



CASE STUDY:

Challenges in recruiting young manual workers

Abstract

This case study deals with a problem that is relevant to many companies today, namely challenges in recruiting young manual workers. The problem was analysed in a Czech company from the Liberec region. The company operates in the metal industry and is a small-sized enterprise. To solve this problem, it is necessary to analyse the needs and expectations of a different generation. This case study provides a manual on the proper content for communications, including job ads, choosing the optimal communication channel, and adjusting benefits.

Introduction to the organisation

The company is a limited liability company and was founded in June 1994, when it took over and expanded an existing production in a state-owned glassworks enterprise. Over time, the owners acquired smaller companies with similar production programmes and today, their range of products reach into seven different fields. However, all products are based on **metal stamping technology**.

In 2013, the company became purely a family business. The company now employs 43 employees (May 2017), which makes it a **small-sized company**. Most of the employees are technical and economic workers and most of them are of preretirement age.



Figure 1: Examples of products

Source: internal sources

HR processes in the company

The company has no HR department, therefore almost all HR activities are done by the company executives and their assistant. The company is a family-run business with a culture of



trust and loyalty. There is almost **no employee turnover**. For this reason, the executives can focus specifically on employee satisfaction.

The only HR activity that is not done by the executives is **recruitment**. This activity is carried out by personnel agencies. Their only task is to look for and select candidates according to the company's requirements. Currently, there is no feedback from the candidates provided by the HR agencies, but the companies negotiate about this.

A SWOT analysis of HR activities

Knowing strengths and weaknesses is essential for any change and improvement.

Table 1: A SWOT analysis of HR activities in the company

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Motivation system	Recruitment – personal agencies (expensive)
Flexibility (working hours, type of contract)	No career website
Employee satisfaction monitoring	Adaptation process
Defined corporate social responsibility towards employees	Communication across departments
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Schools' interest in cooperation	Increased competition in technical fields
Students' interest in cooperation	Instability of workers in one workplace
Increasing the attractiveness of technical fields in recent years	Rapidly changing technology

Source: own creation

Strengths of the HR activities

Based on shadowing the executive, it can be stated that the HR activities work very well in general. The company knows how important its employees are and they have **defined corporate social responsibility (CSR) towards employees**. The main motto of the company's CSR policy is:



“The greatest value in our company is our employees. Our responsibility to them is important for our current and future prosperity!” (Internal sources)

To meet this goal, they have adopted principles such as non-discrimination, the right to privacy, and health and safety at work.

Executives also regularly monitor employee satisfaction and offer **widespread benefits**. They offer flexible working hours and types of contracts, which seem to be very desirable. For employees with children, there is a company kindergarten and all employees have a one-week holiday in addition to the statutory holiday time. Rewards are given for 100% attendance and for bringing a new employee into the company. The company also makes contributions to pensions and life insurance, provides product discounts and education allowances.

Weaknesses in HR

Despite the fact that there are a lot of benefits, there are a few weaknesses. One of the biggest disadvantages is that the recruitment process is performed by **personnel agencies**. This results in high costs and no feedback from candidates. Another problem is the ineffective **communication among the department supervisors** and the related inadequate **adaptation process**.

Opportunities and Threats

The technology sector has been experiencing a boom in recent years. Experienced, skilled, and hardworking employees are in high demand. For future prosperity, employees are the key to success. The company’s executives realise this and say that *“working with important clients can be managed only after building a stable team of capable employees. If we are not able to meet the deadlines and customer’s demands, we will lose our long-standing reputation.”* (Internal sources)

Due to the high level of competition in the sector, innovation is very important and young people are full of ideas and are open-minded, which often nurtures innovation. *“Young people help us not to rest on our laurels”* say the company’s executives.



Objectives of the case study

The objective of the case study is to help solve some of the identified HR challenges by analysing a recruitment process in the company. An essential part of this case study is also to find the right communication channel and way that the company can retain young people. It will be necessary to improve the adaptation process as well as the system of benefits.

Literature review

Generation Y was born into a period of relative peace. Since their early childhood, they have been told that they can achieve everything they want. People from Generation Y are highly ambitious and seek interesting jobs full of challenges and freedoms. Their colleagues are more like friends to them. They require a higher standard of living, feel more responsible for their social security, and place emphasis on personal application (Kazdová & Smrčková, 2012).

