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State and Development of Talent Management at Siili Solutions Plc

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<p>Competition for talent is intensifying and organisations are fighting skills shortages in a variety of ways. Talent has become a leverage to achieve competitive advantage and a key differentiator for human capital management. Talent management can be seen as a set of activities that can help an organisation prepare for unexpected events in order to ensure success in the future. Talent management as a process can be broken down into four segments: attraction, development, engagement and retention.</p> <p>The purpose of the thesis was to describe the current state of talent management at Siili Solutions Plc. The objective of this thesis was to recognise challenges and development areas and offer knowledge for Siili Solutions Plc to further develop its talent management processes and practices in the future to better attract and retain top talent.</p> <p>A qualitative approach was used as a research method. Data were collected in June 2017 by interviewing three competence area directors presenting all three competence areas of the company by utilising individual theme interviews. The data were analysed with deductive content analysis. Based on the content analysis, three themes containing nine categories were formed regarding the practical implementation of the talent management. To describe the challenges and development areas of talent management, two themes containing eight categories were formed.</p> <p>The current talent management approach was found to be inclusive and aimed at all levels of the workforce to offer the equal benefits and growth and development opportunities to all parties involved. Talent management activities of attraction, identification, engagement and retention seemed to be the areas where development was most needed the most. Many well-structured and functioning elements of talent management were found, yet a comprehensive and clearly communicated talent management process framework and talent management strategy were missing. A well-defined meaning of talent management and a clearly stated talent management strategy could improve the awareness and understanding of talent management objectives. Results of the thesis can offer knowledge and guidance for Siili Solutions Plc and other companies in planning and developing talent management processes.</p>	
Keywords	Content analysis, qualitative study, talent management, theme interview

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1 Introduction

One of the first times, when the term "talent management" rose to prominence was in the 1988 "War for Talent" report in created by McKinsey & Company. It stated that, the top talent was necessary for companies wanting to be adaptable, successful and decisive, but that they often found themselves unable to fill the key positions. The talent management process was seen as the answer to help attract and retain employees through the creation of key-value propositions as well as the development of an attractive workplace environment. (Chambers et al. 1998: 45-46)

Now, twenty years later, organisations around the world are experiencing growing competition for talent and many of them are increasingly recognising that tackling the problem of skills shortages in a variety of ways is the only way to stay in operation and competitive (Hays 2017). Research shows that most organisations have currently a dual focus on both recruiting key talent, while also growing and developing more talent in-house. Organisations also are becoming more aware that the skills needed for jobs in their companies are changing at a faster rate than ever before. (CIPD 2017)

When looking at the current situation in the European and Nordic labour markets, there is increased competition for talent. Moreover, developing the existing talent pool and the difficulty of attracting senior employees becomes a challenge. In order to fight and overcome the challenges faced in recruitment and in the labour markets, it is more important than ever for organisations to be agile and remain alert to all the possible changes regarding markets and competition in order to continue to attract and retain the best-skilled talents. (CIPD 2017)

Companies investing more on talent practices and moving their focus progressively towards building both attractive employer brand and processes to both support and develop existing staff are expected to come on top in the tightening competition and fight for talents. Organisational values are currently described as the most important aspects of attracting candidates, followed by personal career and development opportunities offered as well as pay and benefits. (CIPD 2017; Hays 2017) While the labour market situation and skills shortages experienced, are likely to remain challenging,

organisations are expected to look into different media channels and new ways to attract the best talent. According to studies, organisations are expected to increase their attention on retaining rather than recruiting talent. Furthermore, investment in the development of in-house talent is expected to massively grow in the upcoming years. (CIPD 2017)

When considering markets where competition for skilled labour is fiercest, the IT sector emerges as an industry with major shortages. For example, the Nordic countries are currently suffering from a chronic shortage of software developers and the situation is rather similar in most of the developed countries around the world. Finland alone is estimated having an immediate deficit of over 7,000 developers and the demand is expected to increase by up to 3,800 programmers annually the upcoming years. (Naumov 2017)

According to the 2017 Hays Global Skills Index, Sweden is another good example of a country in dire need for highly skilled software developers. The reasons tech talent shortage varies greatly across countries could be related to geographical location, demographics, education level and bureaucracy of a region. In order to stay alive and competitive in the tightening market, organisations need to continue building an attractive employer brand and focus on increasing investment on talent management practices to both attract and retain the top talent. (Hays 2017)

The case company, Siili Solutions Plc (Siili), is a modern software integrator and digital service developer company headquartered in Helsinki, Finland, with operations in Poland, Germany and United States. Siili's strategy of organic growth with the support of corporate acquisitions has made it as one of the fastest growing modern IT companies in Finland. Siili's growth and well-recognised employer brand is based on the respect for its employees and appreciation of its top talent expertise. (Siili 2018)

The purpose of the thesis was to describe the current state of talent management at Siili and recognise the challenges and development areas in need for attention. The objective of this thesis was to recognise current talent management processes and practices at the case company and to offer perspective and knowledge to further develop talent management at the Siili.

2 Talent Management

2.1 Definition and theoretical background

Term "war for talent" was born in the late 90s, to describe the increasing challenges companies were facing to attract and to retain the best talent. Businesses finally began understanding how important of a factor human capital had become in order to stay competitive and ahead of competition both financially and technologically. (Armstrong 2006: 389). While Armstrong characterises talent management as the "war for talent", he also argues that this very definition also downplays the role of the talent which is within the company. Attraction, retention, engagement, motivation, development, and success planning are all described as elements of talent management. According to Armstrong "the main aim is to develop and maintain a talent pool consisting of a skilled, engaged and committed workforce." (Armstrong 2006: 389-390)

Human Capital Institute and D. Creelman describe talent management as not as a set of topics, but a mindset or a perspective. According to Human Capital Institute and D. Creelman, talent management is more of a set of tools and technologies that help organisations make better decisions about their talent. Talent management needs to be considered as one of top concerns and priorities for managers to make it work. Full benefits of talent management can only be achieved when properly integrated and connected to both corporate strategy and business needs of the company. (Creelman 2004: 3-5)

Talent management can also be seen as a set of tools for management of the organisation to prepare for unexpected events while ensuring success in the future. It consists of actions to attract, develop, engage and retain talented people who could eventually succeed top management. Talent management should not be mixed with knowledge management, which is more of a process of identifying, creating and distributing knowledge among workforce for the betterment of the company. (Stadler 2011: 264-266)

2.1.1 Talent management strategy

An organisation needs to have a positive and strong employer brand and strategy in order to both attract and retain the best talent (Brewster et al. 2005: 965-966). Talent has become a leverage to achieve competitive advantage over the competition and a key differentiator for human capital management. Being integrated as a part of strategic human resource management (HRM), managing talent acts as one of the primary functions HRM is using strategically in organisations. Several studies suggest that the war for talent is intense mainly due to labour market shortages but still a very little research and attention has been aimed at competitive talent management strategies. Every successful company needs a well-formed strategy to guide the use of its resources according to current capabilities and weaknesses while being aware of its surroundings and changes in competition. (Cappelli: 2000)

It's debatable, whether success planning is a subset of talent management, or whether the latter is just an evolution of the former. Succession planning as an activity should be distinctly tied to the organisations strategy because businesses need to acknowledge where they are heading in order to plan what they need to get there, and therefore link HR and talent management strategy and processes to business results (Farley, 2005: 55). Figure 1 describes one view on how talent management is positioned in relation to organisation's strategy, human resource management and succession planning (Blass 2009: 22)

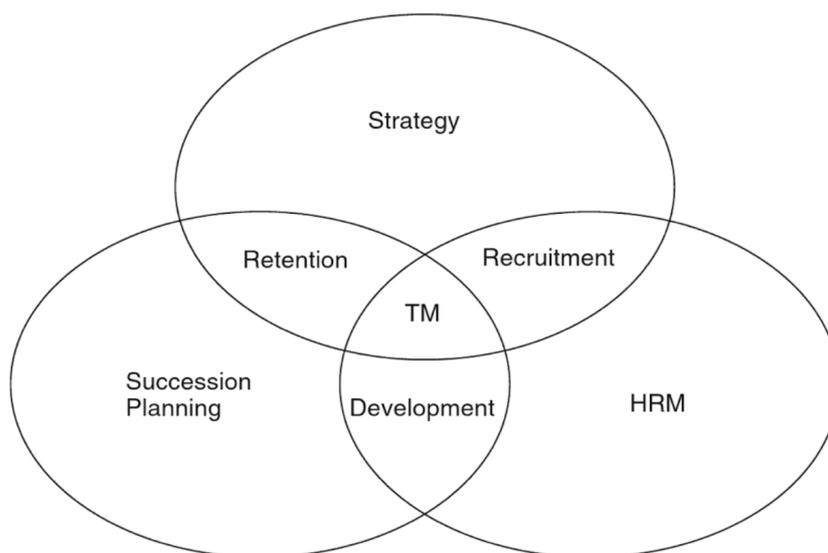


Figure 1 Talent management territory mapping (Blass 2009: 22)

2.1.2 Talent attraction

HR development and talent management are described as vital elements of any successful business. Placing the most capable candidates in right positions is as important as building an attractive employer brand. To fortify company's competitive advantage, it is important to ensure a constant supply of highly skilled people both available and joining the company to meet the company's customer demands while enabling overall growth of the business. To meet requirements of the future, companies can prepare by creating and maintaining relationships to educational institutes close to the field of business they are operating in. IT companies, for example, aim to maintain good connections to technology universities to attract and eventually hire the finest analysts, statisticians, and software developers. (Armstrong 2006: 393-395)

