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IMPROVING THE EMPLOYER BRAND OF THE CASE COMPANY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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The research objective was to provide guidelines for the case company in order to improve their employer brand from the perspective of the engineering students. The research discovered what aspects engineering students appreciate with regards to their trainee experiences at the case company and the possible areas of improvement in terms of the trainee experiences. Research data was collected by interviewing the engineering students that have completed their period of traineeship or summer work at the case company. The data analysis was primarily conducted by using qualitative methods.

Theoretical foundation of this research paper introduces the basic concepts within the employer branding including employer brand, employer branding, employee value proposition, psychological contract, talent management, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the generation y. The purpose of the theoretical framework is to define the importance and the benefits of the employer branding. The theoretical foundation also provides some practical implementations of the employer branding that support the theory. These practical implementations provide examples that can be applied by the case company for the improvement of their employer brand. The research part of this thesis presents the methods that are used as well as the key findings from the qualitative research.

This thesis proposes that, if the case company wants to improve its employer brand from the viewpoint of the engineering students, it has to first and foremost improve the quality of the practical trainings. Engineering students appreciate qualified positions with challenging tasks when it comes to their practical training. The final result of this thesis was the author's suggestions for improvement based on the results of the research. The areas of improvement were related to introduction to work, feedback, guidance of work, training's equivalence to the engineering studies, challenge of the work, positioning the trainees, quantity of the work and the management.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Employer brand is the image of the company as an employer and how it treats its employees. Employer branding, in turn, refers to the strategies and actions for improving or strengthen that image. Employer branding can be seen as a tool for attracting new talented employees and retaining the current employees. This is because the enhancement of the employer brand requires actual practical actions that make the current employees happy with their workplace and potential employees to apply for the open positions in the company as well as communicating that new and improved employer brand for the potential and current employees. Employer branding has become increasingly important within twenty years because talented employees can be seen as valuable resources of the companies and the competition over the talented workforce is getting more and more intense between the companies. Companies also wish to retain their key talents.

This research study aims to provide guidelines for improving the employer brand of the case company from the perspective of its engineering trainees. Experiences of the engineering students have the most substantial impact on their impression of the case company's employer brand. Therefore, the most effective way to improve the employer brand from the perspective of the engineering students is to find out about the opinions and experiences of the engineering students that have completed their training period at the case company. Based on the findings, it can be determined whether there are possible areas of improvement with regards to their trainee experiences.

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews for the 6 engineering trainees of the case company. Interview questions were related to their experiences at the case company as well as their opinions regarding the case company. Interviews included questions about the guidance of the work, quality of the work, quantity of the work and the overall perception of the case company. Interviews also included the theme of the trainees' future aspirations since it is important to know what kind of expectations engineering students have in respect of their future careers. Interviews gave valuable insights into the engineering students' experiences at the case company and shed light

on the possible areas for improvement. This research study offers some suggestions for improvement based on those key findings.

The theoretical foundation of this research paper includes both marketing and management theories. The purpose of the theoretical foundation is to introduce the basic theories within the employer branding and to showcase the benefits and the importance of the employer branding. Theoretical part of this thesis also introduces some of the practical implementations of the employer branding theories that can be applied by the case company in order to improve its employer brand.

The case company wants to improve its employer brand especially from the perspective of the engineering students because it hopes to attract new talented engineers to their organization. This is because some of their engineers will retire in the next few years and these talent gaps should be filled in with the new talents with specialized expertise in the near future. The best way to attract talented engineers in the future is to create interesting trainee experiences for the engineer students today because many students establish a relationship with their future employers already during their practical training period. The case company can carry out the actual improvements and changes for their trainee experiences and overall employer brand based on the suggestions of this research study. The employer brand has an impact on whether the engineering students start to consider the case company as potential employer during their practical training period.

The client company wishes to remain anonymous. Thus, this research paper won't reveal the company name and the company will be referred as the company or case company in this research paper.

2 EMPLOYER BRANDING - THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATIONS

This chapter introduces the theoretical foundation for the employer branding including the benefits and the importance of the employer branding. This chapter also provides some examples of the practical implementations of the employer branding theories which can be also applied by the case company for the improvement of its employer brand.

2.1 Employer brand

The term employer brand was first introduced in the early 1990s referring to organisation's image as an employer by Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler. Since then, it has become widely applied by the worldwide management community. (Tanaka & Yanez, 2012.) Employer brand refers to what kind of reputation company has as an employer and the conception of how company treats its workers. Well-crafted employer brand communicates message about what is like to be an employee in the organization and potential employees can determine whether they are suitable for the organization based on the employer brand. (Lawler 2008, 68.)

Employer brand is a key driver of the talent attraction and the reduction of the employee turnover. Usually employer brand is the sum of uncontrollable and unorganized decisions and policies that have an effect on the company's employees. This is unacceptable especially for the companies that want to turn people into their competitive advantage. (Lawler 2008, 68.)

Companies need to actively develop and maintain their employer brand because human capital is a differentiator and competitive advantage in companies. The biggest mistake that managers make is their low level of commitment to employee related issues. This is because managers don't really know what kinds of benefits dedication and investment to employees will yield.

Study claims that less than 20 percent of companies in The United States don't know the exact return on investment from their human capital programs. It's more difficult to know the precise impact of focusing on the human capital if company manufactures products or offers services to customers. No one still argues the importance of focusing on human capital when the company is, for instance, a sports team. (Lawler 2008, 64.)

2.2 Employer branding

Employer branding means activities that promote company's employer brand. It is the company's continuous and long-term mission which intends to modify or strengthen the people's perceptions of the company as an interesting and good place to work. Employer brand management takes into account everything in the employment experience including people management processes that will have an impact on the employees' conception of the company. The ultimate purpose of the employer branding is to lure the best potential talent and strengthen company's organizational culture as well as engage and retain current employees. Consequently, employer branding activities are targeted at both internal and external audiences. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 501.)

Employer branding uses the same methods that are used in branding corporate image and products, for attracting potential employees and encouraging and retaining current employees. In other words, employer branding applies traditional branding methods in the field of human resource management. Employer branding requires both internal and external marketing and a clear view what makes company unique and attractive employer. Employer branding is the process of creating identity as an employer that is different from competitors' employer brands. Author concludes that one purpose of employer branding is to gain competitive advantage over rivals in talent attraction. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 501-502.)

Employer branding consists of three key activities: establishing a value proposition and marketing it both externally and internally. First phase of the employer branding is creating a value proposition on which all of the branding activities are based. When

managers start creating a value proposition, they should take company's organizational culture, management style, features of the current employees, the current employment image and the perception of company's product or service quality into consideration. Value proposition within employer branding is a concept of offering particular unique values to employees. Value proposition is a statement which tells employees what the firm will provide them. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 502.) I will return to this subject in more depth later on in this research paper.

The second stage in employer branding is the external marketing of the value proposition. External marketing is targeted at the potential employees through employment agencies. As concluded before, external marketing of the employer brand should be in line with the branding of the corporate image and products. External marketing of the employer brand should make potential employees choose exactly this company. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 502-503.)

The specialty of the brand helps the firm in recruiting distinctive human capital. In other words, external marketing makes potential employees to apply for the job because well conducted external marketing makes employer popular and respected. When new employees are recruited to firm, they will make assumptions of the firm's set of values based on what they have learned about company's employer brand beforehand. These assumptions will reinforce firm's values. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 503.)

The whole employer branding idea was developed because people generate value for the company. If companies use the money and time wisely in their labor force, it has a direct impact on the company's performance. According to the resource-based view company's resources can result in competitive advantage. In order to gain a competitive advantage, resources of the company need to be rare and difficult to copy and valuable as well as sustainable. Employees of the company can be regarded as valuable assets that have an effect on the company's bottom line. Internal marketing assists in developing a workforce that is valuable, unique and sustainable. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 503.)

Internal marketing is the third step in employer branding. Target audience of the internal marketing is the company's own employees. Companies use internal marketing as a tool for the creation of a workforce which is committed to the company's goals and values. In addition, skillful marketing inside the company helps creating a workforce that is difficult for the other employers to imitate. The fundamental purpose of the internal marketing is to create a special organizational culture of doing business in the firm's way. Internal marketing also aims to reduce the employee turnover. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 503-504.)

Several studies demonstrate that employer branding activities are popular among HR practitioners and they produce concrete results. Many firm are establishing formal employer image branding programmes and campaigns. Therefore, it is proved in practice that well-implemented employer branding activities result in competitive advantage in terms of the employee acquisition and loyalty. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 501.)

2.2.1 Conceptual framework for understanding employer branding process

As the figure below shows, employer branding induces two benefits: employer brand associations and brand loyalty. The purpose of the external employer branding is to bring about desired brand associations in the minds of the potential employees. Employer brand associations create employer image. Prestigious employer image causes a situation in which potential employees become interested in company as an employer. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505-506.)

Employer branding also influences inside the company. It shapes or reinforces the identity of the organization as well as the organizational culture. Desired outcome of the internal employer branding activities is the employer brand loyalty which, in turn, will lead to more productive and engaged staff. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505.)
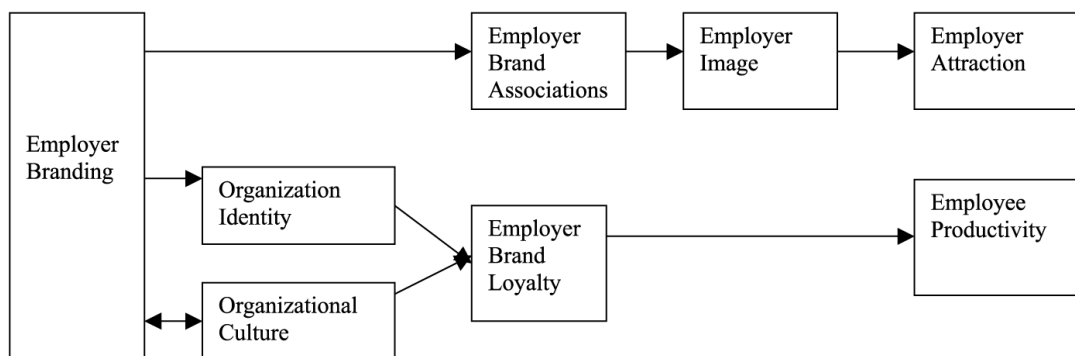
Figure 1. Employer Branding Framework (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505.)

2.2.2 Process of external marketing of the employer brand

As figure 2 demonstrates, external employer branding is a four-fold process: employer brand associations create employer image and distinctive and tempting employer image leads to the attraction of the potential employees. Employer brand associations are ideas and thoughts that come to the mind of the potential employee as well as the sensations that potential employee feels when he thinks of the company as an employer. Employer brand associations reside more at the subconscious level. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505.)

Employer brand associations are the combination of the potential employees' perceptions of the product-related/ functional benefits as well as the views of non-product/symbolic benefits. In the field of the products branding, product-related and functional associations are actual functional benefits that derive from using the products. In the context of the employer branding, functional benefits refer to tangible benefits that employee receives from employer such as salary, leave allowance etc. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505.)

In the branding of products, non-product and symbolic association refer to what symbolic needs customers want to satisfy with the product (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505). For instance, the purpose of purchasing designer purse is rarely to obtain an object that can carry items. Usually people who purchase luxury goods seek to find social approval or maintain their status or satisfy other psycho-social needs and wishes. Within

the context of employer branding, non-product and symbolic associations are for example potential employees' perceptions of the company's prestige and vision of social approval they will obtain if they work for the firm (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505).

