

# Employer Branding

Likenesses and Differences between External and  
Internal Employer Brand Images

Emma Melin

Luleå University of Technology

MSc Programmes in Engineering

Department of Business Administration and Social Sciences  
Division of Industrial marketing and e-commerce

## **Preface**

This master thesis will conclude my education for Master of Science in Industrial Engineering and Management at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. It has been performed at the Division of Industrial Marketing and e-Commerce.

Realising my interest and curiosity in how companies are marketing themselves as employers, it stood clear that this would be my field of work for my final thesis. I was in the beginning not aware of the great interest starting to be directed towards employer branding. However, shortly after having started my work, I realised that it is a burning topic, given more and more attention. It has therefore been even more interesting and encouraging to get more insight into the world of employer branding.

For contributions to this thesis I would like to sincerely thank the people that have helped me during this period of time. First of all my supervisor, Håkan Perzon, for his guidance and support. I would also like to thank my supervisor and contact person at my assigning company, who provided me with great ideas and inspiration. A great thank also to the contact persons at the companies participating in this research, and Universum Communications for providing me with information. Without their assistance this research would not have been possible.

Last but not least I would like to thank my family and friends, who have shared my moments of hope and despair, providing me with great support and laughter. A special thank to my dear friend Camilla Westerlund, for sharing her floor space and incredible spirit, and Karolina Parding, for all moments during this period.

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## Abstract

Most studies show that we are entering a longer period of lack of competence, and more people are showing interest in the matter. The demand for qualified working capacity is increasing faster than the offering, both in Sweden and internationally. As competition in the labour market has intensified, companies have shown an ever-increasing interest in strategies to differentiate themselves. Strong demand for specific skills, in addition to ever tighter labour markets generally, is making it much more difficult both to retain current employees and to recruit new employees.

*Employer Branding* is called the 'hottest strategy in employment'. It is an international concept referring to the work with making the identity clear as employer. The result is the companies' images as employer, both internally and externally.

Strategic work with a company's employer brand should be focused at the common images found externally and internally. In order to develop a strong employer brand, it is necessary to demonstrate what is specific about your organisation and its culture. However, awareness of possibly existing differences and likenesses in attitudes within certain groups will make a strategic work more efficient. The objective with this research was to examine the existence of similarities and differences between external and internal employer brand images.

Universum Communication is an international research and management consulting firm, working with understanding the career expectations of today's students and young professionals. Young professionals, i.e. individuals between the age of 25-35, with an academic background and up to eight years of working experience, will probably be the markets most wanted work force. The other group of interest concerning competence on the future labour market are the students of today. Communicating with these groups is a critical success factor for companies/organisations today.

The research by Universum Communication conducts quantitative surveys about the opinions of students and young professionals regarding recruitment and lifestyle issues. In this research information collected from their surveys concerning students and young professionals was serving as reflection of the external employer brand images. For obtaining comparable data of internal employer brand images among employees, a survey was designed for this research. Three companies were investigated, in this study referred to as company A, B and C, due to requirements for being anonymous. The students and young professionals included were the ones seeing these three companies as ideal employers.

Found in this research as common for all three companies was that among all respondent groups, *varying work* and *exciting products* are frequent expected offers and associations. Three associations were over all neither common, nor uncommon, coincidentally for all three companies. These were *good leadership/ management*, *innovative solutions* and *strong clear company culture*. Among the least frequent associations for any of the companies, for any of the respondent groups, was a *too competitive working environment*.

For this research the objective was also to examine whether there are coincidence concerning differences. Overall the employees at the three companies are appreciating *possibilities for advancement/ promotion* offer very little, while the external groups tend

to expect it more, especially the young professionals. *A good reference for future carrier, project based work, competitive compensation and tasks that mean bigger challenges* are for all three companies something that people on the outside are expecting more than the employees are appreciating it.

*Flexible working hours* are for all employees a highly appreciated offer. *Good reputation & and highly thought of* is also more frequently associated with the companies among their employees, then among the external groups. The size of the gap to the external groups varies between the companies. However, it is clearly so that all employees are strongly associating their employer with good reputation.

When it comes to *employees with varying background* one thing is in common for all three companies: the two working groups, the employees and young professionals are paying more attention to it than the students. *A dynamic organisation* on the other hand is less associated with the companies among the working groups, than among the students.

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## Chapter 1 Problem area

*This chapter contains a general introduction together with the background to why the problem area is relevant and interesting to look into.*

### 1.1 Introduction

In one of the university computer labs, one late afternoon in January 2005, some students are talking about the latest 'Company-days', LARV (Luleå Arbetsmarknadsdagar). Ears dropping to their conversation, it's apparent that the situation has already changed, just since last year. A year ago the comments from the companies represented were everywhere the same: "We do not hire at the moment, but please check out our webpage and remember us for later!". This year the attitude was different. The bigger companies were still rather neutral, but the attitudes among the smaller companies were the total opposite. They seemed to have realised that hard times are ahead of them, when it comes to possibilities in recruiting. However, this will not be an issue only for smaller companies.

Most studies show that we are entering a longer period of lack of competence, and more people are showing interest in the matter. The demand for qualified working capacity is increasing faster than the offering, both in Sweden and internationally. (Talent Talk, 2003).

The population getting older is in the long run the biggest challenge for Swedish economy. Already during the recent recession 17 percent of the small businesses in Sweden are claiming that the biggest obstacle for expansion is lack of labour, a situation that will become worse, as people born in the 40's will retire. (Wassaether, 2003)

As competition in the labour market has intensified, companies have shown an ever-increasing interest in strategies to differentiate themselves. Strong demand for specific skills, in addition to ever tighter labour markets generally, is making it much more difficult both to retain current employees and to recruit new employees. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)

"The hottest strategy in employment", to use words of Dr. Sullivan, is gathered under the international concept *Employer Branding*. It is the work with making the identity clear as employer. The result is the companies' images as employer, both internally and externally (Talent Talk, 2003). According to The Corporate Leadership Council a strong *Employment Brand* is one of the best weapons on a competitive labour market.



## 1.2 Background

“Your Brand and your people are the most important competitive advantages in the New Economy”, Mark Hornung says in his article “Employer Branding in a Recession” from 2001. Adding the fact that well-educated and talented people are becoming harder to find, recruiting and retaining personnel becomes an important issue. (Larses, 2001)

### 1.2.1 Increased competition of competence on the labour market.

Talent Talk is on their webpage mentioning three main factors, causing the increased competition on the labour market. These factors are presented in the figure below.

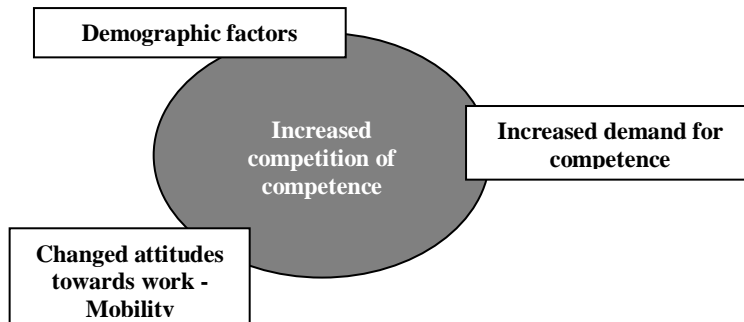


Figure 1: Factors influencing the competitive labour market (<http://www.talenttalk.se>)

#### *Demographic factors*

In year 2004 the first people born in the 40's, between 1944 and 1950, retired. Nearly 90.000 were supposed to leave the Swedish labour market, a number that will be surpassed each of the following nine years. The first years do not include that many people. From 2008 the more serious emanation will start, and most critical the emanation will be in year 2011, when more than 124.000 people will celebrate their 65-th anniversary. During the next ten years, 1,1 million Swedes will retire. The large amount of people born in the 40's is not a typical Swedish phenomenon. The same goes for the rest of Europe. (Andersson, 2005)

However, according to prognoses by SCB (Statistiska Centralbyrån), there is no risk for a lack of labour in general, or an increased burden when it comes to supplying the labour market. The problematic will instead be about a misbalance on the labour market. There will be a demand for some groups, and for some not. There will possibly be a high rate of unemployment, but at the same time a lack of competence. (Talent Talk, 2003) For example in the U.S. between the years 1996 and 2006, job growth for positions requiring a bachelor's degree is projected at nearly double the job growth rate in general, according to Hughes, Rugh & Murphy, using statistics from the Bureau of Labour Statistics.

At the same time as the old people are being retired, and disappearing from the labour market, the amount of people on the sick-list is also increasing. In addition to this there is also an increasing amount of young people that are being retired in advance.

#### *Increased demand for competence*

“Knowledge is Power”- an old saying with fresh meaning in today's competitive business climate”, is to read on UNC Charlotte's Belk College of Business's webpage. Today's business landscape is complex and competitive. Companies today are finding

themselves in an “ever-changing business climate”. (Randy Till, 2004). As the demand for increased capacity is getting higher, the demand for qualified people is also increasing. The situation is the same also in other countries, so Sweden can not count on that immigration of labour will solve the problem. (Talent Talk, 2003).

#### *Changed attitudes towards work – Mobility*

Another thing contributing to increased competition on the labour market is the changed view upon working life. People change jobs more often than before. (Talent Talk, 2003) The labour market today is much more fluid, with more and better information available to employees than ever before. Employees in this environment are coming to view their employment offer – or employment “value proposition” – like a product in a market – in this case the labour market. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999) For example, 72 percent of today’s young academics are rather, or very, interested in switching job at the moment. This according to Unversum Young Professional Survey 2003, Swedish Edition. This survey is done by Unversum Communications among more than 1800 young academics with a study background in the fields of technology/ science, finance, and computer science/ It.

### **1.2.2 Employer Branding**

“The hottest strategy in employment”, it is called - *Employment Branding*. It is one of the few long-term solutions to the "shortage of talent" problem. Whereas most employment strategies are short term and "reactive" to job openings, building an Employment Brand is a longer-term solution designed to provide a steady flow of applicants. (Sullivan, 1999 [2])

The Employer Brand concept is borrowed from marketing. It helps organisations focus on how they can identify themselves within their market as an employer of current staff, as a potential employer to new recruits and as a supplier or partner to customers. Employer Branding is a relatively new idea, but in practice some organisations have been making use of the idea implicitly for some time now. (Harding, 2003)

Employment branding is the process of placing an image of being a "great place to work" in the minds of the targeted candidate pool. It is a concept borrowed from the business side of the enterprise. Product Branding is designed to develop a lasting image in the minds of the consumer, so that they start to automatically associate quality with any product or service offered by the owner of the brand. An Employment Brand does the same, in that it creates an image that makes people want to work for the firm because it is a well managed firm where workers are continually learning and growing. Once the image is set, it generally results in a steady flow of applicants. Employment Branding uses the tools of marketing research, PR, and advertising to change the image applicants have of "what it is like to work at the firm." (Sullivan, 1999 [2])

According to Sullivan a successful Employment Branding strategy does the following:

- It develops a common theme so that current workers tell friends and contacts a similar story about what it is like to be an employee of the firm.
- It builds and reinforces the public's image of the firm's culture, work practices, management style, and growth opportunities.
- It coordinates the employment brand with the company brand and its different product brands.
- It continually monitors the firm's employment image both inside and outside the firm to ensure the brand image remains strong.
- It energizes the best potential candidates to apply for jobs at the firm.

**Figure 2: The goals for employment branding (Sullivan, 1999 [2])**

Whenever we consider the purchase of anything, we go through a series of steps, which Vallee is referring to as – “a buying model”. It has to be underlined though, that there are a number of different buying models. For example there is one by Kotler, which is presented in the following chapter.

However, it is true that a person goes through a series of steps, considering a purchase of anything. This goes for washing machines, mutual funds, clothes, cars, vacations and jobs. We don't make these decisions instantly, and we don't make them in isolation. The steps mentioned by Vallee, in ascending order toward the point of commitment, are: Trigger; Consideration; Search; Choose; and Buy. With an understanding of that there are different steps, the marketer attempts to build communication that will positively influence, assist – and ultimately persuade – the suitable and qualified prospect to move forward through each stage of the decision process towards the purchase. (Vallee, 2001)

Clearly, employers seek to achieve the same outcome from their recruitment marketing efforts. But in many cases, the employer does not have the understanding of the prospect's needs and wants, aspirations and concerns. In that knowledge vacuum (which most companies would never accept from the marketing function), connections are not established with prospects, and they are not provided the means to evaluate whether the job available would qualify as their “dream job”. (Vallee, 2001).

A strong and distinct profile does not only create an attractive working place. It can also function as a kind filter, and create better accuracy of aim by having, to a grater extent, suitable candidates trying to find their way to the company (Talent Talk, 2003). Keeping valuable competence is essential for any company or organisation. Finding the right people, fitting into the company culture, sharing its goals, values and attitudes, are increasing the chances for creating a ‘relationship’ that will last.

By clarifying one's advantages and valuations as employer the company also achieve higher motivation and commitment among current staff. (Talent Talk, 2003) Benefits of Employer Branding revolve around the notion of committed or engaged employees. Research has demonstrated the causal relationship between high levels of engagement and enhanced business performance. Organisations ignore low levels of engagement at their peril, not only because of the lost business benefit, but also because of the cost of replacement, training etc. Without high levels of engagement, it is difficult to envisage an organisation having a strong brand. (Dr. Stephen Harding, 2003)

### 1.2.3 The future competence

Two generations will dominate the future labour market. These are the Generation X'ers, and the Generation Y'ers. The Generation X generally consists of persons born in the 1960s and 1970s, although the exact dates of birth defining this age demographic are highly debated. It has also been described as consisting of those people whose "teen years touched the 1980s", born after baby boomers. (Wikipedia)

Generation Y'ers are young adults born between 1978 and 1986, and described as the upbeat, techno-savvy, educated focused, confident children of Baby-Boomers, and the younger siblings of Generation X. They are numbering 15 percent of the current workforce in Europe and North America. They are streaming into the workplace and will have great impact on how companies do business during the next 10 years. (Martin, 2002)

If instead talking in terms of competent work force on the future labour market, it can be divided into three groups that are normally mentioned: grand professionals, young professionals, and the students of today. Grand professionals are normally referred to as individuals above 40 years old, with a working experience longer than eight years. Young professionals are normally referred to as individuals between 20 and 40 years old, with an academic background, and up to eight years of working experience. Last but not least are the students of today.

### 1.2.4 Universum Communications

Universum Communication is an international research and management consulting firm, working with understanding the career expectations of today's students and young professionals. Their research conducts global quantitative surveys about the opinions of students and young professionals, regarding recruitment and lifestyle issues. Their vision is to improve communication and understanding between young people, graduates and the business community. During the past 15 years Universum Communications has closely monitored international human resource trends relating to the attraction, recruitment, and retention of top talent. They assist companies/organisations in understanding and communicating with future employees. Universum Communications helps companies/organisations to improve their Employer Image towards students and young professionals on a global basis. (<http://www.universum.se/>)

#### **The Universum Communications' Surveys**

The *Universum Graduate survey* is the leading attitude survey among students. The national surveys are based on information gathered from students studying business, engineering/science, IT (Sweden only) and law (Sweden only). The national survey is conducted in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Switzerland. In Sweden the survey is called "FöretagsBarometern". The Universum Graduate Survey contains and reflects information on students' attitudes and preferences relating to recruitment and their career expectations, as well as their opinions about specific companies that are trying to attract them. The survey is a tool that companies and organisations actively use to work towards long-term competence supply. By taking part in their survey each student automatically donates 1 Euro to the work of Save the Children and their different projects that help children in need. (<http://www.universum.se/>)

The *Universum Young Professional Survey* was introduced in Sweden in 1999, and was launched in 7 additional countries during 2001. The Universum Young Professional

Survey gathers the career opinions of individuals with an academic background within Business and Engineering and a maximum of eight years' professional experience. Today, many companies are focusing their recruitment on young professionals, and the information revealed in this survey can assist them in reaching this unique group of future employees.

Universum Communications is specially emphasizing the importance of the young professionals. On their webpage is to read that these individuals probably are to be the future labour market's most wanted work force. Building strong relations with this group gives companies a unique channel to profile themselves as future employers, as well as to enhance their company image. They also remarks that since these young professionals have a greater income than others in their age group, they are big consumers and should also be looked upon as potential customers and clients for your business.

However, the students of today should not be forgotten when talking of attractive competence on the future labour market. Short time after entering the market and gaining working experience, they will also be part of the attractive group of Young Professionals.

### **1.3 Summery of Problem Area**

Employer Branding is now an established international concept, used to define the strategic work with becoming an 'Employer of Choice'. This in to read in the The Conference Board's research report "Engaging Employees Through Your Brand", from 2001. It is also about continues marketing, that does not end by a signed contract. Also after the employment co-workers can continue being good ambassadors for the working place and some might even return. (Talent Talk, 2003)

Knowledge about where the company stands today lays as a foundation for the continuing work (Talent Talk, 2003). At the heart of Employer Branding is the need to understand what it is like to work for an organisation, and what drives employees' desire to keep working for that organisation. If employees are going to live up to the company brand promise, an organisation clearly needs to understand what drives their sense of engagement or commitment. A further reason for working with Employer Branding is a desire to understand what would attract future employees to a business. By focusing on the Employer Brand, organisations can better understand the attributes which are likely to attract new recruits to a business, allowing them to adapt their recruitment strategy accordingly. (Harding, 2003)

However, being an "Employer of Choice" entails more than success in recruiting and retention. Employees should choose not only to join the company and stay with it, but also to identify with its visions and values and give it loyalty, commitment, and performance, whatever the trend of the job market. Research has also demonstrated the causal relationship between high levels of engagement and enhanced business performance (Dell & al, 2001). This is where another benefit from a strong and distinct profile, and its function as a kind of filter, comes in. It creates a better accuracy of aim by, to a grater extent, having suitable candidates trying to find their way to the company. (Talent Talk, 2003)

“The statistics are unambiguous” is to read on Universum Communication’s webpage. Within five to ten years there will be a large deficit in the supply of competent university graduates. Young professionals, i.e. individuals between the age of 20-40 with an academic background and up to eight years of working experience, will probably be the markets most wanted work force. (<http://www.universum.se/>) The other group of importance are the students of today, who will be entering the labour market with fresh knowledge. In addition, they will also, in short time after entering the market and gaining working experience, be part of the attractive group of young professionals. As Universum Communications remarks on their webpage - Communicating with these groups is a critical success factor for companies/organisations today.

The biggest problem is being unclear about the purpose of the employer branding initiative. An organisation needs a clear view of what it is trying to achieve and needs to set clear goals and measures of success, otherwise it will not be successful. (Harding, 2003)

To possibly measure how successful an organisation has been with developing and implementing its employer brand, the measurement approach starts with an understanding of the internal dynamics of employer brands. This means the degree to which employees believe in, and support the goals and values of the organisation they work for. A measurement is made of the extent to which they feel that the practices and conditions in place reinforce these goals and values. Then through analysis of the survey data, it is possible to discover how organisations may be able to work on root causes of dissatisfaction. This to create more alignment between what employees believe the organisation should be providing, and what it is actually perceived as providing. (Harding, 2003)

From the recruitment standpoint, it is also possible to look at the extent to which the attributes described as characteristic of an organisation are reflected in the desires of potential new employees. For example, if new employees are particularly looking for great opportunities for training, but actual employees do not describe it as having this characteristic - there is clearly a mismatch. This needs to be addressed, if the organisation is to recruit the talent it needs. (Harding, 2003)

If organisations spend their time trumpeting their brand and then act in a different manner, for example by doing something unethical, then they will suffer the consequences. The world can be a very unforgiving place if you don't live out in reality the ideals you claimed to aspire to. It is impossible to portray yourself as something you are not - employees will see through this pretty easily. (Harding, 2003)

As Harding remarks, the employer brand concept is borrowed from marketing. Although there are differences between traditional marketing of products/services, and marketing of employment offers, there are also many similarities. One example of a difference, as Talent Talk remarks, is that the goal with employer branding is not to get as many applicants as possible, but the right ones.

However, there is a strong connection between employer branding and traditional marketing and branding. Sullivan is talking about how an employer brand, just like a product brand, is designed to develop a lasting image in the minds of the target pool. In this case an image to make people wanting to work for the firm. Employment branding

uses, like traditional marketing, the tools of marketing research, PR, and advertising. This to change the image applicants have of "what it is like to work at the firm" (Sullivan, 1999 [2]).

As mentioned earlier, Harding is underlining that a company/ organisation needs a clear view of what it is trying to achieve with its employer brand initiative, in order to be successful. With whom is communication desirable, through which means, and what message should be delivered? In order to build an employer brand strategy, it facilitates to use the guidance there is from the similarities between employer branding, and traditional marketing and branding.

In traditional marketing insight in consumer buyer behaviour is an important success factor. This insight is rendering possible a marketing communication that is effective. It is making it possible for marketing efforts to be done towards the right people, at the right moment, using the right message. This also goes for employer branding. Insight in the target candidate pool's attitudes and influencers is also when it comes to employer branding a necessity. Models of consumer buyer behaviour, Kotler's to mention one example, can be useful when creating awareness in these areas.

Reconnecting to the predicted future lack of competence, the question is how to create good communication with the attractive competence, both on the outside and on the inside. This means on the outside the students of today and the young professionals, as Universum Communications especially emphasises the importance of, and employees on the inside. Building a strong employer brand is a matter of creating a strategy for communicating truthfully an attractive employment offer. In order to do so it seems as a good idea to use the similarities applicable from traditional marketing and branding. In following chapter useful models, for example Doyle's model concerning building successful brands, and models revolving around consumer buyer behaviour will be presented. This in order to find guidance in how to successfully communicate with the attractive competence, both externally and internally.

## Chapter 2 Branding and consumer buyer behaviour

*The survey of theories in this chapter spring from the problem area discussed in previous chapter. What will be described in this chapter will be laying as a foundation for continued work. Here the branding concept will be presented, as well as consumer buying behaviour. At the end this will flow into the employer branding concept.*

### 2.1 Branding

In his book 'Living the brand' Ind is saying that there are as many definitions of 'brand', as there are theories of them. Doyle for example is using a definition: "A brand can be defined as a specific name, symbol or design – or, more usually, some combination of these – which is used to distinguish a particular seller's product.

#### 2.1.1 Building successful brands

Brands are at the heart of marketing and business strategy. Marketing is about decommoditizing the company's offer. If a company's offer is perceived to be the same as those of competitors, then consumers will be indifferent and will choose the cheapest or most accessible. Companies that are forced to compete on price rarely make satisfactory profits. The purpose of marketing is to create a preference for the company's brand. If customers perceive one brand as superior, they will prefer it and pay more for it. Brand equity is the value of these additional cash flows generated for a product because of its brand identity. Developing brand equity is a central issue for top management because it is a key determinant of corporate value. (Doyle, p157)

To understand the role of brands it is necessary to distinguish three concepts: a product, a brand and a successful brand. A *product* is anything that meets the functional needs of customers. This can be a *physical product*, alternatively a *service product*. At the most basic level, customers buy products to meet certain functional needs: a watch is bought to tell the time, a bank is used to save, transfer or borrow money.

Most suppliers will want to identify their own product and differentiate it from competitors' products. They do this by branding it. A *brand* can be defined as a specific name, symbol or design – or, more usually, some combination of these – that is used to distinguish a particular seller's product. A supplier will then normally try to create awareness and preference among customers for its brand. Awareness can be created by developing a striking presentation of the brand and spending sufficiently on advertising and promoting it. Creating brand preference, however, is more difficult. Many suppliers achieve high awareness, but are disliked by large sections of the market. These are *negative brands* – the brand name is a liability rather than an asset. (Doyle, p 158)

The specific characteristic of a *successful brand* is that, in addition to having a product which meets the functional requirements of consumers, it has added values which meet certain of their psychological needs. These *added values* are elicited feelings of confidence that the brand is of higher quality or more desirable than similar products from competitors. (Doyle, p158)



A successful brand (*S*) can be seen as a combination of an effective product (*P*), a distinctive identity (*D*) and added values (*AV*).

$$S = P * D * AV$$

The three characteristics of a successful brand are multiplicative rather than additive – each is essential. Without a good product it is impossible to create a successful brand. Similarly, unless differentiation and awareness can be developed, a good product will not leave the supplier's premises. (Doyle, p159)

### **Added values**

Added values – the subjective beliefs of customers – are at the heart of building successful brands. That such beliefs exist has been demonstrated on countless occasions. In tests where customers are presented with competitive products in an unbranded form, there is often no clear preference. But if a top brand name is attached, a dramatic switch in preferences invariably occurs. Not only will people prefer the strong brand name, but they will actually be willing to pay a higher price for it. (Doyle, 159)

Nor is the emotional impact to the brand limited to consumer goods. Doyle mentions a classic study by Professor T. Levitt at the Harvard Business School (1965), which clearly demonstrates that brand image has a significant effect on industrial buying decisions. He found that the more powerful the brand name, the greater the chance of the industrial buyer giving the company a hearing for a new product, and the greater the likelihood of its early adoption. (Doyle, p160)

### ***Sources of brand values***

That most buying decisions are influenced by brand values which are additional to those based upon real performance differences cannot be in doubt. There are two reasons why this occurs. First, the task of choosing competing products on technical or rational grounds is too difficult, time consuming and expensive for most buyers. The sheer volume of decisions to be made everyday, the pace of technical change, the number of competing alternatives and the bewildering variety of advertising and selling message mean that buyers look for safe short cuts. Reputable brand names provide confidence and allow customers to cut through the risks and complexity of choice.

The second reason that added values occur is that brands are bought for emotional reasons as well as functional. A Mercedes car is bought to make a personal statement as well as for a means of transport. People use brands to show off their lifestyles, interests, values or wealth. Customers choose brands that they perceive as meeting their 'needs'. But in today's affluent society, these needs, to borrow from Maslow's theory of motivation, are as likely to be about self-actualization or esteem, or to gain a sense of belonging, as they are to be basic physical or economic needs. (Doyle, 2002, p161)

### ***How added values occur***

How is it that some brands have strong images while others do not? Brand values derive from five main sources according to Aaker (2000) and listed by Doyle (2002, p161):

*Experience of use.* If a brand provides good services over many years of regular use, it acquires added values of familiarity and proven reliability. By contrast, a brand that is

often unsatisfactory in use or where, through lack of reminders, the customer slips out of a regular usage pattern will fail to acquire these positive associations.

*User associations.* Brands frequently acquire an image from the type of people who are seen as using them. Advertising and sponsorship are often used to convey images or prestige or success by associating the brand with glamorous personalities. In consumer tests, buyers will describe with great facility the types of people whom they perceive are driving a Volvo or are buying a Rolex.

*Belief in efficacy.* In many cases, if customers have faith that a brand will work, it is more likely to work effectively for them. For pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and even complex high-tech products, faith in a brand generates satisfaction in use. Beliefs in efficacy can be created by comparative evaluations and rankings from consumers associations, industry endorsements and newspaper editorials.

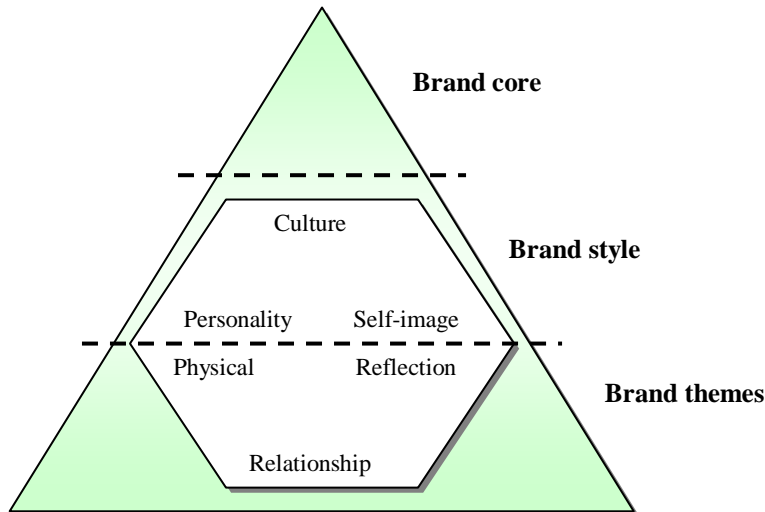
*Brand appearance.* The design of the brand can clearly affect preference by offering cues to quality. Levitt (1970, pp89-95), describes an experiment with expensive laboratory technology. Two designs of the same product were developed, one by engineers, the other one by professional designers. When the two models were shown to a sample of laboratory directors – all with PhDs in electronics – the professional design was overwhelmingly chosen.

*Manufacturers' name and reputation.* In many situations a strong company name attached to a new product will transfer positive associations, so providing confidence and incentive to trial.

### **Brand Identity**

A brand image refers to how the target market perceives the brand. A brand identity is the message sent out by the brand through its product form, name, visual signs, advertising, etc. The two are often different: what image people have of the brand can be quite different from the message that the company is seeking to communicate. Management should plan the brand's identity, since this is the key to acceptance in the market. To help managers plan and analyse a brand's identity, the dimensions of the brand need to be described. (Doyle, p163)

Kapfferer (1997) introduced the concept of the brand pyramid, consisting of three tiers, further on used by Doyle (2002, p164). Its fundamental or genetic code is the brand core, which remains fixed over time. The middle tier of the pyramid is the brand style, which articulates the brand core in terms of the culture it conveys, its personality and its image or self-projection. The base layer of the pyramid comprises the brand themes, which are how the brand currently communicates through its advertising, press releases, packaging, etc. Themes include the physical appearance of the product (colour, logo, packaging), its reflection (e.g. glamour, prestige). Brand themes are more flexible than the brand style and brand core, and will change with fashion, style and technology. Kapfferer describes the set of brand style and themes as the identity prism. (Doyle, p164)



**Figure 3: The brand pyramid by Kapfferer, (1997), is containing the brand identity. (Doyle, 2002, p164)**

The concepts of the brand prism and brand pyramid are useful. First, they enable management and their agencies to understand the brand, its strengths and opportunities. Second, they help develop brand strategy and the formulation of the brand's positioning in the market. Third, they enable the brand team to develop consistency in the message being transmitted through packaging and design, advertising, below-the-line activities and through line and brand extensions. Finally, understanding the brand's core and style helps set the perimeters of brand extensions – how far the brand can be meaningfully stretched to other products and market segments. (Doyle, p164)

### **2.2.3 Brand Image – “I have a brand in mind”**

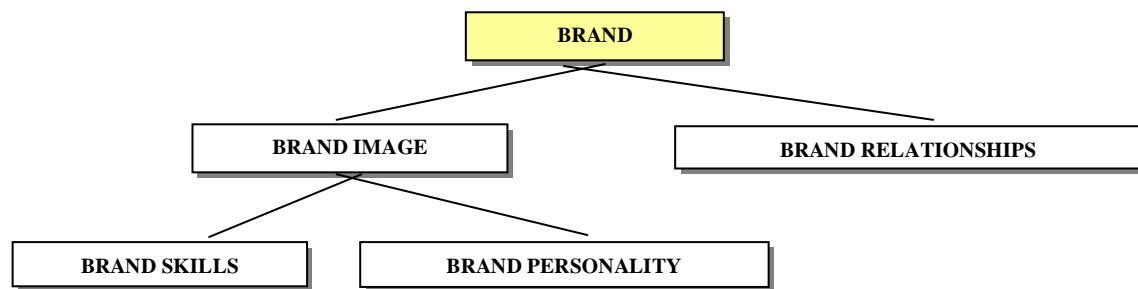
Biel is in his report treating the subject of how brands get into the mind consumer. Brands do not spring to life in board rooms. And are not really produced in marketing departments, although these may facilitate – or impede – their development. Strong brands are created in the minds of consumers. Consumers use the information that marketers present to help them develop their perceptions of brands. But consumers – or customers, or prospects – also use other information which they process to develop their own idea of a brand. Biel quotes Bullmore, former Chairman of JWT in London:

*“We (consumers) build images as birds build nests; from the scraps and straws we chance upon.”*

#### **The Brand Image**

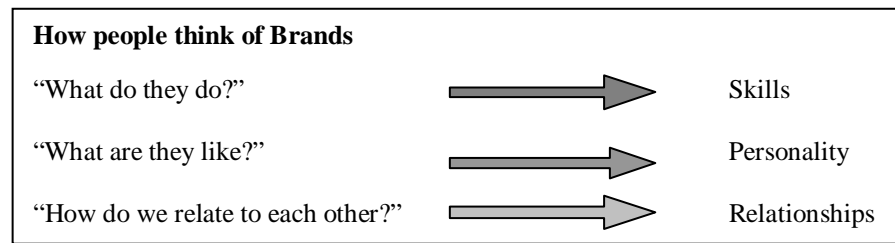
David Ogilvy was the first to use the term brand image. In a speech in 1955 he said that “A brand's image is the picture people carry in their heads of a brand. It's the intangible sum of a product's attributes, its name, packaging, and price, its history and reputation and the way it's advertised.” Two decades later, brand image went mainstream, at least among advertising people. (Biel)

According to Biel and his framework, there are two components of brands: brand image and brand relationships. Brand image, in turn consists of brand ‘skills’ and brand ‘personality’. Skills are those familiar functions and emotional attributes that relate to brand performance. Brand personality is the other components of brand image, which until now has not been well explored.



**Figure 4: Brand Components based on text by Biel.**

One additional illustration of the ideas by Biel's, and his distinction between brand skills, brand personality and brand relationship is shown below. This together with three questions explaining the different parts of the brand.

