How to Win the War for Talent among Professional Engineers

An Employer Branding Perspective

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Industrial and Management Engineering, master's level
2019

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Acknowledgment

This thesis is the final work of the Master Programme in Industrial and Management Engineering at Luleå University of Technology and we would like to thank our supervisor, Kerry Chipp for her engagement, guidance, and continuous support during the whole process, and our opponents for valuable input.

We would like to give special thanks to The Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket) and to our supervisor, Emil Adén, Head of Employer Branding at the Swedish Transport Administration, that gave us the opportunity to accomplish this study. We are grateful for his extensive knowledge within the research area that gave us great realisations, especially in the start of the project, and for providing us with contacts and documents that helped us go through with the study.

We would also like to thank our interviewees who helped us gather the data that our study was built upon, without them the study would not have been possible.

Lastly, great thanks to our beloved ones that have supported us during our five years of education.

Thank you!

Luleå, June 2019

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Abstract

Organisations strive to gain competitive advantages and there is an increasing demand for more advanced technology in today's dynamic and complex environment. The importance of engineering is increasing in the global world, which leads to a higher demand of professional engineers. They represent among the hardest roles to fill. The short supply of engineers, the high employment rate and low unemployment rate among engineers in Sweden makes it difficult for companies to attract them. This issue is often described as ‘The War for Talent’.

The War for Talent is a greater issue for organisations within the public sector because of negative prejudices, reputations and stereotypes. This and the fact that there are limited resources for marketing within the public sector when they are funded by the government, make it difficult to compete with organisations within the private sector. The public sector in Sweden is relatively large, and The Swedish Transport Administration is a large company within the public sector that need to prepare for the war for talents among companies within the private sector. The purpose of this research is to investigate work value preferences of professional engineers and important recruitment aspects to consider, when choosing an employer. To deal with the war of talents effectively, the concept of employer branding has been developed as an effective organisational strategy for employment.

In the report, we will study the concept of employer branding and the employer branding process, work value preferences and important recruitment aspects to enhance understanding of how companies can attract professional engineers in Sweden, to initiate a career within the public sector. Our data collection was through qualitative interviews with eight professional engineers, both from the private and the public sector.

Our study developed an adapted framework with work values preferred by Swedish professional engineers that can be used as a guide to help and enable to attract and recruit engineers towards the public sector. We found differences between the public sector and the private, and six core values preferred by Swedish professional engineers, where organisations in the public sector should put a certain emphasis on two of them. There were some certain preferences among recruitment channels, and we found that recruitment strategies could enhance, improve or damage the brand and that the corporate reputation affects the opinion of the company. We also have some specific recommendations towards the case company.

Key words: Employer Branding, Employer Value Proposition (EVP), Public sector, Recruitment strategies, War for talent, Work values
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<td>Brand</td>
<td>The brand is the known identity and associations of a company and defines as a name, term, sign, symbol or a combination of these. The function is to differentiate and distinguish firms’ goods and services from competitors.</td>
<td>Keller (1993); Kotler &amp; Keller, (2016); Kotler &amp; Armstrong (2010); Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Attractiveness</td>
<td>“The envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation”.</td>
<td>Berthon, Ewing &amp; Hah, (2005, p. 151)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Brand Equity</td>
<td>“A set of employment brand assets and liabilities linked to an employment brand, its name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) the value provided by an organisation to that organisations employees”.</td>
<td>Ewing, Pitt, De Bussy &amp; Berthon (2002, p. 14–15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Brand</td>
<td>“The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company”.</td>
<td>Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996, p. 187)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>“The process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity, and the employer brand as a concept of the firm that differentiates it from its competitors”.</td>
<td>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004, p. 502)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Value Proposition (EVP)</td>
<td>A desired or ideal employer identity, and how the company wants to be perceived by potential employees as an attractive employer. An EVP is usually built on a significant thing about a company that summarises why the company is a great place to work. It works as a clear conceptual guidance and makes it easier to integrate and manage the different or related activities regarding the employees.</td>
<td>Theurer, Tumasjan, Welpe &amp; Lievens (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Management (HRM)</td>
<td>The practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying and managing the employees within an organisation. “Strategic HRM means getting everybody from the top of the organisation to the bottom doing things to implement the strategy of the business effectively. The idea is to use people most wisely with respect to the strategic needs of the organisation.” (p.42-43).</td>
<td>Cascio (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Marketing</td>
<td>The promotion of a company's objectives, mission, products and services to employees within the organisation where the purpose is to increase employee engagement with the company's goals by treating the employees as internal customers.</td>
<td>Ozuem, Limb &amp; Lancaster (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge worker</td>
<td>Knowledge workers possesses the ability to apply theoretical and analytical knowledge and have the ability to work smarter and faster than other employees when develop new products and/or services.</td>
<td>Drucker (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional engineers</td>
<td>Professional engineers are defined between the ages 30-49. This age group is considered key in development of a professional career though they have an education and have worked in the labour market for a while. Based on that, they are more mature and have a greater experience both on a work related and on a personal level. In this study we will define professional engineers as individuals with at least 3 years of education within engineering, with a Master of Science or a bachelor’s degree, and that has at least 5 years of professional experience within the field of engineering.</td>
<td>Martinez-León, Olmedo-Cifuentes &amp; Ramón-Llorens (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our definition</td>
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### Public sector

The public sector is the part of the economy that is tax-funded and consists both public services and public enterprises that are conducted by the state, county council, municipality or other political entities. The public sector provides services that citizens cannot be excluded from, services which benefit all of society and not only the individual who uses it. The scope of the public sector varies between countries, social systems and epochs.

The Swedish public sector include the military, general public administration such as law enforcement and judiciary, environmental protection, social protection such as the police force and fire department, public education, healthcare, media, cultural and religious activities, leisure and sport activities, politics and business issues and lastly science and research (Statskontoret, 2018).

### Recruitment advertisement

Advertising targeted specifically towards potential employees.

### Recruitment channel

A method of how companies can attract potential employees to apply for a job.

### War for talents

The high competition among companies to attract the best professionals and talents.

McKinsey (1998); Keller & Meaney (2017, November)

### Work values

Values arise from the relationship between a brand and its users and employees benefit from the work experience, rewards, advantages and other gains from the workplace.

Ambler & Barrow (1996)
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1. Introduction

The introduction includes a background of the research area and an overview of the study. The chapter will lead towards a research gap within the area and the research problem, where the importance of it will be discussed as well. This section also includes the purpose of the study, the research questions, considered delimitations, and finish with a visual outline of the study.

Organisations want to have competitive advantages in order to gain economic profit. Earlier, organisations were less concerned about branding and its various outcomes, because of limited competition and employer choices. According to Sharma and Prasad (2018), the focus of branding and communication have usually been on the product or service itself. However, the concept is now also including employees (Sharma & Prasad, 2018).

To stay competitive in today's rapidly changing market is challenging. Technology is moving fast with the growing influence of the fourth industrial revolution, also called Industry 4.0, where technology becomes embedded within the society. Emerging technology requires more theoretical and technological knowledge than earlier (Dyhre & Parment, 2013; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). In today's dynamic, complex and competitive environment, the need for greater technical skills is rapidly increasing, and the demand for a competent workforce is increasing (Mosley, 2015). Although technology can be automated, technology is redefining rather than replacing in-demand roles (ManpowerGroup, 2018). To meet the increasing demand for more advanced technology, knowledge workers and talented employees are crucial (Drucker, 1999; Keller & Meaney, 2017, November), especially in developed countries, like Sweden, to stay competitive (Drucker, 1999). They are the foundation for creating knowledge, innovation and competitive advantages (Sommer, Heidenreich & Handrich, 2017), they possess the ability to apply theoretical and analytical knowledge, and they have an ability to work smarter and faster when developing new products or services (Drucker, 1999; Swiercz, 2018). Without them, the company cannot deliver and grow (Dyhre & Parment, 2013).

In an increasingly knowledge-based economy there is often a short supply of skilled employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Reis & Braga, 2015) and many companies have a hard time finding, attracting and recruiting these employees (Sharma & Prasad, 2018). The problem is often described as a war for talent and involves how companies compete for scarce skills in the labour market (Reis & Braga, 2015). In 1998, McKinsey published a report “The War for Talent” which triggered the reaction among companies to start focusing more on finding and attracting talented and well-educated employees with relevant skills. Over twenty years later the most significant issue for organisations is still the failure to attract and retain top talents (Keller & Meaney, 2017 November; Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin & Michaels, 1998).
The war for talent becomes a greater challenge with talent shortages. More employers than ever are struggling to fill open jobs, and ManpowerGroup (2018) mean that the reason is because there is a lack of necessary skills and applicants towards high qualified jobs. The result is a more difficult time to recruit. ManpowerGroup (2018) published a Talent Shortage Survey that is made in over 40 countries, including Sweden, with over 39 000 employers in different industries interviewed, where 45 percent of global employers reported talent shortages, which is the highest percentage in over a decade. According to The Swedish Public Employment Service (Swedish: Arbetsförmedlingen), there is a deficiency of educated workforce in Sweden (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018). They published a labour market report with over 13 000 interviewed employers, which concluded that the majority of organisations require recruitments but have a hard time finding employees with appropriate or suitable competence (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018).

One profession where it is especially hard to find and attract qualified people, is engineers. Engineers represent among the hardest roles to fill, both globally and in Sweden, according to ManpowerGroup (2018). Companies in Sweden have for several years stated that there has been a shortage of professionally experienced engineers, and other employees with technical competence (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018). According to The Swedish Public Employment Service, engineers are among top twenty professions where there will be the most significant shortage in 2024 (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018), and according to Statistics Sweden (Swedish: Statistiska Centralbyrån), there will be a lack of between 30,000-50,000 trained engineers in 2030 (SCB, 2018). Engineers are critical though they play an important role in new technology and innovation processes (Martínez-León, Olmedo-Cifuentes and Ramón-Llorens, 2018). That is the war for talent that will be examined in this study. The competence of engineers is required in many different industries in the labour market, which makes it important to recruit engineers (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019). When competence is missing among employees, it leaves employers with unfilled roles which can threaten the employers’ productivity, efficiency and future growth (Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Dyhre & Parment, 2013).

A contributing factor to the war for talent, is that many engineers already have jobs. Sweden has a high employment rate, (the extent to which available labour resources are being used and is calculated as the ratio of the employed to the working age population [OECD, 2018]), and a low unemployment rate (the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force [OECD, 2018]). Sweden has the highest employment rate in the EU of almost 82%, at the same time as the unemployment rate is lower than the EU’s average, of only 6 % (Schormer, 2019, 9 January). The unemployment is even lower specifically among engineers and has been the last two decades. 2017, the unemployment rate was only 1,1 percent among members in The Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers (Swedish: Sveriges Ingenjörer), which is the most extensive network for graduate engineers in Sweden (Virgin, 2018, 12 April). Statistics showed that engineers have little competition in the labour market and has a similar future forecast (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019). Few chooses also to educate themselves in engineering (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019). This contributes even more to the good job opportunities and the labour market certainly looks good for engineers. However, this is unfortunate for
organisations, since it becomes even harder to find engineers. Then the war for talent becomes a greater issue.

The high demand for well-qualified employees has led to the employees can be much more critical towards potential employers and compare them before making a choice (Sommer et al. 2017). When employees have the opportunity to be selective, the challenge for companies is to really understand what employees value, and which work values are attractive for them. Values arise from the relationship between a brand and its users and employees benefit from the work experience, rewards, advantages and other gains from the workplace (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Companies can only understand the employees’ demands for specific employer attributes by studying the benefits sought by the employees and their perceived value (Ronda et al., 2018; Sengupta, Bamel & Singh, 2015). Then it is essential for organisations to deeply understand the dynamics of value preferences of potential employees.

