



# Developing Employer Branding Strategy Proposals for Attracting and Retaining Finnish Candidates

Emilia Helsky

2025 Laurea



Laurea University of Applied Sciences

# **Developing Employer Branding Strategy Proposals for Attracting and Retaining Finnish Candidates**

Emilia Helsky  
Bachelor of Business Management  
Thesis  
May, 2025

Emilia Helsky

**Developing Employer Branding Proposals for Attracting and Retaining Finnish Candidates**

Year	2025	Number of pages	1
------	------	-----------------	---

---

The purpose of this thesis is to research new methods to attract and retain Finnish candidates and was conducted in collaboration with the case company. The primary objective of this study is to provide developmental proposals to help the case company strengthen its employer brand. The findings will support the case company's growth in new markets by enhancing its talent acquisition strategies and ensuring alignment with the expectations of Finnish job seekers. The beneficiary of this study is primarily the case company, as it includes research of their internal employees and their experiences. However, other international companies looking to attract Finnish candidates may also benefit from the findings provided.

The theoretical framework was collected and draws from existing employer branding and talent attraction literature. The key theories that were used to support this thesis is the dual perception of the employer branding, which are internal and external employer branding and the key factors that build employer branding as a concept.

The methods used to research this thesis were diverse. An interview was conducted with an HR professional working at the case company to provide insight on their current employer branding strategies. Two surveys were sent out exploring the different areas of employer branding through the lens of Finnish employees, one aimed at Finnish job seekers and the second at current employees at the case company. The results from the interview and surveys form the basis for assessing and developing the employer branding strategy to better align with the expectations of Finnish employees and job seekers. Benchmarking was also a method used to research this thesis. For the benchmarking job posts found on LinkedIn were analyzed to gain insight into what strategies other international companies use to attract Finnish employees.

The main findings of this study were that for the case company's external employer branding they have limited brand visibility in Finland, and have no active partnerships with Finnish universities to attract candidates. The case company underutilizes their employee voices in their branding, Finnish employee testimonials and experiences are not leveraged in recruitment content. There is also a lack of localized employer branding content as the company does not post any content in Finnish.

The main findings for their internal employer branding was that career development exists, but is not communicated clearly. There is some uncertainty with the Finnish employees around progression within the company. Another factor that was identified was support with relocation and aligning employee benefits to the Finnish standard.

The case company can take steps to address the identified challenges through the developmental proposals presented in this thesis.

**Keywords:** 3-5 keywords separated with commas

## Contents

1	Introduction .....	5
2	Objective .....	6
3	Employer Branding.....	6
4	The Benefits of Employer Branding.....	8
5	Methodology .....	8
5.1	Expert Interview .....	9
5.2	Survey .....	9
5.3	Benchmarking .....	10
6	Data Collection and Analysis .....	10
6.1	Benchmarking .....	11
6.2	Interview with HR.....	12
6.3	Investigating the Finnish Employees View on International Companies .....	14
6.4	Determining the Most Important Employer Branding Factors.....	16
6.5	Current Employee Overview.....	22
7	Developmental Proposals .....	32
7.1	Strengthen Social Media & Digital Employer Presence.....	32
7.2	Localize Messaging Specifically for the Finnish Market .....	34
7.3	University & Early Talent Engagement Program.....	35
7.4	Align Benefits and Career Path to Finnish expectations.....	38
8	Conclusion .....	41
	Figures.....	44
	Tables.....	44
	Appendices.....	46
	Interview Questions with HR .....	47
	Questionnaire for Finnish Employees .....	47
	Questionnaire for Finnish Employees at the Case Company .....	47

## 1 Introduction

With the emerging global job market, one of the major factors that the international companies need to develop and maintain is a culturally aligned employer branding strategy to attract the top talent. This thesis examines one case company, a Swedish tech company specializing in human resources technology. Headquartered in Stockholm, the company offers a comprehensive platform designed to simplify and automate HR processes, some features include data management, leave tracking, and performance reviews. With a focus on user-friendly design and GDPR compliance, the company positions itself as a modern alternative to traditional HR systems, aiming to streamline HR tasks for companies of various sizes. (Company X, 2025)

This thesis will present customized development proposals based on the results of this research, to increase the company's visibility and appeal on the Finnish labor market. Having a clear employer branding strategy as the company expands globally is crucial. The case company has seen significant growth and success to date, but to continue growing, a strong employer branding strategy needs to be in place to be able to attract and retain talented employees. To achieve this goal of bridging the local cultural perspective with the international goals of the company, this thesis seeks to generate a better understanding of Finnish job seekers expectations, values, and motivations in order to offer practical recommendations that would be aligned with the company's international goals.

This strategy will be formed by means of exploring existing literature, conducting an interview with an HR professional working at the case company and synthesizing survey data from Finnish employees currently working at the company and prospective employees in Finland. The findings of this research will identify best practices and new insights to develop the case company's approach. Additionally, it will also examine the employer branding practices in job posts of other international companies that are aimed to attract Finnish talent.

This will not only help the company calibrate its employer value proposition but also contribute to a better understanding of how international companies can bring employer branding more in line with employee expectations. The end goal of this thesis is to enhance employer attractiveness and be a better competitor in the Finnish local job market.

The editing and fluency improvements in this text have been supported using AI tools.

## 2 Objective

This thesis was done in cooperation with the case company. The company offers innovative solutions to streamline HR processes, enhance employee experiences and talent management. The primary goal of this thesis is to provide developmental proposals to help the case company strengthen its employer brand. The findings will support the case company's growth in new markets by enhancing its talent acquisition strategies and ensuring alignment with the expectations of Finnish job seekers.

This study aims to provide ground for strategic recommendations for the case company, which in turn helps the case company to not only improve their employer brand but also to attract skilled Finnish workforce by gaining insight into the effectiveness of employer branding. The results will help the company develop its talent acquisition practices to accommodate and align with the expectations of Finnish labor market candidates.

The study focuses specifically on the employer branding of the case company as it seeks to recruit Finnish employees. It does not examine employer branding strategies used by Finnish companies or recruitment strategies outside of Finland. This delimitation ensures the research remains relevant to the company's goals while providing a clear, focused perspective on its efforts to attract Finnish talent.

The study is also an opportunity for professional development in important areas like HR, recruitment marketing, and employer branding analysis. These are all key aspects of business strategy. Despite employer branding having been extensively researched, there is a lack of more localized studies concerning foreign companies recruiting talent in Finland.

Besides the case company, other foreign companies entering Finnish markets can obtain insight from the results of this study. As such, it can represent a springboard for improving employer branding strategies and attracting talent. HR professionals, especially those responsible for talent acquisition, will gain new insight from the learnings of this research. Furthermore, this thesis could be beneficial for students and for educators, possibly as a part of further research and education on employer branding and international HR management.

## 3 Employer Branding

Employer branding has emerged as a new research area that needs investigation to better understand its significance and benefits for businesses. According to Bharadwaj et al. (2021, 18), employer branding "refers to the process of creating and communicating a unique image

of the organization as an employer, which can differentiate it from its competitors and retain the most talented and motivated employees.”

Employer branding can be divided into two different perspectives, internal employer branding and external employer branding, each having their benefits and strategies. Typically, the primary focus of literature exploring employer branding has been on external employer branding, even though there are several positive impacts of internal employer branding for an organization. (Rys, Schollaert & Van Hoye, 2024)

The concept of internal employer branding is the endorsement of what makes a company unique and attractive as an employer to the internal employees. Internal employer branding evolved from a marketing concept, referred to as internal branding. The purpose of internal branding is to improve customer perception of the brand by employee understanding, dedication and action, to internally promote a product or service within the company and encourage employees to then in turn communicate this to their external clients. Internal *employer* branding fosters and exudes an image of what makes the organization different and attractive among current employees (Rys, Schollaert & Van Hoye, 2024).

Rana, Agarwal & Sharma (2021) said that the relationship between an employer and an employee needs to be distinctive, engaging, and highly relevant to potential candidates. A strong brand for an organization not only draws in employees but also gives them an incentive to stay. Rana, Agarwal and Sharma (2021) also identified key factors that are most important in employer branding, they include financial health, strong leadership, career growth opportunities, good training, job content, corporate social responsibility, a positive work environment, long-term job security, work-life balance, competitive salaries, and attractive employee benefits. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2024), strategically applying career mapping can foster employee involvement, enhance efficiency, and strengthen loyalty by enabling staff to visualize and chart their professional advancement within the company.

In addition, professional development and training are a crucial component of employer branding towards current employees, while talent acquisition and academic collaboration are the key objects of employer branding regarding potential candidates (Heilmann, Saarenketo and Liikkanen 2013, 293-296).

#### 4 The Benefits of Employer Branding

According to research conducted there are several benefits organizations can experience when having a strong employer branding strategy. Creating an employer brand that is attractive to not only current employees, but also prospective employees can help companies lower turnover rates and in turn lessen any potential negative consequences. As a result, companies can increase employee satisfaction and retention. (Human Resource Management International Digest (2019, 31-33).

Employer branding can be used as a powerful tool for an organization to improve their image, increase job satisfaction and more effective recruitment. Employer branding efforts should be focused according to the target group. (Heilmann, Saarenketo and Liikkanen 2013, 293-296). Therefore, for companies seeking to attract candidates in a specific country or location, efforts need to be taken to make sure that expectations align with local candidates-

According to Rys, Schollaert and Van Hoyer (2024) that there are many benefits for an organization with a strong employer brand. For instance, a company with a good employer brand can attract the best candidates, improve employee attitude, organizational performance and recruitment efficiency. There is a direct link between the mediating role of employer branding and employee engagement (Sharma, Tripathi, Gupta & Singh 2024).

It is clear to see through many different studies that employer branding has a significant impact on many parts of an organization. A company can experience several benefits including financial, improved organizational climate, a more seamless recruitment process and better candidates.

#### 5 Methodology

The methods used to study the topic of this thesis were selected and aimed to gain insight into the case company's current employer strategy and what the cultural expectations of Finnish employees are, to be able to develop their strategy. Employer branding is quite a complex and multifaceted phenomenon and should be well understood through both theory and observational data.

This study utilizes mixed methods, ensuring analysis that covers the theoretical approach alongside practical implementations. By integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study will provide data-driven employer branding developmental proposals tailored for the case company.

## 5.1 Expert Interview

An interview was conducted with an HR professional working at the case company to gain insights into the organization's current employer branding practices. According to Hirsjärvi, Remes, and Sajavaara (2015, pp. 221-222), interviews are particularly effective for examining complex topics, as they enable interaction, clarification of responses, and the exploration of participants' perspectives in greater depth.

A semi-structured interview method was used, which combines predefined questions with the flexibility to explore emerging themes during the conversation. This approach is particularly well-suited for complex topics, as it allows the interviewer to probe deeper into relevant issues while still maintaining a consistent structure across interviews. An interview guide was prepared in advance and shared with the interviewee beforehand, ensuring transparency and allowing time for reflection. The interview was conducted in person, recorded with the participant's consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. A copy of the interview questions is included as an appendix. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the process, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and the assurance of confidentiality (Rutanen & Vehkalahti, 2019, 7-31).

## 5.2 Survey

Two surveys were used to collect data. One survey targeted Finnish job seekers and the other one targeted Finnish employees currently working at the case company. Surveys were selected as a data collection method because they enable reaching a larger group of respondents efficiently and gathering comparable information.

