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TALENT MANAGEMENT IN HOSPITALITY OPERATIONS

CASE COMPANY X

International Business

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ABSTRACT

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The hospitality industry has become a significant contribution to the Finnish economy in the last ten years. Nonetheless, a decrease in labor is reported due to the nature of the industry, even though the industry provides numerous jobs for the people. A new approach in hiring, managing, and retaining talent is discovered to solve the matter.

Talent Management is a modern concept and a holistic approach of human resource management. The goal of this thesis is to perceive the new TM framework and its concept in hospitality operations. The case company is a leading Finnish hotel organization which is adopting the TM framework into their HR policy recently.

This study provides a theoretical review that is a fundamental base for implementing empirical research. The theoretical part includes the primary literature of TM definition, model, and practices in the hospitality industry. The research methods adopted in the practical part are both quantitative and qualitative in which an in-depth face-to-face interview with the company's HR expert and an online survey were conducted.

The results present a case company's TM model including five phases: planning, attracting, developing, retaining, and transitioning. The planning, developing, and retaining phases are defined as doing successfully when the rest two phases need some improvements. Furthermore, the assessments towards the company's performance are also displayed. The research's analysis and the results will be useful support for the case company in order to acknowledge the miss of their TM model and practices as well as contributes useful information for companies that use the same or similar concept.

Keywords: hospitality industry, Talent management, Human resource management, TM framework, TM model, Finnish hotel organization.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HRM	Human Resource Management
HR	Human Resource
TM	Talent Management
STM	Strategic Talent Management
MARA	Finnish Hospitality Association

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

According to Statistic Finland, there were under 285,000 enterprises in 2018, which decreased by 2,000 compared to 2017. The number of bankrupt businesses has increased every year. A successful business does not only possess turnover growth but also conveys a good inspiration and vibe to the organization's staff and employees in order to provide a healthy environment where they can promote potential and abilities. Human capital has been a crucial factor in sustainable business. Management of human capital becomes the most challenging issue in any industry. In the extent of Human Resource Management (HRM), Talent Management (TM) is a new trend that many HR practitioners and managers would involve.

This thesis discusses the Talent Management model and its advantages in the hospitality industry. Hospitality operations were chosen to be researched based on its significant role in today's economic growth. Tourism generated approximately a 2.6% share of Finnish GDP from 2011 to 2017. In 2015, 11% of people worked in accommodation services, 26% in person transportation services, and 48% in restaurant services (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland).

Being the biggest hotel chain in Finland, X Hotels (X Oy) is selected as a case company of the thesis. The hotels welcome hundreds of customers per day in which the house is full during peak season. Therefore, several employees are required to keep the business running. However, the nature of hospitality work is stressful and demands high standards as well as expectations that put workers into tremendous pressure. Acknowledging the strained work type, company X has always been creating an excellent environment for their employees. The company has been conducting research and applying a holistic Talent Management framework to maintain skilled workers and also hiring new talented people. The paper illustrates the process of the study, including

the implementation of relevant strategies and empirical framework of TM concept of X Hotels.

1.2 Research questions and objectives

Tourism has been growing fast and has become crucial for the Finnish economy in recent years. The hospitality industry, as a consequence, requires enormous labor in order to serve and meet customers' demands and expectations. However, this industry is found as unattractive to retain qualified employees (Barron, 2008). A poor reputation of the hospitality industry, including a shortage of permanent employment, low-pay, or anti-social working hours is what makes employees not engaged in this field permanently. The objectives of this thesis focus on the Talent Management concept and its model which has been utilized in the company X.

To obtain the objectives, the central question of this thesis is stated as, "How is the Talent Management approach implemented in the case company?". Along with the critical question, three sub-questions need to be clarified:

- What is the TM model that the case company is applying at present?
- What is the evaluation of employees towards the company's performance?
- What are the assessments of the TM model and the improvements for the case company to enhance its Talent Management program, preferably in the future?

1.3 Methodology of the research

Qualitative and quantitative methods would be adopted to conduct the research. Each method aims to apply to different targets. The qualitative method is an interview with the HR expert in order to collect answers for the company X TM model and its practices. The quantitative method is an online survey to gather numeral data for assessing the company's model and performance from the employees' perspective. The actual interview and the online survey form were organized to compile the primary

data. Secondary data was deliberated from articles, books, online news, and other relevant sources.

1.4 Thesis structure

The thesis structure is categorized into six chapters: Introduction, Literature review, Research methodology, Empirical findings and Analysis, Conclusion including Recommendations and Limitations, and Validity and Reliability of the research.

The introduction is the first part of the thesis, which gives an overview of the thesis topic, background, objectives, and questions as well as a research methodology. The second chapter is a literature review of the TM concept consisting of HRM definition, TM definition, the connection between HRM and TM, TM model, and other related theories. The next part discusses the research methodology in which the two qualitative and quantitative research are introduced deeper. The empirical part includes major findings and analysis of the research. The fifth chapter is the final discussion about the case study. The research's recommendations and limitations are presented in the conclusion chapter. Lastly, the thesis ends with the validity and reliability of the study; moreover, an acknowledgement is also proposed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two will provide fundamental literature related to the thesis topic. There are three main sections in this chapter. At first, the section discusses an overview of the Human Resource Management theory. Next, relevant theories that belong to the significant literature of Talent Management concept will be proposed, including a definition of Talent, a definition of Talent Management, a relationship between HRM and TM, the importance of Talent Management, and a Talent Management model. The literature review chapter ends with the Talent Management practices in the hospitality business.

2.1 Human Resource Management

A definition of human resources is defined by Leon C. Megginson as follows: *“the total knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes of an organization’s workforce, as well as the value, attitudes, and beliefs of the individuals involved”*. Human resources are an essential asset of an organization. Every person is different compared to each other, each with their mentalities, opinions, emotions, and behaviors. Unique characteristics constitute a success for an organization. Because of the differences between people, they might have unique ideas, and sometimes they can conflict with others. An action of managing those resources is called Human Resource Management (HRM). There are various definitions of HRM. Dr. Rao (2008) wrote HRM as *“a set of employing, developing, maintaining and compensating individuals in order to reach business objectives and goals”*. In addition, Sarma (2008) addressed HRM as *“a strategic approach to the acquisition, motivation, development, and management of the organization’s human resources”* as well as *“proactive rather than reactive”*. HRM is seen as a crucial part that is the core of the establishment and development of business. HRM consists of indirect means to find out the best approaches to embody an organization’s goals and objectives through promoting human talents.

The fundamental objective of HRM is to provide business with a productive workforce. Four sub-dimensions of HRM objectives consist of societal objectives, organization objectives, functional objectives, and personal objectives. These sub-dimensions are shown in figure 1 (Sarma, 2008).

- **Societal objectives:** Enterprises must meet the needs and challenges of society. Their business operations do not only focus on creating their revenues but also on delivering society's values. The company has responsibility in minimizing negative impacts on society when generating productions.
- **Organizational objectives:** The aim is to find the right access for departments or the whole enterprise to achieve effectiveness. HRM is a means of an organization to accomplish their primary goals, especially in hiring and managing human.
- **Functional objectives:** Each department has its functions and duties. Thus, each department must contribute equally to the overall goals of the business.
- **Personal objectives:** Managers must recognize employees' personal goals. Productivity will decrease, and employees might leave the organization if their goals cannot be fulfilled.



Figure 1. HRM objectives, Priya C, 2018.

2.2 Talent Management

Section 2.2 contains the particular Talent Management theory of the thesis, including the following definitions of Talent and Talent Management, which are explained in section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, respectively. Later on in this section, a Talent Management model is presented which is the main theoretical part of the thesis.

2.2.1 Definition of Talent

Every industry and business have been through a contest of attracting and retaining talents. Thus, talents are of remarkable importance in organizations. Imagine a company is struggling to find someone for a pivotal role, how much does it cost if they fill in the position with a wrong individual?

DEA (2009) stated that *“a talent is an individual with special competencies. In a business or other context, these competencies are of strategic importance to the organization. The absence of these competencies would pose an actual situation of crisis for the organization. Furthermore, they are hard to copy for other organizations and can rarely be developed here and now”*. On the other hand, the term *“talent”* was defined as an inspiration for people’s emotions by a person’s power or ability; for example, *“exceptional deeds and achievements, beautiful paintings and songs and speeches”* (Joubert, 2007). In addition, Joubert mentioned that some scientists argued *“talent is not essential for greatness, but that the only requirement for greatness is hard work or deliberate practice. One or more strong, innate intelligences always play a key role”*. Individuals who can create a difference by contributing to organizational performance either by their input or by their highest long-term potential are considered as talents (CIPD, 2018). Those definitions present that the talents must be associated with the sustainable development of the organization. Therefore, talent can be found anywhere within an organization as long as they are bringing outstanding performances and are an excellent fit for the jobs.

Ulrich (2012) categorized talents into four groups: executives, leadership cadre, high potentials, and all employees, as demonstrated in figure 2, which shows that talents do not only come from the top managers but also from other groups.

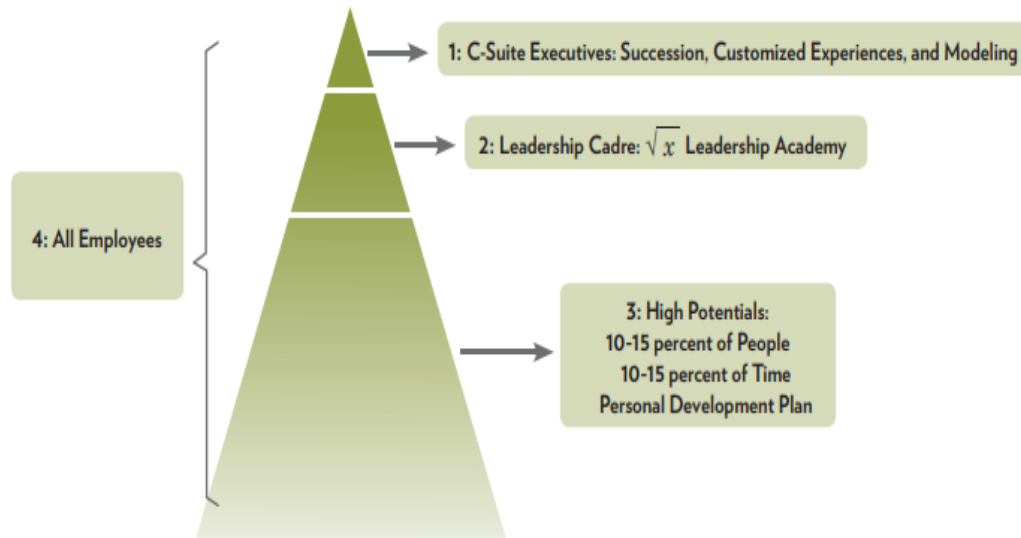


Figure 2. Talents pyramid, Ulrich D & Smallwood N, 2012.

Moreover, 3C Talent Formula, designed by Ulrich in 2007, is also well-known and applied around the world. 3C stands for Competence, Commitment, and Contribution. This formula is an advantageous tool for an organization to detect “good people”, to foster and nurture them to be “talented” which brings higher value to the organization. An employee is said to be competent when he owns the knowledge, skills, and values which are suitable for today's work and especially in the future.

Competence is not enough without commitment. Commitment means that employees are willing to devote themselves to the success of the company. There are plenty of people who are extremely intelligent and productive. However, they do not have the enthusiasm to perform their jobs, which results in not creating any value or contributions. Moreover, talents must also have dedication and recognition. That is, they must be aware of the meaning and purpose of the jobs, as Professor Ulrich emphasized, they also need to have "sublimation", "fullness" in life and work.

2.2.2 Definition of Talent Management

An organization must place their priority on developing and maintaining talented people. Hence, a business needs someone to manage them. A traditional recruitment model has become obsolete and gradually replaced by a new model. Talent management, as a result, is a transition of current development trends.

Talent Management (TM) is an essential part of HRM. In the past, TM was described as a development and succession management of an organization's top people. The term, however, was gradually changed and called as "*an integrated approach to managing all the aspects of an organization that has to do with people*" (Israelite, 2010). According to Aston & Morton (2005), the definition of TM was defined as "*a strategic and holistic approach to both HR and business planning*". On the other hand, CIPD (2018) stated TM as "*the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those individuals who are of particular value to an organization, either in view of their high potential for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles*". TM was expressed as "*a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and then setting out a plan to meet it*" (Cappelli, 2008). The concept has been expanded by organizations; however, its major goal is an improvement between performance and potential (Aston & Morton, 2005). Consequently, Talent Management is a framework and holistic human resource management approach, which its essential objective aims to get and maintain the right people in the right positions at the right time. An overview of Talent Management is shown in figure 3.



Figure 3. An overview of Talent and Talent Management, Baqutayan S, 2014.

