Sympa's Environmental Efforts in Employer Branding Communication

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Abstract

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The research-based thesis explores and analyses the environmental practices of case company Sympa. The background for the necessity of research was about further improvement of environmental efforts of the company. Additionally, it examines the positive effects of company's environmental efforts on employer branding communication.

The study starts with an introductory section where reason behind this report is explained and also consist of four investigative question about existing efforts, employees perception and beliefs on environmental sustainability provided base for employer branding interaction. Theoretical framework section has all information on internal and external environmental sustainability with the employer branding aspects with some highlights on trendy behaviour of the industry. Author collected existing data from HR unit and carried out own research during the author's employment period at the company.

The survey included combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches including both open and close ended questions. Survey link questionnaires was sent to all the employees of Sympa worldwide and sufficient responses 53 out of more than 150 were collected for the evaluation. The results showed that the company is well aware about the sustainability and current efforts are well appreciated by employees. However, they are expecting more initiation and activeness from managerial level and are ready to practice the common goals and suggestions.

Strategic and concrete implementation guidelines were provided at the end such as agreeing to mutual goals, listing environmental sustainability as KPI, sustainable outsourcing of suppliers, improvement on internal and external environmental sustainability. Furthermore, positive impact of environmental practices on employer branding communication was also discussed. Finally, the conclusion chapter review the whole thesis process with learning reflection and further recommendations.

Keywords

Sustainability, Environmental Efforts, Employer Branding, Employee, Stakeholders, Human Resource Management, Human Resource Tech

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1 Introduction

This research-based bachelor's thesis is under the Degree programme in International business in the specialization of Human Resource management. The chapter summarises the essential topics of the thesis report including background, research question and demarcation and international aspects. Furthermore, audience can find the specifics of company for whom this research proceeded. Benefits and key concepts are covered in this report and additionally, this chapter includes an overview of the commissioning company.

1.1 Background

Environmental sustainability is common priority for all kinds of organisations, nowadays sustainability is an essential part of the organisational strategy. Ukaga, Maser, & Reichenbach (2010) stated that although the term global warming is stated everywhere but nobody is aware about the full impacts thus, the new society should be ready for necessary adjustments to the present reality. For full understanding of actions of the individuals in the organisation, the prevailing culture, values of the organisation and the internal climate need to be taken in consideration (Taylor & Simpson, 2013, 73).

Currently many organisations has reviewed their environmental responsibility strategy by keeping in mind its effect on employer branding. Sustainability involves the values given to the internal and external stakeholders. Current employer branding concepts do not abide by the corporate conditions, it complies with the fact employer branding is an integrated part of sustainability strategy, therefore offering a new way of approaching employer branding as supporting sustainable organisational development and long-term stakeholders relationship (Aggerholm, Andersen, & Thomsen, 2011).

Sympa Oy is Finland based an international HR software solution provider company operating in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands and is author's case company. The organisational environment of Sympa is flexible and approachable, management has succeeded to deliver corporate partners values and behaviours to internal and external stakeholders in order to assure a good relationship. Therefore, its important to further work on company branding by emphasizing on environmental aspects precisley, how Sympa could contribute to our planet in many ways. Revisiting environmental strategy enhances Sympa's employer branding effort considering on the fact that Sympa is an internationally rapidly growing company.

The main plan for benefitting party is intended to analyse and provide an overview with possible guidelines on environmental aspects so that company could revisit its visions for

the future development. This thesis report was focused on utilizing company's environmental survey case study for its own employer branding communication.

Environmental aspects and employer branding are cohesive terms. These are important strategy or topics contained by Human Resource Management. Moreover, important to author's career development. It will be interesting to see the sustainability efforts of a software-based company. Via this project author is expecting to contribute to better employer branding experience of Sympa. Relating to this project, author can take useful ideas on how green and sustainable strategies are developed and implemented to enhance the company image.

1.2 Research Question

This research aimed to utilize company's environmental survey case study for its own employer branding communication.
Main research question was formulated as - How to utilise the elements of research survey on environmental sustainability in employer branding communication?

The Investigative questions of the thesis were distributed as follows: (IQ's)
IQ 1. What does company's current efforts say about them?
IQ 2. How do employees perceive sustainability?
IQ 3. How are the company's environment efforts affected by employee's perception?
IQ 4. How could Sympa apply its environmental sustainability belief in employer branding?

Table 1 below presents the theoretical framework, research methods and results for each Investigative question.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Investigative Question	Knowledge Base	Research Methods	Results
IQ 1. What does company's current efforts say about them?	Theories from quality sources on environmental efforts.	Desktop research and study.	Knowledge base for Chapter 2.
IQ 2. How do employees perceive sustainability?	Prior environmental sustainability efforts and reports.	Study of company internal SharePoint materials and online survey.	Ground support for the current sustainability efforts from the company.
IQ 3. How are the company's environment efforts affected by employee's perception?	Information and theories analysed from survey methods.	Online survey of all employees.	Knowledge of current environmental efforts scenario of the company.
IQ 4. How could Sympa apply its environmental sustainability belief in employer branding?	Result from data collected from survey and analysation of theories.	Analysing survey results and related theories.	Guidelines and insights related to employer branding and environment for strategic implementation.

1.3 Demarcation

The case company benefitted with an overall analysis of an internal survey along with, author's own environmental recommendations and the thesis report was focused on utilising survey case study for Sympa's employer branding communication.

1.4 International Aspect

The research-based project fulfilled the GLOBBA's requirement for an International aspect. Sympa is a Finnish company that has already internationalized itself by entering into the neighbour markets like Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands with diversified employees and offices. Sympa HR system is trusted by 800 plus organisations in over 100 countries. And the official language of Sympa is English.

1.5   Benefits

The project was beneficial for Sympa since the survey and findings will be utilised in developing and implementing company's environmental policy in near future. Eventually, this approach will lead to an effective employer branding communication. Findings and utilisation will benefit the company thus, Sympa will be able to attract more investors, applicants, customers, and suppliers.

This project had career developing benefits for author by, understanding how to manage a project and formulating sustainability strategies in near future if needed for a firm. For author, it was interesting to see how the environmental sustainability efforts enhance the company operations, applications, and incoming investments. On other hand, it was a great learning experience to look into the real-life employer branding experience.

1.6   Key Concepts

Environmental Responsibility is initially focused only on the environmental factors that threaten our earth but now it is no longer only about the planet or the environment, it is also about how organisations perceive sustainability, do they recognise the environmental issues from own level activities and surrounding. Kotler and lee (2004, 3) states sustainability as a voluntary commitment that a business makes by choosing and implementing moral or ethical practices in day-to-day operations.

Employer Branding in simple words is the organisation's image or reputation as an employer among the internal and external labour force. Generally, it is the process of promoting an organisation to a target group. With the development in digital age, talent attraction becomes complicated and important too. HR units are constantly under pressure to navigate among the desires and perspectives of new generations and techniques. Digital era is diverting and confusing so, HR need to focus on new strategies in order to grab the new candidate's attention. (Universum 2019.)

Human Resource Management is main organisational function with a professional accountability. HR unit ensures the employees abide by agreements, legislations, code of conduct and act as a gate to top management. HR not only take care of talent, recruitment and selection, employer branding, labour, community and unions but also for the strategic matters, it on purpose gets the interests of many stakeholders equally in the internal and external environment. (Paawe 2004, 48.)

Workplace environmental sustainability is about green practices around the workplace by supporting long term ecological solutions which lessen loss to the environment in big picture. Normally, going green is about being careful in preserving scarce resources of the planet however, Stringer (2009,16 -17) states that workplace sustainability is more than environmental concept, its about maintaining a work style which is manageable in aspects of life and the Workplace environmental sustainability is adapting at least some environment friendly measures that are suitable to the organsiation.

