Knowledge transfer across cultures in the manufacturing industry
A study of Scania’s global implementation of employer branding

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to examine how cultural differences affect an MNC’s knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding, and what support subsidiaries need from headquarters for the MNC to become a global employer brand. The result is based on theoretical findings of employer branding, knowledge transfer and culture, applied to interview results at Scania. The knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding involves the implementation of a global employer branding communication platform. Findings show that Scania face challenges in employer branding awareness within the MNC, knowledge transfer internalization in subsidiaries, and balance of standardization and adaptation in connection to cultural dimensions of the markets. To overcome these challenges, Scania needs to further develop relational, social and organizational contexts for the MNC to become a global premium employer brand. The thesis has high originality since it gives implications to a specific MNC regarding the specific topic employer branding in a certain time of the implementation process.

Keywords: employer branding, knowledge transfer, cultural dimensions, standardization, MNC, communication.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The world has become more globalized, which both opens opportunities and puts constraints on multinational corporations (MNCs). Globalization presents benefits of exploiting economies of scale and opens new markets for MNCs, however companies need to be aware of the increasing need for integration and coordination of global activities (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1987). Intense global competition has enhanced the importance for MNCs to work with complex global business strategies and practices (Schuler, Budhwar & Florkowski, 2002).

Globalization and liberalization of trade make MNCs invest abroad to gain competitive advantages. In such situations human assets are also emerging as competitive advantages (Myloni, Harzing & Mirza, 2004). Human resource management (HRM) has previously solely been a support function in organizations, but is now evolving into a strategic one. Within MNCs HRM practices and policies have become vital mechanisms for control and coordination, however the practices differ among countries. Transfer of HRM practices abroad is affected by cultural differences, since these practices are based on cultural beliefs and values of the national culture (Myloni et al., 2004). International human resource management (IHRM) has evolved from HRM and become the global approach of managing people from different subsidiaries (Brewster, Sparrow, Vernon & Houldsworth, 2011). Human resources are key to success, therefore an integrated IHRM process is the foundation for achieving good performance since cultural practices are critical factors for an organization’s survival (Brewster et al., 2011; Schen, 2005; Schuler et al., 2002). To maintain a successful IHRM process, MNCs need to develop an overall organizational understanding of globally situated employees. Transformation to IHRM occurs simultaneously as the subsidiary adapts to HRM practices (Shen, 2005). One difficulty in adapting HRM practices to local markets is because of its cultural varieties in contradiction to the home country (Schuler et al., 2002). Issues in the process of transferring and adapting home country practices and policies into local markets are identified when matching the local contextual factors. Political, legal, economic, social and historical differences are all factors that affect the implementation of knowledge in foreign contexts (Schen, 2005; Schuler et al., 2002). When the interplay between home country HRM and host country contextual factors are of satisfaction, the construction of IHRM has succeeded.
The modern HRM practice employer branding is a tool where marketing is applied to MNCs’ HRM activities and is communicated towards current and potential employees (Edwards, 2010). Globalized economy, faster communications and new ways of gaining and sharing knowledge have influenced MNCs, and thereby increased their focus on employer branding (Parment & Dyhre, 2009).

1.2. Problem discussion and purpose

Employer branding has gained recognition due to a more knowledge-based economy with high demand for skilled employees and employees’ changing needs and aspirations. This is due to technological innovations and increased individual skills and intelligence (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Parment & Dyhre, 2009). To handle this new generation of employees, employer branding has become an important tool to communicate what differentiates the company as an employer from its competitors.

Modern HRM practices have become a legitimized way to control human resources through soft and cultural influences, intending to mold them into the perfect corporate form (Costea, Crump & Amiridis, 2007). Contemporary organizations are dependent on employees’ productivity and ability to identify themselves with the organizational values. HRM practices have become a managerial fashion to accentuating control (Casey, 1999; Costea et al., 2007).

The employer branding concept is a well-established practice in Swedish MNCs. Internally, companies are globally spreading this concept to be perceived as one global employer with the same employer branding concept in every country (Parment & Dyhre, 2009). To implement the concept of employer branding globally, a knowledge transfer process has to take place from headquarters to subsidiaries. Issues that arise when transferring knowledge across cultures are cultural differences, which affect the transfer and adaptation process of knowledge to subsidiaries (Lucas, 2006). Due to different cultural dimensions, differences between headquarters and subsidiaries affect how well the knowledge transfer is received and ultimately utilized in local markets. Within MNCs, subsidiaries are often widely spread geographically and therefore national culture differences have major impact when working globally (Hofstede, 1983; Lucas, 2006). The knowledge transfer process continues until each subsidiary has received the new knowledge and uses it as its own; it is thus not completed with the implementation of a new practice (Kostova, 1999). MNCs’ knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding is thereby affected by cultural differences evident...
within the MNC, since a global knowledge transfer crosses national borders and meets new cultures that need to be handled.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how cultural differences affect an MNC’s knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding, and what support subsidiaries need from headquarters for the MNC to become a global employer brand. The research objective of our study is to find strategies that will support headquarters in the process of implementing employer branding globally and by that secure the supply of skilled employees, as well as which guidelines and tools are needed in the markets to achieve that objective.

The main research question in our thesis is:
- Which challenges affect knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding from headquarters to subsidiaries in a manufacturing MNC, and how should management handle those challenges?

Our sub-question is:
- How do cultural differences affect knowledge transfer from headquarters to globally spread subsidiaries?

2. Theoretical framework

*In this section we will present a theoretical framework that starts with employer branding, continues with knowledge transfer and evolves into culture and cultural dimensions.*

2.1. Employer Branding

Brands are one of MNCs’ competitive advantages. In marketing, focus has mainly been on product and corporate brands but when included in HRM it is referred to as employer branding (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The original definition of employer branding is “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing organization” (Ambler & Barrow, 1996:187). The concept involves internal and external promotion of what differentiates the company from competitors as an employer (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Companies who embrace employer branding have competitive advantages, since human resources and knowledge are important sources of value today (Moroko & Uncle, 2008). Key purpose of employer branding is to identify corporate
value elements, thereby portraying an image for future and existing employees (Edwards, 2010).

Employer branding derives from corporate and consumer branding and the concepts share the same foundation; brands have to be noticeable, relevant and unique (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). Employer branding can be seen as a psychological contract between employer and employee, while corporate branding is considered as a promise between the organization and its customers (Edwards, 2010; Foster, Punjairi & Cheng, 2010; Moroko & Uncles, 2008). Effective employer branding internally focuses on existing employees and delivery of the brand promise to stakeholders (Foster et al. (2010). Externally, employer branding ensures recruitment of right people to maintain company competitiveness. These two views need to be aligned to strengthen the corporate brand, while the corporate brand guides internal and external branding. The accuracy of the employer brand can be measured by its connection to the corporate and consumer brand, and when these brands work together MNCs gain competitive advantages (Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

For effective employer branding to work, collaboration with and support from widespread functions in top management, marketing and HR are needed (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Parment & Dyhre, 2009). Neither area can work alone, since HR has deep knowledge of organizational culture, and marketing has access to communication channels. Employer branding also has to be in line with corporate business plans and visions to be aware of future focuses and available resources. Management’s actions and behaviors are reflected in the employer brand, which in turn affect corporate policies, procedures and practices, and that is why top management needs to be involved in employer branding (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010).

Building a competitive employer brand is an important solution to handle shortage of talented employees (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010). Other benefits with employer branding are enhanced recruitment, retention, employee engagement, loyalty and company commitment (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Barrow & Mosley, 2005). High level of organizational engagement leads to reduced costs by increased productivity and efficiency, thereby portraying a clear linkage between a strong employer brand, higher employee engagement and financial performance (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). The essence of employer branding is described as competitive advantage for companies as it attracts the right fit for organizations, builds loyalty and pride, adds to shareholder value, and creates positive human capital practices (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010). Employer branding is gaining recognition and is therefore increasingly spread globally in MNCs through knowledge transfers.
2.2. Knowledge transfer

Knowledge transfer is described as the process of mutual knowledge exchange and creation of new knowledge. In MNCs transfers of knowledge aim at providing desired results and embedding new knowledge within subsidiaries (Lucas, 2006; Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier, Rogelio Flores, 2009).

MNCs perform knowledge transfers to foreign markets to gain competitive advantages in form of synergies and efficiency (Kostova, 1999). Knowledge transfers within MNCs occur from headquarters to subsidiaries, from subsidiaries to headquarters, and between subsidiaries. Both headquarters and subsidiaries thereby need an understanding of cultural and institutional differences that affect the message between sender and receiver (Lucas, 2006; Myloni et al., 2004). There are different barriers for successful transfer related to the characteristics of transferred practice or cultural organizational contexts (Kostova, 1999). Knowledge transfers may cause frustration when headquarters implement new practices in subsidiaries, resulting in subsidiaries not implementing or only partially implementing the new practice due to what fits in that specific context.

Standardized implementation processes when transferring HRM practices are favorable, if demands for standardization is stronger than adapting the processes to local prerequisites (Bonache, 2000). Subsidiaries with strong interdependence with headquarters rather tend to adapt global standards than local ones. Main reasons for standardized solutions in HRM are to reduce and monitor costs, face implementation obstacles, and be able to coordinate. Implementing standardized processes is also connected to attaining competitive advantages, maintaining stability and internal equity in management, and facilitating flow of knowledge and information between units. An alternative perspective on standardization, “pattern standardization”, involves strategies originally designed for global use and giving directions for local markets (Peebles, Ryans & Vernon, 1977). The “pattern” is a tool from headquarters involving instructions for marketing practices and standards for example, with the aim to give uniformity in presentation. This concept is developed with transferability in mind and an understanding that the pattern will be altered to fit local markets, target groups and national cultures.

The knowledge transfer process has two steps; spreading of practices and creation of meaning regarding the concepts in the receivers’ environment (Kostova, 1999). The process does not finish with adoption of formal rules regarding the practice, it continues until rules have become internalized among receivers. Success of knowledge transfer is defined as the
degree of institutionalization of the practice at the receiver unit. Institutionalization involves the process of the transferred practice being taken for granted and contains both implementation and internalization. The more the practice is used among receivers, the more likely it will be accepted and used. However, due to employee disapproval and time constraints the practice might not be internalized even if used. There are three factors for knowledge transfer success; the social context involves the institutional distance between sender and receiver, the organizational context involves the organizational culture of the receiver, and relational context involves past relationships between sender and receiver. These contexts affect the success of the knowledge transfer depending on how they are handled by management as well as what cultural differences are involved.

