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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN A FITNESS CENTER COMPANY

– Company X

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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN A FITNESS CENTER COMPANY

- Company X

This thesis aims to evaluate human resource management processes at a fitness center, Company X. The purpose of this study is to describe the present state of human resource processes from the employee perspective. Based on employees' perception of how the selected human resource processes are functioning today, possible development needs are then addressed. Further, it aimed to provide the case company with development proposals concerning the human resource processes. The main research questions were: what are the human resource processes employees consider important at the case company, what do employees consider as main challenges while working for Company X, and how to improve and develop these processes and what should be taken into account for the human resources.

The thesis starts with introduction to the topic and continues describing the research objectives. Thesis continues with a literature review in presenting key areas of human resource management processes and how they are implemented at the case company based on author's observations. Additionally, the chapter examines the operating models of good human resource management and its processes. Understanding the concepts is essential before making conclusions on how human resource management and its processes should be managed in a company.

Thesis continues with chapter 3 presenting the methodology of the study. Qualitative method was chosen since the population under study was narrow, however, large in the scale of the case company in order to make generalizations and form an understanding of how the employees perceive the current human resource practices. The data was gathered by interviewing the employees of the company. With the help of qualitative research, it was clarified whether the qualifications met the objectives, and if there were some potential development needs. The themes of the interviews were human resource management and its selected processes human resource planning; recruitment; selection; orienting, training, and developing employees; employee retention and engagement; and job satisfaction. The interviews helped to obtain a realistic picture of how the employees perceive the current human resource policies.

The thesis continues with chapter 4 and 5 presenting the results, findings, and development needs for the future, and providing development proposals. The study indicated that the major development targets were recruitment, selection, and training and developing employees. The end results of this thesis work consist of practical proposals for developing the human resource management and its processes.

KEYWORDS:

Human resource management, human resource planning, recruitment, selection, employee orienting, employee training, employee development, employee retention, employee engagement

Saara Sorsa

HENKILÖSTÖHALLINTO KUNTOKESKUSYRITYKSESSÄ

- Yritys X

Tämän opinnäytetyön pohjana on henkilöstöhallinnollintoon ja sen prosesseihin kohdistuva tutkimus, joka suoritettiin liikunta-alan yrityksessä. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli kartoittaa kohdeyrityksen henkilöstöjohtamisen prosessien nykytilanne henkilöstön näkökulmasta. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus oli saada kuva yrityksen henkilöstön näkemyksestä siihen, miten valitut henkilöstöhallinnon prosessit toimivat ja mitä kehitystarpeita löytyy. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli laatia toimenpidesuosituksia henkilöstöjohtamisen prosessien kehittämiseksi.

Opinnäytetyö alkaa aiheen esittelyllä ja jatkuu tutkimustavoitteiden kuvaamisella. Kappaleessa kaksi esitellään kirjallisuuskatsauksen avulla teoreettiselta kannalta henkilöstöhallinto ja sen valitut prosessit teoreettiselta kannalta, ja miten ne toteutetaan case-yrityksessä perustuen tekijän omiin havaintoihin. Osiossa tarkastellaan teoreettiselta kannalta hyvän henkilöstöhallinnon ja sen prosessien toimintamalleja. Käsitteiden ymmärtäminen on oleellista ennen kuin voidaan esittää päätelmiä siitä, miten henkilöstöhallinto ja sen prosessit tulisi hoitaa yrityksessä.

Tutkimuksen metodologian kuvaukset esitellään kappaleessa kolme. Kvalitatiivinen tutkimusmenetelmä valittiin, koska tutkimuspopulaatio oli pieni, mutta tarpeeksi suuri yrityksen kokoon nähden, jotta pystyttiin tekemään yleistyksiä ja muodostamaan käsitys koko yrityksen yhden keskuksen työntekijöiden mielipiteistä henkilöstöhallinnosta ja sen prosesseista. Tutkimustieto kerättiin haastatellen yrityksen työntekijöitä. Haastattelun avulla selvitettiin, josko edellytys ja tavoitteet kohtaavat, ja löytyykö mahdollisia kehitysehdotuksia. Haastattelujen teemoja olivat henkilöstöhallinto ja sen valitut prosessit henkilöstösuunnittelu; rekrytointi; valinta; työntekijöiden orientaatio, koulutus ja kehittäminen; työntekijöiden sitouttaminen; ja työtyytyväisyys. Haastatteluilla saatiin realistinen kuva siitä, miten työntekijät kokevat nykyisen henkilöstöhallinnon.

Kappaleissa neljä ja viisi esitellään tutkimuksen tulokset, havainnot, ja mahdolliset kehittämistarpeet sekä kehitysehdotukset. Tutkimus osoitti, että tärkeimmät kehityskohteet olivat rekrytointi, valinta, ja työntekijöiden kouluttaminen ja osaamisen kehittäminen. Kaikista tärkeimmäksi kehittämiskohteeksi nousi työntekijöiden kouluttaminen ja osaamisen kehittäminen. Kehittämisehdotukset koostuvat käytännön ehdotuksista henkilöstöhallinnan ja sen prosessien kehittämiseen.

ASIASANAT:

Henkilöstöhallinto, henkilöstösuunnittelu, rekrytointi, henkilöstön valinta, perehdyttäminen, henkilöstökoulutus, henkilöstön kehittäminen, henkilöstön sitouttaminen

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns the human resource management of a fitness center company (referred as Company X in this thesis). The company is a Finnish fitness center chain, founded in the 1980s. It owns three fitness centers in Helsinki and Turku – two in Helsinki and one in Turku – located in convenient locations. They have an extensive and wide-ranging supply of classes, and class types cater training for everyone from beginners to lifestyle athletes. This thesis concentrates on the company's fitness center in Turku.

1.1 Human resource management in the service sector

All advanced economies are dominated by service sector. It is the most increasing industry in Finland and Europe. There has been a considerable intensification in competition in service industries over the last two decades. This has been seen as a shift in power from producers and service providers to customers, which has raised the competition. (Pietiläinen et al. 2005, 14).

What is the basis of this competition growing within the service industries? Is it a competition of price or service quality? Have service companies competed by offering the cheapest and most effective services, or have they competed by superior service quality? Companies must compete at both levels, simultaneously. Customers will return to service companies, which offer the highest 'customer value' with a lower price and higher service quality, where the quality-price ratio is at its best. (Korczynski 2002, 14.) The service organization must deliver satisfaction but also pleasure to customers. It must deliver efficiency, reliability and responsiveness, but also empathy, tangibles, and assurance. These are the key factors of contemporary service companies to succeed.

Due to the rise of service sector, human resource managers need to raise their game in order companies to remain successful. The service sector employes a major number of people in economically developed countries, and it is one of the fastest growing sectors (Pietiläinen et al. 2005, 14). It includes education, finance, communications, health care, utilities, wholesale and retail trade, transportation, and also the fitness sector where Company X operates. Human capital is a key success factor in the service based industries. Due to the people's important role in companies, it is essential to manage them effectively to achieve, for example, better customer service than the competitors.

There are various challenges human resource management is facing concerning recruitment, selection, training, and development. Companies need to handle these challenges to become or remain successful. Managing people in the service sector is becoming more challenging as companies need to find the right people with the right attitude and people skills: it is not all about qualifications and experience anymore. The importance of social skills and personal characteristics is increasing. Employees must interact well with the customers. Finding the right candidate for the vacant job costs time and money, while being one of the challenges managers have to deal with: the effort to get the right applicant for a right job at the right time. It is crucial for managers to choose exactly the right person to avoid a high employee turnover.

Another challenge for several companies in the service industry is to retain employees; particularly employees who deliver excellent service quality through experienced working. This is where training and development can become relevant. In addition to recruiting and selecting the right employees, employers are pressured to train and develop the employees effectively to make them stay with the company. Slatter (2011) states that clarity is the most important factor when it comes to training and development. When receiving clear information and instructions, an employee is able to perform a job as required. This has positive effect on employees' service quality. Customer interactions can lead to very different situations, which makes the delivery processes vary while making room for uncertainty. When having the certainty of what to do and how, it gives the confidence to deliver effective service. Employer's responsibility is to state the correct job specifications and provide an employee with set goals. Additionally, their duty is to train and develop employees in order them to deliver service that reflects the company. This thesis is going to focus also on these aspects of human resources (recruitment, employee selection, training).

1.2 Personal motivation

The author of this thesis has worked at the Company X as a fitness center receptionist for a year and a half. The responsibilities of the work consists, for example, of customer service and sales. Additionally, the author was trained to work as a class instructor in March 2018, and has instructed classes since. The idea to carry out this study rose from the author's experiences and discussions with colleagues. Even though the idea did not come from the management, the management recognizes the need for action concerning

human resources, and is supporting this thesis. The author wants to identify the most challenging factors concerning human resource management in the case company's fitness center, and how to improve and develop them in order them to function more effectively.

1.3 Thesis objectives

The objective is to identify areas which can be improved regarding the human resource management by performing an audit. Auditing results can be used to develop company's human resource management practices at Company X.

The thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- what are the human resource processes employees consider important at the case company?
- what do employees consider as main challenges while working for Company X?
- how to improve and develop these processes and what should be taken into account for the human resources?

The aim of this study is to understand what works well when it comes to human resource management within the company's center in Turku. By identifying the problems, challenges, and development needs that appear, improvements can be provided and applied in the future. All this will be researched from an employee perspective.