Joubert (2007) detected six actions in practicing TM consisting of “*creation, calibration, cultivation, leveraging, caring and coaching*”. In addition, 59 definitions and explanations were presented in the paper of “Talent Management: What is the value of TM in Business Organizations” by Vatne & Torgesen (2014) in which the core characteristics of TM were firmed into four dimensions as attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining talents (see figure 4).

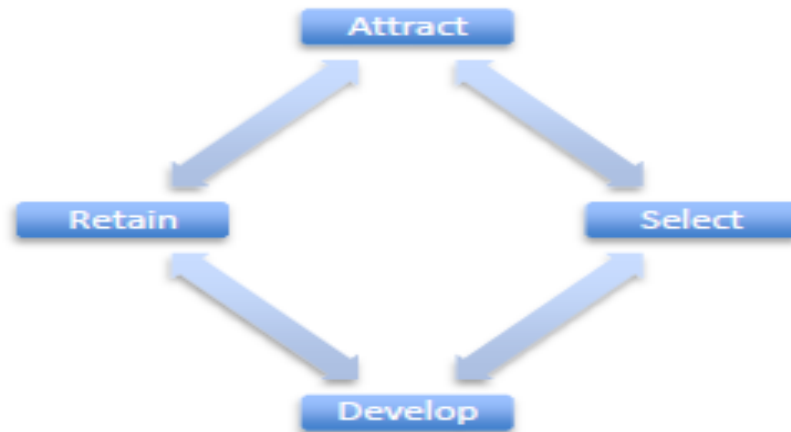


Figure 4. TM dimensions, Vatne M & Torgersen K, 2014.

Collings & Mellahi drew a broader aspect of TM, which was called Strategic Talent Management (STM) by 2009. The definition of STM was concluded as “*activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization’s sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization*”.

Furthermore, a global perspective was studied and applied to TM. The recognition of a crucial role of international talent management systems, therefore, was an element to identify a term of Global Talent Management. The explanation of the term was proposed in the character of “*all organization activities for the purpose of attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best employees in the most strategic roles on a global scale*” (Scullion, et al., 2010).

2.2.3 A relationship between HRM and TM

The common point between HRM and TM is to manage an organization's employees. Both concepts; however, show differentiation in three vital areas involving structure, responsibilities, and implementation (Ingwersen, 2018):

- **Structure:** The primary purpose of HRM is to identify and train new employees into competent performers for a company. HRM focuses on finding the required number of people that suit the company's operating goals and is carried by the HR department. Meanwhile, TM is a newer perception, a holistic approach in which it intends to engage and retain great employees to devote their abilities for a long-term relationship. TM activities are implemented across the organization.
- **Responsibilities:** Administration is the most important in HRM, including HR's policies and rules. HR department compromises people's issues such as personal time off, benefits, or complaints. In other ways, TM concentrates on enhancing and improving organizational talents by supporting them to acquire the best performance.
- **Implementation:** A long-term goal, along with an overall business plan, is the primary mission of implementing strategic TM when HRM deals with managing people daily.

2.2.4 The importance of Talent Management

Talent supply and demand are matched by applying the TM approach. *"It identifies and measures a person's interest and physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strengths and aligns them to the requirements of a job, contest, life goal or dream"*, said Joubert, 2007. There are at least two principal reasons that draw TM immensely important. The first reason is to acquire and maintain talent to assure and achieve outstanding business outcomes. The second one is to engage employees deeply into the jobs. (Hughes &

Rog, 2008). Enterprises that desire to achieve tremendous success always want to have the best talented people for a long-term run.

Deloitte (2017) researched a TM model that comprises four TM levels as essential talent activities, critical talent growth, managed talent relationships, and inclusive talent system, respectively. Three growth markets containing India, China, and Brazil were chosen for the study to analyze a connection between talents and business outcomes.



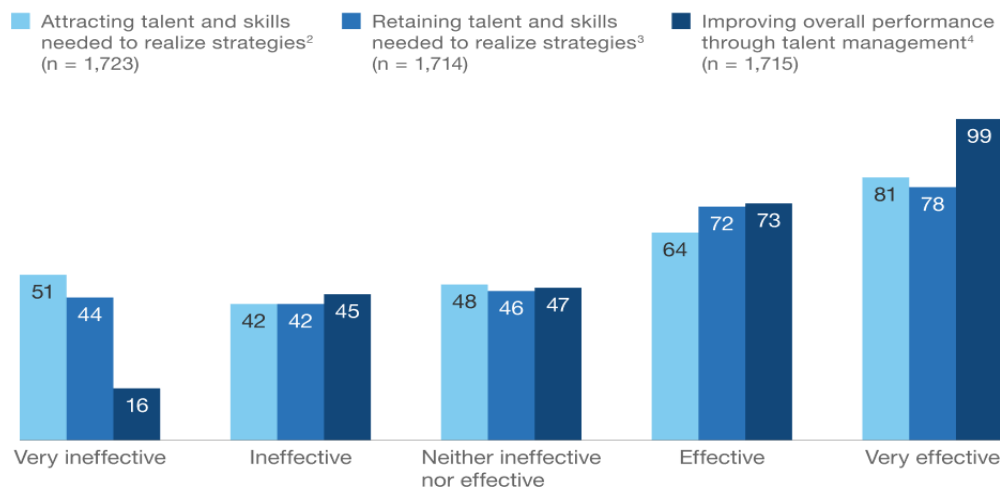
Figure 5. TM Maturity Model: Comparisons across markets, Bersin by Deloitte, 2017.

Figure 5 shows that large percentages of organizations are in low-maturity level (level two) where the importance of talents and business influences are underrated. In contrast, companies which obtained high levels (level four and five) recognized that the high value of talents is in conjunction with positive corporate outcomes.

According to a McKinsey Global Survey in 2017, it was reported that there is an essential relationship between TM and organizational performance, which is displayed in figure 6. Specifically, 99% of respondents who reported that an effective TM strategy helped their organizations outperform competitors. In addition, attracting and retaining practices were also one of the competitive factors constituting organizational performances.

The abilities to attract and retain talent, in addition to having an effective talent-management program, support organizational outperformance.

Respondents whose organizations have performed somewhat or much better than competitors over past 3 years,¹ based on effectiveness of talent-management practices, % of respondents



¹Figures were calculated after removing respondents who said "don't know."

²Respondents were asked how successful their organizations are, compared with competitors, at attracting talent and skills needed to realize their strategies.

³Respondents were asked how successful their organizations are, compared with competitors, at retaining talent and skills needed to realize their strategies.

⁴When asked how effective their organizations' talent management has been at improving overall performance, 4% of respondents said "very ineffective," 19% said "ineffective," 35% said "neither ineffective nor effective," 38% said "effective," and 5% said "very effective."

McKinsey&Company

Figure 6. The positive effects of TM on business outcomes, McKinsey, 2018.

An employee's motivation was claimed as the importance of the TM concept (Momtazian, 2016), "*it creates more reasons for employees to be attracted to the organization, such as a higher purpose or meaning for employees*". The term of retention becomes one of the greatest concerns for companies nowadays since the

number of employee resignations has increased dramatically (Reitman, 2007). The most common reason for leaving enterprises comes from diminished employees' values. Employees have higher expectations and demands on the company's benefits. The purpose of this aspiration is to seek to work in organizations with "*a solid reputation, a reward for performance, clear career trajectory and a culture of collaboration*", as well as a "*meaningful, rewarding, and enjoyable*" workplace, said by Chandler Macleod Group, 2016. A weak connection between employee's values and the organization's operations leads to a bad result. Workers who have a low commitment to the organization will easily be attracted by other firm's offers (Reitman, 2007). Understanding the tremendous impact of TM, hence, assists organizations in acquiring strategic practices to attain business goals and intents.

2.2.5 Talent Management Model

The TM model was created and has been modified by HR specialists based on companies' sustainable goals. Josh Bersin (2010) introduced a new integrated TM framework to approach consisting of "*recruiting, development, performance management, compensation, developing planning, and learning*". HR functions were moved from operating effectively to devising an "integrated system" for managing people.

As mentioned above, the main thesis's theory is appointed to the TM model. Despite the fact that many different TM models exist, it must include five elements (Momtazian, 2016): planning, attracting, developing, retaining, and transitioning. Five phases of the model are promoted in figure 7.

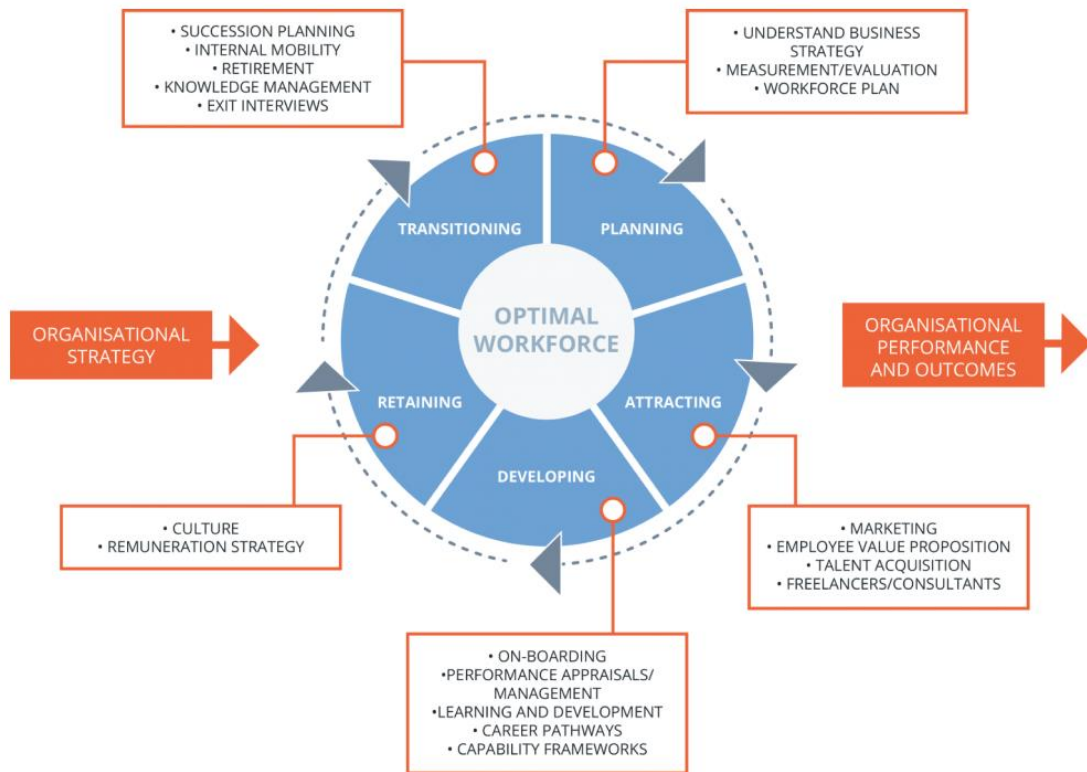


Figure 7. The TM model, Expert 360, 2016.

2.2.5.1 Planning

Planning is a vital stage that cannot be denied by any TM models. Identifying talent must be the heart of the planning stage. If a company is finding someone to fulfill the jobs, that is not an issue. However, *“it’s getting the best candidates who are the best fit at the right price. That requires a more sophisticated, managed approach”* (Cappelli, 2011).

As Momtazian (2016) suggested, there are three core elements indicated in the planning stage: understanding the corporate strategy, evaluation and measurement, and developing the workforce plan. The most significant object is to understand the business strategy. According to Orr J et al (2014), the business strategy role is to decide which parts produce competitive advantage, what types of talent are involved, and what skills need to be prospered before establishing a workforce plan. Therefore, analyzing

and identifying the present human resource situation and future demand, including retaining employees and attracting new talent, are the essential steps in establishing the workforce plan. By connecting the workforce plan with the company's strategic goals, the organization will ensure its competitive advantage. When talent is aligned to business strategy, thus, an organization will determine to choose the right employees with excellent skills and knowledge that meet the business's objectives.

2.2.5.2 Attracting

Attracting phase comprises of marketing, employee value proposition, talent acquisition, and consultants (Momtazian, 2016). Marketing strategy is created based on the need for talent. Employee value proposition (EVP) is an advantageous tool to spread out exceptional organization's characteristics. Marctic (2018) claimed that companies should promote their values and images proactively by their unique differentiation from competitors in order to interest the candidate's attention.

Reputation and attractiveness of an organization are critical to employees. Joubert (2007) asserted, "*Employment brands are designed creatively and built conscientiously over time*". Connected values, people strategy, and HR policies belong to the company brand; "*The employer brand is a way for organizations to differentiate themselves in competitive labor markets*" (Kalman & Turner, 2014). Attractive working conditions that the employer brand should promote are competitive compensation, excellent communication, engaged managers as well as a supportive cultural environment. For example, big technology companies in the world such as Apple and Google, are the desired workplaces of many people. They are well-known for their unique working culture and environment. Company brand provides a more natural way to recruit talent because talent usually seeks for opportunities there instead of headhunting thousands of candidates. Therefore, a high-rated organization shapes an exceptional perception as an outstanding place to work.