The job seekers' survey explored preferences, expectations, perceptions of employer branding, and channels used to search for employers. The employee survey focused on their views and experiences of the case company's employer brand. The surveys included questions ranking the importance or significance of the key employer branding factors determined by Rana, Agarwal and Sharma (2021). One additional factor that was included was work-flexibility, due to its increased relevance in the work environment. Both surveys also included closed and open-ended questions to allow both numerical and descriptive responses. According to ethical research principles of Rutanen & Vehkalahti, 2019, participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed of the study's purpose and assured of anonymity.

The results from the interview and surveys form the basis for assessing and developing the employer branding strategy to better align with the expectations of Finnish employees and job seekers.

### 5.3 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a systematic and continuous process of measuring and comparing an organization's practices, processes, or performance metrics against those of leading organizations to identify areas for improvement and adopt best practices (Anand & Kodali 2008, 257). It serves as a tool for organizations to learn from others and implement strategies that enhance one's own performance.

Benchmarking provides a structured approach for learning from others and adapting successful methods to enhance one's own operations (Anand & Kodali 2008, 257). The purpose of benchmarking is to drive continuous improvement by analyzing how top-performing organizations achieve their results and applying those insights to close performance gaps (Anand & Kodali 2008, 258).

Identifying the best practices from international companies can provide valuable insight in what strategies other companies utilize to attract Finnish employees. Through the investigation of employer branding practices in recruitment of global companies, this research will look to improve the case company's strategy.

The benchmarking process intentionally eliminates local Finnish firms and remains focused on international companies looking for Finnish talent. This analysis will focus on job listings found on LinkedIn for candidates based in Finland. These will be reviewed in terms of the language used, the features and benefits highlighted most to boost appeal.

## 6 Data Collection and Analysis

This section will be analyzing all the data for the thesis. The data was gathered through an expert interview, surveys targeting Finnish job seekers and employees, and benchmarking of international employer branding practices. Each method was chosen to provide complementary insights into the employer branding strategies relevant to attracting Finnish talent. The analysis ensures a comprehensive understanding of the case company's current situation and opportunities for development.

## 6.1 Benchmarking

To better understand effective employer branding strategies used to attract Finnish employees, a benchmarking analysis was conducted with four international companies: McKinsey & Company, Grænn A/S, Danone, and Boston Consulting Group (BCG). These companies were selected based on having a diverse selection of companies based in different countries and sectors and having active recruitment of Finnish professionals. The aim of the benchmarking was to identify key practices used in job advertisements to appeal to Finnish candidates, particularly in terms of career development, work-life balance, values alignment, and role autonomy.

The following table summarizes the employer branding strategies used by each company in their job advertisements. The strategies used in the job ads have been analyzed using four main themes: career development, work-life balance, meaningful work, autonomy and creativity in the role.

Table 1: Benchmarking

Company	Career Development	Work-Life Balance	Meaningful Work	Autonomy & Creativity
McKinsey & Company Founded: 1926, United States, Sector: Management Consulting. (McKinsey & Company, n.d.).	Continuous learning, mentorship, global projects	Flexible hours, well-being programs	Challenging problems with global impact	(Not specified)
Grænse A/S Founded: 2010, Denmark, Sector: Nordic Beauty & Cosmetics (Grænn A/S. n.d.)	Growth in Nordic market, development opportunities	Competitive benefits, flexibility	Creativity in brand events	Independent role with high responsibility
Danone Founded: 1919, France, Sector: Food & Beverage (Danone, n.d.)	Learning platforms, bonus system	Health benefits, company car	Sustainability focus, B Corp certification	Independent field role
Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Founded: 1963, United States, Sector: Management Consulting (Boston Consulting Group, n.d.)	Training, mentorship, global project exposure	(Not specified)	Impactful, analytical work	Collaborative and fast-paced environment

The benchmarking analysis highlights how leading international companies tailor their employer branding strategies to attract Finnish employees. Common themes across the cases include strong emphasis on professional development, support for work-life balance, and the promotion of meaningful, autonomous roles. The identified themes provide a useful framework for evaluating and developing employer branding practices in the case company.

## 6.2 Interview with HR

To gain qualitative insights into the current employer branding strategy, I conducted an interview with a Talent & Culture specialist at the case company. The interview took place on March 19, 2025, in person. The interview lasted approximately 40 minutes and was recorded. The objective of the interview was to understand how the current employer branding strategy looks like today, what goals they have and what developments can be made.

According to the HR professional there is no formal or documented employer branding strategy yet. Existing efforts are organic and are made as needed, mainly visible in job ads and social media presence. A more structured approach is a future goal. The case company's current employer branding efforts center around honesty and transparency, by communicating clearly with candidates about the true employee expectations and company culture during the whole recruitment process.

The focus is mainly on recruitment and how employees represent the company externally. During recruitment the company emphasizes honest expectations and a thorough onboarding process. Employee feedback and support is also a factor that they prioritize, having quarterly employee surveys and monthly one-to-ones with managers. Results are shared transparently across the organization, with both positive and negative feedback taken seriously. From the feedback received, action plans are developed by department heads.

Psychological safety is also crucial. Employees are encouraged to speak up and take initiative. They also foster a non-hierarchical, trusting, respectful and stable work culture. The founders and managers model the culture, encouraging initiative, learning and experimentation. This influence ensures a consistent, strong culture that supports their employer brand. Strategic hiring also ensures new roles are based on clear needs, not just growth, to avoid any future layoffs. Although the company is not yet profitable, their cautious hiring builds employee trust and long-term stability.

The case company has a 40-hour workweek with "trusted hours" which brings some schedule flexibility for their employees. Remote work is also allowed on a case-by-case basis. Salaries

may be below top competitors, but compensation is balanced by a fun culture, inspiring product and flexible work environment.

A strong internal culture, for example collaboration and fun at work, is reflected in external communications. Employees are given challenging and engaging tasks that promote growth and work interest. Past employee surveys have shown that the employees feel valued, impactful, and empowered to influence the company. When it comes to career development employees are encouraged to take charge of their own development with manager support and coaching. Career growth is discussed on an individual basis and is unique for each employee.

The case company's current challenges with employer branding in Finland are that they are still establishing themselves in the local market and constantly building their presence there, though they don't have a formal analysis done or strategy worked out yet. They also have quite a small HR team and limited resources make it a work in progress.

The main online platforms currently in use are LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and their career page. LinkedIn is used for professional purposes and job posts, while Instagram and Facebook offer a more casual and authentic glimpse into the case company's day to day work-life. Their career page only has job posts with no page for branding content, though this is something that might be developed in the future.

Efforts are taken to make job ads as inclusive and approachable as possible by using encouraging language for example "things you will learn" or "nice to have" instead of hard requirements. Swedish is also not required, opening opportunities for international candidates. They have employees that have varied backgrounds, and all CVs are analyzed anonymously to reduce unconscious bias. The commitment to diversity and inclusion is ongoing and expected to be further developed.

They haven't done any formal campaigns targeting Finnish candidates, though it has been noticed that word of mouth and employee advocacy have been a very effective means of recruiting talent. Participating in events and receiving the Great Place to Work certification in summer 2024 also significantly increased applications. The case company is not currently collaborating with any universities but has in the past done so in Sweden. They do, however, recognize the long-term value in engaging students early and aim to build structured collaborations.

### 6.3 Investigating the Finnish Employees' View on International Companies

To gain insights into the current employer branding strategy, a survey was sent to potential Finnish employees located in Finland. The survey had 10 participants of varying ages and backgrounds and had 16 questions related to employer branding. The objective of the survey was to gather data on Finnish employee preferences and recruitment tactics. The survey also explored themes such as where they search for potential and what mindset Finnish employees have towards international companies.

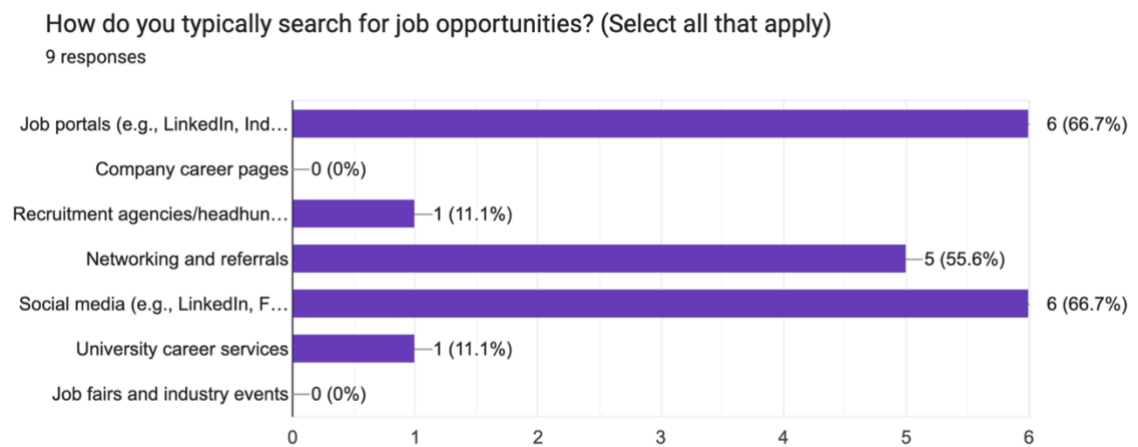


Figure 1: How Finnish Candidates Search for Jobs

The first question in the survey asked participants where they usually search for job opportunities. This is information that is extremely important for employers to know, since this will directly determine where their job ads should be placed in order to reach their intended target as effectively as possible. Based on Figure 1 job portals, social media and networking are the most effective ways to reach candidates.

Platforms such as LinkedIn and Indeed seem to be where candidates mostly search for job opportunities, which makes them platforms employers should prioritize. Networking and referrals are also a very important means to finding employees, usually by either current employees or previous employees, which means internal employer branding and employee well-being should be prioritized in every organization.

Which sources do you trust the most when researching a company's employer brand? (Select up to 3)

9 responses

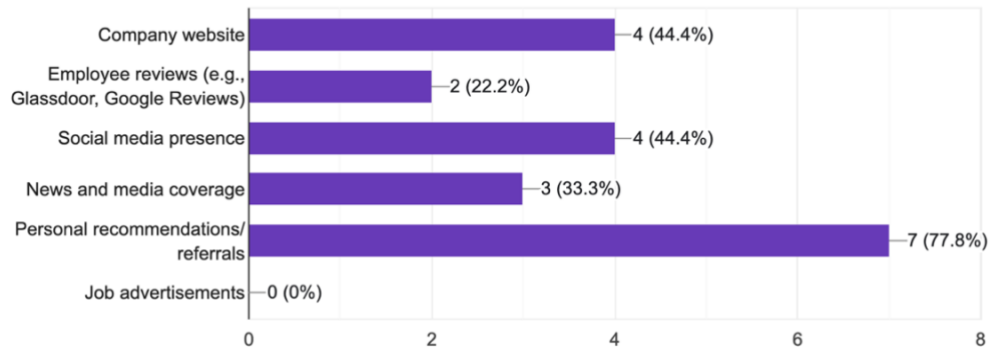


Figure 2: Trusted Sources Candidates Use to Research Companies

The second question was asked to pinpoint which sources candidates use to research a potential employer. Based on the answers it is evident that personal recommendations and referrals are the most trustworthy sources of information, again highlighting the importance of a strong internal employer brand and employee satisfaction, so that current employees can be used as an asset in the recruitment.

