



Master's degree in Marketing

Course of Organizational Issues in Marketing and Sales

The success factors of Employer  
Branding in electronic companies:  
Focus on the Apple case

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## ABSTRACT

This study is about understanding what the success factors of employer branding for electronics companies are. To understand this, the research starts from an explanation of the theory linked to reputation, the value of change and internal culture. Next, by analyzing current market trends and deepening motivational factors, it is possible to emphasize the importance of some key values in creating a company's image.

A section is dedicated to the Apple case, describing the evolution and change of leadership and internal politics. With the change of control from Steve Jobs to Tim Cook, there has been a widening of the decision-making stages. Significant is the experience of the employees, through the best review sites such as Glassdoor and Indeed, are identified highlighting the gaps and the merits of the US company. However, they offer valuable insights to help understand Apple's operating realities and identify areas that could be improved. In conclusion, there is a general view of what employer branding is about to retain workers and attract potential candidates (talents) for electronics companies.

## INTRODUCTION

The topic of the study is a significant area of debate in everyday life, both nationally and internationally. In particular, the lack of adequate training for recent graduates appears as a significant challenge in the professional landscape, limiting their employment opportunities in both public and private sectors. This phenomenon affects the career choices of young people, but also has an impact on the economy, influencing the ability of businesses to compete and produce goods.

In the modern workplace, the reputation and image of a company or individual worker plays a critical role. These elements play an important role, not only to keep workers in an organization but also to encourage them to potentially apply. The perception of the company as a stimulating, inclusive and rewarding environment can make the difference between an organization that seeks and supports the best people and one that struggles to maintain qualified and motivated personnel.

For this reason, the concept of employer branding turns out to be a key tool that can manage the reputation and positively promote the image of the company.

This approach goes beyond simple corporate promotion or advertising and includes promoting a collaborative company culture, enhancing employee well-being, and encouraging professional and personal growth opportunities.

The use of appropriate employer branding strategies would allow companies to stand out in the job market, attract the best talent and promote an environment that supports employee satisfaction and productivity.

The study will try to assess what factors contribute to the effectiveness of employer branding for electronic companies.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF EMPLOYER BRANDING AND RECRUITMENT REPUTATION: INTERNAL CULTURE AND SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

In this chapter, the main concepts of the thesis will be defined, developing a linear and coherent path related to employer branding, recruitment reputation, attractiveness, internal culture, change and hybrid work. Starting from the enunciation of the phenomenon to arrive at the skeleton of the definitions, thanks to the use of reliable sources, we will have a general vision of what rotates around the employer branding.

### 1.1 Employer Branding

Over the years, in Italy, the issues to be discussed in everyday life are countless. There are those who take advantage of the Christmas holidays to get together with relatives and discuss family life, there are those who meet at the bar with a friend to discuss football or there are those who meet at the gym to talk about nutrition.

It is well known that the average Italian is a person of many words and perhaps even a little talkative, but he is certainly a great talker (Gabbatore et al, 2023). Hot topics that often revolve between Italian thoughts is related to academic education and work (Pagliucca, 2023).

Normally, a young person finishes his studies between the ages of 19 and 24 (for those who undertake a university course), consequently the transition from student to working life is taken for granted. Too bad, however, that it does not appear obvious at all, at least in Italy (Pastore, 2019).

Why? What is missing? What is missing is a complete educational system that makes practical what is studied with theory through the classroom. Basically, the children lack the necessary experiences that a good number of public or private organizations require (Carli, 2021).

During these informal debates among friends, it comes out that they often do not apply for certain organizations, because they consider them too pretentious or the environment and images around them are not convincing (Pastore, 2019).

In addition, today's 19- to 30-year-olds are much more likely to be insecure.

In such a digitalized world and with the introduction of social media, we are always under constant judgment and the children of the new generations suffer the most (Lakhan et al, 2020).

From previous research, after the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, which allowed radical changes within schools and work (smart working), many young people suffered from anxiety,

depression and stress problems. Even now, in the early periods of 2024, it has left aftermath and not everyone has recovered (Lakhan et al, 2020).

What do I mean by that? This is why new generations want more reassurance in the workplace (Harris, 2020).

After understanding the context, we need to understand how companies behave in this regard.

Public or private companies, in an Italian context, are always looking for new so-called "talents". Talent refers to people who are competent in a field and who know how to stand out from ordinary people because they emerge in some area (Gilch & Sieweke, 2021).

To attract talent and make a job accessible for young people, companies work to build a good employer branding. Employer branding can be defined as the image that a company wants to show to potential and current workers (Wilden et al, 2010).

In recent years, employer branding has become a well-known component of contemporary human resource management (Yuksel, 2015). One of the biggest hurdles for companies looking to compete in the "war for talent" is creating a unique employer brand. The benefits associated with employer branding in this context extend to almost every aspect of organizational performance, going beyond the initial marketing concept of improved employer reputation (Ahmed et al, 2022).

According to a research study, it has been found that with an increasingly aging population, organizations will face a decrease in choice when it comes to the selection of skilled workers (Franca & Pahor, 2012). Company managers will increasingly have to rely on strategies to try to attract new workers. An example cited would be part-time and/or occasional work. He concludes by saying that employer branding is only at the beginning of its importance (Franca & Pahor, 2012).

It is important to make a distinction in employer branding:

1. Internal-> consists of strategies aimed at increasing the satisfaction, involvement and commitment of its workers. There are strategies such as incentives, more flexible working, development and well-being programs, etc. All of this is also done to motivate and build employee loyalty (Randstad).
2. External -> consists of strategies aimed at attracting new employees, creating a positive and reassuring image of the company. How? Through the use of owned media (websites and social media), collaborations or events. Social media, in particular, have such power that they can broaden the vision and should certainly be exploited to the fullest (Randstad).

In a daily life where each of us has a social profile, whether it is Instagram, Facebook, X or TikTok, it is difficult not to become aware of practices, if well organized and spread in the correct way, of companies that transmit reassuring values or practices.

In addition, they have features that allow you to enrich the visibility of a piece of content, such as the hashtag or tag (Sivertzen et al, 2013). Collaborations are an excellent visibility tool where long-term partnerships can arise that will make a company's vision curious and fascinating. Finally, live events correspond to situations of great closeness with people.

We conclude that employer branding is basically little more than a passing fad in management, an "updated remake" of the concept of internal marketing, now consolidated and tested. This should not necessarily be seen as a problem in itself because recent changes in some labor markets seem to require a resurgence of marketing concepts in the human resource management industry (Behrends et al, 2020).

## 1.2 Recruitment reputation and attractiveness

Fundamental elements for the development of a good employer branding strategy are recruitment reputation and attractiveness.

But, first, how have recruitment criteria changed over the years? Since there are no real specific studies on Italy, a more general one has been leaked from the research. A research study carried out by researchers in the book entitled "The Oxford handbook of recruitment" comes to our help.

Since the 1970s, only interviews have been held, but the reason for attraction was often not related to the company. The peculiarity was related to the recruiter. It turned out that the recruiter was "major reason the applicant chose a particular company" (Rynes et al, page 336 2013). It would seem that it was effective to have recruiters who showed elements of knowledge, enthusiasm and friendliness, ignoring elements such as gender or age of the recruiter himself (Rynes et al, 2013).

By the 1990s, students with high grades began to be more pretentious and were more likely to abandon the hiring process if there were delays in the procedures, attributing a negative evaluation to the organization (Rynes et al, 2013).

Since the 2000s, the focus of candidate searches has been on the relationships between: the characteristics of the organization, its hiring practices, performance, and reputation.

Is the company sufficiently well known? Is it competitive in the market where it operates? Is the structural system level balanced? Do they hire trained people? Does it have a good reputation? Does it bring me any long-term benefits? These are all examples of questions that the worker asked, and still asks (Rynes et al, 2013).

From 2010 onwards, with the introduction of social media and technological advancement, the selection stages during a job interview have become more complex and divided into several stages.

If you used to go to a specific office asking for an application, today with clicks you can queue up to a list of people who compete for that particular job (Rynes et al, 2013).

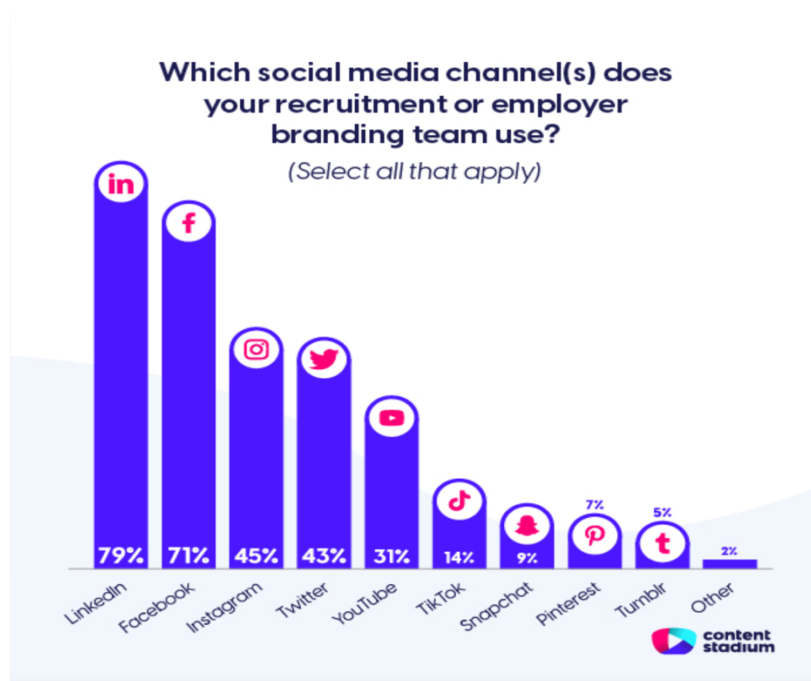
But what are the social media channels that recruitment teams use?

1. LinkedIn, first of all, is the most suitable platform for recruitment processes. It allows companies to publish ads, and to search for work for people registered on the social network. LinkedIn has allowed companies to attach their sites, spread values, and make hiring announcements. Most recruiters regularly use this social media platform (Apollo Technical, 2023).



2. Facebook, being the platform of social media with the most users ever, is leveraged to view the feedback and opinions of old and new workers in an organization (Apollo Technical, 2023).

This is followed by Instagram, X (the new Telegram) and Youtube. The following table (1.1) lists the percentages of social media use by recruiters (De Beukelaer, 2022).



(1.1) Data from contentstadium's 2022 social recruiting and employer branding report

The use of emails or online questionnaires are the basis of recent recruitment methods, not to mention group work to assess the candidate's soft skills (Lumague, 2017). HR managers are responsible for following all these processes, reviewing the various resumes sent and carefully considering who to contact.

Recruitment is not just something about getting into a work project, but it is something more. It is, as mentioned before, a race in search of "talent". Talented people enable companies to maintain a high level of competition, often by innovating an organization's internal industries and systems. People today try to work for companies with high reputations and seek certainty (Padhi & Joshi, 2022).

Psychological studies state that a company's reputation plays an important role in the recruitment process. A company that has a good reputation will have a strong attractiveness, great employee retention skills, influencing credibility and trust and would be better performing than the average competitor in the market (Xie et al, 2015).

In fact, the attractiveness of employer branding is seen as the expected benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization (Kalinska-Kula & Staniec 2021). The more attractive it is, the more it will be perceived as a strong organization by highlighting the value of the brand more.

In addition, attractiveness can be a tool to monitor changes in workers' perceptions of the organization (Kalinska-Kula & Staniec 2021).

A topic, in my opinion, consistent with that of attractiveness, concerns inclusion.

As inclusion policies are the subject of controversial societal discussions that arise in reaction to race-related threats, how those policies connect to the population has become increasingly problematic (Satzger & Vogel, 2023).

The findings imply that employees generally value inclusive workplaces (with women, older people, and the disabled) and respond with positive evaluations and recommendations for their employers, despite the persistent resistance to inclusive societies and the media attention its opponents occasionally receive. When comparing public and nonprofit employers, we don't see any sectoral differences in the relationship; however, the overall ratio is stronger in the case of public employers than private ones (Satzger & Vogel, 2023).

