

Battle for talent – developing social media employee advocacy to support recruitment communication

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<p>The starting point of this thesis is the shortage of employees in hotel and restaurant industry. StaffPoint is an HR company that is looking for hotel and restaurant workers for its numerous well-known client companies. One solution has been thought to be increasing recruitment consultants and key account manager's presence in company's social media channels. The problem is that employees are not as motivated to participate as it is hoped. The purpose of the development work is to find ways to motivate employees to participate and, in the long run, to build an employer image that attracts more applicants.</p> <p>In this development project constructive study method was used. The research is implemented with survey and two interviews. A survey was conducted among 33 branch's employees to find out what would motivate them to participate. Eighteen of them replied. In the interview StaffPoint's Marketing and Communications Director talks about company's social media strategy. Second interview is a benchmark about Finnair's best practises in employee advocacy. I tested my construct, that was plan for social media training, by discussing with branch managers before the actual training.</p> <p>The literature that is represented in this development project is focused on employee advocacy and employee ambassadorship as the main concept. Based on the literature, the survey and interviews, the training was planned and implemented for all officials in StaffPoint's Horeca branch. After the training, a social media team was assembled from the volunteers. Content in branch's social media channels have been produced regularly since social media team begun its work.</p> <p>The conclusion of the thesis is that competence increases motivation and enables participation. In addition, management support and trust are an important motivator. People who are already active in their own social media are the ones who are the most likely to be involved as corporate social media ambassadors as well. Above all, the company must be a good employer in order for employee advocacy to be possible.</p> <p>This development work is important for corporate communications designers as the channels and ways of communication and content production have increased within companies. The guidance and training of employees in communication matters will certainly increase in the future in the job description of communication specialists.</p>	
Keywords Social media employee advocacy, employee ambassadors, content producing, employer image, social selling	

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1 Introduction

The battle for labour and workers is fierce between companies. Companies try to attract employees through a variety of creative means (Collin 19th June 2019). They try to differentiate themselves, for example, by highlighting company's values, responsibility and flexible job opportunities. In addition to their own websites, companies are present on multiple social media channels. Social media channels are a great opportunity to build a company's own brand and reach big audience, as well as create an employer image. The audience is more interested in real people on social media channels than in the communications department's messages from faceless companies. Therefore, more and more companies are starting to develop their own employee advocacy programs. A good employer image has an advantage in recruitment. This is the reason several companies have included an employee advocacy in their recruitment marketing toolkit. Employee advocacy is one way to develop the employer image.

Thought of Brito (2018, 4) supports the idea of employee advocacy: when companies are automating their functions, people want to see humans behind the brands. Social media and its wide networks give brands creative possibilities to show their faces through their employees. Companies are developing employee advocacy programs to get all the possible networks and faces in use. According to Walden & Kingsley Westerman (2018, 606) with the help of employee advocacy, organizations can be humanized. Employee advocacy has an important role in social recruiting.

Employee advocacy means that company's employees act as company representatives in their own networks and share company's messages and content in their own channels. It means also that employees speak positively about their organizations in public and recommend their organizations for others (Walden & Kingsley Westerman 2018, 606). According to Brito (2018, 3) every time an employee in a company "engages with a customer, prospect, friend or family member, they are representing the company they work for." Employee advocacy can also be content created by employees themselves and shared in company's official social media channels.

J.A. Walden and C.Y. Kingsley Westerman (2018, 605) say that employee advocacy is particularly important today, because employees now have access to large networks via social media, and their actions can greatly impact a firm's reputation. To make people take extra step of telling good things about their employer to their networks, employees need to feel committed. It is important they get information they need, so internal communications have a big role in supporting employee advocacy.

According to Brito employee advocacy is important because it is “unlike any other marketing channel”. It gives possibilities to companies from social selling to social recruiting. It is also the only channel that has possibilities to grow the whole organizations return of investment (ROI). (Brito 2018, 4).

Brito sees both benefits and risks in employee advocacy. He thinks that employees with good intentions can miscalculate what is appropriate for online networks and what is not. Employer’s mistrust shows and it is not encouraging. If employer thinks like Brito here describes, they need to make sure employees get all the information and training they need. (Brito 2018, 3.) Employees also gain from employee advocacy: According to Brito (2018, 6) “They are able to grow their social following, make new industry connections, and gain recognitions for their ideas and work.”

To be successful in the employee advocacy, that is the important way of marketing, companies need to communicate to their employees and make them feel committed to the company. Brito also suggests that to be successful in employee advocacy, employees need a program that they can follow. (Brito 2018, 3.)

Social media training is very important for employee advocacy to work the best way possible. According to Brito (2018, 6) training should be a starting point for employee advocacy programs. “Before a program can really take off, employees need to feel confident to share on social media on behalf of the company. The best training programs provide employees with the guidance, safety, and tools necessary to start sharing.” (Brito 2018, 7.)

Brito refers to different brands that have done successful training: Autodesk, a leading software and design company with over 2000 employees. Their marketing team made a video for training employees on social sharing. The training video explains the benefits of the program and simple guidelines for sharing on behalf of the brand. Other brands prefer to do personal training. He mentions Capitol one that holds regular sessions every other week. (Brito 2018, 7.)

The next chapter introduces the context of the study and the commissioning organization.

1.1 Case StaffPoint

This thesis is commissioned by StaffPoint. StaffPoint is nationwide recruitment company, and its key function is to find talents to work for its customers. StaffPoint is employer of 300 officials and 12000 temporary workers. StaffPoint has employees and customers from multiple areas. Temporary workers at StaffPoint are working in customer service in a contact center, construction sites, hotels and restaurants, ICT, logistics, manufacturing, offices and as experts in different fields and security. StaffPoint does straight recruitment for these branches too.

StaffPoint has the marketing and communication team of four members and the author of this thesis is one of them. I work as Content Specialist. The members of the team of StaffPoint have shared branches they serve between them. I serve mainly Hotel- and restaurant branch. Especially this branch has had difficulties in finding enough skilled staff. There has long been talk of a labour shortage in the restaurant sector. Competition between employers is fierce and all means to find talent have been put in place. Low wages in the sector, the seasonal nature of the work and the poor attractiveness of the sector have been identified as the causes of labour shortages. In 2014, almost 3,500 people applied primarily for the accommodation and restaurant sector, and next year in 2015 there were only more than 1,500 applicants. (Collin 19th June 2019.)

Social media has grown as an influential channel for recruiting and finding talent for companies. Companies are launching employee advocacy programs of different kind to show to the rest of the world what it is like to work for them. With presence in social media, companies are also reaching out for people who are not actively looking for work, but they are thought as passive job seekers. (Dutta 2014, 99.) StaffPoint is also taking part to this social media presence and developing its own advocacy programs and guidelines.

The idea of this Thesis came when management of the Hotel and restaurant branch have wondered by what means new talents could be found and activated to apply for open jobs. Horeca branches customers are big and well-known restaurant chains. Need for big amount of seasonal work is large, especially during summertime, little Christmas time and in Lapland during winter. The purpose of this thesis is to develop recruitment marketing to be more humanized that it would attract more applicants and build more an attractive employer image. The Horeca branch's own social media channels have posts about open

jobs every day, but they lack images and stories about staff who is looking for workers: recruitment consultants and key account managers. Before Covid pandemic temporary workers took part of employee advocacy too. They were rewarded when they sent 9 pictures to content specialist to be posted on branches social media channels. The purpose of this thesis is to activate this time especially StaffPoint's own Horeca officials for more active social media employee advocacy.

This thesis focuses on StaffPoint's Hotel and restaurant branch's HR-experts as employee advocates in social media. A lot of work has already been done in the development of social media activity and for the participation of employees in the company. There have been campaigns of a different kind to support advocacy but participating isn't as active as it is hoped to be. The reasons for low participation have been said to be lack of time, motivation and skills.

Management's solution this implementation problem is to increase the training and development of ways to motivate employees in participation. Literature also supports managements thoughts. According to Sundberg (2017, 589.) to make advocacy possible, employees require information about the use of different social media channels. Advocacy also requires different skills of employees, like taking a photo and making a short video and publishes them. Employees need guidelines, direction and policies from the company and about the brand. (Sundberg 2017, 589). Digital transformation brings new dimensions to everybody's work.

According to Leena Ojala (2018) learning new things in today's work life need agile ways and creativity. In my opinion, it is important in nowadays work life to think how we can learn new things in fast paced and changing work environment that needs to learn new continuously (Ojala 2018, 15). Success really depends on people and their skills and ability to learn new things. (Ojala 2018, 9). Learning happens at the workplace and alongside the work. When work is developed, learning new is happening. When new skills are applied to work, the workplace is renewing too (Ojala 2018, 17). In my opinion Ojala's idea about renewing workplace could be one of the motivators for more committed employees.

1.2 Thesis Structure

In Chapter 1, there is a short introduction to employee advocacy. Digital transformation and automation have created the need for human faces: People want to talk to people behind logos. Employee advocacy gives faces to firms and in the same time companies get wide networks in use, when employees share company's messages and recommendations between their family and friends and other stakeholders. To work properly, social media employee advocacy needs a program that employees can follow.

In Chapter 2, I will present the research problem, the objectives and the scope. The research problem will tell that although the importance of social media employee advocacy has been recognized for both StaffPoint's own brand and customer companies and efforts have been made to activate employees on the subject, the participation has not been as good as branch management is hoping for.

The objective of the work is to activate and engage employees in content production. Both by sharing content and especially by producing their own, unique content. The aim is to give a face and involve StaffPoint's officials, recruitment consultants and key account managers, in the social media employee advocacy and develop an employer image over a longer period of time. One long term objective is also to expand recruitment communications and gain visibility for job vacancies in the client companies. The scope of the thesis is hotel and restaurant branch and its officials and the branch's own social media channels, Facebook and Instagram. The perspectives and concepts of the thesis are employee advocacy – social media employee advocacy, employee ambassadorship, employer branding and content creation / co-creation.

In Chapter 4 and 5, I will present the research method and research process. The research method is the constructive method and the result will be a plan for training. The result is a useful construct that can be used to solve a real problem. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 65.) To create the new construct, is needed both theoretical information and new empirical information. Theoretical information was collected from the literature about employee advocacy as a key concept. Empirical information was collected from employees through the survey. A survey was conducted between Horeca branch's officials. There was also information collected from two interviews. First interview is about StaffPoint's Marketing and communications director's Mariliina Karppo's thoughts about employee advocacy as part of StaffPoint group's marketing strategy. Second interview is

a case study. Heidi Lemmetyinen from Finnair's communication shares her insights of the social media employee advocacy in Finnair.

