



# The Impacts of Employer Branding

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## The Impacts of Employer Branding

Aino Kiuru  
Restaurant Entrepreneurship  
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The concept of employer brand refers to the image of the company as an employer. Above all, it is the employees who build it because their experience with the employer is valuable when recruiting new people. Today, an effective employer brand is one of the company's most significant competitive advantages in attracting new talent.

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze the factors that influence the employer brand at Neste K Gammelbacka and create a recruitment process that strengthens employer brand building. Neste K Gammelbacka's current retailer commissioned the recruitment process description. The produces both qualitative and quantitative data which supports the drawing up the employer brand. The author used open interview and participant observation as the main methods. Another objective of the thesis is to map new ways for employer brand building by carrying out related practices together with the employees of Neste K Gammelbacka.

The theory section reviews the concepts of recruitment, organizational culture, and employee commitment and examines their relationship with the employer brand. The outcome of the thesis shows the results of the recruitment process as well as the observations and findings.

Keywords: employee engagement, employer branding, organizational culture, recruitment, talent attraction

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Työnantajamielikuva kertoo, millaisena työnantajana yritys nähdään. Ennen kaikkea sitä ovat rakentamassa yrityksen työntekijät, sillä heidän kokemuksensa työnantajasta merkitsee paljon uusien rekrytoinneissa. Tänä päivänä vetovoimainen työnantajakuva onkin yksi yrityksen merkittävimmistä kilpailueduista uusien osajien houkuttelemisessa taloon.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on analysoida työnantajamielikuvan rakentamiseen vaikuttavia tekijöitä Neste K Gammelbackassa ja toteuttaa työnantajamielikuvaa vahvistava rekrytointiprosessi. Neste K Gammelbackan nykyinen kauppias tilasi rekrytointiprosessin kirjoittajalta. Rekrytointiprosessi toimii itsessään opinnäytetyön tiedonhankintamenetelmänä, sillä se tuottaa sekä kvalitatiivista että numeraalista näyttöä työnantajamielikuvan rakentamisen tueksi. Kahtena pääasiallisena menetelmänä kirjoittaja käytti avointa haastattelua sekä osallistuvaa havainnointia. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on myös etsiä uusia tapoja kehittää Neste K Gammelbackan työnantajamielikuvaa tekemällä siihen liittyviä harjoituksia yhdessä henkilöstön kanssa.

Teoriaosuus käsittää alleen rekrytoinnin, organisaatiokulttuurin sekä työntekijöiden sitoutumisen ja tutkii näiden suhdetta työnantajamielikuvaan. Opinnäytetyön lopputulos esittelee rekrytointiprosessin tulokset sekä sen varrella tapahtuneet havainnoinnit ja löydökset.

Keywords: employee engagement, employer branding, organizational culture, recruitment, talent attraction

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## 1 Introduction

Companies are seeking new ways for employee engagement. Finding the right candidate to fit the position has become a real challenge for recruiters. Attracting and keeping talent has become a real competition among various fields of business. The roles in recruitment have changed, as the amount of potentiality has raised over the past decades. People are more qualified and educated today and they seek a great place to work. Employer Branding (later used as EB) has a significant role in attracting candidates where and when they are needed. Mosley and Schmidt (2017, 9) state that companies with strong employer brand attract more qualified candidates and improve the quality of new hires as they lower the costs of recruitment. Employer brand refers to the image of the company as an employer, and it can be influenced by its employees. In other words, it consists of everything the company's employees talk about their employer and how the company appears to the public. Maylett & Wride (2017, 46) define employer brand as “brand with your current, future, and past employees who pick up and carry the expectations”.

An effective EB helps to engage both current and new employees. People are more interested to be involved in the company's business and they want to be part of the brand. Applicants now have an opportunity to be more selective in choosing a company, therefore employers must stand out in a positive light. Money or benefits are no longer the only matters since people are paying more attention to intangible factors such as employer-employee relations. People are attracted to career growth opportunities, appreciation of their work, and allowing them to be part of the decision-making process. The feeling of doing something meaningful is highly valued. Economic times change from sound to turbulent, but people tend to keep following the intangible factors. There are differences between generations, so the target audience shall be considered carefully when recruiting new employees. (Arthur 2012, 22.)

Mosley and Schmidt (2017, 46) state that employers develop a brand reputation regardless of whether they consciously set out to define one. So does Neste K Gammelbacka, which is a local gas station in Porvoo, Finland. The author has been working there for more than 4 years, which indicates that the workplace is good to be in. In February 2023, the retailer of Neste K Gammelbacka, took Neste K Pukaron Paroni under his control as well. This caused a lot of changes within the organization. From now on, the retailer was no longer physically present at Neste K Gammelbacka, so one of the staff was promoted to store manager. There were a lot of new things to take over and develop at Neste K Pukaron Paroni, and the first thing the retailer turned his attention to is the personnel. It turned out that there would be a need for recruitment in that direction. Alongside working at Neste K Gammelbacka, the author has developed a career path in the recruiting industry. At the time of undertaking Neste K

Pukaron Paroni, the author was given an opportunity to carry out the recruitment of one Main Chef for Neste K Pukaron Paroni. As the output of this thesis, the author designed and published a recruitment process targeting to stronger employer brand. The thesis aims to find an employee for the open position and strengthen the employer brand of both Neste K Gammelbacka and Pukaron Paroni, finding new ways for continuing the EB process.

## 2 Company description

Neste K Gammelbacka is a gas station located in Porvoo, Finland. The distance between the center and the station measures approximately 3.5 kilometers, whereas the nearest highway lies at a distance of approximately 4.5 kilometers. The station is part of Kesko and Neste, which both are large Finnish companies. Although, the station is maintained by a retailer, who is responsible for the sales and profit. The current retailer, Janne Halinen and his wife took Neste K Gammelbacka under their control in 2014. There are currently eight employees, three of whom are full-time and the rest part-time. The author started working at Neste K Gammelbacka in October 2018 as a part-time employee. One of the advantages of working as a part-time employee is the ability to have a flexible schedule. Personally, the author appreciates the opportunity to tailor her working hours to fit her needs. This flexibility allows people to save time for studies, hobbies, and family, for example. (Deery et al., 2020.) Shorter working hours and long periods of unpaid leave have made it possible to maintain the employment relationship over the years, and even a momentary student exchange did not interrupt it.

The location, Gammelbacka, is a suburb in Porvoo, Finland. The history of the area dates to the 16th century when the area still belonged to the Gammelbacka manor. However, the manor's main building was destroyed in a fire in 1974. The current Gammelbacka began to build up ten years before the fire, in 1964. The area continued to grow in the 70s, when Neste Oil Corporation was under construction in Sköldvik. Gammelbacka was planned to be the center of the former Porvoo rural municipality, but as the outcome of the merger of the municipalities it became a suburb of the city of Porvoo in 1997. (Hämäläinen, 2017.)

Despite being just a gas station, Neste K Gammelbacka has a significant role in the surrounding community. In addition to the services of the gas station, there is a restaurant-café and a small Kesko grocery store. The station can be seen as a certain meeting point for locals: families gather to drink coffee and eat bakeries; young people wash and repair cars with each other and older people enjoy reading news in the cafeteria. In previous years, until the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the dining room also offered a buffet lunch on weekdays. Today, customers can choose restaurant dishes from the a la carte list. There are still several meal options, such as hamburgers and sandwiches. The shopkeeper's wife is a

cake artist, and she runs a small cake factory called BonBon Porvoo in addition to the gas station business. Customers can order cakes for parties and events, as well as buy individual pieces of cake to enjoy at the station. Children from the neighborhood often come after school to buy snacks and soda, and many stop by for a cup of coffee on break or after work. During the summer season, the café's terrace attracts customers to enjoy cold drinks and ice cream. Additionally, there exists a large parking area where customers have the convenience of vacuuming their vehicles with a car vacuum, washing windows, and replenishing tire air pressure. The gas station boasts a spacious hall equipped with four car wash stations (two with high pressure) and a car crane. Notably, this manual car wash hall is currently the only one in the whole city. Given its popularity, the car crane experiences high demand, resulting in potential congestion within the hall, particularly during weekends. The automatic car wash, on the other hand, has recently been renewed, so it attracts consumers due to its modernity and quality. Customers' hobby activities have also been considered at Neste K Gammelbacka, because in addition to trailers, you can also rent a scooter, electric scooter, moped, or kayak. (Neste K Gammelbacka's Facebook-page, 2023.)

Customers have become familiar with Neste K Gammelbacka employees, and many chat for a while before they leave. This plays a very central role in building the Employer brand, as customers form an image of the company based on everything the employees say and how they present themselves during working hours. It is worth noting that a significant majority of the clients are already familiar faces to the staff, therefore the customer encounters are also relaxed and easygoing. A strong employer brand increases customer loyalty. Farkas (2010, 119) describes that customer loyalty can be defined as "an attitude that sometimes involves a relationship with the company". As Neste K Gammelbacka belongs to Kesko chain, it is connected to Plussa -loyalty program. This enables personalized offers and even free products for often-visiting customers.

### 3 Theoretical view of employer brand strategy

This chapter provides a theoretical view of Employer brand strategy and three influencing factors: recruitment, organization culture, and employee engagement. By analyzing the factors and understanding their influence on both EB and company development the author started building a recruitment process, which will follow in chapter four.

A well-defined employer brand (who the company really is) gives a feeling of belongingness, which leads to motivated work performance. Employer brand goes beyond the attraction and hiring stage as it is linked to employee engagement as well. People want to receive recognition, support, and coaching forward during their employment - this thrives on employee engagement. Engaged employees are more productive and they will do their share



for the company's success, while unsatisfied and burdened employees will not talk in a positive way to their employer. A strong and positive employer brand increases loyalty among employees. (Hannig, 2022.)

Employer branding has become a critical component of a company's overall success. It influences recruitment efforts and employee engagement, as well as it provides a competitive advantage in the talent marketplace. By building a strong and powerful employer brand, companies can attract and retain top talent, advance a positive organizational culture, and maintain sustainable growth and success. There are various models for employer brand building, but they must be applied to suit the company, by its size for example. For this chapter, the author read a study "Employer Branding Applied to SMEs: A Pioneering Model Proposal for Attracting and Retaining Talent" published by several authors on mdpi.com in 2020. From the research, the author found an employer branding model (Figure 2) which indicates well with the thesis as it is applied to small and medium enterprises, just as Neste K Gammelbacka.

