



# Event Marketing and Recruitment

A Qualitative Study of What Companies in Northern Sweden  
Think of Event Marketing and Recruitment

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## Abstract

Career fairs are recurring events at universities. They provide a chance for students to meet network with different companies. The question is what the participating firms get out of participating in this kind of event.

The existing literature about event marketing does not provide much insight to events as a recruitment tool, however the use of traditional marketing has receive increasing attention in recruitment literature. The purpose of this research was to cover the information gap in research by answering the following questions:

*Why do firms participate in different marketing events?*

*How can the effectiveness of different marketing events be measured?*

*How is employer branding used by firms today?*

Based on a framework of knowledge of event marketing and recruitment, a qualitative study was conducted by interviewing a sample of the firms that participated in Uniaden 2010, a career fair at Umeå University. The empirical findings were presented and discussed in relation to the theoretical background with the aim of finding possible similarities or differences, in an effort to answer the research questions. Also, possible differences between well-known and less well-known companies were intended to be examined, however no such differences were found.

Based on the empirical findings, the following conclusions were made:

- Firms use events for differing reasons. The main reasons are because of the opportunity of getting more personal contact with individuals, increasing individuals' awareness of the firm and its business, and reaching the firm's targeted audience. Creating own events seem to be more beneficial for companies with a well-defined target group, however these events are also costly.
- Few of the examined firms have well functioning measurement methods and several companies request alternative methods. What seems to be the problem for most companies is that their objectives are too abstract and hard to measure, and that their current measurement methods do not measure the stated objectives. By starting with defining more concrete objectives, the firms will be able to get more concrete results as well.
- Employer branding is a rather new term, but still seems to be a concept which most of the firms are familiar with. Firms use it to attract potential employees and all types of firms seem to benefit from using it.

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# 1. Introduction

*The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with some background information about the topic of the thesis, leading to a formulation of the research questions which will be examined in this study. Furthermore, the purpose of the study, as well as the limitations made, will also be presented in this first chapter.*

## 1.1 Background

Most universities market themselves as being able to help the students by offering them a chance to network during their studies. Career fairs where different companies get to participate in an exhibition to show themselves is supposed to help the student to meet companies. Often, the possibility to have a private meeting with representatives from the different companies is offered to students who submit their resumes in advance. With private meetings with students in mind, it is easy to see how this is beneficial to companies, they get a chance to interview students who might be of interest when the company needs to hire new employees. For the students, the private meeting also offers a great opportunity to market themselves and network with people from the business life. However, a question arises about what the benefit of the career fair is, as the universities could just as well set up private meetings only. What do companies get out of participating in an exhibition at a career fair?

A local example of a career fair is the yearly recurring event Uniaden at Umeå University. This event is stated to be one of Sweden's largest and broadest career fairs, as it gives companies an opportunity to meet students from a wide range of education fields (Uniaden, 2010). While this event is not only a "fair" in the meaning of exhibition of companies, the fair is the part of the event which most students attend. It should however be noted that Uniaden also offers private meetings too students and companies, guest lectures, and other activities during the career fair (Uniaden, 2010). This year, Uniaden took place in the end of January, and had 79 participants (Uniaden, 2010). Uniaden provides a perfect opportunity to examine further what companies of varying sizes within different industries think about career fairs.

Career fairs are held with the aim of helping students to get contacts with the business world. From the companies' points of view, the participation can be seen as an early part of the recruitment process. Barber (1998, p. 17) defines the early part of the process as *the generation of applicants*. In this stage of the process, the company determines what kind of applicant should be targeted and engages in different activities to make the targeted group of possible applicants apply for the job. This can be connected to participation in career fairs as an activity to make students at the university aware that the company exists and make them want to apply for working with the organization.

However, this raises further questions. Many of the companies that take part in the career fairs are large, already well-known companies which the students are likely to recognize. What is the incentive of already well-known companies to participate in an exhibition at a career-fair? Are their reasons to participate different from other less well-known companies? What do the companies actually get out of this kind of event? How is the outcome measured? Are the benefits of the outcome enough to cover the cost of participating in the event? These are some of the questions this thesis will try to address.

Furthermore, event marketing is a tool that has attracted an increasingly important role as part of companies' promotional strategies (Close, Finney, Lacey & Sneath, 2006, p. 420). Event marketing can also be used in several other ways, depending on the purpose and the target audience of the marketing activity. Firms can attend events in an effort to strengthen their brand, associate the firm with a certain lifestyle, and also in an effort to involve target audiences (Duncan, 2002, p. 716). Events can also be held when launching a new product, or when trying to attract new employees. Event marketing is a broad term which includes both events held by companies themselves and events created by a third party which companies participate in, as well as sponsorship of events which might not take place primarily as a marketing activity. The definition used in the thesis will however be different from other definitions, this will be discussed further in the theoretical background of this thesis.

A significant problem with event marketing, which has been the topic of several debates, is the measurement of its outcomes. Firms market themselves to increase their popularity, but measuring changes in attitudes and opinions is difficult because these changes exist only in people's minds (Duncan, 2002, p.736). Many companies feel unclear about how the effects of an event can be measured (Sneath, Finney & Close, 2005, p. 375). There are models for measuring traditional communication methods used in marketing, however it is more complicated to capture and explain the outcomes of events by using these traditional measurement models. This is because consumers' choices can sometimes be irrational, and are to a large extent based on the attendees' emotional responses (Martensen, Grønholdt, Bendtsen, & Jensen, 2007, p. 283). The problem of measurement is going to be one of the main topics of this thesis.

What is more, traditionally, marketing has primarily been used by firms to promote their brand and their products in various ways, however in recent years the classic marketing tools have also been used to promote the company as a possible future employer (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2005, p. 132). This phenomenon is called employer branding, and the intention of using employer branding is to market the company as being different to other companies in the business when it comes to employment. However, the term also includes activities aimed at strengthening the internal corporate culture, with the objective to assure that current employees are engaged in the culture and the strategy of the firm (Backhouse & Tikoo, 2004, p.501).

As stated, an increasing number of firms use events as a marketing tool and many firms attend career fairs similar to the example of Uniaden. Companies want to improve their recruitment strategies and strengthen their employer branding efforts, and event marketing is a tool that can be used in achieving that. There is information about event marketing and recruitment separately, but there is a lack of information when it comes to the two of them together. This research will hopefully help fill in a part of this information gap and further the understanding of why firms use events for recruitment purposes.

These concepts will all be discussed further in the theoretical background of this thesis. From the initial queries regarding what companies get out of participating in career fairs and how they measure this, and from examining existing literature about event marketing and recruitment, the following problem statements have been formulated:

*Why do firms participate in different marketing events?*

*How can the effectiveness of different marketing events be measured?*

*How is employer branding used by firms today?*

## **1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and go deeper into the subjects of event marketing and recruitment. The study will examine how events can be used both in marketing and in employer branding efforts and the findings will try to add to the limited existing knowledge in the area. The research will increase the knowledge and understanding of the subject, and can possibly benefit the attending firms as well as the creators of events.

## **1.3 Limitations**

Due to the time limit on this study, some limitations had to be made in order to focus the study on certain parts of the topics mentioned in the background. First of all, the study is limited to events which companies participate in. To some extent, creating own events is also mentioned, but the focus is on events created by people outside the organizations. This means that sponsorship of events have not been an aspect included as event marketing, and will not be discussed, but merely mentioned to show the difference to the other types of event marketing. One reason for this decision is to focus the study on events where companies have personal contact with the customers or other target groups, in other words, events similar to Uniaden. Another reason is because sponsoring seemed to be a field where more research has been conducted than the other types of event marketing, making the information gap wider for these other types.

Secondly, the study is limited to examine the companies which attended Uniaden in the year 2010. The reason for this is to enable a clear definition of the examined population, and also to make sure the examined companies have actually attended an event. While this means that the examined population will be very limited, it is needed to be able to draw any conclusions from the results of the research.

## 2. Theory

*This chapter will look deeper into the subjects of event marketing, the measurement of event marketing, and recruitment. The information found on the different subjects has been the basis of the questionnaire. These questions and the reasons for choosing them will be presented in the end of the chapter.*

### 2.1. Event Marketing

*In order to give the reader a better understanding of the concept of event marketing, the first part of the theoretical background will focus on where event marketing comes from and the problem of finding a suitable definition. This part will be concluded with the definition of event marketing which will be used in this thesis.*

*Furthermore, different types of events will be presented to give an overview of the many usages of event marketing. Next, the increasing importance of event marketing to firms will be explained, to show the contemporaneity of the subject. Finally, the importance of having clear objectives in order to be successful with an event is discussed. This was done to connect it to the next section of the chapter, regarding the measurement of events.*

#### *Background of Event Marketing*

Event marketing has been said to be one of the 1990's most popular trends when it comes to the field of marketing (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 17). The concept of event marketing comes from the United States, and there, the use of events for marketing purposes has grown three times as fast as the use of traditional advertising (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 17). In Sweden, information concerning the growth of event marketing is not as easy to come by. It is known that event marketing has been used in Sweden since the end of the 1980's. But due to disagreements about the meaning of the concept, some have included all kinds of sponsorship in event marketing and vice-versa. This has lead to problems with measuring the growth of the concept in Sweden (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 18). Nevertheless, although the growth has not been measured, everything speaks for Sweden having similar growth as the United States (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 17).

Event marketing has attracted considerable attention and many firms use it as part of their marketing effort (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 373). But still there is limited amount of academic research done in the field of event marketing (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 11; Wood, 2009, p. 247). However, according to Wood (2009, p. 247) research undertaken in other fields, for example lifestyle marketing, can be used to help develop concepts and models in the event marketing field.

With this in mind, the research will try to explore how the firms from Uniaden view event marketing.

#### *Definition of Event Marketing*

There are many types of events and purposes for arranging events, therefore defining the concept is complicated and can be done in several ways. Some definitions also



include sponsorship, which some people state to be a synonym to event marketing. However, according to Duncan (2002, p. 716), sponsorships and event marketing are two separate things, although they sometimes tend to overlap each other, since events can be sponsored.

The explanation of event marketing produced by Kotler (2003, p. 576) states “occurrences designed to communicate particular messages to target audiences”. But this definition is very broad and states that all events can be seen as marketing events, as long as there is an audience, and a message is being shared. In order to make it possible to develop event marketing theories, there is a need for a more limited definition of the term (Wood, 2009, p. 249).

A more limited definition has been given by Behrer and Larsson (1998, p. 18) and goes as follows: “Event marketing is a launch towards coordinating communication regarding a created or sponsored event, and “the event is said to be an activity that collects the target group in time and space for a meeting in which an experience is created and a message is communicated”.

The definition of event marketing which will be used in this thesis is something in between these two definitions, with a limitation to not include sponsorship. The definition of event marketing is as follows: marketing through events, i.e. the creation or participating in an event with the intention of promoting a product, a company or to raise awareness of a brand. Not included is sponsorship, when a firm pays to be part of an already existing event, such as sport events or television programs, in an effort to strengthen their brand.