In Chapter 6, the results of the thesis will be presented. In results, I will talk about the progress that has happened among Horeca branch's officials. I will describe actions that have been made after the development project. I will describe the current situation of officials' social media employee advocacy.

In Chapter 7, I will reflect learnings from the thesis to my experiences about social media employee advocacy during this development process and as part of recruitment marketing.

2 Objectives

In this chapter, I will describe the research problem, the objectives and the scope of the thesis project.

2.1 Research problem

Importance of the social media employee advocacy has been recognized in StaffPoint for both the sake of its own brand and from the point of view of the customer companies. Marketing team has been tried to activate the officials with trainings, rewards and campaigns, but participation is not as active that Horeca's management is hoping for. To reach all the possible applicants and good candidates for open jobs, the management of the Horeca branch want to change the situation and find ways to activate its officials.

StaffPoint's officials work as recruitment consultants and customer relationship managers. There are trainings kept on regularly about how to use social media as part of the recruitment marketing. There have been campaigns of a different kind to support official's social media employee advocacy. Horeca branch has had its own campaigns and competitions to support participation for the employee advocacy and recruitment marketing. In campaigns for example all Horeca's officials around Finland were asked to send pictures about their city and about themselves. Content Specialist did posts from these pictures and wrote texts to accompany pictures. During Christmas time, officials sent pictures from Christmas preparations. There has also been the "liking" contest, where officials who do most of the likes on branch's social media channels wins a small price, like a bottle of sparkling wine, once a month. Managers of the branch hoped that officials would take part of the social media employee advocacy more regularly. Question in monthly meetings between managers is that how to get officials to be more active in the social media employee advocacy. Managers thought the ways to reward officials and they were asking their teams that what they would need for participating? Lack of skills and guidelines seemed to be the answer to this question.

2.2 Objectives and expected outcomes

The main objective of the thesis is to motivate Horeca branch's officials to participate in social media employee advocacy on a regular basis. The primary objective of the work is to activate and motivate officials in employee-driven content production. The goal is for them not only to distribute job postings, for example, but also to produce their own, unique content. Purpose is also to expand recruitment communications and gain visibility for job vacancies in client companies.

In the longer term, the aim is to support the brand and employee image of the client company at the strategic level and the recruitment of client companies at the operational level through involvement and employee referral.

The expected outcome of the thesis is a framework for the employee advocacy model and additionally, increased motivation and competence in social media employee advocacy amongst officials, recruitment consultants and key account managers.

Main RQ is “How to engage employees in social media employee advocacy”

This question was the subject of many meetings of Horeca's managers, and the purpose of this thesis is to answer this question.

Sub questions are

SQ 1 Why are employees not motivated by social media employee advocacy currently?

The situation at the start is that there has been talk about factors that prevent participation among officials. Officials are saying they lack time for participation, or they don't know how they should resource time for participating. They also tell that they don't know what to post and they lack ideas. Officials were also uncertain about their skills of producing content and sharing it in social media channels. These factors were expected that are preventing their participation. To answer this question, I conducted a survey between employees. I also did an interview of marketing and communications director of StaffPoint to get her ideas about employee advocacy as a part of StaffPoint groups social media strategy. I will plan a training for officials from the base of the survey and interview.

SQ2: What kind of competence is needed in employee advocacy?

I will find answers to this question from the survey. The survey serves as the basis for the training plan. Also, I hope to find answers to this question from literature.

SQ3: What motivates employees to get involved in employee advocacy?

All the efforts, trainings and rewards, haven't been working to create long term motivation and activity in employee's social media advocacy and participation. I hope to find ways from the survey and from experiences of the organized training. The survey and the training are the basis of setting up of social media team.

2.3 Scope and limitations

The scope of the thesis is hotel and restaurant branch of StaffPoint and its officials and the branch's own social media channels, Facebook and Instagram. I don't talk about all officials or other branches and their perspectives in this thesis. Training will be only for Horeca branch's recruitment consultants and key account managers. Concepts of the thesis are employee advocacy, employee ambassadorship, employer branding and content creation / co-creation. When I speak employee advocacy, I speak especially social media employee advocacy.

3 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I will study the key concepts of this thesis on the basis of literature. The key concept for this study is employee advocacy. Employer brand and the employer image will develop with the help of successful employee advocacy. Employer brand and the employer image have various definitions in the field of HR and marketing. In this thesis I will focus on the term employer image as external employer brand that can be mapped to an organization's employer image. External brand is defined "outsider's mental representations of attributes related to an organization as an employer". External employer branding is then considered to be a synonym for employer image management. (Lievens & Slaughter 2016, 410.)

3.1 Employer image and importance of WOM

In many papers (Sakka & Ahammad 2020, 8, Lievens & Slaughter 2016, 419) employees communication in social media is seen as WOM (the word of mouth) communication. It means telling positive experiences and messages about employer to employee's own network like family and friends (Sakka & Ahammad 2020, 8).

Corporate managers are interested in how their company is shown on social media (i.e., WOM) and how important stakeholders perceive their business. (Lievens & Slaughter 2016, 419). That is no surprise, taking look at the number of users in social media, social media is everywhere; Twitter alone has 350 million monthly active users (Statista 2020) and Facebook have over 2.6 billion monthly active users (Clement 2020). At StaffPoint managers are also interested company's reputation. The company conducts reputation research annually. This research is used as a basis for communication strategy development.

On social media, people talk online on every theme that exists, also brands and companies (Lievens & Slaughter 2016, 419). "The word of mouth" has always been said to be the best way of advertising the brand and its products or services. On the era of social media, this word of mouth has gone online to be "the word of mouse". Before, it has been information that was changed in social interactions and now WOM happens through social media. WOM is defined as an "interpersonal communication, independent of an organization's direct marketing activities, about an organization and its products, and about what it is like to work there". (Van Hoye & Lievens 2007, 373.) The word of mouse

is communication intensified because in internet the speed is so enormous. Published material is reachable for everybody in a couple of seconds through the search engines. This is where the training of the employees can help to prevent the mistakes in social media. Training makes people more effective, responsible and confident in what they share in social media. (Sundberg 2017, 408.) This is reason why Horeca's managers are planning training for HR-experts of the branch: to create confidence for sharing content in social media. According to Lievens and Slaughter (2016, 419) social media information and WOM affect employer images. By employee advocacy programs of different kinds, corporates try to encourage their customers and employees to recommend their brand and products or services and use WOM for the benefit of the company.

3.2 Staff roles in creating brand identity

According to the literature, employees have a big role in creating a desirable employer image. If a company wants to create a fascinating brand, it has to take into account both internal and external stakeholders, reminds Chernatony and Harris (2000, 269.) Brand's emotional values are transmitted through its employees. If leaders recognize employees meaning in implementing brand's identity, corporates have major competitive advantage in their hands. (Chernatony & Harris 2000, 273.) Horeca branch has recognized this competitive advantage and they want to take it in use now. The identity reputation gap model (Figure 1) represents the idea behind employee advocacy. According to this model, the more closely inner stakeholders commit and identify themselves with the company, the more consistent is the brand identity. It also explains that narrower is the gap between the brand's own identity and how other stakeholder sees the company, the better is the company's reputation. (Chernatony & Harris 2000, 273.)

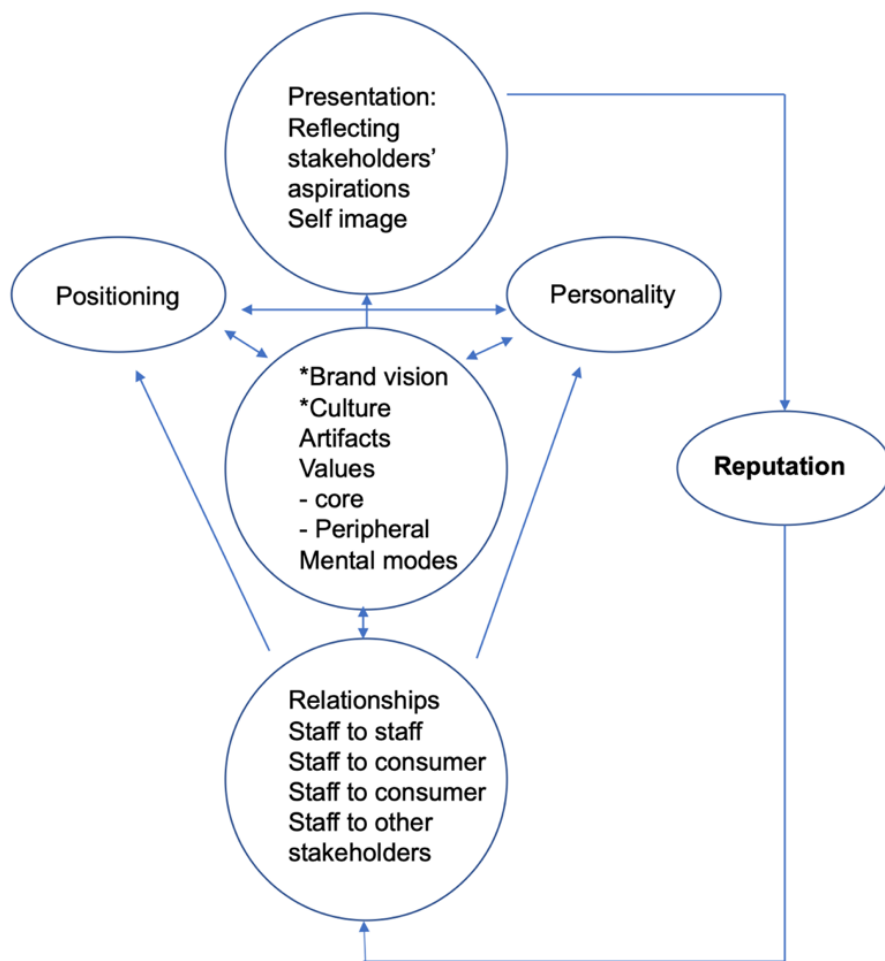


Figure 1: The Identity Reputation Gap model of brand management (Adapted from: Chernatony & Harris 2000, 273)

3.3 Employee advocacy and social selling

Employees are trustworthy source when people are looking for information about the corporate (Brito 2018, 19). An appealing employer image can be built with the help of employee advocacy programs. One definition for employee advocacy is the promotion of the employer by its employees. For example, if employee does a Facebook post about coffee break at work: “Latte a day by the computer keeps me going, thank for the (employer) great coffee machine!” This is one example of employee advocacy. Also sharing corporates updates in LinkedIn is other way of employee advocacy.