In this thesis, the selected processes of human resource management are human resource planning, recruitment, selection, employee orienting, training, and development, and employee retention and engagement. These processes influence the engagement of personnel and the development of an organizational culture, while helping to attract the best employees working in the industry. Therefore, all of these affect the employer image and company's profit. Additionally, above-mentioned influences act as the reasons why these processes were selected for this thesis.

The role of human resources in a company is to respond to various personnel-related practical actions and statutory issues. Every human resources action taken from interviewing to training, appraising and rewarding them, has equal implications. (Dessler 2013, 30.) Human resource management tasks include the use and development of

human resources. According to Foot and Hook (2002, 11), every function of human resources must be completely integrated and connected with the organization's culture.

Human resource management aims to be the company's facilitator by increasing employees' productivity and service quality. It refers to ensure the most efficient use of human resources by company managers. Human resource management serves the achievement of the company's goals and activities by maintaining motivations and a good working atmosphere. In a fitness center, everyday operations and goals are largely affected by the work of personnel, and therefore, people play a key role in the organization's performance.

The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the company's human resource management. Personnel is the company's most important asset, and the right kind of human resources can create a competitive edge for the company. The research problem is to find out which of the selected human resource processes – human resource planning, recruiting, selection, orienting, training, development, and employee retention and engagement – work, which do not, and what human resource processes can be developed. Therefore, the research questions are the following: what are the human resource processes employees consider important at the case company, what do employees consider as main challenges while working for Company X, and how to improve and develop these processes and what should be taken into account for the human resources. As a result of the study, the aim is to provide a realistic picture of the current state of the selected human resource processes, and suggestions on which processes can be developed and how.

1.4 Company X

Company X is a Finnish fitness center chain, founded in the 1980s. It owns three fitness centers in Helsinki and Turku – two in Helsinki and one in Turku – located in convenient locations in city centers. This thesis concentrates on the company's fitness center in Turku. The Turku fitness center acts as its own. However, the center receives guidelines concerning, for example sales and marketing, from the CEO and human resource department, operating in Helsinki. Therefore, the CEO and the office guide its actions from Helsinki. The fitness center representative is the highest job position in Turku, who also acts as a supervisor for all the employees at Turku fitness center.

At Company X, the work includes direct contact with the customers, and as in most service work, employment is a three-way relationship involving management, employees, and customers. The role of the customer is the most important, unique aspect of service work, because the company profits from its customers. Additionally, they are an important source of information, for example, in customer service related issues.

The front-line workers of Company X are the fitness center receptionists. They actively stimulate demands and encourage customers to purchase a good, for example, a protein bar or a shake, or a service, such as gym card or personal training. Service work is all about satisfying customer requests, performing transactions, providing information and so on (Korczynski 2002, 104). Mixing sales and service leads to the question of how Company X can meet the customer perception of service quality while making profit, which brings increasing pressures to maximise efficiency of, for example, customer service. This is where the managers of Company X are facing challenges to achieve extreme sales by providing customers with quality service. In order to increase the number of customers, volume of sales and high quality customer service, human resource management must respond to challenges, such as recruiting and retaining good employees, by promoting the appropriate worker behaviour and strengthening efficiency.

In Finland, fitness industry is one of the fastest growing industries in recent years, and therefore, highly competitive. Therefore, fitness centers such as Company X, are competing to hire the best employees. Companies also need to retain the best employees and to keep them motivated in order to provide their customers with better service than the competition.

At Company X, voluntary turnover is common for part-time fitness center receptionists who do not instruct any fitness classes. If there is no desire than working at the reception in the company, the employee is likely to leave due to the lack of career and professional development prospects. Another reason for voluntary turnover is that Company X is not able to provide part-timers with more working hours.

The company's operating model has been that the customer chose suitable combination of gym and instructed fitness classes in differently priced times. For example, one principle of Company X is that it does not bind its customers for one year or two year compulsory memberships like its competitors. These above-mentioned memberships

are very hard to cancel for a client. Instead, Company X offers, for example, single tickets, ten times cards and reasonably priced monthly cards. The company has always had a customer-oriented pricing chart, meaning that customers only pay for what they really use.

However, the fitness center company came to a situation where the company struggled with serious financial difficulties. The company ended up in debt restructuring in March 2018. To ease its poor financial situation, the company closed two out of four fitness centers in Helsinki. The biggest cause for financial difficulties was the drop in the popularity of instructed classes in the fitness industry over the past five years, which have been the company's largest source of income.

The most popular and most costly center for rental costs in Helsinki as well as the too quiet center were closed at the end of April 2018. There were also co-determination negotiations along with the closings. After, a total of 13 out of a 100 employees were dismissed, laid off or resumed part-time. This highlights the fact that the competition in the industry is tough. Even though the closings and co-determination negotiations concerned only the fitness centers in Helsinki and their employees, it might also happen in Turku in the future. The company is facing difficult times, and therefore, this thesis is important as it will allow to bring insights from employees' perspective about their human resource practices, and that will hopefully help to improve the performance of the Turku fitness center.

1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis continues with the chapter 2 presenting key areas of human resource management processes and how they are implemented at Company X based on author's observations. The literature review illustrates how companies are implementing human resource policies and practices selected for this thesis.

Thesis continues with the chapter 3 presenting the methodology of the study. A qualitative research method is chosen since the population under study is small. However, large in the scale of the case company in order to making generalizations for the case company as all employees were included in the interviews, and form an understanding of how the employees perceive the current human resource practices. Empirical data is gathered by interviewing the employees one-on-one. The themes of

the interviews are human resource management, namely: human resource planning, recruitment, selection, orienting, training and developing employees, employee retention and engagement, and job satisfaction. The interviews help to obtain a realistic picture of how the employees perceive the current human resource practices, both what works well and what could be developed.

The thesis continues with chapters 4 and 5 presenting the results, findings, and development needs for the future, and providing development proposals. This can lead to better, more coherent human resource practices, then more motivated employees, and after, better customer service and happier customers. The thesis provides the outcomes of a qualitative research, as well as recommendations for developments and improvements on these grounds.

2 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT COMPANY X

This chapter explores the main topic, human resource management generally and at Company X by providing needed knowledge of the topic, human resource management and its processes. The presented processes of human resource management are human resource planning, recruitment, selection, orienting, training, development, and employee retention and engagement. Used theoretical sources for the literature review are literature, articles and web resources, together with information about the company, coming from the author's observations and experiences at Company X.

2.1 Overview of human resource management

Human resource management is recognized as one of the most essential tools in a company. It provides methods for operating and communicating with employees in order an organization to improve continuously. The essence of human resource management is to “establish organization, economic, social, psychological and legal relations between subject and object management” (Dessler 2013, 30). The objective of human resource management is to make a positive effect on employees to maximize their performance and effectiveness as employees. Therefore, it plays a key role in organization performance, employees' motivation and satisfaction, and these two aspects are very important in service-based industries, such as fitness centers, where the competition is very high.

Human resource management is the process of acquiring, training, appraising, and compensating employees, and of attending to their labor relations, health and safety, and fairness concerns. (Dessler 2013, 30.)

The main aspects of human resource management are “human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, provision of contracts, provision of fair treatment, provision for equal opportunities, assessing performance of employees, employee counseling, employee welfare, payment and reward of employees, health and safety, disciplining individuals, dealing with grievances, dismissal, redundancy, negotiation, and encouraging involvement”. (Foot & Hook 2002, 3.) The role of human resources at Company X is to respond to various personnel-related matters and statutory issues, such as the ones mentioned above. The aspects researched in this thesis of the

procedures mentioned above are human resource planning, recruitment, selection, training and development. By responding effectively to personnel-related practical actions, such as recruiting qualified employees, Company X would ensure better employee engagement and retention.

According to Foot and Hook (2002, 11), every function of human resources must be completely integrated and connected with the organization's culture. Company X has a strict guidelines for departments and roles. People in different departments generally do not interact with each other that often. Major decisions are left up to the CEO in Helsinki. Company X has clearly defined hierarchy and is still learning how to communicate with its employees through new mediums. The company has a dress code, numbers-focused approach and risk-averse decision making, which are characteristics of a more traditional organizational culture.

The organization culture of Company X has shaped itself to be CEO-oriented. The CEO owns the whole company and each fitness center of it. While CEO being the owner of the entire company, he seeks profitability in all aspects. CEO acts from Helsinki, as an executive of the board's decisions and manages current management issues. The company's board is responsible for all of operations and has a very large area of responsibility. Yet, the CEO has the last word in decisions. Recruitment decisions, however, are performed independently for the Turku fitness center, in co-operation with human resource manager, however, no approval needed from the CEO before recruiting someone.

Human resource policy is defined as the goals and means that human resource management seeks for. According to most experts such as Dessler (2013, 30), managing involves five functions: planning, organizing, recruiting, leading, and controlling, and all together, they represent the entire, general management process. Every function has its own specific activities and purposes.

Human resource management is described as taking care of everything related to human resources, such as planning all the human resource related functions, recruiting and selecting new employees, and training and developing new and current employees continuously (Foot & Hook 2002; Dessler 2013). The concept and content of human resource management vary by company. In practice, this means that human resource matters are mainly the same, but companies' way of operating and implementing them can be quite different. According to Foot & Hook (2002) and Dessler (2013), human

resource management can be used as a tool by which management guides both personnel and organization.

