

# Recruiting Finnish Students to The United States

Study for improvements in Tommy Bartlett, Inc.'s  
process of recruiting

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Abstract <p>The objective of this research was to define the strengths and weaknesses of the recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. and how the recruitment process could be improved.</p> <p>The theoretical background of the research covers recruitment, job analysis, planning and forecasting and selection of employees. The research method is qualitative and the empirical part consists of semi-structured face-to-face interviews, an e-mail interview and authors' observation. The interviews were designed to finding out how the applicants perceive the recruitment process. The purpose of the observation was to study the behavior of the applicants during the recruitment interviews.</p> <p>As a conclusion of the thesis, the strength of the recruitment process is that the former employees are interviewing the new applicants knowing what skills are needed. Lack of information about the job among the interviewers is considered a weakness that needs support and attention. The potential found in training the interviewers can be applied in the program to provide more skillful employees for the company.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli saada selville Tommy Bartlett:in rekrytointiprosessin vahvuudet ja heikkoudet ja miten rekrytointiprosessia voisi parantaa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen teoreettinen tausta käsittää rekrytoinnin, työnkuvan, työvoiman suunnittelun ja tarpeen arvioinnin sekä työntekijöiden valinnan.</p> <p>Tutkimusmenetelmä on kvalitatiivinen ja tutkimuksen empiirinen aineisto koostuu puolistrukturoiduista, henkilökohtaisista haastatteluista, sähköpostihaastattelusta sekä tutkijoiden havainnoinnista. Haastattelut olivat suunniteltu selvittämään miten hakijat käsittivät rekrytointiprosessin. Havainnoinnin tarkoitus oli tutkia hakijoiden käyttäytymistä rekrytointihaastatteluissa.</p> <p>Johtopäätöksenä voidaan todeta rekrytointiprosessin vahvuutena olevan, että aikaisemmat työntekijät haastattelevat uusia hakijoita tietäen mitä taitoja tarvitaan. Informaation puutetta haastattelijoiden keskuudessa pidetään heikkoutena, mikä vaatii tukea ja huomiota. Haastattelijoiden perehdyttämisessä havaittua potentiaalia voidaan hyödyntää ohjelmassa, jotta taitavampia työntekijöitä voidaan tarjota yritykselle.</p>		
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# 1 Introduction

This study deals with the recruitment process of a company called Tommy Bartlett, Inc. The company is situated in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, USA. The purpose of the research is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the recruitment process, how the process is functioning and how it could be improved.

The authors' mutual interest in the topic derives from both having worked for the company through a summer work and travel program organized by the League of Finnish-American Societies, later referred to as SAYL (Suomi-Amerikka Yhdistysten Liitto) in the thesis. Thus, the research will be discussed providing personal insights and experiences. The research idea was introduced to Tommy Bartlett, Inc. as well as to SAYL, who were both willing to help out when needed.

In this chapter the research problem and the objectives are introduced. The chapter also introduces the case company Tommy Bartlett, Inc. and the summer work and travel program.

## 1.1 Research problem

The objective of the research is to examine the recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. The research questions are:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the existing recruitment process?
- How could the recruitment process be improved so that it would provide more skillful employees for Tommy Bartlett?

The more specific target is to find out whether the recruitment process is working efficiently enough in order to provide skillful employees for the company. Possible existing problems and current benefits are researched. Solutions and recommendations for improvement are given in the end based on the research, where both stakeholder interviews and authors' observations were used in the data collection.

## 1.2 Tommy Bartlett, Inc.

The man behind the company, Tommy Bartlett, Inc., was Tommy Bartlett himself. He founded Tommy Bartlett Water Ski & Jumping Boat Thrill Show in 1952 after discovering huge potential in water-ski shows in Chicago. The show site was soon decided and still stands on Lake Delton, in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, USA (see Figure 1). The company remained the water-ski show until 1982 when Tommy Bartlett's Robot World & Exploratory was founded along with it. (Tommy Bartlett Show - Ski, Sky, Stage.)



FIGURE 1. Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, USA (Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin)

Tommy Bartlett Ski, Sky and Stage Show runs from Memorial Day weekend, at the end of May, until Labor Day weekend, at the beginning of September. There are two shows daily, rain or shine. (Tommy Bartlett Show.) The show is divided into two parts. The first part of the show is all about water-skiing with great jumps, stunts, acts and speed-boat performances. The second part consists of various acts from daredevils and acrobats to comedian jugglers. (Welcome to the Tommy Bartlett Show.) With more than 20 million spectators having enjoyed the show so far, Tommy

Bartlett Show is the longest-running, live, outdoor entertainment show of its kind (Tommy Bartlett Show).

Tommy Bartlett Exploratory - Interactive Science Center is the only place on Earth where one can see, touch and experience an authentic Russian Space Station MIR core module (Explore Science, Space and Beyond). From simple puzzles to computerized gadgets, the Exploratory features more than 175 sense-stimulating, knowledge-testing exhibits fit for all ages (Explore the History of a Wisconsin Dells Science Center).

Tommy Bartlett, Inc. has recruited Finnish students through a summer work and travel program for over 15 years and still keeps recruiting seasonal help from Finland each year. According to Mr. Tom Diehl, the president of Tommy Bartlett, Inc., the ambitious program started in 1997 due to a great demand of summer workers in the fast growing Wisconsin Dells, has gone through a lot of alterations and grown to where it is right now. After quite a disastrous start some drastic changes were made the following year and more specific requirements for applicants were set, in addition to giving more specific information regarding the job descriptions and the working conditions for the applicants to create a more realistic picture of the whole experience. Along the way, the company has learnt a lot from its mistakes and taken them into consideration in order to improve the program. Still, after 15 years, the company sees a lot of potential in the program and is willing to invest time, money and effort in maintaining it for the benefit of both, the employer and the Finnish employees.

### 1.3 Work and Travel Program

The recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. is a part of a work and travel program. The work and travel program is organized in cooperation with The League of Finnish American Societies (SAYL - Suomi-Amerikka Yhdistysten Liitto). The purpose of the program is to provide students with an opportunity to explore American culture firsthand through work experience and other social interactions in the United States. As a part of the program, the students are required to participate in activities

that let the students be exposed to American life and history. The program benefits both, the students as well as the Americans, giving them the opportunity for cross-cultural knowledge sharing. (The Purpose of the Work & Travel Program.)

The students applying for the program need to be between 20-26 years old, be Finnish citizens, possess sufficient oral and written English skills for customer service and be service oriented with a positive attitude. The applicant is required to pay the expenses of the visa and travels. (Hakukriteerit.) In Finland, the summer program recruits students for two companies, for Tommy Bartlett, Inc. and for Noah's Ark, a waterpark also situated in Wisconsin Dells.

#### 1.4 SAYL and their role in the process under study

The League of Finnish American Societies, founded (on the 1st of July) in 1943, acts as a liaison between Finland and the United States maintaining relations to promote a more comprehensive appreciation between one another. The League, being one of the world's largest USA friendship organizations, is strongly non-political with its actions. (IN ENGLISH.)