Inclusive workplaces have been found to be positively and strongly correlated with employer attractiveness (Satzger & Vogel, 2023), so public managers have every reason to devote significant attention and resources to fostering employer attractiveness and creating inclusive workplaces.

### 1.3 The organizational change

Over the years, industries try to consolidate and improve their qualities, creating a stable culture in the eyes of consumers and those who work there.

In the case of companies that produce cars, since the Second World War, there has been an exponential increase in sales, and this has allowed car companies to stabilize. If before the market was in the hands of a few people constantly establishing the "rules of the game", now this can no longer be the case. What could possibly go wrong? Progressive and technological improvement or newcomers. If you manage to keep up and surf the wave, you will stay afloat, otherwise you risk drowning. This is the case of the advent of electric cars, i.e. new car models that are more sustainable and different than before 2007, i.e. since the launch of the iPhone (Financial Times, 2018).

Newcomers can upset and challenge the stability of companies because in fact they bring innovations that can divert attention from previous companies. Creating new needs for consumers is the primary objective of competitors (Chyba, 2020).

No one, for example, could expect that the telephone, which had the exclusive function of sending messages or making calls, would become a tool of downloading applications, searching on the internet or even making video calls. And even if before you didn't feel the need for such innovation, then in practice you get used to something that will turn out to be indispensable for everyday life (Goggin, 2021).

The presence of new challenges is not easily predictable. The consequences of a market or sector to technological, social, political or economic changes, allows companies two paths. The first is to follow the change and try to adapt to new situations, or the second is to continue the path with the risk of worsening your position on the market. It is up to the company that feels threatened to understand whether or not it is necessary to adapt to change. So, as we can see, change is something that is able to be different and transform.

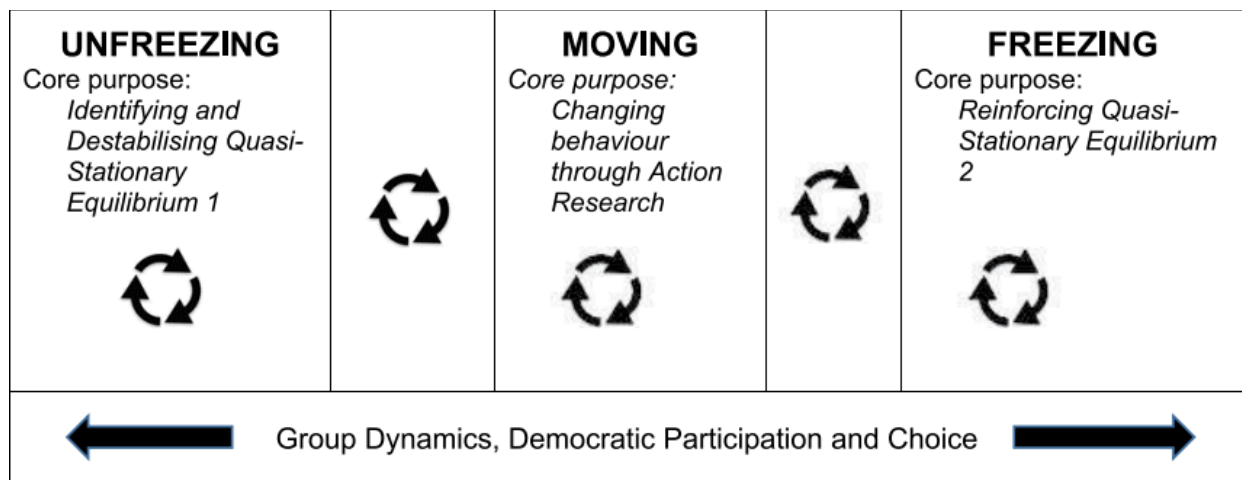
It has an impact on thoughts ("why should I change?"), emotions ("do I feel ready for change?") and behaviors ("do I need to change my behavior?") (Baptista et al, 2020).

Researcher Lewin, through his model divided into three processes, explained the phases of change:

- The unfreezing phase occurs when you learn what the resistances are and build driving forces (Burnes, 2020). It allows for the fluidity necessary for change.

- The moving phase is a phase of displacement that occurs when the forces pushing for change are greater than those resisting change. It is complicated to predict this process due to the complexity of the forces involved (Burnes, 2020).
- The re-freezing phase describes the changes that are essential to determine the permanence of the new situation. It allows you to stabilize the behavior of a new equilibrium. It is the process that includes analyzing results, evaluating or celebrating successes. Refreezing may require changes in internal culture (Burnes, 2020).

The following table (1.2) illustrates these steps:



(1.2) Lewin's conceptual model, taken from the report by the researcher Burnes (2020)

Having understood what change is, what it impacts and what phase it includes, it arose spontaneously to me to know how organizational change is achieved. Kotter's 8-step model comes to our help, which the scholar urges to be followed by leaders to implement and institute change. We need to start by creating a sense of urgency for change, engaging the right people, and creating a common vision. Next, we need to be able to communicate the vision effectively, trying to eliminate obstacles to transformation and creating results in the short term. Finally, according to Kotter, it is essential to be able to consolidate progress and continuously adapt to future challenges (Baloh et al, 2018).

As fascinating as change may be, some schools of thought tend to be strongly resistant to transformation. One of the reasons why some organizations are incapable of change, is from organizational inertia that decides to maintain the organizational status quo (Jabri & Jabri, 2020).

Resistance can be individual (uncertainty), group (cohesion of thought) or organizational (power and conflict). The risk of resistance to change reduces the effectiveness of an organization and its chance of survival (Moradi et al, 2021).

In conclusion, I believe that change in organizations is important for the enhancement of employer branding. In the last 30 years, technology has developed rapidly and the need for change within organizations is indispensable. Organizations need to keep up with the times to better understand market trends to attract the attention of potential workers. The stalemate caused by non-innovative mentalities or contempt for novelty will not make potential future candidates curious and eager to stay.

#### 1.4 Internal culture in companies

It is a well-known fact that there are implicit or explicit rules in every environment. This allows for greater respect for the environment itself and those around us.

Beyond the rules, there are habits that make a path within a reality more natural. Even within organizations, there are habits that we can more correctly define as cultures (Lam et al, 2021).

But what is internal culture? That set of beliefs that over time enter people's daily lives, making them become like habits (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Starting to dress more or less informally and understanding the ways of working whether more flexible or inflexible are two of many possible examples. In a chewing candy company, there will be the possibility of being able to consume the products during working hours because the company's internal culture allows it.

Culture is born through socialization and with it values are absorbed. It can change due to market needs, unpredictable events, and internal or external pressures (Sharma & Sharma, 2022).

An interesting sociology experiment carried out in the 1960s called the "5 Monkey Experiment" explains how internal culture is created and can change over time:

1. Initially, 5 monkeys are placed in a large cage where there is a ladder in the center and a bunch of bananas at the top of it
2. Easily a monkey can climb the ladder and take bananas, but as soon as it tries to pick them up, a mechanism is activated that wets the monkeys with cold water. Every time some monkey wanted to pick bananas; the mechanism would be repeated.
3. The reaction is that the monkeys won't want to take those bananas anymore because they realize that it would be to the detriment of the other monkeys and the environment.
4. The experiment continues by replacing one of the 5 monkeys with a new one. After a few fights given by the monkeys who have become aware of the mechanism, the new monkey adapts to the rules established inside the cage by quickly learning what is not tolerated by the other 4 monkeys.
5. By replacing the old monkeys one by one, an environment is created where they know not to go and pick bananas but without knowing the reason, because "this is how we do it here".

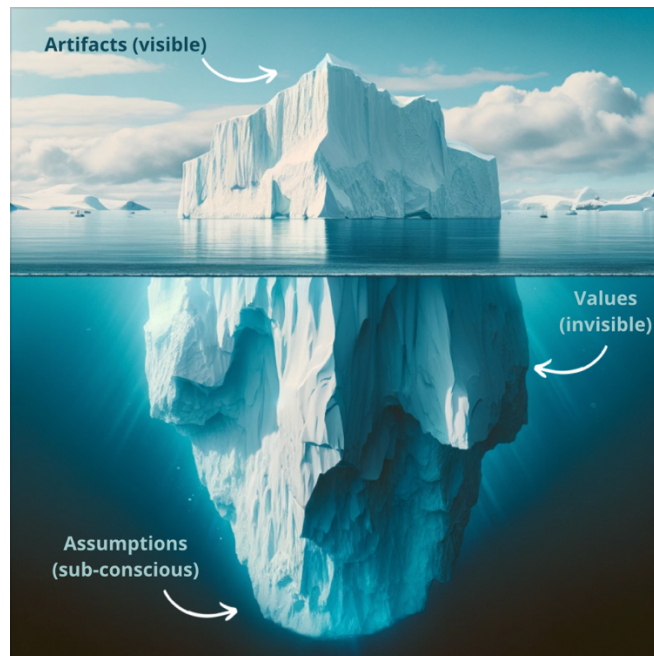
This experiment gives a fairly clear idea of how to internalize an internal norm (Intersol Group, 2020).

To sum up, culture is "the way things are done here" and the reason is often unclear.

In my opinion, there are only two directions: either you join the mechanisms imposed by the organization and pedal at the pace or you enter into a different perspective by aiming for high levels to encourage change.

There are three levels of culture: artifacts, common values, and underlying assumptions. Artifacts represent the visible elements in organizational structures, including structures, processes, and the workplace. They are tangible things such as the dress code, names and titles of people, formality or informality, working hours, color or something you can see on the walls; common values correspond to the beliefs that each worker lives in the business strategy. They correspond to the slogan, mottos, code of ethics or statements about the commitment to excellence; underlying assumptions correspond to the organization's important rules, even if they are unofficial rules. They are the most complicated to change as they are hardly re-examined and represent a shared mind map, as well as a powerful aspect of organizational culture (Pathiranage et al, 2020).

In the following image (1.3), scholar Edgar Schein has encapsulated these concepts through a graphical representation of an iceberg. Being tangible things, artifacts are what you see in the emerged part of the iceberg, while values and assumptions are deeper and invisible (Hattangadi, 2017).



(1.3) AI-created image

So, as we can see, organizational cultures always exist and consequently impact the performance of workers. Is performance correlated?

According to reliable sources, culture and performance are interconnected. Limitations, due to deep cultures, negatively impact the worker's performance. This impact is due to a frequent lack of freedom of choice that often creates a fence around the business (Awadh & Saad, 2013). They can have a positive impact when they go hand in hand with change for the improvement of the organization's results. Employee engagement and group efficiency help improve performance based on the sustainability of the organization (Awadh & Saad, 2013). In addition, internal culture can promote innovation and organizational effectiveness (Azeem et al, 2021). Innovation is a prerequisite for success in an increasingly dynamic and competitive markets. Organizations are social and physical constructions, so an understanding of organizational culture can help shape innovation and business performance (Hogan & Coote, 2014).



## 1.5 Hybrid or presence work?

Nowadays working is a basic necessity in order to be able to live a full and satisfying life.

We live in a reality where work is the daily motivation that allows people to have a goal and a salary.

There are two ways to work:

- Full-time -> consists of working a minimum of 40 hours per week. It is the most common modality that generally spreads the 40 hours in the week. Assuming that Saturday is the day of rest, in addition to Sunday, the worker should generally work from Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m (Lee, 2023).  
I've always wondered why eight hours? Wouldn't it be enough to do just part of the day, morning or afternoon? Basically, it would seem that this division is there because we need two other fundamental moments to live the 24 hours a day to the fullest. Eight hours would be set aside for rest, another eight for family, hobbies, or personal chores, and the other eight for work (Lee, 2023).
- Part-time -> consists of working from 20 to a maximum of 36 hours per week. The breakdown of working hours depends on the employment and the company's rules, so there is no linear split.

There are conflicting opinions between full-time and part-time. There are those who value the eight hours a day as too much and, consequently, waste time waiting to perform tasks, and there are those who assess that part-time work is not enough to make a job profitable (Boltz et al, 2023).