Human resource management helps the organization to reach its goals, identify and satisfy the needs of individuals, provide the organization with well-trained and well-motivated employees, enhance employee capabilities to perform the present job, and induce a sense of team spirit, teamwork and collaboration. It can be defined in such way that a company should be able to acquire employees it desires and needs, and motivate, encourage, and create conditions for good work and performance, so that good employees also remain employed by the company. Additionally, human resource management includes the development and maintenance of employees' working capacity.

2.2 Human resource planning and recruiting

A company needs people to work and to succeed. The total human resources needs can be assessed, however, the strength of human resources is harder to evaluate. The total efficiency and success of personnel is influenced by the fact that the employees are in the right positions, receive the right level of compensation for their work, and that they have the right skills and are motivated. These are some of the reasons why every company needs human resource management and its processes, human resource planning and recruiting.

Human resource planning and recruitment go hand in hand with each other. Human resource planning helps human resource managers to analyse the organizational human resource needs. As a result, it determines the gap between the supply and demand of workforce in the organization which helps to analyze the need for recruitment. (Dessler 2013, 164-165.) Therefore, human resource planning and recruitment process are related to each other. Additionally, selection is closely linked to recruitment. Both processes are targeted towards recruiting needed employees. However, both processes need a separate range of skills and expertise, which means they may require different individuals (Foot & Hook 2002, 58).

2.2.1 Human resource planning

Human resource planning is a continuous process by which management ensures that the right people with required skills are completing required tasks so that the company achieves its desired goals. It seeks to build connections between strategy, structure, and people (Bratton and Gold 2003, 200). Regardless of the size of a company, human resource planning is always needed.

Human resource planning requires forecasts of three things: personnel needs, the supply of inside candidates, and the supply of outside candidates.

The basic workforce planning process is to forecast the employer's demand for labor and supply of labor; then identify supply-demand gaps and develop action plans to fill the projected gaps. (Dessler 2013, 165.)

First question to ask when forecasting personnel needs is how many people are needed. The recruiting needs of a company represent the demand for its products or/and services. The demand is adjusted for changes to make in strategic goals, in turnover rate and in productivity. Estimating human resource demand begins with forecasting what the demand is and will be for offered products and services. (Dessler 2013, 165-166.) Company X aims to provide its customers with a varied, high quality fitness center for women and men, from beginners to professional athletes. The company aims to offer a varied class schedule, including both muscle training, mind and body classes, as well as dance classes. Therefore, human resource planning is required to organize right people to provide customers with classes in order to offer a varied class schedule and class content. Seasonal forecasts are essential for fitness centers such as Company X, contemplating end-of-year and beginning-of-year sales, when "the new year, new me" - thinking is at its peak.

In times of economic downturns, the importance of human resource planning increases. A short-sighted planning can lead to much heavier long-term costs, for example, for dismissing or losing experienced, knowledgeable and talented employees, and later, spending resources on recruiting and training new employees. In order to succeed, companies must develop both long-term and short-term planning. (Sekhri 2010, 42-45.) At the beginning of 2018, Company X made a decision to close two of its fitness centers in Helsinki due to its decreasing financial situation. Two out of four centers in Helsinki

were closed at the end of April 2018. This does not directly have an impact on the fitness center in Turku.

The purpose of human resource planning is to forecast personnel requirements; cope with changes; use existing human resources productively; promote employees in a systematic manner; identify forecast demand; forecast supply; identify supply market; help create, modify and recast human resource policies, procedures and practices; and provide right people with capabilities at right time and at right place. These tasks are seen as required tasks of effective human resource planning. (Sekhri 2010, 46-52.)

The closings of two fitness centers were a consequence of a decrease in number of customers and meant co-operation negotiations at Company X, which led to employees' dismissals at Helsinki fitness centers. The company uses human resource planning to forecast current and future staffing needs to limit exposure to surpluses or shortages in labor. Even though this does not directly affect on the fitness center in Turku, the operations are under the same company name. This means that customers of Turku fitness center might have confusing thoughts about the closings, including thoughts such as will the Turku fitness center be closed too. Therefore, employees at fitness center in Turku must pay extra attention to customer service and its calmness, quality and professionalism.

Effective human resource planning is crucial for companies to procure and train employees in order to save time and avoid unnecessary recruiting and training. Unsuitable employees decrease the efficiency and productivity of a company. A company must plan its human resource requirements beforehand to be successful in the market competition. (Sekhri 2010, 46-52.) In this economic downturn of Company X, the company must plan its human resources even more carefully in order to save its resources and to increase its productivity as a company.

Human resource planning is affected by several factors, and the most important of them are type and strategy of organization, environmental uncertainties, time horizons, type and quality of forecasting information, sufficient lead time to recruit, outsourcing, and human resource planning methods. The management needs to analyse their organization structure's adaptability for changes. Forecasts of organizational changes may indicate future vacant job positions to be filled or required training and development of current employees. Therefore, human resource planning is helpful to other human resource processes, such as selection and development: it ensures that qualified people

are selected and current employees are trained and developed when needed. (Sekhri 2010, 53-54.)

Even though predicting a rise or fall in business activity is not easy, the planning helps to develop recruitment plans to deal with the potential changes in demand. The basic process of recruiting needs is to estimate revenues first, and after, the size of the personnel required to keep this sales volume. Additionally, other strategic factors must be considered, such as projected turnover, decisions to upgrade or downgrade products or services, productivity changes, and financial resources. (Dessler 2013, 166.)

At Company X, human resource planning covers many important goals and responsibilities, including recruiting talented staff, administration over employee policies and employee training programs. It assists the company to grow through advanced recruitment and training programs. The human resource strategy has an impact on the human resource planning and planning of the activities every year at Company X. The class instructor resources and instructors' class competencies strongly determine the number of offered instructed classes, and on this basis, the seasonal class supply and schedule are planned for every season. Company X has three seasons per year: Spring season from the beginning of year till the end of May, Summer season from the beginning of June till the end of August, and Fall/Winter season from the end of August till the end of year. For every season, a new seasonal class supply and schedule is planned.

The supervisors listen to employees and interpret situations at Company X. In annual development discussions the human resource matters – such as human capital value, conflict resolution, training and development, employee satisfaction, and performance improvement – are discussed deeply. The strengths of employees are brought into the work, as exploiting the strengths and competences in the job, while weaknesses are strengthened with the help of supervisors and colleagues.

The human resource planning of Company X includes mapping the number of employees and tasks. The need for recruit and develop employees is defined through human resource planning. If recruiting new employees is needed, a recruitment process begins. If employees are trained to new job positions, a training and development plan is designed, which is followed step by step. Development of well-being at work is an important part of human resource planning.

2.2.2 Recruiting

Recruitment begins already in human resource planning, where the positions to fill and how they are filled are decided. Additionally, the way – internal or external – of recruiting is determined. As mentioned, recruiting can be internal or external, and an internally recruited employee is already employed by the company. Recruiting includes all the measures required to recruit personnel. (Dessler 2013, 164-165.) Company X recruits both internally and externally, depending on the vacant job position. However, usually the recruitment for higher job positions, such as fitness center representative, is performed internally. Already employed employees know the company, which shortens the time used for orientation and training.

A job review is specified in human resource planning. It defines duties and human requirements needed for a job: what kind of skills, training and experience are needed. According to Torrington et al. (2008, 94), in order to find the perfect person to match with the required skills, experience, and attitudes of the vacant job, the recruiter needs to be specialized with interaction with people to get the relevant information of the applicants.

For example, a fitness center receptionist's work duties at Company X include fitness center operations, such as maintenance tasks, sales, and most importantly, customer service. Like in many customer service positions, the requirements needed for a fitness center receptionist are patience, attentiveness, clear communication skills, knowledge of the products and services, ability to use positive language, acting skills, time management skills, ability to read customers, a calming presence, goal-oriented focus, ability to handle surprises, persuasion skills, tenacity, closing ability, empathy, and willingness to learn. Being a people person with the right set of skills takes a spotlight in customer service. Additionally, the receptionist must love and know the sports and wellness industry in order to sell the lifestyle to customers.

The first step in the recruitment process is to note a job position needed to be filled. The position may be a new one a company has realized to need through strategic plans, or it may have occurred, for example, because an employee has resigned, retired or been dismissed. (Foot & Hook 2002, 69.) Usually at Company X, a job position becomes vacant when an employee has resigned. The resigned employee is usually the part time employees who seek full time jobs, which is something that Company X is not able to provide. Additionally, the need for recruiting may occur unexpectedly, for example,

through termination, student or alternation leave (Dessler 2013, 164-165). A job-share partner can be recruited if an employee hopes and is transferred from full-time to part-time employment. Usually part-time employees seem to desire more working hours than the Company X has to offer.

Even though the fitness industry is blossoming, it is difficult to find and recruit good employees in the fitness industry at the moment. Additionally, there is a shortage of good, qualified, and inspiring class instructors for fitness classes in Turku. Providing employees with a safe work environment, pleasant atmosphere, good relations with supervisors and managers, career growth opportunities, and sociability with peers, retain and engage employees to stay with a company (Arthur 2006, 3-20). Company X recruits class instructors on a regular basis, and when coming across with good instructors, hiring them as long-term instructors. Although, the case company does not provide them with full-time position. However, class instructors do not usually work as full-time instructors due to the nature of the work. In this fitness industry, the importance of good class instructors is essential in order for the classes to be wanted and full of customers. Today, there are fitness centers in every block with approximately 20 centers in Turku city center. Additionally, a major part of them have started their operations in the past few years. Therefore, it is difficult to recruit, for example, good class instructors.