Kirsi Rutonen, the project manager of SAYL and the editor of Finland-USA magazine, at the time this thesis was conducted, has a significant role in the recruitment process. Ms. Rutonen works closely together with Tom Diehl, the president of Tommy Bartlett, Inc., at the time of the research, to implement the recruitment process in Finland. For simplicity reasons, the project manager of SAYL and the president of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. will be later referred to as Ms. Rutonen and Mr. Diehl. Ms. Rutonen is in charge of issues regarding the applications and interviews and together with a team at SAYL, they have the final say in choosing the applicants in Finland. SAYL is an organization of two women, which has its limitations regarding the resources.

## 2 Knowledge base for the study: Recruitment as part of HRM process

Human resource management is the fundamentals of how people are managed in the organizations to meet the employer's strategic and financial objectives. Good human resource management ensures maximum productivity, profitability and achievement. It includes the duties and activities performed by the management, and what the approach of executing those activities is. Human resources include staffing, selection of the employees, training and motivating. Following legislation, pay systems and performance appraisals are also part of a company's human resource process. Managers are responsible for the human resource policies in a company. Human resources can be managed by all managers in a company or by separate human resource department with its own managers. (Torrington, Hall & Taylor 2008, 4-5.)

Human resources have changed over the years because of the globalization, growing workforce diversity and rapid technological development. More competition coming overseas means pressure to lower costs and increase productivity while decreasing expenses. Outsourcing, mergers and acquisitions are becoming more common practices in the human resource field. Human resource management's role has changed from improving organizational performance to valuing the company's human capital. Human capital means company's employees' education, knowledge, skills, expertise and training. Managers focus less on administration and more on strategic activities like helping their employees better use their knowledge. (Dressler 2009, 28-41.)

In the following chapters 2.1-2.6 the overall process of recruitment is explained. How to attract, find and select suitable candidates for job openings, temporary or permanent, is covered. The phases of Tommy Bartlett's recruitment process are also explained.

## 2.1 Recruitment

Recruitment process starts by determining the vacancies in the company, the number of employees needed and the supply of the employees, internal and external. The vacancies may occur when a person leaves, the company expands or the business needs seasonal workers. Hiring new employees might be the most common strategy to fill out the vacancies but reorganizing the work, mechanizing the production or overtime can also become solutions. (Torrington, Hall & Taylor 2008, 147.)

Staff is one of the most important quality factors in an organization. An error in recruitment can cause damage to the employer, the organization and to the customer. Very successful recruitment may, in turn, bring development, strength and a better quality of operations and customer service. (Viitala 2004, 243.)

Tommy Bartlett's Exploratory is open all year, but the water ski show runs only during summertime when the tourists come to spend their vacations in Wisconsin Dells. For the summer months, Tommy Bartlett needs to more than double the number of its permanent staff members to fill out all the required positions to keep the show and the Exploratory running. Some of the staff is hired from the United States, and some of them come via work and travel program from Finland. Many companies use temporary workers for multiple reasons, such as seasonal or cyclical demand, cost-saving reasons or when specific skills are required. The need for the employees at Tommy Bartlett is seasonal by its nature.

Recruitment can be done by managers, human resource management specialists or employment agencies. There are several ways to conduct a successful recruitment process, and tools such as the internet can be used to support the process. Effective recruiting can be complex and requires careful planning. Recruiting has to make sense in terms of the company's strategic plans. Selecting the right method for recruitment, taking into account the potential issues such as legal problems that may rise and the cost effectiveness are issues to consider. (Dressler 2009, 101.)

Employment agencies are widely used as a source of candidates. They can be government operated, nonprofit organization operated or privately owned agencies. Public agencies are usually nationwide job banks that offer services for employees seeking a job but also for the employers to inform about openings. Training, labor market information and recruitment services are offered by public agencies. Private employment agencies charge fees from their services of recruiting workers. Non-profit organizations usually help recruiting special categories of employees such as disabled or war veterans. (Dressler 2009, 116.) SAYL, the League of Finnish-American Societies, that is responsible for the Tommy Bartlett's recruitment process in Finland, is a nonprofit organization. The expenses coming from the recruitment for the work and travel program are covered with a fee that is collected from the students selected to work for Tommy Bartlett, Inc. (Rutonen, 2014.)

## 2.2 International recruitment

Companies become more international by recruiting workforce abroad. Internationalization forces companies to deal with other cultures, and finding functioning human resource practices for a company is a challenge. Intercultural knowledge and understanding is one of the most important requirements of people who are in the recruiting workforce from abroad. (Viitala 2004, 311.) In multinational companies or companies like Tommy Bartlett, recruiting employees abroad can be more challenging for multiple reasons. Countries differ in culture, legal system, politics and economies, which means that human resource practices tend to differ from country to country. (Dressler 2005, 661.)

Tommy Bartlett has 15 years of experience in hiring Finnish employees for itself but also in delivering Finnish employees to other companies in the area in the past. The practical approaches of the international human resource management are often developed in the company through experience. The longer a company has been operating in an international environment, the more sophisticated systems it has. (Viitala 2004, 312.) Even though SAYL does the recruitment process abroad, Tommy Bartlett takes care of the employees' needs, training and positioning in the United States.

International company manager and the one responsible for human resource functions must be able to serve and support employees from other cultures with the same quality as workers from the home country. Internationalization will inevitably increase the complexity, surprises and challenges. (Viitala 2004, 313.)

### 2.3 Job analysis, job descriptions and job specifications

Organizations have positions that need to be filled. Before deciding what jobs need to be filled and what the procedure of recruiting employees into them is, employers want to know the duties and skills required in each position. They also want to know how many people are needed to fill out the tasks. This is called a job analysis. Usually the job analysis is done by a supervisor but an HR specialist can also be used. There are various techniques to collect information on the responsibilities, duties and activities related to a specific job. Questionnaires, interviews and observation can all be used to make a job analysis. (Dressler 2009, 102.)

Since Tommy Bartlett hires seasonal workforce annually they can use almost the same job analysis each time if there are no changes in the positions. The changes in the positions are informed to SAYL and to Ms. Rutonen by Mr. Tom Diehl before the applicants are hired. In the early years of the work and travel program Tommy Bartlett delivered Finnish workers for multiple other companies in the Wisconsin Dells area, but now the only employers of the work and travel program are Tommy Bartlett and Noah's Ark, the latter not participating in the recruitment process. Tommy Bartlett needs to carefully evaluate the number of employees needed. Less tourism in the Wisconsin Dells area means fewer employees needed. "In 2009, we had a very slight dip, but we have recovered. Every year has beaten the previous year," Tom Diehl, the president of Tommy Bartlett, Inc., describes the employment and tourism situation in the Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel in July, 2014.

The job analysis provides the information required for the job description, which is a written statement of what the employing company does, how it does it and under what conditions the job is performed. Students who apply to the work and travel

program in Wisconsin Dells can apply for two positions that are shortly described online at SAYL's website. Job identification, job summary, relationships and working conditions are parts of the job description. Job identification specifies the title of the job, department, date of employment and locations. Job summary is a brief summary of the general nature of the job and its major functions and activities. When the employees of the work and travel program are chosen among the applicants, they are informed of the position in which they will be working during the summer. The summertime employees will then get a more thorough job description about their positions. The job description also provides an image of the corporation to the applicants, which is important when trying to find the most suitable candidates. (Dressler 2009, 104; Viitala 2004, 252.)