Potential employees form their opinion about company's employer image based on the employer brand associations that are generated by the company's external branding activities. Professionals who implement external employer branding activities need to contrive what are the desired associations of their employer brand and then take actions to create or strengthen these desired associations. For example, UK railway company wanted to be perceived as flexible company with opportunities for advancement and emphasized these qualities in its employment campaigns. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 505-506.)

There are at least two theories that support the fact that employer image generates employer attraction. Person-organization fit theory concludes that in terms of the recruitment potential employees become interested in the company as an employer if they feel that company possesses attributes that they appreciate. Person seeks to work for an organization that has a brand that corresponds to their needs, personalities and values. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 506.)

Other theory proving the link between employer image and employer attraction is a social identity theory. According to this theory, person defines his own self-image based on the group he belongs to. If the firm has a good image, potential employee is more willing to work for the company because of the better self-image that he might obtain due to belonging to this group. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 506.)

During the process of recruitment, organizations communicate messages about what is like to be an employee at their organization. These job previews advertise things related to career advancement, challenges and unique opportunities. These kind of messages can be interpreted as promises to employees. If employer fails to keep its promises, employees are more likely to resign. That's why brand promise needs to be realistic including also pros and cons of the work position. In this way, new employee doesn't feel disappointed. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 507.) Reflecting to these concerns, job advertisements need to be realistic. According to Jablin, job interviews are

the best way to eliminate distorted and unrealistic expectations related to the job description. Usually interviewers spend considerable amount of time explaining what the job description will entail. (Jablin, 2001.)

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┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│ External  Employer│ →  │ Employer Brand   │ →  │ Employer         │ →  │ Employee         │
│ Branding         │     │ Associations     │     │ Image            │     │ Attraction       │
└──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘
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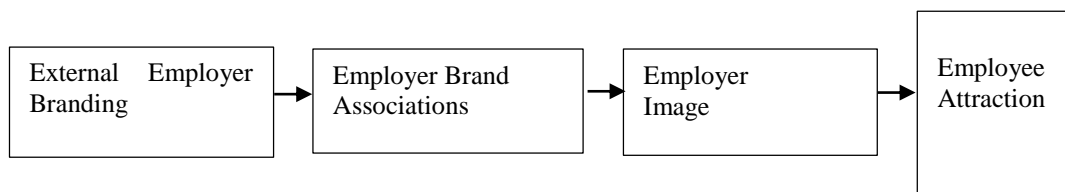
Figure 2. Process of External Employer Branding (Inspired by Backhaus and Tikoo)

There are multiple ways to implement external employer branding in practise. One method is to simply state the employer brand message in each recruiting and other materials that go outside the company. For instance, United Technologies emphasized in their job advertisements how much they have invested in the education of their employees. Another good and innovative method of the external employer branding is to give job applicants company's attitude survey results. In that way, applicants can build a realistic idea of what is like to work for the company based on what current employees truly think about the company. (Lawler 2008, 68-69.)

2.2.3 Process of internal marketing of the employer brand

As the figure 3 demonstrates, the process of the internal employer branding is a five-fold process. Employer branding is used for modifying both organizational identity and culture. These both assets have an effect on the employer brand loyalty. Employer brand loyalty leads to increased employee productivity because, when employees are loyal to organization, they usually tend to be more productive. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 508-510.)

Internal employer branding is used as tool for creating a strong organizational culture. Organizational culture means core values of the organization. New members in the organization will learn these values when they join the organization. Organizational culture manifests itself in the employees' ways of working and communicating. Culture is constantly changing and progressing. Due to strong organizational culture,

members usual change their behaviour in order to match their behaviour to other employee's behaviour. The reason is that they want to feel the sense of conformity and fellowship. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 509.)

Internal marketing efforts are aimed at creating a culture that establishes commitment to organizational goals and supports individual quality of work life. The more organizational culture highlights and supports employees' quality of working life, the more loyal employees are to employer brand. Therefore, creating a supportive and productive organizational culture is a major responsibility of the managers. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 509.)

Organizational identity also contributes to employer brand loyalty. Organizational identity is a mutual attitude about who company is as a group. People tend to identify with the group if they regard organization's identity as unique and appealing. If organization has a positive identity that will raise the self-esteem of its members, increased number of the employees will engage themselves in the organization. Management can modify or change insiders' perceptions of the organizational identity by using organizational goals, policies, and practices. As the process of shaping and reinforcing organizational identity gains momentum, employees are more committed to organization. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 509.)

Employer brand loyalty derives from a strong organizational culture as well as from the distinctive organizational identity. Employer brand loyalty refers to the level of commitment of employees towards their employer. Employer brand loyal employees are more committed and do their best to achieve the targets set by the organization and respect organizational values. Employer brand loyal employees don't seek to resign even when the circumstances might get them to want to seek for another place to work. Employer brand loyal workers are more satisfied. Several research studies point out that when employee are satisfied, they usually perform better and offer the best possible service to customers. If the employees are treated well in the company, they usually tend to give the same kind of treatment to company's customers. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 508-510.)
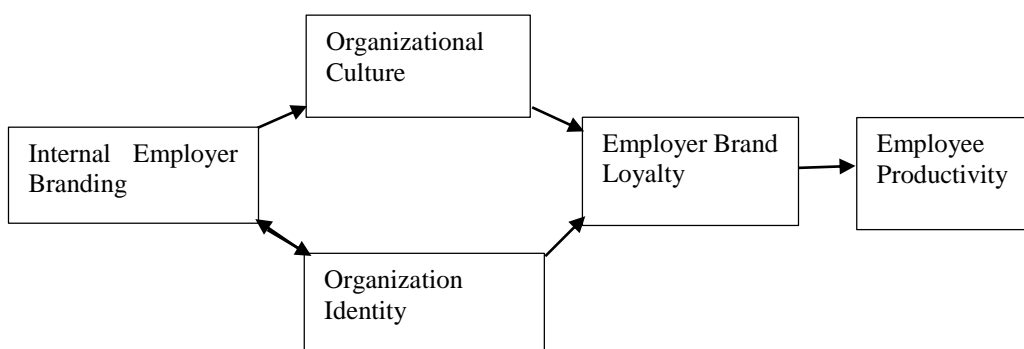
Figure 3. Process of Internal Employer Branding (Inspired by Backhaus & Tikoo)

2.3 Employee value proposition

The first part of this chapter introduces the concept of the employee value proposition. The second part of this chapter presents examples of how the case company can improve its employee value proposition.

2.3.1 The concept of employee value proposition

Employee value proposition is the concept of how much of the benefits employee is entitled to in exchange for his or her work input. Creating a competitive employee value proposition is part of the employer branding activities. If employee feels that he or she will receive the same or greater amount of compensation than what he brings to the company, employee will be more satisfied and feel more appreciated (Recruiters Network, 2003). Compensation and the set of offerings for employees must be unique and attractive if company wants to attract, motivate and retain potential and current employees. (Tanaka & Yanez, 2012.)

What kind of benefits employee value proposition encompasses? First thing that comes to mind is salary. In fact, there are far more substantial factors than salary in terms of personal job satisfaction. Key ingredients in job satisfaction are for example opportunities for career advancement, training and development, management and giving

recognition to employee's work. Pay and salary are just one aspect in terms of compensation, but many management professionals incorrectly believe that employee leaves organization because of the inadequate amount of salary. (Hill & Tande 2006, 19-20.)

2.3.2 How unique employee value proposition is created?

Employee value proposition clarifies what activities company will execute in order to encourage employees to grow, reward for their work and improve management. What programs and policies the company has to undertake in order to create employer brand that is compelling and attractive for employees? (Hill & Tande 2006, 20.)

Company needs to:

- Provide employees the best possible platform for the professional growth, learning and personal development in defiance of the employees' duration of the employment relationship and pay grade

- Improve managerial skills and to make sure that same rules and company policies apply to everyone

- Highlight the fact that one worker's contribution is part of the company's success or failure and to explain what is the role of one certain employee in the bigger picture.

First step in defining a distinctive employee value proposition is to imagine a hypothetical situation in which company has to pay 20 percent less salary than what its competitors pay their employees. Imaging this kind of situation helps discovering creative ways to compensate lower wage. In that sense, it helps creating unique and attractive employee value proposition. (Hill & Tande 2006, 20.)

There are several ways to be different as well as retain and re-engage current workers and attract potential qualified employees. For instance, employer could provide its employees nontraditional rewards. College scholarships to each child of an employee, three months sabbatical after 10 years of service, donating money to community organizations in which employees actively participate are great examples of non-traditional rewards. (Hill & Tande 2006, 20.)

First and foremost, the company needs to make the effort in order to develop the management culture and practices because employees appreciate good management and it also supports their work. The better the management is, the more satisfied employees are. Most innovative enterprises have established new kinds of management practices. Self-directed teams that set their own schedules and recruit their own staff as well as the creation of the policies that encourage immediate problem solving without involving managers are examples of these kinds of innovative management policies. (Hill & Tande 2006, 20.)

However, the company does not necessarily have to change all of the procedures in the company in order to improve management. An effective way to find out what is wrong with the management is to organize upward appraisals. In practice this means that employees answer the questionnaire which includes questions about the quality of the management. (Hill & Tande 2006, 22.)

The study conducted by Kelly Services claims that the most significant mistakes that leaders usually make, are not taking seriously the ideas of junior colleagues, always having a reason why the new ideas won't work, postponing difficult decisions and being late for the meetings. The purpose of upward assessment is to identify these kinds of poor managers and to offer instructions in order to change their leadership styles. (Hill & Tande 2006, 22.)

Employees need to feel appreciated and that their job has meaning. Consequently, managers need to divide organizational goals into smaller divisions and activities and in that way, demonstrate the impact of one employee's efforts in a larger picture. When employees can relate their job into organizations success, they feel more motivated. A tool to assist managers in this goal is a personal impact map. (Hill & Tande 2006, 21.)

Other way to create an attractive employee value proposition and to enhance inner employer brand is to set clear goals for work productivity. When workers know what is expected from them, it makes employees motivated and more productive. Employer can also pay incentives based on the performance and the professional growth in order to engage employees in the organization and to motivate them to do their best. (Hill & Tande 2006, 22.)

2.4. Psychological agreement

Theory of psychological contract forms also theoretical foundation for the employer branding. Psychological contract is an unspoken agreement regarding what the employer expects from the employee, and vice versa. The essence of psychological contract has changed due to uncertain economic situation and the fact that layoffs are rampant in several companies. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 504).

According to the traditional psychological agreement, employer provides safety working conditions and gains employee's loyalty in return. Nowadays, in the face of downsizing and uncertainty in the labor markets, employer gives employee competitive skills and working history by offering training and career opportunities whereas employee offers flexibility and effort. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, 504.)

When the company is recruiting new employees they should deliberate what is expected from employees and what it gives back to the employee. The give and get aspect of the employment deal should be in balance. In that way, both parties can equally benefit from the employment relationship.

2.5. Talent management

This chapter introduces the concept of the war for talent as well as provides practical implementations of the talent management which the case company can apply for creative and effective talent management.

2.5.1 War for talent

The concept of "war for talent" was first publicly introduced to a management audience in 1998 and defined by McKinsey & Company, America's largest and most respectable management-consulting company in their reputable report "Better talent is worth fighting for". This academic paper was the first published attempt to prove that top percentile talent creates prominent asset for companies and management should go the extra mile in the sustainment and development of this kind of talent since it is a diminishing resource. (Beechler & Woodward 2009, 274.)