Attracting talents becomes a tougher challenge for companies to confront as the fight for talents becomes more intense. Attractive organisational cultures often consist of characteristics such as the balance between work and play, opportunities for personal growth, salary and benefits as well as the actions of management and executive personnel. A successful company brand is built on these kinds of intangible characteristics and naturally have a great effect on the level of appreciation in the labour market. Organisations who attract the brightest often not only win the war for talent but beat the competition also. Employer's reputation plays a large role because the same marketing that is used for attracting new customers and to manage customer relationships also attracts the talent. (Armstrong 2006: 393-395)

While being a strong part of HR work, talent management offers an organisation a proper set of competence and skill to meet the current and upcoming business needs. If recruiting talents with various backgrounds and skillset are not in line with market and customer demands, there lies a risk of company's processes, innovativeness, and commercial success to stumble into serious bottlenecks. (Bodden et al. 2000: 14-15)

By making the right, preventive decisions early enough are essential for both attracting and retaining the employees required. Businesses that fail to put enough emphasis on talent management will often confront difficulties of keeping the resources needed for their business. If employers do not seem to invest sufficiently in the development and

career prospects of their people, top talents and performers are highly likely to switch companies. (Finegold & Mohrman: 2001: 34-35)

2.1.3 Talent development

Talent development practices of the company, ways of identifying talent internally and offering of assorted personal development opportunities, vary greatly depending on the talent management strategy and approached being practised in an organisation. Depending on to whom the strategy is aimed at, companies can offer both structured and formal personal development programs and opportunities in their management programs and in a form of structured qualifications such as the MBA degree. These approaches are often both resource intensive and expensive options and therefore are not usually offered or accessible to all employees. (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010: 105-106) Tansley et al. (2007: 21) call this as an exclusive approach to talent development and talent planning, focusing mainly on the high performers and the key positions for development planning and these individuals are usually located in a single talent pool.

The inclusive approach recognises that there are potential employees at all levels in the organisation who have talent useful to the organisation. Making full use of all talents in all talent pools in the organisation, maximises the benefits to the business while offering motivating and career advancing opportunities for all employees. In inclusive approach, less formal development opportunities are often offered for example in a form of coaching, courses and workshops. Also, talent often can have more influence over options offered in an organisation using inclusive approach. This approach is normally characterised by having multiple talent pools in an organisation in form of, for example, multiple teams or tribes, each grouped together based on, for example, a particular set of skills and competence. (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2010: 105-106) According to Tansley et al. (2007: 21-22), most organisations nowadays seem to have a mixing hybrid model in use, that combines and uses elements from both exclusive and inclusive approach. Investing in training and development on all company levels to broaden and deepen the skills of their employees, provides companies an opportunity to be thinking and preparing more towards the future and improve retention rate by taking a long-term perspective to talent development and management. (Hay, 2002: 52-55)

2.1.4 Talent retention

Today, the competition for talents, especially Millennials, is intense and their engagement at work is essential due to this age group being less loyal to organisations than other generations before them (Global Human Capital Trends 2016: 47). Level of retention is directly tied to talent recognition and ultimately to the financial success of the business (Berger & Berger 2004: 407). The possible turnover of company's key employees can have a major impact on both the business and the talents organisations aim to retain. These employees are also often considered the ones most likely to leave. Mutual, preventive procedures and guidelines are essential to retain talents, but there are also limitations to what organisations can do about it. The existing talents should feel valued and appreciated to not consider changing employer. (Armstrong 2006: 397)

In order to accomplish this and retain the talent, personalisation is needed. Several empirical studies prove employee retention is an individual phenomenon as many variables can affect the probability of somebody staying in any given job and position meaning any attempt at influencing the likelihood of leaving will require a greatly personalised approach. (Meifert 2013: 226) The nature of careers is changing and while companies tend to invest greatly in employees with the intention of retaining them even for decades, the current situation is somewhat different. Today, because employees change jobs more quickly, employers must, for example, offer better and quicker development possibilities, move people more regularly from a position to another, offer a variety of promotions and also provide employees more tools to manage their own careers better. (Global Human Capital Trends 2016: 49)

2.2 People management

The people strategy represents a holistic strategy for the development of an organisation's human capital in line with the greater strategic requirements of the organisation. This means that the people strategy does not stop where the HR unit ends. People management is not simply about making HR units work more efficiently. The organisation's line managers are among the leading actors in the people strategy as they are the prime levers to influence human capital. Other corporate functions, such as marketing, also take part, for example, when it comes to raising the company's

attractiveness as an employer, launching new brand campaigns, or measuring the satisfaction of customers. Going beyond the accustomed boundaries of HR has been recognised as the key to the success, or failure, of the HR function. Depending on organisation's definition of talent management strategy and the wording used, the term people management is often used instead of talent management to emphasise people instead of talents. (Cascio, 2005: 159-163)

3 Research problems, purpose and objectives of study

The purpose of the thesis was to describe the current state of talent management at Siili and recognise the challenges and development areas in need for attention. The objective of this thesis was to recognise and further develop talent management processes and practices at Siili.

Research questions are the following.

1. How is talent management implemented at Siili?
2. What challenges is Siili facing regarding talent management?
3. How can talent management be improved at Siili?

4 Materials and methods

4.1 Research method

A qualitative approach was chosen for the approach of this thesis because very little was known about the current state and the implementation of talent management at Siili, thus qualitative approach enabled a holistic and comprehensive picture of talent management implementation at this time. The qualitative approach was also justified, as the purpose was to gain the most comprehensive and rich data to describe the phenomenon being studied. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was justified since the purpose of the thesis was not to find statistical significances or to generalise the study results to other populations. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008: 176-177, Ojasalo et al. 2008: 93)

The starting point for qualitative research was to describe real life and aim of the research was to describe the examined subject as comprehensively as possible. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008: 157, Ojasalo et al. 2008: 94) According to Eskola and Suoranta (1998: 15-16) when using qualitative research method, the research plan and changing its form throughout the study is a part of the research project. Qualitative methods are used to achieve the process form of the studied phenomenon (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 15-16).

In a qualitative approach, researchers typically concentrate on the small size of the underlying phenomenon and to further analyse it as closely as possible. This way it can be stated that the material analysis and its results are not based on their quantity but quality instead. Not having a hypothesis is also a feature of qualitative research. This means that the researcher should not have any assumptions about the subject or results of the research beforehand, this it is essential to identify such predicament assumptions and to try constantly learn more about the studied phenomenon as new research proceeds. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998: 16-20) In qualitative research, it is also typical to collect the material from real life situations and favouring people as a source of information. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008: 157, Ojasalo et al. 2008: 94)

4.2 Case company and sample

Siili is a modern software integrator and digital service developer company of about 600 employers, headquartered in Helsinki, Finland and operating also in Poland, Germany and United States. Since its establishment in 2005, Siili has been one of the fastest growing modern IT companies in Finland. Siili's strategy is continuous and profitable organic growth with the support of corporate acquisitions and with respect for company's employees and appreciation of its top talent expertise. (Siili 2018)

Siili specialises in helping its customers meet the challenges of digitalisation in the rapidly changing business environment, where companies need to transform and evolve quickly and iteratively. Siili's role in the market is to be the trusted advisor, digital developer and service provider within the competence areas of service design, data management and software development. Siili's competitive advantage in the market is the knowledge and ability to combine these areas in an agile, efficient, transparent and technology-independent way. Continuous improvement, openness, entrepreneurial way of working

and customer-focused business models, are the cornerstones of the company's mission to be one of the world-leading integrators of design, software development, data and business understanding. (Siili 2018)

For the sample of this thesis, three competence area directors presenting all three competence areas of the company were chosen and interviewed. The directors present the highest level of knowledge in the case company regarding the combination of both practical implementations of the elements of talent management, combined with the knowledge of each competence area – the cornerstones – of the company. The sample chosen offered a comprehensive and unbiased view on the current state of talent management processes, which offered valuable information for management, HR, and recruitment, the parties responsible for talent management development decisions. The purpose of the interviews was to gather objective information and knowledge of the current state of talent management and in the form of a thesis, offer the results for parties involved with planning and developing case company's talent management processes. In the organisational hierarchy of the case company, competence area directors possessed the ideal position (Figure 2.) between the chief of human resources operations and the tribal leaders to offer the best view and understanding about the current state of talent management and the challenges involved.

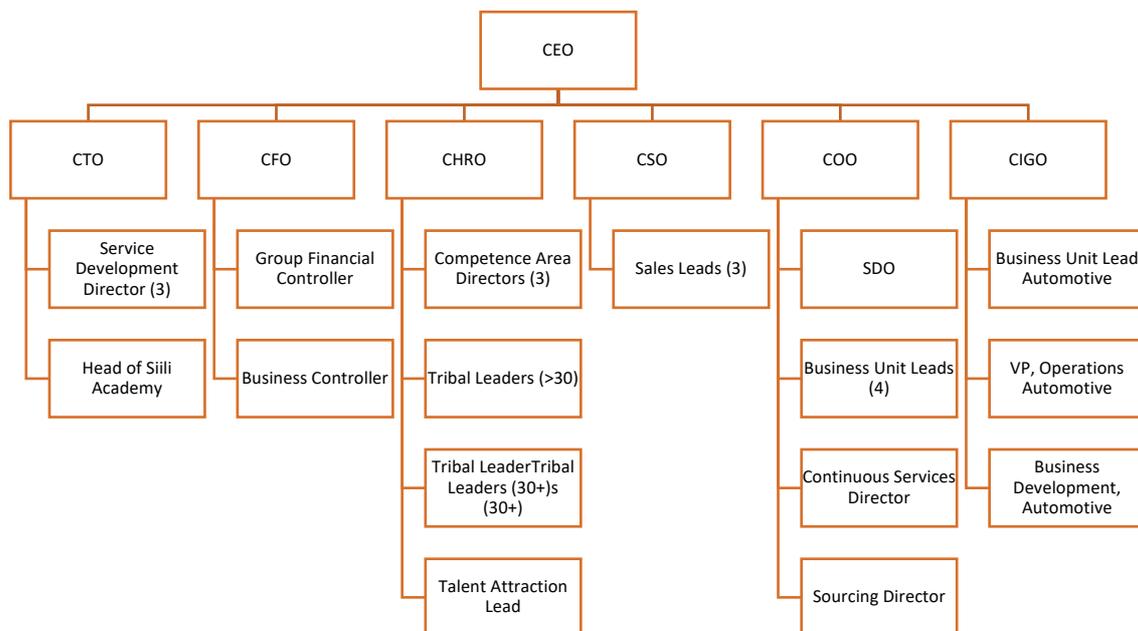


Figure 2. Organisational chart (Siili 2018), with the permission of Siili Solutions Plc.

