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STANDING OUT insights from celebrated employer brands









good to know you









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Standing Out: insights from celebrated employer brands

The annual Randstad Award survey is the largest independent employer branding study globally. More than 200,000 people from around the world are asked what makes an organization attractive to work for, what are the most attractive sectors and whom they would most like to work for.

The publication of 'Standing Out: insights from celebrated employer brands' marks the announcement of the 2016 Randstad Award survey country winners. Featuring interviews with HR executives from six organizations that have consistently scored highly in the Randstad Award survey, we look at what makes an employer appealing to prospective and existing staff. The organizations were selected to cover a range of different sectors, public and privatelyowned.

Among the areas we explore are what inspires real passion in a workforce and how people find meaning in different types of work. As the results from the latest Randstad Award survey

highlight, IT, consulting and life sciences are consistently among the sectors people most want to work in. But there are also stand-out companies within some of the sectors further down the list. What makes them so successful in attracting talent?

Further discussions range from how to create a buzz in the workplace to the secrets of turning a great employer brand into a great commercial brand. This publication also looks at the results of this year's Randstad Award survey and Randstad's own perspectives on how technology is reshaping recruitment and employer branding.

We would like to thank the executives from IKEA, Google, Microsoft, Deutsche Bank, Singapore Airlines and the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC) for kindly sharing their insights.

We hope that you find this publication interesting and useful for your organization.

Microsoft:

a talent for reinvention

Founded in 1975, Microsoft is a veteran in the fast-moving world of technology, facing fierce competition for talent from not only the likes of Apple, Google and Facebook, but also from a myriad of challenger businesses. Yet Microsoft is constantly reinventing itself, enabling it to stay fresh and relevant in an industry that in the words of its CEO, Satya Nadella, "doesn't respect tradition – it only respects innovation". According to **Chuck Edward, Head of Global Talent Acquisition**, "Microsoft's continuing appeal to people who want to shape the future stems from our ability to combine the buzz of a start-up with opportunities to bring innovations onto the global stage". And it's certainly a winning formula – Microsoft is the company participants in the Randstad Award survey would most like to work for. Yet as Mr Edward says, "there's no let-up in a highly competitive technology labor market. We have to bring our 'A' game every day." So how does Microsoft stay on top?

arly on, Bill Gates saw an opportunity to make Microsoft the main gateway to the worldwide web. His vision was followed up with swift and decisive execution as the company sought to take the initiative and prevent competitors from moving in ahead. It's this vision, tenacity and, ultimately, the ability to organize and execute that has enabled Microsoft to thrive and survive long after most of its original peers have fallen by the wayside.

Now Microsoft is taking another big leap as it seeks to empower people to be more productive in what Satya Nadella, who took over as CEO in 2014, describes as a "mobile-first and cloud-first world".

"In a market that never stands still, we want people who embrace growth, people who are eager to learn rather than thinking they know it all," says Chuck Edward. He believes that the move to a cloud-first world is changing the





Chuck Edward.

- Chuck Edward has been with Microsoft since 2004, working in various leadership roles
- Mr Edward started as an HR Director in the Microsoft Business Division (MBD), supporting the Unified Communications and Office Live groups and then spent four years leading HR for Microsoft's Customer Service and Support (CSS) Organization.
- Prior to Microsoft, Mr Edward held Human Resources leadership roles at Cigna Behavioral Health, PepsiCo and 3M.
- He received his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin and a Master of Arts with specialization in Human Resources Management from the University of Minnesota.

relationship with customers and making the need for people who are both curious and able to think on their feet even more pressing. "Before customers would buy an application or piece of software, and then the engagement fell off. But cloud systems create ongoing engagement, marked by the continual need for feedback, update and renewal," says Mr Edward. "It's no longer about long development cycles and big product launches. We need people who can keep listening, analyzing and responding all the time. These fast-paced demands have created a renewed vibrancy in how we work. People have to keep thinking and be more open to making mistakes as they present great opportunities to

challenging the challengers

This vibe of a challenger is something Mr Edward is very keen to promote. "We want people to know that we're changing, and that we're still curious," he says. While he recognizes the appeal of a start-up, he believes that Microsoft has more to offer. "People want the impact and relevance that comes from being in something new, being at the cutting edge. They often think that in comparison to a start-up, a corporation like ours is going to be slow and bureaucratic. But we've been able to create a similarly innovative and fast-moving environment by encouraging people to come together in small, nimble work groups that have the energy and interaction of a start-up," he says. "And the big advantage of our business over a start-up is that we can launch innovations in a global market, at massive scale, which allows innovators to make a real and immediate impact. There is also the point that if you work for a small organization and want a change you have to switch employers, but here you can go to another team. Our people like the fact that we have a wealth of knowledge and experience that young people coming into the industry can learn from, not just from a technical perspective, but how to commercialize ideas and innovations."



How does Microsoft create the challenger vibe? "We prefer a flat organization as that keeps us close to the marketplace and enhances our listening systems," says Mr Edward. He believes that the real key is culture. "We're determined to create an environment that encourages people to be curious, to take risks, to talk openly about what might have gone wrong as that creates the insight that's going to help us get it right in the long run," he says.

workshop of ideas

This ambition to push boundaries is bolstered by opportunities to come together in ad hoc teams to develop experimental projects. Examples include the Microsoft Garage initiative, which aims to "find the next thing you can't live without". This problemsolving drive stretches to social responsibility and charitable initiatives through to collaborative hackathons that promote the spirit of innovation. "We see these initiatives as more than just corporate "I think that international reach and exchange of ideas gives us the best of both worlds, local and global"

social responsibility. They help to keep people engaged and motivated. They also encourage greater collaboration and the development of lasting relationships and partnerships around our worldwide group," says Mr Edward.

local and global

As an industry, technology tends to operate in clusters and has given renewed impetus to the campus model. How much does Mr Edward feel that the location and physical environment of Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington, contribute to its commercial success and appeal to talent?

"We've been able to create an ecosystem of technology and innovation here in Redmond. The town has become a magnet for talent, drawing people from around the world. A lot of smaller technology businesses have also set up here. In a marketplace in which partnerships are more

important than ever and in which we need to buy and borrow as well as build talent, this local ecosystem and the concentration of talent and expertise that comes with it is very valuable to us. However, that can cut both ways as people move guite a lot within this industry," he says. The Microsoft campus in Redmond is only part of a hugely diverse global business. "I spend as much time interacting with my colleagues in Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia as people here in Redmond and I think that international reach and exchange of ideas gives us the best of both worlds, local and global," Mr Edward says.

clean sweep

Whatever Microsoft is doing to attract talent, it works. Microsoft is the company Randstad Award participants in the US and worldwide would most like to work for. "After 12 years with Microsoft, I still get a buzz from coming into work. Working with smart, passionate and motivated people is really enjoyable, it inspires me to keep learning, to always want to do better," says Mr Edward.

