Employer Branding for Consultancies

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Summary

Fierce competition for talents and asymmetric distribution of information are the two main reasons that make employer branding necessary for knowledge intensive companies. Why is this especially important for knowledge intensive companies? These companies rely on an excellent base of human resources as the employee is forming the perception of the client in terms of credibility, quality and reputation. So how can you filter out and attract the best people? And are all talents attracted by the same patterns? The idea of this research is, that as the characteristics of employees cannot be determined in advance, it is important to initiate a pre-selection by communicating a certain industry-image that functions as a signal of expectations the company has. This signaling via external positioning makes it easier for the prospect employee to select a job that fits to his/her identity and reduces hopefully the number of applications the companies get without decreasing the overall quality. The focus of this work lies on corporate culture, its visibility in different processes and interactions and its importance in the employee attraction process. The interrelations between involved constructs like organizational identity, image and attraction are worked out and a framework of external positioning is elaborated. The two participants on the market: high potentials and management consulting companies are analyzed concerning their needs and expectations from each other as employee and employer. The main outcome of this work is three different possibilities for consultancies to position themselves: efficiency, transfer of experience and creativity. They lead to different communications strategies as they highlight different aspects of the work as a consultant. Methodologically the interesting and demanding issue of this work is the integration of organizational theory concerning organizational culture and marketing theory regarding branding into one model.

The method used is reflexive and interpretative as it takes primary and secondary data and the social constructions of the researcher into account and actively uses it to construct something new.

The empirical data is gathered by a written questionnaire and the sample was limited towards the biggest players in the consultancy industry namely A.T. Kearney, Booz Allen & Hamilton, McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group and Roland Berger Strategy Consultants.
1 Introduction

1.1 Two perspectives on employer branding

To make the issue of this work clear, I want to discuss it from the perspectives of the two participating parties: the employee and the employer.

Let me start with the perspective of the employer which will be the dominating one in this thesis:

The basic theory underlying this work or better explaining this work is the theory of the asymmetric distribution of information. The basic problem of this so called agency theory is, that the company is not able to specify in an employment contract, which return it will get from the employee. The literature calls this “performance risk” (Akerlof 1970, p. 488-500). It cannot be determined in advance, that the employee is creative, social competent, able to cooperate and motivated. The organisation has to decide without knowing the outcome and therefore it seeks to develop mechanisms to reduce uncertainty about the willingness to perform and other important traits of the future employee, to avoid an adverse selection.

Employer branding is one possibility to reduce uncertainty before a non fitting contract is closed. It can be described as the employers’ signalling of expectations on the one hand, but also as signalling of the offers the employer makes (Armbraüster 2006, p. 65). Taking the theory of the psychological contract the old contract between employer and employee is no longer adequate which assured loyalty against job security. Within the new contract model employees are provided with development and new skills through training in exchange they have to work with effort and show flexibility (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004, p. 9). In the face of negative perceptions of this employment reality, firms use employer branding to advertise the benefits they still offer including training, career opportunities, personal growth and development.

After I showed the relevance and impact of the issue of employer branding from an employers perspective, I will now switch to the employee’s side and show the chances employer branding offers for employees.

As Schneider shows “People are not randomly assigned to real organizations; people select themselves into and out of real organizations” (Schneider 1987, p.
This results in the big question: „Which parameters drive the decision of the employee to select her/him into the organisation?” Possible answers are: First of all the company has to be perceived. After that a certain profile has to be in the mind of the employee concerning this company including facts like organisational culture, organisational processes and work-ethos. Finally the perceptions must fit to the preferences of the future employee. For Alvesson the whole process of job selection is part of the ongoing process of identity building of the individual (Alvesson 2000, p. 134).

The question for this work is: How is the consulting branch presenting itself, which messages does it directly or indirectly send to the job market and are those messages (or “reason why’s”) appropriate in attracting the target group? If not, how can marketing and communicational means help to achieve a better match?

However this is not suggesting that a company can talk itself into a brand - or that it can just by means of marketing attract the desired people. The opinion underlying this work considers consistency to be very important for a long-term attractiveness of an employer. This means the image that a company or a branch disperses must be aligned with the culture and the organisational processes prevalent in the industry or company. Companies should not underestimate recruited employees, as they will leave again once they have realised that the reality is different from the communicated picture.

Summing up, consultancies as knowledge intensive service companies rely on an excellent base of human resources. It is important for them in terms of credibility, quality and reputation. This means the target group of consultancies are the best 20 percent of the students finishing their degrees at the top business schools of the country. The key to attract high potentials lies in the right combination of material and immaterial incentives:

One key incentive on the “immaterial side” is the image of the company, which is named “employer branding” in some articles (see figure 2.6/1). However attracting the talented people is just possible by offering an attractive overall picture of the company. Concerning the depth of the construct “image” and concerning the elements which lead to this attractive image the ideas are diverse. Ind writes: “Recruitment is a branding exercise, it is part of the management of the corporate brand” (Ind 1998, p. 323-329) and on the other hand de Chernatoy argues that “corporations need to pay more attention to their cultures, since these encompass
their staff’s values and assumptions which affect their behaviour and thus influences stakeholder perceptions” (de Chernatoy 1999, p. 763).

On behalf of the example of the consulting branch as an archetypical service industry, this research wants to analyze how the image – including material and immaterial parts of incentives- is constructed and if it leads to an external positioning of consultancies that attracts the desired potential employees. A special focus will lie on the role of corporate culture and its settlement in the positioning of a company in the framework of the employer attraction process. As companies have to be aware of their grown cultural values and have to involve the cultural fit into their decision for a target group and into their external communication.

1.2 Aims

1.2.1 Theoretical aims

After a thoroughly literature review the underlying understanding of employer branding will be explained and the theoretical model will be introduced. The interrelations between involved constructs like employer culture, organizational identity, image and attraction will be defined and explained. The theory distinguishes between the internal and the external positioning. In this work, the external positioning is made more concrete by visualizing and explaining the process in detail. Introducing and applying a model that clarifies the elements of external positioning as an employer is one of the key theoretical aims of this work.

1.2.2 Empirical aims

The two participants on the market - high potentials and management consulting companies - will be analysed and the designed framework of external positioning will be tried out from the perspective of the consultancy companies. This means the cultural, organisational and economical variables are made visible and they are translated into “reason why’s” that are communicated. The requirements for the desired employee who fits into the company by implicit and explicit criteria are made concrete. Finally high potentials and their preferences are taken into account and it is discovered if there is a match between the two parts.

In a next step suitable recommendations concerning marketing and especially the communication strategy can be deducted.
1.3 Research question

How can an industry that relies so much on skilled employees make sure to attract the best? In such a competitive market for talents, how can external positioning and the communication of organizational values make the right employees to apply at consultancies?

1.4 Limitations

In the analysis, this research focuses on the big five management consulting companies operating in Germany:

- A.T. Kearney
- Booz Allen & Hamilton
- McKinsey & Company
- Boston Consulting Group
- Roland Berger Strategy Consultants

As it is part of their day to day business to be innovators in strategic issues, it can be assumed that they have also taken into account the idea to market themselves to their most important resource. Due to their role as pacesetters they need the best people and have to take care for their image as an area of business which just recruits the best people. As these top players have the necessary resources it can be assumed that they have the greatest potential to invest in the activity called employer branding.

The consultancy branch in Germany is one of the most elaborated services markets in this area in Europe besides Great Britain (FEACO 2004) and shows with ongoing growth-rates up to 15 percent and a turnover of 14.7 million € in 2006 that it will be one of the growing areas of business in the coming years and that it can stand exemplarily for lower developed countries in this area of business (BDU e.V. 2007). The bare fact of geographical and cultural closeness of the researcher to the country of Germany and the connected knowledge of laws, habits, and cultural traits is another reason why this research is limited to the boarders of Germany.

The focus of this research in hands, if we look at the employee-side, lies on graduates of universities and especially on the so called high potentials. This is
limiting the target group of graduates of universities to the best 20 percent of each term. The target group was chosen due to a perceived lack of qualified persons by the market (Manager Magazin 2007) which is expressed by the ongoing discussion about the “war for talents”. Those highly qualified people are a shrinking pool and will form the next generation of leaders in the companies. They are assumed to be more critical, have more options, know about their market value and they want to check their options in many fields. They engage more in the planning of their career which makes them especially open for employer branding as the reputation and the image of the company are a major driver in their decision making process. As two third of the management positions are filled with graduates from business administration or economics, this research focuses on this pool of high potentials. In consultancies they form around 75 percent of the employees (Wirtschaftswoche 2007, p. 148).

1.5 Structure of the work

This thesis is divided into four parts and contains five chapters. In the first chapter the issue of this work is introduced, the research problem is explained and the aims are described. Furthermore the structure of the work is explained.

Chapter two and three form a unity as they create the base of the work. In chapter two the method is introduced. Chapter three consists of the theoretical framework. It starts with a definition of employer branding. After that the literature concerning employer branding, employer culture and personnel marketing will be discussed and the parts that contribute to the perception of a company as a desirable employer will be synthesized. A model will be developed which shows the connections and influences which lead to a successful external positioning.

