

Bachelor of Business Administration

International Business

2023

Jutta Simon & Viivi Nurmi

# Employer Branding as a Competitive Advantage in Attracting and Hiring Women Talent in Luxembourg

– Article Draft

Bachelor's Thesis | Abstract

Turku University of Applied Sciences

Business Administration

Autumn 2023 | 30 pages, 9 appendix pages

Jutta Simon & Viivi Nurmi

## Employer Branding as a Competitive Advantage in Attracting and Hiring Women Talent in Luxembourg

- Article Draft

This thesis explores how employer branding can be strategically used to recruit women talent in Luxembourg. The main goal is to examine the impact of employer branding practices on talent attraction, specifically focusing on the women demographic. The study unfolded through two key objectives: to explore the factors influencing women's perceptions related to employers in Luxembourg, and to make suggestions to companies for improving their employer branding strategies for attracting more women professionals especially to leadership roles.

To achieve the goals of the thesis, a comprehensive survey was carried out in a Facebook group called "Ladies of Luxembourg", offering valuable insights to the perceptions and experiences of women in different industries.

The inspiration for this thesis and article draft originates from both authors' direct exposure to the recruitment domain. Actively participating professionally in the recruitment processes of major corporations, the authors have personally observed the paramount role of employer branding in attracting top talent.

Keywords:

Recruiting, employer branding, human resources, women talent

Opinnäytetyö (AMK) | Tiivistelmä

Turun ammattikorkeakoulu

Liiketalouden Tradenomi

Syksy 2023 | 30 sivua, 9 liitesivua

Jutta Simon & Viivi Nurmi

## Työnantajabrändäys Kilpailuetuna Naisten Rekrytoimisessa ja Palkkaamisessa Luxemburgissa

- Artikkeliluonnos

Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii, miten työnantajabrändäystä voidaan hyödyntää naisten rekrytoinnissa Luxemburgissa. Opinnäytetyö eteni kahden keskeisen tavoitteen kautta: selvittää ne tekijät, jotka vaikuttavat naisten mielikuviin työntajista Luxemburgissa, ja antaa suosituksia organisaatioille heidän työnantajabrändäysstrategioidensa parantamiseksi naisammattilaisten palkkaamiseksi, erityisesti johtotehtäviin.

Opinnäytetyötä ja artikkeliluonnosta varten tehtiin kysely "Ladies of Luxembourg" Facebook-ryhmään. Kyselyn tulokset antoivat arvokkaita näkemyksiä naisten käsityksistä ja kokemuksista työntajista eri aloilla.

Tämän opinnäytetyön ja artikkeliluonnoksen inspiraatio juontaa juurensa molempien kirjoittajien kokemukseen rekrytointialalla. Molemmat kirjoittajat ovat rekrytoinnin ammattilaisia suurissa yrityksissä, ja ovat henkilökohtaisesti havainneet työnantajabrändäyksen roolin huippukykyjen houkuttelemisessa.

Asiasanat:

Rekrytointi, henkilöstöhankinta, henkilöstöresurssit, työnantajabrändäys, naisammattilaiset

## **Content**

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2 Literature Review</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Employer Branding	8
2.2 Theoretical Background	9
2.3 Hiring Women	10
2.4 Luxembourg Labor Market	12
<b>3 Survey Design</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Thesis Objectives	16
3.2 Survey Method	17
3.3 Sampling	19
3.4 Data Analysis	19
3.5 Research Ethics and Limitations	20
<b>4 Key Findings</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 Factors that influence women’s perceptions and decisions regarding employment in the context of employer branding	22
4.2 Best practices and recommendations to enhance employer branding strategies in attracting and recruiting women in Luxembourg	24
<b>5 Discussion and Conclusions</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>6 Thesis Work Process</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1 Design of the Article	28
<b>7 Evaluation of the Learning Process</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>8 References</b>	<b>31</b>

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1. Article Draft

Appendix 2. Survey Questions

# Introduction

## Background

Attracting high-quality talent is a critical objective for an organization's success. The value of a strong employer brand is increasingly recognized by companies, as strong employer branding can help attract high-quality candidates. In addition, a positive employer brand can engage existing employees. (Padhi & Joshi, 2022)

Strong employer brand also has an advantage to attract diverse candidates. Diversity is recognized to contribute to organization's success by boosting productivity and innovation. Diversity has become an increasingly important attribute and goal for companies (Davis, 2022). The high demand of hiring coupled with the growing interest in companies striving to create a more balanced and equitable workforce by increasing focus on hiring women talent. However, hiring women has some unique challenges for organizations, especially when hiring women for leadership roles (Eger et al. 2019).

Luxembourg is a hub for diverse workforce and multinational companies. Due to its small native population, Luxembourg relies on attracting immigrants for open positions, and around 70% of the country's workforce is composed of immigrants or cross-border workers (The Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg), which makes the market especially diverse and attractive to research.

The motivation behind this thesis stems from the authors' direct involvement in the field of recruitment. As active participants in the hiring process in large international companies, the authors have witnessed firsthand the pivotal role that employer branding plays in attracting top talent. The authors have also experienced the emphasis that companies place on diversity and especially hiring women talent, and that providing a balanced pipeline of women and men has proven challenging. The concept of employer branding can be one of the solutions to attract and recruit women professionals. Therefore, this thesis aims to explore the role of employer branding as a competitive advantage in attracting

and recruiting women talent in Luxembourg. Understanding these aspects can have significant implications for employers in Luxembourg.

### **Objective and Methodology**

The aim of this thesis is to examine how employer branding can be utilized to recruit women talent. The primary objective of this thesis is to examine how employer branding practices contribute to talent attraction and recruiting of women in Luxembourg. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To explore the factors that influence women's perceptions and decisions regarding employment in Luxembourg, and how employer branding is shaping these perceptions.
2. To make recommendations for organizations employer branding strategies to attract and recruit women talent in Luxembourg.

To fulfill these objectives, a survey is conducted within the "Ladies of Luxembourg" Facebook group - a vibrant community of women residing in Luxembourg. This survey aims to unravel the factors that impact women's considerations when contemplating new employment opportunities or deciding to remain with their current organization.

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Employer Branding

Brand equity is a marketing term that refers to the value of a product due to its brand name and consumer's perceptions of that brand. Brand can only have equity if consumers are aware of the brand, identify it among other brands and think it is favorable in its unique attributes that are able to fulfill consumer's needs more than other brands. (Keller, 1993). Brand equity generates a competitive advantage for companies and can have a positive effect on company outcomes (i.e., stock price and market success). In recruitment literature, this concept is called employer brand equity (Collins & Han, 2004; Turband & Cable, 2003).

Attracting, recruiting, and retaining top talent is critical to a company's success and performance. Therefore, companies try to differentiate themselves from competition in becoming the employer of choice, which enables them to recruit and retain employees with superior knowledge and skills. Employer branding plays a significant role in reaching this goal and has become an important strategic advantage for companies. (Kalińska-Kula & Staniec, 2021)

The way that job applicants and employees perceive a company has an influence on whether job seekers would consider job opportunities in the company. This is why employer brand has become an essential point for companies to consider when developing brand messaging to the internal and external markets. It is vital for companies to understand the different elements of brand attractiveness to attract, recruit and retain top talent. Awareness of the company's employer brand attractiveness can help companies develop effective marketing and human resource strategies that align with the target market. (Santiago, 2019)

A company's ability to attract job seekers expresses its position in the labor market. Employer branding provides a strong competitive advantage in the selection of the target audience, which is a way to attract job seekers to the company and increase the possibility of recruiting top talent. In employer



branding, companies cultivate relationships with talent similarly as consumers do with product brands. Consequently, employers reflect traits that correspond to traits that can be portrayed by product brands. The concept of employer branding has emerged as a result of marketing principles being applied to human resource management, first introduced by Ambler and Barrow (1996). The authors see employer branding as the benefits offered by the company in order to build a unique identity in the eyes of job seekers and employees and encourage them to join or stay with the company.