But beyond the number of hours worked, equally thorny issues are working methods. Prior to 2020, work was exclusively face-to-face. Meetings took place in meeting rooms, university or enhancement lectures took place at universities, and consultations and client appointments took place at offices or professional studios (Zaffini, 2021).

Something, however, turned this model upside down. I am referring to the Covid-19 pandemic. This event, which has been broadcast since March 2020, has changed the plans of employer branding in organizations.

Being to all intents and purposes in an epidemic, also due to the forced quarantine and the so-called "red zones", not everyone was allowed to be able to carry out duties as before (Zaffini, 2021).

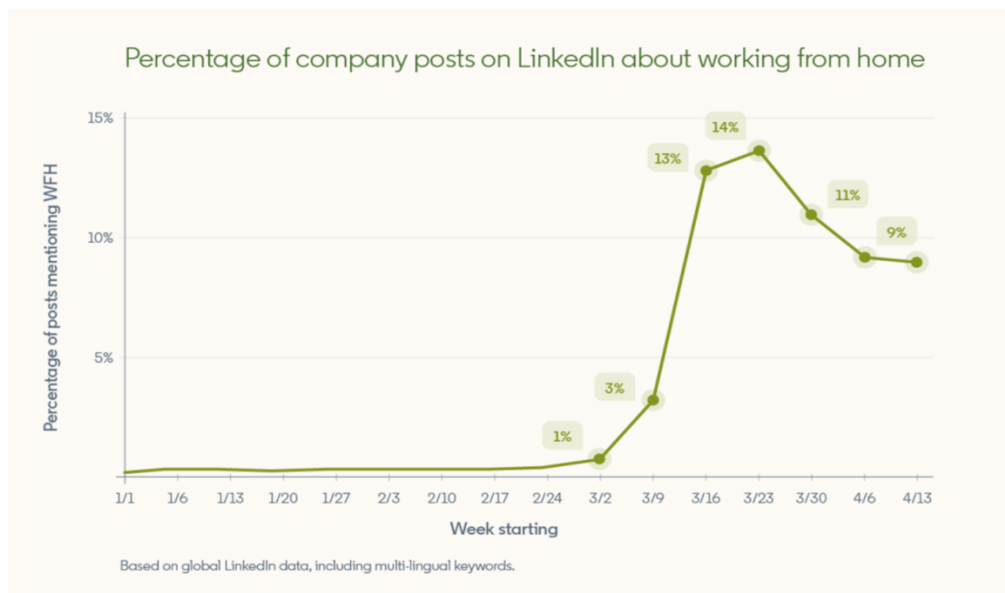
Public and private organizations immediately took steps to solve the problem of staying indoors. This is how smart working was introduced.

An epochal change that has opened the doors to a permanent inclusion in many realities.

There are universities that use video calls to meet the needs of commuters, to follow the change and to show that it is indeed a very useful tool (Zaffini, 2021).

During the pandemic period, it can be seen how the market trends of the moment had completely changed, requiring, for those interested in a certain job, to have the possibility of remote work.

In the following table (1.4) we can see an exponential increase in requests on the social platform LinkedIn (Connaughton, 2020).



(1.4)

Smart working has some advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages -> greater autonomy and freedom of employees which allows a good use of time and work organization; improves the motivation and quality of life of the employee, having more work-life balance, contributing more in the commitment to the company; it does not make people lonely and isolated, as it is based on video calls and there is constant confrontation with colleagues and managers (Fedorova et al, 2020).

Disadvantages -> increased chances of misunderstandings; less practicality on arguments; home distractions (Fedorova et al, 2021).

In addition, remote working seems to be a viable approach to support work-life balance, which is a major concern in contemporary society. This result was unexpected because previous evaluations had warned about the possibility of flexible working arrangements and all the potential drawbacks (health, stress, well-being, etc.). However, ex post evaluations, such as those carried out by previous research, lack credibility because they are unable to prove causality (Angelici & Profeta, 2023).

The ideal work model would be one that allows employees to customize their work schedules to meet their specific needs and adjust their level of engagement based on changing personal and professional priorities (Dizaho et al, 2017). Happy and balanced workers are more likely to be motivated and focused; So, this type of strategy, in my opinion, can increase productivity and efficiency in addition to improving employee happiness and well-being (Smith & Nichols, 2020).

Workplace policies that promote employee well-being, such as access to psychological support programs, physical health initiatives, opportunities for personalized professional development, and, when feasible, the ability to work remotely or take advantage of flexible work schedules, should go hand in hand (Schein, 2015).

In conclusion, a flexible and balanced approach to work not only meets the needs of an ever-changing labor market, but it also proves to be a successful tactic for businesses looking to remain competitive, attract and retain top talent, and improve the lives of their employees. In this situation, employment becomes a tool to lead a fulfilling life (Shifrin & Michel, 2022).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SUCCESS FACTORS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING FOR ELECTRONICS COMPANIES

In this chapter, it will be defined the research question, identifying the success factors for employer branding in electronics companies. After a contextualization of the electronics companies, verifying the market trends, the crucial factor of motivation will be analyzed by leaking the key factors for this success. It will conclude with a survey (31 samples of young people in an age range between 18 and 35 years) to give more support to what has transpired from the research.

Qualitative research will be carried out, with pure description without the use of pre-validated scales. No analysis software will be used, but reliable sources and survey to support what will be developed in the drafting of the paper.

#### 2.1 Employer Branding for electronics companies

Generations such as millennials (people born between 1977 and 1995) have grown up in different realities than those of baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964). The historical context was different and inevitably, so were the needs (Bejtkovsky, 2016).

While older people who tend to old age have grown up without the help or support of electronic tools, millennials but especially generation z (people born from 1996 onwards) have overcome the childhood/adolescence phase with the use of electronic objects or systems (Bejtkovsky, 2016).

In an increasingly digitized and technologically advanced world, electronic tools are indispensable for our lives. From the mobile phone to the personal computer or the burglar alarm system in homes, electronics have become more popular in everyday life, just think that each of us owns products, among the most renowned, Apple, Sony, Samsung, Huawei, HP, LG (Kumar et al, 2019).

In previous years it was possible to encompass coexistence with electronics exclusively to enthusiasts or insiders, while today it has a much wider target (Ingram, n.d.).

Going deeper into the topic of the thesis, what are the benefits of employer branding in electronics/technology companies?

According to a study carried out by the software company Relevant, electronics companies show benefits.

First, electronic companies show an easiness in attracting the best talent. It turns out that, for example, in IT (information technology) companies there is a real war for talent, due to the lack of skilled workers (Burak, 2024). Salaries are competitive, and it's often used as a tactic to easily entice potential workers. Maintaining a healthy and positive work environment allows for a stable balance, making it fascinating (Burak, 2024).

Then the electronic companies show a saving on time and costs of hiring. The reputation of the brand or company makes the figure of employers stand out while the use of reviews or word of mouth allows a reduction on investment in advertising and the hiring of insufficiently suitable candidates (Burak, 2024).

Finally, electronic companies express an improvement in the retention rate. The increase in loyalty is a consequence of policies and cultures adopted within companies. If certain employer branding practices turn out to be successful and compelling, it will increase employee loyalty (Burak, 2024).

An example of an employer branding strategy was carried out by the company Cisco. According to their values, trust is the main element for their employer branding practices, valuing the authenticity factor (Cisco, 2024). Using value models such as "Be yourself, with us", it allows an engaging integration of those who work or would like to work at Cisco. Forming a family-like work environment (with sharing of stories on social media, posts about happy and engaging work moments) gives a great image to the company (Cisco, 2024).

An example of success in employer branding has been demonstrated by the company Microsoft. Through his Jobs Blogs, all the stories related to what is most important to them, namely people, are shared (Reiners, 2024). With detailed interviews, Microsoft has a series of mini biographies that show the different teams of the company, improving the quality of employer branding and externally showing how beneficial it can be to be part of the Microsoft family (Reiners, 2024).

How can be build strong employer branding in electronics companies?

- By establishing policies that are inclusive and compliant with industry requirements, determining the biggest challenges to address the hiring process, and taking deliberate steps to leverage them to one's advantage (Burak, 2024).
- Enabling opportunities for training offerings, making employees invaluable assets, and producing better results (Burak, 2024).
- Implementing motivational strategies through the use of products or services made available by the company (Ahmad & Daud, 2016).

Before delving into the topic of motivation, it is necessary to understand what the current market trends are for electronics companies, to be able to leak the key success factors of employer branding.

## 2.2 Market trends

Before embarking on a long-term project, we need to know what revolves around the context of the project. Understanding the market trends in employer branding is crucial (Urbancova & Hudakova, 2017).

As already stated in the last chapter, since the Covid-19 period (2020-2022) market needs have changed. Abrupt and unpredictable changes, we have seen, alter the market (Gao et al, 2022). In this section, a dual vision will be analyzed, not only on the part of the potential candidate/employee, but also on what a company, and especially electronics companies, must consider regarding new market trends.

So, what are the current market trends? What is a potential worker looking for now? And in an electronics company?

Human Resources staff are responsible for selecting and evaluating candidates. In addition to looking for common points with the company where they work, they study the current needs of those who want to try their hand at a working reality (Mahapatro, 2021).

Starting from the first two questions above, people today are looking for improvements in working conditions, sharing of experiences, employee enhancement and inclusion (Wanberg et al, 2020).

Before trying their hand at a new reality and applying for a new job, candidates need to see behind the scenes to better understand what it's like to work in a company. Watching and listening to moments lived within a company make the job proposal immersive (Bruce, 2024). Being "one of many" is not a good identikit. Employees or potential candidates should not be seen as numbers but should be appreciated for the value they bring to the business. As a result, inclusion in a new environment also strengthens employer branding (Bruce, 2024).

As far as companies are concerned, beyond the search for talent as previously mentioned, there are further potential trends to follow. In particular, the research highlights the Employer Value Proposition (EVP) and sustainability.

The Employer Value Proposition is a promise by the employer, aimed at satisfying the employee by creating a motivational system to join/stay in the company and strengthen the company's brand image in the market (work and business more generally) (Pattnaik & Misra, 2017). It is also the unique set of benefits that an employee receives in exchange for the skills, abilities, and experience they bring to a company. An EVP is all about defining the essence of the company: how it is unique and what it stands for (TeamEcho, 2024). It encompasses the main reasons why people are proud and motivated to work at the company, such as the inspiring

vision or distinctive culture. When integrated into all aspects of a company, a strong EVP will help retain top performers and attract top external talent. (TeamEcho, 2024).

In other words, it is "a clear picture of what your organization stands for, offers and requires as an employer" (Bagienska, page 383, 2018).

An example of Nike's expressed value, as well as slogans, "Just do it!" influences both the outside and inside of the company (Yan et al, 2022). This example inspires and motivates individuals to achieve their life goals, no matter what challenges or obstacles life presents. Nike culture emphasizes ambition in the world of sports and not (Flores, 2023).

EVP includes five categories: rewards, opportunities, organization, work, and people (Ryan, 2010).

- Compensation systems, non-wage benefits, average employee wage, and pension benefits are all included in the reward category (Bagienska, 2018).
- Development opportunities include projects that support employee development, training programs for students and graduates, types of staff training, and number of training hours per employee (Bagienska, 2018).
- By organization, we mean information about the quality of the company's product or service, market position, and a statement attesting to the company's reliability and credibility as an employer (Bagienska, 2018).
- The type of employment contracts, statements that ensure safety and fair opportunities for all workers, work-life balance initiatives, details on opportunities for both vertical and horizontal promotion, and employee turnover index workers are all included in the work area (Bagienska, 2018).
- Finally, under the category of people we mean the managerial position, the employee, the connections and communication with colleagues and the code of ethics (Bagienska, 2018).

The second element concerning trends for companies is sustainability.

It is one of the most recurring themes in recent years. The search for green is present in all organizations, to demonstrate innovation while keeping up with the future (Ubeda-Garcia et al, 2022). There is the so-called "green human resources management", which is a key tool that allows sustainable strategies to be incorporated into business models within organizations (Schuler & Jackson, 2014).