No company wants to spend money and other resources on unnecessary processes. The aims of recruitment are to acquire suitable candidates for vacant jobs, review an equitable recruitment and other human resource processes, ensure all recruitment activities assist company goals and a desired company image, and manage recruitment activities efficiently and cost-effectively. (Foot & Hook 2002, 58.)

At Company X, four factors are considered before placing a recruitment campaign: how much money is available, how quickly the vacant job position must be filled, and must a wide audience be reached. Next, the date in which a job must be filled is determined. The human resource manager of Company X located in Helsinki publishes a job advertisement once a recruitment is relevant. The job advertisement is published on recruitment sites and their own web site. People seem to find job advertisements from recruitment sites, which is why the highest number of applications come through the recruitment sites and via email.

Today, electronic resumes dominate the marketplace. Company X uses the Internet to recruit, and an applicant can prepare and transmit resumés electronically. There are

many ways to transmit a resumé for Company X, for example, an e-mail attachment, a Web-based form built into Company X's website, a PDF document, or a paper. Cover letters are expected as an accompaniment to resúmes, paper or electronic.

2.3 Selection and interviewing candidates

Once applicants' resúmes have been reviewed, the next step is to select the qualified candidates for the vacant job, for example, by interviewing them, and after, deciding whom to hire. Employee selection must be done carefully for three main reasons: performance, costs, and legal obligations. Employees with the right skills do better work, while employees without these will not, which will automatically affect negatively on the company and its performance. Recruiting and hiring new employees do cost, and mismanaging recruitment has legal effects. (Dessler 2013, 202.)

The main goal in employee selection is to reach person-job fit. Person-job fit is matching the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies that are required to perform a job, as defined by job analysis, with the possible employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies. (Dessler 2013, 202.) However, a candidate can be a right fit for a job while being a wrong one for the company (Phillips and Gully, 2012). Therefore, person-organization fit should be thought as well in addition to person-job fit (Dessler 2013, 202).

Interviews are used to support recruitment. A selection interview is a procedure designed to forecast future job performance based on candidate's oral responses (McDaniel et al. 1994, 599). An interview is not just a discussion; it's an activity designed to gain information about a candidate through oral responses. Company X uses interviews to select new employees for the company.

Employers seek a match between a vacant job and an applicant in order to determine the right fit: what tangible and intangible skills, knowledge and attributes an applicant has that will benefit both the job and organization. (Arthur 2006, 75-101.) When Company X selects candidates for interview, work experience, degrees and certificates are the main criteria. However, hobbies and other training, including shorter course training, are taken into account, because they tell about applicant's interest towards the industry. At Company X, 3 to 5 people are interviewed per one vacant job position.

There are several types of interviews. They can be divided into two main interviews by techniques: unstructured and structured interviews. These two techniques are the

opposite of each other. (Dessler 2013, 240-241.) Company X uses structured interviews due to their nature of being superior. The interview structure is formed by a set of systematic questions that are always the same and asked to all candidates (Dessler 2013, 240-241). Structured interviews are considered more reliable to predict job performance than unstructured interviews (Dessler 2013, 240-241). With a structured interview, the interviewer can concentrate on listening and making observations. The structured interview technique creates the freedom to focus on the essentials. A pre-determined questions make it possible for the recruiter to concentrate on the candidates' responses and their assessment.

The structured interview has a certain formula that is followed. That means that all applicants are asked the same questions. Strictly structured interviews can anticipate future work performance. The most important feature of a structured interview is that it enables the company to create a comparison between the candidates. It creates benchmark answers grid to evaluate each candidate's answers. Benchmark answers are needed to know what kind of a person a company is looking for. By following the interview structure, recruiter can compare how the candidates' answers differ and who stands out as being the best candidate.

When Company X uses structured interviews to recruit, every important matter is discussed. If an unstructured interview would be used, important issues could be missed out, as the interview is so close to a normal social interaction. In a structured interview, the questions are more focused on concrete activities, while in unstructured interviews issues are discussed if emerged.

Interviews often include various types of questions, often divided into closed and open questions. Closed questions are predetermined. These are questions that have only exact answers, questions such as "What is your name?". Open questions can be answered relatively freely, for example: "What do you expect from your future job?". Open questions start with words like "why" or "how". They encourage the candidate to talk about themselves. Such questions reflect the personality, feelings and opinions of the applicant. Open questions could be, for example, "Why do you apply for this job?" or "How do you describe yourself?". Closed questions usually result with "yes" or "no" answers as they are very specific and limited questions. However, such questions have their purpose. They are able to authenticate facts and are easy to analyse. Such questions are, for example, "Did you like school?" or "Do you follow news?".

Many interviews include relatively unfocused questions, such as “What are your main strengths and weaknesses?” (Dessler 2013, 241.) Even though these questions do not bring information about how the candidate would do on the job, Company X asks them to get information about the candidates. However, the most relevant questions that predict better job performance are situational, behavioral, and job-related questions.

Situational questions explore how a candidate has demonstrated needed skills in past situations. These questions probe candidate’s skills and evaluate how s/he could perform on the job. Situational questions are describing ones and explore areas, such as people skills, organizing, workflow, communication and persuasion, and problem solving. Such questions could be “Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with a difficult customer” or “Describe a time when you received criticism”. (Hoevemeyer & Falcone 2006, 22-23.) Behavioral questions seek concrete examples of skills and experiences that relate directly to the job applied. Such questions are, for example, “Tell about how you work effectively under pressure” or “How do you handle a challenge?”. (Hoevemeyer & Falcone 2006, 27-29.)

Job-related questions concern the job applied. These questions are, for example, “What do you think the main challenges will be?”, “Why do you want this job?” or “What are you looking for in a new job?”. (Hoevemeyer & Falcone 2006, 19-21.) In interviews, Company X asks more open questions, such as situational, behavioural and job-related questions in order to gain more relevant information about the candidates. For example, what are your weaknesses and strengths, why do you want this job, and why should we hire you are questions from the Company X interview question list.

At Company X, the interview involves discussing about personal and educational background, work experience and motives, interests, abnormalities, ambition, and referrals. In the interview at Company X, the applicant is asked many questions concerning, for example, past job assignments and challenging job assignments by asking situational and behavioural questions. During the interviews, Company X wants to find out whether the candidate is brisk and persistent, learns fast, and is eager to develop by asking situational, behavioural, and job-related questions.

Interviewer errors tell about the low validity of interviews, which include making snap decisions, gathering negative or positive information to support first impression, hiring people like oneself, stereotyping, making assumptions, gathering insufficient or irrelevant information, and contrasting effect. The interview is successful if the interviewer errors

are eliminated, for example, by gathering sufficient information, allowing adequate time, using structured interviews, having more than one interviewer, and having only trained people to perform the interviews. (Foot & Hook 2002, 90-94.) Company X uses adequate time to gather relevant information about candidates by using structured interviews. However, the interviews are performed by one person.

Additionally to the techniques, there are skills to ensure a successful interview for avoiding interviewer errors. According to Dessler (2013, 244), knowing the job position, structuring the interview, getting organized, asking questions, taking notes during the interview, and reviewing the interview are required to conduct an effective interview. Foot and Hook (2002) explain that the skills to ensure a successful interview include planning and preparation, putting candidates at their ease, remaining detached, asking a number of relevant questions, encouraging the candidate to talk, recording the information, responding to candidate's questions, closing the interview, evaluating information, and reaching a decision. Company X is handling all the above mentioned skills, except recording the interview, to ensure their interviews being successful. However, notes are taken during the job interviews.

According to Dessler (2013), employers administer selection interviews in several ways: one-on-one or by panel interviews, sequentially or all at once, and computerized or personally. Most interviews are one-on-one and sequential. In a one-on-one interview, the interviewer meets the applicant alone to gain information by receiving and analyzing oral responses. Usually, employers schedule interviews sequentially, where several persons interview the candidate and make the hiring decision together. In an unstructured sequential interview, each interviewer request questions whenever wanted, while in a structure sequential interview, each interviewer review the candidate on a standard evaluation form by using standardized, predetermined questions. (Dessler 2013, 244.)

The selection aims to choose the best person for the vacant job. Selectors need to predict candidate's performance on the job while providing him or her with all the needed information concerning the vacant job. The selection aims to gather as much relevant information as possible, organize and evaluate the information, assess each candidate, forecast performance on the job, and give information to applicant so that managers can review them to whether hire or not. (Foot & Hook 2002, 85.) At Company X, the supervisor of the fitness center and the human resource manager select the applicants who are invited to one-on-one interviews. The supervisor performs the interviews for the

selected applicants. The person performing the interviews is the one who will be managing the employee. Neither the CEO, nor the human resource manager, nor future colleagues are involved in the interviews. After interviewing candidates, the supervisor recommends the best candidate or candidates to the human resource manager, and the final selection is made in co-operation between the human resource manager and the supervisor, fitness center representative.

2.4 Orienting, training and developing employees

Orienting, training and developing employees are essential in terms of business competitiveness. When competitiveness is increasing, knowledge, skills and know-how are important competitive factors for companies such as Company X. Orientation, training and development are tools for organizations to increase the skills of their employees, and to help them adapt to the changes that are taking place.