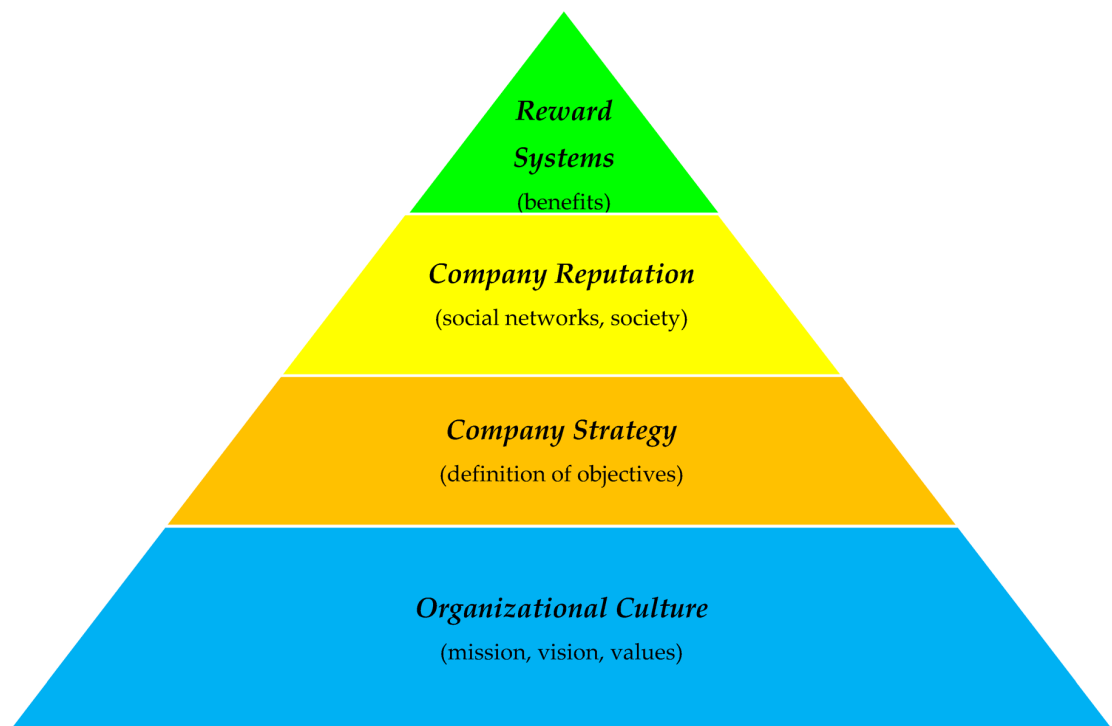


Figure 1: Employer branding model applied to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). (mdpi.com 2020.)

In the first stage, organizational culture, the company's values, mission, and vision shall be clearly stated. It is the very base for employer branding as it defines what the company is about. Holbeche & Matthews (2012, 177-204) explain the stages of building a culture of engagement. Cultures of engagement are supported by a strong vision and values, so it is

important that the values show through everyday work. When it comes to leadership, managers make mistakes as well - they just must have the grace to apologize. Leading by example has gained popularity during the past years, as it is an effective way especially when orienting new employees. Mistakes happen to everyone, but it is important that people learn from them.

The company's strategy means what it aims for in the long term and its goals. However, a strategy means nothing without the people who enable it to be implemented. Holbeche & Matthews (2012, 180) state that employees are more motivated to achieve success when the company is clear about what it stands for, what it wants to achieve, and what are its goals.

A company's reputation refers to the public's attitude towards the company and its operations. It is affected by people's experience with the company's products or services, as well as how the company treats its employees. In fact, everything that is said publicly about a company, be it a news article or an advertising campaign, affects its reputation. Maylett & Wride (2017, 92) state that a company's brand consists of everything that its culture, marketing, reputation, media coverage, and the behavior of its employees do to create expectations. It is the public face of the company; the way people see the organization.

At the top of the pyramid are the company's reward systems, which include various types of employee benefits, such as bonuses, holiday with pay, and occupational health. Benefits can be tangible, such as money or a corporate gift, and intangible, such as free time or recognition. However, it is interesting to note that rewards, especially tangible ones, can also cause problems within the company when it comes to equality. Holbeche & Matthews (2012, 59) claim that rewards are a real testbed of the equity principle. When one employee receives a salary increase because of success, it can contribute to lowering the motivation of other colleagues if they feel comparison. In addition, some business researchers argue that specific monetary rewards even lower people's motivation to do creative work. On the other hand, intangible ways to reward employees are growing in popularity even more, as they are also proven to be effective ways in terms of employee engagement. Feeling that the work is meaningful is very important for many individuals, and it can be influenced by simple words and comments such as "thank you" and "I'm proud of you".

### 3.1 Qualified recruitment

Employer branding plays a central role in attracting top talent to the organization. A strong employer brand communicates the company's values, culture, and mission to potential candidates. Today, people are especially interested in intangible work benefits, such as career development opportunities, balancing work and family life, and the meaningfulness of one's work. Therefore, when starting recruitment, it is essential to consider what the company can offer for its employees. As a result, it attracts a larger pool of qualified

candidates and helps attract individuals who identify with the company's values and goals. In the book *Recruiting Employees: Individual and Organizational Perspectives* (1998, 10) Barber states that recruiting has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions (Rynes & Barber, 1990). Companies are interested in attracting certain numbers of potential candidates who have certain attributes, but regarding quantity, recruitment is most efficient when the number of attracted candidates is stable, not too big, or too small. A smaller number of applicants enables employers few options to choose the preferred candidate, while very large applicant pools are generally undesirable as they burden the administrative systems. When considering the quality of recruitment, companies shall know what they are seeking; what are the requirements, expectations, and goals. According to Barber (1998, 11), *successful* recruitment is best defined in accordance with all the qualities the hiring company had in mind.

The company can open a public recruitment or do it silently, which means that the position is published only inside the company. Recruitment is often done by the Human Resources Department of the company, but also outsourcing has gained popularity during the past decade. In this case, the author has been working in a recruiting partner company and has carried out several special- and management-level recruitments for various fields of business. When the company conducts its own recruitment process, a notable advantage is that the risk of misunderstandings is often reduced. In contrast, when using an external partner for recruitment purposes, the recruiters are not directly employed by the hiring company. This means that their access to information is limited, impeding their ability to provide a comprehensive description of the organizational culture, expectations, or goals, among other meaningful aspects.

According to Barber (1998, 11), recruitment research has not only focused on attracting candidates but has also explored the broader outcomes that extend beyond the recruitment process itself. For example, recruitment can impact on post-hire attitudes and behaviors such as satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, recruitment can influence the attitudes and behaviors of existing employees, potential applicants, and other relevant parties, such as investors and customers. Therefore, companies need to think about recruitment in the long term, which unit requires more expertise, which department will grow in the next few years, where should be invested now, and what to develop in the future.

### **Recruitment process**

Recruitment impacts company development. Motivated, talented, and engaged employees are ideal for business. During the employment, they will develop inside the company, build a

connection with the business, and stay updated on company growth. Engaged employees' knowledge and skills are highly valued. A carefully considered and organized recruitment process leads to successful employment relationships. In the book "Recruiting, Interviewing, Selecting & Orienting New Employees" Arthur (2005, 23) presents four factors to be considered before starting the recruitment process. The factors are budget, how urgent is demand, the size of the audience, and the exemption level of the available position.

The budget creates frames both for length and size. The budget allocated to recruitment also has a significant impact on the available options. According to Arthur (2005, 23), certain methods, such as display ads and search companies, can be quite expensive because there is no certainty of the number of qualified applicants. On the other hand, employee referrals are excellent sources of recruitment and cost very little. In public recruitment marketing is an important factor, and it often requires budgeting. Employers shall consider beforehand how large is their target audience and how widely they want to publish the job advertisement. The more targeted audience sees the advert the more preferred applicants will be reached. The budget also determines whether outsourced recruitment can be used, as recruitment companies charge for their services and set certain contract conditions. Depending on the budget, the selection might involve multiple rounds of various types of tests. Psychological tests are common in expert work. (Barber 1998, 60.)

The urgency should be taken into consideration. Employee relationships might end unexpectedly and therefore preparation is highly important. Companies define how quickly they need the position to be filled. They shall be updated on their workforce regarding possible hires or replacements. Present employees with the needed capabilities can be turned into resources, and employers can consider them also as temporary replacements until a permanent hire is found. Therefore, employee referrals are important, as they can turn out to be very valuable in unexpected situations. (Arthur 2005, 24.)

Some positions are more complicated to fill than others and require more resources. In this scenario, companies aim to maximize their reach by targeting a wide audience with the objective of identifying qualified candidates. Also interviewing as many candidates as possible gives a good amount of data, which may help to clarify the preferred abilities and prerequisites. (Arthur 2005, 24.) Although it is important for hiring employers to understand that the number of applicants does not replace quality. In these cases, external recruitment partners can be a good option, as they not only save the hiring employer's time but also often have extensive networks to use in recruitment. Although, using recruitment agencies does not promise qualified candidates as their recruiters are not employed in the company that does the recruitment. To attain the desired outcomes of recruitment, companies must define the target audience and set effective strategies for engaging with this audience.

The Fair Labor Standards Act defines exempt employees as workers who are legally able to work overtime without being paid for it. The term nonexempt means that workers are “not exempt from overtime compensation”. The difference is noteworthy because recruitment sources that create qualified exempt or professional applicants might not reach the same level of success for nonexempt applicants. (Arthur 2005, 24.) It is worth noting that terms of exempt and nonexempt do not directly apply to Finnish labor legislation, but still have certain similarities to it. Transferred this to Finnish labor legislation, recruitment agencies can produce an outsourced workforce, but in this case, the employees are not directly under the hiring employer. On the other hand, schools and social institutions can provide cost-free work trials, the purpose of which is to support, for example, the employment of students, immigrants, or the long-term unemployed. These work trials can turn into a workforce over time.

The length of the recruitment process depends on the company. There are several factors, such as hiring employer’s requirements, the level of the open position, and negotiations regarding salary and bonuses, that influence the length of recruitment. According to Korpar, (LinkedIn News 2022), the average length of the recruitment process is from three to six weeks. There are factors that cannot be predicted beforehand such as the number of applicants, which can influence the length of recruitment. It is also worth noting, that the job position can be either an existing or new position. Recruiting for a position that already exists is often seen as easier because the candidate profile has been formed. It can be improved since there is something to be compared to. When recruiting for a new position, recruiters shall consider carefully what are the needs and expectations.

### 3.2 Organizational culture

According to Denison et al (2012, 1-3), every human organization possesses its own unique culture, which reflects the collective wisdom that comes from the lessons people learn as they adapt and survive together over time. Organizational culture is also built in the same way, which employees shape through their own actions and attitudes. It can be seen as a combination of the company’s mission, vision, and values. Culture connects people together as it follows certain ways of behavior and beliefs. Maylett & Wride (2017, 100) define culture in a nutshell as how employees feel to work in the organization. It is highly important for companies to understand that organizational culture is reflected through its employees. By defining the company’s values, vision, mission, and desired behaviors, employees get clarity and can set goals for their work.