4.3 Data collection method

Data for the thesis were collected through interviews where all three of the different competence area directors were interviewed individually. From the wide range of different interview methods, theme interview was chosen. Theme interview is an intermediate form of a structured and an open interview, where the progress of the interview is guided by pre-planned theme areas, while precise forms and order of questions are not set in beforehand and therefore can mildly change during the interview (Ojasalo et al. 2008: 95-96, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 75). The interview is a situation of interaction that the researcher controls and guides aiming to get answers to the studied topics (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 75; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001: 48).

In this thesis, the theme areas were based on theoretical background of talent management and the research questions aiming to collect material for the thesis to meet its purpose of describing the current state of the implementation of talent management at the case company and to recognise the challenges and development areas in need for attention (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 75; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001: 48). During the interviews, it is essential to go through all the themes, thus it is possible to gain the data needed to answer the research questions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 75). In this thesis, the set themes for the interviews are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Themes for the theme interview

1. Talent management strategy and how it is implemented at Siili regarding, talent attraction, talent's personal development and identification, and talent retention.
2. Specific tools and methods used at Siili to practice talent management.
3. Challenges faced regarding practicing talent management and possible development areas and ways to improve it in the near future.

Individual interview method was chosen as the executed form of the theme interviews. A form of group interviews would not have delivered the targeted results of receiving different views about the topic and not having views getting mixed and affected by other person's perspective about the matter (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008: 205-206). Also, instead of interviewing a large group of personnel from a variety of positions, three competence area directors were chosen to present each of the company's three service offering areas of design, technology, and data. The chosen personnel manage and are responsible for their service offering areas and all the activities and superiors, also called tribal leaders, within each area. The chosen competence area directors were seen to present the most interesting combination and level of both responsibility and leadership in the company's hierarchy.

After receiving approval for the talent management research and the planned interviews, an interview invitation was sent to all three competence area directors. The invitation included short information about the thesis writing process and the topic of talent management being researched in order to receive insight of its current state at Siili. No further details about the theme areas and the questions were provided in order to keep the probability of receiving raw information as high as possible.

In qualitative research, saturation is used to determine how much data is collected during data collection. Saturation means that data is collected until it reaches its saturation point and doesn't provide any new information. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2008: 177) In this thesis, saturation was achieved through three individual interviews. If the saturation would not have been reached from three interviews, the next step would have been expanding the sample size by sending the same invitation to randomly selected three tribal leaders. These additional interviews were found not to be needed to reach saturation. The recorded one-hour long interviews were carried out in June 2017. Before the interviews, the planned themes and questions were tested in two separate test interviews within the company. Test interviews made it possible to test the structure and appropriateness of the themes and also practice the role of an interviewer.

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewee was informed in more detail about the purpose of the thesis and about the interview being the data collection method selected. Each interview was held in Finnish due two reasons. First, all interviewees were Finnish natives and due to the nature of the topic the answers and insights received may

have lacked the small nuances and the level of detail if any other than interviewee's native language was used. Also, the planned method of not handing out questions beforehand, in order to keep the responses as sincere, might have made interviewees feel uncomfortable if in example English was chosen over the native language.

The interview began with covering the first and the most comprehensive theme area of practical implementation of talent management in the company. From there the interview progressed on other themed areas including challenges and areas of further development. The duration of the interviews ranged from 55 minutes to 62 minutes. The questions and their state order are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Theme interview questions and their order

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does Siili have a talent management strategy? 2. How is the practical implementation of talent management executed at Siili regarding the following areas? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does Siili attract and recruit talent? b. How superiors identify talent inside Siili? c. How talents are further developed at Siili and what kind of personal growth opportunities are being offered? d. How does Siili practice talent engagement while aiming to keep the retention level low? 3. What kind of tools and methods are being used at Siili regarding talent management? 4. What are the current talent management related challenges at Siili? 5. How and to what direction should Siili's talent management strategy and used methods be further developed? 6. What needs to change in order to improve employee retention rate?

The interviews produced a lot of valuable material and gave unique insights on the topic. According to the interviewees, talent management as a topic had not been covered this extensively within the company before and therefore also gave interviewees some valuable ideas in return. The interviewees showed true interest in the thesis topic while all the interviews proceeded naturally and timely according to plan.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using content analysis designed to summarise the acquired material into a compact entity without losing its information (Ojasalo et al. 2008: 98-100, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 113-117). According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 108), the material of the thesis describes the phenomenon being studied and the purpose of the analysis is to create a verbal and clear description of the phenomenon.

The analysis of the data was started by transcribing all the recorded audio material by writing full word-to-word transcripts of all three interviews (Ojasalo et al. 2008: 98-100, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 109-110). A total length of each transcript ranged between 12 to 14 pages in total depending on both interviewers and interviewees input on the matter. After this extensive phase of transcribing material, written transcripts were studied by reading them thoroughly through several times while making notes about the first impressions and underlining insights from the answers to start forming ideas about the possible themes, labels and groups the answers fit into and start matching them lightly to researched themes and to get answers to the set research questions of the thesis. (Ojasalo et al. 2008: 98-100, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 109-110)

There are two approaches to analyse data with content analysis: inductively and deductively. In an inductive content analysis, the researcher starts from single observations and moves towards larger entities. Data is analysed inductively to answer the research questions, but there is no theory or previous knowledge to guide the analysis process. In a deductive content analysis, theory or previous knowledge known about the subject serves as a guide for the researcher in data analysis. Compared to the inductive approach, deductive can be seen as the opposite, since it starts from large entities and moves toward single observations. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 108-117)

In this thesis, deductive approach was used in the content analysis. Taking into account the small sample size of the respondents, the deductive approach was deemed more suitable. Based on the literature, an analysis frame was conducted for the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 113-114). Analysis frame consisted of the three main focus areas of talent management, including attraction, development, and retention, these areas were used to guide the analysis process.

The three areas also formed the themes for the analysis. Data were analysed in three different parts to answer the research questions. The three parts were: implementation of talent management, challenges regarding talent management and future development of talent management. Analysis frame was used to guide the analysis process in all three parts of the analysis. In addition, an open theme was included in the analysis frame in case the data consisted information that was relevant to the subject being studied but did not describe the implementation, challenges or future development of talent management. This data would have then been analysed with inductive content analysis. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 108-113) Analysis frame is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Analysis frame for the deductive analysis

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attraction2. Development3. Retention4. Open theme |
|---|

The next phase of coding was about clarifying all the original answers to simplified expressions without losing or misinterpreting any of their core meaning. From a high number of different codes, similar codes were combined together to form more coherent coded groups. During the phase of combining similar codes by forming groups, some of the initial codes were dropped out due for example not carrying enough valuable information about the topic of the thesis or not answering to the research questions of the study. During the time-consuming phase of coding, common and recurrent themes eventually began to emerge, forming more classified content ready to be labelled to sub-categories under the categories and themes. A total number of 36 sub-categories were labelled and formed. (Ojasalo et al. 2008: 98-100, Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 109-110)

Table 4. An example of forming simplified expressions

Original impression	Simplified expression
<i>"Retention and people leaving is challenging for us. So we have now had a turnover that I think is just too high."</i>	Low retention rate and people leaving is challenging for the company. Turnover rate is higher than expected.
<i>"Another thing that we're aiming for is how we position those new competence area leads and at the same time change role of tribe leads so that they take greater responsibility for allocation decisions."</i>	How to position the new competence area leaders in the organisational hierarchy is currently under work. Tribal leaders' role is changing to take more responsibility of allocation decisions.
<i>"I think the important development thing is the improved and increased dialog between us competence directors, tribe leads and the people at sales."</i>	Important development area is to improve and increase communication between competence area leaders, tribal leaders and the sales unit.

During classification and categorisation of the data, the material is compressed and reduced, while the actual value of information enriches and increases. After multiple rounds of clustering codes in order to create sub-categories, this material was then printed out, sorted and combined back together more accurately by numbering them based on similarity. When comparing to the previous steps of the data analysis process, these formed categories on top of the sub-categories produced earlier, to describe the common themes on more general and abstract level, conceptualising the data collected. A total of 17 categories were formed to describe the content. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 111-113)

Table 5. An example of forming a sub-category

Simplified expression	Sub-category
In recruitment, honesty should be emphasised in describing both job description and the personal development opportunities offered by the company.	Honesty in recruitment
During recruitment process, employer image needs to be communicated honestly and clearly to the candidate.	
Both recruitment and the company must redeem candidate's expectations.	