1.1 Problem discussion

Organisations within the Swedish public sector struggle to recruit qualified engineers. Highly qualified engineers rather work at continuously fast-moving and flexible consulting companies than within the public sector (Dyhre & Parment, 2013), and mean that it is harder to recruit highly qualified engineers for companies within the public sector. Organisations within the public sector lack clear processes and competent managers, which prevents digitalisation (PWC, 2018). This makes it a critical issue, especially when engineers are specialized in innovation and technology. According to Korac et al. (2018), incompetence and lethargy among the employees hinder potential employees from initiating a career in public sector. There are also some other barriers towards recruiting within the public sector, such as reputation, stereotypes, biases and perceptions. There is a recognised picture that the organisational culture within organisations in the public sector is bureaucratic and counteracts innovation (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008). According to Krögerström (2017), one stereotype is that jobs within the public sector are less exciting and has a lower pay than in the private sector. Negative reputations can have severe consequences on the employer brand and can result in more difficult recruitment for companies within the public sector. Some negative reputations might be incorrectly negative, due to ignorance or opinions based on old perceptions. To disprove prejudice, the public sector needs to be better at marketing themselves in general. Then it becomes more challenging for organisations within the public sector to compete in the war for talents.

The public sector in Sweden is relatively large. Today, 33% of all employees work within the public sector employees and is a decrease from 45% during the last two decades (Holmström, 2018, 20 December). The public sector in Sweden has a large impact on the Swedish society and is reflected in a relatively high tax exemption that is required to finance these public commitments (PwC, 2019). The Swedish Transport Administration, (Swedish: Trafikverket), is a company and a government agency in Sweden within the public sector that is controlled by the Government of Sweden and are responsible for long-term infrastructure planning for transport: road, rail, shipping, and aviation. The Swedish Transport Administration has been
ranked as among top 20 most attractive employers in Sweden among engineers both 2017, (Universum, 2017) and 2018 (Universum, 2018). A contributing factor to the high rank could be the realisation that working with effective employment strategies is a winning concept to attract employees. Employer branding has been developed as an effective organisational strategy for employment (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sharma & Prasad, 2018) and emerged as an important strategic tool for organisations to deal with the war of talents effectively (Sengupta et al., 2015). Around 5-6% of professional engineers chose The Swedish Transport Administration as an ideal employer 2018, which is around twice as much since 2012 (Adén, 2018). Despite high rankings, Emil Adén, Head of Employer Branding at The Swedish Transport Administration, still believed that their most significant issue was to attract and recruit professional engineers (personal communication 23 January 2019). The Swedish Transport Administration wants to be a role model within employer branding among authorities and in a leading position in the search for talented employees (Adén, 2018). They are faced with the task of hiring 3000 new employees before the year 2020, where many of them need to be engineers (personal communication 23 January 2019). However, he declared that the company is limited and do not possess the same resources as in the private sector, when it comes to recruitment and stated; “The taxpayers finances our organisation and this means that we have a small, definite budget when it comes to recruitment” (personal communication, 2 April 2019). The Swedish Transport Administration need a new strategy to reach their goals and they want a more systematic and holistic view on how to attract professionals (Adén, 2018).

In order to prepare for the war for talent, organisations within the public sector need to have a better understanding of what characterises individuals who prefer to work in the public sector over other employment opportunities (Korac et al., 2018). What are professionals with an engineering degree searching for at a workplace and which benefits do they value the most when choosing an employer? Which aspects are important to consider when recruiting professional engineers? This will be examined in two ways: what engineers value and how they can be recruited. It would be useful to know what professional engineers value and find attractive at an employer to be able to market these values, and where they prefer to search for jobs to enable companies to reach them.

Many studies are about what students, newly graduated, young professionals or young talent value when choosing an employer (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005; Sivertzen, Nilsen & Olafsen, 2013; Universum, 2018; Arachchige & Robertson, 2011; Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Roy, 2008) and less on experienced, highly qualified, talented employees or knowledge workers. These studies have been done in different countries with varying social structures and employment rates. Given Sweden’s increased difficulty in recruitment, the country serves as an important case. Professionals are more loyal to their employers, and not as willing to switch jobs, and are therefore more difficult to recruit (Keller & Meaney, 2017, November; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). Earlier studies examined employer branding and general factors of employer attractiveness, but empirical evidence on how to attract a certain group of employees is scarce, as in this case; high qualified or talented professional engineers, which are highly valuable for organisations. The research area of employer branding is still relatively new and unclear in
certain ways and it seems weak specifically among organisations within the public sector, which implies a theoretical gap.

1.2 Purpose

Based on the problem discussion above, the study aims to enhance understanding of the concept of employer branding and explore how companies should attract professional engineers in Sweden, to initiate a career within the public sector. The purpose of the study is to investigate work value and recruitment preferences of professional engineers when choosing an employer and important recruitment aspects to consider when recruiting professional engineers. This will be done within the case company, The Swedish Transport Administration, in the public sector and within four private companies in the private sector. It could be useful for employer branding departments as well as human resources departments to gain more knowledge about the research area and it could benefit a company, especially in the public sector, as well as whole industries.

1.3 Research questions

To fulfil the purpose, the following research question will be:

*How to attract professional engineers towards the public sector through employer branding?*

To answer this question, we have developed two sub-research questions:

RQ1: *Which work values are crucial for professional engineers when deciding on an employer?*

RQ2: *Which recruitment aspects are important to consider when attracting professional engineers?*

1.4 Delimitations

Employer branding includes both retaining current employees and attracting new potential employees, where this study will focus on context of attraction. Talented professionals and highly qualified employees will in this study be represented by the profession of engineers, where engineers cover engineers with a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degrees and bachelor’s degrees within all fields. Professional engineers are defined as people between the ages 30-49, this age group is considered as the key in the development of a professional career though they have an education and have worked in the labour market for a while (Martínez-León et al., 2018). The age range provide a higher chance that they have been in the labour market within their field, with greater experience both on a work related and on a personal level and with more maturity (Martínez-León et al., 2018). Based on this we will examine professional engineers with at least 3 years of education, and at least 5 years of professional experience. The study will consider Swedish engineers and will not consider differences between geographical areas within Sweden.
1.5 Outline of the thesis

The outline of the thesis consists of five chapters; *Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Result, Analysis* and *Conclusions*, and is illustrated in Figure 1 below. Chapter one introduces the problem and the second chapter present the literature review and include researched literature that are relevant to the research area and the third chapter explains the methodology and how the research was conducted. In chapter four, the result from the study will be presented and in chapter five the result will be analysed and connected to the literature review from chapter two. The last chapter will conclude the study, answer the research questions, give recommendations, explain implications and contributions, discuss research limitations and lastly recommend future research within the area.

Figure 1. Thesis outline. Source: Own illustration.
2. Literature review

This section reviews, discusses and provides a foundation of the central theoretical areas that are considered relevant for the proposed research. It includes key references and the result of the initial literature review about the research problem.

To gain knowledge of how to attract engineers, we want to find out what to promote and how to promote it. In this chapter, we present our secondary data collection through a literature review where we will study the concept of employer branding and employer attractiveness, work value preferences and if certain values are particularly perceived as attractive by professional engineers. Important aspects regarding recruitment strategies will also be studied and what the literature says about the public sector in the areas. These things are important and could be beneficial for companies within the public sector to be aware of to use in their employer branding strategy. Then it could be possible to compete in the war for talents among companies in the private sector.

The theoretical areas in this chapter will enable to solve the research questions for the study. Our theoretical frame of reference is illustrated in Figure 2 and shows a literature overview and connections between the theoretical areas and the research questions.
How to attract professional engineers towards the public sector through employer branding

RQ1: Which work values are crucial for professional engineers when deciding on an employer?

RQ2: Which recruitment aspects are important to consider when attracting professional engineers?

Employer branding

Employer Attractiveness

External Employer Branding

Work Values

Extrinsic outcomes

Intrinsic outcomes

Economic benefits

Functional benefits

Psychological benefits

Economic values

Development values

Application values

Interest values

Social values

Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

Recruitment Aspects

Figure 2. Theoretical frame of reference framework Source: Own illustration.
2.1 Employer Branding

2.1.1 The evolution

In the 18th century in Europe during the industrial revolution organisations realised the importance of the people and their well-being for organisational success, and that is when human resources management were first evolved (Cascio, 1989). Human resource management (HRM) is the practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying and managing the employees within an organisation (Cascio, 1989). HRM is central for organisations’ future competitiveness (Barney & Wright, 1998; Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sivertzen et al., 2013; Wilden, Gudergan & Lings, 2010). Barber (1998) emphasises that there is a relationship between human resources practices and measures like return on assets, investments, profitability, and organisational survival. Nevertheless, the customer-focus must not be forgotten.

Berry (1982) and Grönroos (1982) believed that there was a possibility to apply the function of marketing among employees to get them motivated and more customer oriented. Wilden et al. (2010) mean that customer service only can be delivered if employee satisfaction and motivation are high. From this, the concept ‘internal marketing’ developed as the promotion of a company's objectives, mission, products and services, to employees within the organisation. The purpose with that was to increase employee engagement of companies’ goals by treating the employees as internal customers (Ozuem, Limb & Lancaster, 2018). George (1990) believed that it was not the marketing specialists of the marketing department who were the most critical human resources, it was all employees having a relationship or any contact with the customer. The author meant that even when employees have tasks that are traditionally considered as non-marketing tasks, the employees need to be customer-oriented, where their behaviours are critical towards the customer's perception of the company (George, 1990). This strategic approach makes it possible for the employees to help the business gain a competitive advantage. To further attract potential employees, organisations cannot only focus internally, they should also have an external focus.

Based on the concept of marketing products or services towards customers, the concept is now used for marketing the company brand towards employees as well (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). Ambler and Barrow (1996) believed it was possible to apply the marketing approach to the concept of human resources management. In the intersection between marketing and human resources management, Ambler and Barrow (1996) coined the concept of employer branding.
2.1.2 The concept

A company can stay competitive by many ways, for example; through innovation, unique features in the product itself, or creative marketing strategies, but the common theme is to create a strong brand (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The ‘brand’ is the known identity and associations of a company and defines as a name, term, sign, symbol or a combination of these (Keller, 1993; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010) where the function is to differentiate and distinguish firms’ goods and services from competitors (Keller 1993; Kotler & Keller 2016; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The brand is one of the most valued assets for an organisation, and the key factor is to develop and maintain the brand to be able to succeed on the market (Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

As well as it is essential to attract consumers to buy products or services, it is also essential to attract recruits and assure that current employees are engaged in the culture and the strategy of the company (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Instead of targeting customers, the ‘employer brand’ is the type of brand that target potential and current employees. The employees are influenced by awareness, positive attitudes, loyalty and trust towards the employer brand (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). The employer brand describes how potential employees perceive the firm, i.e., an employer's reputation as a prospective employer and if it is a great place to work (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). The process of these actions of strengthening the employer brand is called employer branding (Berthon et al., 2005; Ewing et al., 2002; Miles & Mangold, 2004; Sullivan, 2004). Employer branding is a strategic tool to improve the company’s position on the market (Moroko & Uncles, 2008), “a strategic tool for the organisation to market their unique employment offerings or value propositions to the internal and potential employees” (Sengupta et al., 2015, p. 307). The target group of employer branding generally include both potential and current employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), whereas the recruitment aspect is primarily emphasised (Theurer et al., 2018). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) mean that it involves identifying and promoting desired and unique brand associations towards potential employees for recruitment and current employees for retention.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) divided those two aspects to external and internal employer branding. Internal employer branding (IEB) focuses on retaining talented employees that other organisations find difficult to imitate (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The internal focus is about creating trust between the employer and the employees by keeping the ‘promise’ made to future employees during the recruitment process, or by establishing strong moral values which make their employees proud to be a part of the organisation (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). A company succeeds with internal branding if the employees thrive at the workplace, become loyal and behave like great ambassadors on the behalf of the organisation (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). External employer branding (EEB) aims at attracting potential talents to the organisation (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) by being authentic and having activities towards fulfilling the social responsibilities and trustworthiness (Sengupta et al., 2015). The external employer branding strategy at a company is successful if the company manage to attract the desired targeted group of employees (Dyhre & Parment, 2013; Giliani & Cunningham, 2017).
The process of employer branding enables the organisation to deliver the desired brand image in hope for a reliable and clear position in the mind of the targeted stakeholders (Miles & Mangold, 2005). The whole process is essential, from attracting employees towards thanking them for their time in the organisation and wishing good luck in future career, also even welcoming them back (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) describe that employer branding is a 3-step process; see Figure 3. The first step is to create a value proposition, step two is to market the value proposition externally towards potential employees, the third step is to market this internally towards current employees, and this study is focusing on the second step.

