

MASTER THESIS

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN EMPLOYER BRAND POSITIONING CONCEPT FOR THE ANTON PAAR GROUP

with a focus on technical sales experts, applied to the United States

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Graz, 29 June 2018

Declaration of authenticity

I hereby certify that I have written the present thesis independently and without help from any third parties. I have not used any sources other than those which are clearly indicated and have duly provided details of the sources of both direct and indirect quotations.

The present piece of work and parts thereof have to date not been presented to this or any other examination board in the same or similar form, nor have they been published. The present version is the same as the electronic version submitted.

Graz, 29 June 2018

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Linda Hintsteiner, BA

Principle of equality

For readability purposes, gender-specific formulations have not been used in the present piece of work. It is, however, hereby expressly stated that when the masculine form is used to denote people, both sexes are being referred to.

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Summary

The war for talent increasingly affects high-tech companies. Businesses need to stand out as attractive employers to win the war for technical personnel in particular. This trend also influences high-tech company Anton Paar. Given its continuous growth, Anton Paar needs to recruit a large number of technical sales experts in the USA in the coming years. The goal of this thesis is to support Anton Paar in building an employer brand to position the company as an attractive employer globally and as an employer of choice for technical sales experts in the USA.

The theoretical section of this thesis focuses on topics that influence employer branding, such as international human resource management and employer choice. Moreover, it includes the key aspects of employer branding and relevant definitions. The theoretical part is concluded by the development of an employer brand positioning concept. Theory shows that employer branding is targeted not only to existing employees but also to the external target group of potential applicants. Employer branding needs to address both target groups.

The practical section is based on the analysis of the external and internal factors that influence the development of the positioning concept for the employer brand Anton Paar. Moreover, the preferences of technical sales experts in the USA and existing Anton Paar employees are investigated in two quantitative surveys. The findings from the analyses and surveys are then used to define the employer value proposition (EVP) for the entire Anton Paar Group and a sub-EVP for technical sales experts in the USA. Anton Paar symbolises “stability” and “long-term orientation”, two attributes that distinguish the company from the competition. This characterisation is highlighted in the global employer brand positioning. The sub-positioning for technical sales experts focuses on the fields of “innovative spirit” and “development prospects”.

Based on the theoretical and practical sections, recommendations for the implementation of the concept are provided at the end of the thesis. These recommendations would help Anton Paar to implement the positioning concept and anchor the employer brand internally and externally.

Abstract

Die wachsende Rivalität um gut ausgebildete Mitarbeiter beeinflusst Technologieunternehmen zunehmend. Um in diesem Wettbewerb bestehen zu können, müssen technische Unternehmen als attraktive Arbeitgeber auftreten. Diese Entwicklung betrifft auch das Unternehmen Anton Paar, das besonders viele Vertriebsmitarbeiter in den USA sucht. Deshalb ist das Ziel dieser Arbeit die Arbeitgebermarke von Anton Paar zu positionieren, um als global attraktiver Arbeitgeber wahrgenommen zu werden. Zudem soll die Arbeitgebermarke für zukünftige Mitarbeiter im technischen Vertrieb in den USA attraktiv sein.

Im theoretischen Teil dieser Arbeit werden Themen behandelt, welche die Arbeitgebermarkenbildung (=Employer Branding) beeinflussen, wie etwa internationales Personalmanagement und der Arbeitgeberwahlprozess. Außerdem, werden die Kernthemen zum Thema Employer Branding dargestellt. Das abschließende Kapitel erläutert die Teilschritte der Konzeptentwicklung zur Markenpositionierung. Eines der Hauptkenntnisse des theoretischen Teils ist, dass sich Employer Branding immer an interne und externe Zielgruppen richten soll, was bestehende und zukünftige Mitarbeiter umfasst.

Anschließend an die Theorie befasst sich der Praxisteil mit der Analyse von Faktoren, die die Entwicklung des Positionierungskonzeptes für Anton Paar beeinflussen. Ferner werden die Präferenzen der bestehenden Mitarbeiter und der potentiellen Vertriebsmitarbeiter im Rahmen von zwei quantitativen Umfragen dargestellt. Die Ergebnisse der Analyse und der Umfragen werden dann verwendet, um die globale Arbeitgebermarke für Anton Paar festzulegen. Darüber hinaus wird eine untergeordnete Arbeitgebermarke für Vertriebsmitarbeiter in den USA definiert. Anton Paar sticht in der globalen Positionierung insbesondere durch die Attribute „Stabilität“ und „Langzeitorientierung“ heraus. In der untergeordneten Positionierung für den technischen Vertrieb werden die Attribute „Innovationsgeist“ und „Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten“ hervorgehoben.

Basierend auf Theorie und Praxis werden am Ende dieser Arbeit Empfehlungen für die Umsetzung des Positionierungskonzeptes gegeben, die Anton Paar bei der Umsetzung des Konzeptes und bei der Verankerung der Marke helfen sollen.

Table of contents

List of figures	IX
List of tables	X
List of abbreviations	XI
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Company presentation: Anton Paar.....	1
1.2 Initial situation.....	3
1.3 Challenges	4
1.4 Objectives.....	5
1.4.1 <i>Company objectives</i>	5
1.4.2 <i>Master thesis objective</i>	5
1.5 Frame of reference	6
2. International human resource management.....	7
2.1 Fields of HRM in an international context	7
2.2 International HR strategies	9
2.3 Influence of culture on strategic international HRM	11
3. Employer choice	15
3.1 Employer choice process	15
3.2 Employer attractiveness	19
3.2.1 <i>Image and employer attractiveness</i>	19
3.2.2 <i>Factors of employer attractiveness</i>	20
3.3 Employer preference formation	23
3.4 Specifics of the employer choice of technicians	24
4. Employer branding	26
4.1 Introduction.....	26
4.1.1 <i>Terminologies</i>	26
4.1.2 <i>Organisational integration of employer branding</i>	28
4.2 Functions of an employer brand	28
4.2.1 <i>Functions of an employer brand for potential applicants</i>	29
4.2.2 <i>Functions of an employer brand for employers</i>	29
4.3 Success factors of employer branding.....	31
4.4 Corporate branding vs internal branding vs employer branding	32

4.5	Target groups of employer branding.....	34
4.5.1	<i>Internal employer branding</i>	34
4.5.2	<i>External employer branding</i>	35
4.6	International employer branding.....	36
4.6.1	<i>Standardisation and adaptation in employer branding</i>	36
4.6.2	<i>International employer branding strategy choice</i>	38
5.	Development of an employer brand positioning concept	40
5.1	Analysis phase	40
5.1.1	<i>External and internal analyses</i>	41
5.1.2	<i>Target group analysis</i>	42
5.2	Strategy development phase.....	43
5.2.1	<i>Prioritising target groups and defining targets</i>	43
5.2.2	<i>Employer brand positioning process</i>	44
5.2.3	<i>Employer value proposition</i>	48
5.2.4	<i>Employer brand architecture</i>	49
5.3	Implementation phase	50
5.3.1	<i>Employer branding measures</i>	50
5.3.2	<i>Internal communication</i>	51
5.3.3	<i>External communication</i>	53
5.4	Controlling phase.....	54
6.	Analysis	57
6.1	External analysis of the USA.....	57
6.1.1	<i>American culture and its implications on HRM</i>	57
6.1.2	<i>Target group and competition</i>	59
6.2	Internal analysis of the Anton Paar Group.....	62
6.2.1	<i>International HRM strategy</i>	62
6.2.2	<i>Existing communication and corporate branding</i>	62
6.2.3	<i>Existing internal employer branding measures</i>	64
6.2.4	<i>Existing external employer branding measures USA</i>	66
7.	Primary market research	67
7.1	Research objectives and research questions	67
7.2	Survey design.....	68
7.2.1	<i>Survey method</i>	68
7.2.2	<i>Target groups and sampling</i>	68

7.2.3	<i>Survey scheduling and survey instruments</i>	69
8.	Results of primary market research	71
8.1	Overview of the surveys	71
8.2	Employer information search	71
8.2.1	<i>Employer information channels</i>	71
8.2.2	<i>Evaluation of the existing job website of Anton Paar USA</i>	72
8.3	Factors of employer attractiveness.....	73
8.3.1	<i>Employer of choice and values</i>	73
8.3.2	<i>Factors of employer attractiveness of both surveys</i>	74
8.3.3	<i>Summary factors of attractiveness and positioning fields</i>	78
9.	Employer brand positioning concept of the Anton Paar Group	79
9.1	Employer branding strategy choice	79
9.2	Comparison of positioning fields.....	80
9.3	Employer value proposition	82
9.3.1	<i>EVP pillars of the Anton Paar Group</i>	82
9.3.2	<i>EVP pillars for technical sales experts in the USA</i>	83
9.4	EVP model and employer brand architecture	85
10.	Recommendations	87
10.1	Internal employer branding and communication measures	87
10.2	External employer branding and communication measures	89
10.2.1	<i>Global external measures</i>	89
10.2.2	<i>External measures for the USA</i>	90
10.3	Implementation action plan and costs	92
10.3.1	<i>Action plan and cost projection for the internal measures</i>	92
10.3.2	<i>Action plan and cost projection for the external measures</i>	94
10.4	Employer brand controlling.....	96
11.	Conclusion	97
	Bibliography.....	98
	Appendix	112

List of figures

Figure 1: Anton Paar's main principles	2
Figure 2: Frame of reference.....	6
Figure 3: Framework of international HRM.....	8
Figure 4: Types of international HRM.....	9
Figure 5: Employer choice process by Böttger	18
Figure 6: Influencing factors of employer attractiveness	19
Figure 7: Reduction of employer alternatives	23
Figure 8: Relationship between corporate brand and employer brand	33
Figure 9: Deriving the employer brand from the corporate brand.....	34
Figure 10: International employer branding strategies	37
Figure 11: Process steps of an employer brand positioning concept	40
Figure 12: Target group prioritising matrix.....	43
Figure 13: Strategic triangle employer brand positioning	45
Figure 14: Positioning process steps.....	45
Figure 15: Reduction of employer attributes.....	49
Figure 16: Employer brand architecture and umbrella brand.....	50
Figure 17: Communication touchpoints during employer choice	53
Figure 18: Cultural comparison of Austria and the USA	57
Figure 19: Employer brand steering wheel of Thermo Fisher.....	60
Figure 20: Employer brand steering wheel of Mettler Toledo	61
Figure 21: Ratings of the job website Anton Paar USA (n=107).....	72
Figure 22: Values of an ideal employer for technical sales experts.....	74
Figure 23: Factors of employer attractiveness with the largest difference	75
Figure 24: Factors of employer attractiveness with the smallest difference	76
Figure 25: Ideal employer and technician-specific attributes.....	77
Figure 26: Positioning fields per target group.....	78
Figure 27: EVP pillars of the Anton Paar Group	82
Figure 28: EVP pillars for technical sales experts in the USA	84
Figure 29: Employer brand architecture of Anton Paar	86
Figure 30: Involved parties during implementation	92

List of tables

Table 1: Types of HQ orientation toward subsidiaries	10
Table 2: Nine internationalisation strategies in HRM.....	12
Table 3: Comparison of employer choice processes of different authors	17
Table 4: Positioning fields and attributes	47
Table 5: Employer brand controlling KPIs	55
Table 6: Existing communicated topics	63
Table 7: Existing internal EB measures of Anton Paar HQ and Anton Paar USA	65
Table 8: Existing external EB measures of Anton Paar USA.....	66
Table 9: Survey design.....	70
Table 10: The most important and the least important employer attributes	75
Table 11: Comparison of competitor positioning fields, Anton Paar communication and target group preferences	81
Table 12: Action and cost plan internal measures including timeframe	93
Table 13: Action and cost plan external measures including timeframe	95
Table 14: Employer brand controlling KPIs of Anton Paar	96

List of abbreviations

AP	<i>Anton Paar</i>
APAC	<i>Asia-Pacific</i>
APP	<i>Application value</i>
CB	<i>Corporate brand</i>
DV	<i>Development value</i>
EB	<i>Employer branding</i>
EC	<i>Economic value</i>
HR	<i>Human resource</i>
HRM	<i>Human resource management</i>
IN	<i>Interest value</i>
KPI	<i>Key performance indicator</i>
MINT	<i>Mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, technical sciences</i>
R&D	<i>Research and development</i>
SAMEA	<i>South Asia, Middle East, Africa</i>
SO	<i>Social value</i>
SOR	<i>Stimulus-organism-response</i>
STEM	<i>Science, technology, engineering and mathematics</i>

1. Introduction

1.1 Company presentation: Anton Paar

Anton Paar (AP) is an Austrian family business headquartered in Graz (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017a). The company develops, produces and sells “*laboratory instruments and process measuring systems, and provides custom-tailored automation and robotic solutions*” (Anton Paar GmbH 2017a). The company’s most relevant fields in terms of turnover are density, concentration and CO₂ measurement (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017a). Majority of the company’s products are sold to business-to-business customers in different industries such as food and beverage, electronics manufacturing, nanotechnology, pharmaceuticals and the university sector. The instruments are mainly used by researchers, scientists and engineers (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017e).

Since its foundation in 1922, AP has established 7 production sites, 29 sales and service subsidiaries and 60 distribution partners around the world. In 2017 the company generated a turnover of €316 million, of which 20% were invested in research and development (R&D). In 2018 approximately 2,900 people are employed at AP (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2018d). Up to 93% of the company’s products are exported (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017b). The company’s growth is supported by the regular setting up of new subsidiaries and the acquisition of other companies (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017d). This growth strategy is expected to continue in 2018. In 2018 three new subsidiaries were opened—one each in Thailand, Australia and New Zealand. The company expects to increase turnover by 20% in 2018 (cf. Landlinger 28.09.2017).

The name of the company originates from its founder, Anton Paar, a locksmith who opened his first workshop in Graz. Afterwards, his daughter Margarete Platzer took over the company and handed it down to the third generation in 1963, specifically her son-in-law Ulrich Santner. Friedrich Santner, son-in-law of Ulrich Santner, is the current CEO of the company. The company has been owned by the Santner Foundation since 2003 (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017c).

The company slogan of AP is “*Great people, great instruments*” (Anton Paar GmbH 2017d). It highlights the importance of both excellent employees and high-quality products. Anton Paar aims to provide a secure workplace to all employees and simultaneously offer space for talent development and innovation. This objective goes hand in hand with the aim to focus on product quality rather than quantity. According to Anton Paar, high product quality is the precondition for business success and customer satisfaction (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017d). The company’s core purpose is “*to provide employees with an interesting, long-term and secure place of work*” (Anton Paar GmbH 2018b).

Figure 1 illustrates the company’s most important principles that guide their daily work. All of these principles have the same importance. Quality and innovation are the two core principles that connect the other principles.



Figure 1: Anton Paar's main principles (based on Anton Paar GmbH 2017d)

The first principle, “respect”, means that all employees should treat one another and their environment courteously. At the same time, the company needs to respect all its stakeholders, society and the environment. This principle is closely connected with the second principle, “social responsibility”. The company aims to support the disadvantaged members of society. The third principle, “curiosity”, denotes the will to innovate. Finally, all employees should take on responsibility themselves and contribute to the company’s overall success (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2017d).

The company also uses another set of definitions for its guiding principles including the following:

- Personality principle: Every employee contributes to business success.
- Social principle: Teamwork and social responsibility are necessary for success.
- Solidarity principle: The well-being of society needs to be supported.
- Subsidiarity principle: Every employee is responsible and works autonomously (cf. Anton Paar GmbH 2018a).

1.2 Initial situation

With regard to human resource management (HRM), high-tech companies are influenced by several developments in the labour market; in this thesis, the most relevant HRM aspects and developments are the shortage of skilled personnel, importance of technologically exchangeable products and globalisation of labour markets (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 3).

According to a forecast by Eurostat, the shares of the age groups of 0–14 years and 15–64 years in comparison to the entire European population are expected to decrease in the next decades. The percentage of people older than 64 years is simultaneously expected to increase from 19.2% in 2016 to 29.1% of the overall population in 2080 (cf. Eurostat 2016). These figures demonstrate that the working population is shrinking. Demographical changes and declining birth rates tighten the labour market (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 1). Companies compete for the best personnel in the war for talent (cf. Holste 2012, p. 8). In particular, the shortage of graduates in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines is foreseen (cf. Bollwitt 2010, p. 20). Hence, differentiating themselves from competition is becoming increasingly important for companies (cf. Trost 2013, p. 13).

The AP Group, as a global high-tech company, is also affected by the aforementioned labour shortage. Finding suitable employees is especially difficult for positions requiring technical skills (cf. Landlinger 29.03.2017).

This situation is further intensified by the strong expected turnover growth of AP in the coming years (20% in 2018). The company also intends to increase its presence abroad by strengthening its subsidiaries (cf. Landlinger 12.10.2017).

Although AP already received 9,000 applications in 2017 (from 1 January 2017 to 30 September 2017), the quality of submitted applications is insufficient (cf. Landlinger 28.09.2017). Ninety percent of all applications at the headquarters are unsuitable and are rejected in the first step of candidate selection (cf. Landlinger 12.10.2017).

1.3 Challenges

Given the aforementioned changes in the labour market, standing out as attractive employers has become inevitable for technical companies (cf. Trost 2013, p. 13). Furthermore, gaining employee commitment is critical to company success (cf. Sponheuer 2010, p. 6).

Its expected strong growth has prompted Anton Paar to face a major challenge: attracting and recruiting a large number of highly qualified employees. In particular, numerous technical sales experts are necessary. As the competition for technical experts in the labour market is strong and their importance for the business success of AP is high, focus must be given to this target group.

Another challenge for AP is the insufficient quality of submitted applications and the high effort to filter out relevant applicants. Consequently, the overall number of irrelevant applications must be reduced.

A third challenge concerns the lack of definition and internal and external communication of the core values of the company. The presence of these values needs to be strengthened in the subsidiaries, especially in the United States where Anton Paar aims to increase its presence. As one of its oldest subsidiaries, Anton Paar USA works highly independently from the headquarters. Thus, many employees working at Anton Paar USA have lost their affiliation to the headquarters in Graz and its values (cf. Landlinger 12.10.2017). The development of a clear employer brand positioning is one approach for responding to these challenges (cf. Holste 2012, p. 8).

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 Company objectives

The primary objective of the company Anton Paar is to improve the ratio between the number of applications from technical sales experts who meet the selection criteria to those who do not meet the selection criteria at all and are immediately rejected in the first stage of candidate selection for positions recruited by the headquarters from 1:9 in 2017 to 1:3 by 31 December 2021.

The second objective of Anton Paar is that aided awareness of the five core company values reaches at least 90% with all employees from Anton Paar USA by 31 December 2020.

1.4.2 Master thesis objective

The objective of this master thesis is to develop an employer brand positioning concept that focuses on technical sales experts in the industry of measurement instruments manufacturing on the example of the Anton Paar Group and applied to the United States.

Non-objective:

The implementation and control of the developed employer brand positioning concept is not the objective of this master thesis.

1.5 Frame of reference

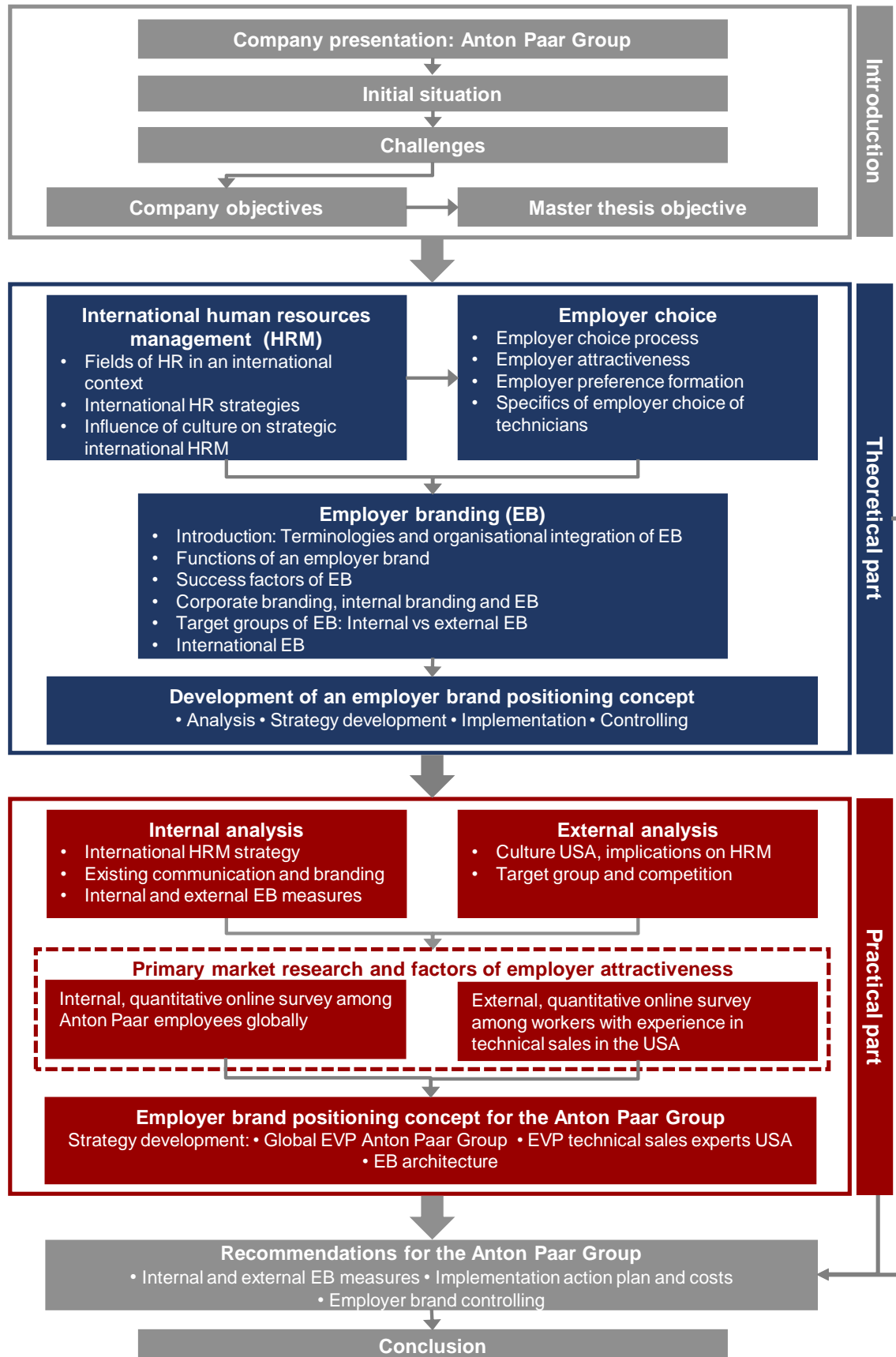


Figure 2: Frame of reference (own presentation)

2. International human resource management

This chapter presents an overview of different methods for organising international HRM. In particular, it demonstrates how HRM changes when companies go international.

2.1 Fields of HRM in an international context

In this thesis, HRM is defined as “*the management of people in relation to work*” (Rowley/Harry 2011, p. 7). This definition is similar to that of personnel management which pertains to “*the systematic analysis, evaluation and arrangement of all HR aspects in a company, including on a worldwide basis*” (Schmeisser/Krimphove/Popp 2013, p. 2). Personnel management and HRM can be understood synonymously (cf. Hauer/Schüller/Strasman 2002, p. 26). Both terms are used in this thesis.

Personnel management includes the following fields:

- Planning of staffing requirements
- Personnel recruitment
- Personnel selection
- Personnel remuneration
- Personnel development and training
- Personnel reduction
- Personnel controlling (cf. Lindner-Lohmann/Lohmann/Schirmer 2016, p. 5 - 7)

One component of personnel recruitment needs to be highlighted in the context of this thesis, namely HR marketing. Human resource marketing, which is also called recruitment marketing, involves measures for attracting employees who are relevant to a company. The aspect that distinguishes HR marketing from HRM is that the former is oriented externally and focused on potential applicants. By contrast, human resource marketing is closely connected with and based on the main topic of this thesis, employer branding (cf. Dessain 2016, p. 4f.).

The mentioned fields expand as soon as companies go international. The reason for this expansion is the increased complexity and knowledge that is required to deal with internationalisation (cf. Rowley/Harry 2011, p. 8). The intensifying complexity and increasing number of stakeholders especially differentiate international from domestic personnel management (cf. Gannon 2008, p. 226). Personnel administration generally becomes more complex. Finding employees who are willing to move geographically is critical in an international environment. Furthermore, the skill set of the needed staff changes. Intercultural competence becomes increasingly important (cf. Lindner-Lohmann/Lohmann/Schirmer 2016, p. 16). Employees must also be able to understand international correlations (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 8).

Scholz developed a framework for international HRM, as depicted in Figure 3. The framework conditions for international HRM include internationalisation strategy, company culture, local culture and international management system (cf. Scholz 2014, p. 95).



Figure 3: Framework of international HRM (based on Scholz 2014, p. 96)

The next two chapters describe the types of internationalisation strategies. They also explain the influence of company culture and country culture on HRM.

2.2 International HR strategies

Bartlett and Ghoshal differentiated four types of organisational models for companies that run overseas operations, namely multinational, global, international and transnational. Multinational companies exploit local advantages and work locally, whereas global companies transfer the centralised headquarters (HQ) strategy to the subsidiaries. International businesses centralise their core competences and their subsidiaries adapt these competences. Transnational companies form integrated networks worldwide (cf. Bartlett/Ghoshal 1992, p. 65).

Kumar applied these models to HRM. He described four types of HRM and differentiated them according to their level of global integration and adaptation to the country, as illustrated in Figure 4 (cf. Kumar 1998, p. 5).

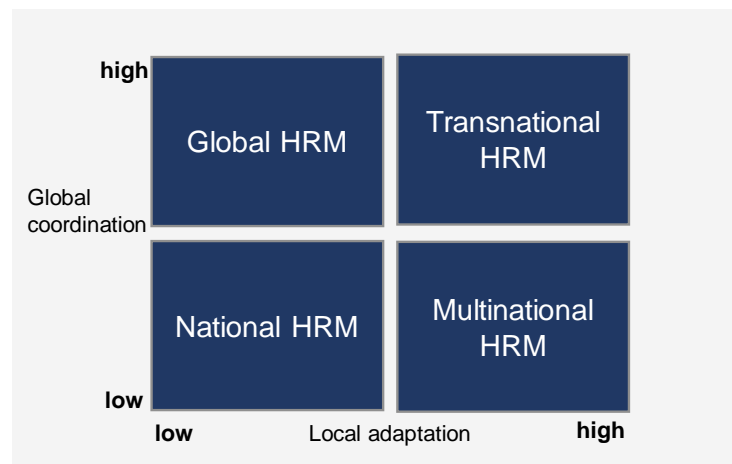


Figure 4: Types of international HRM (based on Kumar 1998, p. 5)

As depicted in the above matrix, global and national strategies have little HR adaptation to country specifics. National HRM is applied when a company's foreign operations are limited. In this case, the HQ defines the human resources strategy, which is then transferred abroad. With regard to global personnel management, the measures are similar around the world, and local adaptations are neglected. In contrast to companies that employ the national strategy, those with global HRM operate in different markets (cf. Schmeisser/Krimphove/Popp 2013, p. 5). The transnational model is selected when companies operate in countries with different cultures. However, the companies are experienced in dealing with the differences and are capable of creating benefits out of such an approach.

By contrast, multinational HRM is applied when the country differences are significant but the number of markets is limited (cf. Kumar 1998, p. 6).

Perlmutter defined another approach for categorising the orientation of the company HQ to its subsidiaries. He named three types of company orientation, namely ethnocentric, polycentric and geocentric (cf. Perlmutter 1969, p. 12). These three strategies were later extended by the regiocentric approach and can be applied to HRM (cf. Schmeisser/Krimphove/Popp 2013, p. 7). Table 1 presents a comparison of the three types of HQ orientation described by Perlmutter. It includes the most relevant facts for this thesis, namely organisational complexity, decision making, control and communication.

	Ethnocentric	Polycentric	Geocentric
Organisation complexity	Complex in home country, simple in subsidiaries	Independent subsidiaries	Increasingly complex and interdependent
Decisions	Centralised	Decentralised	Collective
Control	HQ standards	Subsidiary standards	HQ and subsidiary standards
Communication	Intense towards subsidiaries	Limited to subsidiaries Limited between subsidiaries	Intense, bidirectional to and between subsidiaries

Table 1: Types of HQ orientation toward subsidiaries (based on Perlmutter 1969, p. 12)

Tayeb combined the two approaches by Kumar and Perlmutter in the context of HR and defined four strategic options in HRM: ethnocentric, polycentric, global and hybrid. Ethnocentric means that the HQ defines all HR activities, whereas polycentric denotes that HRM is adapted locally. A global strategy is the same across countries, whereas a hybrid strategy differs from one country to another (cf. Tayeb 2005, p. 99).

Several local aspects influence strategy choice. The HQ is generally more likely to select an ethnocentric and global approach in one of the following events:

- Employees abroad are unwilling to take on responsibility.
- Employees abroad lack experience and know-how.
- The subsidiary is built from the ground up.
- The foreign site is situated in a developing country (cf. Tayeb 2005, p. 102).

A polycentric approach is chosen when an existing foreign company is bought or the trust in the skills of the employees is high (cf. Tayeb 2005, p. 102). In summary, the HR strategy decision is highly dependent on the degree of local adaptation. Companies with many subsidiaries in different countries have a high level of internationalisation, and the dilemma for local adaptation increases (cf. Tayeb 2005, p. 117). However, as previously mentioned, this notion does not necessarily imply that the parent company differentiates its HR strategy.

2.3 Influence of culture on strategic international HRM

As mentioned in the last sub-chapter, Perlmutter's approach describes three general internationalisation strategies that influence HRM. However, this classification is not sufficient for HRM because the cultural dimension needs to be elaborated in detail as well (cf. Scholz 2014, p. 99). Findings from studies indicate that culture critically influences HRM, especially in the fields of employee training, reward systems and communication, and in the selection process and talent management (cf. Vaiman/Brewster 2015, p. 160). Consequently, the term "culture" needs to be described. According to the social scientist Hofstede, culture refers to mental programming that differentiates one group of people from another, and culture is learnt and derived from the social environment (cf. Hofstede/Hofstede/Mayer 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, culture is related to the attitudes and values of a society (cf. Tayeb 2005, p. 21).

Two terms need to be differentiated in discussing culture in relation to international HRM: corporate culture and national culture. One of the main challenges for businesses with foreign operations is to align the company culture with the national culture (cf. Mueller 2016, p. 198). National values influence the corporate culture (cf. Salama 2011, p. 20). In this regard, values can be specified as collective beliefs that characterise cultures (cf. Thomas/Inkson 2009, p. 31).

Scholz subsequently differentiated nine internationalisation strategies in personnel management which deal with the level of adaptation of the corporate culture to national cultures (cf. Scholz 2014, p. 102). Scholz based these strategy types on Perlmutter's types of HQ orientation towards the subsidiaries and divided it into two dimensions: (corporate) cultural strategy and decision-making strategy.

Cultural strategy consists of three types, namely monocultural, multicultural and mixed. These strategy types have direct implications on HRM. For instance, a monocultural strategy means that only one global unified corporate culture exists. On the contrary, a multicultural strategy signifies that the corporate culture is adapted to local conditions. A mixed strategy is a combination of both types. By contrast, decision-making strategy is categorised into centralised, decentralised and federal decision making. Federal decision making connotes the lack of a central management function (cf. Scholz 2014, p. 99 - 101).

Table 2 presents the nine internalisation strategies in HRM, particularly the combination of the types of cultural strategy and forms of decision making.

Cultural strategy Decision-making strategy	Monocultural strategy	Multicultural strategy	Mixed strategy
Centralised	Unified global strategy	Different company cultures, suitable when operating in countries with contrary national cultures	Company culture consists of national cultures
Decentralised	Unified global strategy with local decision making	Different company cultures, local decision making	Subsidiary delivers input to HQ which then leads to a unified global strategy
Federal	Unified global strategy, no central management function	Different company cultures, no central management function	Different company cultures approximate and form an integrated function across all company locations

Table 2: Nine internationalisation strategies in HRM (based on Scholz 2014, p. 102f.)

Table 2 indicates that depending on the strategy type, national cultures can or cannot be considered in developing the company culture. This notion suggests a necessity to describe cultural dimensions. Therefore, the most common cultural dimensions are stated hereafter. Several scientists have defined cultural dimensions to help compare cultures. Among these scientists are Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, Edward Hall and David Pinto.

For instance, Hofstede compared cultures. He conducted a study on IBM, in which he interviewed 117,000 employees in 72 countries (cf. Blom/Meier 2004, p. 47). Hofstede named the following cultural dimensions: "*power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and long-term orientation versus short-term orientation*" (Hofstede 2002, p. 443). The dimension of power distance deals with inequality in society and the manner by which prestige and wealth are perceived by a society (cf. Hofstede 2002, p. 79). Uncertainty avoidance describes how humans cope with uncertainties about the future (cf. Hofstede 2002, p. 145). Individualism and collectivism describe the "*the way people live together*" (Hofstede 2002, p. 209). In highly individualistic countries, individualism has a positive connotation, whereas in collectivistic countries, individualism has a negative connotation (cf. Hofstede 2002, p. 209). Masculinity and femininity describe the manner by which societies tackle the differences between males and females. For instance, highly masculine societies place more importance on status symbols such as money and career. On the contrary, social goals such as helping one another and developing personal relationships are more important in feminine societies (cf. Hofstede 2002, p. 279). The fifth dimension, long-term orientation was added after the IBM study, and this dimension is particularly relevant for Asian countries. Long-term orientation includes the importance attached to traditions (cf. Hofstede 2002, p. 351).

Trompenaars clustered culture into seven dimensions—five of them address human relationships, whereas the two others deal with the management of time and society's connection with the environment (cf. Steers/Sánchez-Runde/Nardon 2010, p. 414). The five dimensions that focus on relationships are named as follows. Universalism and particularism describe whether rules or relationships are more important. Individualism and communitarianism define whether the individual or the group is more important in a society. People in neutral cultures hide their feelings, whereas those in affective cultures show their feelings. Diffuse versus specific dimension describes the extent of people's involvement. Achievement and ascription focus on how people perceive status (cf. Trompenaars/Hampden-Turner 2012, p. 39). Another dimension by Trompenaars pertains to how societies manage time. He differentiated sequential—one task after the other—from synchronic time—several tasks at the same time (cf. Trompenaars/Hampden-Turner 2012, p. 147).

The final dimension explains how people relate to their environment—either inner-directed or outer-directed. Societies with inner direction believe that they can control nature and vice versa (cf. Trompenaars/Hampden-Turner 2012, p. 174).

Hall differentiated cultural concepts and dimensions into context, space and time. Context can be classified into low- and high-context cultures; scale anchors for space can be the centre of power and community. Time is divided into monochronic and polychronic time (cf. Steers/Sánchez-Runde/Nardon 2010, p. 413). Context can be defined as "*the information that surrounds an event*" (Hall/Hall 1990, p. 6) In high-context communication, little information is explicitly said, and the manner by which messages are expressed is more important. By contrast, low-context communication has no implications aside from the words uttered (cf. Hall/Hall 1990, p. 6). In discussing space, Hall referred to a person's invisible boundaries and the level of territoriality. High territoriality indicates that this culture has a greater concern for ownership. In cultures with low territoriality, personal space is less important (cf. Hall/Hall 1990, p. 10). Two concepts of time can be differentiated: monochronic and polychronic time. In monochronic cultures, only one activity is performed at one time. In polychronic cultures, several activities are performed at the same time (cf. Hall/Hall 1990, p. 15). Hall's concepts indicate that depending on the culture, different meanings are associated with messages (cf. Hall/Hall 1990, p. 29).

Pinto clustered cultures according to differences in value systems. He contrasts modern with traditional and western with non-western cultures. He categorised cultures into F-cultures and G-cultures. Combined with Hall's categorisation, F-cultures connote high-context cultures, whereas and G-cultures denote low-context cultures. According to Pinto, F-cultures are traditional and collectivistic, whereas G-cultures are modern and individualistic (cf. Blom/Meier 2004, p. 69).