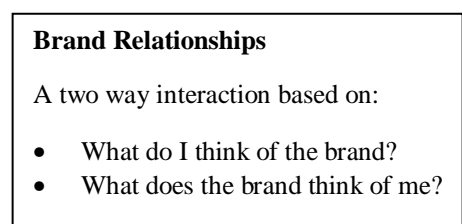


**Figure 5: Distinction between brand skills, brand personality and brand relationships, Biel**

Before the growth of retailing and the emerge of brands, the traditional mode of commerce was strictly personal; a one-on-one transaction between a buyer and a seller who, more often then not were neighbours. While quality was clearly important, so was the personality of the seller. Indeed, people have always preferred to, other things being equal, to buy from people they know, or at least feel they know. (Biel)

As commerce flourished, the direct retail transactions between a buyer and a producer clearly became inefficient. Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that the personality of the brand has developed as a substitute for that of the seller. This very natural transaction explains why consumers take the trouble to impute personality to brands even when those brands have not consciously focused on developing and managing their personas. Today, the personality of the brand serves as a vital surrogate for personal intimacy in commerce. (Biel)

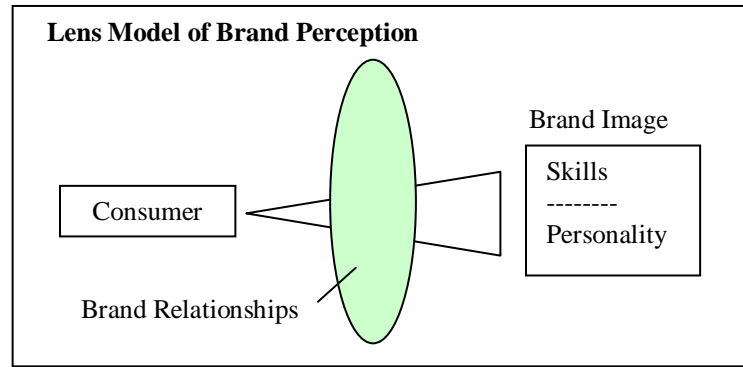
But intimacy is an *interactive* phenomenon. It includes the notion of relationships. Biel names Max Blackstone of Research International, who developed a construct in 1992. Here Blackstone suggests that to understand the interactive nature of brand relationships, it is necessary not only to discover what the consumers thinks of the brand, but also to probe what the consumer believes the brand 'think' of him.



**Figure 6: Interactive nature of brand relationships, Blackstone**

Further Biel mentions Professor Fournier of Harvard, who expanded this concept by developing a scale that measures the quality of brand relationships, the BRQ scale. She reported that the quality of brand relationships can be described on the dimensions of intimacy, commitment, partner quality, attachment, interdependence, and love.

One way that Biel is suggesting for putting these elements together is a lens model, where skills and personality are mediated by brand relationships:

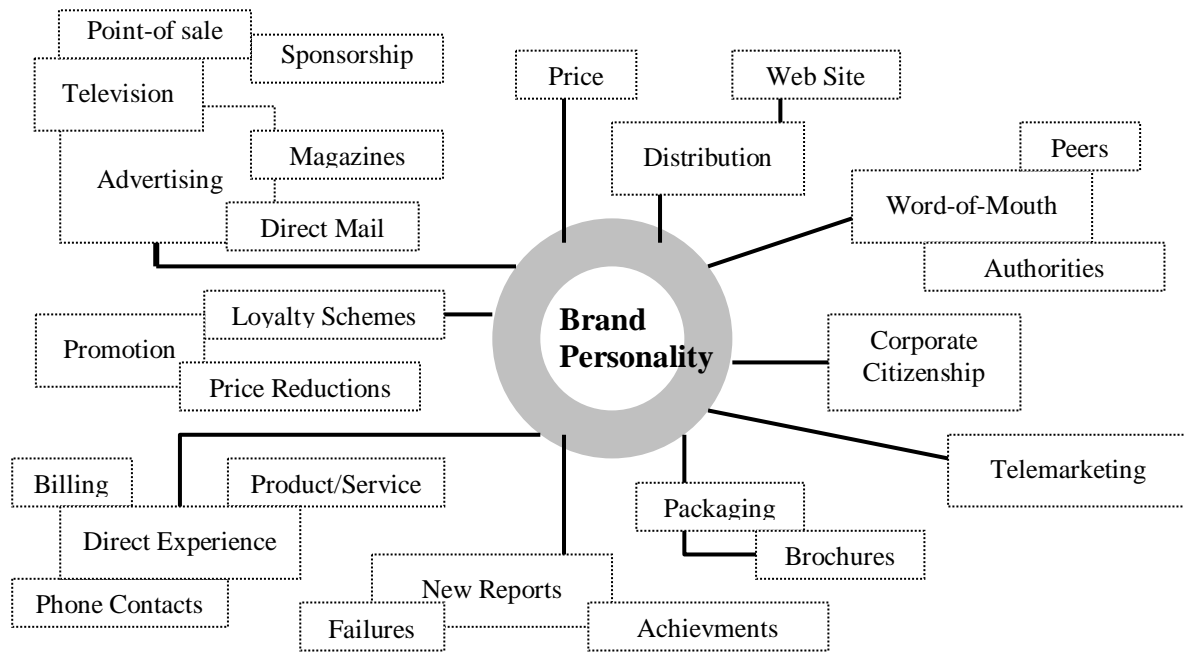


**Figure 7: Biel**

Traditionally, marketers have concentrated on managing their brand skills, but have largely neglected brand personality and brand relationships. There is a serious weakness in this, Biel remarks, but continues - That's not to say that brand skills are unimportant; but they have moved, in many categories, from being differentiators to becoming 'tablestakes'. They aren't enough on their own to make your brand stand out.

### **Personality cues**

How do consumers around the world learn about a brand's personality? In some cultures, there are many other sources from which consumers derive their perceptions of brand personality. Although advertising still plays a dominant role in developing the personality for some brands in some cultures, there are many other sources from which consumers and customers derive their perception of brand personality. This is illustrated in a schematic picture below in figure 8.



**Figure 8: Sources of inference of brand personality, Biel**

“The schematic is messy, but the so is life!”, Biel says. In the 60’s and 70’s when packaged goods dominated the world of marketing, and for those lucky brands where media advertising was a far more dominant source of inference, the advertiser at least had it within his power to shape a consistent, coherent personality for the brand. Today, media advertising’s share of the mix is far smaller. The sources of brand information are multiple, complex, and likely to become more so. Often, the sources of information are not consistent, so the consumer must resolve ambiguity. (Biel)

## 2.1 Employer Branding

Employment Branding is the hottest strategy in employment, according to Dr. John Sullivan, 1999. [2]. It is the process of placing an image of being a "great place to work" in the minds of the targeted candidate pool. Employer Branding is one of the few long-term solutions to the "shortage of talent" problem. And as Dr. Stephen Harding, 2003 further remarks, organisations seeking to develop their Employer Brand, they are aiming to enhance their profile both internally and externally.

The Conference Board is in their report ‘Engaging Employees Through Your Brand’ using a definition of The Employer Brand as shown below:

*“The Employer Brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, systems, policies, and behaviors towards the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees.”*

The Employer Brand can take on special importance when a corporate brand is less well known or understood. This is true for companies whose business, by their nature, make it difficult to establish strong product or corporate brand images – for example, because their products or services are sold not to end-users but to other companies and thus lose much of their product brand identity in the process. (David Dell & al, 2001)

### **2.1.1 The Employer Brand and its Components**

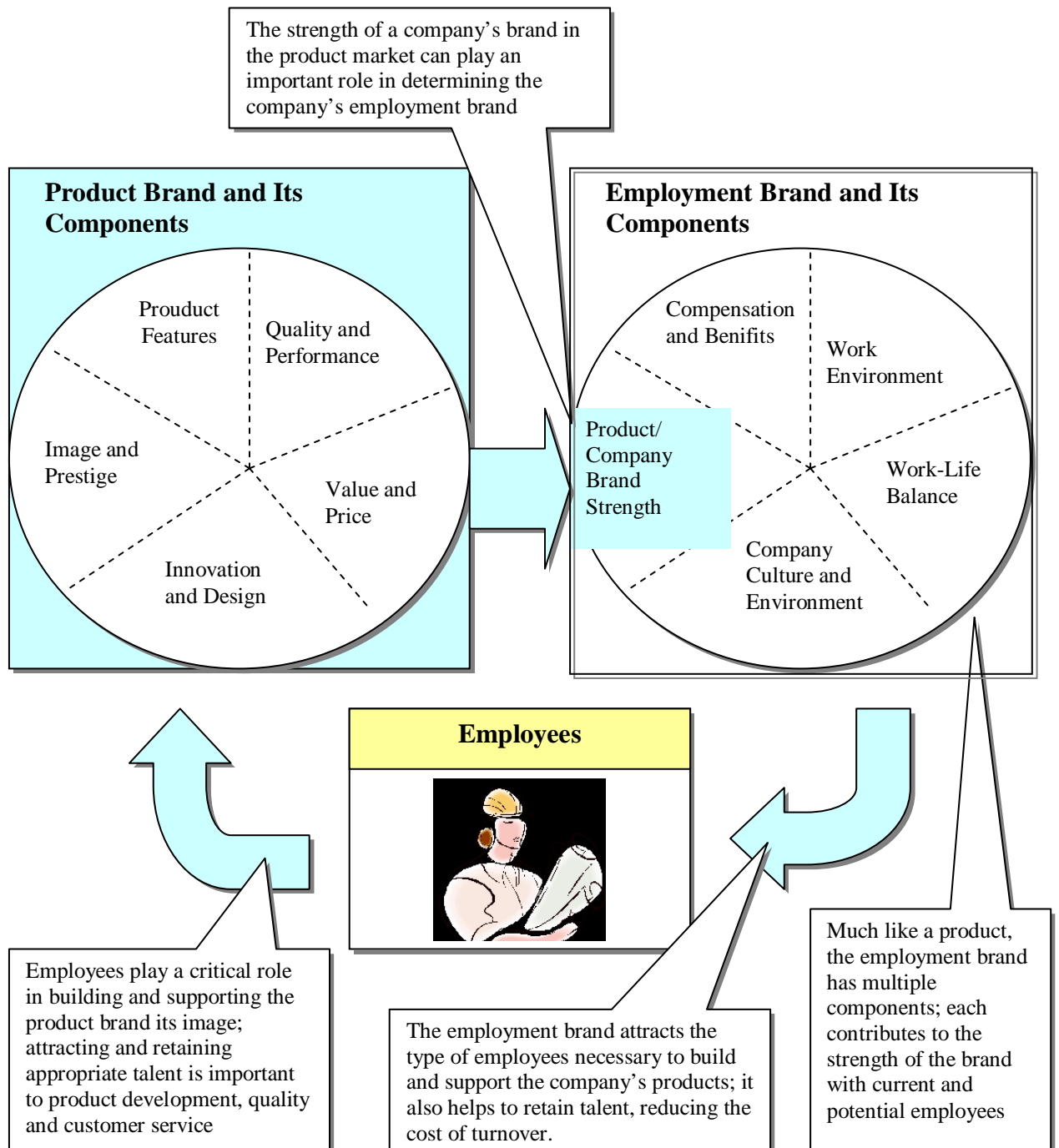
In a report from the Corporate Leadership Council, the components of an Employer Brand are surveyed, as well as the connection between a company's 'Product Brand' and 'Employer Brand'.

#### **The Product and Employer Brands**

##### *Companies Manage Two*

Corporations manage two interrelated brands – a product or company brand in the product market, and an employment brand in the labour market. The product and employment brands are related and mutually supportive. A strong product brand can play an important role in the strength of the employment brand. The employment brand, in turn, is instrumental in attracting and retaining employees who can add value to the company and its products – thus reinforcing the product brand. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)

### Product and Employment Brands Are Mutually Reinforcing



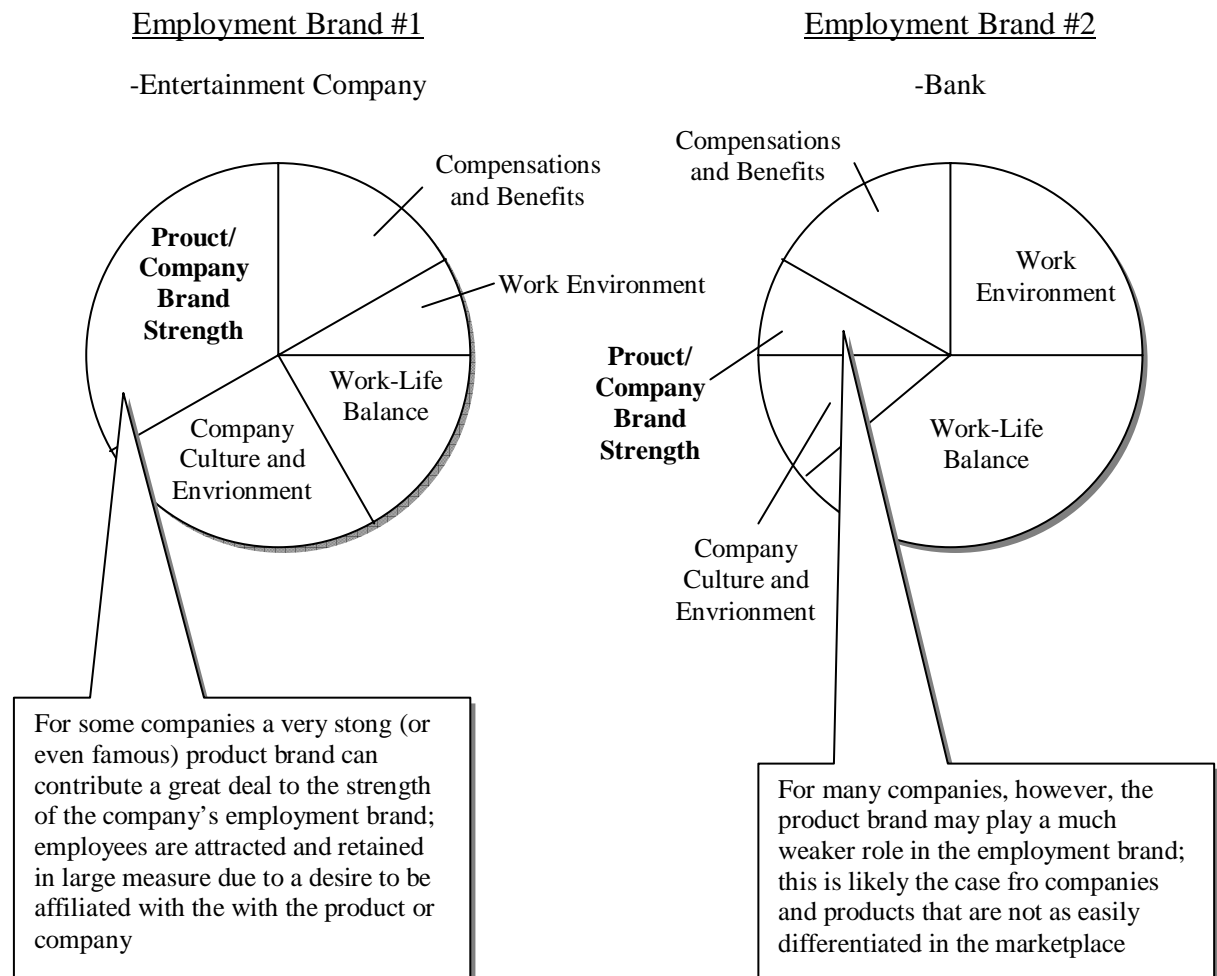
**Figure 9: The connection between a company's 'Product Brand' and 'Employer Brand'**  
(Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)



### *Mutually Supportive Brands*

The importance of the product brand to the strength and success of the employment brand can vary by company and industry. Where products are not easily differentiated, or where product brands are weaker, the employment brand is likely to rely more heavily on the company's reputation for providing "quality employment" – encompassing factors such as compensation and benefits, the work environment, work-life balance and company culture. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)

### **The Contribution of the Product Brand to the Employment Brand Varies by company**



**Figure 10: Contribution of the Product Brand to the Employment Brand Varies by Company**  
(Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)

The strength of a company's product brand plays a role in the strength of its employment brand. For a distinctive few, it may actually "carry" the employment brand. For the remaining companies the strength of the product brand must be seen viewed as one of the many elements contributing to employment brand strength. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)

### The Employment offer – Employment value proposition

The Corporate Leadership Council is in their report from 1999 talking about the ‘Employment offer’ as a “Signal of value to the labour market”. At the heart of a strong Employment Brand is a compelling employment offer – or employment value proposition. Beyond the opportunity to work for at company with a leading product or company brand, these offers are composed of selected *levels* of compensation and benefits, work environment, work-life balance and company culture. Over time, the ability of a firm to deliver on its employees will from the foundation of its employment brand image – just as a firm’s ability to deliver on its product offering contributes to the reputation of its brand.

“The offers a firm makes to the labour market...”

Job Offer Components/ Dimensions

Work-Life Balance	Company Culture and Environment	Product/Company Brand Strength	Compensation and Benefits	Work Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Travel</li> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Flex time</li> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Work Hours</li> <li>• Vacation</li> <li>• Telecommunication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Team Quality</li> <li>• Development Reputation</li> <li>• Technology Level</li> <li>• Risk Taking Environment</li> <li>• Company “Fit”</li> <li>• Company Size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation (Appeal of Company’s Product or Service)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary (Base pay)</li> <li>• External Equity (Pay to market)</li> <li>• Internal Equity</li> <li>• Bonus</li> <li>• Stock Options</li> <li>• Retirement Contributions</li> <li>• Health Benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager Quality</li> <li>• Co-worker Quality</li> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Work Challenge</li> <li>• Cutting-Edge Work</li> <li>• International Mobility</li> <li>• Role Clarity</li> <li>• Project Responsibility</li> </ul>

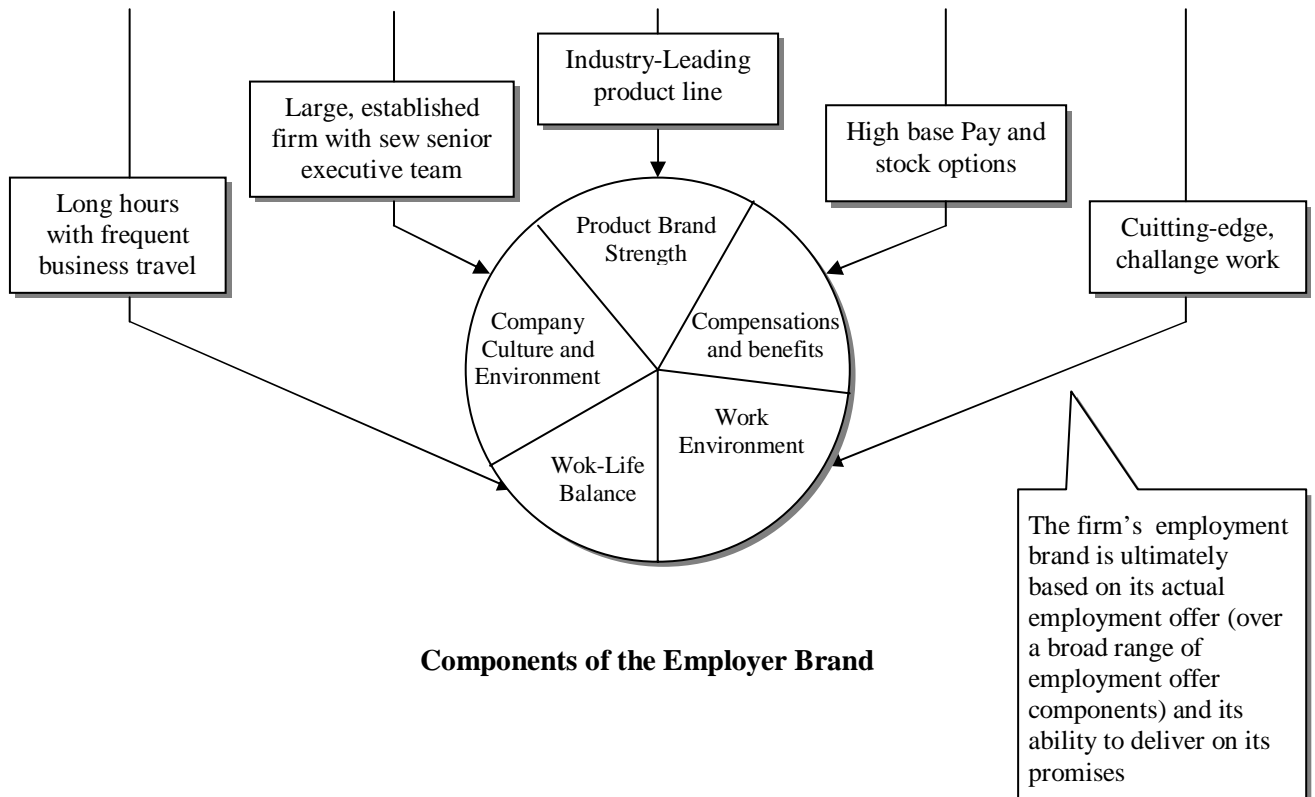


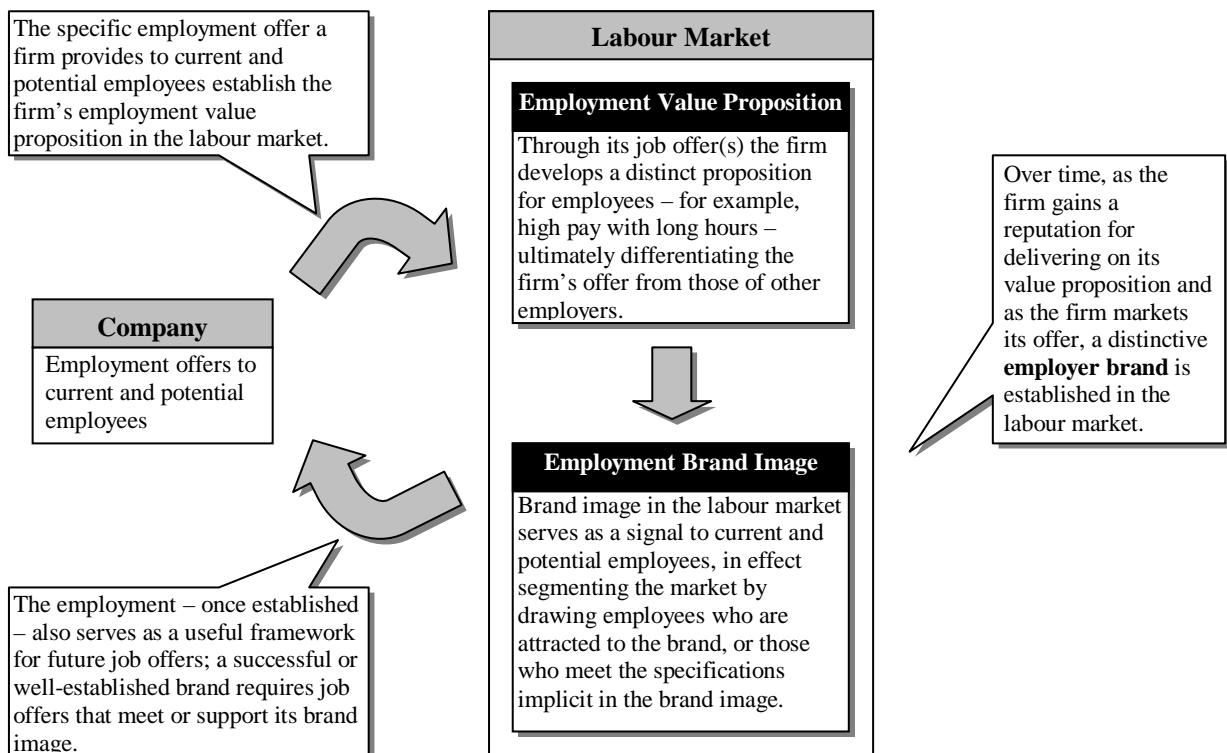
Figure 11: The components of the Employer Brand - a model by the Corporate Leadership Council, 1999.

### The “Job Offer”

The employment brand is built upon the specific job offers (i.e. job offer components) a firm provides to its current and potential employees. In this study by the Corporate Leadership Council, the term “job offer” or “employment offer” refers to the employment value proposition a firm makes to its recruits through specific job offers, as well as the day-to-day offer or relationship a firm provides to its current employees – the offer that holds them to the firm.

## 2.1.2 The successful Employment Brand

The specific employment offer both that it establishes the details of a firm’s employer value proposition and (if appropriately constructed) perpetuates the firm’s employment brand image. Both individual offers and ultimately the brand itself are important signals to the labour market. Once established, individual employment offers differentiate the firm’s reputation grows, its emerging brand signals employees – or labour market segments – as to the type of employee the firm hopes to attract and retain. Over time, these signals work together – establishing the employment brand and creating a framework for future offers. (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)



**Figure 12: How the Employment Offer, if appropriately constructed, both establishes and perpetuates the Employment Brand (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999)**

### 2.1.2 Components of the employment brand and Universum Communications's surveys

On yearly basis Universum Communications is doing quantitative surveys among students and young professionals. Their surveys contains and reflects information on students' and young professionals attitudes and preferences relating to recruitment and their career expectations, as well as their opinions about specific companies that are trying to attract them.

In their surveys questions and alternatives have been put together on the basis of Universum Communications gathered knowledge and experience from earlier years surveys, and after consultation with young professionals and clients. The questionnaires consist mainly of given answer alternatives, but for the main part of the questions the possibility to fill in a person's own alternative is also given. By combining old tried questions with new questions at issue trends as well as changes can be illustrated. However, in this study it is also of interest to see what connection to theory the Universum Communications' surveys have. Applying the Leadership Councils' model of the employment brand components on Universum Communications' surveys can give an idea of what the connection is like.

The main part of the questionnaires is focusing on the respondent's background, expectations and desires, trying to identify and create a picture of the respondent. Only two questions are actually focusing on the respondents associations, and ideas of offerings, with certain companies. In the surveys the respondent is asked to name five ideal employers, and further on answering questions concerning these. These questions have already given answer alternatives. The Universum Graduate Surveys towards students is also including one question concerning how the respondent have collected and gathered information about the chosen companies. The two questions concerning associations and ideas of offerings are formulated as follow:

- *What are you associating with your ideal company?* (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives)  
*Org. in Swedish - Vad förknippar du med dina idealföretag?* (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar)
- *What do you think that your ideal employer is offering?* (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives)  
*Vad tror du att dina idealföretag erbjuder?* (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar)

Some of the employer brand components are not completely covered in the answer alternatives given in the surveys. The point here is to show in what way the employer brand components are represented and included in the research i.e. the surveys relation to the theory. Some of the answer alternatives are connected to a couple, or more, of the employer brand component in the Corporate Leadership Council model.

Due to a missing link between theory and the answer alternatives used in Universum Communications' surveys, an attempt to create a link will therefore be done. Below the different answer alternatives in the questionnaires from Universum Communications surveys will be presented together with the employer brand component/s they are representing.

- What are you associating with your ideal company? (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives)  
*Org. in Swedish - Vad förknippar du med dina idealföretag?* (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar)

Answer alternatives/ Swedish component	Answer alternatives/ English	Employer brand
Alltför konkurrenspräglad arbetsmiljö	Too competitive working environment	Work environment
Anställda med varierande bakgrund	Employees with varying background	Company culture & env/ Work environment
Bra chefs/ ledarskap	Good Leadership/ Management	Work environment / Company culture & env
Dynamisk organisation	Dynamic organisation	Company culture & env.
Finansiell styrka	Financial strength	Company culture & env.
God etik och hög moral	Good ethic and high moral	Company culture & env.
Gott rykte och anseende	Good reputation and highly thought of	Prod/comp brand strength
Innovativa lösningar	Innovative solutions	Company culture & env.
Konservativ arbetsmiljö	Conservative working environment	Work environment / Company culture & env
Marknadsframgång	Market success	Prod/comp brand strength
Miljövänlig policy	Environmental friendly policy	Company culture & env.
Oattraktivt geografiskt läge	Unattractively geographically situated	Work-life balance
Rekryterar de bästa	Only recruiting the best	Work environment / Company culture & env
Spännande produkter/ tjänster	Exciting products/ services	Prod/comp brand strength
Stark fokus på kompetensutveckling	Clear focus on competence development	Work environment
Stark företagskultur	Strong clear company culture	Company culture & env.

- What do you think that your ideal employer is offering? (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives)  
*Org. in Swedish - Vad tror du att dina idealföretag erbjuder?* (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar)

Answer alternatives/ Swedish component	Answer alternatives/ English	Employer brand
Balans mellan privatliv och karriär	Balance between private life and carrier	Work-life balance
En god referens för din framtida karriär	A good reference for you future carrier	Prod/comp brand strength
Flexibel arbetstid	Flexible working hours	Work-life balance
Få övertidstimmar	Few hours of overtime work	Work-life balance
Inspirerande arbetskamrater	Inspiring colleges	Work environment
Intern vidareutbildning	Internal further education	Compensations and benefits
Internationella karriärmöjligheter	International carrier opportunities	Work environment
Konkurrenskraftig ersättning	Competitive compensation	Compensations and benefits
Kontinuerlig återkoppling och uppföljning av ditt arbete	Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	Work environment
Möjligheter att arbeta hemifrån	Possibilities to work from home	Work-life balance
Möjligheter till avancemang/ befordran	Possibilities for advancement /promotion	Work environment
Projektbaserat arbete	Project based work	Work environment
Trygg anställning	Secure employment	Work-life balance
Uppgifter som innebär allt större utmaningar	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	Work environment
Varierade arbetsuppgifter	Varying work	Work environment
Annat	Other	...

As noticeable above the two employer brand components *work environment* and *company culture and environment* are in some case difficult to distinguish. For some answer alternatives there was therefore the two of them marked as representatives.

## 2.3 Buying Behaviour

“The fundamental contribution that Employer Branding makes is to provide the means to design communications, decide media vehicles and develop messages that will support prospective employees at each point of their trip through the buying model”, James Vallee (2001) says. It has to be underlined though, that there are a number of different buying models. For example one by Kotler, which is to be presented in below.

According to Kotler, the starting point for understanding buyer behaviour is the stimulus-response model shown in the figure below.

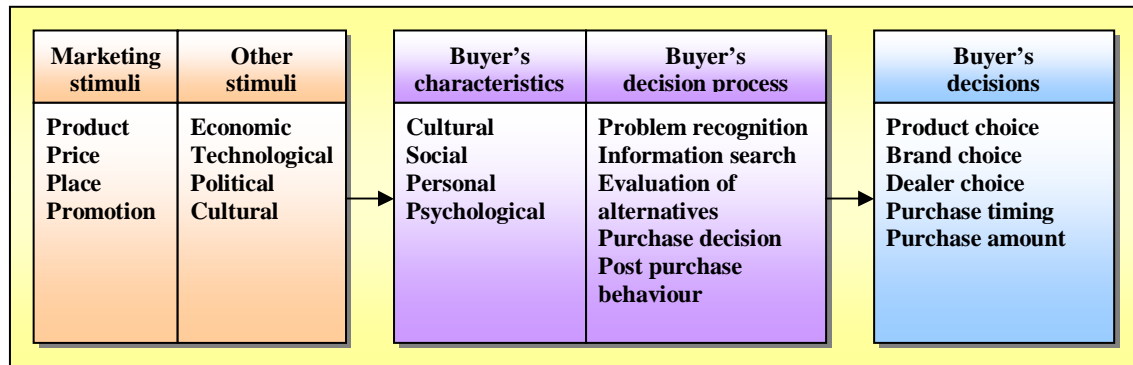


Figure 13: Stimulus-response model - A model of Buyer Behaviour by Kotler (p184)

Marketing and environmental stimuli enter the buyer's consciousness. The buyer's characteristics and decision process lead to certain purchase decisions. The marketer's task is to understand what happens in the buyer's consciousness between the arrival of outside stimuli and the purchase decisions.

### 2.3.1 Influencing buying behaviour

A consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. (Kotler, 2003, p183)

#### *Cultural factors*

Culture, subculture, and social class are particularly important in buying behaviour. *Culture* is the fundamental determinant of a person's wants and behaviour. The growing child acquires a set of values, perceptions, preferences, and behaviours through his or her family and other key institutions. (Kotler, 2003, p183) Each culture consists of smaller *subcultures* that provide more specific identification and socialization for their members. Subcultures include nationalities, religions, racial groups, and geographic regions. When subcultures grow large and affluent enough, companies often design specialized marketing programs to serve them. Such programs are known as *diversity marketing*. (Kotler, 2003, p183)

#### *Social factors*

In addition to cultural factors, a consumer's behaviour is influenced by such social factors as reference groups, family, and social roles and statuses. (Kotler, 2003, p184)

#### *Reference groups*

A person's *reference groups* consists of all the groups that have a direct (face-to-face) or indirect influence on the person's attitudes or behaviour. Groups having a direct

influence on a person are called *membership groups*. Some membership groups are *primary groups*, such as family, friends, neighbours, and co-workers, with whom the person interacts fairly continuously and informally. People also belong to secondary groups, such as religious, professional, and trade-union groups, which tend to be more formal and require less continuous interaction. (Kotler, 2003, p184)

People are significantly influenced by their reference groups in at least three ways. Reference groups expose an individual to new behaviours and lifestyles, and influence product and brand choices. People are also influenced by groups to which they do not belong. *Aspirational groups* are those a person hopes to join; *dissociative groups* are those whose values or behaviour an individual rejects. (Kotler, 2003, p185)

### *Family*

The family is the most important consumer-buying organization in society, and family members constitute the most influential primary reference groups. The family has been researched extensively. We can distinguish between two families in the buyer's life. The *family of orientation* consists of parents and siblings. From parents a person acquires an orientation towards religion, politics, and economics and a sense of personal ambition, self-worth, and love. Even if the buyer no longer interacts very much with his or her parents, their influence on the buyer's behaviour can be significant. A more direct influence on everyday buying behaviour is the *family of procreation* – namely, one's spouse and children. (Kotler, 2003, p188)

### *Roles and statuses*

A person participates in many groups – family, clubs, organizations. The person's position in each group can be defined as in terms of role and status. A *role* consists of the activities a person is expected to perform. Each role carries a *status*. (Kotler, 2003, p189)

### *Personal factors*

A buyer's decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics. These include the buyer's age and stage in the life cycle, occupation, economics circumstances, lifestyle, and personality and self-concept. (Kotler, 2003, p190)

### *Age and stage in the life cycle*

People buy different goods and services over a lifetime. They eat baby food in the early years, most foods in the growing and mature years, and special diets in the later years. Taste in clothes, furniture, and recreation is also age related. Consumption is shaped by the family life cycle. (Kotler, 2003, p185)

### *Occupation and economic circumstances*

Occupation also influences consumption patterns, as well as economic circumstances. (Kotler, 2003, p190)

### *Lifestyle*

People from the same subculture, social class, and occupation may lead quite different lifestyles. A *lifestyle* is a person's pattern of living in the world as expressed in activities, interests, and opinions. Lifestyle portrays the “whole person” interacting with his or her environment. (Kotler, 2003, p191)

### *Personality and self-concept*

Each person has personality characteristics that influence his or her buying behaviour. By personality, we mean a set of distinguishing human psychological traits that lead to relatively consistent and enduring responses to environmental stimuli. Personality is often described in terms of such traits as self-confidence, dominance, autonomy, deference, sociability, defensiveness, and adaptability. Personality can be a useful variable in analyzing consumer brand choices. The idea is that brands also have personalities, and that customers are likely to choose brands whose personalities match their own. We define *brand personality* as the specific mix of human traits that may be attributed to a particular brand. (Kotler, 2003, p193)

### *Psychological factors*

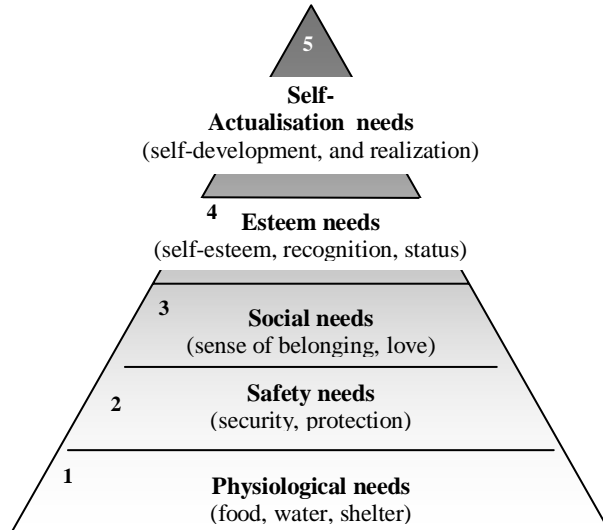
A person's buying choices are influenced by four major *psychological factors* – motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes. (Kotler, 2003, p195)

### *Motivation*

A person has many needs at any given time. Some needs are *biogenic*; they arise from physiological states of tension such as hunger, thirst, or discomfort. Other needs are *psychogenic*; they arise from psychological states of tension such as the need for recognition, esteem, or belonging. A need becomes a motive when it is aroused to a sufficient level of intensity. A *motive* is a need that is sufficiently pressing to drive the person to act.