After the job analysis and the description, a manager can define the particular skills, education and experience required to do the job well. It shows what is needed from the person hired. Job specification can be part of the job description or a completely separate document. The competences required differ depending on whether a company is looking for trained or untrained employees. With the trained employees, the focus is usually more weighted in having the right education, relevant training and experience from previous job positions. When hiring untrained employees, the company has the intention to train them in to the positions. With untrained employees, the focus on the job specification is more on the applicant's personal skills, motivation and potential to learn more. (Dressler 2009, 107.) The students that are hired through the work and travel program are untrained to their positions and the managers at Tommy Bartlett are responsible for educating the tasks to them. Sufficient knowledge of English, an outgoing personality and the right attitude are some of the most weighted requirements.

## 2.4 Planning and forecasting

Personnel planning is the next step when starting the recruitment process after conducting the job analysis and specifying the requirements needed. It is a process where a company decides what positions they have to fill and how to fill them. After that they will build a pool of candidates from internal and external candidates. Through application forms, exams, interviews and other selection techniques the viable candidates can be identified. (Dressler 2005, 152.) Human resource planning tries to define the number and type of people the company needs at the moment and in the future. There has to be a connection between human resources planning and company's strategic planning regarding what kind of direction the company is taking or going in the future, growth or decline. (Ferris & Buckley 1996, 119-120.)

When using recruitment advertising, the basic idea and object is to use the kind of media that will most probably reach the most prospective applicants. Internet provides an extensive potential audience for the advertising. As a recruitment channel, internet is inexpensive, fast and flexible compared to the old-fashioned newspaper advertising. Internet is said to be the only functioning recruitment channel for global job market due to its speed, efficiency and awareness. Having limitations in providing information, newspaper advertising is narrower in its informativeness than internet. In addition to the recruitment advertising, internet provides the possibility to search for more information on the company there and then not having to use another search tool unlike when reading a newspaper advertisement. (Markkanen 2005, 87-88, 92, 96-97.) As SAYL is in charge of the recruitment process in Finland, it is also in charge of the recruitment advertising. As a recruitment advertising method, SAYL sends e-mails directly to third degree schools, requesting them to promote the work and travel program on their websites and intranets in order to reach and invite the potential, best suited Finnish students as applicants. More information about the program, the employers and job positions can be found on SAYL's website.

The pool of candidates is built from the inside and outside candidates. Using inside candidates, the company can determine if a current employee is qualified for the opening and available for a transfer or a promotion. Forecasting the supply of inside

candidates requires analyzing demographics, turnover and other data. The potential internal candidates also need to be evaluated by factors such as their performance record, educational background, age and promotability. (Dressler 2009, 112-113.)

If there is not enough inside candidates to fill the openings, companies need to forecast the availability of outside candidates. General economic conditions and expected prevailing rate of unemployment have an effect on the planning. For example the lower the rate of unemployment the lower the labor supply, which makes it more difficult to recruit employees. Local labor markets and the availability of potential job candidates in specific occupations need to be considered when forecasting. (Dressler 2009, 112.)

When filling out the positions for summer workers, Tommy Bartlett has to use outside candidates because they are hiring seasonal workers that will come in addition to their current employees. Most of the Tommy Bartlett's summer workers work there for a couple of summers. The Finnish employees have the possibility to return without having to re-apply again. Most tourist attractions in Wisconsin Dells need to hire workforce from abroad because the supply of American workers is not enough for the amount of tourists that come to Wisconsin Dells during summer. "It is an integral part of our industry because of the inability to attract the number of workers we need," comments Tom Diehl, the president of Tommy Bartlett, on the importance of the foreign workforce in Wisconsin Dells in the Cap Times article.

Recruiting from outside can be beneficial to the company when the new employees bring fresh ideas and new experience without previous ties with the company or possible burdens from the work culture in that company. New employees outside the company need more orientation when getting to know the job, work culture and coworkers. During the orientation period, the results from work might not maintain the best possible level yet. A problem can also occur if the new employee starts to apply prior experience and working patterns that are not suitable for the company. Despite a good recruitment process, the company may later discover that the person hired does not perform according to the requirements, is not committed to the objectives and is not able to adapt to the organization. (Viitala 2004, 252.)

In addition to the corporate and service image, organizations also have an image as an employer in the labor market. The image of the company that potential employees have is created by news, customer experience and marketing, as well as visible recruitment policies such as recruitment notifications, character and substance, and recruitment volume and density. (Viitala 2004, 245.) SAYL, the League of Finnish-American Societies, is responsible for the recruitment process in Finland and it also delivers Tommy Bartlett's image as an employer for the Finnish applicants. Their advertisement to universities and the information on their website is the source of information and image on which the applicants base their opinion about the company.

## 2.5 Selecting employees

With the pool of applicants, the next step is to select the best person for the job. The pool of candidates needs to be narrowed down using various screening tools such as applications, interviews, tests and background checks. Careful selection of the employees is important. Thorough screening and testing leads to improved employee and organizational performance. The organizational performance partly depends on the subordinates and an employee with the right skills and attributes will do a better job for the organization. In other words, employees lacking the right skills will not perform effectively and the organization's performance will suffer. The wrong type of employees might also lead to dysfunctional behavior in the working place when the new employees do not fit in with the already existing employees, perpetrate vandalism, steal or are absent from their duties. Hiring without a proper background check and safeguards is called negligent hiring. It can become a legal issue if a company hires an employee with a criminal background who later commits a crime while working for the company. (Dressler 2009, 148.) To avoid negligent hiring, Tommy Bartlett as well as the visa sponsor requires the applicants to deliver a criminal record extract.

Application is considered a serious interaction between the applicant and the employer. The application itself embodies the applicant's willingness to acquire the job and is a primary source of information when narrowing down the group of applicants. Despite the fact that internet recruitment is fast and easy, it has lowered the

bar to send an application. Thus, this issue should be considered when planning on the recruitment process and evaluating and selecting employees. Usually, based on the applications, only a fraction of the employees continues to the interview part. The selection is based on comparing the application and the job description. The contents of the application are highlighted even more when there are structured application forms to be compared. Responding to applicants' applications and giving feedback about receiving the application, how the recruitment process proceeds and when a contact can be expected has been made easy by using information technology. (Markkanen 2005, 148-153.) SAYL uses a semi-structured application form and a written essay as the application procedure. Both documents need to be mailed to SAYL, not e-mailed or sent online. The application is part of the selection process and it will be evaluated. Based on the application forms and essays, the interviewers get a first impression of the applicants.

Interview is also an indispensable management tool to be used in the recruitment process. It is a procedure in which the information about the candidate is collected from a person's oral responses and inquiries. (Dressler 2009, 148.) Interviews have a significant role in the recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett. Together with the application, the interview, conducted either by Ms. Kirsi Rutonen or by a former employee, has an impact on the selection of the candidates and, actually, has more emphasis than the application.