The three areas of talent management, including, attraction, development, and retention, were used as themes and the content of these were formed by forming sub-categories and categories from the data. From categories, a total of five themes of the analysis were formed to describe the practical implementation of talent management, including attraction, personal development, employee engagement and retention, challenges and development areas, and organisational challenges and development related to talent management. Results of the thesis are displayed in the described themes, categories and sub-categories and their content.

Table 6. An example of forming a category

Sub-category	Category
Leadership abilities and leadership training of superiors (tribal leaders)	Good leadership practices
The active role of superiors (tribal leaders)	
Communication between management and superiors (tribal leaders)	

Table 7. An example of forming a theme

Category	Theme
Employee engagement through supporting and enabling personal development	Employee engagement and retention
Good leadership practices	
Functional organisational structure and organisational culture	
Methods and tools used of engagement and retention	

During the analysis, it was seen more deceptive to describe the data by categorising it into sub-categories, categories, and themes when it came to the implementation of the talent management since the data was rich and versatile by its content. However, when categorising the data regarding challenges and future development of talent management, the data wasn't as rich and versatile, thus it was possible to categorise it under the themes by forming categories only. It was seen unnecessary to form sub-categories from the data regarding challenges and future development of talent management since the themes and categories formed described comprehensively the content of the data regarding the studied areas.

5 Results

5.1 The practical implementation of talent management

Based on the theoretical background of the topic, the strategy and practical implementation of talent management in a company were often divided into three categories, including talent's attraction, development, and retention. The following sub-chapters describe the results of the practical implementation of talent management at Siili.

5.1.1 Talent attraction

The practical implementation of talent management regarding talent attraction was discussed widely during the interviews. The following category was formed during the analysis and contain sub-categories highlighted in bold below each category.

(1) Employee recruitment

Employee Recruitment was the only category formed during the analysis phase to further classify and describe the practical implementation of talent attraction through the following sub-categories highlighted in bold.

According to the interviewed competence area directors, recruitment at Siili is done using both **internal and external sources**, the latter naturally being the most usually used source of recruitment. One of the best and also the most efficient ways of recruiting a new employee externally was to get employee candidate recommendations internally from company's current employees. This method was said to increase the probability of the sought culture fit as well as the reliability of candidates' background and level of technical competence. Attracting new employees through a variety of different recruitment channels, social media and for example tech-related events, was always seen as a more challenging, time-consuming and also a more expensive way of recruiting, when compared to already warmed-up leads received from current employees.

Learning from mistakes regarding recruitment was raised and emphasised in the interviews. For a lean and agile consultant business company, a recruitment gone wrong was described as a very expensive situation, where having a newly employed consultant without a project was always seen as an expenditure the case company wants and needs to avoid. When compared to customer's current need of skill and competence, the wrong skillset and the lack of experience of a talent was often described as the main reason behind the problem of finding a suitable project for a consultant. Individual's lack of personal interest towards offered projects and also poor culture fit with the customer were also mentioned as reasons behind an employee being benched and not having a project.

Honesty in recruitment was also a topic discussed during the interviews. For the parties responsible of company's recruitment, paying close attention to the promises set and opportunities highlighted for candidates during the recruitment process and eventually being able to keep and redeem them, was considered extremely vital and one of the most important matters regarding attracting new talent. During recruitment, offered project outlooks and for example, personal development opportunities need to match the actual opportunities offered by the company after the recruitment of the talent. If the promises about the project and personal development opportunities were not met and kept, it was seen much more likely that the newly recruited talent would start considering leaving the company.

Due to highly competitive talent market, focusing on redeeming promises, meeting expectations and keeping recruited talents motivated from the first day onward was seen as one of most the important tasks for both recruiters and superiors. According to the directors interviewed, it also takes great courage and determination not to recruit an otherwise potential candidate, who for example has the skillset required, but on the other hand, lacks in terms of culture fit.

Consideration of the customer's needs in recruiting employees

In a recruitment process, everything starts with what the case company's customers need and want. In terms of talent attraction, this means regular and uninterrupted internal communication between the talent team and the sales unit, the latter constantly being on the pulse of case company's customers. The customer's near future need has to be predicted and estimated to a certain point in order to be able to react to talent

needs in a highly competitive market of digital developers. The interviewed competence area directors described recruitment as constant balancing between the current needs of the customer and the possible near-future needs of the customer. Reacting too late to the market trends and customer needs can be as damaging as forecasting future too boldly in advance by exaggerating customers' future needs and creating a bullwhip effect. In both cases, actions of the talent team and especially the predictions made by the directors guiding and steering the recruitment can have a major effect on company's financial results and satisfaction of both customer and employees.

Cooperation and decision-making in recruitment

Recruitment policies and decisions were often made on the executive level and communicated from there eventually to the sales unit, competence area directors, tribal leaders and to talent team responsible for recruitment. According to interviewed directors, the decisions are often made in unison between all parties named above and having the possibility to influence the recruitment decision making. Different situations acquire different approach. For example, extensive recruitment plans for the future are mostly made at the executive level while more specific and time-critical decisions are often made between sales unit, competence area directors, and tribal leaders. During the interviews, it was stated that sales units plays a vital role in forecasting and finding out customers current needs and therefore the communication and cooperation between company's all parties and decision-making needs to work more seamlessly in the future. The current state of collaboration between the parties was seen quite siloed, but according to competence area directors interviewed, measures to improve for example roles and responsibilities had already been made to eventually improve communication and communications between all parties influencing talent recruitment.

Tools used in recruitment attracting talent varied, depending on the candidate and the situation. While not being an active part of the talent team, the interviewed persons were only able to describe some common tools and methods they had been using together with the talent team when recruiting candidates, excluding any software or other methods possibly used by the talent team. Work benefits, including phone, internet, commute, cultural benefits were mentioned as common tools and ways used in attracting and recruiting talent. The most influential extrinsic rewards and benefits mentioned were monthly salary, possible different salary models offered and, in some cases, the possible bonuses. Intrinsic motivators often seemed to outweigh the monetary

rewards. The possibilities to work in a team, doing challenging yet interesting projects while developing personal competence were mentioned as the top ways to attract new talent to the company. Communicating about the personal development opportunities offered through the Siili Academy was also described being a noteworthy part of talent attraction.

5.1.2 Talent development

The practical implementation talent development was widely covered and discussed over the interviews conducted and further analysed and categorised. The following categories were formed during the analysis and contain several sub-categories highlighted in bold below each category.

(1) Internal training

(2) Cooperation between superiors and subordinates

(3) Internal talent identification

(4) Development tools and methods

Internal training was the first category formed during the analysis phase to further classify and describe the elements and actions currently involved in training and development of subordinates and superiors at Siili.

Supporting and enabling training for employees was seen as one of the company's top priorities in improving its talent management. This area of talent development had seen plenty of improvements in recent times in form of for example expanded course selection of both internally and externally offered educational workshops. Currently, the company supports employees financially for example in acquiring books, attending events and taking training courses also outside the company's own Siili Academy. As stated by one of the interviewed directors, "Some of the tribal leaders do encourage their tribe members to discuss more about their personal interests and plans towards, for example, taking courses and educating themselves to meet both their career and personal goals, but this varies heavily between tribal leaders and tribes.

Taking employees' requests into an account in a better way, came up multiple times during the interviews. It was emphasised that every worker should have a better opportunity to fully influence their own development opportunities. According to what was said about a company's role in regard to personal development, company's objectives and policies should never prevent employees making their own career path decisions by making decisions on behalf of them. Inside tribes, joint decisions making should not be done, for example, by always voting on tribe's own development plans, but coming to a common understanding and agreement on matters by discussing the issues at hand more openly both within the tribe and also across the company. It was also mentioned that unlike in some previous cases, offering new responsibilities and promoting employees, for example, to tribal leaders, should also be the person's own choice and not the company's. At the moment, taking employees' expectations and wishes into consideration is heavily dependent on the tribal leader's ability to lead and supervise.

Superior training and development had received less attention inside the company, until recent years, according to interviewed directors. A training program called Inspiring Leader was introduced in late 2016 to improve superior's competence. The program consisted of a set of various sessions depending on the target audience and superiors involved. Inspiring leader training was also created to strengthen the ability of tribal leaders to act better in their role as they would not necessarily have any managerial background. The interviewed competence area directors stated the Inspiring leader training program being a good and promising start to further developed company's ability of take better care of its talents and offering employees in superior roles, better tools for doing their job. Continuing investing in superior training was seen vital.

Cooperation between superiors and subordinates was the second category formed during the analysis phase to further classify and describe the ways of cooperation inside the company regarding talent development.

Communication and cooperation and their importance were emphasised frequently in all interviews. Tribal councils held on either bi-weekly or monthly bases act as a way of gathering tribe members together to share knowledge, skills and development ideas. Also, small-scale workshops held within particular competence areas of data, technology or design, were also perceived to be a good way of increasing knowledge and sharing

know-how between tribes and consultants. When discussing about the current state of talent management in the company, increasing the amount of collaboration and communication between not only tribes within a competence area, but across the whole company and between all three competence areas and their tribes, was considered crucially important in order to improve company's talent management, organisational culture and eventually overall financial performance.

At present, the most noticeable way to share information between tribes and competence arenas has been a weekly held open session called Siili Collective. In its broad form, the collective session has worked well in gathering employees from all business sides together to one space and share information across tribes and groups. Collective was also seen as a great way to communicate and share information about, for example, new technologies, successful customer projects and even about potential new partners.