Employer branding is the reflection of the identity and culture of the company, and its employees are the main messengers of brand awareness. (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2015). The stronger the attractiveness of the company's employer brand, the more robust is the perceived value in the job seekers perception (Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2012). In addition to the competitive advantage employer branding can provide in regard to company's position in the labor market, a strong employer brand can also help companies in achieving strategic business objectives such as building a high-performance workplace, address diversity issues, engage people and retain talented people. (Santiago, 2019) Strong employer branding is also found to reduce turnover, cost per hire and attract more qualified applicants. (Samoliuk, Bilan, Mishchuk, & Mishcuck, 2022)

## 2.2 Theoretical Background

Employer brand has been broken down to dimensions by several researchers. Berthon et al. (2005) have characterized employer brand through five types of values provided: economic value (salary), interest value (interesting work), social value (enjoyable working environment), development value (career growth opportunities), and application value (opportunities to implement one's own knowledge).

(Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2012) have identified four dimensions of employer brand: (1) economic attributes (high salary, fair system of rewards and bonuses, stable employment, work schedule), (2) psychological attributes (strong

corporate culture, positive interpersonal relations, team-working, objective assessment of work), (3) functional attributes (content of work, training perspectives, career growth opportunities, opportunities to realize employees' knowledge and skills), and (4) organizational attributes (leadership in market segment, international scope of activities, organization's history, reputation of consumer brands, reputation of top-managers, management style).

Purusottama's and Ardianto's (2019) research indicated that especially organizational attributes (corporate vision and leadership) and psychological attributes (corporate reputation and working environment) significantly influence job seekers intention to apply for an open role in a company. (Purusottama & Ardianto, 2019). The research findings also corroborated previous studies (Wallace, et al., 2013; Swider, et al., 2015).

### 2.3 Hiring Women

In the previous decades, employees stayed with the same company for longer periods of time and changed their jobs only twice or thrice during the span of their career. Today, the reality looks different, and employees switch jobs at an escalating pace. Companies need to try and retain employees, but also to hire new employees, to both backfill for attrition but also to ensure growth, which causes a labor market battle for top talent and results in fierce competition. (Grubb III, Harris, & MacKenzie, 2006)

Building a strong brand image to attract women talent poses one of the greatest challenges for companies. However, examining and addressing issues that women face can be the key to attracting, recruiting, and retaining women talent, especially in the business areas traditionally dominated by men and in regard to roles in leadership. Hiring women is particularly important in order to create a diverse workplace. Diversity has been proven to improve the information processing and decision making of teams as creating heterogeneous groups reach higher quality decisions (van Knippenberg, De Creu, & Homan, 2004).

Diverse companies have been proven to perform better than their homogenous counterparts (Herring, 2009), looking at both individual, group, and overall company performance (Dezgö & Ross, 2012). Involving more women in positions traditionally dominated by men has been proven to bring informational and social diversity benefits to companies, enrich employee and management behavior and improve performance (Dezsö & Ross, 2012; Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

Companies have tried different strategies to increase diversity. This includes preferential treatments such as quotas or changes in remuneration structure, which can influence job-seekers perception of the company and impact recruitment of women. Research findings highlighted by Flory et al (2018) propose that signaling important dimensions of a company value of employee diversity could be a significant factor. Signals that are valuing workplace diversity have important implications on the size and demographic of applicant pools.

There are specific challenges associated with hiring women, especially in certain corporate positions. This is evident from labor market data. Almost 90% of Fortune 500 companies' CEOs are white men, while less than 6% are women. Looking at companies in the U.S, where diversity data is more accessible, the proportion of white women has stayed mostly flat since 2000 at under 30% in companies with 100 or more employees (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). The percentages are low and do not create a diverse working environment.

Women have made significant advances in educational achievements in the last decades, and for example account for an increasing share of all Master's degree holders (62% in 2020-2021 in the U.S.) and doctorate degrees (56% in 2020-2021 in the U.S.). (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The gap of women representation in companies implies barriers in the career trajectory for women. In Luxembourg, women make up 53% of upper secondary vocational graduates, which is high compared to 46% on average across OECD countries. (OECD, 2019). Women in Luxembourg also hold a higher share of higher education diplomas; In 2021, 58% of 25-to-34-year aged men in Luxembourg had

a diploma while 67.4% of women had completed a secondary education in the same age group. (Research Luxembourg, 2022).

The data indicates that women are highly skilled and qualified workforce worth pursuing. Women are often highly qualified applicants for job openings, yet talent pipelines are often dominated by men. One reason for this could be the significant gender differences when evaluating employment benefits, as noted by talent attraction studies. Women have been found to value dimensions such as diversity management practices, inclusive recruitment, opportunities for career progression, and work-life balance to a greater extent than men (Ng & Burke, 2005). Grubb et al.'s (2006) research suggested that women are also particularly concerned with fairness in compensation and fringe benefits, job security, and long-term career opportunities.

In fortune 500, it has also been observed that women executives are twice more likely to leave their company compared to men, due to frustration with their work environment, company culture, lack of communication and career development. (Gopinath, 2021). Samoliuk et al.'s (2022) research indicated that career development opportunities are in high importance for women, with over 85% of women considering it a significant factor when weighing their career moves. Additionally, the reputation of the company as an employer has been shown to be a significant factor that women consider when applying for job openings. Majority of women, 81.1% of women, find reputation important. Women also place more importance on company leadership (Samoliuk et al., 2022). The way a company brands itself in regard to the aspects women find important, can have significant impact on their success in hiring women talent.

## 2.4 Luxembourg Labor Market

Luxembourg, as a hub multinational companies and a diverse workforce, presents an interesting context to examine the role of employer branding in attracting and recruiting women talent. The recruitment landscape is competitive given the strong demand for talent.

Luxembourg has a uniquely dynamic labor market that is shaped by the country's economic prosperity, international and multilingual character, and commitment to fostering a highly skilled workforce. Luxembourg has an extensive history of cross-border labor flows as a result of its embedding in regional economic networks, and it has the highest rate of cross-border labor mobility in Europe. (Parker, 2013). Luxembourg is a highly international economy with only one in four employees holding a Luxembourgish nationality. More than 47 percent of Luxembourg's workforce are cross-border workers. Approximately 50 percent of the cross-border workers reside in France, and about 25 percent reside in Belgium and Germany. Women comprise 41% of the employees. (Statistiques.lu, 2023)

The Luxembourgish economy has become reliant on external labor. This includes both foreigners moving to Luxembourg for work and cross-border workers who work in Luxembourg but reside in the neighboring countries. Rapid growth of sectors like financial services in Luxembourg has spurred job creation over the past two decades, and the labor market is dependent on external labor to support the growth and to function in certain sectors. (Parker, 2013).

Luxembourg is an attractive location for companies due to the tax benefits and access to multilingual workforce. More than 340 international companies have set up subsidiaries in the country and sought beneficial tax arrangements. (Neugarten, 2021). Luxembourg has the highest GDP per capita and is providing many benefits for workers, including generous social benefits and social protection schemes (i.e., unemployment benefit, social insurance, minimum guaranteed income), which provide high levels of protection. (Worldometer, 2022). The economic situation in the country is stable and projected to keep growing. (European Commission, 2023). Luxembourg also has strict labor laws, which provides job security and Luxembourg has one of the highest rates of permanent employment contracts in the EU. (Rae, 2023)

Luxembourg is known as a global financial and banking hub, but it is also home to several European institutions. The presence of these institutions and international companies increases the multicultural workforce in Luxembourg.

Furthermore, Luxembourg has thriving technology, logistics, and healthcare sectors, which have experienced significant growth, providing a range of career paths for professionals. Luxembourg's labor market is also known for fostering innovation despite its small size, and the government actively supports entrepreneurship. The unique aspects of benefits and opportunities make Luxembourg a compelling location for both job seekers and employers. (Research Luxembourg, 2023)

Table 1. Some of Luxembourg's biggest industries and employers (STATEC, 2023) (STATEC, 2023)

Industry	Major Employers
Finance and Banking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Banque et Caisse d'Épargne de l'État (BCEE) - The national bank of Luxembourg and a major financial institution (1 810 employees)</li> <li>2. PwC Luxembourg - Professional services firm providing audit, tax, and advisory services (3 310 employees)</li> <li>3. KPMG Luxembourg - Professional services firm specializing in audit, tax, and advisory services (1 850 employees)</li> <li>4. Deloitte Luxembourg - A global consulting firm offering a wide range of services, including audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory (2 500 employees)</li> </ol>
European Institutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. European Investment Bank (EIB) - The EU's financing institution, providing loans and financial assistance for various projects (4020 employees)</li> <li>2. European Court of Justice (ECJ) - The highest court in the European Union, responsible for interpreting EU law (2000 employees)</li> <li>3. European Investment Fund (EIF) - A financial institution that supports European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by providing financing and guarantees (700 employees)</li> </ol>
Technology and Telecommunications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amazon - The multinational e-commerce and cloud computing company has its European headquarters in Luxembourg (4 570 employees)</li> <li>2. RTL Group - European entertainment network, operating TV channels, radio stations, and digital platforms (550 employees)</li> <li>3. Groupe Post Luxembourg – The country's largest provider of postal and telecommunications services (4 500 employees)</li> </ol>
Manufacturing and Industrial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ArcelorMittal - A global steel and mining company (3 540 employees)</li> <li>2. Goodyear - A multinational tire manufacturing company (3 540 employees)</li> </ol>
Professional Services and Consulting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EY Luxembourg - A global professional services firm offering assurance, tax, transaction, and advisory services (1 820 employees)</li> </ol>

