

Developing Sympa's Online Recruitment Process Description

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<p>This study examines the current recruitment process in the case company Sympa. The primary objective of the study was to develop the online recruitment process description for Sympa. Additionally, information on the feasibility of the implementation of the developed process description was provided.</p> <p>The study consisted of six project tasks that supported the primary objective of the thesis project. The six project tasks included preparing the theoretical framework, analyzing the current recruitment process, establishing the candidate experience, creating the new online recruitment process description, presenting the new online recruitment process description, as well as evaluating the project.</p> <p>The study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. First, qualitative interviews were carried out with the Recruitment Managers in the company to obtain information regarding how the recruitment processes were conducted. Four Recruitment Managers from the company were interviewed. Second, a survey was conducted among the employees recruited by Sympa during the past year and a half in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process. The survey was sent to 49 employees via email. With 41 responses, the response rate was 84%. The results were analyzed with the help of graphs and survey statistics provided by Webropol.</p> <p>The interviews showed that the recruitment process was carried out in different ways by the Recruitment Managers, and that they wished to receive more help from HR during the recruitments. The results of the survey were positive and showed that the Recruitment Managers had created a strong employer brand during the recruitment process. However, the survey answers also revealed improvement points regarding the recruitment process, such as faster responses, more communication about the upcoming steps and the wish for a more standardized process.</p> <p>Based on the results from the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey, the new online recruitment process description for Sympa was created. The new process description included the phases, steps and duration of the recruitment process and provided a standardized recruitment process across all the teams of the company.</p>	
Keywords Recruitment, recruitment process, online recruitment, candidate experience, employer branding	

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1 Introduction

This chapter covers the main topics of the thesis project with its background, project objective, project scope and international aspect. Moreover, the reader can find a description of the benefiting parties, as well as the key concepts covered in the thesis. Lastly, there will be an introduction of the case company Sympa, and an overview of the project management methods that will be utilized in the thesis project.

1.1 Background

Recruitment is the process of attracting a group of candidates to a specific position, followed by the selection phase (Brandao, Silva & Dos Santos 2019, 273). Saks (2005, 47) has identified the recruitment process to consist of three phases: application, interaction and job offer. Through the growing organizational competition in today's work environment and the importance of acquiring the most capable workers, applicant attraction through a well-designed recruitment process is more crucial than ever (Brandao & al. 2019, 273).

The most successful companies proactively plan the candidate journey, considering the impact of all the information given to the candidates. Organizations should always make sure that their candidates are entirely aware of what to expect in every stage of the candidate journey, together with the outcomes. (Benzie 2009, 15.) Additionally, many firms have substantially enhanced their candidate experience by treating the candidates the same way as they would treat their customers. Through these efforts to create an excellent candidate experience, the result will be a new employee who is excited to be part of this new organization and driven to work hard. (Fritcher 2017, 1.)

With a powerful employer brand, a company increases its ability to attract, retain and engage people. There is substantial research evidence to indicate that strong employer brands help to lower costs associated with recruitment, staff turnover and sickness-absence. (Barrow & Mosley 2005, 83.) Additionally, firms with strong employer branding appear to have a higher retention rate, especially among highly talented workers. Moreover, these organizations have an easier time to attract the best candidates, as shown in the attitudes and career choices of potential and current workers. (Ambler & Barrow 1996, 205.)

The biggest reason for Sympa's current success is found in their excellent and hardworking employees. Thus, it is vital for Sympa to further develop their recruitment process in order to enhance their candidate experience and attract the most capable

workers. This thesis project will analyze the current recruitment process through existing documentation and qualitative interviews and aim to establish the existing candidate experience through quantitative surveys. Based on the results of the project management methods, the author will prepare a new recruitment process description for Sympa with the goal of improving the recruitment process and strengthening the candidate experience.

Recruitment and candidate experience are important topics for the author's career within human resource management. It will be beneficial for the author to see how companies make decisions regarding their recruitment process, with the aim of attracting the most qualified workers. In regard to the recruitment process, it is valuable for the author to learn how the recruitment process can be constantly developed, and how much it impacts the employer branding of a company.

1.2 Project Objective

The thesis project aimed to develop Sympa's online recruitment process description, in order to strengthen the candidate experience for the future employees and enhance the case company's employer brand. The project objective (PO) was formulated as follows: Developing Sympa's online recruitment process description.

The PO was divided into six following project tasks (PTs):

PT 1. Preparing the theoretical framework.

PT 2. Analyzing the current recruitment process through existing documentation and interviews with Recruitment Managers.

PT 3. Conducting a quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process.

PT 4. Creating the new online recruitment process description.

PT 5. Presenting the new online recruitment process description to HR and Recruitment Managers and finalizing it based on comments received.

PT 6. Evaluating the project.

Table 1 below presents the knowledge base, project management methods and outcomes for each project task.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Project Task	Knowledge Base	Project Management Methods	Outcomes and results (chapter)
PT 1. Preparing the theoretical framework.	Theories on recruitment, candidate experience and employer branding.	Desktop study.	Knowledge base to support PT 2-5. Chapter 2.
PT 2. Analyzing the current recruitment process through existing documentation and interviews with Recruitment Managers.	Theories on recruitment and candidate experience. Models and theories on interview framework.	Meetings with HR staff, desktop study of company materials, and individual qualitative interviews with Recruitment Managers.	Knowledge of the current recruitment process. Chapter 3.
PT 3. Conducting a quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process.	Models and theories on quantitative surveys.	Quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half.	Knowledge of the current candidate experience. Chapter 4.
PT 4. Creating the new online recruitment process description.	Data collected from PT 1-3.	Content creation and desktop study of data collected from PT 1-3.	New online recruitment process description. Chapter 5.
PT 5. Presenting the new online recruitment process description to HR and Recruitment Managers and finalizing it based on comments received.	Data collected from PT 3 and PT 4.	Presentation to HR and Recruitment Managers.	Presentation and finalization of the new online recruitment process description. Chapter 6.
PT 6. Evaluating the project.	Data collected from PT 1-5, feedback from the case company and personal reflection.	Desktop study and personal reflection of data collected from PT 1-5.	Evaluation of the project. Chapter 7.

1.3 Project Scope

The project focused on developing the online recruitment process description for Sympa, with the goal of creating a standardized recruitment process across all the teams of the company, as well as improving the candidate experience. The emphasis of the process description was on in-house recruitment, even though the description additionally provided brief information about the utilization of external recruitment assistance. Furthermore, the

external employer branding viewpoint was covered narrowly because of its relation to the recruitment process and candidate experience.

1.4 International Aspect

The thesis project contained different international aspects. Sympa is a Finnish company that has entered markets in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands with offices and international employees located in these countries. The company has customers in over 50 countries and their product is available in 17 different languages. Because of the international nature of the company, the official language in all of Sympa's offices is English.

1.5 Benefits

The thesis was beneficial for Sympa since they acquired a new online recruitment process description that could be utilized by all Recruitment Managers in the company. They also received information on how the recruitment process was carried out by different Recruitment Managers, as well as obtaining data on the quality of Sympa's candidate experience. By receiving the new process description, Sympa would be able to improve the candidate experience, thereby enhancing the employer brand and attracting more employees for future recruitments. Through the improved candidate experience, Sympa's future candidates would also benefit from the new recruitment process provided by the thesis project.

The author benefited from the thesis project by learning how to improve the recruitment process and candidate experience in a company, how to form questions for qualitative interviews and how to analyze numerical information from quantitative surveys. It was also beneficial for the author understand the importance of the employer brand and satisfied employees, starting from a good candidate experience.

1.6 Key Concepts

Recruitment consists of actions and activities led by a company with the intention of identifying and attracting people who have the skills and competencies to assist the company in achieving its strategic objectives. These activities should produce a supply of suitable candidates, strengthen the company's attractiveness as an employer, and enhance the chances of them accepting a job offer. (Saks 2005, 47.)

Candidate experience is part of a company's general employer branding proposition. It starts from the candidate's interest in the company and continues with how the candidate

is treated by the recruiting company throughout the whole recruitment process, including the application process, assessment of the candidate, candidate selection, offering of employment and pre-boarding. (Kreissl 2015, 19.)

Online recruitment is implemented through the internet, email or any other form of advanced communication system. Its primary purpose is to get the attention of the best talents and most competent workers by having an attractive profile for the announced job opening. It involves releasing open positions online with an online form for applicants to fill in their details and information, together with a computerized database for storing all the received data. (Brandao & al. 2019, 274.)

Employer branding is the collection of functional, economic and psychological rewards given by the management of a company and recognized with the organization. The primary importance of the employer brand is to deliver a coherent framework for the employer to clarify and target priorities, enhance productivity and refine recruitment, retention and commitment. (Ambler & Barrow 1996, 187.)

1.7 Presenting the Case Company Sympa

In 2005 Sympa was founded in Lahti by two siblings, Keijo Karjalainen and Taina Sipilä. They strongly thought that it would be valuable for organizations to have the knowledge of their employees' skills and talent, but at that time they could not find any clever solutions for tracking and analyzing that important HR information. This led them to create a tool for this purpose, which later evolved into a comprehensive HR solution to support and assist both workers and managers throughout the whole employee life cycle. (Sympa 2019.)

Sympa has grown quickly throughout the years, constantly expanding to new markets and building on their vision to establish a global company. Having satisfied customers is a big reason why Sympa is now the fastest growing HR service provider in the Nordics, with more than 120 employees located in eight offices across five different countries. The system itself is utilized in more than 50 countries and can be accessed in 17 different languages. Although the organization has been growing rapidly, Sympa continues to be a family-owned company. (Sympa 2019.)

The author is working in Sympa as a marketing coordinator for the Norwegian market. Due to the rapid growth of the company, the author is interested in exploring the possibilities to develop the recruitment process and improve the candidate experience for the organization's future employees. Since Sympa is within the field of IT and tech, it has been challenging to find qualified candidates to fill certain positions due to high

competition for the best talents. Thus, the author sees that developing Sympa’s online recruitment process and improving their candidate experience can strengthen their employer brand and attract more suitable candidates for their future recruitments.

1.8 Project Management Methods

The project management process included six project tasks that were implemented during the thesis project.

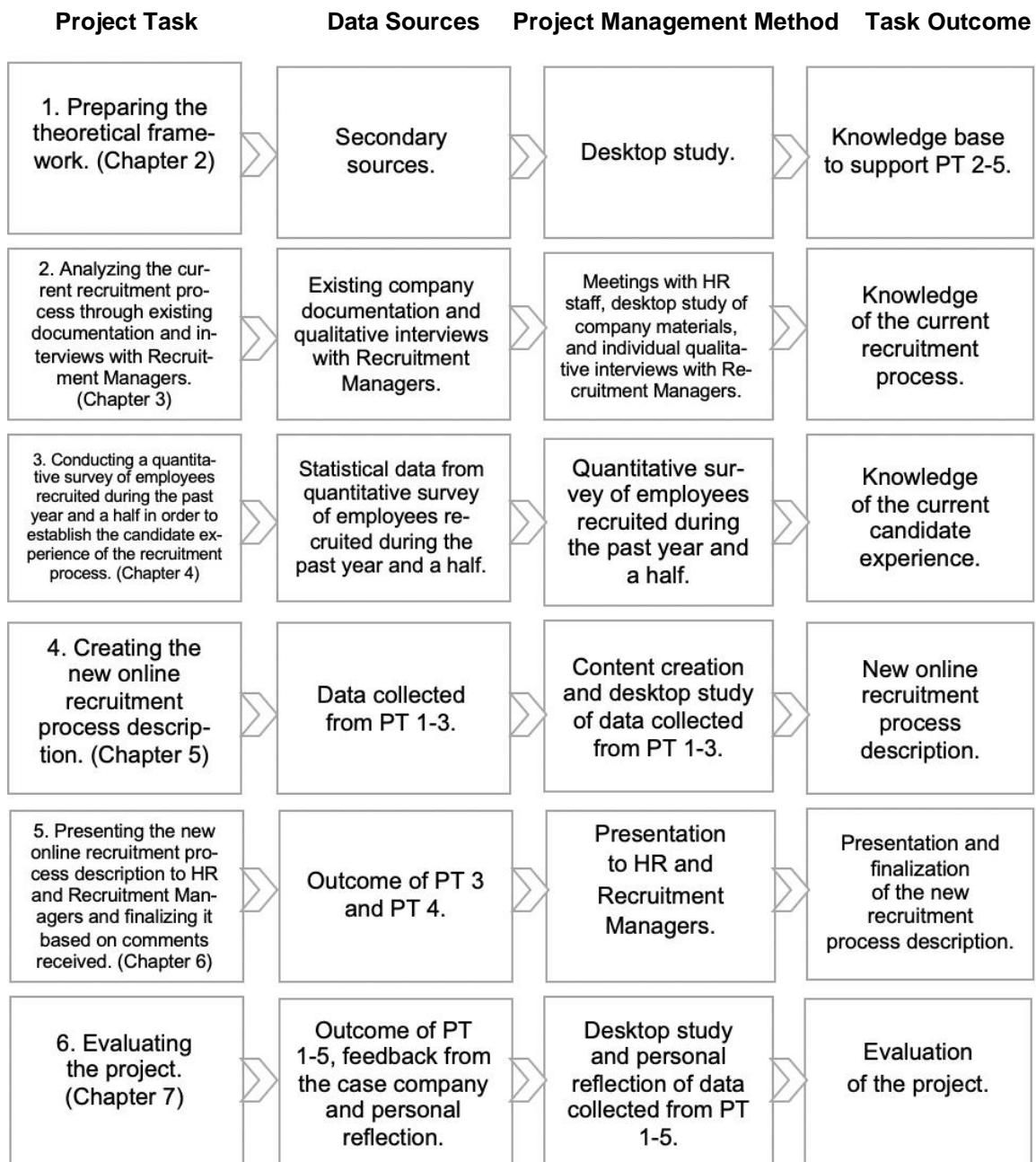


Figure 1. Project management process

As seen in figure 1, the first project task was to prepare the theoretical framework in order to gather knowledge of the thesis topic and create a solid foundation for the thesis project. This included finding research from secondary sources on the topics of the recruitment process, special features of online recruitment, the candidate experience, and the role of employer branding in recruitment and in shaping the candidate experience. Project task 1 is reported in chapter 2.

The second project task was to analyze the current recruitment process through existing documentation and interviews with Recruitment Managers. The author would go through existing documentation regarding the recruitment process, in order to see what material HR had provided for the Recruitment Managers when they were recruiting new employees. Furthermore, the individual qualitative interviews with Recruitment Managers would be conducted in order to gather information on how the recruitment processes were carried out within the different teams in the company. These interviews would give valuable information regarding the strengths and challenges of the recruitment process, as well as provide insights from the Recruitment Managers on what parts of the recruitment process they would like to improve. Project task 2 is presented in chapter 3.

The third project task was to conduct a quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half, in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process. The purpose of the survey was to get quantitative numbers of how the recruited employees were satisfied with their candidate experience. The survey answers could provide useful information on which parts of the recruitment process were good, and which parts could be improved. Project task 3 is found in chapter 4.

The fourth project task was to create the new online recruitment process description. This would be done based on the theoretical research from the first project task, the information from the existing documentation of the recruitment process, the qualitative answers from the interviews of Recruitment Managers, along with the quantitative data from the candidate experience survey. Project task 4 is portrayed in chapter 5.