At many organizations, such as at Company X, orienting, training and developing employees are seen as a tool to adapt to changes and to achieve organizational goals (Nordhaug 1989, 374). Learning through training programs provided by a company can be seen as a process leading to changes in, for example, knowledge, skills or attitudes (Nordhaug 1994, 34-35).

2.4.1 Orienting

Orientating gives the information new employees need to act, while helping them getting emotionally connected to the company. A good orientation accomplishes four things: making the new employee feel welcome and part of the team, providing the new employee with the basic information to act effectively, assisting the new employee to understand and know the company, and helping the new employee on getting familiar with company's culture, values, and ways of doing things, while becoming part of them. The goal is to get the employee to appreciate the company's culture and values. (Dessler 2013, 270.)

Foot and Hook (2002, 213) see orientation as induction, and define it as the process of helping a new employee to settle into a new job position and an organization in order to become an efficient and productive employee. The process of induction starts already at

the recruitment and selection. Everything from the company image provided by interviewers to sent letters and given information are all part of the induction process. (Foot & Hook 2002, 213.) At Company X, the orientation includes all the matters what were described in this paragraph concerning the new job.

It is likely to be difficult for a new employee to focus on job performance before becoming familiar with surroundings, feeling comfortable with the details and routine of a typical day, and understanding company and departmental expectations. Well-developed orientation programs confirm the decision of a new employee's decision for applying to a company. A new employee becomes more productive with a well-executed orientation, which also ensures a trustworthy employer/employee relationship. (Arthur 2006, 288-308.) During the orientation at Company X, the new employee learns about policies and procedures, the repercussions for violating policies, and what the company expects from an employee. In addition, the new employee meets with whom s/he will work, becomes more familiar with the workplace, and learns about job-specific matters.

Even though employees are selected carefully, it does not assure their effective performance on the job. Even high-potential employees cannot fulfill job requirements without instructions. Orientation makes sure new employees have the needed instructions to perform their jobs. (Dressler 2013, 270.) At Company X, the human resource department designs company's orientation and training programs, and the managers and supervisors take care of the everyday orienting and training. This way the company ensures that the new employee learns required aspects of a job (Foot & Hook 2002, 175).

The length of orientation varies depending on what needs to be covered. Orientation includes, for example, explaining basic matters, such as working hours, benefits, and vacations, introducing the new employee to a new supervisor, explaining organization, introducing the new employee to new colleagues, and familiarizing the new employee with the workplace. (Dessler 2013, 270.) Every company uses their own time for training, depending on the job profile, the person's competence, and previous work experience. At Company X, the orientation varies between employees due to the different learning pace of people. Usually, it takes several work shifts, which is about 20 hours all together.

As a result of well-managed and structured orientation, the new employee learns the job right from the start. When the new employee is able to work independently, the work of other employees becomes easier, while saving resources. A new employee is always an

investment for a company. Therefore, the sooner the new employee gets oriented, the better investment the person is. This requires a well-executed, comprehensive orienting in order to avoid major mistakes, accidents, and financial damage.

2.4.2 Training and development

Training can start directly after orientation or is provided during employment. Training means providing the new, or current, employee with the needed skills to perform their jobs. High-potential employees do not guarantee effective performance, and this is where training is a necessity. (Dressler 2013, 272.) The purpose of training is to support self-motivated thinking and learning. As a result of well-managed and structured training, the employee becomes more effective in the job. This leads to more developed skills, improved work quality and efficiency, and increased professionalism.

Training is a benefit for both employees and employers. With improved capacity of employees, the company can perform better, which means it can provide its employees with even better training programs. Training decreases turnover, absenteeism, accidents, and grievances due to its ability to improve moral, motivation productivity, need for supervision, citizen relations, and quality of services (Matzer 1986).

In order training programs to be effective, they need clear goals; involvement of employees; participation by employees; use of employee work experiences and knowledge; use of real examples for a practical and problem-centred situation; connection of new material to employee past learning and experience; reinforcement of learning by practice; informal, safe, and supportive learning environment; respect for the individual employee; and promote self-esteem in the learning opportunity. (Gregg & Zenzen 2009, 119-129.)

Employers provide training to their staff to develop their competence. Therefore, developing employees is a win-win situation. Employees tend to be more confident and loyal, and better at team work, while organization is performing its actions more effectively. Therefore, orienting, training and developing new and current employees should be seen as an investment rather than a cost. (Gregg & Zenzen 2009, 120-121.) At Company X, in-house training includes sales training and class instructors' training days. The company offers training allowance for its employees, which gives them the opportunity to train themselves by participating to training courses. The job description

of customer service is constantly changing, so skills and knowledge are maintained with short guides at Company X.

The importance of personnel development is crucial particularly in information work, that is, expert organizations where the business relies on what employees know and how they are able to utilize this knowledge. For example, in fitness centers, such as Company X, the continuous training and development of the class instructors is vital for classes to vary and be interesting. Therefore, it is important that the knowledge and skills of instructors are maintained and developed continuously. Successful development is beneficial to all parties, and it has a positive impact, for example, on well-being at work and customer satisfaction.

A company usually builds its business on core competence. Focusing on the company's core business means engaging factors that are essential for doing business. Company X provides its employees with trainings, such as personal trainer or class instructor courses, organized by other organizations. These training possibilities emerge when Company X lacks in personal trainers or class instructors, or an employee wants to become a personal trainer or start instructing a class. Additionally, trainings are a possibility to have a class instructors being able to lead a wider variety of classes. This makes it easier to plan the next season's class schedule with several instructor options for Company X. Trainings are also a possibility for trainers to be able to keep up to date with the evolution and trends of the industry. The latest fitness trends have been functional training, revved-up recovery, at-home workouts, and mindful movement.

2.5 Employee retention and engagement

Having invested time and resources in selecting and training employees, the employer wants them to stay with the company. However, keeping good employees is challenging and requires procedures to improve employee retention and engagement.

Turnover is the rate at which employees leave the company, and it varies between and among industries. There are two types of turnover: voluntary and involuntary turnover. The costs of turnover are high, and reducing them require identifying and managing the reasons for both of them. (Dessler 2013, 348.) Managing employee retention and engagement is crucial for every organization. At Company X, turnover rate is low. Most of the employees have stayed with the company for over 10 years. These employees

are the full timers or class instructors. Employees who resign are usually the part-time employees who seek full time jobs. This is something Company X is not able to provide because the company has just a few full time job positions available which are already fulfilled.

2.5.1 Retention

Retaining employees includes talent management, which means retention strategies need to be multifunctional. This leads to addressing issues by setting an effective and encompassing talent management practices, including practices such as recruitment, selection, and training. Turnovers, both voluntary and involuntary, begins with wrong selection decisions combined with defective training, unaffected appraisals, and unequal pay. Therefore, it is essential to create a retention strategy to reduce turnovers and to take all the human resource practices into account. (Dessler 2013, 349.)

Well-defined instructions include expectations regarding employees' performance and responsibilities. Recognition is needed when a job is performed well, in addition to pay and other benefits. Recognition and accomplishment are noticed as effective rewards. When employees are appreciated, they are more likely to stay with the company. (Dessler 2013, 350.)

Involuntary turnovers are unavoidable, because sometimes the employer must let some employees go, for example, when jobs are reformed or competitive pressures require restructures in workforce. Dismissals are also required in cases of poor performances or such. However, performance-based dismissals can be a result of flaws in the employer's talent management. Therefore, reviewing and developing human resource plans concerning, for example, recruitment, selection and training can be seen as decrease in dismissals. (Dessler 2013, 351.)

Voluntary turnover is one way employees withdraw. Job withdrawal is defined as 'actions to increase the distance between an employee and work environment (Dessler 2013, 351). It is a way for dissatisfied people to escape situations (Wilson 2009, 165-166, 195-215). Voluntary turnover and poor attendance are two other examples of job withdrawals (Dessler 2013, 351). Without any career and professional development prospects may lead employees to leave, while a complete training and career sporpects are more likely to keep employees within a company.

Managing voluntary turnover includes identifying its causes and handling them. People who are dissatisfied with their job leave more often, but there are many, various reasons to dissatisfaction. Usually, the reasons for staying in a company are promotional opportunities, work-life balance, career development, and health benefits. While the reasons for leaving are promotion, career development, pay, relationship with supervisor, and work-life balance. (Dessler 2013, 348.) Other reasons for leaving voluntarily are unfairness, not having their voices heard, and lack of recognition. However, turnover can also be a positive factor, for example, when losing low-performing employees. (Phillips and Gulley 2012, 328-329.) In the case of a fitness center, where the promotional opportunities are limited by the nature of the company, having people who are passionate about fitness, well-being, and instructing classes are the key factors for employee engagement and retention.

At Company X, voluntary turnover is likely for part-time fitness center due to the lack of career and professional development prospects at the company. However, in addition to personal training and class instructing, management work as a fitness center supervisor and various office job positions, such as in marketing and human resource management, are possible career options at Company X. As noted, there are not too many career and professional prospects at Company X, which seems to be one of the reasons for voluntary turnover.

Retention is important because without it a company loses knowledge, corporate memory, and a lot of time and money wasted in recruitment, training, and development. When there is retention, less time is spend on recruiting and training because it retains employees and knowledge within the company. Positive public relations and word-of-mouth advertising for the company are results from retention. Therefore, a company becomes a wanted employer and reaches desired employees. (Gregg & Zenzen 2009, 133.)