	2. Arendt & Medernach - A law firm specializing in corporate, financial, and tax law (1 280 employees)
Retail	1. Cactus - A supermarket chain in Luxembourg, operating numerous stores across the country (4 290 employees) 2. Auchan - A multinational retail group with hypermarkets and supermarkets in Luxembourg (1 230 employees)

## Survey Design

As demonstrated by the literature review, developing a strong employer brand has become an important strategic focus point for companies, and the efforts to build a successful brand as employer of choice requires constant examination and awareness. Therefore, research into the labor market is increasingly needed, to examine the values and analyze changes in the behavioral attitudes from different target groups. (Samoliuk et al., 2022)

The aim of this research was to explore how employer branding can be effectively utilized to attract and recruit women talent within companies in Luxembourg. To achieve this objective, we applied a descriptive research approach, which examines the situation by describing factors associated with it, such as demographic, attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and knowledge. Descriptive research estimates specific parameters in a population and describes associations. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003; Walliman, 2016) To examine the impact of employer branding in attracting and recruiting women talent, we applied a quantitative approach and survey method. To obtain insight from women talent in Luxembourg, a survey was conducted among members of the "Ladies of Luxembourg" Facebook group, which comprises a diverse community of women residing in Luxembourg.

### 3.1 Thesis Objectives

The aim of this research was to describe the impact of employer branding in attracting and recruiting women talent in Luxembourg. Our focus was twofold, to examine the factors that influence women's perceptions and decisions regarding employment in the context of employer branding, and what are the best practices that companies in Luxembourg can employ to enhance their employer branding strategy to attract and recruit women talent. To guide this study, the following research questions were asked and addressed:



- 1) What are the factors that influence women's perceptions and decisions regarding employment in the context of employer branding?
- 2) What best practices and recommendations can be proposed to enhance employer branding strategies to attract and recruit women in Luxembourg?

### 3.2 Survey Method

In this research, we applied a quantitative approach and survey method. In this method, data was collected in standardized form, for example by a questionnaire. Survey was selected as surveys can provide a snapshot of a phenomenon at a specific time and are well suited for descriptive studies. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003) Surveys are able to obtain information from a larger sample population and gather demographic data that describes the composition of the sample. Surveys can also collect information about attitudes that are otherwise difficult to measure by using observation techniques. (Glasgow, 2005)

From our background research of existing literature, we applied pre-coded responses that were of interest for this research, which aligned well with the choice of quantitative approach and survey method. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003) To reveal deeper insights, we designed a survey with both closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are suitable to collect the quantitative data of pre-coded areas of interest, but open-ended questions can provide deeper insight into the women's opinions. (Salant & Dillman, 1994) Closed-ended questions in this survey were in the format of Likert scales and multiple-choice, enabling participants to rate their agreement on specific statements or select appropriate response options. Open-ended questions were added to encourage participants to provide more detailed explanations, opinions, and examples related to their experiences.

The survey was conducted within a Facebook community "Ladies of Luxembourg", which comprises a community of women residing in Luxembourg. This method allowed for a broad reach and diverse participant pool, providing insights into a wide range of perspectives and experiences. The questions were

structured to gather both demographic information and the respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections:

1. Demographic Information: This section collected data on the demographics of the respondents including age, education level, employment status, industry, and years of experience, level of position, company size, work arrangement and country of origin. These variables help understand the demographic and draw conclusions of the data in relation to the characteristics.
2. Survey Questions: This section collected data from a series of closed-ended multiple choice, range, and Likert-scale questions. The questions focused on factors that women hold important regarding employment opportunities and the perceived impact of specific employer branding strategies. A few open-ended questions were included to gather qualitative insights into challenges women face in the workplace and what measures companies could take to create a more attractive work environment for women in Luxembourg.

The survey was administered electronically using a secure online survey platform Webropol. Participants were provided with a link to the survey, which they could access at their convenience. The survey began with an introduction explaining the purpose of the research, confidentiality of responses, and voluntary participation. Participants provided informed consent before proceeding with the survey. The estimated completion time was also communicated to manage participant expectations. To ensure a sufficient sample size, the data collection period was set at two weeks. One reminder was sent after one week to encourage more participants who may not have seen it or had the time to participate yet.

### 3.3 Sampling

When aiming to obtain information about a large group of people, a target population from within that group needs to be selected. Asking questions from a sample population can allow generalization of the results as long as the sample is representable. If the results of the sample population are alike, conclusions can be drawn from the responses and then related to the whole group. Sampling is the process of selecting a small group of people from a larger group. (Walliman, 2016)

In Luxembourg, the labor force participation rate among women in 2022 is 58.2%. This percentage reflects the population aged 15 and older who are economically active, including both employed and unemployed people. (The World Bank, 2022) In 2023, Luxembourg has approximately 130,000 women participating in the labor force. (Statista, 2023) The target population for this research was selected as the "Ladies of Luxembourg" Facebook group. This group was selected as it comprises a community of 13,600 women residing in Luxembourg, which made the target population diverse and allowed us to reach women from various industries, levels of experience, and cultural backgrounds.

Simple random sampling was employed to select participants from the group (Walliman, 2016). Random sampling allows easier generalization of the results. Using this technique, each individual within the chosen population is selected by chance and is equally likely to be selected as anyone else. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003) An invitation to participate in the questionnaire was posted in the group, explaining the purpose of the research and inviting interested members to participate in the survey. Anyone from within the Facebook group could choose to participate.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Once the data collection period was complete, the collected survey responses were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. For quantitative

data, the collected survey responses were analyzed utilizing both Webropol Insights (Webropol, 2023) and Excel for further data cleaning, analysis, and visualization. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the survey responses and demographic information where relevant. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003; Walliman, 2016)

Qualitative data from open-ended questions was subjected to thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and patterns within responses. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provided a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The purpose of analysis was to summarize the data in an easily understood way and provide answers to the research questions. Findings of the research were then reported in alignment with the research questions, in a clear and factual manner. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003)

### 3.5 Research Ethics and Limitations

Two important ethical issues to adhere to when conducting a survey are confidentiality and informed consent. The respondents right to consent should always be respected. (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003) The consent should follow the requirements of General data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Intersoft Consulting, 2023). To comply with GDPR, the respondents were informed about what data is being collected, why, with which tools, and how it will be handled. The participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses and informed about the voluntary nature of participation. The collected data was securely stored and accessed only by authorized researchers.

It is important to acknowledge certain limitations of survey-based methodology. The population sample consisted of participants from a specific social media community, which may not fully represent the entire population of women professionals in Luxembourg. A larger sample would have enhanced the reliability of our findings. The self-reporting approach of the questionnaire might also entail biases, which could affect the accuracy of responses.

## **Key Findings**

In the virtual gathering space of the "Ladies of Luxembourg" Facebook group, where more than 13,000 women share experiences, stories, and laughs, we recently turned our focus to a significant aspect of life: work. Our Employer Branding Survey sought to unravel the authentic narratives of women professionals in Luxembourg.

This survey examined the intricate factors influencing talent attraction and recruitment for women in Luxembourg across diverse industries. The anonymized responses from the expansive and engaged community of women professionals provided a comprehensive view into the nuances of employer branding in the Grand Duchy.

### **The Survey Demographic**

It was important for the research to understand the demographic details of the respondents. Among the 65 women who participated, the majority (59,6 %) fell in the age group of 35-44, while 19,8 % were of the age of 45-54, and 9,1 % between the ages of 25-34, showcasing a mix of professionals of all ages. The majority of the participants (90%) have completed a higher education degree.