1.7 Commissioning Company

Sympa is Lahti based Finnish company founded in 2005 by two siblings, Tania and Keijo. They believed that companies would benefit if they were well informed about their personnel's talent and skills. With this believe and passion they developed the ideal tool. In that time there were not any fast and easy tools available. So, the idea developed into a desire to build a complete HR solution. This solution has assisted superior and subordinates in day-to-day human resource management. (Sympa 2021.)

With constant growth, sympa has succeded to establish its business on global market. Currently Sympa is popular among many internatonal organisations, with the vision of putting customers heart at the business company has been able to keep its customers happy and satisfied. Sympa now is the fastest growing HR solution provider in the Nordics, with more than 150 employess in eight offices and six countries. The solution is used in more than 100 countries and can be opened in 21 languages. (Sympa 2021.)

Company promises to assist companies in their daily HR operations. Sympa has been going with the idea of innovation based on latest trends in both software and HR development. Its vison is to expand into the new markets but will remain as a family-owned company. (Sympa 2021.)

This project author was working at Sympa as a business development summer trainee for six months and continued as a project worker for three months. Till date author has learned many new skills, tools and rapid professional develoment. This research was supervised by HR unit of the company, so switching between the units and taking responsibility of tasks has been exciting to learn.

 HR unit took a new approach, of doing an internal research on overall environmental efforts which was interesting, generally big manufacturing companies carry this kind of research thus, it was fascinating to see the insights and efforts from a tech company.

Later in the future, author and company itself would like to see more progress in an overall employer branding.

2 Environmental Responsibility and Employer Branding

The chapter includes the required knowledge base for the report or the overall baseline information to support the project objective, also the demarcated concepts to support the research questions.

2.1 Environmental Responsibility

Environmental aspects get the most attention. With the increase in global warming organisations are aware of the negative impact on the planet, so firms are reducing the usage of plastics packaging, waste, carbon prints and focusing on recycling. However, not all entities are coming in with the idea of global warming, denial and ignorance of those organisations have resulted in natural calamities.

Kotler and Lee have given an example of a CEO comments on CSR. Ford Motor Company: "There is a difference between a good company and a great company. A good company offers excellent products and services. A great company also offers excellent products and services but also strives to make world a better place (Kotler & Lee 2004, 6). In economic point of view, Idowu (2015, 13) state that the classic thinking of the past has outlived itself, passed its sell by date, and now be confined to history where it belongs; it is no longer about the question of whether "there should be more competition or more corporation." A sustainably functioning society needs everything in balance.

In past years, community goals were charitable activities that were seen separately from business goals which were not essential to them. Performing well and performing good were perceived as two different activities. But in today's world that is changing. The thing many companies are learning today is that edge to edge innovation and competitive advantage can result from weaving environmental considerations into business strategy from the first day of its operations. (Kotler & Lee 2004, 1.)

However, the accountability and responsibility of the business has come under question mark by the society, Idowu (2015, 17) states that the faulty lending practices and decisions are driven by short-term profit maximization resulting in environmental crisis.

Everyone talks about environmental sustainability but neglects to execute the real measures, unfortunately nobody knows where to start the sustainable balance.Human activities are so convincing that they are capable of shifting the earth system in many ways and would change the practicability of processes upon which ecosystem depend. (Moran 2010, 24.)

Today, almost all size of organisations (big,small and medium) are expected to release their environmental policies publicly. Not only for the company or employer branding but as a human being it is important to think and act about environmental ethics & responsibility.

2.2 Internal Environmental Sustainability

Internal Environmental Sustainability is the awareness and efforts carried out by the organisations internally. Furthermore, inhouse environmental management comprises of putting a set of actions into practicality to attain firm's specific internal objectives (Giovanni 2012, 265). Generally, internal green practices are specially practiced in service-based organisations, no question that production-based organisations also practice these equally, but service sector pays special attention to inhouse sustainability practices. Whether or not the organisations have sustainability objectives in take on, market and industry forces are shaping them to make major changes in the way of strategies (Stringer 2009, 28).

Sustainable strategy in terms of organisational operations not only influences sustainable product and processes but also the firm's overall behaviour. Several researchers argue there is a strong need of incorporation of firms internal and external behaviour. (D'Souza, Taghian, Mort, & Gilmore 2015, 3.) Internal green practices are hard to maintain if external attributes doesn't go as planned such as internal design, there is no point of planning of automatic lights if vendor don't have facilities inside the space. Stringer (2009, 28) emphasize that there are more to be done than driving hybrids and replacing light bulbs. Employers will need to drop their expectations about how work happens, and employees will need to reconsider about their way of working and living (Stringer 2009, 28).

On the other hand, employees are able to take care of surrounding if their well being is taken care of. Logically, it's a human nature that, a person cannot focus better to other attributes if self welfare isn't in the better place. In this scenario, human resource unit plays an active role in leading inititiaves related to sustainable workplace. The idea of employee welfare goes beyond the law requirement. An organisation can do a lot more better in their internal atmosphere so that, employees can think about the internal green sustainable efforts. Organisations are using pioneering solutions to assist their employees adapt to social, economial and environmental change, they are accepting trending global needs and motivating employees to business sustainability goal. (Singh, Pradhan, Panigrahy, & Jena 2019.)

Additionally, every single individual in an organisation understands the workplace environmental sustainanbility however, without a proper initiation from management can lead to confusions and demotivation among the staffs. Thus, proper planning and strategic implementation is crucial to start with the sustainability.

2.3 External Environmental Sustainability

Environmental ethics and efforts that are considered externally especially thinking about the direct impact of global warming. Globally, the topic is intimidating and trendy however, nobody has dig into the seriousness of this topic. Even though many have tried to go to depth, but vicious circle of bureaucracy, ignorance and petite knowledge have made these efforts more complicated. Today, many organisations take the term 'Environmental Sustainability' as a long-term strategy rather than a destination.

Environmental sustainability requires the free expression to openly discuss the challenges and debate ideas and views for further learning. Moreover, it also requires the sensible thinking and interactions. Working forward into this topic is challenging because the requirement is not only serious commitment, but also applicable tools and systems for shifting properly from awareness, interest, attitude, and knowledge to workable step towards sustainability. For interested group in nurturing environmental sustainability will benefit from concrete ideas about further planning to meet serious needs. (Ukaga , Maser, & Reichenbach 2010, 11.)

Giovanni (2012, 265) shows a deep concern for environmental degradation as many organisations implement the unsustainable strategies in their operations. On the bright side of the concern, firms adapt internal as well as external environmental programs to prevent the harmful impacts of their operations. While inclusive debate is going on regarding sustainability, firms carry out external efforts with the intent of co-operating with its first, second and third parties. Organisations tend to choose the best strategies which matches with its own industry and resources. (Giovanni 2012, 266-267.)

Ukaga & al. (2010, 12) insists learning from many examples of sustainable practices that can be applicable to own day to day situations. An individual personal choices and practices will gradually effect to a community, then a state, nation and in the long run to the world, furthermore a small commitment plays a huge role for a positive contribution in a big picture. Organisations can take smart steps in managing external sustainability such as supporting transportation requirement management, its an approach to enourage employees to reduce frequent automobile use in other than peak periods. External environment sustainabiity have both environmental and organisational benefits in overall

for instance, increased market anad industry value, recruit and retain talents and attracting stakeholders. (Stringer 2009, 30.)

2.4 Employer Branding

In this connected world employer branding has found the force, generally it is the process of promoting an organisation to a target group. Advancing the employer brand strategies and principles along with overall HR management can act as a considerable distinguishing factor. Effective communication with outside world in maintaining employer branding image stands out the competitive advantage of company and attracts prospective talents (Universum 2019).

Barrow & Mosley (2005, 25) have stated the impact of change in corporate operations result in groupism and commercial failure can be directly linked to a organisation's ability as an employer, however sound the strategy and the technical abilities of the people. Strengthening the brand image can be a big deal for HR which largely depends upon the website content for e.g. inclusion, gender equality (refering to the organisation team page), sustainability report, ergonomic content, employee experience blogs and many more.