There are different types and techniques to interview. In structured interviews, the questions and perhaps even acceptable answers are specified in advance, and the responses may be rated for appropriateness of content. Non-structured interviews do not follow any set format and the questions are asked as they come. The questions can be situational, behavioral and knowledge and background based. The situational questions are based on the applicants' responses to how they would perform in a given situation. Behavioral questions are based on the applicants' past behavior in a certain situation. Knowledge and background questions probe the applicants' professional knowledge and experience. (Dressler 2009, 159.) Most of the work and travel program's interviews are conducted by Ms. Rutonen but also, a great amount

of interviews are conducted by employees from previous years, who have the first-hand knowledge of the work, but are not trained interviewers. The instructions for conducting a good interview are given by Ms. Rutonen. The interviewers are given a few example questions, but they have the power to decide themselves what to ask and where and how to conduct the interview, hence making the interview unstructured.

The difference in how the interviews are administered can also be used as a way to classify them. Most interviews, like the work and travel program interviews, are conducted one-on-one. Two people, the applicant and the interviewer, meet alone in a private location such as a meeting room, where the interviewer seeks oral responses to oral inquiries. Interviews can also be sequential or panel. In sequential interviews, several interviewers ask questions from the applicant in sequence before the selection process. In panel, there are also several interviewers, but in this case they form a panel and the questions are asked simultaneously by the panel rather than sequentially. (Dressler 2009, 159.)

The most common mistakes made in the interviews are snap judgments, not knowing the job, negative emphasis, pressure to hire and nonverbal behavior. Interviewers might jump to conclusions and make quick judgments during the first minutes of the interview. Nonverbal behavior, such as posture, facial expressions and handshake can all shape the interviewer's view of the candidate. Generally the interviewers are more influenced by the unfavorable than favorable information about the candidate, and the whole interview can have a negative emphasis. Interviewers who do not know what sort of tasks the job contains and what sort of candidate is the best suited for it, have a risk of hiring a completely wrong person for the opening. The pressure to hire can also lead to hiring the wrong person. (Dressler 2009, 161-163.)

## 2.6 The stages of Tommy Bartlett's recruitment process

### October-November

The whole recruitment process goes in steps. The first step of the process starts in October-November when an inquiry is sent to Mr. Tom Diehl regarding the application form and whether Mr. Diehl wants to edit it, if there are any other notices in the recruitment process and whether there are possible changes in Wisconsin Dells. Even so, some of the changes may not be known at this point of the process. Also, the feedback given by the employees of the previous summer will be taken into consideration to improve the recruitment process. An inquiry is also sent to the current visa sponsor to find out possible changes and tightening of the regulations considering the summer work and travel program the following year. (Rutonen, 2013.)

### November-December

The application period is from the beginning of December until the end of January. An e-mail is sent to third degree schools at the end of November or at the beginning of December, requesting schools to inform their students about the summer work and travel program on their websites or via school e-mail. More information about the program can be found on SAYL's website for the applicants to get as realistic a vision about the program as possible, early in the process. The applicants fill out an application form where they can apply for two positions, one of which they will most probably receive if accepted. The applicants are also required to write an essay about their skills and motivation regarding the work they are applying for. (Rutonen, 2013.)

### January-February

Depending on where in Finland the applicants are from, former employees are asked to help in interviewing them. The interviewers are given instructions on which factors need to be paid attention to. They are also provided with the application letters, including the essays, which the applicants have written. After the interviews have been carried out by the end of February, the applications with the comments by the interviewers are evaluated one by one and the final decisions are made at SAYL. All applicants will receive an e-mail concerning whether they have been chosen to the summer work and travel program or not. According to Ms. Rutonen (2014), as some ap-

plicants always decide not to go after all, a higher number of applicants are selected for the program. The maximum number of applicants is informed by the employers each year. (Rutonen, 2013.)

#### March-April

The work and travel program offers students positions from both Tommy Bartlett and Noah's Ark, a waterpark in Wisconsin Dells. All the chosen applications are sent to Mr. Tom Diehl, who familiarizes himself with the applications and locates the applicants into their positions based on the two positions they applied for, either at Tommy Bartlett or at Noah's Ark. Noah's Ark does not take part in the recruitment process other than by offering the openings. After the positions are decided by Mr. Diehl, the applicants receive a confirmation and a more detailed description of their final position and the working contract. After signing the working contract with the visa sponsor, applicants have to apply for a work and travel visa. The working contracts with the employers are signed later in the summer. (Rutonen, 2013.)

#### Autumn

After the recruitment process and the summer work and travel program, a get-together is organized between SAYL and the summer workers. Despite feedback being collected via e-mail after the program and being sent to Mr. Diehl, the get-together has an important role in gathering informal feedback on the experience. The phases of the recruitment process can also be seen below (see Figure 2). (Rutonen, 2013.)

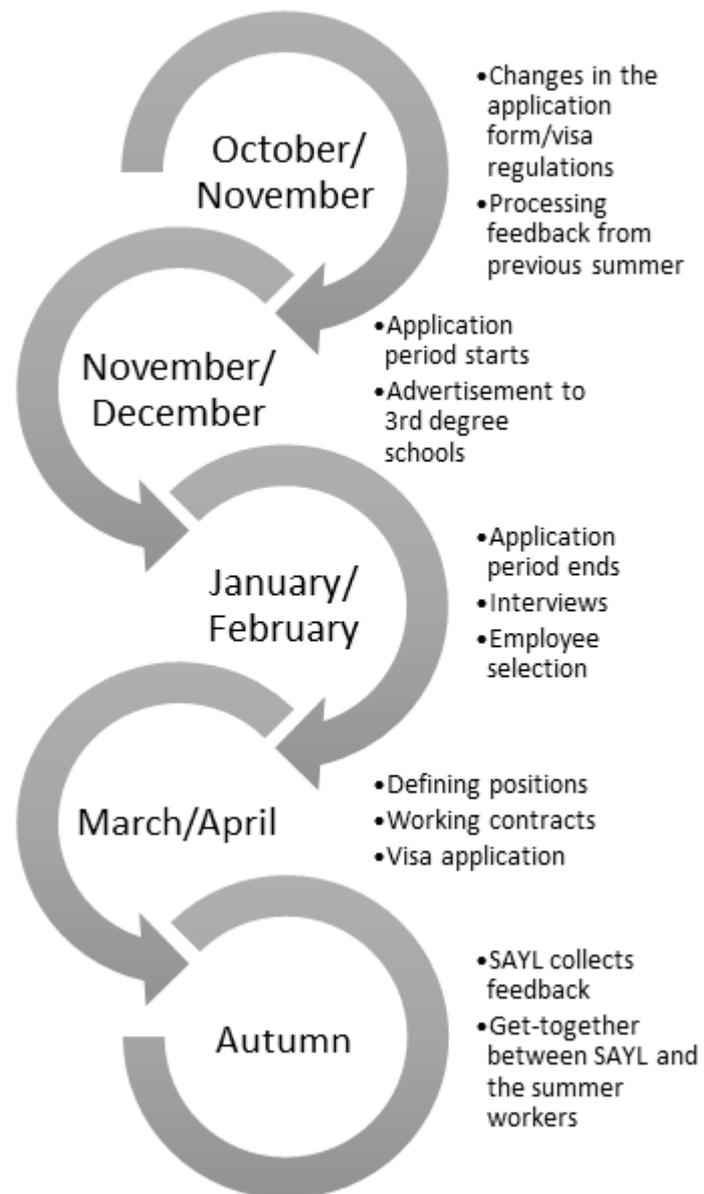


FIGURE 2. The recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett, Inc.