A significant 91% of respondents confirmed they were currently employed, representing a robust segment of the working women population in Luxembourg. The Finance and Banking sector emerged as the dominant industry, with 46% of the participants. The survey reached participants working in various positions, from entry-level (14%) to managerial (18%) while mostly gathering responses from mid- and senior level employees (55%).

When exploring the experience of our respondents, the survey unveiled a balanced distribution, with 45% having 3-10 years of work experience and an equally noteworthy 29% with over 15 years of professional expertise. Those in the earlier stages of their career with 0-2 years of experience represented 11% of the pool. This blend of seasoned professionals and those in the early stages

of their careers provided a rich perspective on employer branding across different career trajectories.

Given the recent surge in remote work trends, the survey addressed the evolving nature of work arrangements. A notable 54% reported working in a hybrid model, while only 6% work fully remotely. The traditional office-based structure retained its relevance, with 26% primarily working from a physical office.

#### 4.1 Factors that influence women's perceptions and decisions regarding employment in the context of employer branding

##### **Job Satisfaction and Commitment**

The survey delved into the core factors shaping job satisfaction and commitment among women professionals in Luxembourg. When faced with a question that they could choose all answers that apply, a competitive salary and benefits package (56 %) along with career growth opportunities emerged as the primary drivers for considering changing employers, with 60% highlighting its significance. A competitive salary and benefits package not only validates a woman's professional value but also contributes significantly to job satisfaction and retention. It serves as a tangible acknowledgement, addressing the need for fair compensation and fostering a sense of financial well-being. This is especially crucial given the existing challenges of wage disparities that women may face. (Cilenti & Cooper, 2021)

Work-life balance emerged as a critical consideration for 49%, reinforcing the growing emphasis of well-being in the workplace. Importantly, many participants raised concerns about the challenges of balancing work and family life, especially in the context of motherhood and caregiving responsibilities for elderly relatives. This struggle is particularly pronounced as these responsibilities often are seen as falling on women. This gendered division of caregiving responsibilities not only impacts women's ability to dedicate time and energy to their careers but also perpetuates inequalities within the workforce. As women navigate the delicate balance between work and family, they face a persistent challenge in overcoming

traditional expectations that dictate their primary role as caregivers. (Parker K. , 2015)

The survey also highlighted the importance of company culture and values, with 44% underscoring its crucial role in fostering satisfaction and commitment. A positive and inclusive culture fosters a sense of belonging, contributing to job satisfaction. Shared values create a cohesive work environment, aligning individual and organizational goals. This synergy not only enhances employee morale but also cultivates a deep-seated commitment, essential for long-term professional engagement and success. (Jigjiddorj, Zanabazar, Jambal, & Semjid, 2021)

### **Company Reputation as Employer of Choice**

A significant revelation from the survey was the importance assigned to a company's reputation and employer brand. On a scale of 1 to 10, the average rating was 7.7, underlining the critical role employer branding plays in women's considerations when contemplating a job change. Impressively, 80% of respondents admitted to having researched a company's employer branding online before applying for a job or accepting an offer.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Furthermore, the survey delved into the resonance of diversity and inclusion initiatives among the respondents. Gender bias in the workplace is a sad reality for many – an astounding 48% of the respondents reported to have experienced gender-related challenges or bias in the workplace. It comes as no surprise that 82% thought it extremely important or important for an employer to actively support and promote gender diversity.

A resounding 89% affirmed that companies with robust diversity and inclusion programs were more attractive as potential employers. This finding underscores the increasing significance women place on workplaces that actively promote diversity and inclusivity. A significant number of respondents (63%) also stated

that they would consider an employer as less attractive if the company did not have any women in leadership roles.

#### 4.2 Best practices and recommendations to enhance employer branding strategies in attracting and recruiting women in Luxembourg

A particularly noteworthy section of the survey explored the challenges women face in the workplace and their recommendations for improvement. Networking opportunities designed specifically for women garnered positive responses, with 56% expressing a desire for more targeted networking events. Some companies are already tapping into this opportunity by providing networking and other professional events that target women talent. Based on the survey results, there is still space for more professional networking opportunities.

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary workplaces, fostering a diverse and inclusive environment is paramount for organizational success. One of the foundational elements influencing women employees' long-term engagement is the establishment of an inclusive workplace culture. Companies that prioritize diversity and actively create an environment where all employees feel valued and heard contribute significantly to fostering a sense of belonging. (Cvjetković & Babić, 2023) One participant proposed that sometimes change requires fundamental changes in law or policy, *“The “bro” culture is real and makes it very tough for women to feel that they are in the right place, respected and valued. This kind of change doesn’t come by itself, it should be regulated by law so that all companies will have to abide to it.”* While companies are likely not to change the laws, they could enhance their policies. Through initiatives such as diversity training, mentorship programs, and resource groups, companies can create an inclusive culture that supports the unique needs and aspirations of women employees. (Fayad, 2022) Survey participants also noted that women need more opportunities to be seen by management without needing to work overtime.

For women employees to remain committed to a company, they must perceive equal opportunities for career growth and development. By emphasizing equity



in talent management practices, companies can strengthen their employer brand and build trust among women employees. (Ronda & Azanza, 2021) Some participants provided anecdotal feedback that companies should pay more attention to gender balance at the workplace. A participant proposed concrete actions that gender balance should be present in each level of the company hierarchy, *“Impose a 50/50 rule on management roles and hires in general in all departments. Equality of chance has to start from low levels otherwise we will never have enough female leaders to choose from.”* Another participant proposed that quotas are needed until gender balance becomes the norm.

Several participants called out how motherhood can hinder women’s career and salary progression. As one participant stated, *“The companies should have dedicated career plans that account for maternity, but still prepare women for managerial positions, and offer meritocracy-based promotions.”* Another participant stated, *“Maternity leave creates a career break for women, this break means we are left behind while the men proceed to promotions. Flexibility and understanding that women may need to be more available to their kids than men, as most are primary parent in their household. Women's compensation also has slower growth curve than men's, this should be fixed.”* Companies have an opportunity to address this concern and brand themselves accordingly to encourage women to apply for openings.

The evolving nature of work demands a reevaluation of traditional structures. Flexibility in work arrangements, such as flexible schedules, remote work options, and family-friendly policies emerges as a key factor in fostering the long-term commitment of women employees. Companies that prioritize work-life balance contribute to a positive employer brand perception especially among women employees. Maternity leave policies, on-site childcare facilities, and wellness programs are examined as critical elements that contribute to the overall well-being of women employees. By addressing the unique challenges faced by women in balancing work and personal life, companies demonstrate a commitment to their employees' holistic success. (Kalińska-Kula & Staniec, 2021)

Transparency in communicating a company's commitment to diversity and inclusion is also essential in shaping the employer brand. By showcasing diversity initiatives, sharing success stories, and highlighting the achievements of women within the organization, companies can enhance their employer brand and attract and retain top women talent. (Ronda & Azanza, 2021) One open-ended response states a recommendation, *"More visibility on mat leave and other benefits before joining company. More open culture about work life balance and promoting women. Companies could publish how many women vs men they have in the company and also what is the pay gap between genders."*

## Discussion and Conclusions

The Employer Branding Survey for Women in Luxembourg, conducted within the expansive and engaged community of the "Ladies of Luxembourg" Facebook group, has not only unveiled the present landscape but has also illuminated potential pathways for positive change. As employers navigate the competitive talent market in Luxembourg, these insights provide a roadmap to strengthen employer branding strategies, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for women professionals. The findings resonate as a call for continuous evolution in employer practices, ensuring alignment with the aspirations and expectations of the dynamic women workforce in Luxembourg.

The survey revealed that women are more likely to consider opportunities in companies that provide a fair compensation and benefits, offer an enhanced work-life balance, and have an active approach in promoting diversity in the workplace. Women value seeing women in leadership positions and place emphasis on company reputation. Furthermore, the survey gathered recommendations from women in the workplace. Recommendations from the participants for employers included a call for enhanced policies supporting work-life balance, transparent communication of diversity initiatives, and focused efforts of career progression for women, including promotion of women in leadership roles.

When considering the implications of the survey, the identified areas of concern and aspiration provide a compelling foundation for further research. Deeper investigation into the complex dynamics of compensation plans and benefits, with an emphasis on aligning them with the needs and preferences of women professionals, could yield valuable insights. Investigating the impact of targeted diversity initiatives on recruitment and retention in addition to researching successful tactics for elevating women into leadership roles, is an interesting direction that research could take.