Companies are judgeable by the workforce. Good companies attract good talents, these talents comes and choose to stay because they feel well valued. However, the leading best companies set a unique organisation culture and brand identity. While overviewing the necessity of employer branding, Deloitte summarises the broader view of inclusion and diversity as being open and diversified about thoughts where different point of view and abilities are main area of difference, rather than observable attributes (Mosley 2014). Sustainability and employer branding are an integrated terms. HR can implement sustainanble approach by fulfilling two points. First is meeting employees needs and expectations at the work place secondly, company increasing their competitive advantage by running legal entreprenuership and green choices in daily operations (App & Buttgen, 2016).

Lybrand (2018) compares corporate brand, which presents a value proposition to customers by distinguishing its products in the market whereas an employer brand is about the market's view of the company as an employer. Additionally, also describes employee value proposition to employees in exchange of their experiences and talents. Effective employer brand strategy includes inspiring employees to use social media networks to represent themselves and circulate good word about the company.

2.5 Environmental Sustainability Trends in Case Company Industry

Usually, for service providing tech companies environmental sustainability awareness is on neutral zone as they do not directly harm the environment. However, with an alarming global warming tension even service providing tech companies are obliged to contribute to save our planet. The effort may seem small but in big picture it makes a huge difference.

Organisations are doing their best to blend sustainable strategies into their main goals and operations. Nevertheless, organisations cannot entirely attain the expected outcomes of their sustainability programs without a determined workforce. Such workforce engagement efforts involve effective leadership and involvement of human resource unit, which are responsible for developing systems for overall employee management. Most of the companies HR unit is well aware of importance of sustainability lead role for the employer branding and also believe that it is achievable. Sustainable HR practices that are developed to help organisations successfully boost the environmental attributes of their sustainable development efforts. (Milliman 2013.)

Table 2 below shows the different Environmental Sustainability trends from three example companies.

Table 2. Example of environmental sustainability trends, compiled from (SAP, 2016) (Triskova, 2017) (Aditro, 2019)

Company 1	Company 2	Company 3
• Environmental policy compulsorily followed by employees and subcontractors • Trainings and needed tools for recycling to all employees • Sustainable selection of raw materials, less travelling and remote approach • Choosing suppliers with ISO value requirements • Timely documentation environment progress and activities from local offices • Commitment from every single employee	• Acting in environmental friendly behavior in and out of the premises. • Consistent and systematic waste sorting • Sustainable choose of resources such as water and electricity • Inspection of emissions from company cars used for business purpose • Education to all stakeholders on environmental issues via trainings, campaigns, emails etc. • Strong employer branding with the perception as environment protection • Public complaince with requirements of environmental ISO	• Goals to reduce carbon emissions in near future • Reduce of plastic use and proper waste sorting • Mindful water consumption • Transparency and documentation of progress • Employee awareness and engagement • Environmetally sustainable third party alliance • Less travelling • Remote working approach • Eco-friendly commuting options as possible • Sustainable product manufacturing and design strategies • Code of conduct

Misapprehensions about sustainable practices are stopping with the certain green project fulfillment. The reality is organisations have to continously run with the policies until the existence of business, moreover constant reminder and awareness of staffs is not enough. Improving practices and serious implementation is also crucial. No business is perfect taking risks, trial and error process bring better solutions everyday. Continuous observation is essential to ensure that these strategies integrate in common belief. Importantly, frustration may arise in between if the things does not go as planned, but efforts will always lead into encouraging events such as acquisitions, new pool of talent, employee retention and many more. (Stringer 2009, 93-94.)

D'Souza et al. (2015, 4) suggests in adopting green strategy in other components of business such as marketing, which openly attracts several changes in operational areas that support policy execution. Environmental methods accept better production processes and therefore sustainable products. Managers are required to tackle environmental problems by putting more emphasis on sustainable green production, methods and improvement. Moran (2010, 147) believes green decision making requires a combination of environmental science with a knowledge of human-environment connections and enhancement of methodologies that combine science with understanding of human values and organizations so that the decisions are accountable, capable and socially suitable.

2.6   Environmental Sustainability and Employer Branding

Increasing global warming has encouraged organisations to take environmentally friendly measures in their operations. Sustainable actions combined with business operations results in positive employer branding. Once organisations adapt methods for sustainable development, it changes stakeholder's relation and organisational procedures, including employer branding processes (Aggerholm, Andersen, & Thompsen, 2011, 105.) On the organisational strategic level, Employer Branding can be attained through the coordination between sustainability approaches and Human Resource Management. At the operating level, many sustainable practices can be used to develop and apply an efficient employer branding at achieving corporate sustainability through HRM. (Vanka, Rao, Singh, & Rao 2020, 133.)

Intergrating sustainability is not obligatory however, a pressure for companies to practice sustainability has emerged from important groups such as, investors, employees, customers, suppliers, legislations and code of conduct. As awareness and interest towards sustainability increases and stakeholders activities becomes more ovious, companies have increased efforts to incorporate the environmental matters of their

operations with the stakeholders for efficient employer branding communication. (Aggerholm et al. 2011,107.)

Organisations progressively attract upon sustainable in their efforts to develop its employer branding to attract and engage both on team and future potential talents and to make sure consistency in employee brand behaviours. The planned integration of sustainability and employer branding helps in communication and enhances the company brand. Organisational green approaches highlights brand value and has ability to pull or draw and preserve the talent. (Vanka et al. 2020, 141.) Not only sustainable methods contribute in employer branding but also in sustainable human resource management.

The introducing of sustainable values in use of branding will strengthen the strategy in attracting the potential candidates and employee retention. The force between sustainable initiatives and employer branding policies results in reputative higher corporate identification which, in change, covers the way for enhanced employee commitment and overall organisational performance. (Vanka et al. 2020,141.)

Internal and external environmental sustainability efforts from human resource management would re-conceptualize and add a new perspective to employer branding along with other employer branding components.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (author's own illustration)

As above figure illustrates, combination of overall sustainability with human resouce management is an exclusive way of fulfilling employer branding goals. Human resource management could play an important role in fulfilling sustainability goal by generating awareness around the organisation about global warming. Certainly , every individual is

aware about the global warming however, HR could initiate and conduct webinars, trainings and strategic implementations for internal sustainability such as, waste sorting, energy saving, using recycled raw materials or seeking for sustainable source of energy around the workplace. Furthermore, green practices in the company should be an strategic policy of business processes, so that the topic is given equal importance as other components.

Sympa as a HR software company might face challenges in fulfilling sustainability goals specially when sustainability turns into a strategic goal. Therefore, it is essential to expand the range of human resource management to employer branding. Moreover, strategic objectives establishes, cooperates and operates sustainable relationships between a firm and its stakeholders co-creating good values for the society as a whole. (Aggerholm et al. 2011, 113.)

Ukaga et al. (2010, 11) believes that the sustainable development involves the ability to think about methods and potential interfaces. Sustainanbility is the 'term' which is to be followed everyday, therefore is an ultimate toward which we make every effort that cannot be accomplished at a certain point of time. HR is responsible for both employees and management thus, working for this concept certainly is a challenging task that entails serious efforts with appropriate systems and strategy for organisational awareness and practicality towards sustainability. Adjustments to existing behaviour is the most important part of making eco-friendly workplace and business operations. However, high-fi tech waste sorting or sharing ride does not make companies any greener. Important initial tools for making difference are education, change management handling and change in policies.

Sustainable operations are actions related to controlling and evaluating the actions of facilities to minimize water and energy use. Business related operational strategies include such as business contracts from green sources, adapting sustainable models building structures so that the building setting will minimize the environmental impacts. Key point here is to bend around the organisational sustainable strategies. Stringer (2009, 89) suggests human resource can list some investigative questions for proper implementation of environmental practices:

- How environmentally sustainable the strategy is focusing on overall impact?
- What is the difference between company's current practices vs desired pratices?
- Who is responsible for the lead and implementation of the policies?
- Checking whether strategy aligns with corporate vision and goals.