Increasing the amount of continuous interaction and level of communication between employees and superiors was seen as the way to improve the current situation. At the moment, too little information was shared between a talent and a tribal leader about, for example, talent's personal development opportunities offered by the company, time allocations between projects and for example internal training or even about salary models and other work-related benefits. Increasing transparency and openness between both individual and company's departments was seen as one of the top ways on how the current situation could be improved.

Learning from mistakes and having retrospects was stated important by the interviewed directors. Lost cases and going back to study what went wrong with the team involved, was described being a vital part of forming a winning culture. Therefore, the importance of learning from mistakes and losses together should never be undervalued and retrospect needs to be planned on a regular basis, together with all the involved personnel, including sales, competence area directors and other talents involved.

The active and encouraging role of superiors was emphasised over the interviews. According to interviewees, tribal leader's responsibility and role should be about getting to know their tribe members well enough in order to be able to discover talent's personal

development interests as well as true sources of their motivation. Based on this knowledge, tribal leaders are able to offer talents more suitable and challenging projects related to their ambitions and goals. Continuing and expanding the superior training program was found important.

Also emphasised by directors, was the sought ability of tribal leaders to be able to guide talents through difficult work project situations and decision-making difficulties related to for example personal development planning. An ideal tribal leader was described as encouraging and active superior, who both listens and cares about their tribe members and who also is aware of company's current objectives, capabilities, and future plans. It was described that unlike before, the tribal leaders need to act and to be seen more as inspirational leaders, trend makers, and enablers. Understanding both the talent's and the company's needs and being able to communicate them on a simple, yet comprehensive enough way will make a good superior and a guiding role model for any talent of the company.

The active role of a talent was stated not be forgotten either. Employees' own activity in both maintaining and developing their skills and competencies was found important. The proactivity of a talent was seen strongly related to their own attitude and ability to resolve problems and unclear issues. Because of this, employee's own initiative and activity were seen massively important for persons' own development and growth. The development opportunities, a variety of benefits and proper tools to do the work are available, but the initiative should start from the employee.

Internal talent identification was the third category formed during the analysis phase to further classify and describe the internal talent identification activities in more detail.

Talent's personal activity level was raised as one of the top ways to identify talents and overachievers within the company. It was stated, there is lots of hidden potential within company's employees, but too often this information remains unidentified due to both consultant's ability or willingness communicate and tribal leader's competence to discover subordinate's ambitions. Currently, it is mainly up to the employee itself to make noise in order to be heard.

Customer feedback was also considered as one of the most important sources of information in identifying talent's personal growth opportunities and therefore hidden potential. Some of the talent's abilities are not stated in resumes and are discovered by customers during projects. These findings were raised during the interviews and regular communication and close relationship with customers was emphasised in order to reveal more detailed information about talent's abilities and how they can help the company to foster and develop itself from the inside out. The current state and the regularity of customer feedback collection about each consultant's performance were seen far from ideal and its importance was emphasised in many instances.

Feedback collected from colleagues was mentioned to lack the regularity, similar to the state of customer feedback collection. Frequently collected, both direct and indirect, feedback from consultant's colleagues, superiors and team members was seen very important factor in talent identification and eventually personal development. Together with the consultant, superiors, including tribal leaders and competence area directors, use the feedback collected from colleagues to further utilise it in planning consultant's personal development opportunities and their career path at Siili better.

Superiors ability to identify talent and identify a person's possible development areas is currently mainly based and reliant on tribal leader's intuition, according to competence area directors interviewed. Also stated during the interviews was the increasingly important task of all superiors to be able to discover employee's hidden abilities, sources of motivation and their desire to further develop themselves. In order to get a full picture of each consultant's abilities and personal growth possibilities, feedback needs to be collected from all parties involved, including the talent in question.

Way too little active identification of talents was stated to be currently happening within teams and between departments by superiors, tribal leaders and competence area directors, which results in not getting the best potential out of employees and therefore not being able to offer enough personally tailored challenges, new roles and opportunities for the best employees, who often constantly are looking ways of personal development and growth.

Tools and methods used was the fourth category formed during the data analysis phase to further classify and describe company's main tool used in both developing and identifying talent.

Personal development discussion was the most highlighted talent development method used. The importance of every tribal leader systematically organising the session individually and twice a year with all of the tribal leader's tribe members was emphasised significantly. For a superior, valuable information gained from organised personal development discussions were stated being the increased knowledge about talent's ambitions, sources of motivation and feelings towards the ongoing project. Without growth discussions, defining and planning talent's personal development and career path was seen more challenging and vague, which was stated having a negative impact on many matters, including weakened predictability of personnel movement and therefore a higher employee turnover rate. Personal development discussions were also stated as the only real tool currently used in talent identification, besides the ways of collecting similar, guiding information from subordinate's colleagues and customers. At the moment, reaching the set target of organising development discussions twice a year, was seen somewhat problematic and inconsistent. The probable reason for this was stated being the challenge to effectively inform employees about the importance and benefits of personal development discussions.

Internal events and activities organised, have especially helped consultants working at customer's premises, to enable them to spend more time together with their fellow colleagues, tribe members and their superior. As stated by all the competence area directors, the more superiors and subordinates have seen each other, cooperated and communicated, the better the level of understanding and cooperation. Whether meeting each other occurred in a form of a tribal council, personal development discussion or even in activities held outside the office, the more aware of the superiors had been about talents' current feelings, needs and thoughts towards their work and personal development possibilities. According to interviews conducted, for years the company has supported employees to organise events and activities for each other to further nurture organisational culture and to increase cooperation across tribes and different business units.

Siili Fiilis questionnaire has been of the most noticeable tool used to improve internal processes, including talent development practices, according to the interviewees. The employee satisfaction questionnaire has been organised on a monthly basis since 2015 and is based on a widely adopted Net Promoter Score system. The short, two question questionnaires have been sent out to every employee at the end of every month to measure the current loyalty and satisfaction level of company's employees. As in the original questionnaire, on a scale of one to ten, Siili Fiilis asks if an employee would recommend the company as an employer to others. The question is followed by an open-ended final question about what would make working at Siili even better. The results are analysed monthly to improve company's processes and to bring helpful information to tribal leaders and to other personnel in superior positions to better take care of their subordinates. Until the end of 2017, the survey was conducted by email. Recently the process has been transformed into a more modern chatbot, performing automatically the same questionnaire on company's internal communication platform.

According to interviews, no tool replaces or is better than face-to-face interaction between a superior and a subordinate, but when a consultant's work is mostly done away from the office and at customers' premises, the use of digital solutions like a Siili Fiilis questionnaire, has proven to be a very important and helpful tool in developing internal processes including talent management, improvement of personal development opportunities and overall taking better care of company's employees. Based on the data collected from both answered and unanswered questionnaires, analysis and predictions can be produced to for example examine the activities and well-being of each of tribe of the company.

Knome has been the other digital talent management tool used heavily in personal development. According to interviewees, this company personnel database is used to store resumes, reports and other valuable information about for example all of the company's employees, tribes, competence areas and personal development training opportunities currently offered. All the information is available for every employee, making it an ideal source of knowledge for both superiors and subordinates. During the interviews, it was also stated that like the Siili Fiilis questionnaire, Knome database is also continuously being developed and new features are often added to cater the personal development needs of a growing company better.

5.1.3 Talent engagement, retention and turnover

The practical implementation of talent management regarding talent engagement, retention and turnover was discussed during the interviews conducted and then further analysed and categorised. The following four categories were formed during the analysis and contain several sub-categories highlighted in bold below each category.

(1) Engaging employees through supporting and enabling personal development

(2) Good leadership and management

(3) Functional organisational structure and culture

(4) Methods and tools used to affect retention and turnover

Engaging employees through supporting and enabling personal development was the first category formed to further classify and describe the elements of employee engagement and personal development through the following highlighted sub-categories.

Interesting customer projects executed with modern technologies was considered a fundamental component in engaging talents. According to one of them, "True talents are driven by inspiring and challenging projects and job opportunities. If no smart and interesting enough projects are offered, the consultants will vote with their feet and change the company". The growing gap between demand and supply of tech talent is ever-growing, making it an ideal market situation for talents to change jobs if the current employer is not meeting talents' expectations. Projects opportunities executed with older technologies often detract the best talent away. Even though plenty of work is available for top talent, projects involved with older technologies, make talent's resume look bad and outdated.

In order to get picked for the best jobs with the best projects, talent's resume needs to reflect the required skill level. Therefore, less challenging projects with the absence of modern technologies are often a poor choice for both the talent and the employer. An important part of talent engagement is also the sales organisation's ability to offer and eventually sell right kind of projects to customers, that both inspire and develop company's talents. According to the interviews, this strengthens talent engagement and enables company's growth through stabilising retention and lowering turnover.

Diverse opportunities offered for employees consist both customer projects and internal activities offered by the company. According to the interviews conducted, in addition to providing interesting and motivating customer projects, talents should also be offered opportunities outside the regular weekly work at customer's premises. The Siili Academy was seen as a good example of the extensive internal education opportunities offered by the company. During the interviews, also the so-called internal playground and high-tech laboratory opportunities were discussed. In these activities and environments offered, consultants can interact and spend more time with each other to further challenge and develop themselves with new technologies and other current high-tech trends that may eventually get implemented one way or the other to future projects offered to customers. The current level of offering motivating personal development opportunities was seen satisfactory, but it was also stated that there is still plenty of room for new offerings and improvements.

Good leadership and management was the second category formed during the analysis phase to further classify and describe the elements of quality leadership and management through the following highlighted sub-categories.