In chapter four the empirical analysis will describe the cultural assumptions and organisational and functional processes of the consulting industry on one hand. Also the requirements of strategic consultancy companies concerning personnel will be discovered. On the other hand the employee side is taken into account and the preferences and expectancies of high potentials are summed up. Furthermore the explicit criteria and implicit assumptions, which motivate high potentials, are described. The results will help in searching for the right incentives – or “reason whys” - which have to be communicated in order to attract the high potentials to consultancies (Rynes & Barber 1990, p. 286-310).
In chapter five the two sides of the market are put together and suitable suggestions for employer branding and appropriate communication strategies are given.

2 Method

2.1 Approach

The approach that describes the access to this work best is an interpretative one like it is used in studies about organizational cultures (Smircich 1983, p. 342). Part of this is the pre-understanding that the researcher brings with her opinions, knowledge and assumptions which all influence the research and therefore are actively used, qualified, developed and integrated into the work. This method is called reflexive methodology according to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000, p. 112 - 137). The theory derives from two distinct areas: marketing and organisational theory for the issue is connecting the ideas of positioning and branding from the marketing area with the theories of organizational culture and identity construction of the organisational area.

The question this thesis raises is a descriptive one at the first hand. This means it attempts to describe a state that is found in the present world. To do that the first task of the researcher with this aim is, to scan the existing literature, if this phenomenon has been described by other authors in the recent time and if there are related questions and topics addressed by other authors which can make a contribution to the work in hands (Mattsson & Örtenblad 2008 p. 15). Important contributions are included in this work. If they have theoretical impact, they are to find in chapter three, the ones having more empirical character are included in chapter four.

To get an overview over the areas of consulting and consultancies (and the German translation “Unternehmensberatung”), the human resource marketing (in German called “Personalmarketing”) and over the preferences and mind maps of high-potentials the database EBSCO has been used and the mentioned keywords (cursive) have been typed in to find suitable articles. The journals high up on the internal selection list were the ones dealing with organizational behaviour, personnel development or personnel psychology, the Journal of Management consulting and Marketing Management journals.
Furthermore the diverse libraries of the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich were reviewed with mainly the same keywords to find suitable books.

The next step was to research on the websites of the selected consultancies to find out if they perhaps did own research in the same direction or if they could contribute to the description of the status quo with any published data.

Another useful source was the association fostering the interests of consultancies in Germany named “Bund Deutscher Unternehmensberater” which had collected useful data about the market of consultancies.

This work customizes and applies a theory about external positioning to the industry of consultancies and the idea to position that company as an employer of choice. Anchoring culture and the impact of internal positioning on the employer-attraction process are discussed.

2.2 Conduct of the empirical research

The empirical analysis mainly consists of secondary data which describes the two participants on the market by the variables, which were fixed in the external positioning model (see figure 2.6/1). The facts about different methods in this chapter are extracted from a paper published by the marketing department of the Ludwig-Maximilian University called “Einführung in die Wissenschaftstheorie und Techniken des wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens” (Institut für Marketing 2005, p. 32 -58).

The course of this empirical study consists of the following four phases:

Phase 1: Formulating and stating more precisely the research problem by

- describing the cultural assumptions and organisational and functional processes of the consulting industry as they form the organisational culture
- discovering the requirements of strategic consultancy companies concerning personnel. To understand the influential strategic and administrative requirements
- preferences and expectancies of high potentials are summed up. To discover overlaps and congruencies.
Phase 2: Planning and preparing the generation of the data

The operationalisation means the transfer of the theories into practically applicable questions. The directly observable variables should be assigned to theoretical terms.

In this research data is necessary about two different parties: the consultancies and the high potentials. As the angle of the analysis is from the consultancy perspective, it was decided to generate primary data from the consultancies and to show the expectancies of the high potentials by secondary data. For the generation of primary data the procedure is the following: the sample has to be determined, the method of data generation has to be fixed and the questionnaire has to be developed.

Sample: The sample can be distinguished into the basic target group which are in this case all management consultancies in Germany and the chosen sample which is a part of the basic target group. Concrete in this research the sample is limited to the big consultancies namely A.T. Kearney, Booz Allen & Hamilton, McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group and Roland Berger Strategy Consultants. The companies were contacted in the cities of Munich, Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt a. Main. The choice of that sample has been reasoned about earlier in this work at the limitations. The questionnaire was sent to 15 selected persons, responsible for human resource in the companies. Wherever applicable it was sent to several representatives in one company. The names and responsibilities were checked via internet and by telephone calls. At the end 12 persons have answered the questionnaire. As the research also consists of secondary data and the literature focuses clearly on the market leaders, the sample and the secondary literature “talk about the same” and are consistent.

Method of data generation: For this research in hands a standardized, written questionnaire was designed. This means the answer possibilities are fixed and this enables a better comparison of the answers. In-writing questioning has the advantage that there is no interviewer influence. Another advantage is that the persons asked have the possibility to think more deeply about their answers than in an interview where they have to react spontaneously. As the questionnaire was distributed online the costs of this method are low. The disadvantages are that one has no control who answers the questions and that there is no possibility to delete misunderstandings.
The questionnaire: The target is to persuade the people to answer the questions correct and truthfully. This motivation can just be transported through the questionnaire. The content and the size of the questionnaire therefore have to be carefully selected. The questioned persons should have some interest in the issue. The questionnaire should not be too long. That means as the questioned people have a huge workload, the first look into the questionnaire must give them the impression that this can be handled in maximum five minutes, otherwise many would not participate (see appendix).

Phase 3: Generation of data

The questionnaire was sent via internet. The e-mail contained some information about the target of the research and the offer to get the written report after completion. (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was sent out in English for several reasons. First of all the meaning should not be changed by translation. Second, the idea of this research is, to be done in other countries. To be able to compare one standardized language is very important.

Phase 4: Interpretation of the data

In the analysis chapter the results of the primary and secondary data are presented. The answers from the questionnaire are integrated.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Definition employer branding

“A successful employer branding strategy articulates a reason, why a potential employee should consider a particular employer” (Marmachev, no year, p. 59).

Founded on strategic marketing, employer branding focuses on the internal development and external positioning of the employer brand (Employer Branding 2007). The employer brand encompasses the companies’ value system, policies, organizational processes and behaviours towards the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the companies’ current and potential employees (Backhaus, K. / Tikoo 2004, p.69). In this research selected relations between elements mentioned in the definition are analyzed in depth: First of all the focus lies on the external positioning. Regarding some elementary parts like the organizational processes and the culture of the company, the internal positioning is necessarily in-
cluded. The second restriction is that this work focuses on the attraction of the potential employees, not on motivation or retention. But the importance of consistency is emphasized and every recruiting strategy is senseless if the communicated messages are not congruent with the reality in the company. This means that motivation and retention have to have the same goals and ethics to communicate a consistent picture to the world outside the company.

The following figure (see figure 3.1/1) is showing the delimitation of employer branding underlying this work and described above. Attraction is containing the preferences and expectations of the employees which are explicitly and in difference to some definitions (Employer Branding 2007) included in this work as an exclusion would mean to lock out one part of the job market (Porter 1980, p. 37). If you want to attract a target group, you have to gain some knowledge about the needs of that group and the company has to create its identity in respect to these needs otherwise it positions itself away from the target.

![Diagram showing delimitation of employer branding]

**figure 3.1/1: Delimitation of employer branding**
Figure 3.1/2 visualizes the different parts that influence and constitute employer branding as construct. It roughly consists of two parts, the internal and the external development.

![Diagram of employer branding constructs]

**Employer branding**
A successful employer branding strategy articulates a reason why a potential employee should consider a particular employer.

**Internal Development**

**Organizational culture**
behavioral elements: value system, policies => assumptions

**Organizational identity**
constructed among insiders
industry culture => selection and promotion

**External Positioning**

**Effective, true Image**
communication

**Attraction**

**Preferences of the employees**

**Effective, true Image**

**External Positioning**

**Preferences of the employees**

Internal development includes the organizational culture and the organizational identity. These are complex constructs which are reduced for the purpose of this work to the dimensions which can be perceived by outsiders as this is the perspective this work inhibits. In the case of organizational culture, those are the basic assumptions classified by Schein (Schein 1984, p. 72) as we will see in the next chapter.

Organizational Culture leads then to an organizational identity. Concerning Organizational identity, which is a construct among insiders, it is the “industry culture” which is visible for outsiders through processes, artefacts and configurations in socialized groups. Selection processes and promotions are important parts which will be analyzed in depth in this work.

Image is the construct, measuring the attractiveness of the employer in the eyes of the employee (Simon 1984, p. 324-345). “An image can be the basis for subjective decisions and preferences between competing brands” (Trommsdorff 2002,
The corporate image can be described as subjective perceptions of externals concerning the culture, the performance, social interactions and the success of a company (Scholz 1992, p. 398). It is a stereotypical simplification of an object.

The degree to which a potential employee feels attracted to the company is a conglomerate of assumptions, attitudes and images the employee has collected consciously or unconsciously. Rhynes and Barber classify attraction with three parameters: recruiting (attraction with arguments which target the values of the people), the change of incentives (or attributes of the job) and the innovation of a new pool of applicants (Rhynes & Barber 1990, p. 286-310). The two parts “attraction” and “image” form together the external positioning. External positioning is expressed in the informational politics the company is following in order to distribute a homogeneous picture of the firm.