2.3. Culture

Culture is defined as systems of beliefs embedded within societies, which reflect people’s behavior (Lucas, 2006). It is important to understand culture, as it ultimately means understanding people and their background. Cultural differences are an ever current issue for MNCs to handle, due to problems culture can create for management who works globally (Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede, 1994).

Culture is an essential source for MNCs’ competitive advantages (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). Challenges are identified in the utilization of differences between local cultures to gain these advantages. To manage a workforce represented by several nationalities is one of the main issues for an MNC to handle. Managerial difficulties are also identified in situations where human resources with different beliefs and values operate. It is important to understanding to what extent culture affects organizations’ structure and processes. Managerial consequences often occur when cultural differences clash, to decrease these consequences HRM practices are used as local implementation strategies.

It is stated that the same policies will not produce the same effects in different cultural contexts (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). Therefore, a strong local cultural connected HRM practice has become a vital competitive advantage since it treats each culture after premises in that specific context. Effectiveness of particular HRM activities depends on how they match local national values, in other words MNCs should adapt its HRM strategies in each nation it operates in (Bonache, 2000). There is no best way of managing across cultures, meaning that HRM practices are not equally effective to implement in all nations.
2.3.1. Cultural dimensions

Hofstede (1983; 1994) describes national cultures and four dimensions affecting it. The first dimension is *individualism vs. collectivism*, which involves the relation between individuals. Individualism is connected to societies that are loosely integrated where individuals are given large amount of freedom, while collectivism is connected to societies that are tightly integrated where the group decides for the individual. The second dimension *power distance* deals with the issue how society handles that people are unequal in physical and intellectual capacities. The level of power distance is connected to the degree of centralized authority and autocratic leadership. The third dimension *uncertainty avoidance* involves the issue of an unknown future. In weak uncertainty avoidance societies members are taught to accept uncertainty, while high uncertainty avoidance societies have members trying to beat the future by avoiding risks and creating security through technology, law and religion. In Hofstede’s (1983) study, the fourth dimension *masculinity vs. femininity* involves division of gender roles. Masculine societies have maximized division between genders, while feminine societies have relatively small division.

Hofstede has been criticized for being overly simplistic in reducing the concept to only four cultural dimensions. Criticism was targeted towards solely investigating one MNC, not investigating culture over time or different cultural aspects within the same country, not involving all national cultures, and cultural changes have occurred globally since Hofstede’s measure (Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006; Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006). Due to these criticisms Hofstede added a fifth and sixth dimension; long-term vs. short-term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011).

To succeed with knowledge transfer within MNCs, it has to be done cautiously and is assumed most successful between culturally aligned countries (Lucas, 2006). Cultures with high individualism have more difficulty in knowledge transfers than high collectivist cultures. In individualistic cultures there has to be an agreement on expectations from both sender and receiver since these cultures are driven by self-interest. While in collectivist cultures knowledge transfer is successful when there is high similarity between sender and receiver. Small power distance cultures are characterized by smooth transfers, due to that both parties are willing to share knowledge. If both parties are members of high power distance cultures, compromise is essential and it also has to be proven that both parties realize their gain from the transfer. In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance transfer will be avoided to escape changes, while in low uncertainty avoidance cultures transfer and change is appreciated.
Masculine influenced cultures are involved in knowledge transfers if they see that they can gain something from the transfer, while feminine inclined cultures has strong sense of cooperation and promotes a win-win situation (Lucas, 2006; Rivera-Vazquez et al., 2009).

Headquarters plays an important role to facilitate and moderate knowledge transfers and it has to be aware of the cultural differences, how they affect the transfer and in what way management can enable cooperation between senders and receivers (Lucas, 2006). Collectivist cultures view knowledge as the MNC’s property while individualistic cultures regard it as individual property. This builds boundaries for successful knowledge transfer. Likewise, if the sender has strong power distance and the receiver small, then the sender most likely exercises control over the receiver. If the sender has small power distance and the receiver high, then the sender tries to facilitate the transfer while the receiver solely wants to participate on its own terms. Headquarters must play a large role in convincing strong uncertainty avoidance cultures the need for change as well as make masculine cultures see benefits of knowledge transfers. The need for knowledge transfer within MNCs is emphasized, and it can be fast and efficient. However cultural differences may create boundaries and bottlenecks that affect the transfer negatively. For knowledge transfers to be successful, it is vital to have good relationships within the MNC.

2.4. Model of knowledge transfer of employer branding

Based on our literature framework, we have developed a model that visually shows the correlations between chosen theories in employer branding, knowledge transfer and culture.

![Figure 1: Model of knowledge transfer of employer branding](image)

The model focuses on how Hofstede’s cultural dimensions affect knowledge transfers of the concept employer branding from MNC’s headquarters to subsidiaries. In the cultural part of
the model we focus on Hofstede’s four dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity vs. femininity. These dimensions are used due to their clarity, managerial and cost saving focus, and that they can be used to portray the overall characteristics of countries (Kirkman et al., 2006; Lucas, 2006; Rivera-Vazquez et al., 2009). The usability of the dimensions is confirmed; they can be used to classify countries based on cultural differences and distances between them (Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006).

Knowledge transfers exist on different levels and in different directions in an MNC. In the knowledge transfer part of our model we only focus on knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding from headquarters to subsidiaries. This reflects the majority of our chosen theory and the current situation at our case company, as headquarters is the sender of the knowledge of the concept employer branding to subsidiaries.

In the model the knowledge transfer of the concept employer branding is highlighted, as it is the foundation of the process for MNCs to become a global employer brand. The model’s three parts culture, knowledge transfer and employer branding are related in this study as MNCs are spreading the concept employer branding globally. To gain this global recognition, knowledge transfers have to take place between headquarters and subsidiaries. In an MNC the knowledge transfer of employer branding crosses different cultural borders, and is thereby affected by Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions.

3. Method

In this section we will present our research design and methods concerning sampling, data collection and limitations.

We had a deductive approach in our study because of its take-off in theory, followed by benchmark in the practical work at our case company (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Our research design had an explanatory approach since we aimed at explaining the causal relationship variables between knowledge transfer and cultural differences in the case company’s work with global employer branding (Anderson, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009). We contrasted these variables between subsidiaries in Sweden, Brazil, China, the Netherlands and South Africa, and the MNC’s headquarters. What we studied is the process of handling cultural differences when globally transferring and adapting knowledge in form of employer branding. Our aim of studying this knowledge transfer process was to examine what support
subsidiaries need from headquarters for the MNC to become a global premium employer brand.

We performed a cross-sectional study describing a particular phenomenon in an MNC at a certain time (Saunders et al., 2009). Our study was an embedded single case study as we studied the interaction of diverse factors of knowledge transfer, employer branding and cultural differences in geographically spread subsidiaries (Anderson, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009). Performing a case study gave us as researchers the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the context and keep asking questions until we attained sufficient answers. Further, we gathered material in form of company reports and interviews from cross-border and cross-cultural contexts, which is why a case study was most favorable to use when investigating employer branding across cultures (Ghauri, 2004). Our case study is delimited to one MNC, since we attained high access to information and interviewees at our case company which would not have been possible in additional companies in our limited time frame (Anderson, 2004).

Through semi-structured interviews we collected our primary qualitative data (Anderson, 2004; Ghauri, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009). We chose this interview approach since it invited the respondents to talk freely, which automatically gave them the opportunity to modify their answers as they wished (Anderson, 2004). Performing semi-structured interviews gave us as researchers freedom to differ our design of interview questions, depending on what specific information we wanted to attain in the specific context (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.1. Sampling

We selected a case company that gave us access to sufficient information regarding our topic employer branding. Our case company Scania has well-developed employer branding strategies founded at headquarters in Sweden. When we started our research project, the MNC was in the process of transferring the concept employer branding globally to all subsidiaries, where employer branding was not as recognized. This was why the company and its work with spreading the concept employer branding globally was interesting to study. Scania launched the global employer branding communication platform the 1st of November 2011, which made it possible for us to follow the project in its early stage. This enabled us to see which challenges Scania was facing and had to handle.
When sampling our respondents, we chose interviewees from headquarters and subsidiaries to gain diverse information regarding Scania’s employer branding (see appendix 1). Our respondents were sampled through purposive sampling, because they were chosen to best answer our research questions (Saunders et al., 2009). To strengthen our choice of respondents, we attained support from our supervisor\(^1\), which reduced difficulties of locating appropriate respondents at Scania (Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, Penttinen & Tahvanainen, 2004). The support we got in the sampling process enabled us to attain diverse perspectives from headquarters and subsidiaries, which otherwise would not have been possible.

The purpose with our sampling from headquarters was to gain strategic and managerial perspectives regarding employer branding, knowledge transfer and culture. In the subsidiaries the purpose was to get information regarding their employer branding work, the global implementation, knowledge transfer and culture. Our sample size at headquarters was seven respondents, representing different managerial positions and department. When sampling respondents from subsidiaries, interviewees from Sweden, Brazil, the Netherlands, South Africa and China were chosen. Due to this sampling we attained diverse knowledge from geographically spread subsidiaries. To get an objective view of the topic, we also interviewed two outside consultants regarding employer branding.

### 3.2. Data collection

At headquarters we performed semi-structured interviews that were conducted face-to-face at the respondents’ offices. These interviews were approximately one hour long consisting of open-ended questions. We sent out preliminary interview guides (see appendix 2) approximately one week ahead so the respondents could prepare for the interviews. All interviews at headquarters were audio-recorded upon consent from the interviewee and later transcribed to maintain the reliability. Due to country differences and different time zones, we performed semi-structured interviews via e-mail in the subsidiaries. These interviews were prolonged over a series of weeks with numerous e-mails and therefore both the interviewer and interviewee could reflect on questions and answers to provide consistent response. However, we realized that e-mail interviews inhibited the opportunity to read facial expressions and reactions of the interviewees. By having this interview approach in subsidiaries we were aware that we automatically lost the opportunity to ask unforeseen

\(^1\) Jessica Thompson, Project Manager Employer Branding, Scania
follow-up questions and have a spontaneous dialogue with the respondents (Saunders et al., 2009).