### *Types of Events*

There are more than one type of events and they can be used for different purposes. Firms need to decide what kind of event to create and what the purpose of the event is. There are three possible approaches to events: creating an own event, participating in others events and sponsoring other events (Duncan, 2002, p. 718).

Created events are for example grand openings, company anniversaries, new product introductions, and annual meetings. While events attract and involve customers and other stakeholders, those who participate often only represent a small percentage of a brand's targeted audience. To make such an event profitable, some say the company should include elements that will be of interest to media, and thus create brand publicity as well (Grönkvist, 2000, p. 182). The more creative, fun, and exciting an event is, and the more people involved, the more likely it is that the event will generate brand publicity (Duncan, 2002, p. 718). Creating events gives firms total control from start to finish, as they can decide all details themselves. This can take a lot of resources to pull off, both economically and when it comes to personnel (Grönkvist, 2000, p. 182). As a result, creating events may be of more use to large and economically strong companies, as they most likely have more resources to spend on marketing activities.

In contrast to creating own events, firms can choose to participate in events created by others (Duncan, 2002, p. 719). Examples of such events are trade shows, career fairs and exhibitions. The firm has less freedom to decide what the event will look like, but on the other hand they can focus more on what message they want to communicate

instead of focusing on the practical work that goes into arranging an event. This is most likely a cheaper alternative for the company, even though many fairs and exhibitions require them to pay a participation fee, as they do not have to bear the whole cost of the arrangement.

The last approach to event marketing is to sponsor an event. By sponsoring an event, the company pays for having the brand appear at an event, for example at sport events. This is supposed to make customers associate the brand with certain events, but also has the drawback of not putting the company as a main focus of the event (Duncan, 2002, p. 728).

The event marketing approach in focus of this thesis is the second approach, participating in events created by others. The reason for this is that Uniaden is such an event, and all the companies examined in this study has participated in this event. To a small extent, the creation of events will be discussed, as this also influences the success of a company's participation of events.

### *Increasing Importance*

Event marketing has started assuming an increasingly important role as a marketing tool for companies, taking over from the more traditional ways of marketing (Close et al., 2006, p. 420). What is new about event marketing is not the event in itself, but the fact that it is used as a marketing tool towards consumers (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 20). Trying to be seen and heard in an increasingly competitive business world has lead many firms to seek new ways of reaching out to their existing customers and also to potential new customers.

Another reason for the increasing use of event marketing is the overuse of traditional media and the challenges connected to it (Wood, 2009, p. 252; Sneath et al., 2005, p. 373). Too many communication messages trying to attract the same audiences can lead to a clutter of messages and hence, the media becomes less efficient. Many companies have felt the pressure to improve and find new ways to communicate with customers in order to stay ahead of competition. This leads to firms using event marketing in order to be more innovative in reaching their target audience and also to increase customers emotional attachments to the firms (Wood, 2009, p. 252). Participating in events also has also been said to be a cost-effective strategy for many firms (Piesiewicz, 2010, p. 40; Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 20).

Apart from this, the increasing use and popularity of event marketing lies within the ability to adapt an event to many different situations. It is a marketing tool that can be used by all types of firms, both large and small, and it is also independent of the size of the firm's target group. By setting up a goal and a marketing plan for the event, it can be adjusted to match firms' specific requirements (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 19).

Since firms have started to realize the benefits of event marketing, companies specialized in the subject have started earning more business. These agencies' try to create creative, unique and tailored events and they have a strong belief in the effectiveness of event marketing which has lead to organizations increasing their use of event marketing (Wood, 2009, p. 252).

## *Objectives of Event Marketing*

When using any type of marketing, it is always important to have objectives for the activity. The reason for this is that in order to evaluate the effectiveness of an advertising activity, the firm must have stated what it wants to accomplish with the activity to compare the objective to the end result (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 235). However, this is not the only reason why firms should have a clear objective when starting to plan an event, both when creating an event and when participating in an event. The objectives are the starting point for the organizing of an event or participation in an event, as these objectives steer the planning process of the event (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 27). Most firms tend to have specific objectives when they choose to engage in event marketing (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 375). As mentioned previously, there are several different reasons why the use of event marketing has increased, but there are also several reasons why firms decide to use event marketing. These reasons are the firms' objectives for using event marketing.

Event marketing can be used in an effort to tailor a mass message or in order to help create more exposure of the firm (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 20). One of the most common objectives of using event marketing is to create awareness (Behrer & Larsson, 1998, p. 28). A successful event can help make customers more aware of the firm and its products or services, and through word-of-mouth help spreading the word of the benefits of the firm to more people. This is because a successful event is likely to make the people attending the event talk about their experience with others.

Events can also be used in order to create involvement. Since events are more focused on involvement and participation of the customers, events can help build a stronger loyalty and partnership between a firm and its customers (Wood, 2009, p. 253). In today's society, when products and services become more and more homogenous and fierce competition pushes prices down, the firm's relationship to its customers becomes increasingly important (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 30). Events are said to be effective when trying to create a lasting impression. The reason for this is that events are said to be more memorable and motivating than other activities of passive brand messages, such as advertising. This is because events include the customers as participants in the events, and thus create a more lasting memory than by simply showing the name of the brand (Duncan, 2002, p. 716).

Another objective for the use of event marketing can be to strengthen the brand in order to attract employees. A strong brand can help distinguish the firm's offerings from their competitors. By linking the firm to a specific event, it can help the firm distinguish themselves from their competition (James, 2000, p. 4).

Finally, firms can also have the objective to reach a certain audience by participating in an event. By defining what their target audience is, the firms can choose to participate in events which are targeted at that audience, as different events are aimed at different audiences (Duncan, 2002, p. 716). This is one of the reasons of the increased use of event marketing, as participating in events give firms the opportunity to have face-to-face contact with their customers and also enable the customers to interact directly with the firm (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 373-374; Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 15).

This raises the question of what objectives the companies participating in Uniaden have. Are they aware of what they want to get out of their participation and do they have clearly stated goals of their participation?

### *Successful Events*

As the benefits of using event marketing are becoming more evident due to the increasing use of it, more firms may be willing to include it in their marketing strategy. When choosing to participate in events, it is important to choose the right kind of event. A poorly performed event by inappropriate organizers may hurt the company more than helping the company (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 26). Before deciding to participate in an event, firms should set objectives to be achieved and define what audience they want to reach, keeping in mind the company's needs, message and budget (Piesiewicz, 2010, p. 40). With these objectives in mind, firms can easier choose what type of event to participate in.

In order for an event to be successful, some certain steps should be followed. The first step is planning, a well planned event is more likely to be successful. Designing a project plan is one way of planning the event. The project plan should entail the purpose of the event, who is in charge of the event, and so forth (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 69).

The next step is to get to know the target audience. This includes finding out what the audience's habits, values and attitudes are, in order to create an event which will make them interested in the messages from the participating firms (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 76). After finding more information about the targeted audience, the message in center of the event must be adapted to suit the audience. As an example, a company participating in a career fair at a university would most likely not use the same message to the students as it would if it was participating in an exhibition for its own industry.

Moreover, the venue and location of the venue must be chosen with care. The venue should be easily accessed for the target audience, and must work well for the specific event at hand (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 83). For example, a class room may be the right place for a guest lecture event, but is not suitable for a larger exhibition with many participants. Finally, in order for an event to run smooth, everyone involved in the event must be well informed of the happenings at the event and what is expected of them (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 88).

Apart from these steps, other aspects of the event also affect how successful it will be in the end. The purpose of the event is important, as this expresses the general idea of what the event is about and the commercial goals of the event. This should be clearly expressed throughout the happening (Grönkvist, 2000, p. 181). Also, in order to be successful and to have the desired effect on the audience, the experience provided needs to be something extraordinary (Wood, 2009, p. 250-251).

In an effort to help firms enhance the experience of specific events, Wood (2009, p. 251) have put forth seven specific attributes to focus on: involvement, interaction, immersion, intensity, individuality, innovation and integrity. In other words, to make sure the event is an extraordinary experience for the customers, the focus should be on interacting with and making the customers involved in the event and the brand. Also, an

event that is innovative and provides something the customers have never experienced before is more likely to make the event memorable. By using the knowledge of the targeted audience, the experience can be adapted to suit the customers' individual needs, thus making them feel that the event has been beneficial to them. A memorable event also involves all the customers' different senses to make the experience more intense. All these different attributes can help make an event more successful and evaluating these attributes may help in assessing the effectiveness of the event (Wood, 2009, p. 251). In the end, all parts of an event are important in order to be successful. If the event fails to provide a memorable experience to the attendees, the message will be lost and the participation in the event was in vain (Grönkvist, 2000, p. 194).

Applying this to the participants of Uniaden, the success of the company's participation depends to a great deal on the success of the event. This should show in the final results of the firms' participation.

## 2.2. Measurement

*In order to evaluate the results of marketing activities, such as event marketing, some kind of measurement is needed. This section will present the problem of measuring the results of event marketing activities and look deeper into some suggested ways of measuring the results. Also, some practical examples of firms evaluating the results of events will be given.*

### *The Problem of Measuring Events*

When it comes to measuring the effects and outcomes of event marketing, it has been stated that measurement of events is rarely simple (Wood, 2009, p. 250). Often, the evaluation of an event is seen as too challenging for the individual firm and also firms often find it is unclear how to assess the outcomes of activities related to event marketing (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 375).

Compared to the traditional marketing tools, such as advertising and direct selling, event marketing is a rather new term. As organizations are increasingly allocating larger proportions of their marketing budget to events rather than advertising and other traditional methods, there is a need for measurements showing the returns of the investments (Wood, 2009, p. 253). But when searching for information on the topic little academic research can be found.

Firms market themselves to increase consumers' awareness of their brand, but measuring changes in attitudes and opinions is difficult, since these changes exist only in people's minds (Duncan, 2002, p. 736). The question is how a change that only exists in the minds of consumers can be measured. For example, if the objective of a marketing event is to increase sales, it is possible to measure the outcomes by looking at the sales numbers. However, if the objective is to increase awareness of the brand, the outcome is harder to measure.

The problem lies within the nature of events. The variety of events when it comes to size, location, timing and content leads to problems with measurement. Because of the varying nature of events it is hard to suggest a standardized measure of the communication effects of all types of events (Wood, 2009, p. 253). Furthermore, spillover effects from other promotional activities are another problem. This is because of the difficulty of separating the effects of different promotional activities from each other and isolating them from other influences within and outside of the planned campaign (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 375; Wood, 2009, p. 253).

Another problem with measurement of events is the possibility of bias. There is a chance that the event did not make potential customers more aware of the firm, but instead merely attracted those who were already aware of the firm (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 380). People who already have a favorable view of the company may be more inclined to attending the event. This is most likely more of a problem for firms when creating their own events, as events created by others are not centered around the specific firm, but rather a certain industry or target audience.

The problem with measuring the success or outcomes of an event raises the question of how the firms which participate in Uniaden measures the success of their participation.

As there is not one general way of measuring, it is interesting to see if the selected companies have found a way to solve this problem.