![Figure 3. The employer branding process. Source: Own illustration.](image)

2.1.3 The outcomes

We now understand the concept of employer branding but why is employer branding important, and how does a company benefit from employer branding? Most studies of employer branding show that it gives the organisation competitive advantages (Reis & Braga, 2015; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Wilden et al., 2010; Sengupta et al., 2015; Miles & Mangold, 2005; Lievens & Highhouse 2003; Theurer et al., 2018; Roy, 2008). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) mentioned external and internal outcomes of employer branding. External outcomes of managing the employer brand are employer familiarity, brand associations, employer image, employer identification, organisational attraction, job pursuit intentions and favourable applicant pools (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Internal outcomes, among current employees, are organisational identity and culture, employee loyalty, engagement, innovation (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), and an increased overall workforce productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sullivan, 2004; Miles & Mangold, 2005). With successful employer branding, according to Sullivan (2004) and Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), the organisation’s exposure and reputation increases. Martin et al. (2011) add that employer branding can have significant effects on innovation, and an impact on the long-term reputational capital of the organisation. Other outcomes are also lower employee turnover (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2014), specifically among top performers (Sullivan, 2004; Miles & Mangold, 2005). Sullivan (2004) suggests that both magazine editors, managers in other organisations, and high potential applicants can express that the organisation is one of the top employers of choice. This can strengthen the employer brand and give the employer great and relatively cheap advertising. Miles and Mangold (2005) created a conceptualisation of the employer branding process showing additional outcomes; the position of the organisation and its offerings in customers’ minds, turnover, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and a favourable reputation (Miles & Mangold, 2005), see Figure 4.
Figure 4. Conceptualisation of the employee branding process.
Source: Modified from Miles and Mangold (2005)

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) illustrated two main different outcomes depending on internal and external employer branding in a framework, see Figure 5 below. The external outcomes are employer attraction, where potential employees can become attracted by the perceived, created and shaped employer brand image that the employees associate to. The authors add that employees also can develop employer brand associations based on information sources that are beyond the control of the employer. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

Figure 5. Employer branding framework. Source: Modified from Backhaus and Tikoo (2004).

According to King and Grace (2009), successful brands are classified based on their ability to exhibit high levels of brand equity. According to Berthon et al. (2005), the stronger the organisation’s employer brand equity is, the more attractive an employer is perceived to be by potential employees. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) state that employer brand equity is a desired
outcome of employer branding activities and define it as “the effect of brand knowledge on potential and existing employees of the firm” (p 504). Theurer et al. (2018) define employer brand equity as “the added value provided by the response of potential employees of their employer knowledge” (p. 156), i.e., favourable employee perceptions of the organisation. Marketing literature supports that brand equity is strengthened when the brand image resonates with the consumer (Keller, 1993). All these outcomes are valuable for companies to achieve competitive advantages and it can be summarised that employer branding is effective when attracting potential employees.

2.1.4 Employer attractiveness

Researchers often discuss and mention employer attractiveness while exploring employer branding. Employer attractiveness has grown in the competitive market and employer branding research has focused on understanding what makes an employer attractive in order to attract and retain potential and current employees. Employer branding strategies contribute to increased employer attractiveness in the labour market (Sommer et al., 2017; Branham, 2000), specifically towards potential skilled candidates but also the brand as a whole (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Reis & Braga, 2015). A company must be attractive for potential employees, to be able to achieve future growth and competitiveness (Sommer et al., 2017; Ewing et al. 2002). Melanthiou et al. (2015) emphasise that companies also need to be well-known in order to operate and generate profits and stated that recognition is the key element to a successful business strategy.

According to Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman and Lance (2010), leading companies have added work benefits focusing on work–life balance, relaxation, and leisure activities. However, to become the most attractive employer, Dyhre and Parment (2013) suggest that it is not the benefits or values that should be the primary focus, it is developing and cherish the company brand. Attractive companies help employees to see how each one of them are contributing (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). An example of this is IKEA that are usually listed as the Sweden's top 1 most attractive employer by Universum, also specifically among Swedish engineers (Universum, 2017). IKEA are using employer branding as part of their broader competitive strategy (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). One of the biggest strengths that IKEA has among work values and a reason to the popularity of working at IKEA is mainly the humanitarian work environment, that the employees are being heard, the feeling of contribution, importance and having an impact (Fauvelle, 2018, 28 January; Arena, 2017, 10 March). Generally, companies within the public sector are not seen as attractive employers. To create a strong brand and to evolve the employees, is seen as a crucial part for companies to work on to be able to attract the right competence.
2.2 Professional engineers

Although, employer branding is not only about focusing on all professionals, it is also about focusing on the right suitable and qualified professionals (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). Professional engineers are defined between the ages 30-49, because this age group is considered key in development of a professional career though they have an education and have worked in the labour market for a while (Martínez-León et al., 2018). Based on that, they are more mature and have a greater experience both on a work related and on a personal level (Martínez-León et al., 2018). In this study, professionals will be represented by engineers, with at least 3 years of education, with a Master of Science or a bachelor’s degree and has and have a minimum of 5 years of professional experience within the field of engineering.

A talented workforce is a crucial prerequisite for organisational growth; without them, the company cannot innovate, develop, and continue to grow (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). As the work tasks and product assignments grows and becomes much more complex, the involvement of engineers in company’s growth play increasingly active roles. Engineers not only understand science and mathematics, working with machines, designs or circuit boards, they can also be involved in the negotiations, management and supervision of engineering teams, financial decisions, ethical judgments, innovations, creativity, assurance of safe work or preventing environmental damage (Lawlor, 2013). Therefore, engineers especially among professionals, is important for society.

According to Wilden et al. (2010), professionals are valuable and rare resources for a company’s continued competitive advantage, especially when it comes to engineers. The competence of engineers is required in many different industries in the labour market, and therefore engineers are needed and desired (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2019). These types of talents are worth fighting for (McKinsey, 1998; Keller & Meaney, 2017, November). In Keller and Meaney’s (2017, November) study, over 80% of employers did not believe that they recruited highly talented employees and also over 80% of managers active within talent-related topics believed that their current employer branding strategies would not generate good results. To be able to attract potential employees and professional engineers, it is important for organisations to have a great strategy and to be perceived as attractive employers.

2.3 Work values

Organisations do large investments on projecting themselves as worthy and attractive employers in the market through recruitment advertising. In order to do so, it is essential to analyse the elements that may help them attract the right candidates, employers need to understand what the employees value and which values they prefer (Sengupta et al., 2015; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). According to Gursoy, Chi and Karadag (2013), “values are seen as source of motivation for individual action” (p. 41). Work values are the end-state or worth that employees look for when applying for a job (Elizur, 1984). Literature classifies work values into different categories. The most widely used approach is dividing work values into two categories, extrinsic outcomes, which are monetary, material or affective, and intrinsic
outcomes, which are cognitive (Elizur, 1984). Twenge et al. (2010) further explain that extrinsic work values are the tangible rewards that provides convenience for example salary and benefits, while intrinsic work values are the intangible rewards, such as work environment, relationships and self-development. Martínez-León et al. (2018) similarly divided work values into ‘work conditions’ and ‘personal and cultural variables’, that can be translated to extrinsic respectively intrinsic work values. Ambler and Barrow (1996) describe three types of benefits that employer branding offers towards employees: functional benefits, psychological benefits and economic benefits. Functional benefits (can be both extrinsic and intrinsic) are benefits which consist developmental or useful activities, economic benefit (extrinsic) include material and monetary rewards and psychological benefits (intrinsic) are the feelings of belonging, direction and purpose (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Berthon et al. (2005) extended and redefined the three dimensions proposed by Ambler and Barrow (1996) towards a five-factor structure, economic values (from economic benefits), interest values and social values (from psychological benefits), development values and application values (from functional benefits). Berthon et al. (2005) developed a set of 25 items, related to the dimensions of employer attractiveness into an Employer Attractiveness (EmpAt) scale, see Appendix I. Many studies have used the EmpAt scale when exploring work values (e.g. Arachchige & Robertson, 2011; Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Sengupta et al., 2015; Sivertsen et al., 2013; Reis & Braga, 2015).

Work values differ between age, generations (Twenge et al., 2010; Gursoy et al., 2013; Sengupta et al., 2015; Reis & Braga, 2015), culture (Sengupta et al., 2015) and gender (Martínez-León et al., 2018), which could be of importance to have in mind when targeting specific group of employees. There are significant differences in work values depending on which sector an employee works within, especially regarding higher pay, status, and helping others (Wittmer, 1991). Perry and Wise (1990) studied the possibility of a unique public service motivation (PSM) and defined it as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organisations” (p. 368-369). The concept of PSM particularly focuses on prospective employees and is one of the crucial factors that explains the drive preferences for a public sector employment, despite the possibilities for a financially better career in the private sector (Korac et al, 2018). Work values from literature across the world will be categorised and discussed below.

2.3.1 Economic values

Economic values mean monetary rewards and benefits, such as above average salary, compensation package, job security and promotional opportunities (Berthon et al., 2005). Other work values regarding work conditions regarding the job itself, and values related to economy are also included in this category, as well as characteristics of the organisation, like providing prestige and status or is placed in a convenient or close location. Research confirms the view of job security as a feature that makes public employment attractive and the importance of trust is seen as an essential driver within the public sector (Korac et al., 2018). According to Korac et al. (2018), the value ‘job security’ includes security of the contract as a job attribute, permanent or temporary contract, safe employment, stability and security. A non-academic
study done by Universum, showed top work values among the best Swedish employers to get a better understanding of the Swedish talent market. ‘Safety’ was the factor that most of employees associated with their current employer (Universum, 2018a). To have a ‘secure employment’, was one of the top work values among professionals (Universum, 2018a) and one of the most important career goals of Swedish professionals (Universum, 2017; Universum, 2018b).

According to a study among Spanish engineers, income was one the second top desired work values (Martínez-León et al., 2018). In the private sector, it is more common for employees to receive financial rewards for successful ideas with substantial profits or cost-reductions for the organisation, however, this is not as common within the public sector (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008). According to The Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers, which is the largest association for engineers in Sweden, there is a significant difference average salary for engineers in Sweden depending sector. Engineers working within the private sector has over 6000 SEK higher monthly average salary compared to engineers working in the private sector (Sveriges Ingenjörer, 2018). Salary can be significant when choosing an employer, however, it is not one of the top work values among Swedish engineers, according to Universum (2018).