What can other mature businesses learn from Microsoft about developing an enduring appeal to talent when newcomers to the industry are snapping at their heals? Microsoft recognizes that it has to be fast as well as big to survive and thrive. In turn, talented developers and innovators don't want to be cogs in the machine. The secret of Microsoft's success is a culture that embraces transformation as an opportunity for each new generation to prove itself the equal of the pioneers who have gone before. Employees know that they will have the chance to work on more new projects and try more new things than at other comparable companies, large or small, new or established. They know that they have leadership who is prepared to challenge expectations and strike out in new directions. This hunger for the new keeps Microsoft fresh, employees motivated and talent wanting to join.

is where the heartis

Some people are put off working in retail because of its reputation (fair or unfair) for low pay and unsocial hours. Yet home furnishing giant, IKEA, stands out as one of the most attractive companies of any sector to work for. Lars-Erik Fridolfsson, Talent Manager, believes that the key strength of the group's employer brand is a shared passion for home furnishing and how this can contribute to "creating a better life for the many". As IKEA continues its rapid growth and moves into new markets, how is it looking to sustain the ideals that are so crucial to its talent appeal?

KEA was founded in 1943 by the then-17-year-old Ingvar Kamprad, whose initials make up the 'I' and the 'K' in the company's name – the 'E' comes from Elmtaryd, the farm he grew up in, and the 'A' from Agunnaryd, his home town. In the 70 years since, IKEA's combination of form, functionality, quality, sustainability and affordability – what it calls 'democratic design' - has helped it to become the world's biggest furniture chain, operating in more than 300 stores and employing over 150,000 staff (referred to as 'co-workers') in 27 countries worldwide.

"We don't just want to be a company that sells things and where success is defined by sales figures alone," says Lars-Erik Fridolfsson. "By helping our customers to make a good home, we can help to improve their everyday lives."

The democratic design principles at the heart of IKEA's mission are also the values that define its employer brand. "Values and attitude are more important than the CV," says Mr Fridolfsson. "One of the advantages we have in seeking out recruits who share our ideals is that most people can relate to the importance of a good home in creating a better life. As part of our selection



Lars-Erik Fridolfsson,

- Lars-Erik Fridolfsson joined IKEA
- His time with the company has included postings as regional HR manager in Southeast Asia and. more recently, South Asia.
- In 2014, he returned to his native Sweden to take up his current post. His responsibilities include contributing to both local and global business plans, mapping future competence needs against these plans and developing strategies to meet the talent demands.

process, we encourage candidates to come to the interview with a photo of their living room and ask them to talk about what they like about the room and what inspires them. From these conversations you can quickly identify people who have a real passion for home furnishing and good design, and how they can make a difference to our customers' lives - these are the co-workers we want and the co-workers who can grow together with us."

return on investment

Once on board, IKEA recognizes the importance of investing in its co-workers. IKEA constantly tries to improve the working conditions and the total package of remuneration. IKEA's focus on co-worker welfare is evident in the fact that it was the first retailer in the UK to commit to paying the 'Living Wage', a higher amount than the statutory minimum wage, which is independently set to reflect the cost of living.

> In Sweden, it has opted not to use 'on call employment' contracts as it wants to ensure that co-workers have

guaranteed minimum hours of work.

IKEA is also determined to ensure that co-workers can fulfill their individual potential. "Everyone has something that they're particularly good at. We want co-workers and their managers to identify what that special strength is. Managers can then assign the right training and ensure co-workers have maximum opportunity to develop

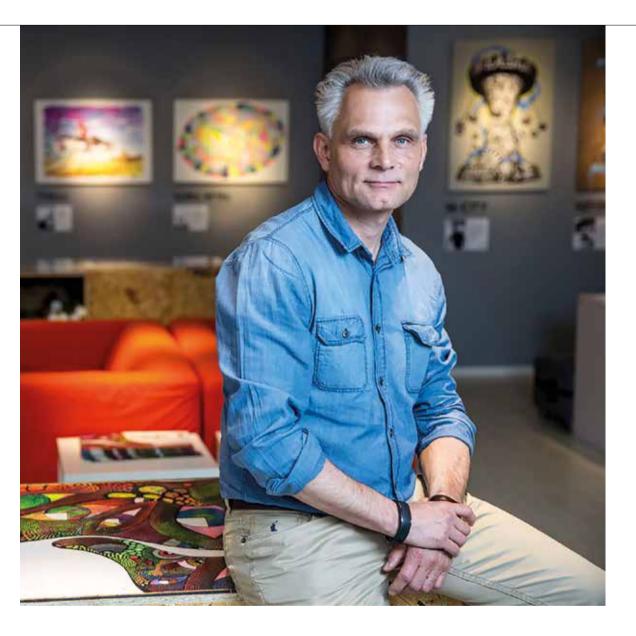
these skills within their work the more they do, the more we'll support it," says Mr Fridolfsson. "We encourage our co-workers to tell their career stories during our annual talent week and through our website, which helps to inspire others of what's

It's a winning formula. IKEA was voted the company people in Sweden most want to work for in the Randstad Award survey, ahead of Sveriges Television and the Volvo Car Group in second and third. The motivation and satisfaction within the workforce help to sustain above average retention and strong corporate growth. And the more IKEA grows, the more it sells, and the more it sells, the more it's able to hold down and even reduce prices.

faith in the IKEA way

And as growth within the business continues to accelerate, IKEA's talent strategy and the employer brand that underpins it are going to be more important than ever.

"If I'm asked why we focus so closely on employer brand, the answer is simple – we need to hire an additional 75,000 people over the next four years to sustain our expansion plans. And it's not just numbers we need. We need people we can fast track to leadership positions. We want people who share our values and who can appreciate the way we do things," says Mr Fridolfsson. "Our informal approach can seem quite alien in countries that tend to be more hierarchical than Sweden. While we fully respect different cultures, we want to maintain 'our way' as much as possible. So if someone at a management interview says 'will I get my own office', we have to politely say 'no, you'll sit with your co-workers'. We also expect managers to spend time working in the store so they can get a better idea about what customers want, the challenges co-workers face and, ultimately, where the money that pays their salaries comes from. A lot of people find our approach quite refreshing, even if it's not what they're used to – co-workers have more of a say and managers enjoy the sense of togetherness."



"IKEA thrives because its co-workers know they can develop as people and contribute to a better life for their customers"

the new face of retail

"Worldwide, we also need to keep pace with shifts in technology and customer expectations," says Mr Fridolfsson. "As more of our repeat and basic product sales gravitate to our digital channels, our stores will increasingly become knowledge centers. Customers come in with an idea about what kind of look and feel they want for their bedroom or kitchen. They look to our coworkers for advice on how to turn these ideas into reality. What are the options available? How does this fit with the available space and budget? This kind of active selling is a specialized skill, which takes experience, engagement and deep product knowledge. The need to develop these capabilities underlines why investing in our co-workers is so important, but it also offers them more interesting and rewarding work."

daring to be different

So what can other companies learn from IKEA? Even relatively low-skilled work requires meaning. IKEA thrives because its co-workers know they can develop as people and contribute to a better life for their customers. IKEA is also prepared to stand up for its values and ways of doing things, even if this means sailing against the tide. These distinctive qualities have always been important in helping the company to attract the people it wants. And they will be even more important as digitization changes what's expected from retail staff. While they're likely to spend less time on stacking, picking and taking payment, the importance of their product knowledge and ability to project the brand will increase. This requires people who are motivated, quick to learn and prepared to commit to a company for the long-term. By investing in staff and giving them a compelling mission, IKEA is going to have a critical edge in attracting and retaining these high value employees.