3.2 Connecting employer branding and culture

The issue of the research is employer branding and the reader could ask if a brand is not too individual to be developed for a whole area of business. This is true if it comes to the last concretisation of a company in aesthetic means but looking at the kind of product and looking at the common requirements the companies have concerning future personnel, the aggregation of the companies is regarded to be appropriate and to make this research interesting for more than just one company.

Branding literature suggests that the importance of symbolic functions increases when functional differences are limited (Lievens & Highhouse 2003, p. 75-202).

Concerning the business area of management consulting, Luhmann and his “Sense-Dimensions” offer an interesting explanation: It is argued, that the roles that potential employees have, form the expectations to them and give some guidance of the appropriate behaviour. (Luhmann 1986 p. 172-192). If the role loses contour, for example because the tasks can not be clearly defined in advance, the common values of the organisation gain in importance (Unterreitmeier & Schwinghammer 2004, p. 6-8). Gorbach and Weiskopf talk in this connection of the “discipline of the being”. This means the organisation requires a certain character of the people it recruits, a certain way of interpreting the world (Gorbach & Weiskopf 1993, p. 171-194). One basic understanding is, that consulting companies are carriers and transmitters of management knowledge. Bessant and Rush
distinguish between two knowledge based roles for consultants: an intermediary one that supports clients’ acquisition of knowledge and technological developments; and a capability building one that supports clients’ adoption and implementation of changes (Bessant and Rush 1995, p. 78).

On the other hand organizational culture is important for applicants in making their job choice. Their beliefs about the companies’ culture affect their self-selection decisions and affect their post-entry performance (Backhaus, & Tikoo 2004, p. 508). The reasons why applicants choose a certain area of industry is explained by Keller (Keller 1993, p. 1-22). He distinguished benefits into “experiential” and “symbolic”, explaining that experiential (or functional) benefits relate to the product or service. On the other hand, symbolic benefits correspond to non-product related attributes and relate to underlying needs for social approval or personal expression and outwardly directed self-esteem.

Schein defines culture as “the sum of shared values, norms and attitudes which is embodied in the organizational actions, symbols and symbolic actions.” (Schein E. H. 1984, p. 72) The impact of strong company cultures on employees has been pointed out for example by Hofstede. In strong corporate cultures there are con-
sistent assumptions resulting in similar styles of behaviour, to which new staff is inducted and which out-live changes in senior management. This means culture is an important stabilizer and is forming the corporate identity. The shared assumptions and values engender greater motivation as the personnel feels proud and becomes committed and loyal (Hofstede, G. & Hofstede G. J. 2004, p. 85-93). The following figure shows, how Schein divided culture into the following three levels:

![The three layers of Culture](image)

The first level are visible artefacts; these are visible, unique expressions of an organisation’s brand and they have the purpose to differentiate between one another and lead to a greater recognition of the company by the stakeholder. Things like the building architecture, office designs, staffs dress style and logos fit to this point.

The next layer consists of values which are hard to measure validly. Values are often connected with ethics and moral behaviour as they determine the judgement of right and wrong. Personal values, attitudes and convictions form an idea of what is desirable behaviour (see assumptions in level three). In companies values
are often fixed in corporate philosophies or in the day to day acting of the employees.

The third level of culture is formed by the underlying assumptions, the learned and reinforced responses which became taken for granted assumptions.

Four of Scheins’ discovered basic assumptions are relevant for this research:

- the company’s relationship with its environment
- its view about establishing “truth” and decision making
- assumptions for what is right for the staff to do
- the way the staff should relate to others.

These assumptions will be worked out in the analysis of the consultancies and they will be reviewed of being capable of forming strong reason whys to attract the right employees. They are stable variables, they are observable and they are the unconscious results of existing values (Schein, E. H. 1984, p.72 et seq.).

3.3 Organizational identity, industry culture and employer branding

Concerning organizational identity, which is a construct among insiders and describes the perceptions of the members about their identity as an organization (Albert & Whetten 1985, p. 263-195), it is the “industry culture” which is visible for outsiders through processes, artefacts and configurations in socialized groups (Unterreitmeier & Schwinghammer 2004, p. 4).

Theories about organizational identity have had a significant influence on the concept of brand identity by emphasizing the relations between internal and external perceptions of who the organization is (Aaker 2003, p. 83-87). But the theory of organizational identity includes another assumption: individuals search for an organization’s identity and values to expand their individual identity (Alvesson, M. 2000, p. 717). This personal branding can also be applied to the employee level and it results in different roles the employee enacts (see point 4.1.1.4).

In this work the selection and promotion mechanisms, which are similar among all management consultancies, are the most obvious processes showing industry culture and therefore will be analysed.
3.3.1 Selection procedures

Procedures for personnel selection are based on an organizations’ intention to gain information about the behavioural and attitudinal characteristics of the candidates. As such they reflect the organizations’ assumptions regarding the personal requirements for and the nature of the business (Parsons & Pascale 2007, p. 52-66).

By making the selection procedures public, the organization also communicates the standards and requirements it has concerning the appropriate employee. In communicating the ways of personnel selection, the company or business branch can differentiate itself from others and it attracts a certain kind of employee who appreciates the way of selection how the company conducts is.

Franck and Pudack discovered another interesting effect: a self-selection process takes place among potential applicants, since a highly selective hiring process attracts and challenges highly qualified graduates in particular (Franck / Pudack 2000, p. 34).

Grey (Grey 1994, p. 479-497) has pointed out how career as a project of the self can constitute work discipline and define life according to the demands of the organization. He distinguishes between those employees who internalize the demand for enthusiasm so that it becomes part of their identity and those for whom the project of career motivates performance without any need for enthusiasm. He concludes that the selection procedure indicates that successful applicants are already constituted as certain sorts of subjects, whether actually or willing to present themselves as if they were. Here personnel selection has emerged as a definer of identity rather than merely a detector of aptitude and talent.

Also the choice of the selection tools can be a marketing criterion as it transports the modus operandi of the company. It signals the number of jobs available, the size of the company and its recruitment targets.
3.3.2 Promotion procedures

Personnel turnover is high in consulting companies; this is the result of two factors: many talented people just use the time in a management consulting company as a springboard and second the workload of a consultant is huge. To give incentives and reduce personnel turnover promotion procedures are a central element of human resource management.

3.4 External Positioning

![Diagram of External Positioning]

Figure 3.4/1: External Positioning

Figure 3.4/1 is the main connecting theoretical thread and shows the way through the following chapters. On the left side of the figure there are the variables which form the image of the industry. First of all the generic term and after the arrows come the concretisations. The variables listed are perceived from the outside and can be influenced by the company. They contain the cultural assumptions, the visible parts of industry culture, the organizational processes for selection and
promotion but also the job characteristics and the corporate design of a company. As explained above (see chapter 3.2), this work concentrates on the examination of the “industry variables”, the “product” variable is left out of the analysis as that is too company specific.

The concretisations of the variables form possible “reason whys”; that means reasons, why a potential employee could feel attracted towards the company. To decide which ones are the most effective, the right side of the figure has to be taken into account. That side takes into account the preferences of the other part of the market: The preferences and expectations of the desired employees. The desired characteristics of the future employment form a synthesis of the ideals of the two participants and lead to the most efficient way of communication for the companies to attract the desired employees. The reason whys are the basic messages that have to be transmitted to future employees to reach the target of acquisition of new employees and profile creation towards the environment.

4 Empirical results

Culture is defined as the sum of shared values, norms and attitudes which is embodied in the organizational actions, symbols and symbolic actions (Schein E. H. 1984, p. 73).

This work will discover three factors contributing to the culture of consultancies. First of all the assumptions, the basic layer of culture (see figure 3.2/1), are explored, secondly the organizational processes and thirdly the roles a consultant may overtake are analysed. Results from the questionnaire will help in discovering the most important roles from the companies’ point of view. The question behind this analysis is: which possibilities do companies have to make their culture experience able to outsiders?

I admit that the distinction between what is belonging to the theoretical chapter and what is part of the analysis was not always easy. Concerning chapter 4.1 which is dedicated to the analysis of the management consulting industry, this problem derives from the use of secondary literature to confirm and discuss the findings of the questionnaire with previous findings. Nevertheless I reviewed the chapter critically and only literature that described a case of a company or a cluster of companies very specifically was taken into the analysis part. The main sources which are used in the analysis are studies of Heuermann and Herrmann,
of Glückler and of Armbrüster, all of them empirical and in detail focussing on consultancies.

Regarding chapter 4.2 which represents and analyses the employee part, I stuck to the same rule. This means that theory explaining the behaviour, motivation or thinking of students in a broader sense is presented in the theory chapter and only the findings of empirical studies, when students have been asked about their preferences concerning future employment were integrated in the analysis part. The main sources used in this context are a study done by TNS Infratest, published on the website of employer branding (Employer Branding 2006), a study done by Herrmann, Kraneis and Rennhak and one study of Teufer.