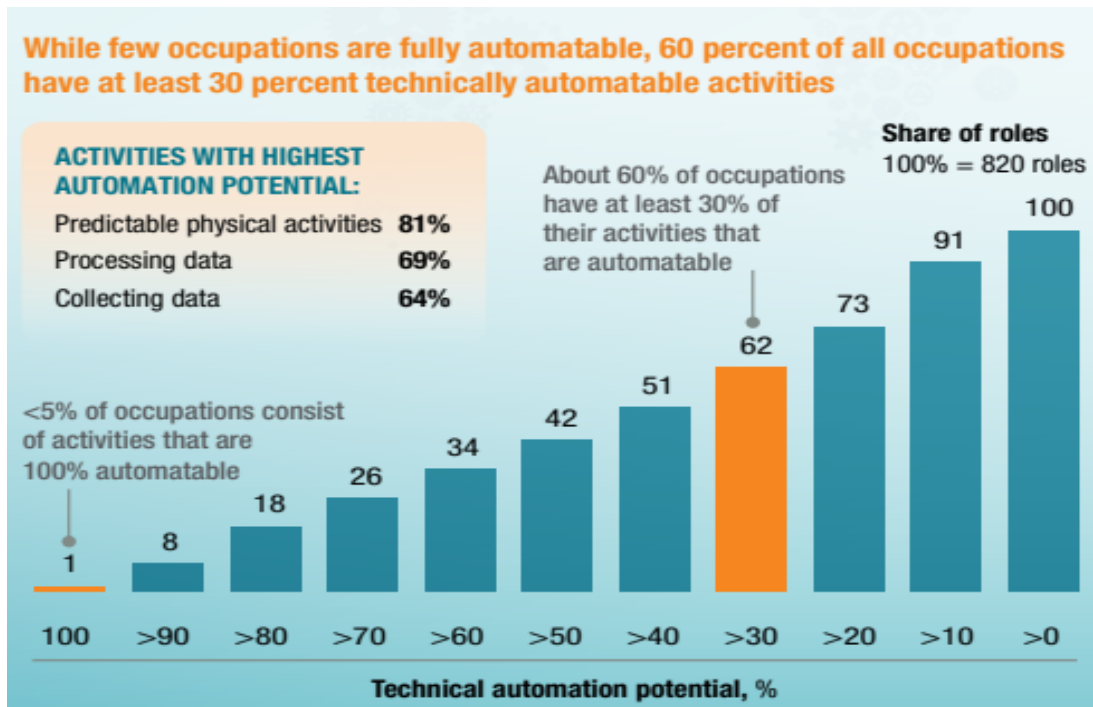
Spreading sustainable policies and practices could create a shared line of thought among workers, making potential workers more enticed to apply to the company (Renwick et al, 2013).

Therefore, these green management practices, on the part of human resources, make it possible to implement the sustainable social environment by providing a competitive advantage (Yasin et al, 2023).

While for electronics companies there is a specific market trend? The answer is affirmative and one trend is artificial intelligence (AI). In recent years, the introduction of artificial intelligence has significantly changed reality (Finlay, 2020). It is a tool with a crazy potential that allows you to solve problems in a matter of seconds or to replace the human being with an image that is not real, distorting reality. A tool as fascinating as it is dangerous, which will surely inject a sense of curiosity into people's minds to try to make the most of it for their own needs (Finlay, 2020).

Electronics companies turn out to be much closer to AI than other industries as electronics show more interest in opening to technological innovation (Alizadeh & Foroughi, 2023).

With AI, companies could make the most of the system's potential by strengthening their employer branding. If used correctly, it would save money and time, simplifying and automating decision-making processes. In addition, it promises to be an accelerator for the hiring of candidates for pre-screening with interviews (Georgiana, 2023). A recent study carried out by McKinsey (2.1) showed that potentially at least 30% of daily tasks could be automated (Edlich et al, 2019).



(2.1) Retrieved from Edlich's (2019) McKinsey report

A recent example is programs such as Grammarly, which check for spelling errors in writing, and this would allow employer branding to be positioned in electronics companies (Fitria, 2021). In addition, AI would help compose and publish social media posts with consistent messaging and tone to electronics companies, presenting innovative results (Linkedin, 2023).

### 2.3 Motivational factors

From childhood to adulthood, every person has mini goals. The child has playing as a motivation to behave politely, while the boy/girl has seeing friends to go to school and study (Mahmoud et al, 2020).

On the other hand, what motivation do adults have? What is that strength that, in a work context and specifically in electronics companies, gives the motivation to get up in the morning and carry out one's duties?

Before delving into the answer of these questions, it's important to know the general implications of motivation.

First, what is motivation? It is that energy that allows people to perform certain behaviors or do their jobs. It's an internal feeling and the energy of it drives us in a certain way (Herzberg, 2017). There can be positive and negative motivations, and their effects on individuals are similar in nature but different in intensity (Howard et al, 2020).

Motivation is divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic is the action that is taken to get a reward or to avoid punishment. In this case, motivation arises from something or stimulus that is outside of us (Malek et al, 2020).

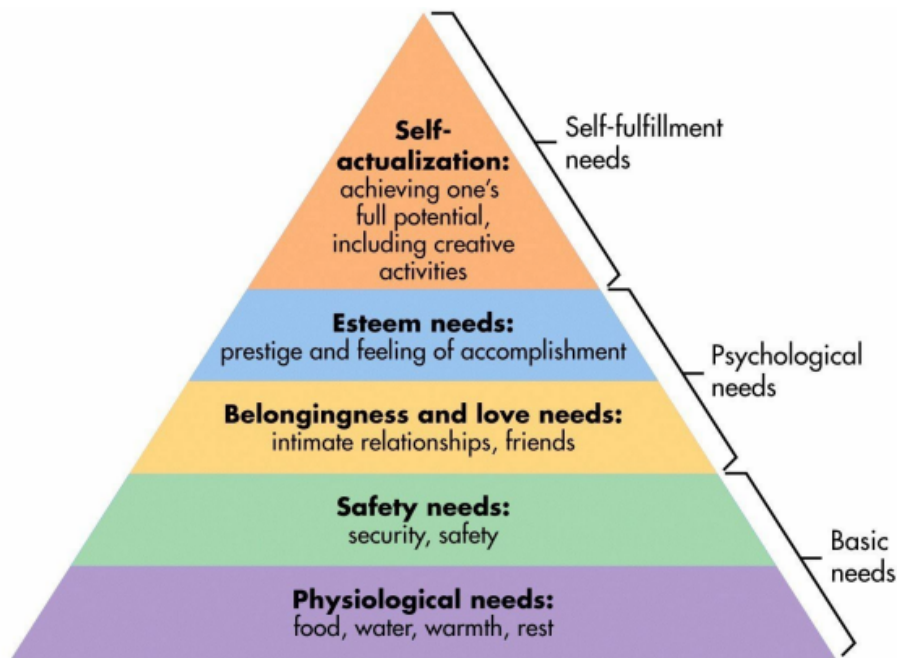
Extrinsic, on the other hand, occurs between individuals and looms large when actions are performed for personal gratification (e.g., completing a puzzle). Here motivation comes from us (Malek et al, 2020).

Maslow enunciated a hierarchy of needs related to motivation (McLeod, 2018). Maslow defines five types of needs:

- Physiological need -> needs such as eating, breathing, or sleeping
- Need for security -> security with health, with work, or with one's own body
- Need for belonging -> needs related to family, friendship, or sexual intimacy
- Need for social esteem -> needs such as confidence, respect for and from others, or self-esteem
- Need for self-actualization -> needs such as spontaneity, creativity, or morality

Motivation is based on these needs, and depending on how much intensity is sought, people will feel motivated (Gawell, 2019).

In the next figure (2.2) graph of Maslow's theory is shown:



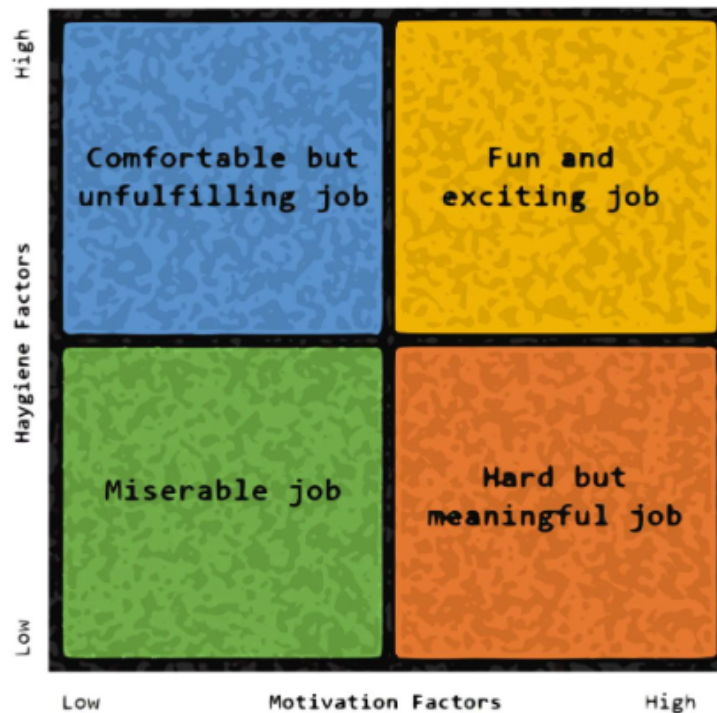
(2.2) Retrieved from the report by the scholar McLeod (2018)

There are separate sets of mutually exclusive workplace factors that cause job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, hygiene factors and motivational factors (Alshmemri et al, 2017).

Motivational factors deal with achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth, and the work itself (Nickerson, 2023). Hygiene factors examine interpersonal relationships, wages, administration, and company policy and working conditions (Nickerson, 2023).

Hygiene factors are related to the need to avoid unpleasantness while motivational factors lead more directly to job satisfaction due to the individual's need for self-growth and self-actualization (Herzberg, 2015). For Herzberg, the presence of motivational factors ensured job satisfaction, while the lack of hygiene factors generated job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 2015). The worst-case scenario is to have low motivational and hygiene factors, where workers feel unmotivated and have complaints, while the best-case scenario, on the contrary, is to have high motivational and hygiene factors to have zero complaints and excellent motivation to work (Nickerson, 2023).

The following graph (2.3) shows what Herzberg said:



(2.3) Retrieved from the report by scholar Nickerson (2023)

After clarifying what motivation is in general in the workplace, what is the motivation for electronics companies?

Specifically, it is difficult to identify motivational factors within a specific reality such as electronics, as there is generally common information in all sectors. However, it turns out that technologically advanced companies reward their employees more through competitive compensation with recognition and incentives (Sitopu et al, 2021). Motivation in these contexts stems from the idea that people are valued and consequently motivated to do better by having a corresponding compensation (Sitopu et al, 2021). Working adults are driven, every morning, by this pay force that makes constant participation and improvement of the company more willing, taking advantage of benefits to optimize the quality of life (Asaari et al, 2019).

## 2.4 Identification of key values

In a work environment, as can be deduced, there are all the elements mentioned above.

Explained the principles of change, the company's image, attractiveness, reputation, trends, internal culture, and motivation, what are the key success factors for employer branding?

Several strategies are used for employer branding to keep employees working at a company but also to hire new ones (Leekha Chhabra & Sharma, 2014).

Being the showcase that a company creates for itself and considering the factors of sustainability and inclusion, several elements have emerged.

First of all, work-life balance (Hendriana et al, 2023). In paragraph 1.5 the difference between full-time and part-time work was expressed, highlighting how this issue is a considerable source of debate. Most jobs are full-time (40 hours per week) and consequently a balance could be compensated by smart working (Hendriana et al, 2023). The introduction of smart working is a solution that, especially for the younger generation, is appreciated (EY, 2023).

In addition, lately at the end of 2023/beginning of 2024, a different way of working from the common one has been experimented with. The short week has been introduced in some circles (Gagliardi, 2024).