Why is organizational culture so important and how it influences the employer brand? Maylett & Wride (2017, 37) claim that “your company doesn’t actually exist”. The people, the

company's employees, get the work done. They make sales, do the hiring, take care of customers, media, and even take out the trash. It is a common false assumption that organizations make decisions or achieve success - however, there are always people behind every company, behind every brand. It is crucial for employers to understand the difference between organization and people - they cannot be led the same way, because human desires recognition, caring, and coaching. It is very different to deal with an organization than with individuals because there are different backgrounds, dreams, expectations, and levels of understanding. This is the fundament for building healthy, positive organizational culture that will lead to committed employees, who will do their share for the company's success. An encouraging organizational culture that brings together employees from diverse backgrounds contributes to a positive external perception of the company. This can be an advantage in recruitment efforts, as the importance of a healthy work environment is increasingly recognized in today's professional landscape. A connective and supportive work environment, where individuals can freely express themselves and grow at their own pace, fosters long-term employee engagement and commitment over time.

The importance of people in a company cannot be overemphasized. People form an organization, just as they produce the technology and develop the markets. According to Denison et al (2012, 2.), research in recent decades has shown that organizational culture has an impact on business performance in four main ways:

- Creating an organization's sense of mission and direction
- Building a high level of adaptability and flexibility
- Nurturing the involvement and engagement of their people
- Providing a consistency that is strongly rooted in a set of core values

Although managing the organizational culture seems difficult, it is not impossible. Edgar Schein, a renowned professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management, is known to have said: "Either you manage the culture, or it manages you." (Denison et al, 2012, 3.) When there is a certain culture in the company, where change does not arouse fear as the first emotion, employees are more confident to create a commitment to the company and take part in future development.

For this chapter, the author studied Schein's model of "Three Levels of Culture" (Figure 2). He believed that there are three levels in an organization's culture: assumptions and beliefs, espoused values, and artifacts.

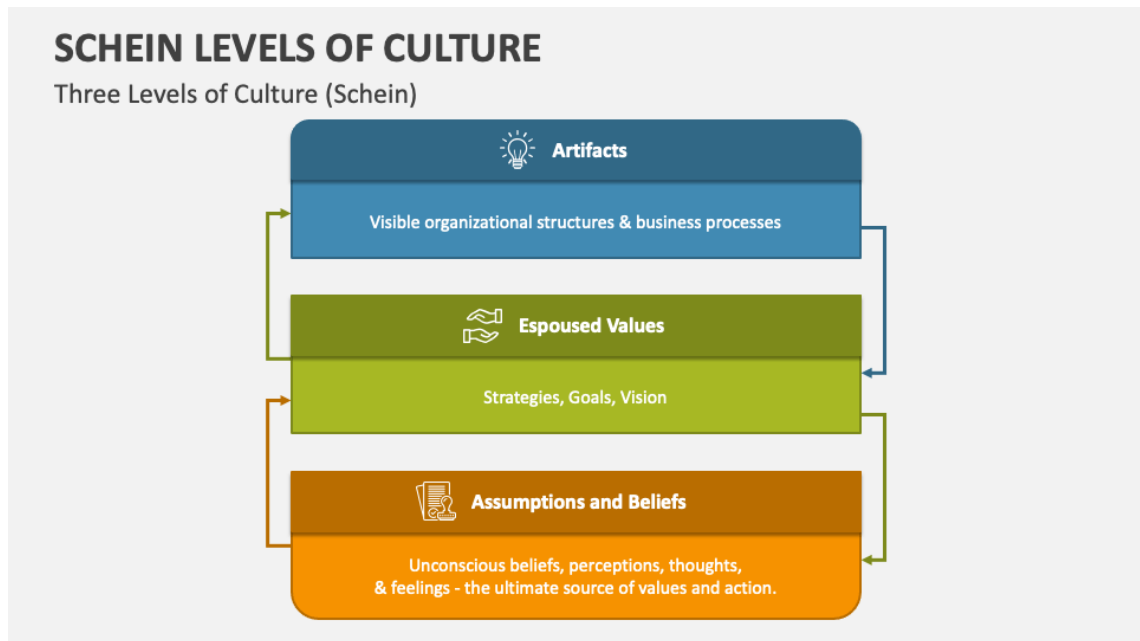


Figure 2: Schein's Three Levels of Culture (collidu.com, accessed in 2023)

The first level consists of unconscious beliefs, perceptions, feelings, and thoughts. They are invisible but can impact the culture even if they are not talked about, or even understood. The second level is called espoused values. Employees' personal values and attitudes are less visible but together those form strategies, goals, and philosophies. The final level is the visible characteristics of an organization, which can be seen, heard, and felt by individuals. Schein defines artifacts as "visible, yet hard to decipher organizational structures and processes". Commonly they are known as the company's architecture, employees' dress code, and technology, for example. This data is easy to collect but difficult to interpret. (Denison et al 2012, 3-4.)

People's habits and values guide the shaping of organizational culture. As Schein's model of Three Levels of Culture shows, every company's culture is unique. The differences occurring from the corporate culture emerge especially in a company fusion, which means the joining of two companies. The management of the company must understand that future development requires learning from the mistakes of the past and developing operating models that have been proven to work so that they are always up to date. (Denison et al, 2012, 72.)

### 3.3 Employee engagement

Holbeche & Matthews (2012, 7) define employee engagement as a "feeling of commitment, passion, and energy that translates into high levels of persistence with even the most difficult tasks, exceeding expectations and taking the initiative". It is worth noting that there are many definitions for employee engagement since some researchers focus on what drives engagement while others examine its effects. In any case, employee engagement includes the

relationship between the employee and the company. At its best, commitment and passion towards work are such that employees don't even notice the working time passing by. Then they are also more productive, more motivated, and more willing to develop and come up with ideas. Employee engagement has also been connected to studies regarding higher earnings per share, improved sickness absence, and higher innovation. In addition, engaged employees remain loyal to the company in difficult times as well as under changes - they also often want to take part in the change. (Holbeche & Matthews, 2012, 8.)

Employee engagement is strongly connected to the employer brand through a congruent experience. According to Maylett & Wride (2017, 10), the Law of Congruent Experience goes as follows: "Employees will deliver a customer experience that matches their own experience in the organization". If employees are unsatisfied with their employer, they will provide customer service with less effort, while satisfied and motivated employees choose to offer great customer experiences as they are proud to represent the company. Employees are the face of the brand since they work at the front line and interact straight with customers. (Maylett & Wride, 2017, 11.)

A company's vision is important in terms of employee engagement. A dynamic and engrossing vision arouses the interest of both current and future employees to join the development. If employees do not believe in the company's vision or its goals, they will not engage with the company as they don't see their future in it. (Holbeche & Matthews, 2012, 86.)

A company's employer brand can be seen as a certain promise for its current and future employees. Matthew & Wride (2017, 92) developed a definition of "Brand Contract", which is all the implied promises that the company's brand makes to the people who are exposed to it. It applies to the company's employees as well as its customers. In this context, the brand could be defined as a set of promises made for customers, while the *employer* brand is a set of promises made for employees. That is why it is extremely important that expectations meet reality. When people form expectations, they often start using them to plan for the future. It is humane for the employee to create expectations, for example, about the next career steps within the company. This also applies from the employer's side, as managers equally create expectations for employees, for example about their performance with customers. (Maylett & Wride, 2017, 23.)

Maylett & Wride (2017, 24) present the Expectation-Reaction Triangle (Figure 3). The triangle shows what happens when expectations are either met, violated, or exceeded. When expectations meet. When expectations match reality, satisfaction follows. If, on the other hand, expectations are exceeded, the basis for motivation and loyalty is created. If expectations do not meet reality, there arises frustration and suspicion towards the development. The employee engagement process begins with recruitment and its post-hire



actions when a candidate becomes an employee of a company. In the first step of building employee engagement, it is extremely important that expectations meet reality from both the employee's and the employer's side.

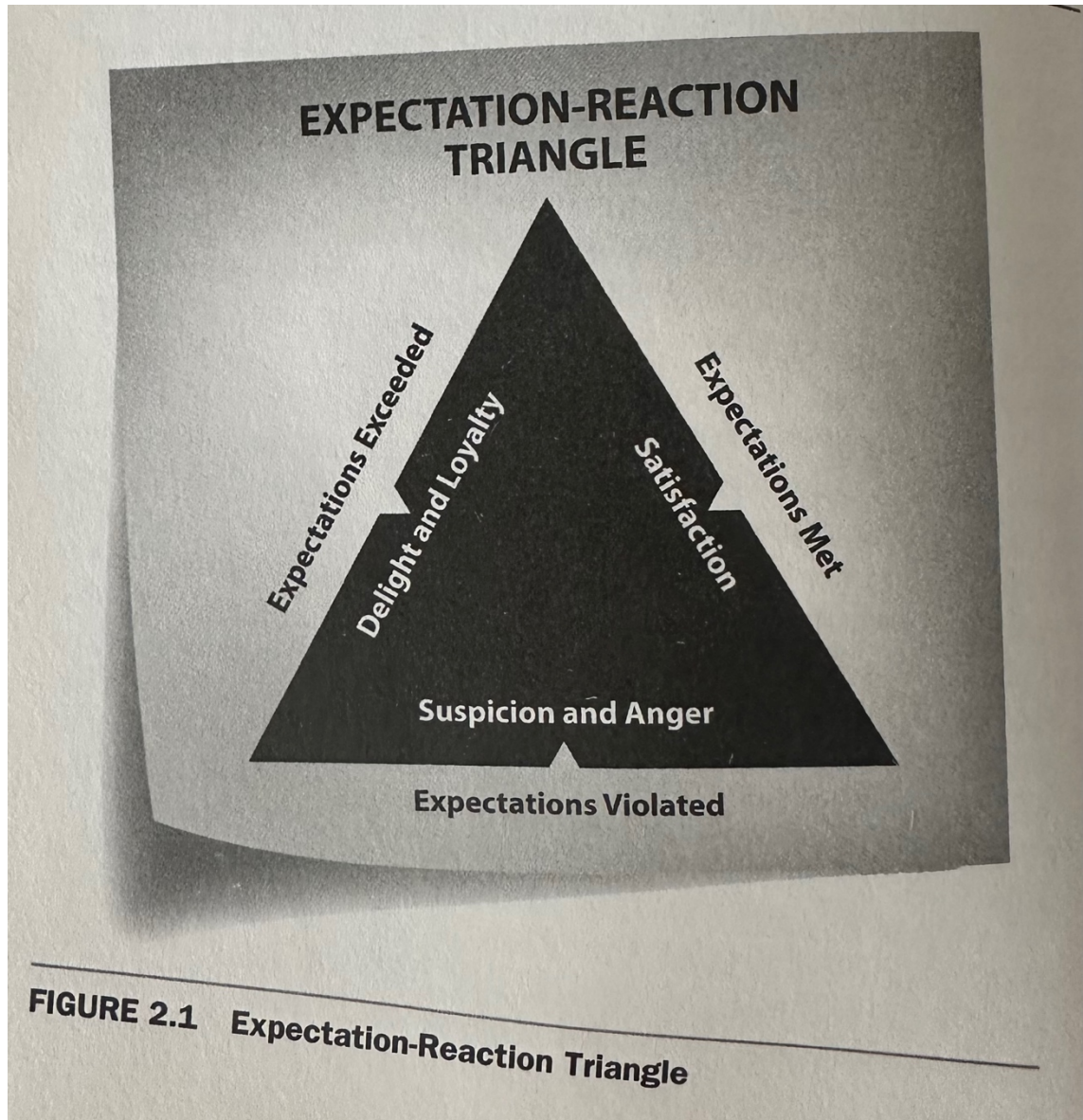


Figure 3: Expectation-Reaction Triangle (Maylett & Wride, 2017, 24.)