Additionally, the workforce plan requires talent acquisition accordingly. Hidden expenses are made by companies' mistakes in hiring the wrong employee. There are

two scenarios that happen when choosing the wrong person for a vacant position. Firstly, a wrong person is hired, and then leaves the position that causes a termination cost. Secondly, a wrong worker provides poor performance that might decrease productivity. The more careless accidents are made, there can be more damage to the company's brand (How Do – an open-source book on corporate innovation, 2019). Lastly, the company can consider employing freelancers or consultants in some projects rather than use employees. By doing this way, the company can observe and nurture potential talent. Providing them a good impression during projects is also a move to attract talent for future requirements (Momtazian, 2016).

2.2.5.3 Developing

Greater control will be made over the jobs and establishes a better management-employee relationship in the development phase, as stated by Smith (2007). This stage allows organizations to create opportunities to grow talents within the company. It is claimed that five elements are implicated in this phase: onboarding, performance appraisals/management, learning and developing, capability frameworks, and career pathways (Momtazian, 2016). Skills, capabilities, and performance should be considered on an entire workforce aligned with corporate strategies.

Onboarding is the very first step that decides the interest of an employee to the organization. An onboarding program does not only introduce jobs itself to a new employee but also help them to get along with their role and teammates (Pellikaan, 2019). Thus, the function of onboarding is essential to integrate new employees to become a puzzle of an organization. 69% of employees reported that they are happy to stay with the organization after 3-working-year if they are given a well-structured onboarding program (Momtazian, 2016). In addition, prosperous onboarding enhances the employer's branding (Pellikaan, 2019). The reason for that is the curiosity of family and friends of new employees who try to notice employees' feelings in the very first week and month of working. The more favorable effects spread out, the more talents' attention the company gets.

The second element to evaluate in this phase is performance appraisal. A performance appraisal, or also known as an annual review or employee appraisal, is carried out at a given time of the year to review and give feedback on employee's performance (Silver, 2019). The performance appraisal helps the company determine its funds, whether to give bonuses or terminate a contract with employees. Furthermore, it strengthens the relationship between managers and employees when regular conversations and feedbacks are made. Managers also perceive a broader view of employee's work in order to create a plan to develop their skills accordingly. Since managers capture their workers' performance, a learning and developing step will be executed in order to improve productivity. When learning and developing talent strategies are applying effectively, it encourages employees to be more innovative and creative (Maycock, et al, 2015).

Next, a clear capability framework provides a clear expectation of employees and also enhances a connection between individual and organizational performance (CIPD, 2019). The capability framework is designed to measure a set of behaviors compelled in employee's work as well as an expectation of how they perform the work effectively. Moreover, each behavior and role represent a fairer appraisal level. Along with the capability framework, a career pathway should be taken into account for improving employees' skills and better job opportunities. Every employee desires growth in their career. The development of the career pathway supports the employee's retention, creates job satisfaction, and make them more engaged with the business by providing a potential career event based on the evaluation of work performance, work value, interests, or abilities (Dupree, 2018).

In the global context, promising employees and executives are the priority of developing activities because of their innovative strategy that secures regional and global growth (Kalman & Turner, 2014). Furthermore, Joubert (2007) stated that talent cultivation would strengthen talent management. Specifically, managers are responsible for knowledge-sharing and collaboration with employees, executives are accountable for the strength of talent pools, while employees should focus on

improving their professional and on-going learning. Employees are striving for developing skills and enhancing their abilities to devote themselves to the success of the organization.

2.2.5.4 Retaining

The retaining section comprises two factors, which are culture and remuneration strategy. (Momtazian, 2016). Gleeson (2017) stated that culture is the most crucial aspect to attract and maintain great talents. Company culture shows the company's attractiveness to potential candidates inclusive of current employees' retention rates. An intentional culture - a cultural workplace platform, has been introduced by Energage to be a helpful way to create values, and accomplish real results. It aligns cultural drivers with the business's goals and strategies to create differences for workers. A research study on workplace culture carried by Energage for 13 years shows that intentional cultures are outstanding compared to accidental cultures that affect dramatically to employee's referrals (Sordilla, 2019). 95% of employees seized in intentional cultures are willing to introduce their workplace to others. Additionally, 80% of them have the intention to stay with the organization. In contrast, the figures are much lower in those aspects of accidental cultures.

Organizational culture, then, becomes an added secret to a company's competitive advantage. The company's culture contains varied elements in which an enjoyable and meaningful workplace is the key to keep employees working longer at the company (Valamis, 2019). The purpose of the company's culture is to bring engagement for employees in which engagement is clarified as "*a powerful retention approach*"; "*This includes a transparent communication process, a responsive organization and a philosophy of employees as partners in the venture*" (Kalman & Turner, 2014). Employee engagement involves the importance of the job, the provision of regular feedback, or the delightful working relationships with co-workers and managers, which is an extension of employee satisfaction. Compensation, rewards for performance as

well as company culture; both financial and non-financial benefits are the major subjects to bring enjoyment for employees.

A second element that is incredibly essential to consider in the retaining phase is a remuneration strategy. The literal purpose of the remuneration strategy is to facilitate the organization to obtain business objectives and goals (Giudice, 2017). Popular drivers to establish an advantageous remuneration strategy are to attract and retain talents, promote and reward the right behaviors, encourage employees to boost productivity, control remuneration costs, and comply with enterprise laws and regulations. The role of recognition and rewards are inevitable in Talent Management in terms of identifying high potentials who retrieve high performances. Enduring an effective remuneration strategy that is above-market rates not only retains the top critical talents, saves extra recruitment expenses, and also enhances the company's brand awareness in the marketplace (Momtazian, 2016).

2.2.5.5 Transitioning

Transitioning includes succession planning, internal mobility, retirement, knowledge management, and exit interviews (Momtazian, 2016).

The last phase in the TM model is transitioning. A succession planning is a part of the workforce plan in case of a sudden change occurs unpredictably (Momtazian, 2016). Succession planning is said to guarantee a smooth running of an enterprise when the most pivotal people retire, acquire new positions, or pass away (Kenton, 2019). Actively pursuing succession planning allows employees to constantly develop to fill vacant roles as well as assist employees in planning ahead of their future. Furthermore, succession planning is compelled to be compatible with internal mobility. Internal mobility is important because of its related nature to employee's development that offers them opportunities to move to new positions accordingly (Miller, 2017).

Retirement is another aspect that leads the company into a preparing circumstance of transitioning. As mentioned above, the company needs to develop a transitioning plan

when talents are going to retirement time, especially the pivotal positions. Recognizing the gaps in vital positions revives the company to plan to fill in those positions (Momtazian, 2016). Knowledge management is an appropriate practice for producing this plan. Establishing a sufficient knowledge transferring plan along with knowing employees who will be transitioning would help the company to acknowledge an employee's transition and retain valuable information. Lastly, an exit interview is a useful way of collecting information to gather feedback in order to assemble future practices and improve recruiting or retention (Rouse, et al, 2013). Whether a worker leaves or is terminated, the exit interview would help to define reasons and problems.

A transition plan will reduce the risk of hiring outsiders from the labor market. Hence, *“effective talent management requires not only developing people for their current roles but also getting them ready for their next transition”*, stated by Wellins, et al., 2009.

2.3 Talent Management in the Hospitality industry

Hospitality and Tourism industry is overgrowing and contributing in providing various jobs for people including direct jobs such as tour guides, tour operators, travel consultants, hotel cleaners, restaurant waiters and related jobs in other businesses; for instance, event management, amusement park, or airlines services (Emerald, 2018). Although plenty of jobs have been created, a negative perception of the industry has been existing due to its nature. High standards, extremely high expectations from customers, and especially the reality of anti-social working hours during peak season and public holidays that make employees tied to the jobs temporarily (Baum, et al., 1997). Consequently, TM strategies become a beneficial way for hospitality organizations to face with recent challenges in order to attract, recruit, and retain well-trained and qualified workers (Chung & D'Annunzio-Green, 2018).

2.3.1 Inclusive talent managerial approach

According to hospitality SMEs owner-managers, they prefer people who perform effectively over long-term rather than those who bring striking effects in a shorter period. Entrepreneurs indicated that “*talent is something that can be manufactured as well as discovered*” (Chung & D’Annunzio-Green, 2018). Recognizing hidden talents within an organization should be implemented in TM practices in which managers should observe a total workforce rather than concentrate on top leaders (Baum, 2008). Investing in training must be taken into account inclusively of all levels and not only focus on executive levels.

2.3.2 Growing talent within an organization

According to the hotelier, the best way to nurture talents comes from inside the community. Developing talents is the method in approaching individuals that brings positive results in which the role of line managers is recognized as vital to deploy good TM practices. Line managers’ responsibilities are to enhance employees’ motivations, abilities, as well as aspirations since they are the closest ones who give employees instructions and assessments (D’Annunzio-Green, 2018). Cost-saving is always an aspect of developing talents from within the organization, especially for managerial positions (Cream.hr, 2013). Recruiting from lower positions decreases the cost of hiring, even after the replacement is taken into consideration. Besides, it is also simpler and faster than employing new outsiders to train and develop them in a short period. In the large hotel chains, vacancies are internal and external-announced, while job-advertising and word-of-mouth are used within small organizations (Nzozzo & Chipfuva, 2013). The bottom line is to offer employees chances to grow, not just to encourage them to advance. Not everyone is “progressive” and want to be promoted at the CEO position. Many people just wish to have opportunities to learn and perceive further knowledge within their industrial areas.

2.3.3 Cultivating emotional connection

Chung & D'Annunzio-Green (2018) claimed that “intra-organizational” and “person-to-person communication” must be cultivated to improve employee’s involvement and retention. Creating a conversation with employees is part of a two-way process, which is essential to convey the overall business direction, especially if employees are uncertain about their future. Quality of life, welfare, work-life balance, rewards are the key variables to increase employees’ retention rates (Deery, 2008). These elements’ role is to establish a happy workforce. It is not only promotions, bonuses, financial incentives for attaining success but also just simple greetings of individual performance appraisals that can affect enormously to employees’ feelings.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is an activity to define, contribute its findings and answers along with the support of the study, observation, comparison, and experiment to deliver solutions to a subject's problem (Kothari, C.R., 2004).

Chapter three presents the thesis' research methodologies, comprehensive data collection, and an overview of the case company.

3.1 Research methods

Qualitative and Quantitative methods are known as the research approaches that were employed both in this thesis. The Qualitative method concentrates on conceiving answers in terms of conducting conversations, observations, gathering relevant objects in order to attain more profound knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon and the research's objects. In contrast, the Quantitative method engages statistical practices containing numbers, proportions to provide data for the analysis (Hurt & McLaughlin, 2012). According to Surbhi (2018), these key variables that show differentiation between Qualitative and Quantitative are listed in the table below:

Table 1. Comparison table between Qualitative and Quantitative Research, Own-making chart based on Surbhi S, 2018.

Comparison	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Meaning	Research produces an in-depth understanding of its subjects	Research measures its variables by employing numerical data and statistical models.
Research type	Exploratory	Conclusive
Sampling	Purposive	Random
Data	Verbal	Measurable
Hypothesis	Generated	Tested
Elements of analysis	Words, pictures, and objects	Numerical data
Methods	Non-structured techniques such as in-depth interview, group discussions	Structured techniques such as surveys, questionnaires, observations

3.2 Data collection

Collecting data is crucial in academic research because false data can misstate information and strongly affect the research's findings and analysis. Mbachu (2018) defined that data collection is *“a systematic method of collecting and measuring data gathered from different sources of information in order to provide an answer to relevant questions”*. The purpose of data collection is to serve as a principal for scientific evidence to support the research's issues. There are two types of data, which are known as primary and secondary data. In this section, the author will describe the process of gathering those data employed for the theoretical and empirical framework.

3.2.1 Primary data

A case study was adopted in this research in which an in-depth interview and surveys were the techniques in order to compile first-hand information. The reason that the case study was chosen was its advantages to provide rich and detailed knowledge as well as insights for the research (McLeod, 2019).

First, the interview proceeded with a HR expert of X Oy who has more than 13 experienced years working in the hospitality organization. Research interview has been divided into three kinds: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Thus, the elected interview type was conducted as semi-structured in which allows the interviewer to follow a questionnaire's outline but can broaden if needed. The aim of the interview is to answer questions of what, when, where, how that involves the TM model and practices of the organization. The question of what, for instance, what kind plans and activities have been employed in the enterprise's TM model, and what are the current TM practices in the context of the hospitality industry?