McKinsey conducted one year profound and extensive research with the target group of 77 companies from various fields and nearly 6000 executives of companies and completed their study by conducting 20 case studies in top-talent-centric companies. They concluded that talent has relevance within the context of company's performance. They predicted that company's most valuable assets within 20 years are savvy business people with the expertise of technology, resourcefulness and operational skills as well as the awareness of the global changes. (Beechler & Woodward 2009, 274.)

Now that almost 15 years have gone by, McKinsey's prediction seems to be accurate as the global economy has expanded drastically from 2007 to 2009. This expansion has led to a situation in which competition over talent has intensified. Company leaders and HR scholars are worried about this change. They know the impact of not having the right people in management positions who are able to face the tough challenges. They also know the negative effect of recruiting inappropriate candidates who are lacking critical skills. Reflecting these concerns, PricewaterhouseCoopers's 11th Annual Global Survey indicated that 89% of interviewed managers considered people agenda as one of their top priorities. Not even the current recession has affected companies' talent-centric agenda. This is because companies are afraid of losing their top-performers or damaging their reputation especially if they have to lay off their employees. (Beechler & Woodward 2009, 273-274.)

There are two approaches to term talent. Within their paper, McKinsey defines the talent as the compilation of individual's abilities. Inherent gifts, skills, know-how, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive form an entity called talent. It also means person's potential future talent and ability to improve performance in the future. McKinsey has a top-star approach to war of talent. For them talent means employees that belong to the group of company's top percentile talent. These high-worth individuals need more management and higher salaries. Other researchers perceive talent as an asset that every people have. According to this approach, all people have talent and their talent need to be identified and liberated. (Beechler & Woodward 2009, 274.)

HR guru David Ulrich has discovered a formula of talent: talent=competence commitment contribution. Competence refers to valid skills and the know-how of the employees. Commitment denotes employees' willingness to work hard, spend their time and energy reaching the set goals. Contribution denotes employees' contribution to work with their heart. This means that employees try to find a meaning in their work. Using Ulrich's terms, talent war is the pursuit of sourcing, developing and retaining individuals with competencies and commitment necessitated by their work and who can find a purpose in their work. (Beechler & Woodward 2009, 274.)

2.5.2 Creative approaches for talent solutions

Talent management is an optimized process with the purpose of attracting high-value candidates as well as developing and maintaining the potential and current talent of the employees. Distinctive employer brand attracts distinctive talent to organization and therefore talent management is integrated to company's employer branding efforts. Talent management activities may entail the development of policies and programs that promotes the attraction and recruitment of potential employees as well as the maintenance of competitive compensation. Talent management can also include providing opportunities for career advancement and training, performance management and retention programs. Several studies have proved that effective talent management results in increased revenue, customer satisfaction, quality, productivity and

market capitalization as well as decreased costs and cycle time because it encourages employees to perform at the high level. (Tanaka & Yanez, 2012.)

Talent management is a long-term program that affects the company as a whole. Both line managers and HR-department should take a proactive stance in order to attract, retain and re-engage employees. The importance of the talent management has considerably increased inside companies since the competition over the qualified candidates is getting more intense as the chapter of the war for talent of this research paper concluded. Companies have come to realize that their employees play a significant role in their success or failure. (Tanaka & Yanez, 2012.)

Talent management requires integrated talent management system. With the help from the state of the art talent management system, company can attract right kind of employees and help these newcomers to understand the goals of their work. The ultimate reason for the establishment of the talent management system is that companies can recruit new qualified employees with such an employment history that brings new assets to their organization's set of key competencies. Talent management system also helps in the retention of these kind of valuable individuals by monitoring and managing employees' relationship with the organization. (Lawler 2008, 63.)

The change needs to start from the top. Thus, senior management needs to set goals for the development of employees. Line managers need to improve skills of their immediate subordinates in order to meet these goals. Organization needs to organize talent meetings in which management discusses about issues related to their employees and their talent and how these issues will be dealt with. Managers need to be well prepared for these meetings and demonstrate with statistics and databases the key weaknesses and strengths in their department's set of talent. (Lawler 2008, 65-66.)

Managers are expected to explain what actions they will undertake in order to develop the skills of their subordinates in the future and how these actions are in line with company's core business strategy. For instance, if one manager suggests growth for business, he needs to demonstrate that company has the sufficient amount of talent that is necessary for the growth. Companies should also organize follow-up meetings in order to see how well these goals have been reached. (Lawler 2008, 66.)

If the company wants to attract and retain top talent, it needs to figure out what kind of talent it exactly needs. This requires strategic planning. Company has to take account of three factors when it is identifying the key skills and competencies in their organization and plan its actions accordingly. First factor to evaluate is the critical impact. It means determining what kind of skills are needed in order to gain competitive advantage. These skills have to be aligned with company's core business strategy. (Lawler 2008, 82.)

When company has identified the key competencies critical to the success of the company, it must translate these key competencies into specific skills that are easy to identify. Current and potential employees of the organization need to possess these skills. For instance, if company's endeavor is to gain technical leadership in their market area, it needs to focus on the acquisition and retention of the technical experts. Company needs to undertake extraordinary actions in order to make sure that it obtains the best technical talent available. In other companies the source of competitive advantage might be the best quality customer service. In these cases companies have to see the trouble to attract potential candidates with high discretion and interpersonal skills. (Lawler 2008, 82.)

The second factor that has to be considered in the creation of the talent management strategy is the performance variance. In practice this means that the company needs to compare different critical and important positions inside the organization and in such a way try to determine in which positions or occupational groups there are inconsistencies in the performance levels. Put on the other words, company should try to figure out which occupational groups contain excellent performers as well as poor performers because these occupational groups or positions need more attention and management. (Lawler 2008, 82-83.)

Company needs to target its efforts to such areas that needs improvement, not to areas of high performance. The reason is that if everyone is doing their best, it is not likely to be an area where improvement is possible. This kind of performance variance analysis can lead to unexpected results. For example, Federal Express discovered that improving the performance of its drivers rather than pilots would have higher impact on

their bottom line. The performance of FedEx pilots is high and all the pilots tend to have the same performance level whereas the performance level of drivers is inconsistent. Drivers' job is challenging because a poor driver can easily delay the time of delivery and thereby make the customers unhappy with the service. (Lawler 2008, 83.)

The third factor that needs to be considered is the talent scarcity. Positions that require staff with talents that are in short supply need special attention. Company needs to go the extra mile, when it comes to compensating and recruiting these workers. Employer could offer customized employment contracts to these kinds of employees. (Lawler 2008, 83.)

The effective method within the talent management is to prioritize all of the positions in the organization based on these three factors: strategic impact, variety of the performance and skill scarcity. The positions with the highest rankings in all of those three categories are so called pivotal positions. Managers need to pay extra attention to these pivotal employees when they are recruiting, developing and rewarding. These pivotal employees need to be also taken into account, when it comes to company's employer branding efforts. When the company is building its employer brand, it needs to deliberate what kind of employer brand would attract these kind of pivotal employees and try to create a good place to work particularly for employees with these kind of critical skills (Lawler 2008, 83.)

Employers are always facing tough challenge for the acquisition of talented people in defiance of the economic situation or fluctuations in the labor markets because all of the employers are competing against each other in the attraction of the top-percentile talent. (Lawler 2008, 63.) One way to identify right kind of applicants is to arrange some kind of tests or questionnaires before the recruitment situation. For example, google published GLAT test in several technology magazines. This test included problem solving. Google had selected such questions to the test that google had found useful in predicting who will be the right fit for their organization (Lawler 2008, 73.)

Talent-centric organization is also committed to the professional development of its employees and provides adequate level of development opportunities. Workers have the primary responsibility for the development of their own abilities, but organizations

can offer some kind of tools in order to help employees in the effective management and planning of their own careers. (Lawler 2008, 89.)

Providing sufficient amount of feedback assists in this endeavor. When the feedback is given at the right time and in the right way, it can give employees a clear view of what kind of future they will have in the organization and which areas they need to improve in order to reach their career related goals. In addition to appraisals, informing about company's future in terms of company's business models and technology assists in career management. This kind of information gives employees some kind idea of how they can develop their abilities and what kind of career they can expect to have inside the organization. (Lawler 2008, 89-90.)

Developing effective career self-management is mutually beneficial since it enables individuals to advance their careers. It is better for the success of the organization to have such employees who are interested in developing themselves and feel good about their careers. One of the most efficient ways of developing workforce is to move them inside the organization from position to other. This will ensure that employees will have the sufficient amount of challenges. These challenges develop their professional know-how and skills. (Lawler 2008, 88.) Talent management puts forth an image of an employer that is interested in the professional growth of its employees.

2.6. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The concept from Abraham Maslow provides a complementary theoretical perspective for understanding the essence of employer branding. Maslow's hierarchy of needs model strives to explain what kind of factors contribute to the motivation of the employees. In this model basic desires and needs of people are divided into 5 sections (Maslow, 1943).   The framework starts from the bottom and proceeds to the higher levels. In practice this means that people have tendency to satisfy their physical needs in the first instance and then they seek to fulfil other needs or desires in the specific order. (Maslow, 1943.)

The first category of the hierarchy is physiological needs which include the basic needs that are prerequisites for the human life. Oxygen, nutrition, hydration and relatively constant body temperature are examples of the basic physiological needs. Safety needs refer to protection and stability. Adults usually recognize their needs for safety only when safety is compromised in the situations like war or emergency. (Maslow, 1943.) Within the context of employer branding, safety needs require that company must provide safety working conditions and necessary protective equipment for employees as well as code of conduct in case of the emergency.

The third stage of the hierarchy is related to affiliation. The inner drive of people is to be loved and belong to some sort of group (Maslow, 1943). Work place can offer employees a social group to which they can belong. Due to this need of affiliation, employees usually seek social approval from their colleagues and superiors. The fourth step in the satisfying the needs is to fulfill the needs of self-esteem (Maslow, 1943). The need for self-esteem is two-pronged: person needs to have high level of self-confidence as well as respect from others (Maslow, 1943). Employer can assist in the attempt of meeting the needs of self-esteem by providing employee high status positions or competitive salaries. When self-esteem needs are satisfied, person feels a valuable person. (Maslow, 1943.) When the four categories of needs are met, the needs for self-actualization can become dominant. Need of self-actualization is the need of becoming the best that a person can become and reaching one's full potential. (Maslow, 1943.)Work can be a great source for self-actualization and therefore employer must provide adequate level of opportunities for advancement and try to offer a work that inspires.

Figure 4. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943)

2.7 Generation Y – considerations of management

If the case company aims to recruit the post-graduate engineers in the future, it needs to take into account what kind of aspects engineering students appreciate with regards to the employment relationship and the working life. All the interviewees of this study belong to the Y-generation referring to the persons that are born between the years 1985 and 1995. Representatives of the y-generation are just entering the working life and therefore it is the fastest growing employee segment with the total number of 70 million representatives (Kane). As concluded before the competition over talented workforce is getting more intense and therefore employers can't ignore the needs of this large group of employees. When the case company acknowledges what kind of aspects this age group appreciates, these young employees are easier to manage and reward.

The representatives of the generation Y have similar characteristics as well as wishes pertaining to their careers and the quality of the working life. They are used for fast data retrieval and discovery, and this is reflected in their expectations related to the working life practices. Within the context of the management, they want that the issues are solved within short order and that the decisions are made as quickly as possible. Multiple Y's are frustrated because of the slow decision-making processes in their workplace. (Paloheimo-Koskipää, 2010.)