All respondents were given the opportunity to be anonymous to increase comfort in sharing company information, but all respondents agreed to be official in our thesis. To reduce misunderstandings during the interviews, we let the interviewees at headquarters choose if the interview should be held in English or Swedish, but all respondents were comfortable speaking English. The e-mail interviews with subsidiaries were all held in English. Due to this all material we gathered were in English, which diminished all problems with translations and eased the usage of quotes.

Throughout our thesis we maintained an ethical perspective. During our interviews and through company reports we got access to sensitive information, which we handled with outmost care and did not spread in our thesis. All interviewees were informed that the thesis would be a public report and through informed consent we attained information and company reports (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.3. Limitations

Weaknesses in our study are found in the choice of study approach. The choice of making a cross-sectional study affected the reliability and generalizability of our study (Ghauri, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009). Our thesis is delimited to our case company Scania and we realized that using one case company would make it less applicable for other companies and industries thereby affecting the thesis’ generalizability. However we can defend this weakness, since the purpose of our study and choice of research design was to perform an embedded single-case study. The study was not intended to be repeated or replicable but rather to investigate the issue deeper at Scania. When researching a specific context, its contextual factors are unlikely to remain constant, which affects the reliability (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 2004). The reliability in our study was affected by the global employer branding implementation at Scania being a current and ongoing issue and studies in the future will find other results. This is because the situation will have progressed to a further stage. The thesis’ reliability was strengthened as we interviewed respondents with authority in the areas of employer branding, branding and communication. To strengthen the validity of our study, we connected our empirical part with the theoretical one in a clear way. This was done as we grounded our interview questions in the theoretical parts of employer branding, knowledge transfer and culture. To additionally get the correct direction of our interview questions we also based
them on our research questions, which increased the validity since it clearly connected each part of the thesis (Saunders et al. 2009).

Since we wrote our thesis on behalf of Scania, we were aware of that we could encounter certain issues of company and sampling bias. Bias portrayed in form of managers and employees wishing to portray a favorable image of the company and not seeing limitations with their own and the organization’s work, and our supervisor providing interviewees that shared the same interpretation of Scania’s employer branding as she did. To handle these biases, we asked neutral questions that did not glorify Scania and specifically asked for both positive and negative examples when interviewing, for the interviewees to go beyond their pre-set mental frames. We were also aware of bias involved when getting responses via e-mail from the subsidiaries, since it may inhibit respondents to give honest and thorough responses. However Scania’s corporate culture is very open and encourages sharing experiences, which we believe is a factor in reducing this bias. We as researchers had previous contact with the company and the research area, thereby affecting our perception of the MNC and portraying observer bias. However, we believe that this should not be viewed as a disadvantage for our study. Instead we have chosen to use this knowledge to our advantage, since our prior experience with Scania helped us gain access and negotiate interviews with influential people at the company. Still, we were aware that our perceptions may be affected but we tried to be unattached and unbiased to remain neutral in our research. To diminish our own bias, strengthen the reliability of our study and to avoid misunderstandings, we sent the transcribed version of the interviews back to the respondents for approval on our own initiative (Saunders et al., 2009).
4. Empirical data

In this section we will describe our empirical findings. First we will present our case company Scania and its work with employer branding. Then headquarters’ and subsidiaries’ views on employer branding, knowledge transfers and culture will be described. Last, two outside consultants give their view on employer branding.

4.1. About Scania

Scania is a global manufacturing company providing more than 100 countries with trucks, buses, engines and services. The company was founded in Sweden in 1891 and has approximately 37,500 employees worldwide. Headquarters is located in Södertälje and its production facilities are located in Europe and Latin America. Scania’s business objective is to provide its customers with profitability throughout the whole product life cycle by providing optimized products and services. Scania emphasizes customized solutions for its customers by working with modularization systems in their production and service management. Scania has a strong corporate culture and the core values Customer First, Respect for the Individual, and Quality are internalized in all company activities (Scania’s Annual Report, 2011).

4.1.1. The employer branding communication platform

Scania’s headquarters has developed a global communication platform for employer branding. The platform has had a global approach from the beginning with several reference markets involved in the project. Reason for implementing the platform was to improve the image of Scania as a global employer and to attract and retain employees with the right competence, which in the long term are the foundation of making the company competitive and profitable. The platform is used towards different target groups depending on local recruitment needs, and is seen as strategic support and a tool for creating a positive impression of Scania as company and employer. Scania is operating globally, therefore it is important that the company is communicating and recognized in the same way in all markets. By this the employer brand is closely related to the corporate and product brands (Jessica Thompson, Project Manager Employer Branding).
The platform consists of an introduction to employer branding; presentation of the concept, purpose and strategy. It involves Scania’s employer branding statement *Scania it starts with you*, description of the corporate language as well as visual guidelines and templates for advertisements, banners, brochures, vehicles striping, presentations and web sites. Scania’s different target groups are described and how to identify and analyze them locally, as well as different communication channels and how to use them towards specific target groups with best practice examples. The platform also involves pictures taken of employees globally and films to be used for employer branding. The platform is a toolbox with some standardized parts, such as the visual guidelines with colors, layout and typeface, and other parts that can be adapted to local markets such as pictures, messages and choices of communication channels (Jessica Thompson). The platform is a preparation for future challenges in employer branding, such as recruitment of attractive employees (Jenny Engvall, HR Controller). Subsidiaries can become premium employer brands on their own, but from a cost-efficient perspective and for Scania to become a global premium employer brand, the company needs to work globally with the communication platform (Jessica Thompson).

4.2. Headquarters’ perspective

4.2.1. Employer branding

“... Everything is employer branding, everything is branding... So people that don’t work with employer branding, they do not work for Scania”

(Maria Jobenius, Director of Communications)

The brand is Scania’s most valuable asset, therefore the company needs to set standards that make it possible to have a globally consistent brand (Jessica Thompson). Having a consistent brand is a highly prioritized question at Scania: “if you don’t have a consistent brand then you don’t have a brand” (Helen Lodell, Head of Communications). Having a consistent brand is a way for Scania to show that their branding communication is honest. Consistency in this manner is when Scania is basing communication on the same values in all situations. Communicating globally saves costs simultaneously as it demonstrates that Scania treats all employees the same worldwide. The employer branding communication platform has been an important tool when it comes to building Scania’s consistency in communication (Mikael Person, Brand Manager).
Scania’s employer branding has three dimensions; to attract right people to the company, retain current competence, and emphasize alumni management (Kent Conradson, Senior Vice President HR Support; Jessica Thompson). The importance of having both current and former employees as brand ambassadors are highlighted (Jessica Thompson). Employer branding is about creating the right image regarding Scania as an employer. Among other things, this is done by marketing communications and activities such as career fairs, cooperation with schools, apprenticeships and study visits. Scania’s employer branding is about building up an image that sustains both on a national and international level to attract the right people (Thomas Bertilsson, Managing Director Scania Academy).

"Without people this company is empty"

(Thomas Bertilsson)

Scania’s employer branding work has its take off in the HR plan, which is a tool for estimating current and future competence needs. It is further connected to the corporate long-term business and HR strategies (Kent Conradson; Jessica Thompson). Scania’s employer branding is prioritized at management level and Maria Jobenius agrees that it is vital to involve management in the work of employer branding. For Scania to become a global employer brand, there has to be clear focus on leadership; the more employer branding is integrated in leadership training the more management will influence employees. To attain this it is important for headquarters to manage communication, and make sure it goes in line with the corporate core values (Mikael Person). Strong brand management and local market connections are vital, since Scania mainly has standardized processes that are adapted locally. The process of becoming a global employer brand is all about spreading good practices globally (Maria Jobenius). For headquarters to build a global employer brand there has to be an awareness of the support needed among subsidiaries, and to raise the consciousness of employer branding among local HR managers (Jenny Engvall).

4.2.1.1. Challenges with a global employer brand

The communication platform is produced at headquarters, which can be a challenge when working towards becoming a global employer brand (Mikael Person). Scania’s employer branding is well-developed at headquarters but it is tougher to get the same recognition in the subsidiaries, such as in small workshops with few employees (Thomas Bertilsson). Needs and market circumstances differ among subsidiaries, each market attracts different target groups
with support from employer branding (Jenny Engvall; Maria Jobenius). Scania has to work more proactively with the employer brand to attract the most wanted employees. The process of building up Scania’s employer branding image differs; in China Scania is hardly known whereas in Brazil the company is a great provider of both jobs and products. Challenges of having a consistent global brand adapted locally, is headquarters’ alertness to market needs and demands. Building up a consistent brand cannot be made only from headquarters, it has to be a two-way communication.

“We should give them guidelines, they should give us guidelines... how we should change, what should we fill the Scania brand with?”

(Maria Jobenius)

The communication platform needs to be followed up and the utilization and experiences of the material in subsidiaries have to be analyzed (Jessica Thompson). In subsidiaries the awareness of employer branding and its potential were missing. However as the communication platform was introduced, the recognition of employer branding and its consequences increased at Scania (Jenny Engvall). The tools and methods headquarters needs to employ to increase the awareness differ, when continuing the process of developing markets to become premium employer brands. Additional to the platform, headquarters needs to transfer knowledge that goes in line with the maturity level of specific markets. Subsidiaries have different prerequisites to use tools and guidelines sent out from headquarters, therefore: it’s not really so much the tools itself, it’s the ability to understand how to utilize them“ (Helen Lodell).

4.2.2. Knowledge transfer

Knowledge transfer is the essence when Scania is implementing HRM practices globally. There is no best way of communicating with local markets, it is rather done through combinations of channels and consistency in communication (Helen Lodell). To reduce misunderstandings and misconceptions when sending out knowledge from headquarters the processes are standardized.

“So, we have really like the Christmas tree without additional, no light no nothing.”