### 3 Research approach and implementation

The research process started in 2013, when the initial idea of doing the thesis for Tommy Bartlett was born. The process follows the phases of the research process model below (see Figure 3). The mutual interest and workplace of the authors, as well as seamless cooperation with the president of the company, made it easy to choose the topic. The fall of 2013 was dedicated to finding the theoretical basis for the thesis. In the spring of 2014, the thesis was on a break due to the exchange program of one of the authors. The following summer was spent getting back on track where the theory part was left off and formulating the research problem. After defining the research problem, the research questions were formed. With qualitative research, interviews and observation were chosen as research methods for collecting data. The fall of 2014 was dedicated to analyzing the results providing suggestions for improvement and to finalizing the thesis.

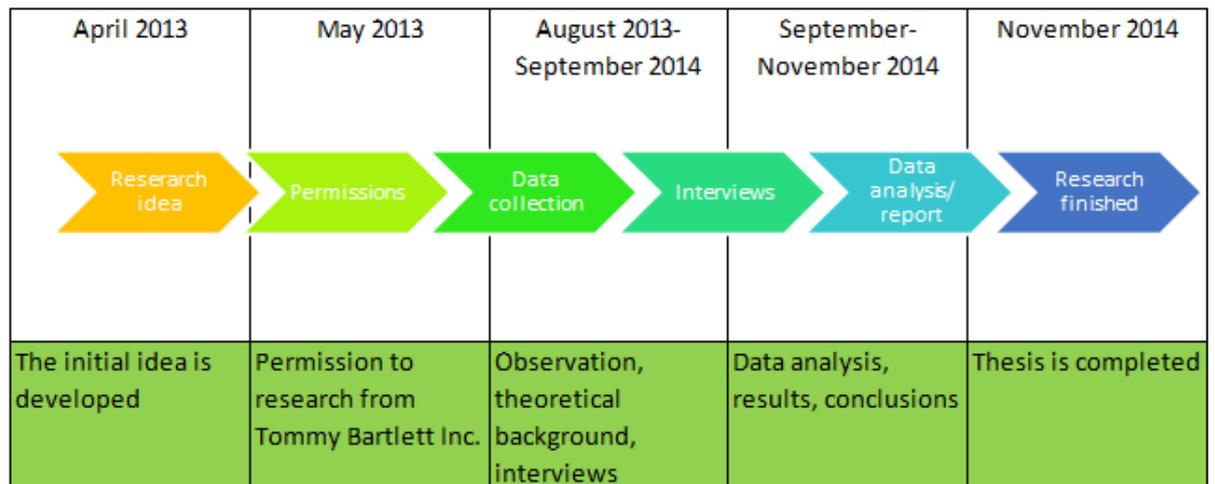


FIGURE 3. A model of the research process

#### 3.1 Data collection

For the thesis, a qualitative research approach was chosen due to the timeline of the recruitment process and the small number of employees. Quantitative research would have required many more respondents in order to get reliable data. What is more, the timeline of the recruitment process together with a small number of em-

employees each year, would have required gathering respondents from a period of several years, in which case it would have taken much more time to collect the data. Also, the chosen theory basis of human resource management and recruitment process support the qualitative approach.

### 3.2 Qualitative research

Kananen (2008, 24) follows the thoughts of Strauss & Corbin in defining qualitative research as any kind of research pursuing findings without statistical methods or other quantitative means. Qualitative research applies narrative outcomes, whereas quantitative research is based on numbers. Qualitative research studies processes and aims to describe and understand phenomena and to provide meaningful interpretation. A direct contact between the examined and the researcher in its right context is part of qualitative research. The researcher acts as an instrument through which data collection and analysis become results of the study. (Kananen 2008, 24-25.)

Research methods for acquiring qualitative data are observation, different interview methods, written material, action research and case studies. Depending on the research problem, its nature and the amount of information available, the research methods used range. (Kananen 2008, 68-84.) Based on the information at hand and the authors' own experiences of the recruitment process, observation and interviews were chosen as research methods.

In 2011, a study about the marketing and the recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett combined with the differences between Finland and the United States of America was conducted by Marjo Sarhola. The prior study has a similar topic and take on the subject as this research. However, in this study, the focus is only on the recruitment process; how it is done, what elements and parties it involves, what the grievances and functionalities of the process are and how it could be improved. This research uses interviews as well as prior, first-hand experiences and findings of the researchers as qualitative data.

### 3.3 Interviews and interviewees

All interviewees were selected by the authors. The reason behind choosing the president of Tommy Bartlett, Mr. Tom Diehl, and the project manager of SAYL, Ms. Kirsi Rutonen, for interviews was that they are the key actors in the recruitment process. The selection of the employees was based on the positions where they worked. The purpose was to get diverse answers and as much cross-type data as possible to get reliable answers. Thus, the interviewees were selected from each job position at the company to provide versatile information. Moreover, the authors themselves have worked in two different positions providing additional data to the results.

Considering the interviewees' relations to the recruitment process, the sample size and the selection were valid and give sufficient data. The interviewed employees have all worked at Tommy Bartlett in the summer of 2013 and have gone through the same recruitment process. For two of the interviewees, the summer of 2013 was their second summer. Two of the interviewees and the authors had also conducted interviews for the summer of 2014 applicants.

### 3.4 Interviews

Interviews can be categorized as structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Semi-structured or unstructured are the most common ones when conducting a qualitative interview, because they leave more room to explore the respondents' feelings, experiences and emotions. During an interview, the interviewer asks questions from the interviewees and expects answers. Interviews can be individual or in a group, and can be conducted face-to-face or mediated by the telephone or other electronic devices, such as computers. In structured interviews, the interviewer asks each respondent the same series of questions precisely according to the script that has been planned in advance. This method gives very little flexibility in the order of the questions and in the variety of the responses. The interviewer plays a neutral role and does not offer his/her opinions during the interview. Unstructured interview is the opposite, where there is no existing script or set of questions. Instead, the interviewer asks open-ended questions and builds up a relationship with the interviewees to

get them to express themselves in their own way. The semi-structured interview falls somewhere between a structured and an unstructured interview. The interviewer follows the script, but is able to follow leads in the conversation that may take unexpected turns from the planned conversation when he/she feels it is appropriate. (Brennen, 2013, 28-39.)

Usually less worried about the data collection, qualitative interviewers aim to understand the relevance of the information, opinions and interests from the respondents' answers. Respondents' feelings, experiences, emotions and values are investigated through face-to-face guided conversations in unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Interviewers must listen to the conversation carefully and remain open and resilient throughout each interview. (Brennen, 2013, 28.)

There were seven interviews conducted for this research, six face-to-face interviews and one e-mail interview. As mentioned earlier, the qualitative methods were chosen because of the timeline of the recruitment process and the small number of employees in the research company. The more in-depth answers and more flexibility for interviewers' follow-up questions were behind the choosing of semi-structured interview methods.