Changing workplace is not difficult decision for the representative of the Y-generation. In fact, if the first week of the new job does not correspond to the images that he had before the employment experience, he might want to seek for another work placement. Thereby, the job previews need to be realistic. However, if he decides to stay, he tries to improve the processes inside the working place. He questions the old and inefficient practices of the workplace and is not afraid to express his opinions. Thus, the opinions and proposals of improvement of the employees need to be heard. (Paloheimo-Koskipää, 2010.)

Generation Y wants a meaningful job and that they enjoy doing their work. However, they don't want to spend all of their time at the workplace and they place great emphasis on their free time. They want more out of their life than the career. Still, according to the statistics, several representatives of generation y are depressed. There aren't yet enough reliable information related to the causalities contributing the depression of the representatives of the generation Y. (Paloheimo-Koskipää, 2010.)

Older generations should not ignore the knowledge of the Y-generation employees since they could learn a lot from them. Y-generation representatives are more than happy to share their knowledge and they also wish to receive information from others. Thus, the information sharing should be a two-sided process between the representatives of the generation y and the experienced workers. The experienced workers provide know-how related to their experience and younger employees provide the current knowledge related to technology and their education. (Paloheimo-Koskipää, 2010.)

Generation Y requires more action from the leaders: feedback and straight talk. Y's challenge and question the leaders and their management models. Generation Y thinks that the managers should delegate responsibility and be flexible and support their subordinates at their work. Directors should also create adequate level of opportunities for employee development at work and to have a wide-range vision. (Paloheimo-Koskipää, 2010.)

3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The primary research question is: How the case company can improve its employer brand from the perspective of engineer students? In order to figure out the solution for this problem, I need to first figure out what is the status quo of the case company's employer brand. In order to figure out the current status of employer brand of the company, I developed more specifying research questions:

- What things trainees appreciate most in terms of the case company's employer brand?
- How they feel about their employment experiences at the case company?
- How trainee experiences can be improved at the company?
- Whether the engineer students are interested in working at the case company in the future?

Based on the research propositions above and the theory of employer branding as well as the desires from the behalf of the case company concerning the themes of interview, I came up with several interview questions. I divided the questions into five different themes: 1. guidance of work, 2. quality of the work, 3. quantity of the work, 4. overall perspective of the case company and 5. Trainees' career aspirations.

As mentioned before in the theoretical part of this research paper the employer brand management contains all the aspects that have an impact on the employment experience at the company. Therefore, questions within the themes 1, 2, 3 and 4 deal with factors that directly affected engineers working experience at the company and hence their image of the company as an employer. Questions within the theme 5 were related to engineering students' future career aspirations since it is important to find out whether the engineering students are possibly interested to work for the case company in the future and what kind of jobs they expect to have in the future.

The ultimate objective of this research is to find out what kind of features engineer students appreciate in employer and to what extent case company possesses these qualities. Study also aims to clarify what kind of aspects students expect to gain in terms of their current and future work and how the work at the company corresponded to these expectations. In case I find something essential missing from the company's employer brand based on the information that I will gain from the interviews, I can answer the underlying dissertation question.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

The research design includes two possible methods: qualitative and quantitative. According to Glenn, qualitative research is a cross-disciplinary field of inquiry. The purpose of the qualitative research is to gain profound understanding of the human behavior and the reasons contributing to such behavior. (Glenn 2010, 95.) Because my area of study is employer branding, which is based on predicting reactions in people's minds, research has to contain a qualitative part. The qualitative method examines "why" and "how" causalities in the decision making process instead of "what", "where" and "when" aspects that are more related to quantitative research (Glenn 2010, 95). Due to this aspiration for quality smaller but more accurate research samples are required instead of large and random samples (Glenn 2010, 95).

According to Metsämuuronen, qualitative approach is particularly suitable for research studies that aim to figure out detailed structures of the certain transactions or events rather than the general breakdown of the certain event. Qualitative method is also suitable when the study aims to clarify individual's opinions of certain events. Qualitative method is recommendable research method as well if study intends to examine natural situations that cannot be explored through empirical methods. In addition, qualitative research method serves the purpose well if the objective of the study is to acquire more information about the causality of some case or event. (Metsämuuronen 2011, 91.)

I chose the qualitative method because my objective was the acquisition of the detailed and explanatory information regarding engineering students' trainee experience instead of the general description of the trainees' work duties and wishes concerning the work. As concluded before qualitative method works well in the exploration of individual's views on the certain events, and as my study focuses on individual engineering students' perspectives of their summer work experience, I selected qualitative method.

Since I chose the qualitative method as my research method, there are some prerequisites for conducting a qualitative study. As mentioned before the sample in qualitative research is not usually selected randomly and it is expedient (Glenn 2010, 96). My sample is not picked randomly because I wanted to study small group's opinion of their internship period in the case company. Second prerequisite is that the role of the researcher is significant in the qualitative study (Glenn 2010, 96). In principle, this means that researchers need to contemplate their role in the research making process (Glenn 2010, 96). For that reason, I will contemplate my inclusion in the interview process and how my choices regarding the data collection methods could have influenced the accuracy of the information. Data analysis process is more explicit in qualitative research than in quantitative research (Glenn 2010, 96).

Data must be coded carefully and divided into different themes in a logic and authentic way (Glenn 2010, 96). For that matter, my process of data analysis involves literation, colour coding and classifying data under different themes. The data analysis is mainly conducted by using qualitative methods. The results were analyzed by thematising one interview at a time after which they were compared to each other. Data analysis also includes quantitative method because the number of similar interview responses were summed.

4.2 Data collection method

There are several methods of information acquisition within the qualitative research approach. Participant observation, non-participant observation, field note, reflexive journal, interviews and the analysis of documents and materials are examples of the

qualitative methods of data collection. (Glenn 2010, 97.) I selected interview as my data collection method since interview is a useful method of data collection if data can't be collected by observing or conducting a questionnaire.

Interviews can be divided into three categories: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interview is defined as a verbal questionnaire. Interviewer asks questions in accordance with the pre-planned script. Structured Interviews conducted to the same research do not differ substantially from each other. Obvious disadvantage of the structured interview is that the interviewer is not prepared for the answers that need further clarification from the interviewee. (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291.)

Structured interview proceeds schematically and relevant additional questions won't be asked from the interviewee. Given these conditions, structured interviews are fast-paced and easily conducted. Structured interview is ideal in the studies that strive to clarify certain answers, for instance, if researcher aims to clarify the results of the quantitative study. Structured interviews are also used in case interviewees are illiterate or dyslexic and they can't participate in the study in any other way, for example, by answering the questions by e-mail. In consideration of the profundity, structured interview does not generate profound answers since the answers of the respondents are restricted. (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291.) I didn't select structured interview as my method of the interview because I wanted to gain in-depth answers and I didn't want to limit or obstruct the answers of the interviewees in any way.

In contrast to the structured interviews, unstructured interviews can take many hours but produce more in-depth answers in return. Unstructured interview is necessary if the researcher is investigating a topic which nothing is known in advance or the researcher hopes to gain truly profound answers. (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291.) Since employer branding is a field of study which has been studied since the 90's, I didn't consider extensive and time-consuming interviews as necessary option. Given the limitations in time, that I and my interviewees had, it was not reasonable to spend several hours in interview.

Unstructured interviews are informal conversations and the interviewer doesn't prepare any questions in advance. Both interviewee and interviewer need to actively participate in the discussion. (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291.) Because I wanted to take notes and make sure that everything that the respondents replied was written down, my role as an interviewer needed to be more inactive, thereby, unstructured interview wasn't the best alternative for my data collection method.

Semi-structured interview is an intermediate form of interview which combines the features of unstructured and structured interviews (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291). I chose semi-structured interview for many reasons. The approximate duration of the semi-structure interview is 15-120 minutes which is appropriate period of time to gain sufficient amount of in-depth information about engineering students' perspectives and experiences. Interviews conducted for this study lasted approximately 45 minutes. In semi-structured interviews interviewer presents the themes to interviewee so that respondent gains a clear idea of what topics are covered (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291). This will help interviewee to answer the questions (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291).

Another benefit of the semi-structured interview is that it does not restrain the answers of the respondents. Interviewees can share their thoughts and ideas freely and in case interviewer wants more information about certain subject or clarification of certain answers, he can ask additional questions. Semi-structured interview allows interviewees to speak about the subjects that are important for them. Therefore, semi-structured interview may result in unexpected results which the researcher would not have thought of before the interview. (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick 2008, 291.)

I conducted 6 semi-structured interviews in order to gain qualitative information to my research study. I chose university of the applied sciences as the interview location because it provided a neutral environment for the interviews and it was convenient place for all of the interviewees. Interviews were conducted separately and they were not recorded. Interviewer asked questions and took notes and asked necessary additional questions. Interviewer also tried to get clarification if some issues or topics were unclear or unfamiliar for her in order to ensure that all the written information was accurate.

4.3 Sampling method

Test subjects and survey respondents can be selected to the study in two different ways: purposively or randomly. Usually random sampling method is better since it increases the reliability of the research because each test subject has come along by chance without investigator's effort. In purposive sampling method, test persons are selected based on the researcher's interests. Researcher's interests can relate to availability or researcher's consideration. Availability means that interviewees are selected based on availability whereas researcher's consideration refers to researcher's desire to study relevant persons. On the other hand, in some cases it may be necessary to examine the entire population. This is called the complete enumeration study which does not include sampling at all since all of the test subjects are examined. (Metsämuuronen 2011, 47.)

The original purpose of this research paper was to conduct complete enumeration study since the total number of test subjects are 15. Due to the restriction in time and availability of the interviewees, it was not possible to study all the test subjects. I interviewed all of the volunteers, a total of 6 interviewees. Thus, the sampling was purposive because it was based on the availability of the tests subjects.

4.4 Reliability

Reliability refers to the repeatability of the study. In other words, if the research is repeated several times using the same methods, it should produce the same results every time (Metsämuuronen 2011, 60). This research has limitations considering the reliability because it was not possible to conduct follow-up interviews due to the strict time limitation that the researcher of this study faced.

Time-passage sets another threat to the reliability of the research since this study focuses on the retrospective viewpoints of the students. This can compromise the reliability of the study because engineering students have to assess their experiences at the

company afterwards. According to Frank and Gilovich from Cornell University, the passage of time can change people's perspectives of some certain event in the past (Gilovich & Frank, 1989, 1-5).

In order to minimize this kind of threat of reliability, I organized all the interviews soon after the end of the training period of the engineering students. In this way, I ensured that the discussed issues in the interview were relatively current for the interviewees. In some occasions, the location of the interview might have an impact on the test results. Interviews were administered in the premises of university of the applied science because it provided a neutral ground for interviews and respondents were able to tell honestly about their experiences and opinions.

4.5 Considerations of validity

Validity aims to the answer the question: does the research examine what it is supposed to examine? Outcomes of the research are worthless if they lack validity. Data collection methods must confirm that the research will reach its goals and answer the underlying research questions. (Glenn 2010, 143.) There are at least two approaches to validity which the author of this study need to take into consideration in terms of the implementation of this research study

Face validity refers to individual's evaluation of the legitimacy of the used research methods (Glenn 2010, 150). Put on the other words, if research is valid, reader can easily see that the research methods are logical and they enable the achievement of the research goals.