Generation Y literally lives with modern technology. Technology is absolutely natural for them. High digital literacy is the main characteristic that distinguishes them from the older generations. These young people want to be online, always communicate, write their own blog, have their own website, Tweet, respond, publish their opinions, experiences, photos, videos, use social networks and create teams with whom they like to work. It is a generation for which it is important to work in teams, to use modern technology, to work in their own environment (Home Office) and in their own way (part-time, space-sharing) and to communicate globally and to work interculturally (Kazdová & Smrčková, 2012).

Other demands, attitudes, and overall expectations of this generation lead to changes in their style of work and communication in the employee-employer relationship. With this understanding, HR staff play a very important role. Based on the knowledge of the differences and needs of this generation, HR staff should change established practices to adapt to Generation Y. Line managers will have to prepare themselves for this generation joining their teams. They will have to prepare for someone who needs more attention. If organisations fail to adequately respond to the specifics and needs of Generation Y, they will be unable to fully exploit the potential offered by this group of workers (Horváthová, Bláha & Čopíková, 2016).

“Generation X”

People of Generation X were born between the years 1965 and 1981. In the Czech Republic, they are also called Husák’s Children because of Gustav Husák, who was the president of



Czechoslovakia between 1975 and 1989. Motýl (2014) describes Generation X as people who grew up in financial, family, and social doubt. In their jobs, they are loyal and sometimes passive. However, they want to learn new skills and to be employable. Their motto is “To work and be hard”. They like stability and do not want change. Very often, their work is more important to them than their family and they face burnout syndrome. The divorce rate has dramatically increased in this generation. They are not used to discussing their personal needs with their boss. They do not like conflict. Money is a big motivation for them. The fact that they are unable to work with modern technologies as well as the younger generation is difficult for them. According to Kubátová & Kukulková (2013), one of the most typical features of Generation X is long-term employment. Most individuals from this generation found a job immediately after graduation and they still work there. It is typical for these people to stay in one place.

Social media and recruitment

Nowadays, social networks are becoming more important in everyday life. The number of users is rising rapidly and it is not just the upcoming generation. Social networking can provide a method for internal communication among employees, between employees and management, and also between the organisation and its clients. Social networks can be also used for recruitment (Horváthová, Bláha & Čopíková, 2016).

Methodology

The case study is based on a literature review and analysis of the chosen company. The process, as well as secondary data of competitors in the region – companies with similar challenges and interests in the area of recruitment, were investigated and evaluated. Primary data (both qualitative and quantitative) were collected by a qualitative survey, shadowing and CAWI questionnaire. Important data were also collected by interviewing the HR manager and the CEO. Moreover, the author utilised their own experience and observations from a several-month-long internship with the company.

Findings and analysis

According to Eurostat, the youth unemployment rate in 2017 was 16.8% in the EU-28. In the Czech Republic, it was 7.9%, which was the second lowest rate in the EU-28 (Eurostat, 2017). Due to the low unemployment rate, it is very difficult to get reliable and hardworking young



employees. This problem is doubly true in the chosen company. The company is looking for manual workers and needs to “rejuvenate” its team. As described above, people working in the company are predominantly of pre-retirement age, thus, the first and main need is for **the recruitment of young and technically-skilled people**.

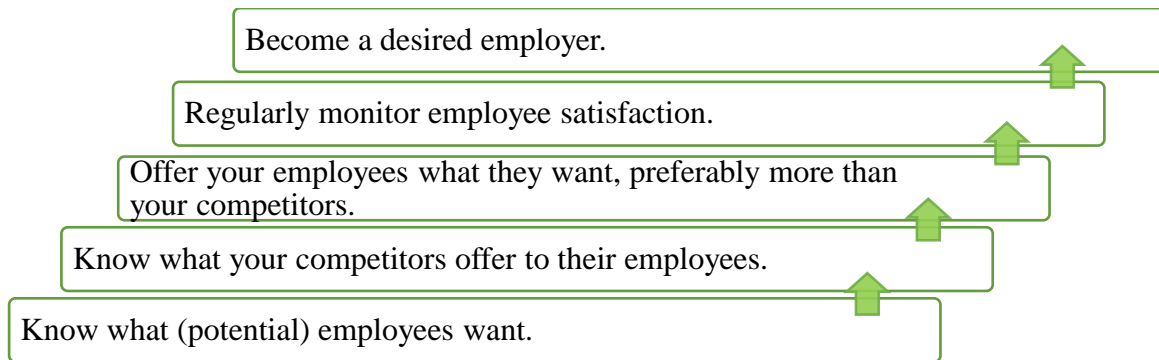
HR challenges

An important part of recruitment is making the proper choice for the communication channel. Social networks are one of the best recruitment tools and the most common social networks are LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Just attracting young people is not enough to ensure future prosperity. Young people nowadays have completely different needs and desires than older generations (Rouse, 2015).