Singapore Airlines: Where DECIDE define and differentiate the commercial brand

The iconic 'Singapore Girl' campaign began as a marketing experiment but has gone on to become one of the most recognized brand identities in the world. By choosing to spotlight the personality of its employees rather than to power of its planes, Singapore Airlines had hit on a successful way to define and differentiate its brand. With so much of the company's appeal hinging on its people, we asked Christopher Cheng, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, to explain the close relationship between its commercial and employer brand, and how it sustains its pipeline of quality talent.

n 1972, Malaysia-Singapore Airlines was split into the Singapore Airlines and Malaysia Airlines we know today. Unlike many other national carriers, Singapore's relatively small population (around two million at the time) meant that its airline couldn't simply rely on domestic demand to sustain revenues. The company therefore had to launch itself on the international stage. Many of its competitors were building their marketing campaigns around the speed with which they were able to deliver passengers to their destination – one advertising campaign of the time actually featured a steward saying the "less time they spend with me the better". Singapore Airlines' has always operated one of the youngest and most efficient fleet of aircraft in the industry,

so it could easily have opted for the 'power marketing' of its rivals. Yet instead, the company saw an opportunity to stand out from the pack by building a softer and more differentiated identity around people, service and passenger engagement. The resulting 'Singapore Girl, you're a great way to fly' campaign helped to turn the company from a regional airline into one of the world's most respected travel brands. Today, Singapore Airlines flies more than 18 million passengers a year to 60 cities in 30 countries around the world.

"'Singapore Girl' represents our unique brand of service, our readiness to go the extra mile," says Christopher Cheng. "A huge amount of care and investment goes into sustaining these

standards. We want to attract people who are bright, friendly, and able to empathize with our customers. We're really fortunate in having an employer brand that's sustainable. For many people, being a member of our cabin crew is a dream job. They want to travel and be part of a world-renowned team. That means we have many more applicants than posts and we are very selective in the people we hire. Our reputation for developing talent, empowering our people and encouraging them to think on their feet means that we're able to consistently attract a strong talent pipeline, including a high proportion of graduates, into our inflight team."

Despite Singapore's low unemployment rate and highly competitive job market, Singapore



"in a growing and fast evolving market,we recognize the vital importance of sustaining a strong employee value proposition

Airlines receives an average of 18,000 applicants for 600-900 cabin crew hires per year. More than 80% of the inflight teams are either Singaporean or Malaysian, with the remainder drawn from other Asian countries. The appeal of the employer brand is reflected in the number of times it has earned the accolade of being the company people in Singapore most want to work for in the Randstad Award survey. Having won three times in a row in 2012, 2013 and 2014, Singapore Airlines' consistent success was recognized by its induction into the 'Randstad Award Hall of Fame'.

To a casual observer, the 'Singapore Girl' identity might appear out of step with the equality that modern companies, including Singapore Airlines, are determined to promote. But Mr Cheng stresses that, above all, the 'Singapore Girl' is a "recognized symbol of service", rather than reflecting a particular gender. "Our male cabin crew go through the same rigorous selection and training, and are equally mindful of the expectations that go with the identity. Our flight crew, ground and support staff also recognize the importance of putting the customer first," he says.

While Singapore Airlines is able to attract the people it needs now, it faces the challenge of securing enough quality people - pilots, ground staff, business support, and innovation and sustainability teams, as well as cabin crew – to keep pace with what experts believe will be a tripling or even quadrupling of aviation demand over the next 20 years. The biggest source of growth will be Asia's fast expanding middle class. "In a growing and fast evolving market, we recognize the vital importance of sustaining a strong employee value proposition, which is built around training, recognition and long-term career opportunities, rather than just financial rewards," says Mr Cheng.

exacting standards

The airline invests heavily in training. Once selected, cabin crew recruits undergo 15 weeks of initial training, the longest and most comprehensive program in the industry. Courses at the training center, which includes a full size and fully equipped aircraft cabin, cover every element of how to serve and engage with passengers, ranging from wine etiquette to cultural sensitivity. And throughout their careers, staff take part in regular refresher

courses and training to support new customer initiatives. An open day at Singapore Airlines' training center in 2015 attracted 7,000 visitors, reflecting popular (and potential recruits) fascination with not only the cabin crew program, but also with the airline in general

The same care and attention is devoted to developing future leaders. Its graduate program allows its next generation of leaders to be exposed to managing all facets of the airline operations and business through regular rotation across different parts of the organization. "People move around quite a lot to help them learn about the organization bring fresh perspectives and develop lasting

relationships which foster and build teamwork," says Mr Cheng. The international experience this provides, including the challenge to be assigned overseas to manage the airlines' operations and business, is another attractive value proposition for talented individuals.

balancing service and costs

How does this investment in talent development square with the need to control costs in a fiercely competitive travel market? Despite offering a premium service and operating from a country with a relatively high cost of living, Singapore Airlines' staff and wider operational costs are extremely competitive – its cost of available seat-kilometer (CASK), the main

premium competitors in comparable regional markets such as Korea or Japan. A young fleet keeps maintenance costs down. Staff are offered a competitive reward package with both fixed and variable components. Through training, observation and regular discussions within cabin teams, staff are encouraged to apply the same critical eye to cost control as they do to improving service. And while everything that touches the customer has to reflect the premium promise, the company makes innovative use of technology to control behind the scenes operating costs. "We're constantly looking for ways to innovate on our service and operations, and improving customer satisfaction. In a highly competitive industry, use of technology to drive cost efficiencies is imperative. The provision of more check-in options via mobile platforms and self-service check-in are cases in point, as it's a lot guicker and easier for passengers, while enabling us to be cost effective," says Mr Cheng.

industry measure, is around three-quarters of

So what can other companies learn from Singapore Airlines? While a lot of businesses say that people are their greatest asset, this is a company that is able to put customers first because it puts its people first. Singapore Airlines sets exacting expectations for its people, but is prepared to make the investment to help them meet these standards, be this selection and training or making their working lives run as smoothly as possible. Talented people want to work for a company that prizes and recognizes their vital contribution to its success. While other airlines might rely on the zero sum game of aggressive pricing to bolster market share, Singapore Airlines has been able to develop a service culture, an employer brand, and an underlying employee value proposition that enable it to compete on both cost and quality.



Christopher Cheng, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Singapore Airlines

- Christopher Cheng joined Singapore Airlines in 1985.
- Starting out in operations, he has managed the airline's airport operations in various parts of the world including London Heathrow, one of the airline's busiest ports of call.
- He subsequently moved to commercial areas of the airline's business and was in charge of handling the airline's call center and ticketing offices at its HQ in Singapore, before taking up a number of managerial roles in the US. Thailand and the Netherlands.
- Mr Cheng moved back to Singapore in 2004 to become Vice President for Ground Services, heading all airport operations at its hub in Singapore and worldwide. He assumed his current position as Senior Vice President of Human Resources in 2009.



A combination of changing employee expectations and growing recognition of the transformational possibilities opened up by new technology is pushing HR towards digital lift-off. Randstad is actively exploring the different ways that technology can enhance organizations' ability to engage, acquire and utilize talent, both within its own business, and in support of clients and candidates. Randstad is also helping to pioneer a range of new talent technologies through its in-house innovation program and investment in start-ups through the Randstad Innovation Fund. We asked **Linda Galipeau**, a member of Randstad's Executive Board and CEO of Randstad North America, whose work has put her at the forefront of talent technology enablement, to share her perspectives on the impact of the latest developments and how to capitalize on the opportunities they offer.

he consumerization of technology is transforming every aspect of our lives, and this increasingly includes the world of work," says Linda Galipeau. "People don't just use mobile devices and social media to connect with friends, but also within their day-to-day work. The new generations coming in to the workforce expect that same responsive, on-the-move interaction with colleagues across the organization, including HR."