Term *social selling* is a good term to describe the goals and means of employee advocacy. These can be seen also as synonyms. Companies who take social selling as business models are growing over their competitors (Brito 2018, 85). In my experience, competitors' actions on social media are followed with extra attention. In my opinion, social media makes competition even harder because everyone is competing about attention with different kind of content.

Many employee advocacy programs end up sharing same branded content between many employees. Even if it is relevant, it appears as spam (Brito 2018, 73). According to Brito (2018, 73) employees should encourage them to tell their own stories and create content that is appealing and relevant to them. At StaffPoint there is HubSpot, the marketing automation program, in use for sharing this kind of branded content form HR-expert's own personal LinkedIn accounts. This shares opinions inside the company. Some employees think it is a spam and some keeps it as an important way to be visible in LinkedIn. The idea and assumption of Marcom team is that if employees share other content too, these automated contents won't be seen as s spam. Branded company content doesn't reach as many people organically as it used to at the beginning of social media. Use of employee's own networks is one way to reach visibility organically. If company wants to reach people in social media, it has to pay for it these days. (Brito 2018, 74.) My experience supports Brito's thoughts. The amount of the money spend on Facebook and Instagram adverts rises regularly. Facebook consult once had said to me that budget for day shouldn't be under 10 euro, nowadays the daily price recommended is between 20-30 euro.

3.4 Employee advocacy requires engaged employees

Employees can become advocates if they feel an engagement towards their work. It is crucial to have leaders who uplift and empower their teams. Employees who are engaged in their jobs needs appreciation. They need to feel they are part of something bigger (Brito 2018, 63). In my opinion, finding jobs for people is very meaningful work. Still, I would like to see HR-experts also as a part of something even bigger than our company. According to Brito (2018, 63) employee advocacy programs should be started with already highly engaged employees (Figure 2). True employee advocacy is more than asking employees to like or share. It is also important that employees don't see advocacy as a burden, obligation or time away from their actual work. (Brito 2018, 86.) Training for HR-experts

will be available for everyone in HoReCa-branch, but my assumption is that social media team and program after training will consists of the most committed employees.

Employees also need to know the reason why employer wants to train employees to be advocates. They want to know the benefits of the advocacy for them. For example, people in HR want to make the company appealing for the best candidates. Also sharing company content in their networks should be easy and content interesting for them. (Brito 2018, 65.) In my opinion Marcom team has to remind employees about benefits of advocacy more frequently. Employees need training and the brand supported tools for being successful in employee advocacy and have ability to create shared value for the brand (Saleem & Iglesias 2016, 52). I thought about buying tripods to motivate and help employees who will participate in social media team and the employee advocacy program after training.

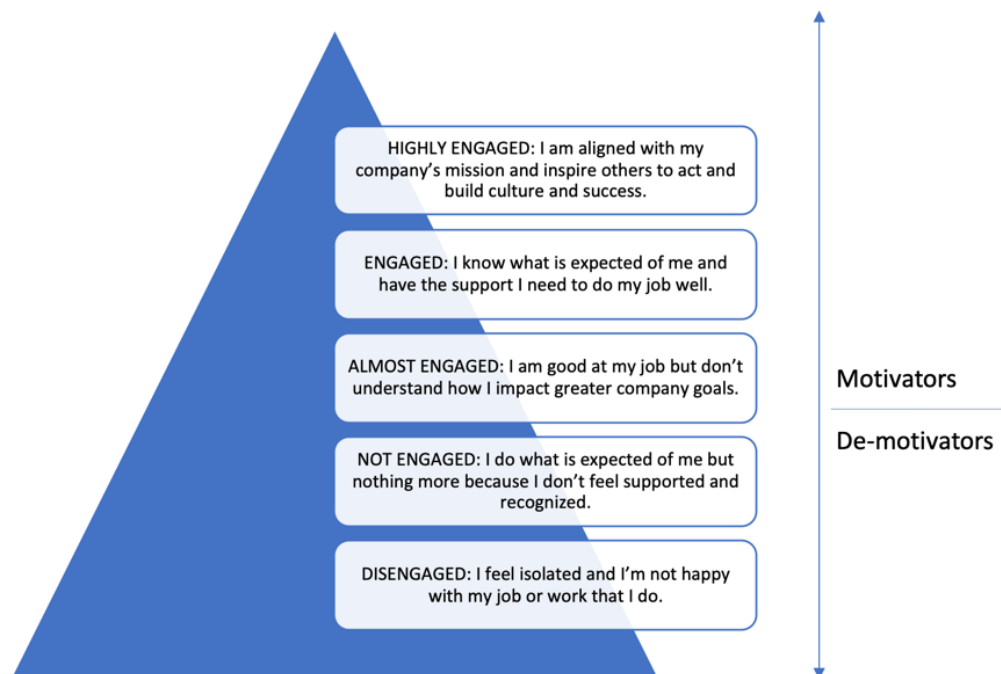


Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of the need for the employee engagement (Brito 2018, 61, Scancapture Ltd).

According to Sundberg (2017, 484) employee engagement is determinative part of functional corporate culture. An employee engagement affects straight levels of employee advocacy. The desire to promote employer free willingly requires positive workplace culture. An engagement will take place only if employees feel valued, respected and trusted.

Trust and credibility are built by making employees believe that their voice matters (Sundberg 2017, 529). There is also one interesting model that supports this thought (Figure 3). This model is a model of the marketing approach to management. It has three stages: 1. Establishing the employer-employee relationship. 2. Developing and maintaining the employee-employer relationship and 3. Individual and organizational outcomes. (Schweitzer & Lyons 2008, 557). Employee advocacy is seen here as the outcome of well-developed and maintained high-value-employment relationship.

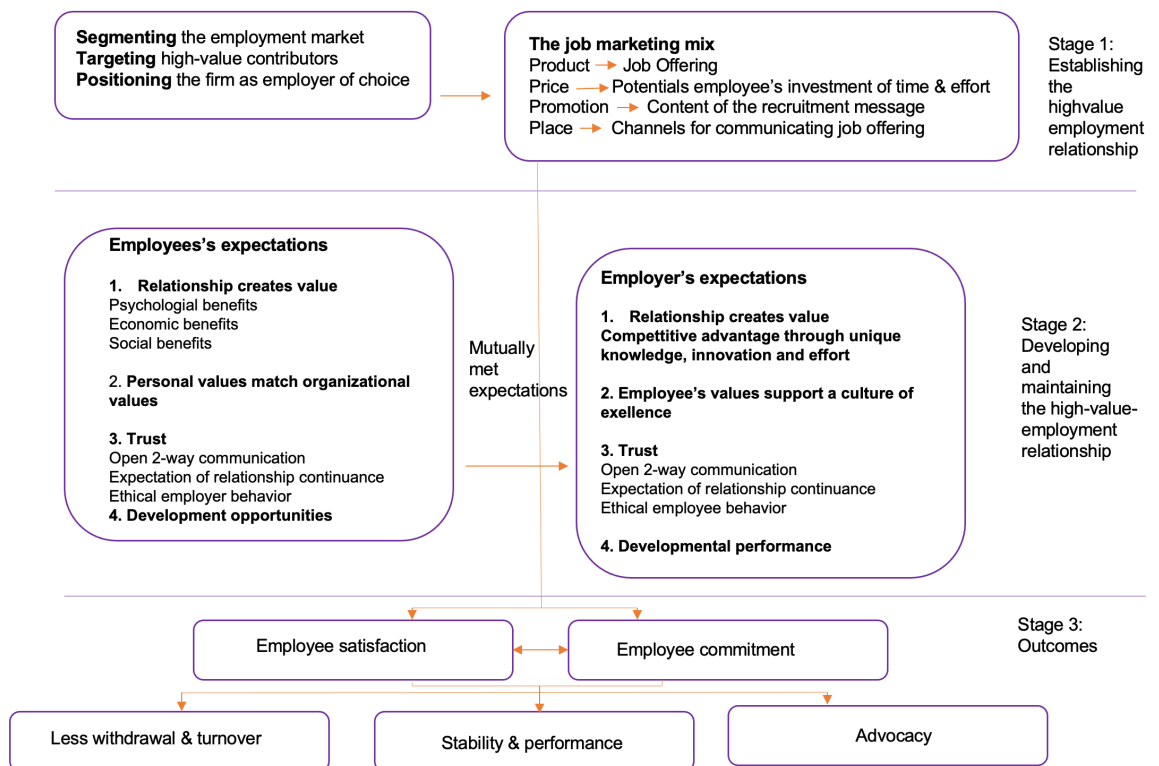


Figure 3. A model of the marketing approach to management. (Adapted from: Schweitzer & Lyons 2008, 557).

3.5 Social media as part of Horeca branch's recruitment actions

In this chapter, I describe the social media channels and their role in StaffPoint's Horeca branch's recruitment actions.

Social media change the way recruitment functions. According to Dutta (2014, 103) it should not be seen as "the recruitment strategy" but more like part of the recruiting strategy. One of the fastest-growing recruiting trends in recent years has been social recruiting, using social media networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to find and recruit talent. Recruitment through social media helps companies to reach the big pool of potential employees (Deshati 2017, 3). In my experience, I would add Instagram to this list of networks.

Horeca branch does active recruitment on its social media channels. It has its own Facebook channel that has 2256 followers and Instagram that has 597 followers (6th June 2021). StaffPoint group has multiple other social media channels, but this thesis focuses on Horeca branch. Both channels are called "Huikee Horeca StaffPoint". As staff leasing company, there are plenty of jobs. Employer in these jobs can be either StaffPoint or its customer. Management of Horeca branch have noticed that open job post on social media channels as only content don't build the employer image of StaffPoint and the Horeca branch. This is the reason why management of the branch would like to do so called passive recruiting on social media channels by developing its employer image using employee advocacy.