Psychologists have developed theories of human motivation, and Maslow is one mentioned by Kotler. Maslow sought to explain why people are driven by particular

needs at particular times. Why does one person spend considerable time and energy on personal safety and another on pursuing the high opinion of others? Maslow's answer is that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, from the most pressing to the least pressing. In order of importance, they are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs (see figure 14). (Kotler, 2003, p196)



**Figure 14: Motivation and Personality, by Maslow (1970). Used by Kotler (2003, p196)**

People will try to satisfy their most important needs first. When a person succeeds in satisfying an important need, he or she will then try so satisfy the next-most-important need. For example, a starving man (need 1) will not take an interest in the latest happening sin the art world (need 5), nor in how he is viewed by others (need 3 or 4), nor whether he is breathing clean air (need 2); but when he has enough food and water, the next-most-important need will become salient. (Kotler, 2003, p196)



### *Perception*

A motivated person is ready to act. How the motivated person actually acts is influenced by his or her perception of the situation. *Perception* is the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world. Perception depends not only on the physical stimuli, but also on the stimuli's relation to the surrounding field and on conditions within the individual. The key point is that perception can vary widely among individuals exposed to the same reality. (Kotler, 2003, p197)

People can emerge with different perceptions of the same object because of three perceptual processes: selective attention, selective distortion, and selective retention.

*Selected Attention:* People are exposed to a tremendous amount of daily stimuli. Because a person cannot possibly attend to all of these, most stimuli will be screened out – a process called *selective attention*. It means that marketers have to work hard to attract consumers' notice. The real challenge is to explain which stimuli people will notice. (Kotler, 2003, p197)

*Selected Distortion:* Even noticed stimuli do not always come across in the way the senders intended. *Selected distortion* is the tendency to twist information into personal meanings and interpret information in a way that will fit our preconceptions. Unfortunately, there is not much marketers can do about selective distortion. (Kotler, 2003, p197)

*Selected Retention:* People will forget much that they learn but will tend to retain information that supports their attitudes and beliefs. Because of *selected retention*, we are likely to remember good points mentioned about a product that we like and forget good points mentioned about competing products. Selective retention explains why marketers use drama and repetition in sending message to their target market. (Kotler, 2003, p197)

### *Learning*

When people act, they learn. Learning involves changes in an individual's behaviour arising from experience. Most human behaviour is learned. Learning theorists believe that learning is produced through the interplay of drives, stimuli, cues, responses, and reinforcement. A *drive* is a strong internal stimulus impelling action. *Cues* are minor stimuli that determine when, where, and how a person responds.

Kotler is giving an example of a purchase of a computer. Suppose you buy an IBM computer. If your experience is rewarding, your response to computers and IBM will be positively reinforced. Later on, when you want to buy a printer, you may assume that because IBM makes good computers, IBM also makes good printers. In other words, you *generalize* your response to similar stimuli. A countertendency to generalization is *discrimination*. Discrimination means that the person has learned to recognize differences in sets of similar stimuli and can adjust responses accordingly. (Kotler, 2003, p197)

Learning theory teaches marketers that they can build up demand for a product by associating it with strong drives, using motivating cues, and providing positive reinforcement. A company can enter the market by appealing to the same drives that

competitors use by providing similar cue configurations, because buyers are more likely to transfer loyalty to similar brands (*generalization*) ; or the company might design its brand to appeal to a different set of drives and offer strong cue inducements to switch (*discrimination*). (Kotler, 2003, p197)

### *Beliefs and attitudes*

Through doing and learning, people acquire beliefs and attitudes. These in turn influence buying behaviour. A *belief* is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. People's belief about a product or brand influences their buying decision. A study of the influence of brand beliefs found that consumers were equally split in their preference for Diet Coke versus Diet Pepsi, when tasting both on a blind basis. When tasting the branded versions, consumers preferred Diet Coke by 65 percent and Diet Pepsi by only 23 percent (with the remainder seeing no difference). This example highlights the role of brand beliefs play in product choice. (Kotler, 2003, p198)

Just as important as beliefs are attitudes. An *attitude* is a person's enduring favourable or unfavourable evaluations, emotional feeling, and action tendencies toward some object or idea. People have attitudes towards almost everything: religion, politics, clothes, music, food. Attitudes put them into a frame of mind of liking or disliking an object, moving toward or away from it. Attitudes lead people to behave in a fairly consistent way toward similar objects. People do not have to interpret and react to every object in a fresh way. Because attitudes economize on energy and thought, they are very difficult to change. (Kotler, 2003, p198)



## Chapter 3 Problem discussion

*This chapter contains a comprehensive problem discussion, ending with a specification of the objective of the work. The chapter will then be completed with an establishment of the work's delimitations.*

“The statistics are unambiguous” is to read on Universum Communication’s website. Within five to ten years there will be a large deficit in the supply of competent university graduates. Also the amount of students on the scientific programs on Swedish high schools is too small, in proportionality to the number of study places on technical programs at Swedish universities. The industry will suffer. In today’s information based society, many jobs are requiring higher education and specialist knowledge. The demand for qualified working capacity is increasing faster than the offering, both in Sweden and internationally. This is making the supply of suitable staff smaller. It is becoming more difficult for companies to fill these places, when the competition of the competent staff is getting harder.

Young professionals, i.e. individuals between the age of 25-35, with an academic background and up to eight years of working experience, will probably be the markets most wanted work force, according to Universum Communications. The other group of interest concerning competence on the future labour market are the students of today. They will enter the labour market with fresh knowledge. Short time after entering the market, and gaining working experience, they will also be part of the attractive group of young professionals. As mentioned previously - Communicating with these groups is a critical success factor for companies/organisations today.

Strong demand for specific skills, in addition to ever tighter labour markets generally, is making it much more difficult to recruit new employees. But also to retain current employees. The labour market today is much more fluid, with more and better information available to employees than ever before. There is a changed view upon working life, and people change jobs more often than before.

Employer Branding has been called “The hottest strategy in employment” - both when it comes to recruiting and retaining staff. According to The Conference Board, the employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, systems, policies, and behaviors towards the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees.

By clarifying one’s advantages and valuations as employer the company also achieves higher motivation and commitment among current staff. Benefits of employer branding revolve around the notion of committed or engaged employees. As mentioned previously in chapter one, research has demonstrated the causal relationship between high levels of engagement and enhanced business performance. It is therefore of great importance for companies to find and attract the right people, being committed to the company and the company values.

A strong and distinct profile, and a well managed and well communicated employer brand, does not only create an attractive working place. It can also function as a kind of filter, making suitable candidates trying to find their way to the company. Keeping valuable competence is essential for any company or organisation. Finding the right

people, fitting into the company culture, sharing its goals, values and attitudes, are increasing the chances for creating a 'relationship' that will last.

It is of great importance that the marketing of the working place is as truthful as possible. As Harding says: "The world can be a very unforgiving place if you don't live out in reality the ideals you claimed to aspire to". It is not possible for companies to market themselves as something they are not, because employees will see through this pretty easily. Also for the new recruit it can be a disappointment to start working at the new working place, if the expectations are not being fulfilled.

As when it comes to working with branding in general, it is important for the companies to be aware of how the brand is looked upon at the moment. Knowledge about where the company stands today lays as a foundation for the continuing work, as Talent Talk mentions on their website. It is therefore central that the company has an idea of the present situation that is as correct and truthful as possible.

To understand the role of brands, Doyle is talking about three concepts: a product, a brand and a successful brand. A *product* is anything that meets the functional needs of customers. This can be a *physical product*, alternatively a *service product*. In terms of employer branding this means the actual "job offer", or "employment offer", as the Corporate Leadership Council calls it.

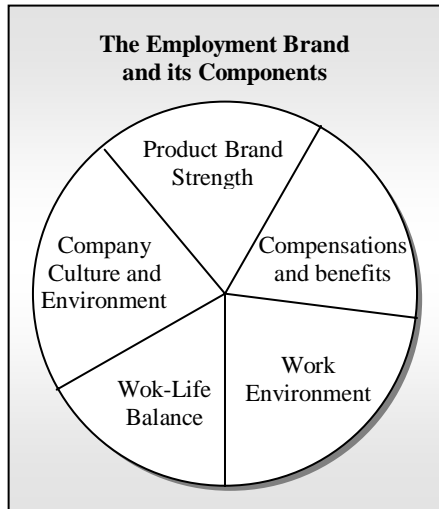
Most suppliers will want to identify their own product and differentiate it from competitors' products, Doyle continues. They do this by branding it. A *brand* can be defined as a specific name, symbol or design – or, more usually, some combination of these – that is used to distinguish a particular seller's product.

Doyle is making a distinction between *brand image* and *brand identity*. According to him the brand image refers to how the target market perceives the brand, and the brand identity is the message sent out by the brand through its product form, name, visual signs, advertising, etc.

Reconnecting to employer branding, this would mean that the message delivered to the labour market, concerning the employment offer, is the *employer brand identity*. At the heart of a strong employment brand is a compelling employment offer – or *employment value proposition*. The Corporate Leadership Council is talking about the employment brand being built upon the specific job offers (i.e. job offer components) a firm provides to its current and potential employees. In their study, the term "job offer" or "employment offer" refers to the employment value proposition a firm makes to its recruits through specific job offers. It also means the day-to-day offer, or relationship, a firm provides to its current employees – the offer that holds them to the firm. The communicated employment value proposition is in other terms the employer brand identity.

According to the Corporate Leadership Council, a firm's employment brand is ultimately based on its actual employment offers (over broad range of employment components, which are presented in previous chapter) and its ability to deliver on its promises. Much like a product brand, the employment brand has multiple components; each contributes to the strength of the brand with current and potential employees. The employment brand and its components are shown below in figure 15. Over time, as a

firm gains a reputation for delivering on its value proposition, a distinctive employment brand is established.



**Figure 15: Employer brand and its components.**  
(The Leadership Council, 1999)

In addition to having a product/service, which meets the functional requirements of consumers, there is according to Doyle the *successful brand*. It has added values which meet certain of the psychological needs of the consumers. These *added values* are elicited feelings of confidence that the brand is of higher quality, or more desirable than similar products from competitors. This is also applicable on employer branding.

Biel is talking about strong brands being created in the minds of consumers. Consumers use the information that marketers present to help them develop their perceptions of brands. But consumers also use other information which they process to develop their own idea of a brand. Biel additionally quotes Bullmore: “*We (consumers) build images as birds build nests; from the scraps and straws we chance upon*”.

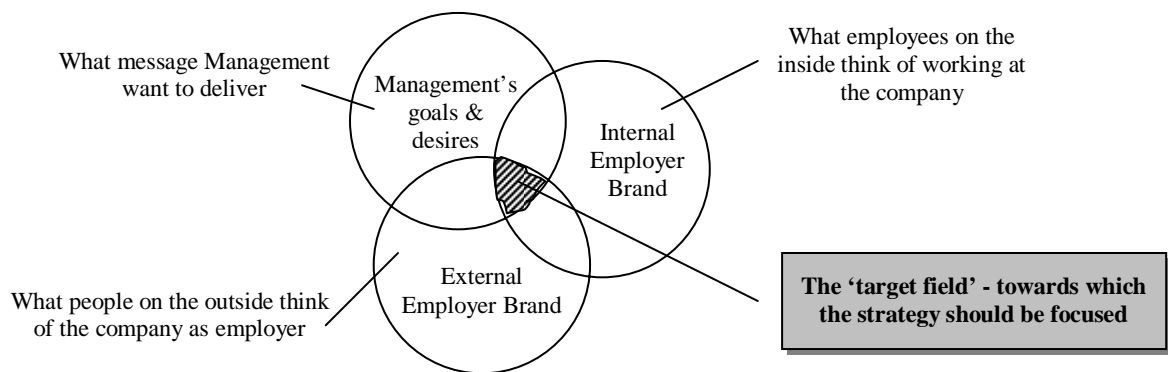
The perceived idea of a brand, the brand image as Doyle calls it – here the *employer brand image* – is influenced by company controlled means, and by other uncontrollable factors. The employer brand image is partly influenced by the communicated employer brand identity, and partly by other influences. Connecting to consumer’s buying behaviour and the terms of Kotler, he is mentioning influential factors such as, cultural, social, personal and psychological.

Organisations seeking to develop their employer brand are aiming to enhance their profile both internally and externally. This requires specific insight into what is driving perceptions of an organisation, and that's where the research comes in. What underpins employer branding is likely to differ from one organisation to another. Harding is underlining that you can not generalise or simply rely on league tables. To develop a strong employer brand, it is necessary to demonstrate what is specific about your organisation and its culture, which can show what is really unique about your brand

However, that the company’s employer brand has to be unique does not mean that the target groups in all meanings are unique. It simplifies the work and makes it more efficient to be aware of existing general conditions. Can general conclusions be drawn

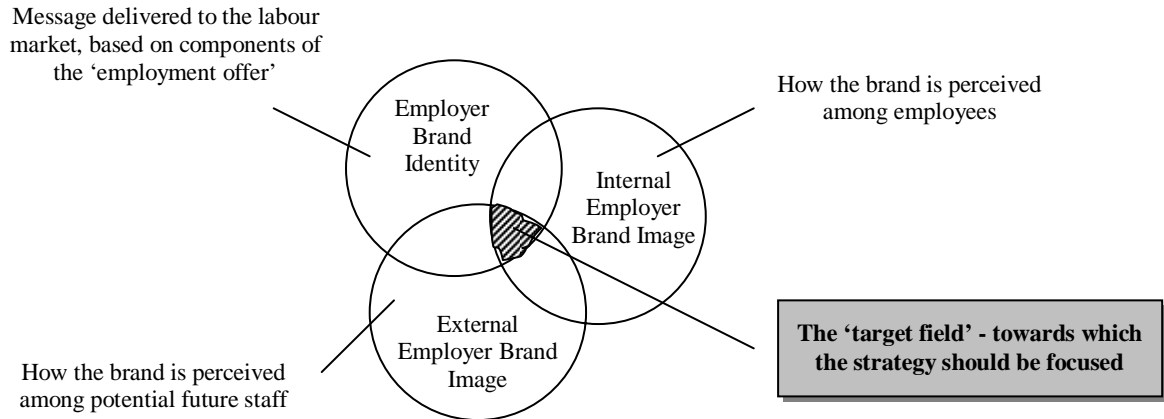
in some cases? Are there in this case any noticeable trends when comes to perceived images of employer brands?

During a meeting and discussion with Universum Communications in October 2004 a picture, shown below in figure 16, was presented. As with any strategic work the focus is important. Harding says that an organisation needs a clear view of what it is trying to achieve and needs to set clear goals and measures of success, in order to be successful. Universum Communication for example, is advising their clients as one step in their strategic work with the employer brand, to focus on the area where the ideas of the three groups of interest coincide. The three groups of interest are management, employees and potential employees. The field of shared ideas will from now on be referred to as the '*target field*'. The target field is where the management's desires with what they want to offer, the employees' idea of what is actually being offered, and finally what potential employees are assuming is being offered, coincide.



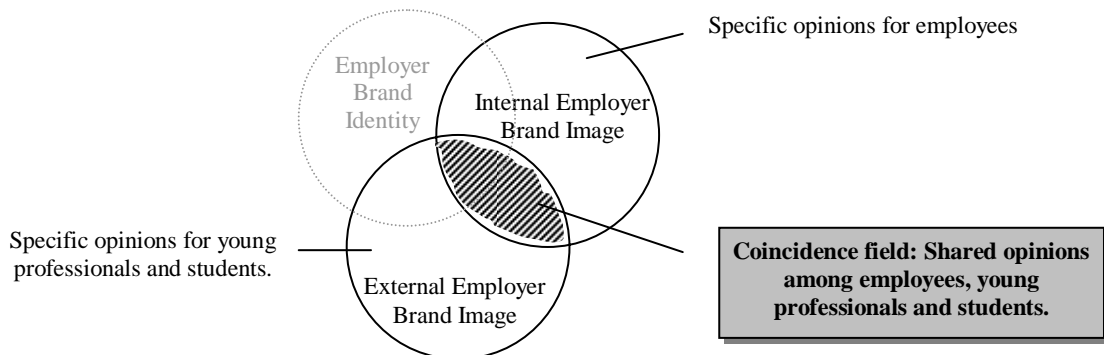
**Figure 16: Focus strategy, at where the three groups of interest are having the same ideas. Modified picture after an original by Kalinowski at Universum Communication. (2004)**

An implementation of the terminology reviewed earlier into the picture is show below in figure 17. False marketing is not to recommend when it comes to employer branding, as Harding is underlining. This means that the message that management is delivering, should be based on the actual employment offer. In other the words – the *Employer Brand Identity* should be based on the actual employment offer. How the employment offer is perceived among a company's employees is the *Internal Employer Brand Image*. On the outside are the potential future employees, here the young professionals and the students of today. *The External Brand Image* is in this study their perceived ideas of the employment brand.



**Figure 17: The work and strategy with the employer brand should be focused at the 'target field'. That is where the actual employment offer and the internal and external Employer Brand Image are coinciding. (Redefined after discussion with Universum Communication, and theory mentioned in previous chapter.)**

In order to obtain knowledge of what the target field is, awareness and knowledge about the external and internal employer brand images is needed, see figure 18 below. When information about these two groups' perceived ideas of the employer brand is obtained, it is possible to combine this insight with the actual employment offer and design the Employer Brand Identity. Having this picture completed is one step in building a strategy for the Employer Brand.



**Figure 18: Area of shared associations between, on the outside: students and young professionals, and on the inside: employees**

As mentioned it is a necessity to focus on what is specific about the certain company/organisation, and what is unique about its employer brand. However, awareness of possibly existing differences and likenesses between employer brand images within certain groups, will make a strategic work more efficient. The question is then, are there any differences and likenesses between External Employer Brand Images and Internal Employer Brand Images? In other terms, are there any existing differences and likenesses between how young professionals and students, and actual employees, are valuing and associating concerning employer brands?



This is bringing the reader to the main objective of this work, which is expressed in following research problem:

***To examine the existence of similarities and differences between External and Internal Employer Brand Images.***

In order to reach the objective of this work, the research problem is further divided into 4 research questions:

- RQ1: *What Employer Brand Image do the companies participating in this research have among their students?*

*'Their students' meaning students who sees the employer as an ideal employer. This according to the researches done by Universum Communications.*

- RQ2: *What Employer Brand Image do the companies participating in this research have among their young professionals?*

*'Their young professionals' meaning young professionals who sees the employer as an ideal employer. This according to the researches done by Universum Communications.*

- RQ3: *What Employer Brand Image do the companies participating in this research have among their employees?*

- RQ4: *How do the External Employer Brand Images among students and the young professionals coincide with the Internal Employer Brand Images among the employees?*

### **3.1 Delimitations**

The problematic is about a predicted future lack of competence on the labour market, of which signs are already to be noticeable. The groups enounced to be the most attractive competence are the young professionals and the students of today. Therefore other groups on the labour market have been excluded in this research. When it comes to the external side of the employer brand, focus has therefore been on the young professionals and the students of today.

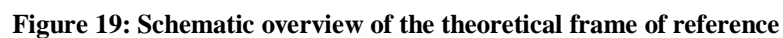
The intention is to make the strategic work with employer branding more efficient, and as mentioned it is when creating a strategy important to have a clear focus and objective with the work. Universum Communications is for example advising their clients to focus on the points where the three groups of interest, i.e. management, employees and potential employees, have ideas of the employer brand that coincide. The employer brand identity – the message sent out to the labour market – is by management controllable. It is a matter of what the management is choosing to offer and how it is being offered. However, the employer brand image is not in the same way manageable. It is possible to influence, but not to control, since brand images are the perceived ideas in the minds of the 'consumers' and also affected by other influencers. This study is only focusing on the uncontrollable side of the employer brand – the employer brand image.

Using the ideas of Universum Communications, and their method of identifying employer brand images among students and young professionals, is leading to a certain focus also for this research. This means that the identification of the external employer brand images is revolving around these two groups' associations with a company as employer, and what they believe that a company is offering.

In order to obtain a comparable study, this research will use the same focus as the surveys done by Universum Communications. This means that when creating a research, with the objective to generate comparable data, it will be based on these surveys already done externally. There will therefore be certain delimitations. The parts of the employer brand components covered in these surveys, are the ones to be included also in this research. The Universum Communications' surveys will be further presented later on in chapter 4, the research method.

The purpose of the frame of reference is to define the theoretical background and complementary data needed for the research. The objective is also to increase the understanding of the results and the conclusions.

Here the establishment of the theoretical frame of reference for this research will be presented. To answer the different research questions different parts of the theories will be used. A schematic picture of interesting theory for this research is presented below.



In addition to the theory needed to answer the research questions presented above, different data is needed. The five research questions will now be presented ones again together with data needed, and arguments for these.

‘Their students’ means the students who To answer this question a combination of data collected in the Universum Graduate Surveys, and their connection to the Corporate Leadership Councils model of the employment brand components will be used. Once again it can be remarked that ‘their students’ means students who have chosen a certain company as ideal employer, when answering the questionnaires. In terms of data the

answers to the two available questions on associations and expected offerings will be used. These two questions are:

- *What do you associate with your ideal company?*
- *What do you think that your ideal company is offering?*

These questions have a number of already given answer alternatives. For the complete questions, with their belonging answer alternatives, the reader is requested to apply for this in the presentation of the questionnaire in appendix 1.

In addition, background information of 'their students' will be included, trying to identify the respondent groups. This in order to increase the understanding of the collected data. It provides the possibility to analyse the information further. Kotler is mentioning different influential factors of buyer behaviour. Certain identification information is needed in order to understand what kind of influential factors that is more or less important for different groups. In this case, to create an understanding of how the employer brand images, these perceived ideas of the brand are obtained and influenced, the background information on the respondents from the surveys will assist. This information will be processed using Kotler's theory of influencers of buyer behaviour (2003, p183).

*RQ2: What employer brand image do the companies have among their young professionals?*

To answer this question a combination of data collected in the Universum Young Professional Surveys and their connection to theory will be used. Here again it can be remarked that 'their young professionals' means young professionals who have chosen a certain company as ideal employer, when answering the questionnaires. In terms of data the same two questions, as for RQ1, and their answers will be included and used. Some of the answer alternatives that are included in the surveys among young professionals are not included in the ones for students. One answer alternative is also different. This will be looked in to, but is not an obstacle for this research.

Also when it comes to this research question, background information of the respondent group will be included, here of 'their young professional'. The motive and reasons are the same as for when looking at the students. The use of Kotler's model of influencers of buyer behaviour (2003, p183) will be repeated when working with this research question.

*RQ3: What employer brand image do companies have among their employees?*

When answering this research question the situation differs from the first two ones. Here there is no information available on employees' perceived ideas of the employers. For answering this research question information therefore will have to be collected. This will be done on the base of the Universum Communications' surveys, in order to obtain data that comparable with the data available on the student's and young professionals' and their perceived ideas of the companies as employers.

When collecting data, there will also in this case be a need of background information of the respondent group. The reason is the same as for the other two previous ones, and

theory used to review the collected data will also in this case be revolving around Kotler's model of influencers of buyer behaviour (2003, p183).

RQ4: *How do the External Employer Brand Images among students and the young professionals coincide with the Internal Employer Brand Images among the employees?*

The data collected from the first three research questions will be combined, compared and analysed. The Corporate Leadership Council's model of the employment brand components will be used also here, together with Kotler's model influencers of buyer behaviour (2003, p183).

### 3.2.3 Frame or reference - Summery of chosen theories and needed data

As mentioned above the theoretical frame of reference is for all questions more or less identical, which can be observes below. Following is a summery of all theory and needed data presented earlier.

Research Question	Theory	Data
RQ. 1.	<i>Components of the Employment brand – the Corporate Leadership Council A brand in mind – Alexander L. Biel Buyer behaviour – Kotler</i>	Use of secondary data from Universum Communications' surveys from 2004, among students in science, finance and computer science/ IT
RQ. 2.	<i>Components of the Employment brand – the Corporate Leadership Council A brand in mind – Alexander L. Biel Buyer behaviour – Kotler</i>	Use of secondarUniversum Communications' surveys from 2004, among young professionals with an academic background in science, finance and computer science/ IT
RQ. 3.	<i>Components of the Employment brand – the Corporate Leadership Council A brand in mind – Alexander L. Biel Buyer behaviour – Kotler</i>	Survey done for this research among a number of chosen companies' employees. This to collect primary data missing in secondary data.
RQ. 4.	<i>Components of the Employment brand – the Corporate Leadership Council A brand in mind – Alexander L. Biel Buyer behaviour – Kotler</i>	A comparison of data collected in Research Questions 1-3.

Figure 20: Summery of all theories and data needed for this research.

### 3.2.4 Conceptualization and operationalization

Concept	Conceptualization	Operationalization
External employer brand image	The perceived idea of a company as employer among people on the outside, i.e. individuals that are not employees.	The associations with an employer among students and young professionals, and what expected offers they are connecting to the company that they are seeing as an ideal employer.
Internal employer brand image	The perceived idea of a company as employer among their employees.	The associations and appreciated offers that a company's employees are connecting to their employer.

Figure 21: Conceptualization and operationalization of the employer brand image concept

## Chapter 4 Method

*This chapter contains a description of the procedure and approach of the work. It will contain a description of the choices made concerning the research method, and the arguments for these. It also contains a presentation of the problems that have occurred on the way, as well as discussion concerning used data.*

### 4.1 Design of research method

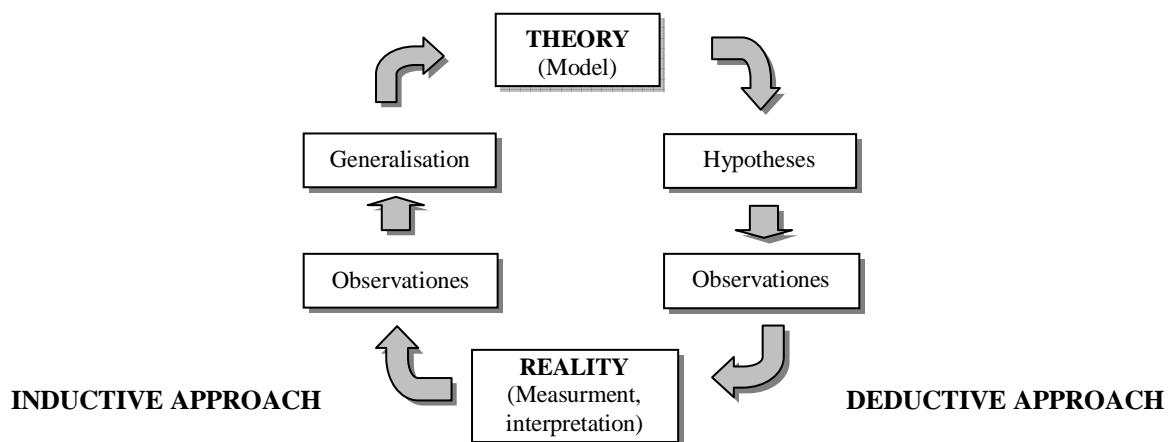
A research design is a framework, or blueprint for conducting a marketing research project. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve marketing research problems. Although a broad approach to the problem has already been developed, the research design specifies the details – the practical aspects – of implementing that approach. A research design will ensure that the marketing research project is conducted effectively and efficiently. (Malhotra, 2000, p72)

However, there is never a single, standard, correct method of carrying out a piece of research. Do not wait and start your research until you find out the proper approach, because there are many ways to tackle a problem – some good, some bad, but probably several good ways. There is no single perfect design. A research method for a given problem is not like the solution to a problem in algebra. It is more like a recipe for beef Stroganoff; there is no one best recipe. Simon, L. Julian (1985) quoted by Zikmund (1994, p62).

Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001, p64) are underlining that existing data always should be taken in consideration first. Already available information should primarily be used. Therefore a research should start off with an information search, and so was this one.

#### 4.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive approach

According to Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001, p220), there are two differences of principle when it comes to approaches of research, the inductive and deductive approach, visualized in figure 22 below.



**Figure 22: Inductive vs. Deductive research approach, Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001, p220).**

The concept *deductive approach*, means that on the basis of theory shape hypotheses that are testable statements about the reality. The result appears through logical deduction. *Induction* means that on basis of different phenomena, sensory impressions, in the reality draw conclusions, i.e. theories and models. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, p220) The inductive approach means to draw conclusions from empirical data. The weakness with the inductive approach though, is that is seldom is build upon all, possible observations. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, p200)

This work was based on a deductive approach, with inductive elements. The work spring from theory, and constantly returned to theory. There were inductive parts, observations done, which results was connected to the theoretical frame of references for analyses.

#### **4.1.2 Positivism and Hermeneutic**

There are today two scientific main directions, positivism and hermeneutic. *Positivism* has developed from an idea of Aristotle, the renaissance, 1700- and 1800 century's scientific progress and rationalism. The term itself 'positivism' refers to objective to build on positive, certain knowledge. According to positivism, there are only two sources of knowledge – the one that man can observe with it five senses, and the one that can be reasoned by using human deduction, our sense. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, pp199-200) There are three ways to draw conclusions within the positivistic tradition: through deduction, through induction, or through a combination of these. These are presented above.

The term *hermeneutic*, can be translated as 'interpretation art', or 'interpretation science'. The hermeneutic method means that a person, for example the researcher, understands another person's actions. In the fields of hermeneutics it is the interpretation and understanding that are important. The starting point is a concrete 'understanding' of what should be examined. A researcher for example, reasonably knows something ahead concerning the problem area that the investigation is about. Assisted by this understanding the researcher is formulating interesting problems, questions, ideas and hypotheses etc. which will help the researcher when opening a dialogue with the research material. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, pp221-223)

While the positivism describes and explains, the hermeneutic study seeks an overall understanding, an insight (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, p221). The goal with this work was to obtain an idea of differences and likenesses between different groups' perceived ideas of certain employer brands. The direction is to describe, which means that this study is positivistic oriented.

#### **4.1.3 Quantitative and Qualitative approaches**

According to Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001, s63) there are different ways to collect information and data.

- *Quantitative data*, also called 'hard data', can be for example number of produced units or profit in monetary units. A quantitative investigation is trying to quantify data and consists often statistical analyses (Malhotra, 1996, p164). Quantitative measuring can also mean placing objects in reciprocal order. (Eriksson och Wiedersheim-Paul, 1997, p65)

- *Qualitative data*, also called ‘soft data’, can be for example attitudes, working environment or functionality (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, s63). A qualitative investigation has the goal to create an understanding for underlying reasons and motives for people’s attitudes, opinions or behaviour. (Malhotra, 1996, p161)

One part of the work with employer branding is to understand the target population, in order to create a successful strategy. This would also include trying to obtain knowledge in reasons why perceived ideas of the brands, the employer brand images, are the ones they are. This in order to be able to affect brand image. In other words, for that a qualitative investigation would be of interest

However, this study has the objective of generating information on how different groups are different and alike, in certain areas. Are they having similar or different ideas? This study was based on statistical data, comparing number of people sharing the same values and attitudes. In other words the study is based on quantitative data. The research was also generating quantitative data. However, the underlying objective with the investigation is to deliver data, combined with theory that opens a door to an understanding for how the employer brand images are affected.

#### **4.1.4 Explorative, descriptive, causal or prognosticated investigation**

According to Zikmund (1994, p.49) marketing research can be classified on the basis of either *technique* or *function*. Experiments, surveys, and observational studies are just a few common research techniques. Classifying research by its purpose or function shows how the nature of the marketing problem influences the choice of methods. The nature of the problem determines whether the research is (1) explorative, (2) descriptive, or (3) causal.