"Technology is also changing the way we evaluate the types of skills and people we need, and seek to engage and acquire them," says Ms Galipeau. "A common refrain used to be that 'there's plenty of talent out there, the problem is that it's in the wrong place'. But now technology is helping to broaden the pool of talent organizations can draw from, and enabling them to reach the people they need more easily. In turn, candidates are using social media to check out what it's like to work at a particular company, and plan their next career move."

The talent engagement possibilities that are now opening up would have been unimaginable even a few years ago, and are increasing all the time. A CEO in the US can evaluate the talent demands created by a planned new market entry from her iPad. A bank in Singapore can source a contingent software developer in Spain and have him working within its virtual team within hours. A pharmaceutical company in the Netherlands can look across its industry to pinpoint the research scientists it needs for a new drug development program, pick out the ones who might be willing to take up a new opportunity, and then target the most viable candidates for recruitment.

gathering momentum

Yet in comparison to other functions, marketing in particular, Ms Galipeau recognizes that HR has up until now been slow to embrace the data and digital revolution. Marketing is using digital interaction and the streams of data that flow from it to engage more closely

with customers, anticipate their demands and respond in realtime. The engagement and analytical techniques currently used by HR can seem narrow and reactive in comparison. But Ms Galipeau believes that talent management is now moving towards a digital tipping point.

One of the main drivers is employee expectations. "HR is used to being at the center of the organizational ecosystem, defining how people are recruited, evaluated and rewarded. But just as businesses recognize the need to be more customer-centric in the digital era, employees are now at the center of a new ecosystem that's built around the way they want to work and engage with the organization. A clear case in point is performance management. People now want the immediacy of real-time feedback, rather than waiting for a formal annual appraisal. HR needs to fit into this faster, more flexible and more employee-centric approach to talent engagement," she says.

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Linda Galipeau, CEO, Randstad North America and Executive Board Member, Randstad Holding

- Linda Galipeau is CEO of Randstad North America and Executive Board Member of Randstad Holding responsible for the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.
- Prior to assuming her current role in 2012, Ms Galipeau served as president of Randstad US' Staffing Division for four years.
- She founded Randstad's Canadian operation in 1997, growing it organically into one of the country's leading commercial staffing firms over the next 10 years.

Ms Galipeau also believes that once businesses come to appreciate the potential of talent technology, take-up will accelerate. And some of the biggest impact will be seen within recruitment. "The limited reach of print advertising and online job boards means that businesses are only drawing from around 30% of the available talent. Digital engagement could push that towards 70%. This includes identifying and reaching out to candidates who may not actively be seeking work. And developments in behavioral and big data analysis are opening up more targeted ways of screening and targeting candidates. For example, a lot of people in hard-to-fill positions in areas such as IT are being bombarded with requests. But by looking for indications that the candidate might be thinking about a switch such as a change of picture or profile on LinkedIn, it's possible to refine the search. We're also seeing greater use of gamification to 'preengage' with potential candidates and create

talent communities. Players can be set tasks or learn what it's like to work for the business. People like the interaction, while businesses have a chance to assess competencies and encourage referrals," she says.

realizing the potential

So how can businesses realize the potential? "Implementing these new technologies can be a bewildering exercise," says Ms Galipeau. "The big risk is letting the technology rather than the business need take the lead by loading up on more and more data, and over-complicating the analysis. It's important to put the business requirements first by clearly identifying what strategic objectives do we want this technology to achieve, and what questions do we want it to answer, and then mobilizing the data sourcing, analysis, talent search and talent engagement around these priorities. Key guestions are likely to include what skills do we need to execute our business plans, where can we source the talent, and how can we increase our chances of attracting them?"

The need to work with often slow and unwieldy legacy systems also creates challenges. "An awful lot of time is spent trying to extract data from antiquated systems and then clean it ready for use. A particular problem has been integrating some of the analytical tools used in candidate screening and workforce planning into enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems," says Ms Galipeau.

"But we're seeing the emergence of easier to implement and integrate tools.
Greater use of profiling, gamification and data validation tools will also provide more ready-to-use source data. The underlying priority

is greater collaboration with IT and marketing in the development and deployment of new HR tools and techniques. Recruiters could soon become more like digital marketers, using the same techniques to profile, connect and engage with people."

balancing tech and touch

While Ms Galipeau recognizes that effective talent engagement demands a balance of digital and face-to-face interaction, she believes



with people"

"recruiters could soon become

more like digital marketers, using the same techniques to profile, connect and engage

Planned moves to take this digital engagement further by conducting artificial intelligence-led 'robo-interviews', rather than meeting candidates face-to-face, might appear

impersonal to some. But Ms Galipeau believes that the opposite is true. "A lot of people assume that the only way to get to know a candidate and judge whether they're right for the role is to interview them in person. But using the latest artificial intelligence systems to screen and interview candidates has

the potential to offer a more accurate match between position and candidate. It may also prove to be more objective as it could cut out a lot of the unconscious biases. The benefits for candidates include being interviewed when and where it's most convenient for them. Robo-interviews could also help to put candidates at their ease as they may not feel that they're being judged to the same extent as they would be by another person. In turn, the people who would have carried out the interviews are freed up to concentrate on the final stages of selection and negotiation or devote their time to other value-adding tasks. Ideally, robo-interviews would form part of a seamless experience that takes people from game-playing and other initial interactions right through to selection and hiring." she says.

the Glassdoor age

So how is the digital era reshaping employer branding? "The influence of review sites like Glassdoor is getting stronger and stronger," says Ms Galipeau. "While many of these platforms started out as a focus for complaints from dissatisfied employees and disappointed candidates, they're evolving into powerful engagement tools. As such, they're now a crucial part of how the employer brand is evaluated and projected. Employers may be tempted to ask their employees to post favorable comments to boost their rating. But in an age that values authenticity more

than ever, it would be better to encourage employees to give a full and frank overview of what it's really like to work for the company, good and bad; and then be seen to acknowledge and respond to any shortcomings."

immersed in the future

One of the ways Randstad is looking to put itself at the cutting edge of HR technology is the launch of its new Innovation Fund. Since 2013, the Fund has invested in a range of startup and expansion enterprises in areas ranging from engagement and gamification software to a platform designed to bring together sourcing, marketing, hiring and on-boarding strategies. "We recognized that the technology is evolving so quickly that to really understand its impact it isn't enough just to put money into new developments. Rather, we needed to play a more active role by trialing them within our business and showcasing them in the market. We're keen to identify and support start-ups while they're in the development stage, so we can help to get them off the ground and keep our finger on the pulse of the very latest innovations," says Ms Galipeau.