It has been researched that there are many methods to retain employees with the company (Gregg & Zenzen 2009, 134), for example, by communicating, coaching rather than managing, establishing clear performance metrics, and creating growth opportunities (Bajic, 2013). However, retention is all about employee satisfaction by meeting their needs (Gregg & Zenzen 2009, 134).

2.5.2 Engagement

Employee engagement is the energy, motivation and passion that can be seen from the level of effort in work-related activities. At Company X, employee engagement can be seen the way, for example, the fitness center receptionists and instructors perform their jobs. This is very important because they are the ones who create the atmosphere to the fitness centers. People come there to enjoy their leisure time, which is why the atmosphere need to be positive and welcoming to get the customers come regularly and more often.

Employee engagement can be seen as an emotional connection between an employee and the company. The connection between a company and an employee is important for a fitness company such as Company X, because the competition between fitness centers is high. Therefore, every fitness center wants the best employees, for example class instructors, to work for their own company. This increases the number of participants in classes, which means more customers.

Human resources is essential when it comes to engaging. The new generation entering the job markets is motivated differently than previous generations, which has led employers to rethink the way to engage employees (Bersin 2014; Coy 2014). Employee engagement benefits both the company and employees. Engaged employees work more effectively, are passionate about their job, provide constructive feedback, and respect the company, supervisors and colleagues (Nolinske 2013).

According to Kruse (2012), engagement prevents negative results, for example, voluntary turnover. It is something to consider as employees are more likely to leave when there is no engagement. This increases the costs of, for example, recruiting and training. Cook (2008, 11-12) states that disengaged employees don't perform their tasks as required, which affects negatively on the company and other employees. Poor attendance, voluntary turnover, and psychological withdrawal are results of reduced employee engagement (Dessler 2013, 352). Dessler defines engagement as "being psychologically involved in, connected to, and committed" to perform a job.

Employee engagement is essential due to its nature to reflect the level of commitment to a company. According to Chun and Davies (2009, 19), satisfied employees are not enough for customer service companies anymore. Even though, satisfied employees are productive, do what they are supposed to, and do not complaining. However, when it

comes to customer service, employees need to be more than satisfied. Employers should provide employees with reasons and methods to serve customers extraordinarily, and after, reward them for this excellent behaviour. In times to times, Company X has sales competitions where the best seller is rewarded with, for example, gift card or bonus. However, there is no on-going reward system for the employees, and the above-mentioned competitions are organized rarely.

Organizational culture affects the health of the organization. Attributes that have been recognized as characteristics of a healthy organization are open communication, trust, respect and fairness, teamwork and involvement. Trust, respect and fairness are cultural conditions, which result from open communication, transparency, fair treatment, and equitable decisions. Teamwork and involvement are ways to engage employees through feeling of belonging. Additionally, engaging employees with team-oriented organizational projects support better retention. (Gregg & Zenzen 2009, 135-136.) Company X retains and engages employees in the company by creating 'we' spirit, keeping the work community and atmosphere comfortable and prosperous, and providing employees with a full fitness benefit and occupational health care. What comes to career management, the customer servants can train themselves to become class instructors. Likewise, class instructors can be trained as customer servants.

Strengthening employee engagement requires ensuring employees to understand how they contribute company's success, to see how their own efforts help achieve the company's set goals, and get feelings of accomplishments from working at the company. (Dessler 2013, 352.) According to above, employee engagement could be described as a concept that combines human resource factors, such as team working and motivation, together.

3 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this thesis is to research human resource management and its processes – human resource planning, recruiting, selection, orienting, training, development, and employee retention and engagement – at Company X, and to provide development suggestions for the company. The objective of this thesis is to identify areas which can be improved regarding the human resource management. As a result, development proposals exploring how human resource processes can be developed and improved in order to support the growth and success of Company X are provided for the company.

The research methods are divided into a qualitative and quantitative method. Quantitative research method answers questions about which, where, how much, and how often, for example, by surveying, interviewing, or both. The method quantifies the interdependencies or changes that have taken place in the underlying phenomenon by numbers and percentages.

First, the study was considered to conduct as a quantitative research, however, it would have not been appropriate due to its lack of involvement of the respondents. Qualitative research method involves them more because the research uses dynamic processes, such as interviews. In qualitative research, the aim is to make sense of the meanings expressed by respondents participating in research about the topic and phenomenon being studied (Saunders et al. 2016, 568). These meanings are dependent on social interaction (Saunders et al. 2016, 568). Qualitative data gives an opportunity to explore a topic as realistically as possible, while quantitative data would give a thorough abstraction or description of the studied topic (Saunders et al. 2016, 568).

Qualitative research uses words and images to conclude meanings. Words and images have multiple meanings, therefore, they are harder to analyse than numbers used in quantitative data (Saunders et al. 2016, 568). However, qualitative data provides more detailed results and conclusion for research in order to understand the phenomenon of human resource management processes studied, and the employees are directly impacted by these human resource processes. This means that quality of qualitative research is dependent on the interaction between data collection and data analysis to fully understand the meanings to be researched (Saunders et al. 2016, 568). Qualitative research seeks to explore, explain and understand phenomena, and answers to questions what and why.

The study is appropriate to conduct as a qualitative research method because the method is generally used for understanding views and perceptions what the study is all about. It provides solution/s to different problems. Qualitative research method gives the opportunity to look deeper into problems. It helps to discover new thoughts and individual views. Qualitative research method is chosen due to its nature to assist interaction with the interviewees, understanding the comments, perceptions, views, opinions and ideas given by the respondents.

A qualitative research responds to the research needs as the research questions seek answers for questions what are the human resource processes employees consider important at the case company, what do employees consider as main challenges while working for Company X, and through these questions, identify answers to questions how to improve and develop these processes and what should be taken into account for the human resources. As the aim of this study is to understand what works well when it comes to human resource management identifying the problems, challenges and development needs that appear within the company's center in Turku, the study is appropriate to conduct as a qualitative research.

A quantitative method was also considered. However, when there are only 6 employees to survey, interviewing them makes more sense. Additionally, the researched sample is wide in the scale of Company X's fitness center in Turku, and generalizations can be made out of the results. The initial idea for the topic rose from experience and discussion amongst the employees at the fitness center. Therefore, another reason why qualitative research method is appropriate to conduct due to the fact that the idea rose from discussion, and qualitative research aims to answer the problematic questions in more describing way. Qualitative research can filter the complexity into more manageable parts because of the describing factor is essential for this study.

In order to gain primary research information, the data for this study is gathered through individual interviews by asking open-ended questions in an effort to explore the topic. Interviewing is a key to understand the human resources at Company X, and doing so, providing the company with a comprehensive overview of the company's human resource management. The intention is to interview 6 employees of Company X, containing all the full-time employees (3 employees) and part-time employees (3 employees). One of the employees works as a fitness center representative, all of them as fitness center receptionists, 5 out of 6 as class instructors, and 1 of them as a personal

trainer in addition of being a class instructor and fitness center receptionist. Additionally, one of them works only as a fitness center receptionist.

The interview explores the topic of the study comprehensively, with themes human resource planning, recruiting, selection, orienting, training and development, employee retention and engagement, and job satisfaction. The interview questions can be seen in appendix 1 and 2. Appendix 1 presents the questions asked from full-time employees, and appendix 2 questions for part-time employees. The questions are designed to gain comprehensive information about the wanted topics. The results and findings of the study are presented in the next chapter. As a result, the aim is to provide the state of selected human resource processes, and suggestions on which processes should be developed, and most importantly, how.

4 FINDINGS

In a qualitative research, employees' opinions on the functionality of human resource management and its processes were analyzed at Company X from an employee perspective. The employees of Company X's fitness center in Turku were interviewed and asked to evaluate the company's human resource management and its processes by answering various issues related to human resource management and its processes.

The employees were divided into two different groups – full-time and part-time employees – because the groups were asked slightly different questions. Full-time employees were asked more questions about human resource planning and recruitment, while part-time employees were asked about orientation issues. The interview questions can be seen in appendix 1 and 2. Appendix 1 presents the questions asked from full-time employees, and appendix 2 questions for part-time employees. Differences between these two groups were found, but no significant distribution occurred, so they cannot be statistically generalized. A total of 6 employees were interviewed for this thesis: 3 full-time and 3 part-time employees.

Next, the opinions of all the interviewed employees on the Company X's human resource management and its processes – human resource planning, recruiting, selection, orientating and training employees, employee retention and engagement, and job satisfaction – will be discussed.

4.1 Human resource management

Questions related to human resource management pointed out that all the interviewed employees saw human resource management as important for the company and their own work. Employees were seen as the company's largest resource, and therefore, human resource having an influence on the company's performance and internal atmosphere, but also the way the company itself looks outward, for current and possible new customers. Human resource management was seen to have a holistic role in staff welfare.

Human resource management was seen as important. When it is well-managed, employees said to be confident that issues are properly handled in the company. This

way, all employees know how to act and when. If human resources are poorly managed, things do not get handled as they should. Through human resources, employees know what is expected from them as employees.

4.2 Human resource planning

At the interview, employees' opinion about human resource planning were asked. Half of the employees saw human resource planning operative, while half did not. Some did not even recognize the current human resource planning at Company X. This might be because the company seems to operate as little as possible in order to pay its debts. All interviewed employees felt that they have the right knowledge and skills for their work. More than half of them had some kind of personal goals in their work, for example, to exceed on their careers or to educate themselves as class instructors. Free shifting of working hours between employees was seen as a positive factor.