What does the short week consist of? A reduction in working hours per week from 5 working days to 4. The result is an improvement in the work-life balance and a reduction in stress on the part of the worker (Mullens & Glorieux, 2024).

One country that has opened its doors to this new concept is the United Kingdom (Ducharme, 2023). It found that productivity improved by 22%, applications increased by 88%, and absenteeism decreased by 66% (Liu, 2024). 92% of companies have decided to continue to adopt the short week, and 55% of employees have shown an improvement in their work skills (Liu, 2024).

All this has shown that light adaptations in the field of work can make employees happier and more productive for those who work there, demonstrating greater attractiveness and eliminating toxic environments (Liu, 2024).

It is still in the embryonic phase, but this experiment shows enormous potential with possibilities for improvements in the working environment, also from an economic point of view (Liu, 2024).

So why would flexible working be an element of success? It would be fundamental for what is often underestimated, namely mental health. A lightening from a work point of view would benefit employees in question of rest and performance (Cagnazzo, 2023).

The second success factor would be technological innovation. Electronics companies are more likely to be open to improvement by trying to keep up with the times (Smirnov, 2023). Technological innovation is powerful enough to retain talent (Smirnov, 2023).

Why do electronics companies need to attract talent?

In technologically advanced companies, having a highly skilled workforce is important. Hire people who have not only industry skills, but also soft skills such as problem solving, creativity, morality, adaptation to change, fast learning and teamwork (Al-Agedi, 2023).

In addition, there is great competition among electronics companies, as talent, in addition to improving the company's performance, could create a strong corporate culture, with a healthy collaborative and startup mindset (Al-Agedi, 2023).

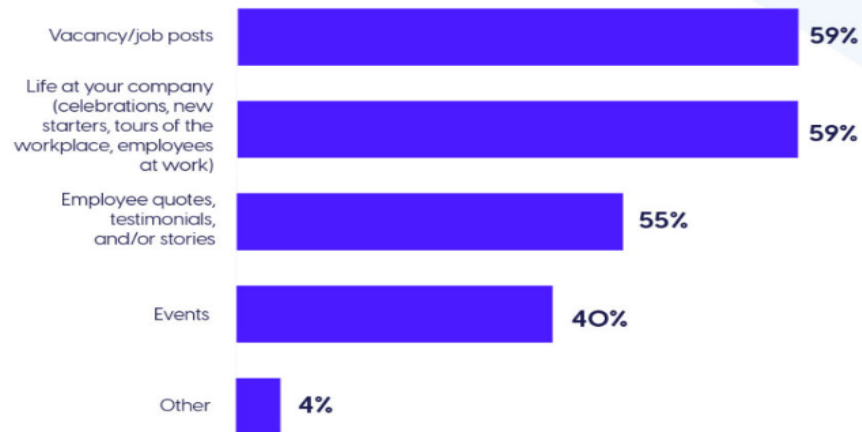
Finally, the third success factor of employer branding is the use of social media.

Candidates look for realities that can reflect their values and that foster professional development and opportunities for growth through social media (Grgurovic, 2023). Social media is a tool that serves as a showcase not only for the company's products or services but also internal beliefs and culture (Grgurovic, 2023).

According to research carried out by Kunzle in 2021 on the Content Stadium website (graph 2.4), it appears that the types of posts most made on social media are about vacancies or jobs (59%) and about the life of the company (59%) (Kunzle, 2021). The rest turn out to be posts related to workers' testimonials (55%) and events (40%) (Kunzle, 2021):

## What type (topic) of content do you usually post on your social media channels?

(Select all that apply)



(2.4) Data from contentstadium's 2021 employer branding and social media report

As far as wages are concerned, they are important but not crucial. According to CareerBuilder, 67% of candidates would accept a low-wage job if the company were to have positive reviews or be talked about highly (Ansari, n.d.).

Strong employer branding could potentially reduce the worker's salary expectations (Mouton & Bussin, 2019). This results in a high consideration of workers in moving from organization (Mouton & Bussin, 2019).



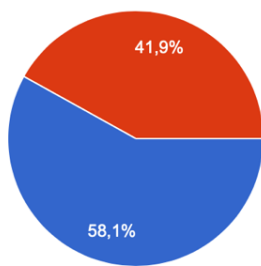
## 2.5 Survey and results

As already announced in the introduction of the chapter, a simple survey was carried out in order to give greater support to what emerged from the research.

After clarifying what the topic would be and defining the anonymity of the respondents, the timing of completion and the number of questions were specified.

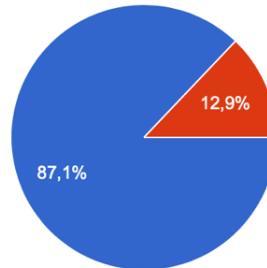
The survey, created on Google Forms, consists of 18 questions and aims to understand what the success factors of electronics companies are. The target audience is potential candidates and not employers.

There are 31 samples, 13 females and 18 males (2.5), 87.1% (2.6) of them concern young people in the 18-25 age group while the remaining 12.9% in the 26-35 age group.



(2.5)

● Maschio  
● Femmina



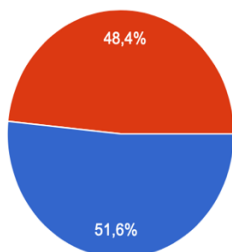
(2.6)

● 18-25  
● 26-35  
● 36-45  
● 46-55  
● 56+

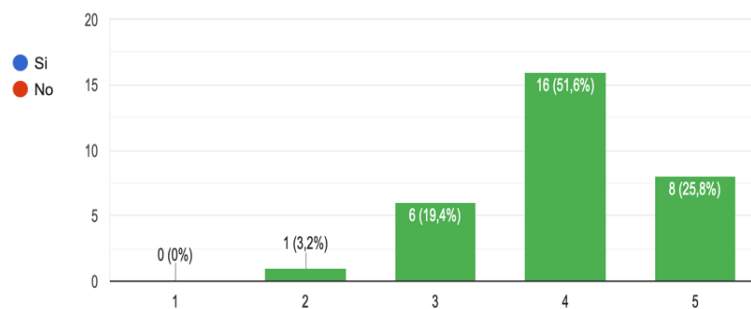
The 18 questions were divided into groups, encapsulating what has been elaborated in the previous paragraphs. Five questions aim to make it clear what the elements of attraction are and whether the reputation of the employer is important, another four concern motivation, three on full-time or part-time work, four on personal and corporate strategies and values and two on market trends.

Trying to synthesize, only the most interesting results of the questions will be analyzed.

First, it emerged that only 51.6% (2.7) of respondents consider the employer branding factor for a potential career choice. The good reputation of the workplace is highly important, giving a positive result of 76.5% (2.8).

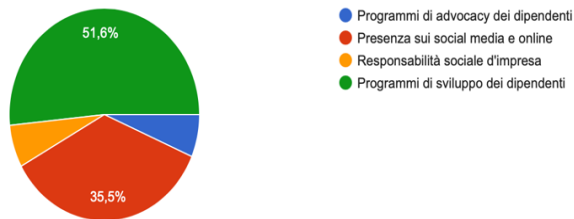


(2.7)

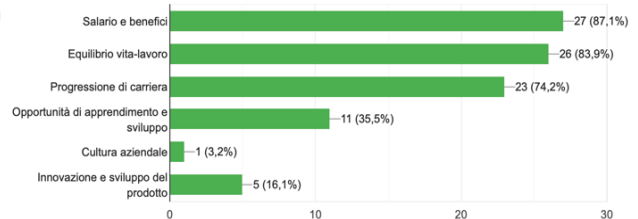


(2.8)

The most effective strategies to improve the company's brand as an employer were 51.6% employee development programs and 35.5% social media and online presence, to the detriment of employee advocacy programs (6.5%) and corporate social responsibility (6.5%) (2.9). When selecting the three most important factors in making the work environment attractive and motivating in a company, the employer needs to give greater consideration to the elements of professional development opportunities, work-life balance and compensation or benefits (2.10).

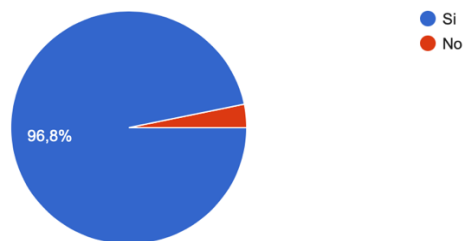


(2.9)

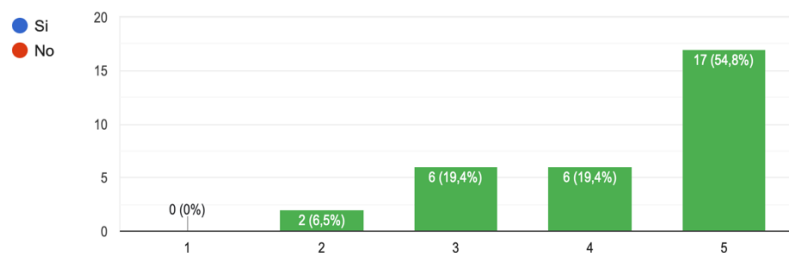


(2.10)

Almost 96.8% unanimously considered work-life balance to be crucial (2.11) and the 74.2% percentage of the importance of concern about employees' mental health was clearly positive (2.12).

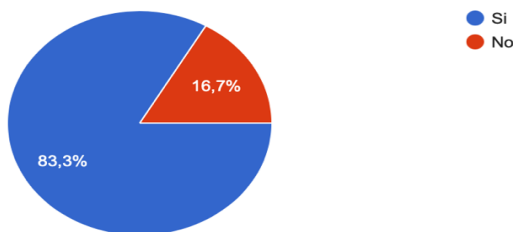


(2.11)

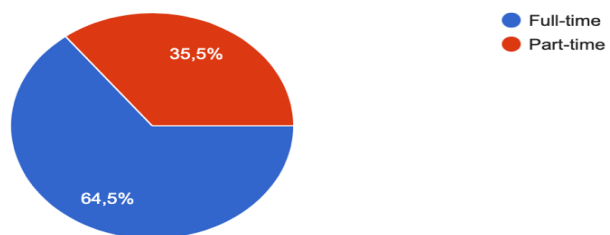


(2.12)

In the future, the permanent introduction of hybrid work (on-site or smart) would improve the quality of work for 83.3% of respondents (2.13). Hypothetically, regarding preferences on full-time work, which is more remunerative but stressful, and part-time, which is less remunerative but beneficial to mental health, 64.5% are in favor of full-time work (2.14).

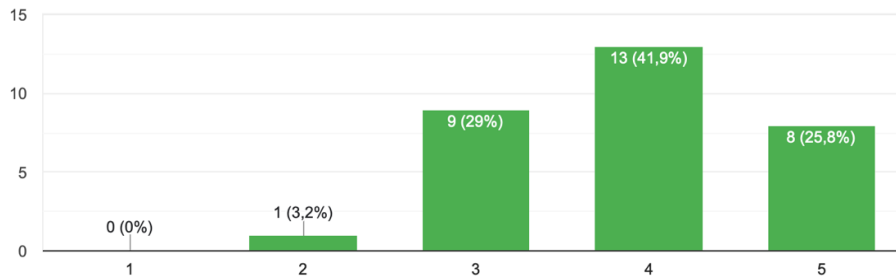


(2.13)

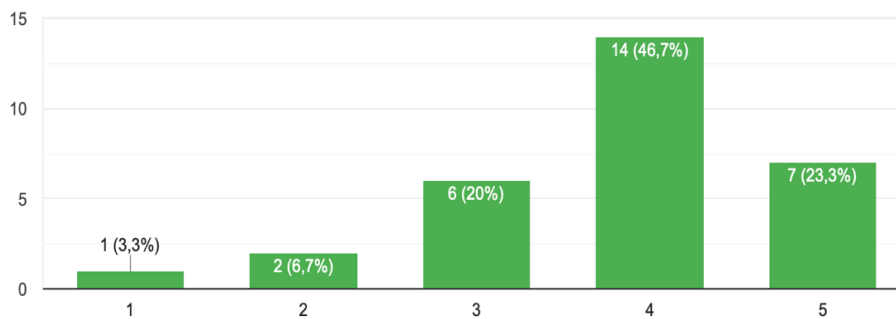


(2.14)

For market trends, sustainability and AI were considered. The importance of implementing sustainability practices in employer branding strategies was high at 67.7% and moderately important at 29% (2.15), while the integration of artificial intelligence elements was high at 70% and moderately at 20% (2.16).