- The attributes where company can implement the measures.
- Easiness of implementation and planning of overall cost.

At an abstract level, regulate basic workplace policies that have an positive effect on the environment. The planning of recognizing possible projects is crucial in understanding the ground needed to cover.

3   Research Methods

Balance of both quantitative and qualitative approach were used for research in this project. Quantitative approach was chosen because of larger sample size, for instance, the whole employees of commissioning company. It was simpler to reach to a common or general conclusion and easier to analysis. Quantitative approach collects the required information quickly for e.g., surveys, interviews, experiments provide instant answers, can be also seen as data-centred process. (Bryman 2006, 97-113.)

Good point about this approach was, it does not require separations of variables to deliver the results and participants do not have to give personal preferential answers to the questions asked but for the depth of the survey close-ended quantitative questions were also asked. Different methods have its own different strengths but combining these methods has to be balanced to bring the desired outcome. (Morgan 2014.)

In some cases, only quantitative approach would not be enough so, qualitative approach was also required. Communicating method for the data collection for this project was questionnaire-survey so, the open-ended questions let the participants to convey the opinions freely on the particular subject.

All employees of the commisining company including People and Culture Coordinator and with access to company's intranet share point materials, having the work experience in the company, employees/managers were aware of the sustainability facts and are willing to help in employer branding. Getting an analysis for environmental survey results was an important thing for whole team. For sure, valuable information and the motivation for contribution was expected from the teams.

3.1 Research Methods Design

The research methods design had four investigative questions (IQ's) and were implemented during the thesis project.

Table 3. Research design methods

Investigative Questions	Data Sources	Research Method	Method Outcome	Results
IQ 1. What does company's current efforts say about them?	Available public and company resources.	Desktop research and study.	Support to research questions 2-4.	Adequate base support to the project.
IQ 2. How do employees perceive sustainability?	Analyse and documentation of prior and current company reports as well as browsing through other company Environmental efforts.	Study of company materials via intranet, share point and meeting with People and Culture Coordinator.	Support to the analysation of Environmental survey results.	Knowledge base for the IQ 3 and 4.
IQ 3. How are the company's environment efforts affected by employee's perception?	Information and theories analysed from survey methods.	Survey form to be send to all employees of the company.	Knowledge support for the analysation of Environmental survey results.	Data collection for analysation and guidelines.
IQ 4. How could Sympa apply its environmental sustainability belief in employer branding?	Results from data collected from survey and analysation of theories.	Outcomes from data collected from survey and analysation of those results.	Insights and outcome.	Guidelines and insights related to employer branding and environment for strategic implementation.

3.2   Investigative Questions Management Methods

Referring to above figure all investigative questions were categorised according to the data sources, research method, method outcome and the results. First question was about understanding company's current environmental efforts for the report from available public and company resources by doing desktop research and studies. Public resources included high quality books and articles materials. This task supported the other continued tasks 2 - 4. Theoretical framework would help audience to understand the whole picture of the report.

 Second question was about employees perceiving sustainability. Author browsed through all available online or physical materials available in company internal website or from people co-ordinator. Knowledge base of this investigative question supported in analysation of survey results report and also to IQs 3 and 4. Available reports and statistics were important for questionnaire formation and content visualization.

Third question was about how employee's perception affect overall environmental efforts. Conducting online survey internally with open ended and closed ended questions around Sympa and gathering the data on sustainability activities and commitment to the environmental sustainability agenda. Survey helped to gather the data on employees' effort on sustainability and also on the organisational level. On the other hand, management can get more creative ideas from its people on formulating sustainable strategies.

Fourth question was about how Sympa could apply its environmentally sustainable belief in employer branding. This question answered by data collection from survey results, theories, and basic practices of company. Main insights, outcome and importantly guidelines related to employer branding and environment for strategic implementation.

In overall, author got feedback on whole survey from the management which will help in author' s own learning experience. Not only to the author company will also find out about the approaches and methods to prepare future environmentally sustainable policies because the survey has valuable information and suggestions from company's workforce which is a great finding to the organisation as a whole.

3.3 Analysis of Existing Environmental Efforts from Desktop Study

Analysis of existing environmental efforts of Sympa was necessary and significant for understanding the full picture. Sympa being a tech company was willing to assess its ability in contributing to our planet and support in reducing global warming effects. Generally, software solution providing companies do not often put sustainability in first place, without denying the fact that they do care about the environment.

For the desktop study author referred to different quality sources and company materials. Previously, author was working at the case company thus, had access to all internal materials related to environmental efforts of the company. Author had huge help from HR specially from People and Culture Coordinator. People and Culture Coordinator provided with all required past and existing documents and information for analysing Sympa's organisational efforts. While exploring existing efforts of company author realised there has been many good attempts from the people of Sympa however, active planning, implementation and participations would be more beneficial.

Cumulative efforts of Sympa to sustain internal and external sustainability that are visible in their organisational strategy are:

3.3.1 Green Office

The idea of Green office is intended to create an awareness among employees about environmental impacts of office work. Sympa thrives to be a sustainability-oriented business in HR tech industry. Sympa believes in bringing change from within will eventually make a positive change in big context. The concept seeks for tangible outcomes to develop the green accomplishment of the company. Moreover, the Green office accelerate actions that encourage ecological everyday life. This concept has motivated whole organisation in adapting eco-friendly practices and to take on environmentally friendly choices. Sympa has succeeded to some extent in engaging employees towards the concept of green office. Sympa has implemented the concept of green office in many ways such as energy preservation making sure unwanted lights are turned off and automatic lights in all locations according to local arrangements. Sympa has encouraged its employees in general waste sorting such as bio, plastics, and other waste inside the workplace. Furthermore, Sympa's maximum operation is paperless saving as much as paper and also printer in daily use. Sympa's flexible working environment encourages remote working if needed and less travelling specially less flying additionally, currently due to remote working and less travelling environmental goals are becoming relevant and positively perceived by all employees.

3.3.2   Sustainability Club

Sympa has a sustainability club with multiple numbers of team members of the company. Club is a pioneering, sustainable oriented organisational influence which encourages ecological practice inside and outside of the company. Club is dedicated to reducing the environmental impact from organisational operation as much as possible. With the mindset of finding greener ways of working both internally and externally club has succeeded in playing an important role in fulfilling company' s sustainability objectives. Club is also responsible for establishing long-term and short-term environmentally friendly goals for internal affairs and external affairs of the company. Sustainable club also acts as a facilitator for encouraging green behaviour around the organisation. In addition to above mentioned efforts of green office, club has set targets for proper recycling and sorting of all types of materials such as metals, cardboards, electronics items etc. volunteering in sustainable practices, donations, balanced schedule for online and face to face meetings with customers or with other parties. Sympa is an international company hence sustainable efforts may vary according to country wise location and local agreements. However, organisational collective efforts will be environmentally friendly regardless the locations.

3.4   Challenges

Author worked in the company previously thus, no challenges were faced in accessing existing resources and documents. Moreover, author got full support from People and Culture Coordinator and received additional required documents. However, due to the less amount of information on the topic, detailed analysis was challenging and as well as the step of going further deep in sustainable efforts was on progress in the company. So, company has been exploring various way to enhance its efforts and set company's employer branding to the new level.

4 Results/Analysis of Online Survey Questionnaires

The following section includes the results and analysis of online survey. Chapter consists of methods carried out in online survey, time duration of the survey, end outcomes and challenges faced during the survey, analysis of whole scenario, future guidelines and conclusions.

4.1 Task Management Methods

The main goal of survey was to gain the information about how employees perceive Sympa's environmental sustainability in big picture. Moreover, how satisfied employees are from company efforts, employees understanding of green office and other improvements required in successful sustainability implementation. Previously, HR unit has not done any survey on environmental aspects. Therefore, the online survey showed different aspects that are needed to be improved or to be changed and implemented.