The findings of the aforementioned scientists overlap. For example, Trompenaar's five relationship dimensions are similar to Hofstede's dimensions. Meanwhile, Hall's definition of time resembles Trompenaar's dimension of time. In summary, understanding national cultures and their dimensions in relation to the corporate culture has a significant impact on international HRM and international HR marketing. Cultures and values need to be considered especially in employer branding communication.

3. Employer choice

Chapter 3 of this thesis delineates the process of employer choice and its influencing factors. This thesis seeks to develop an employer brand positioning concept; thus, describing how employers are selected and determining the most influential employer attributes are necessary.

The first sub-chapter compares different definitions of employer choice processes. The second sub-chapter names the criteria that affect employer choice and employer attractiveness. The third sub-chapter explains how job seekers form a preference for a certain employer. Finally, the fourth sub-chapter identifies the specifics of employer choice of technicians.

3.1 Employer choice process

This thesis defines the term “potential applicant” or “potential candidate” as the person whom the company intends to attract. This term is used synonymously with the terms “potential employee”, “potential candidate” and “desired employee”. Analysing the employer choice process provides insights into the information search, evaluation and decision making of potential applicants. Understanding this process is critical because it defines where potential applicants search for information. Additionally, this process indicates the factors that are more or less relevant to the desired employees during information evaluation (cf. Sponheuer 2010, p. 168).

Böttger differentiated two types of employer choice theory, namely the labour economics approach and the behavioural sciences approach. For this thesis, the focus is on the behavioural sciences approach (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 82). Simon et al. developed one example of a behavioural sciences approach. Simon et al. defined a five-stage application process that consists of the following steps: awareness, attractiveness, sincerity, company offer and preference. Each stage comprises a critical question. If the answer is “yes” then the potential applicant proceeds to the next stage. If the answer is “no”, then the application process is terminated (cf. Simon/Wiltinger/Sebastian 1995, p. 55).

If the answer is “yes” at the end of the fourth stage, then the application process leads to employment. Some of the stages may run in parallel (cf. Simon/Wiltinger/Sebastian 1995, p. 55).

Süß named three phases of workplace choice: low involvement phase, preference formation phase and phase of critical contact. In the first phase, the candidate gathers information in an uncontrolled manner; at the end of this stage, a clear image of the company is formed. At the beginning of the second stage, the potential applicant starts to gain interest in the company; an employer image and finally an employer preference are formed. The application is sent at the beginning of the third stage, resulting in a job offer and employment. The level of involvement increases with each stage, and information search shifts from passive behaviour at the beginning to active behaviour in phase three (cf. Süß 1996, p. 74).

According to Kremmel and Walter, the employer choice process can be divided into three phases:

1. Existing employment, not actively looking for a new position
2. Information and job search
3. Decision-making process (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 23)

The first phase is characterised by low involvement, and the applicant is passive. In the second phase, the potential employee searches actively for information and job offers. At the end of this phase, an application is sent. Finally, in the third phase, the applicant is in active contact with the company. This phase is ideally concluded by joining the company. Various marketing measures should be used in each phase due to the different involvement levels of the potential employee (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 23).

Sponheuer developed another model which consists of four process steps that are combined with the attitudes of the potential employee. In the first stage, the potential employee searches for alternatives. In the second stage, the potential employee examines several employers in detail and determines to which employers applications are sent. In the third stage, the potential employee forms preferences regarding the received offers and accepts one job offer. In the fourth stage, the working contract begins (cf. Sponheuer 2010, p. 169).

Table 3 summarises the definitions of employer choice process of the aforementioned authors. Definitions with resemblances are highlighted in the same colour, whereas those in white fields are not connected with each other.

	Simon et al.	Süß	Kremmel, Walter	Sponheuer
Employer choice process steps	Awareness	Low involvement	Not actively looking for a new position	Search for alternatives
	Attractiveness	Preference formation	Information and job search	Attractiveness
	Sincerity	Phase of critical contact	Decision making	Evaluation of alternatives, preference formation
	Company offer			Company offer and acceptance
	Preference formation			

Table 3: Comparison of employer choice processes of different authors (based on Simon/Wiltinger/Sebastian 1995, p. 55; Süß 1996, p. 74; Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 23; Sponheuer 2010, p. 169)

The authors notably define a different number of process steps, between three and five. The low involvement at the beginning of the process is shared by two authors, same as the attractiveness in the second stage. The steps of preference formation, search for alternatives and company offer are used by several authors. All four authors define the employer choice process similarly.

On the contrary, Böttger developed another approach that deals with behavioural sciences. The author described the process of employer choice in relation to the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 99). The SOR model relates observable and non-observable variables. Stimuli include environmental factors, and responses are the reactions to these stimuli. Consequently, stimuli and responses are observable. By contrast, organisms are not observable. They include cognitive processes, involvement, cultural factors and personal attitudes (cf. Foscht/Swoboda/Schramm-Klein 2017, p. 30).

Figure 5 illustrates the SOR model in relation to the employer choice process.

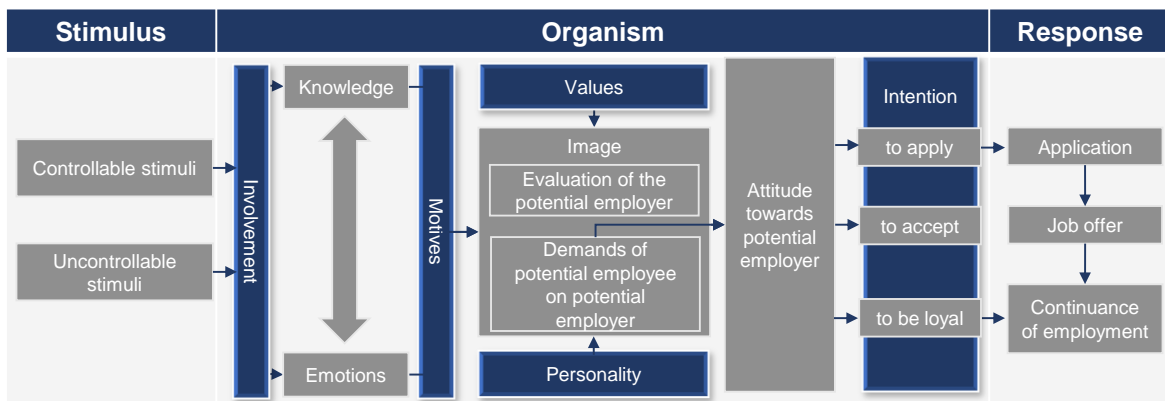


Figure 5: Employer choice process by Böttger (based on Böttger 2012, p. 99)

As previously mentioned, stimuli meet an organism which then elicits a certain response of the potential applicant. An example of a controllable stimulus is face-to-face communication in the course of trade fairs. Other examples include internships, websites, brochures and job advertisements (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 101 - 104). Non-controllable stimuli cannot be measured directly. These non-controllable stimuli include conversations with family members or friends, news and experiences with the products of the potential employer. Other criteria and stimuli are described in detail in chapter 3.2 (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 105).

Involvement refers to the level of activation to search and process information (cf. Trommsdorff/Teichert 2011, p. 49). The high or low involvement of the potential applicant functions as the first filter and determines the level of information processing. Knowledge and emotions regulate preference formation and the applicant's attitude towards an employer. This process subsequently results in an application and a job offer (cf. Böttger 2012, p. 99). Although Böttger's process is similar to that of the other authors, it is a new approach to employer choice in the context of the SOR model.

The next step after explaining how preferred employees choose employers is to analyse the criteria that affect employer attractiveness. This topic is discussed in the subsequent chapter.

3.2 Employer attractiveness

Employer attractiveness can be defined as a set of characteristics that motivate a potential applicant to apply at and choose a specific company (cf. Christiaans 2013, p. 13). In the current thesis, these characteristics and influencing factors are referred to as factors of employer attractiveness. Employer attractiveness likely differs across countries and cultures (cf. Berthon/Ewing/Hah 2005, p. 168). A general overview is presented in the following sub-chapters. As depicted in Figure 6, experiences with the potential employer and information about a company shape employer attractiveness (cf. Kirschten 2014, p. 125).

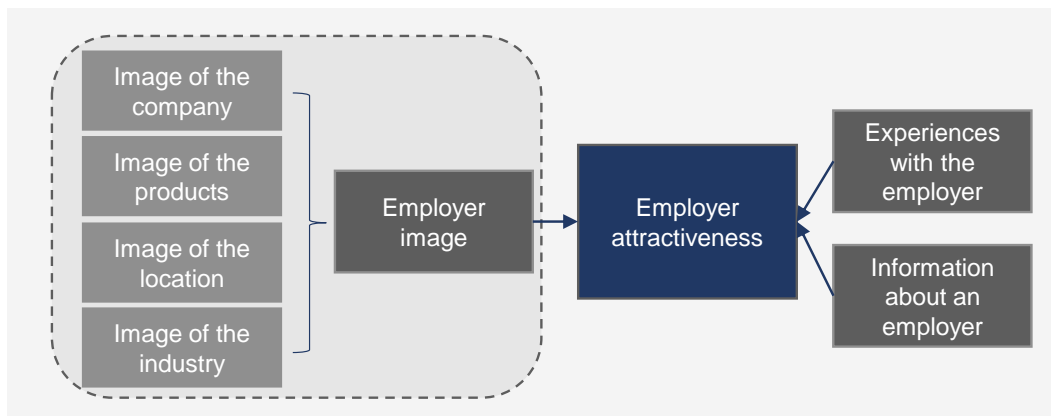


Figure 6: Influencing factors of employer attractiveness (based on Kirschten 2014, p. 126)

The next sub-chapter focuses on the influence of the employer image on employer attractiveness. The second part describes concrete employer attributes that affect employer image and employer attractiveness. Experiences with employers are disregarded because they cannot be generalised. Finally, the means of becoming an employer of choice is illustrated.

3.2.1 Image and employer attractiveness

The image of a company significantly shapes the perceived employer attractiveness. Image describes the "*collection of knowledge, beliefs and feelings about an organization*" (Backhaus/Stone/Heiner 2002, p. 293). Image includes not only the economic success of the company but also the image of its products, industry and location (cf. Kirschten 2014, p. 126.). Awareness of the respective employers is the precondition for a positive employer image. Well-known companies are perceived as more positive and more attractive to potential employees (cf. Kanning 2017, p. 148).

Furthermore, companies with a positive image achieve a higher level of attractiveness as an employer (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 78). The employer's image is formed throughout time via media reports, company successes and company products (cf. Trost 2013, p. 16).

The company's image and the applicant's personality should match. The reason is that job seekers are more likely to choose companies that focus on similar values (cf. Felser 2010, p. 37). The term "person-organisation-fit" summarises the idea that job seekers are more likely to choose companies that share the former's own beliefs (cf. Weinrich 2014, p. 136f.). The more positive the employer image is, the more applicants identify themselves with the company and choose the company as their preferred employer (cf. Backhaus/Tikoo 2004, p. 506).

In summary, company image and reputation influence an employer's attractiveness (cf. Rampl 2013, p. 1489). Furthermore, a company's adaptation of the communicated values towards the preferred target groups or target countries makes a difference.

3.2.2 Factors of employer attractiveness

A company's image and its attractiveness are determined by several attributes of an employer. Attributes can be divided into factual and symbolic information. Facts have more influence on the final employer choice; however, symbolic information facilitates a differentiation from the competition (cf. Kanning 2017, p. 151).

Ambler and Barrow differentiated three types of factors of employer attractiveness: psychological, functional and economic employer attributes (cf. Ambler/Barrow 1996, p. 187). These types of factors were then extended by Berthon et al. who classified the factors of employer attractiveness into five categories. The first two factors are similar to Ambler and Barrow's psychological benefits, whereas the fourth and fifth factors expand on the functional benefits.

- Factor 1: Interest value: Does the company offer an attractive work environment and is the company innovative?
- Factor 2: Social value: Does the company provide a positive and cooperative work environment?

- Factor 3: Economic value: Is the offered salary sufficient? Does the company offer other monetary bonuses?
- Factor 4: Development value: Does the company provide sufficient development opportunities?
- Factor 5: Application value: Can employees teach others and share their knowledge? (cf. Berthon/Ewing/Hah 2005, p. 159 - 162)

Hillebrandt and Ivens further extended Berthon's dimensions and identified 12 factors. Similarities to the aforementioned factors are indicated in brackets, "F" stands for "factor": attractive company culture (F1), team spirit (F2), interesting tasks (F1, F4), internationality (F1), monetary benefits (F3), company reputation, work-life balance, training (F4), diverse work environment (F1, F2), customers, working autonomously (F4) and corporate social responsibility. Compared with Berthon's benefits, the last three dimensions differ the most (cf. Hillebrandt/Ivens 2013, p. 79).

The employer choice process can be described as complex because potential applicants need to evaluate large amounts of information. Cognitive and emotional factors influence the employer choice (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 31). Depending on the phase of employer choice, different decision criteria are dominant. The general perceived attractiveness of the employer prevails in the earlier phases, whereas specific workplace characteristics determine whether a job offer is accepted (cf. Aiman-Smith/Bauer/Cable 2001, p. 232 - 234).

Another study indicated similar results. The function, company culture and development opportunity are critical factors in the first phase of job search. The industry, location and reputation of the company subsequently become significant. Information that reaches job seekers in the earlier phases of decision making has a stronger influence on the final decision. This case is particularly true when applicants have several relevant job offers (cf. Felser 2010, p. 41). During the pre-selection phase, applicants focus on key criteria. If these criteria are not fulfilled, the company is eliminated as a potential employer. The applicant consequently evaluates the remaining alternatives (cf. Süß 1996, p. 110).

According to a summary of related studies, the most relevant criteria are as follows:

- Working atmosphere
- Salary
- Career opportunities
- Development opportunities
- Job security
- Flexible working conditions
- Challenging tasks
- Work–life balance
- Company location (cf. Buckmann 2016, p. 4; Pfeil 2017, p. 217 - 219)

An effective working atmosphere gains importance with an increase in work experience. The criteria of career and development opportunity and a high level of flexibility are more important to academics than to people with a lower education level (cf. Pfeil 2017, p. 218 - 220). Stotz and Wedel-Klein identified similar factors of employer attractiveness, such as resources, feedback and personal reward and personnel management procedures (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 90). According to Kanning, company size, company location, hierarchical structure, business success and company values are of relevance (cf. Kanning 2017, p. 151). Additional criteria can be named in relation to young talent. For this target group, company image, company culture, international career opportunities and clear career perspectives matter the most (cf. Ritz 2011, p. 65).

Ensuring that the aforementioned criteria that influence employer choice fulfil the expectations of a certain group of employees requires the communication of realistic associations. Thus, the emphasised employer attributes need to fit in with the interests and expectations of the applicant. This notion is related to the aforementioned “employee-job fit” (cf. Hauer/Schüller/Strasmann 2002, p. 73). Authenticity consequently plays an important role in defining a company’s most relevant employer attributes that should be communicated (cf. Buchheim/Weiner 2014, p. 68).

3.3 Employer preference formation

As mentioned in chapter 3.1, one step in the employer choice process can be the preference formation. This step is discussed in this sub-chapter.

Employer choices can be categorised as extensive decisions because involvement is high. Furthermore, the decision is made relatively seldom and has long-term effects. As a result, potential applicants are willing to invest personal resources in information search and evaluation. Significant psychological stress is experienced during the process. Therefore, the potential candidate aims to reduce the complexity of decision making and uses solely a limited number of criteria at the beginning of the process (cf. Pfeil 2017, p. 191). Thus, companies should aim to be in their desired employee's consideration set. Additionally, the other companies that are in this consideration set should be examined (cf. Süß 1996, p. 113).

Figure 7 presents the consideration set analysis in the context of employer choice.

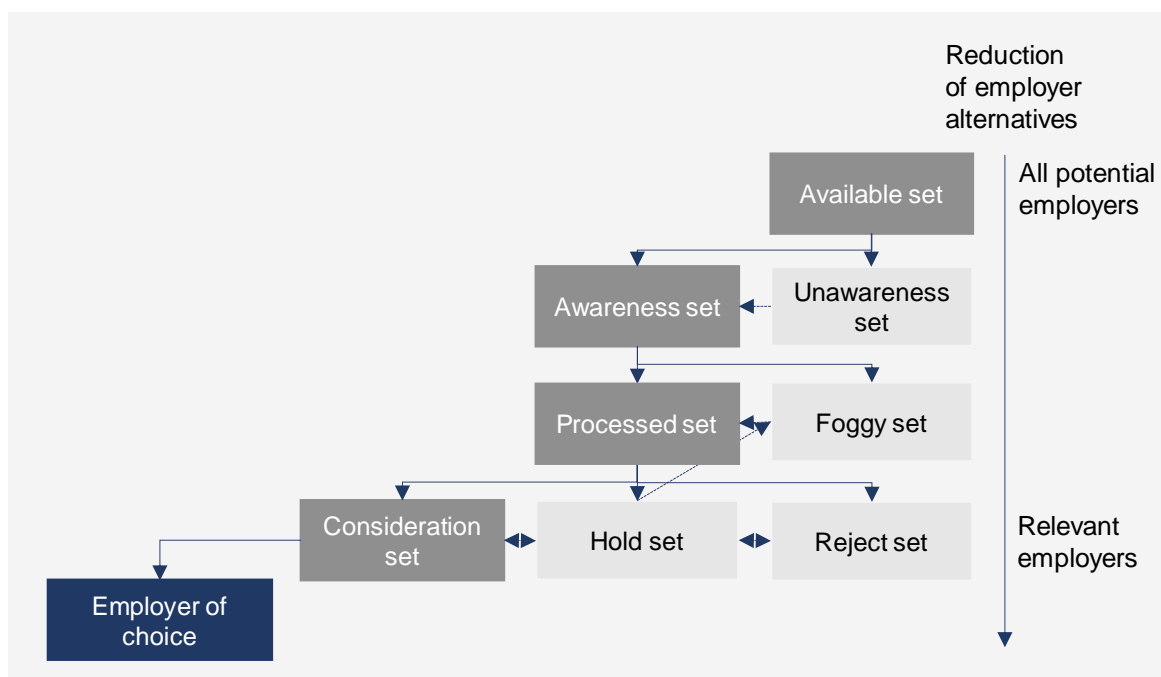


Figure 7: Reduction of employer alternatives (based on Süß 1996, p. 111; Trommsdorff/Teichert 2011, p. 91)

The available set pertains to the total number of alternatives. In relation to employer choice, the available set denotes the total number of potential employers. This number is reduced to the awareness set, and this includes employers of which a job seeker is aware (cf. Trommsdorff/Teichert 2011, p. 92).

Employers that the job seeker has specific knowledge about are in the processed set. Some of these employers are relevant to the potential employee and move into the applicant's consideration set (cf. Trommsdorff/Teichert 2011, p. 92). Finally, one employer is preferred, which is the applicant's employer of choice (cf. Süß 1996, p. 111).

Applicants are also more likely to choose a company as a potential employer when the company is their employer of choice. Hence, companies that employ highly skilled staff who are difficult to find should aim to become an employer of choice (cf. Rampl 2013, p. 1487). Employer branding can be one approach for increasing an employer's attractiveness to potential employees and to become an employer of choice (cf. Holste 2012, p. 61). This topic is examined in chapter 4.

3.4 Specifics of the employer choice of technicians

Labour shortage exists in the field of technical experts and influences high-tech companies (cf. Elias-Linde 2014, p. 19). This shortage has increased the competition in the labour market where companies vie for the most suitable employees with technical education (cf. Bollwitt 2010, p. 21). Therefore, the labour market has changed from a seller's market to a buyer's market. This situation indicates that employees, especially those who are in high demand such as technicians, prefer to be convinced about an employer and its job offer (cf. Hauer/Schüller/Strasmann 2002, p. 65). Thus, the war for talent and the importance of technicians in the success of high-tech businesses have emphasised the need to highlight the employer's attributes that increase its attractiveness to technicians (cf. Axelrod/Handfield-Jones/Welsh 2001, p. 11).

Compared with other high performers, highly specialised technical experts focus on different criteria in the employer choice process. For instance, these technicians place higher importance on workplace security and consistency in their work environment. Related to this example is an open-ended employment that can increase employer attractiveness to technicians (cf. Günther 2013, p. 64). Technicians also aim to be an integral part of the development of new technologies (cf. Hauer/Schüller/Strasmann 2002, p. 57).

Therefore, challenging tasks and company innovativeness are more important to technicians than to other target groups (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 34).

The expansion of their field of activity and addition of new activities (job enlargement or job enrichment) or job rotation can also enhance employer attractiveness (cf. Günther 2013, p. 68). Young potential employees with a research-intensive background could prefer employers with high investments in R&D (cf. Ritz 2011, p. 60). If a high-tech company's strategic focus is on innovativeness, then this factor should be communicated because highly specialised technical employees are more attracted to companies with an innovative culture and a cutting-edge product portfolio (cf. Sommer/Heidenreich/Handrich 2017, p. 299).

Sivertzen et al. conducted a study among engineering students and generated a similar conclusion. The result suggested that the non-monetary employer attributes should be highlighted in attracting technicians. Moreover, the focus should be on psychological, innovation and application values such as innovativeness. Communicating these factors increases employer attractiveness in hiring potential technical employees (cf. Sivertzen/Nilsen/Olafsen 2013, p. 479f.). According to Günther who conducted a study that focused on the preferences of MINT (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, technical sciences) graduates, work-life balance is particularly important to this target group (cf. Günther 2013, p. 63).

Overall, the following employer attributes should be highlighted to attract technicians: innovativeness of the company, workplace security and consistent work environment.

4. Employer branding

The first two chapters outlined the basic principles of HRM and employer choice. These two topics form the basis for employer branding (EB). Employer branding is part of HRM and HR marketing; thus, HRM was examined. The manner by which potential applicants form their preference for one employer over another was also discussed. Chapter 4 seeks to link to these findings because EB is one approach for becoming the preferred employer to reduce skill shortages.

The first sub-chapter presents a general overview of EB and its related terms. The second sub-chapter identifies the functions of employer brands.

The success factors for EB are subsequently named. Chapter 4.4 explains the relationship between corporate branding and employer branding. It also offers insights into the EB target groups and the means of organising international EB.

4.1 Introduction

The literature defines the field of employer branding in various ways, resulting in different approaches to the topic. Therefore, clarifying how employer branding and related topics are understood in this thesis is necessary:

- Employer brand
- Employer value proposition
- Employer branding
- Employer image and employer identity
- Personnel marketing

4.1.1 Terminologies

The term "employer brand" was initially mentioned in 1995 by Tim Ambler and Simon Barrow. The authors applied brand management concepts to HRM (cf. Ambler/Barrow 1996, p. 185). As a result, their definition is used in this thesis: *"The 'Employer Brand' can be defined as 'the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company'"* (Ambler/Barrow 1996, p. 187). The employer brand is the overall result of employer branding (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 71).

The heart of the employer brand is the employer value proposition (EVP). The EVP clarifies why a person should be interested in a certain employer (cf. Trost 2013, p. 16). It includes the positioning of the employer brand and relevant employer attributes (cf. Dessain 2016, p. 5). An employer brand consists of not only the EVP but also a specific brand purpose. The brand purpose should be derived from the preferences of favoured employees (cf. Lukasczyk 2012, p. 13).

Employer branding aims to build employer attractiveness by communicating the reasons for joining a certain company (cf. Wilden/Gudergan/Lings 2010, p. 63). The goals of employer branding can be clustered as follows:

- Increase employer awareness and attractiveness
- Positively influence the job seeker's decision in favour of the company
- Enhance the commitment and loyalty of existing employees
- Positively influence a company's reputation (cf. Lukasczyk 2012, p. 41)

The following topics are part of employer branding: personnel advertising, training and development and recruitment (cf. Lane 2016, p. 24). According to Ralf Tometschek, employer branding is more than recruitment marketing. It is about keeping the promise of being an attractive employer to applicants and employees (cf. Tometschek 2013, p. 77). Employer branding is a strategic process that applies brand management concepts. A company is positioned as an attractive employer. The outcome of employer branding is the employer brand which aims to create a positive employer image and increase employer attractiveness (cf. Schuhmacher/Geschwill 2009, p. 39). Personnel marketing is a cross-departmental function that deals with all activities that make an employer attractive to potential employees (cf. Lukasczyk 2012, p. 12).

Employer image is the unified perception of a company as an employer in society. Employer image needs to be differentiated from company image because the former is part of the company image (cf. Trost 2013, p. 16). Further implications on how the employer image affects employer attractiveness during employer choice have already been outlined in chapter 3.2. On the contrary, employer identity represents what an employer brand should stand for from the company's perspective (cf. Wiese 2005, p. 36).

The purpose of personnel marketing is to attract the most suitable talent and motivate them to apply for a certain position. This includes the communication of the company vision and culture. Hence, personnel marketing and employer branding are closely connected (cf. Hauer/Schüller/Strasmann 2002, p. 71). Employer branding and personnel marketing are used as synonyms in literature (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 9).

4.1.2 Organisational integration of employer branding

The responsibilities for EB can be split between two departments, namely corporate management and personnel marketing. On the one hand, management is responsible for the strategy, objectives and brand identity. Additionally, it defines the budget available for employer branding. On the other hand, personnel marketing is responsible for anchoring the employer brand internally within the company and externally with the company's external stakeholders, especially with potential employees. Personnel marketing also defines the brand's positioning and controls the employer branding process (cf. Wiese 2005, p. 76f.).

Employer branding needs to be viewed as a topic that affects HRM, marketing and corporate management (cf. Mosley 2007, p. 123). However, the main responsibility for EB lies with the human resource department. The marketing department is involved because the products of a company influence its employer image. The department of corporate communications and public relations needs to be involved in the employer branding process as well (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 238). Employer branding must be strategically involved across departments and disciplines (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 13f.).

4.2 Functions of an employer brand

Employer branding affects several aspects within a company, such as employee recruitment, employee retention, company culture and corporate brand (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 27). The functions of employer branding can be categorised into two groups: functions for the potential applicants and existing employees and functions for the employer. This topic is explored in the next two sub-chapters.

4.2.1 Functions of an employer brand for potential applicants

The key functions of employer brands for potential candidates can be termed as orientation function, trust function, prestige and identification function (cf. Kirschten 2014, p.127; Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 31; Petkovic 2008, p. 68).

Orientation means that a strong employer brand helps potential applicants with the search for a suitable employer. It simplifies the search process. During a job search, job seekers are confronted with large amounts of information that need to be processed. Brands support this process because they bundle emotional and functional information (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 31).

An extensive long-term decision is made during the employer choice process. The decision making includes some risk for potential applicants because not all of the relevant factors can be evaluated in advance. In particular, potential applicants who made a poor decision in the past need to overcome their scepticism (cf. Petkovic, p. 65). Strong employer brands minimise the risk with choosing the wrong employer since they communicate specific values (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 31).

Employer choice depends not only on objective factors but also on emotional components. Identification pertains to the manner by which potential employees can identify themselves with an employer's value system. If the degree of identification is high, the job seeker is more likely to apply. Additionally, the clear communication of the company's ideals automatically filters out applicants who pursue different ideals (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 31f.).

This chapter described the functions for potential applicants. The subsequent chapter presents how employer brands function for and benefit companies.

4.2.2 Functions of an employer brand for employers

The central function of the employer brand for the company is that it helps the employer with the differentiation from competitors and preference formation. Furthermore, recruiting costs can be reduced through employer branding. Finally, an employer brand can increase the motivation of an existing employee (cf. Kirschten 2014, p. 128).

As mentioned in chapter 3, preference formation is one part of the employer choice process and is aimed at making a company the employer of choice. Through a unique, positive image, employer brands can position a company as the employer of choice in the minds of the preferred employees and ensure that more suitable candidates apply (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 15). Hence, this aspect constitutes the central goal of employer branding for companies. A positive and realistic positioning as an employer supports this goal (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 28f.). Therefore, matching the chosen values with the preferred employees' preferences is critically important (cf. Mosley 2005, p. 60).

Another advantage is that strong employer brands reduce the recruiting costs because more qualified personnel apply (cf. Ambler/Barrow 2016, p. 20). Differentiation denotes the process by which companies distinguish themselves from their competitors through employer brands. Companies that exclusively differentiate themselves are attractive to potential and existing employees (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 28f.). Employer branding aims to build the image in a potential candidate's perception that a company is a great place to work (cf. Berthon/Ewing/Hah 2005, p. 154). Employer choice is an emotional process. The emotionalisation of employer brands can attract potential employees and enhance the loyalty of existing employees (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 29). This notion connotes that employees feel emotionally connected with a company if they derive value from their tasks and if they have a positive work environment. It indicates that motivation is influenced not only by the salary or perks but also by psychological benefits (cf. Mosley 2005, p. 59).

According to Ambler and Barrow, the other benefits of employer brands include increased brand equity, simplified delegation of tasks and higher agility because employees are more confident in dangerous business situations. Less middle management and less wastage of resources are the other advantages. Finally, employer brands improve the cooperation between departments and performance measurement (cf. Ambler/Barrow 2016, p. 20f.).

In summary, strong employer brands have benefits for both applicants and employers. Chapter 4.3 covers the success factors of an employer brand.

4.3 Success factors of employer branding

Determining the factors that make an employer brand successful is critical after discussing how employer brands function for employers and employees.

According to Melewar and Walker, the seven rules for successful branding are as follows:

1. A brand must match the corporate strategy.
2. A brand must summarise the key principles of what a company stands for.
3. A brand's positioning must be consistent.
4. A brand's marketing mix must be consistent.
5. A brand must provide security for its stakeholders.
6. A brand must be adapted to its stakeholders' needs.
7. A brand must differentiate one company from another (cf. Melewar/Walker 2003, p. 158 - 160).

Moroko and Uncles extended this viewpoint with regard to employer branding. According to the authors, employer branding needs to meet the promise it makes to its recipients. Thus, employer branding must fulfil a psychological contract. The contract starts during the recruitment process and ends with the employee leaving the company. If the contract is fulfilled, employees are expected to be more loyal (cf. Moroko/Uncles 2008, p. 165f.). Another success factor is the consistency in the perception of the company and its brands (corporate brand, consumer brand and employer brand) before and after the employee joins the company. This success factor is related to how well the product, service and brands are aligned with the perception of the potential applicant (cf. Moroko/Uncles 2008, p. 167).

Stotz and Wedel-Klein identified other success factors for employer brands. The first one is a company's resource commitment. Ample financial and personnel resources need to be available. Communication messages also need to be authentic and clear to the desired employees. Otherwise, irrelevant applicants will produce a high number of inappropriate applications (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 32f.).

4.4 Corporate branding vs internal branding vs employer branding

A corporate brand (CB) can be defined as a specific perception of a company and associated company attributes from the perspective of its stakeholder groups which differentiates a business from its competitors (cf. Giersch 2008, p. 40). Corporate brands comprise all of the aspects that make one company unique and stand out from other firms when reaching out to stakeholders. These aspects include promises that an organisation gives to its stakeholders (cf. Schultz/Antorini/Csaba 2006, p. 26).

Corporate brands need to be relevant to different stakeholder groups (cf. Kernstock et al. 2014, p. 9). These interest groups can be classified into internal and external stakeholder groups (cf. Cheng/Foster/Punjaisri 2010, p. 401). On the one hand, internal stakeholders include company owners, management and employees. On the other hand, external stakeholders can be shareholders, suppliers, customers, society, the state, cooperation partners or sales agents (cf. Tomczak/Kernstock 2014, p. 33). Companies are challenged to balance the needs of different stakeholder groups when defining their corporate brand (cf. Kernstock et al. 2014, p. 7). Consequently, corporate brand management must combine external and internal orientations.

The growth of internal branding and employer branding stems from the importance of employees in CB management. Internal branding concentrates on communicating and adopting the brand internally, whereas employer branding focuses on recruiting the most suitable employees (cf. Cheng/Foster/Punjaisri 2010, p. 401). Internal branding assists with creating a strong corporate brand by ensuring that the employees are aligned with the brand's values and the brand promise (cf. Ravens 2014, p. 31; Siebrecht 2012, p. 108). It seeks to increase employees' identification with the company and the corporate brand. This goal includes sensitising employees to the brand identity and its values (cf. Kreutzer 2014, p. 11). Further information on the means of anchoring brands internally is presented in chapter 4.5.1.

Employer branding developed out of corporate branding when marketing concepts were applied to HRM. Hence, the employer brand is part of the corporate brand (cf. Davies/Mete/Whelan 2017, p. 64; Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 6). Figure 8 depicts how the employer brand is embedded in the corporate brand and how both types of brands communicate to existing and potential employees. It also presents the scope of internally and externally oriented employer branding.

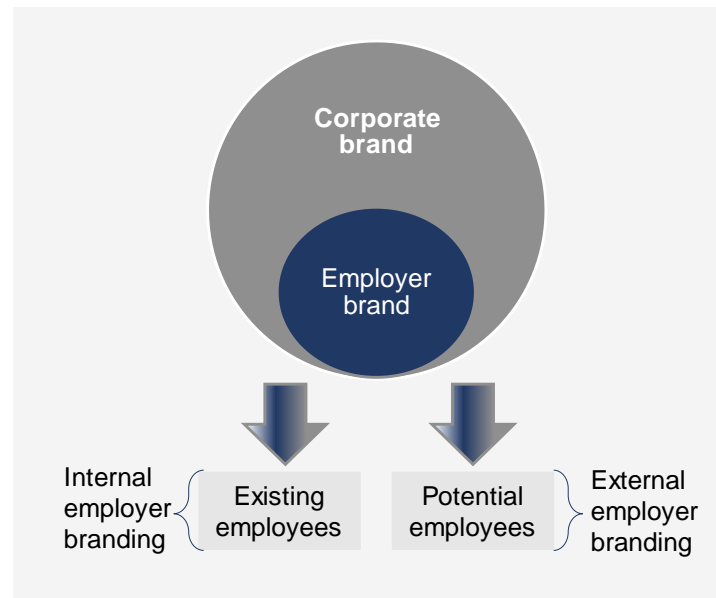


Figure 8: Relationship between corporate brand and employer brand (based on Cheng/Foster/Punjaisri 2010, p. 401; Davies/Mete/Whelan 2017, p. 64)

A company's CB directly influences its employer brand because the CB image is likely to transfer to a company's attractiveness as an employer (cf. Cheng/Foster/Punjaisri 2010, p. 404). Therefore, deriving the employer brand and its identity from the CB is critical. All brand attributes need to match so that a uniform brand is perceived by all stakeholders (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 6).

One model that can be used to achieve this conformity is the brand steering wheel, as illustrated in Figure 9 on the next page. The brand steering wheel consists of four parts that describe the brand identity, namely brand benefits, brand tonalities, brand appearance and brand attributes. A company's employer brand can be derived from the corporate brand by adding HR-specific aspects and adapting the brand to the needs of (potential) employees. The left side of the steering wheel presents the rational characteristics, whereas the right side outlines the emotional characteristics. The developed brand identity is the basis for positioning the employer brand (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 294).