(Jenny Engvall)
A challenge for Scania, when aiming at a global target group is to figure out what factors in
the message that fit all subsidiaries, attaining employees’ compliance globally and getting
them to identify themselves with the corporate values in a HRM practice (Jenny Engvall).
Standardization of processes are common at Scania, however when working with “soft”
business practices there must be a local touch in the knowledge adaptation (Kent Conradson).
If there is room for local adaptation, subsidiaries appreciate when headquarters support their
value creation by sending out help in start-up situations. Having some of the communication
standardized when transferring knowledge is also good from a cost perspective. But,
headquarters needs to be aware of if wrong elements are standardized the communication will
not be useful anywhere (Mikael Person).

Working with guidelines is the best way of transferring knowledge across the
organization and one cannot spread practices with force (Thomas Bertilsson). In the
adaptation process, it is important that headquarters understands that subsidiaries best adapt to
new knowledge if they realize how it will be beneficial for them. Communication must
proclaim what headquarters would like to achieve (Mikael Person). Implementing knowledge
in markets with different cultures is a question of push and pull, since knowledge transfers is a
two-way communication (Jenny Engvall). Finding common ways of working are of great
essence and also understanding the other part’s demands and needs. Transfer and adapting
knowledge into local markets is difficult due to different approaches and attitudes as well as
market conditions and needs. One has to listen to market needs and then adapt, because a
launched HRM practice is not a finished process (Jenny Engvall; Jessica Thompson).
Working with modularization is key to success at Scania, for the markets to be able to pick
and choose appropriate tools (Jenny Engvall). It is vital to read different cultures correctly to
implement HRM practice successfully globally, and to take advantage of the already existing
communication tools in the markets; much of the knowledge is already there it just has to be
utilized in the best way (Mikael Person).

Most important to have in mind when communicating across borders is to use a clear
language; clarify what is actually said, reinforce the message and represent the information
that is sent (Maria Jobenius; Helen Lodell). Knowledge transfer is to a large extent about the
message itself and the content of it. The importance of sending a comprehensive message is
highlighted; the meaning of the message and what the sender wants the receiver to feel after
receiving the message. There are three ways of analyzing if transferred knowledge is
understood and used properly in subsidiaries. First, to analyze what knowledge Scania wants
the target group to have, and second the attitude Scania wants the target groups to have
towards what they are communicating. Last, to analyze the behavior headquarters wants subsidiaries to have as a result of the communication, and then tailor the communication accordingly. If headquarters can deliver a message that is beneficial for subsidiaries, a communication is established resulting in a relationship between the units. The most effective way of communicating is through face-to-face meetings, since it invites building a long-term relationship as well as a high level of trust (Jenny Engvall; Maria Jobenius; Mikael Person). Creating trust is the best foundation to success in business relationships, and the process of building trust is of great essence when communicating with representatives from local markets.

“I have been sitting around a table for a full day in China, only speaking Chinese around me and that is part of the culture. We need to get to know each other before we can start to talk“

(Maria Jobenius)

It is vital to have local representatives and network contacts making sure that transferred knowledge is received, adapted and used in a correct manner. By having local contacts headquarters can easier estimate if right practices are used, or whether other methods should be used in the future, and by that increase competence in subsidiaries (Jenny Engvall; Helen Lodell; Jessica Thompson).

4.2.2.1. Challenges in knowledge transfer

Future challenges for Scania’s global employer branding is to keep the brand consistent according to the guidelines in the communication platform, but simultaneously adapt it locally (Jessica Thompson). It is of great importance to implement a more strategic way of thinking, to get subsidiaries to a higher extent focus on the future, and to find balance between standardization and flexibility to adapt practices locally. A challenge for Scania is to communicate in the same way globally, therefore it is a priority for Scania to have a global approach when communicating worldwide (Kent Conradson). There is a danger with headquarters’ over-confidence when communicating globally; it is dangerous to believe that headquarters’ approach can be adapted elsewhere (Helen Lodell). The conception of Scania as a corporate entity differs between markets. From a headquarter perspective, it is often taken for granted that all subsidiaries are fully aware of the company structure and that knowledge perceptions are alike (Kent Conradson). To handle this and make knowledge transfers
smoother, headquarters needs to find a proper balance to answer both the global and local requirements.

Other obstacles in knowledge transfers are different paces in adaptation and development. Transferring knowledge worldwide is time consuming; HRM practices are quick becoming old fashion at headquarters simultaneously as the implementation just started in subsidiaries. What headquarters needs is patience: “...the biggest problem is that we think it goes quicker” (Maria Jobenius). Transferring HRM practices across borders imply language differences which could affect the meaning of the message sent from headquarters. Obstacles and misconceptions due to language differences should not be a problem at Scania since the corporate language is English. Therefore it is expected that everyone should be able to communicate in English (Jenny Engvall; Maria Jobenius; Helen Lodell).

4.2.3. Culture

Impacts because of cultural differences are experienced in the knowledge transfer process at Scania. However the impacts at Scania are not as severe as they could have been due to a strong corporate culture that often overrides the differences (Helen Lodell).

“I wouldn’t call it obstacles (...) it’s because you have neglected to try to get a little more insight into what drives the persons or the cultures or units that you have been communicating with.”

(Helen Lodell)

It should not be a problem in transferring knowledge across borders as subsidiaries worldwide understand why headquarters has a standardized way of portraying Scania as an employer in a certain way (Kent Conradson). It is generally easy to transfer knowledge across borders, if obstacles occur it is rather because of different cultural behaviors that are affecting the adaptation process, than the knowledge transfer process itself (Thomas Bertilsson). Most markets accept the Scania way of thinking, and potential differences in behavior are shown in subsidiaries’ varying hierarchical levels for instance. Meanwhile, employees working at Scania should not question knowledge sent out from headquarters, since it is based on Scania’s core values and corporate culture (Mikael Person).

Scania are communicating globally, however due to cultural differences the communication varies depending on where to the knowledge is transferred to (Mikael Person). Communication is based on a European model since it is Scania’s main market, which might lead to obstacles when communicating globally. To overcome and understand
the differences it is important to have close dialogues with market representatives. To attain constant improvements of knowledge transfer, it is important to build on previous experiences as well as rotating managers between subsidiaries to transfer best practices. In general no market should have had any difficulties adapting the communication platform into their local culture (Jenny Engvall). Obstacles that have occurred during the implementation process are rather connected to unawareness of what the concept employer branding means. Scania is a global company with many cultures involved and a large challenge for headquarters is to merge the Scania culture with the local one (Maria Jobenius).

4.2.3.1. Specific markets

Sweden is experienced as a good follower of headquarters initiatives; it is rather a question of whether headquarters’ practices fit in the Swedish subsidiary (Mikael Person). Swedes have working standards that is less about control and more about trust. This is also recognized in the Swedish way of doing business (Thomas Bertilsson).

The South African subsidiary has good communication with headquarters and does business in an entrepreneurial way and is successful with it (Mikael Person).

Communicating with the Chinese subsidiary requires good market knowledge, therefore headquarters relies upon market representatives directly present in the market (Mikael Person). Scania is not well-known in this market and the representatives help headquarters understanding the specific support the market needs. Scania’s Chinese employees have a good understanding of how important a good brand is and are generally following headquarters’ rules. This, because headquarters is viewed as a very important player and support function at Scania in China. However the culture is very different in comparison to the Swedish one; experience says that there is a widespread Asian culture of saying yes in most situations. By this it is difficult for headquarters to tell if the knowledge is perceived correct or not (Jenny Engvall).

Mature markets are easier transferring knowledge to; by tradition the European markets have easier adapting guidelines since they have been in the picture for longer time than other markets (Mikael Person). As an example, communicating with the Dutch subsidiary is not experienced as a problem. In this market it is more a question of making them use headquarters’ guidelines and initiatives.

In the Brazilian subsidiary employees are keen doing what headquarters tells them to do. The subsidiary adapts what is pointed out in guidelines and are also loyal to work with (Mikael Person). For Brazilian citizens trust and familiarity are of great importance both in
business and in private. However cultural differences are shown in a clear way; when transferring knowledge to Brazil it will most probably be easier adapted if sent from someone on a high managerial level, otherwise it will not be adapted (Jenny Engvall). Therefore, it is important to have the right sender when it comes to this kind of communication, even if the corporate culture tops the national culture in many situations.

“...If my manager who is the Vice President within Scania is saying something, or if I am saying something, it’s got totally different weight, even though we are saying it in absolutely the same way and we are sending the same message.”

(Jenny Engvall)

4.3. Subsidiaries’ perspective

Our five reference markets Sweden, Brazil, the Netherlands, China, and South Africa have different long histories with Scania, varying amount of employees and different kinds of units (see table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Main location</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Main Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Lindvreten</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>Sales &amp; Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Sao Paulo</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>Production, Sales &amp; Service, IT, Purchasing, Logistics, Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Breda</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>IT, Sales &amp; Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Sales &amp; Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>Sales &amp; Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Subsidiary information (Daniela Cabral; Peter Eberoth; Peter Janssens; Gail Roberts; Scania’s Annual Report, 2011; Tina Tang)

4.3.1. Employer branding

Scania’s subsidiaries work with employer branding in varying degrees and on different levels. In the Netherlands, the subsidiary works with employer branding in cooperation with technical schools and universities, governmental department for employment, unions, and transport and automotive federations (Peter Janssens, Manager Scania Academy Benelux). Both the retaining and attracting parts of employer branding are emphasized in the subsidiary. It is also argued that it is vital to retain know-how as well as stay competitive by attracting the
best future employees in the Netherlands. The Chinese subsidiary works with employer branding on their web site and with contacts with universities (Tina Tang, HR Manager Chinese subsidiary). Currently, employer branding is used for recruiting purposes as well as spreading corporate culture internally and externally. In South Africa, the subsidiary’s focus in employer branding has previously been on internal branding, such as focus on well-being and health, financial support and training (Gail Roberts, HR Manager South African subsidiary). External employer branding is evolving in areas like advertisements, school co-operations, information days and visits to the assembly plant. The Brazilian subsidiary has worked with employer branding before the platform launch without referring to the concept as employer branding (Daniela Cabral, HR and Competence Development Brazilian subsidiary). Today the subsidiary works with the visual guidelines and templates available in the platform, for instance with an internship program to attract students. In Sweden, the subsidiary currently works with employer branding in form of activities performed internally and towards schools, but in an unstructured way with undefined goals and purpose (Peter Eberoth, Competence Development Swedish subsidiary). The subsidiary has a three year plan for retaining and attracting employees, and simultaneously tries to find methods and structured working processes for employer branding.