Two other important sources were the company website as well as their social media presence. The image that a company portrays externally to their potential employees is of utmost importance to secure the candidate in their decision to choose an employer. Therefore, every company should have a dedicated social media strategy and a clear vision of what feelings they intend to achieve in a potential employee when looking through their website.

The next two questions asked were as follows "What do you think makes an international company attractive to Finnish employees?" and "Would you prefer working for a Finnish company or an international company?", the purpose of these questions was to understand exactly what factors candidates are looking for when debating on choosing an international company and to understand the mindset Finnish employees have towards international companies.

The responses to the question about what makes an international company attractive included statements such as "probably bigger company and more connections," "social change and high paying jobs," and "career growth and development, salary, travel

opportunities,” highlighting factors like higher salaries, stronger networks, social impact, professional development opportunities, and the chance to travel.

And when asked if candidates would prefer working for a Finnish or international company, an overwhelming majority answered an international company due to the factors mentioned previously. Which proves that the mentality held by Finnish employees is positive towards international companies, also proving that there is a massive potential market within Finnish employees. One participant, however, responded that they would rather work for a Finnish company. The respondent’s preference for a Finnish company reflects a desire for cultural familiarity, perceived security, and comfort within a known environment.

Have you ever chosen not to apply to a company because of a negative employer brand or reputation?

8 responses

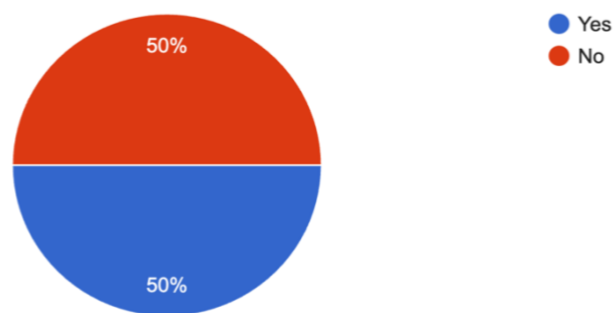


Figure 3: If Candidates Have Ever Chosen Not to Apply Due to Negative Employer Reputation

The next question asked was “Have you ever chosen not to apply to a company because of a negative employer brand or reputation?”. The responses showed an even fifty-fifty split between yes and no. The ones who answered yes, had the opportunity to motivate their reason. The answers showed that the majority of those who chose not to apply was due to stories of previous employees’ personal experiences at the company, again highlighting the importance of a strong internal employer brand and employee satisfaction.

#### 6.4 Determining the Most Important Employer Branding Factors

The second part of the data explores themes such as what employment factors Finnish candidates consider most important, drawing on the theoretical framework of factors affecting employer branding according to Rana, Agarwal, and Sharma (2021). This data consists of data drawn from both surveys sent out to the two sets of participants, including

the Finnish potential employees and the Finnish employees currently working at the case company.

The participants were to choose from a Likert scale (1-5) how important the following factors are: Long-term job security, work-life balance, job content, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), work flexibility (remote vs. office-based), career prospects, financial health (of the company), salary and employee benefits, strong management, good training and pleasant work atmosphere.

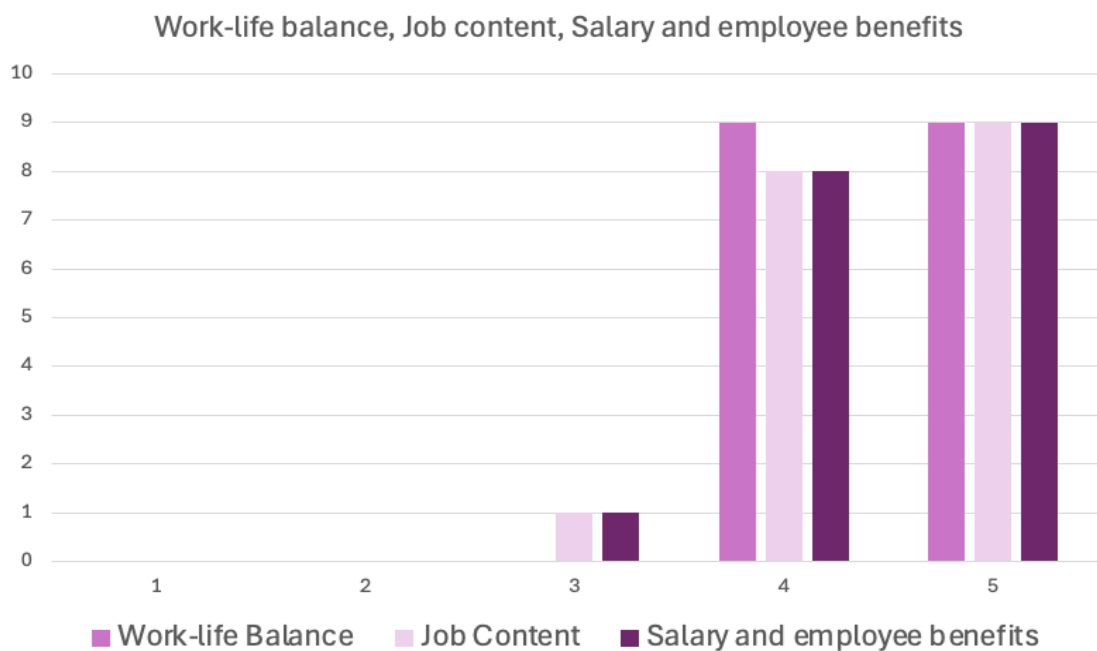


Figure 4: Employer Branding Factors: Work-Life Balance, Job Content, Salary and Employee Benefits

The first questions asked were how important salary and employee benefits, work-life balance and job content are for a potential candidate. The results show that all three factors are highly valued, with most responses at 4 and 5 for each factor. Specifically, work-life balance received 9 responses at 5 and 9 at 4, with an average score of 4.50. Job content had 9 at 5 and 8 at 4, with an average of 4.44. Salary and employee benefits had 9 at 5 and 8 at 4 with also an average of 4.44. Very few participants rated these factors at 3 (only one response each for job content and salary), and none rated them at 1 or 2.

This indicates that employees place a strong emphasis on achieving balance between their professional and personal lives, while also valuing meaningful work and fair compensation. The consistently high ratings across these categories suggest that these are core priorities for individuals when evaluating their employment situation or considering potential employers.

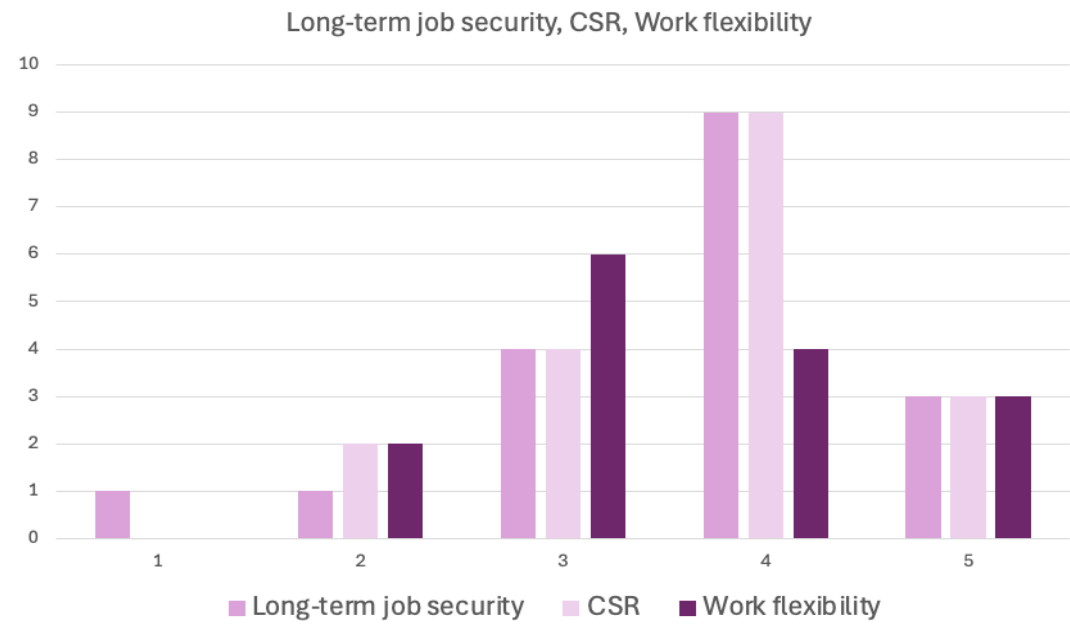


Figure 5: Employer Branding Factors: Long-Term Job Security, CSR, Work Flexibility

The following questions that were asked were how important long-term job security, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and work flexibility are. The results show that all three factors are generally viewed as moderately to highly important, with most responses falling between 3 and 4.

The average for long-term job security was 3.67, and for CSR, it was slightly higher at 3.72. Work flexibility, with an average of 3.53, showed a slightly lower emphasis, with the highest frequency at 3. These findings suggest that while all factors matter, long-term job security and CSR are prioritized slightly more than work flexibility among respondents. There was however, one participant who answered 1 for long-term job security, which may be due to the fact that some of the participants are rather young, therefore it may not be a very significant factor at this stage in life.

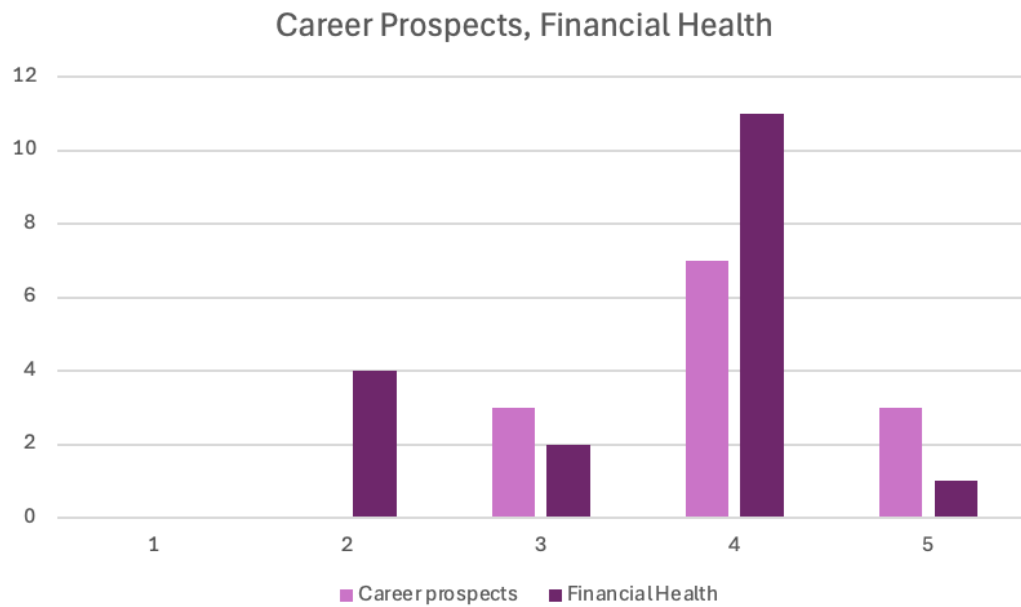


Figure 6: Employer Branding Factors: Career Prospects, Financial Health

When asked about how important career prospects and financial health are to the participants, the results show that financial health was rated slightly more important overall, with a majority selecting 4. Financial health had fewer responses at the extremes, with only one response at 5 and several at 2 and 3. The average score for financial health was 3.50, suggesting that it is not as important in the employee's decision making as the factors in Figure 5.