The first interview with the president of Tommy Bartlett, Mr. Tom Diehl, was conducted in the summer of 2013 (see Appendix 1). The interview was recorded and typed up later on. The interview was semi-structured, hence the questions were planned carefully in advance but the interviewers kept alert of any leads in the conversation that might lead into unexpected revelations or information.

An interviewer needs a list of potential questions or topic areas to focus, and consideration of the time frame is indispensable to complete the research. Identifying and getting access to the right kind of people and deciding how many to interview when planning a qualitative interview is important. There is no right number of interviews on qualitative interviews. The quality of the information, along with the length and depth of the interviews, are the key factors. It is important to interview as many people as necessary to obtain enough knowledge about the topic. During the inter-

views, when the same information starts to appear repeatedly and the interviewer learns less and less from each interview, the topic is covered completely. (Brennen, 2013, 28-29.)

The rest of the interviews were conducted in the fall of 2014. The interviews were conducted with former Finnish employees who had worked at Tommy Bartlett in the summers of 2012 and 2013. The interviews focused on individual experiences and insights about the recruitment process, the work at Tommy Bartlett in addition to hearing the former employees' personal recommendations on how to improve the recruitment process (see Appendix 2). The same questions were asked from each former employee that were interviewed. The interviewers were prepared to do more interviews if the first ones had not offered enough information or covered the whole topic of the research.

Electronic interviews can be categorized as synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous interviews are held in real-time, for example in a chat room, and asynchronous interviews are mediated via e-mail and therefore do not happen in real-time. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 349-351.) Due to the schedule of the recruitment process, the interview with Ms. Kirsi Rutonen, SAYL, was done via e-mail in the summer of 2013. The interview questions concentrated on the schedule of the recruitment process as well as on the persons in charge of different phases of the recruitment process. The set of questions was e-mailed to Ms. Rutonen and after receiving the answers, some follow-up questions were e-mailed later on. The interview via e-mail was also a semi-structured interview, because the interviewers had a set of questions planned and sent, but there were follow-up questions originating from the answers from Ms. Rutonen. Conducting an interview via e-mail is a convenient way if time or distance is an issue or if it is not necessary to meet face-to-face. The information gathered from e-mail interview is easier and faster to process when it is already in the written form. Problems can occur if the interviewee is not a good writer, lacks any interest giving an interview or the answers lack of any required information. E-mails also allow the interviewee to have full control over the answers given. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 349-351.)

### 3.5 Observation

Observation, as one of the oldest methods in scientific research, is also one means of gathering qualitative data. The behavior and actions of an individual or a group are the targets of observation. Observation provides an authentic situation and phenomenon giving versatile data. (Kananen 2008, 69.)

Complete observation, as one form of observation, allows the observer to monitor the target without its awareness. This ensures the authenticity of the situation. Participant observation, in turn, takes the observer into the situation and context along with the targets. Together with the target group the participant observer is an actor in the community. (Kananen 2008, 70.)

In this thesis, observation was used as one method in collecting qualitative data. Both means, complete observation and participant observation, were used to get meaningful information. Both the complete observation and the participant observation were related to the recruitment interviews to monitor the behavior of the interviewees and how they reacted to the recruitment process. The authors acted as observers when conducting the recruitment interviews. The applicants were observed during the interviews and their reactions were recorded and analyzed later. With both methods of observation, more thorough outcomes were discovered. As each and every interview is different due to the free interviewing style given to the interviewees, all of the interviews give different data. In addition to monitoring the reactions of the applicants, the whole interview situation was observed and analyzed also from the interviewer's point of view; how did the interviews change each time. The authors evaluated their own experiences and recorded them as well. The results will be discussed later in the discussion chapter.

## 4 Results

Based on the authors' own experience, the assumption was that the recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett is working quite well, yet it could be done even more efficiently to meet the needs and expectations of both the employer and the employees. In this chapter, the results of the data collection are presented.

According to Mr. Diehl, in the beginning of the program, there were problems in communicating the information about the job to the applicants in addition to a larger number of employees. This created discrepancies and made it difficult to control the program. The expectations of both parties were not met.

Even though according to Mr. Diehl and Ms. Rutonen the program is developed and improved every year and it has gone a long way since the beginning, the results of the former employees tell that there are nonetheless deficiencies and room for improvement. There still remain gaps and lack of information about the job itself due to, for example, the variation of the interviewers and their job positions in the Dells. The issue lies in the interviewers having worked in two different companies and them not knowing in which positions the applicants will end up and into which company.

### 4.1 Reaching applicants

All of the interviewees, except for one, had found information on the summer work and travel program from internet using Google search, both in Finnish and in English. The reason for Googling for the interviewees had been summer work in the United States or living and working abroad. For all, the search results had given a link to SAYL's website and to the summer work and travel program.

One of the interviewees had found out about the possibility to work in the Dells from his university's mailing list. According to Ms. Rutonen, an e-mail requesting schools to advertise the summer work and travel program on their intranet is largely distrib-

uted to third degree schools in the end of November or in the beginning of December.

In addition to these ways of finding out about the program, one interviewee added that she got more information about the program from a friend who had just been working at Tommy Bartlett for the past summer. All these ways of finding information about the program have been experienced by the authors as well.

#### 4.2 The nature of the recruitment process

According to the interviewees, the recruitment process, as it is, is fairly clear. The interviewees described the recruitment process as proceeding with clear deadlines, step by step. Sufficient instructions and information are given in order to fill out the application form and to produce a personal essay in the beginning, and to follow the appointed deadlines for returning forms throughout the whole process. The schedule was described as clear and there were good general descriptions of the job positions available. The atmosphere of the recruitment process supports questions and provides answers guiding the applicant. One interviewee pointed out that the criteria for the applicants were clearly listed and it was mentioned that all applicants will be interviewed, which she thought was nice to hear.

Despite the application process being considered mostly clear by all interviewees, some observations of its deficiencies were made. After the approvals, the recruitment process has several deadlines to remember and practical arrangements, which at times, was hard considering there is a lot to do. According to one interviewee, what made the recruitment process confusing was that all information was often dependent on e-mails, and sometimes one had to wait for a group e-mail to get an answer to a certain question.

Also, what made it frustrating for the applicants was waiting for the selections and approvals for about three weeks. Furthermore, after the approvals it took about three more weeks to find out the job position in the Dells.

One interviewee considered mailing the application form and the essay the hardest part of the application process as he is used to filling out applications online nowadays. Not only do the application form and the essay have to be mailed, but there are many forms along the process that need to be filled out, signed and mailed. However, there are parts, such as the visa application, that are done online.

Regarding the information available about the job positions, one interviewee felt that it had been difficult to prepare herself for the interview and to convince the interviewer as there was not much information available about the program and the job positions:

*The job interview was most exciting, as even though I had read information about the different job positions, I didn't know much. So it was hard to prepare myself for the interview and think how could one tell the interviewer that is the right fit for the job and is very excited about the opportunity.*

#### 4.3 Alterations to the recruitment process

All of the interviewees had suggestions for how they would change the application process from the applicant's point of view, even though they all stated that the process is working rather well.