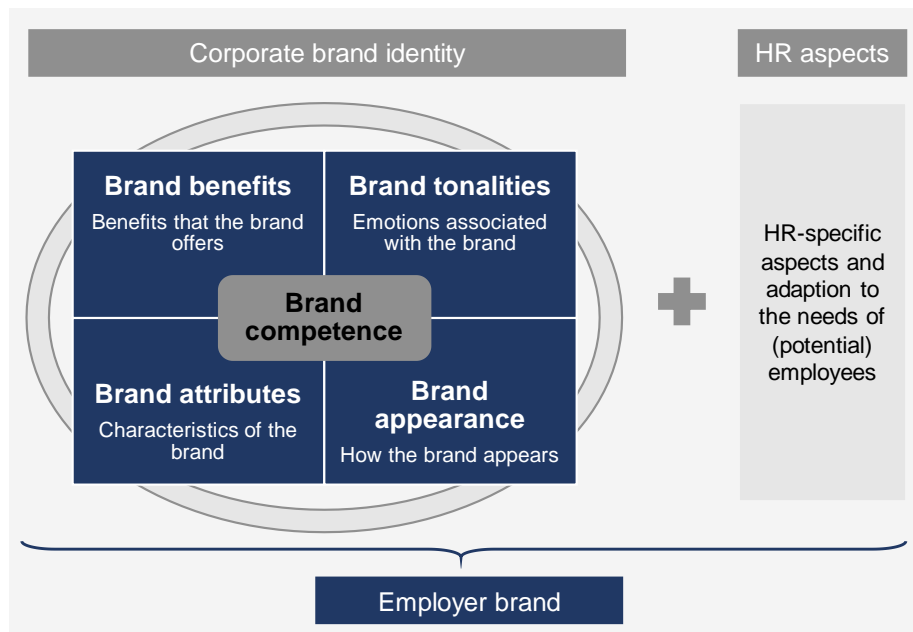


Figure 9: Deriving the employer brand from the corporate brand (based on Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 294)

This chapter described the key differences of corporate branding, internal branding and employer branding. The next chapter examines the means of addressing internal and external target groups.

4.5 Target groups of employer branding

Two target groups of employer branding can be named: existing employees and potential employees. Thus, an internal perspective of employer branding and an external approach to EB exist. Understanding both the internal and external perspectives is key to developing an employer brand (cf. Lane 2016, p. 30). The differences in dealing with both target groups are outlined in the next two sub-chapters.

4.5.1 Internal employer branding

As previously mentioned, the main goal of internal employer branding is to retain employees. Internal branding is based on how the employer brand is lived within the company—for instance, how management applies the employer brand—and how the employer brand is integrated in leadership styles (cf. Lindner-Lohmann/Lohmann/Schirmer 2016, p. 46).

Internal branding aims to achieve employee behaviour that is favourable towards the corporate brand; hence, internal branding can also be called behavioural branding (cf. Schmidt 2008, p. 55). The current thesis views internal employer branding as one part of internal branding which is directed specifically to the labour market (cf. Siebrecht 2012, p. 106). Internal branding has become a success factor in doing business especially when a company is in direct contact with its external stakeholders such as customers and potential applicants (cf. Schmidt 2008, p. 50f.). Thus, employer brands need to be implemented internally before externally because employees function as brand ambassadors when in contact with these interest groups (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 167).

Several benefits are linked with the internal communication of the employer brand, such as more trust, stronger team spirit and higher level of trustworthiness (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 168). Internal branding also strengthens the employees' commitment to their tasks and to the company, and this commitment can be transferred to their work with customers. Hence, internal branding can be a key determinant of employee and customer satisfaction and sales (cf. LePla 2013, p. 19).

Internally, strategic focus entails communicating the employer's identity and attributes in daily work life. Operatively, strategic focus affects the areas of HR processes, leadership, work environment and internal communication (cf. Siebrecht 2012, p. 54).

4.5.2 External employer branding

The main goal of external employer branding is to recruit the most suitable employees. The need for consistent communication is higher because external employer branding is communicated to external audiences (cf. Lindner-Lohmann/Lohmann/Schirmer 2016, p. 46). Other goals can be to increase employer attractiveness from the perspective of potential applicants and to become an employer of choice (cf. Kirschten 2014, p. 122). The functions of employer branding for potential applicants have been explained in chapter 4.2.1 and thus are not tackled in this chapter. Further information on the employer choice process is provided in chapter 3.

Strategic focus and the challenge of external EB involve communicating a trustworthy, realistic and authentic picture of an employer. At the operative level, this affects the areas of external communication, networking at career events, recruitment process and corporate reputation (cf. Siebrecht 2012, p. 54). Authentic communication is a challenge because of the current war for talent. Employers are more likely to communicate an exaggerated positive and unrealistic image due to the intense competition in the labour market. This behaviour bears the risk of high employee fluctuation (cf. Latzel et al. 2015, p. 41).

4.6 International employer branding

In chapter 2, different types of international HR strategies were explained and compared, based on the categorisations by Bartlett and Ghosal and Perlmutter. Employer branding can be viewed as one part of HRM; thus, these internationalisation strategies can also be applied to EB in particular. This chapter focuses on how EB strategies can be standardised or adapted to local needs. The second part outlines the factors that favour the specific types of strategy.

4.6.1 Standardisation and adaptation in employer branding

Companies' use of synergy effects and consideration for different methods for organising the employer brand are apparent in view of the increase in the international expansion of companies. Key questions that subsequently emerge focus on the extent to which the employer brand should be adapted to local needs and the means of achieving synergy effects through standardisation (cf. Trost 2013, p. 99). Hence, similar to Bartlett and Ghoshal (cf. Bartlett/Ghoshal 1992, p. 65), Martin and Hetrick categorised international employer branding strategies according to the need for differentiation and integration. The categorisation by Martin and Hetrick consisted of four types of strategy: local employer branding, glocal EB, global EB and international EB (cf. Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 306). These types of strategy are depicted in Figure 10.

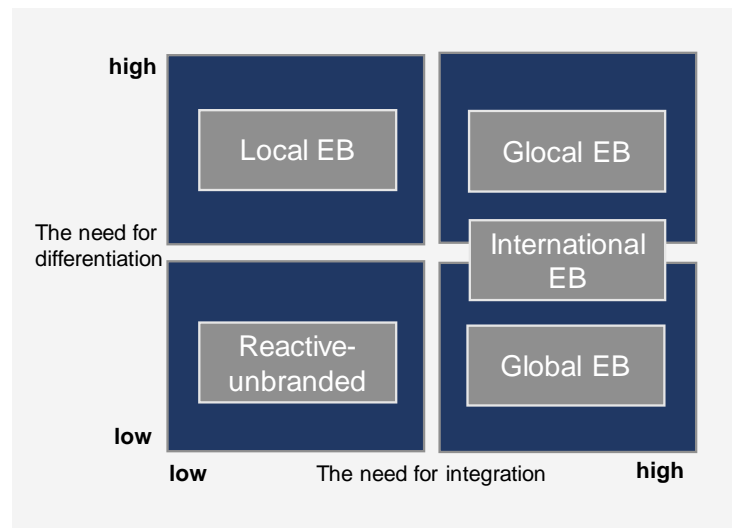


Figure 10: International employer branding strategies (based on Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 306)

For glocal employer brands, the level of differentiation is high. In this case, a unified brand is developed that includes local perspectives (cf. Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 307). For this type of strategy, the responsibility for a global employer brand can lie with the subsidiaries. The subsidiaries may adapt employer brand campaign elements locally with the authorisation of the headquarters (cf. Trost 2013, p. 101). Additionally, the positioning can be global and consistent but local characteristics are included in developing the brand. This positioning is achieved through a democratic process that involves the subsidiaries (cf. Trost 2013, p. 103).

By contrast, global employer brands are standardised. This standardisation includes a unified human resource strategy and culture. With regard to this type of strategy, the subsidiaries have little influence on the development of the brand because the strategy is defined at the headquarters (cf. Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 307). The brand essence is developed from the centralised viewpoint of a global project team. Therefore, the positioning is consistent around the globe. Brand responsibility lies within the headquarters (cf. Trost 2013, p. 101). The major element of a global brand is a consistent corporate culture. Communication is uniform, but some communication activities need to be adapted locally to achieve maximum performance (cf. Ind 1997, p. 155). One benefit of a global brand for a company are economies of scale which indicates that standardised branding can reduce costs. A unified brand image is another benefit of a global brand (cf. Schuiling/Kapferer 2004, p. 100).

International employer brands seek to include the advantages of global brands, but the level of differentiation and adaptation is higher. International employer brands are developed at the headquarters together with the subsidiaries (cf. Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 307). International EB is executed on a local basis, and the company headquarters are in a supporting role (cf. Trost 2013, p. 102).

Lukasczyk named three types of strategy that combined Perlmutter's (cf. Perlmutter 1969, p. 12) and Ghoshal and Bartlett's approaches (cf. Bartlett/Ghoshal 1992, p. 65). The three types of strategy are global employer branding, local employer branding and polycentric employer branding. According to Lukasczyk, polycentric EB is similar to international EB by Martin and Hetrick which signifies that the brand identity is developed locally (cf. Lukasczyk 2012, p. 95).

4.6.2 International employer branding strategy choice

This chapter outlines the level of standardisation that is suitable for a particular company. It focuses on company-specific and country-specific factors.

One of the main factors in deciding on the type of strategy for an employer brand is the variety of needs of people and the required level of adaptation and standardisation to respond to these needs. Particularly for global brands, resolving the differences in local needs on the one hand, and achieving a consistent brand positioning on the other hand, are challenging. As a result, global brands place less importance on cultural adaptation. The country of origin has the strongest impact on the chosen core principles (cf. Ind 1997, p. 144). However, several difficulties in standardising brands emerge, and these difficulties concern the following aspects: difference of countries, dissimilarity in local history and variation in the local cultures and attitudes of people (cf. Melewar/Walker 2003, p. 162f.).

When local needs must be addressed, the use of a local branding strategy is preferred. The reason is that local brands respond to these needs better. Furthermore, local brands can react more effectively to local and international competitors and their branding (cf. Schuiling/Kapferer 2004, p. 101). When communicating the employer brand, the following rule applies: *"the more downstream an activity, the greater the requirement for localisation"* (Ind 1997, p. 155).

Christiaans clustered the factors for or against standardisation in EB in two groups, namely company-related and country-related factors. The brand strategy of a company is related to its history in internationalisation. Companies that adopt an ethnocentric approach are more likely to standardise employer branding. On the contrary, polycentric companies that employ a multinational approach are more likely to favour adaptation in EB. Furthermore, the resources of a company play a significant role. A company with limited financial resources cannot afford a high level of adaptation (cf. Christiaans 2013, p. 72). Companies need to meet the following criteria to successfully build a standardised company image:

- Clear source of authority, for example one person who is responsible for international communications
- Subsidiaries have limited autonomy
- Centralised control of the branding activities (cf. Ind 1997, p. 147)

Moreover, the chosen strategy can depend on the industry in which a company operates. For example, technology companies such as HP, IBM and Cisco prefer global employer brands to local EB. Industries where adaptation is more important include retailing, tourism and education (cf. Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 305). Adaptation is needed more when companies operate in fields with a higher degree of "*culture-boundedness*" (Martin/Hetrick 2009, p. 305).

In summary, defining a global brand for companies with clear core principles and values is easier (cf. Ind 1997, p. 144). In addition to company-related factors, the environment of a company influences strategy choice. Standardisation is preferred when the potential of a target country is limited. If the preferred position is already occupied by the competition, the development of a new positioning based on local needs may be necessary. The other factors that affect strategy choice include geographic distances, legal and political systems, demographics and technological progress (cf. Christiaans 2013, p. 74f.). Companies need to evaluate the aforementioned factors in choosing a strategy.

5. Development of an employer brand positioning concept

Several concepts of how the EB process can be described exist, including a diverse number of process steps and a different step order (cf. Kirschten 2014, p. 129; Lukasczyk 2012, p. 15; Heider-Winter 2014, p. 100). The current thesis combines the models by Esch, Eichenauer, Trost, Kremmel/Walter and Petkovic.

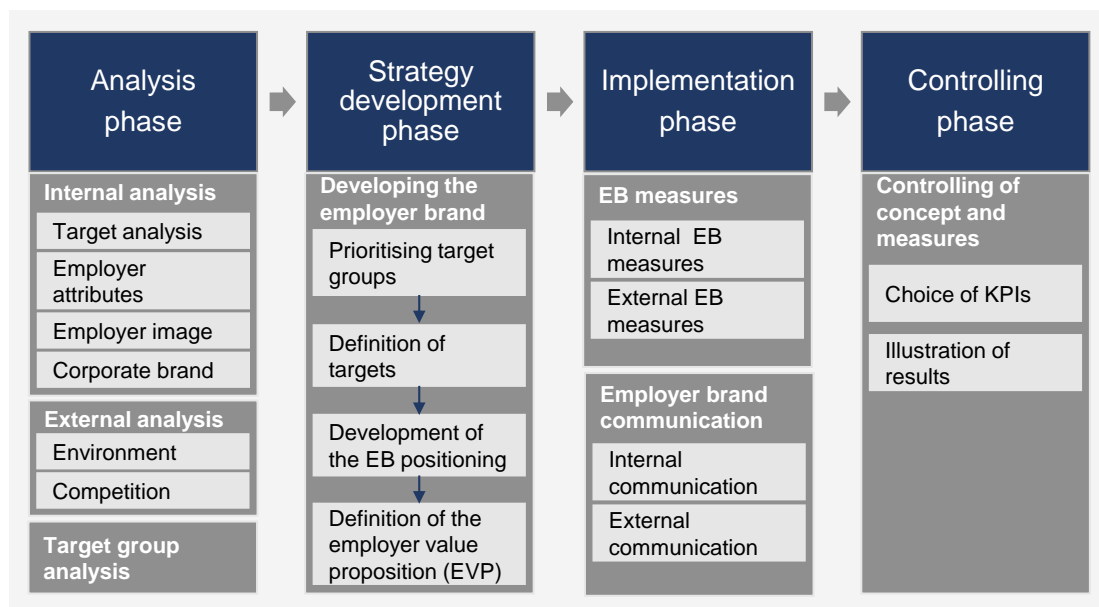


Figure 11: Process steps of an employer brand positioning concept (based on Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 292; Trost 2013, p. 18; Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 10; Petkovic 2008, p. 182)

Figure 11 presents the four phases of employer brand positioning development and offers a brief description of the key elements of the individual phases. Each phase is explained in detail in the next sub-chapters. In the first phase, the company and its target groups are analysed. The definition of the EB strategy is provided in the second phase. The third phase, implementation, includes EB and communication activities that help with implementing the employer brand. Finally, the fourth phase explains the performance of the overall strategy and the individual measures that need to be controlled.

5.1 Analysis phase

The first stage is the analysis phase which consists of internal, external and target group assessments. The goal of the analysis phase is to conduct a target–actual comparison (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 101).

5.1.1 *External and internal analyses*

A company's external analysis includes the evaluation of the company's environment and its competitors. The influencing factors in a company's external environment are related to the following areas:

- Law (labour law)
- Society (demographic changes, moral concepts, education policy)
- Economic development (labour market, economic growth of a country, competition, industry characteristics)
- Technological development
- Attractiveness of the company location(s)
- Politics (cf. Seng/Armutat 2012, p. 21f.)

Another part of external analysis is competitor analysis. Competitor analysis is essential for differentiating the employer brand of a company from those of its competitors (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 292f.). One tool that can be used for competitor brand analysis is the brand steering wheel by Esch, as mentioned in chapter 4.4. The competitors' employer brand identity can be described using the four elements of the wheel (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 294).

Before an employer brand can be developed, the internal status quo needs to be examined. This process involves identifying the attributes that characterise the employer. Furthermore, the strengths and weaknesses of an existing employer brand can be evaluated through this process (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 291f.).

Other company-related, general internal factors that can be analysed are company vision, corporate strategy and targets, products and services, business organisation, corporate culture and values and status quo (business success, fluctuation, number of employees and so on) (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 82f.). The other factors that can be assessed include the company's brands such as corporate brands and product brands, top management, core principles such as those that pertain to corporate social responsibility and the HRM strategy and organisation of HRM (cf. Seng/Armutat 2012, p. 22 - 24).

5.1.2 Target group analysis

An in-depth analysis of the external and internal target groups and their needs is critical for developing an employer brand because the brand needs to be attractive to existing employees and potential applicants (cf. Lane 2016, p. 40f.).

The first step in analysing target groups is to define and cluster them. The criteria can be seniority (entry-level, intermediate level, senior level), function (department), education (field of study) and type of degree (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 12). Other observable segmentation factors include age, geographic location and tenure. The unobservable factors are the potential employee's career focus, the current life stage of the target audience and the employer attributes that the target group prefers (cf. Moroko/Uncles 2009, p. 191).

In the second step, the existing employer image and associated employer attributes from an external and internal perspective are examined and compared with the intended employer identity. The analysis of employer characteristics involves the evaluation of how strongly these attributes are associated with the employer. Furthermore, it requires determining how the relevant attributes differ from those of the competition and how important these attributes are for the target groups. Finally, whether the attributes have a positive or a negative connotation in the eyes of the preferred target groups needs to be ascertained (cf. Walter/Wies/Kremmel 2016, p. 87).

Secondary research sources for the external target group analysis can include existing studies and employer rankings. Customised research offers more exact results compared with internal data (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 292f.). For internal target group analysis, the most suitable research method for investigating the preferences of employees are employee surveys (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 86). This part of the analysis should involve as many employees as possible to obtain comprehensive results. The internal analysis is necessary to avoid discrepancies between the existing perception of the employer and the newly developed employer brand. Assessing the existing employees' perception elaborates how well employees identify themselves with the company values and live these values (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 291f.).

5.2 Strategy development phase

The second part of the employer branding process involves defining the employer branding strategy and the brand's positioning. The three central parts of this process are outlined in the next sub-chapters.

5.2.1 Prioritising target groups and defining targets

In the analysis phase, several target groups and their preferences are evaluated. By contrast, strategy development is focused on the key employees or target groups and their interests (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 87). A technical company's key functions include technical positions. Employees in key functions have a high strategic importance and are critical for business success (cf. Trost 2013, p. 26f.). These positions are usually difficult to fill (cf. Trost 2014, p. 18f.).

Given the importance of technicians in the success of a high-tech business, this target group needs to be examined in detail. Moreover, the future demand of a particular target group and the existing availability of suitable personnel need to be evaluated. The lower the availability of these employees is and the higher their importance for business success is, the more these target groups should be considered in strategy development (cf. Trost 2014, p. 22). Therefore, target groups can be clustered into four groups as presented in Figure 12.

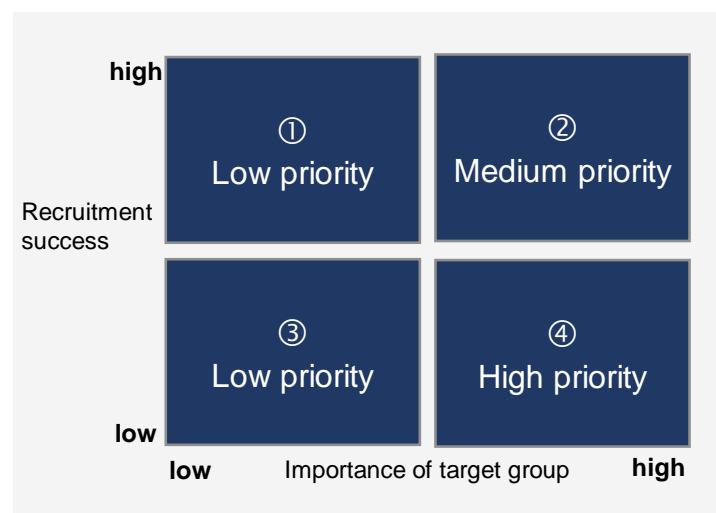


Figure 12: Target group prioritising matrix (based on Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 117)

In the matrix, the target group (number four) with the highest priority for employer branding has a high level of importance and limited recruitment success.

Consequently, developing specific communication measures for this target group is necessary. Target groups with high importance and high recruitment success need to be focused on when defining the employer brand. Adopting specific communication measures for target group number two is unnecessary. Target groups with the numbers one and three should be weighted less during employer brand development because their priority is low (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 117f.).

Specifying the employer branding targets is the next step after defining the more and the less relevant target groups. The reason why the target groups should be prioritised first is that the targets need to be adapted to the desired employee's preferences (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 113). When defining employer branding targets, companies need to differentiate recruitment targets and psychographic brand targets. The main target is to enhance recruitment success which includes either improving the quality or increasing the quantity of applications. Recruitment success is directly influenced by psychographic factors such as employer awareness, employer image and employer attractiveness. Consequently, both recruitment and psychographic targets should be defined (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 120).

5.2.2 Employer brand positioning process

The employer brand's positioning is the core element of the employer branding strategy (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 113). Hence, this sub-chapter explains the manner of positioning an employer brand based on the previous analyses and the preferences of the key target groups.

Delineating the means of positioning an employer brand must be preceded by defining the term "positioning". Brand positioning signifies "*emphasizing the distinctive characteristics that make it different from its competitors and appealing to the public*" (Kapferer 2012, p. 152). The employer brand positioning defines the employer attributes that the company aims to stand for in the eyes of its preferred target groups (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 123).

A brand's positioning needs to answer four questions: what the brand's benefit is, for whom the brand is developed, why the brand has a benefit and how distinctive the company's brand is from those of its competitors (cf. Kapferer 2012, p. 152).

Considering the competitors is essential because choices are made as part of the comparison process (cf. Kapferer 2012, p. 152). One tool that can be used in demonstrating the relationships between the employer, its competitors and the desired employees is the strategic triangle that is depicted in Figure 13. This model helps with the analysis of the existing position and the desired position. The desired position is called employer value proposition (EVP) (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 190f.).

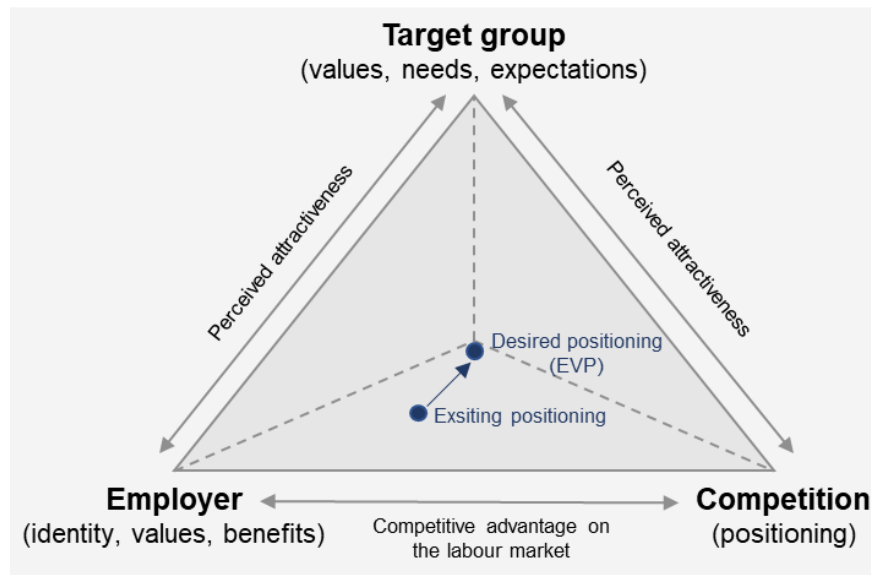


Figure 13: Strategic triangle employer brand positioning (based on Petkovic 2008, p. 191)

For example, employers are compared with each other and the employer with the most benefits in the eyes of the potential applicant succeeds. Notably, brand positioning is an iterative process that should not be considered as a one-time activity (cf. Bausback 2007, p. 88). Esch defined four process steps for brand positioning. These process steps are presented in Figure 14.



Figure 14: Positioning process steps (based on Esch 2005, p. 132)

The two most important positioning goals are to differentiate the brand from the competition and to meet the target group's ideals. The EVP includes both goals (cf. Bausback 2007, p. 89). The goals for the current thesis are covered in the first chapter. Subsequently, two types of positioning strategies need to be differentiated.

The first strategy entails either adapting the positioning to the (potential) employees' needs or changing these needs. In this strategy, the target group's needs are the centre of attention and the brand is adapted to the group's needs. By contrast, the second strategy aims to change the target group's preferences (cf. Esch 2005, p. 143f.).

Related to these two types of positioning strategies are two profiles, namely classical positioning and selective positioning (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 125). Classical positioning prioritises the target group's needs. A classical profile is used by companies that aim to increase the number of applicants. However, several disadvantages are associated with this profile type. For instance, a high number of applicants increase the effort of candidate selection. It can also increase the fluctuation rate because the conveyed image might be unrealistic. Finally, the differentiation from competitors might be insufficient (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 126f.). On the contrary, a selective positioning profile highlights employer attributes that are relevant to the employer and challenge potential employees. The assumption is that these attributes reduce employer attractiveness. A selective positioning profile should encourage applications from those people whose values fit with the company's values (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 127f.). Combining both types of positioning profiles is generally possible. This approach means that attributes that have different levels of attractiveness to the target group are used. Depending on the target group, different attributes are highlighted in the communication (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 130).

The next step after choosing a positioning model is defining the positioning field of the employer brand, as demonstrated in Table 4.

Positioning field	Employer attributes
Internationality	Working in an international team or abroad, multilingual work environment, regular business trips abroad
Compensation	High entry salary, bonuses and incentives
Reputation	Well-known brands, large company, successful company
Work–life balance	Childcare facilities, flexible working hours, leisure time activities

Challenging tasks	Working independently, innovative company, fast increase in the level of responsibility
Ethical work environment	Social responsibility, environmental protection
Work environment	Team spirit, cooperativeness, good management
Innovation, future orientation	Innovative products, secure workplace
Development prospects	Development and career opportunities
Flat hierarchies	Secure workplace, flat hierarchies

Table 4: Positioning fields and attributes (based on Grobe 2003, p. 66; Petkovic 2008, p. 194f.)

These positioning fields categorise employer attributes and are being used in the practical part of this thesis. Emotional positioning fields should be added to emotionalise the employer brand. Positive, emotional positioning fields include modern, supportive, innovative, successful, dynamic, challenging, creative, open-minded, trustworthy and international. By contrast, the following fields have negative connotations: traditional, average, conservative, inflexible and unsuccessful (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 93). A positioning strategy is developed in chapter 9.

The final step in the positioning process is the controlling step. Controlling the brand's positioning needs to include both qualitative and quantitative elements. The focus should be on the target group's brand perception and the perceived brand attributes (cf. Bausback 2007, p. 90f.).

The following pitfalls should be avoided when developing a positioning concept:

- Few positioning options
- Industry-specific stereotype positioning
- Development of a short-term positioning
- Limited consideration of future developments (cf. Esch 2005, p. 149)

Three criteria determine the success of an employer brand's positioning. First, the brand needs to be adjusted to the company identity. Second, the target groups' preferences must be considered. Third, the positioning needs to be different from the competitors (cf. Christiaans 2013, p. 120).

The subsequent chapter deals with the employer value proposition which is the core element of the employer branding strategy.

5.2.3 *Employer value proposition*

The EVP is viewed as the unique selling proposition of an employer on which the positioning is based and differentiates one employer from another (cf. Lehmann 2012, p. 34). It is the promise that an employer gives to its internal and external target groups (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 19). Developing an EVP model ensures that the employer value proposition is consistently applied and understood (cf. Lane 2016, p. 42). An EVP model needs to illustrate four parts: the “*EB (employer branding) vision, the EVP statement, the extended EVP statement, values and EVP pillars and attributes*” (Lane 2016, p. 42). On the one hand, the employer vision states the company’s perspective and the preferred brand identity. On the other hand, the EVP statement summarises the positive aspects of working for a respective company. Finally, the EVP pillars are employer characteristics that function as selling points and support the EVP (cf. Lane 2016, p. 42). An example for such a model is presented in chapter 5.2.4.

The core part of this process is the selection of a limited number of employer attributes (=EVP pillars) that are characteristic for a company (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 123). Four influencing factors determine the employer attributes that are chosen for the company’s employer brand positioning. First, the importance for the target groups needs to be determined. Employer attributes with high importance should be preferred. Second, employer attributes that are more relevant to the company need to be considered. Third, employer attributes that preferred employees have difficulty in fulfilling need to be differentiated from those that are easier to fulfil. Finally, employer attributes can be clustered according to their type (symbolic or instrumental attributes) (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 124). Furthermore, the credibility of each attribute needs to be assessed when choosing employer pillars (cf. Lane 2016, p. 50).

Figure 15 demonstrates how the number of employer attributes can be reduced based on the aforementioned criteria credibility and target group preferences. These attributes are subsequently compared with competitor strengths.

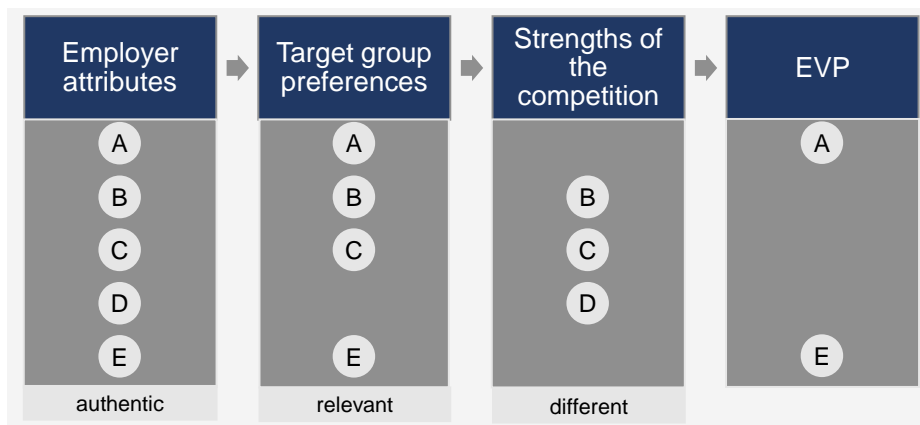


Figure 15: Reduction of employer attributes (based on Trost 2013, p. 41)

As indicated in Figure 15, the number of employer attributes is reduced with each process step, which results in two attributes. These two attributes subsequently become the elements of the EVP. For example, a company offers the following employer attributes: high salaries (A), internationality (B), job security (C), workforce diversity (D) and job flexibility (E). Attributes A, B, C and E are relevant to the target group, whereas B, C and D are already covered by competitors. The company consequently needs to focus on the remaining two relevant factors A and E that are not yet covered by competition. Other examples of employer attributes are perks, career opportunities, interesting tasks, innovativeness, technology leadership, business success and company products (cf. Trost 2013, p. 20). The current thesis focuses on the attribute definition by Grobe and Petkovic (see chapter 5.2.2).

5.2.4 Employer brand architecture

In addition to the prioritisation of relevant target groups and the positioning of the brand, brand architecture is a fundamental decision in employer brand management. A company's positioning can either be holistic and relevant to several target groups or be target group-specific. The latter means that the chosen employer attributes are adapted (cf. Kremmel/Walter 2016, p. 123f.). The overall employer brand is called umbrella brand and is broken down into target group-specific benefits and communicational strategies. Companies that are attempting to attract different target groups should include these individual values (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 188f.). Figure 16 presents an example of such an employer branding model. The model consists of the EVP pillars as part of the brand substance in connection with target group-specific communication.

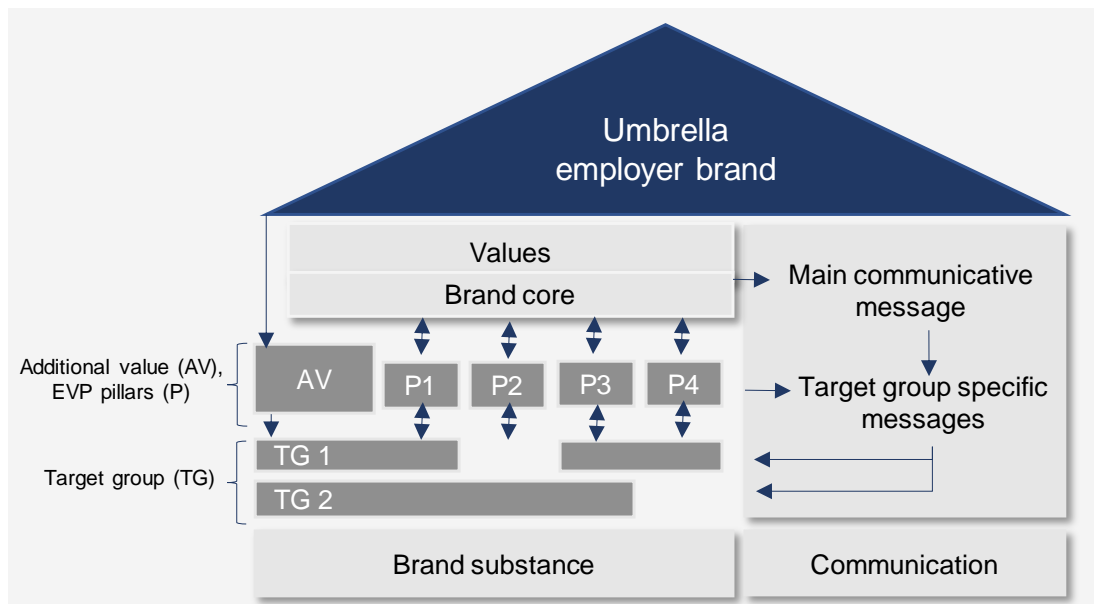


Figure 16: Employer brand architecture and umbrella brand (based on Petkovic 2008, p. 189)

The brand core represents values and brand benefits that are relevant to different target groups. It is concretised in the communicative message (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 190). This representation facilitates a holistic view of the employer brand when attracting different target groups. It also ensures that the individual communication messages follow the same goal.

5.3 Implementation phase

The previous two chapters examined the factors to be analysed to develop an employer brand and the means of positioning the brand. Chapter 5.3 particularises employer branding and communication measures.

5.3.1 Employer branding measures

Employer branding measures can be categorised into two groups, namely internal and external EB measures. The goal of internal measures is to increase employee motivation and enhance employee retention. Furthermore, these measures should ensure that the employee has a positive perception of the company even after leaving it. Internal measures include HR products and processes (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 94f.).

Examples of HR products are mentoring programmes, trainee programmes, perks, special payments, leisure time activities, company holiday, company car and workplace childcare facilities. Other measures include appraisal interviews, flexible working hour schemes and an attractive work environment (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 96 - 99). Two more examples of internal employer branding measures are company canteen and relocation service (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 199). Another internal employer branding activity is the definition of mission statements. These statements summarise a company's core values. Mission statements clarify behavioural norms within the company when communicated clearly (cf. Kanning 2017, p. 179).

Additionally, social media channels have become important for attracting employees. On the one hand, social media can be used in retaining existing employees; on the other hand, employer branding activity on social media helps attract potential applicants externally (cf. Zydorek/Hosseiny 2012, p. 330). For international companies, it offers the opportunity to promote employer brands and job offers across borders. Furthermore, social media is used by job seekers to gain in-depth information about an employer. Hence, social media should not be overlooked in international employer branding (cf. Buckley/Halbesleben/Wheeler 2014, p. 159).

Meanwhile, external EB measures include networking and candidate management. They comprise internship programmes, provision of thesis topics and scholarships. Effective candidate management can also affect employer attractiveness. It includes the structuring of the application process (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 99f.).

5.3.2 Internal communication

Employer branding communication ensures that the employer brand is known and established with the relevant target groups. It also strengthens the brand image. Employer branding communication involves all of the communication measures for implementing the EB strategy (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/Walter 2016, p. 170). An integrated communication concept is the basis for anchoring the brand internally and externally. Therefore, specific measures for existing and future employees are used, as outlined in the next two chapters (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 103).

Internal employer branding communication is essential for increasing employee commitment and trust. Employees need to be informed about news and changes related to the company to understand business activities. The major benefit of internal EB communication is that trust towards management increases (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 105). Additionally, employees represent a brand to external stakeholder groups. They influence the external perception of a company and should therefore convey a positive insight into a company. The reason is that during the information search, job seekers use internal information sources such as personal contacts to existing employees (cf. Felser 2010, p. 15). Hence, the results of internal communication influence the employer choice process of potential applicants. Communicating to employees therefore requires the adaptation of the communication activities to different target groups to ensure that employees identify themselves with the brand. For instance, communication needs to be tailored to managers or to apprentices (cf. Schmidt 2008, p. 90).

The employer brand is primarily communicated via internal media such as the intranet or an employee magazine. Communicating consistently and ensuring that the values are lived are therefore critical (cf. Lindner-Lohmann/Lohmann/Schirmer 2016, p. 46). In addition to the aforementioned media, the following communication instruments are suitable for internal communication: newsletters, social media, meetings, bulletin boards and letters (cf. Heider-Winter 2014, p. 170). Other examples of internal communication measures are brochures about HR products, informational brochures about the company, employee surveys and informal meetings with top management (cf. Stotz/Wedel-Klein 2013, p. 106). Conveying the employer brand identity is most effective in personal communication, for example in training, to ensure that the brand can be experienced first-hand (cf. Siebrecht 2012, p. 56f.). Anchoring the employer brand internally cannot be achieved with a one-time measure. Long-term communication is necessary to attract and maintain employee commitment (cf. Mosley 2005, p. 141).