Author prepared set of questions which can be found in attachment section in this report. Both open ended and close ended questions were prepared for the survey. Online survey questionnaires were circulated around Sympa to all employees. In group of over 150 employees worldwide, 53 answers were collected which is enough number for the data collection (Sympa 2021). The questions were prepared being based on author's personal observation and desktop study from available resources. The respondents were also requested to give their open suggestions about the improvements and implementations on environmental sustainability.

The online survey was designed on Webropol which is an electronic system used for survey. Survey link was sent to all employees of Sympa around the national and international locations via email. And the questionnaires are attached in attachment section at the end of this report. Survey was taken on November 2020 and open for couple of days. Reminders via email were also sent in between the survey. Time duration to complete survey was approximately 5 -10 minutes. The survey consisted information concerning importance of response from all employees and how the results are used and how the outcomes will enhance the efforts of a software-based company in the environmental sustainability.

Overall, the task management went without any obstacles. Full support from HR and other units were received. Everybody perceived the survey as significant step to improve organisation sustainable efforts. Responses gave good insights to HR to create strategies from different perspective.

4.2 End results of survey

The first general question was about country and the location. The goal of this question was to recognise the location base count of employees responses.

Table 4. Respondents according to the locations worldwide

Locations	Percent
Denmark	9.44%
Lahti	28.3%
Vantaa	33.96%
Norway	1.89%
Netherlands	3.77%
Sweden	22.64%

In total of 53 (100%) most of the respondents were from Finland (Vantaa and Lahti). Secondly, respondents were from Sweden which is a second biggest market of Sympa. Then followed by Sympa's strong prospects markets Denmark, Netherlands, and Norway. While evaluating the illustrations in Table 4, the location wise percentage with larger number of employees can initiate and enhance their external and internal sustainability efforts because the daily activities of large number of people have some effect on environment. Additionally, the progress can be shared in monthly meetings and other locations can initiate the efforts from large markets and apply the practices by following the local arrangements. Understandably, the location with lower number of employees should also contribute from their side fundamentally, the scenario here is about an organisation as a whole family.

4.2.1 Green Office Implementation

The objective of the second question was about finding out employees perception on green office implementation. The options went from 'very efficiently, efficiently, neutral, to not at all'.

Table 5. Data on employees perception about green office implementation

Options	Percent
Very efficiently	9.43%
Efficiently	30.19%
Neutral	52.83%
Not at all	7.55%

According to the data in Table 5, most of the employees believed that green practices are neutrally implemented around the organisation whereas some of them stated that the green office execution is successfully efficient and few believed that Sympa is in very efficient in green offices practices. Only small amount believed that there has not been proper execution of green concept around the offices. The results derived will positively affect the orgainsational operations because most of the respondents believed that green office implementation has been a success. Author realised that HR unit should come up with a green office/workplace environmental management framework by engaging and communicating with employees from top to bottom level. Importantly, green office progression could be listed in certain months goal and be followed in every two months or whatever time period decided.

In overall, the results are satisfying because most of the employees believe that Sympa has been quite effective in green practices around the organisation however, on other hand it is clear that company should step up with strategic planning and proper application of the idea of green offices. General practices such as sorting and recycling, using normal dishes rather than disposables, recycled coffee filters if possible, plants and contracts from green suppliers for office supplies for e.g. stationaries, furnitures, and other tiny details inside the office.

4.2.2   Workplace Environmental Sustainability

 The objective of this question was about finding the employee satisfaction on company efforts on workplace environmental sustainability.

Table 6. Data on employees satisfaction on workplace environmental sustainability

Options	Percent
Very Satisfied	13.21%
Satisfied	35.85%
Neutral	39.62%
Dissatisfied	11.32%

The Table 6 illustrates that most of the respondents were objectively satisfied with the efforts whereas some are extremely satisfied and few of them were dissatisfied regarding organisational efforts. While reviewing these results numbers here comes Sympa's responsibility for implementation for effective sustainable practices. They should list sustainable progressions and document those for annual reporting. Environmental efforts should

be an organisational core strategy. Human Resource and main management should start initiating to apply the green practices that are important and measurable. The step does not have to be big and extravagant, small steps are great enough to reach to the desired goal. Location wise managers including teams should be active in executing and recording the sustainability developments.

In continuation, fourth question was asked to describe their selection if respondents indicated dissatisfaction and very dissatisfaction in previous question number (3). Most of employees were dissatisfied regarding waste sorting in particular locations since no clear policy has been circulated around Sympa to follow or share with the prospects. On other hand, some of the employees were dissatisfied of extensive travelling and less choices for recycling. Whereas some of employees do not see any initiatives taken on environmental sustainability. Employees insisted on taking baby steps on fulfilling environmental goals such as common goals/KPIs, recycling of all types of wastes generated in the operations and less travelling. Company could work on identifying the sustainability issues related to workplace as already mentioned and prioritise internal stakeholders in decision making. Although the discussions and decisions might be complicated at the early stages, but the finest strategies make sensible direction in coming days.

4.2.3 Commuting Methods

The goals of this question were to know about respondents commuting method to the workplace and ground data to the next explanatory question.

Table 7. Data on transportation methods used by employees

Options	Percent
Bicycle	9.43%
Car	52.83%
Train/Bus	35.85%
Walking	1.89%

While evaluating Table 7 results, it is quite obvious that maximum employees commute by car and reasonable counts commute by train and bus. Only few numbers of people come to work by walking and of employees prefer bicycle which is more environment friendly. Although everybody commutes in their own comfort and availability of vehicle however, company can have a discussion with employees about using public transportations if they are provided with for example free tickets or explore other sustainable possibilities through brainstorming with employees. Sixth question was continuation descriptive open-end

question to the fifth question. Respondents were asked if employer decides to support if not supported already the commuting expenses are employees are willing to change the transportation method. In total of 53 respondents 34% (derived from count of survey comments) in total respondents are willing to change the commuting methods to public and bike. Others remaining 66% (derived from count of survey comments) were in favour of car because of time saving, convenience and family.

Although this alternative is quite tricky to apply directly but Sympa can have a distinctive plan and discussions about implementing in possible ways. For instance, company can provide benefits for those who want to switch to public commuting. This step might motivate employees to consider public commutes over excess use of car in future. However, the planning and application should be realistic and targeted to interested people. This approach takes a monthly follow-up with benefit using employees to make sure how convenient this approach is to continue efficiently.

4.2.4 Basic Surrounding Environmental Elements

Seventh question asked how often employees remember basic environmentally friendly attributes around their workplace. The results provided the general practices around the workplace. While evaluating the responses employees try to use less papers, printers and importantly turning off lights after use. In future also Sympa as an organisation should practice these kinds of sustainable measures around the workplace. These practices will decrease excess energy usage and will contribute to environment in big picture which Sympa is determined to apply in its business operations.

In addition to all efforts, employees require strong guidance and communication on internal practices and comprehensible new plans. Importantly, for successful practice of green efforts employees should realise the influence of their daily activities in environmental workplace sustainability. Managers should take the responsibility for necessary tools and assistance. Sympa should understand that our surrounding provides plenty of prospects for practicing environmental efforts for instance using less printer to putting off main plug after use thus, there are many methods to make environmentally friendly atmosphere.
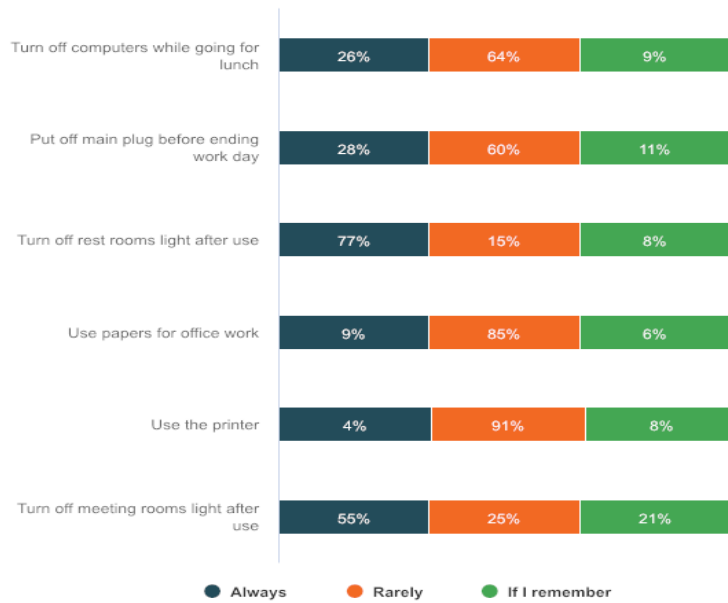
Figure 2. The visualisations in percentage from respondents

4.2.5 Use of Waste Sorting Spaces

The objective of eighth question is about the use waste sorting spaces by employees if available.