All subsidiaries see positive effects of having a strong global employer brand, since it reinforces retention and attractiveness, as well as loyalty and motivation, among employees. All markets agree that a global employer brand helps Scania to portray a unique external message and to have a professional profile; there is an attraction of being an international employer. This also gives the possibility to internally share information and best practices among subsidiaries (Daniela Cabral; Peter Eberoth; Peter Janssens; Gail Roberts; Tina Tang).

4.3.2. Knowledge transfer

Global knowledge transfer of employer branding has made the Chinese subsidiary successively start working with the concept (Tina Tang). In the Netherlands, the subsidiary has not been working with the employer branding communication platform since the implementation, and they have not changed their way of working with employer branding (Peter Janssens). The South African subsidiary has been using the platform in a small scale and started to work more externally with employer branding (Gail Roberts). In Brazil, the subsidiary has been using employer branding in their work previously and has now started to work with the platform (Daniela Cabral). The Swedish subsidiary has been working with
employer branding before the platform launch, and they do not see that the platform will change their long-term work but some methods might (Peter Eberothe). The subsidiary has used pictures from the platform in advertising and they will also make sure that the directions from the platform will be applied on their website.

For the global employer branding knowledge transfer to succeed a clear strategic statement needs to exist within each subsidiary; employer branding has to be a specific item in the strategic and business plan (Peter Janssens). The message needs to be repeated for the implementation to develop into changes in subsidiaries. Generally, what is needed is more coordination between different departments, reinforcing and using already existing employer branding tools in each market, and more educational material for schools and universities. The Dutch subsidiary wishes to attain more tools and material from headquarters as support activities with schools and students in the field of employer branding. The subsidiary also wants a more clear defined policy regarding employer branding and cost directions for activities. The Chinese subsidiary would like more support locally regarding how to work with employer branding in practice, such as how to update web sites (Tina Tang). The subsidiary also wishes more hands-on support and direct contact, like with face-to-face meetings, conferences, and study visits.

“*We have the right tool, but not enough support*”

(Tina Tang)

The received guidelines have been perceived as vague and not clear enough for the subsidiary to handle employer branding work locally. The South African subsidiary has the right tools, but what they ask for are clear directives from top management to work more elaborative with the platform and transferred knowledge (Gail Roberts). To increase the employer branding work, face-to-face meetings and conferences with headquarters are the most effective and desirable channels for communicating and transferring knowledge. The Brazilian subsidiary is aware of the platform, therefore they are in the stage of restructuring their process of working with employer branding (Daniela Cabral). It is beneficial to keep contact with headquarters to get support, and mixtures of contact channels are an option. However, what is vital is the time frame between the contacts and initiatives. The Swedish subsidiary has received general support when working with employer branding, but closer cooperation is requested (Peter Eberothe). Follow-up is crucial as well as best practices from headquarters and other subsidiaries to improve the employer branding work. The Swedish subsidiary also wishes to
get more concrete guidance in how to create results and measure the employer branding work. Face-to-face meetings are important and should be used more actively, especially since headquarters and the Swedish subsidiary are closely located.

4.3.3. Culture

Peter Janssens does not see that cultural differences affect the employer branding work in the Dutch subsidiary; in Scania there is no difference in culture when it comes to hiring and retaining employees. Problems due to cultural differences can occur in communication, since Swedes work with consensus decision making and Dutch people rather work with tough negotiations.

Tina Tang emphasizes that Swedish management is more decentralized while in China they have a more centralized approach in management. Within a Swedish company, as Scania, it is perceived that employees are encouraged to learn from their mistakes while in China mistakes are not appreciated. The Swedish culture that is incorporated in Scania thus makes the company an attractive employer in China.

Gail Roberts states that the Swedish culture involves trust and ownership, which is not easily adapted in the South African subsidiary as the business climate is strongly affected by entitlement and multicultural challenges. This in turn, affects the employer branding work in advertisements in sense of that different descriptions and marketing have varying effects towards different target groups.

Daniela Cabral describes that Swedes invest more time in planning than Brazilians do. However, Brazilians have easier to implement projects and they are more tightly coordinated than Swedish people. The differences will not affect the knowledge transfer and employer branding implementation in Brazil, instead the differences can complement each other and make markets collaborate and cooperate more.

4.4. Employer branding from an outside perspective

Fredrik Ekholm, Employer Branding Consultant at Universum, describes global employer branding as homogenous marketing. He also emphasizes the need to adapt locally to specific interest areas and themes valid in certain markets. Anna Dyhre, Employer Branding Consultant, mentions trends within employer branding and especially in global employer branding. It is important for MNCs to have a global employer brand, while simultaneously adapting it to local markets. The importance of aligning the consumer brand with the
corporate brand is emphasized, and using an already strong brand within the company as a foundation for a strong employer brand. It is also important to align the corporate goal and vision with the employer brand for it to work effectively. To implement a successful global employer brand it is important to have a long-time horizon, top management involvement and directives, clear priorities regarding markets approaches and target groups, as well as a clear price range. For the global employer brand to be received and accepted in local subsidiaries, they need to realize their own gain for them to start utilizing it. Also, headquarters has to be knowledgeable regarding the specific markets, for the global employer brand to be implemented successfully (Anna Dyhre).

5. Analysis

In this section we will analyze the literature framework and the empirical findings we collected at Scania. A section follows describing an alternative perspective on employer branding.

5.1. Employer branding

According to the employer branding theory one of MNCs’ most valuable assets is the brand; strong brand with strong values reduces costs and increases financial performance. MNCs’ key values hold the organization together and thereby portray an image and company identity. This scenario is identified at Scania where headquarters strongly emphasizes the brand as its strongest competitive advantage. It is also stressed that the brand must go in line with the company’s core values and corporate culture to create a true brand picture. The Brand Manager at headquarters states that a global well-communicated brand does not only show that Scania is treating its employees alike, it also saves costs. The employer branding theory suggests that employer branding differentiates an MNC from its competitors and promotes the company as an employer. This we recognize in headquarters’ arguments that Scania emphasizes employer branding to create the correct employer image to attract, retain, and develop competence. Subsidiaries agree with the importance of employer branding, however the perception of the goal and purpose of employer branding is considerable lower than at headquarters. Headquarters states that its main challenge is to increase this awareness. We argue that Scania’s employer branding alignment to the corporate culture is strong at headquarters, thereby creating a competitive advantage. However in subsidiaries, we claim
that the unawareness of employer branding has been a weak link for Scania in the process of gaining a global competitive advantage. We can identify the need for the employer branding communication platform in subsidiaries.

The employer branding work in an MNC should be closely connected to the business plan and vision, according to theory. This is also argued by Scania’s headquarters and outside consultants, who claim that it is of great importance to connect Scania’s business strategies with the employer branding work. The subsidiaries argue that what they need is closer connection to employer branding in their business strategies for the concept to be fully implemented and used in the markets. By this, we identify a lack of awareness from headquarters regarding local strategies in subsidiaries, both regarding business and HR, and its connections to employer branding.

According to theory, effective employer branding is seen as a competitive advantage and it must invite collaboration with top management. This since management’s behavior is mirrored in the brand and management support is needed. This we recognize at headquarters where it is clearly stated that attracting the right competence will help Scania maintain its competitive edge. Headquarters states that employer branding should be a prioritized question at management level and a higher involvement of employer branding in leadership will enhance Scania’s success as an employer. We argue that for employer branding to be successfully spread, it needs to be targeted towards leaders and top management. If these target groups understand the importance of employer branding, we argue that it will be easier spread in the rest of the subsidiaries and the whole Scania.

In theory it is stated that for MNCs to succeed with employer branding and build a strong corporate brand, it is important to align the internal and external employer branding. We see that the subsidiaries in Sweden, China, Brazil and the Netherlands have succeeded with this connection, while the South African subsidiary is evolving their external focus. Headquarters is aware of the different employer branding development actions that are needed in subsidiaries, and it is suggested that headquarters should adapt the employer branding knowledge transfer after the market maturity level. We argue that the different evolvement of employer branding in subsidiaries is connected to the different market maturity levels, and we connect this to theory saying that HRM practices are not equally effective to implement in all countries. However by analyzing this situation, we can see that Scania is going in the right direction to develop both the understanding and usage of employer branding in subsidiaries. It is a continuous process and headquarters needs to be alert towards changes in this process and the needs of the markets.
5.2. Knowledge transfer

According to knowledge transfer theory, the transfer process is not finished with the implementation of a practice but continues until the knowledge has become internalized at the receiver unit. This we have seen at Scania’s headquarters, where the knowledge transfer of employer branding is not perceived as completed with the launch of the platform. Three steps for implementing knowledge correctly at Scania are defined, and especially the behavior is emphasized both by headquarters and theory. We argue that it is important for headquarters to have an understanding of the different markets, to succeed with the knowledge transfer process. To internalize transferred knowledge locally, headquarters states that the knowledge has to be confined and adaptable to local prerequisites. If Scania works with guidelines and there is room for adaptation, transfer problems rarely occur, according to headquarters. The subsidiaries have implemented the knowledge of employer branding in varying degrees and we argue that the subsidiaries have come to different stages of internalization. This we connect to Kostova’s (1999) statement that different cultural contexts can make subsidiaries not implementing or only partially implementing a practice. We argue that subsidiaries must realize their gain to implement employer branding fully, and then it can become internalized in all markets.

Knowledge transfer is a mutual exchange of knowledge and creation of new knowledge, according to theory. Headquarters emphasizes finding a balance between standardization and flexibility to adapt the knowledge locally. We identify the platform at Scania as standardized in some parts with a global approach from the start, which we derive to pattern standardization theory. Headquarters and outside consultants state that successful transfers need room for local adaptation. The subsidiaries wish to attain more concrete support from headquarters regarding employer branding. We have identified different wishes regarding employer branding at Scania. Headquarters works with standardization up to a certain level and then it is up to the subsidiaries themselves to adapt, while subsidiaries wish to attain more concrete support to be able to adapt.