Social media can be used in influencing applicant attraction and improving employer branding and to target different talent pools. Through social media it is possible to provide information about the employer that applicant use when they process information about job choices. This is the reason why social media can be used both for active and passive recruitment, but according to Dutta (2014, 97) more significantly for passive recruitment. At the moment Horeca branch is using social media channels mostly in active recruitment by posting about open jobs when the search time is in progress. After training its HR-experts, management expects more content in social media channels that would support the employer image and passive recruitment. Also, according to Dutta (2014, 97), social media should be thought as the combination of recruitment channels and tools for managing the employer brand and the reputation. Passive job seekers can also be proactively engaged through social media channels. The targeted and personalized

engagement with the possible future employees makes bigger candidate loyalty for the company than competitors have (Dutta 2014, 99). According to Dutta (2014, 98), social media isn't as recommended at all levels and positions. It is advised to think about suitable target segments. For example, according to Schweitzer and Lyons (2008, 560) executives and professionals are reached better through personal networks and headhunting. In my experience, at Horeca industry people are often young, so social media is seen place to reach them.

The social media strategy (Figure 4) tells the "stage" that company can use when choosing the channel for its recruitment support actions. For example, if social media strategy is active recruitment, the stage is company's website and career page. This is then linked to sharing of active jobs in different portals and social media sites like Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook (Dutta 2014, 100.) I would add also Instagram here. StaffPoint has its own websites and partner networks (Oikotie, Monster, MOL) where jobs are marketed. In Dutta's opinion (2014, 98) companies shouldn't discard conventional recruitment channels and operations without the careful thinking of its strategy.

According to Dutta (2014, 100) if the meaning of using social media is to develop employer branding, the stage is blog site on the company's website and LinkedIn and Facebook (I would also add Instagram here like I said earlier). Dutta also suggests that suitable content are updates on current events, the achievements of the company, the employee testimonials and insights of the company culture. The training that is created on the basis of this thesis, will concentrate on this part "the employee testimonials and insights of the company culture". The result of employer branding in social media can also be measured for example by counting the number of followers and impressions on social media channels, see Figure 4 (Dutta 2014,100).

Social media strategy	Suggested Stage	Suggested Channels	Appropriate metrics for ROI measurement
Employer Branding	Blog site	Career page in company website	Number of unique visits company website No. of return visits No. of times bookmarked Search ranking Ratio of Unique: Return visitors Source of traffic (search engines/other links/sites)
	Social Network	Facebook/LinkedIn Page	No. of - reviews/ratings and valence (+/-) No. of members/fans No. of impressions and bookmarks Total reach and viral reach Source of traffic (search engines/other links/sites)

Figure 4. Suggested Relevant Metrics for Social Media Recruitment. (Adapted from Dutta 101.)

4 Methodology

I chose to use constructive methods in this thesis because the result will be a plan. The constructive method is a good approach when the outcome is a product, system, a model or a plan. The result is the useful construct that can be used to solve a real problem. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 65.) The problem of the Horeca branch at StaffPoint is how to motivate employees to participate more in social media content producing and developing the employer image with the help of employee advocacy. There had been contests and other approaches to develop participation but, there was no wished results. To create a new construct, there is need for both theoretical information and new empirical information. Theoretical information was collected from literature that has employee advocacy as a key concept. Empirical information was collected from employees through the survey and the interview of StaffPoint's Marketing and communication Director Mariliina Karppo and Finnair's Editor in chief social and owned media Heidi Lemmetyinen.

4.1 Constructive study as a method

The goal of constructive study is to make solution for a practical problem. This is the reason I chose this method, because our problem is that we don't find ways to motivate officials for the participation of social media employee advocacy. This solution should ground in theory and bring new information for business, and I think this study will also bring new information. All constructs that are made on the basis of development work are evaluated through their practical benefit. Constructive study is planning, the modeling of concepts, and implementation and testing of models. Practical actors like management of the company participates actively to make solution. The whole management of Horeca branch and including StaffPoint's marketing manager are participating in this development project of this thesis. Management have searched for solution for a long time and this development project is carried out on their initiative. Communication and interaction between management and research providers are important things. (Ojasalo et al. 65.)

The constructive approach has a pragmatic notion of truth, it is true what works. (Ojasalo et al. 66). The process is illustrated in Figure 5. In the process, finding solution require theoretical arguments. Constructive study is based on the new ideas and innovations and

new ideas should be pre-tested before actual testing. Documenting different steps is important. Used methods should be reasoned. (Ojasalo et al. 67.)

Methods used in constructive study can vary. Because the goal is to develop something new, it is good to collect material with different ways. Observation, group discussions, the survey and interview are typical methods in this approach. It is also important to know needs of the users of the outcome. The developer or the researcher has the role of change agent, and she/he is supporting a person in the learning process. (Ojasalo et al. 2015, 68.) I will use the survey and interviews as methods. With the survey, I will get to know needs of the users that are Horeca's officials who will participate training as the outcome of the survey.

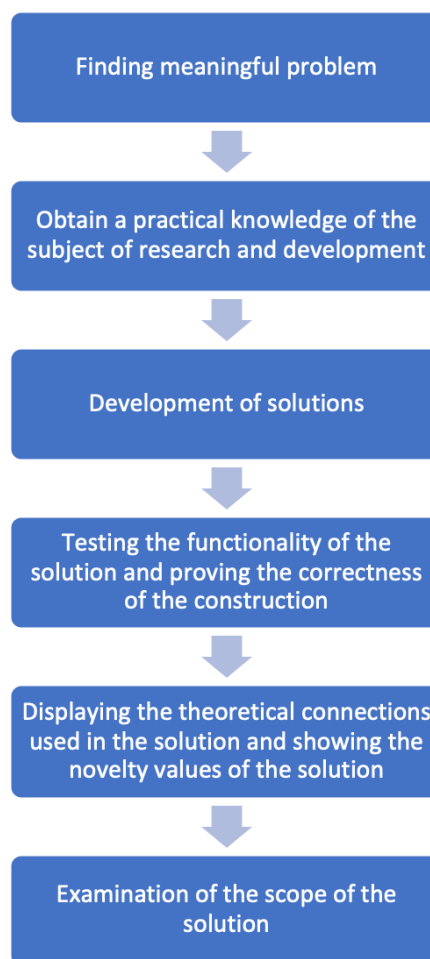


Figure 5. Process of constructive study (Adapted from: Ojasalo et al. 2015, 67)

4.2 How the research was done and material collected

In this thesis, the data was collected using qualitative methods. Data was collected using the employee survey qualitatively. Management of the branch and marketing manager was actively involved in this step and they supported the survey as a good launch for a development project. The survey was done using Questback Essentials survey program. With the survey, I will find out learning the needs and motivation of employees (Figure 6).

With literature, interviews, the online survey and testing I will define goals for training day, and I will make the plan for the training.

Figure 6. The plan for the data collection method and the process.

Method	Objective	Participants	Timeframe
Online survey	Obtain practical knowledge of learning needs of employees	33 Horeca branch employees	Survey was conducted 26.3.2020
Development of solutions	To define goals for training and create study plan for workshop.	Researcher	May 2020
Testing	Testing the solution with 1-2 employees	1-2 employees of horeca branch	July 2020

Interview 1	To get the information of company's social media strategy in whole.	Chief of Marketing and communications Mariliina Karppo StaffPoint	November 2020
Training	Organize workshop that gives employees knowledge and skills to participate employee advocacy	33 Horeca branch employees	March 2021
Follow-up email	To gain information from participants, find out if employees found workshops useful.	Everybody that participated workshop.	March 2021
Interview 2	To do benchmarking with company that has succeeded well in employee advocacy	Editor in chief social and owned media Heidi Lemmetyinen from Finnair	May 2021

5 Empirical research

Collection of information in this thesis is shared in three stages. First stage was the survey that was conducted among Horeca officials. Second stage is the interview with StaffPoint's Marketing and Communications Director Mariliina Karppo. Third stage is the benchmarking case made from Finnair.

5.1 Survey

The goal of the survey is to find out the current state of employees' skills, the state of mind and obstacles and aspirations towards social media employee advocacy. Survey and its questions (Appendix 1) were done with Questback Essentials questionnaire tool and link to the survey was send to 33 Horeca branch's employees. Eighteen, 55.5 % of them replied to the survey. The survey was made based on discussion with Horeca's managers. Survey results will be used as the base of planning social media training for employees. I will answer research questions in this chapter where results are analyzed.

5.1.1 Analyzing results

Social media is part of people's everyday life. Results of the survey showed that most common social media channels were in use among employees. Facebook was the most familiar to everybody (94.1%). Also, Instagram (88.2%) and LinkedIn were used very much (82.4%). On the basis of the survey, these seem to be familiar to almost everyone.

Main RQ: "How to engage employees in social media employee advocacy"

I found the answer to the main research question. One goal and common reward for employee advocacy should be set on the basis of the survey. Assumption of the branch management was that employees would be more motivated about money, but the result of the survey showed the different direction. The result shows that people think it is the part of their job to be active in social media and it helps them finding applicants to open vacancies. In my opinion, this is the result of the whole company's long-term social media strategy where the participation of employees is communicated to be important for a long time by company's management. Also, other research by Hinge research institute (2015) showed that communication about the importance of social media is big motivator for employee advocacy. Survey results also showed that employees hope interaction for

training. Interaction could also be part of their content creation. In my opinion, creating pictures and small video is more fun with workmates than done by oneself.