The fifth project task was to present the new online recruitment process description to HR and Recruitment Managers and finalize it based on comments received. The purpose of the presentation was to receive feedback and make possible modifications to the newly developed process description. HR and Recruitment managers would give their opinion regarding the quality and viability of the proposed process description. Project task 5 is displayed in chapter 6.

The sixth project task was to evaluate the project. This included presenting the feedback from the case company, analyzing the process of the thesis project, assessing the final outcome of the thesis and evaluating the project management methods that were used in the project, namely the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey. Project task 6 is explained in chapter 7.

The outcome of the entire project was a new online recruitment process description, provided for all the Recruitment Managers in Sympa. This process description was created to provide a standardized recruitment process for all the teams in the company, along with additional points in the process description that could improve the candidate experience of the recruitment process. The new online recruitment process description is presented in chapter 5.

2 Recruitment Process and Candidate Experience

This chapter introduces project task 1, which includes preparing the theoretical framework for the thesis project. The first subchapter focuses on the recruitment process, which includes the recruitment process steps and the special features of online recruitment. The second subchapter presents the candidate experience, while the final subchapter provides information on the role of employer branding in recruitment and in shaping the candidate experience.

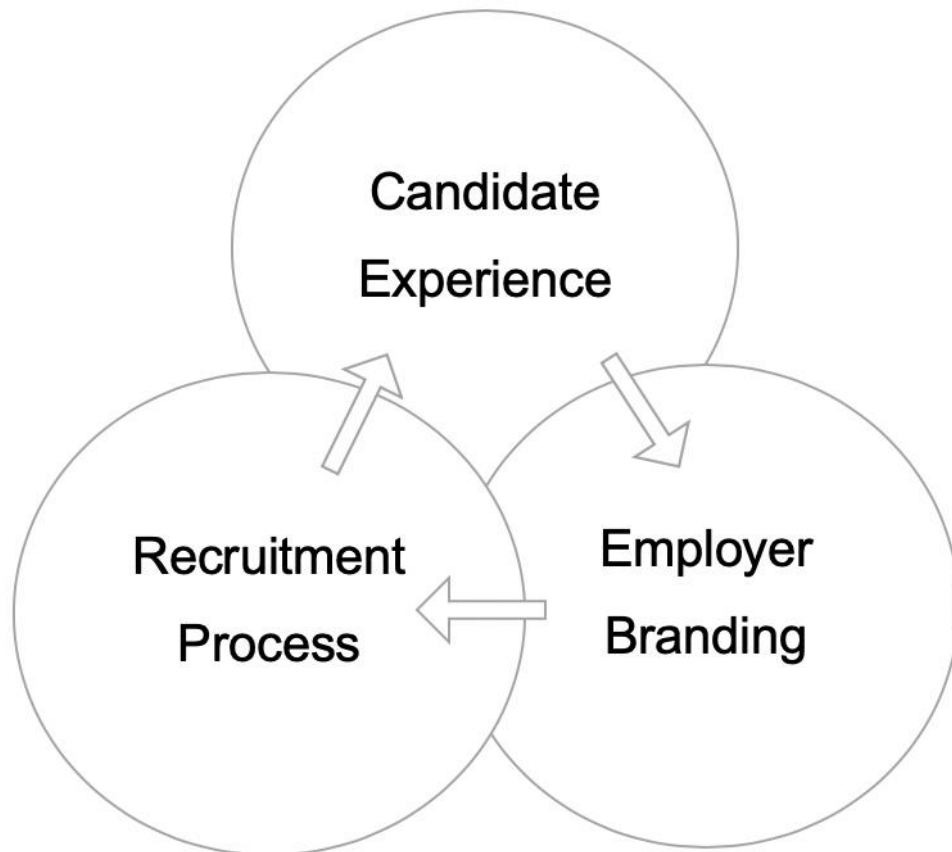


Figure 2. Conceptual model of the theoretical framework

Figure 2 illustrates how the recruitment process, candidate experience and employer branding relate to each other and affect each other. When HR and Recruitment Managers have clear instructions and guidelines on how to conduct a recruitment process with the candidate at the center, it will enhance the candidate experience. This results in the candidates having a positive view of the company, even if they get employed or not, which strengthens the employer brand and attracts more candidates to future recruitments.

2.1 Recruitment Process

In today's ambitiously competitive labor market, company attraction is an essential part of acquiring skilled and capable workers (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012, 216). Shifting

workforce demographics and increased acknowledgment of human resources as a possible source of competitive advantage have made the attraction of the most talented workers a priority for top management. Crucial to a company's ability to efficiently and successfully approach talent attraction is an understanding of how job-choice decisions are made by looking at which job attributes that are most likely to catch the interest of suitable candidates. (Rynes & Barber 1990, 297-298.) Effective recruitment is a powerful tool to attract candidates to an organization, and recruitment related topics such as job advertisements and organizational image have gathered greater attention the past few years. Additionally, firms should keep in mind that it will save costs for the following screening and selecting phases when they are focusing on conveying the appropriate message during the candidate attraction phase. (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012, 216-217.)

The process of the applicants' job-choice decision consists of two interlinked sets of components: job attributes and recruitment practices. Each set of components connects to a specific strategy that improves firms' ability to attract talented workers. The primary strategy for strengthening applicant attraction is to recognize and enhance attributes of the job, for instance the nature of the work or the salary offered, or to improve the qualities of the organization, including factors such as company culture and availability of eldercare. (Rynes & Barber 1990, 298-300.)

Another strategy for increasing applicant attraction is to develop the effectiveness of the firm's recruitment practices, namely the organizational representatives, the training that they will get, or how interviews and site visits are carried out. Some recruiting practices can have a direct effect on applicant attraction, such as creating a deadline for accepting a job offer that urges the candidate to reject or accept the offer. Similarly, recruitment practices can have an impact on applicant attraction by indicating information about the job and organization. This points to a company's recruiting practices that lead to candidates drawing conclusions about the attributes and nature of the job or the organization. (Boswell, Roehling, Lepine & Moynihan 2003, 24.)

One can find varied information concerning the relevance of job attributes and recruitment practices in regard to job-choice decisions. To begin with, job attributes including the nature of the work, advancement opportunities, work location, and the job industry, all seem to have the most powerful and steadfast influence on applicants' job acceptance. (Boswell & al. 2003, 24.) There is also evidence of empirical research revealing that what happens during the recruitment process actually does influence the applicants, something

that has been classified as the candidate experience (Rynes, Bretz & Gerhart 1991, 514-515).

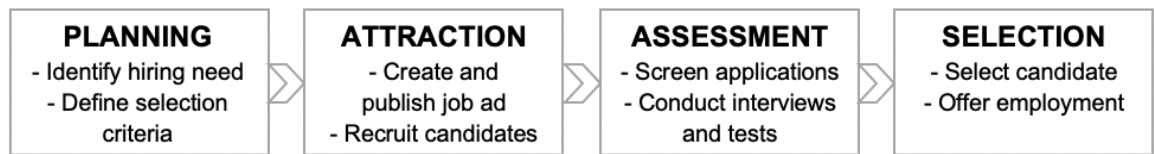


Figure 3. Recruitment process steps (Dessler 2013, 138)

Figure 3 is based on Dessler's (2013, 138) recruitment process steps, with supplementary points added in reference to the theoretical framework presented in subchapters 2.1.2-2.1.4. The recruitment process starts with the employment planning step, where the employer is identifying the hiring need and defining the selection criteria of the new position. The next step includes the attraction of the candidates, where the job ad is created and published and the candidates start applying for the open position. Following this step is the assessment of candidates through screening applications and conducting interviews and tests. Selection is the last step of the process, where the candidate is selected and the employment offer is given. (Dessler 2013, 138.)

2.1.1 Comparison of Internal Promotion and External Recruitment

There are many benefits of internal promotion; the employees are already accustomed to the company's workers and responsibilities and also have an established knowledge of the organization with its corporate objective, departments, functions and staff. Through internal promotion, other employees can also see that hard work is acknowledged and rewarded. Additionally, employee referral programs can significantly lower the costs of acquiring qualified workers through external recruitments. (Harris 2000, 8.)

The internal recruitment strategies are constantly developed by using new programs such as intraplacement to improve the traditional job posting systems. The utilization of this program has been highly successful when the recruitment managers are combining the use of tools and strategies of external search together with career advancement feedback and by implementing them into the company's positions and projects. (Harris 2000, 8.)

Utilization of external recruitments usually happen when the workers in the company are not qualified for the promotional position, if programs such as intraplacement are not implemented into the company yet, or if there are positions that require distinctive or uncommon skills and qualities. Furthermore, one of the main benefits with external recruitment is to receive a bigger group of candidates to choose from. A bigger pool of

candidates increases the company's chances of recruiting an applicant that best suits the position, with strengths and capabilities that can further support the other workers in the company and benefit the entire organization. It is also valuable for the company to bring in different ideas and new viewpoints from outside hires. However, by employing new workers through external recruitment, the company needs to spend more time to orient the new employee to the organization's culture and structure. (Harris 2000, 8.)

2.1.2 Factors of External Recruitment

Today's employers are under immense pressure to fill an increasing amount of vacant positions, and therefore recruiters are reconsidering different parts in their hiring process. By building candidate pools and creating deeper and closer connections with capable candidates, it creates an easier process for recruiters to offer employment opportunities when the company needs to fill positions quicker. Hiring managers will then have a pool of qualified candidates that they can contact when there is an open position available. This will lead to a quicker and more cost-efficient hiring process when the company does not have to spend time and money on attracting new and capable candidates to every open position. Developing candidate pools and utilizing data in order to build the most useful sources of excellent candidates are efforts that are more and more prioritized within companies today. (Holmdel 2018, 1.)

During external recruitments, an essential part of the candidate attraction is the information communicated to the applicants about the position and company through the content presented in the job ads (Rynes & al. 1991, 514). The purpose of the job ads is to attract the candidates to the open position and give a good impression of the company (Rafaeli & Oliver 1998, 343-344). The employment message in the ads should create initial interest from potential candidates and express how the company wishes to be recognized (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager 1993, 414-415). Langan (2000, 462) explains that companies providing a work environment that suits the needs and wishes of the potential candidates are more successful with their recruitments. Job seekers normally receive limited information about firms, and therefore the formulations of the ads are deciphered as indications of the company culture and values, which affects the candidates' decision to continue interacting with the organization or not (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012, 217).

Companies consist of workers with individual ideas, opinions, behaviors, and perceptions which together encompasses the employees' values. In organizations, values affect the culture, structure, and decision making by identifying the firm's acceptable methods of achieving results. All companies make a strategic decision regarding the values they want

to implement, in order to convey their beliefs and what they consider to be of importance. (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012, 218.) Job ads can be categorized into five overall value themes: intrinsic, extrinsic, interpersonal, altruistic, and prestige values. Intrinsic values indicate the natural psychological gratifications of working, stimulated by meaningful work, challenges, variation, and intellectual incitement. Extrinsic values highlight the material elements of work including salary, benefits, and job security. Interpersonal values concentrate on relational aspects among colleagues and managers. Altruistic values emphasize caring for others and helping the community. Lastly, prestige values involve status, authority and power. (Lyons, Duxbury & Higgins 2006, 608-609.)

2.1.3 Candidate Screening and Assessment

Screening of candidates has the purpose of decreasing the candidate group by removing and dismissing undesirable applicants. Candidate screening can take place through the features and qualities of the recruitment process, as well as using predefined employment requirements. The methods used in the recruitment process also screens applications by examining different elements such as the communication of a realistic preview of the position, if the application process was effortless or complicated, the timeframe for candidate response, and the good standard of the hiring information. There are many methods that employers can use to screen, assess and ultimately select candidates for their open positions. Some of these methods include the application form, interviews and assessment centres. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 170-171.)

The application form is created for the recruitment manager to obtain personal data and receive employment details used to organize the upcoming interviews. The information in the application form should regularly be compared to the job description and specifications of the employee in order to minimize favoritism and avoid the use of inconsistent employment requirements. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 176-177.)

One of the main purposes of conducting **interviews** is to measure the applicant's capability to carry out the tasks of the job position. The interview enables companies to gather information in order to correctly assess the candidate's expertise and competences in relation to the criteria of the position. Another purpose is to assess how suitable the applicant is for the job by identifying how the candidate's attributes and qualities will impact the job performance, the company culture and working atmosphere. Through the interview, the company can complete the candidate profile by receiving and clarifying information in reference to the application. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 179-180.)

Assessment centres are processes attempting to enhance validity and reliability by incorporating several selection methods. They are based on the classification and evaluation of measurements which are considered to display future work performances. The processes demonstrate certain qualities, including a range of evaluation methods to create a complete assessment system; the gathering of applicants, multi-dimensional assessment of candidate capabilities, actions, motivation and character, and the training and use of employees to carry out the functions of the coordinators, observers and evaluators. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 187.)

2.1.4 Candidate Selection and Offering Employment

Selection of candidates is a differentiation decision, as the employer discerns the differences of the applicants in accordance with their skills and fit to the position. This decision should be related to the conditions corresponding with the qualifications required for the job. Employers should avoid wrongful discrimination during the selection phase, where every applicant should have the opportunity to show their competencies regardless of nationality, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. (Pilbeam & Corbridge 2006, 170.)

Once the candidate is selected, the employer will give the candidate an employment offer where the recruitment contract details are specified. Giving a time frame for the employment offer has shown to have little opposing result on applicant responses. Nevertheless, part of creating relationships during the recruitment process includes acknowledging the candidates' wishes, and therefore employers should reconsider imposing deadlines for their employment offers in order to care for the applicant and enhance the candidate experience. (Boswell & al. 2003, 34.)

2.1.5 Recruitment Process Outsourcing

Recruitment process outsourcing consists of transferring a company's recruitment duties to an outsourcing provider (Klaas, McClendon & Gainey 1999, 113-114). Companies normally decide to outsource the recruitment process since they believe that outsourcing providers acquire higher professional expertise and have access to a broader spectrum of candidates (Adler 2003, 55-56). As a result, outsourcing the recruitment process is recognized as a way of expanding operational adaptability by enabling companies to employ and retain workers in a faster and more efficient way, while also receiving a larger and enhanced group of candidates. Furthermore, outsourcing the recruitment process results in the recruitment managers having more time to concentrate on essential

business operations including the attraction, advancement and retention of employees. (Siew-Chen & Vinayan 2016, 1030.)

In addition to the great benefits of outsourcing the recruitment process, there are also some drawbacks to it (Siew-Chen & Vinayan 2016, 1030). One of the strongest points against outsourcing the recruitment process relates to the loss of skills and abilities. The argument here is that the skills and abilities within the company will get removed from the organization once the recruitment process is outsourced. (Lever 1997, 38.) Another disadvantage is the absence of individual attention as a result of the outside providers using standardized services for their customers. Lastly, relying too much on the external provider and losing control of the recruitment functions are also hindering factors of using outsourced providers. (Siew-Chen & Vinayan 2016, 1030.)