Employees seem to feel that there are enough employees in the company and its fitness center in Turku, and it works when every employee is available. The current number of employees was seen corresponding the demand of products and services. However, when someone is sick or such, it leads to situations where employees are asked to make shifts at short notice. This might lead to a so-called forced working, which was seen as a negative factor among employees. However, without compelling absenteeism, work tasks are handled.

Generally, the employees are happy and satisfied with their work. However, employees who worked as class instructors would like to train themselves more, which was seen to increase work satisfaction. Training class instructors would also increase customers' satisfaction as instructors could offer them something completely new. Through training, instructors would get more new ideas for their classes, and thus, they could offer their customers an even more enjoyable exercise experience. Nowadays, if a class instructor wants to find new ideas, s/he needs to do it in his/her spare time.

Employees did not see Company X's strategy as operative. They saw that it is far too wide, trying to offer something for everyone. Employees would like the strategy to be packed more tightly to better target its products and services for customers. Employees thought it should be specified better to who and what, what pays off and what does not. When something would be decided, Company X should stick to it and focus on it fully.

Employees would like a clearer strategy in the sense that they would know why things are done as they are. This would clarify the company's goals among employees and what the company wants to offer its customers. The strategy would require clear structuring. An example was given by an interviewed employee that the class schedule should be designed in a new way so that the supply would be tailored for more specified customer range, and not with a thought of something for everyone.

Full-time employees saw the location of the fitness center as a negative one. Company X's fitness centers in Helsinki are located also in the city center. However, employees of the Turku fitness center have noticed that what works in Helsinki does not necessarily work in Turku, and same goes for the location. Most of Company X's customers and the target group move from place to place with their own cars. Therefore, the customers would need a free parking space because of its location in the city center, and Company X is not able to provide it.

4.3 Recruiting

In the interview, employees were asked about recruiting issues. Generally, things that occur in the recruitment process were considered important: all employees considered the exact description of the job extremely important. The part-time employees, who have been hired lastly, saw that job assignments were clearly defined in the recruitment process. Also, the knowledge of the job community and environment were seen as important. Employees also appreciated the professionalism of recruiting and the speed of the selection process.

Recruiting was seen as challenging among employees. Nowadays, a huge number of people are applying for the same job, and it is challenging to find the right person from this pool of applicants. There seem to be a lot of applicants in fitness industry, which makes it a good industry to do business. Especially, when applicants have the passion for fitness, health, and sports, recruitment was seen easy.

The recruitment process was seen challenging because it should be more functional as a process. It should be clearer and more specific of what the company is expecting from its employees because there have been misunderstandings what the work consists of. Recruiting class instructors was seen easier than recruiting fitness center receptionists, because defining the class instructor's job is easier than defining fitness center

receptionist's job. Usually, there are misunderstandings what the work of receptionist includes, and the maintenance tasks might come as a surprise for applicants.

While Company X is trying to manage as little as possible, employees felt that the company should use more resources on recruitment, to interview more applicants to find the right people to work. At Company X, recruiting happens quickly. If more time and resources were spent on interviewing people and more people were interviewed, even more suitable employees could be found among the many applicants.

4.4 Selection

Employees' opinions on interview and selection process were asked in the interview. A job interview was seen as functional. Although the fitness center representative was seen to be interviewing efficiently and finding the right people for vacant job positions, the role of human resource manager was seen important in job interviews. All the interviewed employees felt that depending on the job position, one team member should also interview potential new employees in addition to human resource manager and fitness center representative.

When people are hired to work for Company X, they are most likely to work in a team. Therefore, employees saw the participation of current employee(s) in job interviews possible and useful. This would give different perspectives and observations to the recruiting process. In the interview, employees suggested that a current employee would not necessarily ask questions; s/he could be listening and doing observations. Would this new potential employee be suitable for our work team? Most of the employees were interested in participating in the selection process.

4.5 Orienting, training and developing employees

4.5.1 Orienting employees

The orientation had been executed with every interviewed employee, as all of them were familiarized with their work. Employees saw orientation as functional. They reported having received a comprehensive overview of the company's business practices. During the orientation, general and basic tools were discussed, which clarified acting in a new

company. Additionally, employees experienced that their orientation helped to start working for a new company. The orientation was performed by either a supervisor or a colleague.

They saw that during the orientation, for example, if something was unclear, it could always be asked and a clear answer was received. Even though employees saw orientation as functional, they stated that more time should be spent on orientation. For example, there should have been work shifts more often at the beginning of employment. This would have helped to remember learned things more effectively. However, employees felt that the time consumed for orientation was enough.

Every employee said to learn the work tasks and routines during the orientation. They felt welcome and part of the team. As a result, new employees settled quickly to the company. Every employee said their colleagues had the most impact on fast settling due to their friendliness. This would also mean that the recruitment was well done if there is a nice fit between the new recruit and the older employees. Employees felt to have a close and lively work community at the fitness center. Additionally, employer has also been flexible in many issues, such as flexible working hours.

4.5.2 Training and developing employees

Employees' competence and its development were felt to be extremely important. Employees found it important to create opportunities for development of competence. However, employees felt that Company X does not train its employees enough. Employees would like to be trained in, for example, marketing, sales, payroll, and personal training. According to one employee, training is supported and easily accessed. However, there is no existing training plan. On the other hand, most employees hoped for more training opportunities, because training in the company was seen to be more emphasized to the class instructors.

Employees who work as class instructors wanted more training about, for example, instructing. Company X organizes "training weekend" for its class instructors once a year in Helsinki. It is a weekend full of training sessions concerning class instructing. Employees felt that training weekend should be more frequently. Additionally, the location makes it more difficult for the employees in Turku fitness center to participate. The time and energy consumed to the travelling was not seen as worthy.

Company X organizes sales trainings for the fitness center receptionists who are the frontline workers at the company. Employees did not see sales trainings offered by Company X as operative. Trainings sessions were not seen as planned. Employees did not feel like learning new things at training sessions organized by the company. Employees believed the company should provide its employees with a clear sales package where an employee would find answers, for example, how to respond in certain, especially difficult, customer or sales situations. This would provide the receptionists with tools, especially the new employees who are not yet ready to handle difficult situations. However, all kinds of trainings were seen as important among employees.

Training money offered by Company X was seen as a good benefit. It is a benefit for all the permanent employees s/he can use for training. However, training money requires a lot from employees. The company does not suggest any specific training for its employees, but the employees themselves have to find interesting trainings. Then, they propose them to the company, which will or will not be supported by Company X. Employees saw it would be good if the company would offer and suggest available trainings that the company would support.

Employees felt that there was no way to build a career or proceed in Company X. For example, the vacant position of human resource manager is never internally announced. Employees at the Turku fitness center felt like left out, because employees from Turku would also be interested in these silently announced vacant job positions. Additionally, employees felt that while issues are handled in Helsinki, Turku fitness center is left in the background.

4.6 Employee retention and engagement through job satisfaction

Questions about employee retention and engagement issues were asked from employees. Full-time employees no longer wanted more responsibilities than they already had, while part-time employees hoped, for example, new responsibilities or areas to be responsible of. Employees felt that opinions in the fitness center itself are taken into account. However, opinions are not taken into account at company level. Employees would want to receive more feedback from their supervisor concerning their work and performance. The feedback usually comes from customers and not from supervisors.

Questions about employee job satisfaction were asked in the interview. All employees were happy with their work, however, some tasks such as maintenance tasks were not seen as interesting. Employees felt that they are doing what they like and in a good work community. All the interviewed employees felt that they and their work are valued at the workplace. Many organizations would wish their employees to feel that their work are valued, which is an advantage for Company X as an employer. The workplace is also seen as a place to spend time due to its communality. In their work, employees appreciated especially customers, colleagues, work environment and responsibility.

Employees saw their work as motivating, which was affected by colleagues and customers. Part-time employees saw responsibility as a motivating factor. Almost all employees felt that rewarding, intrinsic and extrinsic, encourages motivation. Additionally, the persistence of the employment were seen as motivating. Employees saw their work as important.

The answers to questions about job satisfaction supports previously asked opinion on the appreciation and feedback given by supervisor. Feedback from colleagues were seen as rewarding. Employees, who also work as class instructors, saw customers as motivating factors, especially when employees have seen their customers enjoy the exercise at the classes. At that time, employees saw they had succeeded. In addition to all the above, employees were seen to be motivated by something happening in the company, for example, by a campaign. Product prizes or sales contests were not seen as a motivating feature.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to find out the current state of Company X's human resource management and its processes from the employee point of view. The qualitative research gained a comprehensive look to the current state of the company's human resource management and its processes, and how satisfied employees are with them.

The goal was to provide Company X with development proposals concerning human resource management and its processes. The thesis aimed to answer the following research questions: what are the human resource processes employees consider important at the case company, what do employees consider as main challenges while working for Company X, and how to improve and develop these processes and what should be taken into account for the human resources.

As a basis for the findings, a qualitative research by interviewing the employees were used. Development proposals consist of development targets according to the themes that emerged in the interviews. The implementation of the proposals remains to be carried out outside this thesis.

5.1 Development targets

Human resource management and its processes do exist in Company X. However, the company needs to renew and make clearer their overall strategy to focus on more specific customer segment(s) so that employees know and understand to whom the services and products are offered. The interviews revealed the need for development in human resource management and its processes. Generally speaking, employees of Company X were satisfied with the company's human resource management and its processes. However, there were few issues that seem to need developing. The most important development targets that emerged were selection and training employees.