## Thesis Work Process

The thesis planning started in the spring of 2023. We wanted to collaborate on the thesis as we both work in talent acquisition professionally, and we wanted the thesis topic to support our knowledge and work. We had both delivered thesis' before, Viivi to Humak University of Applied Sciences in 2017 and Jutta to University of Eastern Finland in 2017 and 2019, which is why we chose to demonstrate our expertise with an expert article. We started to work on the article and the thesis report after a guidance discussion in October 2023.

A previously completed thesis can replace the thesis process, but it cannot demonstrate the expertise of a second degree. An expertise article can demonstrate competence as proof of expertise in another field of education.

### 6.1 Design of the Article

The writing of the draft article consisted of three different work phases, in which we replaced the corresponding phases of the thesis process. These three work phases were the written design of the article, the implementation of the plan and the article to be published. In the thesis report, we described and evaluated our learning process as a whole. We compiled the thesis report like a regular thesis. The draft of the article to be published is attached. We started planning the article in September 2021. We first started writing the article by looking for information on how to write an article for a professional publication. The most important thing for the reader is to get new, and especially from a professional point of view, central and interesting reading. When writing, we used up-to-date sources found on the internet as well as various written sources.

## Evaluation of the Learning Process

Our primary objective was to delve into a subject deeply connected to our professional domain - recruitment. Motivated by a desire to contribute meaningfully to the industry, we aimed to explore how employers brand themselves and attract women talent, particularly to leadership roles. Delving into the perspectives of women themselves, we sought to add value to the industry and to do our small part in filling a research gap in the field. Reflecting on our journey, we are content with the outcome achieved, having successfully gathered insights that we believe will be beneficial to the industry.

However, the research did not come without its difficulties. A challenge we faced was creating an effective strategy to reach a large and diverse group of women in Luxembourg for our survey. Additionally, the scarcity of prior research on the intersection of employer branding and women talent posed a unique obstacle. Navigating these challenges demanded creative problem-solving and highlighted the importance of addressing research gaps to contribute meaningfully to the academic discourse.

Our collaborative efforts were characterized by exceptional communication and seamless teamwork. Drawing on our experience working together in both academic studies and in the recruitment field, we leveraged our well-established working relationship to navigate the complexities of the thesis project. This effective collaboration allowed for the smooth execution of tasks and facilitated a cooperative approach to problem-solving.

Recognizing the significance of completing the thesis within a set timeframe, we prioritized time management. Setting ambitious deadlines and adhering to them became a pillar of our strategy. The commitment to finishing the project before the end of the year of 2023 propelled us forward, emphasizing the importance of strategic time management in achieving academic goals.

Our prior experience in conducting research, including past thesis projects, equipped us with foundational research skills. Applying critical thinking, we

reviewed existing literature and sources, ensuring a rigorous and analytical approach to our exploration of the subject.

Understanding the importance of constructive feedback, we actively sought guidance from our thesis mentor throughout the project. Embracing an iterative process, we utilized feedback as a catalyst for improvement, refining our work at each stage based on valuable insights provided by our mentor.

This thesis has had a significant influence on both our professional and personal growth. It expanded our knowledge of the hiring industry and offered priceless insights, especially to the perspective of women professionals that struggle with combining work and family life. The acquired knowledge broadens our viewpoints and gives us the ability to make more valuable contributions to our careers in talent acquisition and to the businesses that we work with on a professional basis.

Armed with the experiences and knowledge gained from this thesis, our future learning goals are clear. As HR and recruitment professionals, we want to take advantage of this knowledge and apply these lessons to our day-to-day work. Our dedication to ongoing improvement serves as a compass, guaranteeing that we will always be at the forefront of our sector and contributing significantly to the business.

This reflective evaluation concludes by stressing the importance of our teamwork and emphasizing both the learning process's long-lasting influence on our career paths as well as the accomplishment of our academic goals. The knowledge gained from this thesis project will provide us with a strong basis as we move forward, guiding our approach to upcoming obstacles in the academic and professional domains.

## References

- Adams, B. (2022, 2 8). *Make Your Employer Brand Stand Out in the Talent Marketplace*. Retrieved from Harvard Business Review:  
<https://hbr.org/2022/02/make-your-employer-brand-stand-out-in-the-talent-marketplace>
- Allen, P. (2022, 11 18). *Luxembourg: A hyper-connected multicultural hub for global startups*. Retrieved 12 19, 2023, from EU-Startups:  
<https://www.eu-startups.com/2022/10/luxembourg-a-hyper-connected-multicultural-hub-for-global-startups-sponsored/>
- Ambler, T., & Barrow, S. (1996). The Employer Brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 4(3), 185-206. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/bm.1996.42>
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M., & Hah, L. L. (2015). Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(2), 151-172.  
 doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072912>
- Cable, D. M., & Turban, D. B. (2003). The Value of Organizational Reputation in the Recruitment Context: A Brand-Equity Perspective. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 33, 2244-2266. Retrieved from  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2003.tb01883.x>
- Cilenti & Cooper. (2021). *What Is The Meaning Of Fair Pay And Why Is It Important?* Retrieved 12 21, 2023, from Wagefirm:  
<https://wagefirm.com/what-is-the-meaning-of-fair-pay-and-why-is-it-important/#:~:text=Not%20only%20does%20it%20impact,they%20are%20being%20paid%20fairly.>
- Collins, C. J., & Han, J. (2004). Exploring Applicant Pool Quantity and Quality: The Effects of Early Recruitment Practice Strategies, Corporate Advertising, and Firm Reputation. *Personnel Psychology*, 57, 685-717. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2004.00004.x>

- Cvjetković, M., & Babić, T. (2023). The Influence of Employer Brand Dimensions on the Affective Organizational Commitment of Employees in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises. *Organizational Culture - Cultural Change and Technology*. doi:DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.112133
- Dezgö, C., & Ross, D. (2012). Does female representation in top management improve firm performance? A panel data investigation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33 (9), 1072-1089. doi:1072–1089. doi:10.1002/smj.1955
- Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016, July-August). Why Diversity Programs Fail. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail>
- Elitegroup. (2023, 10 15). *Luxembourg needs 270,000 extra workers by 2030*. Retrieved 12 19, 2023, from LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/luxembourg-needs-270000-extra-workers-2030-elitegrouprecruitment-gjh0e/>
- European Commission. (2023). *Economic Forecast for Luxembourg*. Retrieved from [https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-surveillance-eu-economies/luxembourg/economic-forecast-luxembourg\\_en](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-surveillance-eu-economies/luxembourg/economic-forecast-luxembourg_en)
- Fayad, A. (2022, 11 11). *The Importance Of Diversity And Inclusion Training*. Retrieved 12 18, 2023, from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2022/10/11/the-importance-of-diversity-and-inclusion-training/?sh=7d1b41c27cff>
- Flory, J. A., Leibbrandt, A., Rott, C., & Stoddard, O. (2018). Increasing Workplace Diversity: Evidence from a Recruiting Experiment at a Fortune 500 Company. *CESifo Working Paper(7025)*.
- Glasgow, P. A. (2005). *Fundamentals of Survey Research Methodology*. Washington: McLean.



- Gopinath, S. P. (2021). A Study on Strategy of Employer Branding and its impact on Talent Management in IT industries. *Elementary Education Online*, 20(5), 3441-3451.
- Grubb III, W. L., Harris, M. L., & MacKenzie, J. W. (2006). Business Students' Perceptions of Employment in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Versus Multinational Corporations: Investigating the Moderating Effects of Academic Major, Gender, and Personality. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, 17 (2), 27-36. Retrieved from <https://libjournals.mtsu.edu/index.php/jsbs/article/view/69>
- Herring, C. (2009). "Does Diversity Pay?: Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity.". *American Sociological Review*, 74 (2), 208-224.
- Intersoft Consulting. (2023). *General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR*. Retrieved from <https://gdpr-info.eu/>
- Jigjiddorj, S., Zanabazar, A., Jambal, T., & Semjid, B. (2021, 1). Relationship Between Organizational Culture, Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20219002004>
- Kalińska-Kula, M., & Staniec, I. (2021). Employer Branding and Organizational Attractiveness. *European Research Studies Journal*, Volume XXIV(Issue 1, 2021), 583-603. Retrieved 2023, from <https://ersj.eu/journal/1982/download/Employer+Branding+and+Organizational+Attractiveness+Current+Employees+Perspective.pdf>
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *American Marketing Association*, 57, 1-30. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
- Kelley, K., Clark, B., Brown, V., & Sitzia, J. (2003). Good Practice in the conduct and reporting of survey research. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 261-266.