According to two interviewees an electronic application would be better as there is a lot of things to be mailed nearly on a weekly basis after the approvals. One interviewee hoped for more information on the job positions:

*As an applicant, it is hard to know what the different job positions really mean and what are you actually applying for. Despite there are descriptions of the job positions and the employers on SAYL's website, additional information would be useful.*

A more thorough suggestion for improvement by one interviewee was a clear list of deadlines to be given to the applicants after the approvals. From the list, the future employees could check the times for different applications and forms, and the overall timeline and order for the different parts of the process. In addition to this suggestion, the interviewee recommended an info package or a checklist of what needs to be remembered before leaving for the United States. The list would remind the applicant to, for example, purchase the required insurances and to sublet his or her apartment – things that some people might forget, as there are so many new things to learn and do.

#### 4.4 Information given in the interviews

Only one interviewee said that he had got enough information about the job positions and description of the job during the interview. He said he had got comprehensive answers to all his questions, and that the interviewer had explained the realities clearly.

The four other interviewees had got a more general picture of the work and the program during the interview, rather than having more detailed information about the different job positions. Some said they had talked only a little about the work itself, and the focus was more on other aspects, such as the Dells as a city, the employers, or one particular job position. Based on the information given during the interviews, some of the interviewees said they had no clear picture of what the different job positions actually involved. They only knew the work is about customer service and the person chosen for the job should be suitable for that kind of job.

One issue was raised by two interviewees about getting a clear picture of the job description. Two interviewees had had a situation where the interviewer had been working at Noah's Ark and could not tell about the positions at Tommy Bartlett. In one case, the interviewer had mostly talked about the job as a lifeguard whereas the applicant was applying for other positions and did not get any information concerning other positions and had hard time picturing the job.

#### 4.5 Meeting the expectations

All of the interviewees had got either of the positions they had applied for. On the application form, the applicant can choose two favorite job positions that he or she would prefer to work in. The two favorite positions are circled and cannot be ranked as the first and the second choice. An effort will be made to fulfill one of the choices, but there is no guarantee. Mr. Tom Diehl has the final say, and he places the applicants to the positions according to their applications and suitability for the jobs. According to Mr. Diehl, as he is the one doing all the work in the recruitment process for the two companies, Tommy Bartlett and Noah's Ark, he gets to take the so-called "cream of the crop." Mr. Diehl states that he always tries to maximize a person's first choice as it does not serve anyone's interests if there is, for example, a person who does not want to lifeguard working as a lifeguard.

None of the interviewees had big expectations regarding the job, as many of them could have not made a clear picture of what the job is about. However, all of them were positively surprised. Three of the interviewees said they had had some expectations of using English at work and communicating with the customers. These expectations were met, according to them.

Mr. Diehl emphasizes the importance of the training in Finland and giving realistic expectations right from the beginning:

*I think the most difficult thing in recruiting process is over in Finland to make sure that the training is done properly and that the expectations aren't that you are going to Washington D.C.*

From the employer's point of view this is important in order to avoid miscommunication and false picture of the work, which might lead to poor performance. The training of the interviewers is done by Ms. Kirsi Rutonen by mail and by phone. Ms. Rutonen selects former employees as interviewers to help her in the recruitment process as the applicants come from different parts of Finland. Ms. Rutonen guides the interviewers and explains the interview process and what needs to be consid-

ered. Instructions, interview questions and evaluation forms are sent to the interviewers by mail. This information package helps the interviewer to prepare himself/herself for the interviews.

#### 4.6 Being an interviewer

Two of the interviewees and both authors have been interviewers for new applicants in the recruitment process. Based on the interviews and past experience, the instructions for the part of being an interviewer were short, yet clear and sufficient. The interviewers were given instructions both by phone and by mailed written documents. The interviewers had access to the applications and essays beforehand to get a first impression of the applicants based on them. The interview instructions included some sample questions that could be used and instructions on how to fill out the evaluation form. Even though these instructions were given to the interviewers, the overall interview style was free and depended on the interviewer. One interviewee liked the freedom in designing the interviews by saying “It was good that the instructions were not too strict and the interviewer could have an impact on how to do the interview and what to ask.” The other interviewee thought that the orientation was brief yet meaningful. However, the interviews were not uniform:

*The orientation was short but understandable. In addition to a phone call she also had written instructions, which I got by mail together with the applicants' information. I don't feel that the orientation could have been better as I could use the same situation when I was an interviewee myself in 2013 as help and as a benchmark. On the other hand, I don't think the line of the interviews was coherent as after talking to other interviewers I noticed that, for example, everyone didn't emphasize talking in English the same way as I did.*

All interviewers had put more emphasis on the interview than on the application form and the essay, though both were used for selecting the applicants. The application acted more or less as the basis for the interview and for the first impression, but the interview changed the first impression for better or for worse, and gave a better

picture of whether the applicant would be suitable for a customer service job in the United States.

After all, the application form and the essay had little impact on interviewer's decision to recommend an applicant. The application was said to be a good starting point for the interview, and in creating a first impression of a person that the interviewer had never met before. Though, the application was also said not to respond to the reality in some cases, as anyone can write the application and the essay but the person himself/herself is the one who has to talk in the interview. According to one interviewee, the best application proving to be the weakest interviewee in reality shows that the application has no impact on decision making.

In terms of changes that the interviewees would make to the recruitment process from an interviewer's perspective was putting more emphasis on the applicant's English skills in the interviews. As all applicants are interviewed and given a chance to show their skills, it is important to find the most suitable applicants for the jobs. Thus, a great deal of support for the interviewers is needed to help them find the right people.

## 5 Conclusions

The interviews and the authors' experience show that the recruitment process is working quite well and is fairly clear. The whole process has its strengths but some weaknesses were also revealed. In this chapter the advantages and drawbacks of the recruitment process are analyzed and improvement ideas are offered.

Almost all of the interviewees had found information about the work and travel program from Google search. Recommendations from old employees and the advertisement to third degree schools were also mentioned as sources of information. The basic idea of recruitment advertising is to use the kind of media that will most probably reach the most prospective applicants. The number of applicants for the work and travel program has increased every year, from which the conclusion can be drawn that the advertising is working efficiently to reach potential applicants. Internet advertising is an efficient method for SAYL to reach out to applicants. It is inexpensive, fast and effective, since it can be targeted to certain groups of students, for example via third degree schools' e-mail lists.

The recruitment process has multiple steps and there are many forms to be filled. Ms. Kirsi Rutonen communicates via e-mail with all of the selected applicants, and also interviews most of them. The atmosphere during the recruitment process is very open and supportive of asking questions. Ms. Rutonen is seen as easy to approach with any kind of problem or question. The fast-paced recruitment process, multiple forms and visa interview could be very rattling for the applicants, but the support from SAYL and Ms. Rutonen makes the process go much more smoothly and gives the applicants fewer things to worry about.