Second, the survey is an essential approach to demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors of respondents towards the study (Mathers, et al., 2009). The survey's content separates into two parts. The first part is about general information of respondents such as job title and working year. The second part is to study the respondents' evaluation of their organization's TM strategies and performances. The survey was designed in an online form – Google Form, which was published in the organization's online application called Workplace. Moreover, invitation emails containing the survey's link were also sent to employees' mailboxes to gather the answering participation (**Appendix 4**). The questionnaire of the interview and the survey can be found in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**.

3.2.2 Secondary data

In terms of secondary data, the author reviewed the TM concept and its importance as well as strategies based on available published sources such as online academic articles,

online journals, online reports, electronic white papers, online theses, and paper books. Plenty of management sources have been used as references in this thesis.

3.3 An overview of a case company

BOK – B Group (Finnish: B-ryhmä) is a Finnish retailing cooperative organization in which X Oy is its subsidiary in the hospitality business (B-ryhmä, 2015). X Oy (X Hotels) was established in 1974 and its domicile in Helsinki, Finland. The company X specializes in hospitality industry in which the main business is hotel operation. Seven Radisson Blu Hotels and 14 X Hotels have been opened over Finland. Moreover, the company also invests in other sectors, such as restaurants, conference services, bars, and clubs. According to Kaupalehti (2019), the company generated net sales of Euro 221,373,000 along with a profit of period 12/2018 of Euro 22,481,000. Due to its large business scale, company X occupied 1091 employees at the end of 2018, which increased by 6.33% compared to the previous financial year.

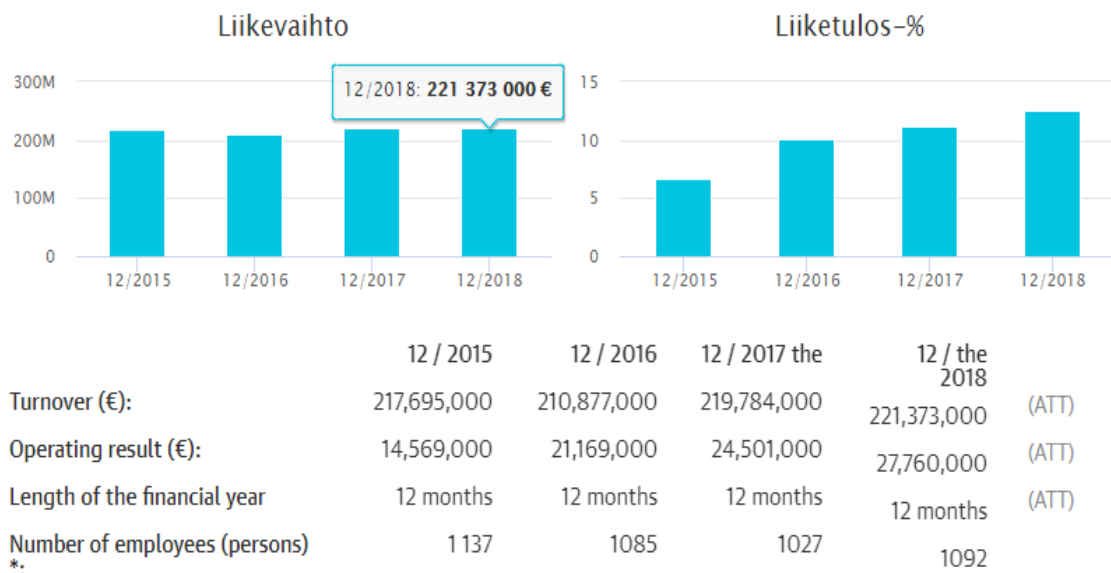


Figure 8. The case company's financial information, Kaupalehti based on the company's information, 2019.

Company X has been declared as one of the most successful companies in the MARA sector (MARA stands for Finnish Hospitality Association) and been awarded the Kauppalehti Success Certificate in 2017-2019. According to the company's website introduction, excellent results in personnel research were obtained that led the company to become one of the most inspiring workplaces in Finland in 2018. X Hotels is the most suitable and desirable organization to conduct the research in order to demonstrate the TM concept in a hospitality operation.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In chapter 4, the empirical data will be presented and analyzed. As introduced above, the central questions of the research are about the current TM situation of the case company, the assessment of employees toward the company performance, as well as the improvements in TM for the future. The analysis is shown by using a combination of data from an online survey, the HR expert's answers, and a provided company's handbook materials including a HR policy handbook, a MARA-training material, a Talent program, and a Talent management assessment form for employees. The online survey data is calculated and presented by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program and Microsoft Excel pivot table and charts. The interview with the HR expert was recorded and is utilized as the main qualitative method of this research.

The empirical findings will start with general information of respondents in which personal contacts were not obtained, such as names, genders, ages, or contact numbers. Following the general information is the analysis to generate the research questions. The analysis is displayed by the main research questions in conjunction with the principal theory.

4.1 General information

The first question from the online survey is about the employee's position (**Appendix 1**). A structure of one hotel includes a general manager (hotel manager), a department head (kitchen, cleaning service, reception), a service manager, and line staff (waitresses, waiters, housekeepers). In addition, there are other back officers working in the main office of the company. After publishing the survey to the company's social network platform, 66 respondents replied. The statistics of the employee's position are exhibited in figure 9 below.

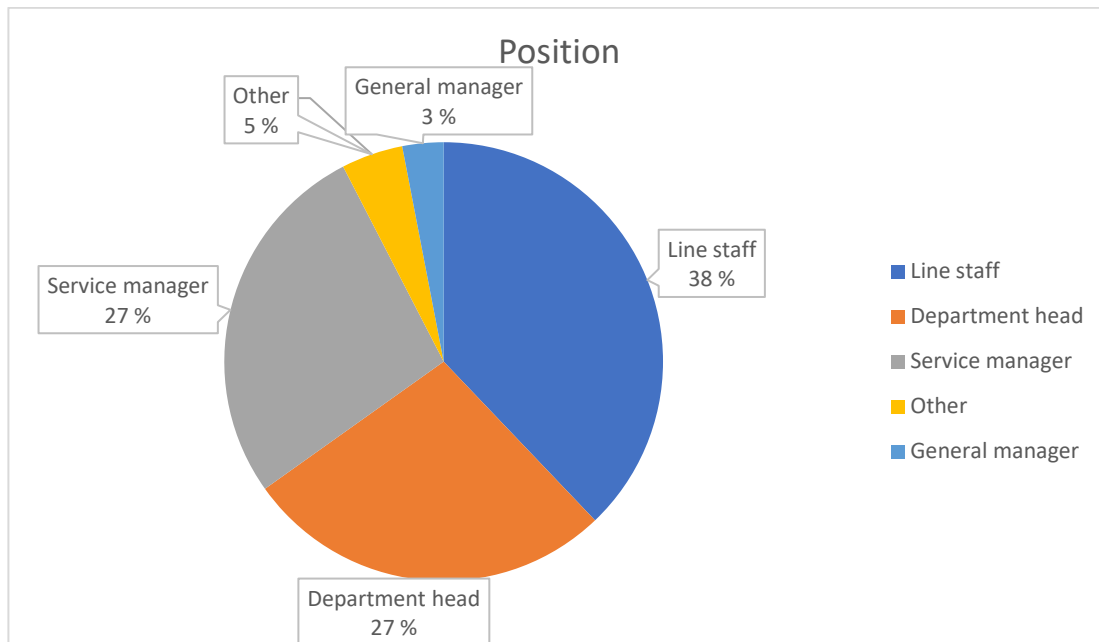


Figure 9. Company's employee position statistic.

In a total of 66 answers, line staff is dominant, with 25 people accounted for 38%, while the department head and service manager occupy the same percentage as 27%. Only 3% comes from the general manager, and other titles seize 5%, including a revenue manager, a specialist in the service center, and an administration manager.

The next question that was asked in the survey is the employee's working-year (**Appendix 1**). There are four phrases represented in the survey consisting of "less than 1 year", "from 1 to less than 2 years", "from 2 to less than 5 years", and "more than 5 years". The aim of the question is to indicate how long the employee has been committed to the organization. The data is delineated in figure 10.

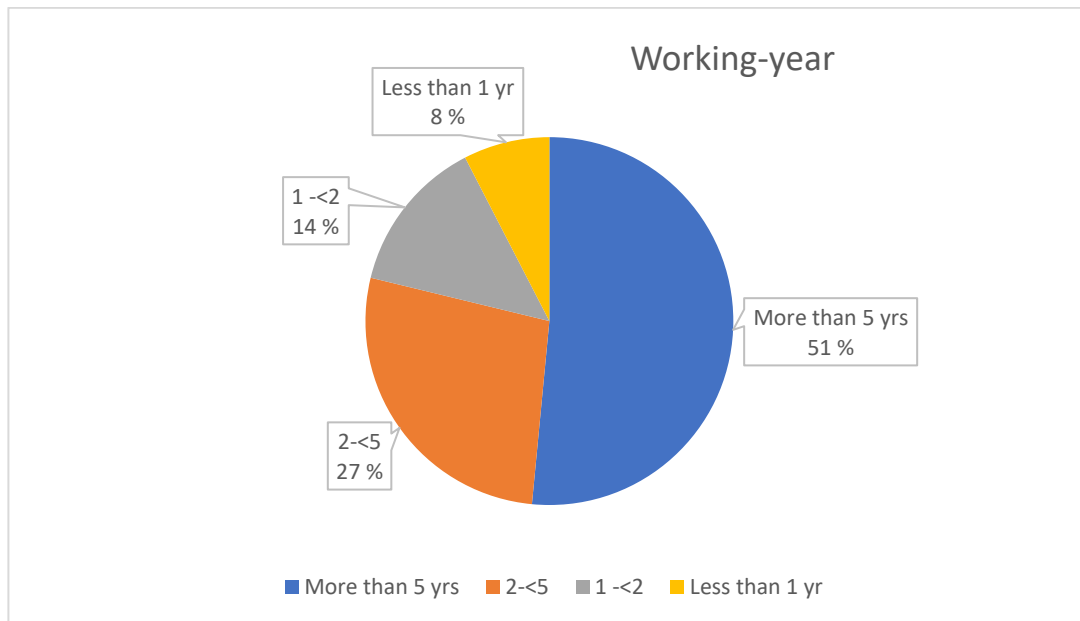


Figure 10. Employees' working-year.

Surprising numbers from figure 10 reveal a high commitment between the employees and the organization. As can be seen, more than half of respondents have been working in the company for more than five years, followed by 27% of those who are working fewer than five years but over two years. The number drops to 14% of workers who have a working experience under two years and the least is 8% with the title of “less than 1 year”.

4.2 Analysis of the study

4.2.1 Talent Management Model of Company X

To examine the initial research question, the researcher decides to analyze the question by a theoretical framework that encloses five phases: planning, attracting, developing, retaining, and transitioning.

Phase 1: Planning

Regarding the planning stage, the company points out that indicators affect their workforce plan are based on the general labor market, economic situation, and the

consequences of retirement or termination. The personnel structure and requirements will be adjusted due to the changes and needs of the business.

According to interviewee(a), the company is planning their next activities for many years; thus, proper actions in the HR field will be implemented correspondingly due to upcoming projects. The company attained new projects in 2019, containing an opening of a new hotel and a shutting down project of an old hotel in the Helsinki area. In addition, some changes in operations of restaurants in Vaasa city and a renovation of the other two hotels which lead the number of employees to change dramatically.

Interviewee(a) indicated that even termination is required when closing a hotel or restaurants, the company still tries to minimize the number of terminated workers; *“we want to offer everybody work in the organization, we would not dismiss anybody”*. Company would move and transfer workers into other departments or other organizations which belong to their organizational group. On the other hand, the planning process occurs spontaneously when workers have the desire to leave the organization. The leaving period offers the HR department two weeks to find a new employee to replace the vacant.

Forecasting future talent demand is carried by independent hotels. The general manager, along with department heads, decides the number of ideal employees for their team. The general manager has responsibilities to evaluate, measure the use of talents, and then report the forecast to the chain director who has a broader view of the current market.

The company's establishment workforce plan is to provide a permanent contract. It was reported that 95% of employees acquired a permanent place at the end of 2018, which equals 1034 people. Table 2 below demonstrates data of permanent and temporary employment, which are depicted in both numbers and proportions.

Table 2. Employment's relationship with the case company.

Organizational units	Permanent	Temporary	Total	Permanent (%)	Temporary (%)
Total	1034	57	1091	95 %	5 %
Hotels	1009	55	1064	95 %	5 %
Centralized services	25	0	25	100 %	0

A fixed-term contract is applied for peak season such as summer or to replace temporary absences. On the other hand, part-time relationships are established due to an employee's desire to fit their background and wishes.

Phase 2: Attracting

The interviewee(a) stated that nowadays, the HR department of the company does not publish a job announcement. The vacant job announcement is handled by an out-source company called Eezy. Eezy will manage the activities related to the marketing sectors of the job announcement. However, job description and needed recruiting numbers are modified by company X.