- Kucherov, D., & Zavyalova, E. (2012). HRD practices and talent management in the companies with the employer brand. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(1), 86-104.  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/03090591211192647>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). *Graduate Degree Fields*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/ctb/graduate-degree-fields>
- Neugarten, J. (2021). Why is Luxembourg Considered a Tax Haven? Retrieved from <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/100115/why-luxembourg-considered-tax-haven.asp>
- Ng, E., & Burke, R. (2005). Person-organization fit and the war for talent: Does diversity management make a difference? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16 (7), 1195-1210. doi:1195–1210.  
doi:10.1080/09585190500144038
- OECD. (2019). *Education at a Glance 2019*. Retrieved from [https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019\\_CN\\_LUX.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019_CN_LUX.pdf)
- Parker, J. A. (2013, 5). Political Consequences of Cross-Border Labor Mobility in Luxembourg. Retrieved from [https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=2614&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=2614&context=utk_chanhonoproj)
- Parker, K. (2015, 3 10). *Despite progress, women still bear heavier load than men in balancing work and family*. Retrieved 12 21, 2023, from Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2015/03/10/women-still-bear-heavier-load-than-men-balancing-work-family/>
- Purusottama, A., & Ardianto, A. (2019). Attracting Talented Employees to Leverage Organizational Competitiveness. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen*, 17, 118-126. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21776/ub.jam.2019.017.01.13>

- Rae, S. (2023). *Contracts, hours and holidays*. Retrieved from <https://www.luxtimes.lu/yourluxembourg/moneyandpersonalfinance/contracts-hours-and-holidays/1357500.html>
- Research Luxembourg. (2022). *Luxembourg ranks 1st in EU for Higher Education Levels*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchluxembourg.org/en/luxembourg-ranks-1st-in-eu-for-higher-education-levels/>
- Research Luxembourg. (2023). *Where Research Excellence and Innovation Go Hand in Hand*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchluxembourg.org/en/luxembourg-fostering-excellence-in-research-and-innovation/>
- Ronda, L., & Azanza, G. (2021). Employer Femvertising: Women Empowerment in Employer Brand Messages. *International Journal of Communication, 15*, 514-544. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349457155\\_Employer\\_Femvertising\\_Women\\_Empowerment\\_in\\_Employer\\_Brand\\_Messages](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349457155_Employer_Femvertising_Women_Empowerment_in_Employer_Brand_Messages)
- Salant, P., & Dillman, D. (1994). *How to conduct your own survey*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Samoliuk, N., Bilan, Y., Mishchuk, H., & Mishcuck, V. (2022). Employer brand: Key values influencing the intention to join a company. *Management & Marketing. Challenges for the Knowledge Society, 17*, 61-72. doi:10.2478/mmcks-2022-0004
- Santiago, J. (2019). The relationship between brand attractiveness and the intent to apply for a job: A millennials' perspective. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics, 28*, 142-157. doi:DOI 10.1108/EJMBE-12-2018-0136
- STATEC. (2023). *Les principaux employeurs au Luxembourg*. Retrieved from <https://statistiques.public.lu/fr/publications/theme/entreprises/principales-employeurs/princip-employeurs-branche.html>

- Statistiques.lu. (2023). Panorama on the Luxembourgish working world on the occasion of May 1st. Retrieved from <https://statistiques.public.lu/en/publications/series/regards/2023/regards-06-23.html#:~:text=Of%20the%20479%2C000%20employees%20in,to%20only%207%25%20of%20men>
- Statista. (2023). *Population of Luxembourg in 2023, by age and gender*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/584996/population-of-luxembourg-by-age-and-gender/>
- Stroman, T., Woods, W., Fitzgerald, G., Unnikrishnan, S., & Bird, L. (2017, 2). Why Paid Family Leave is Good for Business. Retrieved 12 19, 2023, from <https://media-publications.bcg.com/BCG-Why-Paid-Family-Leave-Is-Good-Business-Feb-2017.pdf>
- Swider, B. W., Zimmerman, R. D., Charlier, S. D., & Pierotti, A. J. (2015). Deep-Level and Surface-Level Individual Differences and Applicant Attraction to Organizations: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 88, 73-83. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.01.005>
- The World Bank. (2022). *Gender Data Portal*. Retrieved from Luxembourg: <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/luxembourg/#:~:text=In%20Luxembourg%2C%20the%20labor%20force,labor%20force%20participation%20has%20increased.>
- Thorpe, N. (n.d.). *Employer Branding: The Complete Guide*. Retrieved 12 19, 2023, from Planday: <https://www.planday.com/articles/employer-branding-guide/>
- van Knippenberg, D., De Creu, C. K., & Homan, A. C. (2004). Work Group Diversity and Group Performance: An Integrative Model and Research Agenda. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89 (6), 1008-1022. doi:<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0021-9010.89.6.1008>

Wallace, E., de Chernatony, L., & Buil, I. (2013). Building bank brands: How leadership behavior influences employee commitment. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(2), 165-171.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.07.009>

Walliman, N. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Webropol. (2023). *Survey Analytics-Software Made Easy*. Retrieved from <https://www.webropol.de/unser-produkt/zusatzliche-module/analytics/>

Worldometer. (2022). *GDP per Capita*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldometers.info/gdp/gdp-per-capita/>

## Article Draft

### Strategic Advantage: The Power of Employer Branding on Women in Luxembourg

Date 21.12.2023

Authors

Jutta Simon Recruiter, BBA student, Turku University of Applied Sciences

Viivi Nurmi Recruiting Coordinator, BBA student, Turku University of Applied Sciences

**There has never been a more crucial transition to make from realizing the necessity of inclusive workplace cultures to actively promoting diversity and inclusion. The data from Luxembourg underscores the pivotal role employer branding plays, especially in attracting and retaining women talent.**

#### In the Competition to Become Employer of Choice

But what exactly is employer branding? In essence, employer branding is a company's strategic effort to showcase its unique workplace culture, values, and overall attractiveness as an employer. One might think of it as the company's deliberate effort to be not just a workplace but a desirable destination for top-tier professionals. (Thorpe, n.d.)

Employer brand is a powerful tool in the job market, shaping how potential employees perceive your company. The value of a strong employer brand is increasingly recognized by companies, as investing in a strong employer brand is a smart strategic move that can make all the difference in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the best talent in the industry. The company's reputation as a great place to work is especially meaningful in a competitive job market. Talented individuals have choices, and they often choose employers with a brand that resonates with them. In the competition to become employer of choice, companies are increasingly recognizing the need to foster inclusive and supportive workplace cultures. (Adams, 2022)

#### Shaping Company Reputation Through Employer Branding

Employers must recognize the impact of their reputation as a place to work on hiring decisions. Concerns about job security, dysfunctional teams, and poor leadership contribute to a bad reputation, while stability, opportunities for career growth, and the ability to work with a top-notch team contribute to a good reputation as an employer. (Adams, 2022)

Additionally, a poor employer reputation can have significant financial implications for a company as the cost of attracting and retaining talent may increase substantially. This highlights the

importance of a positive employer brand not only in attracting high-quality talent but also in optimizing financial resources. (Burgess, 2016)