- *Explorative research* in being done to clarify and define the nature of the problem. It is in general done to give the problem a more solid shape and identify which information that is being needed for future research.
- *Descriptive research* is designed to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon. It is in general being used for answering questions of the characteristics: who, what, when, where and how.
- *Causal research* has as basic alignment to identify cause – effect relations between different variables. In studies of this kind the investigator has expectations on the relations between the investigated variables, for example how the price is affecting the sales for a product. This requires that the investigator has rather good knowledge of the area.

In this research the objective is to describe *what* a certain research population have in common, and what differs. What employer brand image do the companies have among students and young professionals on the outside, and their employees on the inside? This research can thereby be classified as descriptive.

#### **4.2 Choice of research approach and data collection method**

Reconnecting to Zikmund (1994, p.49) and that marketing research can be classified on the basis of either *technique* or *function*. Earlier it was described that the function of this research was of descriptive nature. A question remaining is what technique to use.



Experiments, surveys, and observational studies are just a few common research techniques mentioned by Zikmund. These will be further described below.

#### **4.2.1 Selection of research population**

The stage when the research population is chosen is by Zikmund (1994, p62) named the – ‘Sampling stage’. In this stage the researcher determines who is to be sampled, how large a sample is needed, and how sampling units will be selected. Zikmund is mentioning three sampling questions to have in mind and ask:

- Who is to be sampled? Identification of target population.
- Sample size: How big should the sample be?
- How to choose and select the sampling units?

The main objective with this research was to achieve an idea of similarities and differences between certain groups on the labour market. The research population should therefore not be too small. A definition of ‘too small’ is of course discussable, but in this case meaning that the answering population should not be smaller than 50-100 people at each of the studied companies.

#### **The groups of interest**

The objective with this research was to get an idea of similarities and differences between the Internal Employer Brand Image and the External Employer Brand Image. In other terms meaning what people on the outside think of a company as employer, compared with what the employees on the inside think. On the outside, as potential employees, are the students of today and the young professionals. On the inside are the employees at the companies seen ‘ideal employers’ by the two external groups. These three groups just mentioned are the ones of interest for this research.

##### *External – Students and Young Professionals*

The External Employer Brand Image is in the report covered by the yearly surveys done by Universum Communications. They are doing survey among students and young professionals, in the different fields: technology/science, finance and computer science/IT.

##### *Internal – Employees*

In this research the same division was used for the internal study as for the external surveys run by Universum Communication. This for achieving a compatible level with the external groups as high as possible. The research was therefore to be sent out to people working within technology/science, finance or computer science/IT. No other restrictions were to be made concerning choice of the answering group among employees. However, some background information on the answering individual was needed. This for making the comparison with the two external groups as rewarding as possible. It was also generating opportunities for other comparisons to be made. The background information was covering the following identification factors:

- *Present Professional Rôle*
- *Gender:* Male or female.
- *Age:* To be able to classify the employee as a grand professional or a young professional. Interesting because of the possibilities of straight comparison with the external young professionals. Another interesting point to look at was if there possibly were differences internally between the grand professionals and the young professionals?
- *Highest level of education*

- *Field of studies:* technology/science, finance or computer science/IT. This for being able to make straight comparisons with the corresponding individuals in the other groups of interest.
- *Years of working experience:* To be able to classify the employee as Grand Professional or Young Professional. Also interesting with the given opportunity of seeing the years of working experience's effect on values and association.
- *Years working for the Employer:*
- *Present field of work:* technology/science, finance or computer science/IT

### **Choice of companies to investigate**

Awareness of possibly existing differences and likenesses between employer brand images within certain groups, will make a strategic work with the employer brand more efficient. To be able to investigate whether there are any similarities and differences, and to distinguish possible trends, at least one more company, than the assigning company, was needed. However, preferably additional companies were to be included, in order to increase the distinction of possible trends.

There were certain criteria that companies had to fulfil for being included in the study. These were:

- The company had to be listed as an 'ideal employer' in 2004, in the Universum Graduate Surveys among students, in Swedish called "Företagsbarometern", and in the Universum Young Professional Survey.
- The company had to have enough respondents in 2004, in the surveys mentioned above.

The choice of contact person at the different companies varied. It depended on which person the company handed over the issue to. The group of people asked to participate in the research was randomly chosen, in the working fields of technology/science, finance and computer science/IT. The company representative 'contact person' was in charge of generating a list of randomly chosen employees.

Qualifying companies were asked and promised anonymity, due to the sensitivity of the information needed. A few of the companies asked rejected due to research-fatigue among their employees. Three companies had to reject after long time of consideration, due to reorganisation. At the end two companies, beside the assigning company for this research, had both the interest and resources to participate in this research. In total there were three companies taking part in the research

### **4.2.2 Data classification**

There are two kinds of data normally used in researches: secondary data and primary data. These are by Zikmund (1994, p56) defined as:

*Secondary data:* or historical data are previously collected and assembled for some project other than the one at hand. Secondary data can often be found inside the company or at a public or university library. In addition some firms specialize in providing information, such as economic forecasts, that is useful to many organizations. Zikmund (p.57) also remarks that secondary data can almost always be gathered more quickly and at lower cost than primary data. However, secondary data may be outdated, and they may not meet the researcher's needs exactly because they were collected for another purpose.

*Primary data:* are data gathered and assembled specifically for the object at hand. The most common method of generating primary data is through surveys. Other methods

will be presented below concerning data collecting methods. One of the advantages with primary data is, according to Chisnall (1992, p28), that the quality of the information is easier to verify, and that the researcher can adapt the information for it to fit the objective of the research. Chisnall also remarks the biggest disadvantages with primary data, which are the high costs and time consuming.

This work was based on secondary data as well as primary data. Secondary data was used to reflect the external employer brand images, as well as create a base for the research. To fulfil the objective of the research, complementary primary data was also needed. The data that was collected and how it was collected will be discussed and motivated further on.

### **4.2.3 Data collecting method**

Experiments, surveys, and observational studies are a few common research techniques to collect primary data. The objectives of the study, the available data sources, the urgency of the decision, and the cost of obtaining the data determines which design technique should be chosen Zikmund (1994, p58). In addition to the three methods just mentioned Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1997, p219) are also pointing out case studies.

#### *Surveys*

The most common method of generating data is through surveys. A *survey* is a research technique in which information is gathered from a sample of people through a questionnaire, Zikmund (1994, p58). Typically, surveys attempt to describe what is happening or to learn the reasons for a particular marketing activity. Identifying characteristics of target markets, measuring consumer attitudes, and describing consumer purchasing patterns are common survey objectives. Because most survey research is descriptive research, the term *survey* is most often associated with quantitative findings. Although it is true that most surveys are conducted to quantify certain factual information, Zikmund (1994, p210) is remarking that some aspects of surveys may also be qualitative.

Surveys provide a quick, inexpensive, efficient, and accurate means of assessing information about a population. Surveys are quit flexible and, when properly conducted, extremely valuable to the manager, Zikmund (1994, p211).

#### *Experiments*

Marketing experiments hold the greatest potential for establishing cause-and-effect relationships. Experimentation allows investigations of changes in one variable, such as sales, while manipulating one or two other variables. Ideally experimental control provides a basis for isolating causal factors by eliminating outside, or exogenous, influences. Zikmund (1994, p59)

#### *Case studies*

Case studies means that a small number of objects are investigated in many different respects. As investigating and research method the case study can be used in four different connections: as illustration, as mean to create hypotheses, as method for operating research and changing work and as aid for creating new theory. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, pp102-103)

### *Observations*

The objective of many research projects is merely to record what can be observed, for example, the number of automobiles that pass by a proposed site for a gasoline station. This can be mechanically recorded or observed by humans. The main advantage of the observation technique is that it records behaviour without relaying on reports from respondents. Observation methods often are nonreactive because data are collected unremarkably and passively without a respondent's direct participation. Zikmund (1994, p61)

As mentioned, this research started off with studies of secondary data, data collected in the surveys done by Universum Communications. As earlier mentioned, they are every year they doing quantitative surveys about the opinions of students and young professionals regarding recruitment and lifestyle issues. The objective is to create an understanding of the career expectations of today's students and young professionals. The External Employer Brand Image, i.e. partly the associations among students and young professionals, were represented and reflected by the results from Universum Communications surveys from 2004.

To meet the goals of this research a collection of primary data was also needed. Among the methods mentioned above surveys was the most appropriate one. The goal with this research was to identify characteristics of employees and potential employees and identifying differences and likenesses concerning their perceptions of the companies as employers. Since the objective was to obtain more of a general picture of certain groups, concerning a certain matter, the survey was the most suitable research approach. Contributing to this choice was also the fact that a survey is rather fast and cheap.

To collect complementary primary data needed a survey specifically designed for this research was carried out. The planning and design of this survey is to be explained below, after a presentation of the surveys laying as foundation for the studies of the External Employer Brand Image – The Universum Communications' Surveys.

#### **4.2.4 Universum Communications' surveys**

As mentioned earlier, the work was started off with studies of secondary data. The secondary data was delivered from Universum Communications, collected in their surveys from 2004. All data used for comparisons in this research are taken from the surveys from 2004. The objective with this research was to compare the external and internal employer brand images. To obtain optimal results when comparing anything, the surrounding circumstances of the different parts considered should resemble as much as possible. This to limit the amount of influencers to be considered.

When comparing the external and internal sides of the employer brand images, the data collected from both sides should, if optimal, spring from exactly the same method. However, that was not possible in this case, but was strived for being done with the most resemblance as possible. Therefore, looking into the method used by Universum Communications was important. Here follows a brief presentation of the methods used by Universum Communications when doing their quantitative surveys among students and young professionals.

There are many similarities between the surveys focused on students and the surveys focused on young professionals. First general information concerning all Universum

Communications' surveys will be presented. Then specifics and differences between the surveys focused on the different groups will be treated.

Questions and alternatives have been put together on the basis of Universum Communications gathered knowledge and experience from earlier years surveys, and after consultation with students, young professionals and clients. The questionnaires consist mainly of given answer alternatives, but for the main part of the questions the possibility to fill in a person's own alternative is also given. By combining old tried questions with new questions at issue, trends as well as changes can be illustrated.

The list presented in the questionnaire consists of 120 companies and organisations for students, and 128 for young professionals. It is constructed after the results from earlier years' surveys, and other criteria such as market share, industry and trends. The employers that were listed among the top 60 of ideal employers previous year are automatically included, as well as the companies and organisations that most frequently has been added to the list by the respondent groups.

Last but not of least importance it should be remarked that all respondents in Unviversum Communications' surveys are anonymous and the answers can not be traced and connected to single individuals.

#### *Students*

The Universum Graduate Survey ('Företagsbarometern') is divided into three separate surveys:

	Number of participating students:
▪ The Universum Graduate Survey – Technology/ science,	1.746
▪ The Universum Graduate Survey – Finance	3.008
▪ The Universum Graduate Survey – Computer science/ IT.	1.379
In total there were 6.133 students participating the Universum Graduate Survey in 2004.	

The distribution of the questionnaires has been both by regular mail and through electronic means. Around 90 percent of the answers have been collected electronically and around 10 percent by letter questionnaires. Addresses for the circular of the letter questionnaires have been received from the universities concerned. The collections of the electronic answers have mostly been done in collaboration with the concerned universities, but also through internal and external cooperating partners with access to the students email addresses in the suitable segment. Statistics from SCB (Statistiska Centralbyrån) och VHS (Verket för högskoleservice) have also been used as basis for the selection.

#### *Young professionals*

In the Universum Young Professionals Survey 2004, 3110 young professionals participated. Different to the surveys done among students, the young professionals are not initially divided into different groups based on their field of activity, i.e. technology/ science, finance or computer science/ IT. The students are before starting answering the questionnaire asked to announce their field of studies, and are after that treated in three separate reports. When it comes to the young professionals, their earlier field of studies

and present field of work is included. However, they are not being split up, in the meaning of having the results treated and presented in different reports.

#### **4.2.5 Designed survey for this research**

To reach the objective of this research additional primary data was needed. Of the mentioned research techniques presented above a survey was conclusively the best option. A survey is often classified by the kind of instrument used. Some different *research instruments* that Zikmund (1994, p238-250) is mentioning are: Personal interviews, Telephone interviews, and 'letter questionnaires'.

##### *Choice of research instrument*

For the collection of primary data personal interviews were not an option. This due to the large amount of respondents and with the time factor in mind. Also the large spread geographically made it not possible. Making around 300 personal interviews was no way possible within the frames set for this research, both when it comes to money and time. The possibilities for making a few personal interviews within a limited group of respondents were not either an option. This because the chosen target group were not homogeneous, with possibly large differences among themselves. To secure what the different groups thought, and not miss anything, a large number of interviews would have been needed.

Left as possible research instruments were telephone interviews and 'letter questionnaires'. Telephone interviews would in many ways include the same difficulties as the personal interviews mentioned above. Since the telephone interviews in this case would have been done by one single person, too much time would have to be dedicated to running the interviews, and interpretation of the answers. Therefore telephone interviews were also excluded as a possible research instrument.

Since the main objective with this work is to get more of a general picture, the large research population was needed. Because of the large number of respondents, 'letter questionnaires' was left as the only reasonable option. Another reason was the resource delimitations, such as time and people working with the research.

'Letter questionnaires' can be divided into paper versions, and today's progressively more used 'web-questionnaires'. The paper version would in this case have meant that one person, most likely someone from the Human Resource department, would have been responsible for handing out the questionnaire, and recollecting it again. This would have meant a lot of work for the responsible 'contact person'. On the other hand, making every single one of the respondents responsible for returning the questionnaire themselves would have included a large risk, in that it would most likely be seen as quite an effort. It would probably not have been prioritised, if not compulsory, meaning that the response rate – number of returned copies – risked becoming very low.

However, having one person responsible for handing out the questionnaires, and recollecting it again, would have involved another issue for this research. The field of research is employees' attitudes, and values, connected to the employer. It is likely so that most employees do not want to reveal and expose their opinions to their employer. Dealing with paper copies and having someone responsible for handing out, and recollecting the questionnaire, was not optimal. It is important for any research instrument that the respondent can answer freely, and honestly. To increase the chances

for the respondent to do so, the person has to feel confident in that the answers will not be in any way to its disadvantage. Having one person, from for example Human Resource department handing out and recollecting a paper copy, would have increased the risk for the respondent not to find total security concerning the anonymity in the answers.

This lead to the remaining option of using a web-questionnaire. The advantages were many in this case. First of all it was possible to keep total anonymity for the respondent. The respondent received a mail with a link, containing the questionnaire. The answers were then stored directly in an Excel sheet, not possible to connect to the respondent. Second it was time and resource saving, for all parts involved. The company only had to provide with a list of suitable employees, fitting into the described target group above, i.e. people working within the fields of technology/science, finance and computer science/IT. No other delimitations were made. The questionnaire will be further presented below.

#### **4.2.6 The questionnaire**

The task of writing a questionnaire, determining the list of questions, and designing the format of the printed or written questionnaire is an essential aspect of the development of a survey research design Zikmund (1994, p58). According to Zikmund (1994, p396) there are two basic requirements for the questionnaire. These are relevancy and accuracy. For a questionnaire to be relevant, only needed information is collected, i.e. only information that is necessary to solve the question at stake. Accuracy is obtained by having as high validity and reliability as possible.

As mentioned previously, the questionnaire created for this research was based on the Universum Communications' questionnaires, to increase the comparability. Therefore many decisions concerning choices of the design of the questionnaire were excluded. The questions in this case revolved around which of the questions from the Universum Communication surveys were to be included, and also what their design meant for the answers.

In the Universum Communications' surveys the main part of the questions has as objective to identifying the respondent. These are in this research referred to as *background questions*. Only two questions are answering the respondent's associations and expected offers concerning certain companies, which the person sees as an ideal employer. To repeat these two questions, they are:

- *What do you associate with your ideal company?*
- *What do you think that your ideal company is offering?*

These two questions were included also in this research, serving as base for answering the third research question. However, also in this research identifying the respondent was of interest. This for increasing the chances of rewarding analyses. Also the background questions were based on Universum Communications' surveys, with the same objective as with the other two questions: to increase the comparability.

The questionnaire was sent out in Swedish, as the surveys done by Universum Communications. This to have the least differences between the surveys done internally, and the surveys already done externally. The questionnaire was afterwards

translated into English. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1, where both the Swedish version and the English version are included.

#### *Types of questions*

There are different types of questions that can be used when creating a questionnaire. In this research it is of interest to describe and discuss the Universum Communications' questionnaires, since the questionnaires created for this research are using questions from these. Generally there are two different types of questions that can be identified, based on the amount of freedom respondents have in answering. These are the open-ended questions and fixed-alternatives questions. An *open-ended question* poses some problem or topic and ask respondents to answer in their own words. In a fixed-alternative question the respondent is given specific, limited-alternatives responses and asked to choose the one closest to his or her own viewpoint, Zikmund (1994, pp397-398). There are mainly four different types of fixed-alternative questions. These are, according to Zikmund (1994, p399):

- *Simple-dichotomy question*: a fixed-alternative question that requires the respondent to choose one of two dichotomous alternatives.
- *Determinant-choice question*: a fixed-alternative question that requires a respondent to choose one – and only one – response from among multiple alternatives.
- *Frequency-determination question*: a fixed-alternative question that asks for an answer about the general frequency of occurrence.
- *Checklist question*: a fixed-alternative question that allows the respondent to provide multiple answers to a single question by checking off items.

The Universum Communications' questionnaires are basically consisting of fixed-alternative questions, using all four different types mentioned by Zikmund. One of the exceptions, and example of partly open-ended questions, is when the respondents for example are given the option to add two companies of choice to the list, that are not listed already.

The types of questions included also in this research used for comparison are: the simple-dichotomy questions, the determinant-choice questions, and the checklist questions. The two questions answering the respondent's associations and expected offers concerning certain companies, which the person sees as an ideal employer, are both checklist questions. One background question, concerning gender, is naturally a simple-dichotomy question. Further more there are a few other background questions of the determinant-choice type. An example is the persons' present role at work, where different alternatives are given and the respondent get to choose one.

#### *Consequences of fixed-alternatives questions of the checklist type*

The associations and expected offers of the students, the young professionals and the employers' were in this research reflected by the two questions mentioned above: "what do you associate with your ideal company?" and "what do you think that your ideal company is offering?". These two questions are serving as base for this research. Since the two of them are fixed-alternatives questions of the checklist type, it is of interest to look into how that may influence the results.



According to Zikmund (1994, p401), one problem concerning fixed-alternatives questions of the checklist type is that, if researcher is unaware of the potential responses to a question, fixed-alternatives obviously cannot be used. When it comes the questions used in the Universum Communications' surveys, it can be discussed whether they are aware of all potential responses. However it can be seen as they are covering and reflecting certain parts of the employer brand. The results simply have to be connected at all points to the used questions, and their given alternatives. Further more the results should be connected to theory, to discuss which parts of the employer brand that is actually being covered.

### **4.3 Method of Analysis**

To compare included secondary data from the Universum Communications' surveys, with the primary data collected in the research, the computer program Excel was used. The data collected in the survey done among employees was automatically stored in Excel. Secondary data obtained from Universum Communication was delivered in Word documents, with figures easily transformable into Excel tables. When all data was transmitted into Excel, comparable diagrams/profiles were created. These were served as base for the analysing work.

#### **4.3.1 Method for analyses of the diagrams**

There were two different 'conditions' for the diagrams. One kind of diagram was totally comparable, meaning that the different groups compared were asked identical questions, asked to mark the same number of answer alternatives, or as many as they wanted. There were a few things to keep in mind the diagrams though. There were coinciding points, where two or three of the groups have the same percentage of respondents having the same ideas. A coinciding point can have different meaning relatively though, for the different groups. One coinciding point can be one of group's peaks, i.e. one of the most frequent answer, but another group's bottom or middle score. The same concerning points of difference. This means that it always have to put in a relative perspective.

The other type of diagram was where one of the compared respondents groups were asked to mark a maximum of three answer alternatives, and the other one as many as the respondent wanted. Here a problem occurs when analysing these diagrams, since they are not completely comparable. First of all, the curve reflecting the ideas of the group allowed to mark at the most three alternatives, is generally below the other curve connected to the respondents free to mark as many as they want. Secondly, the ups and down are more pointy for the curves connected to the limited answer alternatives questions. The respondent get to mark the most suitable answer alternatives, leaving out others that might have been marked if they got to mark as many as preferred. Therefore differences might seem more extreme when questions with difference in number of asked answer alternatives are compared, than they are in reality. Defining coinciding ideas and points of difference for these diagrams was done on relative basis. If an answer alternative was one of three most frequent ones for a respondent group, and this for the two or three compared groups, it was considered coinciding. The same, but the other way around, for the less frequent answer alternatives.

#### **4.4 Method problems**

An attitude is a theoretical concept. Not before it is made measurable, made operational, in the form of for example an attitude scale, it is possible to empirically test it. Making it operational, i.e. how theoretical ideas, in the form of concepts and models, are transmitted into empirical observations is a tricky problem in the examining work. Two important concepts in this context are validity and reliability. (Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001, p38)

##### *Validity*

Validity is defined by Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001, p38), as a measuring instrument's capacity of measuring what is supposed to be measured. It is important that the validity is good, because if the study do not measure what it is supposed to measure, the results are useless. To improve the validity in this study the questionnaires, from which data have been collected, was connected to theory available. This to verify which components of the employer brand that was actually being investigated. The employees were randomly chosen, but within the frames of occupational roles. To achieve high comparability the different groups were supposed to be as alike as possible. Therefore employees working within the same field as the students and young professionals participating in the Universum Communications' surveys (technology/science, finance and computer science/ IT) were included. Also to increase the validity, in this case the comparability, questions were copied as far as possible from the Universum Communications' surveys. This concerning the questions that were used for comparisons.

##### *Reliability*

According to Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001, p40), validity is the most important requirements of a measuring instrument. If the "measuring instrument" does not measure what is supposed to be measured, it does not really matter whether the actual measurement is good. Depending on scientific point of view additional requirements can be demanded. One common one is *reliability*. It means that a measuring instrument, for example a questionnaire, is giving reliable and stable data. Would other researchers have achieved the same result using the same method? For a research to have high reliability, it should be independent of researcher and – depending on the grade of generalisation that is sought for – of the examined units (persons, organisations etc.)

Instead of doing a case study and only seeing to one company and coinciding images, three companies were included. This to increase the chances for obtaining reliable data.

#### **4.5 Discussion concerning Method**

Halfway through the research I was myself randomly asked to participate in the Universum Graduate Survey 2005. In addition spending time working in the computer lab at the university contributed to possibilities to eaves dropping. A couple of times it happened that students were filling in the electronic questionnaires, and while doing so dropping comments to friends sitting next to them. These comments were to a certain extent revealing their attitudes towards the task of answering the questionnaires. Their comments, and my own experience of filling in the questionnaire, contributed to one conclusion: the answers are rather thought through, when answered. It was not done without complains about the questionnaire being extensive and time consuming, but it

was done and with reflection and consideration. It is likely so that many people do put off answering the questionnaires until later, risking not to answer them at all at the end. However, the impression obtained from the experiences just mentioned, was that when answered the answers are considered.

There is something that should be commented and kept in mind when working with the collected data. That is that the answers and used collected data spring from respondents seeing the actual company as ideal employer. It is *not* the ideas of the complete answering population in the surveys. In other words, the external employer brand images are in this research reflected by the answers coming from respondents who are interested in working for the actual company.

The number of responses is not discussed, or for example errors due to absent answers. Zikmund (p250) is quoting Erdos, L. Paul (1970): “No mail survey can be considered reliable unless it has a minimum of 50 percent response, or unless it demonstrates with some form of verification that the nonrespondents are similar to the respondents”. Here the assumption is made that the same goes for electronic questionnaires. For this survey the total response rate was 54%, and for the three company separately: Company A – 49%, Company B – 52%, and Company C – 59%. Even though Company A did not reach 50 percent, it was close enough and the total response rate for this research was therefore seen as satisfactory.

At some points the questions were not entirely compatible. For the questions [2, 3, 4] in the questionnaires, some given answer alternative differed for the students and the other two investigated groups. The students also have only 13 answer alternatives, compared to 16 for the young professionals and employees. This was handled by applying the students answer alternatives to the lists of the other two groups, and excepting the gaps that occurred when doing the comparisons.

The definition of young professionals varies, also by Universum Communications. They are referring both to people that are between 25-35 years old, and 20-40 years old. However, always with a maximum working experience of eight years. In this research young professionals are referred to people between 22-37 years old, with also a maximum of eight years of working experience.

It can be remarked that among the group of employees included in this research, internally, there were also one part young professionals. Therefore the background questions concerning age and years of working experience were of interest, rendering it possible to identify the young professionals among all employees. It was of interest to be able to compare also the young professional separately, internally and externally.

One mistake was made in the research, when copying one of the questions from the Universum Young Professional Survey. It was question number three: “*Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with your present employer?*”. As marked, the respondent is asked to mark *three* alternatives. In the question planned for comparison, from the Universum Graduate Survey and Universum Young Professional Survey, “*What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?*” the respondent was asked to mark *all* suitable alternatives. There was a risk that this mistake would cause complications for the analyses. The eventual effects of the mistake will be discussed together with the analyses in chapter 6.

## Chapter 5                      Empiric / Results

*This chapter contains a presentation of the comparisons done to answer the fourth research question. The first three research questions will be processed further in the analyses chapter, together with the analyses of the fourth research questions.*

### **5.1 Comparison of collected data**

A presentation of the data collected in the survey done among employees, is presented in appendix 2. There all data obtained from the questionnaires is presented for all three companies separately. All questions are presented in English, also in this chapter, although the questionnaire was originally in Swedish. For original version in Swedish the reader is requested to apply for this in the presentation of the questionnaire in appendix 1. The secondary data concerning students and young professionals from Universum Communications used for comparisons, is presented in appendix 3.

Here follows a presentation of the comparisons done serving as base for answering the fourth research question. Comparisons are done of the External and Internal Employer Brand Images Concerning the three companies separately. This means comparisons of collected primary data in the survey done among employees with secondary data collected in the Universum Communications surveys among students and young professionals in 2004. To refresh the reader's memory, the fourth research question is repeated below.

- RQ4: *How do the External Employer Brand Images among students and the young professionals coincide with the Internal Employer Brand Images among the employees?*

The main part of the questionnaires used in Universum Communications' surveys, and in the survey done for this research, is focused on the respondent's background, expectations and desires. This trying to identify and create a picture of the respondent group. The objective with the background questions is to render possible further analyses of the data. It also enables comparisons between separate groups within the research population.

However, there are limitations when it comes to comparisons including the different groups externally, i.e. students and young professionals. The secondary data available for this research concerning the three companies' 'their students' and 'their young professionals' from Universum Communications' surveys is not traceable. It is not possible to see *who* has answered *what*. The secondary data available in this case can only contribute to a general idea. For example percentage of women in the respondent groups, different ages etc. From the data obtained in the survey done among employees, it is possible to trace each answer to each of the respondents. Each respondent is anonymous, but it is possible to connect all answers coming from one respondent. This generates opportunities to do compare the employer brand images among minor internal respondent groups. However, the differences between the condition of the primary data and the secondary data, is limiting the comparison possibilities between the external and internal employer brand images.

Two questions used in the questionnaires both externally and internally are creating the base for answering the research questions. These are questions nr 3 and nr 4 in the questionnaire designed for this research. It can be remarked that the questions have different appearance in the different questionnaires used internally for employees, and

externally for students and young professionals. Below the versions of the questions copied from the Universum Communications' surveys, which are used for the comparisons, are also presented.

*Question nr3: Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with your present employer?  
[Question nr20 (students), nr35 (young professionals): What do you believe this ideal employer is offering?]*

*Question nr4: What do you associate with your present employer?  
[Question nr19 (students), nr34 (young professionals): What do you associate with this ideal employer?]*

These two questions, or more exactly their belonging answers, are in this research serving as reflection of the employer brand images. They are as mentioned above creating a base for answering the research questions. The identifying background questions of the respondent groups will assist. The results from the comparisons done of the two questions concerning associations and expected offers will now be presented. First comparisons done concerning expected offers will be presented, followed by comparisons carried out to concerning associations.

### **5.1.1 How do the external employer brand images coincide with the internal employer brand images?**

To answer the fourth research question comparisons between all students, all young professionals and all employees, for the three companies separately were done. These comparisons will be presented in diagrams below. For original data the reader is requested to apply for this in appendix 2 and appendix 3.

Some of the answer alternatives differ in the questionnaires. For example for students concerning associations and expected offers (questions 19&20), there are 13 alternatives, while for young professionals and in the surveys done internally among employees, there are 16. Some of the answer alternatives are slightly different, and some are, as just mentioned, missing in questionnaires used in the Universum Graduate Survey for students. In the line diagrams shown below there are therefore points missing for the students.

The secondary data available on the students is originally presented in three different reports for the distinguished groups: technology/science, finance and computer science/IT. For these comparisons below the average of the different groups is used. The data from the different groups will be presented further in the analyses, when the first research question concerning the students' employer brand images will be worked on.

To remind the reader when analysing the diagram concerning question nr 3, externally vs. internally: the amount of requested answer alternatives marked when answering the question differ for the employees and the two external groups. The students and the young professionals were asked to mark as many alternatives as they want, while the employees were limited to three. The effects of this difference will be included when analysing the results in next chapter. However, some things should be mentioned at this point to increase the understanding of the diagrams. Since the total amount of answering alternatives marked becomes smaller when respondents are allowed to mark at the most three alternatives, instead of as many as they want, the curves for employees

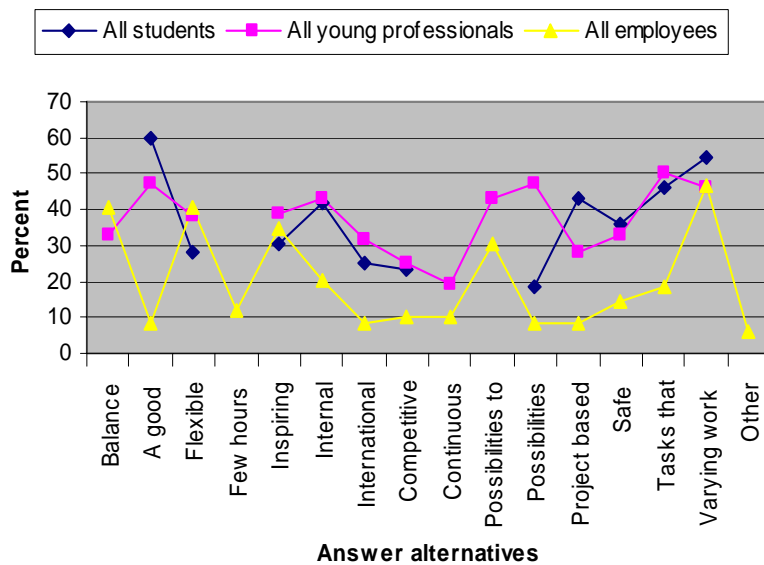
are in general below the curves of the other two respondent groups. The curve for employees also becomes more 'drastic', in the sense of more pointy ups-and downs.

Below the diagrams alone will be presented. In following analyses chapter the results will be further presented together with their analyses.

### Comparison of the expected and appreciated offers

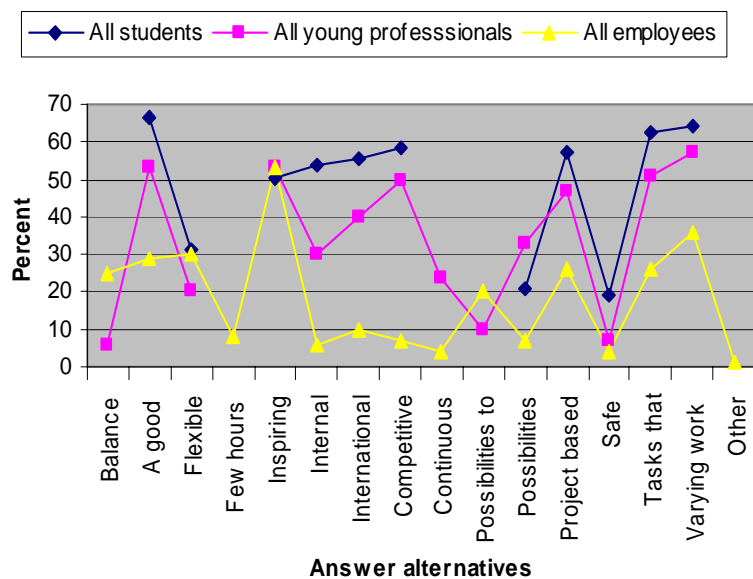
*Question nr3: Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with your present employer?*  
*[Question nr20 (students), nr35 (young professionals): What do you believe this ideal employer is offering?]*

**Question 3 Company A**



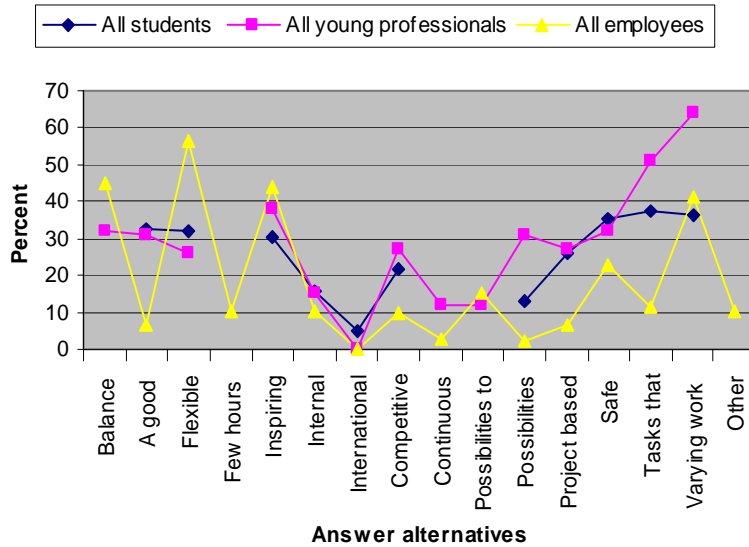
Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

**Question 3 Company B**



Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

### Question 3 Company C



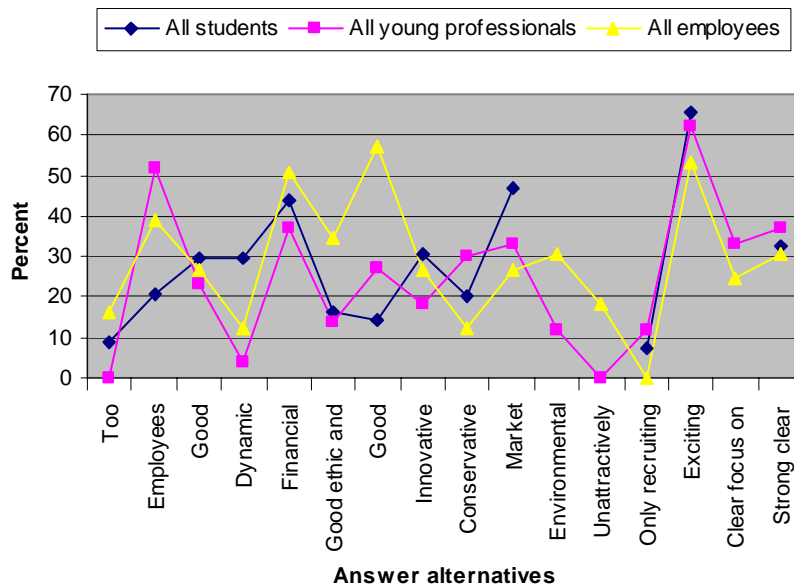
Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

Following is a presentation of the results from comparisons concerning question nr 4 in the questionnaire. For this question there is no problematic concerning differences in number of answer alternatives marked for the three different groups. Here the three groups have all been asked to mark as many answer alternatives as they want.