A vital aspect of communicating internally is ensuring that the internal and external image and communication of a company fit together. This aspect avoids the distorted perception of a company (cf. Felser 2010, p. 14). The next chapter focuses on external communication.

5.3.3 External communication

The employer choice process by Kremmel and Walter was explained in chapter 3. The process consists of three phases: existing employment, information search and decision making. Based on these three phases, the potential applicant comes across several communication touchpoints and activities, as depicted in Figure 17 (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/Walter 2016, p. 171).



Figure 17: Communication touchpoints during employer choice (based on Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/Walter 2016, p. 171)

Figure 17 demonstrates that the communication touchpoints become more personal at each phase. In the first phase, the employer brand is communicated using passive touchpoints and activities such as sponsorship, public relations and social media. The communicated information is not detailed and is limited to mentioning the company name or characteristic employer attributes (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/Walter 2016, p. 172). In this phase, the level of involvement of the potential applicant is low; thus, the communicated information needs to be emotional, short and repeated several times. The goal is to communicate the employer's name and to arouse emotions (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 176). In the second phase, detailed information is being communicated. The communication activities in this phase are closely connected with the recruiting process and form the basis of the overall employer branding communication (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/Walter 2016, p. 172). Information can be less emotional and more rational and needs to be repeated less often. The goal is to increase brand knowledge (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 176). The third phase is characterised by the personal communication of the applicant with the company. In this phase, company representatives should personally communicate key employer attributes. In general, employer branding measures should be developed primarily for the first two phases (cf. Kremmel/Hofer-Fischer/Walter 2016, p. 173).

External communication instruments such as collaborations with universities, online job-portals and advertisements on online forums can also be appropriate measures (cf. Siebrecht 2012, p. 57). Collaborating with universities presents several possibilities. For instance, employers can hold presentations and lectures, undertake research projects together with students or offer thesis topics. The potential for employer branding is high with this activity because the involved students will obtain behind-the-scenes insights into the company. However, the potential for criticism from the student side should be considered (cf. Kanning 2017, p. 175f.).

The communication channels used should be based on the target group's preferences. The use of online channels is inevitable, especially for young generations. Clearly defining the target group and having originality in advertisements help with standing out from the competition (cf. Buchheim 2012, p. 138f.). The importance of networking and personal relationships is expected to increase in the coming years due to changes in information search. Referral programmes (existing employees recommend potential candidates) can be another method for reaching suitable personnel. Furthermore, success stories offer a means of positively influencing a company's image. Social media channels can also be used to enter into a dialogue with potential applicants (cf. Siebrecht 2012, p. 57f.). In the current war for talent, potential applicants prefer to be contacted directly by the company and recruiters. Therefore, communication instruments such as social media and career networks increase in importance (cf. Dannhäuser 2015, p. 20).

The subsequent chapter describes the key aspects of employer brand and EB communication controlling.

5.4 Controlling phase

The main goal of employer brand controlling is to ensure the transparency of the costs of all of the EB activities and to illustrate the efficiency of EB activities. Furthermore, how the EB can contribute to the overall business success should be determined.

Employer brand controlling can be divided into two parts. The first part controls the overall EB concept, whereas the second part controls the individual activities and instruments. Employer brand controlling supports management decision making. Examples of management decisions include finalising budgets, planning personnel resources, positioning the employer brand and choosing communication activities (cf. Quenzler 2012, p. 148f.).

The association Queb e.V. evaluated 19 personnel marketing and employer branding key performance indicators (KPIs) according to their measurement difficulty (cf. Quenzler/Schuler 2011, p. 29). Their study resulted in 10 KPIs that function as standards for employer brand controlling, as presented in Table 5.

	KPI	Explanation
1	Average time to fill	Time it takes to fill a position
2	Candidate per offer accepted	Number of applicants for every job offer
3	New hire satisfaction	Satisfaction of newly hired employees
4	Candidate satisfaction	
5	Mishire rate within 12 months	Number of newly hired personnel that left the company within 12 months
6	Interview ratio	Number of interviews needed to fill an open position
7	Hiring manager satisfaction	Satisfaction of the hiring manager with the recruitment process
8	External candidate source	Number and type of applicant sources
9	External new hire source	Number and type of sources of hired personnel
10	Conversion rate (TRM)-programmes	Number of hired employees out of talent relationship management (TRM) programmes

Table 5: Employer brand controlling KPIs (based on Quenzler 2012, p. 157f.)

In addition to the aforementioned KPIs, the following KPIs offer an extended view on the EB performance: offer acceptance rate (relationship between offered and accepted positions) and quality of hire (performance of newly hired personnel) (cf. Bothmer/Graf 2013, p. 194f.).

Other KPIs are: candidate per offer accepted (number of applicants per job offer), career site visits (number of visits of the career webpage) and job portal visits (cf. Bothmer/Graf 2013, p. 194f.).

Aside from generic controlling, controlling the internal and external measures is necessary. In relation to internal EB, the following KPIs can be identified: fluctuation rate and average duration of employment. External KPIs can be clustered according to the three phases of the application process, as depicted in Figure 17. The first phase involves the measurement of employer brand awareness or the positions in employer rankings. The second phase entails the identification of relevant KPIs such as the number of career page or trade fair visitors (cf. Immerschitt/Stumpf 2014, p. 258). Companies should focus on a limited and relevant number of KPIs. These KPIs should be based on the goals of the overall EB strategy (cf. Bothmer/Graf 2013, p. 200). Employer brand controlling is an on-going process, and the results derived from controlling should be used by management in adapting the employer brand (cf. Petkovic 2008, p. 232).

The previous chapters in the theoretical part of this thesis examined factors that influence employer branding and employer brand positioning. The subsequent chapters particularise employer branding applied to Anton Paar.

6. Analysis

The first chapter of the practical part of this thesis presents the analyses of external and internal situations. Chapter 6.1 highlights the factors to be considered regarding the American culture and Anton Paar's key competitors in the U.S. labour market. In the second part, the existing international HRM strategy and employer branding measures are explained. The analysis section provides the basis for the primary market research.

6.1 External analysis of the USA

6.1.1 American culture and its implications on HRM

Anton Paar is an Austrian-based family business, and its company values originate in the Austrian culture. Therefore, comparing the Austrian culture with the American culture is necessary for highlighting the differences that should be considered in positioning the employer brand.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions that were mentioned in chapter 2.3 function as the basis for the cultural comparison of the two countries. Figure 18 presents the scores per dimension for Austria and the United States.

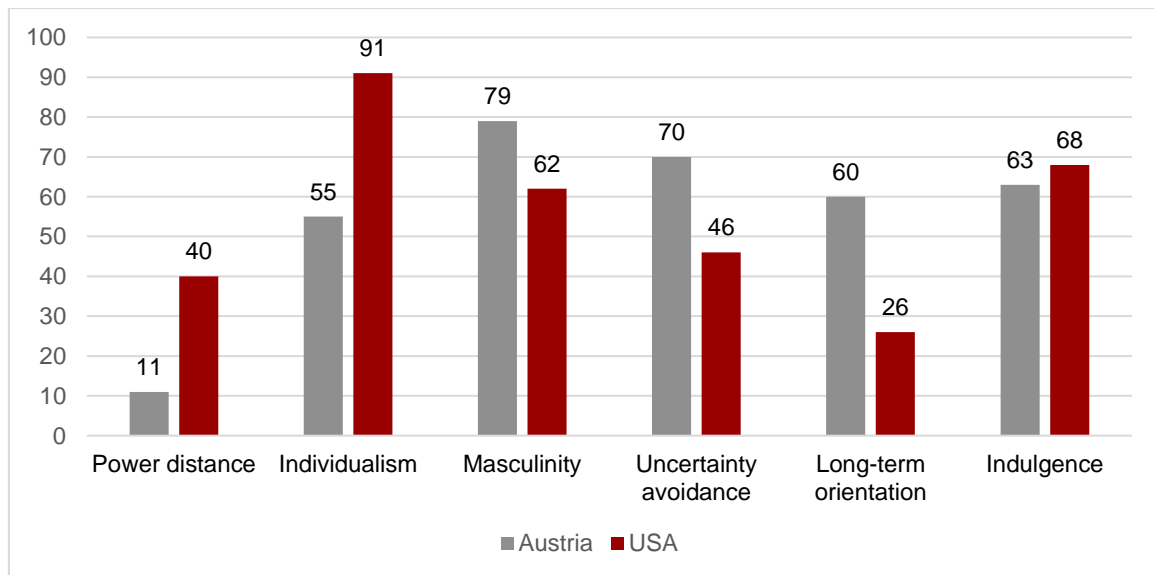


Figure 18: Cultural comparison of Austria and the USA (based on Hofstede Insights 2018)

As Figure 18 indicates, the largest differences in points are in the two dimensions of individualism (deviation of 36 points) and long-term orientation (deviation of 34 points). Therefore, these two points are analysed in detail. On the one hand, the USA scores high in individualism. This score implies that Americans tend to look after themselves and their immediate family members rather than others. Americans believe in equal rights for all due to the high cultural diversity in their country. At work employees are willing to demonstrate their initiative and to travel for their jobs (cf. Hofstede Insights 2018). On the other hand, the low score in long-term orientation indicates that American companies and employees focus on achieving short-term goals and quick results. By contrast, Austria is more long-term oriented. Austrian employees are more likely to persevere to achieve results (cf. Hofstede Insights 2018).

The following factors generally influence American HRM:

- Promotions are performance-based and not loyalty-based
- Informal communication
- Innovative spirit
- Written rules are preferred despite the informality
- Scepticism towards rules
- Personal welfare is more important than the welfare of the company
- High staff turnover
- Willingness to advance one's own career by switching companies (cf. Tayeb 2005, p. 70)

These cultural differences have implications on HRM and the manner of adapting the employer brand positioning of Anton Paar to the USA. When attracting American employees, Anton Paar needs to highlight that the company offers challenging tasks. Moreover, fair remuneration is a key motivational factor for Americans. Americans are willing to work hard for success and believe that nothing is impossible with perseverance. Work ethic is stronger in the United States than in other countries. Americans desire change and prefer to work in innovative companies where they can improve their skills (cf. Lewis 2006, p. 185f.).

6.1.2 Target group and competition

As mentioned in chapter 5.1.2, target group analysis is a precondition for developing an employer brand. Thus, the characteristics of the target group of technical sales experts that this thesis focuses on are explained in detail.

Anton Paar USA is the AP Group's oldest sales and service subsidiary; hence, the contribution of sales employees is critical to the desired company growth. Furthermore, due to the acquisition and development of new technologies, more products are in the company's portfolio. This situation again increases the need for skilled sales personnel and highlights their key function in the company (cf. Landlinger 12.10.2017). Technical sales experts working at Anton Paar are responsible for selling Anton Paar's scientific instrumentation. They not only generate new accounts but also demonstrate the company's instruments and train customers. Consequently, employees from Anton Paar's main competitors are most suitable for working at Anton Paar because they have the most appropriate scientific background. The ideal technical sales employee has work experience in technical sales, obtained a B.S. degree in STEM or has gained sales experience in a similar field (cf. Hudgins 15.01.2018). In January 2018 73 technical sales representatives were employed at Anton Paar USA (cf. Santner 06.02.2018).

The largest competitor in the American labour market that recruits technical sales experts is the U.S. company Thermo Fisher. Thermo Fisher has an annual revenue of more than \$5 billion in the field of analytical instruments (cf. Instrument News 2017, p. 1). Thermo Fisher has approximately 65,000 employees around the world. In the goods market, Thermo Fisher and Anton Paar compete in the field of laboratory instrumentation (spectrometry, rheometry, viscometry and lab automation) (cf. Thermo Fisher Scientific 2018d). Thermo Fisher highlights its high diversity. An internal employer branding measure is an internal staff training programme that offers 40 developmental topics (cf. Thermo Fisher Scientific 2018b). Another benefit is an extensive health insurance plan (cf. Thermo Fisher Scientific 2018c, p. 20). In its job advertisements, Thermo Fisher does not name any employer benefits. The company uses a specific job website to communicate its employer brand, values and employee portraits (cf. Thermo Fisher Scientific 2018e).

Given its importance as a competitor, Thermo Fisher is analysed in detail using the brand steering wheel by Esch that is illustrated in Figure 19.

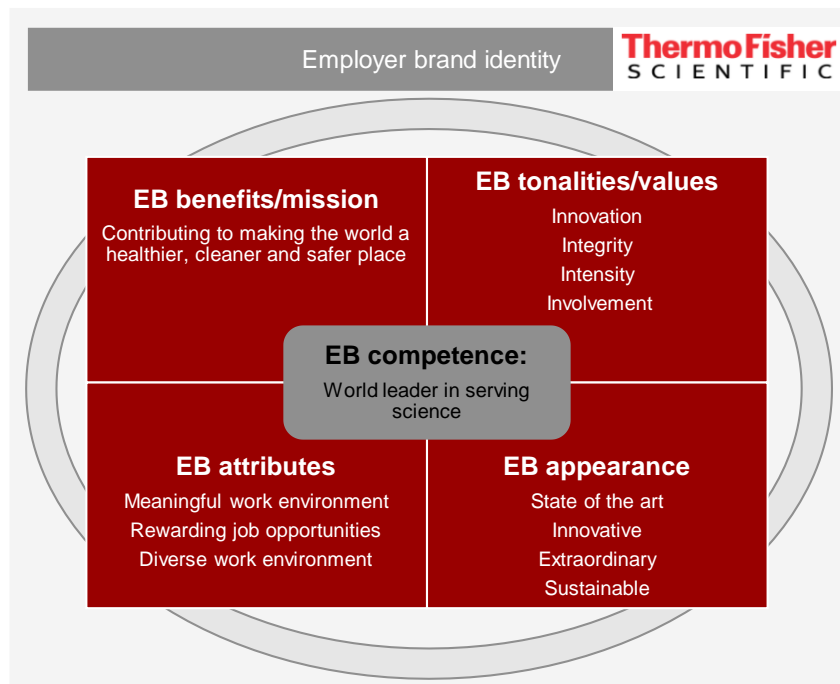


Figure 19: Employer brand steering wheel of Thermo Fisher (based on Thermo Fisher Scientific 2018a)

Figure 19 presents the employer's key values and employer attributes. Thermo Fisher is positioned in the following fields by Grobe and Petkovic (see chapter 5.2.2): challenging tasks, ethical work environment, work environment, innovation and future orientation.

Another competitor that needs to be examined in detail is the Swiss company Mettler Toledo that serves as a global benchmark for Anton Paar. Mettler Toledo generates a turnover of between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion (cf. Instrument News 2017, p. 1). The company competes with Anton Paar in the analytical instruments sector (thermal analysis, melting point analysis, density meters and refractometers) (cf. Mettler Toledo 2018a). Mettler Toledo has more than 5,000 sales and service experts around the world (cf. Mettler Toledo 2018b). The company is positioned in the following fields: internationality, challenging tasks, ethical work environment, work environment, innovation/future orientation, development prospects, cost consciousness and high quality. Further information about positioning fields is presented in chapter 5.2.2.

Figure 20 illustrates Mettler Toledo's brand identity using the brand steering wheel.

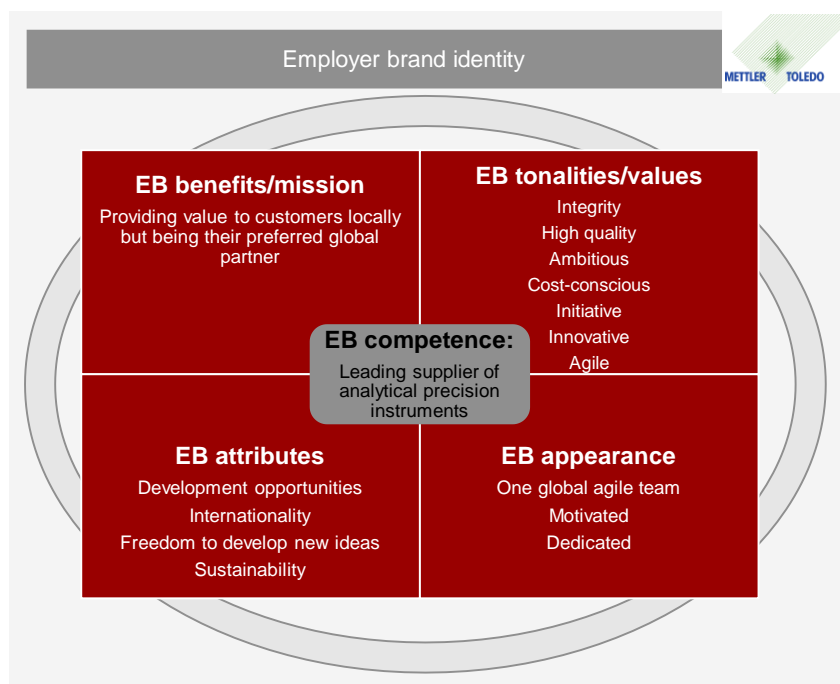


Figure 20: Employer brand steering wheel of Mettler Toledo (based on Mettler Toledo 2018c)

Mettler Toledo offers the following benefits to its technical sales representatives: company car including insurance and gas for professional and private use, laptop, mobile phone, expense account, healthcare benefits and 401(k) retirement savings contributions. Furthermore, its employees receive gym discounts and tuition reimbursements. Paid time off, life insurance, travel insurance and the Employee Assistance Program are also provided (cf. Mettler Toledo 2018d). The Employee Assistance Program is a “voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems” (U.S. Office of Personnel Management 2018).

In summary, Thermo Fisher and Mettler Toledo have similar brand identities and a similar positioning. Both are positioned in the following fields: challenging tasks, ethical work environment, work environment, innovation and future orientation. The aforementioned values and positioning fields are subsequently used in this thesis in positioning the employer brand Anton Paar.

6.2 Internal analysis of the Anton Paar Group

Employer branding is a cross-functional topic between HRM and marketing. Therefore, in the course of the internal analysis, the international HRM strategy and the existing HR communication and corporate brand need to be highlighted. The existing EB measures are also outlined.

6.2.1 International HRM strategy

Chapter 2 of this thesis highlighted that international human resource strategy and employer branding strategy are closely connected. Therefore, describing Anton Paar's HRM strategy as a basis for the employer brand positioning is necessary.

The international HR strategy of the Anton Paar Group is mainly ethnocentric and global with the responsible person being situated at the Anton Paar headquarters in Graz. The subsidiaries do not contribute to the international HRM strategy. All of the strategy decisions are made at the headquarters. However, at the lower and more operative level, the subsidiaries organise local internal and external measures themselves to adapt them to the local culture and circumstances. The recruiting is conducted locally except for senior positions such as general management (cf. Korn 16.01.2018). Based on the findings from chapter 2, the international HRM strategy is said to be a global strategy, but the measures are developed at the national, local level.

6.2.2 Existing communication and corporate branding

The comparison of Anton Paar with its competitors requires an analysis of the existing communication of Anton Paar as an employer. Hence, job advertisements and content from the following sources are analysed: Anton Paar job advertisements, technical sales job advertisements from Anton Paar USA and the job website. The analysed job advertisements and a screenshot of the USA job website are presented in the appendix. International communication and U.S. communication have four common positioning fields/topics, namely challenging tasks, good work environment, development prospects and growth.

Table 6 summarises the communicated topics and is based on the keyword analysis in the appendix (cf. Appendix p. A-6).

Communicated topics per channel		
International job advertisements	Job advertisements for technical sales experts in the USA	Job website in the USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical work environment • Stability • Innovation, future orientation • Development prospects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical work environment • Internationality • Work–life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work–life balance • Internationality • Innovation, future orientation

Table 6: Existing communicated topics (based on Anton Paar USA 2018a; Anton Paar GmbH 2018c; Anton Paar USA 2018b)

The other fields vary per channel. Notably, the communication for international positions that is done at the headquarters in Graz more clearly communicates the company’s guiding principles (mainly personal and social responsibility, innovation). On the contrary, Anton Paar USA communicates the internationality of the company. Anton Paar’s quality focus is not highlighted in either source, whereas its stability and longevity are not mentioned in the United States. In summary, a number of different topics are communicated, and not all of the existing principles and values are conveyed in job advertisements.

The employer brand is part of the corporate brand (see chapter 4.4); hence, the analysis of the global corporate brand of Anton Paar is necessary. The corporate brand vision of Anton Paar states that “*together we measure the world*” (Sommer 2017). Anton Paar’s brand competence highlights the intent “*to be the world’s leading premium brand for lab and process instrumentation by being a technological visionary*” (Sommer 2017). The wording is similar to the brand competence of Mettler Toledo that aims to be the leader in analytical instruments. Anton Paar’s global corporate brand communication message is to “*think the unthinkable to create the exceptional*” (Sommer 2017). This message signifies that Anton Paar aims to provide its customers with the highest quality possible. This wording should be considered in positioning the employer brand AP to ensure that both brands are in accordance with each other.

6.2.3 Existing internal employer branding measures

As mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, internal employer branding aims to improve staff retention. Table 7 presents the entire employer branding measures of the Anton Paar Group and describes each activity. The Anton Paar headquarters in Graz function as a benchmark for all of the subsidiaries; thus, the HQ measures are compared with the offers of the subsidiary in the USA. This comparison is necessary because the ethnocentric international HRM strategy of the company limits local decision making. Table 7 clusters the measures into non-monetary, monetary and environmental measures.

Internal EB measures		Description	HQ Graz	USA
Non-monetary	Mentoring programme	Mentors are offered to new employees.	✓	x
	Appraisal interview	Yearly appraisal interviews are held to find potentials for improvement.	✓	✓
	Flexible working hours	Flexitime offers a more flexible working day to all employees.	✓	✓
	Company holiday	The company is closed during defined company holidays.	✓	✓
	Company doctor	A company doctor offers vaccinations and regular medical checkups.	✓	x
	Employee events	Seasonal events are offered to employees.	✓	✓
	Leisure time and sports activities	The Anton Paar in Motion programme offers planned activities to Anton Paar employees and their family and friends. Up to 100 activities are organised by the Anton Paar in Motion team each year.	✓	✓
Monetary	Profit sharing	Depending on the business performance, a monetary bonus is paid to all employees at Anton Paar GmbH and Anton Paar USA.	✓	✓
	Eco programme	An incentive programme promotes alternative means of transportation such as cycling, electric cars and car pools.	✓	✓
	Employee incentives	Optional monetary bonuses are provided.	✓	x
	Retirement savings contributions	Anton Paar contributes to its employees' retirement savings; this plan is called 401(k).	x	✓
	Employee discounts	Discounts for Anton Paar employees are granted at chosen shops.	✓	✓

	Insurance offers	HQ: After five years, the company takes out a life insurance for all employees and pays all of the insurance contributions. USA: Disability insurance and life and accidental death insurance are offered.	✓	✓
	Healthcare benefits	Medical insurance is offered to employees. Anton Paar contributes to the Health Savings Account (HSA) of its employees. Employees can choose among three different healthcare benefit plans with varying deductibles. Dental and vision plans are also offered.	x	✓
Work environment	Childcare facilities	Eighty children are taken care of at the company's nursery and kindergarten.	✓	x
	Lunchroom facilities	The company offers rooms where employees can spend their lunch time.	✓	✓
	Company gym	A company gym is offered to all Graz-based employees for a contribution of €1 per visit. A company gym is also offered to employees of AP USA.	✓	✓
	Company canteen	Since 2018 all Graz-based Anton Paar employees are provided with a canteen with healthy meals. The restaurant includes a brewery and a shop where local products can be bought. The meals are offered at reduced prices.	✓	x
	Free fruit	Free fruit is offered to all employees working at the U.S. headquarters in Ashland.	x	✓

Table 7: Existing internal EB measures of Anton Paar HQ and Anton Paar USA (based on Karriere.at 2018; Hudgins 15.01.2018)

6.2.4 Existing external employer branding measures USA

The next step after naming the company's internal measures is to describe its external measures. This chapter focuses on the measures used in the U.S. subsidiary.

External EB measures	Description
Social media (LinkedIn)	Anton Paar HQ and Anton Paar USA mainly use LinkedIn for employer branding. The company invested in a premium LinkedIn page with a separate employer branding section that highlights the company's culture and benefits as an employer. LinkedIn is also used in posting vacancies. The Anton Paar USA LinkedIn employer branding section is offered in English. It is used in introducing the company culture and is mainly focused on potential applicants in the United States.
Company website	All jobs are posted on the corporate jobs page on the website. In 2017 Anton Paar USA launched a country-specific sub-page for jobs in the United States with a homepage that includes employer branding content. The page shows a picture of Anton Paar employees and provides a brief introduction of the company's values.
Job rating website (Glassdoor)	Anton Paar USA uses the job rating website Glassdoor. The company is keen on presenting itself as a positive employer there by receiving feedback from existing employees and applicants.
Recruiting agents	Currently 5% to 10% of new hires originate from an external agency recruiter. The goal is to grow this share to 20%. No specific employer branding documents are available to support the recruiting agency.
Trade fairs and events	Anton Paar USA uses its booth at a trade fair as an opportunity to promote the company as an attractive employer. This is particularly useful because potential applicants working in the same industry can be found there. Job interviews may also take place at Anton Paar USA's booth.
Collaborations with universities	Anton Paar reaches out to suitable university coordinators to promote itself as an attractive employer. However, a standardised procedure is lacking.

Table 8: Existing external EB measures of Anton Paar USA (based on Burger 18.01.2018; Hudgins 15.01.2018)

Significantly, LinkedIn, the company website and Glassdoor are the three key information channels that AP uses to promote itself to technical sales experts in the United States (cf. Hudgins 15.01.2018).

7. Primary market research

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the framework of the chosen primary market research. First of all, primary and secondary market research need to be distinguished. Primary market research is used in investigating a specific purpose, whereas secondary market research is utilised in obtaining secondary data that are collected in the course of another market research (cf. Bradley 2010, p. 72).

7.1 Research objectives and research questions

As mentioned in chapter 1, the objective of this thesis is to develop an employer brand positioning concept for technical sales experts in the United States for the Anton Paar Group. Positioning a brand necessitates the analysis of the status quo of the brand's positioning and the assessment of other internal and external factors (see chapter 5) in the course of primary research. These findings subsequently need to be combined with the target groups' preferences.

Two objectives for primary research can be derived from this procedure and assist in positioning the employer brand. The first objective outlines the preferences of the internal target group of employees, whereas the second objective focuses on technical sales experts. The focus on technical sales experts is necessary because this is one of the key target groups of the company. The first research objective is to gain an understanding of the existing and desired employer perceptions of existing employees of Anton Paar around the world and to analyse the employer attributes that are important to AP employees. The second research objective is to assess the employer attributes that are important to the target group of technical sales experts in the United States during the job search and employer choice process.

From these research objectives, three research questions are derived. The following research questions describe the existing information deficit of the Anton Paar Group with regard to external and internal target groups:

1. Employees: What are the most important existing attributes and values of the employer Anton Paar globally? Which other attributes are important to employees?

2. Technical experts: What are the most important employer attributes for technical experts in the United States when applying for a job? Are any of the offered employer attributes of the Anton Paar Group relevant to technical sales experts in the USA? If yes, which ones? Where do technical experts in the USA search for jobs and inform themselves?
3. External and internal target groups combined: What attributes are relevant to both target groups?

7.2 Survey design

The previous chapter clarified the purpose and objectives of the research. Chapter 7.2 describes the chosen research method, sampling method and survey instrument.

7.2.1 Survey method

Depending on the research objective, the three approaches of explorative, causal and descriptive research are used (cf. Fantapié Altobelli 2017, p. 33). Descriptive research is suitable when the research objective is to describe a situation and examine its development (cf. Fantapié Altobelli 2017, p. 35). It should therefore be used for this thesis. In addition to the aforementioned research approaches, two classifications of market research exist, namely qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research aims to understand a situation, whereas quantitative research focuses on the measurement of a situation (cf. Hague/Hague/Morgan 2013, p. 9). When combining the descriptive research approach with the mentioned two market research classifications, descriptive studies are best combined with quantitative studies (cf. Fantapié Altobelli 2017, p. 22). Hence, the current thesis uses the quantitative primary research approach (comprising two surveys) with the descriptive research approach.

7.2.2 Target groups and sampling

The target group for the first quantitative primary research consists of existing employees of Anton Paar. This analysis should include as many employees as possible; thus, census is chosen as sample type (cf. Esch/Eichenauer 2014, p. 292).

The questionnaire needs to be both in German and English because some Austrian employees do not speak English. The statistical population includes 2,600 employees globally.

The target group for the second method comprises workers of technical companies in the United States with work experience in technical sales. Therefore, the questionnaire needs to be in English. As a reference value for the statistical population of this survey, the number of graduates from three disciplines within STEM (engineering, physics and life sciences) is used. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 5,265,000 working people in the USA have at least a college degree in the aforesaid STEM fields (cf. Noonan 2017, p. 1 - 4). Candidates with experience in technical sales need to be separated out by using a filter question at the beginning of the survey. Workers with other degrees are also qualified to participate because they are equally eligible to work in technical sales at Anton Paar USA (cf. Hudgins 15.01.2018). With a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 10%, the survey yields a minimum sample size of $n=100$ (cf. SurveyMonkey 2018). A confidence level of 95% is commonly used in market research; thus, this confidence level is used for the current research (cf. Hague/Hague/Morgan 2013, p. 93). This sample size is a realistic basis for descriptive market research and reflects trends within the target group. Simple random sampling is chosen as sample type because workers in technical sales with different degrees have equal selection probabilities (cf. Bradley 2010, p. 161).

7.2.3 Survey scheduling and survey instruments

The tool used for both online surveys is called "SurveyMonkey". Online questionnaires are used because both surveys take place across borders and both target groups have internet access. Furthermore, online surveys increase the flexibility of the survey (cf. Fantapié Altobelli 2017, p. 63). For the external survey, the questions need to be filtered to ensure that the participants have the relevant qualifications. The questionnaires for Anton Paar employees are distributed via email to all employees and posted on the intranet and information screens in office buildings globally. Survey reminders are sent after one and two weeks after the survey start.

The questionnaires for technical sales experts in the USA are distributed to the alumni networks of universities that cooperate with Anton Paar, relevant business networks, LinkedIn groups and the personal networks of technical sales experts of the company. Prior to the distribution of both surveys, three employees from Anton Paar test the internal survey quality, whereas three graduates from the STEM disciplines test the external survey.

The key elements of the research design are summarised in Table 9.

	Method 1: Employees, company-internal survey	Method 2: Technical sales experts in the USA, external survey
Research method	Quantitative interview 1	Quantitative interview 2
Survey instrument	Online questionnaire 1	Online questionnaire 2
Languages	English, German	English
Duration	~15 minutes	~15 minutes
Statistical population	All employees of the Anton Paar Group.	Workers of technical companies in the USA with work experience in technical sales
Sample size	n=1,182	n=107
Sample type	Census	Simple random sampling
Survey period	06.02.2018 – 19.02.2018	06.02.2018 – 26.02.2018
Survey tool	SurveyMonkey	
Analysis	IBM SPSS Statistics	

Table 9: Survey design (own presentation)

After having outlined the research questions and survey design, the next chapter presents the results of the respective surveys.

8. Results of primary market research

The main findings of the two quantitative online surveys are outlined in this chapter. An overview of both surveys is provided, followed by the topics of employer information search and factors of employer attractiveness. The survey results that could not be included in this chapter are presented in the appendix of this thesis. Where possible, the results of both surveys are compared to clarify the differences.

8.1 Overview of the surveys

The first online questionnaire was sent to all Anton Paar employees globally. In total, 1,182 Anton Paar employees completed the survey. 74.8% of the respondents were male and 25.2% were female. A total of 55.7% of the respondents obtained a university degree in a technical field, of which 24.1% work in technical sales at Anton Paar. The majority of survey participants (61.9%) worked in the sales region “Europe”, 14.4% in APAC, 12.9% in SAMEA and 10.7% in the Americas.

A total of 107 technical sales experts living in the United States participated in the second online survey. 76.6% of the participants were male and 23.4% were female. More than 80% of the respondents have been working in technical sales for more than two years. Ninety-four participants obtained a university degree. Out of this number, a technical degree was mentioned 81 times out of 122 answers.

8.2 Employer information search

This sub-chapter presents the findings on information channels during employer search for both respondent groups. It also describes how the existing job website of AP USA is perceived.

8.2.1 Employer information channels

The development of an employer brand critically requires an understanding of where the desired employees search for information. The reason is that these channels can subsequently be used in anchoring the employer brand externally and internally.

Therefore, sales experts and employees were asked about where they search for information. For technical sales experts, the main channels were company websites (23.1%), recruiting agents (19.6%) and social media (17.4%). The participants primarily named LinkedIn (18 indications) and individual recruiters (17 indications) as examples of recruiting agents. For social media LinkedIn was named 48 times, Facebook was named 5 times, Glassdoor 3 times, Indeed twice and Twitter once.

AP employees chiefly used job recruiting websites (24.6%), company websites (21.9%) and family or friends (16.5%) as information channels. More detailed results are presented in the appendix. Up to 32.4% of AP employees indicated that they first heard about AP from family, friends and personal contacts. A total of 12.8% heard about AP on a job recruiting website and 9.6% from a recruiting agent. Internally around the globe, the three most used information channels are the intranet (28.2%), information screens in the buildings (17.9%) and colleagues (15.4%).

8.2.2 Evaluation of the existing job website of Anton Paar USA

In 2017 Anton Paar USA launched a specific job website for American employees and used this for employer branding. In the course of this thesis, technical sales experts were asked to rate the website according to the criteria “overall impression”, “design”, “photo” and “text”. A screenshot of the website is presented in the appendix. Five stars denote the best possible rating. Figure 21 illustrates the ratings.

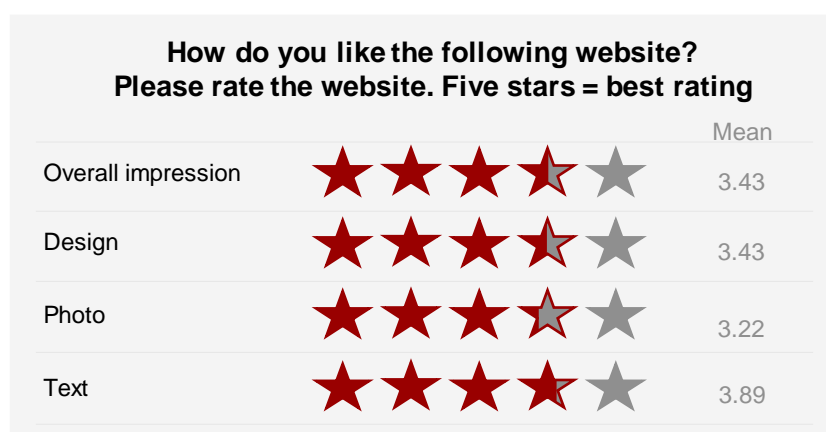


Figure 21: Ratings of the job website Anton Paar USA (n=107) (own presentation)

In the case of a rating of three stars and below, the participants were asked for suggestions of improvement. For instance, participants mentioned that the photo should be different (N=13) and the layout should be different (N=11).

The following areas with potential for improvement were also mentioned, including one quotation each:

- More appealing overall impression (N=10): *"Looks boring"*
- Less generic (N=9): *"It is professional but very generic"*
- Different information (N=8): *"There is nothing about the company's culture"*
- Clearer information (N=8): *"I do not understand what this company is"*
- Different colours (N=3): *"Better graphics and color"*

A detailed list including all of the quotations is in the appendix of this thesis.

8.3 Factors of employer attractiveness

This sub-chapter highlights the employer attributes that are particularly important for the internal target group of AP employees and for the technical sales experts in the United States.

8.3.1 Employer of choice and values

To determine why existing employees selected Anton Paar as their employer of choice, the survey asked about their reason for applying at the company. Employees should tick the top three reasons. According to the results, the three main reasons are as follows: the products are interesting, Anton Paar is an interesting company and the tasks are attractive.