The most crucial factor in attracting phase must be listed as an employer brand. Question number 3 of the survey (**Appendix 1**) was asked about the organization's attractiveness. As a result, participants reveal a positive image of the company's attractiveness. Data on the company's attractiveness is illustrated in figure 11 below.

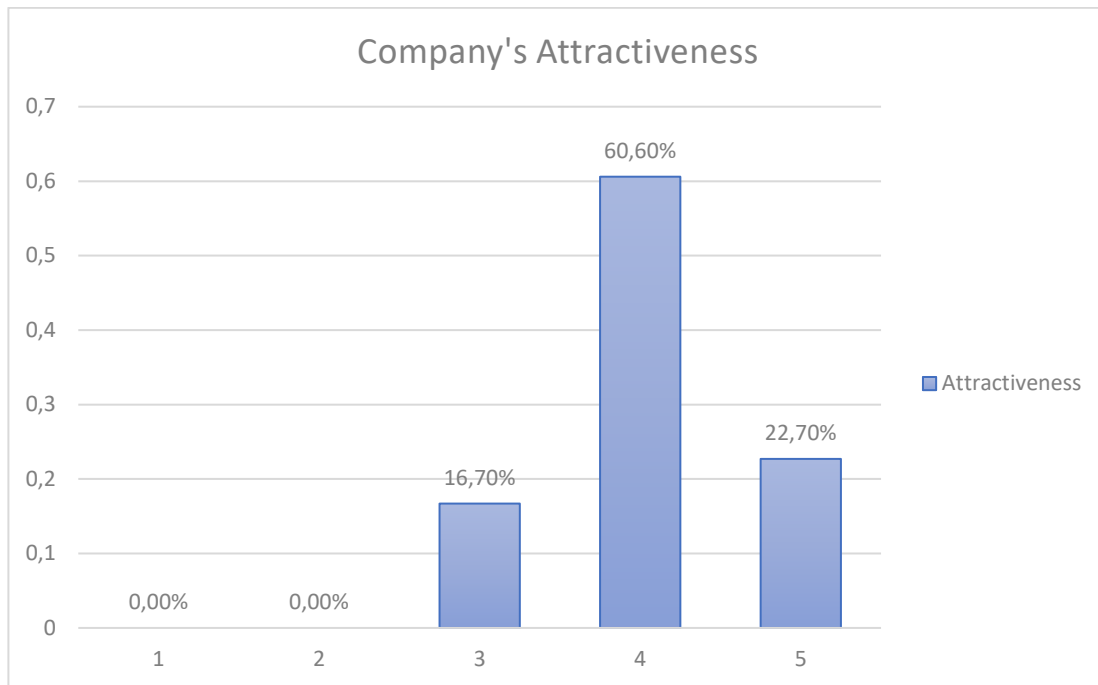


Figure 11. Company's attractiveness.

From scale one to five in which one equal to the worst and five equals to the best, there is no answer for the two lowest scales. The majority proportion places in scale four by 60.6%, whereas scale five marks as a second place by 22.7%. Scale three gets 16.7%, which is not much lower than scale number five. Consequently, the company's image sets a favorable statue in employees' minds.

HR expert(a) asserted that the company's reputation is affected by the giant group that it belongs to. For new laborers in the market, they might not acquaint with company X. However, the reputation of the B group is much greater. Everybody recognizes B group, which possesses different operative companies in Finland; "*somebody has heard from friends who work for B group*"; therefore, word-of-mouth is also an active key to increase the company's reputation. Being a part of the giant B group, company X adds an additional point to candidates' attention regarding attractiveness. Answers collected from the survey's question number 4 (**Appendix 1**) reinforce the information given by HR expert(a) in terms of aspects affecting the company's brand reputation (**figure 12**).

\$Question4 Frequencies

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
\$Question4 ^a Company's brand	58	65.9%	87.9%
A top-notch career page	8	9.1%	12.1%
Positive social media presence	15	17.0%	22.7%
Other	7	8.0%	10.6%
Total	88	100.0%	133.3%

a. Group

Figure 12. Company's attractiveness elements.

The figure shows that 58 people chose the company's brand expression, which is a dominant element in shaping their attraction to seek a job in company X. Another two factors received low proportions, which are only 15 people and 8 people respectively chose "positive social media presence" and "a top-notch career page" as their attention when applying for the job. Low frequencies in those two factors present that the company is not attempting to enhance its job announcement in public career page and media channels. They are confident of their company's reputation beyond these factors. In addition, answers such as "part of B group", "employee's stories: how they have grown in the company", "word-of-mouth information from other people in the industry" appeared from "other" selection which indicates the considerable influence of being connected to a mother group gain greater trust to the organization's brand.

As mentioned above in the planning stage, temporary workers account for 5% in the total workforce of company X at the end of 2018. A small number of limited contract workers were hired during projects not only to save costs but also to provide to a good-working-environment impression for future needs. Interviewee(a) admitted that it is challenging to acquire a good-skilled-laborer in this industry. Hence, whenever

temporary workers request to stay longer with the organization, they are always welcomed if the vacant positions are opened.

Phase 3: Developing

The first element listed in the developing phase is an effective onboarding program. The onboarding program of company X is instructed by supervisors. The introduction and guidance of the jobs are coordinated by the company's HR functions. Supervisors have their responsibilities to set up a schedule to train new talents.

The job introduction is developed in detail by department heads based on the manual materials provided by the HR department, such as to-do lists, welcome to the site materials, and site-specific training materials. The onboarding event for trainees and new employees generally comprises these components: "Introduction to company/workplace", "Fresh-up coaching/Learning at work", "Safety", and "Become familiar with privacy". Evaluation of the job introduction appeared in question number 5 (**Appendix 1**), which required the answer as the same type of question number 4 (from scale one to five). In figure 13, the assessments show an intermediate level of the company's onboarding arrangement.

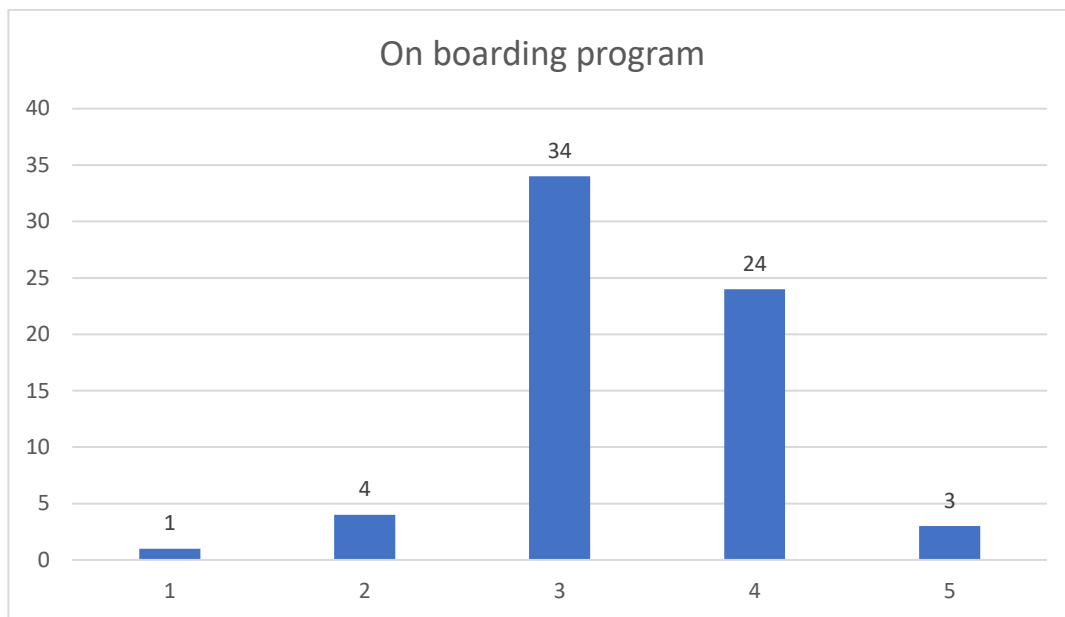


Figure 13. Onboarding program's evaluation.

The most voted point is three, which obtains 34 choices while the second voted point is four, which obtains 10 choices less. There are three respondents who are pleasant with the program since they gave an excellent point (as five) for this section. Although the result has shown a good sign, it is addressed that the minor of five people marked the bad grades on this sector in which four votes for point “2” and one vote for point “1”.

Training activities contribute to a significant impact on a developing plan. Competence management has been implemented through training opportunities to nurture and develop the company’s expertise at all levels. Activities are designed intentionally for different levels within the labor force. There are no specific training times provided by the organization. The frequency of training depends on the staff’s level. Hence, various answers collected from question number 6 (**Appendix 1**) when invited employees to designate how often the company provides on-the-job training (**figure 14**).

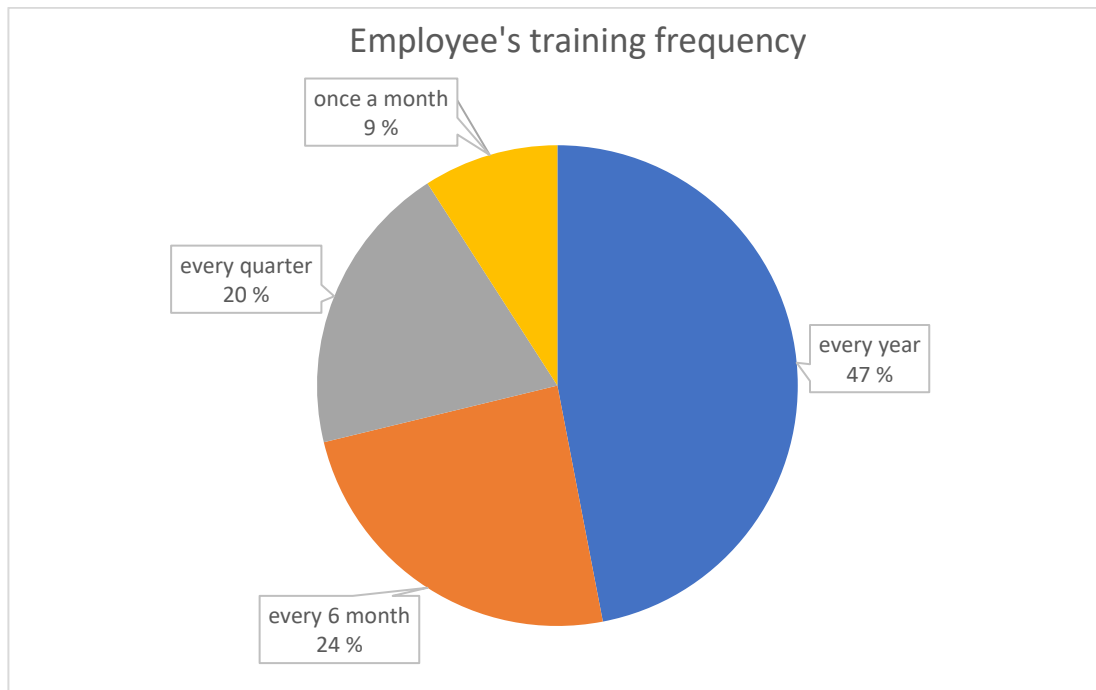


Figure 14. Employee's training frequency.

As can be seen in figure 14, 47% of participants reported that the frequency of training occurs every year. “Every 6 months” and “every quarter” options were selected by 24% and 20%, respectively. Only 9% of respondents attend to trainings once a month. Modified by interviewee(a) “*training opportunity goes for everybody at least once a year and supervisor level twice a year*”. As a result, the company organizes a proper training occasion for its workers to improve skills and knowledge. In addition to the training section, the company designs an online center for learning and development named Jollas Institute. The aim of Jollas Academy is to be employed effectively in the training and development projects of different personnel groups. Types of training programs in Jollas contain kick-off training, strategy and concept-driven training, supervisor and management training, management trainee programs, service training, or IT systems training.

A group development discussion is another tool to increase employees’ knowledge. The discussion is organized where a team arranges a meeting to identify what abilities they have, what sectors they are lacking, or what capabilities they need to improve

further in their working field. For example, a kitchen team recognizes that they are deficient in wine knowledge. One team member will be sent to a training course and then transfer knowledge to the rest of the team. Another example is about working habits. The way of performing job can be reviewed by the team, and then execution is made to improve or eliminate that working style.

In recent years, company X has been developing in sales, customer service, managerial as well as leadership. The development is driven by strategic changes in the industry. Therefore, the company genuinely invests resources in enhancing an employee's competencies. Company X will send employees for training development, which is not available in the company's training packages. Table 3 represents training academy courses in which high-level roles will take part in by 2020.

Table 3. Training courses 2020.