### Comparison of associations

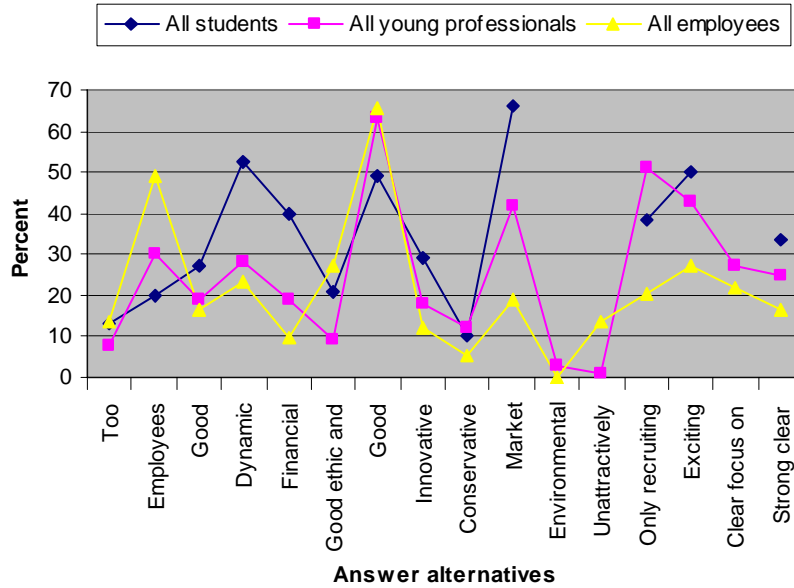
*Question nr4: What do you associate with your present employer?*  
*[Question nr19 (students), nr34 (young professionals): What do you associate with this ideal employer?]*

### Question 4 Company A



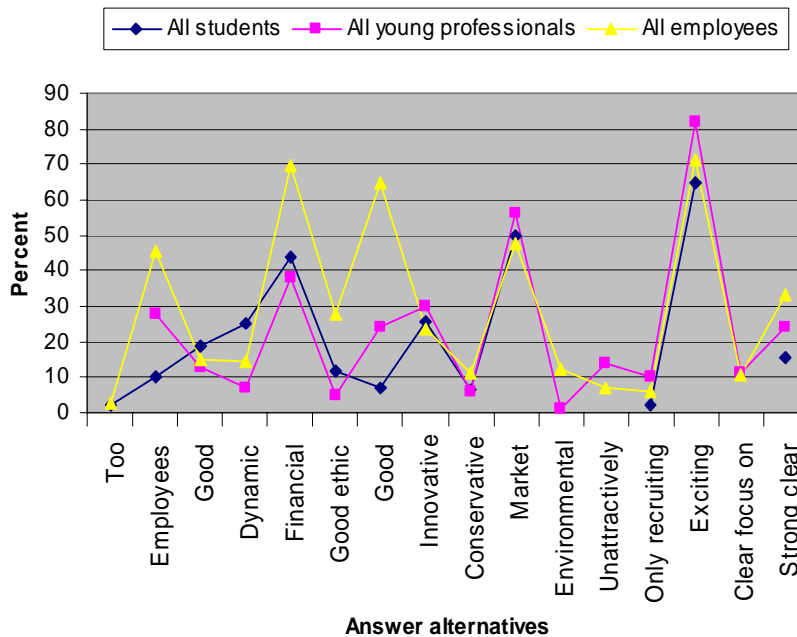
Too competitive working environment
Employees with varying background
Good Leadership/ Management
Dynamic organisation
Financial strength
Good ethic and high moral
Good reputation and highly thought of
Innovative solutions
Conservative working environment
Market success
Environmental friendly policy
Unattractively geographically situated
Only recruiting the best
Exciting products/ services
Clear focus on competence development
Strong clear company culture

Question 4 Company B



Too competitive working environment
Employees with varying background
Good Leadership/ Management
Dynamic organisation
Financial strength
Good ethic and high moral
Good reputation and highly thought of
Innovative solutions
Conservative working environment
Market success
Environmental friendly policy
Unattractively geographically situated
Only recruiting the best
Exciting products/ services
Clear focus on competence development
Strong clear company culture

Question 4 Company C



Too competitive working environment
Employees with varying background
Good Leadership/ Management
Dynamic organisation
Financial strength
Good ethic and high moral
Good reputation and highly thought of
Innovative solutions
Conservative working environment
Market success
Environmental friendly policy
Unattractively geographically situated
Only recruiting the best
Exciting products/ services
Clear focus on competence development
Strong clear company culture





## Chapter 6 Analyses

*This chapter contains a presentation of the answers to the research questions, together with the analyses of the answers.*

To refresh the reader's memory the main objective of this work and the formulated research problem is repeated below:

*To examine the existence of similarities and differences between  
External and Internal Employer Brand Images.*

In order to reach the objective of this work, the research problem was divided into 4 research questions. The answers to these research questions will now be presented together with their analyses.

### 6.1 Analyses of answers concerning Research question 1

The first research question was formulated as follows:

- RQ1: *What Employer Brand Image do the companies participating in this research have among their students?*  
*'Their students' meaning students who sees the employer as an ideal employer. This according to the researches done by Universum Communications.*

To answer the first research question, data from the Universum Graduate Surveys 2004 was used. It was further analysed assisted by the theories included in theoretical frame of reference. The employer brand images among the students observed in this research will first be presented for the three companies separately. This followed by observations concerning the student group as a whole.

#### 6.1.1 The companies' employer brand images among 'their students'

##### *Company A*

*What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?*

Alternative	Te %	Fin %	IT %	All
Balance between private life and carrier				
A good reference for your future carrier	<b>74</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>
Flexible working hours	32	23	30	28,3
Few hours overtime				
Inspiring colleges	38	25	28	30,3
Internal further education	38	40	<b>47</b>	41,7
International carrier opportunities	34	25	16	25
Competitive compensation	20	23	27	23,3
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work				
Possibilities to work from home				
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	26	18	12	18,7
Project based work	<b>62</b>	28	40	43,3
Secure employment	36	30	41	35,7
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>	35	<b>46</b>
Varying work	52	<b>60</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>54,7</b>
Other				

On the reader's left data received from the Universum Graduate Survey concerning students' expected offers concerning Company A is presented. For the students in the different fields of studies, technology/ science, finance and computer science/ IT, the ideas seem rather similar. The three most frequent answers are marked with thick figures in the table.

Connecting the most frequent answer alternatives to the Corporate Leadership Council's model of the

employer brand components, the dominant components are: *product/ brand strength, work environment and compensations & benefits*. This leaves the employer brand component *work-life balance* out. To be able to discuss these figures further it can be of interest to compare the alternatives that the student believe that Company A is offering,

with what the students think is attractive for an employer to offer. These comparisons for Company A are presented in appendix 5. When reviewing these diagrams one should keep in mind that for question nr 2 the respondent is asked to mark at the most three alternatives, while for question nr 3 as many as the respondent wants. This means that the two questions are not perfectly comparable. However, it is possible to see whether the expected offers of the ideal employer somewhat coincide with the preferred offers or not. The reason for left out marks is that the answering alternative have not been included in the actual questionnaire.

The students seeing Company A as an ideal employer are clearly thinking that Company A would mean a good reference for their future carrier, while this is not something they prioritise when it comes to preference in offers. However, this big difference would probably not be as big if the students got to mark as many alternatives as they want also in question 2. Deviation is also noticeable in two more areas: tasks that mean bigger challenges and project based work. Otherwise the expected offers for the students seeing Company A as an ideal employer coincide well with the preferred offers.

*What do you associate with the company/ organisation?*

Alternative	Te %	Fin %	IT %	All
Too competitive working environment	10	5	11	8,7
Employees with varying background	24	20	18	20,7
Good Leadership/ Management	36	28	25	29,7
Dynamic organisation	28	38	23	29,7
Financial strength	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>
Good ethic and high moral	16	15	18	16,3
Good reputation and highly thought of	20	10	13	14,3
Innovative solutions	24	40	28	30,7
Conservative working environment	28	13	19	20
Market success	<b>46</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46,7</b>
Environmental friendly policy				
Unattractively geographically situated				
Only recruiting the best	12	0	10	7,3
Exciting products/ services	<b>72</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>65,7</b>
Clear focus on competence development				
Strong clear company culture	26	38	33	32,3

When it comes to associations the three student groups also have similar ideas. Company A is associated mainly with *exciting products, market success and financial strength*. Connecting these to the Corporate Leadership Council's model of the employer brand components, the focus of the associations with Company A is mainly towards *product/ company brand strength, and company culture & environment*.

According to data collected in the Universum Graduate Surveys these students have collected information about Company A mainly through the *company's webpage, articles in the newspapers and company days*. Students in finance and computer science/ IT are also including *through acquaintances working at the company*. For further figures concerning the three companies' student profiles the reader is requested to apply for these in appendix 4. However, these mentioned channels above are mostly controlled means by the company it self. Articles are in some cases, and in some not. Controlling the message that the employees are delivering to their acquaintances is not as controllable. The company can't do more than trying to meet the employees needs, expectations and desires, and wish for them to be good ambassadors.

For Company A students in finance and computer science/ IT had included as one source of information: through acquaintances working at the company. Verifying whether their employer brand image coincided to a higher extent with the employees was therefore interesting. Doing so no clear indications to that this was the case were given though (see appendix 6).

**Company B**

What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?

Alternative	Te	%	Fin	IT	%	All
Balance between private life and carrier						
A good reference for your future carrier	74	57	68	66,3		
Flexible working hours	35	25	34	31,3		
Few hours overtime						
Inspiring colleges	63	36	52	50,3		
Internal further education	53	55	54	54		
International carrier opportunities	56	51	60	55,7		
Competitive compensation	73	54	49	58,7		
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work						
Possibilities to work from home						
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	21	14	28	21		
Project based work	79	37	55	57		
Secure employment	19	18	20	19		
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	60	60	68	62,7		
Varying work	71	60	62	64,3		
Other						

For Company B the ideas of the three student groups also seem rather alike, with the same focus as for Company A, i.e. focus on the employer brand components: *product/ brand strength, work environment and compensations & benefits.*

For Company B ‘their students’ preferences do not coincide as well with the expected offers as for Company A (see appendix 5). The students seeing Company B as an ideal employer are, as for Company

A, clearly thinking that Company B would mean a good reference for their future carrier, while this is not something they prioritise when it comes to preference in offers. Project based work is another offer which the student are expecting more preferring. This, as well as varying work, is among all three student groups less preferred than expected. However, once again this big difference would probably not be as big if the students got to mark as many alternatives as they want to also in question 2. This influences the complete answering range, making the preference curve lying mostly below the expected offers curve.

What do you associate with the company/ organisation?

Alternative	Te	%	Fin	IT	%	All
Too competitive working environment	18	12	10	13,3		
Employees with varying background	26	10	23	19,7		
Good Leadership/ Management	33	19	29	27		
Dynamic organisation	70	43	44	52,3		
Financial strength	43	30	46	39,7		
Good ethic and high moral	20	21	21	20,7		
Good reputation and highly thought of	48	54	45	49		
Innovative solutions	39	21	28	29,3		
Conservative working environment	10	10	11	10,3		
Market success	66	69	63	66		
Environmental friendly policy						
Unattractively geographically situated						
Only recruiting the best	49	32	34	38,3		
Exciting products/ services	56	43	51	50		
Clear focus on competence development						
Strong clear company culture	39	35	27	33,7		

When it comes to associations with Company B as employer, the ideas among ‘their students’, in the different groups, are similar. Connecting these figures to the Corporate Leadership Council’s model of employment brand components, the associations of Company B is, as for Company A, clearly connected to *company culture & environment and product/ company brand strength.*

According to the data collected in the Universum Graduate Surveys these students have collected information about Company B mainly through the *company’s webpage, articles in the newspapers, company days.* Students in finance are also including *through acquaintances working at the company.* The same verification was done as for Company A, to see whether the finance groups had associations and expected offers more coinciding with the employees, than the other two groups. For Company B there

was a small indication that this was actually the case. However, it should be mentioned that there should be an underlining under *small* (see appendix 6).

### Company C

*What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?*

Alternative	Te %	Fin %	IT %	All %
Balance between private life and carrier				
A good reference for your future carrier	29	24	44	32,3
Flexible working hours	34	23	39	32
Few hours overtime				
Inspiring colleges	31	28	32	30,3
Internal further education	6	16	26	16
International carrier opportunities	6	2	6	4,7
Competitive compensation	11	30	24	21,7
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work				
Possibilities to work from home				
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	11	19	9	13
Project based work	29	27	23	26,3
Secure employment	29	35	42	35,3
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	29	39	45	37,7
Varying work	37	28	44	36,3
Other				

For Company C the ideas of the three student groups are not coinciding as well as for the other two companies. Most students in technology/ science believe Company C is offering *varying work, flexible working hours and inspiring colleges*. Students in finance believe the offers are *tasks that mean bigger challenges, secure employment, and competitive compensation*. Many of the computer science/ IT students believe, more than the other two groups, that Company C is offering *a good reference for future carrier*.

The employer brand components connected these students are *product/ brand strength, work environment, compensations & benefits and work-life balance*.

For Company C the expected offers coincide rather well at some points with the preferred offers, and at some points not. The striking similarity among the three groups is the same expectations and preferences concerning varying work. It is both highly preferred, and expected as offer by Company C. Other rather coinciding offers that are as preferred as expected are flexible working hours and inspiring colleges. Differences are found when it comes to tasks that mean bigger challenges, which is more expected than preferred, and international carrier opportunities, which is preferred but not expected. This except for students in computer science/ IT seeing Company C as an ideal employer. They have also very low interest when it comes to international carrier opportunities.

When it comes to associations with Company C as employer, the ideas of 'their students', in the different groups, are similar. *Exciting products/ services, financial strength, and market success* is clearly the dominant associations. Connecting these figures to the Corporate Leadership Council's model of employment brand components, the associations of Company B is clearly connected to *product/ company brand strength company culture & environment*.

*What do you associate with the company/ organisation?*

Alternative	Te %	Fin	IT %	All
Too competitive working environment	3	3	1	2,3
Employees with varying background	11	10	9	10
Good Leadership/ Management	17	22	18	19
Dynamic organisation	14	30	32	25,3
Financial strength	42	46	44	44
Good ethic and high moral	8	9	18	11,7
Good reputation and highly thought of	3	11	6	6,7
Innovative solutions	22	26	29	25,7
Conservative working environment	3	9	7	6,3
Market success	39	56	54	49,7
Environmental friendly policy				
Unattractively geographically situated				
Only recruiting the best	3	1	3	2,3
Exciting products/ services	61	65	68	64,7
Clear focus on competence development				
Strong clear company culture	14	13	19	15,3

According to the data collected in the Universum Graduate Surveys these students have collected information about Company C mainly through the *company's webpage, articles in the newspapers, and TV/ Radio*. Company C was then only company of these three having TV/ Radio as an important information mean.

### 6.1.2 All students

Alexander L. Biel divides the brand image into skills and personality. Skills referring to 'what they do' and personality to 'what they are like'. These associations and expected offers are connected to both. Most of the given answer alternatives are somewhat a combination of the two sides of the employer brands.

The information channels used by these students to obtain information of these companies are mainly the company webpage and articles in newspapers or magazines. The other two mentioned, by certain of the groups, are information from acquaintances working at the company, or TV/ Radio. These last two mentioned are not as strikingly common for all students. The company webpage is a company controlled mean. The other three to certain extents. Alex L. Biel remarks when commenting the schematic picture of influencers that there are many influencer and sources of inference of brand personality, and image. Depending on the different influencers the information is perceived differently. Further more Alexander L. Biel is showing a schematic over different "sources of inference of brand personality", as he calls it. These associations and expected offers, part of the students' employer brand images, are affected by different means.

Kotler is mentioning cultural, social, personal and psychological factors influencing buyer behaviour. These factors are also most likely influencing a person's interests when it comes to employer and working place. The students participating in the Universum Graduate Survey are in average between 20-25 years old. They are in average younger than the young professionals and grand professionals. Following that in many cases there is also in difference in stage in lifecycle. This means that the influencing factors can differ between the different groups. Interesting when comparing the employer brand images of the students with the other two groups' is to have this in mind.

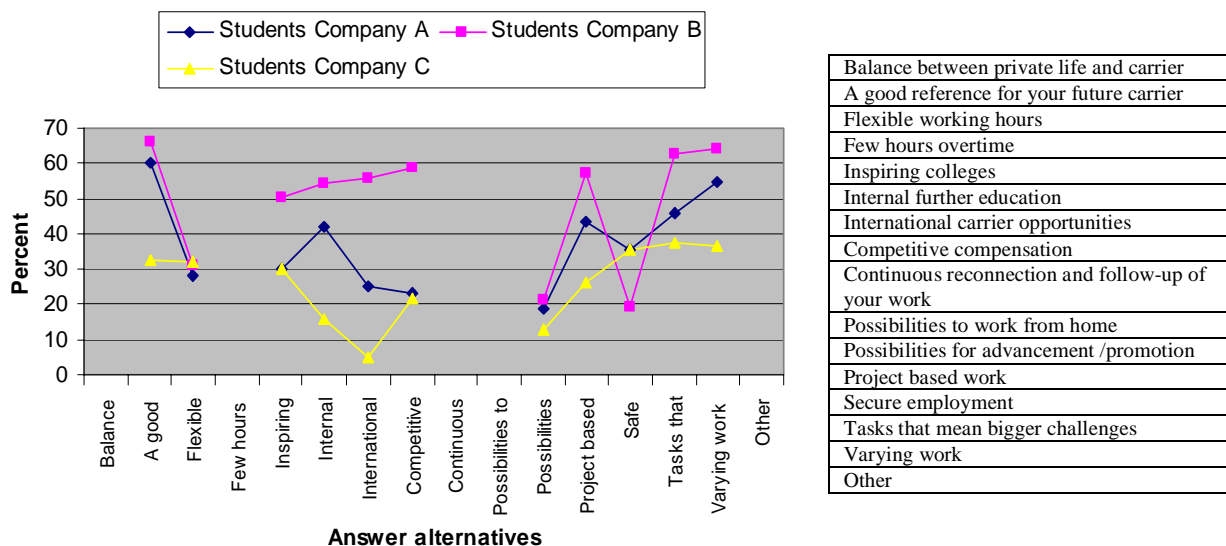
Maslow (1970) was using a triangle to show how human needs are arranged, from most pressing to least pressing. In order of importance, they are psychological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs. The students' choices

and ideas of ideal employers show that for the most part, the three basic needs are secured. One exception are the students finding a secure employment to be important. For students seeing Company A as an ideal employer, especially students in finance and computer science/ IT, this is both a preferred and an expected offer. This goes also for Company C, where especially students in computer science/ IT are valuing a secure employment highly. For Company B it is less important, for all three student groups, both when it comes to preferences, and what they expect from the company.

Besides a secure employment, which can be connected to safety needs, the esteem needs and self-actualisations needs are the ones towards which the students' preferences, and expected offers are directed. However, it should be kept in mind that the images are in this case reflected by a number of already given answer alternatives. The range of answer alternatives are designed after years of experience working with these issues from Universum Communications. This does not mean though that these answer alternatives are perfectly reflecting the full spectra of the employer brand images, which would be rather impossible. Reconnecting to Maslow's pyramid and the third level of needs: the social needs. These are needs such as a sense of belonging and love. According to Maslow's theory it means, that for a student to be able to focus on esteem needs and self-actualisations needs, the student's social needs should already be secured. For a student to focus on offers and associations with a company, revolving around esteem and self-actualization needs, it should already have pictured itself possible to belong and fit in with the company environment, goals and ideas. When the students are seeing a company as an ideal employer, this is already processed in their minds, consciously or unconsciously. Their choices are in other terms reflecting their ideas of where they would fit in and belong.

Above it was noticed that the expected offers among the three different student groups were similar. What can be of interest is also to see whether the expected offers concerning the different ideal employers are alike. If there would be similarities, this would indicate that certain of the alternatives are more, or less, important in creating an interest for an employer. A diagram visualising the students' different expected offers of the three companies is shown below. Here the average of the three student groups is used.

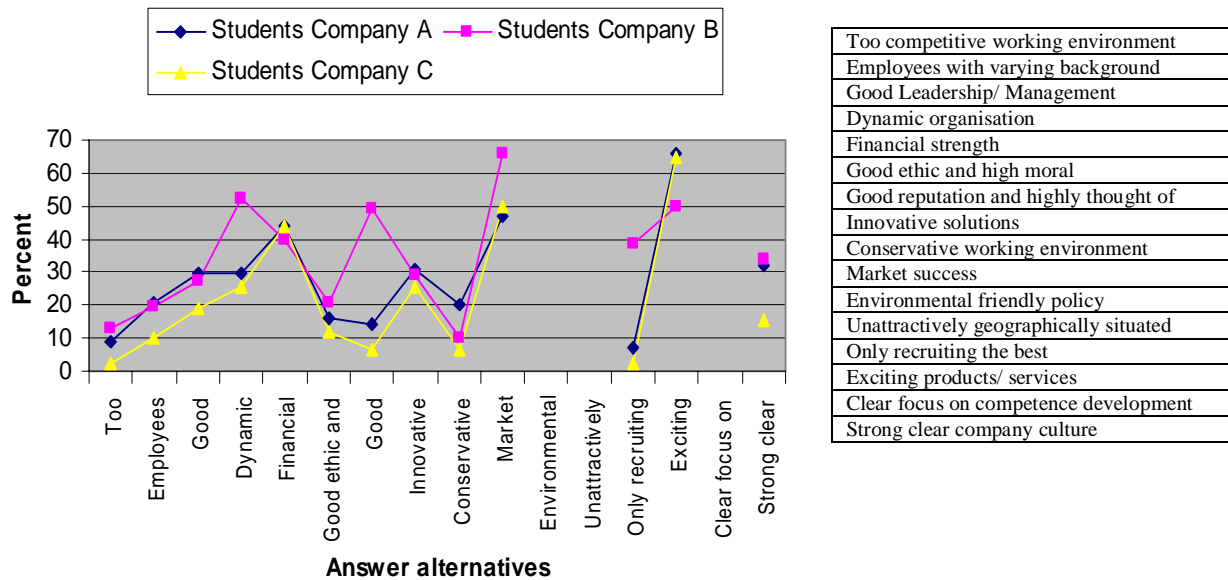
**Question 3 Students' expected offers All three companies**



The expected offers of the three different employers are not overall similar, except for a few exceptions. *Varying work and tasks that mean bigger challenges* are the dominant common frequent expectations. However, it should be remarked that these two expected offers are for all three groups among the most dominant. Connecting to the employer brand components it is clear that *working environment* is the most dominant employer brand component when it comes to expected offers. The high scores for a good reference for future carrier also indicate the importance of the employer brand *component product/ company brand strength*. Common for all three groups is also their relatively low interest in possibilities for advancement/ promotion.

Above it was also noticed that the association of the companies among the three different student groups were similar. It can be of interest also to see whether the associations of the different ideal employers are alike. A diagram visualising the students' different associations of the three companies is shown below. Here the average of the three student groups is used.

#### Question 4 Students' associations All three companies



The associations concerning Company A and Company C are very similar. Their curves are having almost identical trends. Company B is clearly differentiated at some points. When it comes to *good reputation and being highly thought of*, and being associated with *only recruiting the best* Company B is a 'winner'. From these curves it is possible to see trends of which associations are dominating among the ideas of the students' ideal employers. Besides the peaks unique for Company B, the overall dominating associations are exciting products/ services, market success, and financial strength. When connecting to the employer brand components it clear that the *product/ company brand strength* is the most dominant component, followed by the *company culture and environment*.



## 6.2 Answer and analyses concerning Research question 2

The second research question was formulated as follows:

- RQ2: What Employer Brand Image do the companies participating in this research have among their young professionals?

*'Their young professionals' meaning young professionals who sees the employer as an ideal employer. This according to the researches done by Universum Communications.*

To answer this research question, data from the Universum Young Professional Survey 2004 was collected, and analysed assisted by the theories included in theoretical frame of reference.

*What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?*

Alternative	A	% B	C
Balance between private life and carrier	33	6	32
A good reference for your future carrier	47	53	28
Flexible working hours	38	20	13
Few hours overtime			
Inspiring colleges	39	53	38
Internal further education	43	30	15
International carrier opportunities	32	40	24
Competitive compensation	25	50	30
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	19	24	6
Possibilities to work from home	43	10	56
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	47	33	1
Project based work	28	47	14
Secure employment	33	7	10
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	50	51	82
Varying work	46	57	11
Other			

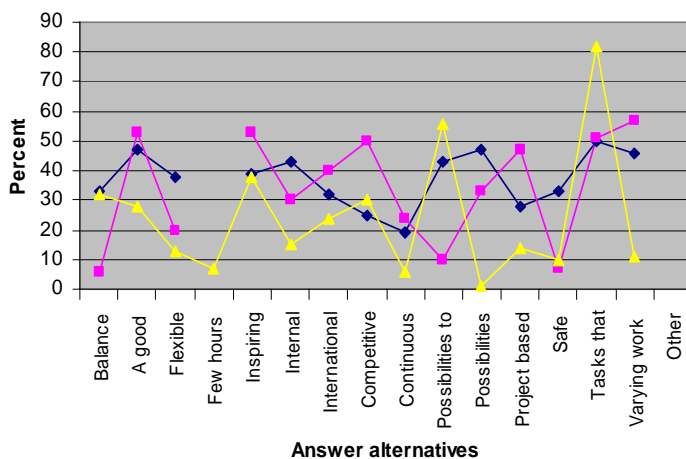
For the three different companies the expectations in offers differ between the different groups of young professionals. Tasks that mean bigger challenges and inspiring colleges are the only expected offers common for all three companies. The unexpected offers are among the groups spread out and without any trend visible. For more clear view of the differences a diagram is presented below.

Company A is having the least spread in expected offers. No offers are clearly unexpected, as well as no offers are clearly expected. For Company B and

Company C there are more clear extremities, especially for Company C, which has a spread of 81 percent. For Company A the most expected offers, connecting it to the Corporate Leadership Council's model of employer brand components revolves around

### Question 3 All young professionals

◆ Young professionals Company A    ◆ Young professionals Company B  
▲ Young professionals Company C



Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

*work environment* and *product/ company brand strength*. The same goes for Company B. Young professionals seeing Company C as an ideal employer are instead of expecting *product/ company brand strength* related offers, expecting possibilities to work from home, which is related to *work-life balance*. On the other hand, flexible working hours and secure employment are expected by rather few, which are the other work-life balance alternatives.

For the students information on how they mainly have collected information of these companies was available. Concerning the young professionals there was only available information on preferable information channels. However, obtaining an idea of their way of collecting information it is valuable.

Company A:	Through personal contacts 70%	The information channels most commonly preferred among the young professionals are the same for the three different groups. Through personal contacts are without any question the most preferred way of getting to know a company as
	The company's webpage 62%	
	Trough colleges and work related contacts 57%	
Company B:	Through personal contacts 76%	
	Trough colleges and work related contacts 52%	
	The company's webpage 48%	
Company C:	Through personal contacts 75%	
	Trough colleges and work related contacts 58%	
	The company's webpage 57%	

employer. It is also the most common channel to how these young professionals found their present employer. This without any competitive information channel close. When it comes to preferred information channels the companies' webpage and colleges, or work related contacts, are as also popular alternatives. The gap to the remaining options, not listed here, is large, with the closest runner up 'go to parties/ mingle parties arranged by the company' at 21% for young professionals interested in Company B.

Also when it comes to young professionals it can be of interest to verify how well the expected offers coincide with the preferred offers. Therefore the same comparisons were done as for the students (see appendix 7). Like for the different student groups the young professionals' preferred and expected offers differ clearly for Company A and Company B concerning the offering of a good reference for future carrier. It is highly expected, but far as preferred. For Company A and Company C the young professionals are clearly expecting possibilities to work from home, while they do not prefer it at much. For Company B the big difference when it comes to expected vs. preferred offers is concerning project based work. This is one of the more expected offers, but at the same time one of the least preferred. However, it should be kept in mind the problematic concerning difference in asked answer alternatives for the two questions. When answering the question concerning preferred offers, the respondent is asked to mark at the most three alternatives, while for the question concerning expectations as many as the respondent wants.

When it comes to associations there is one that among the young professionals is one of the dominant alternatives for all three companies. *Exciting products/ services* are for the young professionals one of the most common associations, and for Company C clearly the most common one. For the students this was also the case. When it comes to the rest of the associations the coincidence is not as clear as for the students.

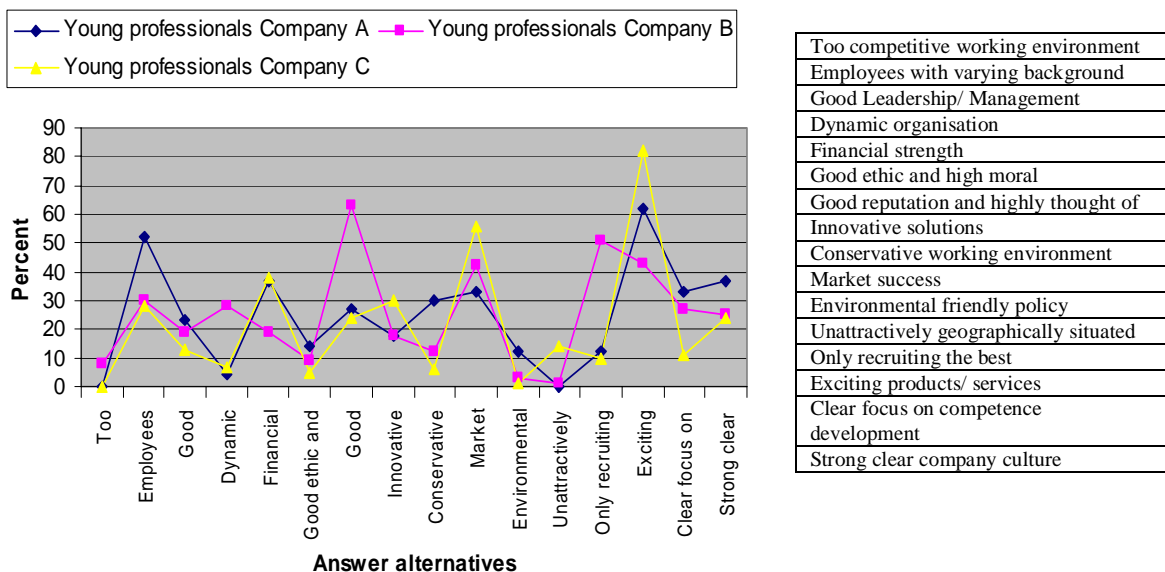
What do you associate with the company/ organisation?

Alternative	A	% B	C
Too competitive working environment	0	8	0
Employees with varying background	52	30	28
Good Leadership/ Management	23	19	13
Dynamic organisation	4	28	7
Financial strength	37	19	38
Good ethic and high moral	14	9	5
Good reputation and highly thought of	27	63	24
Innovative solutions	18	18	30
Conservative working environment	30	12	6
Market success	33	42	56
Environmental friendly policy	12	3	1
Unattractively geographically situated	0	1	14
Only recruiting the best	12	51	10
Exciting products/ services	62	43	82
Clear focus on competence development	33	27	11
Strong clear company culture	37	25	24

A diagram of the different curves is shown below. However, there are a couple of more coinciding points of associations worth mentioning: *market success* and *employees with varying background*. Marketing success is also an association clearly common for all three companies, as well as employees with varying background. The last one mentioned especially noticeable for Company A. The employer brand components dominant when it comes to the young professionals associations are the product/ *company brand strength* and the *company culture & environment*.

As for the students, the associations among the young professionals concerning Company A and Company C are more similar, than with Company B. As for the students, Company B is clearly differentiated at some points, the same points as for the students. When it comes to *good reputation and being highly thought of*, and being associated with *only recruiting the best* Company B is once again unique.

#### Question 4 Associations All young professionals



When it comes to coincidence concerning less frequent associations, the young professionals are having the same ideas of how the companies' are geographically situated, their environmental friendly policy, their good ethic & high moral. Last but not least are the companies associated with a too competitive working environment. This means connected to the employer brand components that company culture & environment also is to be found among the less frequent associations. One employer brand component paid less attention over all when it comes to associations is working environment. In addition the only association connected to work-life balance is not paid much attention.