So how far-reaching and how fast is the impact of new technology on recruitment, employer branding and wider HR strategies likely to be? Like many other forms of disruption, innovations can quickly become expectations. The immediate drivers of change are likely to be the opportunities to draw from a larger talent pool and proactively target suitable candidates. But the deeper transformation is likely to come from the shift in the organizational ecosystem and a blurring of the lines between digital marketing and HR. "As new tools and technologies emerge, it's important to challenge whether traditional approaches are still relevant and how things could be done better, faster and cheaper," concludes Ms Galipeau.

























local needs

















The 2016 Randstad Award survey shows that salary and benefits, long-term job security and pleasant working atmosphere continue to be the attributes that people worldwide most look for in an employer. But behind the headline figures a more varied and nuanced story emerges. Most of the some 200,000 people taking part in the survey mention only one or two of these attributes in their **personal top three**. An employee in Singapore is likely to have preferences that are different from those of counterparts in Russia, which are in their turn different from those in Sweden. This becomes all the more obvious when we look at the companies that people in different countries would most want to work for. As businesses look at how to gain an edge in the competition for talent, these differing preferences underline the importance of keeping up with global trends, but staying keen on local factors and personal expectations. >

Participants see working for one of the large employers in their country as less attractive

than 2015 (see 'negative trend in employer brand attractiveness'). Are the big brands losing some of their appeal? Do people believe there are more opportunities in smaller and start-up companies? Do people believe that their levels of reward don't reflect the returns their company is making? Whatever the reasons may be, they will be varied and multifaceted.

what do workers want?

Worldwide, salary and benefits and long-term job security are the decisive factors (see 'the most important attributes when choosing an employer'). But most people's choices are based on a balance of multiple factors, some of which are hard like pay, and others softer such as the working environment.

how the survey works

Respondents are first asked to rank the top five attributes they look for when choosing to work for an organization. They then pick the organizations they know from a random list of 30 of the 150 largest companies in their country and, based on their perception of the organization, whether they would like to work for them. Finally, they evaluate each selected organization on factors ranging from pay, training opportunities and career progression to the strength of its management and financial health.

As an employer, it's important to note that the largest businesses in the countries surveyed aren't perceived as performing well in the factors that matter most to workers and jobseekers. In particular, pleasant working atmosphere is third on the list of desired attributes, but only eighth in the employer scores (see 'factors employees want and what they think employers deliver'). This underlines the importance of ensuring that your business is meeting expectations.

differing needs

The importance attached to the different factors tends to vary by age, gender and education (see 'different profiles, different needs'). The survey also reveals marked regional and national differences. The better the economic climate, the more employees and job seekers seek out opportunities that fit with their personal lifestyles and aspirations. As growth accelerates in the US, for example, training opportunities and flexible working arrangements have become more important, while pleasant atmosphere and work-life balance remain key factors. At the other end of the spectrum, economic uncertainty is reflected in greater caution. As Russia's economy is buffeted by oil price swings, for example, financial stability and job security have risen up the list of desired employer attributes. In turn, the priority Russian workers give to work-life balance and flexible working is lower than their counterparts in Western Europe. Similarly, the focus on financial health and job security among Chinese participants has increased as the pace of growth recedes, albeit from a high level.

national winners

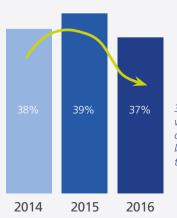
Looking at the country-by-country rankings, we often see a strong preference for

companies and sectors that are locally rooted. Even employees working for multinational companies are often drawn to them by local preferences. In the UK, for example, the automotive industry is seen as the sector most desirable to work in (fifth globally), reflecting the resurgence of car-making in the country over the past decade and its international success. Similarly, the enduring appeal of 'national champions' is highlighted by their strong showing in the companies people most want to work for. This includes Gazprom in Russia, IKEA in Sweden, Dassault Aviation in France, The Walt Disney Company in the US and Suntory Holdings Limited in Japan.



negative trend in employer brand attractiveness

Based on the percentage of participants who would want to work for one of the large employers listed in the survey





most important attributes when choosing an employer top 5 criteria 2015 most important salary & employee benefits long-term job security pleasant working atmosphere good work-life balance financially healthy career progression opportunities interesting job content conveniently located flexible working arrangements good training

factors employees want and what they think employers deliver

potential employees want.. employers score best on... 1. financial health 1. salary & employee benefits 2. long-term job security 2. strong management 3. pleasant working atmosphere 3. good training 4. work-life balance 4. salary & employee benefits 5. financial health 5. career prospects 6. long-term job security 6. career prospects 7. job content 7. job content 8. good training 8. pleasant working atmosphere 9. strong management 9. corporate social responsibility 10. work-life balance 10. corporate social responsibility

men

look more for financial health, (international) career prospects and job content

young

talent more oriented towards training, job content and international opportunities in companies that use latest technologies

older

workforce more concerned with high salary and job security in financially healthy companies

higher educated

more driven by international career opportunities and job content

lower educated

seek more job security, atmosphere, flexibility and convenient location

most attractive employers and sectors by country

Americas

country	most attractive company	most attractive sector
Argentina	Hewlett Packard	ІТ
Canada	Canadian Solar Inc.	П
United States	The Walt Disney Company	consulting

Asia-Pacific

7.00.0			
country	most attractive company	most attractive sector	
Australia	Virgin Australia	consulting	
China	IBM	consulting	
Hong Kong	CLP	π	
India	Google India	ІТ	
Japan	Suntory Holdings Limited	FMCG	
Malaysia	Shell Malaysia	chemical	
New Zealand	Department of Conservation	п	
Singapore	Changi Airport Group	chemical	

Europe

Russia

Gazprom

country	most attractive company	most attractive sector
Belgium	GlaxoSmithKline	life sciences
France	Dassault Aviation	ІТ
Germany	BMW	ІТ
Hungary	Audi	П
Italy	Ferrero	П
Netherlands	Luchthaven Schiphol	technology
Poland	KGHM Polska Miedź	industrial
Portugal	Transportes Aéreos Portugueses	consulting
Spain	IBM	П
Sweden	IKEA	life sciences
Switzerland	Google Switzerland	п
United Kingdom	Rolls-Royce Group	automotive

industrial

working more to earn more

The survey reveals that half of the global workforce are satisfied with their current working schedule, while more than 40% would be willing to work more hours in return for higher pay (see 'feelings about current work schedule').

People in Hong Kong, Hungary, Russia and Poland put in the longest hours on average. People in Australia, the UK and Netherlands work the fewest.

People in Europe and North America are happiest with their current working schedule, while staff in Hong Kong, China and Argentina are least satisfied with their hours and keenest to work more to earn more. While only 6% of people worldwide want to work fewer hours, the proportion is higher in Australia, the country that already works the fewest hours, along with Sweden, Spain and New Zealand.



people in Europe and North America are happiest with their current working schedule, while staff in Hong Kong, China and Argentina are least satisfied with their hours



top 3 motivators to work more

	men	women
increase income	86%	88%
take next step in career	38%	33%
fulfill potential/personal development	30%	27%

top 3 motivators to work less

4%	65%
. , 0	03 /0
3%	68%
4%	36%

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how well-established is flexible working?