4.1 The management consulting industry

4.1.1 Assumptions

In the theoretical part (see point 3.2) I worked out that four of Schein’s basic assumptions are relevant to examine for this work:

- the company’s relationship with its environment
- its view about establishing “truth” and decision making
- assumptions for what is right for the staff to do
- the way the staff should relate to others.

First I want to shed light on a general distinction between the four: Assumptions and ethics are closely connected and in this research the part of ethics which is directed to the inside of the company corresponds with assumptions. Ethics to the inside has different purposes: at first, ethics solves as a deeper reason for the rules and structures existing in the company. The first two distinctions of assumptions have these aims.

The second purpose of ethics is to give direction and create freedom for the individual behaviour of the employees. Concerning rules about the fair behaviour towards colleges, love in the office and other inter-individual interactions. This understanding of ethics underlies the points three and four in the following section.

This means there are some overlaps between the four dimensions in several ways. Issues that are crucial for that business branch appear in more than one of the as-
sumptions (for example the relation and treatment of knowledge). Second, the last assumption: “the way the staff should relate to other” is substantiating the relation between the consultant and his/her client, which was also – but in a more ethically fundamentalist way – part of the first assumption.

The four assumptions will now be discussed more in depth.

4.1.1.1 The companies’ relationship with its environment

The environment consists of all stakeholders which are not in the company. The relevant external parties are: the public (politics, press), clients, competitors, future employees and investors (bank). In the following section the stakeholders are distinguished and the most influential factors are described, knowing that the separation is not clear-cut and that the single factors influence not just one stakeholder group.

The public

Talking about the role of consultancies in public is closely connected with the term reputation. Consulting companies are knowledge distributors and their services are requested because the companies have an elite status which means they have the reputation to be innovative and sophisticated concerning the use of their knowledge.

The relationship management with the public is applying all instruments of public relations to communicate the expert status which is decisive to build trust and reputation. This includes the writing of articles and books and the presence in discussions concerning issues where the company wants to show competence in (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 109).
But it goes far beyond this, as the companies always have to offer “state-of-the-art” products. The gathering of new information and new instruments is decisive and therefore contributes to a special culture of knowledge accumulation. In the questionnaire the companies were asked how they gain up-to-date-knowledge and in the following a summary of their answers will be presented (see figure 4.1.1.1/1): The spent time and effort is very high in all companies and gets visible in many ways, for example: cooperation with universities, mixed teams with experts from other companies, commissions to external companies to do research reports, taking over companies with special knowledge and creating own methods in competence groups or per incident.

The usage of innovative own instruments is communicated to signal the advantages of the company in knowledge properties (Grillenberger 1996, p. 16). The aura of competence is decisive and is kept up at any cost; this means the knowledge existing among the consultants is transferred to other colleagues because of political or strategical concerns about the reputation of the company as a whole. But the relationship with the public is also dependent on successful projects and a general code of conduct or ethics. Discretion is one of the most important attributes. The information gained during a consulting project has to be used in a re-
sensitive manner. The arbitrage of knowledge is one of the key concepts of consultancies but it has to be capitalized in a sensitive manner to not arise displeasure. The integrity of the consultancy has to be guaranteed (Glückler 2004, p.264).

**Clients**

Consulting companies are carriers and transmitters of management knowledge. Relating to Bessant and Rush (Bessant and Rush 1995, p. 78) I asked the consultants if they have to perform mainly the role of an intermediary that supports clients’ acquisition of knowledge or if their role is more capability building and to be a supporter to foster clients’ adoption and implementation of changes.

The answers of the consultants were quite balanced, five emphasized the support, seven answered, the capability-building and implementation are more frequently demanded from customer side. But being asked about the development in the future nine answered that the capability building task will become dominant.

The consultancy gains 70% of its business from follow-up projects of existing clients. This means the single client has great power and to satisfy him, consultants who were criticised by the customer are taken from the project and have to face disadvantages concerning their career (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 88). The rule to satisfy the client at any cost has been confirmed by all twelve answers in the questionnaire.

Because of the pyramid structure of the consultancies (meaning many young analysts and few partners; see figure 4.1.1.2/1), the culture is young and it’s goal is to be quick and persistent, which is sometimes hard to keep in balance. The clients sometimes get the impression, that after the acquisition phase conducted by seniors; the youngsters take over the implementation. This is not always appreciated as customers have the impression the young consultants lack experience. (Glückler 2004, p. 189) In the questionnaire the consultancies admit to face this dilemma seldom (nine) or even often (three) which supports the existence of this problem.

It is central for the company to create a consistent picture of the services it delivers. That is the reasons why principles exist, that define all possible interactions with the client, for example principles of communication, methodological issues, rules about analytical tools and rules how to present the results.
Competitors

The competition between the consulting companies should be fair. Wooing away employees from other consultancies, unserious advertising or unserious pricing policies are not appreciated (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 95).

Future employees

This issue is part of an own chapter in the research in hands (see 4.2.2).

Investors

All consultancies I have looked at are financed by the deposits of its partners. The only company in the research set - Booz, Allen Hamilton – used to be a listed company. It was publicly financed by emitting shares, but bought them back by its partners in 1976 (Booz Allen Hamilton 2007). The admission of new partners or the enhancements of the deposits of existing partners are the most common strategies to increase liquidity. If the investors are insiders, a separate strategy is not necessary as these persons have insight into the business anyway. External investors like banks are interested in a stable backlog of orders - a problem for consultancies as they have rather short turnover cycles. In other respects this interest group also evaluates the trustworthiness expressed in reputation and trust (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 74).

4.1.1.2 Its’ view about establishing “truth” and decision making

The individual willingness to perform and the engagement are essential as the high workload is fixed and can only be managed by employees who are stimulated and disciplined by high requirements. The tasks and the project based procedures require autonomous performers who can act without an order. The hierarchical structures are low (at least officially) and the relationship between the colleagues is partnership to allow knowledge to be transfused. An experienced consultant from a higher level of hierarchy coordinates the consultancy project; the other consultants have a certain freedom in deciding about the operative issues (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 101).
Management by objectives is an appropriate mechanism to steer the project work indirectly. This measure is used by all asked consultancies. Objectives concerning sales or growth are given to employees who are responsible for sales and objectives. Objectives concerning the presentation of results in a given time-frame are given to employees responsible for production. With the allocation of responsibilities the decision-making process can be controlled very efficiently (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 398).

Averagely once a year (evaluated from the questionnaire) appraisals give the consultant a clear feedback how his work is valuated. The consultant gets informations concerning her/his profession, the degree of capacity coverage, the acceptance among clients, the ability to work in a team, ability to work under stress, the number of contributions to the knowledge network and the qualification to take the next career-step. The tolerated level of the evaluated facts also depends on the company’s economic situation. This means in times with a lot of projects the requirements are lower, in times with a low workload they are harsher (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 398).
4.1.1.3 Assumptions for what is right for the staff to do

An extraordinary work ethic and the strong commitment to an achievement culture exist in all questioned consultancies. There is a dedication to a qualified solution and the consultant has to feel responsible for the client and his problem. The consultant’s responsibility results in the involvement in the decision-finding process of the client. The final decision is up to the client but by advising the consultant has a recognizable influence.

The idea of the consultancies is creating a feeling of entrepreneurship among the employees to use the energies which result from this feeling of responsiveness and belonging (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 87). But this idea has not completely reached the responsible persons. Just six of them thought about this issue.

Being asked about the measures the companies undertake to create this feeling of entrepreneurship, the informational side like giving information about projects and decisions is emphasized (six answers). The financial solution via bonus is just practiced by one company. One critical thing about the payment of bonuses depending on the business results could be the dependence on reputation of the company as a whole. This construct is influenced by various environmental factors (scandals, competitors, economical situation of existing clients) which can not be influenced by the single individual and it seems unfair to let the employee participate on this risk.

Knowledge management is also a decisive factor and the staff is expected to enable colleagues to participate from their knowledge and to distribute the knowledge also to the public to enhance reputation (see first assumption in chapter 4.1.1.1).

The easy access to in-house specialists is common. The hierarchies are knowledge-permeable and an access to knowledge management systems is provided for every employee. The knowledge strategy of the big consultancies focuses on codified knowledge. This is better for consultancies with a high personnel turnover as the company is carrier of the knowledge. The transfer of knowledge is regulated via knowledge databases. Smaller consultancies which intend a lower turnover follow a personalized knowledge strategy which emphasizes the role of the employees as experts (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 126).
One can only make career in the consultancy by acquiring projects. The clear focus on sales, from the senior consultant onwards, is characteristically for this industry. The consultant has to be an excellent sales person; it would be best to rouse the need at the client and to be convincing (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 128f.).

4.1.1.4 The way the staff should relate to others

Philosophies of consulting are kind of a world view and take up the experiences collected in a long time. They consist of normative attitudes about consulting, their purposes and principles. They unfold motivation, coordination and orientation for the employees. The orientation at philosophies reduces the complexity of task performance and gives guideline to avoid conflicts (see chapter 3.2; the increase of the symbolic functions). Concerning the client, the purpose of these principles is also to generate a “trust in advance” (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 60).

Competency, confidentiality, integrity, responsibility and neutrality/objectivity are the “big five” attributes which describe the role and the behaviour of a consultant (AMCF 2007, p.2).