Recruitment was seen as challenging. There are many applicants in the fitness and health industry. Therefore, more resources, meaning time, should be used to interview more applicants to find the right fit for a vacant job position, the work team, and the company. In addition to the fitness center representative and the human resource manager, one or more colleagues or team members could participate to selecting and

interviewing the applicants. Participation of a current employee in job interviews would offer the process new perspectives and observations; would the applicant be a right fit for the job, team and company? Additionally, most of the employees were interested in participating in the recruitment and selection process.

What comes to employee retention and engagement through job satisfaction, more responsibilities or areas to be responsible for were desired by part-time employees and feedback were missed by all of the interviewed employees. For example, part-time employees could participate in the job interviews, which would send positive signals for the employees.

5.2 Training and development

The most important development target which was identified to be training. Company X does not have a systematic competence development system and competence management for its employees, which has become a challenge for managers and supervisors. Training was welcomed and considered as an important issue by interviewed employees. They hoped for more training, for example, from sales and marketing, personal training, and instructing classes. Training employees was seen as a contribution to professionalism and well-being at work, because all of them found their work as relevant.

According to the interviews, sales training sessions should be planned better and organized more frequently. This would provide the fitness center receptionists with tools to handle customer service and sales situations more effectively. Additionally, career opportunities were appreciated. Therefore, vacant job positions, such as human resource manager, should be announced publicly inside Company X.

At Company X, training is needed and also wanted by fitness center receptionists and class instructors. Company X could train its employees, and to design a training plan for its employees. The training plan would be designed with the employees. It would map the skills requirements and define the training needs. The research revealed the fitness center receptionists' different sales experiences as a problem for training. Therefore, a personal development plan would allow an employee and employer to have a clear overview of needed training.

Employees felt training extremely important and relevant. Company X should offer more training opportunities for its employees, and more frequently. For example, the company could suggest specific trainings regularly for its employees, which the company would be willing to fund. At present, Company X has traditional training methods. With traditional methods, lecture training is meant. When training the fitness center receptionists' sales skills, the personal training needs should be taken into account. In addition, learning by doing is never emphasized enough. This means that training does not favour traditional methods, such as lecture training, because sales work is learned by doing, rather than reading materials.

The training should emphasize important issues for the receptionists, such as product knowledge, argumentation, and sales processes. The research revealed that especially argumentation was seen as an useful skill for the fitness receptionists to have, and therefore, an important training subject. For these reasons, it would be good to create a compact sales manual to help exactly the right way the company wants its employees to sell their products and services to customers. Additionally, a clear strategy with more specific customer segments would help employees with argumentation. It is a win-win situation if a company has a good attitude towards training employees, and can be seen as a better result in profits and more satisfied customers.

5.3 Further research

The aim of this thesis was to provide Company X with a development proposals concerning human resource management and its processes. There are many topics for further research, such as the implementation of development proposals and assessment of implementing the development proposals. Development is strongly related to evaluation and continuous improvement. Therefore, it is important to further research the suggested topics.

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Interview questions for full-time employees

Haastattelukysymykset kokoaikaisille työntekijöille aihealueittain.

Henkilöstöhallinto/Human resource management

- Näetkö henkilöstöhallinnon tärkeänä yrityksen kannalta?
- Näetkö henkilöstöhallinnon tärkeänä oman työsi kannalta?

Henkilöstösuunnittelu/Human resource planning

- Mitä mieltä olet yrityksen henkilöstösuunnittelusta?
- Onko henkilöstöhallinnossa kehitystarpeita? Millaisia?
- Vastaako henkilöstömäärä mielestäsi palveluiden kysynnän määrää?
- Onko yrityksessä/keskuksessa mielestäsi tarpeeksi työntekijöitä?
- Tunnetko omaavasi oikeat tiedot ja taidot työtehtävääsi varten?
- Millä osa-alueella haluaisit kehittyä työssäsi?
- Onko sinun mahdollista kouluttautua yrityksen kautta?
- Mitä asioita haluaisit parannettavan työviihtyvyytesi kannalta?
- Onko sinulla omia tavoitteita työssäsi? Millaisia?
- Onko yrityksen strategia mielestäsi toimiva?
- Miten kehittäisit yrityksen strategiaa?

Rekrytointi/Recruitment

- Mitkä näet rekrytoinnin haasteina? Miksi?
- Miten yritys voisi rekrytoida mahdollisimman tehokkaasti?
- Miten yritys voisi rekrytoida mahdollisimman sopivia työntekijöitä?

Valinta ja haastattelu/Selection and interviewing

- Kenen/Keiden pitäisi mielestäsi haastatella työnhakijoita?
- Pitäisikö mielestäsi muita työntekijöitä osallistuttaa työhaastatteluihin?
- Pitäisikö haastattelu mielestäsi suorittaa 2-3 työntekijän paneelihaastatteluna?

- Olisitko kiinnostunut olemaan mukana haastatteluissa ja osallistua rekrytointiprosessiin?

Koulutus/Training

- Kouluttaako yritys työntekijöitään tarpeeksi?
- Onko sinulle tarjottu mahdollisuutta kouluttautua?
- Haluaisitko itse kouluttautua?
- Mistä haluaisit lisää koulutusta?
- Näetkö yrityksen järjestämät koulutustilaisuudet toimivina?
- Ovatko yrityksen järjestämät koulutustilaisuudet hyvin suunniteltuja?
- Opitko yrityksen järjestämässä koulutustilaisuuksissa uusia asioita?

Työntekijöiden sitouttaminen/Employee engagement

- Haluaisitko lisää vastuuta?
- Otetaanko työpaikalla huomioon työntekijöiden mielipiteitä?
- Saatko palautetta työstäsi?
- Tunnetko, että olet kehittynyt työssäsi?
- Näetkö työsi tärkeänä?

Työtyytyväisyys/Job satisfaction

- Oletko tyytyväinen työhösi, työpaikkaasi ja työtehtäviisi?
- Onko työsi motivoivaa? Mitkä asiat siihen vaikuttavat?
- Tunnetko olevasi arvostettu työpaikallasi?
- Arvostetaanko työpanostasi työpaikallasi?
- Mistä erityisesti pidät työssäsi, työpaikassasi ja työtehtävissäsi?

Interview questions for part-time employees

Haastattelukysymykset osa-aikaisille työntekijöille aihealueittain.

Henkilöstöhallinto/Human resource management

- Näetkö henkilöstöhallinnon tärkeänä yrityksen kannalta?
- Näetkö henkilöstöhallinnon tärkeänä oman työsi kannalta?

Henkilöstösuunnittelu/Human resource planning

- Tunnetko omaavasi oikeat tiedot ja taidot työtehtävääsi varten?
- Mitä asioita haluaisit parannettavan työviihtyvyytesi kannalta?
- Onko sinulla omia tavoitteita työssäsi? Millaisia?

Rekrytointi/Recruitment

- Oliko työtehtävä/t määritelty tarpeeksi selkeästi rekrytointiprosessissa?

Valinta ja haastattelu/Selection and interviewing

- Kenen/Keiden pitäisi mielestäsi haastatella työnhakijoita?
- Pitäisikö haastattelu mielestäsi suorittaa 2-3 työntekijän paneelihaastatteluna?

Orientaatio/Orientation

- Näetkö orientaation toimivana? Miksi?
- Miten muuttaisit orientaatiota?
- Käytettiinkö orientaatioon mielestäsi tarpeeksi aikaa?
- Opitko orientaation aikana tarpeeksi yrityksestä, sen liikeideasta, arvoista, periaatteista ja tavoista?
- Tutustuitko työympäristöön tarpeeksi orientaation aikana?
- Opitko työtehtäväsi ja rutiinit orientaation aikana?
- Saitko orientaation aikana selkeät ohjeet?
- Jäikö orientaation aikana jotain tiettyä epäselväksi? Mitä?

Koulutus/Training

- Kouluttaako yritys työntekijöitään tarpeeksi?
- Onko sinulle tarjottu mahdollisuutta kouluttautua?
- Haluaisitko itse kouluttautua?
- Mistä haluaisit lisää koulutusta?
- Näetkö yrityksen järjestämät koulutustilaisuudet toimivina?
- Ovatko yrityksen järjestämät koulutustilaisuudet hyvin suunniteltuja?
- Opitko yrityksen järjestämissä koulutustilaisuuksissa uusia asioita?

Työntekijöiden sitouttaminen/Employee engagement

- Haluaisitko lisää vastuuta?
- Otetaanko työpaikalla huomioon työntekijöiden mielipiteitä?
- Saatko palautetta työstäsi?
- Tunnetko, että olet kehittynyt työssäsi?
- Näetkö työsi tärkeänä?

Työtyytyväisyys/Job satisfaction

- Oletko kotiutunut yritykseen?
- Mitkä asiat vaikuttivat kotiutumiseen?
- Tunnetko olevasi osa työtiimiä?
- Oletko tyytyväinen työhösi, työpaikkaasi ja työtehtäviisi?
- Onko työsi motivoivaa? Mitkä asiat siihen vaikuttavat?
- Tunnetko olevasi arvostettu työpaikallasi?
- Arvostetaanko työpanostasi työpaikallasi?
- Mistä erityisesti pidät työssäsi, työpaikassasi ja työtehtävissäsi?