Proposed HR tools

The company’s main objective is to **hire young manual workers** from Generation Y. To attract any new employees, it is most important to know what these people actually want. The same applies in the case of Generation Y. As mentioned above, people of Generation Y are a little bit different compared to the older generations. They have a different system of values and expectations. These young people appreciate free time more than well-paid work, although they are highly ambitious. They are willing to change these values for an *interesting job full of challenges* and freedom. That is also the biggest motivation for them. Especially at the beginning of their career, they have almost no problem moving because of work, but we can assume they will not work for one employer for rest of their life - that is a very important finding.

The company should learn how to communicate with Generation Y and attract older members of this group (or other generations), but it should focus more on attracting students from cooperative secondary schools. Deeper cooperation, such as providing internships, can be a great way to train new staff with minimal costs. However, the company should not assume that students will come themselves after graduation. They have to show them the workplace in an entertaining way with work full of challenges. Also, they should regularly monitor the students’ satisfaction and their needs. Knowing young people’s needs can also be a competitive advantage in recruitment. If a company knows what its current or future employees want, it can be a more attractive employer.



1. Who are the new employees? What do they want?

The company is looking for young manual workers. Due to the type of work, the company is looking for people with a technical secondary education, but the company should focus on skills and experience. In general, the biggest motivation for young people is an interesting job with many challenges. They desire flexible hours and cash bonuses. Moreover, if they finished school years ago and have worked for several employers, it is possible that they are not willing to move for work.

Know what candidates want and focus on it.

2. Job advert and how to attract candidates

The job advert is a very important tool to attract candidates. The job advert is the first contact with a job candidate, therefore it should contain some basic information about the job itself and the benefits associated with it. It is important to use interesting graphics.

- **Title**

Try to find an eye-catching title that the candidate will notice. The title can contain the name of the position or the key aspects that are required.

- **Requirements for candidates**

Try not to attract as many candidates as possible. Be specific and try to attract only the candidates you really want. Does the position need any specific education or experience or can it be done almost by anyone after training? Provide 3-5 requirements and do not forget to provide a job description.



- ***Benefits for candidates***

Based on the knowledge of the candidates' requirements, state the main benefits that you can offer. It should not be only cash bonuses. Moreover, requirements and benefits should be balanced.

- ***Other information***

The job advert should be clear and specific. It should also contain the type of contract, place of work, and contact information.

Try not to attract as many as possible! Candidates must really care about the position. Do not be afraid to write exactly who you want and what you offer.

3. How should you communicate with them?

The recruitment should be a planned process. For HR purposes, **Facebook** is one of the best tools to attract young people. Using a paid ad is a very easy way to reach a target audience. With only a few clicks, a company can choose to whom the ad will be targeted. Facebook collects user information that they not only provide themselves but is generated through monitoring their activities and their likes. The price of such advertising depends on the size of the target group and on the attractiveness of the advertising post. However, good advertising can cost only a few dollars per month. The biggest advantage of Facebook advertising is the simple testing of various forms of advertising (different images, headlines, advanced texts, CTA, targeting of different user groups, placement of advertising, etc.). Immediately, the company can see what is effective, so they do not have to spend unnecessarily on inefficient advertising. For more information and instructions how to create an ad, just follow Facebook and its Help Center (Facebook, 2017). In addition to paid advertising, it is necessary to promote vacancies on the company's own Facebook page. Upon prior consultation and rule-finding, individual posts can be manually shared across different interest groups (for example, workgroups) and on the sites of collaborating schools.

It is recommended that the company also post job adverts on websites other than Facebook. First, the company should post on its **own website**, which should be clear and graphically interesting. There should be a part called *career* where all available positions are listed. If



there are no vacancies, it is possible to create a custom database where candidates can send a CV. In case of later recruitment, you will already have a pool of contacts.

Another option is to use **job offer websites**. There are many paid and unpaid versions. Paid sites usually provide benefits such as better ad placement and better targeting. You do not know which job offer websites to choose? Just imagine that you are an applicant and are looking for a job - how and what will you look for? In this way, you can simply view sites that are likely to be visited by your prospective candidates.

Build your employee brand during the recruitment process and always reply to your candidates!