### *How to Measure the Outcome of Event Marketing*

A well designed event makes it easier to measure the outcomes of the event. Without having clear objectives of the event, it is of course difficult to measure the successfulness of the event. Again, the importance of an event plan with a well defined purpose shows. Stating a clear purpose and a specific objective will help the evaluation process since the outcome can be measured against these objectives, the outcomes can then be used to determine if future action or improvement is needed (Wood, 2009, p. 249).

The variety of methods used to evaluate the effectiveness of event marketing include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Examples of what is used in measuring are volume of attendees, face-to-face or self completion questionnaires to assess visitor attitudes to the event, and services to measure media exposure achieved (Wood, 2009, p. 263).

To put the problem of event marketing measurement to rest, some experts say that marketers need to grasp some of the finer details of their events (Vence, 2006, p. 22). Firms are recommended to measure the effects of both small and large events, and also to measure every element of the event for possible contribution, or detracting, from the marketing objectives (Vence, 2006, p. 22). Furthermore, it is emphasized that less obvious aspects of the events can have an effect on the success of the event. Therefore all elements should to be addressed to see what is working and what is not working. Impressions exist everywhere at all times, for example, environmental elements as ease of parking and queues to an exhibition can make a difference to the event's success (Vence, 2006, p. 24).

Martensen et al. (2007) has written an article including empirical evidence of a model which measures the effectiveness of event marketing. The objective of their research is to examine how the variables involvement, emotions, and event attitude influence consumers' brand attitude and buying intention (Martensen et al., 2007, p. 283). Personal interviews were conducted at an event and the results were put into the created model in order to measure the event's effectiveness. It is stated that the created model did provide an explanation of how the event affected brand attitude and buying intention among the attendees, but it is also stated that it would be desirable to evaluate the model further by using more events (Martensen et al., 2007, p. 297). For the specific event that was measured, the findings show that the event was a success and did have a positive influence on the brand attitude. It is concluded that the event and the brand must match each other well in order for value transfer between the two to take place (Martensen et al., 2007, p. 293).

In addition, bias is a problem associated with measuring the outcomes of event marketing. It is difficult to know whether a person's positive attitude comes from the event or whether he or she already had a positive view of the firm (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 380). One way of addressing that problem is the retest measurement. It means that a test is carried out before and after an event, so that changes in people's attitudes can be

measured. This is a way of measuring that can provide greater assurance of an events positive influence on opinions (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 380).

Another way of measuring the outcomes of firms' event marketing strategies is internal marketing concept (IMC). According to Sneath et al. (2005 p. 375), in recent years, the concept of IMC has emerged as the primary method for evaluating a firm's promotional efforts. Instead of evaluating the effects of individual communications, the IMC approach suggests that the effects of one promotional method cannot be considered in isolation from others (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 375). The IMC approach also suggest that when it comes to event marketing, it may be more appropriate to measure effectiveness by tracking awareness and attitudes (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 375).

These suggestions for measuring the outcomes of events have all been suggested in relatively recent time. The results of this study may show whether or not they have made their way into practices, as the sampled firms from Uniaden will be asked what kind of measurements they use to evaluate their participation in Uniaden and other events.

### *Levels of Evaluation*

According to Wood (2009, p. 265), there are three levels of Event Marketing Evaluation.

- The first level measures attendance volume and media coverage. The advantage of this is that the focus is on the specific event. On the other hand, the disadvantage is that it does not measure the quality of the outcomes, only the quantity of attendees and publicity of the event.

- The second level has to do with consumers' experience of an event. Here, the value is measured by subtracting the experienced costs from the experienced benefits. The advantage of this level is that there is a focus on the customers and their experience. The disadvantage is that it is assumed that a positive event experience is the same as marketing effectiveness. Although the customers have had a positive event experience, this does not mean that there has been a change in brand awareness or buying intention.

- The third level deals with consumers' response to experiences, meaning people's attitudes and behavioral change as a result of the experience. For instance, attendees' feelings, attitudes, intentions, behavior, purchase behavior, and perceived brand values are measured. The advantage is that there is a focus on the results and outcomes of the event. On the other hand, it is difficult to isolate these effects.  
(Wood, 2009, p.265)

These levels can be used when examining the methods used to evaluate companies' participation in events, such as the case with Uniaden.

### *Practical Examples of Evaluation*

In order to find the best way of measuring, researchers have conducted studies of how different companies measure the success of their event marketing efforts. For example, when trying to measure the success of their events, the company Sprint passes out



surveys to event attendees asking them for feedback (James, 2000, p. 4). In addition to the survey, the company monitors on a macro level how much it spent on sponsorship efforts on particular university campuses, and compares it with the number of new hires acquired from those particular universities (James, 2000, p. 4). Not only Sprint has this way of measuring its event efforts, but also Deloitte has a similar way of doing it. At events attended by Deloitte, recruiters have a sign-up sheet for the students to enter their names. Through this sheet, Deloitte can track how many of the people that attended the event eventually got hired by the company or where interviewed by the firm later on (James, 2000, p. 4).

Another example of a firm that uses surveys in order to measure the events effectiveness is Intel corp. The firm changed their measurement system and started measuring brand perception on events by using post-event surveys. These surveys include questions about the company's products, how attendees perceived the company at the event, experience of staff, and so on (Vence, 2006, p. 24). Changing the way of measuring gave the firm better information which helped the firm improve their events in order to get the most out of their event marketing efforts (Vence, 2006, p. 24).

The study conducted in this research paper will be an additional contribution to this field. The sampled companies will be asked what measures they currently use and also if they have considered others. This will show what practical measures the companies use to evaluate their participation in events.

### *Conclusion of Measurement of Events*

The creation of a generalized measurement tool is unlikely to happen due to the diversity of event marketing, but also due to the fact that no consumers have the same experience of an event. Many companies focus too much on market shares, or the level of media coverage the events generates, but these may not be appropriate ways of measurement (Sneath et al., 2005, p. 375). What is needed is a focus on understanding the consumers' experience and their response to the experience. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of event marketing, the company should use mixed methods of evaluation (Wood, 2009, p. 265). It is not likely that a perfect method that has no problems will be developed, but striving towards creating better methods is the way to the future of event marketing measurement.

In relation to Uniaden, this thesis will try to investigate whether there is a certain way that all or most of the participating firms use to measure the outcome of events. If this is the case, the method used will be presented in the findings.

## 2.3. Recruitment

*This section provides a definition of recruitment and also explains recruitment as a process. Furthermore, the connections to marketing will be shown and theories of the importance of image to recruitment will be presented. A practical example of the use of image in recruitment will be shown by the different strategies “Employer of choice” and “Employee of choice”.*

### *What is Recruitment?*

Recruitment refers to a process which consists of efforts undertaken by a company with the objective to find and make potential employees interested in working for the company (Barber, 1998, p. 3; Torrington et al., 2005, p. 121). There are several reasons which can be behind the need to recruit, such as an employee deciding to leave the firm or an expansion of the business which creates new positions (Torrington et al., 2005, p. 121). When companies recruit existing employees for new positions within the company, the process is called internal recruitment. Recruiting individuals outside the firm is called external recruitment. The internal and external recruitment processes are very different and usually not discussed together (Barber, 1998, p. 4). This thesis will be focused on external recruitment, as that is the only one of the two fields which is connected to career fairs.

There are five fundamental dimensions of recruitment: actors, activities, phases, context and outcomes (Barber, 1998, p. 7). The main actors are the firm and the individuals who may consider applying to join the firm, the so-called potential applicants. Activities refers to actions the different actors take in the different phases of the process, the different phases will be discussed in the part “The Recruitment Process”. The surrounding environment which can affect the recruitment process is what the context of recruitment is about. In the environment, both the external and internal environment are included. The external environment can for example mean the current economic environment or the local legislation, while the internal environment may refer to such factors as the company's business strategy or any of its other characteristics. Finally, when it comes to the dimension of recruitment outcomes, there are both quantitative and qualitative standards which should be met. In other words, a successful outcome would be a pool of applicants which is adequately sized and consists of individuals with qualifications matching the firm's preferences.

### *The Recruitment Process*

Barber (1998, p. 3) describes recruitment as a process which is aimed at making potential employees interested in the firm and apply for working with it. The recruitment process is said to be a significant part of efficient human resource managing, as it is the way the company acquires one of its most important resources, human capital (Barber, 1998, p. 13). The process is divided into three stages: generating applicants, maintaining applicant status, and job choice (Barber, 1998, p. 13). The first stage, generating applicants refers to the initial activities of firms which will lead to potential applicants becoming actual applicants (Barber, 1998, p. 18). The second stage, maintaining applicant status, is aimed at keeping the applicants interested in working for the company, while the company evaluates and decides which applicant would be best suited as an employee (Barber, 1998, p. 15). The last stage, job choice, is when the firm

offers the chosen applicant to become an employee. This stage might also involve convincing the applicant that taking a job with the firm would be the best choice for the individual (Barber, 1998, p. 95).

The first stage is the one in focus of this thesis, as it is closely related to marketing. The reason for this will be discussed next.

### *The Recruitment Process and Marketing*

While all the three stages are important in the recruitment process, the first stage, generating applicants, is the one that can be said to be the one closest related to traditional marketing. This is because the first stage involves much advertising. Barber (1998, p. 32) mentions that a company's image does affect whether or not potential applicants choose to apply or not, however it is said to be an area which is in need of much more research. More recently, a term for firms efforts to market themselves as an attractive employer has been introduced: employer branding. The concept of employer branding will be discussed further in the part "Employer branding".

When examining the generation of applicants, further, the connections to marketing are clear. The purpose of the initial stage is to define a group of people which is likely to contain the most qualified candidates and to make them apply for employment with the firm (Barber, 1998, p. 18). This group is then the target audience of the firm's recruitment activities and messages. When the target audience has been defined, the company can also easier decide what types of media to use when advertising to attract new employees (Barber, 1998, p. 18). One reason to have a specified target audience is to keep the advertising part of recruitment costs down, as the company can focus the advertisements to the media which are most likely to reach the targeted audience instead of trying to reach as many people in general as possible. Furthermore, Torrington et al. (2005, p. 125) highlight the importance of using a mixture of different techniques when recruiting externally. This is highly related to the initial stages of marketing, where a target audience or group is specified and the most beneficial media are chosen to reach the targeted audience. However, there is an apparent difference: the purpose. Traditional marketing is aimed at selling a product, not at attracting potential employees.

The medium used in the recruitment process can also be referred to as the recruitment source. When discussing different types of recruitment sources, Barber (1998, p. 18) remarks that apart from the use of traditional media, such as employment agencies and newspaper advertisements, companies have increasingly started using more alternative media, such as advertising online and career fairs. More recent studies have shown that the mentioned alternative media used for recruitment are now commonly used by companies (Torrington et al., 2005, p. 125). Furthermore, early research in the field is questioned, as the outcomes which have been examined in the studies are usually performance and turnover rather than the main objectives of recruitment, identifying and attracting qualified candidates (Barber, 1998, p. 22). Moreover, research has not been able to prove any relationship between the recruitment source and firm's performance or turnover (Barber, 1998, p. 22). It is suggested that researchers should instead examine the results of recruitment by comparing them to the main objectives of recruitment, instead of the overall business objectives of the company (Barber, 1998, p. 27).