2.3.2 Development values
Development values refer to career and advancement possibilities and recognition (Berthon et al. 2005). Development values can be categorised as both intrinsic and extrinsic values, because as an employee it is possible to develop both personally and professionally, also it could be both intangible and tangible work values. Berthon et al. (2005) included self-worth and confidence as development values. Berthon et al. (2005) also mention the value; ‘a springboard for future employment’, and according to Universum’s (2018a) study, the top work value was ‘good references for future career’. However, these two last mentioned work values might be more valuable for young professionals who have their whole career in front of them. Organisational commitment is categorised as development values, and it was the most influential variable that improves engineers’ career satisfaction (Martínez-León et al., 2018).

2.3.3 Application values
Application values mean the impact and the possibility to use and apply knowledge and expertise to others (Berthon et al., 2005). Berthon et al. (2005) include ethical and moral values as application values, how humanitarian the workplace is and also if the organisation is customer oriented. Twenge et al. (2010) mention altruistic rewards, such as helping others or contributing to society, which can be connected to ethical and moral values. This also includes, not just contribution to society, but the feeling of having an impact in decision making and making a difference in society. Altruism is the motivation of treating others and could be seen as a synonym to unselfishness (NE, 2019a), which is the principle and moral practice of concern of other people. Korac et al. (2018) mean that PSM explains why individuals value altruistic rewards. According to Backhaus, Stone and Heiner (2002), the corporate social performance, such as its ethical environment, community relations and diversity dimensions, have the most substantial effect on the attractiveness ratings of the company.
2.3.4 Interest values

Interest values refers to how interesting the organisation is or their values, the environment, the management, the culture and the work tasks seems to be from the applicant’s perspective (Berthon et al. 2005). Terms that are considered as interesting are challenging, stimulating, creative, variating, innovative, attractive, exciting and qualitative. This could be regarding work tasks, but also regarding the products a company produces and the company’s ability to make use of its employee’s creativity to produce high-quality products (Berthon et al. 2005).

‘Innovation’ was the term that all sorts of employees associated to with the top 10 of Sweden’s best employers, and professionals associated ‘excitement’ with employers they would like to work for (Universum, 2018a). Several studies show that one significant barrier to innovation is the lack of qualified employees (Sommer et al., 2017) and there is a recognised picture that organisational culture is bureaucratic and counteracts innovation (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008). Organisations within the public sector lack a ‘natural’ competition, which is a barrier of innovation (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008). Innovation can imply experiments and risk taking; however, this can cause problems for organisations within the public sector. If failing experiments, the media can present it as the government wasting time and money (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008), which is a larger deal than for organisations within the private sector, since the money are taxes. Innovation can result as a reward of organisations saving a significant amount of money, however, for organisations within the public sector this can imply that the next year’s annual budget is cut back (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008). This can have negative effects on the motivation to be innovative.

Personal, professional and learning potential, development and growth can be thought of as development values, which it is indeed, but also how interesting the development is, rather than the development itself. It is also of interest to have a job that balances work and free time. Work-life balance and family conflict provide convenience but is categorised as personal and cultural variables by Martínez-León et al. (2018). Having work-life balance was the most important career goal (Universum, 2017; Universum, 2018) and one of the top desired work values among engineers (Martínez-León et al, 2018). According to Universum’s (2018a) study, one of the top work values was having a ‘meaningful purpose’ and is also included in interest values.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) compare the person-organisation fit with the ‘social identity theory’ and mean that the theory supports the link between the employer brand image and attraction. Tajfel (1982) coined the concept of social identity theory, meaning that people derive their social identity from their membership in certain social groups. Research indicates that potential applicants compare the employer brand to their own needs, values and personalities (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). According to Cable and Judge (1996), it is more likely that an employee is attracted to an organisation when there is a match between values of the firm and the values of the individual. Personalized fit with the organisational identity means feeling emotionally connected and represented by the brand. Korac et al. (2018) state that a person-organisation fit is a reason why employees choose to work for a company within the
public sector. Organisations within the public sector appear to work with equality, which could be a reason why more individuals from minorities apply for jobs within the public sector (Korac et al., 2018). The motivations of choosing a company within the public sector can also be explained by the social identity theory, that applicants are more attracted by the organisation if values are alike. Suitability for the job can be thought as a similar value but means not being under qualified or over qualified for a job. Martínez-León et al. (2018) included suitability for the job into the category of work conditions that is translated to extrinsic work values, however, Martínez-León et al. (2018) meant that suitability for the job is viewed as a subjective work condition, based on feelings or opinions rather than facts. Therefore, in this study, suitability for the job will be categorised as psychological benefits and interest values.

2.3.5 Social values
Social values refer to the work environment, team atmosphere, and the relationships with colleagues and superiors (Berthon et al. 2005). A positive, pleasant and an interpersonal environment (Berthon et al. 2005). If the work environment is agreeable, fun and happy and if the relationships are social, great and valuable. It is also valuable for an employee to feel appreciation, encouraged and supported, both from colleagues and superiors (Elizur, 1984; Berthon et al., 2005; Ronda et al., 2018; Dyhre & Parment, 2013). In social values, it is also included teambuilding or teamwork activities. Social activities outside work hours, training and development programs, networking or socialisation at work could be more difficult to participate in for employees with family responsibilities because of have less time.

2.3.6 Framework
We created a framework based on work values. The work values comes partly from the EmpAt scale by Berthon et al., (2005) where the scale lay as ground for our framework, but has been extended based on other literature (Elizur, 1984; Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Roy, 2008, Ronda et al. 2018; Twenge et al. 2010; Ronda, Valor & Abril, 2018; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Giliani & Cunningham, 2017; Korac et al., 2018; Sengupta et al., 2015; Barrow & Mosley, 2011; Sullivan, 2004; Dyhre & Parment, 2013; Martínez-León et al., 2018; Universum, 2018; Universum, 2019), and include earlier discussed categories, see Table 1.
Table 1. Work Value Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic benefits</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic values</strong></td>
<td>Material and monetary rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary and benefits</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Lievens &amp; Highhouse (2003); Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Universum (2017); Ronda et al. (2018); Korac et al. (2018); Martínez-León et al. (2018); Universum (2018); Universum (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible or convenient work hours</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Lievens &amp; Highhouse (2003); Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time job</td>
<td>Martínez-León et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Lievens &amp; Highhouse (2003); Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Korac et al. (2018); Universum (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location or placements</td>
<td>Lievens &amp; Highhouse (2003); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and promotion opportunities within the organisation</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational structure, job position, hierarchical positions, position of power or great responsibilities</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Martínez-León et al. (2018); Ronda et al. (2018); Universum (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige, status or reputation</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Lievens &amp; Highhouse (2003); Sullivan (2004); Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Twenge et al. (2010); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation and leisure</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Twenge et al. (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift growth and fast-moving</td>
<td>Barrow &amp; Mosley (2011); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on inter-department experience</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional benefits</th>
<th>Developmental or useful activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development values</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for advancement, educations or skill developments</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Barrow and Mosley (2011); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td>Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good references for future career</td>
<td>Universum (2018a); Universum (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A springboard for future employment</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Intrinsic work values

**Personal and cultural variables, and intangible work values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development values</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-worth, recognition, appreciation, confidence</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom or independence</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Twenge et al. (2010); Universum (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational commitment</td>
<td>Martínez-León et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application values (and ethical and moral values)</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to apply knowledge</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to teach your knowledge</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and environmental responsibilities</td>
<td>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic rewards, such as society contribution and helping others</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Twenge et al. (2010), Korac et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride of membership of the organisation</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Moroko &amp; Uncles (2008); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation is customer-oriented</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having impact in decision making</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian, acceptance, diversity, respect, ethical</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005); Roy (2008); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Universum (2018); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological benefits</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest values</td>
<td>Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance or family conflicts</td>
<td>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Korac et al. (2018); Martínez-León et al. (2018); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging, interesting, stimulating, creative or varying works tasks or having opportunities to be creative or innovative</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Ronda et al. (2018); Universum (2018); Universum (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting, innovative, attractive or qualitative products or services</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005); Sullivan (2004); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Universum (2018); Universum (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative employer, forward thinking, success in its market/industry</td>
<td>Lievens &amp; Highhouse (2003); Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Berthon et al. (2005); Universum (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative or exciting work environment</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Ronda et al. (2018); Universum (2018); Universum (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational culture or values</td>
<td>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Sullivan (2004); Roy (2008); Sengupta et al. (2015); Giliani &amp; Cunningham (2017); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational traits or characteristics</td>
<td>Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work values can be considered as information about an organisation, which can be used to develop a concept of what particularly a company offer its employees (Sullivan, 2004). According to Lievens and Highhouse (2003), job-related factors are often similar within the same industry. If those factors or values are very similar, the choice of employer matter less, which can result in difficulties for organisations to differentiate themselves as employers from their competitors. Therefore, it is important to highlight and focus on the qualities and offered benefits that are unique at a company as discussed earlier, also called, the *unique selling point* or *unique selling proposition* (USP). An USP is a factor that a company possess that differentiates from competitors (Entrepreneur, n.d.).

One of the steps to succeed with strategic employer branding, according to Universum (2018), is to find out which strengths, differentiators and unique selling points that provide the most attractive, credible, true, distinct and sustainable foundation for the employer brand. Effectively communicating the unique and positive aspects increase the employer attractiveness in the labour market among potential skilled candidates, and this can be done through a corresponding *employer value proposition* (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work value</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalised fit with the organisational identity</td>
<td>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Twenge et al. (2010); Korac et al. (2018); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability for the job</td>
<td>Martínez-León et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership or management of the organisation</td>
<td>Sullivan (2004); Berthon et al. (2005); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and professional learning potential, development and growth</td>
<td>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004); Twenge et al. (2010); Barrow &amp; Mosley (2011); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Korac et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem enhancement</td>
<td>Sengupta et al. (2015); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful purpose</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Universum (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social values</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social, great or valuable relationships with colleagues or supervisors</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Twenge et al. (2010); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Sengupta et al. (2015); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation, encourage and support</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Ronda et al. (2018); Universum (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teambuilding or teamwork activities</td>
<td>Berthon et al. (2005); Dyhre &amp; Parment (2013); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeable, happy and fun work environment</td>
<td>Elizur (1984); Berthon et al. (2005); Ronda et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Employer Value Proposition

The unique aspects of the employment offer, or the “package of reward features or employment advantages and benefits offered to employees”, as Ambler and Barrow (1996, p. 187) described, are often referred to as the Employer Value Proposition (Barrow & Mosley, 2011). The concept of a value proposition is borrowed from marketing literature and is defined as “a promise the seller makes that value-in-exchange will be linked to value-in-use” (Sengupta et al., 2015, p. 309). “The value proposition is your unique selling point, the key reason why a client should come to you rather than your competitor” (Polovoy, 2015, p. 34).