Kostova (1999) describes three contexts for success in knowledge transfer. Headquarters describes knowledge transfer as a two-way communication at Scania and a question of push and pull between headquarters and subsidiaries. Having networks and local contacts in the markets is emphasized. Building long-term relationships and trust with local markets are highly important and what Scania needs to focus more on, according to headquarters. The subsidiaries agree that there is a need for close relationships between
subsidiaries and headquarters, and that face-to-face meetings are beneficial to establish relationships and trust. We can link this discussion regarding the importance of relationships to the relational context, which is an important factor for success that Scania has to take into consideration. We draw parallels between the social context to headquarters’ over-confidence that their practices can be implemented everywhere. It is often taken for granted that subsidiaries have the same understanding of knowledge and practices as headquarters. We connect institutional distance to different paces in adaptation and development at headquarters and in subsidiaries. Since knowledge transfers take time, headquarters needs patience to handle this distance. The support subsidiaries wish to gain are more clear directives, tighter contacts, follow-up meetings and sharing of best practices. We argue that if these wishes are received it will diminish the institutional distance and strengthen the social context. An issue that increases the distance is language differences between headquarters and subsidiaries, which we also connect to the organizational context. Headquarters emphasizes their corporate language and that it will diminish problems with knowledge transfers within Scania. Even though Scania has a common corporate language, we believe that there are still cultural differences affecting knowledge transfers that need to be handled. Headquarters also state that it is vital to understand the receiver culture for the employer branding implementation to be successful and not solely base it on European standards. This we connect to theory; the transfer is highly affected by cultural differences and thereby an understanding of the effect it will have on the transfer is necessary.

5.3. Culture

According to theory, culture could be one of MNCs’ sources for competitive advantage. This view, we can link to subsidiaries’ claim that it is beneficial for Scania to utilize cultural differences from their markets in relation to headquarters. The Chinese subsidiary states that Scania is an attractive employer due to its Swedish cultural profile, while in Brazil cultural differences can gain Scania competitive advantages as the Swedish and Brazilian cultures are very much diverse, and by that the cultures are complementing each other. Headquarters states that cultural differences also imply challenges. An obstacle we argue can affect Scania’s future is the European approach in its global communication, which can lead to difficulties when transferring knowledge to other continents. Headquarters identifies one of Scania’s main challenges when communicating globally, as the merger of the corporate culture with the local one in subsidiaries. By this, we argue that culture can be both a
competitive advantage and a challenge. For it to be a competitive advantage, Scania needs to create an awareness of the challenges facing them and how they should be handled.

Hofstede (1983;1994) describes four dimensions of cultural characteristics and we have visualized the characteristics of our five reference markets in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individualism Vs. Collectivism</th>
<th>Power distance High/Low</th>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance High/Low</th>
<th>Masculinity Vs. Femininity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Collectivistic</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Feminine/Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede 1983; 1994)

According to Hofstede’s dimensions, we have identified Sweden, the Netherlands and South Africa as individualist cultures and Brazil and China as collectivistic. Headquarters has experienced the subsidiaries in Brazil and China as easier transferring knowledge to and the employees in these markets tend to do as headquarters says. This we can analyze as one of the benefits of transferring knowledge from an individualistic culture to a collectivistic one. Theory highlights that individualistic cultures view knowledge as individual property while collectivist cultures view knowledge as MNC property. Due to the different views on knowledge, we can identify is a clash regarding who governs the knowledge. This we see as a problem when transferring knowledge from Scania’s Swedish individualistic headquarters to the Chinese collectivistic subsidiary for instance. Headquarters describes the Netherlands as a mature culture opposing change, which according to theory is a typical individualistic characteristic. The opposing of change we can derive to the individualistic view of knowledge as their property, since it is harder to influence all individuals in an MNC than the MNC as a single unit, as it is viewed in collectivism.

Sweden and the Netherlands have low power distance while Brazil, China and South Africa are high in power distance. According to theory, if knowledge transfer is initiated between cultures of different power distance levels problems might occur. In Scania’s case we
can identify problems due to different levels of centralization affecting the knowledge transfer between different cultures. This could take place between Scania’s Swedish headquarters, which is decentralized, and the Chinese subsidiary with strong centralization. In this situation we argue that the different power distance levels have to be taken into consideration by the sender as the hierarchical systems differ in these cultures. An additional example we have identified as problematic due to different power distance levels, is when headquarters is communicating with the Brazilian subsidiary; the message has to be sent from a high managerial level. This can be linked to Sweden having low power distance and Brazil high power distance.

According to Hofstede’s dimensions, we have identified Sweden and China as having low uncertainty avoidance while Brazil, the Netherlands and South Africa have high uncertainty avoidance. According to theory, headquarters has to play an important role in convincing high uncertainty avoidance cultures the need for change. The Dutch subsidiary emphasizes that the Swedish headquarters work with consensus decision making while the Dutch subsidiary work with tough negotiations. This we can derive to the countries’ different levels of uncertainty avoidance and we therefore analyze that a clash appears when transferring knowledge between these two countries. The Brazilian subsidiary states that the Swedish headquarters invest more time in planning than they do in the Brazilian subsidiary. Due to this, projects are perceived to be more easily implemented in Brazil than in Sweden. This we can link to Scania’s headquarters’ consensus decision making and low uncertainty avoidance as based on the Swedish culture.

Sweden and the Netherlands are feminine cultures while China and South Africa are masculine. Brazil is in the middle with equal feminine and masculine tendencies. Theory highlights that there are problems transferring knowledge to masculine cultures. Due to China and South Africa being masculine cultures, headquarters has to play a vital role in making them clearer see the benefits of knowledge transfers, and thereby participating more actively in transfers. Both the Swedish and Dutch subsidiaries have close cooperation with Scania’s headquarters. This ease of knowledge transfer we can identify in the cultures’ origins in the feminine culture dimension. The South African subsidiary exemplifies that the Swedish culture at headquarters is based upon trust while the South African culture is strongly affected by entitlement. This we connect to the countries’ different traits based on their feminine and masculine cultures.
5.4. Another perspective on employer branding

Scania’s employer branding work that has been portrayed in our thesis can be seen from another angle as well; as the managerial way of controlling employees and meanwhile auditing what kind of employer branding knowledge leaves headquarters and how that specific knowledge should be used. Guidelines in the communication platform can be seen as steering the employees’ behaviors and making them identify themselves with the HRM practices set by MNC’s headquarters.

As stated above the most important asset in organizations is the human resources that work within it. Efficiency, profitability, productivity and effectiveness of an organization have been progressively dependent on employees’ ability to identify them with cultural, political and economic subjectivity framed by the organization (Casey, 1999; Costea et al., 2007). Modern HRM practices, such as employer branding are viewed as managerial fashion as it intensifies the soft characteristics of the subjectivity. A perspective we find interesting as a contrast to our study, is that employer branding has become a legitimized logic to control the modern subjectivity of employees. In other words, it can be argued that this is the “new” way of governing human resources to attain human resourcefulness. Among other things this forces employees to identify themselves in some kind of boundlessness, which achieves endless resourcefulness. Criticism should be directed against new HRM practices, like employer branding, and the beliefs that implementation of common organizational views will delimit bureaucracy, intense employee participation, motivation and generally improve the organizational productivity (Casey, 1999). New organizational settings rather make organizations accentuate control even more in a wish to attain productive employees.

Another angle that is interesting to contemplate is that organizations that enter the sphere of modern organizational management among new cultural dimensions are leaving the bureaucratic and controlled business environment behind (Maravelias, 2003). In comparison to bureaucratic organizations, post-bureaucratic companies are flat and organic structured which makes them imaginative and capable to handle varieties of new organizational problems. Further, the author is critical towards MNCs believing that leaving the old fashion management environment behind and instead becoming a post-bureaucratic organization will liberate it from hierarchical control. Post-bureaucratic organizations are described as democratic, since they lack clear boundaries and constantly try to influence aspects of employees’ personalities, they are controlled by decentralized principles and the disciplines aim at maintaining control of employees. Employees themselves do not cause identities,
behaviors and emotions; it is rather the organization’s wish that employees should act in this certain manner. The way people are controlled in modern organizations, with support from culture and HRM practices, is more comprehensive than control performed in bureaucracy ruled organizations. The meaning of reducing the level of hierarchical control in post-bureaucratic organizations is to easier affect employees’ emotional commitment, modes of thinking and identities. Organizations are, by using certain cultural and HRM practices, trying to conquer the very selves of employees and affecting them to think and act in the favor of the organization and not as free individuals. The HRM practices in the post-bureaucratic organizations can therefore be questionable from functional and moral point of view, which we want to highlight to get a full picture of employer branding.

6. Conclusions and implications

In this section we will declare the most important results of our findings based on our research questions. We will also present the implications for managers and for future research. Last, we will describe limitations with the thesis.

6.1. Conclusions

Challenges that affect knowledge transfer of employer branding in manufacturing MNCs can be derived to both the employer branding part and the knowledge transfer part. We can conclude that the degree of awareness regarding the concept employer branding, both in subsidiaries and at headquarters at Scania, affect how well the knowledge transfer will succeed. Especially in the subsidiaries the awareness has to increase, since the markets are not fully involved in headquarters’ employer branding practices and therefore cannot be expected to work as progressively with employer branding as headquarters. This we conclude to two main reasons; first, the employer branding connection to Scania’s business strategies are not yet fully completed, since subsidiaries still request clearer connections to employer branding in their business strategies. Second, employer branding is a prioritized question at management level at headquarters. To get the employer branding work to another level globally, we can conclude that employer branding has to be targeted towards all management levels. This should occur both at headquarters and in subsidiaries, since managers have strong influence on employees’ behaviors. Our conclusion from this, is that headquarters needs an
increased global overview and action plan that will enhance the understanding of how to increase the employer branding competence in the subsidiaries.

In the knowledge transfer part, the challenge is to get subsidiaries to internalize the knowledge transfer of employer branding. We can conclude that what affects the internalization is the balance between standardization and adaptation in the implementation of employer branding in subsidiaries. Our conclusion is that the situation today, where headquarters standardizes up to a certain level and subsidiaries want more support, is not sustainable in the long run. Therefore we believe that Scania has to identify one working method that is accepted by both parties. We can conclude that headquarters needs to adapt the standardization to the markets’ maturity level in form employer branding awareness and technological prerequisites. The level of standardization and flexibility in market approaches should also be determined by the degree of cultural differences between headquarters and the specific subsidiary.