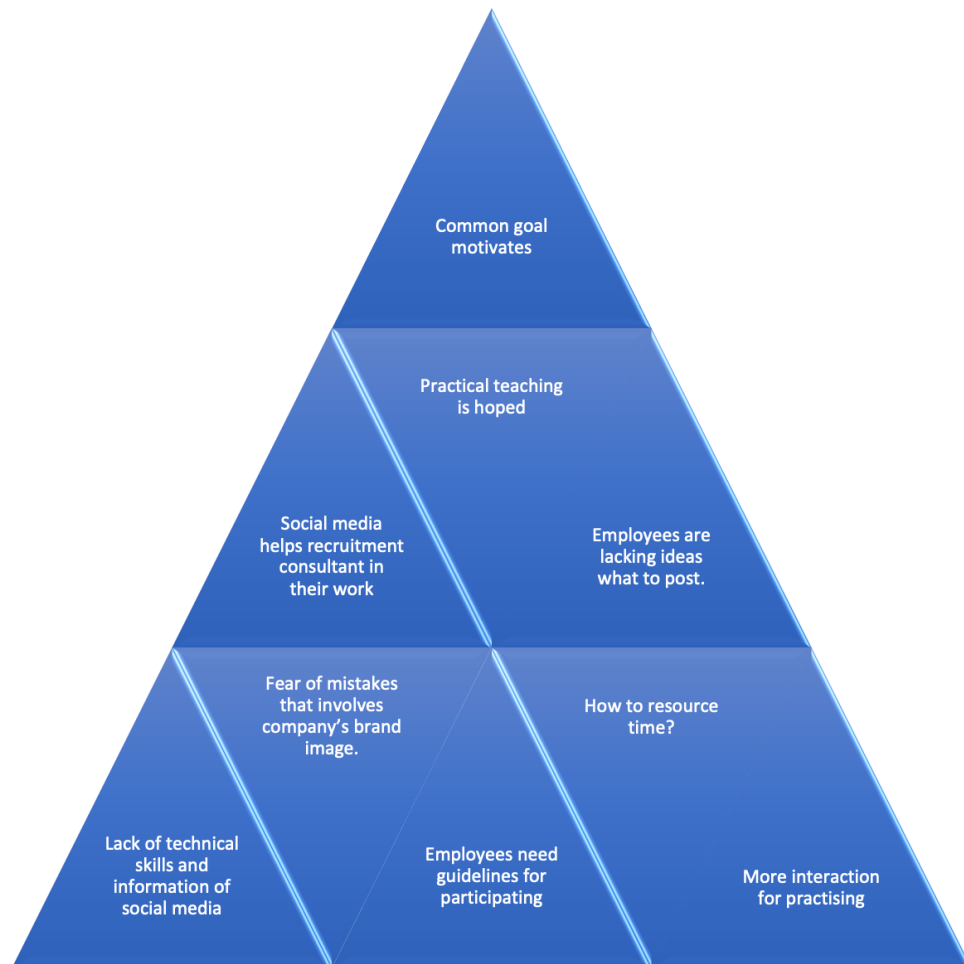


Figure 8. Key findings of the employee survey.

SQ 1 Why are employees not motivated by social media employee advocacy currently?

I found answers to research question about employee's lack of motivation towards participation in employee advocacy. Results of the survey showed that employees were worried about lack of ideas what to post. Employees also lack the ideas what to post. They hope practical teaching how to use social media and for example to create good Instagram-story. The survey showed that fear of mistakes also prevents people from participating. One respondent said that it is easier to post privately than in a company

channel, because there is no fear of damaging company's brand or reputation. Jörgen Sundberg (2017, 362) presents the case of flight company SAS and its launch for the employee advocacy program. They did a survey to find out employee's expectations about advocacy. They got similar results than I got from the survey. People were asking for more training and being afraid that they make mistakes and get fired because of it. They end up doing the whole program that was based on this question. They did heavier training and coaching on the individual development side. SAS representative in Sundberg's book (2017, 362) says this differentiates their program from others. "We aim to equip staff with the training they need and teach them to find content that aligns with what they want to stand for and the people they are trying to connect with", says Alli Soule. I think this is good perspective for developing training. Should we make an individual plan for content for each one of them? Should we first teach all the possible forms of creating content and then encourage employees to use form that is the most comfortable for them? These are questions that I need to consider when planning the final training.

One respondent was asking the same thing: How to integrate participating in one's work? Managers thought was that if everybody would participate, not so much time would be consumed on behalf of one person. Social media participation is seen and communicated to be part of employees' work. Maybe it should be communicated more and take that time into account in daily reporting and following. That is the way to get more information about it and make it more transparent. We could also together agree what suitable time is to use creating one post/content. Is it half an hour or one hour? This needs more discussing. I made a note that the time-consuming issue is also the biggest critic in discussion about employee advocacy in general.

SQ2: What kind of competence is needed in employee advocacy

The survey also gave answers to research question about skills that are hoped for participating. Open questions showed that employees need more skills and information for participating social media posting. Employees are interested to participate but they are worried about mistake that involves company's brand image. They say it is easier to post on free time because people don't need to think about the company image.

The open questions of the survey show the direction for the learning needs and hopes for the training. Some of the answers showed that employees have a positive attitude towards employee advocacy. Most of the answers were about content: What the content should be, how it should be produced and in what form and when and how often posts should be done. Employees seem to need two different kinds of guidelines: Some want to have strict guidelines what to post, when and how often. Some want skills for everyday social media use as part of their own work. Also, technical information was hoped like what apps are good to edit pictures and videos.

On the basis of the survey, the training should give answers to what (ideas) to post on social media (For example about open job opportunity? About having a nice lunch with colleagues or about company's sustainability?), what channel it is best to post (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn?), in what form should the content be made with video or picture or graphic? How often these kinds of posts should employees be posting?



Figure 7. Information needed for social posting. Questions that employees are asking according to the survey.

The practical down to earth use of social media as part of the work was hoped. Also, information that how much time there is to use in a week for posting. Practicing was hoped doing with pair, for example when videos are taken. According to Ojala (2018, 7)

teamwork and interaction are supported when new things are created. The easiest way to start using new practices is to do it with team members that employees already know. Continuous improvement, evaluation of what has been done and the use of problem-solving techniques are concrete ways of working while learning effectively. Teams can exchange learning experiences and advise each other on how to implement policies. (Ojala 2018, 324).

It was also hoped that there would be a guidebook on the cloud service where all passwords, tips and guidelines would be found easily. The survey also showed learning need for using the integrations between social media platforms and the company webpage. This includes sharing posts from company's webpage to Facebook and embedding videos from YouTube to job announcements on the company's webpage. Because the training that is being planned is mostly about creating content, the practice will focus on Instagram. Employees would like to develop their skills in LinkedIn, but I think that is theme for another training. The survey showed that there are also special skills for LinkedIn use with some employees, so these skills will be used as part of LinkedIn workshop in the future.

SQ3: What motivates employees to get involved in employee advocacy?

I also found the answers to the question what motivates people to participate. Managers were also interested what would motivate employees to participate in employee advocacy. Almost 71% replied that employees think that it was part of their job and helped them in their work. Their work as recruitment consultants is to find more talent to apply for the jobs. Also 53% replied that common goal and reward would motivate participating. Also 47.1% thought that paying a small number of every post would be motivating.

Employee advocacy also supports employee's own career and makes their own expertise visible. Assumption between branch managers was that participating, and access to social media posting must be done very easy. The feeling among the managers was that heavy structures would stop people from posting. Still, most of the literature suggests that employee advocacy and content producing requires a plan and structures to be successful. Even if management thinks it is easy and a quick thing to do, the truth might be different. That is why I suggest the guidelines and the plan to be presented as part of the training day.

Employees need skills for participation in content producing for company's social media channels. The more I read about employee advocacy the more I was convinced that employer need to commit really much to employee advocacy. One training is a good start, but now I realize that it is really just a beginning. Employers need to be encouraged to be employee advocate all the time. Advocates should also be seen as individuals, not as the group of people. Everybody should have an individual advocacy plan. The training is a good starting point for advocacy, but it needs more than technical skills afterwards, so that content producing would be continuous. Motivation comes from engagement people feel toward their work. The survey also showed that common goal and reward would be motivational factors for employees

5.1.2 Validity and reliability

The scope of the survey was quite narrow though I think it was enough to get to know to the learning needs of employees. One reason for narrow scope was the timing of the survey. Coronavirus effected in companies and employees functions globally around the world during spring 2020.

The supposition was that there is learning need among employees and the survey showed that to be true, so this part of the study is valid. Research questions were right and I got answers to all of them. Target group was right too. Most of my conclusions in this study are based on literature in this thesis. Literature supports results that found in the survey. Survey as method is reliable and it can be repeated if the same training will be also repeated with the different group of employees.

Employee advocacy as phenomenon is growing and taking new forms. This study also proves that. StaffPoint is taking one step further from employee advocacy that is usually described the sharing of company content and messages in employee's own networks to the share of self-made content by employees in company's official social media channels. Employee advocacy is trending in social media discussion inside the companies. Academic literature in this study was about social media and recruitment and the employer image. In my opinion, these are quite suitable concepts to use when explaining employee advocacy.

5.2 Marketing and Communications Director Mariliina Karppo's interview

StaffPoint is nationwide HR and staff leasing company. The shortage of manpower especially in the hotel, restaurant and catering industry (Horeca), have worried the industry during recent years. In this chapter, I will reflect interview's answers from StaffPoint's Marketing and Communications Director Mariliina Karppo to findings from literature. In the interview, she describes StaffPoint's communication and culture related to social media, brand ambassadorship and employee advocacy.

5.2.1 Battle for talent requires all means to use

According to Schweitzer and Lyons (2008, 555) there is a battle for right talent going on. In this competition after talents, managers need to think like marketers, they claim. I agree and think this is even more important in the case of recruitment firm that also StaffPoint is. StaffPoint is employer of 300 officials and 12000 temporary workers. Employee advocacy is important part of the communication of the company. Communications and HR-department develop employee advocacy annually. It is also part of marketing and sales. "Employee advocacy at StaffPoint means that employees are ready to recommend the company as employer and employees are proud of the product and services that company serves. It means also that employees are ready to recommend the HR-company as HR-experts. BtoB perspective has been highlighted this year," says Marketing and Communications Director Mariliina Karppo. Due Covid-pandemic a lot of temporary staff was laid off. Before the pandemic there was a shortage of workers, especially in the hotel-, restaurant and catering industry. The employee advocacy program of temporary workers was one way to find people to come and work as temporary workers at StaffPoint and its customers. At the moment, a lot of temporary workers are still laid off and focus have been turned into BtoB perspective and finding new customers instead of finding more temporary workers. After Covid-Pandemic need for employees is even more urgent that it used to be before 2020, because many people changed their industry from hotel- and restaurant industry for example to sales because of lack of jobs during pandemic. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

The employee advocacy at StaffPoint has been taken into account in the communication strategy as one of the so-called as a form of "win-win communication." This means that employees get to develop their personal brands as experts in their networks and company gets its employer image and brand developed at the same time. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

Schweitzer and Lyons (2008, 555) support this thought: They describe that employment relationships have to provide value for both companies and their employees.