In comparison, career prospects had a more balanced spread, with additional responses at 3 and 5. The average score for career prospects was 4.00, indicating that while financial health is still valued, they are seen as somewhat less important than career prospects. This suggests that while both factors are valued, career prospects are more consistently seen as important at a practical level, whereas views on financial health are more varied.



Figure 7: Employer Branding Factors: Strong Management, Good Training, Pleasant Work Atmosphere

When asked about the importance of strong management, good training and a pleasant work atmosphere. The responses indicate that a pleasant work atmosphere was rated most highly, with the majority selecting 5, compared to strong management and good training. The average score for pleasant work atmosphere was 4.70, suggesting that respondents place significant importance on having a positive work environment.

Good training and strong management were more frequently rated at 4, with averages of 3.90 and 3.70 respectively. This suggests that these factors are considered important but slightly less critical than the work atmosphere. Lower ratings at 3 were given by a minority for strong management and good training, while no participants rated any factor at 1 or 2.

These results highlight the high value respondents place on a positive work environment, alongside recognition of the importance of management and training for their job satisfaction and success.

Table 2: Averages for the Importance of Employer Branding Factors

Factor	Average
Pleasant Work Atmosphere	4.70
Work-life Balance	4.50
Job Content	4.44
Salary & Employee Benefits	4.44
Career Prospects	4.00
Good Training	3.90
CSR	3.72
Strong Management	3.70
Long-term Job Security	3.67
Work Flexibility	3.53
Financial Health	3.50

The survey results show that participants prioritize several key factors when evaluating potential employers. A pleasant work atmosphere, work-life balance, job content, and salary and employee benefits consistently ranked as the most important, with the highest number of top ratings and very few lower ratings. This indicates that these three factors are central to employment decisions. A pleasant work atmosphere stood out as the most valued factor, with most respondents giving it the highest possible score, resulting in an average of 4.70. This suggests that a positive work environment is a crucial consideration for potential candidates and employees.

Career prospects were seen as important but slightly more varied, with responses spread across ratings 3, 4, and 5, resulting in an average of 4.0. This indicates that while opportunities for advancement matter, they are slightly less prioritized than the core work-life and compensation factors. Strong management and good training were also considered moderately important, with averages of 3.70 and 3.90 respectively, indicating that while they are recognized as important, they do not hold the same weight as the factors mentioned earlier.

Other factors such as long-term job security and CSR were considered important, with most averages between 3.67-3.72. These results suggest that while these factors are valued, they are slightly less critical than work-life balance, job content, salary, and a pleasant work atmosphere. Work flexibility with the average of 3.53, received slightly less emphasis compared to other factors, indicating that while it is a consideration, it is not as central to employment decisions as other aspects.

Overall, the findings suggest that potential candidates are primarily driven by the desire for balance, meaningful work, fair compensation, and a positive work environment, with career growth and organizational stability also playing significant roles in their decision-making.

## 6.5 Current Employee Overview

To determine the current employee satisfaction at the case company a survey was sent to the current Finnish employees exploring themes such as what attracted them to the company, if they feel like there are clear career progression paths, what could make them stay longer at the case company and what they think the company could improve to attract and retain Finnish employees. There were eight participants in this survey and included Finnish employees working in different departments in the company. The findings of this survey will give a clear understanding of which aspects need to be developed to improve the case company's employer brand.

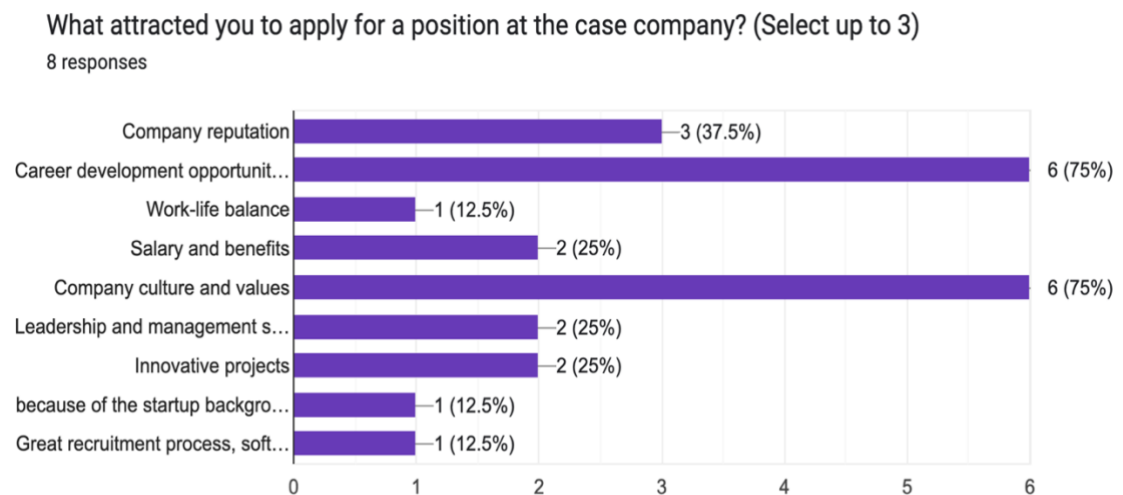


Figure 8: What Attracted Employees to the Case Company

The first question that was asked was “What attracted you to apply for a position at the case company?”. Based on the answers there were two primary factors that attracted the employees, being career developmental opportunities and company culture and values. Other factors highlighted the company reputation, innovative projects and leadership and management style. Participants were also given the opportunity to add their own reasons, and the responses were e.g. “because of the startup background, the company is nimble, flexible and always evolving” and “great recruitment process, soft values in management and

in HR”. These responses show that employees are not only motivated by possible career prospects but also by the company’s dynamic and people-oriented approach, indicating that a combination of innovation, flexibility, and supportive leadership creates a compelling employer brand.

The following questions explored how employees perceive the company’s work environment and what the main decision factors drew them into joining the case company. The first question asked respondents to describe the company in three words. All the responses to the question were overwhelmingly positive including recurring themes such as “fun and positive atmosphere”, “ambitious and driven”, “supportive and caring”. These responses reflect a strong internal culture centered around enjoying the work they do, and a great sense of community. The frequent mention of fun and ambition suggests a well-balanced environment where employees are motivated and personally fulfilled. A combination that is challenging to achieve but imperative for long-term employee engagement.

When asked why they chose the case company over other available opportunities presented to them, respondents highlighted factors such as the speed and clarity of the recruitment process, flexible start date and the overall energy of the company. Many mentioned the appeal of joining a growing organization with an international mindset as well as possible opportunities of expanding to and shaping new markets.

How likely are you to recommend the case company as an employer to a Finnish colleague or friend? (1 being unlikely, 10 being very likely)

8 responses

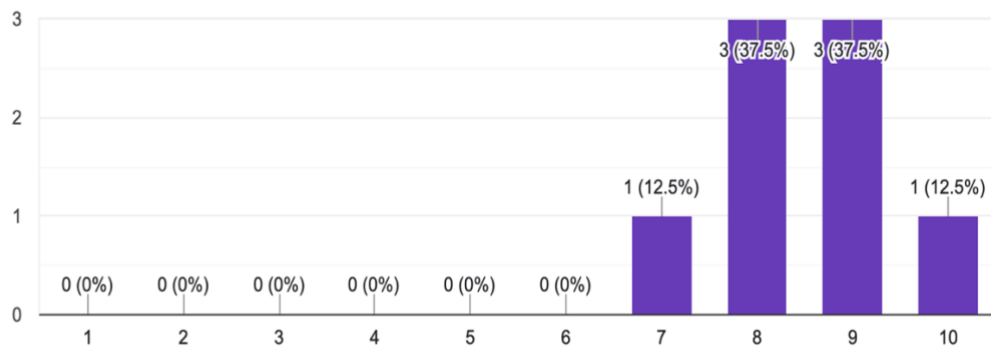


Figure 9: How Likely Employees Are to Recommend the Case Company to a Friend or Colleague

The following question asked whether they would recommend the case company as an employer to a Finnish colleague or friend on a scale from 1-10. As depicted in the chart many

of the respondents would fall into the category of a “promoter” of the company with only one person answering a seven out of ten. Indicating that they have a strong positive opinion of the company, though there is still some room for further improvement.

Do you feel that the case company provides clear career progression opportunities?

8 responses

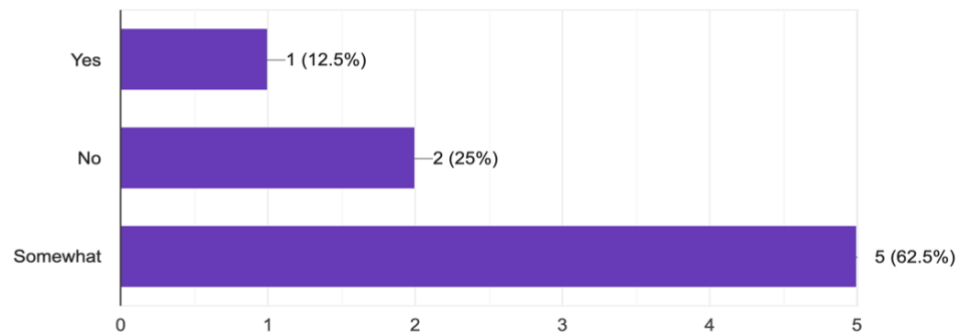


Figure 10: If Employees Feel the Case Company Provides Clear Career Progression Opportunities

When asked if there are clear career progression opportunities at the company, the responses indicated there is a significant room for improvement. The majority answered “somewhat”, while one respondent answered “no”. Only two of the respondents answered with a definitive “yes”. This suggests that while employees may see a potential for growth, they do not feel that the career progression is fully structured or transparent within the organization.

This feedback highlights an opportunity for the company to refine its approach to career development, providing a clearer, more structured path for employees to follow. Implementing an organized and structured framework for career progression, along with transparent communication about opportunities for advancement, could greatly enhance employee satisfaction and retention. This can also be used in attracting new talent, as career development is often a key factor when choosing an employer.

Before applying to the case company, how familiar were you with the company's employer brand?  
8 responses

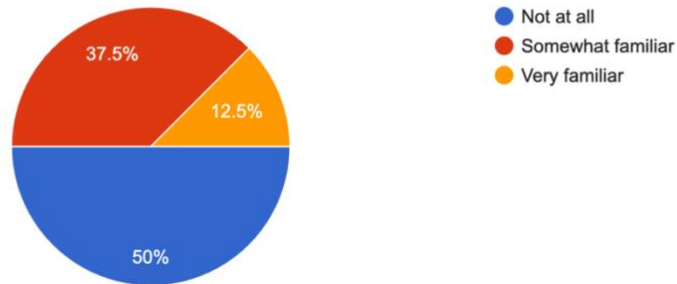


Figure 11: How Familiar Employees Were with the Employer Brand of the Case Company

The participants were then asked if they were familiar with the company's employer brand before applying. As Figure 11 shows, half of the participants had no knowledge of the case company's employer brand. 37,5% answered somewhat and 12,5% answered "very familiar". This indicates that there is still limited visibility among potential candidates, particularly before applying. Meaning there is much room for improvement when it comes to the company's brand awareness amongst potential candidates.

The awareness of the company's brand could be improved through a myriad of ways, including a bigger social media presence, utilizing platforms such as LinkedIn or Instagram. In addition to social media efforts, forming partnerships with universities and actively engaging with them could be highly effective in improving awareness among early career talent and staying top-of-mind as a potential employer when the students graduate.