Furthermore, the existing AP employees were asked if they would recommend the company as an employer to others. The results indicated that 82.2% of the respondents would recommend Anton Paar as an employer, 14.2% do not know if they would recommend it and 3.6% do not recommend it. The existing AP employees were also asked if they have heard of the company values. Up to 54.8% ticked "yes" and 26.2% said that they do not know. Afterwards, the participants were asked to choose Anton Paar's core values. The results suggested that the employees considered high quality, social responsibility and innovative spirit as the three core values of Anton Paar. Each answer received around 20% of responses.

Personal responsibility obtained 11.9% of responses, whereas curiosity obtained 5.8% of responses; both values are included in the official value set. Thus, the core values are not totally clear to the AP employees. However, “high quality”, an “ethical work environment” and “innovation” and “future orientation” are regarded as the core positioning fields that Anton Paar fulfils. Later in this thesis, the perceived core values are used in positioning the employer brand Anton Paar.

In an open-ended question in the external survey, technical sales experts explained the values that characterise an ideal employer. The keywords are provided in Figure 22. The larger the word is written, the more often it is mentioned. All indications are presented in the appendix. According to Figure 22, “progress” and “decency” are preferred values.



Figure 22: Values of an ideal employer for technical sales experts (own presentation)

8.3.2 Factors of employer attractiveness of both surveys

Chapter 3 of the theoretical part listed the employer attributes. These attributes were used as a basis for both surveys. The survey participants were asked to evaluate the importance of the individual attributes. The more important these attributes are to the target groups, the more relevant they are for the employer brand positioning.

Table 10 on the next page summarises the five most important and the three least important employer attributes for the individual target groups and for both respondent groups combined. The respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the criteria from “not important at all” (value = 1) to “very important” (value = 5). The numbers in brackets indicate the individual mean values. The results from both surveys are compared in detail in Figure A20 in the appendix.

Employer attributes		
Anton Paar employees (n=1182)	Technical sales experts USA (n=107)	Both (average)
Top five		
1. Work environment (4.61)	1. Product quality (4.75)	1. Cooperative colleagues (4.56)
2. Cooperative colleagues (4.57)	2. Company reputation (4.63)	2. Product quality (4.56)
3. Interesting tasks (4.53)	3. Innovative spirit (4.62)	3. Work environment (4.54)
4. Skill development (4.49)	4. Company culture (4.54)	4. Skill development (4.52)
5. Team spirit (4.48)	5. Skill development (4.54)	5. Company culture (4.45)
Bottom three		
1. Internationality (3.24)	1. Product variety (3.34)	1. Internationality (3.30)
2. Diversity (3.60)	2. Internationality (3.36)	2. Product variety (3.49)
3. Product variety (3.64)	3. Diversity (3.48)	3. Diversity (3.54)

Table 10: The most important and the least important employer attributes (own presentation)

To indicate the differences between the target groups, the difference in mean was calculated in addition. All of the attributes with a difference above 0.30 are illustrated in Figure 23. The technical sales experts' results are depicted in red, whereas the AP employee results are presented in grey.

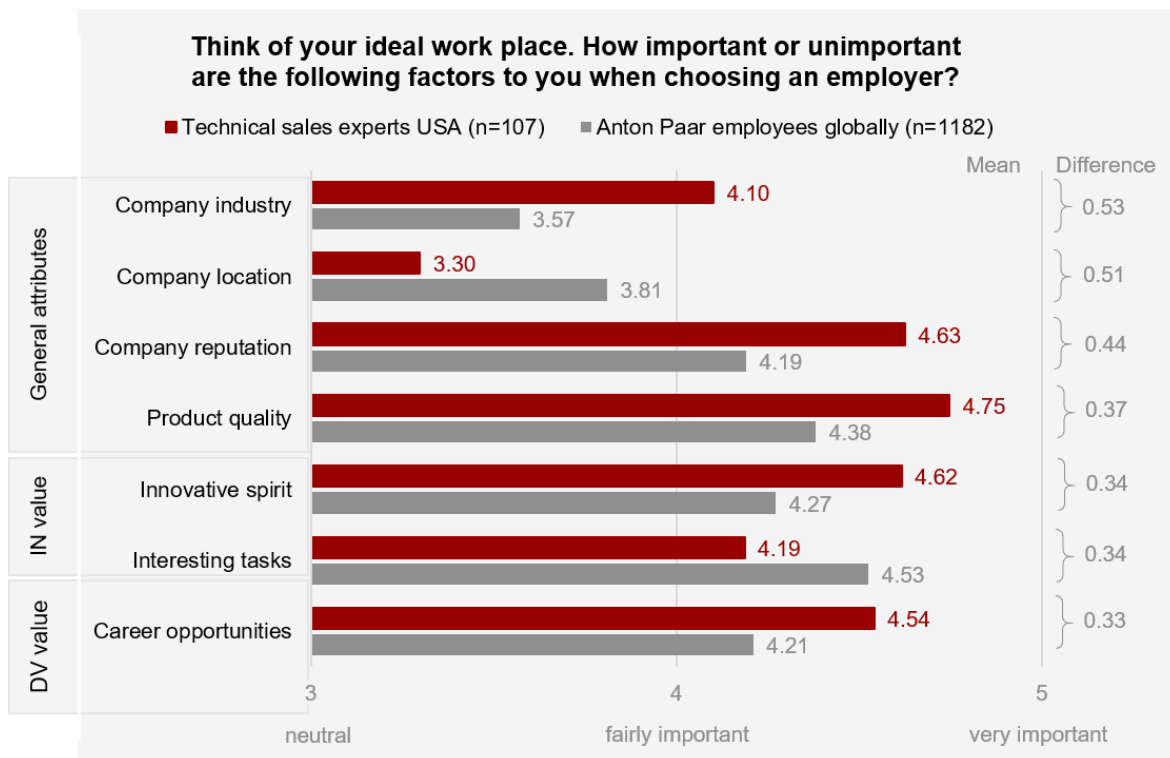


Figure 23: Factors of employer attractiveness with the largest difference (own presentation)

As indicated in Figure 23, the largest difference in mean between the target groups concerns the attributes company industry (difference of 0.53), company location (0.51), company reputation (0.44), product quality (0.37), innovative spirit (0.34), interesting tasks (0.34) and career opportunities (0.33). Company location and interesting tasks are less important for the external target group, whereas industry, reputation and product quality are more relevant to the external target group than to the existing AP employees. The employer attributes were categorised into the groups by Berthon et al. and completed by general attributes. All of the categories are obtained from the theoretical part, namely interest value (IN), social value (SO), economic value (EC), development value (DV) and application value (APP).

The figure indicates that the internal perspective differs from the external perspective. The attributes that are extremely important to technical sales experts (above 4.50) need to be considered in the target group-specific positioning; these attributes are company reputation, product quality, innovative spirit and career opportunities. The interesting tasks need to be considered for the overall positioning.

In addition to the analysis of the largest difference between the target groups, the smallest difference was also assessed, as demonstrated in the Figure 24.

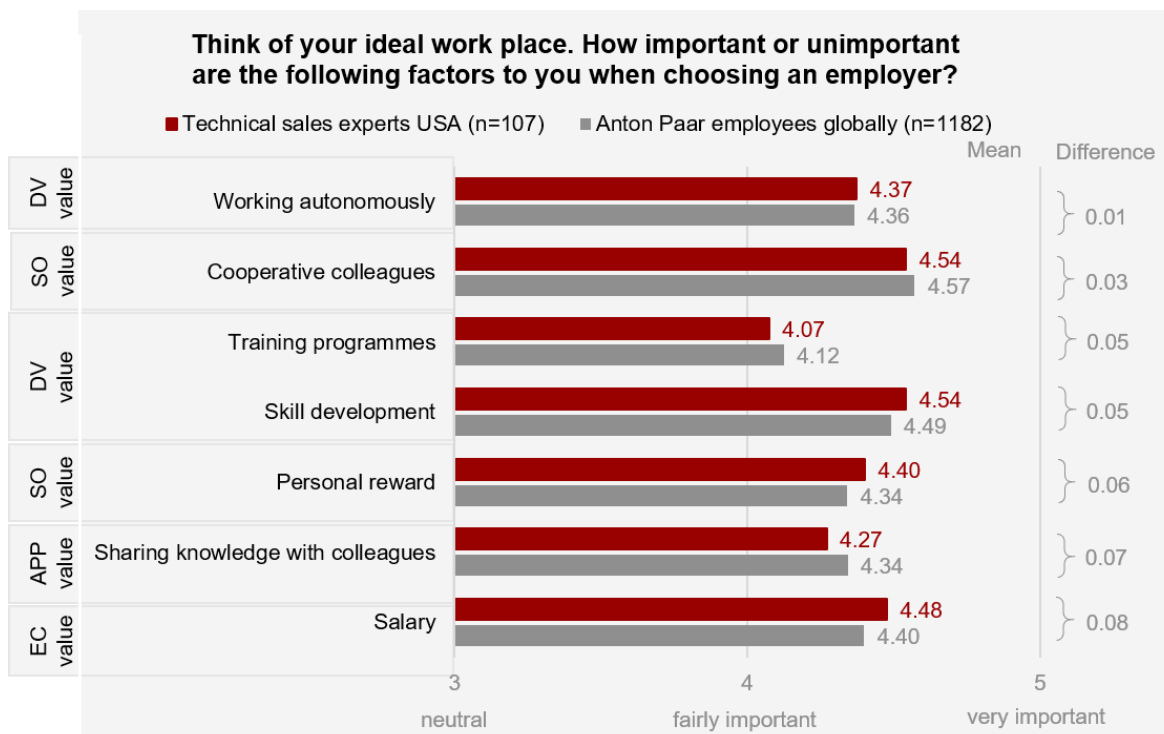


Figure 24: Factors of employer attractiveness with the smallest difference (own presentation)

Values of around 4.5 (cooperative colleagues and skill development) should be particularly examined in detail. These attributes need to be considered for the overall employer brand positioning because they are relevant to both target groups.

In addition to basic employer attributes, technician-specific factors were highlighted in another question. The results are presented in Figure 25. The theoretical part underscored the findings that employees with a technical background prefer consistency in their work environment and innovative companies with a secure workplace. Work–life balance is also important to these employees.

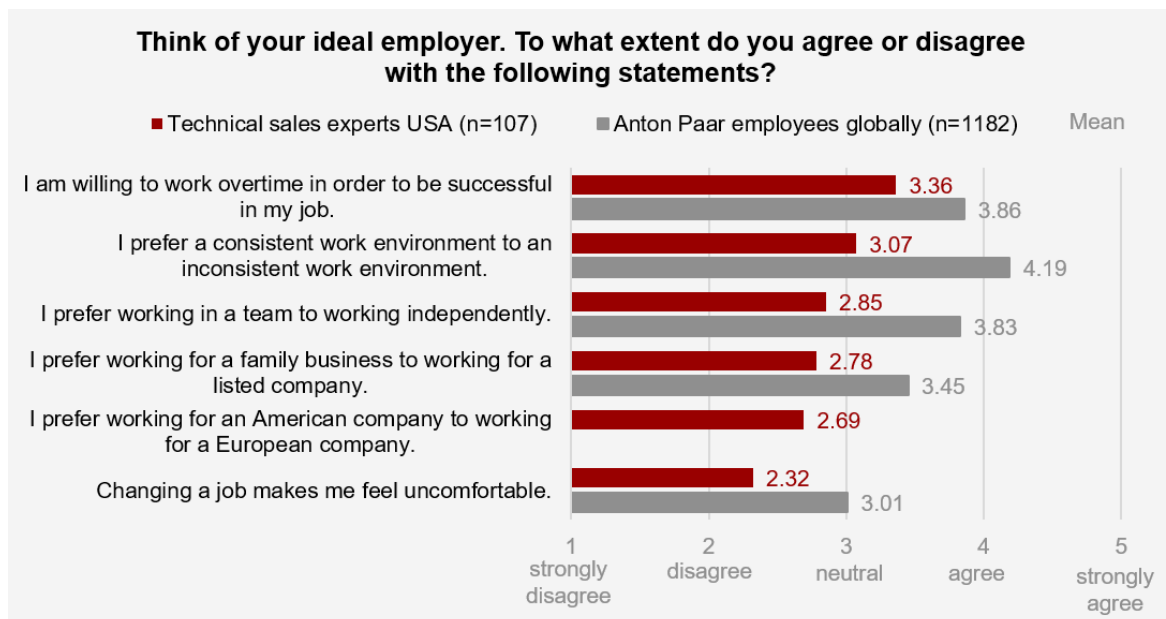


Figure 25: Ideal employer and technician-specific attributes (own presentation)

The majority of technical sales experts’ answers in all of the statements is “neutral”. Therefore, the results from theory could not be confirmed clearly for the external technical sales survey participants because all of the mean values are close to neutral. However, the first four statements could be confirmed for AP employees. During the primary research of this thesis, the external and internal respondents are found to be willing to work overtime to be successful. Anton Paar employees favour a consistent work environment and prefer to work in a team rather than independently. Therefore, consistency needs to be highlighted in the overall employer brand positioning. Moreover, Anton Paar employees prefer to work for a family business rather than a listed company. Technical sales experts in the USA slightly tend to prefer to work independently and favour working for a European company. Inconsistency is not a problem for the external respondent group.

Another question that was used in both surveys evaluated the benefits offered by Anton Paar. Both respondent groups named the same top five benefits. For technical sales experts in the USA, the top five benefits offered by AP are as follows:

1. Healthcare benefits (18.1%)
2. Retirement savings contributions (17.9%)
3. Profit sharing (17%)
4. Flexible working hours (16.3%)
5. Employee incentives (13.3%)

The technical sales experts also mentioned the following benefits in an open-ended question: development and training programme (N=23), paid time off (N=19), company car (N=12), stock options (N=7) and cell phone (N=3), family leave (N=1), travelling fare (N=1) and expense reimbursement (N=1).

8.3.3 Summary factors of attractiveness and positioning fields

This sub-chapter summarises the most relevant employer attributes and positioning fields for the target groups which are derived from the results in chapters 8.3.1 and 8.3.2. The positioning fields are based on chapter 5.2.2. Figure 26 presents the positioning fields (written in red) and the matching employer attributes (written in white). The larger the bubble, the more important the field is to the target group.

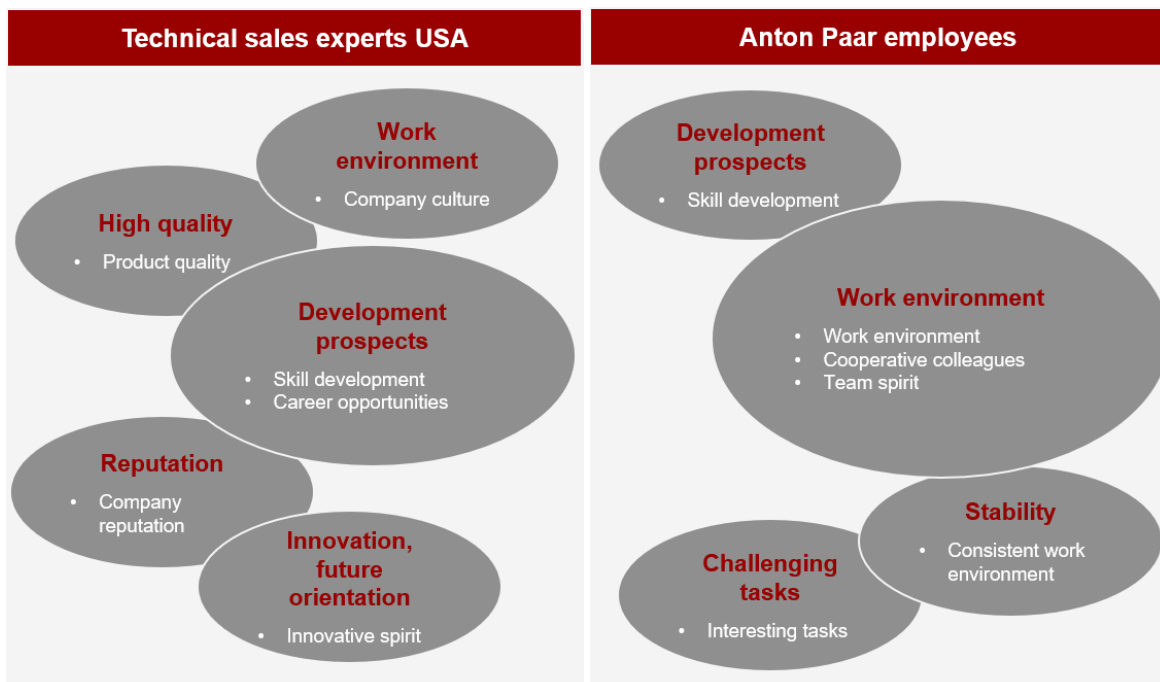


Figure 26: Positioning fields per target group (own presentation)

9. Employer brand positioning concept of the Anton Paar Group

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the positioning of the employer brand for Anton Paar. The findings from the theoretical part (see chapter 5) regarding employer brand positioning are combined with the results from the analysis (chapter 6) and the primary market research (chapter 8). The next step is to develop the employer value proposition for the Anton Paar Group and the target group of technical sales experts. The brand architecture, including the brand values and communication messages, is defined in the final sub-chapter.

9.1 Employer branding strategy choice

Four types of EB strategies are mentioned in the theoretical part, namely local, glocal, global and international EB. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the strategy that is chosen for the Anton Paar employer brand.

Local employer brands and international employer brands are adapted to country specifics. These types of brands are being developed and administered together with the subsidiaries. Glocal employer brands have a uniform positioning including local perspectives. Global brands are standardised and managed centrally. For the Anton Paar employer brand, a global employer brand positioning strategy is chosen for several reasons. First, Anton Paar has an ethnocentric and global international HRM strategy (chapter 6.2.1) and a global corporate brand (6.2.2); hence, the employer brand needs to fit in with this global orientation. Second, theory indicates that global brands should be favoured when the HR strategy is unified and when the HQ are responsible for branding. Third, theory suggests that technical companies are more likely to standardise their employer brands. Fourth, Anton Paar is a family business with the family members working at the HQ in Graz. Thus, the home country orientation is high.

Global brands have the disadvantage of limited adaptation to local needs. Thus, the global employer brand of AP can be supplemented with target group-specific and country-specific sub-values and EVP pillars. For this thesis, the global employer brand of AP is supplemented with values and EVP pillars for technical sales experts.

At the operative level, localised EB and communication measures may be added to balance out the lack of localisation in the positioning strategy. This approach fits in with the local recruiting approach of Anton Paar.

In summary, out of the two types of positioning strategies from theory (selective and classical positioning, chapter 5.2.2) Anton Paar uses a mixed strategy with a tendency towards a selective positioning strategy. This approach is adopted to provide potential applicants with a realistic image of what working at Anton Paar is like. As a result, the improvement of the quality of applicants is ensured. This strategy choice influences the positioning fields that are communicated by the company in the future. Further details are presented in chapter 9.4.

9.2 Comparison of positioning fields

The positioning fields from chapter 5.2.2 were used as a basis for the coding in the analysis and market research sections of this thesis. The results from the analysis section and the primary market research were matched with the positioning fields from theory to position the employer brand Anton Paar.

Each employer attribute from the questionnaire was allocated to one positioning field by Grobe and value by Berthon et al. The last four positioning fields had to be added by the author of this thesis to cover all of the relevant employer attributes. With regard to the internal and external target groups, the six most important positioning fields from chapter 8.3.3 were used; each attribute is denoted by one “x” in Table 11. Table 11 presents a comparison of the individual results.

		Analysis			Surveys		
Values	Positioning fields /codes	Thermo Fisher	Malvern	Existing communication Anton Paar	Technical sales experts USA	Anton Paar employees globally	Both
Interest value (IN)	Internationality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationality • Diversity 		x	x			
Economic value (EC)	Compensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary • Financial incentives 						
General attributes	Reputation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company reputation • Customer reputation 				x		

Interest value (IN)	Work-life balance			x			
Interest value (IN)	Challenging tasks • Challenging tasks • Interesting tasks	x	x	x		x	
Interest value (IN)	Ethical work environment • Corporate social responsibility	x	x	x			
Interest value (IN), social value (SO)	Work environment • Work environment • Company culture • Team spirit • Cooperative colleagues • Personal reward • Sharing knowledge with colleagues	x	x	x	x	xxx	xxx
Interest value (IN)	Innovation, future orientation • Business success • Innovative spirit • Product quality • Product variety	x	x	x	x		
Development value (DV)	Development prospects • Skill development • Career opportunities • Training programmes • Working autonomously		x	x	xx	x	x
Interest value (IN)	Flat hierarchies						
General attributes	Company location • Company location • Company industry						
General attributes	Cost consciousness		x				
General attributes	Stability			x		x	
General attributes	High quality		x	x	x		x
General attributes	Growth			x			
General attributes	Product variety						

Table 11: Comparison of competitor positioning fields, Anton Paar communication and target group preferences (own presentation)

The interest value is the most important value group for all of the analysed fields. Additionally, the development value achieved a high ranking for the target groups. The fields of flat hierarchies, company location and product variety are not important to the target groups and are neither covered by AP nor by the competition.

9.3 Employer value proposition

The EVP is the heart of the employer brand positioning, and is thus dealt with in the subsequent sub-chapters. This chapter is expected to help Anton Paar with gaining clearly defined global and technical sales-specific employer brands.

9.3.1 EVP pillars of the Anton Paar Group

The first step in defining the EVP for the entire Anton Paar Group is to reduce the number of employer attributes. For Anton Paar, this step was performed by comparing AP attributes with those of the competition and with the existing employees' preferences. The attributes of Anton Paar were evaluated in the analysis and primary market research section of this thesis. The target group preferences were based on the global employee survey and the competitor positioning fields were discussed in chapter 6.

Figure 27 presents the positioning fields found in the previous chapters.

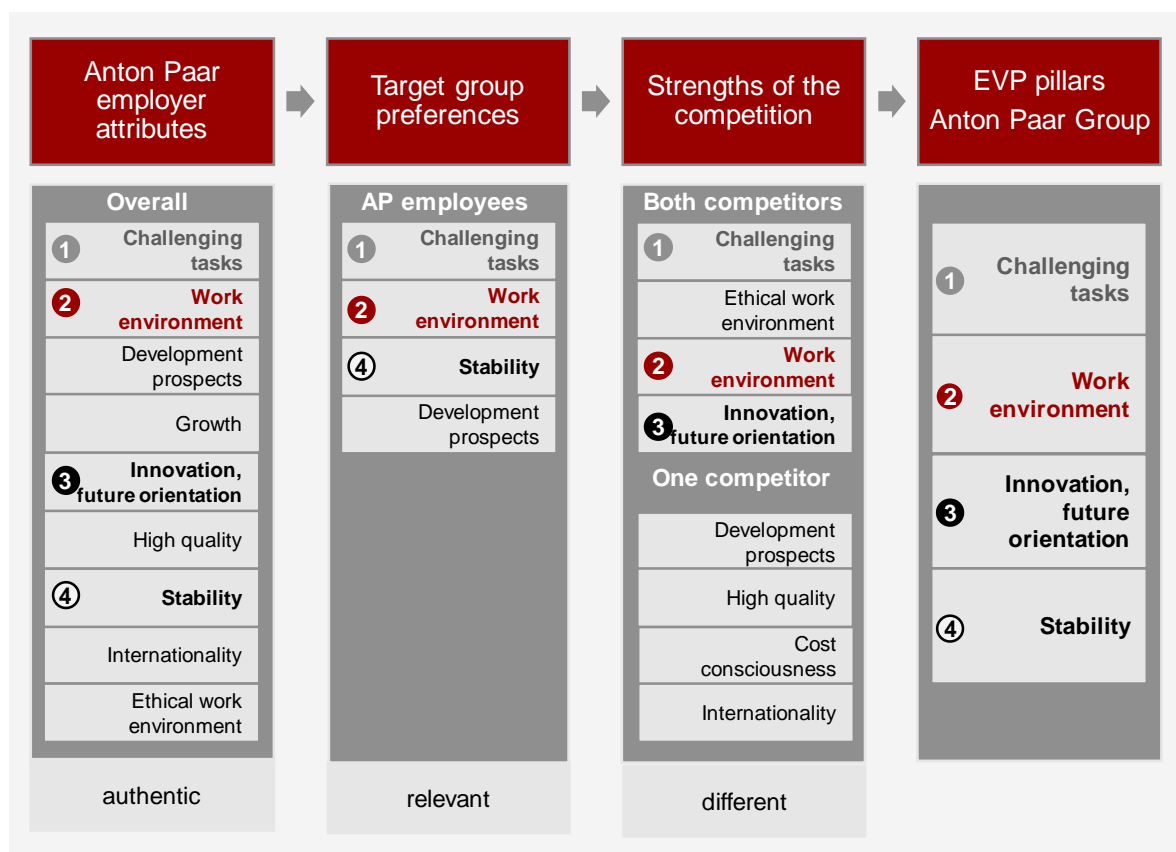


Figure 27: EVP pillars of the Anton Paar Group (own presentation)

Significantly, Anton Paar currently communicates nine positioning fields. The reduction of this number is advisable to ensure clear communication. Furthermore, Figure 27 clarifies that the competitor's positioning highly intersects with Anton Paar's attributes and strengths and the target group's preferences.

The target group's preferences should be at the centre of brand positioning (see chapter 5.2.3); therefore, these preferences have to be partially included in Anton Paar's positioning.

"Work environment" needs to be included as a pillar because it is the most preferred topic by AP employees. The positioning field of "challenging tasks" is included as a pillar because it supports the field of an exciting work environment and is important to the target group. "Innovation" is a core value of Anton Paar and is therefore added as another pillar. "Stability" is a positioning field that is not yet covered by the competition but is important to the target group. Both competitors are listed on the stock market, which causes them difficulty in covering this positioning field. Furthermore, "stability" is a field that Anton Paar as a family business with stable growth represents. Hence, "stability" builds the key EVP pillar.

This resulted in four global EVP pillars, namely challenging tasks, work environment, innovation and future orientation and stability. These four positioning fields form the global employer brand of Anton Paar.

9.3.2 EVP pillars for technical sales experts in the USA

After providing a definition for the global EVP, this thesis presents a more specific EVP for the target group of technical sales experts in the United States. This step is necessary to ensure that Anton Paar is attractive to the aforementioned sales target group that the company aims to entice. This sub-EVP may not conflict with the above-mentioned global pillars. The process during analysis was similar to that used in developing the global EVP and resulted in three EVP pillars for sales experts, namely reputation, development prospects and high quality.

"Reputation" was chosen because it is important to the sales experts and is not yet covered by competitors. The second pillar, "development prospects", was selected for three reasons.

First, this pillar was the most important topic in the external survey. Second, it is currently covered by only one competitor. Third, as indicated in chapter 6.1.1 during the cultural analysis, Americans are highly individualistic. They care for themselves more than for the well-being of the company. Hence, they intend to be offered development opportunities to stay with a company. Finally, “high quality” is another core value of Anton Paar and is important to the target group.

Figure 28 illustrates the process of choosing the EVP pillars for U.S. sales experts.

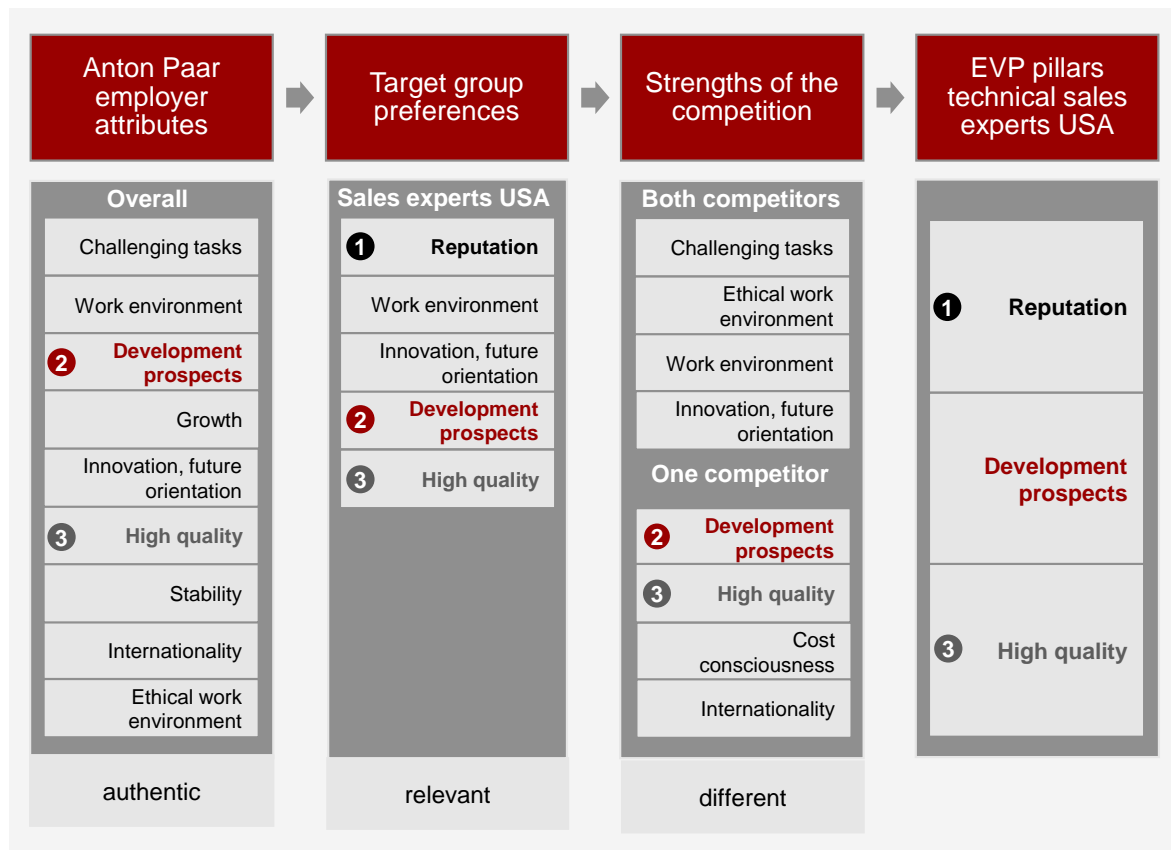


Figure 28: EVP pillars for technical sales experts in the USA (own presentation)

Americans are more short-term oriented than Austrians (chapter 6.1.1). Nevertheless, the global employer brand positioning field “stability” can be highlighted when communicating with technical sales experts. The emphasis on this pillar makes Anton Paar’s positioning more selective so that only employees who are attracted by this pillar apply. “Challenging tasks” and “innovativeness” can be communicated together with the “development prospects”.

9.4 EVP model and employer brand architecture

Anton Paar's EVP pillars were filtered out in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the EVP pillars are connected with the employer brand values and the brand's communication.

Anton Paar currently communicates the four values "respect", "social responsibility", "personal responsibility" and "curiosity". In the survey, "curiosity" was named as a core value in around 6% of responses. However, "quality" was named as a value in around 22% of responses. Therefore, the addition of "quality" instead of "curiosity" as a core value of the employer brand is suggested. "Innovation" is included as a value instead of "curiosity" because the former is one of the core factors in the company's success. The values "respect" and "social responsibility" are highly similar; hence, "respect" was omitted and "responsibility" was used instead. The value of "stability" was added because it distinguishes AP the most from its competitors. Anton Paar is owned by the Santner Foundation which builds on long-term growth. Furthermore, as mentioned in the company purpose, AP intends to provide its employees with a secure workplace. The focus of brand communication should be on this value. Finally, "cooperation" was added as a value because it was named as a key factor in an effective work environment.

This resulted in five core company values, namely quality, innovation, responsibility, stability and cooperation. The selection of these values supports Anton Paar's primary goal (chapter 1) to improve the quality of applications because the values of "responsibility", "quality" and "innovation" are challenging to the target group.

Furthermore, this positioning conveys a more realistic picture of the company. As the topic of this thesis is the development of an employer brand positioning for sales experts in the USA, the two sub-values of "decency" and "progress" were added to address this target group in particular. These values were chosen because sales experts named them as the attributes of an ideal employer in the external survey (see chapter 8.3.2). These values also fit in with the company Anton Paar. Figure 29 illustrates the brand architecture of the AP employer brand including the values, EVP pillars and communication messages. The reason for the selection of these EVP pillars was explained in the previous chapter.

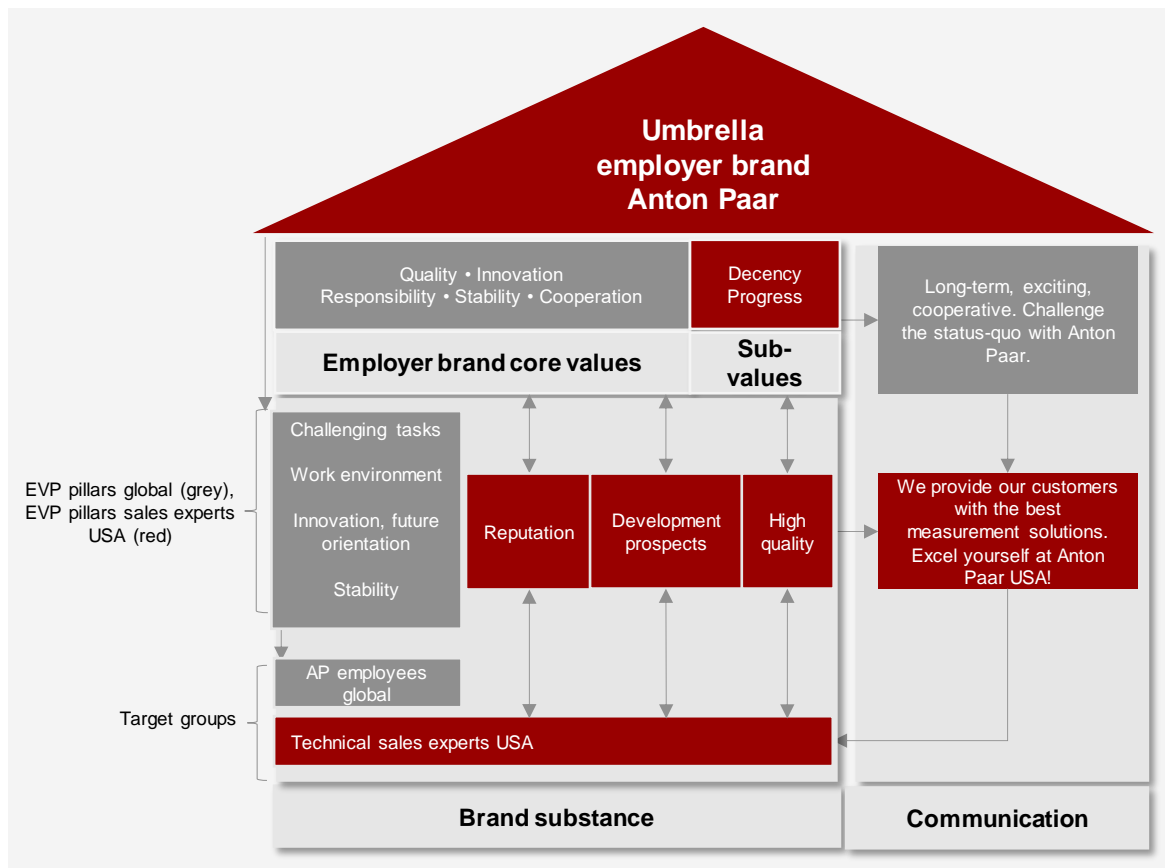


Figure 29: Employer brand architecture of Anton Paar (own presentation)

Figure 29 indicates the communication message for the Anton Paar Group. The focus of this communication message is on conveying that AP builds on long-term relationships. In addition, AP offers an interesting work environment. The overall communication message also spreads the company’s innovative spirit. Furthermore, it communicates that the company challenges its employees.