Public, both internal and external, trust more messages that come from employees than those messages that are crafted by their employers (Thelen 2018, 309). This is also the reason why raising the social media activity of employees is one of the standard topics in company's internal training. These trainings are part of the job description of a communications and marketing Director Karppo. In order to strengthen employee advocacy, individual projects and campaigns have been defined separately, for example in StaffPoint's annual social media plan. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

5.2.2 Employee advocacy for HR-experts

Karppo (2.11.2020) explains that a certain kind of communication, marketing and sales-oriented attitude, which also includes social media activity, is an important criterion for the company when hiring an employee. The same thought is presented in Figure 3 in Chapter 3.4 in stage 1 (Schweitzer & Lyons 2008, 557). According to Schweitzer and Lyons (2008, 558) "an effective HR system need to identify types of individuals who have the right mix of knowledge, skills, abilities, or KSAs, and values to make a significant contribution to the organization's strategic operations." Karppo highlights that employee advocacy is needed as part of the work of an HR-professional. In her opinion good recruitment skills are constantly in use in recruitment. "It is advisable for everyone to present their employer in a positive manner in their own way when there is a genuine reason for it," Karppo amplifies. "Of course, the starting point for us is to be such a good employer that we want to talk about us and recommend us for our own acquaintances, friends and strangers," says Karppo (2.11.2020). Sakka and Ahammad (2018, 2) have the same perspective in their paper. They explore the relationship between brand ambassadorship and social media usage through employee wellbeing in workplace. They point out that employees are important stakeholders when it comes to the brand engagement. According to Karppo (2.11.2020) it is essential that everyone finds their own ways of advocacy - especially leisure recommendation, which is often even more effective and that cannot be obligated. Organizations can also encourage their employees towards employee advocacy by engaging in open and supportive communication inside the company (Walden & Kingsley Westerman 2018, 593).

5.2.3 Job orientation and rewards have important role in activating employees

At StaffPoint employees receives coaching from both HR-department and communication department in employee's orientation during the first weeks at a new job. One of the topics is tips on how the employee can strengthen the image of the employer in a way that suits him or her, for example, the messages delivered by StaffPoint in the social media and in the field. "We "like" and "share" each other's encouraging messages, and this is a common task for all of us. This is also the job of top management; we are active in social media, each according to their own expertise and target group. Our CEO is setting an active example here," Karppo explains. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

According to Sakka & Ahammad (2018, 8) managers should think about rewarding and recognizing this kind of "extra-role behaviour". They also point out that management should give instructions for employees' social media presence. In their opinion, employees should first understand the meaning of their behaviour for the branding process. After they understand, they will support employee advocacy behaviours that support branding goals of the company. At StaffPoint, officials are rewarded on a regularly basis about active social media activity. There is a little budget set for rewarding. The StaffPoint Group has also outlined general recommendations for increasing a person's social media activity and, on the other hand, for fostering good social media behaviour. Training has also been provided about technical and smart tips for using social media down to the top management. Often the trainings are small group trainings because of the need for different social media channels and their use changes. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

The purpose of this thesis is to plan training especially for HR-experts of the hotel and restaurant branch of the company. Karppo gives an example of training of a different kind. "For example, LinkedIn can be used in two ways. Communication gives tips that support selling one's own personal brand as HR-expert. Other way to support employees is to give tips that support recruitment consultants to use LinkedIn as a tool for recruiting. Employee advocacy in social media is also part of many other trainings at StaffPoint that has digitality as the theme. "For example, one of the aspects of the annual trainings on recruitment marketing trends organized by our partners, is how the recruiter / seller can promote the visibility of the content with his or her own choices and actions," Karppo explains. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

Karppo (2.11.2020) and Sakka & Ahammad (2018, 2) both points out that social media is also a tool for work, not only the support of marketing. It is of big help to the search of information, taking part in conversations and developing contact with stakeholders. (Sakka & Ahammad 2018, 2 refers to Sigala & Chalkiti, 2015). In employee advocacy apply the same content orientation than in other communications as well. For example, the sunny images posted by the social media ambassadors of StaffPoint SLU in Mijas are always get great interest. On the other hand, you don't have to raise the bar too high in the quality of your content: the more peculiar posts you convey your employer's messages, often the more interesting it is. (Karppo 2.11.2020.) In my opinion, this is something where employees need more information and support.

5.2.4 Benefits and challenges of the employee advocacy

StaffPoint as employer doesn't think that it is company's responsibility to make too precise guidelines for employee advocacy in social media. According to Karppo, every individual is responsible for its own social media behaviour and behaviour should follow the same obligations of confidentiality as the employee's employment contract. "The same common sense and good manners in social media work just like in actual life," Karppo says. Karppo sees those benefits of employee advocacy are obvious. In the social media algorithms of many social media channels favour "liked" and "shared" contents. Sharing employers content employees make sure employer's messages spread widely. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

According to Sakka and Ahammad (2018, 1), Dreher (2014) state that social media and its technologies are progressing all the time and that makes new possibilities for innovative marketing. In my opinion, the role of communications professionals inside the companies rises when new possibilities are coming in addition to traditional ones.

I see that "liking" and "sharing" is one traditional way for employee advocacy. New technologies that support employee advocacy could be for example platforms of a different kind for short video messages that can be produced by employee. In my opinion, this is part of employee advocacy that needs motivation and inner feeling of security like Sakka and Ahammad (2018, 3) points out in their paper. Social media use can also cause techno stress. This means that use of social media can cause fear and anxiety because

lack of skills to use new technologies. (Sakka & Ahammad, 2018, 4 refers to Brooks, 2015). In my opinion training is one solution to avoid this kind of technostress. Sakka and Ahammad (2020, 1) are studying social media as a tool that empowers employees for ambassadorship and networking with stakeholders. They examine how employee social media use affects their wellbeing and role as brand ambassador. In their framework (Figure 9), they present that employee personal social media use, psychological well-being and social well-being leads into employee wellbeing and through that to employee ambassadorship and work-related social media use like communicating with stakeholders (Sakka & Ahammad 2020, 7). I could see StaffPoint's official closed Facebook-group as part of social well-being that is related to internal communication. In my opinion it could be said that this group has a role in employee wellbeing and employee brand ambassadorship at StaffPoint.

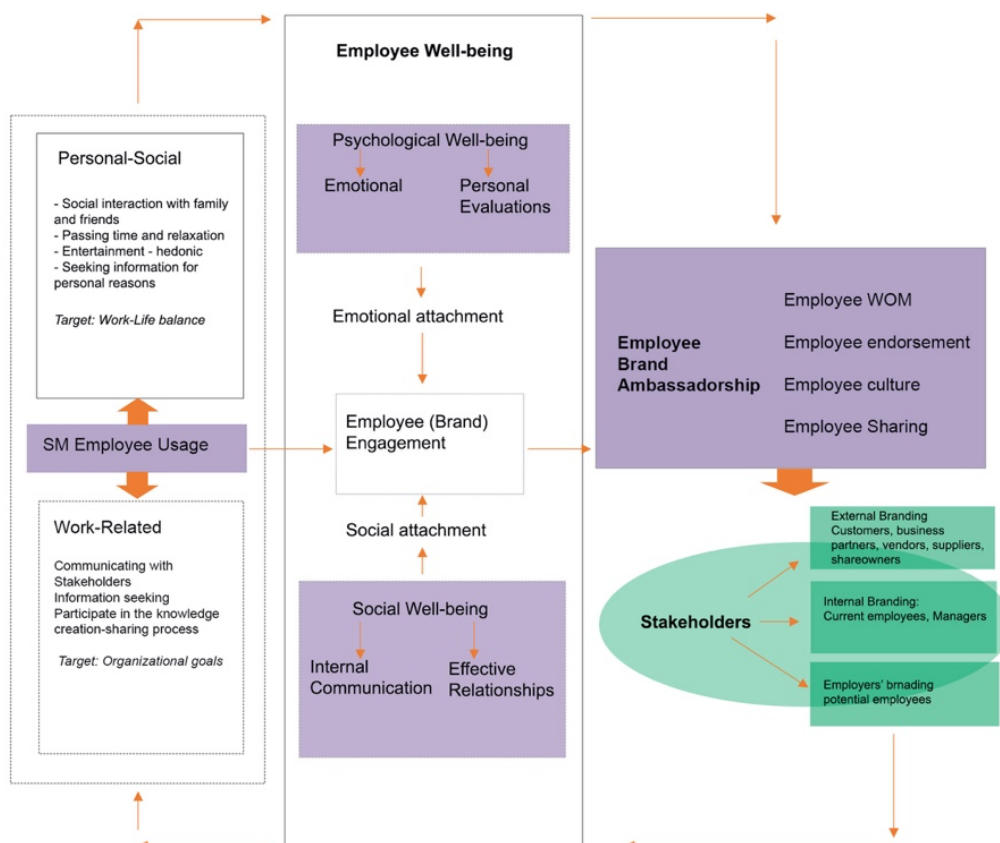


Figure 9. An integrated framework for employee brand ambassadorship in correlation with employee SM use and employee well-being. (Adapted from: Sakka & Ahammad 2020, 7)

Karppo claims that positive and work life oriented social media presence can never be harm to employees. "It is opposite, it benefits employee, at least when branding itself as professional", she says. Activity in social media is the direct message for everybody that oneself is aware of existing communications channels and forms. One of StaffPoint strategy's themes is "The store is always open 24/7". This theme and common sales spirit are processed in staff's strategy information meetings on a regular basis. This theme includes the idea of employee advocacy: Even when you are not at work, you can speak positively about your employer as expert, if it feels like it. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

In the literature, there are some challenges in social media presence, according to some authors. For example, Sakka and Ahammad (2018, 4) sees one challenge of employee advocacy for employees and that is mixing work hours with free time, because social media never shuts down. It is the opposite opinion of Karppo. However, I think Karppo's point here is still voluntary basis recommendation. I agree Sundberg's thought (2017, 393): "Advocacy is associated with employee pride and belief in what the organization does". If there is genuine belief for organizations purpose and existence, recommendations could happen like Karppo says, around the clock every day. I also agree Karppo that branding itself as professional benefits the employee because for example many open vacancies can be applied with LinkedIn profile only. Activity can be checked straight from applicant's profile.