The next part of the survey explored how satisfied the current Finnish employees are at the case company with factors such as work-life balance, pleasant work environment, salary & employee benefits, long-term job security, job content, work flexibility (remote vs office based), CSR, career prospects, good training, financial health and strong management. The questions asked the participants to rate each factor using a Likert scale of one to five.

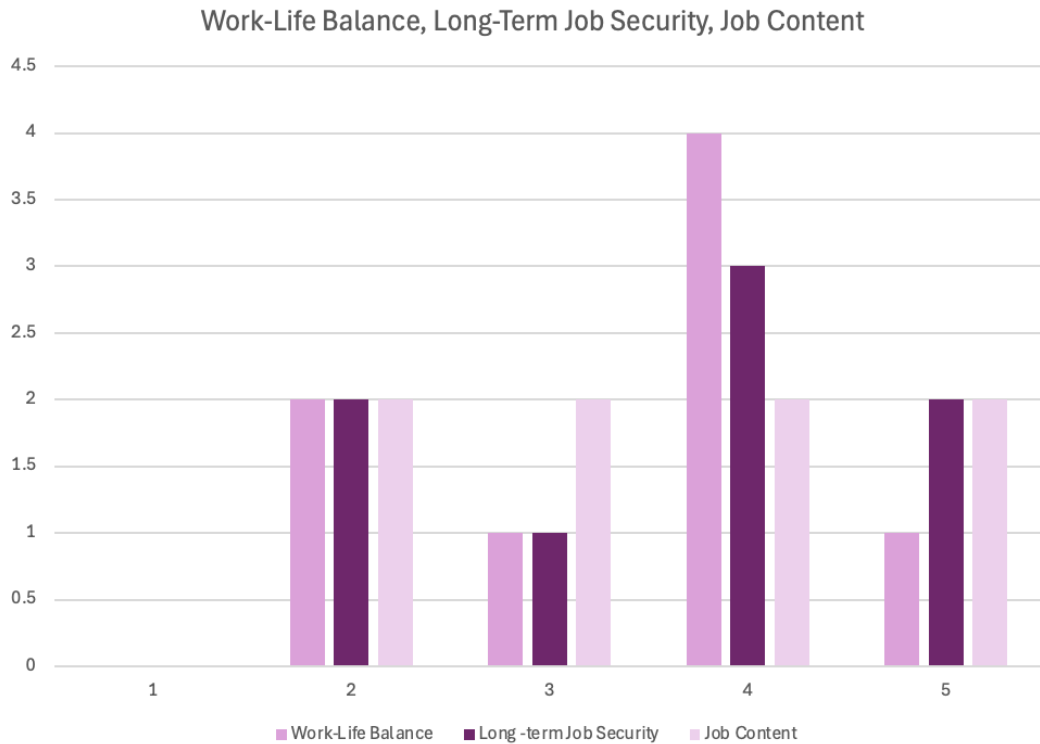


Figure 12: Employer Branding Factors: Work-Life Balance, Long-Term Job Security, Job Content

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with work-life balance, long-term job security, and job content. The results showed moderate to high satisfaction across these factors, though with notable differences in both average scores and distribution.

Work-life balance had an average satisfaction score of 3.50, with responses ranging from 2 to 5. Most participants rated this factor at 4, indicating that a majority were fairly satisfied, though a small group rated it lower, pointing to room for improvement. Long-term job security received the highest average out of these factors at 3.63, with responses clustered mostly at 4 and 5. This suggests that many respondents feel confident in their job stability, though a few rated it lower, reflecting some uncertainty among a smaller portion of the group. Job content had an average of 3.60, with responses evenly spread across the scale from 2 to 5. This balanced distribution indicates varied experiences, while some

respondents were very satisfied with the content of their work, an equal number were neutral or dissatisfied.

Overall, the findings highlight that while work-life balance and job security are generally viewed positively, satisfaction with job content is more divided, suggesting a potential area for organizations to address.

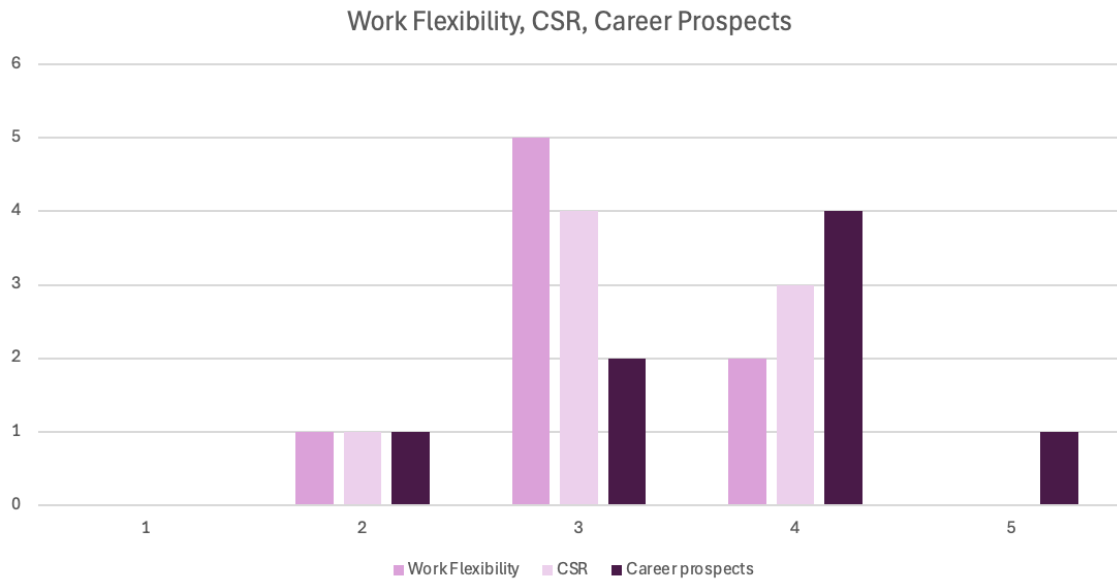


Figure 13: Employer Branding Factors: Work Flexibility, CSR, Career Prospects

Figure 13 presents valuable insights into the employee satisfaction of work flexibility, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and career prospects. The results showed moderate satisfaction across these factors, with some differences in both average scores and response patterns.

Work flexibility had an average satisfaction score of 3.13, with most responses clustered at 3. Very few respondents rated it higher at 4 or lower at 2, and no one gave it the highest or lowest possible score, suggesting moderate but not strong satisfaction. CSR had an average of 3.25, also with most responses falling between 3 and 4. Similar to work flexibility, no participants gave the highest rating of 5, indicating that while CSR efforts are viewed positively, they may not be seen as exceptional. Career prospects had the highest average among the three at 3.63, with responses skewed slightly higher toward 4 and 5. This suggests that while views on advancement opportunities are positive overall, they remain somewhat varied across individuals.

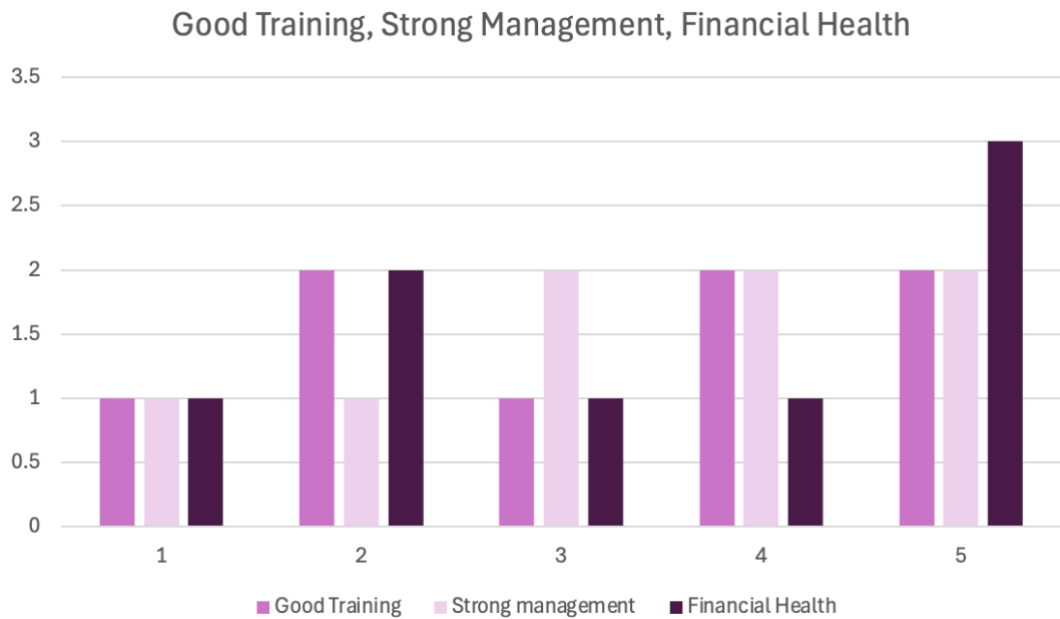


Figure 14: Employer Branding Factors: Good Training, Strong Management

The respondents were then asked how satisfied they were with strong management, good training, and financial health. The results indicate moderate levels of satisfaction across these factors. Strong management and financial health both had an average satisfaction score of 3.38, while good training had a slightly lower average of 3.25.

For strong management, answers ranged from 1 to 5, with most responses clustered around 3, 4, and 5. This suggests mixed perceptions of leadership quality, with some respondents highly satisfied and others more neutral or dissatisfied. Good training showed a similar spread, though slightly more responses were at the lower end, contributing to its lower average. Financial health had the highest concentration of top ratings, with three respondents selecting 5, indicating that while some participants are very satisfied with their organization's financial stability, others expressed lower satisfaction with responses scattered across the full range.

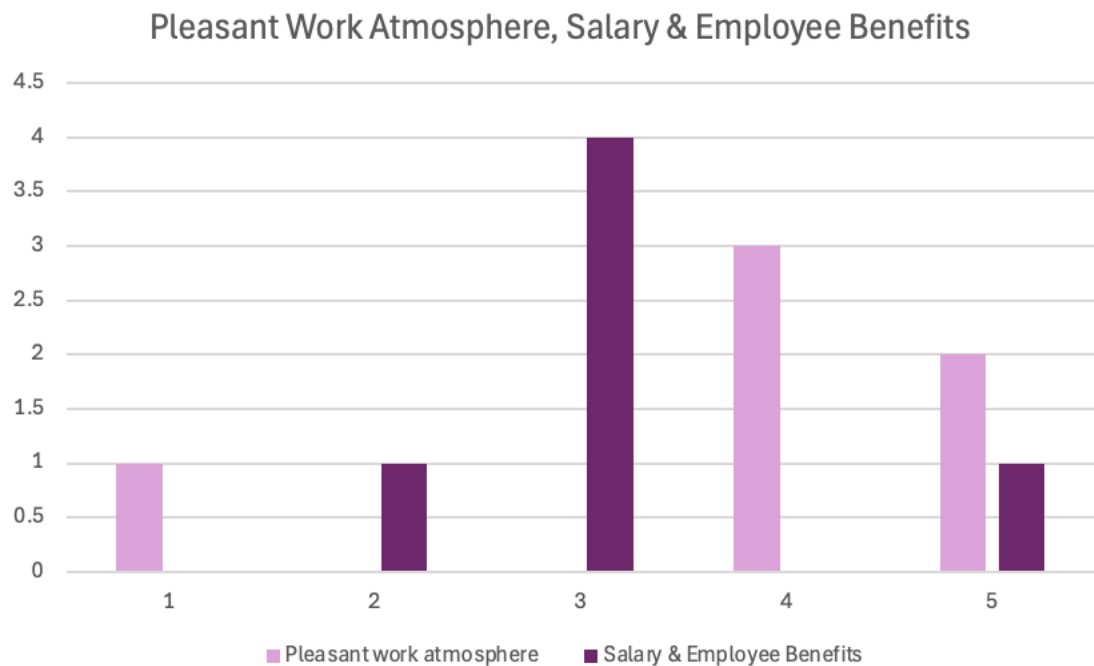


Figure 15: Employer Branding Factors: Pleasant Work Atmosphere, Salary & Employee Benefits

The results show that employees are generally satisfied with the work atmosphere, with an average rating of 3.83. Most respondents rated it positively, with 2 people giving it a 5 and 3 people giving it a 4, though 1 person rated it as low as 1, showing that while the majority feel satisfied, not everyone shares this view.