2.2 Special Features of Online Recruitment

Globalization and the utilization of new technologies have resulted in changes in the labor market (Brandao & al. 2019, 273). With modern technologies undergoing quick advancement, online recruitment has become an essential way of conducting recruitments with an increasing number of applicants using this recruitment approach (Petre, Osoian & Zaharie 2016, 64). Additionally, online recruitment platforms and social media channels are expanding significantly, while firms' usage of online recruitment systems is growing (El Ouiridi, Pais, Segers & El Ouiridi 2016, 415).

The use of online recruitment covers the need to preserve a modern and efficient database to support HR staff in finding distinctive features and qualities in candidate profiles. The online recruitment process can be utilized on various platforms. Companies can use their website to communicate to candidates about employment opportunities, as well as giving candidates the chance to submit open applications on their website even when they do not have vacant positions needing to be filled. There are also multiple websites for job searching, created to present employment possibilities and collect applications in order to help connect job seekers with employers. In these job portals candidates can submit their applications together with other information required by the hiring company. (Brandao & al. 2019, 274.)

Advantages of online recruitment includes reduced costs and increased efficiency. Publishing job ads online is inexpensive and creates a convenient way to later change or update the information if needed, a favorable method compared to posting the job ads in newspapers or trade journals which costs more and cannot be modified later. (Brandao & al. 2019, 274.) Online recruitment simplifies the work of the HR department by reducing

paperwork substantially when candidates' resumes can be saved and structured in digital databases, making it possible to select the applicants who are most qualified for certain job roles (Petre & al. 2016, 63). The candidates also benefit with the opportunity of updating their applications multiple times in different job portals (Brandao & al. 2019, 274).

An essential benefit of online recruitment is to provide fast and frequent responses to the applicants, where some companies use systems that give automated responses. Other advantages include online recruitment creating the opportunity for companies to contact specific candidates located in all parts of the world. Online recruitment also gives job seekers the chance to connect with more international work opportunities while receiving more information from the recruiting company. (Brandao & al. 2019, 274.)

Disadvantages related to online recruitment include firms not being technologically developed with systems that structure information within a database where they might collect more applications than required, leading to a waste of resources. Additionally, implementing online recruitment systems might be expensive when it includes the progress of the computer system posting open positions online, a database that can manage applications and point out the qualified applicants who are desired by the firm, along with providing responses to the candidates. Another point to take into account is that the use of online recruitment involves examination of the candidates that the company desires, since certain job seekers do not use the internet and are therefore not familiar with this recruitment method. (Brandao & al. 2019, 274.) Furthermore, even though online recruitment is a secure process, online recruitment fraud can still happen which leads to certain applicants not wanting to use online recruitment portals because of security reasons and privacy risks (Vidros, Koliass & Kambourakis 2016, 8).

2.3 Candidate Experience

Candidate experience has been a major topic for several years and is extremely important for all organizations (Carpenter 2013, 207). Candidate experience is a crucial part of the recruitment process that can affect the success outcome of a firm's talent acquisition strategies, which in turn impacts the future success of the company (Paauwe 2017, 1). Hiring qualified candidates relies strongly on the candidate experience - how the applicant is treated during the whole recruitment process. How the candidates are treated can influence their probability to accept the employment offer and affects what they convey to others about the company. (Johnson 2018, 23.)

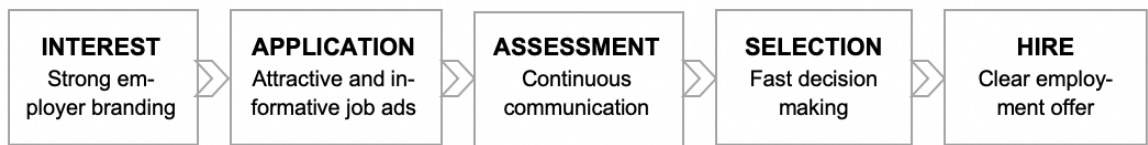


Figure 4. Candidate experience process

Figure 4 portrays the different stages of the candidate experience process. The process stages were created based on the theoretical framework in reference to employer branding mentioned in 2.4, description of the job ads in 2.1.2, the candidate selection and offer of employment presented in 2.1.4, as well as the candidate experience explained in this chapter. The process starts with the candidate being interested in working for the company because of its positive reputation and image. The second part describes the job ad, which aims at attracting employees and conveying detailed information about the job position. The next part is the assessment of the candidate, including interviews and tests. In this stage of the process it is crucial that the employer continuously communicates with the candidate throughout all the assessment steps, in order for the candidate to always be informed of the next steps of the process. The following part is the selection stage, where the candidate is selected based on their performance during the assessment stage. In this part of the process, fast decision making and quick communication with the candidates can positively impact the candidate experience. After the candidate is selected, the last step of the process consists of hiring the candidate, which includes giving the candidate a clear employment offer. If the candidate does not accept the offer right away, the employer can give the candidate a few days to think about their decision.

A company's interview process is one of the most impactful candidate experiences, and it is normally the first time the recruiter meets the applicant in-person. Candidates are usually prepared to deliver a good first impression, but employers should also focus on providing a good first impression to the applicants in order to create a warm atmosphere. (Johnson 2018, 23.) Recruiters have a big influence on job-choice decisions, and therefore it is crucial to give interview training for the recruitment managers. The recurring situations with bad interviewer performance and behavior affected the candidates' evaluation of the company. Behaviors and characteristics to highlight throughout recruiter training consists of organizational skills, possessing and communicating comprehensive and correct information, and showing interest and a positive view towards the candidates. (Boswell & al. 2003, 34.)

There are many procedures that companies can take in order to establish a strong candidate experience. It is crucial that the employer frequently communicates and

consistently stays responsive throughout the entire recruitment process. Companies should always keep their applicants updated on the status of their recruitment process, and immediately give feedback when the applicant is not qualified for the next round. Organizations should look at the candidate's perspective with the purpose of knowing how to keep the candidates' attention and establish a good recruiter-candidate relationship during the recruitment process. (Paauwe 2017, 1.)

Furthermore, it is also vital to set the right expectations from the beginning by letting the candidates know at what times and how often they will get contacted. Lack of communication is one of the major factors of candidate dissatisfaction, and it occurs too many times that the applicants do not receive the quality communication that they wish for. Another way to enhance the candidate experience includes valuing the candidates' time by making the experience of the recruitment process as consistent as possible. Candidates don't feel valued if they are left waiting for a long time for no reason, or if the recruiter is not ready during the interviews. (Finn 2017, 240.) Recruiters need to understand that recruitment is all about relationships, making it essential to show applicants that they are cared for as individuals (Paauwe 2017, 1-2).

Applicants require a modern, quick and efficient process, and might leave if the application process becomes too long and complex. Firms should therefore understand the needs of the candidates and keep the recruitment process short, simple and convenient. Companies can create a positive candidate experience and increase the possibilities of hiring top talent by customizing the process to fit the applicants' desires and expectations. (Paauwe 2017, 2.) In the end, strengthening candidate experience does not require a big financial investment or demand a plethora of resources. Companies should think from the candidates' perspective by treating them respectfully, frequently communicating with them throughout the process, creating a warm environment and making sure to implement a quick and effective process. (Finn 2017, 239.)

2.4 The Role of Employer Branding in Recruitment and in Shaping the Candidate Experience

Employer branding describes a company's external workplace reputation and their employee value proposition (Barrow & Mosley 2005, 149-150). Company reputation has a significant impact on attracting qualified candidates. Additionally, company reputation has been recognized as an essential job-choice regarding the acceptance of an employment offer, showing that applicants desire to work for a successful company. Thus, recruitment managers should emphasize the positive company reputation during the recruitment process in order to make it more prominent to the candidates. (Boswell & al. 2003, 33.)

Many scholars have researched the company attraction for potential candidates from the perspective of the framework describing the fit between people and organizations (Kristof 1996, 1). It is shown that candidates often decide for themselves the understanding of a suitable fit between individual and detected corporate values (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012, 218). Candidates' impression of a company's image is connected with their wish to continue their communication with the firm (Gatewood & al. 1993, 424).

Moreover, Hoffman & Woehr (2006, 390-391) reported that firms who recruited employees who believed they were a good fit for the organization ended up obtaining well-performing, engaged and pleased workers who adapted nicely to their new roles with a bigger chance of remaining in the company. Additionally, it was discovered that specific qualities appointed to companies are more appealing depending on a person's qualities, where individuals were more attracted to firms with qualities that matched with their own (De Cooman & Pepermans 2012, 218).

Furthermore, companies should recognize word-of-mouth is an influential recruitment tool and how their employer branding get impacted when social platforms express positive or negative stories of candidate experiences (Finn 2017, 239). During an organization's recruitment process, they have to remember that even through the candidate does not receive an employment offer this time, they could potentially be suitable for a job opening in the future after gaining more training or work experience (Johnson 2018, 23). When firms are providing a positive experience for applicants throughout the whole recruitment process, it will result in a positive impression of the employer brand, regardless if the candidates are hired or not (Benzie 2009, 15).

Top candidates make conscious decisions regarding which employer they want to work for when they have the luxury to pick and choose. Therefore, all the interactions that companies have with applicants is a chance to convey their organizational identity and employee value proposition, in addition to emphasizing the company's reputation as a great workplace. Employers should establish a recruitment process that shows the company's values and welcoming atmosphere, giving the candidates a positive impression of the organization's culture and employer brand. (Paauwe 2017, 2.)

Recruitment experiences are becoming more essential as candidates advance through the process and start making assumptions about the qualities of the company in relation to their candidate experience. Thus, firms should concentrate on the attraction, commitment and retention activities established to enhance the organization's employer brand. (Boswell & al. 2003, 25.)

3 Analysis of the Current Recruitment Process

The following chapter goes through project task 2, which consists of analyzing the current recruitment process through existing documentation and interviews with Recruitment Managers. The first subchapter presents the process and the project management methods applied to achieve the project task, while the second subchapter focuses on reporting the results.

3.1 Project Management Methods

Two different project management methods were used to analyse the current recruitment process in Sympa. First was the analysis of the four existing documentations provided by the HR department to support the recruitment process. The purpose of this analysis was to see what instructions and guidelines the Recruitment Managers used and followed when they were recruiting new employees for their teams. The process of analyzing the documents included finding parts that were unclear or identifying missing information, followed by the suggestion of improvement points. The purpose and analysis of the different documentations are presented in subchapter 3.2.

The second part of the recruitment process analysis was to conduct qualitative individual interviews with four different Recruitment Managers in order to receive more information on how the recruitment processes have been carried out in different teams and business units in Sympa. The purpose of the qualitative interviews was to gather information from the Recruitment Managers regarding the different steps they have in the recruitment process, what they think about the process, what challenges they have, which parts of the process they would like to improve, and where they want to receive more help from HR. These points are introduced in subchapters 3.3.1-3.3.5.

The four Recruitment Managers were chosen among 19 managers in order to get a good overview of how the recruitment processes are conducted across different teams, business units and countries in Sympa. The managers were also of different age and gender where half of them have been conducting recruitment processes for several years, while the other two recently became Recruitment Managers in Sympa. The author prepared a set of questions before the interviews, which can be found in Attachment 1. The interviews were conducted online on October 8th and 9th 2019 and lasted for 30-40 minutes each. The author recorded the interviews and took notes of the Recruitment Managers' answers while listening to the recordings after the interviews were conducted.

3.2 Results of Existing Documentation Analysis

Sympa's HR department had offered four different documents that the Recruitment Managers could use for their recruitment processes. The first document gave a description of Sympa's online recruitment process with the steps and the people responsible for the different parts. The analysis of these instructions can be found in subchapter 3.2.1. The second document emphasized the importance of the candidate experience with instructions on how to carry out the recruitment process in a way that could create the best type of candidate experience. HR also offered their assistance to the Recruitment Managers in several different areas of the recruitment process in the same document, and the analysis of these guidelines is provided in subchapter 3.2.2. The third document provided a list of the elements and qualities the Recruitment Managers should be looking for in a future employee, analysed and written about in subchapter 3.2.3. Lastly, the fourth document provided instructions on how to conduct an efficient interview, stating the structure and giving examples of questions that could be asked to learn about different aspects of the candidate. These instructions are analysed in subchapter 3.2.4.

3.2.1 Top Management's Recruitment Plan

The document gave a description of the online recruitment process in Sympa, by providing a list of the recruitment process steps and also including the people responsible for certain parts of the process. The description started with defining the selection criteria and informing about the open position in the company's internal platform. It continued with checking the candidate pool of earlier applicants to see if there were any potential candidates who would be suitable for the open position. Then the job ad was drafted together with the marketing team before HR opened up the recruitment form in Sympa's own system, and the Recruitment Managers together with HR proceed to use the system to fill in the different phases and assessments of the candidates.

Next they conducted the initial video interview online and the first personal interview, where HR offered their assistance if the Recruitment Manager wished to have help with conducting the interviews. Following the interviews, they would send out "no thank you" messages to the candidates who did not qualify for the next round. Then the candidates were sent to the assessment tests with an external psychologist, where the Recruitment Managers communicated to the psychologist the key expectations and demands of the candidates beforehand. Afterwards the Recruitment Managers and HR would receive the assessment test results and the psychologist would send the assessment results to the candidates.

The process proceeded with the selection of candidates where they discussed about the salary, gave the job offer, and communicated with the candidates who had been participating in the interviews. Then they signed the employment agreement before the pre-boarding would begin. During the pre-boarding, the Recruitment Manager would request the tools and software accesses for the new employee and look through the onboarding checklist for managers provided by HR. Lastly, HR and the team's tutor would send a welcome message to the new employee on their first day of employment.

By analyzing this document from the recruitment process perspective, it provided most of the important steps of the recruitment process for Sympa, but the instructions were missing some crucial steps and essential information regarding the different parts of the process. The list was not mentioning the step where the Recruitment Managers were screening the applications and deciding which candidates they wanted to invite for the initial online video interview. HR should also offer their services with the applicant screening process, since some positions might generate a lot of applications.

Furthermore, communication with the candidates should happen after every step of the process, in order to ensure a good candidate experience where the applicants consistently would get updates about their performance and information about the next steps of the process. Similarly, after every step of the process when the Recruitment Manager had decided on the qualified candidates to proceed in the process, they should immediately send out the "no thank you" messages to the candidates that had not been chosen. Thus, the communication with the candidates and the sending of "no thank you" messages should both be mentioned several times during the recruitment process.

Furthermore, the list only mentioned one online video interview and one personal interview. However, it would be more common for the Recruitment Managers to have at least two personal interviews in order to decide which candidate they would want to give the employment offer. This second interview could be either before or after the assessment tests, where the Recruitment Managers could invite other people to join the interview in order to get a second opinion of the candidates. Additionally, it would be beneficial to mention the people responsible for every step of the recruitment process, since it was only mentioned for some of the steps. HR could also point out more areas where they could be of assistance for the Recruitment Managers.

Additionally, the process description should have a more detailed explanation of the assessment tests including information of the person conducting the assessment tests, what assessment methods that were included in the tests and how long they would last. Recruitment Managers should have all this information available, in order for them to

properly plan and carry out the recruitment process, especially if they were new to the company and not be familiar with the recruitment process in Sympa. It would also be useful to have more comprehensive explanations of what communication the Recruitment Managers should have with the candidates during the recruitment process, including methods of communication, tone of voice, giving feedback on their performance during the interviews and the results of their assessment tests. The developed version of Sympa's online recruitment process description can be found in subchapter 5.2.