The active role of superiors was emphasised. According to the competence area directors, the most important factor regarding tribal leaders' role as superiors is to allocate them enough time to concentrate on their tribe and its members. Currently, tribal leaders are allocated to spend 40 percent of their work time on tribal activities, meaning over half of their monthly hours are spent on matters not directly involved with tribe related processes, for example on invoiced customer work. According to directors, depending on the abilities of a tribal leader, the currently allocated 40 percent can be enough to perform at the adequate level as a superior, but often this has not been the case. The reasons behind this can be related to many matters, including for example the superior's current workload, managerial experience, ability to lead and methods used in communicating and activating subordinates.

Training of superiors as a topic was also covered broadly during the interviews. The importance of tribal leaders being able to identify different personal characteristics and attributes of a talent was emphasised over the interviews. Understanding what motivates a person and what makes somebody tick, are examples given over the interviews about

the skills and leadership abilities expected and required of a tribal leader. According to directors interviewed, in the past, some of the tribal leaders and other superiors were chosen to their roles based only on their expertise of, for example, a particular technology, while ignoring their lack of ability or even interest to lead and act in a managerial position. Through added training and changed decision-making process regarding who gets selected for a superior role, the situation has much improved during the past couple of years and is expected to continue improving through, for example, increased leadership training offered.

According to the interviewees, Inspiring Leader training was specifically designed to improve the overall leadership abilities of tribal leaders and other persons in managerial roles, which in the big picture has also helped the whole company to keep talents more satisfied, more motivated and as long-term employees in the company. Also stated during the interviews was that no tool, training or software can replace good leadership in a company, but in order for superiors and other talents to be able to perform well and efficiently, these details, tools, and opportunities offered also need to be in place and available when needed.

Communication between management and superiors was also examined extensively over the interviews. The level and quality of communication inside the company and between departments and different personnel was seen to be developing and going into the right direction, but for the company's strategy and the directions chosen were seen somewhat vaguely and hazily communicated from the management to the rest of the company. More transparently communicated strategic directions and common goals were expected from the management in the future. According to one of the interviewed directors, even if the management is ultimately responsible of decision making, it should always aim to clearly and openly communicate and also justify the decision made to the whole company and all of its employees.

Another important element of clear and uninterrupted communication was said being a continuous exchange of information between the tribal leaders and both the competence area directors and leaders. Due to tribal leaders' divided work allocation between invoiced customer work of 60 percent and tribe activities of 40 percent, the competence area directors and leaders also need to be kept up-to-date regarding the current status of all tribes and tribe members. According to the interviews conducted, improving

cooperation and communication both within and across every competence area and business unit has lately been one of the key focus areas in improving talent management processes.

Functional organisational structure and culture was the third category formed during the analysis to further classify and describe the elements of a practical implementation of talent engagement, retention and turnover, through the following sub-categories highlighted in bold.

Clear processes, roles, responsibilities, and division of labour was a widely covered topic during the interviews. In terms of practical implementation of talent engagement, retention and turnover, the current situation and the future of it looks far better than its the past due to some of the recent changes regarding roles and responsibilities. The new role of competence area lead and the increased level of responsibility of tribal leaders in terms of talent allocation and resourcing are steps to right direction, according to all interviewed directors. Roles, responsibilities, and communication are expected to improve and become clearer, when tribal leaders take more responsibility for resourcing, away from sales unit and both competence area directors and leaders.

A sense of belonging can be a difficult task for any company to create. According to all three interviewed directors, much of planning of work has gone into building ways to prevent and avoid the worst-case scenario of talents leaving the company because of getting separated or even isolated from the company, its culture and from other colleagues, because of poorly practiced talent management.

Siili collectives, tribal council sessions, and personal development discussions were described as the most important internal events, where the sense of belonging is formed. Externally the sense of belonging is often created by enabling talents to work in teams with fellow colleagues in customer projects. According to all interviewees, one of the best ways to spread organisational culture and create a sense of belonging, is to offer consultants the chance to work in teams in interesting customer projects, where they can develop themselves through motivating and challenging work. Based on the interviews conducted, if a company is not able to offer these opportunities to its

employees, the organisational culture will not be able to flourish, the feeling of belonging is left diluted and the odds of losing talents will rise.

Salary, benefits and bonus models often help in both recruitment and retention of talents. During the interviews, typical work benefits offered to everyone were stated to be often mentioned and discussed, including for example phone, commute, cultural and recreational benefits. On top of salary and benefits, also possible bonus models are often communicated and can help make a difference during recruitment. According to all interviewed directors, what was more important to consider and to focus on, were the more intangible benefits of great colleagues, motivating work, opportunities to educate yourself and being part of something bigger that enables its employees to grow alongside the company.

The current situation regarding benefits, salaries and bonus models offered, was seen competitive enough and in line with the market, but what was raised to attention, was paying closer attention to the way salary models are being communicated inside the company and how they are offered to talents. According to the interviewed directors, the salary models and possible bonuses offered need to be both communicated transparently and need support company's culture of helping each other and working together in collaboration towards common company goals.

Methods and tools used to improve retention and turnover was the fourth category formed during the analysis phase. The following sub-categories highlighted in bold further classify and describe the tools and methods currently used.

Siili Fiilis questionnaire has proven to be a good and useful tool for all business units and especially for tribal leaders, according to the interview directors. It offers a clear snapshot of current state of employee satisfaction within each tribe and across the whole company. Information received both from answered and also unanswered questionnaires is analysed and offered to persons in superior roles to direct and allocate their work accordingly to be aware of the current state of their subordinates. Even though superiors in the company often have a maximum of 20 subordinates in their teams, Siili Fiilis helps forming a clearer picture of team's current shape and matters that should currently be more focused on.

As stated by one of the interviewed directors, when communicating about the questionnaire's importance to subordinates and to new employees, it is important to avoid creating a feeling of "a supervising big brother". Instead, superiors should emphasise the benefits of the transparently conducted questionnaire and the opportunities it has already offered for employees to have a true effect on, for example, getting their work area ergonomics improved or being offered new educative courses at the Siili Academy for all employees.

Knome is known as the company's personnel database. The tool has proven to be an important platform for employees to store their resumes, manage their competences and to, for example, look up for upcoming educative courses and workshops available. For superiors and all business units of the company. All the company reports regarding for example personnel changes, retention rate, employee turnover and Siili Filis results can be found from Knome and are available for all employees.

Siili Collective has been a good example of a long-running, engaging event and a way of gathering employees from all business sides of the company together to finish off the week, while also learn something new on the side about the day's presented topic. According to interviews conducted, for a consultant company, it is immensely important to enable and find ways of getting employees come together, share thoughts and also let off some of the steam. The often-arranged wine lottery together with the collective has proven to be a good combination of both formal and relaxing activity, that attracts talents to the office of Fridays to wrap up their week together with the colleagues they would otherwise rarely see due to the nature of the work. According to the interviewed directors, the culture of the organisation and the feeling of belonging to a consultant company is created through moments and events just like these.

Personal Development interviews play a vital role in engaging employees, keeping them motivated and having them as employees in the company. According to all interviewees, through personal development discussions, Tribe leaders and other personnel in superior roles are able to have a major effect on the project opportunities and personal development possibilities offered to employees. Through superior training, the company has aimed to improve the outcomes of personal development discussions by providing superiors the necessary knowledge and tools needed to be able to both identify talent's potential and to guide them accordingly.

Training and courses offered for employees are some of the most important ways to improve both a person's and company's competence and competitiveness. According to interviewed directors, offering right kind of workshops and courses for employees and proposing motivating career path options for them, while lowering turnover and improving retention. As stated by one of the interviewees: "Enabling talent engagement through offering motivating work, interesting new projects, and personal development opportunities, are the keys and also current focus areas to further improve company's talent management processes and the rates of retention and turnover".

Measuring the quality and performance of work are some of the elements needed to be in place and working, in order to do business and practise talent management properly. According to the interviewed directors, turnover and billing rate have been set as the followed and measured indicators for all tribal leaders, to help evaluate their level of performance. For employees in superior positions, the set target levels and personal objectives also serve as an effective tool to guide each individual's own work, while also making sure their subordinates are being taken care of. Based on the knowledge gained from the interviews, the measured targets and rates currently can vary greatly depending on the business unit, tribe or even an individual employee in question. It was stated that some of the set targets and common goals need to be further clarified and made for transparent and unified across to company in order for them to work effectively towards improving the state of talent retention and turnover.

Consultant availability tool was said being the most important tool currently available for tribal leaders to guide their work regarding project allocations of their tribe members. The tool acts as a primary way to communicate with sales and other business units about each consultant's current work status and availability. In order to operate, the whole company and its business units are dependent on this information in order to make the necessary predictions and business decisions regarding project allocations and planning. If the tool is not used effectively and properly by tribal leaders, it can have a major negative effect on the project opportunities offered for consultants. According to interviewed directors and company's data available, consultants without good project outlooks are highly more likely to leave the company.

5.2 Challenges and development of talent management

The following chapter describes talent management challenges and areas of development discussed over the three interviews conducted. During the phase of data analysis, the answers of the interviewed competence area directors were divided into the following two themes.

(1) Challenges and development areas of talent management processes

(2) Organisational challenges and development related to talent management.

These themes were then further divided into eight categories highlighted in bold. No further categorisation was needed at this point of study due to the amount, quality and saturation level of data.

5.2.1 Challenges and development areas of talent management processes

Talent attraction has become increasingly harder over the past few years for tech companies, including Siili, due persistent skill and talent shortages seen on the labour market. The demand for highly skilled employees is only expected to increase and therefore a great amount of consideration needs to be given to how to attract top talents to the company now and in the future. For Siili, attracting talents and striving to become a tech developer's "employer of choice", was stated to require growing investing on talent attraction, including increased contribution to employer branding, employee value propositions, organisational culture and to showing the range of project and personal development opportunities available.