A separate communication message was defined for the technical sales sub-group. The goal of this thesis is to improve the quality of technical sales applicants; hence, this sub-communication message includes aspects that are challenging to the target group. This is indicated by the words “best” and “excel yourself”. This communication message shows that AP searches for employees who are willing to leave their comfort zone. It simultaneously communicates the development opportunities offered at AP which was the most important topic in the external survey. Sales representatives are in close contact with Anton Paar’s customers; thus, this communication message is customer focused. The communication message also includes the quality emphasis that forms the EVP of the sales employee group.

10. Recommendations

In this chapter, the findings from the theoretical and practical parts are summarised as recommendations for the Anton Paar Group. All of the recommendations are given priority levels of high (highest priority), medium or low. Measures are prioritised according to their contribution to the anchoring of the brand.

10.1 Internal employer branding and communication measures

The internal employer branding measures should help Anton Paar with anchoring the employer brand and its core values with existing employees from the time they join the company until they decide to leave it. Internally anchoring the employer brand for Anton Paar before doing so externally is advisable because as indicated in the internal survey, employees function as brand ambassadors.

Inform employees about the global survey results (high priority)

Informing Anton Paar's employees globally about the key survey results is necessary to make them feel that they are highly valued. The use of the intranet is suggested because it is the most heavily utilised internal information channel.

Obtain senior management commitment to the global EB strategy (high priority)

The results from theory and the analysis section reveal that a global employer branding strategy is the most suitable for AP. Obtaining senior management commitment to the strategy is critically important because it enables the internal and external implementation of the employer brand. After this step, all of the other measures follow.

Conduct a leadership workshop—obtain the commitment from company leaders (high priority)

Trainings or workshops are effective methods for enabling leaders within Anton Paar to experience the employer brand (see chapter. 5.3.2). Conducting a workshop together with AP's leaders is therefore recommended because these leaders function as role models and multipliers for all of the other employees. Leaders should then be required to share their experience with their subordinates.

Start an informational series about Anton Paar's company values in the subsidiaries (high priority)

Introduce a fortnightly intranet article that provides information about the company values of Anton Paar and the reasons why the company represents each value.

Offer a mentoring programme for technical sales experts (high priority)

Introduce a mentoring programme for sales experts who recently joined AP USA.

Conduct an in-depth analysis of the employee survey data (medium priority)

A global employee survey provides valuable data; thus, the local data should be shared with the subsidiary HR managers. The following data could be analysed per subsidiary and region:

- Differences in the preferences of technical and non-technical employees
- Gender and age differences
- Preferred employer attributes
- Preferred information channels
- Preferred company benefits
- Open-ended question at the end of the survey, comments by employees

Develop a global onboarding material (medium priority)

When new employees join Anton Paar, ensuring that their expectations match with the company's values, offers and principles is necessary. The development of global onboarding material that is given to all new AP employees globally is thus recommended. For example, this material could be a folder explaining the company's background, culture and core values. It helps to anchor the brand in the subsidiaries so that all AP employees follow the same principles.

Use the intranet to communicate the employer brand (low priority)

Anton Paar employees mainly use the intranet in informing themselves internally. This channel should be used to share employer branding content. Additionally, the EB section in the intranet needs to be refreshed according to the new values.

Extend the EVP to attract other target groups (low priority)

The EVP that was defined in this thesis addresses all of the AP employees and sales experts in the USA. This EVP could be extended for other key target groups.

10.2 External employer branding and communication measures

The external employer branding measures should give recommendations on the means of communicating the employer brand AP externally.

10.2.1 Global external measures

Create a career section on the Anton Paar website (high priority)

The use of online channels in employer search is expected to increase in the future (see chapter 5). Moreover, company job websites are of high importance for the external and internal target groups. The competitor Thermo Fisher already uses such a career page. Hence, Anton Paar's extension of its job section is recommended. Contents that could be included are EB values, information about Anton Paar's working culture, employee portraits and open positions.

Define a uniform global HR advertising subject (high priority)

How the subsidiaries communicate Anton Paar as an employer is currently unclear to the HQ because recruiting is performed on a local basis. Providing the subsidiaries with a standardised advertising template is therefore suggested. This approach ensures that the employer brand is communicated in the same manner.

Use existing employees as employer brand ambassadors (high priority)

Theory indicates that internally communicating the brand in a credible manner is a key success factor in employer branding. This activity can be performed through employee success stories. These success stories can be communicated internally and externally. Identifying ambassadors who represent the employer brand core values is recommended. As a first step, this process should be done for positions that are difficult to fill on a global scale. Anchoring the employer brand in the subsidiaries necessitates the inclusion of ambassadors who do not work at the HQ.

Increase employer branding activity on LinkedIn (medium priority)

In theory, more personalised information during job search is expected to increase in the future. This can be supported by extending Anton Paar's global LinkedIn page with content that is adapted to the needs of the most sought-after global employee groups. Additionally, more job postings and employer branding postings should be shared on the global and subsidiary LinkedIn accounts.

Standardise the global communication in job advertisements (medium priority)

Employer branding communication needs to be consistent to ensure its clarity to potential applicants. Anton Paar currently uses different communication keywords for international communication and communication in the USA. These communication messages need to be aligned to the overall employer branding message to ensure that the same values are communicated.

Introduce a global employee referral programme (low priority)

Employee referrals are an option for strengthening AP's employer brand. They are suitable for the company because almost one third of AP employees first heard about the company from personal contacts. Therefore, an employee referral scheme that offers staggered incentives to existing employees who help bring in applicants for difficult-to-fill positions should be introduced.

10.2.2 External measures for the USA

Update the job website content (high priority)

Company websites are the key information channel that technical sales experts use in their job search. The external survey revealed that the job website obtained a medium ranking by the technical sales experts. Updating the website photo and layout is therefore recommended. Stating the company purpose more clearly is critical. In general, the website should be less generic.

Update job advertisements for technical sales experts (medium priority)

Target groups prefer less generic communication. This preference became apparent in the external survey. Thus, job advertisements should be adapted to the defined employer brand, include the sub-values for technical sales experts and highlight the communication message.

Update the AP page on the Indeed job website (medium priority)

Indeed and LinkedIn are the job recruiting websites that technical sales experts use the most in searching for potential employers. A recommendation for Anton Paar USA is to update its existing page on the Indeed job website to ensure that potential applicants obtain the latest details on job opportunities and other key company information.

Create a LinkedIn page that targets technical sales experts in the USA (medium priority)

Personalised information is again expected to become more important in the future, as indicated in the theoretical part. The external survey revealed that social media (primarily LinkedIn) is among the top three information channels for technical sales experts. Thus, creating a specific LinkedIn “life” page for technical sales experts is recommended.

Create a brochure for third-party brand communicators (recruiting agents, employees) (low priority)

Recruiting agents are used by nearly 20% of sales survey respondents in their job search. In addition, the goal of AP USA is to recruit 20% of new hires through recruiting agents (chapter 6.2.4). A brochure should be created for recruiting agents who cooperate with AP USA to inform them about the company values and purpose. It can also be used by employees who intend to recommend the company to personal contacts. This approach helps to communicate the brand through third parties.

Create an employer branding page on Monster.com (low priority)

Monster was named in third place in terms of job recruiting websites. The creation of a premium company page for Anton Paar USA on Monster is therefore recommended. This approach offers a possibility to present the employer brand Anton Paar. Unfortunately, Monster does not list the cost of such a profile on its website.

Include the key company benefits in job advertisements (low priority)

Healthcare benefits, retirement savings contributions, profit sharing, flexible working hours and employee incentives were the top five benefits of technical sales experts. Communicating these benefits in technical sales job advertisements is recommended.

10.3 Implementation action plan and costs

Employer branding is a topic that affects several departments in the company; therefore, a suggestion is given about whom to involve in which order during implementation. The goal is to inform all of the parties step-by-step and top-down about the new employer brand. The individual steps are presented in Figure 30. The red elements denote the form of involvement of the departments.

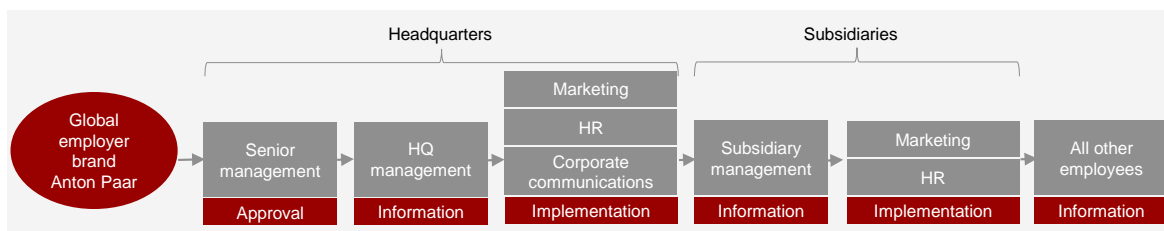


Figure 30: Involved parties during implementation (own presentation)

10.3.1 Action plan and cost projection for the internal measures

Table 12 breaks down the individual internal measures into sub-tasks that are subsequently allocated to the responsible department. The measures are sorted according to their priority level. As a basis for calculation, the hourly rate used is €50 which is the average cost of a marketing employee at AP in Graz (cf. Herischko 09.04.2018). The left column in grey depicts the timeframe for the implementation of each measure.

Time-frame	Prio.	Measures	Tasks	Responsible parties	Hours	Costs (in €)
Q3 18	H	Inform employees about the global survey results	• Summarise the key results	IHR	5	250
			• Write the intranet article	IHR	2	100
Q3 18	H	Obtain senior management commitment to the global strategy	• Choose and prepare content that should be presented	IHR	10	500
			• Present EB in connection with the corporate brand	MA/IHR	5	250
Q3 18	H	Conduct a leadership workshop—obtain the commitment from company leaders	• Invite leaders	MGM	5	250
			• Prepare the workshop content	IHR	20	1,000
			• Conduct the workshop	IHR	5	250
Q4 18 Q1 19	H	Offer a mentoring programme for technical sales experts	• Develop the mentoring content	IHR	40	2,000
			• Choose the mentors	SHR	5	250

Q4 18	H	Start an informational series about AP's values in the subsidiaries	• Prepare the text	MA/CC	10	500
			• Choose/create images	MA/IHR	5	250
			• Share the articles	SMA	2	100
Q3 18	M	Conduct an in-depth analysis of the employee survey data	• Send the data to the subsidiaries	IHR	3	150
			• Analyse local survey results (costs per subsidiary)	SHR/SMA	10	500
			• Analyse age, gender, technical education differences in preferences	IHR	10	500
Q3 18 Q4 18	M	Develop a global onboarding material	• Deliver the content suggestions	IHR	3	150
			• Write the text	MA	20	1,000
			• Prepare the layout	MA	25	1,250
Q3 18	L	Use the intranet to communicate the employer brand	• Distribute the material to new colleagues	SHR	1	50
			• Update the EB section text on the intranet	IHR	4	200
			• Visualise the global employer brand, infographics	MA	2	100
Q1 19 Q2 19	L	Extend the EVP to attract other target groups	• Communicate to employees that information can be found there	IHR/SHR	1	50
			• Define other target groups that are key for the business	IHR	5	250
			• Develop the EVP for one other target group and extend the EVP	IHR	30	1,500
			• Communicate new pillars	IHR/SHR	2	100
Total internal measures					230	€11,500
Prio. = priority; H = high; M = medium, L = low IHR = International Human Resources; MA = Marketing; MGM = Management; SHR = Subsidiary HR; SMA = Subsidiary Marketing						

Table 12: Action and cost plan internal measures including timeframe (own presentation)

Out of the total cost of €11,500 for internal measures, €9,400 needs to be spent in 2018 and €2,100 in 2019.

10.3.2 Action plan and cost projection for the external measures

Table 13 lists the external measures. Global (G) measures apply to the entire AP Group. The USA measures (USA) are only applied in this subsidiary.

Time-frame	Prio.		Measures	Tasks	Responsible parties	Hours	Costs (in €)
Q3 18 Q4 18	H	G	Create a career section on the AP website	• Write the text	IHR/MA	15	750
				• Create the website	MA	30	1500
				• Perform website administration/month	IHR/MA	2	100
Q4 18	H	G	Define a uniform global HR advertising subject	• Brainstorm the content	IHR	5	250
				• Create the subject text	IHR/MA	5	250
				• Take the photos	MA	5	250
				• Create the subject layout	MA	5	250
Q4 18	H	G	Use existing employees as employer brand ambassadors	• Search for testimonials and ask for permission	IHR/SHR	5	250
				• Organise interview testimonials	MA	2	100
				• Write the success stories	IHR/MA	3	150
				• Take photos of employees	MA	1	50
				• Publish the success stories on the intranet, social media, job website	IHR/MA	4	200
Q3 18	M	G, USA	Increase employer branding activity on LinkedIn	• Publish the job posting	IHR/SHR	1	50
				• Create the EB post	MA, SMA	1	50
				• Adapt the "life" tab on corporate page to key employee groups	IHR	4	200
				• Perform page administration/month	MA	1	50
Q3 18	M	G	Standardise the global communication in job advertisements	• Define the standard text	IHR	1	50
				• Use the text, translate it and adapt it to local needs	SHR	2	100
Q1 19	L	G	Introduce a global employee referral programme	• Define the incentivised positions	IHR/SHR	5	250
				• Determine the incentive amount	IHR/SHR	2	100
				• Pay out one incentive	IHR/SHR	1	50
Q3 18	H	USA	Update the job website content	• Update the photo	SHR	1	50
				• Update the text	SHR	2	100
				• Perform website administration/month	SHR/SMA	1	50
Q4 18	M	USA	Update job ads for technical sales experts	• Adapt the standardised text to fit with the sub-values	SHR	2	100
				• Communicate the EVP pillars	SHR	1	50

Q4 18	M	USA	Update the AP page on the Indeed job website	• Update the text	SHR	1	50
				• Update the header image	SHR	1	50
Q1 19	M	USA	Create a LinkedIn page that targets technical sales experts in the USA	• Create the localised text	SHR	3	150
				• Organise local testimonials	SHR	1	50
				• Build the LinkedIn page	MA/IHR	2	100
Q1 19	M	USA	Create a brochure for third-party brand communicators	• Create the text	MA	5	250
				• Create the layout	MA/SMA	5	250
				• Print the brochure	SHR	2	100
				• Share the brochure with recruiting agents	SHR	2	100
				• Share the brochure with employees	SHR	1	50
Q1 19	L	USA	Create an employer branding page on Monster.com	• Request price at Monster.com	SHR	1	50
				• Write the text	SHR	5	250
				• Choose the photos	SHR	2	100
				• Create the page	SHR	5	250
				• Perform page administration/month	SHR	1	50
Q4 18	L	USA	Include the key company benefits in job ads	• Change the ad text	SHR	2	100
Total external measures						146	€7,300
G = global; USA = USA only; Prio. = priority; H = high; M = medium, L = low IHR = International Human Resources; MA = Marketing; MGM = Management; SHR = Subsidiary HR; SMA = Subsidiary Marketing							
Total cost of internal and external implementation: €18,800							

Table 13: Action and cost plan external measures including timeframe (own presentation)

Out of the total cost of €7,300 for external measures, €5,150 needs to be spent in 2018 and €2,150 in 2019. The overall implementation costs €18,800.

10.4 Employer brand controlling

Controlling the EB success regularly is recommended to determine the effective anchoring of the employer brand. This step is performed by controlling the individual external and internal measures and measuring the achievement of the company goals defined in chapter 1.4.1. Table 14 summarises the KPIs for each topic.

	KPI	Explanation
Achievement of company goals		
1	Supported awareness of the core values at the HQ	The percentage of employees at the HQ who are able to tick the correct core company values by 31.12.2020
2	Supported awareness of the core values in the USA subsidiary	The percentage of employees per subsidiary who are able to tick the correct core company values by 31.12.2020. Company objective: 90%
3	Application quality of technical sales experts	Ratio between applications filtered out in the first stage of candidate selection and the number of suitable applicants at the HQ and in the USA. Objective: 3:1
4	Average time to fill technical sales positions	Time it takes to fill technical sales positions in the United States
Internal measures		
5	Number of onboarding brochures	The number of brochures handed out to new employees
External measures globally		
6	Number of brand ambassadors	-
7	Number of unique career page visitors	Unique visitors according to Google Analytics per month and country
8	LinkedIn channel growth	Follower growth of the global AP LinkedIn page
9	Number of employer branding LinkedIn posts	Number of posts per subsidiary and month
10	Number of adapted "life" pages on LinkedIn	-
11	Budget spent on referrals	The amount of money given to employees for referring applicants
External measures USA		
12	Career website visitors and sessions	Monthly number of sessions, average session duration
13	Number of applications on Indeed and Monster.com	Number of applications per month
14	Number of third-party brochures	Number of brochures handed out to third parties

Table 14: Employer brand controlling KPIs of Anton Paar (own presentation)

11. Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to develop an employer brand positioning concept for Anton Paar to enable the company to succeed in the war for talent. The support from the company during the entire thesis process demonstrated the company's interest in the topic of employer branding. This interest was also reflected by the total number of completed employee questionnaires (1,182); of this number, nearly 600 responses were already obtained after the first day of the survey.

One key finding of the theoretical part is that the success of employer branding depends on the cooperation of several departments. The human resources, marketing and corporate management departments need to collaborate. Each department should be involved in the implementation process. Obtaining the commitment from senior management is a key success factor in the implementation of the employer brand. A finding from the primary market research is that Anton Paar highlights various employer attributes, and some of these attributes are neither distinctive nor relevant to the target group. Instead, the company needs to focus on a limited number of attributes.

The first step in implementing the concept is to anchor the global brand and technical sales sub-brand internally. This step is important because as the internal survey revealed, existing employees function as Anton Paar's brand communicators to potential applicants. The second step is to extend the global brand with employer value propositions for other important target groups or countries. A detailed analysis of the internal survey is also suggested for each subsidiary. The implementation of the concept should be started within a narrow timeframe to gain the employees' interest.

Clearly communicating the challenging, important and distinctive attributes defined in the positioning concept of this thesis allows the possibility to attract the desired employee groups and improve the quality of applications. Anton Paar can effectively compete in the war for talent through this approach.

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Appendix

Appendix: Table of contents

Appendix: Table of contents	A-1
Appendix: List of figures	A-3
Appendix: List of tables	A-4
1. Communication of benefits in job advertisements	A-5
1.1 International positions.....	A-5
1.2 Technical sales representatives USA	A-5
1.3 Communication keyword analysis	A-6
2. Job website of Anton Paar USA.....	A-7
3. Global employee survey	A-8
3.1 Questionnaire	A-8
3.2 Results	A-14
3.2.1 Question 1: Gender	A-14
3.2.2 Question 3: Technical university degree	A-15
3.2.3 Question 4: Technical sales	A-15
3.2.4 Question 5: Sales regions	A-16
3.2.5 Question 12: First hear about Anton Paar	A-16
3.2.6 Question 13: Reasons for application at Anton Paar.....	A-17
3.2.7 Question 19: Internal information channels	A-18
3.2.8 Question 20: Awareness company values	A-18
3.2.9 Question 22: Company values and principles supported	A-19
3.2.10 Question 23: Recommendation rate.....	A-19
4. Technical sales experts USA survey.....	A-20
4.1 Questionnaire	A-20
4.3 Results	A-27
4.3.1 Question 1: USA filter.....	A-27
4.3.2 Question 2: Gender	A-27
4.3.3 Question 4: Sales filter	A-28
4.3.4 Question 5: Experience in technical sales.....	A-28
4.3.5 Question 6: University degree	A-29
4.3.6 Question 7: Field of study.....	A-29
4.3.7 Question 8: Highest academic degree	A-30

4.3.8	Question 10: Examples of information channels	A-30
4.3.9	Question 11: Ideal employer.....	A-31
4.3.10	Question 14: Benefits unsupported	A-34
4.3.11	Question 19: Potentials for improvement job website USA	A-35
5.	Combined results of both surveys	A-36
5.1	Information channels	A-36
5.2	Employer attributes.....	A-37
5.3	Benefits	A-38
6.	Project plan.....	A-39

Appendix: List of figures

Figure A1: Job website AP USA.....	A-7
Figure A2: Gender employees (n=1182)	A-14
Figure A3: Technical university degree employees (n=1182).....	A-15
Figure A4: Technical sales employees (n=1182)	A-15
Figure A5: Anton Paar regions	A-16
Figure A6: First hear about Anton Paar.....	A-16
Figure A7: Reasons for application at Anton Paar.....	A-17
Figure A8: Internal information channels.....	A-18
Figure A9: Awareness company values (n=1182).....	A-18
Figure A10: Core company values supported	A-19
Figure A11: Employer recommendation rate (n=1182).....	A-19
Figure A12: USA filter (n=107)	A-27
Figure A13: Gender (n=107)	A-27
Figure A14: Technical sales experience (n=107)	A-28
Figure A15: Technical sales experience in years	A-28
Figure A16: University degree (n=107).....	A-29
Figure A17: Field of study.....	A-29
Figure A18: Highest university degree (n=94)	A-30
Figure A19: Information channels during employer search	A-36
Figure A20: Employer attributes	A-37
Figure A21: Employer benefits	A-38

Appendix: List of tables

Table A1: Communication keyword analysis	A-6
Table A2: Other reasons for application at Anton Paar	A-17
Table A3: Examples for information channels (n=107).....	A-31
Table A4: Ideal employer interest value (n=107).....	A-32
Table A5: Ideal employer social value (n=107)	A-33
Table A6: Ideal employer economic value (n=107)	A-33
Table A7: Ideal employer development value (n=107)	A-34
Table A8: Unsupported benefits (n=107).....	A-35
Table A9: Potentials for improvement of website (n=46)	A-35
Table A10: Project plan	A-43

1. Communication of benefits in job advertisements

1.1 International positions

The following paragraph describes the communicated benefits in an international job advertisement of Anton Paar for an expat position.

“We offer you:

- *An interesting, reliable and long-term workplace in our international company*
- *An innovative company culture that promotes technical excellence guaranteeing us the position of technological leader in the global market*
- *A value-oriented working environment that fosters friendly, supportive cooperation between colleagues and, at the same time, provides room for active involvement and individual responsibility” (Anton Paar GmbH 2018c).*

1.2 Technical sales representatives USA

Excerpts from a technical sales job advertisement can be found below. These excerpts show how AP is currently communicated when searching for technical sales experts in the USA. The first quotation gives an overview of the company and industry that AP works in:

“Would you like to work for the world leader in the measurement of density, concentration, CO₂, and in the field of Rheometry? Do you prefer to mix things up and work with a variety of customers, such as universities, breweries, and Fortune 500 companies? Are you always curious about how things work and enjoy tinkering with sophisticated calibration equipment?” (Anton Paar USA 2018b).

The company Anton Paar is described as follows in the next paragraph

“Anton Paar:

- *Globally headquartered in Graz, Austria, Anton Paar GmbH is owned by the charitable Santner Foundation.*
- *A highly diverse organization, Anton Paar USA has employees from more than 20 different countries, located all over the US and the Caribbean.” (Anton Paar USA 2018b)*

The subsequent quotation highlights the benefits that Anton Paar USA offers.

“Anton Paar USA offers a unique and rewarding position within an innovative and rapidly expanding company and service organization. We offer:

- *A highly competitive salary*
- *Outstanding benefits package*
- *Opportunity for professional growth within the Anton Paar organization*
- *Anton Paar in Motion program: planned activities together and with family/friends to promote a healthy working environment for the well-being of our employees. Past examples are baseball, roller skating, picnics, and 5k walks/runs.*
- *Free fruit for Ashland based employees (a healthier alternative to the vending machine)*
- *Eco Program – incentive program to promote alternative means of transportation (car pool, electric car, cycling)” (Anton Paar USA 2018b).*

1.3 Communication keyword analysis

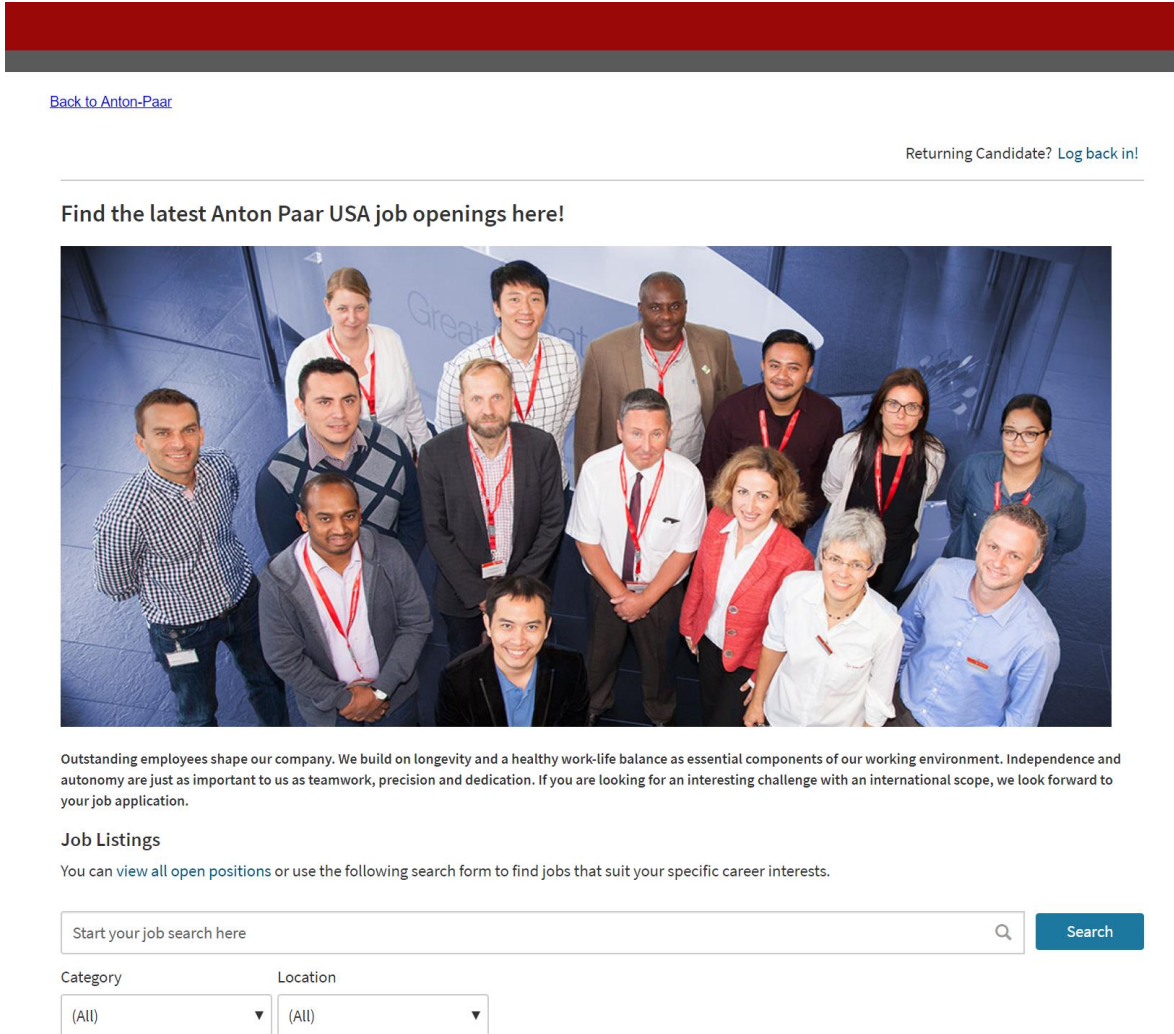
The communication keyword analysis functions as a basis for analysis of the communicated positioning fields. It gives an overview of keywords used in international and US job advertisements.

Communication keywords		
International job advertisements	Job advertisement technical sales expert USA	Job website USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal reward • Interesting tasks • Interesting workplace • Reliable • Long-term • Innovative company culture • Value-oriented work environment • Teamwork • Involvement • Autonomy • Individual responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse • Global • Charitable • World leader • Curious • Development opportunities • Leisure-time activities • Innovative • Expanding company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longevity • Work-life balance • Independence • Autonomy • Teamwork • Precision • Dedication • Interesting tasks • Internationality

Table A1: Communication keyword analysis (based on Anton Paar USA 2018a; Anton Paar GmbH 2018d; Anton Paar USA 2018b)

2. Job website of Anton Paar USA

The following image shows Anton Paar USA's job website.



The screenshot displays the top section of the Anton Paar USA job website. At the top left, there is a blue link that says "Back to Anton-Paar". On the right side, there is a link for "Returning Candidate? Log back in!". Below these links, a heading reads "Find the latest Anton Paar USA job openings here!". This is followed by a large group photograph of approximately 15 diverse employees in professional attire, some wearing red lanyards. Below the photo is a paragraph of text: "Outstanding employees shape our company. We build on longevity and a healthy work-life balance as essential components of our working environment. Independence and autonomy are just as important to us as teamwork, precision and dedication. If you are looking for an interesting challenge with an international scope, we look forward to your job application." Underneath this text is the "Job Listings" section, which includes the instruction: "You can view all open positions or use the following search form to find jobs that suit your specific career interests." The search form consists of a text input field with the placeholder "Start your job search here", a search icon, and a blue "Search" button. Below the input field are two dropdown menus labeled "Category" and "Location", both currently set to "(All)".

Figure A1: Job website AP USA (Anton Paar USA 2018a)

3. Global employee survey

3.1 Questionnaire



Anton Paar Global Employer Attractiveness Survey

Welcome

Dear colleagues,

Anton Paar is growing steadily and we are constantly facing the challenge of hiring and integrating new employees into Anton Paar. We continuously strive to make Anton Paar an attractive and preferred employer in the market but, of course, also for all our current employees.

Ms. Linda Hintsteiner, a colleague from our marketing department, currently covers the topic of employer attractiveness in her master thesis. We now kindly ask for your support in gaining important feedback on how you perceive Anton Paar as an employer and what matters to you when choosing an employer.

We have prepared a short survey, which will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. All responses are treated confidentially and 100 % anonymously. Please complete this survey by February 20, 2018 at the latest.

We highly appreciate your honest feedback. Thank you for being a vital part of Anton Paar!

Maria Santner

*** 1. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

*** 2. How old are you?**

*** 3. Did you obtain a university degree in a technical field?**

- yes
- no

*** 4. Do you work in technical sales at Anton Paar?**

- yes
- no

***5. In which region do you work for Anton Paar? Please choose.**

***6. In which country do you work for Anton Paar in Europe? Please choose.**

***7. In which country do you work for Anton Paar in SAMEA? Please choose.**

***8. In which country do you work for Anton Paar in APAC? Please choose.**

***9. In which country do you work for Anton Paar in the Americas? Please choose.**

***10. Think about when you were last searching for a job. Which of the following information channels did you use to inform yourself about employers or job offers? Multiple answers are possible.**

- Print media, newspapers
- Social media
- Company websites
- Recruiting agents
- Job trade fairs and events
- Job recruiting websites
- Family/friends
- Other (please specify)

10. Please name examples of the information channels you use to inform yourself about employers or job offers.

- Print media, newspapers: _____
- Social media: _____
- Recruiting agents: _____
- Job trade fairs and events: _____
- Job recruiting websites: _____

***12. Where did you first hear about Anton Paar? Please tick.**

- Print media, newspapers
- Social media
- Company website
- Recruiting agent
- Job trade fair and event
- Job recruiting website
- Family/friends
- I do not remember
- Other (please specify)

***13. Why did you apply for a position at Anton Paar? Please tick the three most important reasons.**

- Interesting company
- Interesting products
- Interesting industry
- Good company location
- Interesting tasks
- Internationality of the company
- Unlimited working contract
- Good company reputation
- I do not remember
- Other (please specify)

***14. Think of your ideal work place. How important or unimportant are the following factors to you when choosing an employer? Please tick.**

	not important at all	not so important	neutral	fairly important	very important
Company location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product variety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Corporate social responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business success	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovative spirit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interesting tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenging tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***15. Again, think of your ideal work place. How important or unimportant are the following factors to you when choosing an employer? Please tick.**

	not important at all	not so important	neutral	fairly important	very important
Internationality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team spirit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperative colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal reward	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other financial incentives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skill development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working autonomously	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing knowledge with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. What benefits should a company offer in order to be an attractive employer to you? Please name them.

○ _____

17. Think of your ideal employer. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please tick.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I prefer working for an American company to working for a European company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer working for a family business to working for a listed company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer a consistent work environment to an inconsistent work environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer working in a team to working independently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to work overtime in order to be successful in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing a job makes me feel uncomfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***18. Below you will find a number of benefits. Which of these influence your decision to choose one employer over another? Please tick the top five benefits.**

- Planned activities together with colleagues and family/friends
- Incentive program to promote alternative means of transportation (car pool, electric car, cycling)
- Free fruit
- Employee events
- Profit sharing
- Healthcare benefits
- Retirement savings contributions by employer
- Lunchroom facilities, breakroom
- Mentor program
- Childcare facilities

- Company gym
- Flexible working hours
- Employee incentives
- Employee discounts at chosen shops

***19. Where do you inform yourself about news within the company?**

Please tick the three that you use the most.

- Intranet
- Website
- Extranet
- I ask colleagues
- Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)
- Employee magazine What's AP
- Information screen in the building
- Other (please specify)

***20. Have you heard of Anton Paar's company values?**

- yes
- no
- do not know

21. Please name Anton Paar's core company values

- _____

***22. Below is a list of words. Which of the following represent the core company values of Anton Paar? Please tick. Multiple answers are possible.**

- Social responsibility
- Innovative spirit
- Integrity
- Cost-consciousness
- Curiosity
- High quality
- Personal responsibility
- Ambitiousness

*** 23. Would you recommend Anton Paar as an employer?**

- yes
- no
- do not know

24. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

- _____

Thank you for your participation!