(2.15)



(2.16)

To conclude, what do these results show?

They show that the reputation and strategies implemented by employer branding are relevant. Of great impact is an environment that is serene and monitored towards those who work there. Market trends must be followed if you want to make candidates gravitate around a company and implement good employer branding is in fact good advertising. In addition, working in a technological environment makes workers feel like they are in a state-of-the-art location, creating a stimulating work environment.

These data, in fact, are raw and cannot be considered as reliable and objective for future research but they can certainly be taken as food for thought for what is actually considered, evaluated and worried by the new generations projected into business realities.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE APPLE CASE

In this chapter, there will be a focus on the multinational company Apple. For one of the most famous brands in the world, a company profile analysis will be carried out, employer branding practices will be known, and employee reviews of the U.S. company will be recognized.

#### 3.1 Apple Company Profile

One of the most famous electronics brands in the world is certainly Apple (Johnson et al, 2012). Steve Jobs at the end of the 70s had in mind to design something that could change the habits of the time and thanks to Apple, he succeeded with great triumph (Stanko, 2015).

He wanted to create electronic products based on convenience and constant innovation by beating the competition (Stanko, 2015).

The production of electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, computers, smartwatches and media players has made the brand unique since the 2000s (GlobalData, 2024).

Iconic is the launch of the iPhone product, where Steve Jobs showed off exclusive features. The set of applications that allow people to access services such as the internet, phone calls and e-mails with one click; the "home" button that allows customers to access the main screen of the device; the smartphone screen lock that can be unlocked with a swipe; the speed of the applications, have created novelty and amazement, enticing people to buy the product (Pangambam, 2007).

The organizational structure, i.e. the visual representation of the Apple company's organizational chart, like any billion-dollar company, has different levels of management. First of all, it is a functional structure (Dudovskiy, 2023).

Functional structure is the most common structure of small and medium-sized enterprises based on the principle of work of division, i.e. that workers are divided by group based on the qualities and skills they have in common (Bottorff & Organ, 2023). Having efficacy and efficiency goals, functional structures basically tend to maintain a stable environment, creating products with long life cycles by implementing technology (Bottorff & Organ, 2023). The positive sides are the sharing of work tools, economies of scale and the development of technical and specialized skills, while the negative sides are potentially rigidity on decisions, not suitable for support on the diversification of innovative strategies with a tendency to bureaucratization and centralization (Vaughan, 2022).

Apple has more than 160,000 employees in all parts of the world (Statista, 2023).

The management split is product-based, dividing assets according to:

- Services like the App Store or iCloud
- Mac (computer)
- iPhone (phone)
- iPad (tablet)
- More products like Apple TV

The functional structure is not common for large companies such as Apple, but it allows for greater efficiency in avoiding conflicts between division heads (Dudovskiy, 2023).

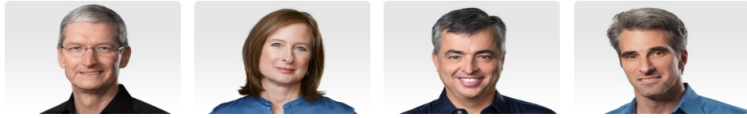
Before Tim Cook took over, with Steve Jobs, the U.S. company had a different decision-making system than it does now (Davenport, 2011). They were also different times, as in 13 years there were huge changes in trends and markets, but all decisions had to go through Jobs. He had the last word, which severely limited the improvement of internal decision-making positions (Davenport, 2011).

Was Jobs a good decision-maker? Certainly yes, but there was no lack of preponderant and extreme choices (Lashinsky, 2011). According to an article in Fortune Magazine, Steve Jobs was a "corporate dictator who makes every critical decision and oodles of seemingly noncritical calls too, from the design of the shuttle buses that ferry employees to and from San Francisco to what food will be served in the cafeteria" (Lashinsky, 2011).

Since 2011, after Steve Jobs' death from respiratory arrest, Tim Cook took over as the brand's leader (Steinwart & Ziegler, 2014). Today, with a market that is always developing and with different and innovative trends, the decision-making phase is not only up to the CEO. With him, decentralization in the decision-making phase was embraced, encouraging business development and creativity (Dudovskiy, 2023).

Apple is divided into focused divisions. Each division has its own senior management and vice-presidents (Organimi, 2024). The following photos (3.1 and 3.2) show the company's current leadership (Apple Leadership, 2024):

Executive Profiles



**Tim Cook**  
CEO

**Katherine Adams**  
Senior Vice President and General Counsel

**Eddy Cue**  
Senior Vice President Services

**Craig Federighi**  
Senior Vice President Software Engineering

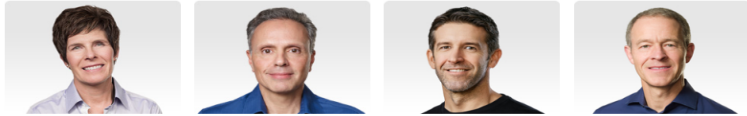


**John Giannandrea**  
Senior Vice President Machine Learning and AI Strategy

**Greg "Joz" Joswiak**  
Senior Vice President Worldwide Marketing

**Sabih Khan**  
Senior Vice President Operations

**Luca Maestri**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer



**Deirdre O'Brien**  
Senior Vice President Retail

**Johny Srouji**  
Senior Vice President Hardware Technologies

**John Ternus**  
Senior Vice President Hardware Engineering

**Jeff Williams**  
Chief Operating Officer

(3.1)



**Mike Fenger**  
Vice President Worldwide Sales

**Lisa Jackson**  
Vice President Environment, Policy and Social Initiatives

**Isabel Ge Mahe**  
Vice President and Managing Director of Greater China

**Tor Myhren**  
Vice President Marketing Communications



**Adrian Perica**  
Vice President Corporate Development

**Kristin Huguet Quayle**  
Vice President Worldwide Communications

**Phil Schiller**  
Apple Fellow

**Carol Surface**  
Chief People Officer

(3.2)

Photos taken from the Apple.com website

### 3.2 Apple's Employer Branding

Like any self-respecting company, in addition to the organizational structure, there are fundamental principles that drive the company machine. Indispensable figures are the employees who emit energy and illuminate the working environment.

This paragraph is divided into three parts:

- 1) Company values
- 2) Internal motivation
- 3) Recruitment and employer branding

The values of the Apple company are many: starting from accessibility, environment, inclusion and diversity, privacy and supplier responsibility (Arocha, 2017).

Apple's technology products are accessible to everyone, using systems suitable for people with mobility difficulties, such as with the Apple Watch, or sensory systems with screen readers or the use of audio to perform actions or give input (Apple Accessibility, 2024).

Since 2011, Apple has been executing internal policies to support sustainability, decreasing carbon emissions annually (Milanesi, 2023). By 2030, Apple has set itself the goal of producing all carbon-neutral products (Apple, 2023). To date, the company has followed the progress made by constant innovations, producing the first neutral product, the Apple Watch, produced with 100% clean electricity and over 30% recycled materials. Complete this mission with at least 50% airplane-free expeditions (Apple, 2023).

Inclusion and diversity within the U.S. company is another strong element. It turns out that, in 2022, in hiring, 35.3% of workers are women with a percentage of 29.8% asian ethnicity among all workers in the United States (Apple Inclusion & Diversity, 2024). In addition, salary payments are perfectly equal and balanced between the genders. (Apple Inclusion & Diversity, 2024).

As far as privacy is concerned, Apple considers this an immovable human right.

The company's technological innovation aims to defend the entirety of the services offered, to make browsing safer (Apple Privacy, 2024). Applications are structured so that they do their business and not the person who uses them, learning what is needed and storing the memory of photos, chats, messages and credit cards (Apple Privacy, 2024).

Finally, Apple considers people as the top priority. Satisfying them in every way to disseminate comfort products and services, shows that workers listen and act, accelerating the dissemination of opportunities with partnerships that cry out for progress (Apple, 2023). Well-being in mindset, health, and safety are important elements for Apple (Apple, 2023).

What are the motivation elements within Apple?

Stress is a very recurrent element in small and large business contexts (Wu et al, 2021). To avoid burnout, which is a condition of extreme stress that leads to the depletion of people's psychophysical resources, Apple uses strategies (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Apple was often characterized as a company where people worked too much, giving little room for work-life balance. They soon realized that the best solution, for greater motivation, would be to implement reward policies at work, making it more profitable (Main, 2023).

The most common current strategy is to reward the best performers with greater freedom. By gaining the employer's trust from time to time, and completing various tasks and objectives, workers will happily do a good job for those they want to please, gaining great supportive benefits (Main, 2023).

Another element of motivation for Apple employees is the innovation factor.

The company's products and locations have always proven to be at the forefront, with design and functionality in step with the times. As Steve Jobs said, "Design is not just about the look and feel. Design is how it works" (Ahmed, 2023), meaning how aesthetics is a fundamental element to express the real functioning of the product or service (Joseph, 2024).

In addition, the design of the office and workplace is also part of the process. The work environment, such as in Apple Park in Silicon Valley, is created in a way that gives you more incentives to connect, talk and walk with other people. Fitness area and acres of orchards give the eye an idea of breathing in the work environment (AppleInsider, 2023).

Living together in a technological and powerful environment makes people more motivated, expressing curiosity and a sense of belonging (Joseph, 2024).

As previously defined, employer branding is the set of strategies that an employer of a company implements to attract new workers, while retaining their current ones (Lopez Artacho, 2022).

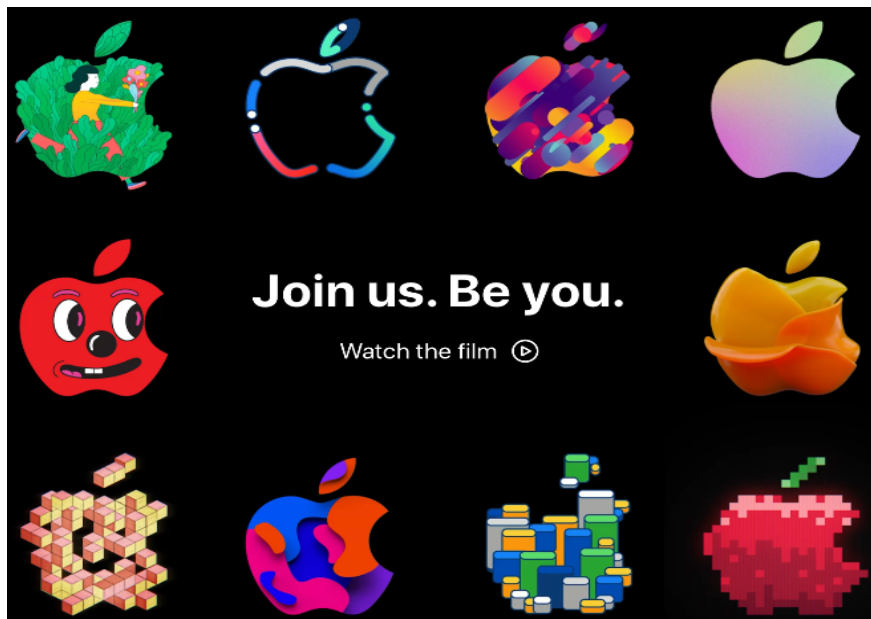
Apple aims to create a strong sense of belonging, seeking not only the skills but also the values, motivations and aspirations that a person transmits. Finding membership identification in a high-tech context makes Apple unique (Clear HR Consulting, 2019).

Apple is searching for "The crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things." (Schmalz & Mowatt, page 245 2014). Out-of-the-box people who can see things you don't normally see, who aren't afraid to think differently, and who genuinely want to change the world are the most suitable and well-liked people for the company. With this, the U.S. company



considers customers as unique and counterculture (Clear HR Consulting, 2019). Apple shows a great commitment to communicating a sense of purpose to its workers, projecting them into large and ambitious contexts, attempting to leave a mark on the universe (Ducker, 2023).