In contrast, salary and employee benefits received a lower average of 3.17. The responses were more spread out: 1 person rated it 5, 4 people rated it 3, 1 person rated it 2, and no one gave it a 4. This distribution suggests moderate satisfaction overall, but with a tendency toward neutral or lower ratings.

Only six of the eight participants responded to these two questions, so the results may not represent the whole picture. Overall, the work atmosphere is perceived more positively and received the highest average out of all factors. Salary and benefits show a broader range of opinions. These results suggest that improvements in compensation could have a significant impact on employee satisfaction.

Table 3: Averages for the Satisfaction of Employer Branding Factors at the Case Company

Factor	Average
Pleasant Work Atmosphere	3.83
Long-term Job Security	3.63
Career prospects	3.63
Job Content	3.50
Work-life Balance	3.50
Strong Management	3.38
Financial Health	3.38
Good Training	3.25
CSR	3.25
Work Flexibility	3.13
Salary & Employee Benefits	3.17

Overall, the findings suggest that employees were most satisfied with a pleasant work atmosphere, with an average of 3.83, long-term job security and career prospects, with both having an average of 3.63. Work-life balance and job content had the same average of satisfaction which was 3.50. Satisfaction with strong management and financial health is generally positive but varies notably between individuals and had lower averages of 3.38. While a segment of respondents is highly satisfied, others see these areas as needing improvement, pointing to differing experiences within the organizations.

CSR and good training were also seen favorably, though with slightly more moderate levels of satisfaction, with averages of 3.25. Work flexibility and salary & employee benefits had the lowest averages at 3.13 and 3.17 respectively. Overall, while satisfaction is positive across most areas, there is room to further strengthen perceptions of salaries, work flexibility, good training and CSR to better align with employee expectations.

### What would make you stay longer at the case company? (Select up to 3)

8 responses

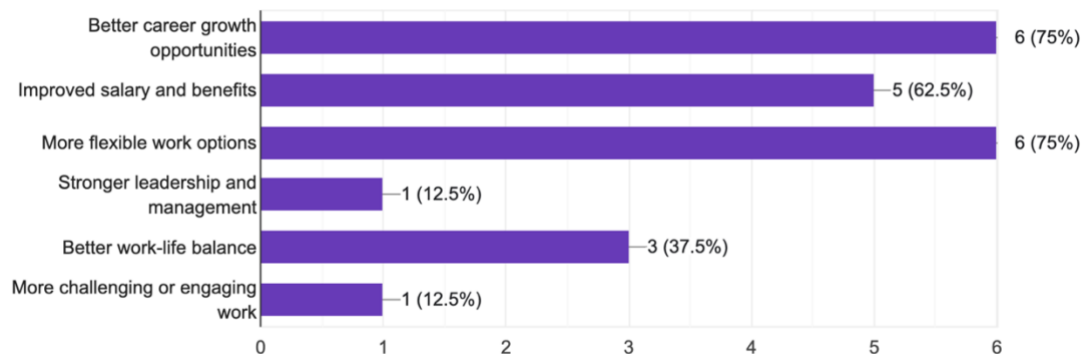


Figure 16: What Factors Would Make Employees Stay Longer at the Case Company

The following question asked participants what would make them stay longer at the case company. The responses highlighted two main key factors such as “better career growth opportunities” as well as “more flexible work options”. These findings align closely with earlier findings and suggest that while employees appreciate many aspects of their current workplace, there are still expectations that are not being fully met.

The desire for more work flexibility indicates a growing employee expectation around hybrid or remote work flexibility. Although the company does offer trusted hours as well as some days available to work from home, employees appear to want more formalized or flexible options for remote work. Implementing a clearer policy on remote or hybrid work, could greatly enhance retention and employee satisfaction.

The final question asked participants for their suggestions on how the case company could improve to better attract and retain Finnish employees. This question is very important to gain valuable insight from the Finnish employees’ perspective on how the case company could develop their recruitment strategy and reduce turnover.

The main findings concerning how to attract Finnish employees were to reach out to universities, to build visibility among Finnish students through university collaborations, job fairs and campus marketing. The second suggestion was to increase employer brand visibility by increasing presence in Finland through marketing channels and events.

The main findings with regards to retaining Finnish employees were to have clearer and more structured career paths, and to develop and have transparent communication around career progression. Improved work-life balance was another suggestion, improving flexible working

conditions such as hours or location. The last suggestion for improving employee retention was to develop localized benefits and well-being support. Matching benefits to Finnish expectation, especially occupational healthcare, which is seen from the Finnish employee perspective as a basic requirement.

## 7 Developmental Proposals

Based on the research findings presented in previous chapters, it brings to light that companies seeking to attract and retain Finnish employees must adapt their employer branding strategies to align with the cultural expectations, values and preferences of Finnish talent. This section introduces a set of developmental proposals for the case company, designed to address their key challenges. These proposals will offer guidance for the case company in their employer branding strategy development for the Finnish market. The first three proposals are targeted for attracting Finnish talent, and the last proposal will bring forth developmental suggestions to increase the retention rate.

The main challenges that were highlighted during this research were lack of presence in the Finnish markets, unclarity with employee career growth and unaligned employee benefits. The proposals presented are grounded in these findings and aim to provide practical solutions for them.

### 7.1 Strengthen Social Media & Digital Employer Presence

The first proposal presented will try to address one of the main challenges of the case company, the limited visibility and weak employer brand awareness in the Finnish market. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of a strong digital employer presence in attracting top talent. According to Heilmann, Saarenketo, and Liikkanen (2013), employer branding efforts must be adapted to local labor market expectations to effectively attract candidates. Similarly, Rys, Schollaert, and Van Hoya (2024) note that employer branding that lacks cultural relevance can fail to resonate with local audiences.

To improve brand awareness and appeal among Finnish job seekers, efforts should be taken to strengthen its digital employer branding across both social media platforms and its career site. The focus should be on authentic storytelling, cultural relevance, and creating a sense of belonging before the candidate even sends in their application.

To align with best practices, the case company should strengthen its digital employer presence across platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram by launching localized campaigns tailored to Finnish audiences. This could include Finnish employee testimonials, highlights of

local team activities, and showcasing development paths similar to what Danone and BCG do. Rana, Agarwal & Sharma (2021) identify employee testimonials and visible career growth as top influencing factors in employer branding.

Personal recommendations and employee testimonials were seen by Finnish candidates as the most trusted source when researching a company. Employee testimonials are also a powerful recruitment tool because they build trust and authenticity with a potential candidate, they offer a glimpse into what it's like to work at the company and makes the employer brand feel more human and credible. According to Human Resource Management International Digest (2019), such approaches can increase retention and reduce hiring costs by improving fit and engagement.

The implementation of these actions may lead to several benefits, such as increased visibility and reach, a better employer brand image and higher engagement and application rates. A well-planned social media strategy could improve visibility among Finnish job seekers who may not be aware of the company or its values. Highlighting authentic stories and values could help shape a more trustworthy image in the minds of external candidates. A developed and dynamic career page that highlights employee experiences could drive engagement and application rates and reduce bounce rates.



Figure 17: Developmental Proposal 1: Strengthen Social Media & Digital Employer Presence

Despite the potential benefits, some contextual factors may influence the success of these actions. It is important to keep in mind cultural nuances, efforts must be taken to make sure content is not overly promotional or exaggerated. Maintaining consistent content might also add too heavy of a workload for the small HR team and may require additional internal resources. It is also important to consider that paid campaigns, while highly effective, require careful budget planning. To ensure the effectiveness of any actions taken, engagement metrics such as page visits and clickthrough rates should be continuously tracked.

## 7.2 Localize Messaging Specifically for the Finnish Market

In addition to the previous proposal focused on market presence, localizing messaging specifically for the Finnish audience could help boost employer brand awareness. Research by Rana, Agarwal, and Sharma (2021) highlights that tailoring communication to match local values and preferences increases employer attractiveness. Furthermore, Rys, Schollaert, and Van Hoye (2024) emphasize that employer branding efforts must resonate with cultural expectations to build trust and engage candidates effectively.

The benchmarking analysis supports this conclusion. For example, both McKinsey and BCG actively promote their employer brands through global project exposure, storytelling around impactful work, and showcasing employee autonomy in challenging roles. McKinsey's use of well-being programs and mentorship opportunities also serves as content that appeals to Finnish job seekers, who value work-life balance and personal development. Similarly, Grænn A/S targets Nordic talent by emphasizing development opportunities and brand creativity, areas currently underrepresented in the case company's external messaging.

The case company doesn't currently communicate in Finnish on any of their platforms, only occasionally reposting content from their Finnish employees. Any content published by the company is usually in either Swedish or English. Translating key branding content and potentially even some of the job posts on LinkedIn in Finnish might increase brand awareness exponentially and reach a wider audience. Using culturally aligned language that appeals to Finnish values and highlighting Finnish employee testimonials, can result in a more positive perception of the company. The company could also include Finnish subtitles in their company videos intended for potential candidates shared on social media or during recruitment campaigns. Another suggestion could be to post employer branding content celebrating Finnish holidays, events or milestones to show cultural compatibility.

Including information about work atmosphere, work-life balance, and job content in the localized messaging is important because these factors are highly valued by Finnish candidates. Bharadwaj et al. (2021) describe employer branding as communicating a unique and attractive image of the organization that fits the expectations of the target employees. This means that localization is not just about language but about reflecting the real values and culture of the target group.

Tailoring its employer branding approach to the local context could not only enhance visibility but also bring several key benefits that could improve the company's positioning in the Finnish talent market. Heilmann, Saarenketo, and Liikkanen (2013) found that employer branding tailored to local needs results in a stronger employer image and attracts more relevant candidates. Rana et al. (2021) also stress that emotional connection and cultural

relevance are key factors when candidates evaluate potential employers. It would also allow the content to reach a wider talent pool, since there are candidates who prefer content in their own language, and it would be more likely to get shared locally, increasing visibility further. It would also give the case company a competitive advantage over other international companies that might overlook localization.



Figure 18: Proposal 2: Localize Messaging Specifically for the Finnish Market

Targeting a specific cultural and linguistic audience adds significant value, but also some added complexity. It would require additional time and coordination to translate any content or localized materials and need frequent updates to make sure that the content remains relevant. The actions would need to be executed thoughtfully to have a strong and beneficial impact.

### 7.3 University & Early Talent Engagement Program

To further support the goal of strengthening presence in the Finnish market, collaborating with local Finnish universities and developing an early talent engagement program could significantly improve brand recognition and relevance. The case company has not collaborated with any Finnish universities to date, but has previously collaborated with a Swedish university, where students were able to visit the Stockholm office, and it was deemed a success. The HR team also indicated in the interview conducted that partnerships with Finnish universities is something that they wish to implement in the future.