This problem and the suggestions are similar to those of event marketing, and here, the importance of clear objectives in a company's activities is evident once again.

### *Recruitment and Image*

When discussing the first stage of recruitment and attracting potential applicants, Barber (1998) points out that the potential applicants often do have a general idea of the company even before the company starts the process of finding the right person for a vacant position. This is referred to as the company's organizational image, or merely as image. Image and branding are central parts of the concept of marketing and the interest in their importance to recruitment has increased substantially in recent years (Torrington et al., 2005, p. 132). Several studies in the area have noted that potential applicants are more attracted to companies which have a certain image in the eyes of the general public (Barber, 1998, p. 33; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 506). However, it has been hard to determine whether the image potential employees use to evaluate companies' attractiveness is the general public's image of the company or if it is the image the potential employees have of the firm as an employer. This call for a differentiation of the two concepts, and the terms used are usually: "company image" and "employer image". The two have several overlapping points, but there are also some fundamental differences: the company image refers to the company as a whole, while the employer image has to do with how the company is seen as an employer. This will be discussed further in the section "Employer Branding".

Focusing on the concept of image in general, Barber (1998, p. 36) wonders whether or not it is possible for companies to reshape their existing image. In addition, this raises the question of what factors individuals base their view of a company's image on. A study of the subject found a correlation between a company's general image and its attractiveness as an employer to students (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993, p. 423). Interestingly, the image portrayed had little relation to the attractiveness, instead, the amount of received information seemed to be a positive factor of the likelihood that students would apply to work for a company (Gatewood et al., 1993, p. 424). This implies that companies can change their existing image by making themselves more visible to students (Barber, 1998, p. 37).

Martin and Hetrick (2006, p. 13) describe branding in general as an asset to companies and highlight the importance of employees in the process of building and preserving a company image. While the intangibility of a brand makes its value hard to define, it has been proven to be related to the firm's performance (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 10). Moreover, the features which affect a company's image have not yet fully been understood, but its importance is emphasized in industries where the actual job performed has little differences compared to jobs offered by other firms (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 506). In these industries, differentiation, such as a well-known brand, is said to be even more important when trying to attract the most qualified employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 506).

In the case of Uniaden, the career fair provides a perfect opportunity for companies to make themselves more visible to students. Whether or not visibility is part of firm's objectives for participation is a question which will be asked and analyzed in this thesis.

### *Employer of Choice or Employee of Choice*

Two opposing strategies can be used to exemplify the role of image to the attractiveness of a company. The first is to become an “Employer of Choice” (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 274). Lists of employers of choice are compiled by certain organizations by surveying a number of employees at various companies and asking them questions about what they think of their employer. Based on a number of different factors, the employers are ranked according to what the employees have answered. These lists are often featured in the press, spreading the word of which companies have the most satisfied employees and are considered to be most sought after employer. This strategy have been criticized as being more of a way to give employees benefits so that they will rank the company higher, and critics claim companies will not attract the best employees, but instead the people who wants as much benefits as possible (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 275). Also, it is said to lead to making the higher performing employees less satisfied, as the lower performing employees get as many benefits as them (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 275).

Conversely, an opposite strategy has developed, focusing on the “Employee of Choice” instead. The intent of this strategy is instead to not become an employer of choice, but to attract high achieving employees. This is said to be a more beneficial strategy, arguing it will scare off the people who are only after certain benefits and in the end be less costly as there will be less non-qualified applicants (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 276).

However, there are benefits and drawbacks with both strategies. First of all, it may be costly for a company to become and remain an employer of choice, both in terms of the costs of the actual benefits and the costs of high numbers of applicants who all wants to join the employer of choice. Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that turnover rates will decrease and the employees becoming more satisfied with their employer as a result of the award. Secondly, the strategy of finding the employee of choice may scare away some potential employees which perform well and would be beneficial to the company, but who do not want to work in such a competitive environment. On the other hand, companies using this strategy might argue that their employee of choice will be someone who is challenged by competition and uses it to perform even better. In the end, both these strategies are on two ends of a scale, there is no reason why a company could not be an attractive employer and at the same time seek to hire only high performing individuals. According to Martin and Hetrick (2006, p. 277), something in between employer of choice and employee of choice would most likely be the most successful strategy.

These two strategies are mere examples of how companies can use the concept of image in recruitment. However, it should be noted that there are several ways of conducting the research for the lists ranking employers, the example used here is an example of how it is done in Great Britain. Furthermore, it is connected to the concept of employer branding, which will be discussed next.

## 2.4. Employer Branding

*The previous section of recruitment was concluded to be connected to marketing through the importance of company image to recruitment. This is the source of a new concept in recruitment literature: employer branding. Employer branding is the topic of this section. First, a background and definition of the concept will be provided. Secondly, a framework of the concept will be presented.*

*What is Employer Branding?*

Employer branding is a relatively new term for a concept which has for long been known within the field of recruitment and human resources (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 277). The term employer branding refers to the use of marketing methods, which primarily have been developed to market products, in differentiating the company as an employer (Torrington et al., 2005, p. 132). However, while it is emphasized that employer branding is not a new idea, both the general interest in it as well as the academic knowledge of it is said to be increasing (Martin & Hetrick, 2006; Torrington et al., 2005; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). There are however different views on the usage of employer branding and to whom it can be beneficial, which will be examined further later.

Employer branding is explained as a new angle of the meeting-point of marketing and human resources (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 277). Both of the previously mentioned strategies, employer of choice and employee of choice can be explained as employer branding strategies. Moreover, while it is stated that there are some qualities of employer branding that are similar to company or product branding, the differences are highlighted as especially important (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 503). The two main differences are the focus and the target of the branding activities. When it comes to employer branding the focus is to show the company's employer image and the targeted audience can be found both outside and inside the firm (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 503). In order to be successful in this sort of differentiation the firm must identify what special features it offers its employees and create an employer identity which is special for the firm (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 502). This usually includes evaluating the existing organizational culture within the firm, as the culture is an excellent example of an intangible asset which is hard to copy, creating a possible competitive advantage for the firm (Martin & Hetrick, 2006, p. 16).

Uniaden is explained as a career fair, which should be an excellent opportunity for companies to use the event as a part of their employer branding efforts. Whether or not this is the case for the participating firms will be examined when interviewing the chosen companies.

*The Employer Branding Framework*

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004, p. 505) suggest a framework of the concept, simply called the "Employer branding framework". The model shows the outcomes of employer branding, which are said to be employer brand associations and employer brand loyalty. Employer brand association is the recruitment equivalent of brand association. The latter refers to consumers' associations with a certain brand, while employer brand associations have to do with how potential employees perceive a company as a future

employer. These different perceptions make up the total employer image, which in turn is said to influence the appeal of the company as an employer (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 505).

Employer brand loyalty on the other hand, has to do with the culture within the firm and is said to affect both the productivity of the employees and the firm's ability to retain them (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 504). While this part of employer branding has more to do with the internal communication of companies, it is of much importance to the external communication as well, as the image the employer wants to show to potential employees must reflect the reality of working for the company. If an incorrect image is presented, the outcome of the employer branding is said to be less likely to be successful when using it to recruit and keep the best employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 508). This is because the employees will be recruited on false premises. Martin & Hetrick (2006, p. 20) adds that the internal part of employer branding is probably the most important and challenging part.

This can be connected to real life, since firms may use their participation in Uniaden in an attempt to make use of the employer branding tools to influence students' association to the firms' brands. However, as the concept is relatively new, it is not obvious whether or not the companies are aware of their use of employer branding. Therefore, this thesis will examine whether or not the companies attending Uniaden are aware of the concept, as well as how they think they benefit from using it.

#### *Who Can Benefit From Employer Branding?*

As earlier mentioned, the opinions about who can benefit from employer branding differs. The whole process is said to be more difficult for small unknown companies than large well-known ones (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 512). However, this remark seems quite obvious, as the whole point of branding itself is to create awareness of the company and the brand, which of course is easier when there is an already existing well-known brand. Moreover, it is stated that creating and maintaining an image is advantageous to any firm, no matter what size or how well-known it is to the public (Torrington et al., 2005, p. 132).

This research will examine whether or not there is any difference between well known companies and less well known companies when it comes to the use and perceived benefits of employer branding. To add further scope to the study, differences in the use and perceived benefits of event marketing between these two groups of companies will also be examined.

### 3. Method

*The aim of this chapter is to give the reader an insight to how the research has been conducted and also to explain what the methodological assumptions are.*

#### 3.1. View on Research

Research is affected by the outside world and the influences are many: theory, epistemology, ontology, practical considerations and values all have an effect on research (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 30). For example: according to Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 9) how questions are asked, how the output of research is evaluated, and how the relevance of different research methodologies is assessed, all vary depending on the authors underlying epistemological commitments. Therefore it can be beneficial to evaluate the possible influences in order to make the best decisions for the specific research at hand.

Epistemological considerations are about knowledge and what should be considered acceptable knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 16). Many different methods of seeking knowledge exist, and each type of knowledge can be valuable, but researchers need to choose the way through which they gain knowledge (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 508). Interpretivists believe that the study of social science is different from the natural science and therefore another way to conduct research is needed (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 17).

Hudson and Ozanne (1988) wrote an article with the purpose of exploring and comparing two approaches to gaining knowledge: positivism and interpretivism. These two philosophical assumptions include different beliefs about the nature of reality, of social beings, and of what constitutes knowledge (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 508). When it comes to their approach to research, interpretivists take a historical stand towards research, they tend to study a specific phenomenon in a particular place and time. Instead of trying to determine for regularities they seek to determine motives, meanings, reasons, and other subjective experiences (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 511).

Ontological assumptions deal with the nature of reality and the nature of social beings (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 509). According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 22) the social world can be regarded in two ways, as something external to social actors or as something that people are in the process of fashioning. Instead of the idea that only one real world exists interpretivists believe that because individuals experience things differently and have different perspectives there are multiple realities (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 509). People are also viewed as voluntary meaning that they can actively take parts and create the environment (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 510). An interpretivist position is taken in this paper. This is because the views on event marketing and recruitment cannot be assumed to be the same for all companies in the study, or companies that are not included in the study for that matter.

Practical issues are also important to consider. For example the choice of research strategy and method have to work with the research question being investigated (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 33).



The last influence to discuss is values. According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 29-30), values reflect personal beliefs and feelings of the researcher, and they can influence parts of the research, for example the choice of research area, formulation of questions, choice of method, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Knowledge or previous experience will influence how researcher see things but also what they see (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 30). One position taken by researchers is that research cannot be totally value free, but understanding this and being self-reflective can lessen the problems (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 30).