1) Interesting and valuable work experience

Cooperation with schools can be very valuable. Education is no longer enough; thus, schools should provide students with experience. The company can provide unpaid or minimum paid internships. One advantage is knowing what students want and what kind of workers they are (hardworking, responsible, etc.). The practice has to be well organised and there has to be work for the students. First, it is necessary to think about how many places can be provided, how long, and for what students. The company cannot teach students from the ground up, and they also expect students to stay in the company. Therefore, it is good to offer internships to students in their last year of studies and only to the best students. Young people are very competitive and ambitious - take advantage of it! The minimum length of internship is recommended to be at least two months.

At the beginning of the internship, it is necessary to properly train the students (a manual can be helpful). During the internship, one must have a leader who will be responsible for the student and his/her tasks. Extra bonuses are needed for such a leader. The student will become familiar with procedures, the machinery, and the work itself.

At the end of the internship, an evaluation should be provided. The evaluation (see Appendix) should be filled in by both the supervisor and the student. The supervisor assesses the students' abilities such as work pace, meeting deadlines, thoroughness, accuracy, etc. In addition, the supervisor recommends the intern for further cooperation. The students evaluate both the internship itself and the supervisor.



Ensure that the students have something to do!

2) Excursion done in an entertaining way

Boring lectures full of sitting and listening are students' everyday lives. Only a few people manage to pay attention and even fewer remember the topics and content of the lectures the following week. Do not be in the same group! Young people want fun and action. Instead of a traditional excursion (company visit), organise a fun day and show students what you are doing, but try to do it through a game. If the students can try something themselves and take away a small souvenir (e.g. from scrap), you will seem like an attractive employer. You can find good ideas at Technodays and *Girlsday* held every year both in the Czech Republic and abroad.

Do not be boring, show your fun side too!

3) Trainee programme

This is a similar option to *work experience*. Nowadays, trainee programmes are used quite often. This is a rotating programme in which the worker can change different positions or departments, gain experience, and decide where he/she want to work. This option is great for graduates who have not yet fully decided on their preferred career path.

Encourage employees through education!

Conclusion

This case study deals with the current topic of recruiting young people into technical jobs in an SME. The problem was applied to a company from the Liberec region in the Czech Republic. We chose a company that is a small-sized enterprise with a long tradition. It operates in the metal industry. Since it is a small-sized company, there is no HR department. HR activities are performed by the company's executives. Expensive personnel agencies are used to recruit new employees and they are very often inefficient. In theoretical frameworks, different generations are described, including Generation Y, which is key to today's labour market. Moreover, a guide showing how to write a good job advert and choosing possible communication channels is presented.



In order to attract young manual workers, it is important to know what these people want and focus on it. Job adverts should help you to find *quality* rather than *quantity* and they also help create an employer brand. Young people want to have an interesting job with many challenges and not be bored. They have no problem changing employers. The company should focus on the needs of hardworking and responsible employees.



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Appendix – Evaluation of an intern

Evaluation of an intern

Intern's name Click or tap here to enter text. **Personal number** Click or tap here to enter text.

Date of stay – from Click or tap to enter a date. **until** Click or tap to enter a date.

Intern supervisor Click or tap here to enter text. **Department** Click or tap here to enter text.

A description of the internship project

Click or tap here to enter text.

Filled in by the internship supervisor

The intern is recommended (please, fill in every point)
for another internship

yes

no

as a potential employee in my department

yes

no

In another department

yes

no

The following part is to be rated according to this scale

1 – absolutely agree

2 - somewhat agree

3 – somewhat disagree

4 – absolutely disagree

	1	2	3	4
Intense work pace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thorough	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurate, not prone to error	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-reliant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spontaneous initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperation, willingness to help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date In Internship supervisor

I was familiarised with the evaluation, and my supervisor gave me feedback on my internship.



Date In Intern

Filled in by the intern

School Click or tap here to enter text.

Field of study Click or tap here to enter text.

Expected date of completion of studies Click or tap to enter a date.

I am interested in (please, fill in every point)

	yes	no
another internship at this company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
becoming an employee of this company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
becoming a trainee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In case you filled in 3x no, please, give us the reasons

Click or tap here to enter text.

The following part is to be rated according to this scale

1 – absolutely agree 2 - somewhat agree 3 – somewhat disagree 4 – absolutely disagree

	1	2	3	4
Tasks and objectives were clearly defined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internship corresponded to my wishes of future employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The supervisor was forthcoming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I received all necessary information on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation of the internship was trouble-free	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Suggestions for improvement, remarks

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date In Intern