As SAYL is responsible for the recruiting in Finland, the applicants do not have any experience or direct contact with the companies they are applying for. For this reason, it is of vital importance that SAYL reassure the applicants of the reliability and validity of the work and travel program. Personal contact with Ms. Rutonen and the information provided by SAYL help to establish trust in the whole process. The interviews pointed out that SAYL provides a very realistic image of the work, living ar-

rangements and other important factors. Most of the interviewees were actually pleasantly surprised by the working conditions. There is a great significance in creating as realistic an image as possible about the working conditions and positions to build trust and keep the employees coming back the next year. With the realistic image and expectations, the applicants may have a wonderful experience and later on act as ambassadors for the program and promote the company. Recommendations on new applicants made by former employees are very important for the company and are welcome, as the former employees are the ones who know what the program is about and know the best if an applicant would be suitable for the job. The work and travel program can also be quite pricey for low-budget students, thus making it important to have a clear image about the realities of the workplace to avoid any dissatisfaction or misunderstandings.

The most recurring result from the interviews was the lack of information about the job positions. That was shown in the interviews when the interviewers lacked knowledge about the positions, but also when the applicants searched for information online. The difficulty in the recruitment process lies in the training of the interviewers and in creating reasonable expectations towards the whole experience. To create as clear and realistic a picture of the program and of the job positions as possible, right from the start, requires training of the interviewers. Sufficient information about the different job positions, at both companies, should be provided in the interviews to all applicants regardless of the interviewer's past job position and company. Along with the different job position descriptions, SAYL could provide the interviewers with additional information on the two companies, for example how things such as housing, work related issues and free time activities are handled in both companies.

The interviewers are provided with a few sample questions, but mostly they can decide for themselves what questions to ask and how to administer the interview. This creates different interviews depending on the interviewer, which can cause unfairness in the interviews. For example, one of the interviewers might offer less information or give wrong information, thus making it more difficult for the applicant to demonstrate his/her capability for the applied position. Interviewers could be pro-

vided with a short description of each position beforehand, and with a set of questions to be asked from the applicants. Having the same questions for all applicants would also make it easier to compare applicants who have been interviewed by different interviewers. In addition to the info package Ms. Rutonen already provides, the interviewers could be given a clear set of questions, as well as descriptions of all the positions, to prevent unfairness and to increase the interviewers' knowledge of all the positions.

At the moment, all of the applicants are interviewed and the interviewers have access to the applicants' essays and application forms. Some of the applicants have far weaker application form and essay than others, but perform strongly during the interview. As the interviewers were more likely to favor those with a strong, outgoing personality and the right attitude, the application form seemed to have less impact on the application process than the interview did. The number of applicants increases each year, thus putting more emphasis on the application letter could make the selecting process more efficient. The pool of applicants can be narrowed down during the early stages of the recruitment process, when only those with the highest quality in the application forms are invited to interviews. Another way to narrow down the number of applicants is a group interview, where multiple applicants are interviewed simultaneously. This gives the interviewer an easier way to compare the applicants with each other, as an inexperienced interviewer might find it difficult to think back to the previous interviews. A group interview can work as the only interview method, or it can be used as a way to narrow down the pool of applicants for individual interviews.

Applicants can apply for two positions in the application form, and the wishes are attempted to fulfill. As mentioned earlier in the results, the applicants are not able to specify which position they prefer. A clear distinction between the first and the second choice of position could help both parties, the applicant and the employer, to designate the applicants into the most suitable position according to their skills and interests. It promotes meeting the employer's expectations and requirements of an employee, as well as the applicant's expectations towards the job and the whole experience. Other improvements for the application form could be transferring it into

electronic form, thus making it more efficient, modern and approachable for a larger audience, while giving it a try for narrowing down the applicants in the first part of the recruiting process.

Based on the interviews, clearer instructions and deadlines would make the recruitment process more cohesive and easier to follow for the applicant. A list of deadlines and things to remember was suggested as a guiding tool through the whole process. An overall list of deadlines from being accepted to returning back to Finland after the summer could be sent to the selected applicants at the beginning of the process.

## 6 Discussion

Based on the interviews and the analysis it can be concluded that the recruitment process is vital in providing skillful employees for Tommy Bartlett. Like Mr. Tom Diehl himself put it “this company is no better than the people that work for it”. With the former employees having experienced the program and being part of the recruitment process as interviews, it gives the program a great deal of potential to provide skillful employees for the two companies. The interviewers need to be committed to the recruitment process as their recommendations have a significant impact on the final decisions.

### 6.1 Research limitations

All of the interviews, except for one, were done face-to-face. One of the interviews was done via e-mail due to busy schedules. Even though interviewing via e-mail brings limitations to interpreting the answers to the fullest, it gave the authors the possibility to respond to the answers received by e-mail and ask further questions.

The authors also noticed some limitations on the face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Even though the semi-structured interview questions, planned in advance, gave the authors a good frame to get meaningful results, nevertheless some of the answers received were rather narrow and gave little information.

The authors could have interviewed also former employees from Noah’s Ark to get more extensive results about the recruitment process, but the focus wanted to be kept on Tommy Bartlett due to lack of time.

### 6.2 Reliability and validity

When evaluating reliability of a research, terms of reliability and validity are used. Validity measures that meaningful things are being researched. Kananen (2008) follows the thoughts of Maxwell in defining validity as the reliability and accuracy of descriptions, conclusions, explanations and interpretations. Reliability, in turn,

measures the stability and the reproducibility of the results in quantitative research. In qualitative research, quality is guaranteed by making the right choices during the research process. Similarity in interpretation regardless of the interpreter can be considered reliability in qualitative research.

This thesis can be considered valid as meaningful matters of the recruitment process were researched in order to find out suggestions for improvement. The interview questions were designed to provide relevant data. Reliability of the research is assured by similarity in interpretation in further studies regardless of the interpreter. Based on the results of this thesis, similar issues rose already among five interviewees.

### 6.3 Suggestions for further studies

This research focuses on studying the strengths and weaknesses of the recruitment process of Tommy Bartlett but there was no time for further investigation of the actual effects of the recommendations. Thus, a suggestion for further studies would be taking the recommendations into practice and make an action research about the impacts on the recruitment process.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview questions for Mr. Tom Diehl

- Could you tell us a little background to recruiting Finnish employees? How did this program start? How did you end up working with SAYL?
- For how long have you done this program?
- Is it different recruiting from abroad? Why from Finland?
- What is the most difficult thing in recruiting from abroad?
- How do you see what is SAYL's role in the recruitment process? Have you been satisfied with SAYL's recruitment in Finland? Would you like to be more involved in the process?
- How do you choose your employees among the applicants? How do you place people to their positions? Placements vs. wishes?
- What are the main characteristics an employee should have?
- Has it been paying off? Any difficulties?
- Why do you think it is working?
- How does managing foreigners differ from managing Americans?
- How have you developed/changed the program over the years?
- How do you see the future of this program?

## Appendix 2. Interview questions

- How did you find out about the work and travel program in the Dells?
- Was the recruitment process clear? Why? Why not?
- What was the hardest part in the recruitment process?
- How would you change the recruitment process from the applicant's point of view?
- Did you end up in the desired position (either of your desired options)?
- Did you get enough of information on the job positions at the recruitment situation?
- Did the job meet your expectations? Why not?

### Interviewers:

- Have you been an interviewer?
- Was the orientation for interviewers sufficient? Why? Why not?
- Based on what you recommend an applicant (the application, the interview or both)?
- How much did the applicant's application affect the decision to recommend?
- Having been both an interviewee and an interviewer, how would you change the recruitment process?