The consultant faces a continuous tension between involvement into the project and loosing independence. His obligation to objectivity and neutrality is the guiding line for him not to get influenced by group interests.

The role of the consultant in a project keeps changing. The implementation of the ready-to-implement-solutions in a participative manner or even a kind of crisis management, which means overtaking the whole business of a client for a limited time, has been demanded more and more. Responsibility, competency and confidentiality are essential to fulfil such a requesting task (see chapter 4.1.1.1.: clients).
Figure 4.1.1.4/1 shows the different roles a consultant can take over during the consulting process. It depicts the distribution of influence between the two parties in dependence of the role the consultant obtains.

As described in the text above, crisis manager is the most powerful position of the consultant. He has a high share in the decision process, he carries responsibility for the implementation and as he has high decision power and if the problem is urgent, there is a low level of team involvement. In the questionnaire this role was ranked at position two, which is quite high, but as the sample of consultancies are the “big players”, their excellent reputation can explain a good deal of this position to be the “fire-brigade”.

The expert role is the stereo typical role of consultants: on the basis of his analysis he works out several solutions, after the consulting project is finished, the client decides which of the solutions he wants to implement. This is a typical top-down process, as the employees on the client-side are not involved in the solution finding process. The acceptance of the solution depends on the degree to which the authority of the consultant is accepted or if the solution is congruent with the
ideas the client had before the project started. The questioned consultants ranked this role still at number one.

The role of the promoter is more supportive. This means the aim of the consulting project and the single steps to solve the problem are dictated by the client. The consultant works actively together with the team to solve the problem and makes some suggestions about the content of the problem or the procedures. The problem for the consultant in this role is the dependence on a leader who supports him; otherwise he might not be able to bring in his expert knowledge. This role was the at least probable one for the asked consultants and was placed at number four in frequency to be acted out.

The process consultant is a specialist of processes to solve problems. He initiates the process, defines the structure and guides the implementation. The solution is worked out by the client; the consultant just moderates and gives help (Althaus 1994, p. 68 et seq.). This role was evaluated to be the third important role, which can be interpreted as a shift from the traditional top-down relation between consultant and client to a bottom-up approach, where the solution is worked out from the inside of the clients company.

The heterogeneous tasks require some more specific competencies: cognitive competence, which means to give reasons for the solutions proposed and emancipative competence to inhibit a clearly profiled position for arguing. Both require task related knowledge and experience and require sensitivity for the problematic developments in this case (Glückler 2004, p. 201).

On the other hand, being a professional consultant requires having a high level of social control. The boarder to be frustrated has to be high among consultants, as just because the consultant is convinced about the solution, the costumer might be too inflexible or political hindrances make this solution impossible to be implemented. The consultant has to cope with these problems in a professional way; this also requires a certain level of neutrality (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 389).
4.1.2 Organizational processes

The intangible nature and initial quality uncertainty of consultancy services are the characteristics of the branch which lead to certain requirements in the establishment of the business. Concerning the recruiting of employees who are the representatives of the company, consultants must convey their sincerity and output quality (Armbrüster 2006, p. 153).

4.1.2.1 Selection processes

To describe the dynamics which are prevalent in the consultancy branch, the organizational selection process will be analysed. Furthermore the questionnaire will be used to get some information about reality.

![The application-crater in consultancies](image)

figure 4.1.2.1/1: The application-crater in consultancies (Armbrüster 2006, p. 169).

The figure above shows the selection process. On the right side there are the single steps in the selection procedure. It also gives an impression about the extent of the selection by underlying the single steps with average numbers.

Management consultancies select the graduates by a special tool: the case study interview – an interview in which an abbreviated form of a business case study is posed to the candidate. The fact that the management consulting sector relies on
this tool and for example has not adopted the widespread assessment centre method (see Appendix 1: just one company uses an assessment centre, interviews are common among all). It suggests that there is a specific way of thinking within this industry regarding the capabilities a future consultant must have and regarding the way these talents can be found. This means the expected solutions of the cases seem to enable the recruiter to draw conclusions about the congruence of reality construction between the candidate and the people already working in the company.

**Question: What do you assess in the case studies?**

![Figure 4.1.2.1/2: What do you assess?](image)

The cases are constructed in a way that the information that has to be processed is condensed into units so the candidate can discuss the case with the interviewer in not more than half an hour, since candidates have to undergo two to nine case study interviews varying from company to company. The cases present information that has to be transformed into quantitative analyses. The candidate is expected to make assumptions in order to have a basis for calculations. The interviewer mainly wants to assess the candidates’ analytical skills, the ambition, and the ability to argue ones position (see figure 4.1.2/2). One interesting finding is to see the “Willingness to learn” ranked so low, in my opinion this shows the nor-
mative character of the branch and it is incongruent with the claim made by this business to be a knowledge creator and distributor.

There is yet another difference between management consulting and other sectors in the context of personnel selection. In recruitment and examination procedures many large organizations rely on trained members of a human resource department. The management consulting sector—by contrast—relies on its own consultants (ten answers), those consultants responsible for personnel selection must be considered laypersons in this respect. This is another proof for the fact, that underlying assumptions and the industry- or company culture (see chapter 3.2.) are among the main selection criteria for future employees.

Since the quality of consultancy services is difficult to determine, management consultancies need to signal the quality of their services by substitutive means. The selection procedure itself is a signal of quality, too. As a tool that is only used in management consulting, the case study serves as a signifier of otherness and analytical skills. The selection procedure is associated with elitism and symbolizes special business training and competence. Turning business questions into calculation processes symbolizes rationality in the sense of data driven objectivity and presents the solution as scientific, apolitical and trustworthy.

The self-selection process discovered by Franck and Pudack (Franck / Pudack 2000, p. 34) and the “project of the self” explained by Grey (Grey 1994, p. 479-497) (see chapter 3.3.1) is exactly what can be observed here among potential applicants, since a highly selective hiring process attracts and challenges highly qualified graduates in particular. It is possible, that the leading consulting companies hire candidates with additional social and communicative skills. However this is due to the signalling effect and self-selection and less because of a systematic outcome of the selection procedure.
The consultancies were asked to rank a list of criteria their future employees should have after their perceived importance. This gives an impression about the influence of the single factors for the employee’s decision. The following list shows the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>important</th>
<th>low important</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>Average*</th>
<th>rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economical apprenticeship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business administration studies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation at educational measures</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having experienced similar issues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem specific knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehensive communication</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capacity to assert oneself</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice in negotiating</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal qualifications</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creativity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-discipline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>team-oriented</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quick grasp</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extrovert communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global associative thinking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analytical thinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1= very important; 2= important; 3= low importance; 4= not important

By summarizing this diagram, it is obvious that the consultant are selected by person-related requirements concerning information processing (quick grasp) and information gathering on the one hand, but on the other hand by the behaviour of the person like integrity and self-discipline. Experience is of course highly evaluated but all in all the professional criteria like problem specific knowledge (also analytical thinking as connected personal trait) and communicative skills like being able to articulate one’s ideas rank on the third place, followed by experiential knowledge.
4.1.2.2 Promotion procedures or the „up or out policy“

In a market characterized by personal trust, networks and word-of-mouth effects, mistaken promotions and inadequate senior consultants may quickly make clients to change provider (Glückler 2004, p. 110). This issue is not covered in the questionnaire as there is nothing new to discover about up-or-out tournaments and it is not expected to get truthful answers about the rat race phenomenon as realistic answers would lower employees’ loyalty and public reputation.

It is the consulting companies’ strategy to generate internal lists of those who are to be promoted and decide who may be promoted first. If consultants miss the two or three time slots for promotion in one cohort, they will be asked to leave. This is due to the fact that relative performance is easier to measure than absolute performance (Armbrüster 2006, p.185). From a signalling viewpoint it must be added that the up-or-out tournament itself is an important signal of consulting quality and size of the company as only the big companies can afford to do it that way. The retained consultants, so the environment assumes, are the elite’s elite (Armbrüster 2006, p.188). In addition a self selection mechanism takes place and those who do not think to have a chance in the up-or-out competition will soon seek employment in other companies. The signalling mechanism works because only the top consulting companies can afford this tournament. Lower status consulting companies do not have such an ample supply of applicants.

The difficulties in measuring absolute performance result in the rat race phenomenon (Akerlof 1976, p. 599-617). Management consultants often work eighty hours a week or more, which means they stay at work far in the night, many nights a week. The extra output of the long hours might be low, but since performance output is hard to measure, input in the form of time represents a proxy performance indicator that consultants can influence. The incentive to engage in a rat race is particularly high at the beginning of a career, because this is the time of greatest uncertainty about the performance. The more time a consultant works in the company, the more certainty his environment gains about his/her output (Armbrüster 2006, p. 192). This leads to the conclusion that one of the central mechanisms of rat races is to assess the performance willingness and the ambition of the hired people.
4.1.3 Characteristics of the job

Consultants often frame ambiguous information in new terms and theories and thus develop and sharpen an interpretive consciousness within the client company. They focus on tasks which are different from clients’ routines and they have developed methods and tools for analyses that rarely occur in individual client companies but can be used across client industries and regions. (Glückler 2004, p.253) To have a constant look at new technologies and innovation is part of the job and is a condition which enables innovative solutions. This issue is not covered in the questionnaire as the basics are proven and can easily be extracted from secondary literature. The hidden problems are difficult to be extracted with a questionnaire either as social desirability is a strong mechanism of distortion. Turner (Turner 1982, p. 120-129) was probably the first to list the various functions of consulting services using the following eight task categories:

- Providing information
- Solving a clients problem
- Making a diagnosis, which may necessitate redefinitions of the problem
- Making recommendations based on the diagnosis
- Assisting with the implementation of the recommended actions
- Building a consensus and commitment around the corrective actions
- Facilitating client learning
- Permanently improving organizational effectiveness.