3.2.2 Delivering a Great Candidate Experience

The document started with describing how successful recruitments result in successful companies, and how well-organized recruitment processes help to find the best candidates and to maintain a positive employer brand. It was also mentioned how recruitment processes become successful when the company is able to deliver great candidate experiences and focus on candidate care throughout the process.

The document then proceeded to go into the steps of the recruitment process and emphasized how the Recruitment Managers could focus on delivering a great candidate experience by fast communication and focusing on the candidate. The first step was to post about the open position in Sympa's internal company platform, for the employees in Sympa to have a chance to apply for the open position by contacting the Recruitment Manager directly. Then the positive candidate experience would begin with the job ad where the focus would be on what they could offer the candidate. The document then described how Sympa's employment criteria should be realistic and well-grounded in regard to competence requirements and that they would not ask for education or language skill requirements unless they were necessary for carrying out the tasks required by the job position.

The next part emphasized that it should be simple and fast to apply for the job, followed by friendly and fast communication with applicants at every step of the process; the interviews should be scheduled as soon as possible in order to not miss any good candidates, the "no thank you" messages should be sent to the candidates as soon as the Recruitment Manager had made the decision of the candidate's assessment, and an additional message would be sent to the applicants if the recruitment process would extend. The document then described the interviews to be structured and relaxed in order for the candidates to be themselves, while regarding the open applications the "no thank you" message would be sent out a few days after the applications were received.

Additionally, at the end of the document HR provided a list of tasks where they could support the Recruitment Managers, including briefing meetings, finding the best channels for the job ad to be published, publishing the job ad, reading and giving comments on job applications, inviting candidates for interviews, conducting online interviews, making reference calls and sending messages to candidates.

By analyzing the document from the viewpoint of enhancing the candidate experience, it would be good to include more explanations of why candidate experience is so important and give more examples of what the Recruitment Managers could do in order to further improve it. The document could bring up how finding top talents is one of the main challenges for companies today, and how the candidate experience could help with that. As mentioned in the theory framework from subchapter 2.3, the experience could also influence how the candidates communicate with other people about the company as an employer, which would in turn affect the company's employer brand.

The document provided great examples of how the candidate experience could be enhanced by quick communication with the candidates. In addition to this, it would also be beneficial to mention more ways for the Recruitment Managers to deliver a great candidate experience, in reference to the points that were mentioned in the theoretical framework in subchapter 2.3. These points consisted of treating candidates with dignity and respect in the same way that they would treat their customers. The Recruitment Managers should also be clear about the job description and the needed requirements, as well as providing a clear timeline of the application process for the candidates to know what to expect at all times. It was also noted that it would be beneficial for the managers to value the time that they got from the candidates by being prepared for the candidate's arrival, such as being organized and informed by conveying complete and accurate information while demonstrating interest and a positive attitude towards the applicants. As reported by the theoretical findings, the recruitment process is all about relationships where the Recruitment Managers should care for the candidates as human beings in order for them to feel valued and respected. Furthermore, the theoretical framework suggested that the candidate experience should be enhanced by bringing up the company's values and culture as well as highlighting the good company reputation.

Lastly, some parts could be excluded from this document, such as posting the open position on the internal company platform as well as HR offering their assistance for the Recruitment Managers. This information does not directly impact the candidate experience but could be included in the recruitment process description covered in the Top Management's Recruitment Plan document presented in 3.2.1.

3.2.3 Elements and Qualities in Recruitments

The document offered a list of the elements and qualities that the Recruitment Managers should be searching for when they were assessing candidates during the recruitment process. The list included characteristics such as being open, down to earth, independent, a good team player, ambitious, proactive, open for new challenges, flexible, adaptive to change, relaxed and easy-going, willing to learn, solution oriented, reliable and real.

By analyzing this document from the Recruitment Managers' perspective, the characteristics mentioned in the document were quite general and could therefore be mentioned as desired employee qualities for most companies. Thus, the list should be updated with more specific and distinct employee qualities in order to differentiate the attributes of Sympa's employees compared to the employee qualities in other companies. In the end, this list did not bring extra value to the Recruitment Managers, since the employee qualities mentioned for Sympa's workers were too general.

Moreover, the document mentioned that the Recruitment Managers should define the criteria thoroughly by thinking through what these qualities would mean in practice for a certain position, and in what situations these qualities could be shown. These points would be hard to consider for the Recruitment Managers, since the list of qualities was focusing on the candidate's fit to Sympa as a company, and not including elements of a specific job position. Once more, the provided instructions were hard to apply and not valuable for the Recruitment Managers when they were interacting with the applicants. Additionally, there were several spelling errors and grammar mistakes in the document, some of the list elements were missing important words and the mention of being flexible was phrased twice. Lastly, certain qualities listed such as "open – mindness" and "real – not only an employee" were not clear descriptions of the candidates' attributes.

3.2.4 Interview Structure and Questions

The final document provided by HR have the Recruitment Managers advice on different types of questions they could ask the candidates when they were conducting interviews, as well as the structure of the interviews. The interview questions were grouped into six different categories, starting with the candidates' motivation and why they wanted to work for Sympa. The examples of the questions in this category touched upon why the candidates wanted to apply for the position, why they wanted to work for Sympa and what they were looking to get out of the position. The second category focused on the applicants' education and work history with questions centered around the candidates' employment history and their perception of their previous workplaces. Regarding

candidates who had changed their workplaces in the past, one of the questions asked for the reason and the outcome of the change.

The third category focused on the skills and potential of the candidates, with task specific questions. One question asked about the different skills of the candidates, such as their project management skills or their required technical skills, while another question requested concrete examples of the skills and tasks done in previous jobs. Another question touched upon the match between the candidates' skills and the position that they are applying to. Moreover, the fourth category of questions encompassed the success and failures of the candidates, referring to past work life experiences. In this category, the questions also included what aspects the candidates succeeded in really well in their previous or past workplaces, as well as the areas that had not been so successful. One question also inquired what kind of feedback the candidates had received from their colleagues and managers in the past.

The fifth category of questions captured the personal qualities of the candidates. These questions asked the candidates to tell about their strengths and weaknesses and how they could show concrete examples of different qualities in their behaviour and work life. Moreover, the last category covered the qualities that they were looking for in employees of Sympa, which were mentioned in the previous document analyzed in subchapter 3.2.3. In this category, the questions were asking about the candidates' qualities as good team players, being proactive and taking initiative, being adaptive to change and being relaxed and easy-going. The questions asked about concrete examples where these qualities were used and covered how well the candidates were able to contribute to and fit into the good working atmosphere in Sympa.

After the interview questions, the document presented additional points that the Recruitment Managers should bring up during the interviews, including a presentation about Sympa and the position, questions and candidate reflection of the position, practical aspects, and information about the continuation of the recruitment process. By analyzing this document from the viewpoint of the Recruitment Managers, the document should provide points that the managers could include in their presentation of Sympa to create a strong employer brand, supporting the theoretical findings from 2.4 where the employment company should use all interactions with the candidate to communicate the organizational identity and employee value proposition. Additionally, there should also be a more detailed description of what should be included in the practical aspects, such as going through the employment contract details and requirements of the job position together with the candidates.

This document provided a lot of good questions for the Recruitment Managers to use in their interviews and grouped the questions nicely together to create a good overview of the different types of questions that could be asked in order to get the best view of the candidates' skills, qualities and previous working experiences. However, some of the questions had grammatical mistakes, and therefore HR should look through the document and make the needed improvements.

3.3 Results of Interviews with Recruitment Managers

Two of the Recruitment Managers had recruited several new employees to Sympa and therefore had a standardized process in place for their recruitments. One of the managers had only done the recruitment process once and therefore did not have a unified process yet, but was willing to try out different things to see how they could optimize the process in the future. The last Recruitment Manager was located outside of Finland and had recruited employees for several different positions and teams. This manager did not have a standardized process for the recruitment processes in their country, but wished to have it. One of the reasons for the absence of structure in the last manager's recruitment process was due to lack of communication with the HR staff who are located in Finland.

Based on the descriptions of the steps and duration of the recruitment process in subchapter 3.3.1, the development suggestions are presented in Sympa's new online recruitment process description found in subchapter 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. The way of informing about and continuing with the utilization of external recruitment assistance formulated in 3.3.2 can also be found in the online recruitment process description displayed in subchapter 5.2.3.

3.3.1 Steps and Duration of the Recruitment Process

All of the Recruitment Managers started their recruitment processes by asking for permission to recruit from the top management in Sympa by showing and discussing the need for them to hire a new person for their team. When they got the green light to recruit, the managers started drafting the job ads in cooperation with HR and the marketing team. HR opened the application form in Sympa's own system, and either HR or marketing published the job ad online. Depending on the position, the Recruitment Manager decided together with HR which channels the job ad should be published in. The job ads were always published in Sympa's own channels such as their website, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, and often the ads would also be published online in different job portals. For positions that were harder to find, they would also consider using sponsored

advertisement in LinkedIn to reach out to more candidates. Moreover, one of the managers usually added contact details in the job ad, together with a couple of set times where they were open for people to call and ask questions about the job position.

After receiving permission to recruit, one manager proceeded by looking at previous applications and tried to find a suitable person from there, in order to save time and money by avoiding the whole recruitment process. If the manager found someone suitable from past applicants, they would proceed to contact the applicant for an interview. All of the Recruitment Managers were screening the applications on their own, mostly because they had the most knowledge about the position and the requirements of the applicants. However, one of the managers expressed that they would like to get help from HR to screen the candidates, but this had not happened due to lack of communication.

One of Recruitment Managers received help from HR to conduct the first online interviews with the purpose of seeing the candidates fit to the company and to narrow down the number of applicants. The rest of the Recruitment Managers conducted the first interview by themselves, either online or through a phone call in order to screen the applicants in a quicker and easier way. All of the managers proceeded to conduct two in-person interviews during the recruitment process, and for one of the interviews they would often invite someone else to join in order to get a second opinion. The second interviewer would either be from the team, HR or a Recruitment Manager from another team. Two of the managers had tried to have the team present for the final interview, especially for the strong candidates. The purpose of these team interviews was for the candidates to ask questions to the team about the job task and the job role, and for the candidates to meet the team beforehand.

Regarding all of the recruitment processes in Sympa, they would send the candidates for assessment testing with an external psychologist to conduct personality tests, logical thinking tests and interviews with the applicants in order to see their fit for the role and the company. The psychologist would provide information for the Recruitment Managers about the strengths and risks of the applicants and tell what kind of guidance and leadership the candidates would need if they were hired. All of the managers highly valued the psychologist's feedback and approval of the candidates, and none of them would hire anyone who had not passed the assessment tests.

During the recruitment process, one of the Recruitment Managers had a written test for the candidates, to see if they possessed the right qualities for the role. Similarly, another

manager would ask the candidates to send some examples of previous work that they had done, for the manager to assess their skill level.

Most of the Recruitment Managers offered the job through a phone call. The managers proceed to make a contract proposal before sending it to the candidate, giving them a few days to read through it in order to make changes and ask questions before signing it. The final step before the first day of employment was for the managers to arrange the needed equipment, softwares and accounts for the new employee. Moreover, one of the managers always called the new employee one or two days before the first day of employment, to ask about how they were feeling, how happy and excited they were to start working in Sympa, and how it went during the last few weeks with their old employer.

For two of the Recruitment Managers, it usually took 2-3 months from asking for permission to recruit until the first day of employment, while for another manager it required around half a year. One manager's recruitment process usually lasted around two months from the candidate's point of view, while for the other Recruitment Managers, the candidate experience of the recruitment process lasted either 2-4 weeks or 5-6 weeks.

3.3.2 Utilization of External Recruitment Assistance

One of the managers had often been using external recruitments assistance from the recruitment company aTalent to recruit new positions for the team, either to receive help with the screening process for positions with a lot of candidates, or to get assistance with finding applicants for positions that were lacking good candidates. The manager thought that it was not enough to only post the job ad through Sympa's own website and channels for the candidates that were harder to find and believed that aTalent was able to reach out to more applicants because of their prominent presence in different channels and platforms. The manager used the team budget to cover the costs of the external recruitment assistance, where the costs were lower than the work that the manager would use to find good candidates.

Furthermore, one manager was previously managing the recruitment project for the developer team in Sympa, where the growth of the company created the need to double the size of the team. In the end they had successful recruitments thanks to headhunting services provided by external recruitment companies such as aTalent and Talented, the latter company working as an agent to connect developers with employers. Other managers also expressed the wish to start using external recruitment companies to headhunt positions that were hard to fill.

3.3.3 Involvement of HR

The Recruitment Managers usually did not use the materials provided from HR regarding the recruitment process. One manager was experienced with recruitments and therefore did not have the need to look at the instructions, while for the other managers they either did not know about the existing guidelines or they did not see the need to use them. However, the managers all agreed that the guidelines were great tools for new managers who did not have previous experience with recruitments.

HR was helping one of the managers with sending “no thank you” messages to the candidates who were not chosen in the beginning of the recruitment process, before the in-person interviews. This was a big help for the manager, giving them more time to focus on the most potential candidates whom they were interviewing and meeting with. Furthermore, one manager believed that it was good practice to always call the candidates that they had met in person, also the ones who were not chosen for the position. Moreover, one of the managers expressed that HR had no role in finding, screening, interviewing or communicating with the candidates for their team, and the manager wished for HR to help them with screening the job applications, as well as sending out “no thank you” messages.

Another manager also wished for HR to send out “no thank you” messages to the candidates who were not chosen for the position, since their team did not have a standardized process for it. They had many different managers with a shared responsibility of checking the incoming applications, but they did not have a clear process regarding which manager should look at the incoming applications, at what time they should be checking them, and how they should proceed with the applications. Therefore, the manager wished for HR to help with implementing a procedure that the managers could follow when looking through incoming applications. Additionally, the managers in this team did not get notifications when new applications had been received, and they therefore had to log into the system in order to see the incoming applications. Thus, they wished for HR to help them get automated email notifications when they received new applications.

Furthermore, one manager wanted HR to inform the Recruitment Managers about the different options they could use in the recruitment process, in case they had urgent positions to fill and needed to get good candidates quickly. Some of these options could be to get more help from HR or marketing to push the applications through different job portals or to use sponsored advertisement in LinkedIn. Another option could be to use

external recruitment assistance that could help with head hunting or provide more qualified applicants. The manager also wished to receive data from HR on how successful these different options had been in the past. Additionally, another manager wished for HR to arrange training session for the Recruitment Managers on how to pick out the best applications and how to conduct interviews. The manager thought that it would be beneficial to learn about how to make the interview process more efficient and what questions to ask in order to better understand the expertise and personality of the applicants.

Based on the Recruitment Managers' descriptions about the involvement of HR, there was found several development suggestions. First, HR should more frequently communicate about the documents provided to support the Recruitment Managers in their recruitment processes, since there were many of the managers who did not know that the documents existed. Furthermore, the documents should be developed according to the improvement points presented in subchapters 3.2.1-3.2.4, in order to create additional value for the Recruitment Managers. HR should also implement a procedure for specific teams to follow regarding the people responsible for checking and screening the incoming applications, since some teams did not have a set procedure in place for that. HR could also help the team get automated email notifications when they receive new applications, in order for them to respond faster to the applications.