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Question 1: Gender

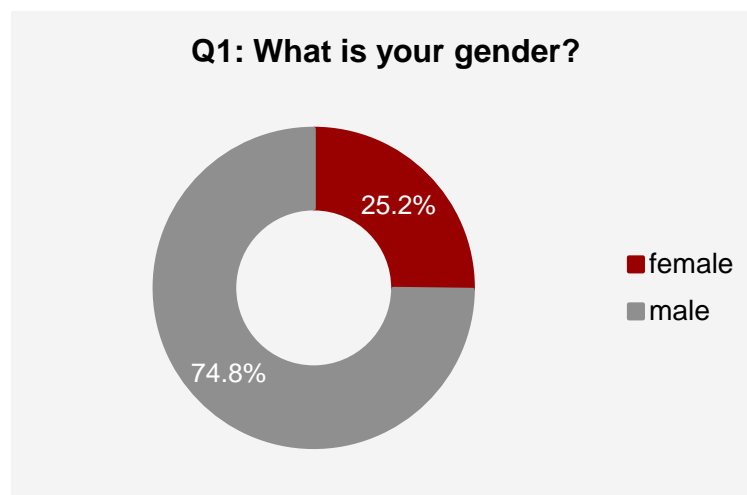


Figure A2: Gender employees (n=1182) (own presentation)

3.2.2 Question 3: Technical university degree

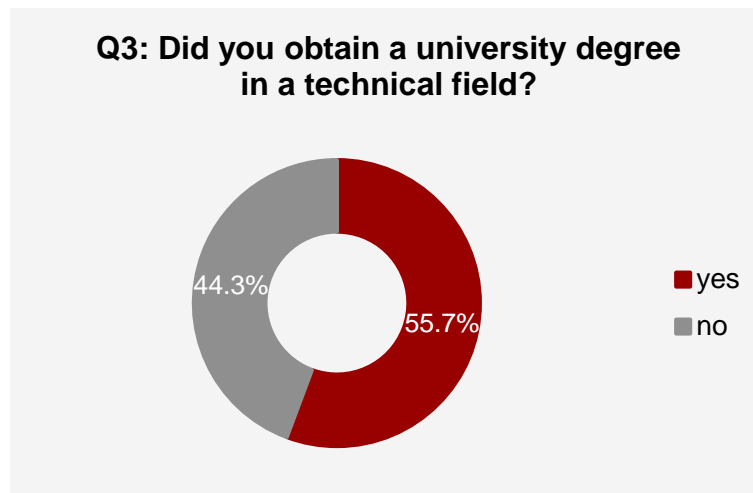


Figure A3: Technical university degree employees (n=1182) (own presentation)

3.2.3 Question 4: Technical sales

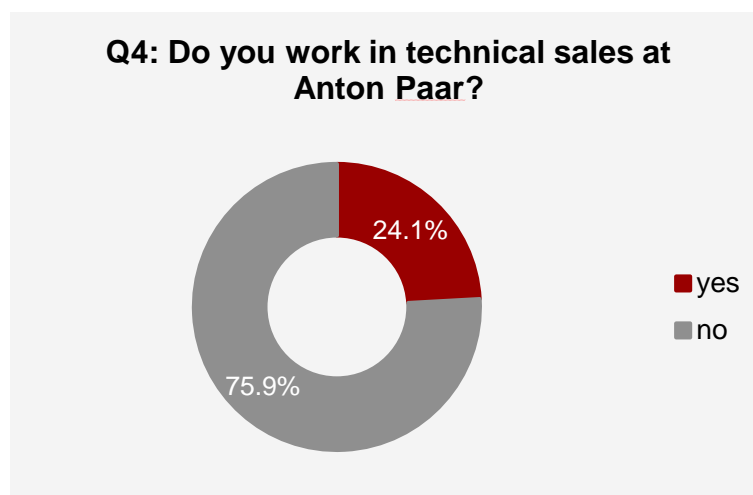


Figure A4: Technical sales employees (n=1182) (own presentation)

3.2.4 Question 5: Sales regions

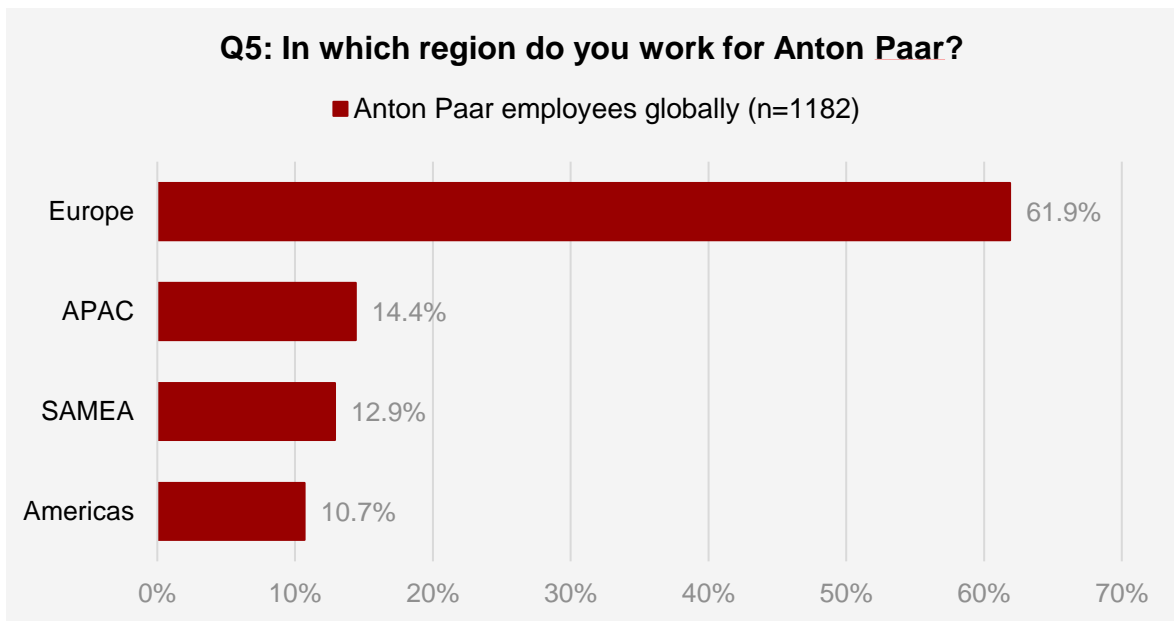


Figure A5: Anton Paar regions (own presentation)

3.2.5 Question 12: First hear about Anton Paar

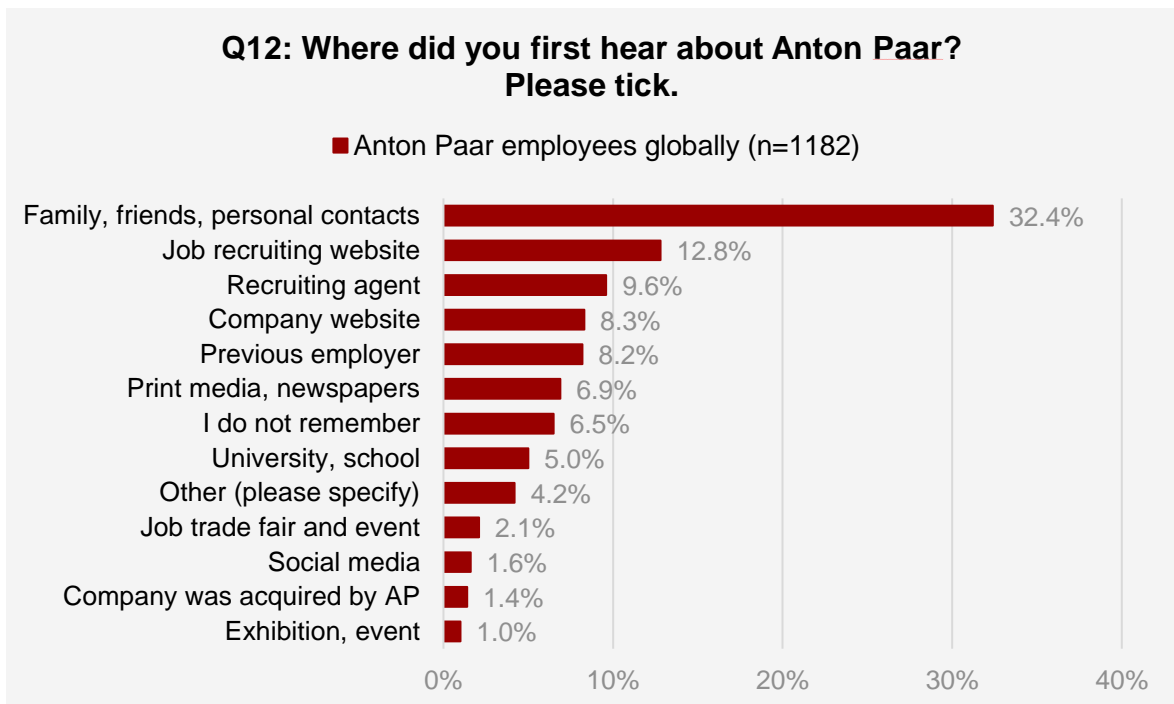


Figure A6: First hear about Anton Paar (own presentation)

3.2.6 Question 13: Reasons for application at Anton Paar

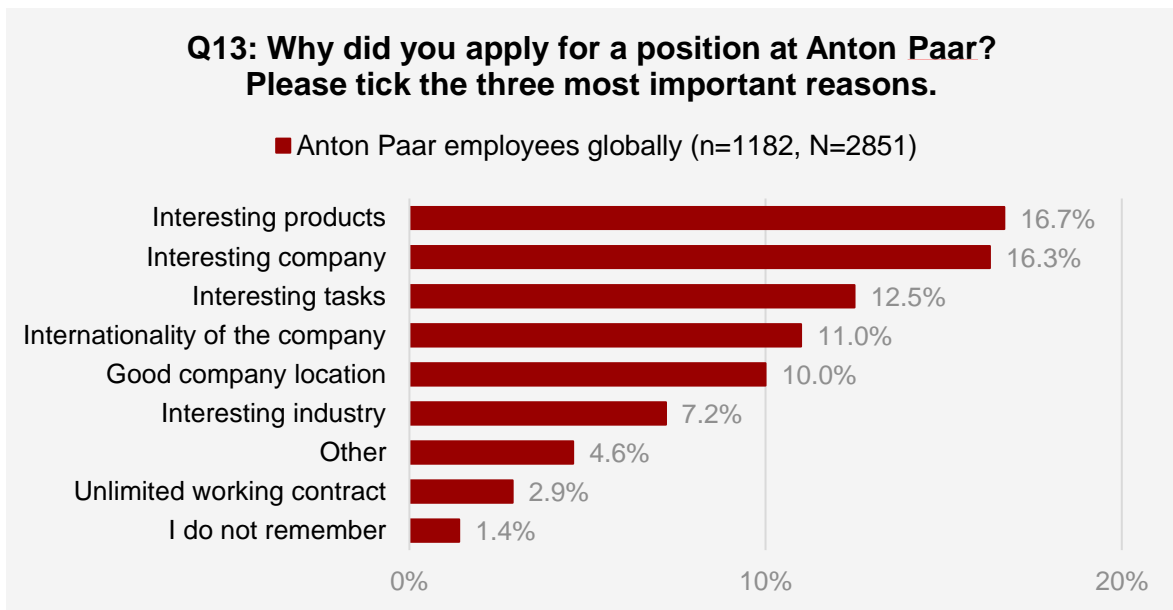


Figure A7: Reasons for application at Anton Paar (own presentation)

The most relevant other reasons for an application at Anton Paar were the following:

Number of indications N	Reason for application	Quotations
29	Development opportunities	<i>"Better job responsibility than previous organization"</i>
27	Match of qualifications with the open position	<i>"Instrumentation company consistent with work experience"</i>
16	Company acquisition, worked for distribution partner	<i>"I was working for another company bought by Anton Paar"</i>
13	Santner Foundation, social responsibility	<i>"Santner Foundation and charitable goals (Offline project...)" "the philanthropy of the Santner Foundation"</i>
8	Headhunted	<i>"Anton Paar contacted me."</i>
8	Personal contacts	<i>"Existing contacts with people working at APIT"</i>
6	Work-life balance	<i>"Work Life Balance"</i>
5	Benefits	<i>"Company benefits"</i>
5	Company growth	<i>"Immense yearly growth"</i>
119		

Table A2: Other reasons for application at Anton Paar (own presentation)

3.2.7 Question 19: Internal information channels

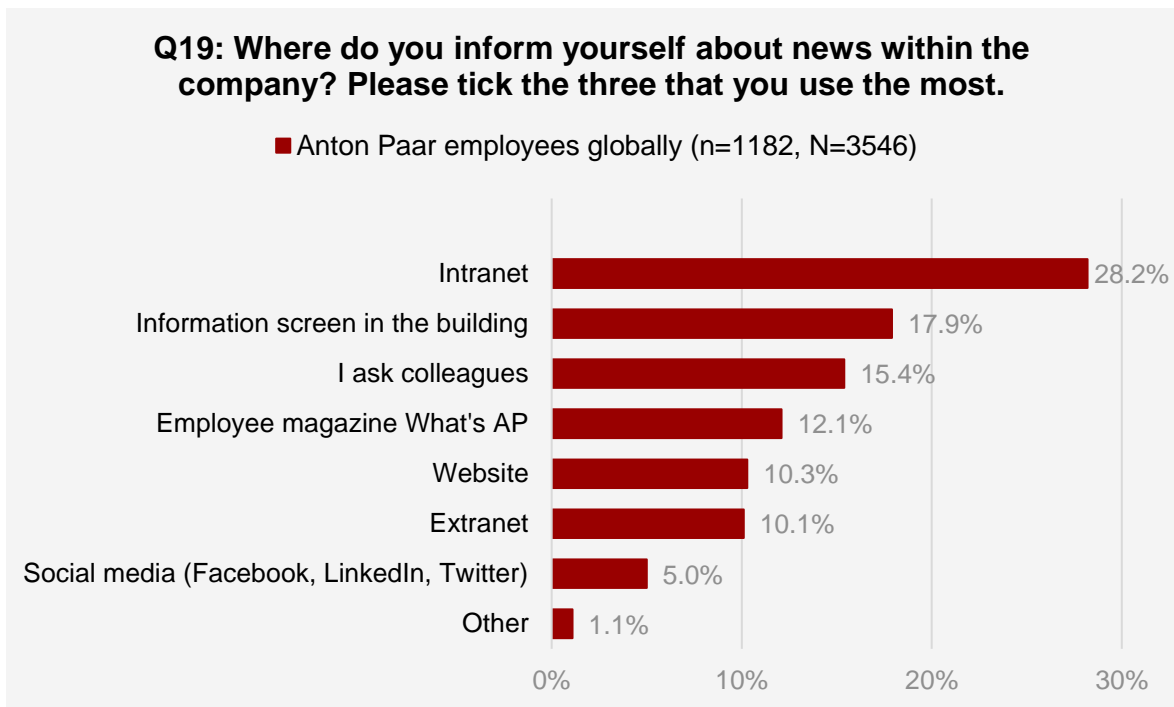


Figure A8: Internal information channels (own presentation)

3.2.8 Question 20: Awareness company values

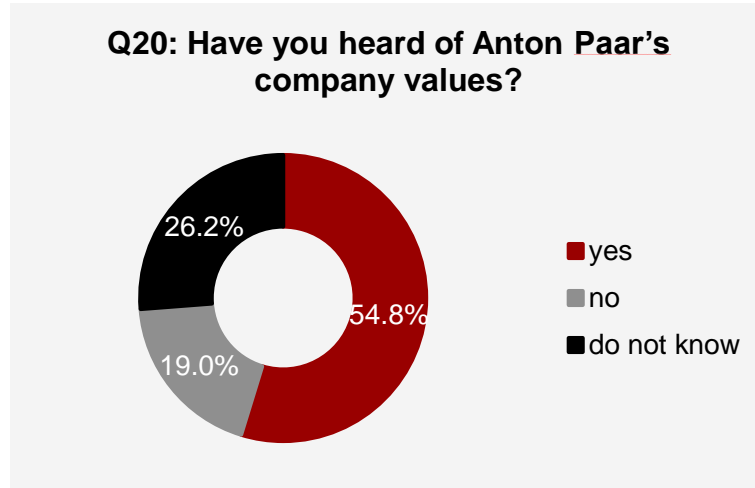


Figure A9: Awareness company values (n=1182) (own presentation)

3.2.9 Question 22: Company values and principles supported

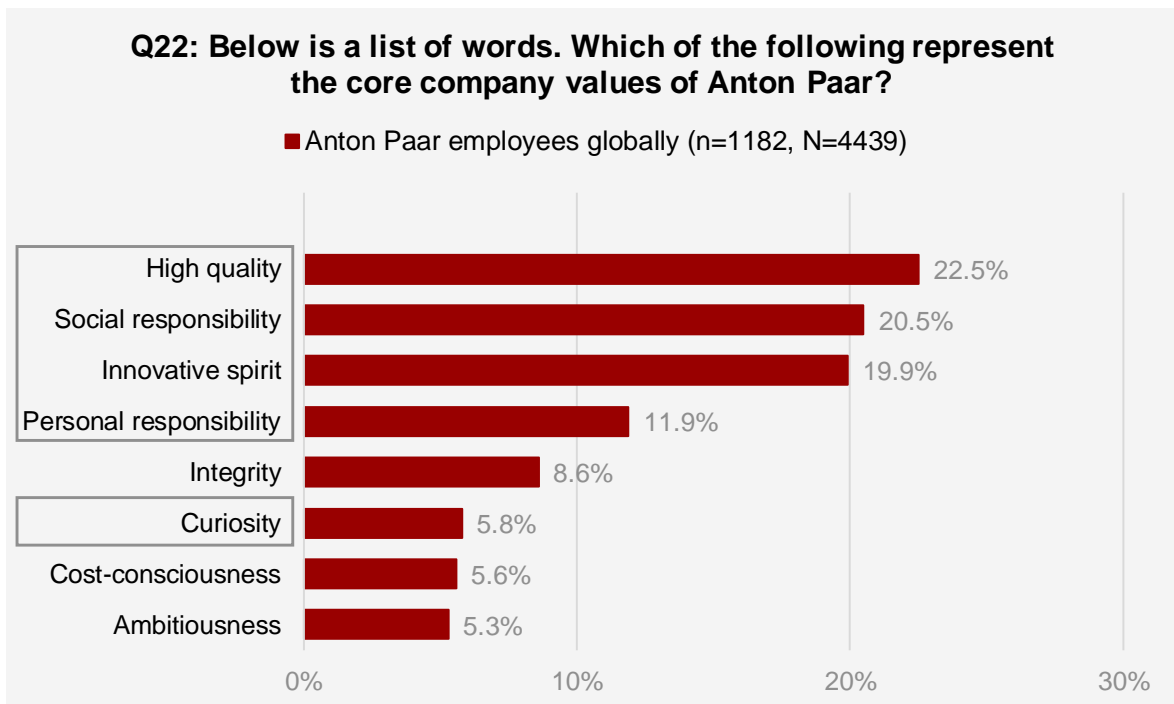


Figure A10: Core company values supported (own presentation)

The actual company values and principles of Anton Paar are framed.

3.2.10 Question 23: Recommendation rate

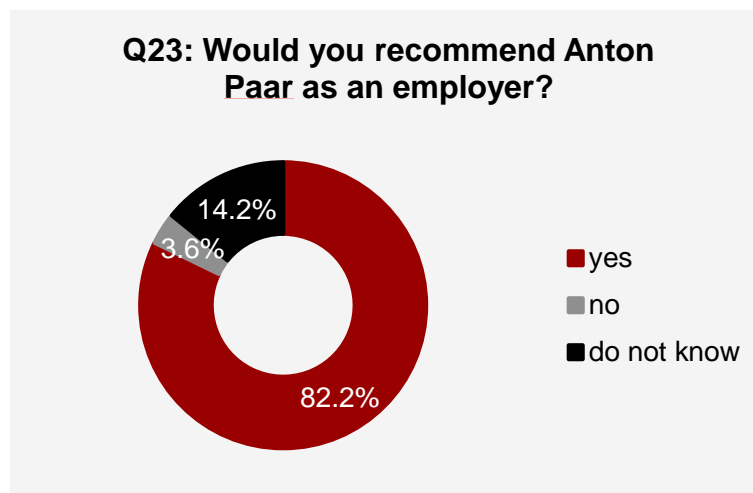


Figure A11: Employer recommendation rate (n=1182) (own presentation)

4. Technical sales experts USA survey

4.1 Questionnaire



Employer expectations of technical sales experts in the United States

Welcome

My name is Linda Hintsteiner and I am a student of International Marketing at the University of Applied Sciences CAMPUS 02 in Graz, Austria. I am conducting this survey in the course of my master thesis in cooperation with the measurement instruments manufacturing company Anton Paar.

I would like to find out how you choose your preferred employer. I know how precious your time is which is why I made sure that this survey will only take a maximum of 10 minutes of your time. It would be great, if you could help me!

At the end of the survey, you will have the option to take part in a sweepstakes for an Amazon gift card worth \$100!

Your responses to this assessment are strictly confidential, individual responses are not shared.

I am grateful for your participation. Thank you for helping me.

Kind regards,

Linda Hintsteiner

If you would like to receive more information, do not hesitate to contact me:

linda.hintsteiner@edu.campus02.at. You can also reach me via LinkedIn on:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindahintsteiner/>.

* 1. Do you live in the United States?

- yes
- no

*** 2. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

*** 3. How old are you?**

*** 4. Have you worked in technical sales?(sales of a technical product or technical equipment)**

- yes
- no

*** 5. How long have you been in technical sales?**

- less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- more than 20 years

*** 6. Did you obtain a university degree?**

- yes
- no

***7. What did you study? Multiple answers are possible.**

- Chemical Engineering or Chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Biological Engineering or Biological Sciences
- Biology
- Biomedical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Materials Science
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Business Administration or Business
- Marketing

Other (please specify)

*** 8. What is your highest academic degree?**

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- PhD
- Other (please specify)

***9. Think about when you were last searching for a job. Which of the following information channels did you use to inform yourself about employers or job offers? Multiple answers are possible.**

- Print media, newspapers
- Social media
- Company websites
- Recruiting agents
- Job trade fairs and events
- Job recruiting websites
- Family/friends
- Other (please specify)

10. Please name examples of the information channels you use to inform yourself about employers or job offers.

- Print media, newspapers: _____
- Social media: _____
- Recruiting agents: _____
- Job trade fairs and events: _____
- Job recruiting websites: _____

***11. Please describe your ideal employer in three words. Please enter one word per line.**

- _____
- _____
- _____

***12. Think of your ideal work place. How important or unimportant are the following factors for you when choosing an employer? Please tick.**

	not important at all	not so important	neutral	fairly important	very important
Company location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product variety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Corporate social responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business success	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovative spirit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interesting tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenging tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***13. Again, think of your ideal work place. How important or unimportant are the following factors for you when choosing an employer? Please tick.**

	not important at all	not so important	neutral	fairly important	very important
Internationality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team spirit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooperative colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal reward	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other financial incentives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skill development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working autonomously	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing knowledge with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. What benefits should a company offer in order to be an attractive employer to you? Please name them.

15. Think of your ideal employer. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please tick.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I prefer working for an American company to working for a European company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer working for a family business to working for a listed company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer a consistent work environment to an inconsistent work environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer working in a team to working independently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to work overtime in order to be successful in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing a job makes me feel uncomfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***16. Below you will find a number of benefits. Which of these influence your decision to choose one employer over another? Please tick the top five benefits.**

- Planned activities together with colleagues and family/friends
- Incentive program to promote alternative means of transportation (car pool, electric car, cycling)
- Free fruit
- Employee events
- Profit sharing
- Healthcare benefits
- Retirement savings contributions by employer
- Lunchroom facilities, breakroom
- Mentor program
- Childcare facilities
- Company gym
- Flexible working hours

- Employee incentives
- Employee discounts at chosen shops

***17. Based on your first impression, how do you like the following website?**

Please rate the website. Five stars = best rating



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Returning Candidate? [Log back in!](#)

Find the latest Anton Paar USA job openings here!



Outstanding employees shape our company. We build on longevity and a healthy work-life balance as essential components of our working environment. Independence and autonomy are just as important to us as teamwork, precision and dedication. If you are looking for an interesting challenge with an international scope, we look forward to your job application.

Job Listings

You can view [all open positions](#) or use the following search form to find jobs that suit your specific career interests.

Start your job search here

Category Location

***18. How do you like the design of the website?**

Please rate the design. Five stars = best rating



19. What could be improved regarding the website's design?

***20. How do you like the photo? Five stars = best rating**



***21. Imagine you are searching for a job and browsing a company job website.**

You inform yourself about the company and read the text below. How do you like the below text? Five stars = best rating



Outstanding employees shape our company. We build on longevity and a healthy work-life balance as essential components of our working environment. Independence and autonomy are just as important to us as teamwork, precision and dedication. If you are looking for an interesting challenge with an international scope, we look forward to your job application.

*** 22. Have you heard of the company Anton Paar before this survey?**

- yes
- no
- do not know

Thank you for your participation!

Participate in the sweepstakes to win an Amazon gift card. The winner is chosen randomly and is going to be contacted via email at the latest by the end of April.

***23. Would you like to participate in the sweepstakes?**

- yes
- no

24. Please enter your email address so that you are eligible to take part in the sweepstakes. The data is only going to be used to contact the winner of the sweepstakes. The winner is chosen randomly among all participants and is going to be contacted via email.

- Email: _____

4.3 Results

The results in this chapter include findings that were not pointed out in the practical part of this thesis.

4.3.1 Question 1: USA filter

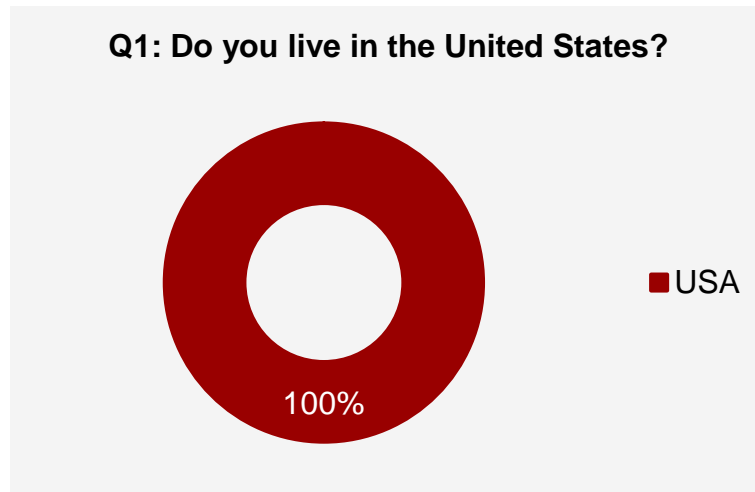


Figure A12: USA filter (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.2 Question 2: Gender

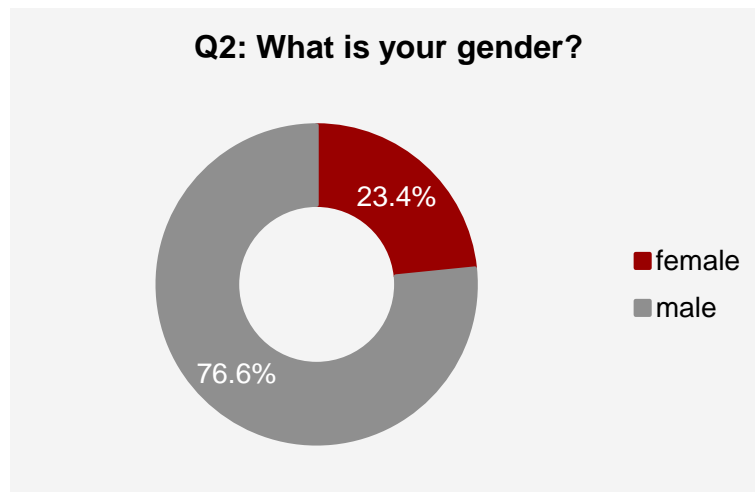


Figure A13: Gender (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.3 Question 4: Sales filter

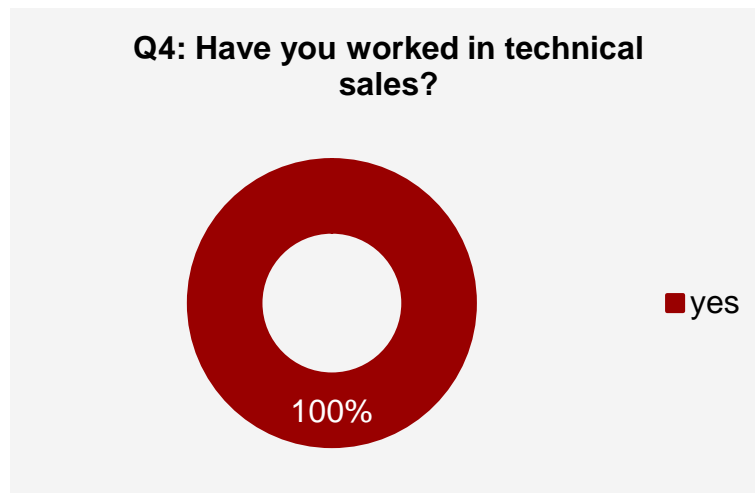


Figure A14: Technical sales experience (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.4 Question 5: Experience in technical sales

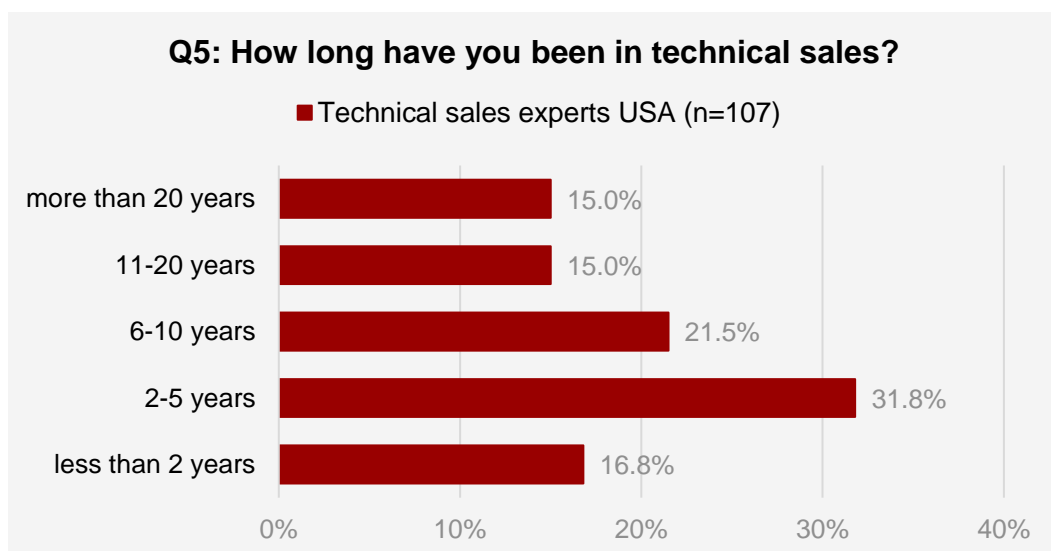


Figure A15: Technical sales experience in years (own presentation)

4.3.5 Question 6: University degree

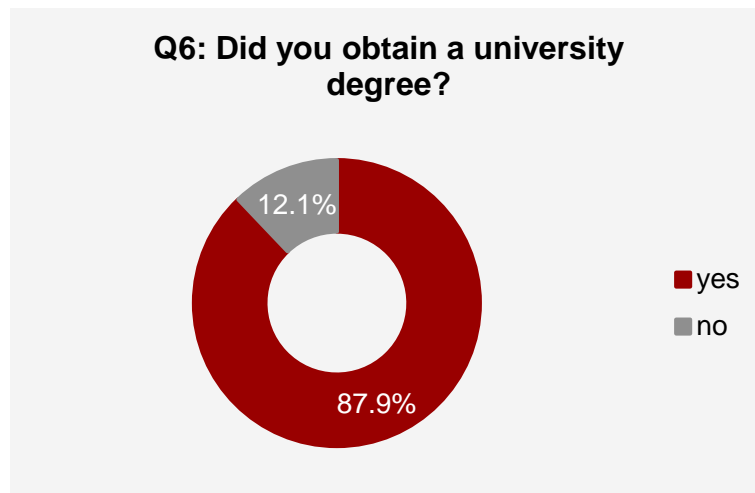


Figure A16: University degree (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.6 Question 7: Field of study

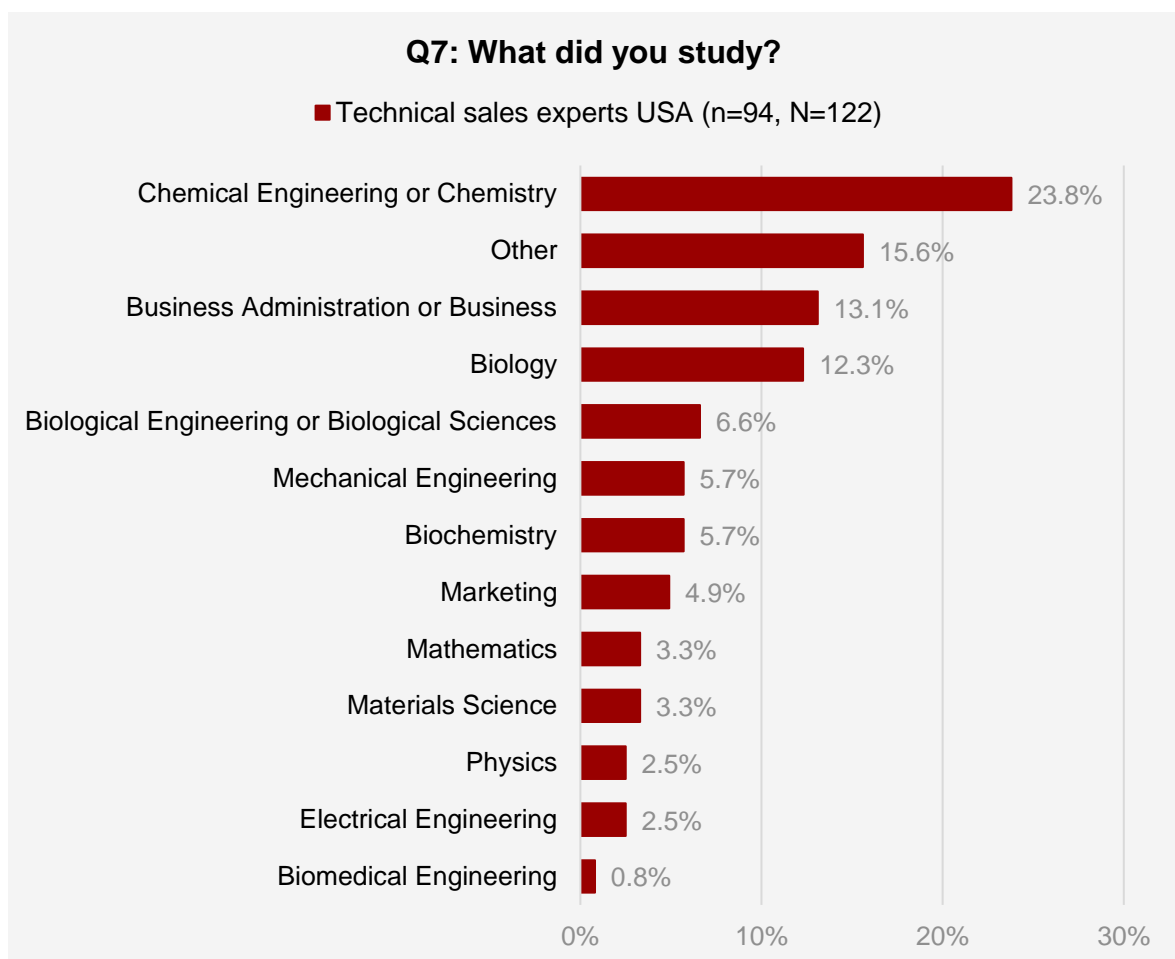


Figure A17: Field of study (own presentation)

4.3.7 Question 8: Highest academic degree

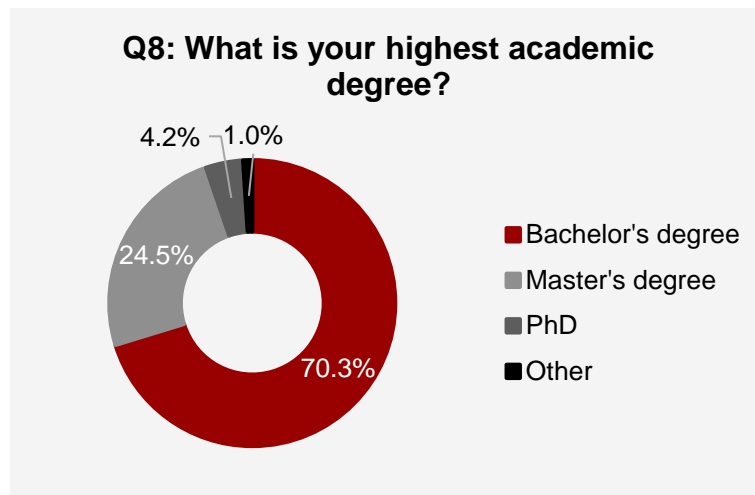


Figure A18: Highest university degree (n=94) (own presentation)

4.3.8 Question 10: Examples of information channels

Q10: Please name examples of the information channels you use to inform yourself about employers or job offers.

The following table displays the mentioned keywords and examples for different information channels during employer search of the target group of technical sales experts in the United States.

Information channel	Number of indications N	Keywords
Job recruiting websites	29	Indeed
	15	LinkedIn
	15	Monster
	7	Glassdoor
	5	Industry-specific job portals
	4	Career builder
	1	Google
	1	Joblistify
	1	Ladders
Job trade fairs and events	5	University career fair
Print media, newspapers	2	WSJ (Wall Street Journal)
	1	Science mag, nature
	1	Emballage digest
	1	Local newspaper
	1	Trade magazines
	1	Local newspapers-articles detailing companies expanding and growing

	1	San Jose Mercury News
Recruiting agents	18	LinkedIn
	17	Individual, private recruiter
	3	Personal contacts
	2	MRI
	2	Monster
	2	Life search technologies
	2	Ed's job list
	1	The Recruiting Group
	1	MB Analytics
	1	Indeed
	1	Career builder
	1	Apex Life Sciences
	1	Aerotek
Social media	48	LinkedIn
	5	Facebook
	3	Glassdoor
	2	Indeed
	1	Twitter

Table A3: Examples for information channels (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.9 Question 11: Ideal employer

Q 11: Please describe your ideal employer in three words. Please enter one word per line.