According to interviews, fulfilling expectations created and delivering the promises communicated during phases of talent attraction, recruitment process and general employee interaction, was seen both challenging, yet a fundamental area of focus and further development, due credibility and truthfulness having a major effect on both company's brand and turnover. Talent attraction and recruitment processes of Siili were currently seen being in a state where the company's fast growth, intensified battle for talent and the skills gaps in labour markets could lead a company to consider options including outsourcing parts of recruitment, using increased number of recruitment

agencies and headhunter agencies as partners and also moving more towards using automated recruitment processes. Instead of these, the right ways to tackle the current challenges of talent attraction were stated and expected to be focused on using new media in recruitment even more, while having an emphasis on human interaction and face-to-face encounters in recruitment processes. Also increasing cooperation and transparency between company's recruitment team and other business units was seen as essential part of improving company's talent attraction methods.

The talent attraction challenges currently faced in recruitment were often stated being related to multiple different software used. While the company has grown, so has the number of tools used, which has made managing recruitment processes much harder and cumbersome. The current bottlenecks and problems faced due to a high number of different software and platforms used were expected to reduce when the new recruit management platform is taken in use before the end of 2018.

Talent identification in its current state was seen somewhat problematic and challenging, due to consultant companies, Siili included, having most of their employees working at customer's premises and therefore making it harder for superiors to daily meet their tribe members and identify and identify potential. According to interviewed directors, the company certainly has a lot of unidentified talent potential, but often talent's skills and therefore personal development opportunities could be left unnoticed. To overcome the challenge, a number of superior training have been planned and organised to grow the overall leadership competence of both the company and its managers to further improve also the ability to identify talent potential. This was seen as a good start, yet an insufficient act, if the number and quality of managerial training would not grow alongside the company.

The amount and the utilisation level of feedback collected from customers and colleagues about a single talent's performance was seen as one the important development areas of talent identification to improve ways of identifying employee's potential to grow and develop their competence. Transparency and regularity of communication and cooperation between tribal leaders competence area leaders and competence area directors were seen as a way to develop talent identification across all business units of the company.

Talent development, according to the interviewed directors, was considered being in the best form regarding elements and phases of talent management. The number of courses offered through Siili Academy has increased steadily, offering a great and easy way for both new and current employees to pick suitable and interesting courses to attend. Challenges faced in talent management are often closely related to talent identification. Tribal leaders need to be more qualified to both identify and to guide their tribe members in choosing suitable and career-advancing personal development opportunities while reflecting career guidance decisions to also support company's current talent growth objectives. The superior's ability to plan a career path together with a talent was described as an especially important skill during the interviews conducted.

Employee empowerment regarding personal development opportunities offered has both enabled individuals to fully plan their growth track without restraints, but it has also revealed a challenge, where superiors have not fully been able to identify, encourage and push forward the talents making less noise about themselves and their personal goals. Through superior training, the level leadership among superiors was expected to grow and develop from the current state of too many superiors having little or no previous managerial experience.

Talent engagement, retention and turnover was said to not only be one of the current focus areas of company's talent management processes but was described as one of the main development areas selected for the whole company. According to the interviews, the skills gaps in labour markets have driven companies, including Siili, to re-think their talent management procedures and ways of keeping employees engaged and motivated in order to not give them any reason to start considering other job options available. Aggressive recruitment in a form of for example headhunting had been noticed to increase among the competition recently and the competition and talent markets were expected to continue to intensify.

The current challenges faced in talent engagement were said to be related to the personal development opportunities offered at times, but the most critical aspect described was about the form and quality of project opportunities offered for the consultants. The directors described an ideal project as a lean, motivating project, executed with modern technologies and in a team with fellow Siili employees. In recent

years and in too many cases, the situation had often been quite the opposite, affecting severely both the level of engagement and retention. The combination of offering employees both motivating, team-based projects with modern technologies and a wide range of interesting personal development opportunities, was seen as the aspired combination to overcome current challenges faced regarding talent engagement, retention, and turnover. Challenges faced in talent engagement were stated to have a direct negative impact on company's turnover. The current labour market shortage of software developers makes the situation even more challenging, but according to directors, it also helps highlight areas needed to be developed in order to keep the talents engaged and in the company.

5.2.2 Organisational challenges and development related to talent management

Tools and methods currently in use were described to lack many of the capabilities a company as large as Siili would need. According to directors, current challenges were often due to the fact that the company's internal processes had not developed and grown at the same pace with the company. This was especially noticed in recruitment, project management and in sales, where some of the operations, methods, and tools used had not yet been upgraded and streamlined to match the current needs of different business units. The monthly employee satisfaction questionnaire, Siili Fiilis, was said to currently serve its purpose. The current challenge faced was about finding ways to communicate the purpose of the questionnaire more clearly inside the company and eventually getting more employees to both answer the questionnaire and to get more interested in developing the company. Currently, the data received from the questionnaire was described to be inadequately utilised and analysed in order to have a positive effect on company's talent management, including engagement, retention, and turnover.

Organisational culture and processes were described to be in decent shape overall, even though some aspects were stated to be still lagging a little bit behind because the company's main focus has been on productive customer work and overall growth of Siili. Regarding development of organisational processes, it was stated during the interviews that the current movement towards focusing more on developing talent management, could have been started much sooner. Many of the challenges faced regarding both

organisational and talent management processes, were expected to reduce when employees' wellbeing becomes a higher priority.

Organisational culture of Siili in its current form was described to be a mixed bag of both successfully implemented processes and elements still needed to be developed. Creating and strengthening the culture was stated to require more extensive and long-term commitment from the management to fully enforce the culture of taking employees' thoughts and needs better into account. For a company in consulting business, creating a multi-dimensional organisational culture was said to be especially hard due to almost all of the consultants working daily at the customer's premises, creating a major challenge of how to enable and get employees spend more time together in order to strengthen the culture.

Another cultural challenge brought up during the interviews was related to merger and acquisition of smaller companies leading to a clash of cultures. Some parts of the organisational culture of the acquired company do sometimes survive the fusion, but even then, most of the cultural elements will eventually dilute and become an invisible part of the acquirer's culture. The acquisitions made by Siili during recent years were stated having similar difficulties in integrating cultures together, without it having a notable effect on company's organisational culture, feeling of belonging, talent engagement and the employee turnover. Improving cooperation and communication between the merged companies on all company levels, including management, HR, recruitment, and sales, both before and after the fusion, was stated to be the way to further develop the situation.

Communication and transparency were one the most discussed development areas of both the whole organisation and its talent management processes. The main challenge raised during the interviews, was the lack of full transparency and clear communication between different business units regarding goals, salary models and other factors possibly having a negative effect on employees' motivation to work together and help each other. Increasing transparency across the company and its business units in the future was speculated to have a major positive impact on organisational culture, employee engagement and eventually turnover rate. Improving especially the quality and quantity of communication between competence area directors, tribal leaders, sales unit, and recruitment, was emphasised several times over the interviews.

The fast growth rate of the company was also described as one of the most influential factors regarding challenges in communication. The talent management processes were also described to be inadequately communicated across the company. Possible reasons for this were expected to be related to elements still under development and therefore not yet having a clear talent management process. Despite preventive measures taken, employees, units, and processes getting sometimes siloed and isolated was still said to be one of the challenges and development areas of communication.

Roles, responsibilities, and decision-making were topics widely discussed during the interviews. According to interviewed directors, company's rapid growth has also been reflected in organisational changes regarding processes and roles, blurring the boundaries between new roles and responsibilities. Challenges in communicating more constantly and clearly about organisational changes across the company was highlighted as one of the most important development areas for the company's management level and the HR unit.

Many of the decision-making challenges currently faced were stated to be heavily related to inadequately clarified roles, responsibilities, common goals and the ways of measuring performance inside teams, units, tribes and across the company overall. The lack of clarity between competence area directors, competence area leaders, tribal leaders and sales personnel, was said to have both a direct and indirect effect on many elements of the company, including efficiency, engagement, and turnover. During the interviews, it was also stated, that a constant challenge for a rapidly growing company is to keep its organisational structure, including decision making and responsibilities, both as clear and as hierarchically low as possible, in order to maintain the lean and agile way of operation.

6 Discussion

6.1 Research findings

The purpose of the thesis was to describe the current state of talent management at Siili and recognise the challenges and development areas in need for attention. The objective

of this thesis was to recognise and further develop talent management processes and practises at Siili through interviews to form a comprehensive study, that could be later used to further develop and more clearly define the case company's talent management processes.

At the case company studied, many well-structured and functioning elements of talent management were found, yet a clear and comprehensive talent management process framework and talent management strategy still remains to be defined and communicated. What was found to be promising and encouraging about the current state of talent management at the case company, was the number of high-quality talent management components already in place. A well-defined meaning of talent management and clearly communicated talent management strategy could greatly improve awareness and understanding of talent management in the case company. If the case company had better communicated and more clearly formed talent management process, this could also greatly improve the efficiency of human resource management.

The current talent management approach of the case company was found to be very inclusive and aimed at all levels of the workforce to offer fundamentally the same benefits and growth and development opportunities to all parties and individuals. This strategy extended from the more common, exclusive thinking of seeing talent management only as a strategy aimed at offering certain benefits and personal development opportunities only to the top performers. The chosen strategy of positioning everyone at the same level and offering equal opportunities for all reflects the case company's ideology and core values while also differentiating Siili from many of its competitors by improving employer brand. Investing in offering equal opportunities for all employees will highly have a positive impact on both employee engagement and retention.