Employer Value Proposition (EVP) are often mentioned in employer branding literature and is the first step in the employer branding process. In the employer branding context, an EVP is an employee promise (Dyhre & Parment, 2013), meaning that an employer makes a promise that the potential employee expects the employer to keep. Potential employees want to avoid “buying the pig in a poke”, they want to know why they should work for a certain employer, and that is why employer branding is important (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). The EVP is the desired or ideal employer identity, it works as a conceptual guidance (Theurer et al., 2018) and are often found in recruitment advertisements (Barber, 1998). Value proposition models are the backbones of employer branding and should be created in line with the value preferences (Sengupta et al., 2015). The EVP is usually built on a significant or unique aspect about the company, that summarises why the company is a great place to work (Theurer et al., 2018), often included are organisational characteristics, rewards or the organisation image (Barber, 1998). Brand associations contribute and affects the employer image and exists everywhere and in every organisation. These associations are the building blocks of an EVP (Theurer et al., 2018) and are based on attributes and benefits that are highlighted in the employer branding process (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018; Barber, 1998).

Individuals are attracted to different associations or work values, and it is crucial for organisations to focus on the values that attract the desired employees when recruiting (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). According to Cable and Judge (1996), employees that base their job choice on unbalanced information are more likely to become dissatisfied and quit their job, because their expectations are not met. Organisations need to adapt the EVP towards the desired targeted groups (Dyhre & Parment, 2013; Ronda et al., 2018). In the long term, it is unsustainable for both the employer and the employee with a recruitment failure, meaning to have a mismatch with the employee and the position at a company. It is less efficient, and it creates an unwell environment. The employee can also appear as a bad ambassador for the company which can have severe consequences (Dyhre & Parment, 2013).

According to Dyhre and Parment (2013), many employees working within the public sector state that they have meaningful jobs but are afraid to be proud of that. Meaningfulness has shown to be a very successful factor (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). Therefore, the authors mean that this should be communicated in companies’ EVP in the public sector (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). The Swedish Transport Administration focuses a lot on ‘togetherness’ in their EVP, and one of the main points in their EVP is “Tillsammans driver vi Sverige framåt”, meaning
‘together we drive Sweden forward’, with a focus on a meaningful purpose (Adén, 2018). This could be a reason for their high rank as an attractive employer. When an EVP is created, the first step of the employer branding process is done and organisations can continue the process (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sengupta et al., 2015). According to Universum (2018), to find out where, when and how a company should communicate, is one of the steps to succeed with strategic employer branding. The second step in the employer branding process is external marketing and to market the EVP, which is how companies can attract desired employees.

2.5 Recruitment strategies

There are different recruitment strategies for external marketing in the employer branding process. Employer branding has an effect on the recruitment by influencing the perceptions of the job, which can increase the chance of them joining the company (Wilden et al., 2010) and according to Sivertzen et al. (2013) and Sharma and Prasad (2018), there is a relationship between the employer brand and intent to join.

According to Berry (1982) and Grönroos (1982), opinions of a company are depended on their experiences with the whole business and not just the products. All actions by the company affect the employer brand (Wilden et al., 2010; Korac et al., 2018; Theurer et al., 2018) and everything related to the company need to be aligned (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018). For example, companies that offer products with low consumer awareness, possibly has a brand with lower awareness among potential employees. If products are seen as unattractive, potential employees may even have negative associations towards the company, which can lead to hesitations of applying for a job at that company. According to Rosengren and Bondesson (2014), companies’ choice of how to market themselves has proven to have an effect on its employer brand. Both creative consumer advertising and recruitment advertising can make a difference in the war for talent. Innovative or creative advertisement creates the image of the company having a brand that signals skill and ability, which in turn gives the feeling that the organisation is innovative (Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014). Rosengren and Bondesson (2014) argue that this has a similar effect on potential employees. It also gives the feeling of a higher status and that employees assume that working for the brand will be more developing for them (Rosengren & Bondesson, 2014).

Attractive employers are the ones succeeding with attracting talented employees. Building a strong and attractive employer brand generates favourable attitudes among potential employees (Berthon et al., 2005) and will have positive consequences for communicating the organisations’ benefits (Wilden et al., 2010). Ronda et al. (2018) mean that this allows companies to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage as they differentiate themselves from competitors. Having an attractive employer brand and a positive corporate reputation, increases the number of applicants and the intentions to apply for a job (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Sharma & Prasad, 2018), as well as the quality of the applicants (Sullivan, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005). By increasing the number of applicants per advertised vacancy the chance of finding and recruiting suitable employees will increase, Wilden et al. (2010) mean that this provides a strategic advantage to the firm. Successful employer branding and employer attractiveness also
reduces the cost of employee acquisition (Berthon et al., 2005; Wilden et al., 2010), and saves recruitment costs both short- and long-term (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). A bad reputation in the market costs a company at least 10 per cent more per hire (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). According to Talentnow (n.d.), when deciding to apply for a job, 84% of the job seekers believe that the reputation of the employer is important and 55% would abandon an application if the employer had a bad reputation, which could be costly for a company.

In the long run a company benefits by having an attractive reputation on the market. Organisations need to establish their images and promote the company as a “great place to work”, or the “employer of choice” to attract the best talents (Roy, 2008; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). That is what employer branding is communicating to the targeted employees (Ewing et al., 2002) and when employer branding strategies are effective (Sullivan, 2004). The organisational benefits that position the firm, need to be formed in the minds of potential employees as a “great place to work” or “the employer of choice” (Branham, 2000). Sullivan (2004) suggests that if an employer is one of the top employers of choice, the employer will have more awareness. It is crucial to be well-known as an organisation among potential employees to succeed with recruitment campaigns (The Recruitment of Engineers Is Doomed without Employer Branding and Marketing, 2016).

Our research seeks to connect work value preferences to external employer branding. The EVP can include preferred work values and the EVP needs to be marketed externally. A common recruitment strategy is through various recruitment channels. Recruitment channels contribute to give a broader view to potential employees so they can evaluate the company (Chhabra & Scharma, 2011; Dyhre & Parment, 2013). Steve Jobs legendary hiring practices and recruiting philosophies, was having over five thousand interviews himself, to make sure that the right people was hired. A successful strategy, but very time-consuming and expensive. There many types of recruitment channels, see Table 2 on the next page.
Table 2. Recruitment channels with explanations and examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment channels</th>
<th>Explanations and examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals</td>
<td>Suggestions from friends, family or acquaints. The suggestions often come from someone that already works within the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent Scout or headhunting</td>
<td>Internally, externally, Know A Talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-mouth</td>
<td>Storytelling or passing information from person to person through oral communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Job fairs, inspiration or company lectures or events connected to the employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital channels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Employers website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment websites</td>
<td>Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen), Indeed, Monster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job application apps</td>
<td>LinkedIn Job Search, Glassdoor,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>LinkedIn, advertisements on Facebook, YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff agencies</td>
<td>Student Consulting, Manpower, Adecco, Academic Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed press</td>
<td>Job ads in magazines, for example Metro, student magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>Trainee programs, Internship, Graduate programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal recruitment</td>
<td>Recruiting employees from within the organisation, posting job vacancies on intranets or internal job boards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cappelli (2019) mention that many organisations have another aim with recruitment advertising, not only recruiting new employees, but advertise that the company is a great place to work. According to Melanthiou et al. (2015), all social media as recruitment tools has the same common goals, recognition and to reach as many potential employees as possible. In social network sites, users can make their profile visible to others, which enable the social network to expand. Sivertzen et al. (2013) mean that this is suitable for both active and passive job seekers. According to Dyhre and Parment (2013), most people today are passive job seekers. Dyhre and Parment (2013) mean that passive job seekers are people that are ‘searching’ for jobs by having an updated profile on LinkedIn or exist in recruitment databases. Passive job seekers can be defined as “the ones who are not actively looking for a job” (The Recruitment of Engineers Is Doomed without Employer Branding and Marketing, 2016). Approaching the passive candidates is the most effective method so far and companies are doing that by knowing them, the number of them, where and how to find them, before using the right communication channel to attract them (The Recruitment of Engineers Is Doomed without Employer Branding and Marketing, 2016).
Without employer branding, companies pass unnoticed on the market which lead to possible candidates being obtained by other companies that succeed with suitable presentations (The Recruitment of Engineers Is Doomed without Employer Branding and Marketing, 2016). Organisations need to create awareness. Today the most known recruitment channel is the digital channels, such as Social Media, LinkedIn, job sites, job application apps or the organisations’ own websites. For organisations, the choice of recruiting digitally, especially through social network sites, has changed the way of thinking in trying to attract new employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013). According to Sivertzen et al. (2013), social media is an effective tool for employer branding and recruiting and can help the organisation to build a good reputation, which increases intentions to apply for a job. Sivertzen et al. (2013) tested the dimensions in the EmpAt scale and found out that use of social media as a recruitment channel may be more effective if organisations focus on the attributes that are important for potential employees. Social media as a recruitment channel also has some limitations. The aim of digital recruitment channels it to make it faster and cheaper, however, it has ended up gaining more applicants (Cappelli, 2019). According to Sivertzen et al. (2013), social media recruitment might lead to a higher number of applicants, but also a higher number of non-qualified applicants. If the goal is to make the recruitment process more cost-effective manner, Cappelli (2019) believes that companies should scare away candidates who don’t fit rather than gaining more candidates into the recruiting funnel.

The demand for good professionals is extensive, but they tend to spend less time browsing job advertisements, since job offers often find them automatically (The Recruitment of Engineers Is Doomed without Employer Branding and Marketing, 2016). The consequences of that are that job sites become less effective as a recruitment channel. The most popular channel for finding new hires, according to Cappelli (2019), is through employee referrals (an act of referring someone towards the position). According to Korac et al. (2018), the attraction and motivation of working within the public sector are more significant if the recruit’s parents have been working within the public sector. Connections can be beneficial for the applicant, because the recruiter might trust the employee that referred the applicant, and this could serve as a ‘shortcut’. However, there is a risk of getting a homogeneous workforce, since people know other similar people, which is a great matter regarding diversity (Cappelli, 2019; McCord, 2018). McCord (2018) emphasises that employees with all sorts of personalities can be great at a job. “Making great hires is about recognizing great matches - and often they’re not what you’d expect” (McCord, 2018, p.93).

There are some risks with outside hiring that need to be considered. It can disrupt the culture, burden current employees and cause current employees to putting effort in positioning themselves for jobs somewhere else (Cappelli, 2019). Regardless of the choice of recruitment channel, Cappelli (2019) stated that to become better at hiring, employers need to know which channel that produced the best candidates at the lowest cost. Companies need to measure which employees became the best ones, for example by tracking the outcomes, such as which employees who perform the best, stay the longest or their starting wage (Cappelli, 2019). Cappelli (2019) believed that the ability to predict the quality of an applicant is one of the most consequential aspects of modern business.
According to Martínez-León et al. (2018), the employee commitment and dedication towards the company is personal and is depended by the company offers. The possibilities for a job applicant to identify with an organisation’s values help the recruitment process from the organisation’s perspective. The social identity theory provides a foundation and argues that job seekers want to work at a firm with similar values as themselves. For example, Sivertzen et al. (2013) found that psychological values have a direct relation with intentions to apply for a job. The individual values of getting a person-fit job, Theurer et al. (2018) emphasises are significant outcomes on an individual level through employer branding.

When having more knowledge about external employer branding strategies or recruitment strategies, we can now perform our study. In the next chapter, we will present the choices and motivations of the methodology.
3. Methodology

This chapter presents the methods applied in the study to fulfil the research purpose and the research approach and strategy that explains how the research question is answered. The chapter also includes the choice of interview respondents and how the data was collected and analysed.

3.1 Summary of methodology

A visual overview over the methodology is summarised in Figure 6. The figure illustrates available methodology approaches and the choices for this research, which are based on the most appropriate and relevant approach for this research. Methods and choices of methods will be further explained in this chapter.