There are several ways to develop this collaboration. The company could engage with Finnish universities through job fairs, guest lectures, or internship programs. Such partnerships create a direct recruitment channel for entry-level roles and internships while potentially reducing hiring costs by accessing an already engaged and relevant talent pool. Early engagement with students is particularly important since, according to Bharadwaj et al.

(2021), employer branding should establish a strong emotional connection with talent early on to build loyalty and retention.

Another suggestion might be to launch a Finnish student ambassador program. The ambassador program would entail recruiting students that are studying in relevant fields to represent the company at university events, job fairs or info sessions. They could even organize small-scale meetups, pop-up events or workshops. They could act as the primary contact for peers interested in the company or potential internships. Another option to this would be for the company to organize demo days at universities, where they would have the opportunity to showcase their tech solutions and career opportunities. This approach supports Rana, Agarwal, and Sharma's (2021) view that peer-to-peer engagement builds trust and authenticity, which is more influential than traditional corporate marketing.

A further practical action that could be taken is to organize co-branded events or hackathons that would highlight the company's HR tech strengths. This could increase brand awareness and credibility among students through innovation driven events that align with the company's HR tech expertise. The hackathon could be focused on solving HR challenges that would not only engage students and potential candidates but may also provide innovative solutions for the company. The case company could provide mentorship or real challenges from their own product ecosystem for the hackathon.

Another simpler, lower barrier alternative to a hackathon would be innovation competitions or ideation days. This could include the case company providing a defined HR or tech problem, and students would form teams to pitch their creative solutions for this problem.

Several positive outcomes may emerge as a result of these initiatives. Collaborating with universities will build goodwill and strategic relationships with leading academic institutions. It can also enable future opportunities for collaborative research and thesis projects for example.

There are also many benefits that the company could experience from the internship pipeline, for example it could ensure a flow of talented and motivated students who would be highly committed to learn more about and contribute to the company. Utilizing internships could also be a way of lowering the risk of recruitment. It could be seen as an extended job interview where the top performing interns could become full time employees after graduation. Internships are also a budget friendly way of bringing a fresh perspective and a great opportunity to develop and shape talent early on. The interns that wouldn't end up staying long-term are still likely to promote the company on campus, especially if they've had a positive experience, which would increase the company's reputation even further.

The ambassador program could help build trust with students since they relate to their peers more than corporate ads. It could also create an ongoing presence at universities in a cost-efficient manner. The ambassadors would provide insights on student perceptions and feedback and help to build long-term interest in the company. Having ambassadors representing the company would also ensure that the messaging and engagement are tailored to Finnish student culture and values.

The hackathon and innovation competitions would highlight the case company's strength in both modern, digital HR solutions and within the tech industry. It would also allow potential candidates to interact with the company's culture and people. They could engage participants to become future applicants for full time positions. It would present a good opportunity to generate visual and written content to share on social media or be used in employer branding campaigns.

There are some limitations that could affect putting these ideas into practice. Some universities might have strict rules or not allow on-campus marketing at all. There may also arise some challenges around scheduling events around the academic calendar.



Figure 19: Proposal 3: University & Early Talent Engagement Program

There is also the same challenge concerning limited resources and budget. There might be limited immediate ROI (return on investment) as these activities are long-term investments and converting students into full time hires may take years, though the company might receive short-term benefits from new insights and ideas. These activities aren't scalable either since maintaining consistent engagement across multiple universities would be difficult to manage without a dedicated team. Measuring the impact of these actions is also going to pose a challenge since metrics such as awareness or preferences are hard to track.

#### 7.4 Align Benefits and Career Path to Finnish Expectations

One of the main internal employer branding challenges that has been brought up throughout this research, is the lack of a clear career path for employees. This proposal is intended to address that lack and thereby increase the retention of Finnish employees. While the case company offers career progression opportunities, the communication about them tends to be indirect, often requiring employees to take the initiative in seeking out and pursuing advancement, which, for some, can be a bit confusing or unclear. There are also additional challenges concerning the lack of relocation support, work flexibility and benefits that align with Finnish expectations.

There are steps that could be taken to clear the path for the employees, which would help employees feel more supported and, in turn, more motivated to work hard and grow within the organization. The case company could build clear, visual career progression maps for each department and make them accessible to all employees, outlining the skills, experience, and expectations required to move between levels. It is important to identify all the core competencies for example technical, behavioral, leadership, needed at each stage of an employee's growth. These career maps could be presented and used as a guide throughout the onboarding process and during any relevant individual employee performance review meetings.

The benchmarking analysis supports this proposal. For example, McKinsey and BCG emphasize continuous learning, mentorship, and global project exposure as key components of their career development strategies. Danone and Grænn A/S also incorporate learning platforms and development opportunities as central parts of their employer value proposition. The case company can take inspiration from these examples by formalizing internal development tools and promoting them more actively among current employees.

Additionally, training managers on career coaching and encouraging them to hold structured career discussions as a part of the performance reviews, could act as a support tool for the employees. Incorporating employee growth stories into the internal employer branding and career discussions could boost employee motivation and serve as an achievement to look up to.

To further strengthen its position as an attractive employer for Finnish talent and increasing the retention rate, the case company should consider offering a more tailored package of competitive benefits that align with Finnish standards, such as comprehensive occupational health care. These benefits not only demonstrate the company's commitment to the well-being of its employees but also help to build trust and loyalty internally. They could also offer more schedule flexibility and broader options to work remotely. In addition, offering support

for relocation from Finland to Sweden can make the transition smoother for potential candidates, positioning the company as a supportive and considerate employer. This type of assistance would go a long way in alleviating the concerns of candidates considering an international move.

There are several positive outcomes from implementing these actions in their employer branding strategy. Structuring a clear career progression plan for employees would give meaning and direction for their daily work, and when employees see clear growth opportunities, they are more driven to perform and improve. Career mapping, when used effectively, can increase employee engagement, productivity, and retention by helping employees envision and plan their growth within the company (Society for Human Resource Management, 2024).

They would also be more likely to stay with a company that invests in their long-term development and therefore preserve internal knowledge. It would show the employees that the company invests in its staff, which would significantly improve their employer brand since this is attractive to not only current employees, but potential candidates as well. Through this, the company could position itself as a lasting career destination. Having a clear career progression helps to improve performance management through clear expectations and competencies at each level, making performance reviews more effective, objective and actionable. It would also give the employees a better understanding of what success looks like in their current and future roles. Employees would also feel more empowered to explore different paths within the organization, supporting a dynamic workforce. It could also ensure continuous learning and employee growth.

There are also many advantages of aligning benefits to the Finnish expectations. By integrating a tailored package of competitive benefits that align with Finnish expectations and offering more work flexibility, the case company can significantly enhance its retention rate among the Finnish employees. Offering comprehensive occupational health care, a highly valued benefit in Finland, signals the company's genuine commitment to employee well-being. This not only builds trust and fosters loyalty internally but also strengthens the company's reputation as a responsible and caring employer.

Collectively, these initiatives not only enhance the company's appeal but also foster an environment that values the needs and aspirations of Finnish talent. By prioritizing these aspects, the company would solidify its reputation as an employer of choice, attracting top-tier candidates who are motivated to contribute to its success.

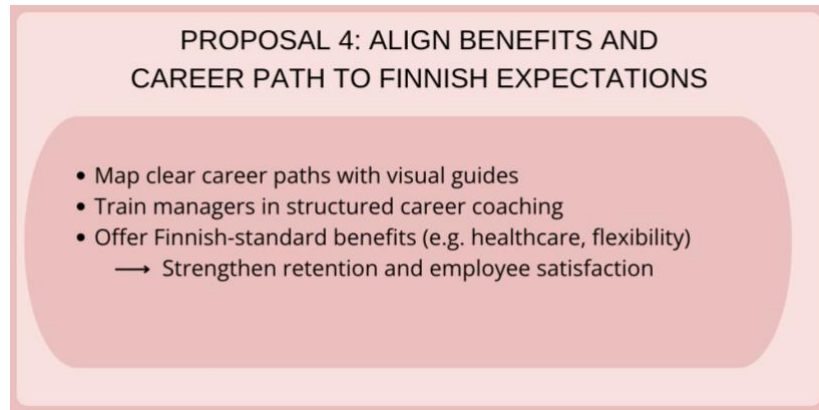


Figure 20: Proposal 4: Align Benefits and Career Path to Finnish Expectations

Although the proposal aims to address key gaps, it is important to discuss the potential limitations that could impact its success. Creating career progression frameworks would require allocating sufficient time to make them useful, and requires collaboration between many departments such as HR, team leads and manager. The responsibilities and roles need to be clearly defined by departments, which may pose a challenge since the company is growing and changing fast. Lack of clarity in the definitions might cause confusion for the employees. Additionally, support with relocation and occupational healthcare is an expensive investment for the company.

Proposal	Actions	Outcome
Strengthen Social Media & Digital Employer Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen digital presence on LinkedIn &amp; Instagram</li> <li>• Share Finnish employee stories/testimonials</li> <li>• Create branded, localized recruitment content</li> </ul>	Track reach and engagement metrics
Localize Messaging Specifically for the Finnish Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translate key materials into Finnish</li> <li>• Post content around Finnish holidays, values</li> <li>• Highlight work-life balance and meaningful work</li> </ul>	Increase trust and relatability through cultural relevance
University & Early Talent Engagement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with Finnish universities</li> <li>• Create internship programs and ambassador roles</li> <li>• Host events, workshops, hackathons</li> </ul>	Build talent pipeline and brand familiarity
Align Benefits and Career Path to Finnish Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map clear career paths with visual guides</li> <li>• Train managers in structured career coaching</li> <li>• Offer Finnish-standard benefits (e.g. healthcare, flexibility)</li> </ul>	Strengthen retention and employee satisfaction

Figure 21: Developmental Proposals, Actions, Outcome

The figure presents a summary of all proposals discussed above for strengthening employer branding and talent engagement in the Finnish market. It is structured into three columns: *Proposal*, *Actions*, and *Outcome*. The figure highlights four strategic proposals: (1) Strengthening social media and digital employer presence, (2) Localizing messaging for the Finnish market, (3) Engaging early talent through partnerships with Finnish universities, and (4) Aligning benefits and career paths with Finnish expectations. Each proposal is accompanied by concrete actions and their intended outcomes.

## 8 Conclusion

The primary goal of this thesis was to provide a foundation for strategic recommendations aimed at enhancing the case company's employer branding to attract and retain skilled Finnish employees. The research for the external employer branding identified key factors valued by Finnish candidates, such as a positive work atmosphere, work-life balance, and engaging job content. The research for the internal branding identified the need for clear career paths and more aligned benefits. Based on these insights, practical proposals were developed to improve job advertisement messaging, increase the company's presence on platforms favored by Finnish job seekers, and better align the employer brand with Finnish cultural expectations.

The case company found the thesis highly insightful, particularly appreciating the dual perspective combining internal and external views on employer branding and retention. The proposed action points were considered relevant and practical, with some being readily implementable to help attract Finnish candidates and strengthen employee retention. The employer also valued the critical thinking behind suggestions that highlighted potential cost implications, adding depth to their decision-making process. Notably, the study revealed employee values, such as the importance of occupational health care, which the company already provides but had not effectively communicated internally. This insight will prompt them to better promote existing benefits and clarify career development paths. Overall, the company plans to use the findings as a foundation for future initiatives related to employer branding and retention strategy.