Holbeche & Matthews (2012, 75) highlight the importance of being heard. Most people consider involvement existing when their voice is being heard, the opposite is to feel left out when being ignored. Feeling valued and involved drives engagement. It is important for employees to be able to talk about their ideas, feelings, concerns, and development proposals. By listening to employees, managers also get qualitative data that they can use in business development, such as, what are the real and current challenges in the customer interface.

#### 4 Research and development methods

According to Saunders et al (2019, 4), the term method refers to a technique or procedure used to obtain and analyze data. Research methods are ways or techniques that researchers use to gather information and get answers to questions. The purpose of the methods is to support research and guide it in the right direction, collecting important data. Research methods include interviews, surveys, tests, and observation for example. Saunders et al (2017, 4) state that research is usually referring to the way in which the data were collected. With the help of methods, researchers find answers or even solutions, while learning new things about the subjects they are studying. According to Sreejesh et al (2013, 10), researchers can use focus groups to understand views, preferences, and cultures, especially in business research.

Research and development methods can produce qualitative (non-statistical) or quantitative (statistical) data. (Saunders et al, 2019, 4.) According to Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault (2015, 18) qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data. That is people's own words and behavior. Examples of qualitative research methods are interviews, observation, and case studies. Salmons (2016, 2) explains that qualitative researchers typically avoid simple descriptions and do not seek big, generalizable answers. It is an umbrella term used to describe ways of studying experiences and behaviors, targeting to understand human emotions and experiences.

When studying qualitatively, the researchers get to know the participants personally and are therefore able to understand their experiences and background. The study starts with research which then leads to forming specified questions. Researchers shall consider what they want to ask and how participants view their own experiences. The same goes with recruitment, as recruiters shall define beforehand the interview structure and questions.

Quantitative data refers to information that is expressed in numbers and that can be measured and calculated. It provides objective and numerical information on a specific topic. Quantitative data is obtained, for example, through surveys and surveys, which involve collecting data from a specific group or source. This information can be analyzed through statistics and graphs. According to Sreejesh et al. (2013, 46), there are usually pre-designed answers for quantitative research. A good example of this is surveys, where part of the answer options might only be yes or no. It is worth noting the occurring problem, which is that respondents are unable to convey their true feelings, as there are limited answering options. Therefore Sreejesh et al. suggest that qualitative research methods shall be used before quantitative research, as they produce data that can be transferred to quantitative research methods such as questionnaires.

The author chose both qualitative and quantitative methods for this research, as the recruitment process includes observing and interviewing. Two main research and development methods in this thesis are a semi-structured interview and participant observation. The author also created a set of questions to gather feedback from the recruitment process, which she uses as a secondary research method.

#### 4.1 Observation

Observation is a qualitative research method. Observation can be rewarding and enlightening and can greatly increase the richness of research data. Saunders et al. (2019, 380) present three observation methods: participant observation, structured observation, and Internet-mediated observation. Participant observation is a qualitative research method and is based on the work of social anthropology at the beginning of the 20th century. Its focus is on discovering the meanings people give to their actions and interactions. In participatory observation, the researcher physically goes to the place where the intended informants are located, and participates in activities and practices, for example by being part of the work community where the research is carried out.

Characteristics of participant observation are for example engaging in dual purpose, experiencing as both insider and outsider, and being reflective. As the researcher is a member of the observed group, she or he comes to understand the group's perceptions about their social situation. The development of the employer image in the work community requires participant observation, as does the implementation of the recruitment process. (Saunders et al. 2019, 390-391.)

#### 4.2 Interview

Saunders et al. (2019, 434-435) define the research interview as a purposeful conversation between two or more people. During that, the interviewer asks clarifying and succinct questions and actively listens to the interviewee. That way the interviewer can explore points of interest and clarify meanings. Research interviews help to gather valid and trustworthy data that is relevant to research questions and aims.

There are different types of research interviews. Saunders et al. (2019, 437) state that one generally known typology distinguishes between standardized (structured) interviews and non-standardized interviews (semi-structured and unstructured). Semi-structured interviews generally involve key questions related to a predetermined list of themes and produce qualitative data. Themes and key questions guide the conduct of the interview.

## 5 Implementing the recruitment process

Neste K Gammelbacka's current retailer Janne Halinen commissioned a recruitment process from the author. The author was given an opportunity to plan and implement a recruitment process for Neste K Pukaron Paroni. There was an open position for one main chef, and the recruitment was carried out in cooperation between the author and the hiring manager. From the point of view of the thesis, this was ideal, because this way the author can examine the effects of recruitment on employer branding, and alongside the process, also influence it.

### 5.1 Planning the process

Situated approximately 50 kilometers away from Porvoo, Neste K Pukaron Paroni is a larger and more expansive gas station than Neste K Gammelbacka. It is located next to Highway 6, which is a 604 kilometers long highway from Loviisa to Kajaani. As the station now belongs to the same retailer it has the same supervisors as Neste K Gammelbacka's staff. At Pukaron Paroni, there are currently around 30 employees, which makes it a much larger working community than Neste K Gammelbacka. Around 10 employees work around kitchen tasks.

The author decided to start the recruitment process by having a semi-structured interview with Halinen, the hiring manager. The interview was conducted over the phone, and it also included the exchange of text messages. There were also times when the author and Halinen met face-to-face at Neste K Gammelbacka. The themes of the semi-structured interview were job description, requirements, and wishes, as well as the current employer brand, i.e., what Neste K Pukaron Paroni wants to bring out to the public.

#### **Analyzing the job position**

The preparation process starts with analyzing the open job position. It is a combination of responsibilities, requirements, reporting relationships, environmental factors, exemption, and union status (Arthur 2005, 75). Also, salary and other benefits, as well as growth opportunities shall be considered. They are a competitive advantage for the hiring company and an important factor in company engagement. In the case of Neste K Pukaron Paroni, the position of the main chef was already existing. This made it possible to reflect the requirements, prerequisites, and desires of the position in the already existing employee profiles.

According to Halinen, the main job responsibilities would be lunch, groups, and reservations, but it is good to practice other areas as well so that, if necessary, the person can also make à la carte or pizza. A vocational school degree in the restaurant industry is suitable for the role of a main chef. It is hoped that the person already has some work experience because this is a role with a lot of responsibility. An active attitude, the desire to learn and develop, and

teamwork skills emerged as the most important qualities. As experience accumulates, the employee will gain more responsibility. The working hours of this position are mainly around lunchtime.

Employment legislation must be followed both in job posting and interviewing candidates. All candidates have the right to be equally evaluated regardless of their sex, race, religion, nationality, age, or disability (Arthur 2005, 103). Employment legislation determines what can be considered as requirements and what can be asked during the interview. As an example, asking about a candidate's relationship status is against the employment law. In connection with this, the author asked Halinen if - before the start of the employment relationship - there will be a physical examination, where a drug test will be taken. This is very common in the restaurant industry in favor of hygiene legislation. If there is a drug test, according to the Finnish Collective Agreements Act, it must be mentioned at the latest at the signing stage of the contract, but it would be good to mention it already in the job advertisement.

In public job openings, marketing has a significant role. The author and Halinen agreed to use cost-free platforms for advertising as there are still various options. If the job opening is published in a wide area, the way of interviewing shall be considered. Technology has enabled online interviews. The author and Halinen agreed that the interviews could be held remotely, but it would be good to meet the top candidates face-to-face at least once. In case the advert receives a lot of applications, the author can interview the first round.

In a highly competitive talent marketplace, a well-crafted employer brand provides a significant competitive advantage. Candidates actively seek out companies with positive employer reputations and attractive work environments. A strong employer brand differentiates a company from its competitors, making it more appealing to top talent. It helps to attract skilled professionals who are selective about the organizations they choose to work for, giving the company an edge in attracting the best candidates over competitors who have weaker or less defined employer brands. In this case, the author wanted to highlight those things in the job advertisement that convey an authentic image of the employer. According to Halinen, a positive and encouraging work environment and comprehensive employee benefits shall be pointed out in the job advertisement.

The most significant employment benefit came up in the form of an idea while the recruitment process was already underway. Halinen thought about the significance of an employee apartment in this recruitment; if it is possible to offer an apartment to the employee, it makes it easier to start work. The location of Neste K Pukaron Paroni can be a challenge for applicants coming from larger cities, so the existence of a ready-made apartment is a valuable factor. The author strongly agreed with Halinen that an employee

apartment is a significant advantage. Consequently, the employment apartment was brought up in conversations with candidates later in sourcing.

## 5.2 Publishing the process

In this chapter, the author shows a more detailed implementation and publishing process of recruitment. In the implementation of the process, the author used her own experience in recruitment and the theory studied for this thesis, as well as articles found on the internet.

### Job advertisement

The author designed the job advertisement based on the semi-structured interview with Halinen and tinted by her own recruitment experience. The advert should state the name of the position, job description, requirements, starting day, information regarding the hiring employer, and whether it is permanent employment. The author found an article “Näistä asioista syntyy hyvä työpaikkailmoitus - älä sorru yleisiin sudenkuoppiin” (Haavisto, 2017) published on Duunitori.fi website, which she found useful for designing the job advertisement. The article presents five arguments that help the job advertisement stand out. Truthfulness, personality, and clarity of the advert become important elements when preparing the text. The author considers one of the most important findings of the article to be that the job advertisement should be written from the applicant's point of view. This means analyzing the target audience, such as what kind of writing style attracts them and what they are expecting for their career development. This way the author designed and wrote the Neste K Pukaron Paroni's job advertisement, which can be found in Appendix 1. The advert is written in Finnish because it is the working language.

### Timetable

The planned length for the recruitment process was four weeks. This included a two-week application period, after which the following two weeks were reserved for interviews and other measures to support decision-making. The job advertisement was published on 17.1.2023 both on Duunitori and TE-toimisto -websites.

### Channels

The job posting was published both on Duunitori and TE-toimisto -websites. The author and Halinen chose them as the main channels to publish the job announcement because both are free platforms, and their users belong to the target audience for this recruitment. For recruitment marketing, the author chose LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook as channels, as she has found them to be effective channels for promoting open jobs.