Table 8. Data on employees use of waste sorting spaces

Options	Percent
Always	64.15%
Rarely	13.21%
Not applicable	22.64%

While evaluating the Table 8, large number in total respondents used spaces regularly which is encouraging towards sustainability goals. Whereas some of the respondents answered not applicable that means no sorting facilities were available. The not applicable has nothing to do with the individual choice because not every international location has sorting space as in local market, it totally depends upon local vendor's planning. By reviewing these results, it is clear that Sympa is aware of sorting and recycling and should continue working on organisational common goals and work on arranging sorting facilities in all locations according to local guidelines. Additionally, very few of the respondents mentioned they rarely use sorting places. However, the numbers are good enough for motivation in continuing green practices. People of Sympa should continue the sorting practices and also introduce to those locations where sorting practices are not practiced.

Daily business behaviours emit lot of wastes such as, cardboards, plastics, metals, papers, and bio wastes. Thus, with the clear waste space markers detailed application and embracing the changes will fasten the desired results. Every employee should understand how to reduce and how to handle all types of wastes. By certain time span these steps will get more meaningful and influential around the company.

4.2.6 General Flying Culture

Business operations require frequent flying throughout the work journey however unnecessary numerous flying is harmful to our planet. For same concern, respondents were asked about times of flying on a yearly basis in nineth question.

Table 9. Data on employees flying culture on yearly basis

Options	Percent
Never	30.19%
Less than 5	33.96%
5 - 10	22.64%
10 - 15	5.66%
15 -20	3.78%
20 -30	0%
More than 30	3.77%

 Table 9 illustration shows that the top-level employees fly frequently due to the necessity of management decision making position. While others fly due to the client requirements, team responsibilities, exchange programs, seminars and many more. It is understandable that internationally operating business requires regular flying, but employees should understand the urgency of flying if it is that necessary to be one to one and anticipate if responsibilities can be fulfilled via remote meeting. In this busy world, time is money and matters a lot however, if things get planned beforehand then it is still manageable for instance considering public transportation replacing short distance flights because emissions happen a lot in the course of departure and arrival at the runway. Thus, this approach is more feasible, cost friendly and environment friendly.

Sympa should implement some strategic policies on urgence of flying. Previously, author was working on Sympa in pandemic time when everything went remote and understood advantage of virtual working similarly, Sympa have also understood the environmental pros of going to remote environment. The world has seen that everything is possible via remote working and work productivity has also increased therefore, author would suggest considering remote meetings at normal time also.

4.2.7 Employees Overall Feedback

Final question was asked if respondents have any advice, updates, or comments that they want to add on improving Sympa's sustainability efforts. While reviewing the comments it seemed that most of the employees understand sustainability and if they get more specific guidelines on environmental sustainability and initiation from the management, they would definitely be motivated to practice sustainable approaches such as campaigns regarding how sustainability works and its benefits. Some of the employees insisted keeping up with the online meeting culture in normal times too. Most of the employees supported automatic lightings, waste sorting facilities for all kind of wastes and flying if the situation is utmost essential.

In conclusion, Sympa as a team should come up with a plan and communicate in an organisational level and importantly country managers should take the responsibility of the local sustainable efforts because the regulations are different per country. Other great options highlighted were planting trees, volunteering in sustainable activities and increase of plants around the workplace. All opinions will encourage constant developments towards eliminating the impacts on environment and encourage management level to act quickly. Internal stakeholders motivation will definitely improve the overall environmental sustainability of the organisation.

4.3 Analysis of Survey Outcomes on Environmental Aspects of Sympa

The goal of the survey is to get an overall view, ideas, recommendations from people of Sympa on an internal environmental aspect of the company and as well as externally, how Sympa as an international organisation contribute to our environment in big picture. By exploring all results from survey, it is clear that Sympa has tried its best to reach to its environmental objective. All employees of Sympa openly put their clear feedback on environmental survey. Most of the employees were satisfied with sustainable efforts however further active and planned implementation will make employees more satisfied and motivated.

It is quite rare for a software providing service sector to dig deep down to the environmental aspects like big productions companies. Normal daily business operations feel like there is no harm done to our planet, to some extent this fact is true because no hazardous elements are physically released to the environment. On the other hand, the energy amount used by electronic devices, lights and wastes cannot be see seen physically outside but unknowingly it is released to the environment. The scenario author is trying to present here is even though everybody understands sustainability, understanding above

mentioned attributes in detail will make a huge difference in organisational environmental goals. On similar context, Sympa's current efforts are well appreciated but more efforts are expected from internal and external environmental sustainability point of view. Employees feedbacks provided an important perspective to human resource unit to move forward towards strategic planning. Human resource is not only responsible for maintaining an internal sustainability but also for an external sustainability. Sympa will have many beneficial opportunities from stakeholders if green practices are considered in its daily operations.

Nowadays, in addition to burning competition future prospects such as candidates, investors and suppliers have started scanning the organisational green efforts, if environmental sustainability is not considered seriously company has a lot to lose for example good talents, green suppliers, and quality investors. These factors play huge role in the employer branding. For instance, Sympa's current efforts are well appreciated and to enhance its employer branding image to high level then Sympa have to brush up the green efforts actively. Going along with employees feedbacks will definitely bring good results. Internal employer branding is equally important as external employer branding. Respecting employees advice and insights will help on employees retention and as well as word of mouth. Human resource can use the survey result to measure the existing environmental activities and establish business goals.

Although the employees have provided their collective feedback but, law and regulations differ according to country thus, all countries related to Sympa can focus on its country or location wise strategies and enforce regulations by complying with common goals. Making individual sustainable changes by employees in their day-to-day activities will aid to Sympa's sustainable goals in greater level.

4.4 Strategic & Practical Recommendations for Further Contribution to Environmental Goals

Survey provided good comments and insights from employees and human resource unit found a unique perspective on planned application of all measures. By analysing the survey, the author uncovered some strategic and practical recommendations for further development of environmental efforts. Author's recommendations completely agree with employees comments and advice therefore, cumulative suggestions including some additional ideas from the author are included in this section. Practical recommendations are real solution for direct implementations. Sympa will definitely find its common goals by further discussion with the team and the author's suggestions will be beneficial to the company.

Communication is key factor for turning heads around, Sympa should plan and prioritize the environmental sustainability topic actively. KPI is key performance indicator and is quantifiable technique that shows how organisation is reaching its goals, agreeing with some of the survey comments, author also suggest that company should put environmental attributes in KPI so that it is measurable and noticeable. Not only HR is responsible for this step, but location wise responsibility and initiatives are equally crucial to move forward with green efforts. Author also supports the idea of avoiding unnecessary flying except for the important events. Importantly, Sympa should make compulsory waste sorting facilities and clear marked spaces for waste in all the locations by consulting with local authorities, proper disposal of all kinds of wastes especially thinking about old equipments and metals and end disposal process. Installing automatic lights and purchasing less energy consuming appliances makes decent energy saving and also lessens electricity bills thus, cost saving, and a sustainable approach together will create a win-win situation to the company.