Reflecting on the research process, a more extensive sample size could have improved the depth and applicability of the results. Time constraints also limited deeper exploration of long-term employer branding effects. For future research, a longitudinal study assessing the impact of implemented strategies over time would provide valuable insights.

The developmental proposals offer the case company actionable steps from a dual perspective to improve its competitiveness in the Finnish labor market while supporting its

international growth objectives. Furthermore, this thesis contributes a practical framework that other organizations aiming to attract Finnish talent can adapt, promoting culturally informed employer branding practices more broadly.

Overall, this work lays groundwork both for the case company's ongoing employer branding development and for further academic and practical exploration of cross-cultural talent attraction strategies.

Through this thesis process, I have significantly developed my research and analytical skills. I learned how to structure and conduct a research project from start to finish, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing meaningful conclusions. Additionally, I gained experience in translating research findings into practical development proposals tailored to a real company's context. This has deepened my understanding of employer branding and talent retention, particularly in a cross-cultural setting. The project also enhanced my critical thinking, project management, and ability to evaluate the feasibility and impact of suggested actions, skills that will be valuable in any future professional or academic setting.

## References

- Anand, G. & Kodali, R. 2008. Benchmarking the benchmarking models. *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 15 (3), 257-291.
- Bharadwaj, S., Singh, R. & Sharma, P. 2021. Employer branding: A strategy to enhance organizational performance. *Global Business Review* 22 (1), 18-35. Accessed 20 April 2025. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0258042X211005330>
- Boston Consulting Group. n.d. About BCG. Accessed 19 April 2025. <https://www.bcg.com/about>
- Danone. n.d. About Danone. Accessed 19 April 2025. <https://www.danone.com/about-danone.html>
- Company X 2025. About Us. Accessed 19 April 2025.
- Grænn A/S. n.d. About Grænn A/S. Accessed 19 April 2025. <https://www.graenn.dk/om-os>
- Heilmann, P., Saarenketo, S. & Liikkanen, K. 2013. Employer branding in power industry. *International Journal of Energy Sector Management* 7 (2), 293-296. Accessed 3 May 2025. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ijesm-03-2012-0003/full/html>
- Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. 2015. *Tutki ja Kirjoita*. E-book. Helsinki: Tammi.
- Human Resource Management International Digest. 2019. The strategic importance of employer branding in an organisation's performance. *Human Resource Management International Digest*. 27 (7), 31-33. Accessed 3 May 2025. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/HRMID-04-2019-0104>
- McKinsey & Company. n.d. About us. Accessed 19 April 2025. <https://www.mckinsey.com/about-us>
- Rana, S., Agarwal, A. & Sharma, R. 2021. *Employer branding For Competitive Advantage*. E-book. Accessed 10 April 2025.
- Rutanen, N. & Vehkalahti, K. 2019. Changing fields of research ethics in research with children and youth. In Rutanen, N. & Vehkalahti, K. (eds.) *From research ethical regulation to lived encounters: Ethics in research with children and youth II*. Publications of the Youth Research Network / Youth Research Society 218, 7-31.
- Rys, T., Schollaert, E. & Van Hoye, G. 2024. Living the Employer Brand During a Crisis: A Qualitative Study. Accessed 3 May 2025. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0303361>
- Sharma, A., Tripathi, S., Gupta, A. & Singh, S. 2024. Mediating role of employer branding in employee engagement: An empirical study. Accessed 3 May 2025. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/jabs-02-2024-0089/full/html>
- Society for Human Resource Management. 2024. Developing employee career paths and ladders: Improve employee engagement, productivity and retention with career mapping. Accessed 16 May 2025. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developingemployeecareerpathsandladders.aspx>
- OpenAI. 2025. Accessed 19 April 2025.

## Figures

Figure 1: How Finnish Candidates Search for Jobs .....	14
Figure 2: Trusted Sources Candidates Use to Research Companies .....	15
Figure 3: If Candidates Have Ever Chosen Not to Apply Due to Negative Employer Reputation .....	16
Figure 4: Employer Branding Factors: Work-Life Balance, Job Content, Salary and Employee Benefits.....	17
Figure 5: Employer Branding Factors: Long-Term Job Security, CSR, Work Flexibility .....	18
Figure 6: Employer Branding Factors: Career Prospects, Financial Health.....	19
Figure 7: Employer Branding Factors: Strong Management, Good Training, Pleasant Work Atmosphere .....	20
Figure 8: What Attracted Employees to the Case Company .....	22
Figure 9: How Likely Employees Are to Recommend the Case Company to a Friend or Colleague.....	23
Figure 10: If Employees Feel the Case Company Provides Clear Career Progression Opportunities .....	24
Figure 11: How Familiar Employees Were with the Employer Brand of the Case Company ....	25
Figure 12: Employer Branding Factors: Work-Life Balance, Long-Term Job Security, Job Content.....	26
Figure 13: Employer Branding Factors: Work Flexibility, CSR, Career Prospects.....	27
Figure 14: Employer Branding Factors: Good Training, Strong Management.....	28
Figure 15: Employer Branding Factors: Pleasant Work Atmosphere, Salary & Employee Benefits .....	29
Figure 16: What Factors Would Make Employees Stay Longer at the Case Company .....	31
Figure 17: Developmental Proposal 1: Strengthen Social Media & Digital Employer Presence	33
Figure 18: Proposal 2: Localize Messaging Specifically for the Finnish Market .....	35
Figure 19: Proposal 3: University & Early Talent Engagement Program .....	37
Figure 20: Proposal 4: Align Benefits and Career Path to Finnish Expectations .....	40
Figure 21: Developmental Proposals, Actions, Outcome.....	40

## Tables

Table 1: Benchmarking.....	11
Table 2: Averages of Importance for Employer Branding Factors .....	11
Table 2: Averages of Satisfaction for Employer Branding Factors at the Case Company .....	31



## Appendices

Appendix 1: The Interview Questions with HR.....	47
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Finnish Employees .....	47
Appendix 3: Questionnaire for Finnish Employees at the Case Company .....	47

## Appendix 1: The Interview Questions with HR

### General Employer Branding Strategy

1. How would you describe the company's current employer branding strategy and its main goals?
2. Do you have a documented employer branding strategy, and how often is it reviewed or updated?

### Attracting Talent

3. What channels do you use to attract new talent, and how do you position us as an attractive employer in Finland and internationally?

Have you conducted employer branding campaigns targeting Finnish employees, and what were the results?

4. Do you collaborate with universities or educational institutions to attract young talent?

### Employee Experience & Retention

6. What initiatives do you have in place to ensure a positive employee experience and work culture?
7. How do you gather and act on employee feedback regarding their experience at the company?
8. What career growth and development programs do you offer employees?

### Competitive Positioning & Challenges

9. How does your employer brand compare to competitors, and what challenges do you face in attracting and retaining Finnish employees?
10. Have you conducted employer brand perception surveys, and what were the key findings?

11. How does your employer branding strategy reflect your commitment to diversity and inclusion?
12. What steps do you take to ensure inclusivity in your hiring and workplace culture?
13. How do you measure the effectiveness of your employer branding efforts?
15. What policies or initiatives do you have in place to support work-life balance, such as flexible working arrangements?
16. How does your salary structure and employee benefits compare to industry standards?
17. What strategies do you use to ensure long-term job security for employees?
19. How does the company ensure that employees find their work meaningful and engaging?
23. How does leadership contribute to shaping and maintaining a strong employer brand?

#### Language in Job Advertising

25. How does the company approach the language used in job advertisements to attract candidates?
26. Do you tailor job postings based on different target audiences (e.g., Finnish vs. international candidates)?
27. Have you conducted research or testing to determine which wording or tone is most effective in job ads?
28. Do you apply marketing principles (such as storytelling or emotional appeal) when crafting job postings?

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Finnish Employees

### How do you typically search for job opportunities? (Select all that apply)

- Job portals (e.g., LinkedIn, Indeed)    Company career pages    Recruitment agencies/headhunters
- Networking and referrals    Social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook)    University career services
- Job fairs and industry events    Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Which sources do you trust the most when researching a company's employer brand? (Select up to 3)

- Company website    Employee reviews (e.g., Glassdoor, Google Reviews)    Social media presence
- News and media coverage    Personal recommendations/referrals    Job advertisements
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### What do you think makes an international company attractive to Finnish employees?

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Would you prefer working for a Finnish company or an international company? Why?

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### When considering job opportunities, how important are the following factors to you?

(Rate 1-5, with 1 = not important, 5 = very important)

- Long-term job security   1   2   3   4   5
- Work-life balance   1   2   3   4   5
- Job content   1   2   3   4   5
- CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)  
1   2   3   4   5
- Work flexibility (remote vs. office-based)   1   2   3   4   5
- Salary and employee benefits   1   2   3   4   5
- Strong management   1   2   3   4   5
- Good training   1   2   3   4   5
- Pleasant work atmosphere   1   2   3   4   5

- Career prospects 1 2 3 4 5
- Financial health 1 2 3 4 5

---

**How important is employer branding when choosing where to apply?**

(Scale: 1 = Not important, 5 = Very important)

1 2 3 4 5

---

**Have you ever chosen not to apply to a company because of a negative employer brand or reputation?**

Yes     No

---

**If yes, what factors influenced your decision?**

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for Finnish Employees at Hailey HR

**What attracted you to apply for a position at the case company? (Select up to 3)**

Company reputation     Career development opportunities     Work-life balance   

Salary and benefits

Company culture and values     Leadership and management style     Innovative projects

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**How would you describe Hailey HR's work culture to a friend or colleague in 3 words?**

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**What were the main reasons you decided to work at Hailey HR over other opportunities available to you?**

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**How likely are you to recommend the case company as an employer to a Finnish colleague or friend?**

(1 = unlikely, 10 = very likely)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

---

**Do you feel that the case company provides clear career progression opportunities?**

Yes     No     Somewhat

---

**When considering job opportunities, how important are the following factors to you?**

(Rate 1-5, with 1 = not important, 5 = very important)

- Long-term job security 1 2 3 4 5
- Work-life balance 1 2 3 4 5
- Job content 1 2 3 4 5
- CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)  
1 2 3 4 5
- Work flexibility (remote vs. office-based) 1 2 3 4 5
- Career prospects 1 2 3 4 5
- Financial health 1 2 3 4 5

---

**How satisfied are you with the following aspects of working at the case company?**

(Likert scale: 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)

- Work-life balance 1 2 3 4 5
- Long-term job security 1 2 3 4 5
- Job content 1 2 3 4 5
- Work flexibility 1 2 3 4 5
- CSR 1 2 3 4 5
- Good training 1 2 3 4 5
- Career prospects 1 2 3 4 5
- Strong management 1 2 3 4 5
- Financial health 1 2 3 4 5

---

**How does the case company's employer brand compare to other companies you've worked for or considered?**

(1 = much worse, 5 = much better)

1 2 3 4 5

\_\_\_\_\_

**Before applying to the case company, how familiar were you with the company's employer brand?**

Not at all     Somewhat familiar     Very familiar

\_\_\_\_\_

**What would make you stay longer at the case company? (Select up to 3)**

Better career growth opportunities     Improved salary and benefits     More flexible work options

Stronger leadership and management     Better work-life balance     More challenging or engaging work     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What aspects of Hailey HR's employer brand do you think stand out compared to other companies in Finland?**

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think Hailey HR could improve to better attract and retain Finnish employees?**

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_