Furthermore, HR should arrange training sessions for the Recruitment Managers to help them screen applications and conduct interviews more efficiently. HR could also provide training for other parts of the recruitment process, based on the wishes from the Recruitment Managers. Providing recruiter training was mentioned in the theoretical findings in 3.2 as a great way to enhance the candidate experience, since the interview process is one of the most impactful candidate experiences. Other development suggestions regarding the involvement of HR can be found in the new online recruitment process description in subchapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.3.

3.3.4 Creating a Positive View of Sympa as an Employer

There were different ways for the Recruitment Managers to create a positive view of Sympa to the applicants during the recruitment process. One manager tried to be relaxed, honest and easy going during the interviews and they would tell about Sympa as a company and what they valued. The manager also told about the benefits for the employees in Sympa, like monthly allowances as well as parties and trips arranged and sponsored by Sympa. Another manager told stories to show the Sympa culture and how their values played out in real life. The manager pointed out the usage of internal

platforms for communication within the company, which showed a good picture of how every employee in Sympa easily could get help and answers from their colleagues when they asked for it. Another manager told about the way they were working in the team and provided chances for the candidates to ask questions about the position and the company. Furthermore, the manager also brought out some practical points by emphasizing how having fun is one of Sympa's key values and how it shows in their daily lives when they play foosball or card games, as well as having shared coffee breaks in the office.

One manager thought it would be beneficial to have a Culture Handbook to help the Recruitment Managers see and understand all the good benefits they have in Sympa. They could also use to this handbook to communicate to the candidates all the cultural benefits during the recruitment process. This improvement suggestion would be great for HR to develop in order to create an even more positive view of Sympa as an employer to both the employees in the company and to the applicants. The theoretical framework in 2.4 mentioned that it was important to emphasize the company as a great place to work, and the creation of a Culture Handbook could be beneficial for that purpose. Additionally, the Culture Handbook could also be published online for everyone to see, in order to strengthen Sympa's employer brand even more.

3.3.5 Challenges in the Recruitment Process

Since Sympa started signing their employment contracts digitally online, one of the managers revealed that it was strange to not meet the new employee after offering the job. Previously they used to meet the new worker at the office to sign the contract, show them around the office and for them to meet the other employees. Without the face-to-face meeting, the manager experienced a gap in the interaction with the new employee.

The manager who was located outside of Finland had encountered some challenges for positions that were functioning across countries where the manager faced the issue of conveying to the candidate how it was going to work in practice with them having a Finnish line manager. The Recruitment Manager's office team would share the social responsibility regarding the employee, but the professional responsibility would still be with the manager who was located outside of the country. Thus, the Recruitment Manager had faced the need to create a safe situation for the candidates in these positions.

One Recruitment Manager expressed that the biggest challenge had been to attract good candidates to fill the open positions. Therefore, they had taken more initiative to reach out to students from universities, where the manager was holding guest lectures for students

and arranging joint events. The manager's goal was to be recognized as the best software company in their area, but they needed to gain more visibility in order for people to recognize Sympa as a good employer.

One of the recruitment managers expressed that they wanted to start contacting the good applicants right after the applications were received, since they had previously been waiting until after the job application deadline to contact the candidates. The manager wished to have a more individual and running approach for the interesting candidates, to show them that they were seen as individual people. The risk would be for a better candidate to apply in the end of the application period, but the manager stated that it would be worth it since they had previously lost candidates because they were too slow with their initial response.

In the end, most of the managers expressed that the recruitment process was quite time consuming, but they saw that it was an important part of their job and also essential for the growth of the company.

In reference to the descriptions about the challenges in the recruitment process, several development points were identified. Regarding the manager who experienced a gap in the interaction with the new employee because of digitally signing the employment contract, HR should communicate more clearly with the Recruitment Managers regarding the purpose of signing the contract digitally, in order for them to see and focus on its benefits. Additionally, the Recruitment Manager could fill the interaction gap with the new employee by implementing one of the pre-boarding step mentioned in the process description in 5.2.1 where they could call the employee a few days before their first day of employment in order to give them a warm welcome and make them feel cared for.

In relation to the challenge of the positions that were functioning across teams, it would be important for the line manager to be present during the interviews in order for the employee to get to know the manager better and feel safe about them being located in different countries. Moreover, it would be beneficial for the line manager to tell stories and give examples of similar situations where the cross-country communication and cooperation had successfully been carried out between the line manager and the employee.

Concerning the attraction of good candidates, improvement suggestions have been identified in subchapters 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 regarding the steps that the Recruitment Managers can take if they do not receive enough qualified candidates through the normal

process of publishing the job ads. Additionally, the Recruitment Manager could discuss more with HR and marketing to plan and create marketing campaigns in order to target and attract good and suitable candidates for their open positions.

Regarding the point about contacting good candidates right after receiving applications, as well as the recruitment process being time consuming for the Recruitment Managers, development suggestions are presented in the new process description in subchapter 5.2.1. The suggestions include screening the applications before the application period ends, in addition to more involvement from HR to ensure that the Recruitment Managers can spend less time on the recruitment process.

4 Establishing the Candidate Experience

This chapter presents project task 3, which includes conducting a quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process in Sympa. The first subchapter lays out the survey and the project management methods used to complete the project task, while the second subchapter concentrates on reporting the results. The final subchapter presents the findings and recommendations from the survey that can help HR and Recruitment Managers with enhancing the candidate experience for future recruitment processes in Sympa.

4.1 Project Management Method

The project management method used to establish the candidate experience in Sympa included conducting a quantitative survey of the employees who had been employed during the past year and a half. The objective of the survey was to acquire quantitative numbers of how satisfied the employees were with the candidate experience of the recruitment process, since the HR department did not have any previous data on this matter. Thus, the survey results showed which parts of the recruitment process were good and which parts could be improved.

At the time the survey was conducted, Sympa employed 129 employees in total and the survey was sent out to all the 49 workers employed during the past year and a half, making up 38% of the total number of employees. The first part of the survey grouped the employees into country of location and business units. The rest of the survey focused on the candidate experience and asked about the employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding different factors and parts of the recruitment process. The employees were also requested to specify how they thought the process could be improved and which parts of the process that went well. The quantitative survey form can be found in Attachment 2.

The survey was created with the electronic survey system Webropol and sent to the employees via email. The survey was kept open for nine days from October 10th-18th, 2019. Additionally, two email reminders were sent to the employees who had not answered the survey. The survey included information regarding the importance of gathering the answers from the employees and how the results could be used to enhance Sympa's candidate experience in the future. The survey also added an incentive where one of the survey respondents could win a special prize. Thus, a champagne bottle was gifted to one randomly chosen respondent after the survey was closed.

4.2 Results

The survey was sent out to all 49 employees who were recruited by Sympa during the past year and a half, and the response rate of the survey was 84% with a total of 41 respondents. The **two first questions** asked about the employees' country of location and business unit. Most of the survey respondents were located in Finland with 54% of the answers, while the second biggest country of location was Sweden with 24% of the survey respondents. The biggest business unit was Sales & Marketing with 49% of the respondents, followed by Services with 24% of the total answers. By analyzing these numbers, it showed that Finland and Sweden were the countries with the biggest growing markets and therefore had a greater need of hiring more employees. Similarly, Sales & Marketing and Services were the business units in Sympa with the biggest growth and most hires during the past year and a half.

Question 3 asked about how the participants found out about the open position. The option with the most answers was through Social Media with 32% of the respondents, followed by job advertisement through other job portals with a 22% response rate. The option with the least responses was job advertisement on Sympa's own website with 10% of the respondents. By reviewing the results from these answers, it showed how important it was for Sympa to utilize other channels in addition to their own website if they wanted their job ads to reach a wider range of candidates. They should especially market the job ads through their Social Media channels, as well as analyze previous recruitments to find the most suitable job portals for the different positions and countries.

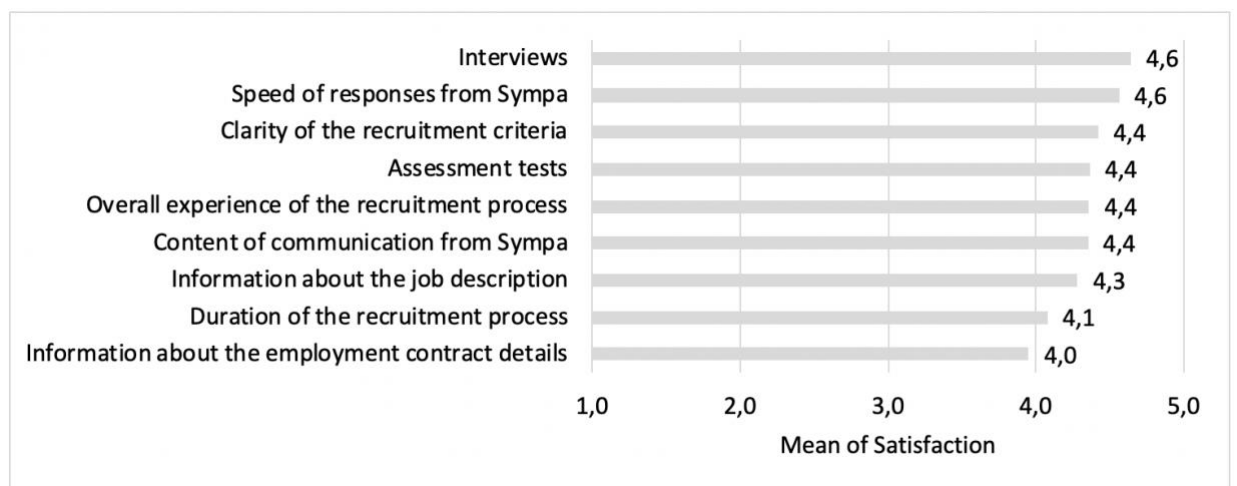


Figure 5. The satisfaction of the respondents (1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied and 5 = very satisfied)

Question 4 mentioned many different factors in the recruitment process and asked the employees to state how satisfied they were with these factors in their recruitment process. Figure 5 showed the mean of satisfaction among the respondents, which was found by calculating the average of the answers. The overall satisfaction rate of the respondents was very good for all the factors, with the mean ranging between 4.0 and 4.6. Thus, most of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the different components that were mentioned. The lowest means of satisfaction were regarding the information about the employment contract details and the duration of the recruitment process, while the highest mean of satisfaction was connected to the interviews, followed closely by the speed of responses from Sympa.

If the respondents stated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the components, **question 5** would appear and ask the respondents to explain the reason for their dissatisfaction. Some of the employees answered that they were dissatisfied with the speed of responses from Sympa and the duration of the recruitment process, since there were times where they did not know the status of their recruitment. After the assessment tests they had to wait several weeks before getting updates from Sympa, and they were therefore very uncertain if the tests had gone well or not. Other respondents were dissatisfied with the content of communication from Sympa and explained that their recruitment process had long gaps with no communication on how the process was proceeding.

By evaluating the answers, it was clear that the Recruitment Managers in Sympa had to communicate with the candidates how the process was proceeding after every step of the process, in addition to always clarifying to the candidates the status of their recruitment processes. The Recruitment Managers should understand how the speed and content of communication with the candidates could affect the candidate experience of the recruitment process, as well as the candidates' thoughts regarding Sympa as an employer.

Question 6 asked if there was any time of the recruitment process where the employees did not know what was going to happen next. The answers to this question were overall positive with 73% responding no and only 17% responding yes. When the respondents answered yes, **question 7** appeared to ask the respondents what information they would like to receive during the process. The answers consisted of a timetable for when decisions would be made and an overview of the process covering the order of all the different steps, including the people responsible for each part of the process. Additionally, the employees wished to receive information about the job description, the contact

persons involved and the collaboration between the different countries that Sympa is present in. One respondent stated that they did not know what the next step was after they submitted their application, while another respondent expressed that the initial contact from Sympa took a long time. It was also expressed by an employee that the external psychologist did not contact them for several days regarding the assessment tests, and therefore the employee was wondering if the psychologist had received their contact information.

Moreover, one of the respondents said that they were flown to another country for a meeting without any information about what was going to happen there. Similarly, another respondent had finished all the tasks and interviews of the process and was told that they would soon receive news if they had gotten the job or not. The respondent expected to get a phone call with the information about Sympa's decision but was instead invited to a meeting at the office without receiving information about what would happen there. In the end, the respondent wished that they could get the information about the job offer beforehand, and that Sympa would make it clear that the meeting was arranged in order to sign the employment contract.

By examining the answers received from these survey questions, the Recruitment Managers or HR should at the beginning of the process provide the applicants with an overview of the whole process including the steps, the duration and the people responsible for each part. During the interviews, the interviewer should also provide further information about the job description of the position, as well as the collaboration between the different countries that Sympa is operating in. Moreover, when the recruitment process steps were handled by different people such as the Recruitment Manager, HR and the external psychologist, the communication and speed of the process should remain unaffected; the candidates should continuously be informed about the status of their process and who they could contact. The content of communication should also be clearer for the applicants, and they should always get informed about the agenda and purpose of all the meetings and interviews during the recruitment process.

Question 8 inquired how much time Sympa gave the employees to respond to the job offer. 46% of the respondents answered that they accepted the job offer from Sympa immediately, 15% replied that Sympa offered them 1-3 days to answer, while 7% said that they got 4-7 days to reply to the job offer. One respondent stated that the recruitment manager did not explicitly ask them if they wanted to accept the job offer before starting to go through the details of the employment contract, assuming that the candidate wanted the offer. Thus, the respondent expressed that this was not a clear and professional way

for the Recruitment Manager to give the job offer. Reviewing the answer from the candidate regarding this question, the Recruitment Managers should not take for granted that the candidates would accept the employment offer. Thus, the Recruitment Managers should be clearer with their communication by creating a good practice of always asking the candidates if they want to accept the job offer, before moving on to the next step of the process.

Question 9 raised the question if the respondents agreed that the job description matched the tasks that they were currently doing in their job. 76% of the respondents agreed to this statement, while 19% were neutral and 5% disagreed. By analyzing the answers from this question, the results were positive. However, to improve this component the Recruitment Managers should from the beginning have a clearer vision of the tasks that they want the new hire to carry out, in order to match these tasks with the job description formulated in the job ad.

Question 10 asked if the recruitment process positively affected the respondents' decision to accept the job offer. 78% of the respondents stated that it positively affected their decision and 22% were neutral. Moreover, **question 11** asked what impression the employees got about Sympa as an employer during the recruitment process and 93% answered that they got a positive impression, whereas only 7% were neutral. By examining the numbers, it was evident that the respondents had a great experience of Sympa's recruitment process. The results showed that the Recruitment Managers were doing a great job in giving the candidates a positive impression of Sympa as a great place to work.

Question 12 inquired if the respondents had any improvement suggestions regarding the recruitment process. One respondent wished for better communication about the content of the employment contract, since the contract did not adapt well for the Sympa offices outside of Finland and it was unclear if Sympa had a collective agreement in other countries. Other respondents expressed that it would be better to properly describe the job role and not use too many positive adjectives in the job ads, especially that tech positions could be more informative and include more information about the job itself. Additionally, there was a wish for the developer positions to have more emphasis on tech stack discussions and preferences during the recruitment process.