![Methodology Diagram](image-url)

Figure 6. Summary of methodology. Source: Own illustration.
3.2 Research Purpose

The research purpose can be described in three different types of approaches; exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). All approaches are used for seeking new insights into a problem or evaluate findings from a new perspective, they are often used separately but could also be used together. An exploratory research explores a phenomenon and increase understanding, a descriptive research describes a phenomenon in detail and an explanatory research explain relationships between different variables to make it clearer (Saunders et al., 2012). Saunders et al. (2012) argue that the exploratory research is used when trying to establish causal relationships between different variables where the goal is to dig deep and explain why the phenomena is happening. Since the aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding and investigate what capabilities and actions that are required to attract engineers into the public sector in Sweden, an exploratory approach was the most suitable method for this research. Edmondson and McManus (2007) strengthen this choice of exploratory approach by arguing that it is suitable when the research area is scarce. This direction was decided based on the information gained in the literature review and later strengthened with conducted interviews.

3.3 Research Approach

According to Saunders et al. (2012) and Bryman and Bell (2013), the approach of the research can be deductive, inductive, or a combination of the two, which is called abductive. David and Sutton (2016) argued that a deductive research often is a hypothesis testing and involves testing of existing theories. The authors further argue that an inductive research is building a new theory in an already explored area (David & Sutton, 2016). Bryman and Bell (2013) emphasise that an abductive approach, is a combination of deductive and inductive and could be explained as a way of drawing conclusions based on a set of observations. This research was made using an abductive approach, aiming to expand the existing research area and contribute with new and more focused context. Examining the area could lead to fill the research gap, with new insights and a new perspective on the research area.

David and Sutton (2016) explain that data research design can be collected through either quantitative or qualitative gathering of information. The quantitative collection of material is a gathering of detailed information based on already known literature and researches and focuses mostly on numbers, rankings and statistics. The other way of collecting data is through qualitative data collection, which is mainly about interpreted people’s attitudes, feelings and values and is rarely ranked or numerical. (David & Sutton, 2016)

A qualitative approach was chosen to answer the research question on how to attract professional engineers towards the public sector, both to add additional knowledge in the selected area concerning the importance of engineers’ value preferences, and by our client, the Swedish Transport Administration’s preferences.
The EmpAt scale by Berthon et al. (2005) laid ground as an inspirational base, however, this approach was mostly used in quantitative studies (Sengupta et al., 2015; Reis & Braga, 2015; Sivertzen et al., 2013; Arachchige & Robertson, 2011; Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Roy, 2008). Therefore, to fill the gap and make it more suitable for a qualitative approach, we expanded the scale with further literature (Elizur, 1984; Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Ronda et al., 2018; Twenge et al., 2010; Ronda, Valor & Abril, 2018; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Giliani & Cunningham, 2017; Korac et al., 2018; Sengupta et al., 2015; Barrow & Mosley, 2011; Sullivan, 2004; Dyhrre & Parment, 2013; Martínez-León et al., 2018; Universum, 2018; Universum, 2019). The qualitative approach was chosen to gain more detailed information and data collection from the interviewees by also including attitudes, feelings and values though this are considered to be major influencing factors.

3.4 Research strategy

When conducting an exploratory research, the aim is to search through the literature, interviewing experts within the area or to conduct interviews (Saunders et al., 2012). According to Yin (2009), a case study is preferable when the research is a “linear, but an iterative process” like it is in an exploratory research and is also strengthened by David and Sutton (2016). David and Sutton (2016) further argued that a case study is relevant to use when investigating specific cases in depth, especially when examining an organisation. A case study focuses on examining a phenomenon in its real-life context with questions based on “how” and “why”. To be able to complete a case study, Yin (2009) argued that it is important to have a firm grasp of the area being studied. Further, some desirable traits are the ability to ask the right questions, being adaptive and flexible, but also have the insights to know how to avoid bias (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), case studies consider “the messiness of the real world”, such as social structures, different relationships and surrounding factors.

In this type of case study, when the research area is scarce, Edmondson and McManus (2007) argued that nascent theory research is the most suitable method for collection of qualitative data in organisations. Nascent theory includes systematic studies where the subject requires more open-ended research questions to be able to “strongly shape the researcher’s developing understanding of the phenomenon” (Edmondson & McManus, 2007, p. 1159). The methods for learning with an open mind are inputs from interviews and observations to get a clearer picture. We are trying to fill the research gap, where a case company in the public sector and some different actors in the private sector law as a ground for our research.
3.4.1 Case company

The Swedish Transport Administration (Swedish: Trafikverket) was chosen to represent the public sector, which is a government agency in Sweden, controlled by the Swedish Government. Swedish Transport Administration and is responsible for long-term infrastructure planning for transport: road, rail, shipping and aviation. According to ManpowerGroup (2018), large enterprises (250+ employees) have in general twice as much difficulty filling roles than small- and medium enterprises, which could be a contributing factor to their recruitment challenges and The Swedish Transport Administration have approximately 8000 employees spread around Sweden. They own, construct, operate and maintain all state-owned roads, railways and ferry services (www.trafikverket.se). The Swedish Transport Administration is operating in the infrastructure industry or more specific; “The Public Administration & Society industry - Infrastructure Program” (Allabolag, 2019). The majority of the Swedish transport infrastructure is financed through public funds such as municipal and state funding (Sveriges Byggindustrier, n.d.).

The case company, The Swedish Transport administration, was chosen based on several reasons. Partly because of the wide spread of engineers in different areas as employees, and partly on order because of their large recruitment challenge and the talent shortage and deficiency of engineers. Another reason was that investments in infrastructure are crucial to achieving sustainable development and empowering communities, growth in productivity and incomes, and improvements in health and education outcomes require investment in infrastructure (United Nations, 2018a). Investments in infrastructure is Goal 9 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, targeted to be achieved by 2030 (United Nations, 2018a), see Figure 7. Goal 9 includes transport, irrigation, energy and information and communication technology (United Nations, 2018a), to build a resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (United Nations, 2018b). Therefore, the infrastructure industry needs technical and technological competence and engineering. Sustainability issues and awareness are an up to date topic and becomes more and more important when choosing an employer. That is why it is interesting and of importance to help organisations within the infrastructure industry with this issue.

![Figure 7. Sustainable Development Goals & Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.](https://example.com/figure7.png)

3.5 Data collection

The data was collected through primary research from eight interviews, that were based on our frame of reference, and in consultation with the supervisor, Emil Adén, of The Swedish Transport Administration. The data collection was based on the case study approach as the research strategy, argued by Yin (2009). In case studies, the best-argued approach, according to Yin (2009), is to conduct interviews. The focus during the interviews were the interviewees' feelings, values and attitudes towards the company, from the initial stage in their recruitment process towards their current job. This focus assumes from the nascent theory research which is “qualitative initially open-ended data that need to be interpreted for meaning” (Edmondson & McManus, 2007, p.1160). By conducting and collecting this data, the goal with the interviews was to get an overview and inputs on how the company should attract professional engineers. The structure used during the interviews was a combined approach, with semi-structured interview questions, according to David and Sutton (2016), and McCracken’s (1998) famous long interview technique.

3.5.1. Sample selection

There are two kinds of sampling selection, random and non-random selection, according to Saunders et al. (2012). Random selection is when each employee of the company has an equal chance of being selected for the interviews, and the non-random is when the employees are hand-picked (Saunders et al., 2012). To be able to get a larger view of what professional engineers value and to possess various answers, David and Sutton (2016), argued that the selection of candidates must be of high variation. Therefore, in this study, the selection of candidates where non-random.

The selection of candidates was according to quota, which means that is was based on age, gender, religion and socioeconomic status (Saunders et al., 2012). The non-random choice of interviewees was a base of people with different socio-demographic variables, such as age, marital status and gender. The selection of interview respondents was eight professional engineers between the ages 30-49, this age group is considered key in the development of a professional career, according to Martínez-León et al. (2018). People in this age group has matured, are positioned in a certain professional category, have other influencing factors from their private life and being more experienced (Martínez-León et al., 2018). Seven participants had a Master of Science in engineering and one had a bachelor’s degree in engineering. They also had different orientations within engineers, years of experience and worked in different areas of expertise in different locations throughout Sweden. All respondents had at least worked at two different companies, which increased the recruitment experience and experience of preferences among work values. This also enabled that the respondents could compare values between different employers. Four of the respondents was working in the public sector, and four of them in the private sector. All engineers currently working in the public sector had worked in the private sector before, and one of the engineers working in the private sector had worked in the public sector before. The interviewees working in the public sector were selected
with help from the supervisor at the case company and the interviewees working in the private sector was selected by us.

3.5.2 Interview structure

Interview questions were created to investigate value preferences and recruitment experiences. The aim with the semi-structured interviews was to develop open-ended and open-structured questions to allow the interview candidates to bring up their own thoughts, seek new insights and to bring up new ideas about the subject (David & Sutton, 2016; Edmondson & McManus, 2007). The openness helps ensure enriched the details, but also to evocative data that are needed to shed light on the phenomenon (Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

This was combined with the Long Interview technique by McCracken, which is known to be one of the most famous ways of collecting qualitative data through social scientific studies. The method makes it possible for the interviewer to step into the mindset of another person’s lifeworld to see their social and cultural context. The method provides a systematic 4-step guide, see Figure 8, to ensure that the interviewer do not influence the participated employers’ answers. The steps open up for free interpretations and make the interviewees talk about their own experiences, where the research questions are designed to be open to be able to let the interviewees lead the direction of the interview themselves. (McCracken, 1998)

![Figure 8. The four-step method of inquiry. Source: Modified from McCracken (1998).](image-url)
The four steps include how to conduct the interviews and also how to analyse the data collection from the interviews. Step one is *review of analytic categories & interview design*, which is collecting existing litterateur in the research area and based on that define problems and assess data. This is the initial stage in gathering data to the construction of the interview guide with the interview questions. The second step is *review of cultural categories & interview design*, which is firstly about familiarization for the interviewer to be able to distinguish pattern and be spontaneous in alternative follow-up questions during the interview. Secondly, it is also about defamiliarization so that the investigator is not in a position to establish any distance from the own deeply embedded cultural assumptions. Towards the third step, the interview candidates are to be chosen. The third step is *discovery of cultural categories & interview*, where the investigator should try to keep a low profile during the interview, while simultaneously trying to discover key terms as they emerge from the interview and to prompt the respondent to continue talking more about them. Lastly, the fourth step is *discovery of analytic categories & analysis/write-up*, which covers analysing the qualitative data that have been conducted and to examine what different aspects gained from the interview. (McCracken, 1998)

When conducting the interviews, the focus was to dig deeper by using only a few participants. McCracken (1998) explained that the goal with this type of qualitative collection of data is to glimpse the lifeworld of some selected individual, and really get to know their thoughts and values. Four of the respondents participating in the interviews was currently working for the case company, The Swedish Transport Administration, one with a bachelor’s degree and three with master’s degrees and they had all been worked in the private sector before. The other four participants where potential employees that were currently working in the private sector, all with master’s degrees, where one of them had worked in the public sector before. To ensure that the right information was gathered from the interviews, they were recorded after approval from the interviewees (David & Sutton, 2016).