Overall, more than half of participants worldwide prefer some form of flexibility. Opinions between countries and regions vary, however. People in India, China, the US and Canada are the most likely to want to work a standard workweek. Employees in Sweden, Switzerland and to a lesser extent in Italy, Germany and Hungary are most in favor of flexible working schedules.

most people work longer than their contracted hours

Asia-Pacific	ı	
	average hours	
country	contracted	actual
Hong Kong	42	44
Singapore	40	41
China	39	41
Malaysia	38	41
Japan	32	39
India	38	38
New Zealand	35	38
Australia	33	34

Americas	

Americas	average hours	
country	contracted	actual
Argentina	35	40
United States	36	37
Canada	36	36

Europe

	average	riours
country	contracted	actual
Hungary	38	44
Poland	38	42
Portugal	37	41
Spain	36	39
Switzerland	37	38
Germany	35	38
Sweden	36	37
Belgium	34	37
France	35	36
Italy	35	36
United Kingdom	33	35
Netherlands	32	35
Russia	38	43

average hours

telecommuting comes of age

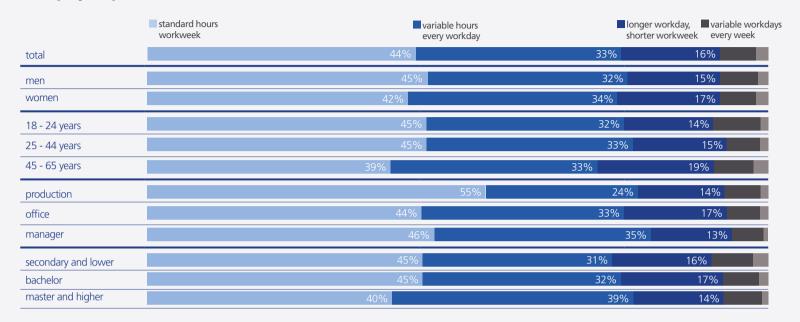
More than 60% of people around the world would like to work remotely at least occasionally as they look for greater flexibility and a better work-life balance. The countries where telecommuting is most popular include Hungary, Poland and Russia, where people are looking for greater autonomy in how they work in return for their long hours. However, few people want to telecommute every day, reflecting both the importance of opportunities for face-to-face collaboration and the social dimension of the workplace. It's notable that young people are the least likely to want to telecommute every day despite being brought up in a digital era.

improving your pulling power

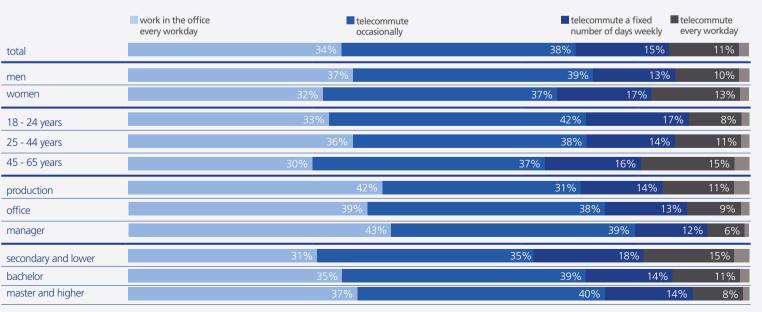
The survey findings reflect the interviews we've carried out with some of the most popular companies to work for, which are featured in this edition of 'Standing Out'. This includes the importance of feedback and measurement in gauging what shapes perceptions of your employer brand among employees and jobseekers, and whether this reflects what they see as your strengths and weaknesses and what you want to be known for.

The interviews also highlight the importance of articulating and communicating a clear employee value proposition that matches what you want from employees and what they want from you. This might be the chance to push back the borders of innovation and make a difference to society as much as pay and promotion.

how people prefer to work % employees prefer...



how popular is telecommuting % employees prefer...





The image of banking has been tainted in the eyes of some potential recruits by the losses and trading scandals of recent years. In Italy banks also face tough competition for bright young talent from seemingly more exciting fashion and media companies. Yet Deutsche Bank's attractiveness rating in the Randstad Award survey ranks alongside the country's famous fashion houses. Good salaries are clearly part of the appeal. But, Carlos Gonzaga, Head of Human Resources, believes that what really sets Deutsche Bank Italy apart are the opportunities to go anywhere, try anything and make a real difference to the lives of its clients.

ou only need to think about how rarely you cash a check these days to realize how much and how quickly banking is changing. The smartphone has ushered in a world of 24/7 on-the-go banking. Customers now expect their banks to provide the same ease and accessibility they've become accustomed to in online retail or digital communications. In turn, an increasingly globalized economy means that even relatively small businesses now routinely source and sell internationally, and expect their banks to help make this possible. And even bigger changes are on their way as Big Data, artificial intelligence and machine-to-machine trading revolutionize the world of finance.

Randstad Award 2016

Deutsche Bank

Banking was ranked eighth out of 14 in the sectors respondents in Italy would like to work in. But Deutsche Bank Italy was by far the most attractive company in its sector. It scored number one across all sectors in Italy for career growth opportunities and competitive salary and employee benefits. It was also in the top three for job security, a good work-life balance and quality of training.

"the most important quality we're looking for is the agile mindset that enables people to adapt to what is now constant change within banking"

"We clearly need intelligent people and maintain close contacts with leading universities to help find and attract top graduates. But the most important quality we're looking for is the agile mindset that enables people to adapt to what is now constant change within banking," says Carlos Gonzaga. "It doesn't matter how good an economist the candidate is or how strong their technological skills, if they don't have the capacity to adapt, their skills will soon become obsolete."

Deutsche Bank Italy has set up dedicated assessment centers to help identify and select these nimble-minded recruits. "We look at how people perform within a group dynamic, how well they develop relationships and how effective they are at solving problems. It soon becomes clear which people have what it takes," says Mr Gonzaga.

different voices deliver better results

The bank believes that diversity is a vital part of its ability to respond to change by bringing new voices and ideas into the organization. "For us, diversity is about bringing in people with different experiences and perspectives as well as providing more opportunities for women, people with disabilities, people from different ethnic backgrounds, and gay, lesbian and transgender people," says Mr Gonzaga. "We want people

with varied opinions – an orchestral concert is always more fascinating than a single instrument. And we're making strong headway in broadening our organization – ten years ago we were still a male-dominated business, but now more than half of our intake is women, for example."

the chance to shine

Competition for these creative thinkers and leaders of change is clearly intense. Yet, according to the 2015 Randstad Award survey, banking ranks a fairly low eighth in the sectors people in Italy would like to work in The financial crisis has dented the image of the industry. Within investment banking, the returns and hence remuneration are down, and the megadeals are fewer and farther between than they were prior to the financial crisis. In turn, business and retail banking may seem a little dull in comparison to the glamour of fashion or constantly changing horizons of technology.

"We know we need to win over the best recruits. We pay well, which is reflected in the fact that we rank number one for competitive salaries in the Randstad Award survey. But money can't be the only driver. If you want the best people, you need to give them the excitement that comes with new challenges, meaningful work and the chance to shine. We're therefore pleased to have been recognized in the survey as number one for career development," says Mr Gonzaga. As a major global bank, employees have the opportunity to take up international assignments. They can also explore new roles - Mr Gonzaga himself worked in business banking and as a branch manager in retail before moving to HR.

"In the wake of the financial crisis, it's essential for the banking industry to restore a solid bond of trust with the communities we serve. That applies to us at Deutsche Bank as well as the



- Carlos Gonzaga joined Deutsche Bank Italy in 1985.
- After nine years in the business covering different roles he joined HR in 1994 as HR advisor. In 2009, he was appointed Head of Human Resources Italy.
- He is a member of the bank's management board and executive committee.
- He also has regional responsibilities covering Poland, Turkey, Israel, Greece, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

entire industry," Mr Gonzaga continues. He believes that one of the big differentiators for Deutsche Bank Italy is that while it offers international opportunities, it's also very much rooted in the community. "Our surveys show that our customers see us as different. We want to develop solutions for the issues they face rather than just handling their transactions. And potential recruits see the extra care we take when they come into our branches, hear it from their friends and family, and want to be part of that. And rather than just talking about integrity we need to make sure it's built

into every aspect of the working day. During appraisals, we don't just ask our people what they've achieved, but how they've achieved it and what impact it will have. And we use electronic measurement and tracking to make sure the yearly performance evaluation is timely," says Mr Gonzaga.

word of mouth

So how are the attractions of the organization and its values conveyed? "We're very conscious of how our commercial and employer brands are perceived and carry out surveys and seek feedback to gauge this. But we don't spend that much on advertising, preferring word of mouth. People see the kind of customer experience and solutions we try to offer, and that provides recruits with a much better indication of what kind of organization we are than advertising would. We also make contact with students through their universities and through social media channels," says Mr Gonzaga.