One of the respondents found the assessment tests a bit strange and expressed that the interviews with the external psychologist were not well conducted. Other respondents stated that it was not made clear by Sympa why the assessment tests were important,

and they did not receive enough information regarding what the tests were measuring. One employee voiced the importance of the new hires fitting in well within the smaller teams, and that it would be wise to involve current employees during the recruitment process and discuss open positions internally. Moreover, someone wondered why their recruitment process was different than their colleagues and wished for the process to be more standardized. It was also expressed that the Recruitment Managers could bring up more specific examples emphasizing Sympa as a great employer.

Reviewing the answers from the open question, there were many improvement suggestions for the recruitment processes that could be developed by HR and the Recruitment Managers. To begin with, HR should provide more detailed information regarding the employment contracts for countries outside of Finland, especially regarding the collective agreements. Regarding Recruitment Managers for the tech teams, they should include more information about the open position when creating the job ad. Furthermore, the Recruitment Managers should communicate more with the developer candidates regarding tech stack discussions and preferences during the recruitment process.

Other improvement suggestions involved the assessment tests, where the Recruitment Managers should convey to the candidates the importance of the assessment tests and the reason for including them in the recruitment process. The managers should also communicate more with the candidates regarding what the tests were measuring. An important development suggestion focused on how HR could make the process for all the recruitments in Sympa more standardized, from starting the process by publishing every open position internally to ending the process with the same pre-boarding steps. HR and the Recruitment Managers should also bring up more specific examples of why Sympa is a great employer and communicate this to the candidates during the recruitment process.

Question 13 requested if there were any other points that the respondents wanted to bring up regarding the recruitment process. The employees had many positive comments about Sympa's employer branding and recruitment process. One respondent wrote: "I got very good vibes from Sympa when I was looking through their website. When I arrived at the interviews, I was amazed by the good atmosphere in the office. People were playing and laughing and having fun. That was new to me and I wanted to be a part of it. Lucky me, now I am!" Another respondent stated: "I think that the job ad and the Sympa couch video really made me think that Sympa is a great place to work right from the beginning, even before the first interview. Meeting the Recruitment Manager and all the other people during the recruitment process made that initial feeling even stronger! So really great job

on emphasizing the Sympa family culture and making sure that all the applicants are treated well during the entire process.”

Many of the respondents were satisfied with the fast decision making and the fast responses from Sympa after the different steps of the process. One employee was impressed by the short duration of the recruitment process where they signed the contract within ten days, while another respondent expressed that they were well informed during the process and that they were glad to receive more detailed information about the job description during the interviews. Other good comments included one respondent’s positive reaction to Sympa for not discriminating them based on their gender and life situation, while another respondent enjoyed being interviewed by other members of the team which gave them a realistic view of the job. One employee thought that the human contact during the process was strong and was pleased with the interviews, while other respondents said that it was good to use an external psychologist for the assessment tests. One of the respondents had nothing bad to say about their recruitment process and expressed: “I am very satisfied with the process, I have nothing to complain about.”

By analyzing the feedback from the employees regarding the final survey question, it was evident that HR and the Recruitment Managers did an amazing job with creating a strong employer brand and emphasizing Sympa’s great company culture during the recruitment process. Many of the recruitments were conducted well and the employees were satisfied with the fast decision making and quick responses. The Recruitment Managers were good at giving information to the candidates during the process and presented a company that did not show discrimination when selecting the candidates.

5 Creating the New Online Recruitment Process Description

This chapter introduces project task 4, which consists of creating the new online recruitment process description. The first subchapter describes the preparation of the process description, while the second subchapter provides the description of Sympa's new online recruitment process.

5.1 Preparation of the Process Description

The author created a new and developed online recruitment process description for Sympa based on the Top Management's Recruitment Plan document provided by HR, as well as the results from the qualitative interviews with the Recruitment Managers and the quantitative survey with the employees in Sympa. The developed process description aimed at helping HR and the Recruitment Managers with enhancing the candidate experience of the new employees recruited by Sympa in the future, leading to a stronger employer brand for the company.

First, the steps and phases of the new recruitment process were written down, before the additional points to enhance the candidate experience were included. Then the online recruitment process description text was written, followed by creating the figures of the recruitment phases and steps. It was decided to design the figures of the recruitment process in PowerPoint, which is mentioned more in the presentation of the process description in chapter 6.

5.2 Sympa's Online Recruitment Process Description

The phases and steps of the new online recruitment process can be found in subchapter 5.2.1 and were developed based on the needs and comments of the Recruitment Managers, as well as the feedback and wishes from the employees. After the recruitment steps are presented, the duration of the recruitment process and the utilization of external recruitment assistance are brought up in subchapters 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

5.2.1 Phases and Steps of the Recruitment Process

The recruitment process is sectioned into four phases: Preparing to recruit, assessment of candidates, selection & signing and pre-boarding.

PHASE 1: PREPARING TO RECRUIT	PHASE 2: ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES	PHASE 3: SELECTION & SIGNING	PHASE 4: PRE-BOARDING
1. Ask for permission to recruit 2. Define selection criteria 3. Post open position in the internal company platform 4. Check candidate pool 5. Create job ad 6. Create application form in Sympa's system 7. Publish job ad	8. Screen applications 9. Conduct video interview 10. Conduct first in-person interview 11. Conduct skill test (optional) 12. Conduct second in-person interview 13. Conduct assessment tests	14. Select candidate 15. Give job offer 16. Create employment contract proposal online 17. Sign employment contract digitally online	18. Implement pre-boarding

Figure 6. Phases of the recruitment process

Figure 6 shows that the first phase of the recruitment process encompasses all the steps that are needed for the preparation to externally recruit new candidates to the company, including the steps of asking for permission to recruit, defining the selection criteria, recruiting internally, checking the candidate pool, opening the application form, as well as creating and publishing the job ad externally. The second phase assesses the candidates' fit to the company and the position, mentioning the steps of screening the applications, as well as conducting the video and in-person interviews together with the skill and assessment tests. The third phase covers the selection of the candidate and the signing of the employment contract, including steps such as giving the job offer and creating the employment contract proposal online. Lastly, the final phase contains the implementation of the pre-boarding process.

STEP 1: Ask for permission to recruit	STEP 2: Define selection criteria	STEP 3: Post open position in internal company platform	STEP 4: Check candidate pool	STEP 5: Create job ad	STEP 6: Create application form in Sympa's system
Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager & HR	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager & HR	Recruitment Manager, HR & Marketing	HR
STEP 7: Publish job ad	STEP 8: Screen applications	STEP 9: Conduct video interview	STEP 10: Conduct first in-person interview	STEP 11: Conduct skill test (optional)	STEP 12: Conduct second in-person interview
HR & Marketing	Recruitment Manager	HR or Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager
STEP 13: Conduct assessment tests	STEP 14: Select candidate	STEP 15: Give job offer	STEP 16: Create contract proposal online	STEP 17: Sign contract digitally online	STEP 18: Implement pre-boarding
External Psychologist	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	HR	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager & HR

Figure 7. Steps of the recruitment process

Figure 7 displays the eighteen steps covered in the recruitment process, including the person or team responsible for each step. There are new steps included in the recruitment process that have either not been documented by HR or implemented by the Recruitment Managers during previous recruitments. These steps include asking for permission to recruit, posting the open position in the internal company platform, checking the candidate pool, screening the applications and conducting the optional skill test.

The recruitment process starts with the Recruitment Manager asking their manager for **permission to recruit** a new employee into the team and presenting the needs for this proposal. Once the Recruitment Managers have received the permission to recruit, they will start **defining the recruitment criteria** for the position together with HR. After that, the Recruitment Manager will **post the open position in the internal company platform**, giving the possibility for the current employees in Sympa to apply for the position. Next, the Recruitment Managers and HR will **check the candidate pool** to see if there are any potential candidates who are suitable for the open position. If there are fitting candidates found in the candidate pool, the Recruitment Manager can invite them for an interview. The candidate pools are created by saving the information of candidates from previous recruitments, with the purpose of potentially hiring them for other positions. The goal of using the candidate pool is to fill open position faster and spend less time and money by hiring a new employee without implementing the full recruitment process.

Creating the job ad is done as a cooperation between the Recruitment Managers, HR and Marketing. In the job ad, the Recruitment Manager should always give their contact information and include a time where they are available for the candidates to ask questions about the position. After the job ad is done, HR will proceed to **create the application form in Sympa's system** where they will update the phases and assessments of the candidates during the recruitment process together with the Recruitment Managers. HR and marketing will **publish the job ad** online, and HR will help the Recruitment Managers with deciding the most suitable channels for publishing the ad. The job ads should always be published in Sympa's own website and their Social Media channels including Linked, Facebook and Twitter. Normally the job ads are also posted in external job portals to reach out to more job seekers. For positions with candidates who are harder to find, HR can inform the Recruitment Managers about the possibility to use sponsored advertisement in LinkedIn created by the marketing team, with the purpose of attracting more candidates.

The following step of **screening the applications** will primarily be the Recruitment Managers' task, but they can also ask HR for help with this if needed. The Recruitment

Managers or HR should start screening the applications and invite the candidates to the first video interview before the application period ends, in order to respond faster to the applicants and speed up the whole process. After the screening of the applications, HR can offer their help with sending out the “no thank you” messages for the candidates who are not qualified to the next round.

After screening of the applications, HR or the Recruitment Managers will **conduct the online video interview** in order to assess the candidates’ fit for the company and do further applicant screening before the next stage of the process. In this interview, the candidates will get an overview of the process covering all the steps and the people involved. Following this interview, HR will continue to send out the “no thank you” messages. The Recruitment Managers will then proceed to invite the remaining candidates for an **in-person interview** in order to assess the candidates’ fit for the position. The Recruitment Manager will give the candidates information regarding the next steps of the process in this interview. After the assessment of the in-person interviews, the Recruitment Managers will call the candidates who are not qualified for the next round.

The next step of the recruitment process is optional, depending on the needs of the position. The Recruitment Managers can choose to **conduct a skill test** of the applicants in order to see if they have the needed skills for the role. The test will be created before the start of the recruitment process and conducted as a written test online. The proceeding step is for the Recruitment Manager to **conduct the second in-person interview** with the candidates. For this interview the Recruitment Managers can choose to invite someone else to join in order to get a second opinion. The second interviewer can be a member from the team, HR or another Recruitment Manager. It is also a possibility for the Recruitment Manager to invite more team members to participate in this interview, where the candidates can ask questions to the team members and get a realistic view of the job. In this interview, Recruitment Manager will give the candidates information regarding the final steps of the process.

After the final interview, the Recruitment Manager will call the candidates who did not go through to the next round, while the remaining candidates are sent to **complete assessment tests** conducted by an external psychologist. Before the tests, the Recruitment Manager notifies the psychologist regarding the key expectations and demands of the candidates, while communicating with the candidates the purpose of conducting the tests. The psychologist also knows beforehand the skills and capabilities needed for the position, as well as the attributes and qualities that Sympa is looking for in their employees. During the assessment tests, the candidates go through personality

tests, logical thinking tests and interviews in order to determine the candidates' suitability for the company and the role. The psychologist provides the assessment results of the candidates to the Recruitment Manager and HR, in addition to giving their approval of the candidates who passed the tests and are qualified for the position. The psychologist also sends the assessment results to the candidates.

Based on the assessment results, the Recruitment Manager will **select the most suitable candidate** before **giving the job offer** through a phone call. The Recruitment Managers should always ask the candidate if they want to accept the job offer, and not take for granted that the candidate will say yes. The Recruitment Manager should also be ready to give the candidate a few days to respond to the job offer, if they wish for it. When the candidate accepts the offer, the Recruitment Managers agrees with the candidate about the employment contract details, including the salary and the first day of employment. The Recruitment Manager will then proceed to call the applicants who did not get the job.

The next step of the process is for HR to **create the employment contract proposal online** before the Recruitment Manager sends it to the candidate to give them a few days to read through it and give comments. Once the candidate has agreed on the terms of the contract, both parts will proceed with **signing the contract digitally online**. After the contract is signed, the **pre-boarding process** will start. During pre-boarding, the Recruitment Manager looks through the onboarding checklist for managers provided by HR and requests tools and software access for the employee. The Recruitment Manager will also call the employee a few days before the first day of employment to hear how it went with their previous employer and ask how the employee feels about starting to work in Sympa. Once the new employee starts working, they will receive a welcome message from HR and the tutor from their team.

5.2.2 Duration of the Recruitment Process

The duration of the recruitment process should be more standardized across all the teams, and the Recruitment Managers should aim at keeping the process short and informative in order to enhance the candidate experience. The duration of the recruitment process from the Recruitment Manager's perspective starts when the manager receives the permission to recruit until the signing of the contract. The duration does not include getting the approval to recruit or the process of defining the selection criteria, since the time it takes for these steps to be completed can vary significantly depending on the team and the position. The pre-boarding phase is also not included since the recruitment process has ended at that point, and the pre-boarding phase also varies depending on when the new employee is able to leave their old workplace and start their first day of

work in Sympa. The duration of the recruitment process from the candidate's point of view starts from when the candidate is applying for the job until they receive the job offer, since this includes the time when the candidate starts their involvement in the process, until they know that they are chosen for the job. Furthermore, if the Recruitment Managers do not receive qualified candidates through the normal way of publishing the job ads, they can either prolong the application period and continue running the sponsored advertisements in LinkedIn, or they can utilize external recruitment assistance mentioned in subchapter 5.2.3.

Looking at the duration of the recruitment process, the first week consists of posting the open position in the internal company platform and keeping it open for one week. Within the first week it will take one day to check the candidate pool, create the job ad and open the application form in Sympa's system. During week two and three, the job ad will be published online with an application period of two weeks, in addition to publishing the sponsored advertisement in LinkedIn for the positions that require more marketing efforts. During the application period, screening of applications and inviting candidates for the video interview will also take place. The video interview and the first in-person interview will be conducted in week four, while the optional skill test and the final interview will take place in the following week. In the sixth week, the candidates complete the assessment tests and the Recruitment Manager selects the most suitable candidate based on the assessment results and gives them the job offer. In the final week, the contract proposal is created and both parts sign the contract digitally online.

5.2.3 Utilization of External Recruitment Assistance

HR should give more information to the Recruitment Managers regarding how they can utilize external recruitment assistance for the recruitment process. The information provided should include when the managers could utilize external recruitment assistance and the different types of recruitment services they could use, including the costs. Other information should cover the recruitment companies they could contact and the benefits of the different companies, along with how successful the use of external recruitment assistance has been in the past.

The Recruitment Managers can utilize different external recruitment services when they encounter challenging recruitment positions. For positions receiving many applicants, the Recruitment Manager can receive help with the screening process of the applications. For other positions that are lacking suitable candidates, the Recruitment Manager can use recruitment assistance to help promote the open position in external channels that Sympa has not reached yet. Finally, regarding positions that are competing for the best talents in

the market, Sympa can use headhunting services in order to receive more candidates that can qualify for the position. Sympa has previously used external recruitment services from the external recruitment companies aTalent and Talented, which have led to successful recruitments. aTalent's recruitment services were affordable and the company had the benefit of not needing to pay for their services if they could not provide good candidates for Sympa to recruit.

6 Presenting the New Online Recruitment Process Description to HR and Recruitment Managers

This chapter goes through project task 5, which was to present the new online recruitment process description to HR and Recruitment Managers and finalizing it based on comments received. The reader can find a description of the creation and implementation of the presentation to HR and the Recruitment Manager. Moreover, the feedback from HR and the Recruitment Managers will be presented, as well as the changes that were made to the process description and the presentation on the basis of the feedback.