One more is added by the author:

- Serving as unbiased, external third party to validate a concept or argument

The tasks are interesting and requesting and every project is new. There is a low level of division of labour which means the consultant is trained to look at the problem in its entirety. This is one important reason for the extremely steep learning curve. The payment is extraordinary good: entrance-salary for an analyst is between 50.000 and 85.000 Euros; average income for a partner 250.000 Euros (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 99). These are the motivators to apply for a job at a consultancy.
Work-Life balance is getting more important. The company has to show real alternatives besides temporary solutions like sabbaticals or temporary time-outs.

As consulting companies are searching people with an over-average performance-motivation, it is necessary to communicate also the shadow sides of this job. These are in particular:

- Up-or-out / Grow-or-go principles
- The pyramid of earnings is at the top very small, this means high income possibilities are used as motivations for all employees, they can just be reached by very few (one of thirty analysts who start at a consultancy becomes a partner) (Heuermann & Herrmann 2003, p. 100).
- There is no workplace-guarantee at any time due to two reasons: first of all consultancies have to be flexible, innovative and always try out new areas of business but not all of them are efficient. If an area of business is closed down, the people who have worked in this area are often set free.
- The second reason why even experienced consultants have to leave the company is partly because of low productivity reasons but partly because of their personnel costs. The employee financing model makes it necessary for a senior consultant to have 10 to 14 employees that cover his personnel costs by their higher coverage. As such a growth rate is not realistic even in normal times; people will be set free (Biech 1999, p.67).

These facts are not made public as this would weaken the loyalty of the employees from the very beginning on.

4.1.4 Product

The dimension of product - here product are the components of the service which are closely connected with the company - will not be treated in the frame of this work as these are individual characteristic of the companies. The factors which can be discussed concerning product like the appearance of the company and the logo are not decisive in helping a company attracting the desired personnel. The size of the analysed organisations is due to the selection of companies similar as they are all big companies with more than 5000 employees. As communication is also part of the “product”, this work gives helpful advices to communicate in a target-group-suited way in the conclusion part.
4.2 The perspective of the high potentials

Keller’s theory explaining why applicants choose a certain area of industry (see chapter 3.2) and his distinction between “experiential” and “symbolic” benefits helps to make this employer-employee relationship more clear. “Experiential” issues in this context are the personnel political issues like salary, the content of the work, selection and promotion processes. Symbolic benefit is the need for social approval and outwardly directed self esteem by working for a certain company, which has a highly estimated image. Here the image of the company is influenced by the image of a whole area of business. Discovering the drivers of applicants’ choice is decisive as this analysis delivers important information about the motivational structures of the target group.

Taking these intentions of social approval into account it is not surprising, that business areas with a high image are highly attractive: science and research and consultancies are the preferred employers for high potentials. 63% of the polled students (they asked 2,100 students who have received scholarships about their demands; further details about that study on the following page) answered that research is their favourite industry, 45% would prefer to work for a consultancy.

Some companies exceed as preferred employer: McKinsey & Company, BMW and Bosch are the most wanted employers in Germany concerning the study of TNS Infratest (Employer Branding 2006, p. 8). To support the thesis that these companies are so attractive because of their reputation, the study “Best Brands 2006” which explores the brand value of several companies lists these companies among the first ten in the category “strongest company brand” (Serviceplan Gruppe, GfK Marktforschung, SevenOne Media, WirtschaftsWoche, Markenverband und GWP media-marketing 2006, p. 17). But just 36% of the graduates named a concrete company as their most attractive employer (Employer Branding 2006, p. 9). This finding shows that there is just a medium connection between the own profiles of demand and a certain company and it opens up a lot of possibilities for the companies to position themselves as attractive employers.

The attractiveness of certain positions or departments is also interesting. The most attractive positions are: research and development, assistance of the executive manager or internal consultancy. Besides social approval the most decisive factor among the symbolic benefits are the assumptions about the organizational
culture, as they affect self-selection decisions and have an influence on future motivation and satisfaction (see chapter 3.2). If the assumptions made by the future employee have been right, this would lead to consistent behaviour and would shape the context of credibility and stability. If an employer is attractive in the experiential context, depends on the congruence of the ideal profile the employer is communicating and the perceived profile of the candidate.

In this context it is primarily important to know the expectancies of the high potentials concerning an ideal employer. A study which was conducted in 2006 by TNS Infratest and the German newspaper “Die Zeit” found out the key drivers after which high potentials choose their employer. They asked 2.100 students who have received scholarships about their demands, and the ranking of these demands. It turned out that the high potentials are less interested in security than in responsibilities and in a task, where they can actively apply their knowledge and create something on their own. The most important requirement of students after this study was a positive working climate (90% said this is a very important criteria). With a little distance the next was “challenging tasks”, “support and promotion”, “further education” and “good possibilities to develop”. Concerning the content of the work, a high level of responsibility is important. The work in project teams is interesting and enriching for them. All of these are requirements that concern the personal working situation. Also very important was the more general perspective of the company as being equipped for the future (stability) (Employer Branding 2006, p. 10-18).

The salary has a special function for the selection as it can not be compensated by other factors. High potentials have a minimum expectation of their salary. Other monetary compensations like bonuses or stock options are taken into account. In the eyes of the employer it is a sign for the relative importance of the job and the level of the salary signals status and prestige. In close connection with the salary are working hours. The acceptance of long working hours can be compensated by a higher salary. This study explores also an important relation between the salary and the image of the company and concludes that a less positive employer image can be partly compensated by a politic of flexible wages (Wiltinger 1997, p. 55-79).

The organizational climate is defined by Rosenstiel as “the quality of social relationships in an organization” (Teufer 1999, p. 21). This means the climate is per-
ceived and formed by all employees not by the single individual. This makes it difficult for the manager to influence it. Another interesting factor is introduced by Teufer who sums up the fit with the colleagues and the satisfaction with the selection process with the phrase: “feel-good factor”. The applicant judges the whole selection process, his positive or negative feelings during the process, the potential new colleges, the amount of information he got during the selection process. This factor is formed by the experiences of the single person and was highly evaluated among the polled students (Teufer 1999, p. 68).

Ten year ago the branch was a selection criterion for applicants - which is no longer true. Candidates do not focus on certain industry branches anymore. This means that the overall competition to win the best employees has become even fierce.

To sum up, over time the most important parameters for high potentials do not differ very much which is shown by a meta-analysis of ten studies about high-potentials (Herrmann / Kraneis / Rennhak 2005, p. 66-82). An interesting and miscellaneous task, responsibility, high salary, the possibility to learn and develop and corresponding career options were the most named factors in the surveys. The big difference to “normal” graduates is that security is not important and that the organizational climate is very important. Decisive to get into the relevant decision set of high potentials is popularity and a positive image of the company.

4.3 Desired characteristics of the future employment

This is the conclusion of the analysis of the two market participants.

As the focus of interest of the applicants lies more on a challenging task, the possibility to develop and gain knowledge, an attractive salary and creative freedom, those are the factors which have to be emphasized to signal quality and to get people with a high willingness to perform.

Some images of the consulting business which were en vogue some time ago are no longer decisive for the employees: a tough-guys image, the elbow-mentality, the image of the distanced man in black suit knowing everything and having no relation to work-life balance issues to name a few.
But the future consultants will need many more skills – technological literacy and comfort with extensive travel being just two of the more obvious ones. At the same time most likely people who are looking for a more balanced lifestyle may be put off by the consulting industry’s reputation for long hours.

The result will be a tension between the corporate needs of consulting firms and increased individualism among those people they are seeking to recruit.

The desired employee of the future will be less interested in the conventional rewards of consulting as he knows about the negative sides like human costs of the long hours, high stress levels and constant travelling.

To attract good people, the consultancy business has to ensure to be an intellectually challenging profession, one where people can have breakthrough ideas and can make significant contributions. Strategy consulting has an advantage here as it gives its people much greater scope to be creative.

The educational level in consultancies is relatively high and the people need skills in interpersonal communications and also need a talent to discover, what the client really wants or needs (often called social empathy).

Another fact concerning the communication we will discuss in the next chapter is the fact, that the companies ad features to their requirement-profiles not because of their needs or because the employee has to fulfil them all, but to transport a certain image of the company (Conbäck 1999, p. 122).