### **Sourcing**

Candidate sourcing has gained popularity in recruiting over the past decade. According to Headworth (2015, 102), sourcing is a proactive talent management discipline targeting to attract usually passive talent. So, the layout is the other way around; the employer (in this context, the recruiter) contacts the candidate directly without having them apply for the position. The author also decided to use sourcing in this recruitment, although it is more common in recruitment for higher-level positions. It was possible to carry out sourcing through job groups on Facebook, where there were many restaurant workers from all over Finland. The author joined a Facebook group named “Ravintolayhteisö” where belongs approximately 6300 members. The group was created to advertise jobs and events in the restaurant field, and in addition to that, job seekers can also present themselves there. The results of sourcing are presented in Chapter 5.3.

### **Contacting educational institutions**

Schools often have extensive networks among both students and graduates. About halfway through the recruitment process, the author decided to contact a vocational school in the local area that had a study program in the restaurant industry. Contact was made by calling the school's study counselor directly. The author told that Neste K Pukaron Paroni is looking for a main chef, and a graduated student could be suitable for the role. The conversation continued via e-mail, in which Halinen was included. The vocational school promised to share Neste K Pukaron Paroni's job advertisement on its own channel.

### **Interview preparation**

Arthur (2005, 78) highlights the importance of both concrete and intangible requirements. Intangible requirements are often not shown in the résumé, for example, the ability to get along with clients. These are also known as “soft skills” in today's business world. Intangible skills are better revealed during the interview phase when the essence and character of the applicants are better revealed. Interviews should focus on asking questions that are essential for the job position and that aim to reach the preferred candidate profile. According to these elements, the author designed 10 interview questions for the recruitment process (Figure 4).

Job interview questions		
The beginning	The middle	The end
<p>1. How are you / how has your day started?</p> <p>2. What made you interested in this position?</p> <p>3. Tell us about your background in your own words (education and working experience)</p>	<p>4. Which skills do you consider an advantage for this position?</p> <p>5. What would you like to develop in yourself?</p> <p>6. Describe what a good team and manager means to you.</p> <p>7. What dreams do you have for your future career?</p>	<p>8. What salary would you be satisfied with in this position?</p> <p>9. When would you be able to start at the earliest?</p> <p>10. Do you have referees who we could call with your permission?</p>

Figure 4: Interview questions.

### Marketing

Marketing is of great importance in the recruitment process, as it helps to reach both active and passive candidates. The ideal marketing channels for this recruitment were LinkedIn and Instagram, as they are the largest online networks for the author. The methods of marketing in this recruitment were a LinkedIn post and an Instagram story designed by the author. The LinkedIn post aimed to spread recruitment but above all, strengthen the employer brand of Neste K Gammelbacka. The Instagram story highlighted only the recruitment and was also more compact.

While working on recruitment, the author got to know LinkedIn's algorithms, so on which day and at which time users are most active. This is especially interesting from a marketing point of view because the time of publication is of great importance in terms of audience reach. The author researched several treatises found on the internet about the best time to post on LinkedIn. Karjalainen's (2023) personal experience is in line with the author's experience, according to which the best time to publish on LinkedIn is between Tuesday and Thursday around 10:30. This is influenced, among other things, by the fact that many Finnish LinkedIn users, who are working people, often scroll LinkedIn around that time during a break. Therefore, the author considered well the publication day and time for the LinkedIn post.



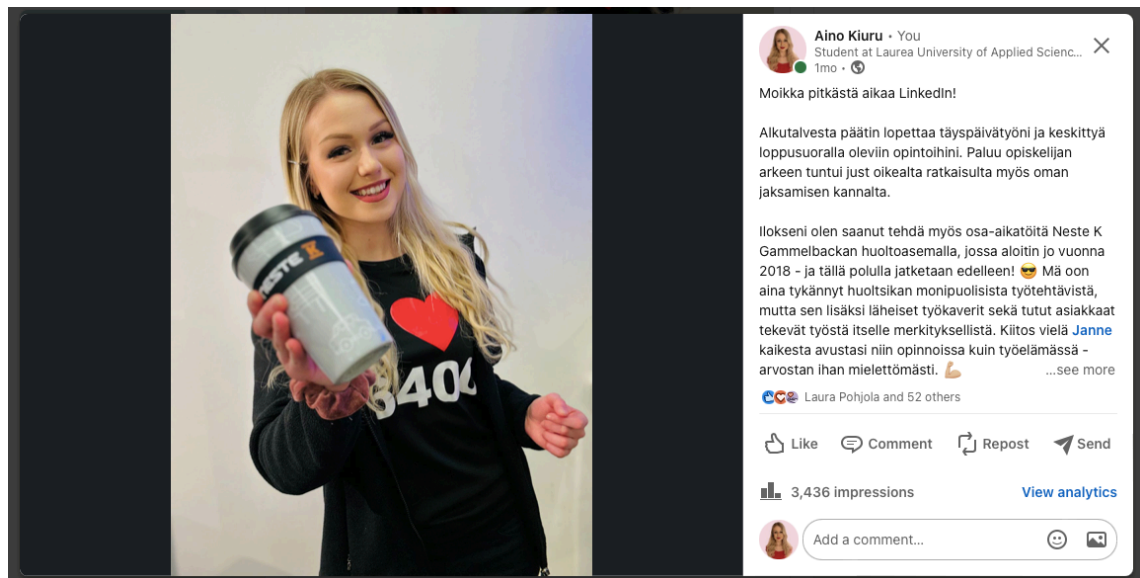


Figure 5: A LinkedIn post the author designed to promote recruitment.

As part of the marketing, the author designed an Instagram story, which was expected to boost recruitment's visibility. The current number of the author's Instagram followers is 1181, but since the account is public, anyone can access stories and posts. Figure 6 shows a screenshot of the author's Instagram story, which was visible for 24 hours. The story included a hyperlink, by which clicking can access the job advert on Duunitori.



Figure 6: An Instagram story the author published to promote recruitment.

### 5.3 Results

This chapter contains the results of the recruitment process in the form of both quantitative and qualitative data. The author collected recruitment statistics in Figure 7. The figure shows the number of views, search clicks, and applicants of Duunitori job advertisement and people reached through sourcing.

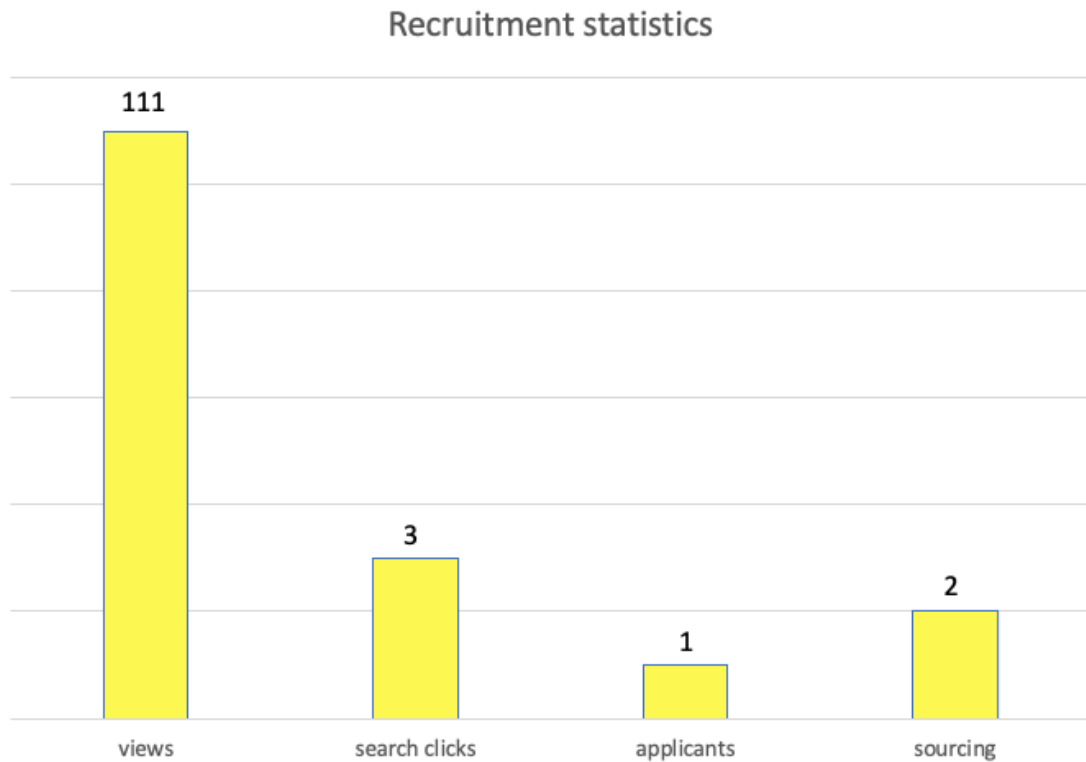


Figure 7: Recruitment views, search clicks, and applicants from Duunitori.fi and candidates found through sourcing.

#### **Job advertisement statistics**

The job advertisement was on display for a total of 23 days on Duunitori and TE-toimisto websites. It gained 111 views at Duunitori.fi, where the statistics were visible to the author. Also, the advertisement gained three search clicks. One applicant came through Duunitori.fi advertisement, but the person did not leave any application form or contact information, so the author could not take this applicant into the process. Instead, through sourcing, the author reached a total of two people, one of whom was found in a Facebook group. The author first contacted the candidate through a private message on Facebook, from which they continued the conversation by email. In the case of this candidate, the process did not progress to the interview stage because the position of the main chef at Neste K Pukaron Paroni did not fully correspond to what the candidate hoped for in the next career step. The second person reached through sourcing happened thanks to word of mouth. The author communicated information about the recruitment process to her social network, such as her friends and classmates. During the recruitment process, one of the author's friends told her about her friend who is trying to find a job in Finland. This resulted in a truly meaningful result for the recruitment process of this thesis, which follows later in this chapter.

When looking at the viewer numbers of the job advertisement in Figure 8, the effect of the LinkedIn post can be seen in terms of reaching people. Of course, it should be noted that the views on the job advertisement itself on the Duunitori.fi -website probably come from job seekers, while the audience on LinkedIn was more diverse. The author's Instagram story (Figure 6) gained a total of 641 views and reached a broad audience. From employer branding perspective, these numbers are valuable and strengthen the visibility of both gas stations.