Cultural differences affect knowledge transfer from headquarters to subsidiaries in form of the level of understanding and awareness of the specific cultural differences. What we can conclude from this is that Scania’s headquarters needs to create an awareness of the cultural differences between the markets, and continue to see the global perspective as a starting point in their communication and knowledge transfers. Our conclusion from this is that headquarters should gain this awareness by analyzing the cultural dimensions in each market, utilizing the cultural differences as competitive advantages, and using the corporate culture to overcome the challenges.

**6.2. Managerial implications**

To internalize the global employer branding transfer, we believe that management at Scania’s headquarters has to create additional awareness of the success contexts affecting knowledge transfers. *The relational context* means that representatives from Scania’s headquarters have to be more active out on the field and visit subsidiaries to create close relations and build networks. It is vital to establish relationship with key decision makers in each market to know who the transferred knowledge should be targeted towards. When relationships are established it is easier to understand each other’s needs and what support is needed in the markets. *The social context* means that if the institutional distance is diminished and no prestige is involved, both headquarters and subsidiaries can learn from each other and share best practices more freely. Ways for Scania to get there is to organize additional meetings and
conferences that facilitate that and also build on the relational context. Among other things, we suggest that each country can prepare a presentation of how they work with employer branding, how they want to work with employer branding, and what support they want from headquarters. The purpose with this practice is to share best practices within the organization. If top management, both at headquarters and in each market, understand and emphasize Scania’s global employer branding work the institutional distance will diminish and local markets start to work with the concept. The organizational context means to create a common culture, which we believe Scania can utilize more. Since Scania is operating globally, we can see that there are many cultural challenges and dimensions affecting the MNC. However, due to its strong corporate culture the company can overcome the challenges easier by being aware of the obstacles and emphasizing its core values globally which has been successful in several subsidiaries.

For the employer branding communication platform to be fully globally implemented the markets need varying support. We believe that the support from headquarters can be divided in two steps. First, to help markets that are aware of employer branding and are working with it today; to give them more practical tools and best practices what work in specific markets, for them to develop their work. Second, to help the markets that are unaware of what employer branding is; the support needs to be more thorough and basic and to create an understanding of the concept.

Our study has focused on the case of employer branding at Scania and therefore we believe that our case company has most practical usability of our thesis. However we state that it can still be practically applicable to other manufacturing MNCs that are in similar situations or contemplate implementing employer branding globally. MNCs in general that are interested in working with employer branding on a global level can use our thesis as help when implementing employer branding knowledge in the organization.

6.3. Future Research

Our thesis can be seen as a foundation for future research. We believe that a follow-up study is applicable and interesting both for our case company and other MNCs that contemplate a global employer brand. Examples of research areas could be to investigate how the knowledge transfer of employer branding has progressed at Scania in a few years’ time and what effects the global employer brand has gained for the MNC. We also believe that a critical study of employer branding would be interesting to investigate based on our latter
section in the analysis; to see which long-term effects the concept has on an MNC and how it affects the employees.

6.4. Limitations

Our thesis is delimited as the study is conducted in a Swedish MNC, therefore it is not generalizable to other companies than MNCs. The thesis focuses on a company with a well-developed employer branding strategy and is thereby not applicable to companies that are in the early stages of developing their employer branding work. The knowledge transfer section presented in our thesis focuses on the flow of information from headquarters to subsidiaries, therefore it is delimited to knowledge transfer in this direction. The cultural aspects in the thesis is focused on five reference markets; Sweden, the Netherlands, Brazil, China and South Africa. The thesis is therefore delimited to these areas and is not applicable to other countries.
7. References


Barrow, S. and Mosley, R. (2005), *The Employer Brand: Bringing the Best of Brand Management to People at Work*, Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.


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## Appendix 1: Table of interviewees

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<th>Interviewees</th>
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<th>Interview Theme</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approach</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Thompson</td>
<td>Project Manager, Employer Branding</td>
<td>Employer Branding - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>19th of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikael Person</td>
<td>Brand Manager</td>
<td>Branding, Knowledge Transfer - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>20th and 28th of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Conradson</td>
<td>Senior Vice President HR Support</td>
<td>HR, Employer Branding, Strategies - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>22nd of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Bertilsson</td>
<td>Managing Director Scania Academy</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>22nd of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Engvall</td>
<td>HR Controller</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>26th of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Jobenius</td>
<td>Director of Communications</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>27th of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Lodell</td>
<td>Head of Communications</td>
<td>Communication, Knowledge Transfer, Culture - HQ Perspective</td>
<td>27th of March</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Janssens</td>
<td>Manager Scania Academy Benelux, Dutch subsidiary</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture – Subsidiary Perspective</td>
<td>2nd to 10th of April, 2012</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniela Cabral</td>
<td>HR and Competence Development, Brazilian subsidiary</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture – Subsidiary Perspective</td>
<td>2nd to 24th of April, 2012</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
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<td>Contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Eberoth</td>
<td>Competence Development, Swedish subsidiary</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture – Subsidiary Perspective</td>
<td>19th to 26th of April, 2012</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail Roberts</td>
<td>HR Manager, South African subsidiary</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture – Subsidiary Perspective</td>
<td>17th to 23rd of April, 2012</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tina Tang</td>
<td>HR Manager, Chinese subsidiary</td>
<td>Employer Branding, Knowledge Transfer, Culture – Subsidiary Perspective</td>
<td>16th to 18th of April, 2012</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Dyhre</td>
<td>Consultant Employer Branding</td>
<td>Employer Branding in general</td>
<td>29th of March, 2012</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fredrik Ekholm</td>
<td>Consultant Employer Branding, Universum</td>
<td>Employer Branding in general</td>
<td>21st of March</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Interview guides

**Jessica Thompson**, Project Manager Employer Branding, headquarters

1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania
2. What is your definition of Scania’s employer branding?
3. Tell us about Scania’s employer branding work!
4. What is the purpose of having a global employer brand?
5. What is the purpose of the implementation of a global communication platform? Describe the implementation! Good examples, bad examples?
6. How should Scania proceed in order to become a consistent global employer brand?
7. Which challenges do you see with Scania’s employer branding in the future?

**Mikael Person**, Brand Manager, headquarters

1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania!
2. How do Scania work with communication and branding in general
3. Why is it important to have a consistent brand? How do Scania work with achieving that?
4. What is Scania’s strategy with branding? Good examples, bad examples?
5. What do you argue are the most effective channels of communicating branding across markets, both top-down and bottom-up, at Scania?
6. Do you have any experience of communicating branding into local markets? Any examples?
7. How does the branding work differ in local markets at Scania? Pros and cons?
8. How do Scania communicate corporate and product branding in local markets from headquarters? How involved is headquarters in local branding activities?
9. In what way do you control which branding communication is used in local markets? Which “rules” do you apply to local markets?
10. How do you see to that the transferred knowledge is understood and used properly in local markets? How do you handle rejection or misuse of transferred knowledge in local markets?
11. What is the general strategy when transferring branding knowledge across nations and cultures – standardization or adaptation to local markets? Pros and cons?
12. Has Scania experienced any obstacles due to cultural differences when communicating branding knowledge in different local markets? Good examples, bad examples?
13. We are primarily looking into the markets in Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa – what experience do Scania/you have of communicating branding knowledge into these markets?

14. Do you have any experience of which markets have easier adapting to headquarters’ knowledge transfers (branding practices)? Good examples, bad examples?

15. How do Scania handle language differences when communicating branding? Good examples, bad examples? How do you tackle the problem of misconceptions in the knowledge transfer?

16. Why do you think it is important to establish a global employer brand?

17. What do you think is important to have in mind in order to implement a global employer brand?

18. Do you have any recommendation on how Scania should work with methods and tools in order to have a consistent employer brand?

19. Which challenges do you see of having a consistent brand and at the same time adapting to local cultures? Pros and cons?

20. More practically, which contact points and forums do you have when communicating with local markets? (conferences, telephone meetings etc.) Examples?

Kent Conradson, Senior Vice President HR Support, headquarters

1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania

2. Why is it important for Scania to work with employer branding?

3. In what way do you see employer branding as a part of Scania’s strategic HR-work?

4. How is Scania’s HR and employer branding strategy connected with the business strategy?

5. In what way is employer branding prioritized at management level? Examples? If not, how could it be prioritized?

6. How does Scania’s HR department work with employer branding? Do you know if there is a difference from employer branding work in local markets (Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China, South Africa)?

7. What kind of experience do Scania/you have of transferring knowledge in form of practices between headquarters and subsidiaries? Good examples, bad examples?

8. We are primarily looking at the markets Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, South Africa and China – which experiences do you have of transferring and communicating knowledge into these markets?
9. Has Scania experienced any practical obstacles because of cultural differences in previous situations when transferring knowledge (in Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China, South Africa)? If yes, how have you handled these obstacles? Good examples, bad examples?

10. The process of knowledge transfer involves transfer between headquarters and subsidiaries, as well as adaptations in local markets. In earlier situations, has Scania/you encountered any problems in this process?

11. What is Scania’s general strategy when implementing knowledge into new markets – standardization or adaptation to local markets? Pros and cons?

12. What kind of employees do Scania most value and need, now and in the future?

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**Thomas Bertilsson**, Managing Director Scania Academy, headquarters

1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania
2. What are your thoughts regarding Scania’s work with employer branding?
3. How is Scania’s employer branding strategy connected with the business strategy?
4. In what way is employer branding prioritized at management level at headquarters and in the subsidiaries? Examples? If not, how could it be prioritized?
5. How do you look at the importance of employer branding? Do you have any experience from working abroad regarding that issue?
6. Which benefits do you see with employer branding?
7. What do you consider is the importance for Scania of having a global employer branding work?
8. What do you think is important in order to implement a global employer brand?
9. Which focus areas do you see within employer branding at Scania in the future?
10. How do you think Scania should work with methods and tools in order to have a consistent employer brand?
11. How did you experience knowledge transfers in form of practices from headquarters to subsidiaries when working abroad? Good examples, bad examples?
12. Has Scania/you experienced any practical obstacles because of cultural differences in previous situations when transferring knowledge or practices? If yes, how have you handled these obstacles? Good examples, bad examples?
13. The process of knowledge transfer involves transfer between headquarters and subsidiaries, as well as adaptations in local markets. In earlier situations, has Scania/you encountered any problems in this process?
14. What is Scania’s general strategy when implementing knowledge into new markets – standardization or adaptation to local markets? Pros and cons?
15. What is your experience of how Scania handle language differences when transferring knowledge? Good examples, bad examples? How do you tackle the problem of misconceptions in the knowledge transfer?
16. What kind of employees do Scania most value and need, now and in the future?