### **3.2. Research Approach**

Another important aspect the researcher must consider when conducting research is what approach to take. As was previously explained, this study has been undertaken with the epistemological view of knowledge that states that the study of social science is different from the natural science, and therefore another way to conduct research is needed. Furthermore, the research has been approached with an interpretivist position, which means that because different individuals experience situations differently and have different perspectives, there are multiple realities.

Furthermore, the researchers also need to consider the relationship between theory and research. Does the research seek to build theory from its findings, or is theory the base from which observations is sought (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 14)? This study will be conducted with a deductive approach, meaning that theory and hypothesizing comes first and drive the process of gathering data forward (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 11). The deductive approach is appropriate for this thesis as it starts with a base of already existing theory on the subject at hand. The existing theory has then been the base for the questions asked to the companies. The purpose from there was to explore the subject at by generating data trying to found answers to the research questions. However, no hypotheses have been formed, as this study is going to be a qualitative study. The meaning of qualitative will be further elaborated on in the section “Quantitative and Qualitative Research”. The reason no hypotheses will be formed is because this type of research cannot be evaluated by statistical methods to accept or reject hypotheses. Instead, the answers given by the examined companies will be assessed by other methods.

The alternative approach would have been the inductive approach, where the researchers seek to generate theory from the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 14). Since this thesis does not seek to generate theory, but rather explore a subject from a new angle, the inductive approach is not appropriate.

### **3.3. Sources and Criticism of Sources**

To get a general overview of the different subjects, different books where used to define the different concepts used. On the downside, some of the books may be old. On the other hand, in order to see the development in the different fields, examining the older sources is a good starting-point. Also some of the books concerns research methodology, which is such a broad subject that it can hardly be covered enough in an article.

Furthermore, after the subjects had been decided upon and reviewed further, the search for research articles started. The different databases Business Source Premier (EBSCO) and Emerald Fulltext were mainly used in when conducting this research. Key words such as *career fair*, *career event*, *recruitment event*, *recruitment marketing*, *marketing events*, *recruitment fair*, *employer branding*, *event marketing* and *event effectiveness measurement*, were used to find relevant information. The original interest in career fairs and the measurement of their effects lead to the fields of event marketing and employer branding. Few, but enough, relevant articles on the different subjects were found. Problems of searching within these areas are mainly that event marketing often is considered to be the same as sponsorship of events, and that employer branding is a relatively new concept as well. However, sufficient information was still found. What is positive with using scientific articles is that they are peer reviewed, and therefore trustworthy sources.

### **3.4. Research Strategy**

What is the best choice of research design depends on the type of research and the kind of information that is going to be collect. According to Marshall and Rossman (1994, p. 40), the design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. It is also stated that the purpose of the research is defined before choosing a design. Does the research try to explore, explain, describe or predict something?

Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 44) set out five different designs that can be used by researchers: experimental, cross-sectional, comparative, longitudinal and case study. They all have pros and cons. For example, if the goal of the research is to deeply examine a company and how it works then a case study would be the best choice of design, but if the objective of the research is to examine group dynamics in different cultures a comparative design would be a better choice. The purpose of this study is to explore the firms attending Uniaden to find out more about their motives for using events in recruitment purposes. The design that works best for this research is cross-sectional which entails the generation of data on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to generate a body of data which can be examined to detect patterns of association (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 55). This design is best suited for this study, as it is built to examine different cases which can translate to the different firms and the design searches for variation, which is also what this research is after.

### **3.5. Sampling**

#### *Defining the Population*

In order to properly select a sample to investigate, it is important to have a well defined population to select from. The population refers to all individuals which matches the criteria of what is going to be examined (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 182.). As the focus of this study is the companies who participated in Umeå University's career fair Uniaden in the year 2010, the participants of Uniaden have been the population used to choose a sample. The original list from Uniaden consisted of 79 different companies, of which 70 companies where identified to be relevant for the study. The nine participants which were considered to not belong to the population were mainly unions and institutions of the university, but also Coompanion Västerbottens Län and Uminova Innovation were not considered to be part of the population.

The reason for excluding these nine companies was that they were considered to participate in the fair for other reasons than recruiting employees, which is the focus of this study. Firstly, the unions were assumed to participate to inform student about the importance of unions and to recruit members, rather than employees. While their participation is interesting in a marketing perspective, the recruitment of paying members is different from recruitment of employees, and unions should therefore not be included in this study.

Furthermore, the motive for the institutions of the university's participation was assumed to be to inform students of what guidance the institutions could offer them. This is not connected to recruitment and the institutions were considered to not be part of the population.

Finally, Coompanion and Uminova were excluded after research showed that the two companies could be assumed to participate for other reasons than recruitment. Coompanion is a cooperative company which helps individuals start their own company. Uminova is a similar company, research showed that the company helps entrepreneurs fulfill their ideas. While both these companies' participation must be considered valuable contributions to the career fair, their motives cannot be considered to be recruiting employees, which exclude Coompanion and Uminova from the population.

Besides the excluded participants, some attendees were considered for being excluded because they were thought to have other motives than pure recruitment of employees. The first group which was considered for exclusion was participating municipalities. The reason was that they could be assumed to attend Uniaden to attract future residents. However, this reason was not considered strong enough to exclude municipalities from the population, as they also employ many individuals in different sectors. Therefore, municipalities were included in the study.

The second group on the borderline was staffing companies. The reason was that this kind of company mainly recruits employees for other firms. However, the employees are often hired by the staffing company and work for other firms on contracts through the staffing company. For this reason, the employees must be considered employees of the staffing company. Moreover, as the main function of staffing companies is actually to recruit, there is a strong reason why they should be included in the study: they recruit employees. For these reasons both municipalities and staffing companies were considered to be part of the population.

Ultimately, the population was defined as companies attending Uniaden 2010, whose motive was assumed to be to recruit employees. This resulted in a sampling frame of 70 companies from different industries.

### *Dividing Companies Into Strata*

After defining the population for the study, the next step was to divide the companies into groups in order to enable comparisons between different kinds of companies. As the comparison was going to be conducted on well-known and less well-known companies, some kind of measure of what can be considered a well-known company was needed.

One alternative was to divide the companies after what companies the authors' of the thesis had heard of. However, this would have made the division strongly biased and too influenced of the authors' own judgment. Also, as the authors are business students, companies within the business field would have been favored as being well-known, which would have made the study even more biased. As the participants of Uniaden are companies from many different industries, this would not have made an accurate measurement. Furthermore, the fact that the companies are engaged in different industries means that they are aimed at different types of students. A strong bias towards business students would have created a problem were well-known companies in different industries would have been considered to be less well-known. This could possibly have interfered with the final result of the study.

As an alternative division measurement, the idea of conducting a study on Umeå University campus was discussed. However, as this would have required research of which students to ask to get a representative divide across the fields of study, this idea was dismissed, due to lack of time.

Furthermore, the idea of dividing the companies depending on their economical conditions, for example turn-over rates, was discussed and dismissed, as this was not considered to be relevant to the study. Moreover, other similar conditions were discussed and dismissed for the same reason, such as number of employees, number of offices, or a combination of the conditions. In the end, a measurement source independent of the companies of the population was considered to be the most trustworthy and relevant source.

The final decision was made based on the fact that the focus of this study is on event marketing in recruitment, which has much to do with the field of employer branding. As employer branding has to do with making the firm well known and sought after as an employer, a list of Swedish students ideal employer was used to make the final division. This list is the result of the "Universum Top 100 Ideal Employer 2010 Student Survey". The reason this list was chosen is that it is the result of an independently performed survey and that it shows which companies students all over Sweden consider to be the most sought after employers (Universum Group, 2010). Obviously, the companies on such a list are mostly large, well-known companies, as well-known companies are more likely to be recognized by more students.

Furthermore, the Ideal Employer-list is divided depending on the students' field of studies. The different fields are business, IT, law, science engineering and real estate. All these lists were used when dividing the participating companies from Uniaden. The reason for using all these different lists when dividing the companies, is that the companies attending Uniaden are companies from many different fields. Using only one field of study as a comparison would not have taken into consideration that students of different fields have different preferences when it comes to employers.

The result of the division of the companies was two groups of companies, one group with the companies which were on the Ideal Employer-list, and one group with the companies which were not mentioned on the list (see Appendix 2). While it can be debated whether this division really reflects which companies can be seen as well-known companies and which cannot, for simplicity, the groups will be referred to as well-known companies and less well-known companies. A more suitable choice of word

may be “companies on the Ideal Employer-list” and “companies not on the Ideal Employer-list”, but these terms are not as easily used. It should however be kept in mind when reading further.

The final lists of companies, divided into groups, consist of 36 and 34 companies respectively.

### *Stratified Random Sampling*

Due to the time limit on this study, it was not possible to conduct in depth interviews with all the companies in the population. Hence, some kind of sampling had to be made in order to make the study more effective. The selected companies for a study is called the sample, in order to choose a sample which is representative for the whole population, some kind of probability sampling should be made (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 182). Probability sampling of course refers to choosing the sample based on probability, meaning randomly choosing the companies for the sample, giving all companies in the population the same probability to be chosen (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 182). Random sampling is one type of probability sampling.

As a comparison between well-known and less well-known companies was going to be made in this study, stratified random sampling (SRS) was considered to be the best suited sampling method. SRS is when the population, which is going to be examined, is split into different categories, so called strata (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 733). The different strata are determined by certain criteria chosen by the researcher, in this case if the company can be seen as a well-known company or not, based on the Ideal Employer 2010-list. Random sampling is then performed on the different strata to get a final sample (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 187).

In this case, the sample of companies chosen for further research were randomly selected from the different strata by assigning each company a number, and then randomly selecting notes with the respective numbers on. In total, 14 companies were selected to be part of the sample, seven from each strata. The reason for choosing 14 companies was that it is generally recommended to have a large sample, to get a more accurate result (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 195). While a sample of 14 may not seem to be a very large sample, it must be considered that this study is a qualitative study with a limited time frame. Hence, for this study it is considered to be a sufficient sample. Also, the possibility of non-response is taken into consideration.

Furthermore, as the strata were relatively equal in size, the number of companies sampled from each group was the same.

## **3.6. Research Method**

Choosing a research method is the next step in the process, and this entails deciding how to conduct the research as well as how to collect the data needed. It is important to keep the research questions in mind and decide what kind of information is sought to be extracted. One method which is often used in the field of qualitative research is interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 472). The benefits of this method lie within its flexibility. The interviewer can decide between conducting structured or non-structured interviews, and also have the option to rephrase questions, asking follow up questions,

gain more insight to what the interviewees find relevant by letting them speak freely (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 474). The method chosen for this study was interviews.

Due to the fact that many of the participants had hectic schedules and limited time, an alternative consisting of a self-completion questionnaire was given. The participants were given the option to answer the self-completion questionnaire or participate in an interview via telephone. It is obvious that self-completion questionnaires can have drawbacks. For example: the questions can be misunderstood and no chance to explain them exist, there is no chance for follow up questions, and the respondents might not give as detailed answer due to having to write it down. Given the situation at hand this was the best solution to the problem, and all interviewees were urged to contact the researchers if they felt the questions were unclear.