The presentation can be found under attachment 3 and was created based on Sympa's new online recruitment process description mentioned in subchapter 5.2. It provides an overview of the development points created from the qualitative interviews with the Recruitment Managers found in subchapter 3.3 and the quantitative survey with employees recruited during the past year and a half, presented in chapter 4. The presentation was created with Microsoft PowerPoint, since Sympa had previously used this program to present their process descriptions.

The presentation was held through an online meeting on November 5th, 2019. There were three participants in the meeting, consisting of Sympa's HR Director and HR coordinator, in addition to the director of consulting services in Finland who also worked as a Recruitment Manager. Other Recruitment Managers were invited to the meeting but could not attend. They later received the presentation file along with the recording of the online meeting, in order to hear about the new process description and give additional feedback. The presentation focused on the phases and steps of Sympa's in-house recruitment, the recommended duration of the process, as well as information about the utilization of external recruitment assistance. Additionally, visual images of the phases and steps of the recruitment process were presented, along with explanations of additional points to improve the candidate experience of the process.

The HR staff and Recruitment Managers thought it was valuable to receive the new online recruitment process description and wished to introduce the new process description to the Recruitment Managers as soon as possible. **Feedback from HR and the Recruitment Manager** included highlighting the parts of the recruitment process that had been changed and improved from the previous one. Other feedback consisted of better communication regarding what the Recruitment Managers could do if they did not receive enough candidates through the normal way of publishing the job ads, as well as

comments related to the division of tasks and where the recruitment steps should be placed throughout the duration of the process.

Based on the feedback, **changes were made** to the online recruitment process description as well as the presentation. In the process description, an additional point was added regarding the new steps that were included in the recruitment process. These steps had previously either not been documented by HR or implemented by the Recruitment Managers. In the presentation, the change was made visually by using a different colour to display the improved steps and new points created.

Additionally, new information was added to the process description and presentation regarding the steps that could take place if the Recruitment Managers did not receive enough qualified candidates through the normal process of publishing the job ad. One of these steps included prolonging the application period and continuing with the sponsored advertisements on LinkedIn. If they still did not receive enough qualified candidates through this step, the Recruitment Managers could then utilize external recruitment assistance. Furthermore, adjustments were made to the division of tasks and the positioning of the different steps throughout the different weeks of the recruitment process.

7 Conclusion

This chapter starts by covering the key outcomes of the thesis project before moving on to the suggestions for further research and projects. Moreover, the evaluation of the thesis project is presented before the chapter closes with the reflection on learning.

7.1 Key Outcomes

The project objective of the thesis was to develop Sympa's online recruitment description, with six project tasks created and implemented to support the objective. **The first project task** presented in chapter 2, was to prepare the theoretical framework in order to create a knowledge base regarding the thesis topic. The framework included different parts of the recruitment process, such as internal and external recruitment, candidate screening and assessment, candidate selection and offering employment, as well as recruitment process outsourcing. Other parts of the framework covered special features of online recruitment, candidate experience, and the role of employer branding in recruitment and in shaping the candidate experience.

Key findings from the theoretical framework included how effective recruitment was a powerful tool to attract candidates to an organization, and how online recruitment was an important recruitment source in a society where new technologies experience rapid development. Other findings covered how the recruitment of top talents relied strongly on the candidate experience since the treatment of candidates could impact their likelihood to accept the job offer and influence what they communicated to others about the company. Additionally, it was important for companies to know how strongly the company reputation or image could influence applicant attraction. Thus, the outcome of project task 1 resulted in the understanding of how important it was for Sympa to develop their online recruitment process in order to enhance the candidate experience of their recruitments and strengthen their candidate attraction and employer brand.

The second project task described in chapter 3 consisted of analyzing the current recruitment process through existing documentation and interviews with Recruitment Managers. First, the four documentations provided by HR to support the Recruitment Managers were analyzed, followed by individual qualitative interviews conducted with four Recruitment Managers. Regarding the existing documentations, they had four different purposes: Presenting the company's online recruitment process description, improving the candidate experience, clarifying the elements and qualities of the desired candidates, and providing interview structures and questions for the Recruitment Managers.

One key result regarding the documentations provided by HR was that either the Recruitment Managers did not know that these documents existed, or they did not find them valuable. Thus, HR should implement a frequent way to communicate with the Recruitment Managers about the existence of the documents and how they could bring value for them.

On the basis of the qualitative interviews with the Recruitment Managers, several challenges and wishes were discovered regarding the recruitment process. The first challenge contained the differences in the way that the Recruitment Managers conducted the recruitment process, with a variety of steps and durations of the process, as well as different people responsible for the various steps. Other challenges included slow responses to the job applications that led to the loss of potential candidates, as well as the duration of the recruitment process which was not the same for all the managers.

Additionally, the Recruitment Managers wished that HR could be more involved in the recruitment process by helping with screening of the applications, along with conducting the first online interview and sending out “no thank you” messages to the candidates during the beginning of the recruitment process. Some managers also expressed that they wanted to have more information regarding the different ways of promoting the job application for positions that were harder to fill. They also wished to get more information regarding external recruitment assistance, such as the different services and companies they could use, as well as the success rate regarding the use of external recruitment assistance in the past.

In accordance with the challenges and wishes from the Recruitment Managers, the new recruitment process description was developed. By using the steps presented in the previous process description by HR and adding the steps that the Recruitment Managers mentioned in their recruitments, the new process description consisted of eighteen steps which were sectioned into four different phases. The people and teams responsible for each step were also added to the process description. Furthermore, the new process description included screening of applications and inviting qualified candidates to the first interview while the application period was still open, in order to give quick responses to the candidates from the beginning of their candidate experience. The recommended duration of the process was also presented, both from the Recruitment Managers’ perspective and from the candidates’ perspective. The new process description also provided information regarding the different channels the job ad could be published in, along with the opportunity to utilize sponsored advertisement in LinkedIn to promote positions that were harder to fill. Moreover, the process description also included

information regarding the different external recruitment services and companies that the Recruitment Managers could utilize if they could not find enough qualified candidates through the normal way of publishing the job ads.

With detailed and clear information regarding the phases, steps and duration of the recruitment process, the new process description gives value for the Recruitment Managers and provides a standardized recruitment process across all the teams of the company. The new online recruitment process description is presented in subchapter 5.2.

Project task 3 reported in chapter 4, was based on conducting a quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process. The survey was sent out to all 49 employees who were recruited by Sympa during the past year and a half, and the response rate of the survey was 84% with a total of 41 respondents. The results of the survey were overall positive, showing that HR and the Recruitment Managers did a great job with creating a strong employer brand and highlighting the good factors of the company culture during the recruitment process. Some of the positive results consisted of 76% of the respondents agreeing that the job description matched the tasks that they were currently doing in their job, 78% stating that the recruitment process positively affected their decision to accept the job offer, while 93% of the respondents answered that they got a positive impression of Sympa as an employer during the recruitment process.

An additional result from the survey showed that only 10% of the respondents found the job ad on Sympa's own website, which showed how essential it would be for Sympa to utilize other channels in addition to their own website if they wanted their job ads to reach a larger pool of candidates. Due to this, the new process description added the different channels that could be used to publish the job ad, including the opportunity to utilize sponsored advertisements in LinkedIn to further promote it.

Moreover, some improvement points from the survey included faster responses from Sympa, a shorter recruitment process, receiving an overview of the process and more communication regarding the following steps of the process, as well as more explanations concerning the purpose of the assessment tests. Some candidates also wished for a more standardized recruitment process, since they did not understand why their process was different compared to their colleagues.

Regarding the point of faster responses from Sympa, the new recruitment process included more involvement from HR regarding the communication to the candidates,

which would give the candidates faster responses from Sympa. The new process also highlighted the importance of giving an overview of the whole process during the first interview, as well as communicating the next steps of the process throughout all the proceeding interviews. The Recruitment Managers would also communicate the purpose and importance of the assessment tests to the candidates, before they would meet with the external psychologist. Moreover, the new process description provided a way for the Recruitment Managers in Sympa to conduct a more standardized recruitment processes with clear phases, steps and duration of the process.

Project task 4 portrayed in chapter 5, was to create the new online recruitment process description. The results of the project task consisted of Sympa's new online recruitment process description, including the four phases and eighteen steps of the process, the duration of the process, along with information for the Recruitment Managers regarding the utilization of external recruitment assistance.

Since the Recruitment Managers had not earlier utilized the recruitment process description provided by HR, four new phases were created to make it more clear to see the different sections of the process, in order for the Recruitment Managers to see the added value of using all the steps and phases of the process. On the basis of the existing documentation analysis and the qualitative interviews, the new steps created for the developed process description had either not been documented by HR or implemented by the Recruitment Managers during previous recruitments. These steps included asking for permission to recruit, posting the open position in the internal company platform, checking the candidate pool, screening the applications and conducting the optional skill test.

Lastly, the quantitative survey results had improvement points for the recruitment process regarding the slow response rate from Sympa, the desire to receive more communication regarding the overview of the process and the process steps, and the challenge of having different recruitment processes in the past. Thus, the new and developed process was created with more people answering the applicants, additional points adding the importance of giving an overview of the process along with continuously communicating the next steps of the process with the candidates, as well as the new process description providing a standardized recruitment process for all of Sympa's future candidates.

The fifth project task explained in chapter 6, included presenting the new online recruitment process description to HR and Recruitment Managers and finalizing it based on comments received. Based on the new online recruitment process description, the presentation was created to visually present the new process description to HR and the

Recruitment Managers in Sympa in order to receive feedback regarding the quality of the process and the viability of implementing it for Sympa's future recruitments. The feedback received from HR and the Recruitment Managers was positive, and they communicated that the new online recruitment process description was of good quality. They wanted to introduce the new process to all the Recruitment Managers in the company and wished to use the new process description at once.

A few comments were given regarding the division of tasks and the placement of certain steps throughout the duration of the process. The HR staff also wished to know which parts of the recruitment process were new, and what the Recruitment Managers could do if they did not receive enough qualified candidates through the normal way of posting the job ads. Based on the feedback, there were made changes to the process description regarding the division of tasks and the placement of the steps. Additional information was also added to convey the new steps that were created in the process, together with a description on how the recruitment managers could prolong the application period or utilize external recruitment assistance in order to find more suitable candidates.

The outcome of the thesis project was the finalized online recruitment process description consisting of four main phases with eighteen different steps, including instructions of the steps and points to improve the candidate experience. Additional information presented in the process description included the duration of the process and the opportunity to utilize external recruitment assistance.

The sixth project task will be reported in subchapter 7.3, regarding the evaluation of the project.

7.2 Suggestions for Further Research and Projects

On the basis of project task 2, which was to analyze the current recruitment process through existing documentation and interviews with Recruitment Managers, the author discovered development suggestions that HR could implement in order to further support the Recruitment Managers and continue improving the recruitment process.

The first development suggestion included more frequent communication between HR and the Recruitment Managers. HR should regularly communicate about the documents provided to support the Recruitment Managers in their recruitments, especially when new managers were starting to recruit employees for their teams. Additionally, the Recruitment Managers revealed during the interviews that they had many thoughts and challenges regarding the recruitment process, but had not previously communicated them to HR.

Thus, HR should start to have continuous communication with the Recruitment Managers in order to understand their needs and receive information on how to continue the development of the recruitment process description.

The second development suggestion would be for HR to regularly arrange training sessions for the Recruitment Managers in order to help them screen applications and conduct interviews more efficiently. HR could also provide training for other parts of the recruitment process, based on wishes from the Recruitment Managers. Following this, the third development suggestion would be to create a Culture Handbook to help the Recruitment Managers when they communicate with candidates about Sympa's cultural benefits. The handbook would also help with creating a positive view of Sympa as an employer to both the employees in the company and to the candidates, and it could also be published online in order to strengthen Sympa's employer brand. Lastly, the final development suggestion would be for the Recruitment Managers together with HR and marketing to plan and create marketing campaigns in order to target and attract more suitable candidates to fill Sympa's open positions, especially within the developer teams.

7.3 Project Evaluation

After presenting the new online recruitment process description to HR and the Recruitment Managers, the received feedback was positive. Sympa's HR staff and the Recruitment Managers expressed that the new online recruitment process description was of good quality and wished to use the new recruitment description immediately. The HR staff also invited the author to present the new online recruitment process description to all the line managers in the company, where HR also informed about the value that the Recruitment Managers could receive from the new process description and the other documents provided by HR.

The questions for the qualitative interviews were created based on the desired outcome of the second project task, which was to analyze the current recruitment process and see how the Recruitment Managers were conducting their recruitment processes. The interviews were completed over the duration of two days, before the key findings and results were compiled into a separate document to make it easier to find the information when making the analysis of the interview results. The results found from the interviews proved to be useful in the creation of the new online recruitment process description, while the results were also helpful in creating the development suggestions for HR to implement in order to further support the Recruitment Managers and continue improving the recruitment process.

Regarding the quantitative survey, the questions were created based on the desired results from project task 3, which was based on conducting a quantitative survey of employees recruited during the past year and a half in order to establish the candidate experience of the recruitment process. The author sent out the survey via email and kept it open during nine days for the employees to answer. Two reminder emails were also sent, and the response rate of 84% was excellent for the validity of the survey answers.

The author was satisfied with the outcome of the thesis project, which was the new online recruitment process description. The description was created to help the Recruitment Managers with standardizing their recruitment processes, along with additional points that were included in the process in order to enhance the candidate experience. The author was also pleased with the presentation of the recruitment process description, which could be utilized and further developed by the HR department in Sympa. The presentation of the new online recruitment process description was successful, where the HR staff and Recruitment Managers in Sympa were able to understand the new process and see the added value that the process description would bring to their future recruitments.

By analyzing the whole process of the thesis project, the author was satisfied with time management of the project by completing it over a process of three months. During this time, the author created deadlines for completing each part of the process and was able to complete most parts according to the plan. Some of the parts that took longer time than expected included the presentation of the theory framework and the analysis of the qualitative interviews. For the theory framework, the author had some initial difficulties with finding relevant information, while for the qualitative interviews there was a lot of information to condense and restructure in order to find the main results and development suggestions. Overall, the author was happy with the work that was done on the thesis project and satisfied with the outcome of the online recruitment process description, as well as the successful presentation and positive feedback from the commissioning company.

7.4 Reflection on Learning

The author learned many new aspects of employee recruitment in a company, such as the many people involved in the process, the different steps of the process that needed to be included, as well as the importance of utilizing the right assessment methods in order to find the most suitable candidates for the open positions. The author also learned about the importance of the candidate experience during the recruitment process, and how much impact it could have on the employer branding of the company.

Furthermore, the author also learned about conducting qualitative interviews, namely how long the process would be from creating the interview questions until finding the key results. Regarding the quantitative survey, the author discovered how to ask suitable questions and provide the best set of choices for respondents to choose from, in order to gather information and results of good quality and reliability.

It was a positive experience to work with Sympa as a commissioning company, especially with their helpful and nice workers. The HR staff provided all the documents and information that was needed for the thesis project, and the Recruitment Managers were more than happy to take time from their schedules in order to participate in the qualitative interviews. Additionally, most of the new employees in Sympa answered the survey and also gave many comments in the open questions, since they saw the value that their answers could bring. With the help from the employees in Sympa, the author was able to finish every project task on time, even with a limited time frame.