**Jenny Engvall**, HR Controller, headquarters

1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania!
2. What are your thoughts about employer branding?
3. How does S&S work with employer branding? Do you know if there is a difference from employer branding work in local markets (Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China, South Africa)?
4. Why do you think it is important to have a consistent brand for Scania as an employer?
5. What are the benefits of having a common branding platform?
6. How can Scania’s headquarters create prerequisites to build a strong employer brand?
7. What does the need for employer branding support (methods and tools) look like in local markets (Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa)?
8. How can Scania transfer knowledge regarding employer branding from headquarters to subsidiaries in order to build a strong employer brand?
9. How can Scania transfer a global employer branding concept (the communication platform) for it to be implemented locally?
10. Which methods and tools can Scania transfer to subsidiaries for them to build a strong employer brand themselves locally?
11. What kind of experience do Sales & Services have of transferring knowledge in form of practices between headquarters and subsidiaries? Good examples, bad examples?
12. What experiences do Sales & Services have of transferring and communicating knowledge into the markets in Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa? Good examples, bad examples?
13. Has Sales & Services experienced any practical obstacles because of cultural differences in previous situations when transferring knowledge or practices in the above markets? If yes, how have you handled these obstacles? Good examples, bad examples?
14. The process of knowledge transfer involves transfer between headquarters and subsidiaries, as well as adaptations in local markets. In earlier situations, has S&S encountered any problems in this process?

15. What is Sales & Service’s general strategy when implementing knowledge into new markets—standardization or adaptation to local markets? Pros and cons?

16. Having cultural differences in mind, which markets have easier adapting to headquarters’ knowledge transfers in form of employer branding practices?

17. Which forums/communication channels do you use to keep in contact with local markets? (Meetings face-to-face, phone meetings, conferences etc.) How do they work? Pros and cons?

18. How do Sales & Services handle language differences when communicating employer branding? Good examples, bad examples? How do you tackle the problem of misconceptions in the knowledge transfer?

19. What kind of employees do Scania most value and need, now and in the future?

Maria Jobenius, Director of Communications, headquarters
1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania
2. What are your thoughts about employer branding?
3. How does Sales & Services work with employer branding?
4. Why do you think it is important to have a consistent brand for Scania as an employer?
5. What are the benefits of having a common branding platform?
6. How can Scania’s headquarters create prerequisites to build a strong employer brand?
7. What does the need for employer branding support (methods and tools) look like in local markets (Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa)?
8. How can Scania transfer knowledge regarding employer branding from headquarters to subsidiaries in order to build a strong employer brand?
9. How can Scania transfer a global employer branding concept (the communication platform) for it to be implemented locally?
10. Which methods and tools can Scania transfer to subsidiaries for them to build a strong employer brand themselves locally?
11. What does the communication look like between headquarters and local markets at Sales & Services?
12. How does the branding work differ in local markets at Scania (Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China, South Africa)? Pros and cons?

13. In what way do you control which branding communication is used in local markets? Which “rules” do you apply to local markets?

14. How do you see to that the transferred knowledge is understood and used properly in local markets? How do you handle rejection or misuse of transferred knowledge in local markets?

15. What do you think is important to have in mind in order to implement a global employer brand?

16. Do you have any recommendation on how Scania should work with methods and tools in order to have a consistent employer brand?

17. Which challenges do you see of having a consistent brand and at the same time adapting to local cultures? Pros and cons?

18. What are the most effective channels of communication, both top-down and bottom-up, at Scania and Sales & Services?

19. Which forums/communication channels do you use to keep in contact with local markets? (Face-to-face meetings, phone meetings, conferences etc.) How do they work? Pros and cons?

20. As a representative from headquarters, how does Sales & Services transfer knowledge and practices to local markets?

21. What is Sales & Services’ general strategy when transferring knowledge and practices across nations and cultures – standardization or adaptation to local markets? Pros and cons?

22. We are primarily looking at the markets Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa– which experiences do Sales & Services have of transferring and communicating knowledge into these markets?

23. Has Sales & Services experienced any practical obstacles because of cultural differences in previous situations when transferring knowledge or practices in the above markets? If yes, how have you handled these obstacles? Good examples, bad examples?

24. The process of knowledge transfer involves transfer between headquarters and subsidiaries, as well as adaptations in local markets. In earlier situations, has Sales & Services encountered any problems in this process?

25. Having cultural differences in mind, which markets have easier adapting to headquarters’ knowledge transfers in form of employer branding practices?
26. How do Sales & Services handle language differences when communicating employer branding? Good examples, bad examples? How do you tackle the problem of misconceptions in the knowledge transfer?

**Helen Lodell**, Head of Communications, headquarters

1. Introduction – shortly describe yourself and your work position at Scania
2. How do Scania work with communication/branding/marketing in general?
3. Why is it important to have a consistent brand? How do Scania work with achieving that?
4. What is Scania’s strategy with marketing and branding? Good examples, bad examples?
5. What do you argue are the most effective channels of communicating across markets, both top-down and bottom-up, at Scania?
6. Which forums/communication channels do you use to keep in contact with local markets? (Meetings face-to-face, phone meetings, conferences etc.) How do they work? Pros and cons?
7. What experience do Scania/you have of communicating marketing/branding into Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa? Any examples?
8. How does the marketing/branding work differ in the local markets above at Scania? Pros and cons?
9. Has Scania/you experienced any practical obstacles due to cultural differences when transferring knowledge to Sweden, Brazil, Netherlands, China and South Africa? Good examples, bad examples?
10. In what way do you control which marketing/branding communication is used in local markets? Which “rules” do you apply to local markets?
11. Why do you think it is important to have a consistent brand for Scania as an employer globally?
12. What are the benefits of having a common branding platform?
13. How can Scania’s headquarters create the prerequisites to build a strong global employer brand?
14. Do you have any thoughts regarding which methods and tools to transfer to local market so they themselves can build a strong employer brand locally?
15. How do you see to that the transferred knowledge is understood and used properly in local markets? How do you handle rejection or misuse of transferred knowledge in local markets?
16. What is the general strategy when transferring branding knowledge across nations and cultures – standardization or adaptation to local markets? Pros and cons?
17. Do you have any experience of which markets have easier adapting to headquarters’
knowledge transfers (branding practices)? Good examples, bad examples?
18. How do Scania handle language differences when communicating branding? Good
examples, bad examples? How do you tackle the problem of misconceptions in the
knowledge transfer?
19. What do you think is important to have in mind in order to implement a global employer
brand?
20. Do you have any recommendation on how Scania should work with methods and tools in
order to have a consistent employer brand?

Peter Janssens, Manager Scania Academy Benelux, Dutch subsidiary
Daniela Cabral, HR and Competence Development, Brazilian subsidiary
Peter Eberoth, Competence Development, Swedish subsidiary
Tina Tang, HR Manager, Chinese subsidiary
Gail Roberts, HR Manager, South African subsidiary
1. Shortly describe yourself and your responsibility areas at Scania.
2. How is employer branding perceived in your subsidiary?
3. Describe what employer branding is for you?
4. Do you work with employer branding today? If so, how?
5. If you work with employer branding, which function or functions are involved? (eg. HR,
communications). Do you cooperate internally between the departments regarding employer
branding? If so, how?
6. Employer branding covers both the internal perspective of retaining employees, and the
external perspective of attracting new employees. What are your thought about this? Is
either of these areas more important too your organization? Why?
7. What positive effects do you see of having a strong, global employer brand?
8. Have you been using the employer branding platform? If yes, which parts? If no, how come?
9. Did you work differently with employer branding before the launch of the communication
platform? If so, how?
10. To what degree can you adapt the content in the platform to your market? How do you do it?
11. What support have you gotten from headquarters regarding:
   - how to work with employer branding?
   - how to adapt the platform to your market?
- in the implementation process of the new platform

12. What kind of support do you want from headquarters regarding employer branding? Are you pleased with the support today? Do you have any suggestions on improvement?

13. Do you think that the support from headquarters is adapted to your culture, local needs and way of working? If no, do you have any ideas for improvement?

14. How do you prefer that the knowledge is transferred to your subsidiary from headquarters? (Face-to-face meetings, telephone meetings, e-mail, exhibitions, conferences, study visits etc.) Why, why not?

15. What are the major cultural differences between Sweden and your subsidiary?

16. How do the cultural differences affect the knowledge transfer between the two countries regarding employer branding?

17. How do you perceive the new employer branding communication platform?

18. In order to build a strong employer brand in your subsidiary, do you have the right tools and support? If no, what kind of tools and support would you like?

19. Anything else you would like to add?

Fredrik Ekholm, Employer Branding Consultant, Universum

1. Describe yourself and your work at Universum.
2. How do your work with employer branding?
3. How do you see that companies are working with global employer branding? Examples?
4. Which trends do you see with companies’ employer branding work? Examples?
5. Why should companies work with employer branding? Pros and cons?
6. Which focus areas do you see within employer branding in the future?
7. What do you think is important to succeed with the implementation of a global employer brand?
8. Have you see in what way cultural differences affect companies global employer branding? Examples?

Anna Dyhre, Employer Branding Consultant

1. Describe yourself and your work with employer branding.
2. How do you see that companies work with employer branding? Examples?
3. Which trends do you see with companies’ employer branding work?
4. Why should companies work with employer branding? Pros and cons?
5. Which focus areas do you see within employer branding in the future?
6. What do you think is important to succeed with an implementation of a global employer brand?

7. How do you think cultural differences affect companies’ global employer branding work? How can you overcome them?

8. In what way do you think headquarters can teach employer branding to subsidiaries? Examples?