According to Karppo, some employees at StaffPoint already include social media activity and employee advocacy as part of their roles. There is also small budget for developing official's social media activity. In different industries, like HoReCa, budget has been used to pay small rewards about social media activity (to temporary workers). Different branches at StaffPoint have their own social media channels among corporate channels. "Some industries' employee advocacy in social media has brought a boost for monthly social media communication," Karppo explains. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

Employee advocacy has been developed with compact resources and there has been trust for the people's own initiative and developing themselves towards a positive social media attitude. According to Karppo this is the reason why also the results merge into everyday doing. In my opinion, to make advocacy happen in HoReCa branch more actively, HR-experts need also training and guidelines to support activity. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

5.2.5 Employee advocacy for temporary workers

When talking about StaffPoint's temporary employees who are working in different industries, some of them do not necessarily include the active use of social media and other sales and marketing perspectives in their job description. StaffPoint reviews the willingness of its temporary employees to recommend StaffPoint as their employer each year. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

Company's recommendation rate is 89% (among temporary employees). According to Karppo this is good in private employment industry. "It is important to us that it stays above the HPL average," Karppo says. HPL is the private employment agencies' association. It is the employer and industry association for companies who provides private employment services (HPL). "In principle, of course, we hope that the jungle drum will work, that is, that the temporary employee who recommended StaffPoint in the study will do the same in real life," Karppo points out. The company also has various industry-specific incentives and campaigns each year to engage temporary employees, for example, in content production on company's recruitment-based social media channels. According to Karppo, in certain industries, employee posting seems to be a particularly important means of branding. "We have especially invested in the communication and social media resources and expertise of those industries," Karppo explains. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

5.2.6 Employee advocacy program for temporary workers

Like said in previous chapters, in order to strengthen employee advocacy, individual projects and campaigns have been defined separately, for example in the annual social media plan. Year 2019 the social media plan set goals for different industries to produce their own campaigns to get temporary workers as employee ambassadors. Concept and rewards for social media ambassadors were created. Content specialists get to implement the concept in different ways appropriate to a particular channel / profile.

For example, hotel-, restaurant and catering industry did one month post collaboration with various temporary workers. During this month, a certain number of pictures with accompanying texts, produced by the ambassador, was posted to company's channels in Instagram and Facebook. The theme is the ambassador's own work on StaffPoint's customer's workstations like restaurants. This means for example pictures of seasonal

work in Lapland and pictures of chefs working in the kitchen. “Working with active temporary employees who are satisfied with StaffPoint always brings a plus to both, and willing people have often been found,” Karppo says. This employee advocacy program was informed in monthly publication for temporary workers. There was also a campaign in annual temporary worker’s review where employee advocates were recruited to produce content to StaffPoint’s social media channels. With this campaign 20 new advocates were recruited. Unfortunately, this campaign was just before Covid-pandemic started and making posts from ambassadors’ physical workstations became challenging. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

Mariina Karppo sees that challenges in employee advocacy (among temporary workers) are attached to the overall reputation of staffing: “The overall reputation of staffing has been studied and there is still room for improvement”. According to Karppo, although StaffPoint clearly outperformed its large competitors and its reputation is moderate at the level of a large Finnish company, a temporary employee is not always willing to emphasize that he is a temporary employee. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

According to Karppo it would be the best if the reputation of temporary work develops to be as trendy that for example every operational or expert level of temporary employee would like to mention StaffPoint as employer in their LinkedIn profile. At least mention that they are working “via StaffPoint” that would tell that they are working as temporary workers. “This is where we aim at,” Karppo talks about future goals. Karppo believes that as public awareness confirms that temporary work is an increasingly common form of work, including in expert and management positions, StaffPoint’s LinkedIn visibility, and thus awareness, would improve. “When awareness and appreciation are in place the sensitivity to recommendation and acting as an ambassador are also activated,” Karppo sums up. (Karppo 2.11.2020.)

5.2.7 Findings from the interview of Karppo

Mariina Karppo’s interview (2.11.2020) showed the bigger picture of StaffPoint’s social media strategy. A lot has been done already concerning employee advocacy and social media participation of employees in the company. According to Karppo, it is important that company management is also active and serves as an example. I think this is important when motivating other employees, because it is important to show them that employee advocacy is recommendable and valued among managers. The interview showed that

employees who are already happy with their employer, are easier to get to participate in sharing their work life and experiences in social media channels. Both Karppo and literature support the importance of education and training as the surface for successful social media employee advocacy. At StaffPoint employees are trusted that they follow company guidelines and common sense when posting and sharing in social media. Karppo also point out an interesting point that raising the appreciation of temporary work as a good form of work would activate more ambassadors and add the amount of employee advocacy.

5.3 Case Finnair

Heidi Lemmetyinen is Editor in chief social and owned media at Finnair. He is responsible for Finnair's social media strategy, specifically on the organic side. Paid advertising on social media is handled by an advertising agency. Finnair can be seen e.g., on the following social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, Handle, LinkedIn, Instagram, Tiktok, in addition to the Asian channels Weibo and WeChat.

At Finnair, the employees have always appeared on social media channels. Still, Finnair wanted to take a slightly more structured approach to the topic and started a social advocate program. An internal job search announcement was made for the program. The search looked for people who would like to create content for Finnair's own social media channels in addition to their own work. Twenty people were selected for this group from Finnair's various operations. Cabin staff has been visible in the past, but now it was also wanted people to be visible from, for example, the engineering department and flight planning. (Lemmetyinen 28.5.2021.)

Heidi Lemmetyinen (28.5.2021) says that there were no difficulties in finding volunteers and there were many applications for the position. "Finnair employees are really active in this, they are active in doing, they are visible and helpful. We have been able to make great projects together."

In Lemmetyinen's opinion (28.5.2021), the best thing about working in social media at Finnair is that the ideas come directly from the employees, not from the marketing and communications department.

Why are people so willing to participate? According to Lemmetyinen, this is because tourism is a passion for many people. “Many have dreamed of a profession since childhood, they really love what they do. They have flying in their blood and they are happy to talk about it on social media. They are proud of their profession and their employer, Finnair. Activity can also be affected by, for example, the age distribution of cabin staff. It is natural for young people to be on social media. (Lemmetyinen 28.5.2021.)

Finnair's staff therefore does not need encouragement and motivation to produce content on their own social media channels. The company management needs some support in how it should be displayed and what should be shared on social media channels. “Still the flying people don't need encouragement,” Lemmetyinen points out. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

The official content of Finnair's social media program (Social media Advocates) is shown on Finnair's official social media channels, which are the most visible to consumers. The brand has certain attributes that it wants to bring out through people. These include optimism and approachability. People want to talk about the world of flying, aviation, travel. “It is the most effective to give people a message about these things through their own professions, with their own faces. It would bring different creditworthiness than if a faceless organization communicated the same things. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

The intention is for people to be visible on Finnair's social media throughout the entire organization. For example, people are really interested in flight safety. “It is much more interesting and credible when tech professionals and pilots themselves talk about these things than organization,” says Lemmetyinen. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

The communications and marketing department leads the bigger story behind social media content posts. They choose a theme from which they want content to channel and connect with the person who is working on that issue. The marketing team and the person agree on how to communicate the topic on social media. A great number of ideas come from the people themselves. Lemmetyinen gives an example of the soon to be released TikTok video, where the staff dance in front of and inside an airplane. The message of the video is in welcoming people back to flights after a long period of pandemic. The video was attended by people from the kitchen, appliances, cabin and pilots. The idea came from the staff themselves. The video also shows Topi Manner, Finnair's CEO, dancing. The video was filmed and edited by a creative agency. “The most wonderful and

rewarding part of my job is to see people's passion, energy and ideas." (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

One cabin crew member who had not flown for a year due to the pandemic, who participated in the video, cried as he stepped inside the plane, so sadly he had been without flying. The pandemic affected many things. Several workers were laid off and many changed jobs due to the pandemic. Doing became more "ad-hoc" than originally planned. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

A popular form of telling stories on social media channels is "takeover day". Marketing chooses the topic they want to tell, for example, recently there has been a desire to promote healthy travelling. During the takeover, the person introduces himself in Finnair's Instagram feed and talks about the topic in the takeover day. Takeover can take one to three days. These days have been well received by the public. Takeover day includes a Q&A section where Instagram followers can ask questions. There has been a lot of questions and there is no time to answer all of them. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

The social media guidelines tell employees what they can and cannot do on Finnair's social media channels. For example, joking about flight safety, or at the expense of customers and processes, is prohibited. There are a lot of rules to flying, like not being photographed in the cockpit during takeoff or landing. The instructions are pretty simple and following common sense will do well. There have been no problems in complying with the rules, Lemmetyinen states. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

In addition to work, the production of social media content is standard and approved by Finnair. There is no separate salary paid for participation. There has even been a bit of jealousy among the staff about who can post on Finnair's channels. Lemmetyinen wrote an article on the subject for the internal channel, where it was reminded that it is possible for everyone to offer their help to social media postings: "There is really no shortage of people who want to participate," Lemmetyinen says. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

Results are measured through monthly social media reports and follower numbers are monitored, but results are not the most important thing. The amount of "likes" is not the most important goal for Finnair: "For example, posting a picture of the northern lights brings a lot of likes, but it doesn't mean anything." According to Lemmetyinen, for example, Tiktok and Instagram reels do not have to have many followers and a piece of

content still gets lots of visibility. According to Lemmetyinen, there must be a reason for posting. Finnair's intention to be present on social media is to build a brand. "We want to highlight Finnair and position it close to people." Another goal in addition to the brand building is to strengthen the employer brand. Due to the pandemic situation right now, there is no recruitment, but when the situation is over and recruitment starts again, it is important to grow the employer brand. The goal of the brand building is to make traveling interesting, to tell what kind of company Finnair is, to communicate about responsibility, products and services, travel destinations, corporate culture and safety culture. Lemmetyinen sees that communicating about important matters and telling stories on the faces of employees will always be of great importance to Finnair. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

Finnair's social media advocates did not need to be trained for the use of tools and channels. "Actually, they teach us how to use channels," Lemmetyinen adds about participators. People, who were already active in their own channels and knew them, were chosen as ambassadors. Participants were only offered some social media guidance. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

According to Lemmetyinen, the success of employee advocacy requires the support and trust of management. It is important that management believes it matters. It is important to trust people that they are doing well when they have the information they need. The aim is to give people more empowerment than too many rules, guidance must of course exist. Lemmetyinen points out that employee advocacy is only successful if people like to work there anyway. (Lemmetyinen 2.11.2021.)

5.3.1 Findings from the interview of Lemmetyinen

Finnair's employee advocacy program proves the idea that happy employees are willing to participate in social media employee advocacy. It was interesting thing to realize that Finnair is doing the same kind of employee advocacy what was planned to do also at StaffPoint. With this I mean employee advocacy as content creation made by employees straight into company's social media channels. In Finnair, marketing department chooses subjects for social media advocates from their key values and messages and they choose the right advocate to do content about the specific subject. This is how the company uses social media employee advocacy as part of the brand building process. I think this is important finding, because it offers ideas for developing social media employee advocacy

to more structured dimension also at Staffpoint. The staff at Finnair is proactive with bringing up ideas for company's social media channels. One goal of their employee advocacy was also employer branding that is important especially when they are recruiting. One thing I noticed from Lemmetyinen's speech and language choices was that she spoke about "people" when she spoke about employees. She used this so many times that it made a feeling that company values its employees also with active word choices in speech. One important finding was also that people weren't paid extra for their efforts in company's social media. The whole company culture of Finnair supports their social media advocates and top management also believes its importance. I think this is also reason why employees at Finnair are so willing to participate in content creation.