Director	Supervisor	Sales	Coach
Management intensive program	Managing the capacity of supervisors/Supervisors ensure implementation	Academy for sales 4.0	Hotel coaching training day
MARA (Finnish Hospitality) division management day	To be the best manager training and growth program 2020	Best-seller coaching	
Training days for hotel presidents and group managers	Training days for supervisors		
Nordic Business Forum 2020			

The next essential factor in the developing phase is performance appraisal. At X Oy, the discussion of development is held at least once a year. According to the company's material, the common topics usually discussed in performance review are employee performance, job performance, skills development, and career development. Figure 15 will affirm the frequencies of factors that must be discussed in performance appraisals in terms of employee's perception (**Appendix 1**).

\$Question7 Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$Question7 ^a	Performance measurement of goals	38	19.0%	57.6%
	Feedback from manager	55	27.5%	83.3%
	Achievements	31	15.5%	47.0%
	Training requirements	16	8.0%	24.2%
	Future plans for development	55	27.5%	83.3%
	Other	5	2.5%	7.6%
Total		200	100.0%	303.0%

a. Group

Figure 15. Frequencies of the important elements in performance appraisals.

The critical factors that respondents would like to deliberate in annual review are “feedback from manager” and “future plans for development”. Figure 15 shows outright percentages in those factors by 83.3%. The second and third selected choices are “performance measurement of goals” and “achievements” which obtain 57.6% and 47%, respectively. The gaps between those most influential factors are not extensive. The least factor cared by people is training requirements, which only possess 11%. In addition, five people gave optional responses to this question in the subjects of well-being at work, wage discussion, employee's own goals, and employee motivation.

A career pathway is also assessed under performance appraisal. Supervisors are responsible for discussing and listening to the employee's aspiration. Interviewee(a) asserted that not many people have an aspiration to transfer to a higher level. There are numerous challenges to learn if they would like to have a promotion. However, the possibility of having a promotion was examined from the employees' perspective by question number 9 of the online survey (**Appendix 1**). The data is exposed in the following figure 16 below.

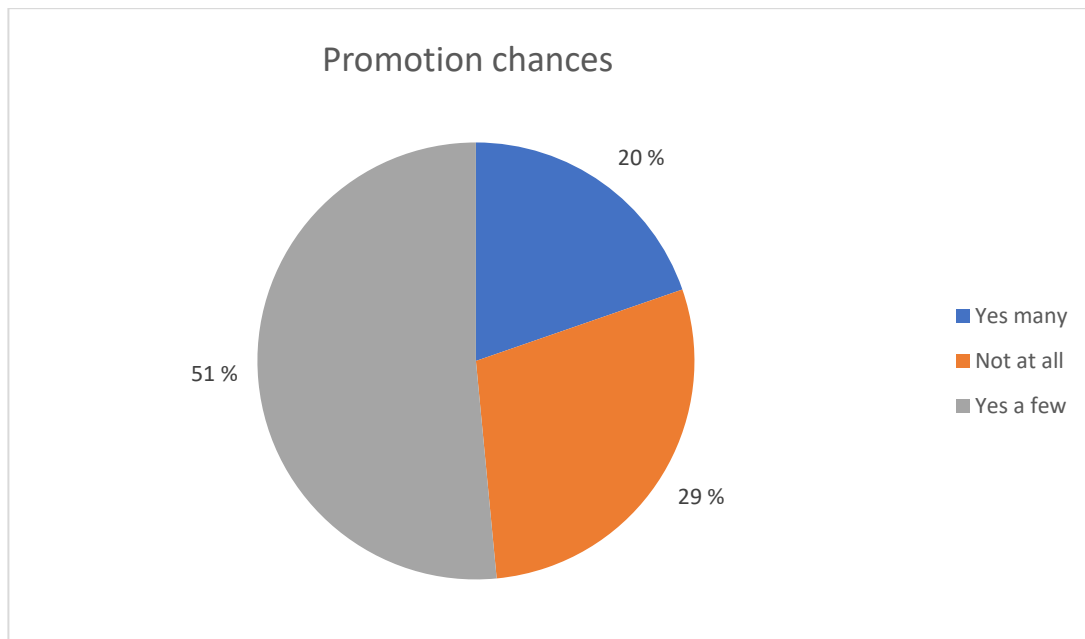


Figure 16. Promotion chances in company X.

The respondents were asked, “Do you find any promising chances to promote your position in the company?” with three choices. As can be seen, it is reported that there is no plenty of opportunities for employees to have a promotion. The statistic shows that “not at all” is the second biggest proportion by 29%, whereas having few chances conceives over half of answers by 51%. Only 20% of respondents agreed that they could be promoted to a higher position. To evaluate the employees' expectations of the current situation, in addition, the researcher built an open question in the online survey, which is in question number 12 (**Appendix 1**). The researcher summarizes the collected answers as table 4 below.

Table 4. Employee's expectations of the current situation.

Question number 12: Expectations of the current situation		
Answer's ideas	Quantity	Frequency
A promotion	7	23%
Develop professional skills/Increase knowledge of the business	9	30%
Diverse work duties	2	7%
Happy with the current situation	6	20%
Others (including clearer career pathway, yearly bonus, stability...)	6	20%

Thirty people answered this question. Seven out of thirty answers, which account for 23%, announced the same idea of having a promotion. The same amount for those who are happy with the present situation and other aspects such as a more specific career pathway, a yearly bonus, or stability of the job is by 20%. The more critical attention of the employee places on the possibility of developing professional skills and enhancing business knowledge by 30% of the total answers. Meanwhile, two people have a desire to work in multiple duties and departments, which occupy 7%.

Phase 4: Retaining

To retain talents, company X develops a competitive remuneration and salary. The company's goal is to gain work motivation and commitment, which is promoted by rewards and fair remuneration. The basic salary policy is populated by Hospitality Collective Agreement (MARA TES) in which minimum terms, conditions of employment, as well as details of pay, working hours, sick leave, and annual holidays are implemented. The salary rate of a worker is affected by the demanding nature of the job, working experiences, skills, training, and performance. The contractual salary is employed for senior staff.

The company always offers benefits in order to strengthen commitment for long-term employment relationships by rewarding or bonuses. HR expert(a) stated that *“everyone has an opportunity to earn xx euro per hour if KPIs and revenue of the hotel have reached, or additional sales, and ASSI (customer satisfaction system)”*, *“we would like to provide chances to people to earn more”*.

Company X proposes a variety of employee benefits. Employees receive staff discounts when go shopping by their Group-Bank card at the stores that belong to the mother group, including groceries, electronics, hotel bookings, restaurant dining, fuel, or sports. Permanent as well as temporary employees also get accessibility to use ePassi (mobile payment system) in which they can spend 200 euros per year for their interest in sport, cultural, business travel, and other well-being. On the other hand, the most important benefit provided by company X is preventive and general occupational healthcare. With the idea of ensuring a healthy and safe place to work, the company’s workers can go checkups at Terveystalo (Healthcare service company) by making an appointment under occupational healthcare.

Another principle promoted to encourage long-term employee engagement is a celebration of work milestones. Commemorating working years such as after 10, 20, 30, or 40 is to memorize the great contributions of the employee. Otherwise, the reminiscence of work milestones also assuredly aims to intensify internal mobility within the B Group. The idea of internal mobility is to inspire workers to be flexible in different roles to diversify and deepen their skills. The work history does not only comprise the real-time working years but also parental leave, study leave, and alternative leave.

To assess the retaining strategies of company X, the researcher designed a question to identify the employee’s commitment to the enterprise. Responses from question number 10 “How can you assess your commitment with the organization?” (**Appendix 1**) represent surprising statistics (**figure 17**).

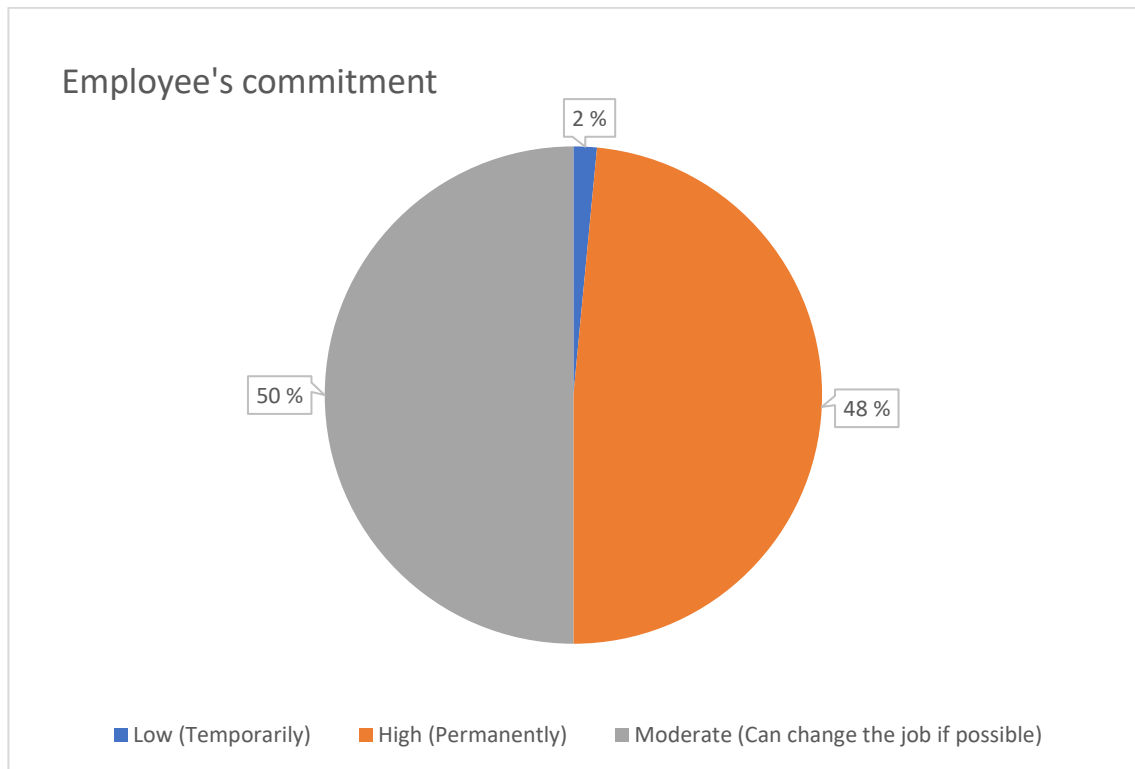


Figure 17. Employee's commitment.

A slight amount of “low commitment” answers which obtains 2% in total. On the contrary, figure 17 reveals the significant data between “high” and “moderate” levels of the employee’s commitment by 48% and 50%, respectively. Half of the respondents, which are 33 people in a total of 66, marked their engagement as moderate to the company, which means if they get a better job offer, they will consider changing. High level of engagement or permanent engagement expression conceived 32 answers in which only 1 answer less than the moderate level. The data indicates that nearly half of respondents positively love their job and the environment so that they choose to commit for the long-term. The small gap between “high” and “moderate” levels identifies that needed improvements in retaining strategies must be taken into account in order to increase the employee’s commitment to the organization.

Culture is the next component generated in the retaining phase. The role of culture plays a significant impact on the employee’s engagement. Interviewee(a) mentioned,

“my personal opinion is that the most important element of culture is the level of our leadership”, “the capability of supervisors toward people that is the reason why we really want to focus on training them in this aspect”. Question number 8 of the online survey was conducted to clarify the most important aspects of the organizational culture. With the question of “What components of culture affect your spirit at work the most?” (Appendix 1), the results collected are displayed in the following figure 18.

\$Question8 Frequencies

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
\$Question8 ^a Solid communication	23	16.5%	34.8%
Good leadership	49	35.3%	74.2%
The community	53	38.1%	80.3%
Commitment to learning	13	9.4%	19.7%
Other	1	0.7%	1.5%
Total	139	100.0%	210.6%

a. Group

Figure 18. Frequencies of the important cultural aspects.

Employees believe that the community factor is mandatory. It is understandable when this element got the highest proportion, among others by 80.3%. According to Desai and Yakunin (2017), the community involvement makes employees have a better feeling for their employer, “they want to feel good about where they work and about what their employer does, both in the marketplace and in the community”. Following the community aspect is good leadership and solid communication expressions, which attain 74.2% and 34.8%, respectively. The least element that catches employees’ attention from a cultural perspective is the commitment to learning with 19.7%. There

is only one person giving a different answer to this question by providing an answer as “believing in people”.

The company builds an online framework named Workplace and Work Chat for enhancing company communication. That is also available as mobile online applications. Employees can access to a weekly newsletter or current issues and affairs happening within the organization. This is not only a place to follow up on the latest information but also be a useful communication tool for staff to chat and talk during and after work.

Phase 5: Transitioning

According to the interviewee(a), there are no specific procedures implemented for a succession plan. However, the company tries to increase the internal mobility, “*we want to give information internally through the internal communication system, in what vacant positions we are having now and prioritize our own staff*”, “*everybody can apply for any vacancies*”.