### **Employer Branding could be the Answer to Diversity and Inclusion**

*“Companies should learn how to be more inclusive and supportive.”*

- Survey Participant –

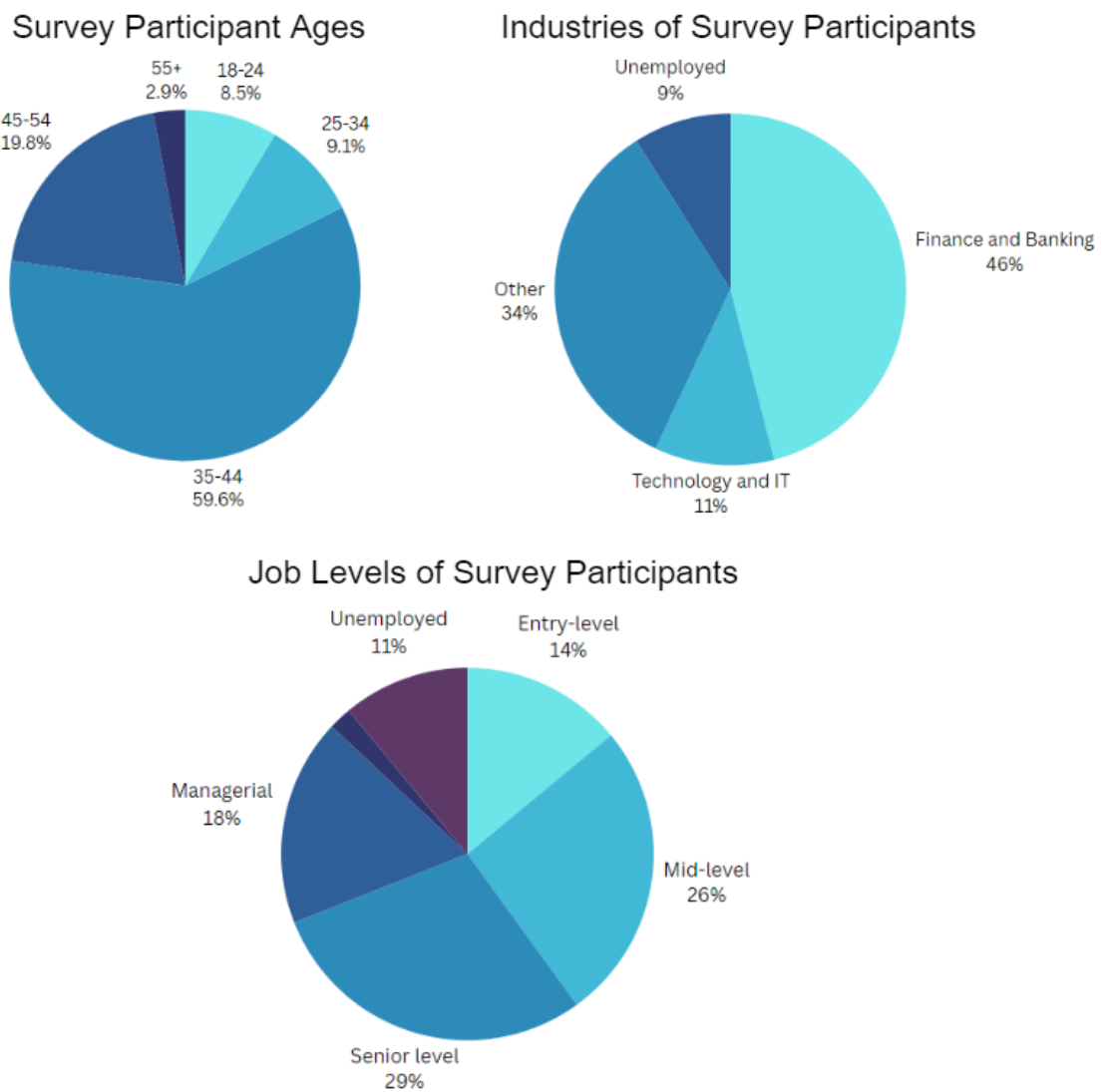
The high hiring demand coupled with the growing interest to create a more balanced and equitable workforce has enhanced companies focus on hiring women talent. Diversity has also become an increasingly important attribute and goal for companies. Hiring women has unique challenges for companies, especially regarding leadership roles. The persistent existence of conscious and unconscious gender biases and stereotypes within organizations contributes to these challenges, affecting women’s confidence, limiting their opportunities, and perpetuating gender inequality. (Galsanjigmed & Tsekiguchi, 2023)

Employer branding could be the answer to these challenges, as a strong employer brand has an advantage to attract diverse candidates. A strong employer brand sets a company apart from its competitors, and for women professionals, an employer's commitment to diversity and inclusion can make all the difference. (Adams, 2022)

Hiring women is not only a matter of promoting gender diversity but reaping the benefits of a more inclusive, innovative, and socially responsible workforce. It contributes to the success of businesses, supports broader societal goals, and paves the way for a fairer and more equitable future. A strong employer brand that prioritizes diversity, inclusivity, and support for women professionals is not only a recruitment strategy but a commitment to creating a more equitable workforce. When women see an employer that values their contributions and well-being, they are more likely to choose and stay with that company. (Ronda & Azanza, 2021)

### **The Impact of Employer Branding Under Microscope**

Luxembourg is a hub for diverse workforce and multinational companies, which is why it provides an interesting context to examine the role of employer branding in attracting women talent. With major financial, technology and professional services sectors, Luxembourg is an attractive location for companies as it offers low effective corporate tax rates, strong financial and economic performance, and sustained job creation. (Allen, 2022) Due to its small native population, Luxembourg relies on attracting immigrants for open positions, and around 70% of the country’s workforce is composed of immigrants or cross-border workers. (Elitegroup, 2023)



*Figure 1 Survey Demographics*

We investigated the impact of employer branding on women in the Luxembourgish labor market. Among the 65 women who participated in our employer branding survey, 83% fell in the age group of 25-44 years, showcasing a dynamic mix of young professionals. Most of the participants (90%) had also completed a higher education degree. (Figure 1) Our research sought to unravel the authentic narratives of women professionals in Luxembourg —the highs, the hurdles, and the heartbeat of their careers. The anonymized responses from the expansive and engaged community of women professionals provided a comprehensive snapshot into the nuances of employer branding in the Grand Duchy. The questions revolved around the factors that influence women’s career decisions, the importance of company’s reputation, inclusion and diversity topics, and suggestions that could enhance the overall experience of women in the Luxembourgish labor market.



*“Equality of chance has to start from low levels, otherwise we will never have enough female leaders.”*

- Survey Participant –

Empirical evidence from the 65 women who actively participate in Luxembourg labor market reveals that women place a lot of importance to a company's reputation and employer brand. Majority, 80% of women, research a company's employer branding online before applying for a job or accepting an offer, and this plays an important role when contemplating a job change (avg. 7.7 on scale 1-10). Furthermore, 82% of women affirmed that companies with robust diversity and inclusion programs were more attractive as potential employers. This finding underscores the increasing significance women place on workplaces that actively promote diversity and inclusivity. A substantial number of women (63%) also stated that they would consider an employer as less attractive if the company did not have any women in leadership roles.

### Gender Dynamics and Challenges Beyond the Workplace

Gender bias in the workplace is a sad reality for many – an astounding 48% of the respondents reported having experienced gender-related challenges or bias in the workplace. It comes as no surprise that 82% think it important for an employer to actively support and promote gender diversity. (Figure 2)

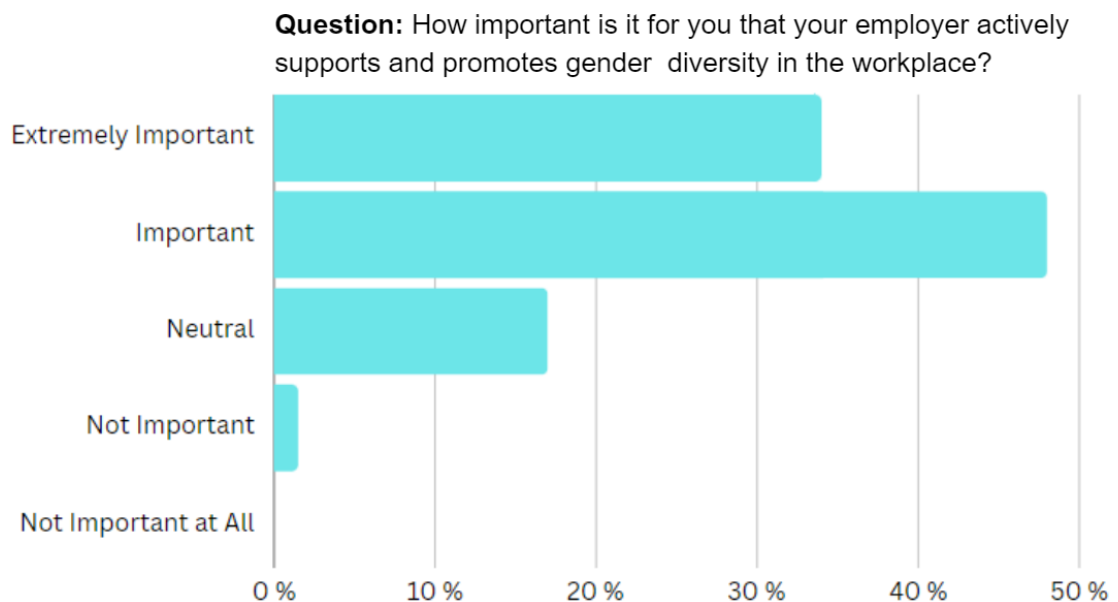


Figure 2: Survey Question: How important is it for you that your employer actively supports and promotes gender diversity in the workplace?