The keywords mentioned in the course of this question are clustered according to the five value categories for employer attractiveness by Berthon et al. (chapter 3.2.2). The keywords in bold summarise the main categories mentioned by the survey participants. The survey participants did not mention keywords that are related to the category of “application value”.

Interest value	
Number of indications N	Keywords
16	Progressive
2	Progressive
1	Commitment
1	Entrepreneurial
1	Current
1	Proactive
1	Opportunist
1	Adaptive
1	Modern

1	Forward-thinking
1	Fast-paced
1	Open-minded
1	Prepared
1	Inspiring
1	Positive
1	Ambitious
12	High quality products
10	Innovative
10	Reputable
10	Successful
4	Success
1	Knowledgeable
1	Expertise
1	Profitable
1	Well
1	Marketable
1	Lucrative
8	Market leading
7	Growing
6	Stable
4	Challenging
4	Small company size
3	Aggressive
3	International
2	Realistic
1	Motivational
96	

Table A4: Ideal employer interest value (n=107) (own presentation)

Social value	
Number of indications N	Keywords
16	Decent
1	Responsible
1	Accountable
1	Conscious
1	Diligent
1	Humble
1	Knowledgeable
1	Reasonable
1	Good-willed
1	Attitude
1	Pedigree
1	Just
1	Social responsibility
1	Academic
1	Decent
1	Purpose
1	Professional

14	Fair
14	Honest
13	Collaborative
12	Supportive
10	Flexible
8	Culture
8	Ethical
8	Integral
8	Understanding
7	Trusting
6	Loyal
6	Transparent
5	Dynamic
4	Respectful
3	Diverse
3	Family-oriented
146	

Table A5: Ideal employer social value (n=107) (own presentation)

Economic value	
Number of indications N	Keywords
9	Fair salary and benefits
1	Retirement
1	Giving
1	Earning
1	Salary
1	Advancement opportunities and bonuses based on individual (or team) performance
1	generous
1	Good benefits
1	No salary gap
1	Healthcare, 401k and bonus package
9	

Table A6: Ideal employer economic value (n=107) (own presentation)

Development value	
Number of indications N	Keywords
10	Development opportunities
3	Growth opportunities
1	Potential
1	Possibility to evolve
1	Training
1	Opportunist
1	Advancement opportunities and bonuses based on individual (or team) performance

1	Mentoring
1	Upward mobility options
6	Encourages independence
1	Offers me autonomy to self-manage
1	Provides freedom
1	Independence
1	Autonomy
1	Independence encouraged
1	Freedom
16	

Table A7: Ideal employer development value (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.10 Question 14: Benefits unsupported

Q14: What benefits should a company offer in order to be an attractive employer to you? Please name them.

Survey participants were asked to name their preferred employer benefits in an unsupported question. The individual benefits and the number of indications as well as suitable quotes are displayed in the following table. The three key benefits are health insurance, retirement savings and monetary compensation.

Number of indications N	Benefits	Quotations
42	Health insurance	<i>"insurance coverage beyond state minimums"</i> <i>"Health, Dental, Vision"</i> <i>"Health care at competitive rates"</i>
40	Retirement savings, 401k	<i>"Matching 401k 401k is VERY important to me"</i> <i>"401K or some sort of retirement plan"</i>
30	Financial incentives and salary	<i>"Profit sharing and commission for sales"</i> <i>"Competitive salary, bonus structure"</i> <i>"Potential bonuses contingent upon performance."</i> <i>"Base + Commission"</i>
23	Development and training programme	<i>"Ability to further your education and/or certifications"</i> <i>"Clearly defined & communicated personal career path (short-term & long-term)."</i> <i>"Great training program"</i> <i>"Career path with increasing earnings and responsibility"</i>
19	Paid time off, vacation plan	<i>"3 weeks minimum vacation"</i> <i>"reasonable amount of PTO"</i>
16	Other	<i>"sick days, work from home or the office"</i> <i>"family leave"</i> <i>"fair pay for women"</i> <i>"tax saving and travelling fare"</i> <i>"expense reimbursement"</i>
12	Company car	<i>"car allowance"</i>

8	Flexible work environment	<i>"freedom to work wherever I want"</i> <i>"Autonomous environment"</i>
7	Stock options	<i>"access to corporate assets"</i>
6	Insurance	<i>"disability"</i>
5	Flexible working hours	<i>"flexible schedule"</i>
3	Life insurance	
3	Cell phone	
1	No all-in-contracts	
215		

Table A8: Unsupported benefits (n=107) (own presentation)

4.3.11 Question 19: Potentials for improvement job website USA

Q19: What could be improved regarding the website's design?

The following table names potentials for improvement for the company website mentioned by the survey participants. Quotes were selected for each potential for improvement.

Number of indications N	Potential for improvement	Quotations
13	Different photo	<i>"less "stock photo"."</i> <i>"It could look more modern. I personally don't like corporate stock photos."</i> <i>"Diversity in the staff photo"</i> <i>"The picture is boring. Sorry."</i> <i>"Show something the company does. This could be a picture of the kitchen staff at Cracker Barrel"</i>
11	Different layout and features	<i>"User Interface, More options on the website"</i> <i>"important functions up top, not below the picture of the employees, all wearing their company lanyard."</i> <i>"make fonts larger better graphics, easier to navigate menu"</i> <i>"text should be larger"</i>
10	More appealing overall impression	<i>"Looks boring. "</i> <i>"It looks and feels INCREDIBLY corporate."</i> <i>"Visual appeal. More interactive and absorbing"</i>
9	Less generic	<i>"It is professional but very generic."</i>
8	Different information	<i>"There is nothing about the companies [sic!] culture, goals, etc."</i> <i>"Needs info on why the company exists – vision"</i>
8	Clearer information	<i>"The text is meaningless marketing fluff. Say something real"</i> <i>"Company statement is not easy to find"</i> <i>"I do not understand what this company is."</i>
3	Different colours	<i>„Better graphics and color“</i>
62		

Table A9: Potentials for improvement of website (n=46) (own presentation)

5. Combined results of both surveys

5.1 Information channels

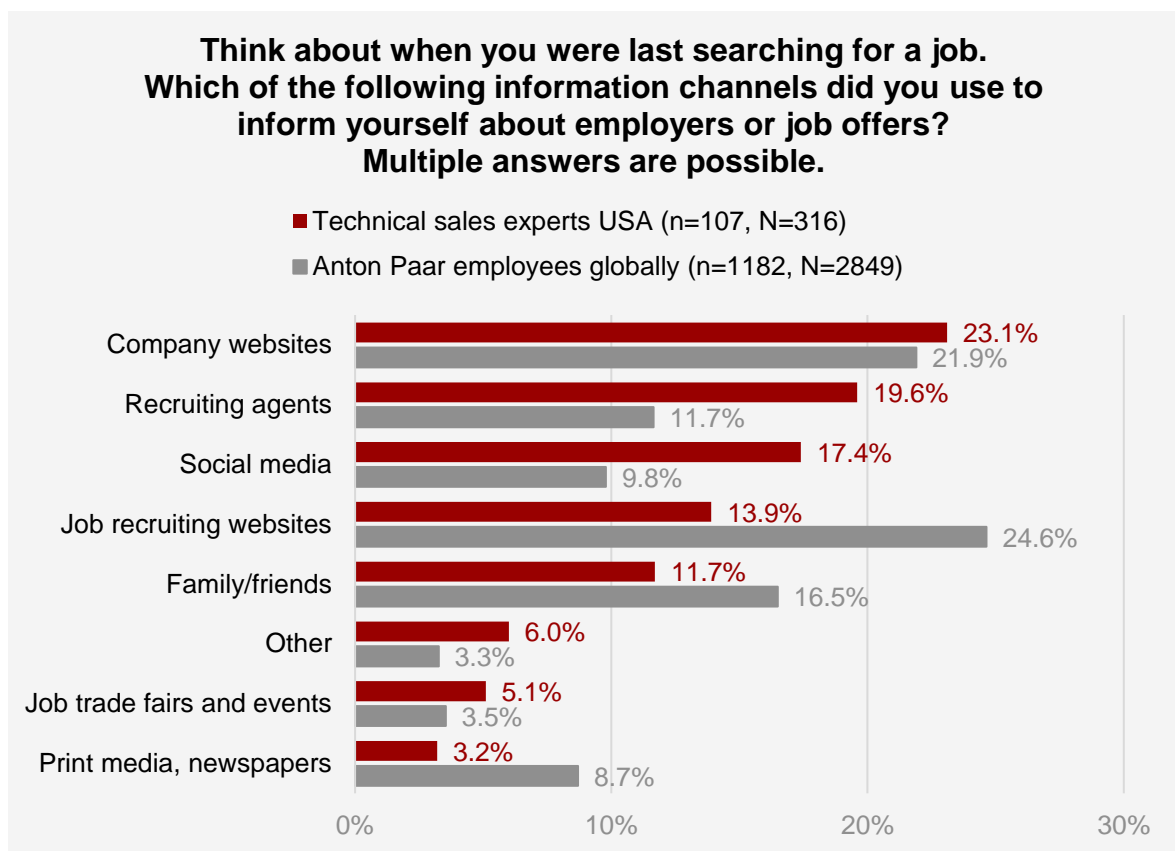


Figure A19: Information channels during employer search (own presentation)

5.2 Employer attributes

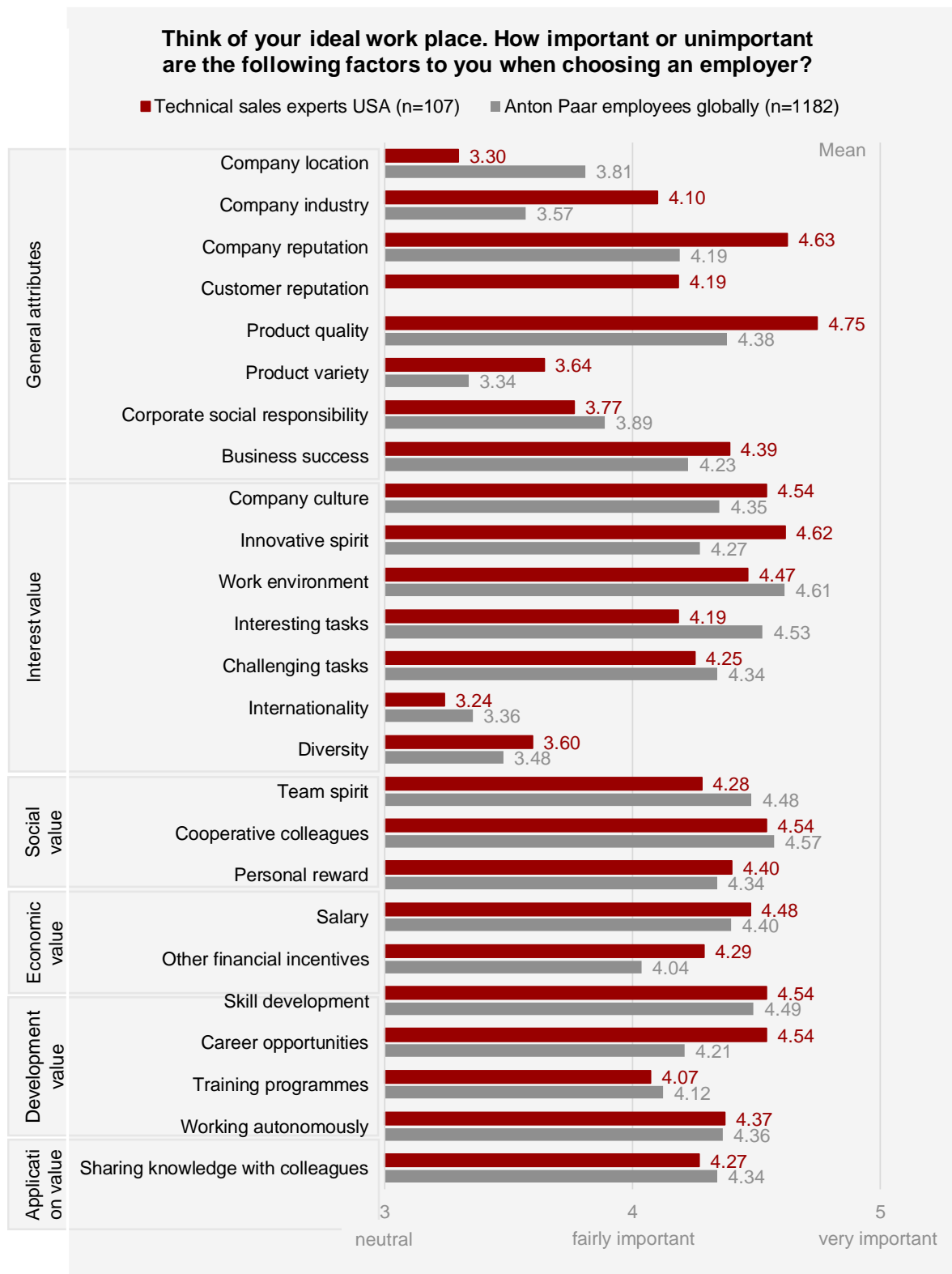


Figure A20: Employer attributes (own presentation)

5.3 Benefits

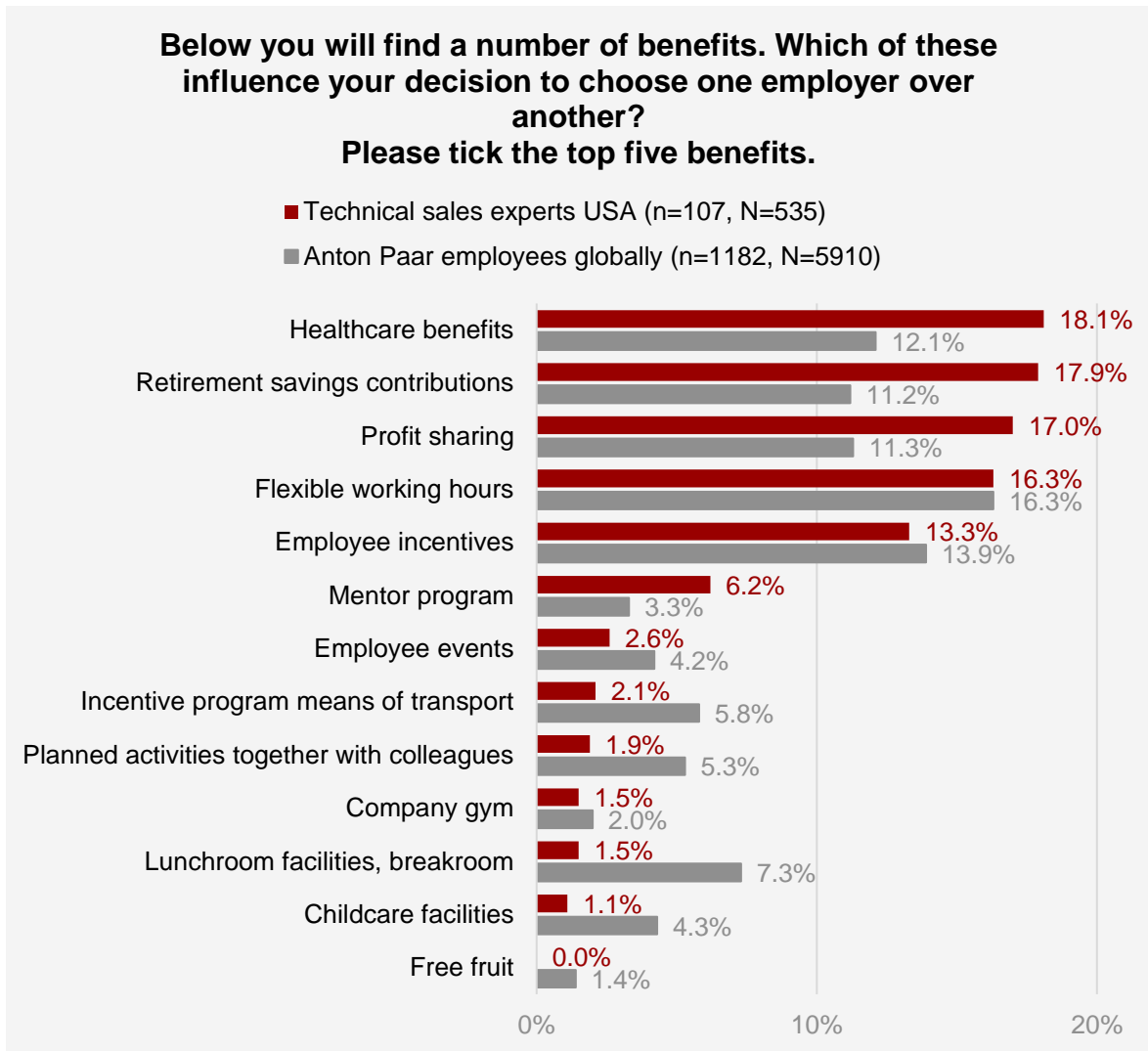


Figure A21: Employer benefits (own presentation)

6. Project plan

Project		Master thesis							
Title		Development of an employer brand positioning concept for the Anton Paar Group with a focus on technical sales experts, applied to the United States							
Date		14/05/2018							
MT: Master thesis, MS: Master Seminar, MM: Master Thesis Mentor, CM: Company Mentor, C: Company, m: Milestone, h: Holiday, p: Phase									
No.		Tasks/Phases	Dependencies	Start (date)	Ends after (days)	End (date)	Status [0 to 100%]	Milestone	Involved Parties besides student
1	p	Phase 1: Introduction to the topic		01/07/2017	125	02/11/2017			
1.1	m	Announcement MM						18/09/2017	
1.2		General literature research		01/07/2017	168	15/12/2017	100%		
1.3		First draft initial situation	1.2	22/09/2017	9	30/09/2017	100%		
1.4		First draft challenge	1.2, 1.3	22/09/2017	9	30/09/2017	100%		
1.5		Rework objectives	1.2, 1.3, 1.4	22/09/2017	10	01/10/2017	100%		
1.6		Prepare questions meeting	1.2	01/10/2017	5	05/10/2017	100%		
1.7	m	1st MM Meeting	1.1					06/10/2017	MM
1.8		Write company presentation	1.1	07/10/2017	4	10/10/2017	100%		
1.9		Work out project plan	1.1	06/10/2017	5	10/10/2017	100%		
1.10		Further literature review	1.1	07/10/2017	6	12/10/2017	100%		
1.11		Agenda Kick-off-Meeting	1.1	11/10/2017	1	11/10/2017	100%		
1.12	m	Kick-off-Meeting	1.1, 1.2					12/10/2017	MM, CM
1.13		Adapt initial situation 2	1.3	13/10/2017	1	13/10/2017	100%		
1.14		Adapt challenge	1.7, 1.12, 1.13	13/10/2017	1	13/10/2017	100%		
1.15		Adapt objectives	1.7, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14	13/10/2017	2	14/10/2017	100%		
1.16		Adapt MT title	1.7, 1.12	13/10/2017	2	14/10/2017	100%		
1.17		Adapt frame of reference	1.12-1.16	14/10/2017	181	12/04/2018	100%		
1.18		Adapt table of contents	1.12-1.17	14/10/2017	181	12/04/2018	100%		
1.19		Create presentation	1.12-1.18	14/10/2017	5	18/10/2017	100%		
1.20		Prepare literature list (used, not used)	1.2, 1.18	14/10/2017	4	17/10/2017	100%		
1.21	m	2nd MM Meeting	1.13-1.19					16/10/2017	MM
1.22		Rework MS1 presentation	1.21	16/10/2017	4	19/10/2017	100%		
1.23		Adaptations according to 2nd MM Meeting	1.21	16/10/2017	4	19/10/2017	100%		
1.24	m	Submission Docs MS1	1.13-1.23					20/10/2017	MM
1.25		Further literature research	1.18	21/10/2017	56	15/12/2017	100%		
1.26		Preparation for the presentation	1.18, 1.23	23/10/2017	4	26/10/2017	100%		
1.27	m	MS 1	1.24					27/10/2017	MM
1.28		Reflection feedback MS 1 & changes	1.27	28/10/2017	6	02/11/2017	100%		
2	p	Phase 2: Theoretical section		03/11/2017	43	15/12/2017			
2.1	m	3rd MM Meeting	1.28					02/11/2017	MM
2.2		Changes due to 3rd MM Meeting	2.1	02/11/2017	2	03/11/2017	100%		
2.3		Further literature research chapter 2	1.2	03/11/2017	30	02/12/2017	100%		
2.4		Writing chapter 2.1	2.3	03/11/2017	2	04/11/2017	100%		
2.5		Writing chapter 2.2	2.3	04/11/2017	4	07/11/2017	100%		
2.6		Writing chapter 2.3	2.3	04/11/2017	4	07/11/2017	100%		
2.7		Prepare MT agreement and send to involved parties		06/11/2017	1	06/11/2017	100%		
2.8		Writing chapter 2.3	2.3	08/11/2017	4	11/11/2017	100%		
2.11	m	Review chapter 2 finished	2.3-2.10					12/11/2017	(MM)
2.12		Further literature research chapter 3	1.2	12/11/2017	34	15/12/2017	100%		
2.13		Writing chapter 3.1	2.12	12/11/2017	1	12/11/2017	100%		
2.14		Writing chapter 3.2, 3.3, 3.4	2.12	13/11/2017	3	15/11/2017	100%		
2.15	m	MT Agreement submitted	2.7					16/11/2017	
2.16	m	Review chapter 3 finished	2.12-2.14					16/11/2017	(MM)
2.17		Further literature research chapter 4	1.2	17/11/2017	29	15/12/2017	100%		
2.18		Writing chapter 4.1, 4.2	2.18	18/11/2017	1	18/11/2017	100%		
2.19		Writing chapter 4.3, 4.4	2.18	19/11/2017	3	21/11/2017	100%		
2.20		Writing chapter 4.5, 4.6	2.18	22/11/2017	4	25/11/2017	100%		
2.21	m	Review chapter 4 finished	2.17-2.20					26/11/2017	
2.22	m	4th MM Meeting	2.2-2.20					27/11/2017	MM

2.23		Changes due to 4th MM Meeting	2.22	27/11/2017	2	28/11/2017	100%		
2.24		Further literature research chapter 5	1.2	28/11/2017	18	15/12/2017	100%		
2.25		Writing chapter 5.1	2.24	28/11/2017	3	30/11/2017	100%		
2.26		Writing chapter 5.2	2.24	30/11/2017	3	02/12/2017	100%		
2.27		Writing chapter 5.3	2.24	03/12/2017	3	05/12/2017	100%		
2.28		Writing chapter 5.4	2.24	04/12/2017	2	05/12/2017	100%		
2.29	m	Review chapter 5 finished	2.23-2.28					10/12/2017	MM
2.30		Proof-reading theoretical part, changes	2.1-2.29	03/11/2017	42	14/12/2017	100%		
2.31	h	Time reserve		13/12/2017	3	15/12/2017	100%		
2.32	m	Theoretical part finished						15/12/2017	
3	p	Phase 3: Analysis & primary market research design development		16/12/2017	46	30/01/2018			
3.1		Identification of information sources within Anton Paar		16/12/2017	7	22/12/2017	100%		
3.2		Identification of distribution sources for external survey		16/12/2017	30	14/01/2018	100%		
3.3	m	First contact CM and AP USA	3.1					17/12/2017	CM, Renate Eberl
3.4		Preparation external analysis	3.1-3.2	01/11/2017	14	14/11/2017	100%		
3.5		External analysis USA	2.22	15/11/2017	39	23/12/2017	100%		
3.6		Target market USA labour market analysis	2.22	15/11/2017	39	23/12/2017	100%		
3.7		Target market USA cultural analysis	2.22	15/11/2017	10	24/11/2017	100%		
3.8		Email questions to CM and AP USA	2.22	29/11/2017	1	29/11/2017	100%		CM, Chuck Hudgins
3.9	m	External analysis finished	3.5-3.8					23/12/2017	CM
3.10		Preparation internal analysis	3.1	15/11/2017	5	19/11/2017	100%		
3.11		Internal analysis	2.22	01/12/2017	31	31/12/2017	100%		
3.12		International HRM strategy analysis	2.22	01/12/2017	15	15/12/2017	100%		CM, Petra Leitner
3.13		Analysis of core company values	2.22	01/12/2017	5	05/12/2017	100%		CM, Petra Leitner
3.14		Existing internal employer branding measures analysis	2.22	15/12/2017	15	29/12/2017	100%		CM, Petra Leitner
3.15		Existing external employer branding measures analysis	2.22	20/12/2017	12	31/12/2017	100%		CM, Petra Leitner
3.16	m	Internal analysis finished	3.11-3.15					31/12/2017	
3.17		Target group analysis	2.22	01/12/2017	30	30/12/2017	100%		
3.18		Target group analysis technical sales experts	2.22	01/12/2017	30	30/12/2017	100%		
3.19	m	Target group analysis finished						31/12/2017	
3.20	m	Meeting CM analysis results	3.4-3.19					15/01/2017	CM
3.21		Adding relevant aspects	3.20	15/01/2018	15	29/01/2018	100%		
3.22	m	Analysis finished	3.1-3.21					30/01/2017	
3.23		First draft survey design primary market research	3.5-3.18	16/12/2017	2	17/12/2017	100%		
3.24		Preparation company meeting	3.23	18/12/2017	1	18/12/2017	100%		CM
3.25	m	Company meeting before absence Ms. Landlinger						19/12/2017	CM
3.26	m	MM meeting						21/12/2017	MM
3.27		Changes due to company meeting	3.25	19/12/2017	2	20/12/2017	100%		
3.28		Edit external analysis sub-chapter headline in Word Document	3.26	20/12/2017	3	22/12/2017	100%		
3.29		Edit internal analysis sub-chapter headline in Word Document	3.26	21/12/2017	3	23/12/2017	100%		
3.30	h	Holidays Ms. Pukl		24/12/2017	9	01/01/2018	100%		MM
3.31	h	Christmas		24/12/2017	3	26/12/2017	100%		
3.32		Second draft survey design	3.26	27/12/2017	3	29/12/2017	100%		
3.33		Send draft survey design to MM	3.32	30/12/2017	2	31/12/2017	100%		
3.34	h	New Year's Eve		31/12/2017	2	01/01/2018	100%		
3.35		Project plan adaptation: market research	3.32	02/01/2018	15	16/01/2018	100%		
3.36	m	Current status MT clarified MM						03/01/2018	MM
3.37		Amendments	3.36	09/01/2018	2	10/01/2018	100%		
3.38		Third draft survey design	3.36	10/01/2018	2	11/01/2018	100%		
3.39		Organisation Survey Tool	3.25	11/01/2018	5	15/01/2018	100%		CM

3.40		Preparation of the MS 2 presentation		13/01/2018	2	14/01/2018	100%		
3.41	m	MM Email survey design questions sent						10/01/2018	MM
3.42		Changes due to MM email	3.41	12/01/2018	3	14/01/2018	100%		
3.43	m	MM Email MS docs sent						14/01/2018	
3.44	m	MM Meeting						17/01/2018	MM
3.45		Amendments due to MM meeting	3.44	17/01/2018	1	17/01/2018	100%		
3.46		Amendments and finalisation survey design due to email	3.44	16/01/2018	2	17/01/2018	100%		
3.47		Project plan adaptations	3.44	17/01/2018	1	17/01/2018	100%		
3.48		Presentation adaptations	3.44	17/01/2018	1	17/01/2018	100%		
3.49		Print MS 2 documents		18/01/2018	1	18/01/2018	100%		
3.50	m	Docs MS 2 submitted	3.49					19/01/2018	
3.51		Presentation practicing	3.5	20/01/2018	6	25/01/2018	100%		
3.52	m	MS 2	3.5					26/01/2018	MM
3.53	m	MM Meeting MS 2 finished	3.52					29/01/2018	MM
3.54		Adaptations according to MS 2	3.52	29/01/2018	1	29/01/2018	100%		
3.55	m	Primary market research design finished						30/01/2018	MM
4	p	Phase 4: Primary market research and data analysis		11/01/2018	60	11/03/2018			
4.1		Internal primary market research and data analysis	2.26	11/01/2018	47	26/02/2018	100%		
4.2		External primary market research and data analysis	2.26	11/01/2018	53	04/03/2018	100%		
4.3		Organise list of departments within the AP group		11/01/2018	5	15/01/2018	100%		
4.4		Development of the first internal questionnaire draft German	2, 2.26, 3.11	11/01/2018	4	14/01/2018	100%		
4.5		Development of the first internal questionnaire draft English	2, 2.26, 3.11	11/01/2018	4	14/01/2018	100%		
4.6		Development of the first external questionnaire draft	2, 2.26, 3.5	13/01/2018	4	16/01/2018	100%		
4.7	m	MM Meeting questionnaire drafts						17/01/2018	MM
4.8		Changes to draft due to MS 2	3.5	27/01/2018	2	28/01/2018	100%		
4.9		Prepare intranet information about internal survey	3.1, 3.2	20/01/2018	7	26/01/2018	100%		
4.10	m	Second draft questionnaires finished						28/01/2018	
4.11		Prepare laptop for survey in production hall	3.1	31/01/2018	5	04/02/2018	100%		
4.12		Sending questionnaires to CM, AP USA	4.1	28/01/2018	1	28/01/2018	100%		CM, Renate Eberl
4.13		Changes due to CM, AP USA feedback	4.12	29/01/2018	2	30/01/2018	100%		
4.14	m	Call with MM status questionnaires clarified	4.13					30/01/2018	
4.15		Set up surveys in SurveyMonkey	4.13	30/01/2018	1	30/01/2018	100%		
4.16		Pre-test internal questionnaire German	4.15	31/01/2018	1	31/01/2018	100%		
4.17		Pre-test internal questionnaire English	4.15	31/01/2018	1	31/01/2018	100%		
4.18		Pre-test external questionnaire English	4.15	31/01/2018	3	02/02/2018	100%		
4.19		Changes due to pre-tests	4.16-4.18	02/02/2018	1	02/02/2018	100%		
4.20		Proof-reading questionnaires English	4.19	01/02/2018	2	02/02/2018	100%		
4.21		Proof-reading questionnaires German	4.19	01/02/2018	2	02/02/2018	100%		
4.22		Changes due to proof-reading	4.20-4.21	02/02/2018	2	03/02/2018	100%		
4.23		Request questionnaire approval	4.22	04/02/2018	1	04/02/2018	100%		
4.24	m	Approval internal survey questionnaire	4.23					05/02/2018	CM
4.25	m	Approval external survey questionnaire	4.23					05/02/2018	CM
4.26	m	Internal questionnaire is switched online in SurveyMonkey	4.24, 4.25					06/02/2018	
4.27		Internal survey	4.24	06/02/2018	14	19/02/2018	100%		

4.28		Distribute internal questionnaires via email to AP employees globally	4.26	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		CM
4.29		Put laptop in production hall (German questionnaire)	4.26	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		
4.30		Put intranet information about survey online	4.26	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		CM
4.31		Send e-mail reminder to employees	4.26	12/02/2018	1	12/02/2018	100%		
4.32		Writing chapter internal analysis	3.11	12/02/2018	5	16/02/2018	100%		
4.33	m	Internal survey finished	4.27					19/02/2018	
4.34	m	External questionnaire is switched online in SurveyMonkey	4.25					06/02/2018	
4.35		External survey	4.34	06/02/2018	21	26/02/2018	100%		
4.36		Distribute external questionnaire on LinkedIn	4.34	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		
4.37		Ask AP sales reps in the USA to share on LinkedIn	4.34	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		
4.38		Distribute external questionnaire via uni cooperations	4.34	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		
4.39		Distribute external questionnaire to research centers	4.34	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		
4.40		Distribute on online platforms in the USA	4.34	06/02/2018	1	06/02/2018	100%		
4.41		Post survey reminders on online platforms	4.34	12/02/2018	1	12/02/2018	100%		
4.42		Writing chapter external analysis	3.9	12/02/2018	5	16/02/2018	100%		
4.43	m	External survey finished	4.35					26/02/2018	
4.44	m	End primary market research	4.1-4.43					26/02/2018	
4.45		Data analysis	4.44	20/02/2018	13	04/03/2018	100%		
4.46		Data analysis internal survey	4.33	20/02/2018	7	26/02/2018	100%		
4.47		Data analysis external survey	4.43	26/02/2018	7	04/03/2018	100%		
4.48	m	Data analysis finished	4.45					04/03/2018	
4.49		Comparison external and internal data	4.46, 4.47	26/02/2018	10	07/03/2018	100%		
4.50		Write chapter 9, factors of employer attractiveness	4.49	26/02/2018	10	07/03/2018	100%		
4.51	h	Time reserve		07/03/2018	3	09/03/2018	100%		
4.52	m	End primary market research	4.1-4.50					09/03/2018	
4.53	m	MM Meeting	4.52					10/03/2018	MM
4.54	m	Phase 4 finished	4.53					11/03/2018	
5	p	Phase 5: Employer brand positioning concept for Anton Paar		12/03/2018	44	24/04/2018			
5.1		Writing chapter employer brand positioning concept	2.26, 4	11/03/2018	12	22/03/2018	100%		
5.2		Define EVP for the whole AP group	2.26, 4	11/03/2018	2	12/03/2018	100%		
5.3		Define EVP for technical sales experts	2.26, 4	13/03/2018	3	15/03/2018	100%		
5.4		First draft recommendations for Anton Paar	1, 2, 3, 4, 5.1	15/12/2017	100	24/03/2018	100%		
5.5		Write recommendations internal EB measures	1, 2, 3, 4, 5.1	15/03/2018	2	16/03/2018	100%		
5.6		Write recommendations external EB measures	1, 2, 3, 4, 5.1	17/03/2018	3	19/03/2018	100%		
5.7	h	Thesis conclusion and time reserve	1- 4, 5.1, 5.2	19/03/2018	5	23/03/2018	100%		
5.8	m	First version of concept finished	5.1					23/03/2018	
5.9	m	MM Meeting	5.1-5.7					23/03/2018	MM
5.10		Adaptations concept according to MM Meeting	5.9	24/03/2018	5	28/03/2018	100%		
5.11		Adaptations recommendations for Anton Paar	5.9	24/03/2018	6	29/03/2018	100%		
5.12		Proof-reading concept	1-5.11	29/03/2018	7	04/04/2018	100%		
5.13		Preparation of presentation	5.12	30/03/2018	5	03/04/2018	100%		
5.14		Preparation of docs MS 3	5.12	30/03/2018	5	03/04/2018	100%		
5.15	m	Send e-mail with questions to MM	5					04/04/2018	
5.16		Final adaptations MS 3 documents	5.15	06/04/2018	6	11/04/2018	100%		
5.17		Print MS 3 documents	5.16	12/04/2018	1	12/04/2018	100%		

5.18	m	Submission Docs MS 3	3, 4, 5.1-5.8						13/04/2018	MM
5.19		Presentation practicing	5.9	14/04/2018	1	14/04/2018	100%			
5.20	m	MS3	5.9						20/04/2018	
5.21	m	MM Call MS 3	5.11						25/04/2018	
6	p	Phase 6: Finalisation of the master thesis		21/04/2018	70	29/06/2018				
6.1		Adaptations according to MS 3	5.21, 5.20	21/04/2018	7	27/04/2018	100%			
6.2		Thesis finalisation: Summary, Abstract, Conclusion	1-5	24/04/2018	4	27/04/2018	100%			
6.3		Proof-reading	1-5	15/12/2017	145	08/05/2018	100%			
6.4	m	Documents submitted to proof-reading	1-5						28/04/2018	
6.5		Time reserve for final corrections	6.4	05/05/2018	5	09/05/2018	100%			
6.6		Printing of the master thesis	6.5	10/05/2018	4	13/05/2018	100%			
6.7	m	Submission final master thesis	6.6						14/05/2018	

Table A10: Project plan (own presentation)