Our planet's ecosystem is incredible every living thing are interrelated with the nature. Volunteering in environmental causes, always does not have to be plants and trees, animals are also an incredible part of the ecosystem therefore, taking care, funding, or adapting endangered animals would be great achievement to the company as well as to employer branding. Sympa could volunteer in varieties of green causes and participate in similar campaigns. Author worked in Sympa in fixed term when pandemic hit since then remote working has been top priority, author agrees with employees comments on opting for online meetings in normal times too. Instead of purchasing non-recycled materials for internal use Sympa can choose recycled finish products.

On the other hand, tech industry uses excessive amount of electricity in its daily operations, only going paperless does not make a business automatically green therefore, Sympa could consider choosing sustainable sources of electricity for its operations. Another approach Sympa could consider is collective donations instead of tangible gifts in celebrations. If possible, employees could opt for public transportation if employer is willing to provide some benefits and this step will be encouraging to employees in choosing publicly available commute. Additionally, all employees could opt for combined trips for business meetings.

For planned implementation of practical recommendations author uncovered some strategic guidelines if considered by Sympa will be beneficial to its environmental objectives. First and foremost, prioritising and communicating environmental awareness to strategic

level with the aim that whole organisation would notice as an important part of business and act accordingly. As discussed in practical suggestions knowing about location wise accessibility and law on overall sustainability such as possibilities and restrictions then after recognising the area of common goals suitably fit in strategic implementation.

Human Resource can create a qualified plan and notably analyse the cost and resource because getting started with new plan would be overwhelming thus, planning should be cost effective starting with small steps. Time period and money are required to be allocated after having final discussion with the teams about practical solutions and create a starting project timeline. Monthly or periodical meetings, webinars are vital for the departments and organisation as a whole likewise, scheduling a monthly meeting organised by company's sustainability club and discussing about the progress and results with country managers and respective team representatives.

In conclusion, cooperation between active sustainability club, human resource and every single unit of the company will further progress the green practice efforts. Apart from results and suggestions Sympa certainly recognizes the sustainability as a strategical process not as a destination and requires commitment with small steps at a time. Therefore, if human resource including top management start enthusiastically participating and initiating in this cause whole organisation will come around and be more determined to practice sustainable methodologies.

4.5   Positive Impact of Environmental Sustainability on Communication of Employer Branding of Sympa

Sympa is gaining more popularity nowadays in HR tech industry. Employer branding of the company is in great place due to its culture of valuing employees, customer, and other related stakeholders. Author's previous experience also adds more value in Sympa's employer branding. Sympa has a distinct hiring process, and each process takes care of employees mindset. With the talent attraction strategy Sympa promotes its brand as having fun, flexible environment, employee valuing culture and unique growth strategy. Employees perceive its employer brand as diverse, inclusive, valuing, fun and flexible and minimal hierarchy. Externally, via word of mouth and its marketing efforts Sympa's employer branding is progressing day by day.

On the other hand, organisational environmental sustainability efforts have huge impact on employer branding. Sustainability efforts is a competitive advantage to the company, the essentiality of sustainability to new generation is gaining more importance. To be the desired employer of new generation, Sympa can integrate the sustainability strategy to its

business operations which differentiates from the entrants and position itself in outstanding level. By listing environmental sustainability sections in the explanation of brand value, Sympa can attract more talents on first sight moreover it represents more promising and ideal organisational branding.

Company does not have physical products for manufacturing and distribution. However, if company initiates to buy the required equipments from sustainable suppliers then the brand value in market will have a great impression and might attract more sustainable third parties towards the company. For examples: seeking recycled paper towels, papers, water bottles, furniture from used woods and many more if possible. Customers are core group for Sympa, and company has a good satisfaction rate, for further increase of satisfaction response from end users, company can share its green strategies which will attract sustainable prospects customer organisations towards the service and solutions provided by company.

Strategic visualisation shows the company culture, slogan, and its value to external market. Sympa has a unique identity which is depicted by its logo, colours, and face. Author has witnessed company's brand signs and drawings which represents people and atmosphere of Sympa. Sympa could represent its sustainability belief in brand signs, logo and communicate that idea in company's website, public reports and possibly also in Sympa's recruitment software, service packages, webinars, and presentations. By this way, the public brand impression of company will go further higher enhancing the employer branding. Thus, visual representation plays a crucial role in public employer branding representation of the company.

Workforces are heart of Sympa, without their efforts and determination company would not be in the today's position in the industry. As per research it is already known that there is environmental awareness among employees and certain practices are already carried out in the company. Furthermore, more activeness from managerial level will keep employee engaged in the process. For instance, implementation of strategic and practical suggestions discussed in chapter 4.4 by engaging employees will bring desired results internally. Eventually internal satisfaction among employees will boost employer branding externally. Without generating internal awareness, the external realisation of brand will never occur in first place. Stories and experience of employees will act as a word-of-mouth advertising to the market. Additionally, employees could share their experiences in websites as blogs about their satisfaction and reviews about the practices and campaigns on environmental sustainability awareness. These kinds of promotional activities help in delivery of organisational value to the external stakeholders.

Recruitment is a unified part of the employer branding. While communicating as both terms are closely associated, Sympa could ask candidates expectations towards the company sustainability in addition to other work-related attributes and ask for feedbacks in an interview. Additionally, putting an eye-catching organisational environmental sustainability slogan and short clip portraying green practices in career and recruitment pages will attract more new generation fresh candidates. Future candidates prospects use excessive social media such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and others thus, employer can promote its green efforts on these platforms to be noticeable.

In conclusion, Sympa has created a strong brand content that differentiates from other competitors. Employer branding does not get strong with only turnover, company size or salary, the employer branding indicators include company culture, employees value and their experience, green practices, and inclusive web pages. As author has previously worked, Sympa has succeeded in winning its people hearts and it shows in their public pages. Similarly, focusing on green efforts will win internal and external stakeholders heart and reputation also improves by adding competitive advantage. All implementations and strategic planning of environmental sustainability will result in better profit in certain span of time. Employer branding is an ongoing process in addition to other aspects Sympa could adopt to the options which are applicable to the company by finding common goals because all solutions might not be feasible in long term business operations.

5   Conclusion

The author researched about commissioning company environmental efforts and utilising the research results on employer branding communication. The chapter consist of evaluation of this research-based report and answers to investigative questions asked in section 1.2. Lastly, the chapter as well as the thesis ends with recommendations for future studies and learning and self reflection to the author.

5.1   Answers to Investigative Questions

This section will sum up the results from the investigative questions, which were mentioned in introduction section. Four research questions were asked for the research and the author was able to find the explanations to all questions.

The author discovered that people of Sympa were determined to green practices and everybody are doing their best from their side to minimise the possible impact to environment from their daily activities. However, the author noticed that more extra efforts could be done to get the desired environmental goals. Exploration of this question provided an enough support for analysis for thesis and for rest of the questions. Throughout the research process author realised that this question was substantial to find further information.

Author realised the employees perception on sustainability by analysing the existing company documents including materials via company intranet during the author's employment journey. Employees understands sustainability as preserving the resources of today without negotiating the ability of coming generations to meet their needs. Sustainability is also about being transparent to the stakeholders so that employees can offer to their prospects. Employees believe in reducing energy use, outsourcing from sustainable suppliers and proper disposal and or long-term organisational development also depend upon sustainability.

The online survey where employees responded by providing their feedbacks and comments showed the impact of people's opinion on current sustainability efforts. Overall, all employees were convinced with organisational sustainability efforts from employer. Might be in some cases employees view and understanding may not be the similar with management or vice versa otherwise, employer has always valued its people's suggestions and feedbacks thus, organisational green efforts are progressively and positively affected

by employees perception. Understanding employees point of view has been always progressive approach to the employer. Survey results provided employer with pool of opportunities in the form of feedbacks will lead to great differences.