When it comes to labor dynamics, women encounter difficulties that go beyond the workplace and into the complex dance of juggling work and family. In the conducted survey, many women

mentioned the challenges of balancing their professional life with childcare, maternity leave as well as taking care of their elderly parents. The survey illuminated the significance of employer support in creating an environment where women feel empowered to pursue both their professional aspirations and familial responsibilities.

*“Women bear the brunt of childcare, meeting the needs of children and the needs of their own parents as they age.”*

- Survey Participant –

Our empirical research revealed some recommendations for improvement. Networking opportunities designed specifically for women garnered positive responses, with 81% expressing a desire or possible interest for more targeted networking events. Recommendations for employers included a call for enhanced policies supporting work-life balance, transparent communication of diversity initiatives, and focused efforts to promote women in leadership roles.

In the competitive world of talent acquisition, companies are increasingly realizing the importance of providing comprehensive and supportive policies for maternity leave and other family-related situations. Beyond the legal frameworks, there is a growing recognition that fostering a family-friendly work environment contributes not only to the well-being of employees but also to the overall success and retention of valuable talent. (Stroman, Woods, Fitzgerald, Unnikrishnan, & Bird, 2017)

----

One thing becomes evident when we peel back the layers of employer branding: this dynamic force is not merely a business buzzword; rather, it is reshaping workplaces for the future. Having a great employer brand is not just about drawing in top talent; it is also about fostering a culture that people want to work in, making your organization the top pick for top talent.

### **Article References**

Adams, B. (2022). Make Your Employer Brand Stand out in the Talent Marketplace. Retrieved 12 19 2023, from Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2022/02/make-your-employer-brand-stand-out-in-the-talent-marketplace>

Allen, P. (2022). Luxembourg: A Hyper-Connected Multicultural Hub for Global Startups. Retrieved 12 19 2023, from EU-Startups: <https://www.eu-startups.com/2022/10/luxembourg-a-hyper-connected-multicultural-hub-for-global-startups-sponsored/>

Burgess, W. (2016, 3 29). A Bad Reputation Costs a Company at Least 10% More Per Hire. Retrieved 12 13, 2023, from Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2016/03/a-bad-reputation-costs-company-at-least-10-more-per-hire>

Elitegroup. (2023). Luxembourg needs 270,00 extra workers by 2030. Retrieved 12 19 2023 from LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/luxembourg-needs-270000-extra-workers-2030-elitegrouprecruitment-gjh0e/>

Galsanjigmed, E., & Tsekiguchi, T. (2023, 5 19). Challenges Women Experience in Leadership Careers: An Integrative Review. *Leadership in the Workplace*, 366-389. Retrieved 12 13, 2023, from MDPI: <https://www.mdpi.com/2673-8104/3/2/21#:~:text=2.1.-,1.,leadership%2Dspecific%20biases%20and%20stereotypes>

Ronda, L., & Azanza, G. (2021). Employer Femvertising: Women Empowerment in Employer Brand Messages. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 514-544. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349457155\\_Employer\\_Femvertising\\_Women\\_Empowerment\\_in\\_Employer\\_Brand\\_Messages](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349457155_Employer_Femvertising_Women_Empowerment_in_Employer_Brand_Messages)

Stroman, T., Woods, W., Fitzgerald, G., Unnikrishnan, S., Bird, L. (2017). Why Paid Family Leave is Good for Business. *Boston Consulting Group*. Retrieved from <https://media-publications.bcg.com/BCG-Why-Paid-Family-Leave-Is-Good-Business-Feb-2017.pdf>

Thorpe, N. (n.d.). Employer Branding: The Complete Guide. Retrieved 12 19 2023 from Planday: <https://www.planday.com/articles/employer-branding-guide/>

## Survey Questions

1. What is your age?
  - a. 18-24
  - b. 25-34
  - c. 35-44
  - d. 45-54
  - e. 55 and above
2. How do you identify your gender?
  - a. Woman
  - b. Man
  - c. Other
3. Are you currently employed?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Which industry do you work in?
  - a. Finance and banking
  - b. Technology and IT
  - c. Healthcare
  - d. Logistics and transportation
  - e. Manufacturing and engineering
  - f. Retail and consumer goods
  - g. Legal and professional services
  - h. Real estate and construction
  - i. Energy and utilities
  - j. Hospitality and tourism
  - k. Education and research
  - l. Government and public administration
  - m. Aerospace and defense
  - n. Media and communications
  - o. Environmental and sustainability
  - p. Other, please specify:
  - q. Unemployed / Job seeker
5. How many years of work experience do you have?
  - a. 0-1 year
  - b. 1-2 years
  - c. 3-5 years
  - d. 5-10 years
  - e. 10-15 years
  - f. Over 15 years
6. What is your highest level of education completed?
  - a. None
  - b. High school diploma or equivalent
  - c. Associate's degree (e.g., AA, AS)
  - d. Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS, BBA)
  - e. Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MBA)
  - f. Doctoral degree (e.g., PhD, MD, JD)
7. What is your current level or position?
  - a. Entry-level
  - b. Mid-level
  - c. Senior level
  - d. Managerial
  - e. Executive
  - f. Unemployed / Job seeker
8. How many employees does your current company employ?
  - a. 1-10 employees
  - b. 11-50 employees
  - c. 51-250 employees
  - d. 251-1,000 employees
  - e. 1,001-10,000 employees
  - f. 10,001 + employees

- g. I'm not currently working
9. Is your current workplace in Luxembourg?
- Yes
  - No
  - I'm not currently working
10. What best describes your current work arrangement?
- Fully virtual: I work remotely
  - Hybrid: I have a combination of remote work and office-based work
  - Office: I primarily work from a physical office location
  - I'm not currently working
11. What is your home country?
12. What factors influenced your decision to consider changing employers in recent years? (Select all that apply)
- Salary and benefits
  - Work-life balance
  - Career growth opportunities
  - Company culture and values
  - Inclusivity and diversity initiatives
  - Job security and stability
  - Location and commute
  - Personal reasons (e.g., family, health)
  - Company employees and CEO
  - Other, please specify:
13. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is a company's reputation and employer brand when considering a job change?
14. Have you ever turned down a job offer because of concerns about an employers' reputation or branding?
- Yes. Please specify what was the concern about:
  - No
15. Do you believe that companies with strong diversity and inclusion initiatives are more attractive as potential employers?
- Yes
  - No
16. Have you ever researched a company's employer branding and reputation online before applying for a job or accepting an offer?
- Yes
  - No
17. Would you consider a company with no women in leadership positions as a less attractive employer choice?
- Yes
  - No
  - Not sure
18. In your opinion, how well do employers communicate their values and commitment to inclusivity and diversity?
- Very well
  - Somewhat well
  - Not very well
  - Not at all well
19. Have you ever left a job because you felt the company did not uphold its stated values or commitment to inclusivity and diversity?
- Yes, please specify:
  - No

20. Have you ever sought out reviews or feedback from current or former women employees of a company you were considering joining?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
21. How important is it for you that your employer actively supports and promotes gender diversity in the workplace?
  - a. Extremely important
  - b. Important
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Not important
  - e. Not important at all
22. In your opinion, how transparent are companies in communicating their policies related to maternity leave, parental leave, and flexible work arrangements?
  - a. Very transparent
  - b. Somewhat transparent
  - c. Not very transparent
  - d. Not at all transparent
23. Have you ever considered leaving a job due to dissatisfaction with the employer's policies or practices related to gender diversity?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
24. Have you ever experienced gender-related challenges or bias in the workplace?
  - a. Yes. Please briefly describe the situation and how it influenced your decision to stay or leave:
  - b. No
25. In your career, have you ever felt that your gender influenced opportunities for professional growth?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
26. Would you appreciate more networking opportunities specifically designed for women in your industry?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Maybe
27. In your opinion, what challenges do women face in the workplace that employers should address to improve the working environment?
28. What measures, in your opinion, can employers take to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in the workplace?