6 Implementation and outcomes

On the basis of the survey, interview with Mariliina Karppo and interview of Heidi Lemmetyinen at Finnair and the information I found from the literature, I planned a training for Horeca's officials to support more active social media employee advocacy.

6.1 Competence strengthening – The training

On the basis of my learnings, I end up planning a workshop that strengthens the competence of social media participation among Horeca officials. Training was held in March 2021, and it has 23 participants. I chose digital media agency to do the training, because according to my studies, it is more motivating to order training from outside than implement it as in-house training. I gave detailed specs for training according to my studies.

Training happened in Instagram because this is the social media channel that Horeca branch's managers wanted to focus. The same content can be also posted to Facebook. The training included the basic use of Instagram because there were people with different levels of skills participating in the workshop. I also kept important that different forms of social media content are taught to people. These forms were pictures to feeds, pictures to stories and making short videos. I also pointed out that workshop have to be doing, not only watching when specialist is doing updates and posts. On the basis of the survey's answers, I also wanted to have tips about how to take a good picture and get tips on where to get ideas for content producing. I asked also some case examples to be shown.

Everybody was given passwords to the Horeca branch's own Instagram channel: @huikeehoreca_staffpoint. Trainer suggested that in the actual training people would practice with their own accounts and tag branch's Instagram to their pictures and videos. Me and the instructor planned together preliminary tasks for people two weeks before the training. Purpose of the preliminary task was to bring StaffPoints officials up in Instagram with fun and creative way. It was hoped that people would include their faces in pictures, but it wasn't mandatory. For Instagram feed, people were asked to take one picture and prepare a couple of sentences that describes the picture. For Instagram stories people were asked to take video that is 15-60 seconds long. People were said that their faces don't need to show in the video, but their voice has to be heard. Then employees were

given four ideas from what to do their posts about. These ideas were: favorite spot to work at home, breakfast, lunch and favorite mug. At the beginning of workshop people were given instructions about webinar and training.

Training was held 24.3.2021 by the instructor from digital media agency. At the beginning of the training people were given tips on how to make a good company Instagram profile and how to get followers for account. People were also taught what kind of content is popular at the moment. These were for example: show your staff, spontaneous content, what happens behind the scenes, Instagram takeover (somebody takes over the Instagram story for one day), advertise other content, like blog posts and what new is coming. One tip was to do recurring themes in Instagram stories. Different forms of stories were introduced, these were serial picture posts and talking head video. I found these especially useful for officials.

The instructor logged in Huikee Horeca's Instagram account and shared the screen. This was something I especially asked for this training. This way trainer showed how to do posts of a different kind. Then people posted pictures and videos that they had taken before the training and tagged Huikee Horeca's account. Participants were also asked to put ideas about possible content to the chat field. These ideas were related to work, hotel and restaurant branch and recruiting.

Training was made through Zoom and it was 2,5 hour long. Feedback after the workshop was that the training was a bit long but also useful. In the future there could be other training that is more advanced, because people, who would participate employee advocacy, were people, who already knew quite many functionalities of Instagram.

6.2 Social media team

After the workshop, the assumption was that some of the officials would be motivated to be part of new social media team. After the workshop, everybody got an email where volunteers were asked to participate to social media team. Altogether 6 officials participated in for the first meeting. These people were officials who were already active on social media in their own social media channels. This supports the idea that Heidi Lemmetyinen's told in Finnair's case also: Active social media users are more likely to be active in social media employee advocacy.

The social media team gathers together every other week and sums up last two weeks and plan together with the coming two-week period. In the first meeting there was discussion about team members hopes for the posting schedule and best practices. I was surprised that people wanted structured program for posting and named tasks per certain days. Literature supported this idea, but I thought it is too binding for a team member who does this on a voluntary basis in addition to their main tasks and work. Also, when this was tried two years ago, people weren't committed to schedules. Lots of ideas that came in the training were put into practice. Every weekday got its own theme for posting.

Ideas for content were gathered from the training. Members established group in Teams and there is all the information the team need. One PowerPoint was made were all the follow-up and schedules are updated. Ideas for content were gathered from training's chat and added also this PowerPoint that works as an important tool for the team. Theme days, ideas and the schedule should make the team member's participation and content creation be easier.

Management of Horeca branch was happy about the training and social media team that was a result of training. Management wanted to show their support to the team and that they value their efforts by offering tools for team members. All six members got selfie sticks that had tripod and remote shooting features. Members were happy to get new tools. Management also offered lunch to the team and promises to remember these social media advocates with small benefits like tickets to the movies etc. This way of working with social media team was all new to StaffPoint and especially Horeca branch. The goal for the social media team was set. It was 100 posting and 1000 followers by November 2021. However, in my opinion the most important goal is building the employer brand by giving human faces for the company. In the future, this group could be offered an advanced training for Instagram.

7 Conclusions

The result of the development project was a social media team that regularly produces content that supports the employer image on StaffPoint's social media channels in the hotel and restaurant industry. The result was also to increase the skills of employees through training. The need for training emerged in a survey conducted at the beginning of the development project. The skills and knowledge of all employees in the use of social media (Instagram) on how to produce content for social media channels, were strengthened on the base on the feedback. The training served as a motivating factor for joining the social media team. I also think the strong desire of management to make the faces of employees visible on the company's social media channels, served as a motivator for participating in the social media team. This conclusion is also supported by an interview with Finnair's Heidi Lemmetyinen, where she emphasizes the importance of management support and trust for the success of employee advocacy. More desired faces on social media channels were obtained, alongside the pictures of the image bank.

This development project provided the StaffPoint new expertise and new ways of working. The activities of the social media team are now planned and structured. Team development and growth are possible after initial experiments. The end result is in a longer period of time possibly and desirably an improvement in the employer image and thus an increase in the number of job applicants. In the longer term, it is also important to increase the number of followers of the social media channels in the Horeca industry in order to gain as much visibility as possible for the produced content.

The expected outcome of the Thesis was a framework for the employee advocacy model and increased motivation and competence in social media employee advocacy amongst officials, recruitment consultants and key account managers. This outcome came true. The activity and wishes for structured models of the social media team and content producing were an unexpected outcome for me. The social media team has now been in operation for a couple of months and schedules have been kept and the team produces content on a regular basis. The commitment of the social media teams also surprised me, because in previous years, despite the efforts, no continuous activity has been achieved. This could have succeeded now that more things came together: the opportunity offered to increase skills, the strong encouragement and support of management, and the

presence and motivation of people who were already active in social media to work as employee ambassadors.

The management of the hotel and restaurant branch at StaffPoint has been satisfied with the result. The end result is not a quick solution to increasing employee availability but supports the goal in the long run by increasing the employer image.

Feedback from participants has been that the structured activities of the social media team facilitate participation. They also liked the tools offered (selfie stick) as well as the small comments offered by the management, such as lunch. There has been feedback from a restaurant customers that branch's social media channels now show nice and varied content.

In the future, we need to invest in advertising the content produced by the social media team in order to gain more visibility for the content. The skills of team members can also be taken to a more advanced level. When the pandemic situation eases, it would also be good to involve temporary workers in content production. Also, one goal is to bring the company's key messages and values visible on channels in more planned way. Such an approach emerged during an interview with Finnair's Heidi Lemmetyinen.

7.1 Self-reflection

This thesis put my thoughts from the operational level to the strategic level with planning communications. It took me a while to see the whole picture of the development project especially at the academic point of view. I think this thesis project took my thinking to the next level and opened my eyes. I was so focused on the details in the beginning and thinking so complex way that the big picture wasn't there for me to see. This thesis project was hard, but I think my thinking really developed during this process. I also see my work as content specialist the different way now and I see where I should focus in my work in future.

At the beginning of the development project, the subject of the thesis felt small. This is because I thought about it at operational level like what concrete actions the participating and training require. Now I see social media employee advocacy as big phenomena that is at the heart of the whole company culture. It includes ideas of engaged employees, encouraging employer, continuous learning and competition about talents. All the sudden

everything related to thesis were big concepts in itself in nowadays work life. I hope this mind change takes me forward in my career with communications.

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Interviews

Karppo, M. 2.11.2020. Chief of Marketing and communications. StaffPoint. Interview. Helsinki.

Lemmetyinen H. 28.5.2021. Editor in chief social and owned media. Finnair. Interview. Helsinki.

Attachments

Appendix 1. Questions of the survey

1. Mitä seuraavista sosiaalisen median alustoista käytät?
(Which of the following social media platforms do you use?)
2. Mikä motivoi sinua osallistumaan työnantajakuvaan tukevan somesisällön tuottamiseen?
(What motivates you to participate in producing content that supports employer image?)
3. Mitä toivot somekoulutukselta?
(What do you wish from social media training?)
4. Onko sinulla sometaitoja/tietoja, joita tahtoisit jakaa muillekin?
(Do you have any skills / knowledge that you would like to share with others?)
5. Millaisia taitoja/tietoja/vinkkejä tahtoisit jakaa?
(What skills/knowledge/tips would you like to share?)
6. Osaatko lisätä kuvabannerin avoimen työpaikan yrityspohjaan? (Työpaikkailmoituksen yläosassa oleva kuva)
(Can you add a photo banner to open vacancy form? - Picture at the top of the job posting)
7. Osaatko jakaa työpaikkailmoituksen someen suoraan www.staffpoint -sivulta työpaikkailmoituksesta?
(Can you distribute a job advertisement directly to social media from a job advertisement on company's web page?)
8. Osaatko lisätä videon työpaikkailmoitukseen Saimassa?
(Can you add a video to a job advertisement in Saima?)
9. Osaatko lisätä StaffPointin somekanava Huikeen Horecan Facebook ja Instagram-linkit työpaikkailmoitukseen Saimassa? (Can you add StaffPoint's social media channel Huikee Horeca's Facebook and Instagram links to the job advertisement in Saima?)
10. Vapaa sana (Free word)