Nevertheless the criteria found in the job advertisements are somehow the same but as a practitioner says: „Those are just the criteria on the paper. If you take a look at the people who conduct the selection procedures and you look at different consulting companies you will discover big differences, about the things discussed and the persons actually searched for……there are candidates which are so good, that every consultancy wants to have them. There is nothing much to say about it, these people are incredibly grown up and balanced, they are analytically gifted, communicative, they have everything and they fit everywhere. Within the next group of employees it depends much more on the individual fit between the person and the company, to which company does the person fit concerning the culture? The formal criteria are all met but one has to look what the single individual searches for his/her life. Which criteria are leading him to decisions? Some
people are deciding after brand or power or potential in the future or they look what they need in their curriculum to be successful” (Herold F. 2007).

5 Marketing and Communication for strategic Consultancy companies

5.1 Marketing activities in consultancies

Marketing has many tasks, here I want to emphasize the task to form, implement and coordinate activities directed to sell products and also the construction of an image of the brand. Typical for consulting companies is the spread of marketing as every marketing action reaches several of the stakeholders. A presence at a Job-fair for example reaches future employees as well as prospective and existing clients as there are many companies at such a fair and some students might get job offers from other companies that are or will be clients of the consultancy.

Particularly the contact with prospect employees is an on-purpose-side-effect.

Armbrüster has explored and identified the marketing tools of consulting firms and related them to firm size, consulting segment and firm growth (Armbrüster 2006, p. 220). In general the marketing activities can be differentiated into two groups:

- activities to retain current employees (=> connectedness to promote interactivity, trust and word of mouth) and
- activities to attract new ones (=> public visibility to gain reputation)

In the following I will classify some of the common marketing tools due to their potential to enhance visibility or to create interactivity.

Publication based marketing significantly influences public reputation and visibility through a large number of potential readers and public availability but it is low on interactivity since the reader is unknown to the consulting company.

Event based marketing is high on both dimensions as the participants at presentations or workshops are known and the announcement of these events and a potential media coverage support public visibility.
Finally online marketing is low on both dimensions since the interactivity of most consulting companies’ websites are very limited and the effect of online marketing on public reputation is quite low.

Armbrüster also discovered in his study clusters of companies with a similar usage of marketing. He described the following groups:

- Cluster A is called the “direct marketers” and the companies grouped in this cluster mainly use direct marketing measures. They have an average use of event based tools and a low reliance on online and publication based marketing.

- The second cluster B is called the “marketing refusers” as they do not use any marketing instrument except online marketing in form of a web presence.

- Cluster C is called the “marketing champions” and the companies in this cluster apply mainly online marketing and event-based marketing and as they involve the two dimensions connectedness and reputation it is expected that they profit the most of marketing activities.

- The last cluster D is the “publicists” as they make above average use of publications but employ no other tools.

A central result in this context is that large and medium-sized consulting companies are mostly in the cluster of “publicists” this indicates the importance of public visibility as a central factor of the company’s identity. Retaining from marketing belongs to the professional ethos of many consultants, especially when they believe that their service performance speaks for itself.

Only accounting firms and IT consultancies also advertise in business magazines and at airports in terms of consulting quality. Strategy consultancies do not do that. Their advertisements are directed at personnel recruitment and their posters at airports and in business magazines call for applications, even though they were hiring nobody then.

This is due to the reason, that graduates form just one of the target groups for these advertisements. The other target group are client executives, who are supported in their belief that the strategy consulting company accepts only the very
top graduates. And the advertisements seek to create the impression that the order books of the strategy consultancy are full (Armbrüster 2006 p. 127).

It seems like the companies themselves are not happy with the employee-company relationship as it is right now. So in fact many companies try to discover alternatives like congresses, fairs, image ads, high school contacts, or recommendations from employees.

5.2 Communication

How is the communication of the consultancies to future employees conducted right now? I want to present two statements from renowned consultancies to give an impression about the communication of expectancies so far:

- BCG:

  “We request stand out degrees and practical experience but your personality traits are equally important. The best education is useless without the right attitude, without curiosity, and without a sense for hidden opportunities. Personality is requested: openness for adventures, strive and commitment. The personalities should be fair and open-minded and they should respect the performance of others. No elbow-mentality or traps, no understatement and no overexcitement. Good people who know what they can bring about, who appreciate the atmosphere to develop together with other good people solutions, which did not exist before” (The Boston Consulting Group 2007, p. 1).

- McKinsey:

  "We don’t need people who make us just bigger; we take people who make us better! ……creative individualists able to perform in a team, interested in many subjects, able to dedicate themselves to a task, who have fun in questioning the things already reached who want to work as long at a task until it cannot be performed in a better way (Wilson 2006, p. 2).

As it is getting clear from the two statements, some attributes (concerning the future employee) are requested by every consulting company, unimportant how big the company is or which strategic focus it has. These traits are not suitable to differentiate the companies and the most important ones are: willingness to perform, obeying the rules and the corporate identity, discretion, competency, confi-
dentaility, integrity, neutrality, stimulation by high requirements, autonomous performer.

5.2.1 Positioning

Depending on the positioning of the employer a company has to signal different expectations to the future employee. The purpose of communication is that the desired employee selects himself into the company. This happens if the preferences of the two participants meet, when the organizational procedures of the companies are known and accepted and if the general work ethos is congruent. In the following chapter the three possibilities to position the company are described and the appropriate communication of preferences, of the connected job attributes and of underlying values / work ethos is deducted (see figure 5.2.1/1).

### Possible Positioning for Consultancies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Transfer of experience</th>
<th>Creativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Marketing to employees</em></td>
<td>Standard- Knowledge distributed in projects</td>
<td>Methodological basis applications</td>
<td>“best practice”, research, new solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stile of work</em></td>
<td>Emphasis of method. Models; hierarchical controll</td>
<td>Half-autonomous group-work</td>
<td>Artist-like freedom, avoid standards and method-modelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the information we got from the employers and employees I worked out three different possibilities for consultancies to position themselves: efficiency, transfer of experience or creativity. Similar to the two extreme-positions of companies producing goods (they can focus either on price-leadership or on quality), creativity in this context means quality, and efficiency means cost-leadership.
The efficiency-strategy focuses on the process, the consultant has the role of a process-consultant or promoter and his influence has to be limited in order to avoid too high levels of involvement (see figure 4.1.1.4/1: Roles of a consultant). The employee working in a consultancy focusing on efficiency has a precise knowledge of analytical methods. The methods are codified knowledge and therefore the single consultant is easily to replace and in those companies the up-or-out tournaments are tough. The future consultant has to have communicative skills to moderate the process and argue his position. The consultant has to have a high boarder of frustration and he has to be a team worker as he does not have authority and the power to set through his ideas. This type of consultant often faces the problem to get too much involved into the internal processes of the company. He always has to keep in mind the rule to stay neutral and objective. He does not have to be innovative as the knowledge is codified. The future employee has to be attracted with arguments concerning high salary, good career possibilities and an achievement culture.

The transfer of experience is the “stuck-in the middle-position”. The role of the consultant is the expert-role which means he analyses, presents several solutions but he is not responsible for the implementation. The creativity of the consultant has to be higher than in the efficiency-strategy as he has to develop solutions but he does not have to take the responsibility that the solution works out as the customer does the implementation on his own. This type of consultant has to have a quick grasp, good analytical skills and he has to be a good negotiator. The future employee has to be attracted by offering challenging tasks and a good reputation of the company.

The creativity-strategy requires the real elite, which means the consultants must have a high interest in research issues as their knowledge always has to be up-to-date. He has to publish articles, participate at discussions and has to enhance the reputation of his company actively. This type of employee has to be attracted with freedom in performing his job and the possibility to create something own. He has to be responsible as his role is the crisis manager or the expert - but the later role including implementation. He is responsible for the results and is equipped with high authority. This consultant has to transport experience and seniority.
5.2.2 Marketing Culture

The assumptions about the organizational culture affect self selection decisions and therefore have to be involved in marketing strategy. The following issues offer the possibilities for the companies to differentiate from their competitors in the way they communicate their company culture.

Work-life balance is getting more important and the companies have to show real alternatives besides temporary solutions like sabbaticals or temporary time-outs. Offering consultants with family projects near their homes, enabling job-sharing and part-time work are possibilities to make the consultant job compatible with a family life. To enable all employees a private life the 3-4-5 rule would be an appropriate way. This means three days out of the office at the customer, four days at the office, five days reachable for the customer. The consultancy can hardly give a guarantee on an eight-hours-per-day job because the work depends on the project and the resources are scarcely calculated but measures like the ones named above document the change in philosophy and can be a real USP.

Visiting associate programmes are programmes which enable selected applicants the possibility to accompany a consultant for a given period of time to see what the job is about. The applicant experiences the culture and the day-to-day-work in a consultancy and has a better basis for his final decision for or against the job. The measure is one way to reduce fluctuation which is especially desirable for smaller consultancies with non-codified knowledge.

Up-or-out tournaments are a constituting factor of the consulting business as described before (see chapter 4.1.2.2). But with regard to the increasing competition for the talents, the consultancies should offer possibilities to their talents to work in less stressful positions than firing them and loosing valuable human resources. Suitable positions could be expert instead of generalist, advisor or coach for the younger consultants.