In the context of this study, face validity is important because face validity can increase the amount of the participants. This is because when the test subjects recognize the legitimacy of the study they are more willing to participate. Thus, the participants need to be assured that their contribution plays a substantial role in the success of the research in the interview invitation. Construct validity means that the selected data collection methods actually measure what they supposed to measure (Glenn 2010, 151). Because I chose face to face interview as my data collection method, I need to ensure

that the questions are correctly and properly understood by the tests subjects in the interview situation and in that way to try to assure that my data collection has construct validity.

4.6 Reflection of ethical issues

Especially researchers within the field of social studies should reclaim responsibility for ethics. Even the greater emphasis should be placed on the consideration of ethical issues if the researcher uses qualitative data collection methods. This is because qualitative methods of data collection usually necessitate more interpersonal relationship between the test subject and the researcher. Within respect to research study, a variety of issues need to be deliberated in the data collection and reporting process such as issues related to privacy, voluntary nature of the participation to experiments, anonymity, confidentiality and legitimacy. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2006, 158.)

Since I am applying qualitative methods in my study, I should ensure that all my data is collected and presented ethically. Professional secrecy is a fundamental right that I as a researcher must observe. Within respect to this research study, it refers to the anonymity of the research subjects. Interviews are conducted and reported in such a way that no one else gets to know the identity of the test persons. I will present all of the outcomes from the interviews in this report but leave out all the details that clearly reveal the identities of the interviewees. The anonymity of the participants are highlighted in the invitations that are sent to the test subjects. In this case, the anonymity also applies to the case company of this research paper. Therefore, this report doesn't contain the biography of the case company or other recognizable information related to the company.

All the interviews were voluntary and the questions weren't personal. The purpose of the study was explained in the invitations and in some cases in the interview situations in order to ensure that all the test subjects were aware of how the interview data is utilized. The data is collected for the research purposes only and forwarded to the case company. The research data is not misused or utilized in any other purposes or contexts by the author of this research paper.

5 KEY FINDINGS

5.1. Guidance of work

5.1.1 Work orientation

According to four of the six respondents, the initiation into their work was sufficient or excellent. All four of them received thorough introduction to their actual tasks right from the beginning of their training or summer work period and they were shown where to find necessary tools and parts. These four respondents, who felt that they received proper work orientation, worked in the engine department, finishing department, assembly line and in the warehouse. Two of these respondents added that besides introduction to work duties that were pertinent to their work station, they also received general information related to the employment relationship and the company.

Interviewee 2 concludes that he received proper introduction to his tasks at the engine department. Right from the beginning of his training he received instructions for building the engines and he was shown where to get spare parts for the engines. Interviewee 3 worked in the finishing department. The work tasks were shown once for him and after that it was acceptable to ask from the senior installers in case he didn't know what to do. The workstation as well as the machines were new in the company when he started his work. Therefore, the use of these machines was also quite new thing for his instructors as well. He still feels that he received thorough guidance of how to do tasks that were pertinent to his work station. The introduction period lasted 2 weeks. Introduction period wasn't so busy in his department which respondent perceived as a positive thing. This is because he had plenty of time to learn his work tasks.

Interviewee 4 was also among the engineering students who perceive their introduction as an adequate. The introduction to his work included tour at the factory and the locker rooms were also shown to him. In addition, introduction included briefing of the working hours and breaks. He was also shown where to find chief shop steward and labour protection delegate. With regards to the introduction to actual duties, experienced workers guided summer workers through the installation of the parts in the introduction phase. Interviewee 5 felt that the Introduction to his work tasks was thorough and all of the work stages were taught to him separately. His introduction included safety issues, tour in the company's premises and introduction to his actual tasks. He learned how to drive forklift and how to use Sonet database.

Interviewee 1 and 6 told that their introduction was limited. There are still major differences in their attitude towards the importance of the familiarization to their work. Interviewee 1 would have preferred to receive actual and proper introduction to his tasks in the finishing department whereas respondent 6 felt that there wasn't need for the actual familiarization. This is because his tasks were pretty simple and he had worked for the company in the past. Interviewee 1 still added that even he didn't have actual familiarization, it was okay to ask whenever he didn't know how to perform his tasks or what to do next.

When the interviewees were asked about the wishes concerning the introduction, 3 of the interviewees find something to add or improve in terms of the familiarization. Wishes were related to receiving information regarding company's processes, business ideology and safety issues. Interviewee's 1 wish was that the premises and processes could have been presented more thoroughly in the beginning. Even though interviewee 5 received briefing of the basic safety issues in the company, he felt that the introduction to safety issues was missing something essential. He would have liked to receive some kind of briefing of the company's emergency plan in situations like explosion or fire and where to find emergency exit marks. Although the company is not such a dangerous workplace, interviewee appreciates safety in the work. In his opinion, the safety issues could have been even more emphasized in the introduction.

Interviewee 5 also hoped that the company could have explained more about the ideology of the company. He would have liked to know more about the company's processes and where the products are sold. He feels that if he had known more about the bigger picture, he would have been even more motivated towards his work. In addition to the contents of the introduction, one of the interviewee hoped that his foremen would have conducted the introduction. Interviewee 6 told that senior worker provided introduction to his work tasks and everything was showed and presented quickly and superficially. However, he believes that if his foreman had conducted the introduction, he would have gained more knowledge and more in-depth view of his work tasks.

5.1.2 Feedback of the work

All of the interviewees told that receiving feedback concerning their work input is important for them. When the interviewees were asked about the reasons why they regard the feedback as an important matter, all of the respondents told that based on the feedback they can obtain a clear idea of which areas they need to improve their performance. 2 of the interviewees also concluded that it is also important to know which areas they perform well. They told that they will become even more motivated towards their work if they receive encouraging feedback.

Receiving feedback of his work input is important for the interviewee 1 because feedback gives him a clear idea of what he is doing wrong and he can in that way learn from his mistakes. Thereby, he can learn to do his work properly and in a better way. In a similar vein interviewee 2 told that receiving feedback is important for him because then he knows which areas of his work need improvement. It is important that he knows what he is doing wrong. For the interviewee 3 receiving feedback of his work contribution is important. In his opinion, it is important to keep workers up to date and he likes to know whether the quality of his work is good enough.

For the interviewee 4 receiving feedback is important in the sense that then he will know which areas of his work he needs to improve. He also appreciates that the negative feedback is given as constructive criticism. Interviewee 5 concludes that the feedback of his work input is important for him because positive feedback motivates him

and he can learn from the negative feedback. Receiving feedback is also important for the interviewee 6 because based on the feedback he can improve his own performance and he knows which areas of his work requires improvement.

When the respondents were asked about the quality of the feedback at the case company, the answers were very divergent. One of the respondent discloses that he didn't receive any form of feedback concerning his personal work contribution. According to the respondent 3, the workers of his department didn't receive actual feedback but they get to hear what kind of progress other workstations had made in 7 AM meetings. Respondent concludes that it was a good sign if there wasn't any feedback. Respondent didn't receive feedback concerning his workstation. He wishes that he would have received some kind of feedback of his work input. He would have known how to improve his work effort based on the feedback.

Three of the respondents stated that they received only negative appraisals during their summer work. Interviewee 1 told that there was enough feedback of his quality of work that came from the dispatch department and the feedback was always negative. He also concluded that it was a good sign if there wasn't feedback. Sometimes interviewee went to ask feedback regarding his work quality by himself and sometimes somebody came to give him feedback in person. Respondent feels that case company could have organized general feedback meetings for everybody in the finishing department.

Respondent 2 has similar experiences regarding the feedback at the company. Respondent 2 received direct feedback of his work quality and the feedback was occasionally given in a rather negative way. He received negative feedback if he had installed parts to the engines incorrectly or the parts were in a wrong position. Even though he received quite direct and slightly negative feedback, he didn't perceive it as a negative thing. Respondent appreciates that he received instant feedback at the case company. He concluded that he feels frustrated if he has done a lot of work and afterwards he receives negative feedback of his work quality and he has to do the work all over again.

Interviewee 6 wasn't satisfied with his feedback. In the company he received negative feedback, for example, if there was a shortage of some parts or parts were defective. He felt frustrated due to the feedback because shortages and deficiencies of parts were things which he was not able to influence. In other words, he received feedback concerning the issues that he wasn't able to influence and, for the most parts, the feedback did not concern his personal work input or quality. Rarely, he received negative feedback of his actual work effort. He received negative feedback if his work pace was too slow or he was too ineffective or he made some kind of minor mistakes. But if he took the extra mile and made his work tasks better, he didn't receive any kind of encouraging feedback which he would have liked to receive. He concluded that the critique was always negative.

Interviewee 5 received versatile feedback. He received positive feedback because he performed his tasks well. He also received negative feedback and learned from it. He received instant face to face feedback from his colleagues. In his opinion, direct and face to face feedback is the best way to give and receive feedback. This is because he can discuss about the issues especially if the feedback is negative. Interviewee 4 stated that his feedback was constructive. He received feedback from the senior colleagues if he had installed some parts incorrectly. This was his first workplace in which he did not receive negative feedback. If he did something wrong, he received instructions of how he can do things better next time and the areas he needs to pay more attention.

5.1.3 Receiving guidance in problem situations

All of the respondents feel that they received enough help when they faced problems in their daily work. All the six respondents felt that their work duties were pretty simple and therefore there weren't so much problems related to their personal work. Interviewee 1 feels that whenever he had problems or challenges in his work, he received enough help and guidance from the senior mechanics. Problem situations in his everyday work were usually related to finding some parts and pieces. Interviewee 2 had only few problem situations and he received instant help from his colleagues. He had problems with building engines that were different from other engines that his department

usually installed. He told that his colleagues helped him with the installation of these kinds of different engines when he needed help.

Also respondent 3 had only a few of problem situations related to his work. There was always somebody to help him in case he didn't know what to do. He received help from the more experienced mechanics. In some cases experienced employees from other departments came to help him. Generally speaking, his problem situations were related to finding or attaching the parts. Interviewee 4 had similar opinion in terms of getting help in problem situations. He thought that if he had questions related to employment contracts and other employment related matters, he received answers from foremen. If his problems were related to actual work, experienced employees helped him. Interviewee 5 received help from his colleagues or superiors. He concluded that there was always a solution for his work related challenges and problems. Interviewee 6 stated that there weren't any actual problem situations in which he would have required guidance. In his opinion, the work was very simple and tasks included placing items on shelves or carts.

Two of the respondents also stated that even they received help for their personal work, there were situations in which their department needed help, but there weren't always instructors or foreman to give guidance. Interviewee 2 told that because the job was done in two shifts, there wasn't always overseer on duty at the engine department. This slowed down the work from time to time because their department needed help and there wasn't no one to give instructions. From time to time, their department had to consult employees from other departments. Interviewee's 4 wish was that there would have been somebody always on the spot to guide summer workers in the assembly department. Half of his department's employees were summer trainees from the University of Applied Sciences and their job was occasionally delayed due to the absence of the instructor.

5.2 Quality of the work

5.2.1 Work's equivalence to engineering degree and studies

When the interviewees were asked about to which extent their work at the company corresponded their education, opinions were identical. The main issue, that the interviews revealed, was the job's poor equivalence to engineering studies. All of the interviewees agreed that they would have liked to work in more challenging positions that would have been more comparable to their engineering studies and degree. 5 of the respondents still stated that there were some application possibilities of their studies.