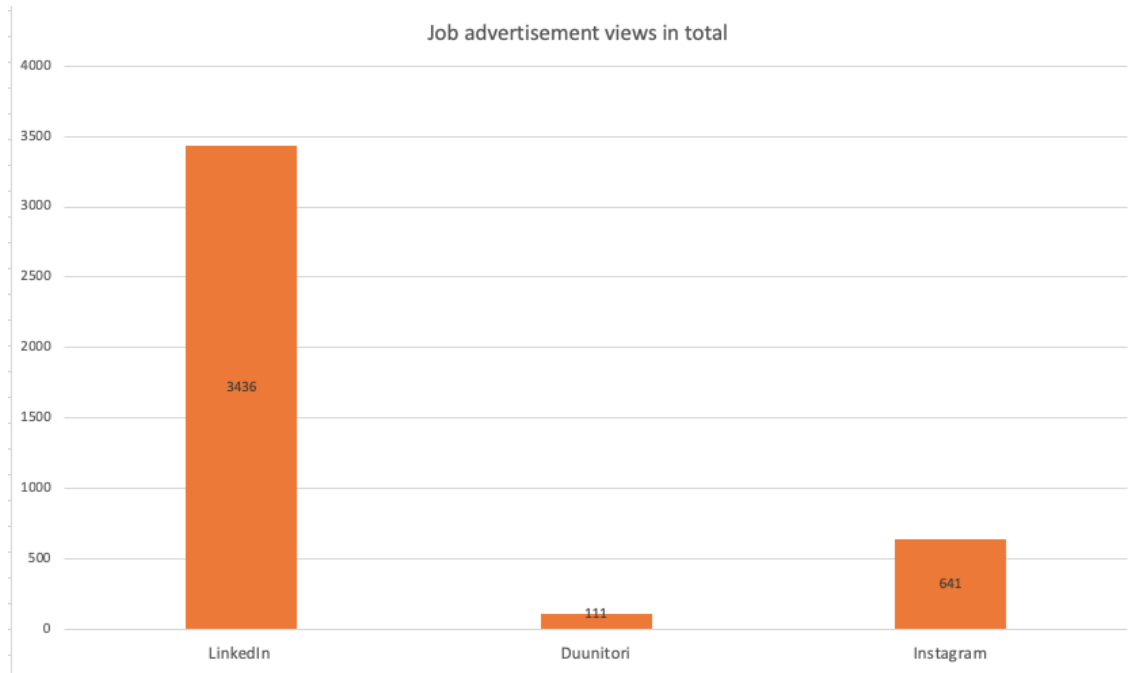


Figure 8: Job advertisement views at LinkedIn, Duunitori, and Instagram.

LinkedIn provides detailed post analytics for all users. This allowed the author to collect more specific analytics from the LinkedIn post about a month after its publication. As shown in Figure 9, the author's LinkedIn post from January 2023 collected 3436 impressions and 53 reactions around four weeks later. Many of the people who reacted to the post were from outside the author's own LinkedIn network.

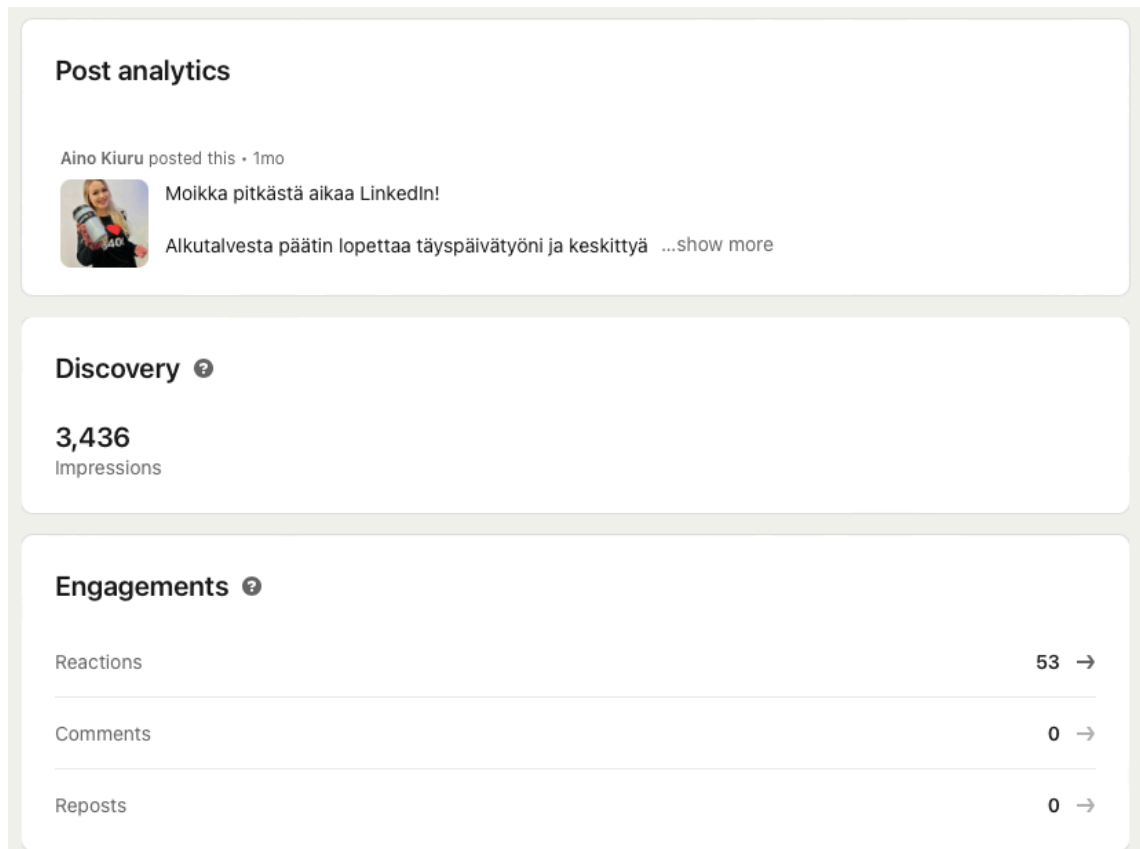


Figure 9: LinkedIn post analytics.

The post's unique viewer demographics can also be seen in the post analytics offered by LinkedIn. Figure 10 shows that the people who viewed the post were not from the restaurant industry but mainly from the author's LinkedIn network. However, it is worth noting that the post managed to show that gas station recruitments can also be advertised on LinkedIn.

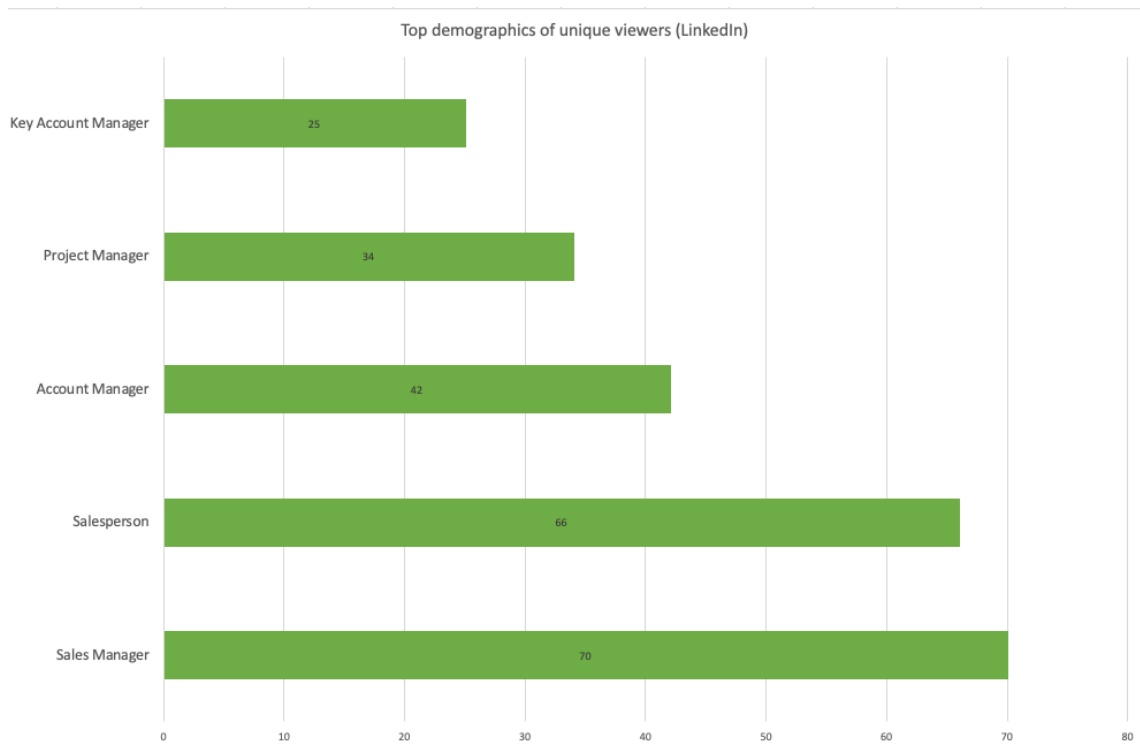


Figure 10: Detailed demographics of viewers at LinkedIn.

### Recruitment outcomes

The recruitment process took approximately 6 weeks to be completed. The original publication time for Duunitori job advertisement was two weeks, but since no applicants appeared, the author and Halinen decided to extend it by another two weeks. During these last two weeks, a close friend of the author contacted her and told her about their mutual friend in Joensuu, Kristina, who is seeking a job. As Kristina was not born in Finland, her Finnish language still needs to be fluent, which is required by most jobs. A friend asked if the author would have the opportunity to help in this situation, for example, through her networks. The author knows Kristina as a conscientious and caring person who is easy to recommend to any employer. So, without further due, the author contacted Halinen and told him about Kristina, even though she would not match the main chef's role.

At the time of the author's contact, Halinen was designing Neste K Pukaron Paroni's processes and personnel. When the author talked about Kristina, Halinen immediately suggested an interview with a low threshold - let's meet, get to know each other, and talk. So, the face-to-face interview was arranged in Helsinki because Kristina also had business in the capital, even though she lived in Joensuu at the time of the interview, more than 400 kilometers away from Helsinki.

When Halinen, his wife, and Kristina met for the first time, they had a good and warm feeling of each other. During the open interview, Kristina showed great motivation and desire to develop and create a career in Finland. She has various skills that she can use with working at the gas station, such as accuracy, planning, and organization. Working straight with customers at Neste K Pukaron Paroni requires a certain level of Finnish language, but the language skill can be developed through work. Kristina's personality matched well with the Neste K Pukaron Paroni's employee profile, and Halinen made the decision to recruit her.

Cleaning was one area that Halinen was thinking about changing. It was outsourced to a relatively expensive partner who also traveled a long way to the gas station. Cleaning maintenance was a good fit for Kristina's job description, as it is a versatile role where she interacts with other employees and partly with customers. So, Kristina took over the cleaning of the gas station, resulting in permanent employment. When the decision was made to recruit Kristina, it was also decided to close the recruitment of the main chef. From the current work community, it was possible for Halinen to train one assistant chef to become a main chef. It can be believed that the educational institutions from the area offer suitable candidates for the role of assistant chef.