The transferred knowledge is based on the current situation when one person is recognized as going to pension or retirement to another potential candidate who has a desire to promote themselves into a new position. Not all the employees are willing to change their position to another. It might be some challenges to adopt a new level in the business. The following figure affirms the percentage of employees towards switching positions, which was asked on the survey question number 11 (**Appendix 1**).

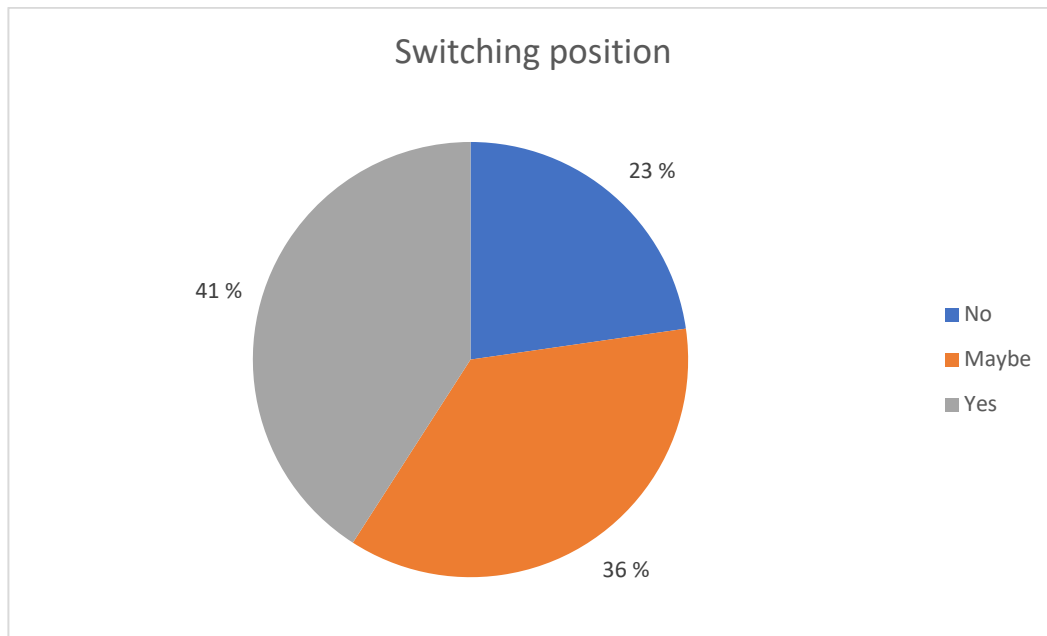


Figure 19. Switching position respondents.

Figure 19 indicates a small gap between those expressions. When asking for the will to change position, 23% of 66 respondents chose “no”. In their perspective, they are happy with their current level and have no command in a new place. On the contrary, “maybe” received more 13% of answers than “no”. People who chose this might consider the available offer, which means they are not afraid of new challenges, but some aspects need to be evaluated before making a decision. Not many differences than “maybe”, 41% of respondents are enthusiastic about taking a new position. As interviewee(a) stated, *“it is totally based on the employees’ aspiration”*.

Exit interviews have been administered to understand the reason why the former employees leave the organization. The exit interview is crucial to identify the reason behind leaving. HR expert(a) clarified *“we would like to know what is the most important factor that they fail in the company”*, and *“what would they tell us including positive and negative feedback on where we should improve”*. The company keeps a good connection with former employees. Many prior workers return to the company after leaving a few years, which mostly are service managers, stated by the HR expert.

4.2.2 Talent Management Practices of Company X

The purpose of implementing TM program of company X is to identify potential employees who will be converted into a Talent Pool. The main objectives of the TM program are to provide recognized talent strategic and holistic thinking, leadership, networking, and utilizes change and diversity within the industry.

The identification of talent is accomplished through development discussions where the HR experts understand employee's stories and personalized plans. The company designed a 9-grid matrix to assess potential talent. The X-axis – horizontal axis includes three components that displays the level of goals labeled as “Stay on target”, “Reaching goals”, and “Exceed the goals”. Meanwhile, the Y-axis – vertical axis represents the potential level of the employee comprising “No potential for the next level”, “Clear potential”, and “Outstanding potential”. The matrix will be demonstrated in figure 20.

Outstanding potential			
Clear potential			
No potential for next level			
	Stay on target	Reaching goals	Exceed your goals

Figure 20. 9-grid matrix of evaluating potential employees.

The company has completed the Talent Assessments by June of 2019. It is reported that there are approximately 20 department heads and 25 service managers classified as talent. The talent assessment criteria rely on the business leadership competencies as well as individual developmental needs. The Talent Development goals are displayed as following figure 21.

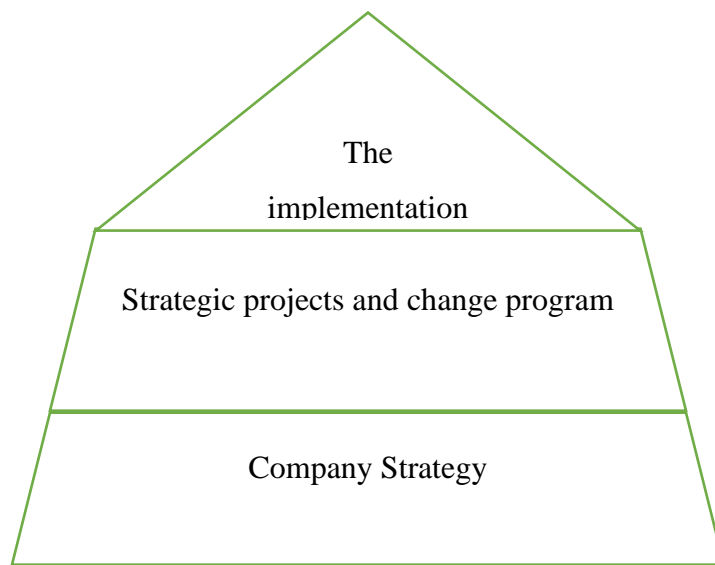


Figure 21. Talent Development goals.

In 2020, the company has enacted a proposal for a Talent Structure that can be found in **Appendix 3**. The itinerary began last December 2019 and continues to the end of 2020. Explicitly, the main goal of specific month is declared in conjunction with implemented actions. The fundamental ideas of the proposal will be summarized including the monthly goals and needed actions as below:

December 2019: Personal development goals.

- Determining own growth potential.
- OPQ Rating 7 within Competency Area (if applicable).
- Personal development plan.

- The supervisor has a mentoring role.

January 2020: Coaching leadership.

- Toolkit for Coaching supervisors.
- A manager's ability to participate, engage and inspire.
- Challenging discussion situations with coaching.

February 2020: Leading change.

- The areas and stages of change management.
- Tools for implementing change.
- Change agility as a resource for the organization, team, and individual.

March 2020: Strategic thinking and action.

- The importance of strategy for the operations in the marketplace.
- Setting goals and translating them into everyday measures and tasks for own group and individual.
- Understanding role as a facilitator and implementer of a strategy.

May 2020: Leading and continuously improving customer experience.

- Anatomy of good customer experience.
- The role of customer experience across channels.
- Initiatives, innovation, and continuous improvement as part of business development.

At the moment, company X has chosen the most five talented people from the Talent Pool to apply for the TM training program. According to the HR expert(a), the company hopes the proposal is executed by the schedule to cultivate the talent. If the proposal this year goes well, the continuity of the Talent Program will occur to recognize more talent in the next few years.

4.2.3 The evaluation of the TM model

The TM project is a tool to identify hidden potential talent and enhance their wills to develop in a higher position. The continuity of the TM program is vital because the company wants to show the possibility of internal movement to employees and keeps the talent in the organization. *“We would like to lower the turnover, so we want to keep our potentials for us, and to inform everybody that they have chances to grow and learn to be in a higher position in the company”*, specified by the HR expert(a). It is a tough challenge to detect talent, especially in supervisors’ positions, for example, with a kitchen manager.

According to the HR expert(a), the TM program has been performing well in the right direction. However, there are some aspects that need to be improved and developed further. For example, the training model of the TM program has just started. Therefore, the more specific evaluation will be carried out in this year 2020, and if the result is positive, the program will be conducted and applied for all managers that were identified in the Talent Pool.

Speaking of the TM model, the phases which are examined as “good and doing in the right direction” are planning, developing, retaining. On the contrary, attracting and transitioning are evaluated as “should be improved”. In the attracting phase, the company’s image should be more visible in social media channels to fascinate more people’s attention. Meanwhile, a job rotation system must be designed for the transitioning phase to strengthen and ensure smooth transitioning procedures. Good rhythm in doing the good phases must be maintained and also have to concentrate on some parts.

Lastly, to assess the TM approach, the researcher designed a question for employees to give judgement to the company performance. Here is a result of question number 13 about the evaluation of the company’s performance among competitors in Finland (**figure 22**).

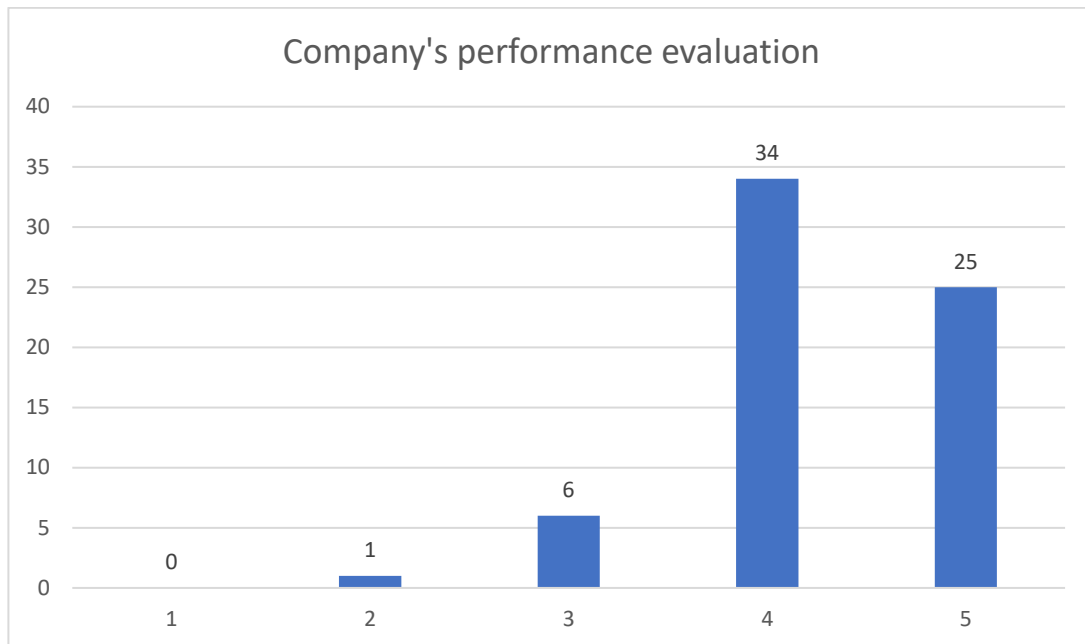


Figure 22. Company's performance evaluation.

In the employees' perspective, their company is performing excellently in Finland. In the scale from one to five, the most collected vote in this aspect goes for "point 4" which receives 34 answers. Following "point 4" is the excellent "point 5" which has 25 votes, accounts for the second place. The minor answers occupy "point 3" and "point 2" which obtain six votes and one vote, respectively. As can be seen, employees appraise astonishingly the company's performance. These evaluations demonstrate that the TM approach and the company's performance have a deep connection with each other. When the TM plans have been implemented properly, it brings a positive effect on the performance.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion chapter will discuss the main objective research questions and a summary of the findings. Moreover, recommendations and limitations of the study are also proposed at the end of the chapter.

It is crucial to present the research outcomes and findings because it will set the stage for further research. The topic of the study is about the TM approach and its model. To examine the TM theories, an in-depth interview and an online survey were conducted to gather primary data for interpreting the main research questions. The interview was executed with the company's HR expert at the main office in Helsinki. Meanwhile, the online survey was sent out through the internal social media platform and received 66 accomplished respondents.

The research objective is to identify the TM approach of the case company in the hospitality area. The used literature is TM in relation to its importance and model. The empirical part implied by both research methods, which includes qualitative and quantitative. The interview with the HR expert took approximately 3 hours to complete all the questions. The content of the interview is to focus on the TM model of the case company. Meanwhile, to examine the connection between the TM approach and the company's performance, the online survey was created. The survey was sent out through Workplace platform. To ensure the number of respondents, the researcher also sent an invitation letter, which comprises the survey's link to the company's employees by email. To analyze the data, a statistics application SPSS and Excel were applied.