As for the students it is possible to from these curves see trends of which associations are dominating among the ideas of the young professionals ideal employers. Besides the peaks unique for Company B, the most common associations are also for the young professionals exciting products/ services and market success. Financial strength is for Company A and Company C still as common, but not for Company B. This making financial strength less striking as coinciding. When connecting to the employer brand components it clear that the *product/ company brand strength* is the most dominant component, also here followed by the *company culture and environment*.

### 6.3 Answer and analyses concerning Research question 3

The third research question was formulated as follows:

- RQ3: *What Employer Brand Image do the companies participating in this research have among their employees?*

To answer this research question, data from the survey done for this research was used. The data was collected from the questionnaires answered by the employees at the three companies. Further the data was analysed assisted by the theories included in theoretical frame of reference.

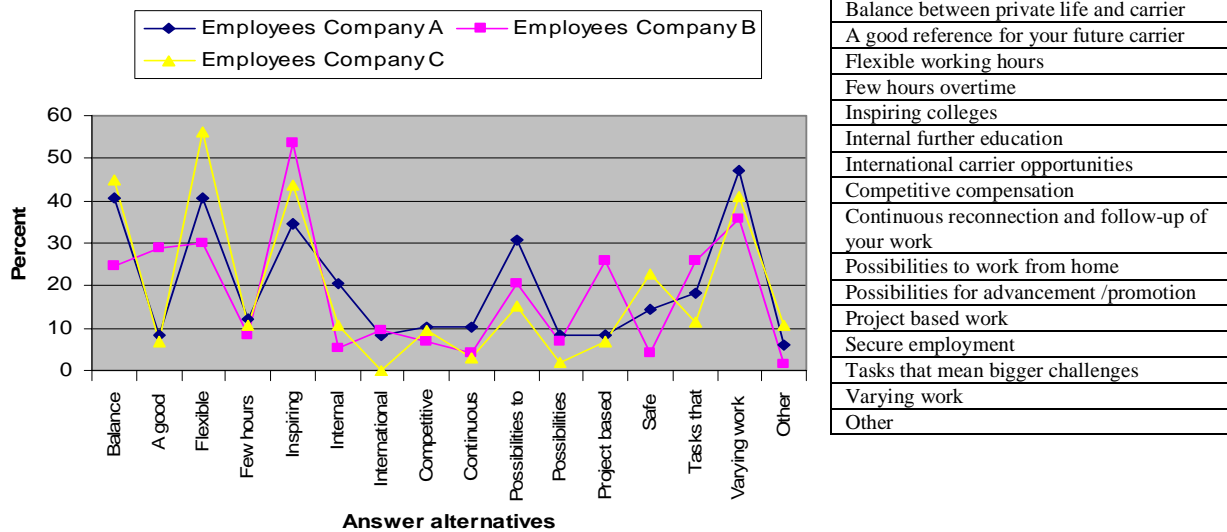
*Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with your present employer?*

Alternative	A	%	B	C
Balance between private life and carrier	40,8		24,7	44,8
A good reference for your future carrier	8,2		28,8	6,7
Flexible working hours	40,8		30,1	56,2
Few hours overtime	12,2		8,2	10,5
Inspiring colleges	34,7		53,4	43,8
Internal further education	20,4		5,5	10,5
International carrier opportunities	8,2		9,6	0
Competitive compensation	10,2		6,8	9,5
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	10,2		4,1	2,9
Possibilities to work from home	30,6		20,5	15,2
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	8,2		6,8	1,9
Project based work	8,2		26	6,7
Secure employment	14,3		4,1	22,9
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	18,4		26	11,4
Varying work	46,9		35,6	41
Other	6,1		1,4	10,5

For the three different companies the appreciated offers among their employees are similar when it comes to the most dominant ones. The curves, see diagram below, are also following the same trends. The three most dominant appreciated offers are varying work, inspiring colleges, and flexible working hours. Connecting the figures of the employees' appreciated offers to the employer brand components, there is a dominance of offers related to *work environment* and *work-life balance*.

Concerning the appreciated offers there are also some offers clearly being less important for the employees for all three companies. When it comes to employer brand components, there are also work environment and work-life balance related employer brand components that are less important. Compensations and benefits in addition also seem less important (see diagram below).

## Question 3 Appreciated offers All three companies



As for the students and the young professionals the employees' preferred offers were compared with, in this case, their appreciated offers with their present employer (see appendix 9). Over all the preferred and appreciated offers are coinciding rather well, except for one offer concerning all three companies – competitive compensation. Employees at all three companies are clearly preferring this offer more than they are connecting it with their present employer.

Highly preferred among all employees are balance between private life and carrier. For company A and C this is also an appreciated offer, but for company B not as much. Over all there are more differences between preferred and appreciated offers for company B, than for the other two companies. Few hours overtime is paid very little attention among all employees, which means that the employer brand component *work-life balance* is both among the most preferred/ appreciated, and the least. For company A and C the offering of a good reference for future carrier is paid little attention. However, here age is an issue to consider. For company A and C there are a higher number of older employees, especially for company A, and with probably less focus on future carrier. The only employer offer connected to the employer component *product/company brand strength* is among the employees, as mentioned especially for company A and C, not important.

When it comes to associations they are over all coinciding well between the different companies, especially when it comes to 'middle-frequent' alternatives. Two of them are being more frequent among the employees for all three companies (see list and diagram below). These are good reputation & being highly thought of, and employees with varying background. Exciting products is another rather coinciding alternative, clearly associated with company A and C especially. Financial strength is one of the clearly dominant associations for company A and C, while for company B this is one of the least noticed. Other associations that are not frequent, and these among all employees are: too competitive working environment, conservative working environment, and that the companies would only recruit the best.

What do you associate with the company/ organisation?

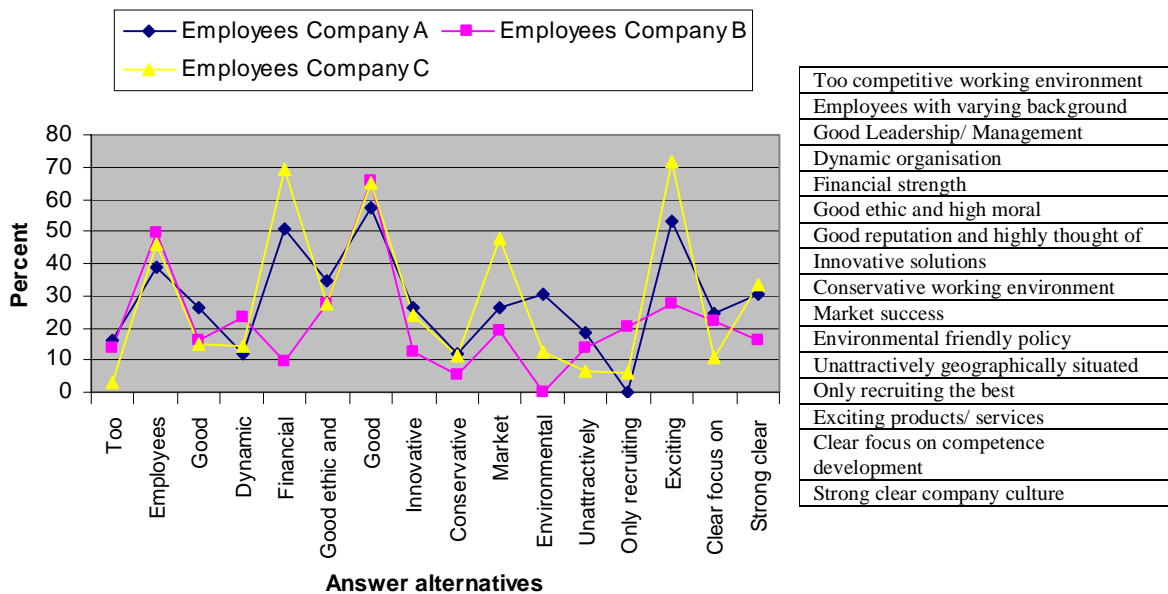
Alternative	A	% B	C
Too competitive working environment	16,3	13,7	2,9
Employees with varying background	<b>38,8</b>	<b>49,3</b>	45,7
Good Leadership/ Management	26,5	16,4	15,2
Dynamic organisation	12,2	23,3	14,3
Financial strength	51	9,6	<b>69,5</b>
Good ethic and high moral	34,7	<b>27,4</b>	27,6
Good reputation and highly thought of	<b>57,1</b>	<b>65,8</b>	<b>64,8</b>
Innovative solutions	26,5	12,3	23,8
Conservative working environment	12,2	5,5	11,4
Market success	26,5	19,2	47,6
Environmental friendly policy	30,6	0	12,4
Unattractively geographically situated	18,4	13,7	6,7
Only recruiting the best	0	20,5	5,7
Exciting products/ services	<b>53,1</b>	<b>27,4</b>	<b>71,4</b>
Clear focus on competence development	24,5	21,9	10,5
Strong clear company culture	30,6	16,4	33,3

Translating the observations of these associations into the terms of employer brand components, the dominant ones are *product/ company brand strength* and *company culture & environment*. The associations connected to the employer brand component *working environment* and *work-life balance* are *paid less attentions*.

Company A and C have more coincidence when it comes to appreciated and preferred offers, as well as associations, than with company B. Looking into these

respondent groups was therefore done, to see if some explanations could be found in the employee groups' different background (see appendix 2). One striking similarity between the respondent groups having company A and C as employer, is the large number of individuals with completed upper secondary school as highest level of education. The majority of the employees at company B on the hand have more than 4 years of studies at university, and almost none with less than 2-4 years of studies at university.

#### Question 4 Employees associations All three companies



Age and years of working experience are distinguishing the young professionals from the grand professionals. These two factors might affect the employer brand images. The fact that the young professionals are younger and with less years of working experience, their way of looking at their employer might differ from the one of the grand professionals. The employer group investigated in this research consists of both young professionals and grand professionals. The proportion young/ grand professionals differ in the respondent groups for the different companies: company A [18,4/ 81,6], company B [42,5/ 57,5] and company C [25,7/ 74,3]. If young professionals and grand

professionals tend to have employer brand images that differ, the difference in proportions between the three companies will affect the results. It is therefore of interest to make a distinction of these two groups, and see whether their employer brand images coincide.

The comparisons done show that the overall picture coincides rather well between young and grand professionals (see appendix 8). However, also here company B have slightly different results. Common for the three companies is that their grand professionals appreciate a good reference for future carrier less than the young professionals. This indicates that grand professionals are less interested in changing working place, and are therefore less focused on good references. For company A and C there is an indication that young professionals are more appreciating a secure employment than the grand professionals. This seems rather natural, if the last ones hired are the first ones to go. The young professionals are more likely to loose their employment, if that is the scenario. The uncertainty of keeping a job makes an individual focusing on security need first, as Maslows' pyramid of needs shows. Young professionals at company A are also the only group clearly appreciating tasks that means bigger challenges. Possible reason for this is not understood.

Concerning associations the images among the companies young and grand professionals are also coinciding well. The two groups working for company C especially have very similar ideas. What comes out of this is that there are certain differences between the young professionals and grand professionals for the different companies. However, there are no indications that the ideas of the young professionals and the grand professionals differ systematically.

#### **6.4 Answer and analyses concerning Research question 4**

The fourth research question was formulated as follows:

- RQ4: *How do the External Employer Brand Images among students and the young professionals coincide with the Internal Employer Brand Images among the employees?*

In previous chapter the results from comparisons done to assist answering the fourth research question was presented. These results, together with the answers from the first three research questions, and assistance from theory, the answers to this last research question will be presented and analysed.

In the early stages of this work a figure was presented showing a focus strategy that Universum Communication is recommending their clients. The idea is focus on common ideas of the employer brand images among different groups of interest. This field of common ideas was referred to as the 'target field'. The three groups of interest are management, employees and potential employees. The last two ones mentioned are the target groups, which interest management want to retain and awake. The area of shared opinions between the two target groups was referred to as the 'coincidence field'. In order to obtain knowledge of the coincidence field's contents, awareness and knowledge of the external and internal employer brand images is needed. In this research these employer brand images have been reflected externally by the students' and young professionals' images, and internally by the employees' images. These investigated in the first three research questions. The objective with this research was to examine whether there are any likeness and differences between external and internal

employer brand images. The information obtained from the other research questions will now be combined in order to answer this question.

The diagrams presented in previous chapter of the comparisons done were analysed and compiled. Each of the answer alternatives were analysed separately. An interpretation was made of how well the ideas of the different groups were coinciding, this according to the reasoning discussed in the method of analysis. The results of these interpretations are shown below, for each company separately. These will further on be combined to see whether there are likenesses and differences for the different companies that coincide with the others. For easier understanding of the schematics below it can be remarked that the different levels – high, middle, low – refers to the level of frequency that the group/s had at the point of coincidence, or distinguished point.

The different answer alternatives given a number

1. Balance between private life and carrier 2. A good reference for your future carrier 3. Flexible working hours 4. Few hours overtime 5. Inspiring colleges 6. Internal further education 7. International carrier opportunities 8. Competitive compensation 9. Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work 10. Possibilities to work from home 11. Possibilities for advancement /promotion 12. Project based work 13. Secure employment 14. Tasks that mean bigger challenges 15. Varying work 16. Other	17. Too competitive working environment 18. Employees with varying background 19. Good Leadership/ Management 20. Dynamic organisation 21. Financial strength 22. Good ethic and high moral 23. Good reputation and highly thought of 24. Innovative solutions 25. Conservative working environment 26. Market success 27. Environmental friendly policy 28. Unattractively geographically situated 29. Only recruiting the best 30. Exciting products/ services 31. Clear focus on competence development 32. Strong clear company culture
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## Company A

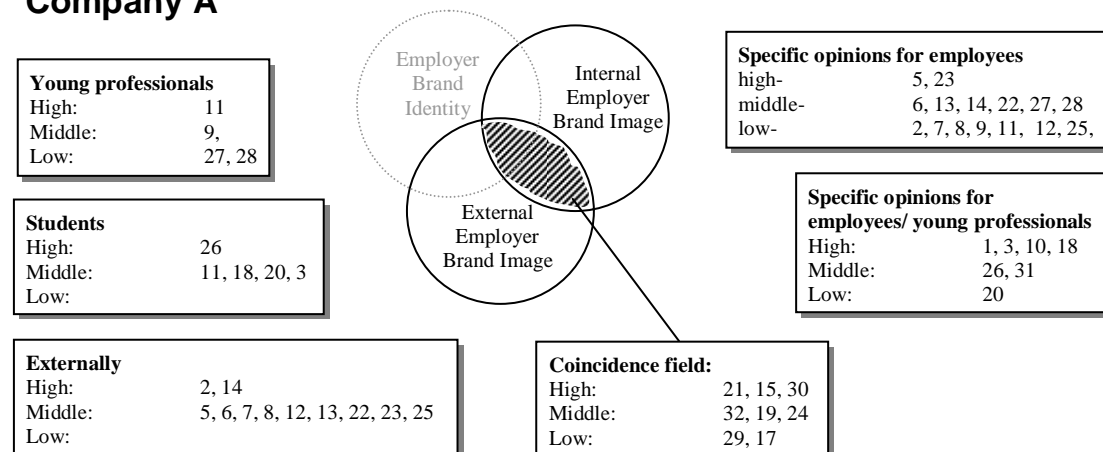


Figure 23: Interpretation of likenesses and differences in associations & expected offers for company A



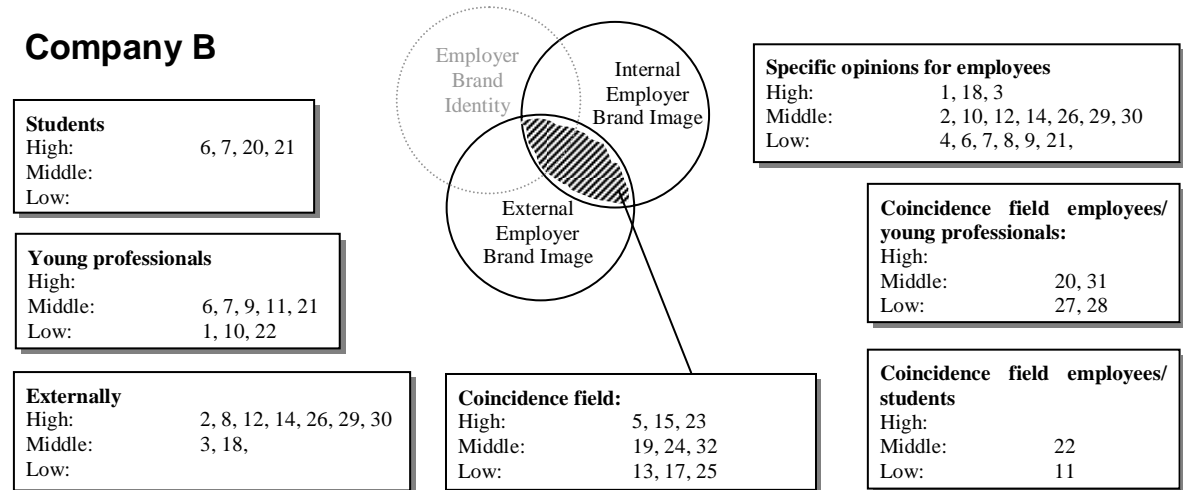


Figure 24: Interpretation of likenesses and differences in associations & expected offers for company B

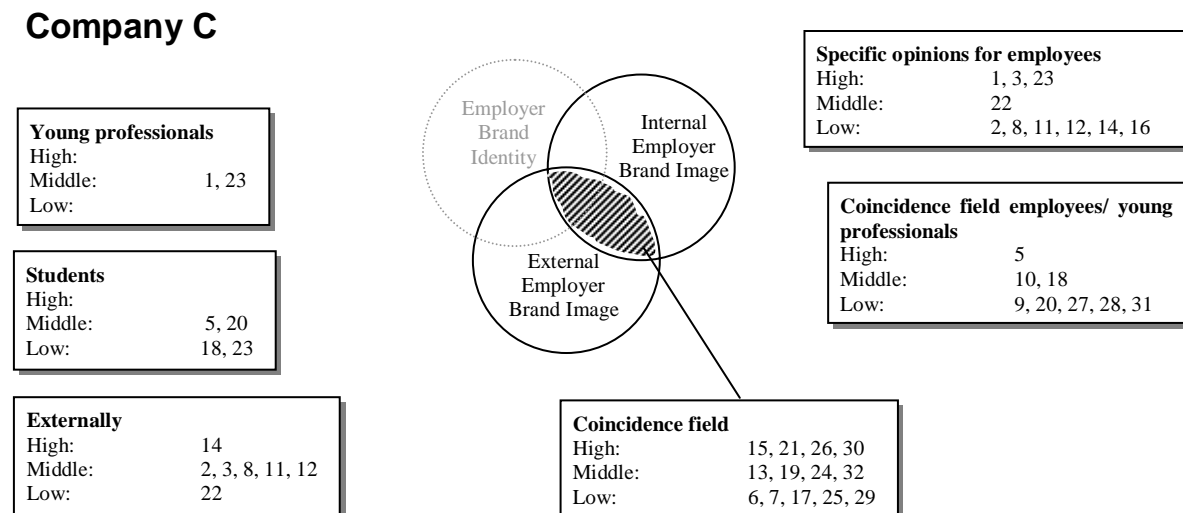


Figure 25: Interpretation of likenesses and differences in associations & expected offers for company C

### 6.4.1 Coincidence – Likenesses

In order to see whether there are likenesses between external and internal employer brand images, the coincidence found above for each of the companies were combined. This to see if there were coincidences common for the three companies. Counted as coincidence were answer alternatives included in the coincidence field, found at the same level for all three companies. In addition coincidences common for only two of the companies were looked at.

#### *Frequent associations*

15. *Varying work* is highly associated with all three companies. Among the different groups of employees it is also as preferred as appreciated, except for a smaller difference for company B, where preference is below appreciation. For the students and young professionals, both internally and externally, there are indicators that varying

work is less preferred though, than expected. The internal employee group is in average older and with longer working experience than the two external groups. Many years of working experience might increase a sense of need for varying work. The young professionals working for company A and C for example, prefer varying work less the companies' grand professionals. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*.

*Only two companies*

21. *Financial strength* is for company A and C one of the dominating associations among the different respondent groups. The young professionals and grand professionals internally have similar ideas in this case. For company B the ideas internally are coinciding well, but when comparing with the external groups the ideas are spread. Neither the students nor the young professionals externally are associating likewise concerning company B's financial strength. Students are the ones strongly associating company B with it. They also believe that company B is offering a competitive compensation. This more than the students that see company A and B as ideal employer do expect from these companies. Employer brand component/ s: *company culture & environment*

30. *Exciting products/ services* is another common associations dominating for company A and C, among all respondent groups. For company B there is distinction between external and internal images in this case. Students and young professionals on the outside are associating company B quit strongly with exciting products/ services, while their employees average. Employer brand component/s: *product/ company brand strength*

***Middle frequent associations***

19. *Good leadership/ management* is for the three companies neither common, neither uncommon. This for all respondent groups, except company A's employed young professionals. It should be mentioned that this groups is very small in number of respondents. Therefore no attention was directed towards this difference. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment* and *company culture & environment*

24. *Innovative solutions* is another association that is for the three companies over all 'in the middle' when it comes to attention. Only company B are among their employees less associated with it, this both among the internal young and grand professionals. Employer brand component/ s: *company culture & environment*

32. *Strong clear company culture* is the last typically 'middle placed' association for all three companies. For company A this association is coinciding more for external and internal respondent groups', than for the other two companies. The young professionals and grand professionals are concerning strong clear company culture also associating very similar. Employer brand component/ s: *company culture & environment*

***Low frequent associations***

17. *Too competitive working environment* is among least frequent associations with any of the companies, for any of the respondent groups. For company A and B there are a few more respondents associating this with the companies, and the grand professionals are the ones marking this the most. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

*Only two companies*

9. *Continuous reconnection & follow-up of ones work* was not included in the questionnaires for the students, which is why they are left out. For company A and C the reconnection & follow-up of work is both little expected and appreciated as offer.

However, the young professionals externally are still expecting it a bit more. For company B, the same, only the difference is bigger. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

25. *Conservative working environment* is among the least frequent associations concerning company B and C, for any of the respondent groups. Their employed young professionals and grand professionals have also very similar ideas in this matter. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

29. *Only recruiting the best* is one of the least frequent associations with company A and C, also for any of the respondent groups. Their employed young professionals and grand professionals are also associating likewise. For company C on the other hand there is quite a spread between their different respondent groups' ideas, besides when it comes to the internal groups, young and grand professionals. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

### 6.4.2 Coincidence - Differences

In order to see whether there are differences between external and internal employer brand images, the observed distinguished ideas for different groups found above, for each of the companies, were combined. This to see if there were differences common for the three companies. For to be counted as distinguished, the different groups have placed an answer alternative on different levels. The existence of coincidence concerning differences was analysed by combining the distinguished ideas found for each of the companies. For it to be seen as complete coincidence the different groups have placed an answer alternative on the same levels, when comparing with another company. Further more cases when an alternative simply was placed in the same order was looked into.

2. *A good reference for future carrier* is for company A and C something that their employees are appreciating very little. The external groups are expecting more. The students, and especially the young professionals on the outside, are highly expecting it though. For company B the students and young professionals externally are highly expecting it too. Different from company A and C their employees are appreciating this offer a bit more. For company A and B it is noticeable that their employed young professionals are appreciating this offer more than their grand professionals. Employer brand component/ s: *product/ company brand strength*

3. *Flexible working hours* are for all employees an highly appreciated offer. For company A they are sharing this attention towards flexible working hours with the young professionals on the outside. For company B and C the external groups are both expecting this less. Employer brand component/ s: *work-life balance*

8. *Competitive compensation* is for all three companies something that the external groups are expecting more from the companies than the employees are appreciating it. For company A and C the expectations are neither high nor low though. However, here it is likely that the differences in asked answer alternatives are affecting the results. The external groups are allowed to mark as many as they want, while the employees are limited to three. If their compensations are not remarkably good, it is therefore likely that this answer alternative is paid less attention, than if they would have been free to mark as many as they want. Having in mind though that man tends to never be satisfied, it might not have been market anyway. When comparing with preferences, competitive compensation is among the highest preferred offers among the employees for all three

companies. Higher than for the students and the young professionals. Employer brand component/ s: *compensations & benefits*

11. *Possibilities for advancement/ promotion* is for company A and C something that their employees are appreciating very little, both their young professionals and grand professionals. Over all the employees at the three companies are appreciating this offer very little, while the external groups tend to expect more, especially the young professionals. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

12. *Project based work* is for all three companies something that people on the outside are expecting more than the employees are appreciating it. For company B there is level difference though with company A and C. This question might also be affected by the difference in the number of marked answer alternatives. However, when looking at preferred offers among employees, the preference concerning project based work is also very low among employees for all three companies. Only young professionals working for company B prefer it. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

14. *Tasks that mean bigger challenges* are for all three companies more expected externally than appreciated internally. There is difference between the different companies in how appreciated more challenging tasks are though. What they have in common is the fact that it seems quite important for the external groups seeing these companies as ideal employers. Employer brand component/ s: *work environment*

18. *Employees with varying background* have one thing in common for all three companies: the two working groups, the employees and young professionals externally are paying more attention to it than the students. Employer brand component/ s: *company culture & environment*

20. *Dynamic organisation* is less associated with the companies among the working groups, the employees and the young professionals, than among the students. However, the frequencies varies between the different groups. Employer brand component/ s: *company culture & environment*

23. *Good reputation & and highly thought of* is associated more with the companies among their employees, then the external groups. However, the size of the gap to the external groups varies between the companies. Employer brand component/ s: *product/ company brand strength*

Above the outcome of connecting the companies' employer brand images among the different groups was presented. In following chapter the conclusions will be drawn from this information.



## Chapter 7 Conclusions

*In this chapter the study will be discussed and conclusions of the study will be drawn. Recommendations will be given as well as recommendation for further studies in the area.*

### **Discussion**

The objective with this research was to examine whether there are any likenesses and differences between external and internal employer brand images. The external employer brand images were in this research reflected by students and young professionals expected offers and associations with certain companies. The internal employer brand images were reflected by the appreciated offers and associations among the employees at these companies. Universum Communications' Research conducts quantitative surveys about the opinions of students and young professionals regarding recruitment and lifestyle issues. Obtained data from these surveys was used to reflect the external employer brand images in this research.

To obtain comparable data the same design of questionnaire was used for designing a questionnaire for this research. The same given answer alternatives was used. These answer alternatives are, when answered, serving as reflections of the employer brand images. When connecting these answer alternatives to the employer brand component model, it shows that the different components are all represented in the range of answer alternatives. However, that does not mean that the employer brand reflection is complete. Parts of the employer brand are being represented, and as mentioned, all the different components. Since the employer brand images are reflected by the answering range of these given answer alternatives, the whole spectrum of the respondent groups employer brand images is not covered in this research. However, it can be assumed that essential parts are included, due to the many years of experience of Universum Communications, which are continuously working with their material for improvement.

For certain questions used for comparisons there was a difference in number of asked answer alternatives. When comparing preferences and expected offers for example, the respondent was asked to mark at the most three alternatives concerning preferences, while as many as it wants concerning expected offers. The same problematic concerning employees' appreciated offers, compared with the external groups' expected offers. The external groups were asked to mark as many as they wanted, while the employees were limited to three. For the fourth question in the questionnaire used among the employees, the respondent employees were asked to mark *all* suitable alternatives. Seeing to this question, and how many alternatives that were marked in general, it was clearly so that the respondents tended to mark more than three. Seeing to the data obtained in this research the average amount of marked answer alternatives comes up to 4,5.

What this meant for the analyses of the comparisons done concerning these questions was mainly one thing: at the points where the frequency got very low for the groups limited to maximum three marked answer alternatives, it was not possible to draw certain, sharp or drastic conclusion from this. Since they only were allowed to mark three alternatives, it can be assumed that the three most important was marked. When allowed to mark as many as preferred, also other suitable alternatives get marked. These

curves in diagrams for comparison did not drop as dramatically at certain points, as the other ones.

### **7.1 Coinciding field**

In order to see whether there are likenesses, and differences, between external and internal employer brand images, the coincidence found for each of the companies were combined. The reason for combining the coincidences found was to see if there were coincidences common for the three companies. The main objective with identifying a company's coinciding field is to be able to connect it to the message that management want to deliver. This to find the focus for the strategic work concerning the employer brand. Dr. Harding is underlining that in order to develop a strong employer brand, it is necessary to demonstrate what is specific about your organisation and its culture. However, awareness of possibly existing differences and likenesses between employer brand images within certain groups will make a strategic work more efficient. That is where this research came in, examining whether there are any likeness, and differences, between external and internal employer brand images. Investigating this it was found that there were likenesses and differences. The found coinciding field was:

*Varying work* is highly associated with all three companies. However, the interest of varying work seems to increase with age and working experience. The students and young professionals, both internally and externally, do expect varying work highly, but there are indicators that it might be less preferred. The young professionals working for company A and C for example, prefer varying work less the companies' grand professionals. Many years of working experience might increase a sense of need for varying work.

*Financial strength* is for company A and C among the dominating associations among all different groups. However, it is not possible to draw the conclusion that it is a commonly shared association, between people interested in working for a company and its employees. Company B is an example of that it that it is not so. Internally among young professionals and grand professionals the ideas concerning the employers' financials strengths coincide very well though. A company's financial strength is rather factual, meaning that if a person has insight in the matter, there is less space for a subjective judgement. Other given answer alternatives of associations might be perceived differently among different respondents. Good ethics for example, can be perceived differently depending on what the respondent puts in 'ethics'. Employees are likely to have insight in the company's financial state. Therefore it comes rather natural that the ideas are coinciding well internally when it comes to a company's financial strength.

*Exciting products/ services* is another common associations dominating for company A and C, among all respondent groups. However, their contribution to coincidence over all is once again destroyed by the distinguished associations concerning company B. Indicated is though that among the external groups for all three companies, exciting products might be an important attraction factor. For company A and C there is, as mentioned, clear coincidence between their external and internal respondent groups, when it comes to being strongly associated with it exciting products. This means that they do not risk false marketing, and the bad effects from it that Dr. Stephen Harding mentions, if focusing their strategies on promoting it.

There were three associations that were found ‘average’ frequent for all three companies for all groups. These were *good leadership/ management*, *innovative solutions* and *strong clear company culture*. These associations were over all neither common, nor uncommon, coincidently for all three companies.

A commonly uncommon association was especially a too competitive working environment. It was among the least frequent association with any of the companies, for any of the respondent groups. *Continuous reconnection & follow-up of ones work* was for company A and C both little expected and appreciated as offer. However, the young professionals externally are still expecting it a bit more. For company B, the same, only the difference is bigger. *Conservative working environment* is among the least frequent associations concerning company B and C, for any of the respondent groups. Since company A is having quite a spread concerning this association it is not possible to say that it is over all valuable though.

*Only recruiting the best* is one of the least frequent associations with company A and C, also for any of the respondent groups. Their employed young professionals and grand professionals are also associating likewise. Looking to the background information of the respondent employee groups for these companies, they are more alike in studying background, than if comparing with company B. Company A and C do have a large number of employees with completed upper secondary education as highest level of education. A question is if this might affect ones idea concerning a company’s focus on only recruiting the best? For company B there is quite a spread between their different respondent groups’ ideas of whether they are focusing on only recruiting the best, besides when it comes to the internal groups, young professionals and grand professionals. They do have employees with generally different academic background. Many have 2-4 years of studies at the university, and the majority have studied more than four years.

## **7.2 Differences**

For this research the objective was also to examine whether there are coincidence concerning differences. This was done by combining the distinguished ideas found for each of the companies. *A good reference for future carrier* is for company A and C something that their employees are appreciating very little. The external groups are expecting it more. Something to take in consideration here is once again the more similar profiles of the respondent groups for company A and C. Their respondent groups consisted of a higher number of older people. Likely these are less focused on future carrier and maybe changing working place. In that case it is natural that a good reference for future carrier is paid less attention. The students, and especially the young professionals on the outside, are highly expecting it though. Which also goes along with previous reasoning. For company B the students and young professionals externally are highly expecting it too. Different from company A and C their employees are appreciating this offer a bit more, which might indicate that they are more mobile. For company A and B it is noticeable that their employed young professionals are appreciating this offer more than their grand professionals, which also goes along with the reasoning just presented.

*Flexible working hours* are for all employees a highly appreciated offer. What seems overall coinciding is that it is mainly among employees that this offer is paid more attention. *Competitive compensation* is for all three companies something that the



external groups are expecting more from the companies than the employees are appreciating it. When comparing with preferences though, competitive compensation is among the highest preferred offers among the employees for all three companies. Either the reason for differences between preferred and appreciated offers in this case might be that the companies do not have overall satisfactory compensation, or it shows that man simply never gets enough.

Over all the employees at the three companies are appreciating *possibilities for advancement/ promotion* offer very little, while the external groups tend to expect it more, especially the young professionals. The group of employees working for company B and the young professionals working for company A show signs of a certain focus on carrier plans, through their appreciation of a good reference for future carrier. This does not shine through in their little appreciation of possibilities for advancement/ promotion though. However, considering the importance the employer brand component *work-life balance* is given, good references can also serve other motives. If a person for example is obliged to move because of personal reasons and then feel more secure when it comes to finding new employment.

*Project based work and tasks that mean bigger challenges* are for all three companies something that people on the outside are expecting more than the employees are appreciating it. When it comes to *employees with varying background* one thing is in common for all three companies: the two working groups, the employees and young professionals are paying more attention to it than the students. A *dynamic organisation* on the other hand is less associated with the companies among the working groups, than among the students. *Good reputation & and highly thought of* is more frequently associated with the companies among their employees, then among the external groups. The size of the gap to the external groups varies between the companies though.

## **7.2 Are the research questions answered**

As mentioned the same given answer alternatives was used as in Universum Communications surveys. When answered, these answer alternatives were serving as reflections of the employer brand images. All different components are being represented, but not the whole spectrum of an employer brand. This would rather be impossible to do though. However, it can be assumed that essential parts are included, due to the many years of experience of Universum Communications, which are continuously working with their material for improvement. This means that this research, and its four research questions, are answered by looking at parts of the employer brands images. This has been the idea through the whole study, so in that meaning the research questions are considered to have been answered.