The talent management activities of talent attraction, identification, engagement and retention seemed to be the areas most needed attention to further develop practical implementation of talent management in the case company. Regarding talent attraction, HR's and recruitment unit's limited decision power and influence over company's business strategy, together with too many separate software tools currently in use in recruitment, were found to be the current major challenges and development areas.

While retention and turnover rates were stated being some of the case company's most important business strategy focus areas for the upcoming years, increasing HR's influence and decision maker power accordingly, could be one of the ways improving the current state.

Talent engagement and talent retention were seen as the most challenging areas, due to a high number of dependencies between people, tribes, business units and processes. The level and quality of communication between all the stated parties, including recruitment, sales, service development and the company management, was found to be needed considerably improved by forming clearer roles, responsibilities and structure around the current talent management, recruitment and sales processes, while also integrating and blending the processes more tightly together. Also, the current software tools used, and the overall quality of project opportunities offered for consultants were in its current state found to be insufficient and major focus areas for the future development. The targeted and desired rates of high retention and low turnover can be seen as the two main indicators of a well-functioning talent management process.

Talent identification and talent development activities were found to be facing challenges mostly related to inefficient communication and the lack of leadership training, but overall their current state was found to be in better shape over the activities of attraction, engagement and turnover, due to the substantial investments on talent development opportunities. The importance of personal development discussions, openness between superiors and subordinates – tribal leaders and tribal members – and the superior's ability to guide and lead were found to be areas needed to be further developed.

Based on the literature studied and articles read about the vast skills shortages, it can be clearly stated that the case company Siili has been facing similar challenges as its competitors and other organisations regarding attracting and retaining the top talent. In Finland, the persistent skill shortages, changing demographics and concerns with work-life balance have contributed to increased competition for top employees who can have a major influence on organisational success and sustainability. Also, in the case company, this situation has raised the issue of talent attraction, identification, development, management and retention on a very high level on the organisation and HR agenda, moving focus increasingly towards improving elements of talent management to form a clearer, better functioning process and framework around talent management.

Regarding practical implementation of talent management and especially the challenges and development areas involved, the results of this thesis can offer knowledge and guidance for other organisations in planning and developing talent management processes. Due to the nature of the topic and its substance, the findings are profoundly related only to the case company studied and therefore should only be perceived to offer perspective on the development of another company's talent management processes.

6.2 Reliability of the thesis

The reliability of this thesis was evaluated by examining the different phases of the research process by the means of qualitative criteria for qualitative research, including conformability, dependability, transferability and credibility (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 134-139). Conformability refers to the objectivity of the thesis, whereby the results of the thesis are not due to the researcher's own assumptions or prejudices (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139). This thesis acknowledges that the researcher had preconceptions towards the state of talent management at the case company because he was also working in the company's sales organisation, but this matter was taken into account from the very beginning of the study and was pursued to not have any effect on the results.

Regarding conformability, this thesis also acknowledges that all interviews were conducted in Finnish. Using the native language of the interviewed competence area directors, a deeper level of knowledge and understanding towards the topic was achieved and therefore no language barrier limitations or other restrictions were involved in the knowledge transfer during the interviews. This thesis acknowledges that during the phase of the analysis and the manual translation process of the interviews, some information may have been affected and slightly changed, but the end results of the translation is expected to fully reflect the content of the original interviews written in Finnish. Conformability of the thesis was also increased by conducting the phase of the data analysis thoroughly and step by step in form of coding, theming and categorising the data to tables before examining and writing results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 139).

Dependability considers that the results of the thesis are accurate and consistent so that the reader can evaluate the appropriateness of the analysis by following the decisions made by the researcher at various stages of the research process (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139). Dependability was increased by presenting results in a clear, understandable and comprehensive form while also presenting example tables from the process of coding, theming and categorisation of the data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139). This thesis acknowledges the example tables of the method of coding offered, will only offer a reader a limited view of how the analysis and coding of interviews were conducted. Offering full interview transcripts and coding tables as appendices may have offered added value to the results while increasing the dependability of the thesis.

Transferability refers to the possibility of using the thesis results in another similar situation, environment or a company (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139). The results only reflect the current state of talent management and the challenges and development areas of the case company and therefore can only be used to offer perspective and guidance regarding talent management activities and processes. Transferability and possibility of using the information in the case company were increased by conducting a very comprehensive and thorough analysis of the results.

In an evaluation of the credibility of the thesis, it is essential to examine the research decisions made by the researcher about the chosen sample, collection and analysis of data and results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139). Regarding credibility, it is also important to consider the representativity of the sample selection, although it is often the aim of qualitative research to find meaning and not to aim for the generalisability of research results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139). Credibility was increased by interviewing all three competence area directors presenting every competence area of the company. This offered a broad and unbiased view of the current state of talent management process, while also isolating the answers to be coming from persons in same positions but presenting different competence areas. Some of the more vague answers given, particularly related to talent attraction practices and tribal leaders' activities, were later confirmed by briefly presenting the purpose of the thesis separately to a personnel responsible of recruitment and two tribal leaders and asking more about the issues and their state in order to get reassurance to what was said during the interviews.

The sample size of the thesis was considered rather small. Interviewing more personnel from other business units would have likely increased the credibility of the thesis by widening the scope while also offering a greater and more diverse perspective on the matter. For example, interviewing HR personnel more about the current activities involved with talent attraction could have resulted in getting more information about both talent attraction and how the company is currently marketing and communicating itself to the outside world in order to create more appealing and attractive employer brand. However, if the topic would have been triangulated more by interviewing a higher number of employees presenting multiple levels of the case company, it could have also diluted the results and, thus taken some of the credibility and objectivity away, when compared to interviewing only very experienced, senior-level personnel. In the organisational hierarchy of the case company, competence area directors possessed arguably the most ideal and interesting position between the chief of human resources operations and the tribal leaders to offer the best view and understanding about the current state and the challenges involved.

Regarding credibility, it is also worth noting, the interview invitations sent to all competence area directors, did only include a relatively short piece of information about the thesis and the topic of talent management being studied. At this point of sending out the invitations, no further details about the interview theme areas or questions about to be asked were provided in order to keep the probability of receiving raw information as high as possible. On the other hand, offering interviewees more information and time in advance to react and prepare for the interview about the topic, could have resulted in more detailed information received during data collection.

Credibility was also added by analysing the material using an analysis frame based on a wide range of literature studied. This way, all the themes and categories formed, were credible, logical and justified. In addition to this, the analysis frame also included a category for all additional information not directly related to talent management. This added credibility because all the information was coded and analysed, leaving nothing out from the interviews. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009: 138-139)

6.3 Conclusion

The thesis was set out to describe how talent management processes were currently implemented at Siili. Recently. The case company has recently been facing similar challenges as its competitors and other organisations regarding attracting and retaining the top talent in the highly competitive software developer job market. Also, in the case company, the skills gap situation has raised the issue of talent attraction, identification, development, management and retention on a very high level on the organisation and HR agenda, moving focus increasingly towards rapidly improving elements of the current talent management activities to form a clearer, better functioning process and framework around talent management.

Results of the thesis show the rapidly growing case company, specialised in developing digital services, has many elements and activities of talent management already in place and functioning, but a clear and comprehensive talent management process and talent management strategy is not defined, established and communicated throughout the company. Results of the thesis also show, that in all areas and activities involved with talent management, including, talent attraction, identification, development, engagement and retention, many challenges and development areas were found, which proves there is a need to clarify talent management processes and form consistent policies around it, to meet challenges of the labour market and to stay competitive.

Talent attraction, engagement and retention were found as the most critical and important areas of development regarding improving leadership and management training, developing communication and cooperation between different units of the organisation and modernising tools currently used in recruitment and in project and consultant management. The thesis results state, the case company seems to have both the determination and the capability to refine and further develop its talent management processes in order to improve both the company's employer brand and competitiveness in a highly competitive labour market of attracting and retaining the top talents.

6.4 Further studies and recommendations

The thesis was set out study the current state of talent management at the case company and to offer valuable information about the challenges recognised and contributing in improving the processes of talent attraction, identification, development, engagement and retention. The results of the thesis will hopefully also help the case company in communicating and forming a clearer and more comprehensive talent management process around the elements and activities already in place. Broader knowledge about the possible talent management development directions could be further explored by, for example, involving more employees to be actively part of the transparent development process of together taking the company to next level.

For the case company, studying and testing the possibilities of HR analytics, could also come in the picture soon to help in decision-making and to avoid only relying on the intuition of tribal leaders and other decision makers to understand their employees better. The next big step in improving internal processes, including talent management, could be the improved collection of data and implementation of HR analytics to be integrated to some of the current HR processes. Workforce metrics could also help the company to gain valuable information about their current talent pool available to better meet the needs of individual talents, teams, business units and also to fulfil the customer needs and wants more accurately.

With the help of talent management software, predictive analytics could also assist the company in attracting, hiring, identifying, developing, engaging and retaining the talent. However, adaptation of new approaches in HR, including predictive analytics, could also introduce real risks in form of, for example, faulty analytics resulting poor recruitment and business decisions. In the future, one of HR's primary role regarding risk mitigation will likely be to continue to evaluate new possibilities and approaches of HR practices and perhaps even trying to slow down some of the trends and adaptations of automated HR processes and the overall movement towards HR analytics. In the case company, instead of HR analytics and automation of HR and talent management processes, the focus and emphasis could be moving more towards actually increasing human interaction and face-to-face encounters with both the current employees and the talent candidates to form even a more personal, appealing and attractive employer brand, which could positively distinguish Siili from its competitors even more.

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