In order to lessen the negatives, much time was spent on creating a clear questionnaire to avoid ambiguities. One way of making a clear questionnaire is to make sure the questions are well formulated. The issue of how to ask questions is of crucial concern and specific rules exist regarding how to design questions (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 258). It is important to bear in mind the specific research questions, what information is sought, and also make sure to avoid questions that are long, leading or too general (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 267). The questionnaire was conducted with the research question and the theoretical background in mind. Questions regarding event marketing, measurements of success and employer branding were formed on this basis, and each question responds to a specific part of the theoretical chapter. The answers were also analyzed with regards to the existing knowledge of the subjects.

To further improve the questionnaire and assure clarity in questions, a pre-test was conducted. According to Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 273), a pre-test can be a crucial help when doing self-completion questionnaires, since it can help ensure that the instrument functions well. The pre-test was conducted on a firm that attends events, but has not participated in Uniaden and that are not part of our population. The reason for conducting the test was to get an idea of how well the questions worked, if they gave the information sought after and to find out if any improvements could be made. On the basis of the pre-test, the questionnaire was evaluated and slightly modified, some questions were rephrased and one question, which was too similar to another question and therefore did not provide any useful information, was excluded.

### **3.7. Quantitative and Qualitative Research**

Research can be divided in two types depending on what kind of data the research will be based on. Quantitative research deals with information that can be quantified, data that can be given numbers and that can be analyzed by using programs, such as the statistical computer program SPSS. The other type of research is qualitative, which is focused on gathering information in the form of words (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 402). This method is used when the researcher wants to look deeper into a topic and facts which cannot be quantified will be needed.

As this is an explorative study, the objective is not to draw any general conclusion about a phenomenon or a whole population, but to explore what the current views of the selected companies are on the subjects. Therefore, the qualitative method was chosen for this research as interviews have been performed to gain deeper knowledge of the

different companies view on event marketing and employer branding. The questions have been open ended questions which are hard to evaluate quantitatively.

### **3.8. Data Generation**

The sampled firms were contacted via email, this mode of contact was chosen because of its ease and flexibility. First of all, making fourteen phone calls would take a considerable amount of time which was saved by contacting the firms via email. Secondly emailing gave the firms a chance to discuss within themselves if they wish to participate or not instead of making the inquiry over the phone, when it can be difficult for them to say no. There are negatives connected with email contact as well, the firms might be slow at answering, or not bother to answer at all when receiving an email from an unknown person. However, in this case, the queries were sent to the people in charge of information questions in the different companies. This because they were assumed to be more receptive to queries from unknown people, and also because they might know have better knowledge regarding who to contact to get the best answers on the topic. In this case, the advantages of email contact were found to outweigh the negatives.

At first contact the purpose of the study was explained and the companies were informed that although their firms name would appear as part of the population, their answers would not be linked to them in the actual study. Some of the participants had limited time to spare due to busy schedules and business trips in the near future, and therefore interviews were not possible to conduct. Therefore they were given the option to the answer the questions in writing, which helped to a great deal to give more data to the study. While this was not the optimal way of conducting a study, the fact that these people took the time to answer the questions at all were of great benefit to the scope of the study.

### **3.9. Analyzing the Data**

After finalizing the data collection the next step in the research process is to analyze the findings. According to Gummesson (2005, p. 311), although it is extremely important how data is collected, what happens after the collection of data is equally important. Qualitative data is attractive because of its richness, but it can be rather difficult to find a path through it since it often contains large amounts of data (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 579). For quantitative data specific rules about analysis exist, but this is not the case when it comes to qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 579). Researchers have different ideas of how to conduct the data analysis, and this section will discuss some of the possibilities.

Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 22) have divided the data analysis into three steps including data reduction, data displays, and conclusion drawing. The first step of data reduction refers to the process of taking the raw data that has been gathered and selecting, focusing, simplifying and transforming it (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21). The second part of the process is data display. This is the part where the researcher tries to put the gathered information into some sort of matrix or scheme (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21). Since qualitative research can contain large amounts of data organizing the information will make it easier to grasp and access and that makes the analysis easier. The third part of the analysis deals with conclusion drawing. The researcher tries to decide what things mean, notes regularities, pattern and explanations (Miles &

Huberman, 1984, p. 22). The researcher holds these thoughts throughout the whole process but it is first at the end that the final conclusions are drawn.

This way of data analysis does not follow a specific pattern or a straight line. Generating the data and starting the analysis can be done throughout the whole research life and it is continuous process. The researcher can go back and forth between the steps of analysis, for example, when entering data into a matrix during the data display it may lead to the researcher going back to do further reduction (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 23).

When conducting the analysis some other ideas can be beneficial to keep in mind. When it comes to qualitative research the researcher himself is one of the most important instruments in use, the analysis and interpretation is dependent on the individual (Gummesson, 2005, p. 314). Human qualities such as intuition, common sense, experience, wisdom, knowledge, and ethics should be combined with research techniques (Gummesson, 2005, p. 314). According to Gummesson (2005, p. 314), a well developed intuition means that an individual can quickly process and draw conclusions from a big mass of data, although intuition can contain bias that is also true for other analysis techniques. It is important for the researcher to offer more than one interpretation of the data and to argue both for and against them. The researcher should offer alternatives in order to increase credibility (Gummesson, 2005, p. 315). And in order to take the readers closer to the reality it is important that the data is accounted for completely and that contradictory data is not left out (Gummesson, 2005, p. 315).

These different views have all been the basis for the analysis conducted in this study. The gathered data consists of interview material from the participating firms. Firstly, the data was collected and arranged in a such a way to make it easy to read and review. The analysis was done on a firm to firm basis meaning that one firms answers' will be examined at a time. The next step was to put all the information together in order to find similarities, links or differences. The information from the gathered data was also examined with the theoretical background in mind.

### **3.10. Assessing the Quality of Research**

When it comes to quantitative research there is three criteria to consider when evaluating your research and these connect to all different research designs (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 40). Reliability deals with the question of whether or not the results of a study are repeatable or not (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 40). Replication is the second criterion and it is concerned with the fact that a study conducted must be replicable (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 41). For example if another researcher wants to do redo the research on another, therefore it is extremely important that the research is clearly explained and the process is given in detail (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 41). The last criterion deals with validity which is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions generated from a research (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 41).

While these criteria may seem irrelevant to a qualitative study, some researchers argue that the same criteria can be used, and others that they cannot be used (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 410). Three different positions have been taken by researchers. The first position is to adopt the criteria of validity and reliability, but to change them somewhat so they better work with qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 410). For



example: the same amount of external reliability is difficult to achieve in qualitative research, since the social setting change over time and therefore would not produce same outcome if examined a second time (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 410). The second position taken by researchers is that a whole new set of criteria should be developed so that they better fit the qualitative research method. The third and final position taken on the issue lies somewhat between the first and second one (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 414).

In this case, it is possible to conduct the same study as the population has been clearly defined, as well as the procedures of sampling and collection of data. This research has been assessed using a slightly modified version of the criteria used for quantitative research.

### **3.11. Questions for the Questionnaire**

*With the theoretical background as a basis, several questions were formed in order to gather knowledge of what the companies participating in Uniaden thought of event marketing in general, and recruitment events in particular. To gain deeper knowledge of some areas, follow-up questions were added.*

The first part of the study focused on the companies' thoughts of event marketing in general. The first question regarded the different types of events the companies usually attend. To gain a deeper understanding, follow-up questions about positive and negative aspects of the different events and whether the companies had considered to participate in other events were added.

*1a. What types of events do you company usually attend?*

*1b. What positive and negative aspects so you see in attending these different events?*

*1c. Have you considered participating in other types of events? Why did you choose not to attend them?*

The question regarding how often firms participate events was included in order to learn if events are in fact a common way of marketing for the firms. This because the frequency of participation could explain the knowledge the firms have about the subject.

*2. How often do you participate in marketing events?*

The next set of questions was included in order to get information on how widely used events are within the firms attending Uniaden. This to see whether events are only a small part of the companies' marketing activities or if events have a more prominent role among the marketing activities. These questions seemed beneficial to the research, as the examined literature often mentions the growing importance of event marketing to firms. They provide an interesting aspect to this statement, but with a view of the companies participating in Uniaden. Asking the companies in what way participating in events is beneficial to the companies adds further scope to the question.

*3a. How important are events as part of your marketing strategy?*

*3b. How are the participation in events beneficial to your company?*

The next questions were formed to examine how companies follow-up events and evaluate the effects of them. To add another aspect of the question, the companies were asked what other methods they had considered using. Also, the second question could provide an overview of how familiar the companies are with what different measures would be appropriate when measuring the effectiveness of event marketing.

*4a. How does your company evaluate how profitable an event has been? Which parameters do you measure?*

*4b. Are there any alternative methods you have considered using?*

As the companies in this study all participated in Uniaden, this event was the focus of the questions about recruitment events. In order to see if the companies' objectives for participating in Uniaden were different from their objectives when participating in other types of events, a question about their objectives with participating in Uniaden was formed. Also, to see how successful the companies believed their participation was, a question of whether they had achieved these objectives was included. To gain further knowledge in how the companies evaluate their participation in recruitment events, a question of how the companies measure the effects of their participation in Uniaden was included as well.

*5a. What is your objective with participating in recruitment events, such as Uniaden?*

*5b. Do you think you have achieved these objectives? Why/Why no?*

*5c. How do you measure the effects of your participation in Uniaden?*

The next set of questions deal with recruitment and employer branding. Uniaden is a event marketed as an recruitment event, and with the focus of the event being on recruitment it would be interesting to see if the firms knew more about the subject. Employer branding is a term often used in literature and denotes a highly used recruitment tool. The first question was asked in order to see if the companies knew about the expression. In the case of a positive answer follow up questions regarding how they used the tool in their recruitment as well as how they thought they had benefited from the use the concept were added. This was done to get a deeper understanding when it came to their use of employer branding.

*6a. Are you familiar with the expression “employer branding? If no, continue to question 7. If yes:*

*6b. How does your company use this in the recruitment process?*

*6c. Do you think your company has benefited from the use of an employer brand?*

Finally, the last question was included to give the companies an opportunity to add any other comments they had on event marketing and recruitment events.

*7. Do you have any other thoughts on event marketing or recruitment events?*

The final questionnaire that was sent out to the companies can be found in appendix 1.

## 4. Empirical Findings and Analysis

*In this chapter, the empirical findings will be presented, discussed and analyzed in relation to the theoretical background provided earlier. The aim is to find possible similarities and differences in the answers of the questionnaires, and also to answer the research questions. The questions will be discussed in numerical order.*

Out of the 14 sampled companies which were invited to participate in this study, eight replied. One out of these eight, one declined the invitation due to lack of time. The remaining seven were sent a questionnaire and asked to answer all questions as detailed as possible. One of these seven companies ended up declining after seeing the questions due to lack of time to answer them properly. In the end, three companies in each group answered.