## **7.3 Suggestions for continuous research/ Recommendations**

Along the way when working with this study, question marks occurred not possible to answer within the frames for this research. These are natural suggestions for continuous research.

The definition of the young professionals used for this study was individuals between 22-37 years old and with a maximum of eight years of working experience. Universum Communications are having two different ones concerning the age, 20-40 years old or 25-35 years old. When comparing the associations and expected offers internally, between the young professionals and the grand professionals, the ideas in many way

seemed so alike. The question is how long a young professional is actually distinguished from a grand professional? How fast does a young professional adapt to the working environment? Is the definition used for distinguishing these individuals optimal?

An important issue in branding in general are the possibilities of influencing the brand image. As Bullmore said: “We (consumers) build images as birds build nests; from the scraps and straws we chance upon.” Some of the influencers are by the company controllable means, while others are not. Interesting for companies would be to know which of their channels of information the influential are. Is it one of their controllable channels? Or are the employer brand images mainly influenced by other factors? Does the active work with the employer brand have effect?

Last reflection is concerning the use of given answer alternatives. In this research the employer brand images are reflected by a range of given answer alternatives. It would be interesting to study the effect of the use of these alternatives. Would reflections of employer brand images come out differently if more free associations were possible?



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## Appendix 1 Questionnaire

*This is a presentation of the questionnaire used in the survey. The questions are presented both in their original version in Swedish, used in the questionnaires, and the translation into English. The answer alternatives are also presented, as well a translation.*

1. *What occupational role do you have at your present work?*  
*(Vad har du för roll på ditt nuvarande arbete?)*

Swedish	English
Assistent	Assistant
Gruppchef	Group director
Handläggare	Handling officer
Högre chef- ingår i ledningsgrupp eller motsvarande	Higher managerial position, directorship
Konsult	Consultant
Mellanchef- har gruppchef (-er) under dig	Middle director – having group director(-s) under you
Projektansvarig	Project responsible
Specialist	Specialist
Styrelseordförande/ ledamot	Board director/ member
Trainee	Trainee
VD, företagsledare	CEO, MD
Annat	Other

2. *Which of the factors below would you find most attractive if an employer offered them? (Kindly mark at the most three alternatives)*  
*(Vilka av nedanstående faktorer skulle du tycka vore mest attraktiva om en arbetsgivare erbjöd dem? (Vänligen markera högst tre alternativ))*

Swedish	English
Balans mellan privatliv och karriär	Balance between private life and carrier
En god referens för din framtida karriär	A good reference for your future carrier
Flexibel arbetstid	Flexible working hours
Få övertidstimmar	Few hours overtime
Inspirerande arbetskamrater	Inspiring colleges
Intern vidareutbildning	Internal further education
Internationella karriärmöjligheter	International carrier opportunities
Konkurrenskraftig ersättning	Competitive compensation
Kontinuerlig återkoppling och uppföljning av ditt arbete	Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Möjligheter att arbeta hemifrån	Possibilities to work from home
Möjligheter till avancemang/ befordran	Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Projektbaserat arbete	Project based work
Trygg anställning	Safe employment
Uppgifter som innebär allt större utmaningar	Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varierade arbetsuppgifter	Varying work
Annat	Other

3. Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with you present employer?  
(Vilka tre alternativ uppskattar du mest hos din nuvarande arbetsgivare?)

Swedish	English
Balans mellan privatliv och karriär	Balance between private life and carrier
En god referens för din framtida karriär	A good reference for your future carrier
Flexibel arbetstid	Flexible working hours
Få övertidstimmar	Few hours overtime
Inspirerande arbetskamrater	Inspiring colleges
Intern vidareutbildning	Internal further education
Internationella karriärmöjligheter	International carrier opportunities
Konkurrenskraftig ersättning	Competitive compensation
Kontinuerlig återkoppling och uppföljning av ditt arbete	Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Möjligheter att arbeta hemifrån	Possibilities to work from home
Möjligheter till avancemang/ befordran	Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Projektbaserat arbete	Project based work
Trygg anställning	Safe employment
Uppgifter som innebär allt större utmaningar	Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varierade arbetsuppgifter	Varying work
Annat	Other

4. What do you associate with your present employer? (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives)  
(Vad förknippar du med din nuvarande arbetsgivare? (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar))

Swedish	English
Alltför konkurrenspräglad arbetsmiljö	Too competitive working environment
Anställda med varierande bakgrund	Employees with varying background
Bra chefs/ ledarskap	Good Leadership/ Management
Dynamisk organisation	Dynamic organisation
Finansiell styrka	Financial strength
God etik och hög moral	Good ethic and high moral
Gott rykte och anseende	Good reputation and highly thought of
Innovativa lösningar	Innovative solutions
Konservativ arbetsmiljö	Conservative working environment
Marknadsframgång	Market success
Miljövänlig policy	Environmental friendly policy
Oattraktivt geografiskt läge	Unattractively geographically situated
Rekryterar de bästa	Only recruiting the best
Spännande produkter/ tjänster	Exciting products/ services
Stark fokus på kompetensutveckling	Clear focus on competence development
Stark företagskultur	Strong clear company culture

5. Gender? (Kön?)

Man (Man) ☐ Woman (Kvinna) ☐

6. Age? (Ålder?)

18 – 21 ☐ 22 – 25 ☐ 26 – 29 ☐  
 30 – 33 ☐ 34 – 37 ☐ 38 – 41 ☐  
 42 – 45 ☐ 46 or older (eller äldre) ☐

7. *What is your highest level of education? (Vilken är din högsta utbildning?)*

Swedish	English
Grundskola	Nine-year compulsory school [for children aged 7-16]
Gymnasial utbildning	Completed upper secondary education
2-4 år på universitet/ högskola/ motsvarande	2-4 years of studies at university,
Mer än 4 år på universitet/ högskola/ motsvarande	More than 4 years of studies at university

8. *What was your main field of study? (Vilken var din huvudsakliga studieinriktning?)*

Swedish	English
Ekonomiska ämnen	Financial subjects
Tekniska/ Naturvetenskapliga ämnen	Scientific subjects
Data/IT – ämnen	Computer science/ IT subjects
Annat	Others

9. *How many years have you been working after finishing your studies? (Hur många år har du arbetat efter avslutad utbildning/ Hur många års arbetslivserfarenhet har du?)*

Less than one year <input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3-4 <input type="checkbox"/>
5-6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7-8 <input type="checkbox"/>	9-10 <input type="checkbox"/>
11-12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13-14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15-16 <input type="checkbox"/>
17-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19-20 <input type="checkbox"/>	21 or more (eller mer) <input type="checkbox"/>

10. *How many years have you been working for your present employer? (Hur många år har du arbetat på nuvarande jobb?)*

Less than one year <input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3-4 <input type="checkbox"/>
5-6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7-8 <input type="checkbox"/>	9-10 <input type="checkbox"/>
11-12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13-14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15-16 <input type="checkbox"/>
17-18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19-20 <input type="checkbox"/>	21 or more (eller mer) <input type="checkbox"/>

11. *What is your present main working field? (Vilket är ditt nuvarande huvudsakliga arbetsområde?)*

Swedish	English
Ekonomiska ämnen	Financial subjects
Tekniska/ Naturvetenskapliga ämnen	Scientific subjects
Data/IT – ämnen	Computer science/ IT subjects
Annat	Others



## Appendix 2 Results from survey

*Following is a presentation of obtained data from the questionnaires, used for this research.*

The results will be presented in order of questions in the questionnaires. The three companies participating will all be presented separately under each question. This to keep the possibility to compare each company separately, with 'their students' and 'their young professionals'. For the answer alternatives in Swedish, the reader is requested to apply for this in the presentation of the questionnaire in appendix 1.

1. *What occupational role do you have at your present work?*  
(Vad har du för roll på ditt nuvarande arbete?)

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Assistant	2	4,10	0	0	0	0
Group director	4	8,20	3	4,10	0	0
Handling officer	12	24,50	0	0	10	9,50
Directorship	3	6,10	4	5,50	0	0
Consultant	2	4,10	40	54,80	0	0
Middle director	2	4,10	1	1,40	1	1
Project responsible	5	10,20	7	9,60	7	6,70
Specialist	8	16,30	4	5,50	41	39
Trainee	0	0	1	1,40	1	1
CEO, MD	0	0	1	1,40	0	0
Other	11	22,40	12	16,40	45	42,90
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

2. *Which of the factors below would you find most attractive if an employer offered them? (Kindly mark at the most three alternatives)*  
(Vilka av nedanstående faktorer skulle du tycka vore mest attraktiva om en arbetsgivare erbjöd dem? (Vänligen markera högst tre alternativ))

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Balance between private life and carrier	28	57,10	39	53,40	52	49,50
A good reference for your future carrier	4	8,20	12	16,40	8	7,60
Flexible working hours	14	28,60	12	16,40	49	46,70
Few hours overtime	1	2	5	6,80	7	6,70
Inspiring colleges	13	26,50	30	41,10	29	27,60
Internal further education	13	26,50	10	13,70	23	21,90
International carrier opportunities	4	8,20	8	11	3	2,90
Competitive compensation	23	46,90	40	54,80	50	47,60
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	7	14,20	14	19,20	10	9,50
Possibilities to work from home	11	22,40	9	12,30	20	19
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	6	12,20	23	31,50	21	20
Project based work	2	4,10	2	2,70	5	4,80
Safe employment	13	26,50	7	9,60	35	33,30

Tasks that mean bigger challenges	14	28,60	28	38,40	21	20
Varying work	21	42,90	14	19,20	37	35,20
Other	2	4,10	1	1,40	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>		<b>254</b>		<b>370</b>	

3. Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with you present employer?  
(Vilka tre alternativ uppskattar du mest hos din nuvarande arbetsgivare?)

Alternative	Company A Nr %		Company B Nr %		Company C Nr %	
Balance between private life and carrier	20	40,80	18	24,70	47	44,80
A good reference for your future carrier	4	8,20	21	28,80	7	6,70
Flexible working hours	20	40,80	22	30,10	59	56,20
Few hours overtime	6	12,20	6	8,20	11	10,50
Inspiring colleges	17	34,70	39	53,40	46	43,80
Internal further education	10	20,40	4	5,50	11	10,50
International carrier opportunities	4	8,20	7	9,60	0	0
Competitive compensation	5	10,20	5	6,80	10	9,50
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	5	10,20	3	4,10	3	2,90
Possibilities to work from home	15	30,60	15	20,50	16	15,20
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	4	8,20	5	6,80	2	1,90
Project based work	4	8,20	19	26	7	6,70
Safe employment	7	14,30	3	4,10	24	22,90
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	9	18,40	19	26	12	11,40
Varying work	23	46,90	26	35,60	43	41
Other	3	6,10	1	1,40	11	10,50
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>		<b>213</b>		<b>309</b>	

4. What do you associate with your present employer? (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives)  
(Vad förknippar du med din nuvarande arbetsgivare? (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar))

Alternative	Company A Nr %		Company B Nr %		Company C Nr %	
Too competitive working environment	8	16,30	10	13,70	3	2,90
Employees with varying background	19	38,80	36	49,30	48	45,70
Good Leadership/ Management	13	26,50	12	16,40	16	15,20
Dynamic organisation	6	12,20	17	23,30	15	14,30
Financial strength	25	51	7	9,60	73	69,50
Good ethic and high moral	17	34,70	20	27,40	29	27,60
Good reputation and highly thought of	28	57,10	48	65,80	68	64,80
Innovative solutions	13	26,50	9	12,30	25	23,80
Conservative working environment	6	12,20	4	5,50	12	11,40
Market success	13	26,50	14	19,20	50	47,60
Environmental friendly policy	15	30,60	0	0	13	12,40
Unattractively geographically situated	9	18,40	10	13,70	7	6,70
Only recruiting the best	0	0	15	20,50	6	5,70

Exciting products/ services	26	53,10	20	27,40	75	71,40
Clear focus on competence development	12	24,50	16	21,90	11	10,50
Strong clear company culture	15	30,60	12	16,40	35	33,30
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>		<b>250</b>		<b>486</b>	

5. *Gender? (Kön?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Man	21	42,90	41	56,20	76	72,40
Woman	28	57,10	32	43,80	29	27,60
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

6. *Age? (Ålder?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
18-21	0	0	0	0	0	0
22-25	0	0	4	5,50	1	1
26-29	3	6,10	17	23,30	9	8,60
30-33	6	12,20	15	20,50	25	23,80
34-37	1	2	8	11	17	16,20
38-41	1	2	9	12,30	21	20
42-45	6	12,20	9	12,30	11	10,50
46 or older	32	65,30	11	15,10	21	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

7. *What is you highest level of education? (Vilken är din högsta utbildning?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Nine-year compulsory school [for children aged 7-16]	5	10,20	1	1,40	0	0
Completed upper secondary education	25	51	2	2,70	43	41
2-4 years of studies at university,	12	24,50	24	32,90	42	40
More than 4 years of studies at university	7	14,30	46	63	20	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

8. *What was you main field of study? (Vilken var din huvudsakliga studieinriktning?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Financial	16	32,70	18	24,70	19	18,10
Scientific	15	30,60	22	30,10	23	21,90
Computer science/ IT	8	16,30	23	31,50	55	52,40
Others	10	20,40	10	13,70	8	7,60
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

9. *How many years have you been working after finishing your studies? (Hur många år har du arbetat efter avslutad utbildning/ Hur många års arbetslivserfarenhet har du?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Less than one year	0	0	8	11	0	0
1-2	0	0	8	11	1	1
3-4	0	0	6	8,20	6	5,70
5-6	2	4,10	6	8,20	13	12,40
7-8	5	10,20	6	8,20	11	10,50
9-10	2	4,10	8	11	14	13,30
11-12	0	0	3	4,10	7	6,70
13-14	1	2	3	4,10	6	5,70
15-16	0	0	1	1,40	10	9,50
17-18	0	0	6	8,20	8	7,60
19-20	3	6,10	4	5,50	4	3,80
21 or more	36	73,50	14	19,20	25	23,80
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

10. *How many years have you been working for your present employer? (Hur många år har du arbetat på nuvarande jobb?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Less than one year	1	2	20	27,40	6	5,70
1-2	7	14,30	9	12,30	18	17,10
3-4	5	10,20	14	19,20	24	22,90
5-6	7	14,30	10	13,70	16	15,20
7-8	2	4,10	4	5,50	9	8,60
9-10	3	6,10	6	8,20	8	7,60
11-12	1	2	1	1,40	3	2,90
13-14	0	0	2	2,70	5	4,80
15-16	3	6,10	1	1,40	8	7,60
17-18	2	4,10	3	4,10	1	1
19-20	2	4,10	1	1,40	1	1
21 or more	16	32,70	2	2,70	6	5,70
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

11. *What is your present main working field? (Vilket är ditt nuvarande huvudsakliga arbetsområde?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Financial	11	22,40	14	19,20	13	12,40
Scientific	7	14,30	1	1,40	6	5,70
Computer science/ IT	12	24,50	44	60,30	80	76,20
Others	19	38,80	14	19,20	6	5,70
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>73</b>		<b>105</b>	

## Appendix 3 Used data: students and young professionals

*Following is a presentation of the used data concerning students and young professionals. This data is received from the Universum Communications' surveys from 2004.*

The results connected to the questionnaire designed for this research is presented in order of the questions appearing in the questionnaires. The three companies participating will all be presented separately under each question. Data concerning students presented are the average of the different groups: technology/ science, finance and computer science/ IT. Ap4 marked in the tables means that the information is found in appendix 4. Young professionals are below referred to as YP. For the answer alternatives in Swedish, the reader is requested to apply for this in the presentation of the questionnaire in appendix 1.

1. *What occupational role do you have at your present work?*  
(*Vad har du för roll på ditt nuvarande arbete?*)

This question is only to be found in the young professional survey.

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Assistant	-	8	-	4	-	4
Group director	-	3	-	6	-	8
Handling officer	-	5	-	6	-	3
Directorship	-	0	-	3	-	2
Consultant	-	26	-	22	-	21
Middle director	-	2	-	2	-	2
Project responsible	-	23	-	25	-	23
Specialist	-	32	-	24	-	33
Trainee	-	0	-	3	-	0
CEO, MD	-	2	-	2	-	0
Other	-	0	-	3	-	2
<b>Number of 'their students'/ 'their YP's'</b>		<b>74</b>		<b>206</b>		<b>97</b>

2. *Which of the factors below would you find most attractive if an employer offered them? (Kindly mark at the most three alternatives)*  
(*Vilka av nedanstående faktorer skulle du tycka vore mest attraktiva om en arbetsgivare erbjöd dem? (Vänligen markera högst tre alternativ)*)

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Balance between private life and carrier	-	33	-	24	-	35
A good reference for your future carrier	16,3	7	14	10	19	7
Flexible working hours	28,7	29	26	23	37	29
Few hours overtime	5,3	4	6,3	3	6	2
Inspiring colleges	28,3	44	24	39	22,3	45
Internal further education	38	7	31,3	7	34	7
International carrier opportunities	28	21	34	26	21,3	8
Competitive compensation	25	30	32	44	26,7	38
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	-	15	-	17	-	18
Possibilities to work from home	-	8	-	3	-	5

Possibilities for advancement /promotion	12	33	19,7	28	14	18
Project based work	13	3	16,3	5	16	6
Safe employment	38,7	11	21,7	7	28,7	15
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	26,7	26	34	37	18,3	33
Varying work	40	23	31	23	39,7	24
Other	0	1	0	0	0,7	1

3. *What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?*  
 - *This to be compared with the question in “Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with you present employer?” in this research.*  
*(Vilka tre alternativ uppskattar du mest hos din nuvarande arbetsgivare?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Balance between private life and carrier	-	33	-	6	-	32
A good reference for your future carrier	60	47	66,3	53	32,3	31
Flexible working hours	28,3	38	31,3	20	32	26
Few hours overtime	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inspiring colleges	30,3	39	50,3	53	30,3	38
Internal further education	41,7	43	54	30	16	15
International carrier opportunities	25	32	55,7	40	4,7	0
Competitive compensation	23,3	25	58,7	50	21,7	27
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work	-	19	-	24	-	12
Possibilities to work from home	-	43	-	10	-	12
Possibilities for advancement /promotion	18,7	47	21	33	13	31
Project based work	43,3	28	57	47	26,3	27
Secure employment	35,7	33	19	7	35,3	32
Tasks that mean bigger challenges	46	50	62,7	51	37,7	51
Varying work	54,7	46	64,3	57	36,3	64
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-

4. *What do you associate with the company/ organisation? (Kindly mark all suitable alternatives) - This to be compared with the question “What do you associate with your present employer? in this research. (Vad förknippar du med din nuvarande arbetsgivare? (Vänligen markera alla alternativ som passar))*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Too competitive working environment	8,7	-	13,3	8	2,3	0
Employees with varying background	20,7	52	19,7	30	10	28
Good Leadership/ Management	29,7	23	27	19	19	13
Dynamic organisation	29,7	4	52,3	28	25,3	7
Financial strength	44	37	39,7	19	44	38
Good ethic and high moral	16,3	14	20,7	9	11,7	5
Good reputation and highly thought of	14,3	27	49	63	6,7	24
Innovative solutions	30,7	18	29,3	18	25,7	30
Conservative working environment	20	30	10,3	12	6,3	6
Market success	46,7	33	66	42	49,7	56

Environmental friendly policy	-	12	-	3	-	1
Unattractively geographically situated	-	-	-	1	-	14
Only recruiting the best	7,3	12	38,3	51	2,3	10
Exciting products/ services	65,7	62	50	43	64,7	82
Clear focus on competence development	-	33	-	27	-	11
Strong clear company culture	32,3	37	33,7	25	15,3	24
<b>Number of 'their students'/ 'their YP's'</b>		<b>74</b>		<b>206</b>		<b>97</b>

### 5. Gender? (Kön?)

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Man	Ap4	53	Ap4	62	Ap4	62
Woman	-	47	-	38	-	38
<b>Number of 'their students'/ 'their YP's'</b>		<b>74</b>		<b>206</b>		<b>97</b>

### 6. Age? (Ålder?)

Alternative Students	Alternative Young professionals	Company A		Company B		Company C	
		Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
18-19	22-24	Ap4	1	Ap4	2	Ap4	0
20-21	25-27	-	19	-	27	-	11
22-23	28-30	-	35	-	39	-	38
24-25	31-33	-	28	-	21	-	38
26-27	34-36	-	9	-	9	-	6
28-29	> 36	-	7	-	2	-	6
30-31		-		-		-	
32-33		-		-		-	
34 or older		-		-		-	

### 7. What is your highest level of education? (Vilken är din högsta utbildning?)

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Nine-year compulsory school [for children aged 7-16]	-	-	-	-	-	-
Completed upper secondary education	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-4 years of studies at university,	-	38	-	26	-	51
More than 4 years of studies at university	-	61	-	74	-	49

### 8. What was your main field of study? (Vilken var din huvudsakliga studieinriktning?)

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Financial	-	38	-	46	-	47
Scientific	-	22	-	18	-	11
Computer science/ IT	-	17	-	36	-	41
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-

9. *How many years have you been working after finishing your studies? (Hur många år har du arbetat efter avslutad utbildning/ Hur många års arbetslivserfarenhet har du?)*

Alternative	Company A		Company B		Company C	
	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%	Stud%	YP%
Less than one year	-	9		17		1
1-2	-	3/ 8		12/ 18		3/ 13
3-4	-	15/ 24		14/ 13		9/ 25
5-6	-	12/ 11		11/ 8		20/13
7-8	-	9/ 8		5/ 3		9/ 6



## Appendix 4 Student profiles

Following are summaries of data concerning the different student groups received from Universum Graduate Surveys 2004.

Company A their students – technology/ science		
Age	Age (years)	23,5
Gender	Women	35%
	Men	65%
Education	Computer technology, technical computer science	26%
	Electro technology, electro design, micro electronics	22%
	IT, information-communication technology, interaction and design	15%
Carrier objectives	Work that means bigger challenges	52%
	Build a good private economy	48%
	Working internationally	43%
Industry	Computer science/ IT consultancy	52%
	Telecommunication	44%
	Software development	37%
Attractive offers	International carrier opportunities	43%
	Inspiring colleges	37%
	Varying work	35%

Company A their students – technology/ science		
The students associate Comp A with	Exciting products/ services	72%
	Market success	46%
	Financial strength	40%
The students believe Comp A is offering	A good reference for future carrier	74%
	Project based work	62%
	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	58%
The students have collected information about Comp A through	Company days	47%
	Company's/ organisation's webpage	39%
	Articles in newspapers and magazines	37%

Company A their students – finance		
Age	Age (years)	25,1
Gender	Women	49%
	Men	51%
Education	Marketing	27%
	Accounting	24%
	Management	10%
Carrier objectives	Build a good private economy	54%
	Work that means bigger challenges	51%
	Create an equilibrant between private life and carrier	49%
Industry	Marketing/ PR	46%
	Management consultancy	34%
	Private/ commercial bank	32%
Attractive offers	Varying work	51%
	Internal further education	39%
	Secure employment	39%

Company A their students – finance		
The students associate Comp A with	Exciting products/ services	68%
	Financial strength	50%
	Market success	48%
The students believe Comp A is offering	Varying work	60%
	A good reference for future carrier	55%
	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	45%
The students have collected information about Comp A through	Articles in newspapers and magazines	50%
	Company's/ organisation's webpage	38%
	Through acquaintances working at the company	33%

Company A their students – computer science/ IT		
Age	Age (years)	26,4
Gender	Women	31%
	Men	69%
Education	Computer technology, technical computer science	26%
	Systemvetare	22%
	Computer science	16%
Carrier objectives	Build a good private economy	62%
	Tasks that means bigger challenges	40%
	Create an equilibrant between private life and carrier	34%
Industry	Computer/ IT consultancy	67%
	Software development	52%
	Tele communication	40%
Attractive offers	Secure employment	44%
	Internal further education	42%
	Varying work	34%

Company A their students – computer science/ IT		
The students associate Comp A with	Exciting products/ services	57%
	Market success	46%
	Financial strength	42%
The students believe Comp A is offering	Varying work	52%
	A good reference for future carrier	51%
	Internal further education/ focus on competence evolvement	47%
The students have collected information about Comp A through	Company's/ organisation's webpage	48%
	Articles in newspapers and magazines	44%
	Through acquaintances working at the company	33%

Company B their students - technology/ science		
Age	Age (years)	24,4
Gender	Women	31%
	Men	69%
Education	Industrial economics	31%
	Computer science, technical computer science	14%
	Mechanical engineering, ergonomic design & production, wood technology	13%
Carrier objectives	Tasks that means bigger challenges	63%
	Working internationally	52%
	Build a good private economy	45%

<b>Industry</b>	Management consultation	55%
	Data/ IT consult	34%
	Technical consultation	34%
<b>Attractive offers</b>	International carrier opportunities	41%
	Competitive compensation	33%
	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	33%

<b>Company B their students - technology/ science</b>		
<b>The students associate Comp B with</b>	Dynamic organisation	70%
	Market success	66%
	Exciting products/ services	56%
<b>The students believe Comp B is offering</b>	Project based work	79%
	A good reference for future carrier	74%
	Competitive compensation	73%
<b>The students have collected information about Comp B through</b>	Company days	70%
	Company's/ organisation's webpage	45%
	Articles in newspapers and magazines	30%

<b>Company B their students - finance</b>		
<b>Age</b>	Age (years)	24,9
<b>Gender</b>	Women	41%
	Men	59%
<b>Education</b>	Accounting	38%
	Computer/ IT	11%
	Financial analyses and directing	9%
<b>Carrier objectives</b>	Tasks that means bigger challenges	57%
	Build a good private economy	51%
	Working internationally	35%
<b>Industry</b>	Accounting	43%
	Management consultancy	39%
	Private/ commercial bank	35%
<b>Attractive offers</b>	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	38%
	International carrier opportunities	35%
	Internal further education	33%

<b>Company B their students - finance</b>		
<b>Age</b>	Age (years)	24,9
<b>Gender</b>	Women	41%
	Men	59%
<b>Education</b>	Accounting	38%
	Computer/ IT	11%
	Financial analyses and directing	9%
<b>Carrier objectives</b>	Tasks that means bigger challenges	57%
	Build a good private economy	51%
	Working internationally	35%
<b>Industry</b>	Accounting	43%
	Management consultancy	39%
	Private/ commercial bank	35%
<b>Attractive offers</b>	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	38%
	International carrier opportunities	35%
	Internal further education	33%

Company B their students - finance		
The students associate Comp B with	Market success	69%
	Good reputation at my university	54%
	Dynamic organisation	43%
The students believe Comp B is offering	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	60%
	Varying work	60%
	Good reference for future carrier	57%
The students have collected information about Comp B through	Company days	44%
	Company's/ organisation's webpage	43%
	Through acquaintances working at the company	39%

Company B their students – computer science/ IT		
Age	Age (years)	26,9
Gender	Women	37%
	Men	63%
Education	Systemvetenskap	45%
	Computer science	13%
	Information technology	12%
Carrier objectives	Build a good private economy	58%
	Tasks that means bigger challenges	50%
	Create an equilibrant between private life and carrier	30%
Industry	Computer/ IT consultancy	81%
	Software development	46%
	Internet/ e-commerce	30%
Attractive offers	Internal further education	42%
	Varying work	32%
	Competitive compensation	31%

Company B their students – computer science /IT		
The students associate Comp B with	Market success	
	Exciting products/ services	51%
	Financial strength	46%
The students believe Comp B is offering	A good reference for future carrier	68%
	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	68%
	Varying work	62%
The students have collected information about Comp B through	Articles in newspapers and magazines	50%
	Company's/ organisation's webpage	43%
	Company days	35%

Company C their students - technology/ science		
Age	Age (years)	24,9
Gender	Women	32%
	Men	68%
Education	IT, information-communication technology, interaction and design	27%
	Industrial economics	19%
	Computer science, technical computer science	11%
Carrier objectives	Build a good private economy	54%
	Tasks that means bigger challenges	38%
	Create an equilibrant between private life and carrier	30%

<b>Industry</b>	Computer/ IT consultancy	36%
	Software development	28%
	Academic research	17%
<b>Attractive offers</b>	Flexible working hours	44%
	Varying work	36%
	Internal further education	33%

<b>Company C their students – technology/ science</b>		
<b>The students associate Comp C with</b>	Exciting products/ services	61%
	Financial strength	42%
	Market success	39%
<b>The students believe Comp C is offering</b>	Varying work	37%
	Flexible working hours	34%
	Inspiring colleges	31%
<b>The students have collected information about Comp C through</b>	Company's/ organisation's webpage	42%
	TV/ radio	33%
	Articles in newspapers and magazines	21%

<b>Company C their students - finance</b>		
<b>Age</b>	Age (years)	24,5
<b>Gender</b>	Women	25%
	Men	75%
<b>Education</b>	Marketing	24%
	Accounting	14%
	International economics	9%
<b>Carrier objectives</b>	Build a good private economy	55%
	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	51%
	Working internationally	29%
<b>Industry</b>	Marketing/ PR	41%
	Private/ commercial bank	30%
	Management consultancy	26%
<b>Attractive offers</b>	Varying work	33%
	Flexible working hours	31%
	Competitive compensation	31%

<b>Company C their students – finance</b>		
<b>The students associate Comp C with</b>	Exciting products/ services	65%
	Market success	56%
	Financial strength	46%
<b>The students believe Comp C is offering</b>	Varying work	48%
	Tasks that means bigger challenges	39%
	Secure employment	35%
<b>The students have collected information about Comp C through</b>	Articles in newspapers and magazines	44%
	Company's/ organisations webpage	40%
	TV/ radio	34%

<b>Company C their students – computer science</b>		
<b>Age</b>	Age (years)	26,6
<b>Gender</b>	Women	23%
	Men	77%
<b>Education</b>	Computer science	26%

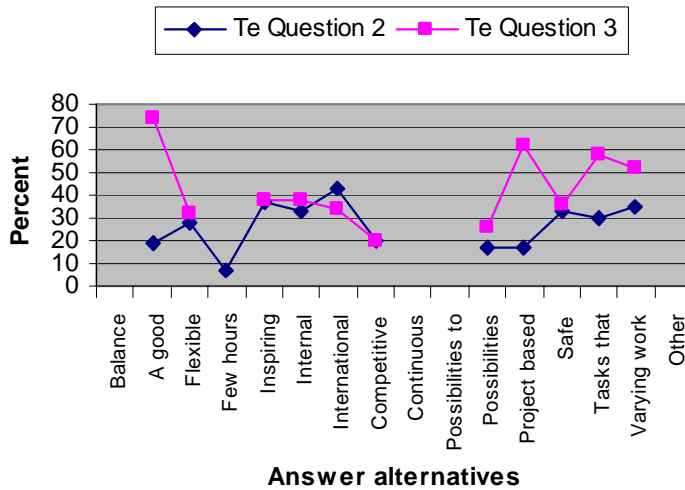
	Systemvetenskap	26%
	Information technology	14%
<b>Carrier objectives</b>	Build a good private economy	59%
	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	43%
	Achieve specialist competence	34%
<b>Industry</b>	Computer/ IT consultancy	64%
	Software development	44%
	Internet/ e-commerce	41%
<b>Attractive offers</b>	Varying work	50%
	Secure employment	41%
	Internal further education	40%

Company C their students – computer science /IT		
<b>The students associate Comp C with</b>	Exciting products/ services	68%
	Market success	54%
	Financial strength	44%
<b>The students believe Comp C is offering</b>	Tasks that mean bigger challenges	45%
	A good reference for future carrier	44%
	Varying work	44%
<b>The students have collected information about Comp C through</b>	Company's/ organisation's webpage	46%
	Articles in newspapers and magazines	30%
	TV/ radio	27%

## Appendix 5 Students' preferred vs. expected offers

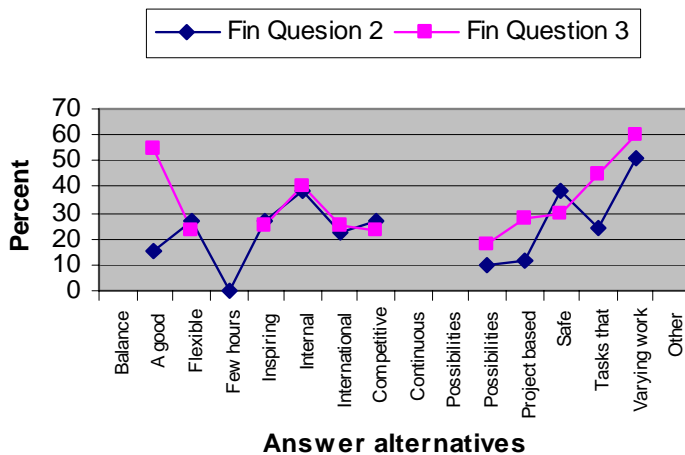
Following is a presentation of the offers that the students are expecting from the three companies, compared with their preferred offers.