Regarding the first question of the research, "What is the current TM model of the case company?", the in-depth interview with the HR expert revealed a vivid understanding of the five phases that have been used. The company has built a structured plan for those phases. The company's material handbook, in conjunction with the face-to-face interview, gave the researcher a full picture of the company's TM model. The company's model is working effectively. However, there are some aspects that need to

be focused and developed further (attracting and transitioning phase). It does not mean that other phases will be neglected. The five phases must have remained in order to enhance the business's competitive advantage.

To answer the second objective which is the evaluation of the company's employees on their performance, the online survey was designed by using a Google form template and sent via the company's social channel. Although there is some minor judgement in some part, the overall result is positive, which gives a high assessment of the company's performance. There is no disqualified respondent, and all of the answers were completed.

Lastly, the final objective is the assessment of the TM model and the improvements for future development. The HR expert indicated that the good operating phases are planning, developing, and retaining. In the planning phase, the HR team has learned tremendously in terms of adjusting personnel through the upcoming projects such as renovating or closing a hotel. The developing phase provides numerous opportunities for employees to strengthen their skills and knowledge by attending available training courses. The HR expert asserted that the company has a satisfactory retaining system that offers employees a variety of benefits to enhance their loyalty and commitment to the organization. On the other hand, the attracting and transitioning phases need some improvements. To approach a better laborer's attention, the brand's image should be more visible in the social channels and fairs. Meanwhile, a job rotation system is required in the future to increase effective transitioning procedures.

At the moment, the company's model has been implemented in the right direction, but some adjustments should be developed for future demands. The TM framework is still a new approach in the HR field. To acquire extraordinary competitiveness in the business, the company must concentrate on investing in an integrated TM model and practices.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

For recommendations, the researcher would go through the TM model and the practices within the hospitality industry. Regarding the TM model, some subjects need to have extra attention comprising the attracting, developing, and transitioning. In order to promote the company's brand more efficiently, a social media channel is an effective tool to catch the labor's eyes. Participating in the community's activities and sponsoring business events will strengthen the brand's image positively. Moreover, the company should actively attend the hospitality's fairs not only in Finland but also overseas to promote the reputation with other business partners. The developing phase is operating successfully; however, a clear career pathway policy must be improved to attain more exceptional hidden potential employees. The frequency of conducting the development discussion should be increased. In that way, the supervisors and managers will perceive the major employee's wishes and stories. Eventually, a job rotation system and a knowledge management system must be established to give the company a remarkable preparation when having a retirement or a termination, especially with the key roles.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

For limitations, the study will be better diversified if the number of interviewees increases. The interview was only with one interviewee and might cause some limitations in perceptiveness. In addition, there might be some misconceptions, and lack of information occurred because of the language barrier. Regarding the online survey, the number of respondents is minimal, which can decrease the reliability of the research. It was also difficult to catch the participants' attention when no official announcement of the existing thesis topic is available. Lastly, the company's handbook material was a time-consuming work for the researcher to translate it from Finnish into English.

6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The terms of “Reliability” and “Validity” were used to evaluate the quality of the research. Reliability indicates the consistency of a measure, while the accuracy of the measure is meant as validity (Middleton, 2019). Those elements are genuinely important to researchers in designing the research, planning the methods, examining the findings, and writing up the results.

Regarding the reliability, the suggestive number for the sample size of the survey is 285 respondents, which gives a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, only 66 answers were collected that increases the level of margin of error by 11.7% with the same confidence level. Even though the margin of error rises, the overall reliability of the whole research is still positive because there is another method used in this research, which is regulated in the HR expert’s insights and the company’s materials. The main theory was explained by the HR expert, who obtains a high intuition in the subject. If the same research methods are approached in further research, the results should remain at the same level.

Regarding the validity, the literature applied in the thesis were published in academic journals and books. The study adopts two research methods combining the quantitative and the qualitative to give an in-depth analysis and provide a fascinating result to answer the main research questions. Moreover, the chosen case company is a famous and big firm in the Finnish hospitality industry in which the researcher believes that it is the best reflection to demonstrate the thesis’s ideas. The interview and the online survey’s content were created based on the main theories which received authorization and approval of the thesis’s supervisor as well as the company’s expert. The HR expert gave recommendations and helped the researcher to adjust and translate some English terms into Finnish to assure the accurate understanding of the respondents.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is your position in company X?
 - a. Service Manager
 - b. Department Head
 - c. General Manager
 - d. Line staff
 - e. Other
2. How long have you worked in company X?
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1 – <2 years
 - c. 2 – <5 years
 - d. More than 5 years
3. How can you describe your organization's attractiveness?
Unattractive o 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o 5 Very attractive
4. What aspects do you think that shape the company's attractiveness when seeking for the job?
 - a. Company's brand
 - b. A top-notch career page
 - c. Positive social media presence
 - d. Other
5. How do you evaluate the company's onboarding program (job introduction)?
Ineffective o 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o 5 Very effective
6. How often does the company provide employee's training?
 - a. once a month
 - b. every quarter
 - c. every 6 month

- d. every year
7. What elements you think that are important to discuss in the performance appraisals?
 - a. Performance measurement of goals
 - b. Feedback from manager
 - c. Achievements
 - d. Training requirements
 - e. Future's plans for development
 - f. Other
 8. What components of culture affects to your spirit at work the most?
 - a. Solid communication
 - b. Good leadership
 - c. The community
 - d. Commitment to learning
 - e. Other
 9. Do you find any promising chances to promote your position in the company?
 - a. Yes, many
 - b. Yes, a few
 - c. Not at all
 10. How can you assess your commitment with the organization?
 - a. Low (Temporarily)
 - b. Moderate (Can change the job if possible)
 - c. High (Permanently)
 11. Are you willing to change or switch your position to another positions?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Maybe
 - c. No
 12. What are your expectations of the current position?
 13. How do you evaluate your company's performance among competitors in Finland?

Very poor o 1 o 2 o 3 o 4 o 5 Excellent

14. Do you have any suggestions to improve the company's performance?

15. Please add any ideas or feedbacks you would like to share about your experiences towards the company beyond the questions!

APPENDIX 2

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (for HR Expert)

Planning

1. Please describe how you create and administer the staff establishment plan (henkilöstösuunnitelma)?
2. How do you forecast the future talent needs and what kind of planning activities do you have within the Talent Management (TM)?

Attracting

1. Please describe the organization's talent acquisition?
2. How do you attract talents and are there any special measures for this?

Developing

1. Please describe the job introduction/induction process for new recruited talents
2. What kind of training opportunities do you have for talents?
3. How do you choose talents to TM-training programs and please describe these programs?

Retaining

1. What are the elements discussed in the performance appraisals? How often is the performance appraisal carried out?
2. Please describe the organization's remuneration strategy and how it is linked to TM?
3. How do you see the role of the company culture regarding retaining talents?

Transitioning

4. Do you have any job rotation system and if there is one, how it works?

5. Are there any procedures to transfer knowledge when talents change jobs or go the pension?

Other aspects

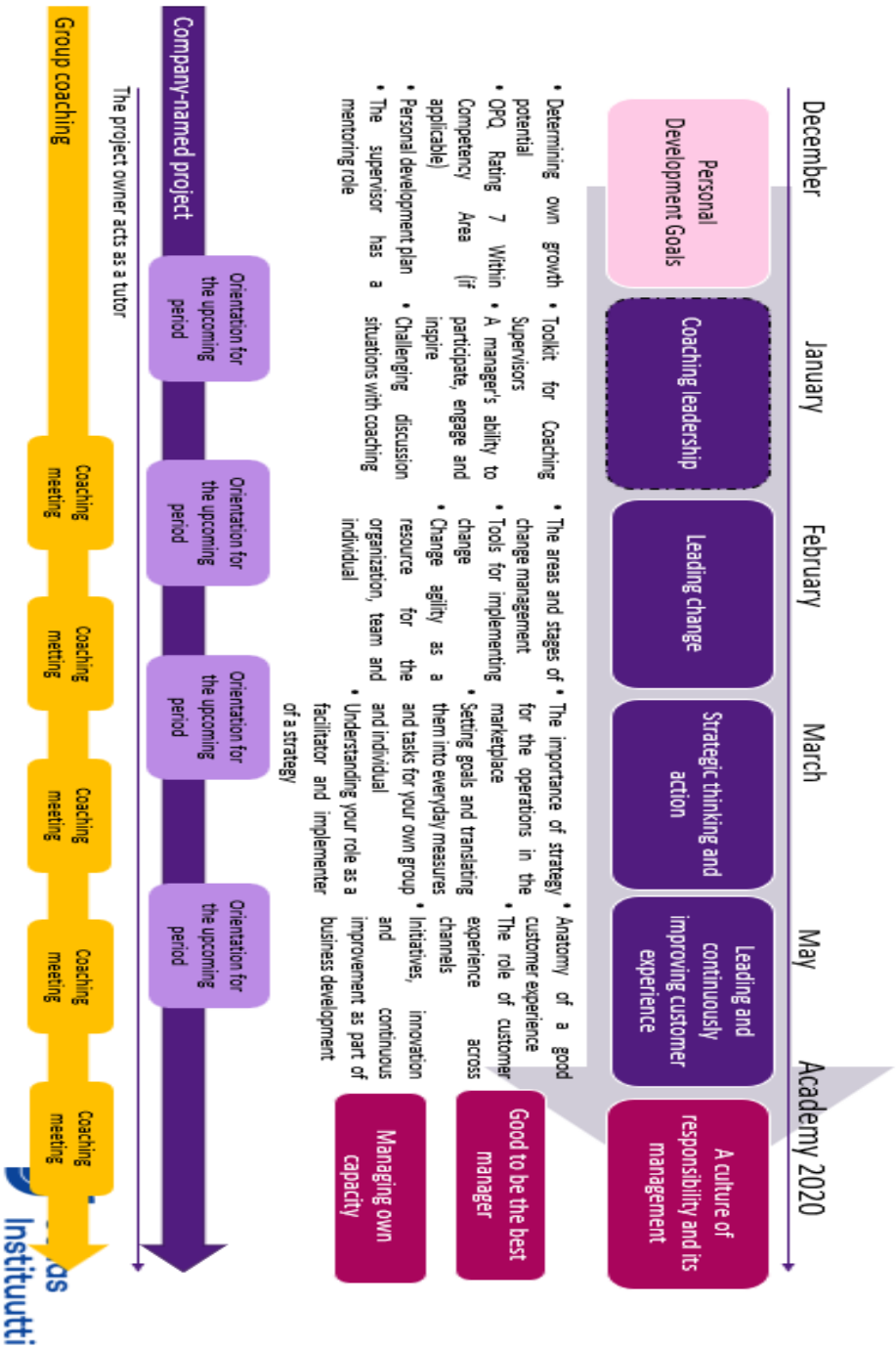
6. How do you create and assess the organization's TM model?
7. Does the company have plans to improve the model? If yes, what is it?

APPENDIX 3

THE TALENT MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL FOR THE PERIOD OF 2019 – 2020.

Proposal for Talent Structure 2019-20

Step 1. Master Talents



- Determining own growth potential
- OPQ Rating 7 Within Competency Area (if applicable)
- Personal development plan
- The supervisor has a mentoring role
- Toolkit for Supervisors
- A manager's ability to participate, engage and inspire
- Challenging discussion

- The areas and stages of change management
- Tools for implementing change
- Change agility as a resource for the organization, team and individual
- The importance of strategy for the operations in the marketplace
- Setting goals and translating them into everyday measures
- Understanding your role as a facilitator and implementer of a strategy

- Anatomy of a good customer experience
- The role of customer experience across
- Initiatives, innovation and continuous improvement as part of business development

APPENDIX 4

AN INVITATION LETTER

Hyvä kolleega,

Olen Yen Nguyen, neljännen vuoden opiskelija Vaasan Ammattikorkeakoulusta pääaineenani kansainvälinen liiketalous. Työskentelen myös kerrossiivoojana Original Sokos Hotel Royal Vaasassa. Lopputyöni aihe on “Talent Management in Hospitality Operations”.

Pyydän sinulta hetken aikaa kyselylomakkeen täyttämiseksi tutkimustani varten. Kyselyn tarkoituksena on tarkastella yrityksen Talent Management prosessia työntekijän näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää yrityksen Talent Management konsepti ja malli, jota käytetään hotellitoiminnassa. Tutkimusta ja kyselyä käytetään pohjana parantamaan yrityksen nykytilaa talentin löytämiseen ja säilyttämiseen, ja tarjoamaan jatkokehitysehdotuksia.

Olen saanut kyselyyn luvan työni ohjaajalta, esimieheltäni ja X-Oy HR-asiantuntijalta. Kyselyn kesto on noin 3-5 minuuttia ja se on luotu Google Forms sovelluksella. Vastaukset ovat täysin anonyymejä. Tukesi on erittäin merkityksellistä ja auttaa saamaan lopputyöni valmiiksi.

Klikkaa TÄSSÄ siirtyäksesi kyselyyn.

Lämpimät kiitokset tuestasi!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Yen Nguyen.