The interview questions were formed in a way to enable comparison between what engineers value when it comes to choosing between working in public or the private sector, to find out differences between the two sectors. In this way, organisations within the public sector can focus on these values when trying to attract professional engineers, for example when creating an EVP in the future. The interview questions are created to be able to find out any recruitment aspects that are important to consider when attracting professional engineers, and what type of recruitment channels professional engineers prefer to find jobs in. Knowing this will help to answer the research questions. Table 3 on the next page will show information about each interview respondent.
### Table 3. Interview respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Previously worked in the other sector</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Years of professional experience</th>
<th>Length of interview</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>31/4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M. Sc. in Engineering Physics and Electrical Engineering (Swedish: Civilingenjör inom teknisk fysik och elektroteknik)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1h 14 min</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>7/5</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>1h 32 min</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>M. Sc. Mechanical Engineering (Swedish: Civilingenjör Maskinteknik)</td>
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<td>37 min</td>
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</table>

#### 3.6 Data analysis

To analyse the collected data, we relied on thematic analysis, as the fourth step in the four-step method of inquiry by McCracken (1998): *discovery of analytic categories & analysis/write-up*. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a flexible method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within a data-set. The goal of the data analysis is to identify and investigate key variables and to collect and categorise short phrases and illustrative quotes from the interviews that represent the essence or key attribute of narrative and verbal information (David & Sutton, 2016; Edmondson & McManus, 2007). By doing this and using openness like this during the conduction of the data analyse, unexpected insights from qualitative data and patterns can be identified (Braun & Clark, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that the thematic analysis can be used to interpret data from a social and psychological perspective, which is suitable in this qualitative research where people’s feelings, values and behaviour are significant components.
The data analysis was inspired and made according to the thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Edmondson and McManus (2007) and has a six step-approach. The first step was a collection of data and a comparison against the audio files, which later was summarised to get an initial understanding of what could be of interest for potential patterns. In the second step, the collected data from each interview was systematically coded, where each code was named to make it easier to separate the interview candidates. In the third step, data began to be interpreted and all data where linked to a specific theme. The themes were then collected together, and a mind map was made in order to facilitate understanding of how all themes were connected, and to make the connections clearer. In the fourth step, a check was made once more to ensure that the codes were not too similar or superfluous. Then all the themes were mapped, and codes developed to understand the connection between them so that a complete picture of all data could be obtained. The fifth step was a last check to make sure that all themes reflected the categories and was “on point”. The sixth and the last step was combining parts from selected themes and finding patterns, which consist of similarities and differences, analysing them, comparing them to the literature and lastly combining them with our frame of reference to compile the report. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

3.7 Reliability and validity

The requirement for reliability and validity is two prerequisites for the research results to have a proven value. Reliability measures the study's dependability, transferability, and confirmation (Bryman & Bell, 2013). Validity includes a fair picture and measure what is relevant in the context and if the research was conducted pedagogically (Bryman & Bell, 2013).

According to David and Sutton (2016), the data collection in a study can be seen as reliant if all questions from the interview are perceived in the same way by all respondents. According to Bryman and Bell (2013), interviews are a subjective method of gaining information. An issue with this can be that interviewers might influence or affect the interviewees’ answers in different ways, especially when interview questions are semi-structured. Therefore, an interview guide with interview questions was formed also with some prepared sub-questions to ensure and clarify the answers. All questions were formed to be open to avoid leading questions that might affect the interviewees answers. In the result section, some of the respondents’ answers were illustrated with quotes, which facilitate the reliability and validity (Johansson, 2005).

The interview questions were reviewed by the supervisor at The Swedish Transport Administration, Emil Adén. This was done to ensure that the correct data was collected during the interviews, and that there was a connection between the frame of the interview, the theoretical framework and the literature study (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The interview questions were then tested on a third party. This to find out if there were any misunderstandings, confusions, unclarities, errors or mistakes (David & Sutton, 2016). Before we conducted the interviews, the participating interview respondents were informed with a letter in Swedish, see Appendix II and the English translation in Appendix III, and with the interview guide, see the Swedish interview guide in Appendix IV and the English translation in Appendix V. Research
ethics concerns the researcher's relation to the research task to make sure that the research is carried out in an honest manner, respect the surroundings (Vetenskapsrådet, 2018). Factors such as reliability, justice towards participants, nature and society should be included, and the aim is to ensure that the research is conducted in a fair way (Vetenskapsrådet, 2018). Our interview respondents were informed about research ethics through our letter and interview guide to make them feel safe and secure and to be reminded of their rights. To ensure that the right information was gathered from the interviews, the interviews were recorded after approval from the interviewees, which increase the reliability and makes it possible for the interview to be controlled afterwards (David & Sutton, 2016).

Regarding validity of the thematic analysis, it could be considered to have a relatively limited interpretation if the analysis were not made based on an underlying theory. There could occur some difficulties to know what is important to focus on when sorting out common themes in an extensive data collection, but through guidance this can be avoided (David & Sutton 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2013). The reliability refers to if the study would achieve similar results another time (Bryman & Bell, 2013). To increase reliability, all the different phases during the research was discussed with opponents and controlled by our supervisor at The Swedish Transport Administration and by our supervisor at Lulea University of Technology. The interview guide also enables future repetitions of the research that aims to measure similar phenomenon in another occasion.
4. Result

This chapter will present findings based on the data collection from the empirical study. The chapter will be divided into the different value categories from our framework. It will also be divided into preferred and non-preferred recruitment channels.

Below, we will present the result from the interviews, including with citations from the interview respondents. The structure of this chapter is divided into the themes from our constructed framework, see Figure 9, where the work values will be highlighted.

![Figure 9. Themes and work value categories from our constructed framework. Source: Our illustration](image-url)
4.1 Economic values

Salary & benefits
Almost all engineers from each sector, commented on their thoughts about salary. Respondent #6 that was currently working in the private sector and had earlier worked in the public sector stated she now had a significantly higher salary. When working in the public sector, she thought that there were always dissatisfaction and employees whining over the salary in the public sector. Three of the respondents currently working within the public sector did not agree, and argued that the difference in salary was insignificant, especially after taxes. Although, they added that they were not getting bonuses, which they believed was a benefit for people working for companies in the private sector. Respondent #6 mentioned that she valued the benefits when working in the private sector, and stated that at her employer, they have a budget where the employees get to decide together and vote what to do as social activities. She added that this also contributed to a great environment at work. None of the respondents thought that salary was their most prioritised value. Respondent #6 believed that higher salary was important because it resulted in a higher pension, which would give her more security. Respondent #7 was happy with her current salary and believed that her employer in the private sector had a great wage development. Salary was something she valued and believed was important to stay informed about, and stated:

“Not just because of getting the money to use to personal interest, but it is a way of how much the company is showing appreciation of my work.”

Two of the respondents from the public sector valued vacation, and the benefits of extra days off around the holidays they had when working in the public sector compared to when they worked in the private sector.

Flexible or convenient work hours
A common denominator between all eight participants was that they valued the flexibility their employers gave them. All of them valued the flexible working hours, but in different ways. The engineers in the private sector liked that they could be more flexible depending on when the deadline was. The engineers working in the public sector appreciated that they did not need to work overtime, and that they worked could work more one week and less the next. For example, Respondent #1 stated that, if needed, she could pick up her child earlier from day-care and work late another day. When these engineers were working in the private sector, they
stated that they sometimes had to work during weekends. They all valued that it was not like that in the public sector, and respondent #2 stated:

“When I was working for the private sector, and the supervisor came on a Friday, and wished that some work tasks needed to be done by Monday, we had to work all weekend.

Now, when I go home from work, I leave the work behind, I didn't really do that when working in the private sector. “

Almost all of them also mentioned that they did not like the stamping clock they had when working in the private sector and argued that it generated too much focus on time instead of the actual work assignments. Respondent #2 appreciated that if he could get his job done faster, he could go home earlier, and stated:

“It is not how much or how long hours you work, it is how smart you work.”

This quote was also almost stated in the same way by Respondent #4 when she said that she wanted to work less hours and instead more effective. Two of the respondents from the private sector valued the flexible working hours, where Respondent #7 explained that flexibility for her was the possibility of setting up own work hours, and stated:

“If it’s snowing, I can go ski and work those hours another day.”

The ability to work from home some days during the week was something that all respondents valued much, but not as highest. Three respondents from the private sector worked from home once and a while and believed that it was something highly valued, and three in the public sector stated that they would like to work from home at least once a week. For example, Respondent #3 appreciated to work at home often instead of commuting.

**Job security**

Some candidates from both sectors mentioned that they valued job security. Respondent #6 explained that job security in the economic crisis was something she valued and considered when choosing among two job offers. Respondent #1 meant that security for her was acceptance from supervisors and co-workers when she was absent because of parental leave, or when she was working from home to take care of sick children. Respondent #6 stated that many of her colleagues valued the company’s positive attitude towards parental leave. Respondent #4 thought job security was ranked as a high value in the organisation based on the fact that her co-workers average age was very high, and many were close to retention.
Geographical location or placements
The engineers in the public sector, valued the fact that The Swedish Transport Administration had geographical locations throughout Sweden, two of them valued the possibility of relocation and meant that relocating within the same company implied the same organisational culture and similar work tasks. Respondent #1 valued the geographical location of the employer to avoid traveling too much which made her gain more family time. From the private sector, Respondent #6 explained that the geographical placement was the main reason of her choice between two job offers, one in each sector. She also stated that instead of sitting in the office every day, it was possible to travel and get out because of the company’s locations throughout Sweden. One respondent in each sector did not like the fact that they needed to commute, however, the felt the compensation was flexible work hours and the possibilities to work from home sometimes.

Career and promotion opportunities within the organisation
All respondents, both from the public and the private sector, argued that interesting opportunities for personal growth and career advancements were one of their top preferred work values. All respondents working within the public sector had changed position within the company, and believed that this was a great benefit, to develop themselves. Respondent #1 chose to work at The Swedish Transport Administration because of the development opportunities and opportunities to work within different areas or departments or switch job internally. Two of the respondents in the public sector denoted that they valued the fact that it was easy to relocate internally, because in that way, they got to keep the organisational culture and similar work tasks. On the other hand, Respondent #6 switched job from the public sector to the private sector, because she felt that she did not develop professionally when working within the public sector. Among the respondents in the private sector, Respondent #8 had a goal to get a promotion within the company and Respondent #5 had change employer recently because his employer could not offer him promotions at the time. Respondent #7 stated that she had enlarged her knowledge, working for a large consulting company in a way that she wouldn't had in a smaller company.

Prestige, status or reputation
Five out of eight engineers thought that the company's reputation was a crucial part and a contributing factor to the choice of employer. Respondent #5 was passionate about technology. He wanted to work at his current employer because of the well-known brand and great reputation about their incredible high-quality products, and stated;

“If the product that the company is producing has a bad reputation, my opinion is that the company is not that good either. I think people want to be proud of the products or services the company is producing”.

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Respondent #8 stated that he had followed his current employer’s work for a long time, reading about their exciting projects, heard rumours, and waited for a suitable position to open. Respondent #2 thought that the company’s reputation was something that affected the loyalty towards the employer.

Swift growth and fast-moving
All engineers working in the private sector believed that companies within the public sector had slower processes, which was confirmed by the engineers working in the public sector. They explained that there were many different managers that needed to be involved and many laws and rules that needed to be followed within the public sector. Some explained that the reason for slower processes were that organisations within the public sector are tax founded and controlled by laws and political decisions, which slows down the decision-making processes. The respondents working in the public sector thought that it was sometimes hard to work when all decisions had to go through so many people before anything could be decided (politicians, several managers, laws to follow), because sometimes it required to wait with some work tasks before they could proceed. They also added that slower processes sometimes resulted in boring working days, but Respondent #1 believed that this was a positive aspect. He wanted to work within the public sector to avoid stress when generating results under pressure and during deliveries, and stated:

        “Working in a slower pace within the public sector only affects ourselves, since we are our own clients and suppliers”.