Interviewee 1 told that his installment and repair related tasks at the finishing department corresponded his education to some extent. He got a chance to take the advantage of some of the things that he had learned during his engineering studies. He got a chance to apply his basic knowledge of electrical engineering, hydraulics as well as his ability to interpret and read drawings in his work. Nonetheless, he doesn't believe that he will do this kind of work in the future since this kind of work doesn't correspond his level of education.

According to the respondent 2, the work at the company corresponded his education poorly. He didn't get a chance to apply any of his knowledge related to the automation engineering at his work at the engine department. The use of the pneumatic tools was the only thing he was able to apply from his studies.The work at the case company didn't correspond the future degree or education of the interviewee 3. He still added that if he someday in the future will become an overseer, the work experience at the company might be of some use. This is because he got to learn how the overseers manage and organize their jobs. His personal tasks weren't related to his education or field of expertise at any level. Only thing he was able to apply from his knowledge of the engineering studies, was the ability to interpret and read drawings.

In a similar vein the respondent 4 proposes that his work at the assembly line didn't correspond his educational attainment. He was still able to apply his know-how related to wiring and installation of the electric sensors which he had learned during his automation engineer studies.

Interviewee 5 told that the work did not correspond his education. His work at the warehouse entailed logistics which does not correspond his automation engineering

studies. He was still able to apply some of his knowledge of the automation because the company uses automation in their products. Thereby, he was able to find different kinds of parts in the warehouse, such as electric sensors, because he had learned what they are during his studies. He also concluded that one of the warehouse at the company was automated. Therefore, he was able to use some of his know-how related to the automation studies.

According to the interviewee 6, his work wasn't comparable to his engineering studies to any extent and there wasn't anything that he could have applied from his studies. He would have still wanted to take advantage of the skills that he had acquired from his previous summer work. He worked in the motorcycle shop for three summers and he repaired all sorts of motorcycles. Therefore, he would have liked to do assembly work in case company. He would have been able to utilize his skills of installation which he had learned in the motor cycle shop. He wasn't able to utilize anything from his current engineering education because the job duties consisted of placing screws to shelves.

5.2.2 Challenge and difficulty level of the work

According to 2 of the 6 interviewees, their work duties at the company were enough challenging. For the respondent 1 the work was relatively challenging because the variety of the company's products caused diversity in terms of his work tasks. Each product provided different framework and challenges for his work and each product included different problems that had to be solved. Thereby, he was happy that he got a chance to work with different kinds of products. Challenges in his work included fixing electrical faults and leaks as well as finding solutions to mechanical impossibilities. He received guidance in these kinds of challenges.

Couple of times respondent 1 got a chance to solve some of the problems by himself which he sees as positive thing. He tried to fix these problems by himself, but in case he did not know what to do, he received help. Respondent 5, in turn, thinks that the work was challenging enough because he did the same work than what the permanent

employees did. If he marked items incorrectly, it instantly showed. He had to be careful that the items matched and that they were correctly marked.

Other two of the six respondent thought that their daily work was usually routine, but occasionally it provided some level of challenges. Interviewee 4 thinks that, for the most parts, the work was routine for him especially after learned to perform his tasks. If the parts didn't fit to the products, that brought more challenging aspect to his work. He was allowed to organize his work station independently and decide the order in which he made each task. He also arranged necessary parts for his work with his colleague. He thinks that it was a positive thing that he got to decide some of the issues related to his work duties by himself.

Interviewee 6 stated that his work was simple because his work duties entailed placing different kind of parts and items to shelves. However, his work sometimes included challenges that caused additional work and expanded the working time. Challenges in his work were, for instance, if some of the parts had paint-defects and they needed to be retransmitted to paint department. He concluded that the deficiencies in parts slowed down the production of the machines and it was his responsibility to provide parts to different machines on time.

The last third of the interviewees told that their work wasn't challenging at all and the other interviewee added that it would have been nice to have more challenging job description. According to interviewee 2, the work wasn't very challenging. The work tasks were quite simple once respondent learned to do them. At first he had to think more about which parts fit in different engines and learn how many different kinds of bolts and nuts there are. The respondent 3 has worked for the company for two summers and, therefore, the work tasks were quite easy for him since they were familiar for him. Respondent says that if the work tasks had been more challenging, it would have brought interesting aspect to his work.

5.2.3 Other interesting work positions or tasks at the company

When the interviewees were asked about whether there were other interesting work positions in the company, five of the six interviewees would have preferred to work in other position. Interviewees had two kind of motivators in terms of their wishes related to different positions. Two of the interviewees would have wanted to work in certain position due to application possibilities of their previous experience at the company and other companies. The most substantial research theme rose up again: the work's low equivalence to engineering studies. Half the interviewees concluded that their reasons for wanting different position were related to work's equivalence to engineering studies. Only one of the interviewee told that he didn't have special wishes concerning his work position and he didn't even apply for other positions.

Interviewee 2 and 6 would have wanted to work for another position or department due to application possibilities of their previous employment history. Interviewee 2 told that he would have preferred to work in the cabin line because he had worked there in the previous summer. Thereby, the crew and the work methods would have been familiar for him. Interviewee 6 told that he was highly interested in the installing of the company's machines. The assembly work doesn't correspond his education, but it is a position in which he could have utilized his manual skills. When he started working for the company at beginning of the summer, he got a chance to install air conditioning machines which he was excited about. He got to a chance to utilize his skills and know-how which he had learned during last summers in his previous job at the motor cycle shop.

All of the sudden, he was transferred to another position. It did not make sense to him, why he was transferred to another department and, at the same time, new employees were positioned to his previous position. Majority of these new employees didn't have previous experience of the installation of the company's machines. They were trained to install these machines whereas he had previous experience of installing and repairing the machines. He concluded that he would have liked to continue in his first position at the cabin line and he don't fully understand the reasons for his transfer. In his opinion, there was lack of communication between different departments and recruitment. He felt that his talents in terms of the installing of the machines weren't fully utilized.

Interviewees 1, 4 and 5 were among the engineering students who would have wanted to work in another position because the position would have corresponded their engineering studies. Interviewee 1 told that he was interested in the design related work because it would have corresponded his education and degree. He would have liked to obtain experience within his own field of expertise. For the interviewee 4 obtaining a summer job was difficult this summer and the job at the case company was the last opportunity for him to get some kind of summer job. This is because this summer's job at the company didn't correspond his degree and he would have liked to get work experience within his own professional field during this summer. He didn't apply for any other position at case company, but he hoped that he would have been positioned to some job that would have corresponded more his educational background. Interviewee 5 would have preferred to work at the electrical workshop or the automation department because the work in these departments would have corresponded more his education.

5.3 Quantity of the work

Only one of the interviewees was of the opinion that the work amount was at the very high level. This interviewee worked in the finishing department. Respondent 1 feels that the amount of work was at the very high level at his department. He didn't manage to do all of his planned duties during his regular working hours and, hence, he worked overtime. He worked overtime quite a lot, but he sees this as a positive thing due to higher salary and positive challenge. He feels that he did his best despite the high amount of work because his stress management ability is relatively high and he sees large workload as a challenge that can be overcome. He thought that if he made his best effort, he is no longer able to influence the result of the work. He thinks that even though his department was working overtime, it still sometimes struggled to perform all of the planned duties within the working hours.

3 of the six respondents were of the opinion that their workload per day was at an appropriate level, but 1 of these interviewees still admitted that their department could have been able to do more within their working hours and that their quota of the work could have been slightly higher. Interviewee 3 stated that the amount of work was

usually at the right level or it was occasionally at too low level. He worked in the finishing department and sometimes there was too much deficiencies in parts of the company's products. This meant that his department wasn't able to do nothing with the products and forward company's products. This delayed his department's work. He told that during his training period the quota of work was 3 products per day which he perceives as appropriate amount.

Interviewee 5 was also among the interviewees who considered their workload to be in an appropriate level. In his opinion, the work amount was at the right level at the warehouse because the workload was well divided between the employees of his department and he did not have to do all the tasks alone. He told that the daily goal was that all of the items that arrived at the company premises needed to be forwarded during the same day they arrived. He wasn't sure what the official goal in his job was because it can't be defined in the same way than in the assembly line.

Interviewee 4 thinks that the work amount per day was correctly estimated in the assembly department, but he revealed that his department could have been able to do a little more in terms of the amount of work. As a student he appreciates that he could have done overtime hours during weekends, but he knows that providing overtime work is not very profitable for the company. The quota was 2 products per shift and, thereby, the total quota was 4 product for each day.

As soon as he learned to do his job and got a good overview of the work duties, the pace of his work accelerated. The pace of his work was slower during the first two weeks of his training period when he was just learning to do his duties. After the familiarization period the work was routine for him and the work pace accelerated. He thinks that his department would have been able to manufacture 2, 5 products in shift instead of 2 because their pace of work was at the high level after the initiation period.

Two of the respondent had a similar perspective of the amount of work. They concluded that the amount of the work was underestimated at their departments. One of these respondents worked at the engine department and the other told that his job was to deliver components to the assembly line. Both of these respondents concluded that

all the planned work could have been done in just one shift instead of two at their department.

Respondent 2 feels that the engine line department would have accomplished to do all of the planned tasks in one shift. The amount of work was estimated based on the last year's amount of work. During last year there was more work to do and a higher number of the deficiencies in parts and that resulted in increased workload. This year's amount of work was at the lower level, but the quota of the work was still the same. Therefore, the work amount per day was incorrectly estimated. Interviewee clarifies that when the work was done, there were a lot of sitting around and waiting because there was nothing else to do. In consideration of this year's amount of work, the workers of engine line felt that all of the work would have done in just one shift. He told that despite the requests made by the employees of the engine line concerning the shifts, the foreman was not willing to makes the changes. Interviewee also claims that if the work had been a contract based work, he would have been even more motivated towards his work.

Interviewee 6 stated that for him personally the work pace was too slow. Besides him there was one worker in the other shift. All in all, there was one worker per shift and 2 shifts per day. He and the worker from the other shift agreed that all of the work could have easily done in one shift by just one worker. Respondent thinks that there were too much sitting around because the amount of work per day was underestimated. The standard chores could have done in one shift because there wasn't enough tasks for two peoples. Work sometimes included challenges that caused additional work and expanded the working time. Challenges in the work were, for instance, if some of the parts had paint-defects and they needed to be retransmitted to the painting department. That slowed down the production of the machines. He still thinks that one worker can handle these situations by himself if he works overtime.

5.4 Overall perception of the case company

5.4.1 Features that are appreciated in the company by the engineering students

When the interviewees discussed about the respected features of the employer and to which extent the company has these features, preferences were divergent. Features of the employer brand that were generally most valued among the interviewees were strong leadership, flexibility of the work schedule, possibility to work overtime, good and relaxed atmosphere as well as efficient communication between employees and management. Interviewee 2 appreciates a company that is flexible in respect of working hours. He wants to work for a company that is flexible if he is also flexible regarding his work input and where his work input is appreciated.

Interviewee 3 thinks highly of the employer who offers employee benefits such as access to the gym. He appreciates workplace with good atmosphere. In addition, he appreciates that managers understand their subordinates and are flexible. Interviewee 4 told that he appreciates an employer who takes seriously employee's wishes and proposals for the improvement. Issues of the employees should be forwarded to the management and the management of the company should take a proactive stance in order to find solutions for the issues of the employees. Communication inside the company should be two-way and the views of the both employees and managers should be heard.