Figure 11: The author and Kristina, the recruited candidate for Neste K Pukaron Paroni.

Kristina lived in Joensuu, so the employee apartment became an essential factor in the recruitment process. Kristina had a ready-made place to move to, so she could peacefully focus on her new hometown without worrying about housing. In addition, the fact that the employer is also the contact person for questions related to housing makes everyday life easier. Halinen organized Kristina's overall move. Kristina told the author that her words are not enough to describe how much helping to move means to her. That is an outstanding example of how an employer can earn an employee's trust and respect.

### **Recruitment feedback form**

It is important for any company to receive feedback on recruitment, as it helps to develop the process in the future and supports post-recruitment actions. In this case, the author prepared a recruitment feedback form to support her research, the purpose of which was to produce mainly numerical data. To support that data, the author also met with the recruited candidate several times and collected qualitative data, her own words, and feelings. The set of questions also had a section where the respondent was free to give comments about the recruitment process. There was a total of six questions, which purpose was to evaluate the different areas of recruitment. The evaluation took place on a scale of 1-4 and was supported by verbal descriptions. The questions were as follows:

- How satisfied were you with the length of the recruitment process?
- How did you feel about the interview?
- Did you feel that you were kept informed throughout the recruitment process?
- Did your expectations from the interview match later on with the work?
- Do you feel that your needs, expectations, and goals were taken into account in the recruitment process?
- Could you recommend this recruitment process?

The candidate gave 4, the highest grade, for four out of six questions. She was very satisfied with the interview and her expectations met the reality of the work. The candidate felt informed and updated throughout the process, but the length of recruitment could have been expedited. She could fully recommend the recruitment process.

Next is the comment received in the survey as it was originally written.

*“Each step of the recruitment process and the following integration into the work process was smoothly and openly explained in advance. There were no unclear steps or periods of time, I've known about the procedures and their outcomes fully, no information was hidden from me. Constant support was highly appreciated, and the feeling of comfort and trustworthiness of the company has been felt from the beginning and - which is also*



*important - continued to be present during the actual working process. If I had any questions, they were answered on each step of the recruitment process as soon as possible.”*

The author met with Kristina several times after the beginning of the employment and discussed her feelings, thoughts, and wishes regarding work. Overall, Kristina feels that she was welcomed with open arms, and her work feels meaningful. Kristina has shown motivation and care in her work and has become a beloved member of Neste K Pukaron Paroni’s work community.

## 6 Developing employer brand at Neste K Gammelbacka

During the spring of 2023, Neste K Gammelbacka has advanced its Employer brand significantly. In the following subchapters, the author will present examples of employer brand practices, ways to influence organizational culture and analyze employee engagement - all in relation to employer brand.

### 6.1 Employer brand practices

Another objective of the thesis is to encourage the employees of Neste K Gammelbacka to take part in employer brand practices. Social media offers various channels for employer branding alongside marketing. Many Neste K Gammelbacka’s employees are very active on social media and often publish content related to work even monthly. The content is relaxed and own-looking pictures and text, which is great in terms of the authenticity of employer branding.

The author designed couple of Instagram stories during the spring of 2023 to boost the employer brand. The stories aimed to promote ongoing offer campaigns and spread the brand of Neste K Gammelbacka. Figure 12 is a screenshot of the Author's Instagram story, which was published in the middle of March 2023 to boost the promotional campaign. The story was visible for 24 hours and gathered a total of 623 views.



Figure 12: The author's Instagram story in March 2023.

Neste K Gammelbacka's employees have correspondingly published content about the employer on social media. Two different examples of such posts can be found in Appendix 4. One of the posts was a Snapchat story made for a promotional campaign in which Pringles chips were sold at a price of one euro per unit. Another one is more relaxed, a Facebook post about a moment that brightened up the working day.

Social media offers excellent platforms for supporting and spreading Neste K Gammelbacka's employer brand. It is important to remember that it is each employee's own choice whether they want to post work-related content on their personal social media accounts. However, social media can be produced as a company, in which case the content is not connected to any employee. A great example of that is Neste K Gammelbacka's Facebook pages, which are maintained by the retailer and a few employees. In the future, Neste K Gammelbacka's social media accounts can be developed by planning, for example, themes for new publications, and by taking over new platforms, such as LinkedIn or Instagram.

## 6.2 Developing the organizational culture

Neste K Gammelbacka has a positive and encouraging organizational culture. Trust is the basis of everything, both among employees and between them and the employer. The organizational culture advances along with the employees, but the employer can guide it in certain directions by doing actions. In terms of business development, it is important to train personnel regularly, but it also has strengthening effects on organizational culture. Training employees gives them value for themselves when they get to learn new things and develop further with the support of the employer.

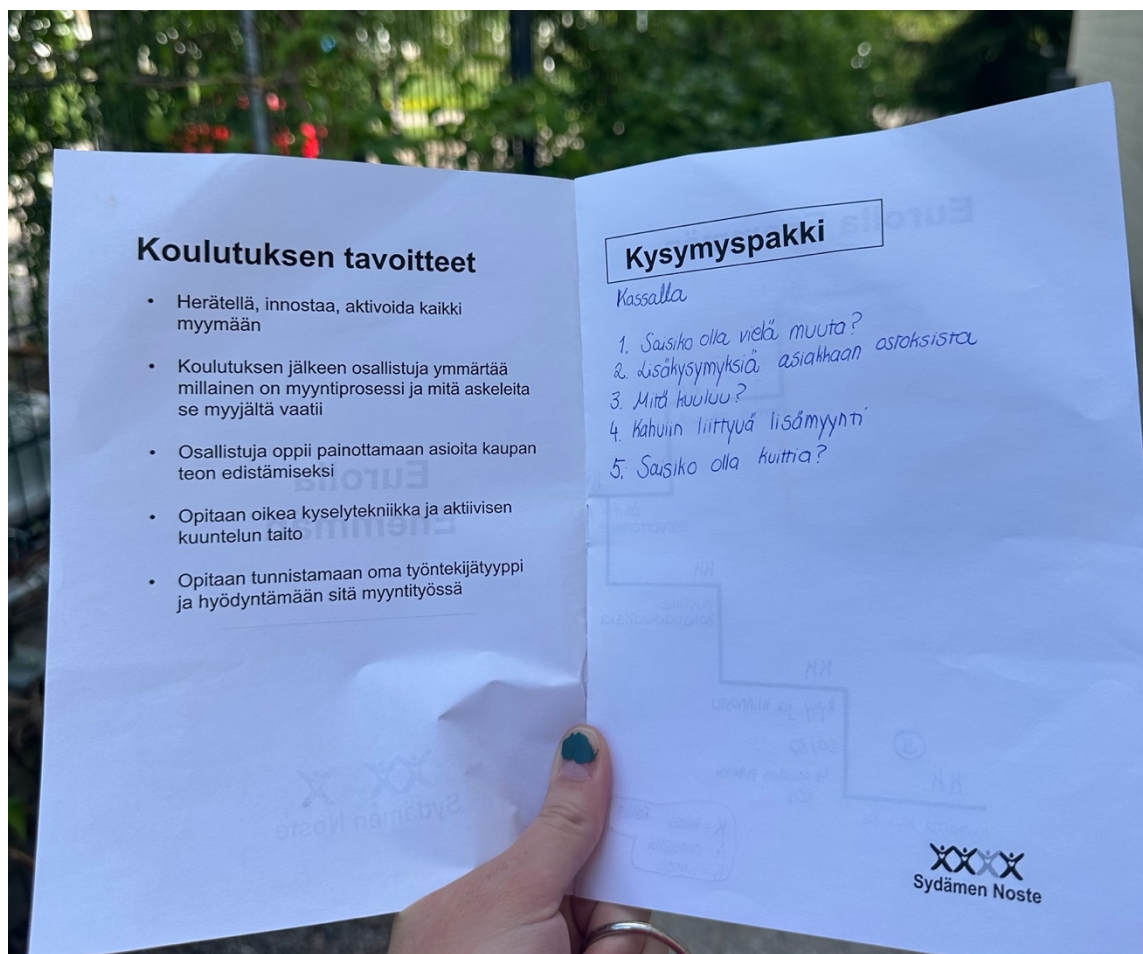


Figure 13: “Eurolla Enemmän” -palvelukoulutusohjelma (Sydämen Noste 2023.)

In May 2023, the employer organized a service -training for the employees of both gas stations. It is part of Kesko's training program, and its purpose is to inspire employees in selling and to help them understand the stages of the sales process. The training was organized on May 16, 2023, at Neste K Pukaron Paroni, and the author participated in it. The training, which lasted about three hours, taught each other new things about the employees and sparked ideas and new goals for the future. It is definitely worth organizing training like this in the future, as they generate value for both the employer and the employees.

### 6.3 Supporting employee engagement

The length of Neste K Gammelbacka's employee's employment varies from a couple of years to decades, but the turnover rate has remained low since the current retailer started in 2014. It can be said that, in general, the workplace is perceived as good, and employees are loyal to it. Employers can support employee engagement in various tangible and intangible ways, of which intangible ones are often more meaningful to people.

The author gathered here four factors that are commonly known to support employee engagement, but which the author also finds applicable to Neste K Gammelbacka's working community.

#### **Employment benefits**

Neste K Gammelbacka has a good set of employment benefits, which can be updated if necessary to meet the wishes of the employees. Holbeche & Matthews (2017, 222) recommend non-cash benefits such as spontaneous recognition, which the author finds extremely valuable and something that can be done with a low threshold. Recognition drives employee engagement and gives value to the work employees do. Intangible employment benefits can also be a holiday or day offs. Many employees value that enormously because they can't buy time with money.

#### **Supporting education**

Support in education can help strengthen employees' commitment to the company. This is, for example, taking studies into account at work, in which case part-time work can be a good solution. Neste K Gammelbacka has set an excellent example here, which shall be continued in the future. The employees have received study leave if necessary and the employer has always supported them in their studies, of which this thesis is also an example.

#### **Recreation day**

Recreation days cheer up the staff and help employees learn new things from each other that may not come up in the context of work. A recreation day can be, for example, a trip together or an activity, such as bowling. They are usually organized a few times a year, and the budget can be determined together with employees.

#### **Personal goals**

Personal goals and support with them help employees commit. Goals might not be always related to work, but they still have a connection to performance at work. An example of this is graduating from school, which the employer can support by considering the working hours

again with the employee. The fact that employees talk about their personal goals also shows trust.

## 7 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to produce a recruitment process that supports the employer brand and its development on both Neste K Gammelbacka and Neste K Pukaron Paroni. The research examines the influencing factors of employer branding and analyzes their connection to each other. Another objective is to find new ways for EB development and carry out certain EB practices with the employees of Neste K Gammelbacka, with the aim of emphasizing the importance of the people behind the brand.