In 2020, the company's first employer branding video was launched (Talent Brand Alliance, 2020). The aim was to attract the best talent and the video in question can be summarized with the following photo (3.3) (Apple Career, 2024):



(3.3)

What he wants to express is a strong message of belonging, highlighting how diversity is welcome and indispensable. It is a transparent modality that includes the target audience, through a showcase of stimuli that tend to strengthen the variety of potential and current workers (Talent Brand Alliance, 2020).

Finally, how does recruitment at Apple take place? What are the stages? What kind of process is it?

Each company has its own internal policies and therefore even in recruitment, from one company to another, the criteria may vary. From what has transpired from research, the selection process, to date, is divided into 5 parts (Graduates First, 2024).

The first, and the same for everyone, is the online application phase. The candidate is asked to upload his/her Curriculum Vitae and after a selection, if deemed suitable by the talent acquisition team, the online assessment phase is carried out (Graduates First, 2024).

The online assessment is in turn divided into three parts: the technical test, the situational judgment test and the personality test. The technical test corresponds to the verification of

technical skills, the situational judgment test consists of the assessment of decision making and situational awareness such as interpersonal skills, leadership or emotional intelligence, while the personality test allows you to understand personality traits with psychological questions (Graduates First, 2024).

The third phase consists of group work. This phase aims to divide the candidates into working groups to understand how they behave in terms of communication and in teams, putting them in front of exercises (Graduates First, 2024).

After this stage, the fourth phase corresponds to the call with the senior manager. A conversation of about 30 minutes with specific questions about the candidate's skills. The call is not made through the camera, so the manager cannot see body language, clothing, or confidence in speaking (Graduates First, 2024).

Finally, the last phase corresponds to the assessment day. In this last part, the candidate is asked to have a technical interview and another based on skills. The technical interview is about technical questions related to the field of work in which the application was made, and the skills interview consists of assessing the candidate's skills in practice (Graduates First, 2024).

Once this long process is over, you will be able to become part of the Apple family. It should be noted that for each department and based on the period, these selection criteria can vary and change from time to time, streamlining or weighing it down (Tian et al, 2022).

Evaluating the entire process, at first glance it turns out to be long and cumbersome. On the one hand, the time taken could vary between a month and a month and a half and this could be limiting, but on the other hand, it is also plausibly understandable as it is a very powerful multinational on the market and the search for talent takes time (Dorn, 2022). Apple's commitment to empowering its workers is evident, and this helps to enrich the company with internal values (Apple Career, 2024).

### 3.3 Working at Apple

To verify and evaluate the behind-the-scenes of Apple workers, it is necessary to do a thorough analysis. This research is carried out by analyzing and evaluating what exists on the vast world of the internet to understand what it is like to work within Apple.

The search tools used are the review sites Glassdoor and Indeed, certainly more reliable sources of "word-of-mouth" speculations (Gildin, 2022).

Reviews often show significant problems, namely that they all come from private individuals who are free to write what they want without a real fair trial being review sites and not courts (Mandouit & Hattie, 2023).

This means that any statement can be affected by several cognitive distortions stemming from preconceptions of the author's human experience (Trincherro, 2023).

The assumption is that it is scientifically proven that humans are more likely to leave negative reviews than positive ones, to alert the online community (Ghelber, 2021). This is due to the fact that negative emotions last longer than positive ones, focusing on annoying rather than beneficial events (Verduyun & Lavrijsen, 2015).

Therefore, the inside of reviews can be written to exorcise negative experiences, which may have occurred even in the rosiest and healthiest situation (Srivastava & Kaul, 2014).

Acknowledging that many of the reviewers may be disgruntled employees or former employees, for example because of a missed promotion, an unsatisfactory salary, or some kind of dislike towards a particular colleague or superior, leads to the next logical consequence: namely, that these statements cannot be considered as testimony under oath on the witness stand as they are the personal opinions of individuals telling the truth, but a truth that mixes facts with perception and cognitive biases that are physiological and cannot be adequately filtered (Proserpio, 2020).

The statistical sample is adequate with over 25,000 reviews, but once filter out those concerning job interviews or too old (some date back to 2011), to accurately represent the current situation, it will have a more complete view (Indeed & Glassdoor, 2024).

Just as there are many voices that can be heard, there will be others that will remain silent and will not take part in the representation of the "state of health" of the Apple work environment (Garfield, 2021).

All the reviews that make sense chronologically will be collected to highlight which are the recurring positive and negative elements, therefore the year 2023 and 2024, which are presumably the most reliable and therefore least affected by personal cognitive distortions, and with those the health status of the workplace will rise.

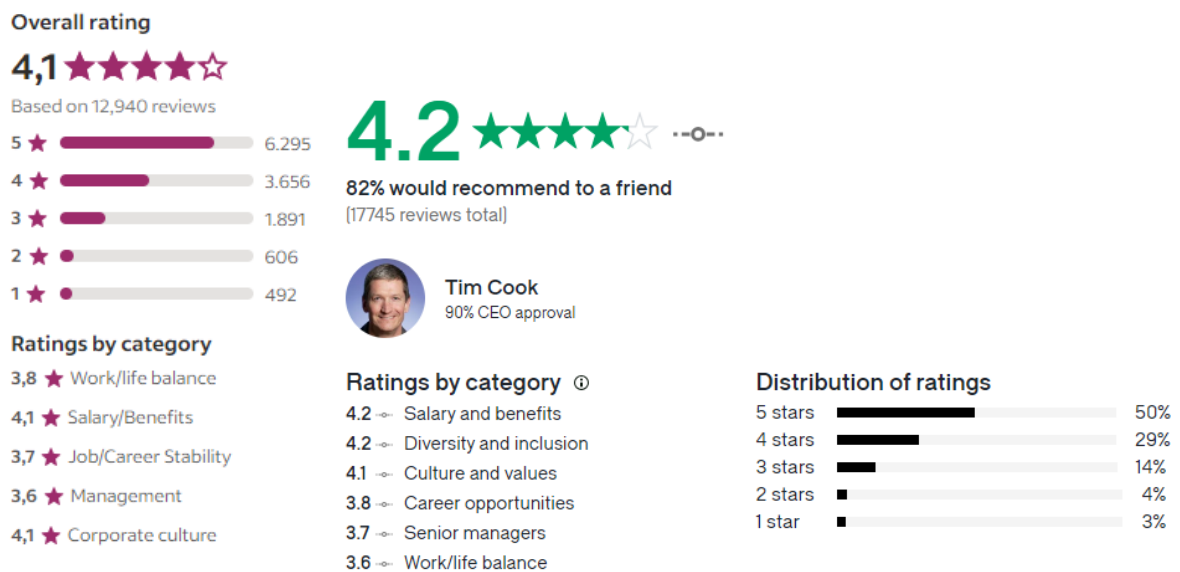
As this is a specific research and the data based on geographical location may vary, reviews on U.S. soil will be considered, being numerically larger (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Premise defined, the sites in question analyzed for the purpose of the research, as well as the most reviewed sites, are Glassdoor and Indeed.

Apple's overall rating is above average (3.4), but still similar between the two platforms (3.5) (Indeed & Glassdoor, 2024).



(3.4) Comparisons between companies (Indeed & Glassdoor)



(3.5) Apple's ratings on the two sites (Indeed & Glassdoor)

Starting with Glassdoor, with more than 17,000 reviews, reviews throughout 2023 and 2024 will be evaluated, with the worst ratings (1 star) and the best ratings (5 stars) (Glassdoor Reviews, 2024).

A star is the result of a bad experience (3.6) and the most recurring points were:

- Toxic and dishonest management, without any kind of empathy. Managers are rigid and work only for their own interests, treating employees unfairly. In addition, managers tend to deceive workers by making them believe that the employee is an investment but in reality by using gaslighting, which is a form of manipulation (Mace, 2022).
- Assiduous presence of micromanaging, i.e. constant control and supervision of managers on the work done, not giving the possibility of freedom and exerting pressure (Kamarudin et al, 2023).
- Non-existence of a work-life balance due to the many hours of work, with often sudden changes and unreasonable hours. Contractual instability is present, greatly limiting the growth of the worker, and salaries are not high.
- Lack of appreciation of mental health and cultures and values exist only on the surface but not on the inside.

1.0 ★☆☆☆☆ June 16, 2023 ...

#### Apple does not treat their employees well

IT Advisor  
Former employee Raleigh, NC

Recommend  CEO approval rating  Trade prediction

##### Advantages

There are no positives about working for Apple. They don't care about their employees, and they really don't care about their customers.

##### Disadvantages

They promised bonuses at the end of first 6 months and further training for advancement. But at the end of the 6 months when it's time to pay up and promote, they randomly fire without a reason why. They said they can fire without an explanation. I was at the top of my team.

1.0 ★☆☆☆☆ 12 Dec 2023

#### Really really stay away

Software Engineer  
Current employee, 3+ years San Diego, CA

Recommend  CEO approval rating  Trade prediction

##### Advantages

Maybe salary but it's not worth it. Good reputation

##### Disadvantages

There is no work life balance. Micro managing by managers. Some young and disrespectful employees. Not a healthy environment to grow.

(3.6) Examples of two negative reviews (Glassdoor)

On the contrary, the 5 stars correspond to an excellent experience (3.7) and it emerged more that:

- The people who work within Apple are polite, kind, and professional, with strong ambitions.

- It's a serene environment, where you don't feel the pressure of micromanaging. The benefits are numerous and the pay is balanced with the work effort.
- Every candidate and worker feel motivated, increasing ambition and making it possible to develop a thriving career.

5.0 ★★★★★

1 apr 2024 ...

### Apple Inc. - Typical Pay, Great Benefits



Business Specialist

Former employee, more than a year Tampa, FL

Recommend  CEO approval rating  Trade prediction

#### Advantages

Great people to work. You will learn a lot about technology, especially Apple products. Great employee benefits.

#### Disadvantages

Pay is typical for a retail company. Get in good with your managers or your career path will be slow.

5.0 ★★★★★

14 Mar 2024 ...

### Great place to work



Retail Manager

Current employee Washington, DC

Recommend  CEO approval rating  Trade prediction

#### Advantages

Benefits are incredible and unbeatable. Apple really cares about its people, not just lip service. They take a stance on issues.

#### Disadvantages

Retail management is excruciating. Not recommended for those with families. It can feel like you're an overpaid babysitter sometimes

### (3.7) Examples of two positive reviews (Glassdoor)

It's important to make another clarification, which is that review numbers are deeply unbalanced, consequently making numerically more substantial ratings significant (Glassdoor Reviews, 2024). There are about 130 1-star reviews, while 5-star reviews are over 1600. It means that the weight of a negative opinion is exceeded 10 times more than the positive one; therefore, positive reviews would be more relevant (Glassdoor Reviews, 2024).

Another review site is Indeed. Using the same modus operandi, there are more than 10,000 reviews (Indeed Reviews, 2024).

What emerged from the one-star reviews (3.8) is:

- Stressful environment, with oppressive and toxic managerial management.
- There is little chance of growth with unfair wages and a non-existent work-life balance, due to the many hours of work.

**1.0** Monotonous job with no opportunities to grow in the company.

☆☆☆☆

Annotation Analyst in Spanish (Current Employee) - San Diego, CA - March 11, 2023

What is the best part of working at the company?  
The best part of working at Apple is my coworkers.

What is the most stressful part about working at the company?  
The most stressful part about my job is the low salary that can't afford a comfortable living in San Diego.

What is the work environment and culture like at the company?  
Multicultural environment where the company fosters inclusivity, and empower people to know more about other cultures.

What is a typical day like for you at the company?  
Repetitive tasks every thirty seconds without any challenge after 1 month in the position.

(3.8) Example of a negative review (Indeed)

5-star reviews (3.9) revealed that:

- The company discloses numerous benefits for its employees.
- The environment is stimulating and innovative, aiming at the creation of belonging to a community.
- The professional opportunities are many and very likely.