In addition, he perceives company with laid-back atmosphere as a good place to work. Interviewee 5 values an employer who is fair and provides good and supporting place to work and pays adequate salary for the work input of the employees. Interviewee 6 told that he appreciates employer who understands employees. If employees are doing their best and spend their valuable time, employer should also be flexible and fair. He also appreciates cooperation between employees and employer. He doesn't appreciate employer who decides everything without consulting employees or considering the needs of the employees.

When it comes the employer brand of the company, strong leadership and flexible work schedule and atmosphere were the most respected features. Interviewee 1 appreciates first and foremost the strong leadership at the company. He respects managers who are trustworthy and responsible. He doesn't appreciate micromanagement. He was happy with the management at the company because his managers set clear guidelines for his work, but they gave him free rein to perform his work duties independently

to some extent. In addition to strong leadership, he appreciates case company's flexibility in terms of the working hours because he got a chance to work overtime and the work schedule was flexible.

Interviewee 3 also appreciated flexitime. He told that foremen let him sometimes to work more hours from Monday to Thursday and to take a time off Fridays. Interviewee 4 regard case company as a laid-back place to work. In his previous work places he received quite a negative feedback, but in case company the feedback was constructive or positive. He got the impression that if he made some kind of mistake, he was not so hardly penalized. The respondent 5 appreciated the fairness and that he could discuss openly about the issues or problems with the management at the case company.

5.4.2 Interests to work for the company in the future

Four of the test subjects told that they are willing to work for the company in the future. They mentioned location, previous experience, financial benefits as well as the atmosphere as main reasons for their willingness to work for the company in the future. Interviewee 1 would certainly like to work for the case company again. The most significant reasons for that are the convenient location of the company premises and his previous experience in the company. He has gained more profound view and knowledge of the company's premises and processes and, therefore, it would be easier to work at the company again since he knows how everything works.

Interviewee 3 stated that if he can't find work position related to his education and field of expertise, he would consider working for the company. The other reason for choosing the company in the future is familiarity of the work place. After graduation he searches for job from the city in which the company locates as well as from the other city. Interviewee 4 is willing to work for the case company in the future. He likes the location of the company because he doesn't want to move from his hometown. He also likes the work environment and atmosphere in the assembly department. In addition, he got a sense that his work input was appreciated and he received good feedback from his superiors when he performed well in his job. Interviewee 5 told that he is willing to work for the company due to the financial benefits. He also hopes that he

will receive more challenging position that would correspond more his education if he receives a position from the case company in the future.

Two of the respondents told that it is unlikely that they will work for case company in the future. Inadequate level of the positions that are compatible to their degree is the main reason why these two respondents are not interested in the job at the company. Interviewee 2 told that he is not interested in the work position at the company because there is no work position that would correspond his educational background or any jobs suitable for the automation engineers. He also hopes to move to another city in the near future. In a similar vein respondent 6 told that he is not interested in working at the company in the future because there aren't any positions corresponding his education as an environmental engineer at the company.

5.4.3 Engineering students' perspectives of the employer image of the company after their summer work period

All in all, relaxed working atmosphere as well as the amorphous management structure and disordered production were the main themes that emerged from the interviews in terms of the overall employer image of the company. Interviewee 1 has a good image and impression of the company after his period of traineeship due to his colleagues and the work atmosphere. Everybody helped each other and everybody worked in unison in order to achieve the work related goals.

From the perspective of the respondent 2, the work was disorganized in case company and work didn't go smoothly mostly because of the poor inventory of different kind of parts. Parts for the engines were often late because nobody didn't know in time which parts were running out. Therefore, the parts were often ordered too late. This delayed the work in the engine department. In addition, respondent feels that the overall picture of the company's processes was somewhat unclear for him. However, he lists the positive atmosphere in the company as vantage in his traineeship.

Interviewee 3 has a good general image of the case company after his training period because he perceives the company as good place to work. He had nice and familiar co-

workers as well as a good knowledge of what he is supposed to do. He still expresses some level of criticism with regards to the management of the company. He would have wanted to receive more help and support from his foreman. If he went to ask for guidance on his work related problems, usual answer he received was that he has to try to come up with the solution by himself in the first instance.

Respondent 4 has mixed feelings about the image of the case company company after his training period. Asset of the company is the laid-back work atmosphere. In his opinion, the organization of the production could be more effective and structured. He still added that he and his colleagues got a chance to propose suggestions for the improvement in order to increase the productivity of the production line. Overall, interviewee 5 has a good image of the company, but he thinks that structure of management could have checked. He got a sense that some things in the company were all over the place.

Respondent 6 got a similar impression that everything was all over the place in the company. In his opinion, no one had thought enough how the processes could have organized more efficiently. In addition, the foremen were too authoritarians and they switched employees from place to another without consulting or informing employees in time. In his situation his foreman discussed about his transfer with another employee in his department and he wasn't first to know about his own transfer to another position. He also got a feeling that the level of communication between foremen was quite low

5.4.4 Suggestions for improvement by the engineering students

The most substantial theme of this research emerged again when the interviewees were asked whether they have suggestions for improvement with regards to their traineeship experience. Two of the tests subjects propose that the company should provide trainees from University of Applied Sciences more qualified work positions. Interviewee 1 hopes that the company would take the educational background and the level of the degree into consideration in the recruitment phase of the trainees.

Interviewee 4 has similar hopes regarding the positioning. His improvement suggestion for the company is that when the company recruits and positions new trainees, company should take the educational backgrounds of the applicants into account even if the applicants have applied for certain position at the company. Half of the employees of his department were trainees from The University of Applied Sciences. In his opinion, case company should have positioned these trainees for example to design department in order to provide them adequate level of opportunities for the professional growth and development. In this way case company can showcase that it is interested in recruiting talented employees in their organization in the future. He perceives providing trainees an adequate positions as more of an ethical issue.

Exit interviews and feedback were also among the most common improvement proposals. Interviewee 5 would have liked to receive some kind of feedback discussion before he left the company. Before he left, he was just asked to leave his keys and there was no actual discussion with his foreman. However, he understands the lack of the exit interview because he knows that his superior was really busy at the time. Interviewee 6 would have also liked to receive some kind of feedback discussion before the end of his training. He also hopes more cooperation between the University of Applied Sciences and the company. Respondent 3, in turn, would have wanted to give constructive feedback for the company after his training period. He also suggested that appraisals could be conducted by giving employees a form to fill not by organising personal meetings.

The importance of the effective organization of the production from the perspective of the engineering students manifested itself almost in every interview. Therefore, the suggestion for improvement of the interviewee 2 was also related to the production. He suggested that the company should acquire a well-functioning ERP-system in order to to clarify and facilitate as well as expedite the processes in the company.

5. 5 Trainees' future aspirations

5.5.1 Possible future positions

All interviewees hope to get a position corresponding their degree from their field of expertise in the future. Respondent 1 believes that he will be designer or foreman or commissioning engineer in the future. He hopes that his work tasks are related to electrical design or factory plant design. Interviewee 2 believes that his future career would relate to robotics and machine vision. Usually automation engineers' work is related to design, installing and modernizing old. Interviewee 3 also hopes to be a foreman as well as automation designer or expert/consultant in the field of automation technology.

Respondent 4 told that his aim is to design and program automated production lines in the future. Interviewee 5 hopes to have a job that will correspond his education. He hopes that his future work will include logic and programming. He is open minded with regards to what the future will bring in terms of his career. He concluded that the field of automation is broad and automation is applied to a certain degree in every company. Interviewee 6 has not yet been able to acquire such work that would correspond his education. Thus, he doesn't know at the moment what kind of tasks his future work would entail. However, he hopes to have a job related to sun or wind power.

5.5.2 Application possibilities of trainee period in the future

All of the interviewees were of the opinion that this training will have some sort of benefit for them in the future. In addition, 5 of the interviewees believe that they gained useful experience at the company that can be applied in their personal or working life to some extent. Interviewee 1 clarifies that this training provided opportunity for diversified work assignments that can be applied in different professional fields. Also interviewee 2 thinks that this practical training will benefit him in the future. He gained a clear overview of the manufacturing operations in his work at the company. He says that good view and knowledge of what happens in production lines will help him in his possible future design related work. Interviewee 3 didn't gain work experience within his own field of expertise, but he feels that he learned manual skills that he can utilize in life generally. He also gained a good general overview of the metal sector.

Respondent 4 told that the work at the company work won't benefit him directly in the future, but as he performed his work duties in company, he contemplated how his mechanical and manual work could be transformed into automated work. Respondent 5 was of the opinion that this training will benefit him in the future in terms of the new knowledge and experience that he gained in the company. It was his first time in the large-sized enterprise and he got to see how the large organization operates. Because he worked in the warehouse, he contemplated how the manual labor could be changed into automated, for instance, by using warehouse control system. Interviewee 6 believes that the summer work will have only a little benefit for him in the future. He still admits that one benefit is that he got to work in the same company for two summers which is an asset when he searches for new positions.

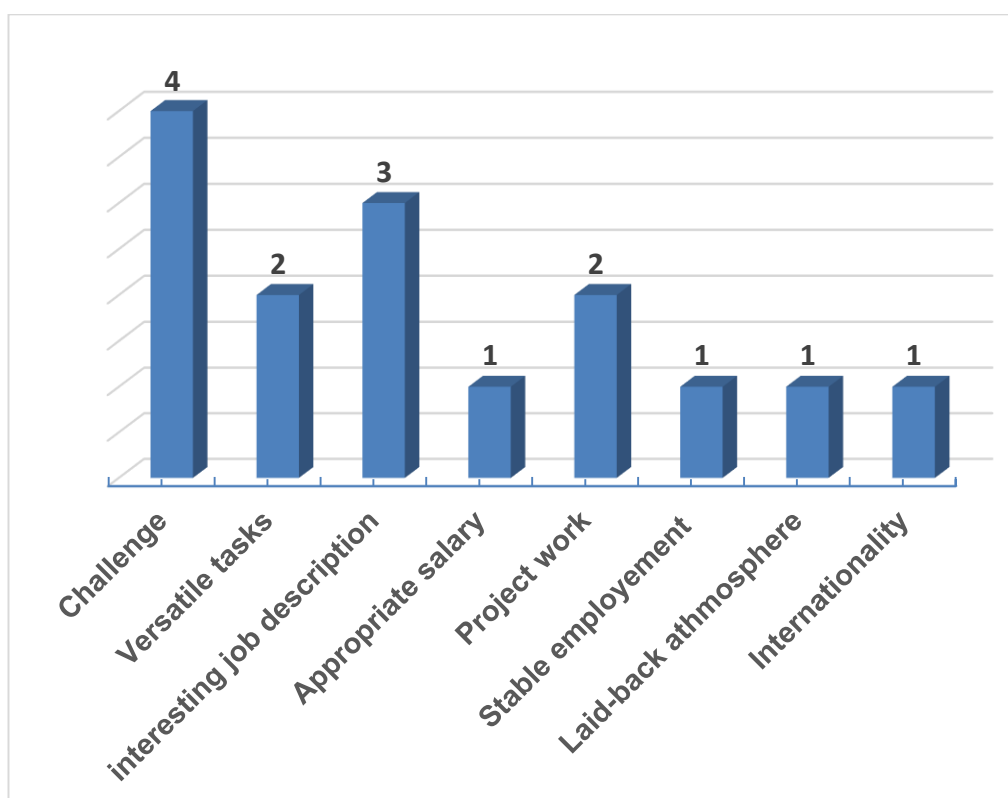5.5.3 Appreciated aspects in terms of the future career

Figure 4. Appreciated features of the future work

When the interviewees were asked about what features they appreciate in their future career, the answers were very diverse. As the figure above shows, the most significant

and valued aspect in terms of the future career of the engineering students is a challenging job description. Interviewee 1 hopes to have a challenging career with diversified work tasks in the future. He clarifies that he hopes to have a job in which he will have to think constantly and use his intelligence. Respondent 2 hopes to have a job which he enjoys doing. He also appreciates challenging job description as well as appropriate salary. Interviewee 3 hopes to have a job with interesting job description. He as well appreciates challenging work and important aspect of the work is enjoyable job description. He is still aware of the reality of the current employment situation and, therefore, he is willing to lower his expectations and to take any job that he gets after his graduation.