The recruitment process succeeded in influencing the employer brand of both gas stations as it reached a wide audience, also extending beyond the current customer base. It raised people's awareness through job advertisements and social media posts, even though there was no main chef found at the end. The recruitment process also connected the retailer and one local vocational school, which could lead to possible cooperation in the future. However, the most important result from the point of view of the recruitment process is that there was found an employee whose values coincide with the company's and who has shown great motivation towards her work since the very beginning.

The author believes that the output of this thesis also had socially meaningful value, as it managed to employ a person who was not born here and whose mother tongue is not Finnish. Fluent Finnish is often a requirement in many job positions, which makes it difficult for people with a foreign background to find employment. In addition, in the case of this recruitment, the fact that the employer could offer an apartment in connection with the workplace had an extremely valuable meaning, as it helps the employee to adapt to the new environment. When the snow had melted away, Kristina was given a bicycle that she could use for trips to work and exploring the local areas.



Figure 14: Kristina's bicycle in front of her new home.

Neste K Gammelbacka has succeeded in creating the employer brand that speaks of a good and loyal employer, who supports both in challenges of work and life outside it, and who coaches forward as a team, and above all, as an individual. A healthy and motivating organizational culture is reflected directly to customers, for whom employees are the face of the company. Neste K Gammelbacka's employees' positive experience of their employer and their desire to take part in the development emerges in the employer brand practices carried out in this study. When the author asks her colleagues what they think is the best thing about work, the answer is very consistent: the work community feels like a family and the place feels like home. The employees' personal attachment to the company is one of the most valuable factors driving the employer brand. It is something that no company can buy with money, but something that is earned both during the challenges and the successes.

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Appendix 1: Job advertisement on Duunitori.fi and toimistot.te-palvelut.fi.

### **Kokoaikainen kokki Neste-K Pukaron Paroniin**

Neste K Pukaron Paroni etsii nyt rautaiseen tiimiinsä kokoaikaista kokkia tarjoamaan asiakkaille monipuolisia makunautintoja. Oletko sinä ravintola-alan osaaja, jolle herkullisen ruoan valmistus on intohimo? Saatat olla juuri etsimämme henkilö!

Toimenkuvanasi tulee olemaan pääasiassa lounas, ryhmät ja tilaukset. Lisäksi on hyvä harjoitella muutkin osa-alueet, jotta voi tarvittaessa tehdä myös à la carte tai pizaa. Pääset haastamaan itseäsi monipuolisessa sekä kannustavassa työympäristössä, jossa jokaisella on tilaa kehittää omaa osaamistaan ja saada sen myötä lisää vastuuta.

Mitä toivomme sinulta:

- Tehtävänkuvaa soveltuvaa ammattitutkintoa ja työkokemusta ravintola-alalta (eduksi katsotaan etenkin kokemus lounasravintolasta tai pitopalvelusta)
- Aktiivista asennetta sekä halua oppia ja kehittää yhdessä uutta
- Tiimityöskentelytaitoja ja yhteen hiileen puhaltamista
- Ruoan laatu ja tyytyväiset asiakkaat ovat lähellä sydäntäsi

Mitä tarjoamme sinulle:

- Iloisen tiimin ja kannustavat esihenkilöt sekä työympäristön, jossa mahdollisuudet edetä ja saada lisää vastuuta
- Kattavat työsuhde-edut, kuten: kattavat Keskon alennukset ja oman kaupan edut
- Työterveyden palvelut Terveystalossa

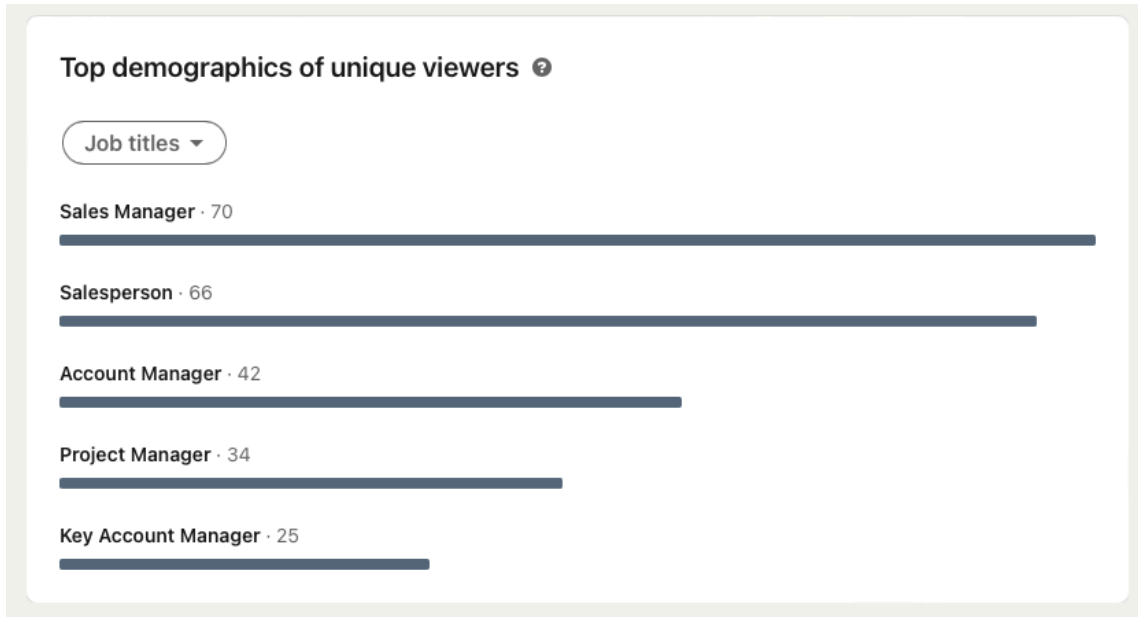
Työsuhde on vakituinen ja tehtävä kokoaikainen. Työt voi aloittaa aikaisintaan 1.2.2023.

Olisitko sinä seuraava vahvistus tiimiimme? Laita rohkeasti hakemusta tulemaan - nähdään haastattelussa!

Kysy lisää [xxxx@gmail.com](mailto:xxxx@gmail.com). CV:n sekä työhakemuksen voi lähettää Duunitorin kautta tai suoraan sähköpostilla [xxxx@gmail.com](mailto:xxxx@gmail.com).

*Neste K Pukaron Paroni on monipuolinen matka-asema, joka sijaitsee Valtatie 6:n varrella vain 30km päässä Kouvolasta. Tarjoamme asiakkaillemme makuelämyksiä, joita kannattaa tulla nauttimaan kauempaakin!*

## Appendix 2: Original demographics of job advertisement (LinkedIn &amp; Duunitori)



## Kokoaikainen kokki Neste K Pukaron Paroniin

Sijainti: **Lapinjärvi** - Ilmoitustyyppi: **Normaali**  
 Umpeutunut ilmoitus; haku aika ti 17.1.2023 - ke 8.2.2023

Näytä

Lataa hakijoiden tiedot

Kopioi ilmoitus

Arkistoi

**111**

Lukukerrat

**3 (2.7%)**

Hakuklikit

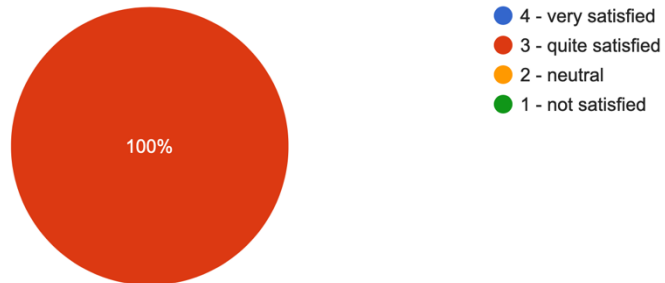
**1 (33.3%)**

Hakemukset

## Appendix 3: Recruitment feedback form's questions and answers

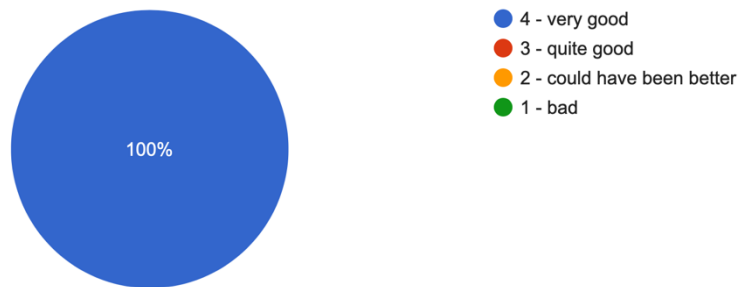
How satisfied were you with the length of the recruitment process?

1 vastaus



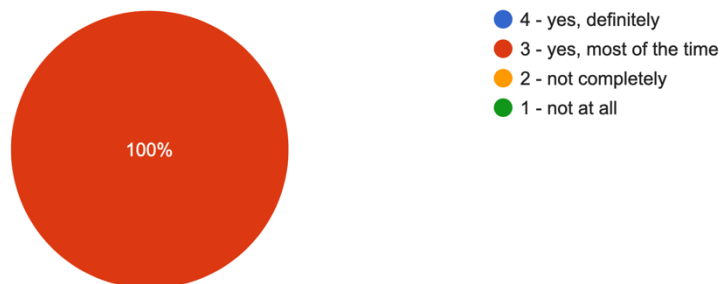
How did you feel about the interview?

1 vastaus



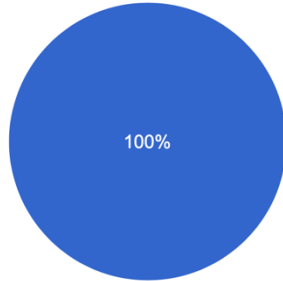
Did you feel that you were kept informed throughout the recruitment process?

1 vastaus



Did your expectations from the interview match later on with the work?

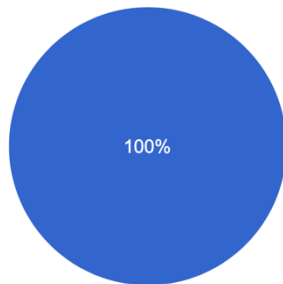
1 vastaus



- 4 - yes, definitely
- 3 - yes, quite well
- 2 - not completely
- 1 - not at all

Do you feel that your needs, expectations and goals were taken into account in the recruitment process?

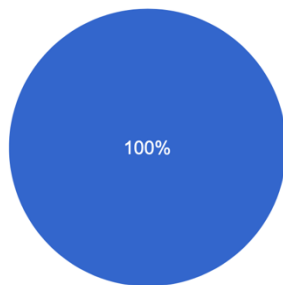
1 vastaus



- 4 - yes, definitely
- 3 - yes, quite well
- 2 - not completely
- 1 - not at all

Could you recommend this recruitment process?

1 vastaus



- 4 - yes, definitely
- 3 - yes, mostly
- 2 - not completely
- 1 - not at all

Appendix 4: Neste K Gammelbacka's employee's social media posts.