Still consultancies offer unique possibilities to their employees regarding the accumulation of knowledge. These advantages have to be emphasized in marketing the company to desired employees. The possibilities and investments in continuous learning have to be communicated. The consultancy is a “talent-forge” which invests a lot, especially in the first years, in the consultants’ excellent education.
“The company cares for its talents” could be another message communicated to prospect employees to enhance the “feel-good-factor”. This means the company should take the selected employees into the family and give them a feeling of belonging after the harsh selection process. Considering all the hours they will spend in the company there has to be a sense of community. This will also take away the anxiety of new employees to talk to people over the boarders of hierarchies and offices and give them the possibility to experience networking.

5.2.3 Marketing processes

There are three mechanisms on which strategies can be legitimized. Those are: pragmatic, moral and cognitive (Suchman 1995, p. 94). Selection-procedures of consulting companies fulfil all three them. Case studies symbolize pragmatism as they suggest closeness to real business questions. They stand for morality as the calculation process represents the virtues of neutrality and objectivity and they symbolize cognition in that they meet the cognitive structure of a business environment. The same argument can serve as reason why the management consultancies do not apply more sophisticated methods of selection like assessment centres, because the business environment could perceive this as tendency towards psychology and the signalling effect could diminish. This means the selection procedures fit perfectly to the purpose of the company and therefore can be used as self-selection criteria to increase the percentage of applications of high potentials.

5.3 Recommendations for implementation

Which are the concrete marketing means to which high potentials react positive? All marketing activities which enable the applicants to get in personal contact with the company were appreciated; contact fairs with the possibility for interviews and lectures or seminars of practitioners at universities were the favourite contact channels (see chapter 4.2).

Job ads in newspapers or other broad scattered information brochures were not taken into account to get serious information. Informal contacts or own experiences with the company during an internship or as a customer were also valued channels of information.
Here is a list of suitable marketing actions:

- Presence at universities / fairs
- Internships for students
- Student trainee
- Cooperation concerning diploma thesis
- Workshops
- Sponsoring of seminars, golf-tournaments
- Contacts to business-lobbyists to get contacts and recommendations
- Image-ads
- Internet
- Articles in newspapers and business-magazines
- Editing own newspapers
- Presence at public discussions (TV)
- Hand out material
- Organizing Alumni-meetings

Important for all of these measures is a controlling of the success of the actions. Tracking the most successful sources of contact to qualified candidates is an important decision support for the future actions of the consulting companies.
Possibilities to influence the decision of high potentials to apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactivity:</th>
<th>Public visibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairs</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiential benefits:</th>
<th>Image:</th>
<th>Symbolic benefits:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working climate</td>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>social approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenging tasks</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support &amp; promotion</td>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
<td>reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possibilities to learn and to develop</td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This figure 5.3/1 gives an overview which communication tools influences the perceived benefits of the employees. It is obvious that the marketing strategy has to be twofold: Influencing the experience of the desired employee by interactivity via personal contact and increasing the reputation and the symbolic benefits of the company by increasing public visibility. The improvement of the visibility is a long-term goal whereby the experiential benefits can be enhanced in the short run by the increase of personal contact possibilities.

5.4 Conclusion

This research has shown that the consultancy business is fulfilling many reasons which make employer branding necessary: The market of talented people is an employee-market, the consultancy companies have a recognizable need for personnel and the performance of the people can not be replaced.

The working-conditions are medium attractive depending on the needs of the individual and the differences in performance can be quite big.

The possibilities to improve the fit between employer and employee via marketing-communication have been shown.

The author would like to end the research by having a look into the future:
“Hiring people who know what everybody else knows will not be enough. Whether they are sociologists or nuclear physicists, we will need to attract people who can bring a new perspective and fresh way of thinking. The consultancies will furthermore need to ensure that the knowledge they acquire from very different people is not standardized. Being able to hold a variety of ways of thinking and a range of possible, sometimes contradictory meanings – ambiguity will be essential.

Organisations tend to reject people or products that do not fit their existing mindset, but in the future it will become important to be much more inclusive. But at the same time it will be really difficult to manage the tensions which will occur between the various cultures that consulting companies will need to bring together.

One approach will be looking at consultancies as self-organising entities, sufficiently fluid to adapt to changes as they emerge with minimal central direction or control. The role of the centre will be to provide overall direction and leadership, while the structure itself evolves by allowing individuals to gravitate towards areas that interest them and gradually coalesce into teams (Czerniawska 1999, p. 65).

In the future rather than being a consultant or a client people may have a business career in which they move between formal study, consultancy and industry. Of course this raises the problem who funds the training and the development of such people as no organization may employ someone long enough to justify this kind of investment. The key word to solve this problem is shared responsibility for career development. Such a sense of responsibility translates directly into client work: consultants who are prepared to take ownership of their careers are also likely to take ownership of clients’ problems.
5.5 Further research

Further research is proposed to two directions: A technical and a cultural one.

Technical:

E-Recruiting: One should explore the possibilities to transfer the collaborative filtering technique (for example it is used for recommendation agents of Amazon) on the selection of internet applications of candidates by underlying profiles of selected candidates practising the job already with success. A system which should perform this has to be provided with complex individual and relational attributes which capture larger parts of the reality of human characteristics. It should record skills, leadership styles and personality and then it should be able to make a proposal. The task is twofold: modelling human and social capital and designing an information system which is able to leverage this underlying information.

Cultural:

The selection procedures the companies in this research apply are quite the same across the countries. Certainly there will have to be some adjustments to the cultural environment in every country and these tendencies could be researched with a discussion of the right amount of differentiation.

Knowing what the employees expect and having an idea about how the market of consultants as employers is perceived, it is the next step to analyze the possibilities of differentiation between the companies. This future research could take the one in hands as basis at go deeper into positioning strategies.
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Appendix 1

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren die sie in Unternehmensberatungen arbeiten,

Im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit im Bereich internationales Marketing die ich über das Thema „Employer Branding für Consultancies“ schreibe, bitte ich Sie um Mithilfe bei folgender Umfrage. Im Mittelpunkt des Projekts stehen die Interessen, Erwartungen und Maßnahmen von Unternehmensberatungen im Bezug auf die Gewinnung geeigneter Mitarbeiter. Wir bitten Sie herzlich, sich etwa 10 Minuten Zeit zu nehmen, um die folgenden Fragen zu beantworten.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mitarbeit!

**Company Culture:**

1. Which of the following actions do you undertake to gain up-to-date knowledge?
   - [ ] Cooperation with universities
   - [ ] Mixed teams with experts from other companies
   - [ ] Commissions to external companies to do research-reports
   - [ ] Taking over companies with special knowledge
   - [ ] Creating own methods in competence groups or per incident
   - [ ] Other _____________________________

2. Which roles do the consultants more often perform during their projects?
   - [ ] Helping clients to acquire knowledge
   - [ ] Support clients in implementing change

3. Which of the two roles is more important in the future?
   - [ ] Helping clients to acquire knowledge
   - [ ] Support clients in implementing change

4. The client has to be satisfied at any expense. Do you agree?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] A little
   - [ ] Not at All

5. Do you use MBO’s (Management by objectives) to measure the performance of the employees?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
6. **In which time-slots do you give explicit feedback to the employees?**
   - [ ] Every year
   - [ ] Every half year
   - [ ] Every three months
   - [ ] Informal if necessary

7. **Would you agree that in your consultancy is a commitment to an achievement culture?**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

8. **Did you think about creating an entrepreneurship-feeling among your employees?**
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

9. **If yes at 8: Which measures do you apply?**
   - [ ] To give information about the current success of the company/important projects
   - [ ] Introducing bonus-systems basing on business results
   - [ ] To give information about current decisions among the board
   - [ ] Other _____________________________

10. **How often do you get problems with some clients due to the fact that the consultants are too young in their eyes?**
    - [ ] Very often
    - [ ] Often
    - [ ] Seldom
    - [ ] Never because _____________________________
Roles of the consultant:

11. Which roles does a consultant have to obtain how often? Please rank the following roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis manager: high share in the decision process, high responsibility for implementation, high decision power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert: stereo-typical role of consultants, on the basis of his analysis he works out several solutions, client decides which of the solutions he wants to implement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoter: supportive, aim of the consulting project dictated by the client, high team-involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process consultant: initiates the process, defines the structure and guides the implementation, just moderates and gives help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selection process

12. Do you use case studies in your selection procedures?

☐ Yes
☐ No

13. Do you use other selection tools?

☐ Assessment Centres
☐ Interview
☐ Interaction games
☐ Other _____________________________

14. What do you think can you assess in the case studies? (Please mark with a cross only one box in every line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarder of frustration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to make recommendations/ arguing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
15. Who conducts the selection procedure?

- Trained members of a human resource department
- Consultants

16. Please rank the following selection process criteria: (Please mark with a cross only one box in every line)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal criteria</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Low important</th>
<th>Not important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>economical apprenticeship</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>business administration studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>participation at educational measures</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional criteria</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Low important</th>
<th>Not important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>having experienced similar issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem specific knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>comprehensive communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>capacity to assert oneself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>practice in negotiating</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal qualifications</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Low important</th>
<th>Not important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>creativity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>integrity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>self-discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>team-oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>quick grasp</td>
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<tr>
<td>extrovert communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>global associative thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>analytical thinking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>