Respondent 4 appreciates meaningful and interesting job. In the future he is most likely to do project work and wishes that each day in his work differs from each other. Interviewee 5 told that in the future he hopes to work in a stable and financially solvent company in which there is no uncertainty related to layoffs. He also appreciates laid-back work atmosphere. Interviewee 6 were also among the engineers who value challenging work description. He hopes to have a position in which he have to be on his guard all the time. He likes to work in a position where he has a possibility to reach his full potential. He strongly believes that he will search for a job abroad after his graduation. If his future job is not located abroad, he would like to have a job that entails projects abroad. He sums up that his future work would encompass both internationality and projects.

5.5.4 Advancement of career

For 5 of the interviewees the career advancement is important aspect of the career since it is a motivator and career advancement usually brings about variation of work tasks. Respondent 2 perceives opportunities for career advancement as important because it's nice to gain appreciation of his work and know-how. Career advancement is important also for respondent 3 because he wishes to have variety in terms of the job tasks. Respondent 4 stated that he wishes to become as good employee as he can be-

come and to develop himself professionally. The opportunity of the career advancement inspires and motivates him in his work. Interviewee 6 stated that career advancement is important for him to some extent.

Advancing career is important for interviewee 1, but he still appreciates the location of the workplace more than the possibility to advance his career. He hopes to receive work placement from the town where the company is located. He is, therefore, willing to work in a position that doesn't quite correspond his level of education as long as the work place is located in his hometown and there isn't any other work available that would be suitable for his level of education. This is because he is aware of the current uncertainty in the economy and labor markets especially in his hometown.

Interviewee 5 was the only one who doesn't perceive career advancement as an important aspect of his future career. This is because he has had slightly negative personal experience regarding career advancement. In his first job he proceeded from summer worker all the way to management and worked approximately 60 hours per each week. At the time workload was gruelling and then he learned to value his own leisure time. That is why he knows that advancement of career can lead to over stressful work tasks and, therefore, career advancement doesn't mean everything to him.

6 CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The purpose of the interviews was to discover whether there are areas for improvement in terms of the employer brand of the case company. Employment experiences of the engineering students have the most significant impact on their perspectives of the case company's employer brand. Thus, the best way to improve employer brand is to start inside the company and to look at all the processes that have an effect on the employment experiences of the engineering students. In this chapter I recap the main issues that were discovered from the interviews and I also present some considerations for improvement.

Case company can improve the trainee experiences of the engineer students in the future based on these considerations. If the case company can improve their trainee experiences, it will enhance their employer brand and increased number of the qualified engineering students start to consider the case company as possible employer. This is because many students establish a relationship with the possible future employer already during their traineeship period.

All in all, the majority of the respondents perceive their introduction at the case company as an adequate. However, 2 of the respondents told that they didn't have actual introduction to their duties. The company should make sure that every new employee receives a proper introduction to their work tasks. In addition, some proposals for improvement were expresses with regards to the contents of the introduction. These respondents would have liked to know more about the company's ideology and processes. They told that if they had known more about the processes and the business ideology, they would have become even more motivated towards their work. Thus, the managers of the case company need to make a presentation of the whole picture of the company's processes and ideology and to offer a tour in the company's premises for every newcomer. In addition, the safety issues could have been even more emphasized in the introduction. The case company should provide more information about the emergency plan and the exit marks already during the introduction phase.

All of the tests subjects appreciate feedback of their work input because they can improve their performance based on the feedback. However, some of the respondents did not receive actual feedback concerning their personal work input. It was also evident that in many cases the feedback was only negative whereas the engineering students also appreciate positive feedback if they are doing their best. From now on, the case company should place greater emphasis on giving the feedback regarding the personal work input. The company should also give encouraging appraisals because positive feedback is an effective way to motivate employees.

Direct and immediate feedback is the most effective form of feedback because it gives possibility to discuss about the issues especially if the feedback is negative. Direct and instant feedback also addresses the issues in time and, therefore, it prevents situations

in which employees have done lot of work and they have to do the work all over again. Interviewees also revealed that sometimes engineering students felt frustrated due to the negative feedback. This is because they received negative feedback regarding the issues that they were not able to affect, for example, if the parts were defective or there were shortages of parts. Thereby, the company should pay more attention to the quality of the feedback and make sure that feedback for the trainees concerns only the issues that they are able to influence.

All the tests subjects told that they received enough help in the problem situations and actually there weren't many problems related to the work because their job was pretty simple. The colleagues played the most significant role in the guidance of the engineering students because usually the experienced installers helped and guided the engineering students through the problem situations. Even though engineering students received enough help for their personal work, two of the interviewees expressed their concern related to the absence of the foreman in certain shifts in the assembly line and in the engine department. There wasn't instructor or foreman in every shift to guide their subordinates which delayed the work at their departments. Reflecting to these concerns, the company should arrange qualified instructors for every shift in every department.

The theme of the work's equivalence to engineering studies proved out to be the most substantial theme of the research since it came up several times during the interviews even when the interviewees were not directly asked about this subject. All the engineering students placed a great emphasis on having a training period with enough challenging work duties in which they can take the advantage of the knowledge of their engineering studies. In contrast with their wishes regarding the traineeship, their work at the case company didn't correspond their studies or the level of degree. Two of the interviewees also stated that they don't consider the company as possible future employer because they don't believe that there are any work positions at the company that correspond their educational backgrounds.

Reflecting to these concerns, the case company should invest in providing engineering students qualified tasks already during their studies. Engineer students learn to perform duties within their own field of expertise if they will get the opportunity to perform

tasks related to their education. By offering qualified position already during the studies of the engineering students, case company demonstrates that it is interested in the professional development of the trainees as well as the quality of the traineeships that it provides engineering students.

When it comes to the challenge level of the work, it can be concluded that different work positions affected the level of difficulty and challenge. Since all the interviewees worked in different positions, the jobs had also different difficulty levels. The most challenging jobs proved out to be in the finishing department and in the warehouse. It was evident that all of the respondents appreciate challenge in work to some extent and one of the respondents expressed that he would have liked to receive more challenging job description. Therefore, case company should consider placing engineering students for example in the warehouse or finishing department in the future in order to provide adequate level of challenges for the work.

Majority of engineering students would have wanted to work in another position at the company. These wishes derived from the desire to utilize their knowledge from the previous employment experiences or know-how of the engineering studies. Reflecting to these concerns, the case company should pay more attention to the educational backgrounds and employment history of the trainees in the recruitment phase and position the trainees accordingly. In this way company can ensure that the talents of the trainees are fully utilized. Design department, cabin line, electrical workshop and automation department were the most wanted departments among the engineering students.

Two of the respondents felt that their working hours could have been utilized better and there was too much sitting around. One of these respondents worked at the engine department and the other interviewee told that his work was to provide components and parts to the assembly line. Reflecting to these concerns, case company should re-estimate the set goals of work or consider to reduce the amount of shifts in certain departments. The interviewee, who worked in the finishing department, in turn, felt that the workload was at the high level in his department, but he sees this as a positive thing because of the overtime hours.

Two of the interviews expressed some level of criticism towards the management. One engineer student would have wanted to receive more support and guidance from his foreman. One interviewee got an impression that the foreman made the decisions related to the employees without consulting or informing the employees. The communication between the employees and the management should be two-way and the opinions of the employees should be heard. The managers should at least tell their subordinates in time about the possible changes.

Many of the interviewees would have wanted to have some kind of feedback discussion before they left the case company. The case company should organize exit interviews for the engineering trainees after their period of traineeship because it will give valuable insights of how to improve the trainee experiences in the future and what aspects engineering students appreciate in terms of their training. The appraisal could be conducted by arranging face to face interview or at least giving the students a form to fill.

7 CONCLUSION

The starting point for this thesis was to answer the dissertation question: How the case company can improve its employer brand from the perspective of the engineering students? All in all, this study succeeded to answer the dissertation question by defining what kind of aspects engineering students appreciate with regards to their employment experience at the case company and whether there were areas of improvement and making a suggestions for improvement based on those findings.

The findings suggest that if the case company wants to improve its employer brand from the perspective of the engineering students, the company needs to improve the quality of the practical trainings that it offers to the engineering students. The most effective way to improve the quality of the practical trainings is to offer work positions that correspond the level of the education of the engineering students. Engineering

students appreciate challenge and want a job position that is compatible to their level of degree.

The purpose of the qualitative study was to discover the main issues from the smaller sample that would most likely to be discovered by conducting a wider quantitative study. Answer to the research question was obtained by using qualitative method but the sample could have been a little wider. However, the data reached a point of saturation meaning the same key issues manifested themselves multiple times in the interviews. The key findings of this research succeeded to answer the dissertation question in such a way that the results are satisfactory also from the case company's point of view.

The results of this research are forwarded to the Director of Human Resources of the case company. The case company can make the possible improvements based on this research study in order to improve the quality of the practical trainings of the engineering students. In this way the case company can attract more qualified engineers to their organization in the future. This is because improving practical training today, helps the case company to attract talented post-graduate engineers in the future because many students will establish a relationship with their potential future employer already during their period of the practical training. Engineering students will start to consider the case company as potential future employer if they regard the employer brand of the case company as interesting.

Making a thesis and conducting a qualitative research was extensive process for the author of this research paper. This was the first research study that I have conducted. It was a learning experience since I had to learn the basics of conducting the research and analyzing the results by myself. I was responsible for the completion of the work in time and I arranged the tests subject for this research. In addition, I gained huge amount of knowledge of the theories of the employer branding. Overall, this project taught me responsibility, perseverance and to take the initiative.

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Script of the semi-structured interview

Theme 1: Guidance of work

1. Did you feel that you got the proper introduction to your work tasks? What the familiarization included? Was there something essential missing in your work introduction based on what you now know about your work tasks?

2. Is receiving feedback of your work important to you and why? Did you receive enough feedback? What kind of feedback did you get? How feedback was given to you? Should feedback be given in a different way?

3. Did you get enough support and guidance in problem situations?

Theme 2: Quality of the work

4. How well the work corresponded to your education?

5. Did you perceive the work challenging enough?

6. Were there any tasks or jobs that corresponded to your education that you would have like to do, but you didn't get a chance to do?

Theme 3: Quantity of the work

7. How was the level of amount of work? Was the amount of work to high or low or at the right level?

8. Were there clear targets set for your work?

Theme 4: Overall perception of the case company

9. What features do you appreciate most in employer generally? Does case company possess these features?

10. If you would like to continue working for the company in the future, what would be the most significant reasons for that?

11. What is your image of the company as an employer after your period of training?

12. Do you have other suggestions for improvement concerning your trainee experience?

Theme 5: Trainees' future aspirations

13. What kind of work tasks do you believe or wish to do in the future?

14. Do you believe that this training will benefit you in the future?

15. What aspects do you appreciate most in terms of your future career?

16. How important is career advancement to you?