So what can other companies learn from Deutsche Bank Italy? In a world where nothing stands still, the most prized talent is the versatile and creative people who see change as an opportunity rather than being phased or feeling threatened by it. Deutsche Bank Italy recognizes these agile minds need variety, challenge and intellectual stimulation as much as financial remuneration. Just as importantly it wants to be known as a bank that champions diversity and provides employees with meaning in their careers, which helps to broaden its talent pool and attract people who want to go the extra mile for clients – what it calls the "passion to perform". Its employees won't be seeing their creations on the catwalk, but the challenges they face are no less exciting and their chance to make a difference even greater.





"Rather than money, it's the chance to make a difference to people's health and wellbeing that really motivates our staff," says **Denise van de Leur, Director of Human Capital and Organizational Development** at the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC), one of the Netherlands' leading teaching hospitals. "By enabling ambitious people to stay close to what they want to achieve, we can attract and retain the high quality professionals we need," says **Serena Sterkenburg, Employer Branding and Talent Acquisition Specialist**. But with all hospitals facing increasingly complex challenges and a host of competing demands, how does LUMC sustain the inspiration, engagement and creative dialogue that are so important to its success?

he LUMC is one of eight university medical centers in the Netherlands.

These elite institutions provide specialis medical care that isn't available in standard hospitals. They are also the country's main centers for scientific research and medical education.

"A combination of cost pressures, the need to give patients greater say in their treatment and the rising incidence of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease are making the challenges faced by hospital staff more and more complex," says Denise van de Leur. "The need to focus resources in the most efficient way while ensuring patients have the right care and co-decision making opportunities is leading to much greater specialization in, and differentiation between, the university medical centers. Our specialist areas are diverse and include among others: organ transplantation, special cancer treatment, complex cardiac interventions,

migraine treatment and neuroradiological interventions, and we are a first level traumatology centre for our region. We need to attract leading practitioners in these fields to provide 'last resort' specialist treatment and take forward academic education and fundamental research."

"It's rare to find someone who is naturally outstanding across all the three areas of academic education, scientific research and patient care," says Serena Sterkenburg.

"Realistically, the most you can expect is probably two out of three; for example, they may be great in the operating theatre and research, but not the lecture hall or vice versa. We would work with them to develop their capabilities and confidence in engaging and developing their skills in every area needed."

fostering innovation and debate

"There is clearly a lot of competition for the kind of medical and research professionals we



Denise van de Leur Director of Human Capital and Organizational Development,

- Denise van de Leur took up her post as Director of Human Capital and Organizational Development at the LUMC in August 2015.
- A qualified lawyer and certified mediator, she has worked 25+ years in a number of senior international HR roles in leading private sector corporations in the Netherlands, UK, US and Africa.

need to attract and retain. And we know that these people are ambitious and intellectually curious. We're fortunate to be part of such an old and prestigious university here in Leiden, which gives our people an opportunity to work with other leaders in their fields and engage with some of the brightest students. Our people also like the opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing that come from our place at the center of a large cluster of medical and life sciences research like our Bio Science Park and the 'Medical Delta' which includes the LUMC, the Leiden University, TU Delft and the Erasmus Medical Center and University in Rotterdam," says Ms van de Leur.

"Another key part of our appeal is the opportunity we offer our people to really focus on their domain of choice," says Ms Sterkenburg. "As we have a finite budget, we clearly have to be very careful in how we target resources. And we know that what attracts and motivates our people is the chance to push back the borders of medical science and apply these breakthroughs for the benefit of our patients. So we make it a priority to put enough financial and organizational resources behind these developments, even if some other lesser priorities might miss out."

"A key part of the academic freedom is the license to challenge people at all levels of the organization. We want to foster a high level of intellectual debate and be a truly learning organization. We want to ensure proper commitment and accountability. We call this 'productive conflict'. A situation where opposing views can be expressed openly and safely, with the aim to learn from each other and without damaging the personal relationship. And the foundation for this is trust. If employees trust each other and trust their leaders to support them, they will be more prepared to take accountability and challenge others rather than shying away from conflict. All this constructive

debate creates a learning, high performance and healthy culture," says Ms van de Leur.

How do other employees such as nurses and support staff fit into the employer brand? "There are some differences in the focus of our employee value proposition. We tend to put more of a spotlight on the working environment and development opportunities, for example, while for medical staff we focus mostly on the teaching, research and cuttingedge medical opportunities. But the chance to work with great people and make a difference is at the heart of the brand whomever we speak to," says Ms Sterkenburg.

And it's a successful approach. The Randstad Award survey shows that in the Netherlands, LUMC is the most attractive non-profit organization people want to work for. It also has exceptionally high staff engagement and low turnover rates for the medical sector.

celebrating success

Ms van de Leur and Ms Sterkenburg recognize that there are areas that need work. Ms van de Leur is looking closely at leadership and talent development as part of a wider review of HR strategy within the LUMC. "We tend to make the best medical or research practitioner the head of department. But he or she may not be a natural leader. Academic mastery and leadership are different crafts, so we need to think more about who we put in these positions and how we prepare them for these roles," she says.

And in a sector where differentiation and the need to attract extra funding are becoming more important, they would like their people to be less reluctant to celebrate success.

"The people here set very high expectations for themselves on the one hand, but don't like publicizing their achievements on the other. In an academic environment, saying "we're good" isn't the done thing. While not changing our culture entirely, we would like our people to be more open about their achievements, so outsiders can learn more about the great work we do," says Ms van de Leur.

making all the challenges worthwhile

So what can other medical and public sector organizations learn from the LUMC? This is an institution that gives people the freedom to choose the right direction for them and mobilizes the organization to support this. In other words, LUMC tries to make the coat fit the employee. It also prizes the productive conflict that is so important in fostering intellectual curiosity, learning and a highperformance, yet safe climate. The pressure on funding and growing weight of demand are always going to be a challenge at the LUMC, as at other public medical facilities, but the lively and liberating culture at LUMC makes this is a place that people look forward to coming into every day.



Serena Sterkenburg Emplover Branding and Talent Acquisition Specialist, LUMC

- Serena Sterkenburg joined the LUMC in 1991.
- She is responsible for promoting and protecting the LUMC employer brand internally and externally.
- Her expertise has been built up through 15 years of policymaking across the areas of employer branding, labor market policy and talent management strategies.

"we know that what attracts and motivates our people is the chance to push back the borders of medical science"

Randstad Award 2016

Google Switzerland

Google is the company people in Switzerland would most would like to work for. It was rated number one for good training, interesting job content, career progression opportunities and pleasant working atmosphere.