**5.0** I will make sure to work as good as I can

★★★★★

Computer Programmer (Current Employee) - New York State - October 3, 2023

I've had an incredible experience working at Apple. The company's commitment to innovation and creativity is truly inspiring. The positive and collaborative work culture has not only allowed me to thrive in my role but has also fostered a sense of community among colleagues. The opportunities for professional growth and development are abundant, making it an ideal environment for anyone looking to advance their career. I'm proud to contribute to a company that values excellence and constantly pushes boundaries in the tech industry

(3.8) Positive review example (Indeed)

Here, too, numerically, there is a gap quite similar to Glassdoor. While there are more than 60 negative reviews, there are more than 600 positive reviews, so again 10 times fewer (Indeed Reviews, 2024).

What can be deduced from these results and what is Apple's current "state of health"? It turns out that, for better or worse, Apple's environment is competitive and rigid; made up of trained people who aim for results but at the same time pay their workers with many benefits; there is potential for growth, making the path more ambitious and motivating; The phenomenon of micromanaging is present, but it is bearable and livable, creating satisfaction. Finally, a big flaw concerns the work-life balance, as it has not been sufficiently denied. This results in a limitation on the variety of activities performed outside of work (Indeed & Glassdoor, 2024).

In addition to the aforementioned sites there could have been others such as Kununu or FairyGodboss but they were not considered as the first was exclusively for Apple Germany (Kununu, 2024) and the second was referred to women's work experiences and it was also mandatory to review a company before being able to view other people's comments, therefore with a high probability of finding fake posts for the sole need to view reviews (Fairygodboss, 2024).

So, are these reviews true? Absolute truths no, but there are internal practices on sites that make posts more authentic (Ananthakrishnan & Smith, 2020). It appears, for example, on Glassdoor, a system of control of published content that allows users to write one review per year for the company in which they work, which removes multiple posts made by different accounts or by the same person, and which cancels the possibility of any kind of fraud by companies by obtaining positive reviews for a fee (Holznienkemper & Aditham, 2024). In addition, it is possible to notify the site of any type of anomalous comment, not sufficiently substantiated, with few references or little credibility (Glassdoor Fraudulent reviews, 2024). All of this should narrow the range of falsehoods of the post and make it as authentic as possible (Yadav & Shah, 2019).

These results should be considered as food for thought for future research and not necessarily as a totally real representation of the working reality at Apple.

For the structure and drafting of the paragraph, a Youtube video by the Italian youtuber Cydonia was taken into consideration, in which he analyzed the testimonies of those who worked in the japanese company Game Freak (Cydonia, 2023).



## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this last chapter, considering what has emerged from the past ones, a reflection will be made on the hiring process by recruiters, highlighting the importance of feedback for candidates. Finally, the conclusions, limitations of the study and possible directions for future research will be identified.

#### 4.1 Hiring process, feedback and Employer Branding

In a world where all people vary their satisfaction based on mental constructs, it is normal for there to be expectations regarding the most disparate topics (Kristoffersen, 2018).

Waiting for a greeting when meeting with a person, receiving birthday greetings, or getting a pay rise after excellent performance at work, are just a few examples of how we live directly or indirectly with social norms on a daily basis (McDonald & Crandall, 2015).

What does it have to do with employer branding? The issue is related for those who apply for a job expect something in return (Ferdouse & Tamzid, 2021). If not hiring, at least an experience that serves as a lesson (Chițu, 2020).

A well-known problem in Italy, precisely because of the lack of work and consequently the presence of many requests and candidates for few positions, is the lack of response or feedback from recruiters after the application (Saraceno et al, 2022).

Since there is a scarcity of job positions made available to Italians, compared to other countries, the demand for those positions is abundant (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2024). Each call, proposal or job advertisement may have specific or indispensable requests, but, basically, the requests are numerically high (Magnani, 2019).

This leads to a consequent issue in selecting the ideal candidate for HR staff (Rusconi, 2024). It is easier, for example, to select the required candidate from a pool of 20 potential workers than 150 (Rusconi, 2024).

What are the steps that a recruiter takes to evaluate the best candidate?

It turns out that the most common hiring process is divided into six stages:

- The preparation phase consists of organizing with the hiring manager everything related to the admission criteria, the skills required, the role in the team, the personal characteristics, and skills of the candidate. From here the job ad is created (GeeksforGeeks, 2024).

- The sourcing phase identifies and selects which channels provide the most successful candidates (Elabram Group, 2023).
- The screening phase is the first looking or interaction with a candidate. This phase varies according to the type of rules that the human resources sector has set up. There is classic screening, i.e. the viewing of every single resume and motivational letter, telephone screening, a first direct interaction with the candidate, and pre-selection, used more with a high volume of candidates, i.e. cognitive and personality tests (Verlinden, n.d.).
- The selecting phase is the process of attending interviews and providing feedback to candidates. Interviews can be face-to-face or remote, one-on-one or in groups (GeeksforGeeks, 2024).
- The hiring phase is the time when one to three candidates remain on the list. Following the interviews, the ideal candidate will be selected (Verlinden, n.d.).
- The process concludes with the onboarding phase. It is the period between the signing of the contract and the start of the new job. Here, employers are tasked with maintaining open contact with the candidate, making the start exciting (Verlinden n.d.).

The following diagram (4.1) shows the entire cycle of intake described above (Verlinden, n.d.):



(4.1) Diagram extrapolated from the article on AIHR.com (Verlinden, n.d.)

Over the years, technology has made huge strides, as a result, investments in digital have also become a priority in the search for candidates (Cimpanelli, 2024). There are numerous technological tools and software that make it possible to streamline and speed up the hiring phases (Villeda et al, 2019). With artificial intelligence (AI) taking over, 65% of

recruiters believe it can radically change work in the human resources sector (Industria Italiana, 2024).

There is a possibility that upcoming interviews could be created and based on artificial intelligence using 3D avatars with human features (d'Elia, 2022). It will be able to converse with the user in the most empathetic and human way possible (d'Elia, 2022).

Regardless of all the complex process that recruiters go through, feedback is necessary and important (Parrone & Roaring, 2020). If, hypothetically, a young candidate with no experience who applies for more than 100 job positions and of those 100 receives a response from only 10, they will not benefit the personal and professional growth and improvement of the person (Wood et al, 2023).

Worse is the situation in which of those 10 you do not have an adequate answer of the motivation of why you were discarded (Wood et al, 2023). It could be a problem of resumes, cover letters, not meeting the requirements of the advertisement, or numerous reasons that may be related to internal policies of the organization that are not known to candidates (Gottlieb et al, 2021).

During the interview phase, the candidate may make mistakes related to lack of preparation or emotional factors. Using trick questions such as "what kind of person are you" can be crucial to the continuation of the application (Lees, 2012). The ideal is to try to deepen the job advertisement as best as possible by extrapolating what are the best strengths they look for in a candidate (Prodromou, 2015).

Normally what is sought, attitudinally, is a positive approach, good communication and strong motivation (Majid et al, 2019). By positive approach it means a way of doing things that is positive in the face of situations and especially in the face of difficulties or unforeseen events; Good communication consists of knowing how to relate to other people, both formally and informally; strong motivation is the force that drives the candidate to work for a context, making it more pleasant and less burdensome (Majid et al, 2019).

Understandably, recruiters can take days or even weeks to share an update on the application, but there is no one-size-fits-all period (Fieni, 2023). Receiving a quick email with a simple preset phrase such as "we have carefully reviewed and evaluated but have decided to continue with other candidates" is not enough (Fieni, 2023).

This is where HR recruiters should start to do better, while taking longer to recruit (Golden, 2022). The expectation is to receive formative feedback that can be a starting point for new experiences (Golden, 2022).

The company's image, therefore, employer branding, also depends on these actions, precisely because recruiters are points of reference for those who are looking forward to a potential future working reality. It must be kept credible, safe and reassuring and possibly improved with new market trends (Erlinda & Safitri, 2020).

## 4.2 Conclusion, limitations and potential future research

To get to the end credits, it is necessary to summarize what has been addressed.

First, the importance of employer branding in electronics companies was examined, taking into account the historical background and generational changes that have occurred (Barbulescu & Vasiluta-Stefanescu, 2021). The benefits of employer branding for electronic companies have emerged, including reduced expenses and speed of hiring, improved employee retention, and the ability to attract and retain staff (Burak, 2024).

Current market trends were then observed, paying special attention to the needs of electronics companies and what potential employees expected (Bruce, 2024). It has been highlighted how sustainability and employer value proposition (EVP) in the workplace are essential components of effective branding in the workplace (Rzemienak & Wamer, 2021).

With the help of Maslow's needs theory and Herzberg's idea, motivational factors have also been investigated, differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017). In addition, staff motivation tactics employed by electronics companies, such as competitive pay, were analyzed, but ultimately, it was determined that work-life balance, technological innovation, and social media usage are essential components of a strong employer brand for electronics companies (Shouman et al, 2022).

Subsequently, there was a focus on the Apple case. With its rich history of inventions and transformations over the years, Apple's history offers a comprehensive understanding of the company's evolution, business practices, and employee experience (Gao, 2021). Apple has gone through numerous stages of its history, from its visionary creator, Steve Jobs, who successfully turned an ambitious concept into a reality, to its current CEO, Tim Cook, who has continued Jobs' legacy with a more decentralized and collaborative approach (Glimstedt, 2020). Functional organizational structure has been shown to be successful in preserving a stable environment and encouraging the development of specialized capabilities, while being rare in large organizations such as Apple (Cohen, 2015).

Apple bases its workplace branding on principles such as supplier responsibility, privacy, diversity, inclusion, and innovation. Apple is committed to fostering a work environment that respects and values its employees and achieving this goal through internal sustainability and diversity policies (Apple Life, 2024).

Innovation, a demanding work environment and the ability to contribute to the development of goods and services that transform the world are the motivations behind Apple. Apple's dedication to protecting the well-being of its employees is evident in its company policies that promote a work-life balance and reward top performers (Apple Life, 2024).

Apple has a strict hiring procedure that consists of multiple processes, from online application to interviews. Despite its length and complexity, it conveys the importance Apple places on finding and hiring top staff (Graduates First, 2024).

Based on an analysis of potential employee ratings found on websites like Indeed and Glassdoor, there are some advantages and disadvantages to working at Apple. While some workers appreciate the dynamic atmosphere, bonuses, and opportunities for advancement, others complain about micromanaging and unbalanced work schedules (Glassdoor & Indeed, 2024). It's crucial to keep in mind that a variety of factors, such as personal and cognitive biases, could influence reviews (Lipnevich et al, 2023). However, they offer valuable insights to help understand Apple's operational realities and identify areas that could be improved.

In the end, Apple remains a standard in the tech industry not only because of its cutting-edge products but also because of its business procedures and workforce qualifications.

The research, however, points to some possible limitations. Firstly, as indicated above, there is a possibility that the assessments made by Apple staff on review sites may be biased, which will reduce the neutrality and representativeness of the data.

Another is the methodological limitations of the research. No quantitative data were collected because a purely descriptive methodological approach was adopted.

In addition, stakeholders are not sufficiently involved. Through the lack of interviews during the research process, no executives or employees of electronics companies were directly involved in the study.

As far as future research is concerned, two possible topics to look for could be the analysis of competition and the effects of globalization.

Competitor analysis would allow for an extensive mapping of what concerns the business tactics of electronics companies. Company regulations and the reputation of the employer of Apple competitors, such as Samsung, Microsoft or Google, are other points that potentially need to be explored.

Examining the impact of globalization on employer branding in electronics companies, taking into account regional variations in the culture, law, and market of countries that have developed or are likely to develop, may be a source of research. Essentially, try to understand how HR procedures or company guidelines relate to global settings.

The study carried out reinforced the importance of an employer's reputation and underlined the aspiration of potential employees to be employed by reputable organizations with strong employer branding.

In conclusion, studies have shown that strong employer branding can provide electronics companies with a significant competitive advantage, helping them attract and retain the best people in the workplace.

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