Lastly, the author concluded that the thesis project was a great professional experience within the field of HR and would like to help with the development of the online recruitment process description in the future. The author is looking forward to continuing to work at the commissioning company and hopes that the new recruitment process will benefit the company with their future recruitments.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Qualitative Interview Framework for Recruitment Managers

1. Is it okay for you if I record this interview?
2. Please explain how you usually carry out a recruitment process for an open position in your team. What are the different steps?
3. How important is it for you to have a written job description available during the recruitment process?
 - a. How important is it for you to have a written set of recruitment criteria?
 - b. How do you define the recruitment criteria? Who is involved?
 - c. Do you discuss the job description with the applicants?
4. How long does one recruitment usually last, both from your perspective and from the candidate's perspective?
5. What do you think is the ideal timeframe of the recruitment process from the candidate's perspective?
6. How important is it for you to communicate to the candidates about the next steps in the recruitment process?
 - a. Why is it important?
7. How important is it for you to generate a positive candidate experience?
 - a. Why is it important?
8. What do you do to create a positive view of Sympa during the recruitment process?
 - a. What more could be done in the recruitment process to generate an even more positive view of Sympa?
9. Have you been using the provided documents from HR regarding the recruitment process?
 - a. If yes, do you think they bring value for your recruitments?
 - b. If no, could you please explain why? What could be changed or added in order for them to bring value for your recruitment process?
10. Are there any challenges that you have faced with the recruitment process for your team? Please elaborate.
 - a. For the hard to find candidates, do you think that external recruitment assistance would be helpful? Please elaborate.
11. Are there any parts that you would like to improve about the recruitment process? Please elaborate.
12. Are there any areas where you would like to get more help from HR in your recruitments? Please elaborate.

- a. Why do you need more help in these areas?
13. Is there anything else that you would like me to know about your recruitment process, before we wrap up the interview?

Attachment 2. Quantitative Survey of New Employees

Sympa's Candidate Experience Survey

Welcome to Sympa's Candidate Experience Survey!

We have chosen you to participate in this survey, since you started working at Sympa between January 2018 and September 2019. As a newer employee of Sympa, your feedback is very valuable in order to improve the candidate experience at Sympa, with the purpose of attracting even more lovely Sympaticos to our growing Sympa family!

The survey will take 3-5 minutes of your time, and in the end you have the option to participate in a raffle where one lucky survey respondent will win a special prize. All the survey answers are handled anonymously, and the prize data is taken separately.

We kindly ask you to respond to the survey by October 16th.

1. Please select country of location *

2. Please select business unit *

3. How did you find out about the open position? *

- Job advertisement on Sympa's website
- Job advertisement through job portals (e.g. Oikotie, Jobindex, Made for Sales)
- Social Media (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)
- Friend/family/colleague
- Other, please specify

4. During the recruitment process, how satisfied were you with the following: *

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
Clarity of the recruitment criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment tests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content of communication from Sympa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speed of responses from Sympa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about the job description	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about the employment contract details	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Duration of the recruitment process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall experience of the recruitment process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please explain the reason(s) for your dissatisfaction. *

6. Was there any time during the recruitment process where you did not know what was going to happen next? *

- Yes
 No
 I don't remember

7. Please specify what information you would like to receive during the recruitment process. *

8. How much time did Sympa give you to respond to the job offer? *

- I accepted the job offer immediately
 1-3 days
 4-7 days
 I don't remember
 Other, please specify

9. Do you agree that the job description matches the tasks that you are doing in your job now? *

- 1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Fully agree

10. How did the recruitment process affect your decision to accept the job offer? *

- 1 2 3 4 5
Negatively Positively

11. What impression did you get about Sympa as an employer during the recruitment process? *

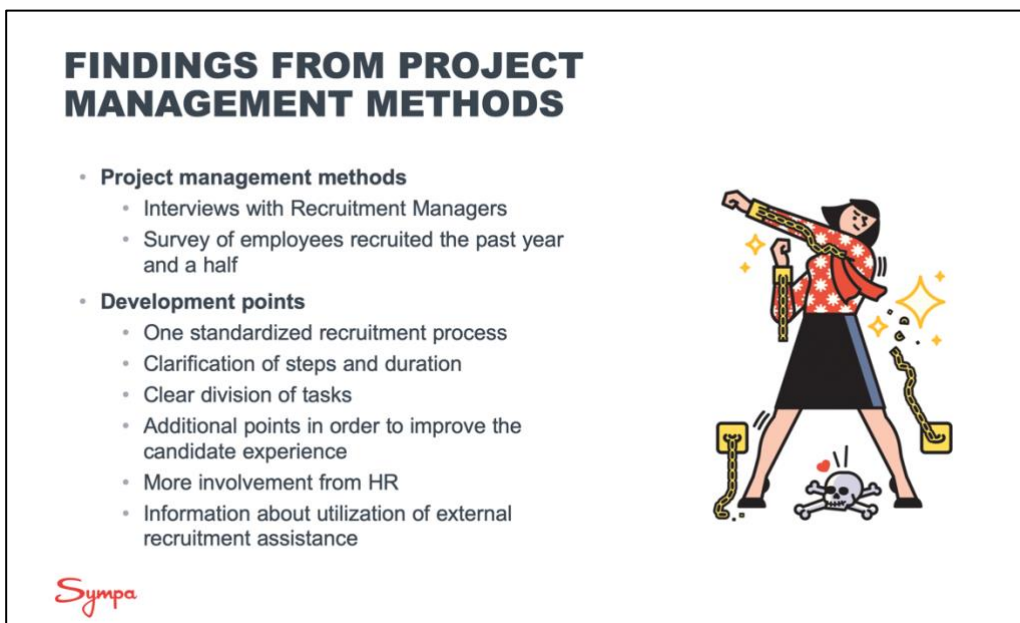
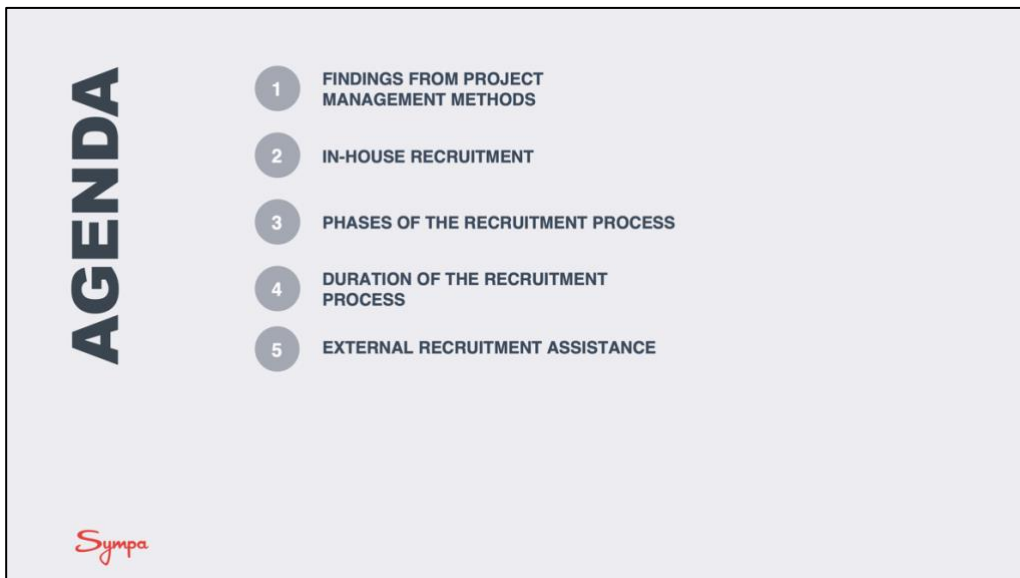
- 1 2 3 4 5
Very poor Excellent

12. Is there any way that you think the recruitment process could be improved?

13. Are there any other points that you want to bring up regarding the recruitment process?

14. Would you like to participate in the raffle for a chance to win the special prize?

- Oh yes!
- No, thank you



IN-HOUSE RECRUITMENT



PHASES OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

PHASE 1: PREPARING TO RECRUIT	PHASE 2: ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES	PHASE 3: SELECTION & SIGNING	PHASE 4: PRE-BOARDING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask for permission to recruit 2. Define selection criteria 3. Post open position in the internal company platform 4. Check candidate pool 5. Create job ad 6. Create application form in Sympa's system 7. Publish job ad1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Screen applications 9. Conduct video interview 10. Conduct first in-person interview 11. Conduct skill test (optional) 12. Conduct second in-person interview 13. Conduct assessment tests 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Select candidate 15. Give job offer 16. Create employment contract proposal online 17. Sign employment contract digitally online 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Implement pre-boarding



PHASE 1: PREPARING TO RECRUIT

STEP 1: Ask for permission to recruit	STEP 2: Define selection criteria	STEP 3: Post open position in internal company platform	STEP 4: Check candidate pool	STEP 5: Create job ad	STEP 6: Create application form in Sympa's system	STEP 7: Publish job ad
Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager & HR	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager & HR	Recruitment Manager, HR & Marketing	HR	HR & Marketing

PHASE 2: ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES

STEP 8: Screen applications	STEP 9: Conduct video interview	STEP 10: Conduct first in-person interview	STEP 11: Conduct skill test (optional)	STEP 12: Conduct second in-person interview	STEP 13: Conduct assessment tests
Recruitment Manager	HR or Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	External Psychologist, Taija



PHASE 3: SELECTION & SIGNING

STEP 14: Select candidate	STEP 15: Give job offer	STEP 16: Create contract proposal online	STEP 17: Sign contract digitally online
Recruitment Manager	Recruitment Manager	HR	Recruitment Manager

PHASE 4: PRE-BOARDING

STEP 18: Implement pre-boarding
Recruitment Manager & HR

Sympa

PHASE 1: PREPARING TO RECRUIT

1. **Ask for permission to recruit**
(Recruitment Manager)
 - Present the needs for the new position
2. **Define selection criteria**
(Recruitment Manager & HR)
3. **Post open position in internal company platform** (Recruitment Manager)
4. **Check candidate pool**
(Recruitment Manager & HR)
5. **Create job ad**
(Recruitment Manager, HR & Marketing)
 - Add times when Recruitment Manager is available to answer questions
6. **Create application form in Sympa' system** (HR)
 - Update phases and assessments (Recruitment Manager & HR)
7. **Publish job ad** (HR & Marketing)
 - Decide suitable channels for the position (HR & Recruitment Manager)
 - Sympa's website
 - Sympa's LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter
 - External job portals
 - Can use sponsored ads in LinkedIn to attract more candidates (HR & Marketing)

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PHASE 2: ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES

8. **Screen applications** (Recruitment Manager)
 - HR can help if needed
 - Start screening applications and invite candidates for video interview before the application period ends
 - Send "no thank you" messages (HR)
9. **Conduct video interview**
(HR or Recruitment Manager)
 - Assess candidates' fit for the company
 - Present an overview of the process, covering the steps and the people involved
 - Send "no thank you" messages (HR)
10. **Conduct first in-person interview**
(Recruitment Manager)
 - Assess candidates' fit for the position
 - Communicate the next steps of the process
 - Call candidates who are not qualified for the next round (Recruitment Manager)
11. **Conduct skill test (optional)**
(Recruitment Manager)
 - Created before the recruitment process starts
 - Conducted as a written test online

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PHASE 2: ASSESSMENT OF CANDIDATES

12. Conduct second in-person interview (Recruitment Manager)

- Can invite a member from the team, HR or other Recruitment Managers
- Can also invite more team members to participate
- Call candidates who are not qualified for the next round (Recruitment Manager)

13. Conduct assessment tests (External Psychologist, Taija)

- Notify Taija regarding the key expectations and demands of the candidates (Recruitment Manager)
- Communicate clearly the purpose of the assessment tests (Recruitment Manager)
- Receive assessment results (Recruitment Manager & HR)
- Send assessment results to the candidates (External Psychologist, Taija)

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PHASE 3: SELECTION & SIGNING

14. Select candidate (Recruitment Manager)

- Can ask for HR's opinion, if needed

15. Give job offer (Recruitment Manager)

- Contact candidate through a phone call
- Always ask if the candidate wants to accept the offer and don't take for granted that they will say yes
- Give the candidate a few days to accept the offer, if they wish for it
- Agree on employment contract details
- Call candidates who did not get the job (Recruitment Manager)

16. Create employment contract proposal online (HR)

- Send it to the candidate and give them a few days to read it (Recruitment Manager)

17. Sign employment contract digitally online (Recruitment Manager)

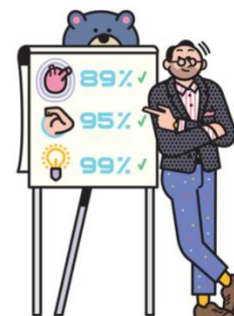


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PHASE 4: PRE-BOARDING

18. Implement pre-boarding (Recruitment Manager & HR)

- Look through onboarding checklist for managers (Recruitment Manager)
- Request tools and software access for the employee (Recruitment Manager)
- Call the employee a few days before the the first day of employment (Recruitment Manager)
 - Ask how it went with their previous employer and how they feel about starting to work at Sympa
- Send welcome message to the employee (Tutor)
- Send welcome message to the employee (HR)



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DURATION OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- **Recruitment Manager's perspective: 7 WEEKS**

- Receiving permission to recruit until signing the contract

- **Candidate's perspective: 5 WEEKS**

- Applying for the job until receiving the job offer

Steps not included:

- Ask for permission to recruit
- Defining the selection criteria
- Pre-boarding

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DURATION OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

WEEK 1	WEEK 2-3	WEEK 4
3. Post open position in internal company platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal application period lasting one week 4. Check candidate pool 5. Create job ad 6. Create application form in Sympa's system	7. Publish job ad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External application period lasting two weeks • Publish sponsored ads, if needed 8. Screen applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite candidates for video interview 	9. Conduct video interview 10. Conduct first in-person interview

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DURATION OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7
11. Conduct optional skill test 12. Conduct second in-person interview	13. Conduct assessment tests 14. Select candidate 15. Give job offer	16. Create employment contract proposal online 17. Sign employment contract digitally online

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DURATION OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

If Recruitment Managers don't receive qualified candidates through the normal way of publishing the job ads:

1. Prolong the application period and continue running the sponsored ads in LinkedIn
2. Utilize external recruitment assistance



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EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE

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INFORMATION ABOUT EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE

Regarding external recruitment assistance, HR should inform Recruitment Managers about:

1. When they could utilize it
2. Different types of recruitment services, including the costs
3. Which recruitment companies to contact and the benefits of the different companies
4. How successful the use of external recruitment assistance has been in the past



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EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT SERVICES

CHALLENGING RECRUITMENT POSITIONS

1. Positions with many applicants
2. Positions lacking good candidates
3. Positions competing for talents in the market



EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT SERVICES

1. Receive help with screening process
2. Use recruitment assistance to promote the position
3. Receive candidates through headhunting

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EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT COMPANIES

Companies that have led to successful hires:

1. **aTalent**
 - Reasonable pricing
 - Don't have to pay for their services if they can't provide suitable candidates to recruit
2. **Talented**
 - For developer positions only



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THANK YOU!

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