The main engine room of Google's operations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East is its engineering center in Zurich, Switzerland. The 'Googlers' – or 'Zooglers' as the Zurich engineers call themselves – are not only chosen for their technical skills, but also what **Elodie Lhuillier, HR Business Partner**, Google Switzerland, described to us as their "Googleyness" – the ability to thrive in an environment of ambiguity, uncertainty and constant change.

keeping it

Google Switzerland:

Google Switzerland GmbH

he rigor of Google's selection process is something of a legend within the technology industry. Yet, the approach is actually 'pretty basic', says Elodie Lhuillier. Google believes that the baffling brainteasers and other such off-the-wall interview approaches used by some firms to gauge candidates' cognitive skills are a waste of time. Instead, Google prefers structured behavioral as well as hypothetical interviews and a consistent approach to assessing people. So why does Google use such structured techniques to find people who can think in imaginative, innovative and ultimately unstructured ways?

Want to know something, want to find something, chances are you'll 'Google it'. And the success of the search engine has provided the launch pad for services ranging from shopping, payments, advertising and translation to digital analytics, development and cloud storage.

Behind the apparent ease of all these applications is a highly sophisticated engineering operation spearheaded by the Zurich Googlers or 'Zooglers'. "Our engineers get to work on product developments for services such as Search, geo products, YouTube, Gmail and Google calendar, used by millions of people worldwide. Projects like these require skills in everything from software development and software testing to system and network engineering," says Ms Lhuillier.

The engineers are generally highly qualified (around a third have PhDs). But rather than necessarily looking for people with top grades, the selection process is designed to identify candidates who have a particular set of defined capabilities and provide a good fit for Google.

"The capabilities we want fall into four main areas," Ms Lhuillier continues. "First, we look at how the candidate thinks. We want people

who can learn, adapt to new situations, and solve difficult problems in real life work situations. Second, we check they have the necessary knowledge. For engineering candidates, in particular, this includes checking their coding skills and technical areas of expertise. But we want people who have a variety of strengths and passions, not just isolated skill sets. Leadership is the third key area. We'll want to know how they've flexed different muscles in different situations in order to mobilize a team. Rather than just a position they've held, what we're looking for is the ability and readiness to step and take the lead when the situation demands it. Last but not least in the profile of the ideal candidate is what we call 'Googleyness'. We want to get a feel for what makes them, well, them. We also want to make sure this is a place they'll thrive, so we'll be looking for signs of comfort with ambiguity and their collaborative nature."

freedom to amaze

Google's profile and reputation for innovation give it considerable appeal to potential candidates. But Ms Lhuillier believes that the way the company thinks about its people and promotes personal fulfilment are equally important elements of its employer brand. "We're very conscious of how big a role work plays in people's lives and the importance of meaning within it. We want to be known as a company that genuinely values our people and gives them the freedom to amaze. Research tells us that organizations are more successful when they put people first, trust them and treat them like owners. It also shows that freedom-based organizations perform better than fear-based ones," says Ms Lhuillier.

So how is Google looking to develop a more empowered workplace? "Since Google was founded in 1998, we've experimented a lot with our culture and management practices. The results from our most recent research,

"each application is reviewed by a recruiter to make sure we let no great candidate pass through unnoticed"

which was based on more than 200 interviews with employees, were fascinating as they show that who is on a team is less important to its success than how the team members structure their work, interact with each other and view their contributions," says Ms Lhuillier. "Among the things we learned from the study is the importance of people being able to count on each other to deliver high-quality work and feeling safe enough with each other to take risks without feeling insecure or embarrassed. The other key dynamic for success is the feeling that the work is personally important (i.e. meaning) and what they do matters (i.e. impact)." Ms Lhuillier is keen to stress that Google doesn't have all the answers stemming from this research. It has therefore set up a website to help organizations share ideas and experiences (https://rework.withgoogle.com). But Google Switzerland's strong showing in the Randstad Award survey shows that it is making progress in not only creating an attractive employer brand overall – it is the company people in Switzerland most want to work for – but also in the specific areas that it sees as vital to its people mission. This includes being rated number one for training, interesting job content, career progression opportunities and pleasant working atmosphere.



identifying future Googlers

The way Google reaches out to candidates and conveys its employer brand reflects this desire to find people who can thrive within the Google environment, both at a personal level and as part of a team. The careers website allows Googlers to explain what the business expects, and what life within the company is really like. The people featured include Reto Strobl, who is an engineering manager, based in Zurich. Mr Strobl talks about the great people he works with and the impact they can have – it's "fun to see bloggers writing about a technology you've worked on", he says. But he's also frank about

the challenges, which for him include having to work across time zones and sometimes having to travel abroad when you have a family.

Despite the thousands of applications received every day, Google is keen to ensure that it engages with candidates on a personal level. "Each application is reviewed by a recruiter to make sure we let no great candidate pass through unnoticed. We also make the best use of our referral system to make sure that suitable candidates in our employees' networks are able to apply and be considered," says Ms Lhuillier. The interview process is subject to the same

emphasis on personal interaction. "The process is actually pretty basic," says Ms Lhuillier. "The path to getting hired usually involves an initial conversation with a recruiter, a phone interview and a day of onsite interviews at one of our offices. Some interviews might also take place over videoconference.

"To give candidates a sense of what working at Google is really like, some of the interviewers could be potential teammates, but candidates may also speak to people working in other teams. This helps us see how the candidates might collaborate and fit in at Google overall.

Independent committees of Googlers play a crucial role as they help to ensure we're hiring for the long-term. This includes reviewing feedback from all of the interviewers to make sure our hiring process is fair and that we're holding true to our 'good for Google' standards," Ms Lhuillier continues. "We've spent a lot of time making our hiring process as efficient as possible – reducing time-to-hire and increasing our communications to candidates. While involving Googlers in our process does take longer, we believe it's worth it. Our early Googlers identified these principles more than ten years ago, and it is what allows us to hold true to who we are as we grow."

structured approach

One of the distinguishing features of the interview process is how highly structured it is. "We ensure that our interviewers are well trained, calibrated and use structured interviewing techniques. For us, structured interviewing means using the same interview questions, grading candidate responses on the same scale, and making hiring decisions based on consistent, predetermined qualifications," says Ms Lhuillier.

So why is the process so structured? Google believes that structure allows interview teams to get to know the real candidate and ensure assessments are objective. "Research shows that during first encounters human beings tend to make snap, unconscious judgments, which are heavily influenced by unconscious biases and beliefs. This can result in the interviewer shifting from assessing the candidate's competencies to hunting for evidence that confirms their initial impressions without realizing it. Research also shows that structured interviews are more objective than unstructured interviews, even for jobs that are themselves unstructured and this is why we use them at Google."

applying engineering principles

So what can other businesses learn from Google? Great cars handle easily and perform well because of great engineering. And



Elodie Lhuillier, Human Resources Manager, Google Switzerland

- Elodie Lhuillier joined Google Switzerland in 2011
- Since 2013 she has been HR Lead for Google Switzerland, supporting the Engineering organization in Zurich and the sustained growth of Google Switzerland from 700 to more than 1,600 Googlers
- Prior to joining Google, she held various HR positions at General Electric in Europe.

that engineering comes together through a continuous process of idea generation, trial, error and refinement. Google applies the same engineering principles to its products. And after a lot of trial and error they've opted for a highly standardized and systematic approach to recruitment. This might seem counterintuitive when trying to pick out people with creative and problem-solving minds. Crucially, however. Google believes that this approach is the best indicator of how people will behave when they come up against ambiguity, are asked to lead or are confronted by challenges they've never experienced before.