**Company A Preferred offers vs expected offers**

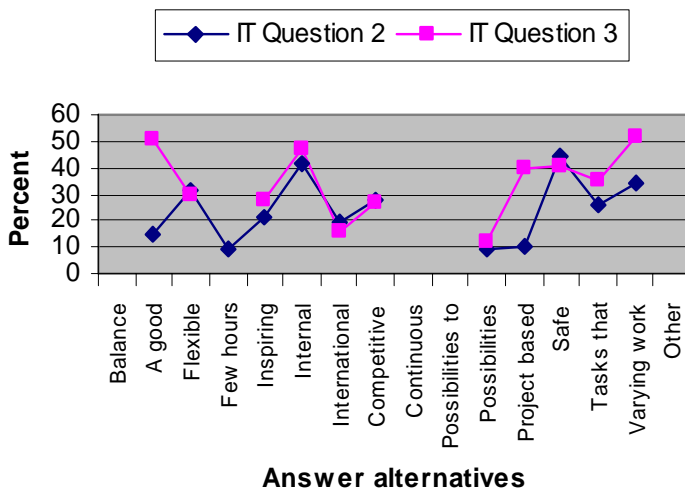


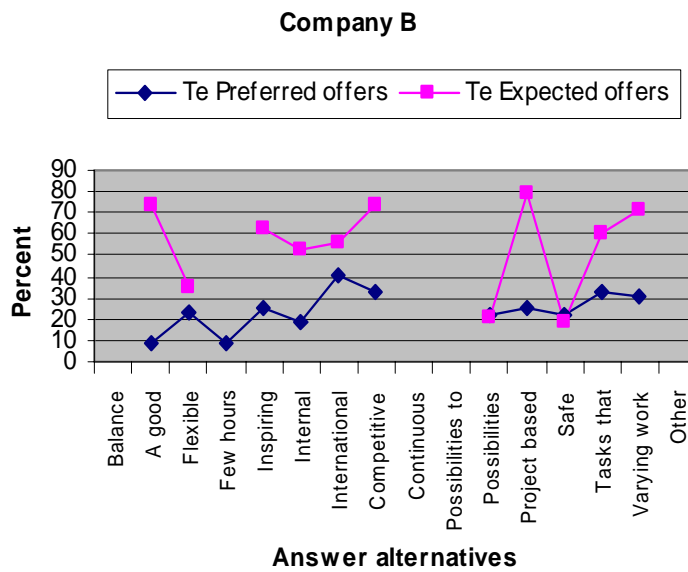
Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

**Company A Preferred offers vs expected offers**

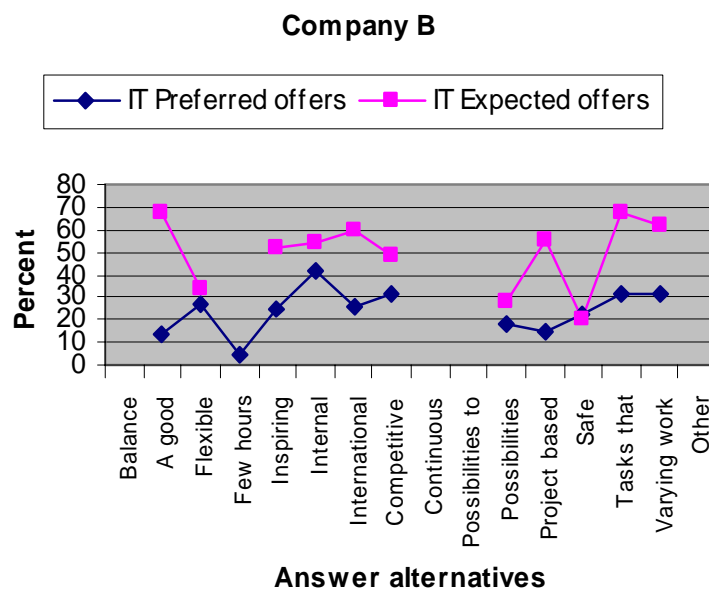
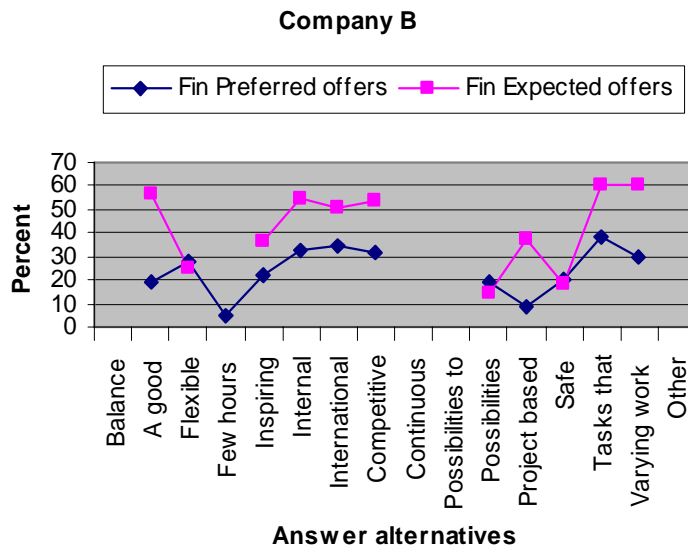


**Company A Preferred offers vs expected offers**



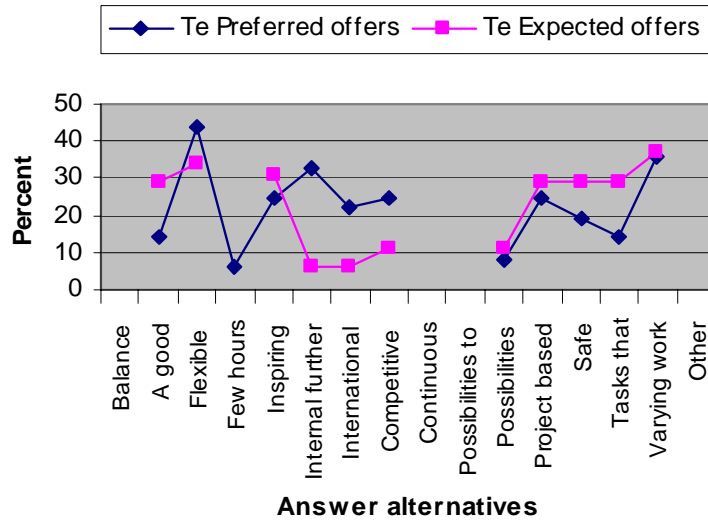


Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other



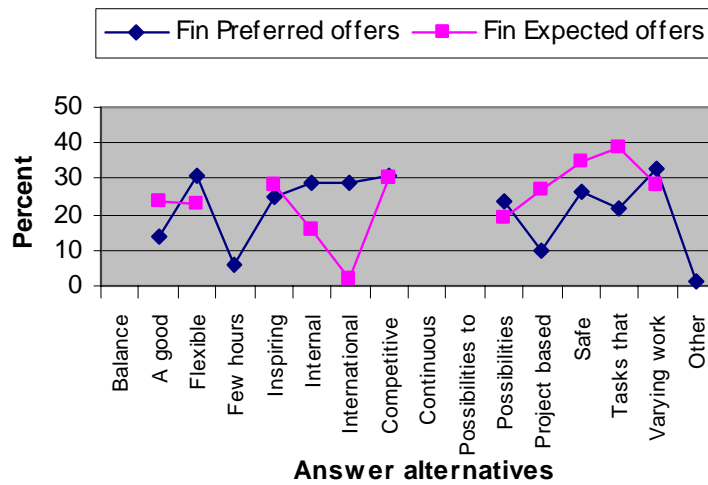


Company C

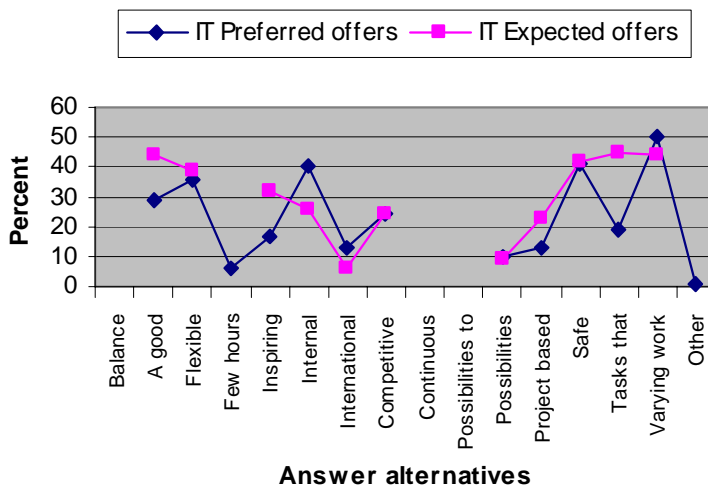


Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

Company C



Company C



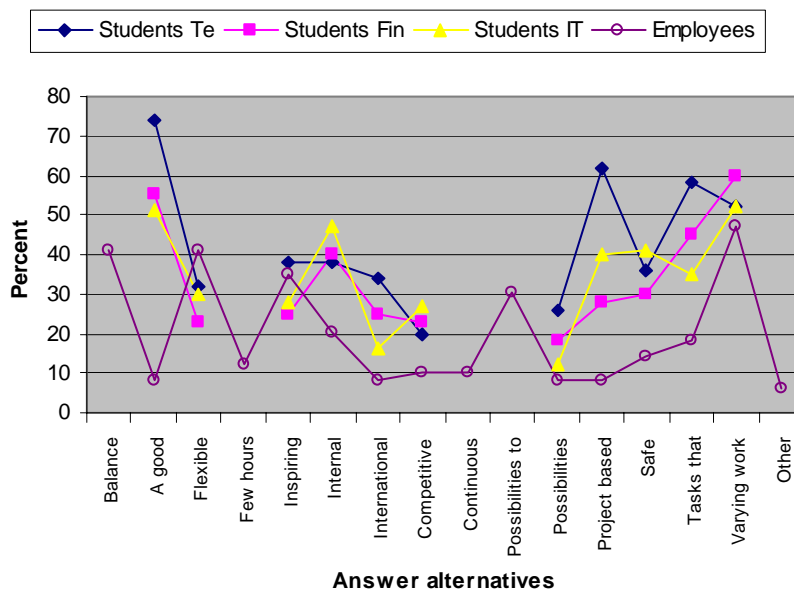
## Appendix 6 The different student groups vs. the employees

Following is a presentation of the three different student groups' perceived ideas, compared with the employees' perceived ideas of the three companies as employer. This for the two questions nr 3 and nr 4 in the questionnaire designed for this research.

### Company A

Question nr 3: What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?

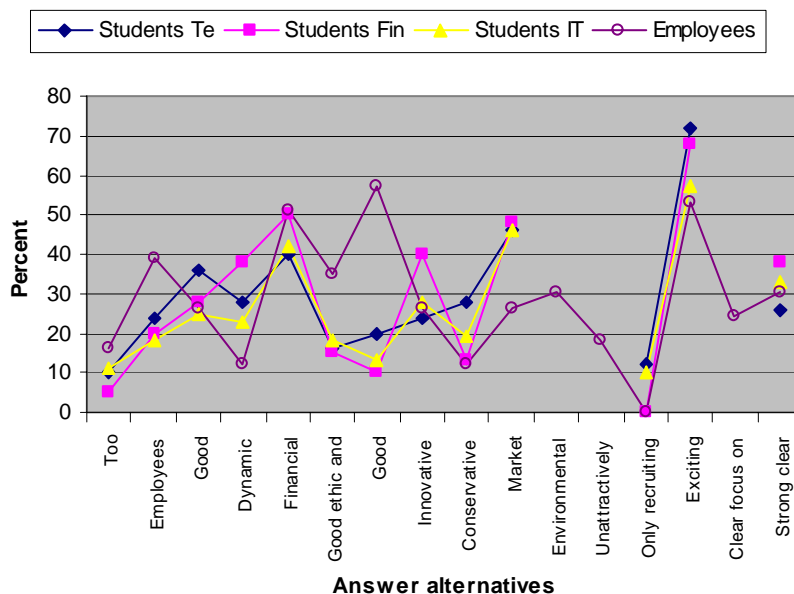
Question 3 Company A



Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

Question nr 4: What do you associate with the company/ organisation?

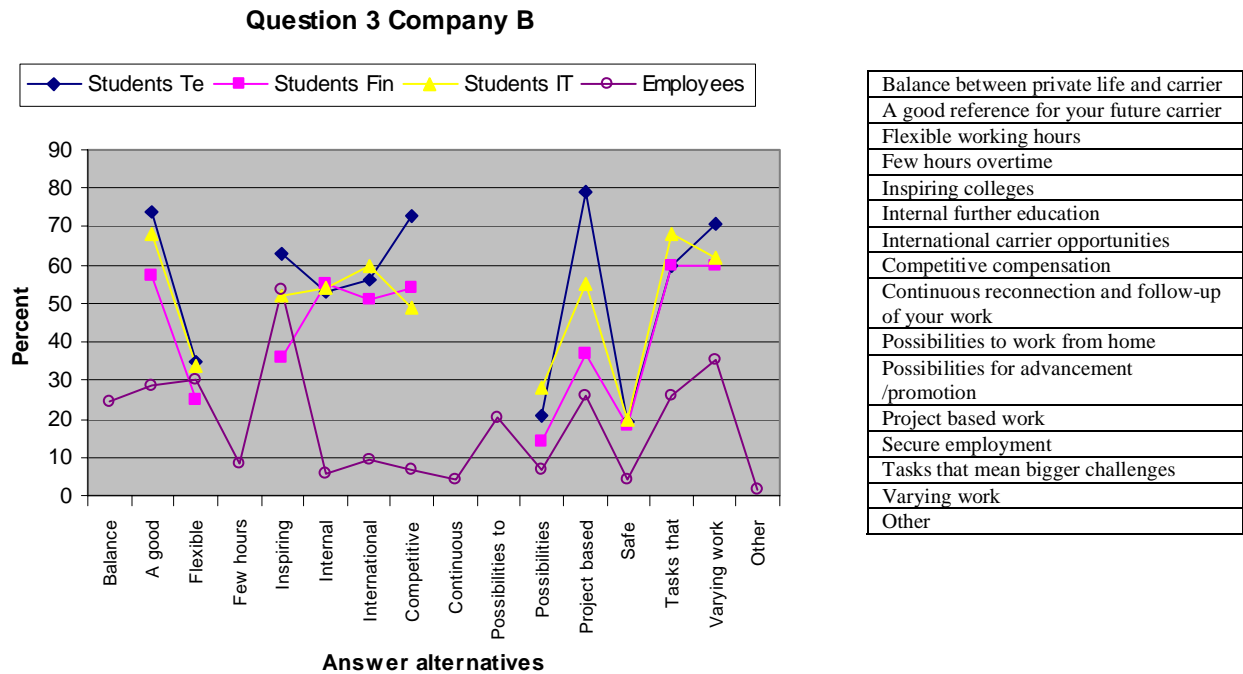
Question 4 Company A



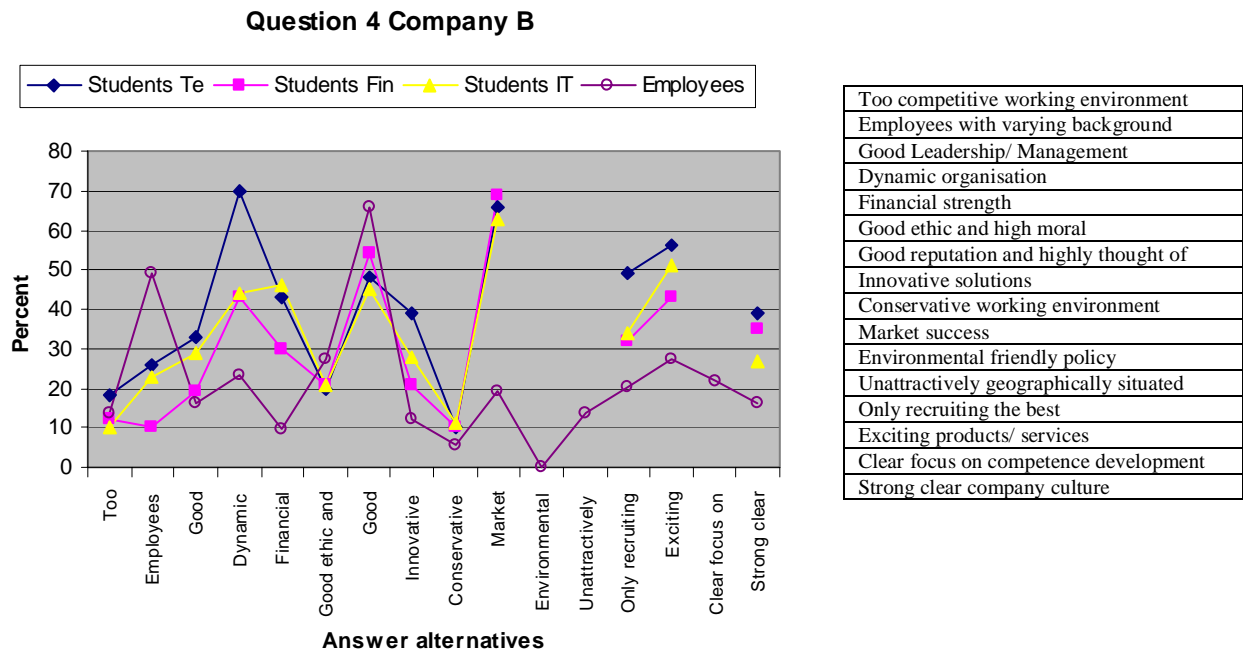
Too competitive working environment
Employees with varying background
Good Leadership/ Management
Dynamic organisation
Financial strength
Good ethic and high moral
Good reputation and highly thought of
Innovative solutions
Conservative working environment
Market success
Environmental friendly policy
Unattractively geographically situated
Only recruiting the best
Exciting products/ services
Clear focus on competence development
Strong clear company culture

## Company B

Question nr 3: What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?

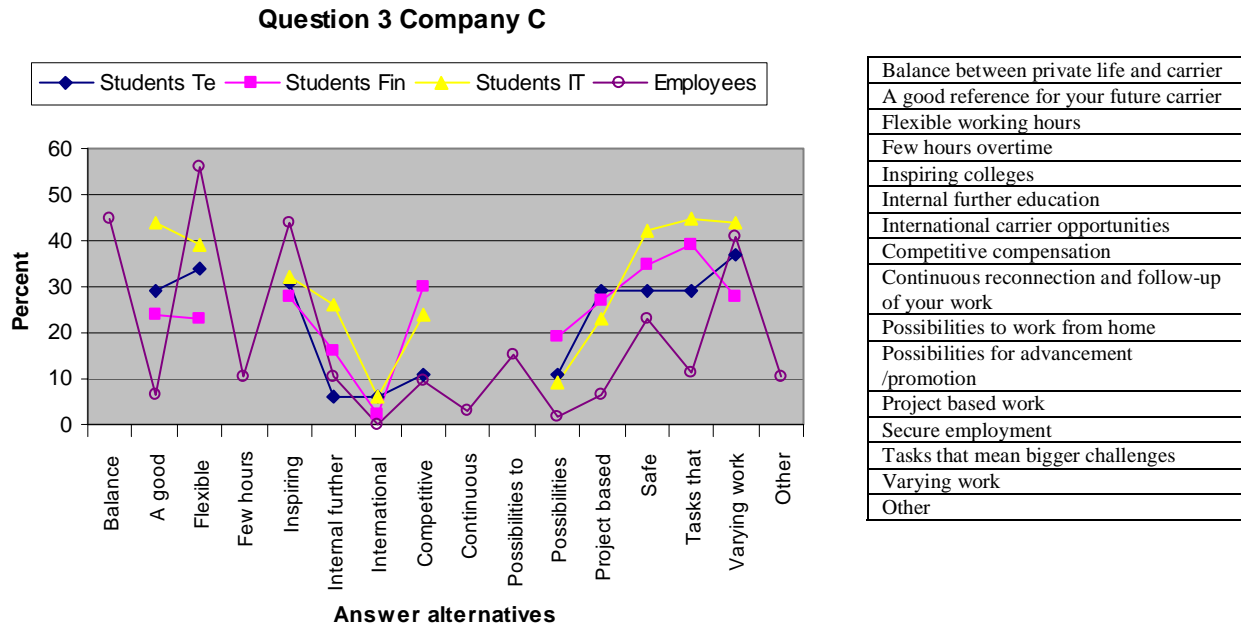


Question nr 4: What do you associate with the company/ organisation?

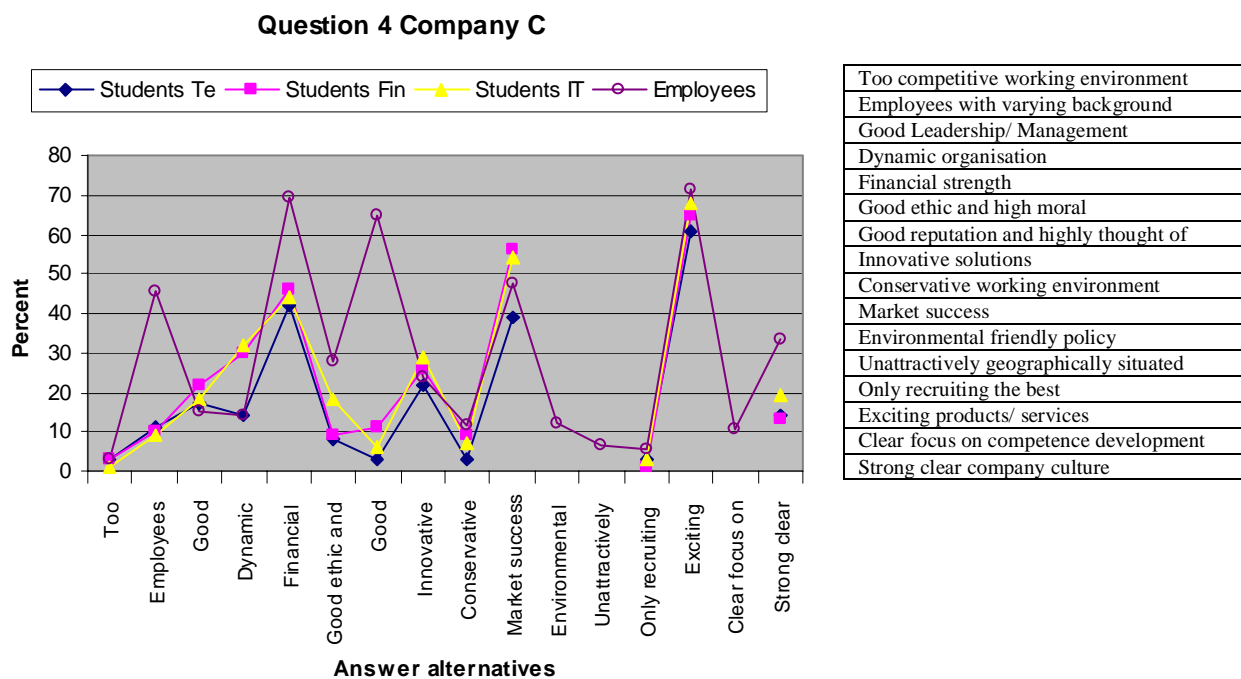


## Company C

Question nr 3: What do you believe that the company/ organisation is offering?



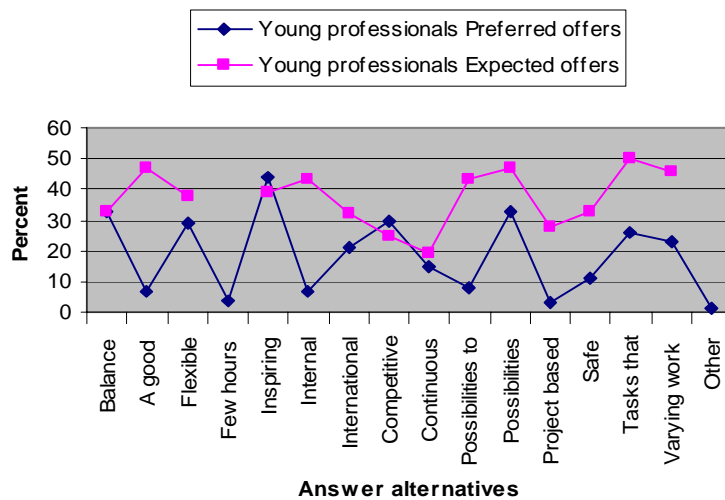
Question nr 4: What do you associate with the company/ organisation?



## Appendix 7 Young professionals' preferred vs. expected offers

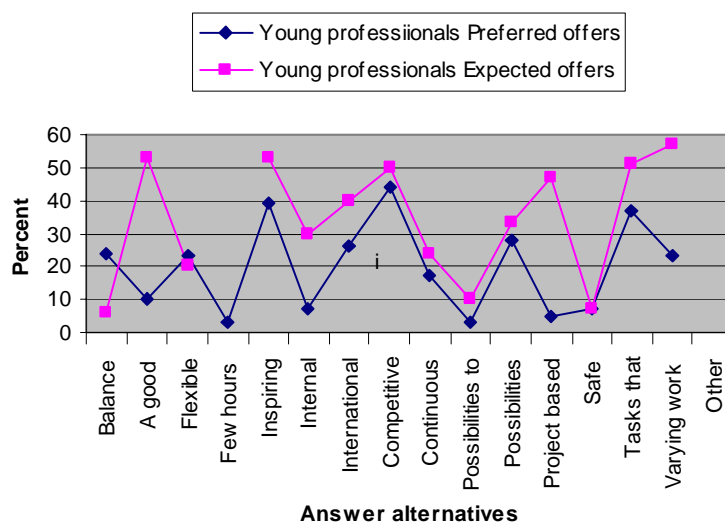
Following is a presentation of the offers that the young professionals are expecting from the three companies, compared with their preferred offers.

**Company A Preferred vs. expected offers**

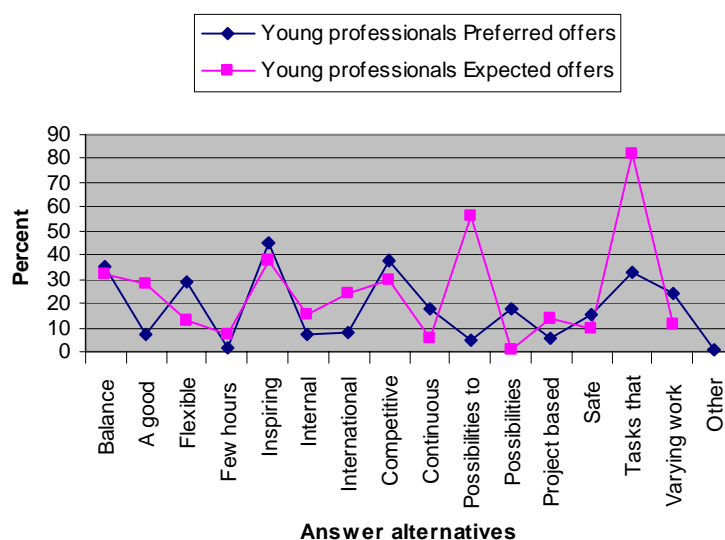


Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

**Company B Preferred vs. expected offers**



**Company C Preferred vs. expected offers**



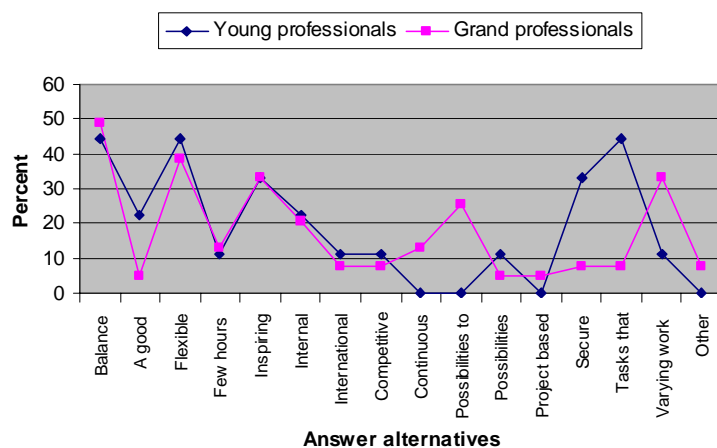
## Appendix 8 Young professionals vs. grand professionals

Following is a presentation of comparisons done between the two internal groups – young professionals and grand professionals

### Comparison of appreciated offers

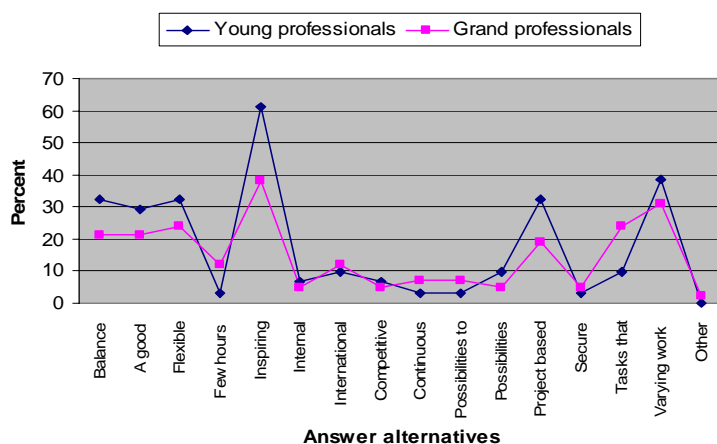
Question nr3: Which three alternatives are you appreciating the most with your present employer?

Question 3 Company A

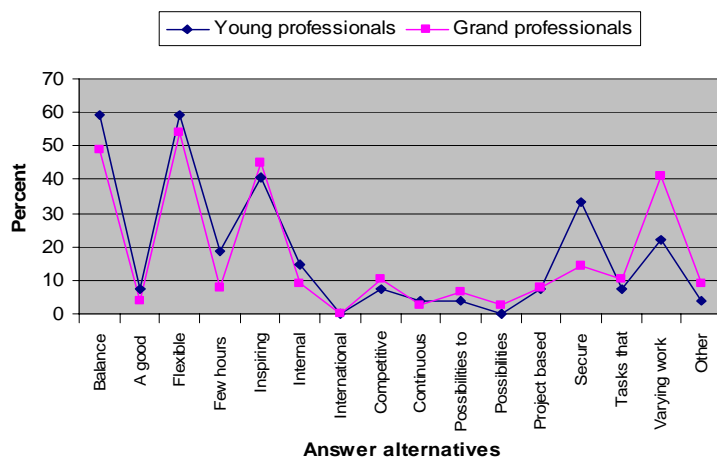


Balance between private life and carrier
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Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

Question 3 Company B



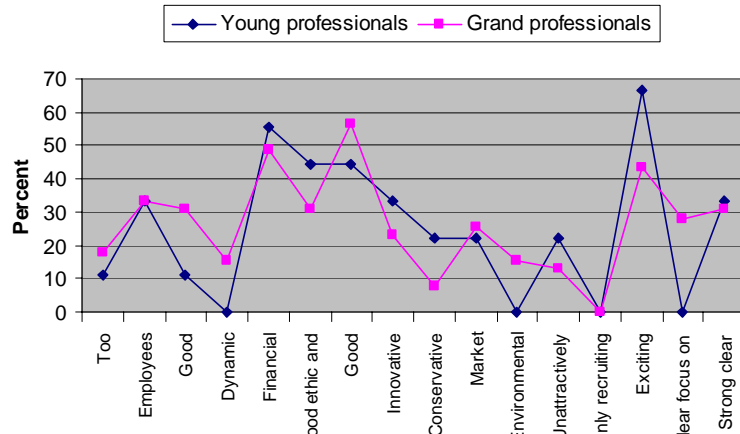
Question 3 Company C



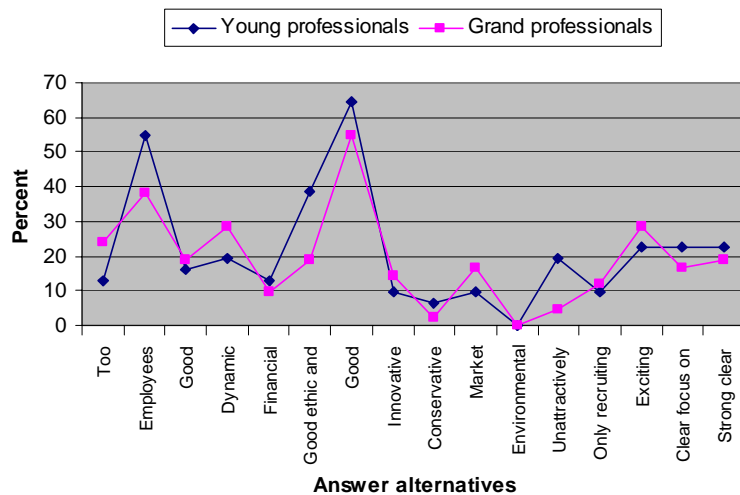
## Comparison of associations

Question nr4: What do you associate with your present employer?

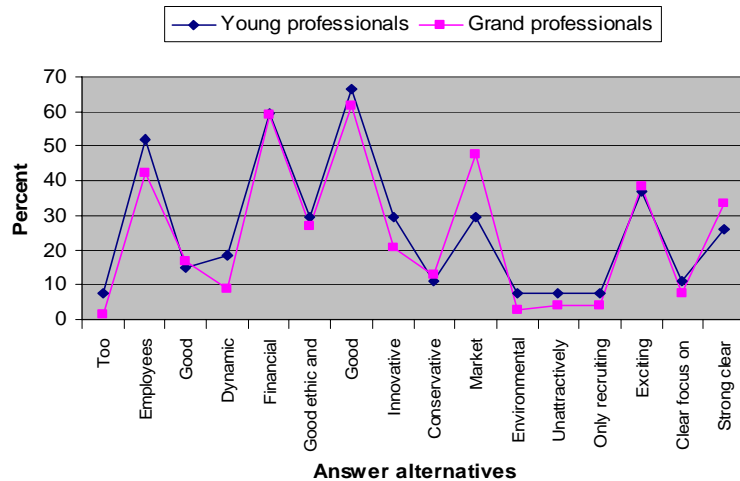
**Question 4 Company A**



**Question 4 Company B**



**Question 4 Company C**



Too competitive working environment
Employees with varying background
Good Leadership/ Management
Dynamic organisation
Financial strength
Good ethic and high moral
Good reputation and highly thought of
Innovative solutions
Conservative working environment
Market success
Environmental friendly policy
Unattractively geographically situated
Only recruiting the best
Exciting products/ services
Clear focus on competence development
Strong clear company culture

## Appendix 9 Employees' preferred vs. appreciated offers

Following is a presentation of the offers that the employees are appreciating with their employer, compared with their preferred offers.

**Company A Preferred vs. appreciated offers**



Balance between private life and carrier
A good reference for your future carrier
Flexible working hours
Few hours overtime
Inspiring colleges
Internal further education
International carrier opportunities
Competitive compensation
Continuous reconnection and follow-up of your work
Possibilities to work from home
Possibilities for advancement /promotion
Project based work
Secure employment
Tasks that mean bigger challenges
Varying work
Other

**Company B Preferred vs. appreciated offers**



**Comany C Preferred vs. appreciated offers**