As the companies and their representatives have been promised anonymity, the companies will be assigned a pseudonym, which will be shown in the list below. The different companies have been assigned a Greek letter to make possible to identify which company said what. No differences have been found between the two groups however the companies will be presented according to these groups for simplicity.

Well-known companies:

1. Company Alpha
2. Company Beta
3. Company Gamma

Less well-known companies:

1. Company Delta
2. Company Epsilon
3. Company Sigma

## **4.1 Why do firms participate in different marketing events?**

As discussed in the theoretical background, the importance of event marketing has increased in the past two decades. This had been proven to be true in the United States, and was assumed to be the case for Sweden as well. The results of this study agree with this, as five out of the six studied companies said that event marketing was a very important part of their marketing strategy. The one firm that does not consider events to be important, states that this is because they act within a narrow industry. Many of the companies mention that they attend different industry specific events, and there are similarities between what kind of events the different companies attend, but no special types of events stand out.

All the firms see positive aspects with attending marketing events, the most mentioned aspects were the opportunity to connect with people on a more personal level, increase awareness of the firm and its business, and reach the targeted audience. When it comes to the reasons for participating in recruitment events, the reasons are similar to the positive aspects of events in general: strengthening the brand and making students aware of the company's existence is mentioned consistently. This is very much in line with the literature on the subject, both Sneath et al. (2005) and Lanner and Söderberg (2006) gives interaction and face-to-face contact as a reason why the use of event marketing has increased, which is what the companies seem to be after. Some of the companies provided a more detailed description of what kind of interaction they were seeking at recruitment events. Company Gamma said that the personal contact is “the key to reach out”, and mentions that events are used both to introduce the company to new students, as well as to follow up on the students they have met before. In addition, company Beta said that they used events to understand how youths' think and what youths find important. This is said to be an important aspect to company Beta when directing their marketing efforts. Company Delta mentions that as they seek to change attitudes through their participation in events, and that the close contact they are after is hard to get with traditional marketing tools.

Looking at the awareness factor of events, Behrer and Larsson (1998) states that this is one of the most common objectives of using event marketing, which is the results of this study agrees with. However, the kind of awareness the companies were after at Uniaden differs. Company Gamma states that they wanted to make both potential future employees aware of the company, but also the students which are potential future customers. This means that the company had more than recruitment objectives for their participation in Uniaden. Company Delta stated that making their industry and operations more visible to students. The problem of having an objective stating that the firm wants to create or increase awareness will be further discussed in relation to the next question.

Finally, reaching the target audience is also mentioned. As Wood (2009) mentions, event marketing is a way for companies to be more innovative in reaching their target audience. This point is in some ways similar to the previous point, personal contact, but not entirely the same. Company Delta's comment on events being beneficial as the company can get a closer contact with the customers compared to other traditional marketing media definitely has to do with reaching the target audience. Company Delta also mentions that events' broad target groups are beneficial to them, as they want to meet many different people. Company Gamma is not as positive to the wide audience of

larger events, but still finds it beneficial to be able to reach both potential future employees and potential future customers at events.

When it comes to negative aspects of event marketing, two of the companies stated that they cannot find any negative sides of events, the two companies being Sigma and Delta. This is interesting as company Sigma also is the only company which finds event marketing to be of relatively low importance to their marketing strategy. However, the low importance is said to be because of the character of the company, and probably also has to do with the fact that the company states to be more after spreading knowledge about their operations when attending events. Company Delta also has a different character of their company, compared to the rest of the companies. However, they find events to be of much importance to their company, this is most likely because they are after a change in behavior. The different views of the two companies seem to oppose Behrer and Larsson's (1998) view that events can be adapted to fit any firm's purpose or message. However, company Sigma may not find events to be important, but still seems to be satisfied with their participation in different events. The difference in views may simply be that the clientele of the companies are very different, Delta being a local company with their clientele in easier reach than company Sigma, which states that their clients are mainly European companies

The four remaining firms all mentioned different negative aspects worth considering. Several companies mention that events can be time consuming and also costly. This is contradicts Piesiewicz's (2010) and Behrer and Larsson's (1998) comment that events are a cost-effective strategy. Company Gamma also finds a negative aspect to be that large events can be challenging when trying to reach a specific target audience. In the firms' reasons for not attending some events, these negative aspects of event can be seen again. These reasons are lack of time and resources, and events not being directed at their target audience. However, all companies are positive overall to event marketing and state that they have achieved their objectives with their participation in Uniaden, if not fully, then at least to some extent.

All the firms in the study, which are all in operation within different industries and are of different sizes, use event marketing and all but one firm concludes that events are a very important part of their marketing strategy. While this result may be biased due to the fact that the sample was taken from a population which consisted of companies that all attend a recruitment event, the fact that event marketing is seen as very important is still interesting. This as it is in line with Close et al.'s (2006) statement that event marketing is taking over from the traditional marketing tools. One reason for the popularity of events may be, as Behrer and Larsson (1998) stated that it is a very adjustable marketing tool that can be used by all types of firms.

Furthermore, the companies Gamma and Delta mention that they also arrange events themselves. Delta arranges industry themed events, while Gamma arranges a variety of different events for both customers and students within their area of business. Gamma prefers this to participating in larger events, as they believe they get a more personal contact through their own events. In relation to Grönkvist's (2000) comment on own events being a more costly alternative of event marketing, it is likely that one reason for company Gamma's preference for own events is that it is a large company which can afford the increased costs of such events.

On the other hand, company Gamma mentions the costs of participating in other events to be one of the reasons that they may choose not to participate in more events. This

contradicts the assumption that participating in others' events is a cheaper alternative than creating own events. However, it should also be considered that company Gamma believes that larger events have a wider target audience than their own smaller events, making it harder for them to reach their particular target audience. With this in mind, it is not hard to assume that company Gamma has a well specified targeted audience which they feel they can attract through their own events. Also, with regards to costs, it may be so that the total cost of creating an own event is higher than to simply participate in an event, but that the cost per person within the targeted audience is higher for larger events.

To conclude, firms participate in marketing events for different reasons. The line of business that the firm operates in and the objectives they seek to achieve are the main things that influence the firms' choice of events. All the participating firms expressed that events hold positive aspects, but for different reasons. Overall, the companies were satisfied with their participation in Uniaden, and were positive towards the use of events.

## **4.2 How can the effectiveness of different marketing events be measured?**

All of the companies participating in the study seem to be satisfied with their participation in Uniaden, yet few of them seem to use any specific measurement methods to evaluate how effective their participation really was. When asked if they believed they had achieved their objectives with Uniaden, many said they believed that they had, referring to receiving many applications from students to do degree projects or internships with the company.

The firms feel that they have achieved their goals but still there seem to be a lack of clearly stated measurement methods used by the firms. One reason for this may be that the firms do not have any specific objectives which are measurable. According to Wood (2009) clear objectives is a key to measurement and also a key to achieving an successful event. Another reason for the lack of measurement tools can simply be that measuring event effectiveness is difficult. This is something that the different companies seem to be agreeing on, and is also consistent with Sneath et al.'s (2005) comment that many firms find it challenging.

Even though no particular methods are used, overall, the companies seem to evaluate their participation in events in some way. Company Beta said that they evaluate the events by letting the employees which attend the events document their view of the event, including taking notes of the amount of people who visit them and other attributes of those individuals. In addition, Company Delta states that they calculate the amount of people that visit them during the event, and also note how they perceived the students attitudes towards the company. Furthermore, company Sigma says that they only evaluate events to a small extent and that they do not use any particular method. Company Gamma and company Alpha also mentions that they use internal measurements to evaluate events, meaning they discuss how they perceived the quality of the event. Company Gamma also mentions the Universum Ideal Employer list as a more long-term measurement of their efforts, however this is said to be more of an overall measurement of all the company's marketing activities.

Examining the firms' answers in relation to Wood's (2009) three levels of evaluation, it can be confirmed that most of the firms are on level one or to some extent on level two, but none have reached the third level of evaluation. The first level deals with quantitative measures of attendees and media coverage of events, which can be compared with the companies using the amount of applications as a measurement of the success of the event, and of course also with company Delta's and company Beta's way of counting the number of people visiting their booth. To get to the second level of evaluation, more emphasis must be put on the attendees' experience of the event. Company Delta seems to try to get to this level of evaluation by trying to judge the attendee's attitude of the firm at the event. However, this is enough to reach the second level entirely, as they do not seem to ask the attendees about the experience of the event. As mentioned, none of the companies manage to reach the third level of evaluation, which includes measuring the change in attitudes or behavior of the attendees.

On the other hand, two of the firms mention that they evaluated their own experience of the event, this is not reflected in any of the levels of evaluation, but should maybe also be considered when looking at measurement of participating in events. This because the firm's actions at an event are likely to affect the target audience attitude of the firm. Also, as mentioned by company Gamma, sometimes the result of an event could have been affected by the way other firms acted at the event, rather than how the firm acted. Other firms being more successful may steal some of the attention that the other firms seek to get.

Some of the practical examples of measurement of events which were given in the theoretical background can be spotted in this study as well. James' (2004) example of firms measuring the effectiveness by the amount of students that apply for positions at their firms is the one example that seems to be most used. However, James' (2004) examples give a picture of firms putting a lot of effort into finding an effective way of measuring events, while the firms in this study does not seem to put as much effort into measurement. The reason for this may be the high costs associated with measuring. If the companies feel that they cannot afford attending some events, they probably cannot afford investing more in measurement of events. Another reason for the difference in use of measuring compared to James' (2004) examples may be that the firms in the examples are large companies operating in the United States, and that the progress there has come further then it has in Sweden.

Although measuring is of importance, three firms state that they have not considered any alternative evaluation methods. Why they have not considered any other methods is not stated, but one reason could be lack of knowledge of other methods. The companies Beta and Delta on the other hand, express an interest in suggestions of other methods, but do not give any examples of methods. Company Epsilon is the only company which gives an example, which is web surveys.

An addition to the problem of measurement is the possible spillover effects of other promotional activities. Both Sneath et al. (2005) and Wood (2009) agree that it is difficult to isolate and separate the effects of events from outside influences. This is something that company Gamma emphasizes when stating that they get statistics of how many students from Umeå University that apply for internships or employment with



their firm, but that is impossible to say whether the number of applications depends on their attendance at Uniaden or other parameters that may have an effect.

This problem can also be connected to Sneath et al.'s (2005) concept of IMC, stating that the effects of individual communications cannot be measured separately, since other communications can also have an effect. If the only objective of participating in an event is to increase the number of students applying for work, that increase would be an appropriate measurement of the outcome of the event. However, events are most often used in order to achieve more than one objective, meaning more aspects must be measured. Looking at the firms answers when it comes to why they attend events them all seem to have more than one objective with participation. According to the concepts of IMC, the solution is to measure all the companies' marketing efforts together, not trying to separate the effects of different parts of the marketing. While this is probably the measurement that is easiest to use in real life, it does not help evaluate the effectiveness of particular events.