After knowing the employees perspectives and ideas on sustainability, management can analyse the concrete solutions and allocate the cost and resources and prepare for strategic implementation. Author has separately mentioned the practical and strategic implementation of the solution. Positive employer branding results will automatically be seen after applying the feedbacks furthermore, current generations are more aware of sustainability, winning internal employer branding will automatically win external employer branding as word of mouth and company's marketing efforts. Human resource and marketing department can come together and distribute the company's sustainability efforts however, before sharing with public Sympa should team up on application of efforts and track the progress. Positive employer branding via implementing sustainability efforts is not competition with any other organisation. Every individual of Sympa should understand that environmental sustainability is not a destination that it would be fulfilled in some span of time rather is an integral part of business strategy which should be considered importantly as green practices affects employer branding process.

5.2   Evaluation of Research Process and Thesis Report

Author delivered the company version of analysis of online environmental survey to the People and Coordinator of Sympa and the feedback was motivating and positive. Coordinator conveyed appreciation and mentioned the results will make huge difference in operations of the company. Results derived from survey will be utilised in preparation of environmental report in future whenever management decides to prepare it. The method and form of questions the author has applied was crucial to obtain the diverse view from the organisation in insight of topic.

The questions for survey were prepared being based on the existing study materials from the organisation, having discussion with people coordinator and author's observation and insights. Survey questionnaires link were sent to all employees of Sympa. Answers were received in few days after the distribution. In addition, a reminder email was sent to make sure everyone participates the survey. All key results were collected and analysed in graphical representation. This made final analysation easier and explainable. Finally, author presented a report of analysis with guidelines to People and Culture Coordinator. Report and suggestions were helpful to HR to develop functional strategy.

Author is satisfied with whole thesis process, analysing the total time period of the project, author has learned a lot from trial and error. During active time period of the thesis process author completed each part on reasonable time although time frame went bit over the schedule. Theoretical framework took much longer due to limited accurate information on the topic however, survey process went smoothly with good participations with initiating responses. Author was able to compile all responses quite easily because the answers were identical and provided a perspective towards interpretation of new suggestions.

In conclusion, author has been pleased with the overall work and especially results of survey. Author's journey has been productive knowing own's ability of being able to present strategic guidelines and some of the practical guidelines. On the other hand, positive feedback from People and Culture Coordinator has provided motivation and confidence to the author for further endeavours.

5.3   Recommendations for Future Studies

In this section, author is focusing on environmental awareness in case company including tech/software industry. With the increase in globalisation digital industry can push into paying attention on tiny attributes of sustainability which are around in the environment. Service solution providing companies does not have direct effects on the environment however taking care of surrounding and changing into sustainable lifestyle can make vast difference.

Throughout the research process author realised the potential areas where commissioning company including its industry can consider for further studies. Outsourcing sustainable suppliers who have environmentally friendly certification. It is not sure if companies check environmental ISO certifications especially in digital world. So, it would be beneficial to check if there are sustainable certifications for digital companies. Companies can establish a precise guidelines or code of conduct specially addressing to the suppliers. Before circulating to the suppliers companies should explain the purpose and need of the guidelines. Nowadays, new generations are much interested in sustainability thus, companies can get help from new generations to research and brainstorm for innovative ideas.

Undoubtedly, digital companies will take care of their internal sustainability by implementing green measures and external sustainability by making sure the environmental impact is low as possible in external business operations. However, companies can think out of the box by going beyond the normal expectations of the industry such as author found that considering about adapting, funding, or taking responsibilities of certain endangered species will make huge impact in organisational employer branding. Organisations including

commissioning companies can do some research about this topic and analyse the pros and cons and decide accordingly. Environmental Sustainability does not only imply to the plants, forests, water, and atmosphere it also includes animals preservation thus, species preservation could be one important topic to consider.

Another general idea could be globalising the concept of environmental sustainability in software industry. Organisations a could do some research within their industry and compare own efforts. This helps in implementing green efforts in their daily activities. Not denying the fact that competition between companies may come in amid their activities but initiating good trends from competitors and interpreting in own way is not considered a negative step. In future if they evolve in some ways then companies can resolve them by evaluating own resources and disparities.

5.4   Learning and Self Reflection

Author had real learning experience throughout the thesis process and learned diverse aspects of environmental sustainability with trials and errors. Many people of Sympa were involved in initiating environmental sustainability. The author learned about the importance of green practices in employer branding of the company in an internal and as well as external level during the thesis process. Additionally, author also learned more about corporate behaviour used around the organisation.

Going further with the process author learned about preparing open and close end questions and conducting survey, moreover, evaluating and interpreting the results were the best part of survey. Being specialised in Human Resource Management in school, close integration with HR unit in the company was productive as author learned about people management although the thesis was not about workforce. Author was really amazed by observing how HR cares about the sentiments of people, small unnoticed things mattered to HR. In future author thrives to grow in human resource and human resource tech industry therefore, working in the case company has taught a lot of skills and mindset to the author.

With the positive time period in Sympa, author has been grateful to all cooperative and helpful people of Sympa. People and Culture Coordinator provided with all required documents and information for this research-based project, and additionally people of Sympa were inspired to take their time and participate in survey. Maximum employees responded honestly and provided many ideas and suggestions openly as they believed that the answers provided by them will bring a positive change in Sympa's operations.

In conclusion, the overall thesis process was excellent professional knowledge base for the author's career especially in preparing strategies for employer branding which is an integral part of Human Resource Management. The author is motivated to continue career in human resource industry in various roles and hopes the commissioning company reach to higher level in environmental sustainability practices and remain top in its employer branding process.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Online Survey Questionnaire

Sympa's Environmental Sustainability Survey

Mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk (*) and must be filled in to complete the form.

Welcome to Sympa's Sustainability Survey!

At Sympa we want to keep sustainability in mind and be responsible in all our actions and business. Therefore, we are doing research on Environmental Sustainability to increase our knowledge and to create a shared understanding. For this, we would highly appreciate your experience and feedback. Your input is highly valuable in recognizing and enhancing sustainability efforts in the company. The aim of the research is to let all stakeholders be aware of how the company is integrating sustainable development into its everyday operations.

The survey will take maximum 5-10 minutes of your time. The data will be collected for Sympa's further development on environmental efforts and Sanju's Bachelor's Thesis. All data will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

Kindly respond to the survey by November 23rd.

Thank you in advance for your valuable time.

1. Please select country or location *

- ⬤ Denmark
- ⬤ Lahti
- ⬤ Vantaa
- ⬤ Norway
- ⬤ Netherlands
- ⬤ Sweden

2. How efficiently the idea of Green Office is implemented in the offices? *

- ○ Very efficiently
- ○ Efficiently
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Not at all

3. Are you satisfied with the company efforts on workplace environmental sustainability? *

- ○ Very Satisfied
- ○ Satisfied
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Dissatisfied

4. In continuation to the previous question: If 'dissatisfied' where are we lagging behind?

5. What is your commuting method to the workplace? *

- ⊙ Bicycle
- ⊙ Car
- ⊙ Train/Bus
- ⊙ Walking

6. Are you willing to change your transportation method if employer decides to support your commuting expenses? *If not supporting already*. Open Comments.
*

7. How often do you *

	Always	Rarely	If I remember
Turn off computers while going for lunch	☐	☐	☐
Put off main plug before ending work day	☐	☐	☐
Turn off rest rooms light after use	☐	☐	☐
Use papers for office work	☐	☐	☐
Use the printer	☐	☐	☐
Turn off meeting rooms light after use	☐	☐	☐

8. In offices where waste sorting spaces are available. How often do you use waste sorting spaces? *

- ◯ Always
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Not applicable

9. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, how often did you use airplane for business travelling on a yearly basis? *

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Less than 5
- ◯ 5 - 10
- ◯ 10 - 15
- ◯ 15 -20
- ◯ 20 -30
- ◯ More than 30

10. Are there any updates/comments/advice that you want to add on improving Sympa's sustainability efforts? *