To conclude, even though the firms measure the effectiveness of event marketing to some extent, no specific measurement method could be noted within the answers. This can be due to the firms lack of knowledge regarding the subject or because there are not effective methods today. As was stated in the theoretical background, because of the nature of events, it may not be possible to find or create one universal method of measurement of events. It would also be difficult to create one single method that can measure all the aspects of the event, which would not be an effective measurement as the missing aspects may have great influence on the final outcome.

### **4.3 How is employer branding used by firms today?**

When researching the subject of external recruitment, the importance of marketing quickly showed. Scientists seemed aware of the fact that the company's image does have an important role in the recruitment process, however it was not clear in what way. However, the importance of branding for the early stage of the recruitment process was evident, as it refers to making potential employees attracted to the company. Here, the increasing use of different types of media was mentioned, and one of the media was said to be events, such as career fairs. It should however be noted that this is only one of many types of media used in recruitment marketing and that a mix of several media is said to be the most effective method. Soon, the term *employer branding* appeared in more recent studies, and this concept seem to be the key connection between marketing and recruitment. The equivalent connection between recruitment and event marketing is participating in career fairs as part of the employer branding effort.

Out of the six examined companies, four were familiar with employer branding in some way. The two well-known companies who were familiar with the expression, company Beta and company Gamma, both mentioned the Universum Ideal Employer list in connection with employer branding. Company Beta mentioned that they had started working with an employer branding firm to measure students' current view of the company and to get a better rating in the Ideal Employer list. Their recent organizational change is mentioned as a possible reason for the current (in their view) low placement on the list, and the change of name is said to have created a need to re-brand as an employer. However, company Beta also states that surveys show that the company is

seen as an attractive employer because of its size and innovativeness. This information is also used in its recruitment process, indicating a successful employer branding effort.

Many of the other firms also express a wish to be seen as an attractive employer, and mentioned this as one of their main objectives of participating in career fairs. Strengthening the brand and making themselves visible to students are mentioned in almost all answers to why they participate in recruitment events. This is in line with Torrington et al.'s (2005) comment of the increasing importance of image and branding in recruitment.

In addition, Company Alpha was not familiar with employer branding, but mentioned that participating in events was beneficial to them regarding increasing awareness of the firm. As a comment to this statement, company Alpha also added that they wished to be the company that students, within their area of business, first turns to when looking for internships, degree projects, and employment. This appears to be an effort from company Alpha that is very similar to employer branding, as the company obviously seeks to differentiate itself from other companies in the industry towards potential future applicants, the students. This is an interesting angle to employer branding, as the company is not aware of the concept itself, but still practicing the idea of it. However, the reason may simply be that the interviewee was not aware of the concept, while others in the company may be the ones in charge of such branding efforts.

Company Gamma said that the company's employer branding efforts were governed on a more central level of the firm, meaning the different local offices receives guidelines of how to contact students from the central administrative part of the firm. This assures consistency in the firms' recruitment marketing efforts. Company Gamma believes they have benefited from the use of an employer brand, but on a larger scale than locally.

Company Sigma knew of the expression, but stated that it was not a primary focus of the company at the moment, but that the company had started working on forming company values. However, they do mention that these values will be used in the future to show the company as an attractive employer. In this answer, it seems as company Sigma is only familiar with the external part of employer branding, or employer brand associations. This because they mention that they have started working on an important aspect of employer branding, the internal part. A common set of values is a good way to show future employees what the company culture is like. Furthermore, company Sigma (LK) even states that these values will be used in an effort to be perceived as an attractive workplace to potential future employees. This means that company Sigma, despite their own belief, is in fact working on their employer brand. As the theoretical background states, the internal part of employer branding may just be the most important and challenging part of the whole process.

Company Sigma also expresses a wish to change the old image of the through through the work with company values. This is in a way similar to company Beta's problem with a need to re-brand due to a name change. While company Beta invests in outside help with employer branding, company Sigma chooses to start from within. On the other hand, company Beta may have already worked through the internal factors during their organizational change, and now be ready to move on to the next step, external aspects of employer branding. As a counterweight, Gatewood et al.'s (1993) research showed that the image did not have much to do with the attractiveness of the company to students,

only the visibility of the company. However, it is possible that this has changed over the years and the type of image know matters more than it used to.

Overall, Uniaden seems to have been a way for the attending companies to strengthen their employer brand and make them more visible to the students of Umeå University. As no differences between the two groups of companies were found, the findings of this study indicates that employer branding and an employer image is beneficial to firms of all sizes, as was previously stated by Torrington et al. (2005). In the end, most firms seem to use employer branding to attract potential employees to the company.

## 5. Conclusion

*In this chapter the final conclusions of the thesis will be state. Theoretical contributions and recommendations for future research will also be presented.*

In the introductory chapter it was stated that the aim of the research is to explore why firms decide to attend different types of even, how they measure the effectiveness of these events and how employer branding is used by firms today. These queries were explored by conducting a study with firms who had attended Uniaden. Furthermore the purpose of the study was to gain information regarding how these firms use events in marketing and employer branding. This was done in order to fill in the existing information gap and increase the body of knowledge on the specific topic. This as it was noticed that little information was available and no academic research investigating the topic could be found.

The aim was that the study would provide creators of events and firms attending events with valuable information that could possibly help them improve their use of events and their measurement of the effects of events. Hopefully this research will be a positive step forward that will lead to more research being done in this field in the future.

Based on the discussion of the three research questions some main conclusions have been made:

- Firms use events for differing reasons. The main reasons are because of the opportunity of getting more personal contact with individuals, increasing individuals' awareness of the firm and its business, and reaching the firm's targeted audience. Events also has some negative aspects, the most commonly mentioned are that they are time consuming and costly. Creating own events also seem to be more beneficial for companies with a well-defined target group, however these events are also costly.
- Measurement is difficult, more knowledge and more specific tools are needed. Few of the examined firms have well functioning measurement methods and several companies request alternative methods. What seems to be the problem for most companies is that their objectives are too abstract and hard to measure, and that their current measurement methods do not measure the stated objectives. By starting with defining more concrete objectives, the firms will be able to get more concrete results as well.
- Employer branding is a rather new term, but still seems to be a concept which most of the firms are familiar with. Firms use it to attract potential employees and all types of firms seem to use it.

Due to the interpretivist nature of this research, the possibilities of making clear separations and generalizations are limited. It should therefore be kept in mind that the information found in the study cannot be assumed to be applicable to all cases of companies using event marketing.

## **5.1 Theoretical and Practical Contributions**

Little research existed on the subject of event marketing and recruitment, this research is a contribution to this pool of knowledge. Even though the research may not have lead to any revolutionary findings, it is can be used as a starting point for further research in the subject.

One of the aims with this study was to provide firms participating in marketing events with knowledge that could help them improve their use and measurement of events. Most firms stated that they participate in events and they all have reasons for attending, but the research findings show that most of the firms do not have clear objectives, which makes it hard to measure the effects of the events. Event marketing has many advantages, but competition is likely to make it harder to reach out to customers or other individuals using this method of communication. Therefore the firms cannot trust in event marketing to do the work for the firms, but the firms have to work with the event to get the most out of them. There is room for improvement when it comes to firms participation in events and clearly stated objectives that can be measured may help increase the effectiveness of events.

## **5.2. Future research**

Finally some recommendations for future research will be made.

Due to limitations regarding time, this research had to be done in a small scale only examining one specific event and a limited amount of sampled firms. If similar research is to be carried out in the future, conducting it on a larger scale would be beneficial. An example could be to investigate several events to widen the scope and take away any specifics within certain types of events that might influence the research. Increasing the sample and interviewing a larger number of firms would increase the amount of data and make it possible to detect any similarities or differences that conclusions can be drawn from.

In most cases the people being interviewed for the research only had knowledge of the firm's event marketing efforts in the northern region of Sweden. Research conducted on a more nationwide level would definitely be an interesting contribution to this field.

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## 7. Appendices

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire

The first part (question 1-4) concerns all types of events, with the exception of sponsorship. By events, we mean those where you are participants yourselves, not the events that the company sponsors. The second part (question 5-6), refers to pure recruitment events, such as Uniaden.. If any of the questions are unclear, please contact us for a further explanation. Please answer as detailed as possible.

- 1a. What types of events do your company usually attend?
- 1b. What positive and negative aspects do you see in attending these different events?
- 1c. Have you considered participating in other types of events? Why did you choose not to attend them?
2. How often do you participate in marketing events?
- 3a. How important are events as part of your marketing strategy?
- 3b. How is the participation in events beneficial to your company?
- 4a. How does your company evaluate how profitable an event has been? Which parameters do you measure?
- 4b. Are there any alternative methods you have considered using?
- 5a. What is your objective with participating in recruitment events, such as Uniaden?
- 5b. Do you think you have achieved these objectives? Why/Why not?
- 5c. How do you measure the effects of your participation in Uniaden?
- 6a. Are you familiar with the expression “employer branding? If no, continue to question 7. If yes:
- 6b. How does your company use this in the recruitment process?
- 6c. Do you think your company has benefited from the use of an employer brand?
7. Do you have any other thoughts on event marketing or recruitment events?

**Thank you for participating in this study!**



## Appendix 2. The final division of the participants of Uniaden

### Well-known

Adecco Sweden AB  
Accenture  
Akzo Nobel AB  
BAE Systems Hägglunds  
Deloitte  
Eon sverige ab  
Ericsson AB  
Ernst & Young  
Folksam  
Ge Healthcare  
IKEA  
Konsum Nord  
KPMG  
Logica  
LRF Konsult AB  
Länsförsäkringar Västerbotten  
Manpower AB  
NCC  
Nordea  
Peab Sverige AB  
Ramböll Sverige AB  
Sandvik  
SCA  
Set Revisionsbyrå KB  
Skatteverket  
Sogeti Sverige AB  
Svevia  
Sweco  
Swedbank  
Telenor Sverige AB  
Tieto Sweden AB  
Tyréns AB  
Vattenfall AB  
Volvo group  
ÅF  
Öhrlings PricewaterhouseCoopers AB

### Less well-known

Atea Sverige AB  
Bdo Nordic  
Boliden Mineral AB  
Centrala Studiestödsnämnden  
Element Six AB  
Energoretea Group  
Epsilon Tekno AB  
Hägglunds Drives AB  
Indexator AB  
Komatsu Forest AB  
Kommunerna i fyrkanten (Piteå, Lu  
Kramfors kommun  
M-real Sverige AB  
Martinsons Såg AB  
Mondi Dynäs  
Nomura  
Norra skogsägarna  
Outotec Sweden AB  
Processum Biorefinery Initiative AF  
proffice sverige ab  
Skanska Sverige AB  
SKC  
Skellefteå kommun  
Skellefteå kraft AB  
Smurfit kappa kraftliner  
Studentconsulting AB  
Totalförsvarets Forskningsinstitut (I  
Umeva  
Umeå energi  
Umeå kommun  
Vitec software group ab  
Vizrt ardendo  
Wsp Sverige AB  
Örnsköldsvik kommun.

Source: Anmälda företag 2010 | Uniaden: <http://www.uniaden.com/anmalda-foretag-2010> (accessed on 2010-02-02)



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