When delays occur, it could affect the company or the society, but external clients will not suffer by any consequences, which he meant resulted in less pressure on the employees. All respondents currently working in the public sector mentioned that when working in the private sector, it was stressful to keep deadlines and satisfying the clients, and the fact that they sometimes had to work during weekends. They believed this was a negative aspect, and they all valued that it was not like that in the public sector.

Respondent #1 and #2 believed that there were outdated systems within the public sector. Respondent #1 stated that she would like to see more rejuvenation among the staff in the public sector, to gain faster processes and to get more productive employees. Respondent #6 stated that when she started to work in the private sector, she was first afraid of the process of change, but appreciated the fast-changing environment after a while and dared to take more initiatives within business development. She had earlier worked in the public sector and added that slower processes for sure could suit some people, but she recommend everyone to switch to an employer within the private sector. Respondent #7 believed that faster development in the private sector facilitated the daily work.
4.2 Development values

Opportunities for advancement, educations or skill developments

The engineers in the public sector, mentioned that the fact that The Swedish Transport Administration was a large sized company with geographical locations throughout Sweden, made it easier to change work assignments and managers if needed. They meant that this opened up opportunities for personal and professional development within the company. In the private sector they were all satisfied with their career development opportunities. Respondent #6 switched job to work in the private sector, because she felt that she did not develop professionally within the public sector, and stated:

“I would definitely recommend everyone to switch from the public sector to work in the private sector, because of that.”

International opportunities

Respondent #6 liked to travel and dreamed about working abroad, she valued the international possibilities that her employer had. She had worked in the public sector earlier and stated that this was not as possible there. She stated that she did not feel comfortable or secure in taking an engineering job in English at first, but with her current employer she valued the possibilities to start working in Sweden to further relocate abroad, which she thought felt safer.

Intrinsic work values

These work values below, are still in the category of development values:

Self-worth, recognition, appreciation, confidence

Most of the respondents mentioned recognition in different ways. As mentioned earlier, Respondent #7 believed that the amount of salary was a way of showing how much the company appreciated the employees’ work. Respondent #6 stated that she valued and wanted to be heard and seen, and this was also stated by Respondent #8 that wanted to be appreciated for the work he contributed with.

Respondent #2 believed that he got better and more feedback at his former employer in the private sector, than currently in the public sector. All respondents in the public sector had in common that their managers did not question their work in the same way as their former
managers did in the private sector, which they believed was positive, but still had a critical aspect. Respondent #3 stated:

“I appreciate that they trust me, but sometimes it feels like nobody cares what I do.”

**Freedom or independence**

All respondents mentioned ‘freedom with responsibility’ during the interview, as one of their most preferred work values and some also stated that this was a strength of the company. Respondent #3 thought that the best part with his job was that he could design the work assignments as he wanted. Respondent #7 compared sectors based on what she heard from colleagues that had worked within the public sector earlier and stated that it seemed to be more freedom and variation working in private sector. Respondent #6 believed that there was more freedom in deciding when to have meetings in the public sector, and in the private sector meetings are bound to the client. She also stated that she needed to report working hours that are chargeable for clients, which was not necessary in the public sector. She meant that reporting work hours made employees work more productive, when not reporting, the consequences was slower processes and developments.

4.3 Application values

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and environmental responsibilities**

All engineers mentioned the importance of CSR and environmental responsibilities. Respondent #4 wanted to work with sustainability issues and make an improvement in society, and especially for the environment. Respondent #5 discussed the importance of working for an employer that produced environmentally friendly products. His former employer was famous for their ability to develop environmentally friendly products that contributed to society, which he valued highly compared to his current employer and stated:

“Unfortunately, we do not produce electric cars, but at least our new engines are better for the environment compared to the old ones.”

Two of the respondents working in the public sector stated that they wanted to be involved in improving the infrastructure to reduce the impact on the climate, for example by improving public transportation. Respondent #7 stated that she could switch towards working in the public sector if she got to investigate sustainability, climate and environmental issues that the public sector is responsible for. It was very noticeable how passionate she was when discussing this, and stated:

“These types of issues would unfortunately not a client pay a consulting salary for, since it does not generate direct profits for the client.”
Altruistic rewards, such as society contribution and helping others

All engineers in the public sector valued the feeling of contributing to society. The reason why all of them chose to work in the public sector was the fact that the company was contributing to society. Two of the engineers in the private sector also stated that it was important for him. Respondent #4 stated:

“My favourite part is when I see result from the projects that I have been a part of, out in the community. It makes me feel proud, and I feel like I have done something good for the society and to other people.”

Respondent #2 stated that:

“The challenges we are faced regarding the climate changes, makes it feel good for me that at least I can be a part of making sure that people can travel in a more environmentally friendly way. I also like being involved in helping people come closer to each other.”

The other two engineers in the private sector wanted to contribute to society by working with sustainability issues, as mentioned earlier. Respondent #5 felt proud of his last job because he could contribute to helping people, and stated:

“By making our prosthesis more durable, means that the patient does not have to undergo another operation just, because the material of the prosthesis is too weak.”

Pride of membership of the organisation

As mentioned earlier, most of the engineers discussed that they were proud of their employer, both by their own work that they were contributing with and the products or services they provided at their employers. Two of the respondents in the private sector stated that they felt prouder if they got to see the result of a project. Three of the respondents in the public sector mentioned that they wanted to be proud of the organisation they worked at, especially when other people asked them about their work, they that people respondent negatively when they said where they worked or what they worked with. Respondent #5 was prouder of working for his former employer than his current employer because of the extent of environmentally friendly products, and stated:

“Now people respond negatively, when I am explaining what I do for a living, compared to my last job, I would be much prouder if we produced more environmentally friendly products.”
The organisation is customer-oriented

All engineers believed that companies within the private sector was more effective and customer oriented. The engineers currently working in the public sector, all thought that when they worked in the private sector, the companies were too customer oriented. The result of not being customer-oriented in the public sector, however, was that processes were too slow because of not as tight deadlines.

Having impact in decision making

All respondents wanted to have an impact or the possibility to make a difference. As mentioned earlier, two engineers believed that there were outdated systems within the public sector. However, they believed this was a positive aspect because there were more challenges and gave them opportunities to contribute more and make a difference. Respondent #6 and #7 stated that they valued the possibility to make a difference at the workplace when working in the private sector. Respondent #7 added that she had a larger impact when working for a smaller than a larger consulting company, and stated:

“I now appreciate to have that experience,
I probably have more experience of that than other people”.

Opportunities to apply knowledge

All respondents seemed satisfied with their work tasks and assignments, at their employer, especially the technical ones. All engineers valued that they could contribute with their technical knowledge specifically within their orientation within engineering and area of expertise from their education. For example, Respondent #7 valued that her studies were useful in her work, and stated:

“My education was really relevant of what I’m doing now.
At our department, we are all environmental and water-nerds”.

In the public sector, the engineers believed that they could apply their knowledge by contributing to implement digital systems, as mentioned above.

Humanitarian, acceptance, diversity, respect, ethical

A common denominator between many of the respondents, mostly respondents working in the private sector, thought that the feeling of working for an employer with a humanitarian work environment was important. Three respondents from the public sector stated that they believed that a weakness at The Swedish Transport Administration was the ability to take care of new employees in the beginning of their learning period. Two female respondents working in the public sector, pointed out that they would appreciate more diversity in gender, with more female colleagues. Respondent #6 also valued having diversity among genders and stated that
her employer was knowingly trying to attract more female employees, which she valued a lot. However, she stated that she missed more females in leading positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of belonging, direction and purpose</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Interest values

**Work-life balance or family conflicts**
To have **balance between work and personal life** was a really important factor for almost all interviewed engineers, many of them mentioned that this was particularly important when having a family. All respondents within the public sector valued the fact that they did not have to work overtime.

**Challenging, interesting, stimulating, creative or variating works tasks**
All engineers valued the **technological** and **technical** work tasks they were working with, and that this made it interesting. All respondents working in the public sector, was positively surprised of the amount of technical and technological work tasks or assignments. Respondent #5 valued the amount of technology in his work tasks and the challenges that comes with. He appreciated the high-quality products at his employer, and stated:

“I love working with advanced technology and develop technical products”.

Respondent #1 stated that she thought that not that many people, especially engineers, probably knew that the employer offered as many interesting and technological assignments, including her. However, two other respondents from the public sector stated that they would like to experience more **innovation** at the workplace.

Three of the respondents from the private sector was satisfied with the innovation and valued that they constantly got to be creative at their current employer. A great focus in the interview with Respondent #6 was the value of being **stimulated** at work, and not being bored. She had worked in both sectors and believed that the work tasks were more stimulating in the private sector compared to the public sector. Respondent #7 valued **problem solving**, and stated she wanted to be a part of whole chain of when solving problems and finding solutions, from writing the assignment proposal, the planning-, solving-, budgeting-, implementing- analysing towards the presenting process for the client.

All respondents within the private sector valued having **interesting** work tasks. Three of the respondents from the private sector valued working with a group of people with high knowledge and explained that this made the work being interesting. The project groups usually had variation in background, education and competence to complement each other. Simultaneously, all co-workers were oriented towards the same area of expertise, which
implied possibilities to bounce ideas and having more interesting discussions. Respondent #7 had a negative view of the public sector, based on discussions with colleagues that had worked in the public sector before, that this was not possible in the public sector. What she had heard was that many employees were alone with their competence, because of less resources to hire more employees with similar experiences and competence, and stated:

“I wouldn't want to work in such an environment, it would be boring not having anyone to bounce ideas with.”

All eight interviewed engineers, from both sectors, discussed varying work tasks as one of their top work values. In the public sector this was a value the respondents mentioned, where all of them had changed position within the company when they wanted to work with something new or needed more stimulating and varying work task. In the private sector, this was something the respondents gladly discussed and explained thorough. Respondent #7 also had the negative view of the public sector that work tasks had less variation. She stated that she appreciated more variation and change working for a larger consulting company than a smaller one and when comparing to other colleagues’ experiences within the public sector. Respondent #5 valued variation highly and argued that the best part with his job was the variation of combining the leadership role with technical skills. He explained that he got to handle customer relationships as the manager, but also worked in the lab and being part of experiments and tests of prototypes.

Two engineers valued challenging work tasks. Respondent #8 stated that he wanted the opportunity to participate in both large and small important projects, and work tasks that combined advanced technologies, personal and professional growth and an international work environment.

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**Innovative employer, forward thinking, success in its market/industry**

All respondents from the private sector was happy with their employers and the way their employers let them to be innovative. From the public sector, two of the respondents argued that there was a lack of new technology and digital systems, but as mentioned, this was something positive because it created opportunities for them to be more innovative. Respondent #3 mentioned that the reason he wanted to work at The Swedish Transport Administration was that he knew that he would be able to form his own work tasks with innovation.

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**Organisational culture or values**

All respondents from the private sector stated that the organisational culture and the values of the employer was a contributing factor to why they wanted to work for their employer. Working for a large company, the engineers put an emphasis on that they got to keep the organisational culture if they relocated, which implied that they thrived and valued the culture.
Organisational traits or characteristics
The trait or characteristics of the employer that all engineers mentioned was the size of the organisations, all engineers mentioned size as an aspect of importance. The engineers in the public sector, valued the fact that The Swedish Transport Administration was a large sized company, because it enabled development opportunities, opportunities to work within different areas or departments, possibilities to switch job internally and it made it easier to change work assignments or managers if needed.

Two of the respondents in the private sector wanted to work at a smaller company because the possibilities to follow a project the whole way and be a part of the project from the start to the end, to see the result. Respondent #6 valued working at a medium-sized enterprise, where there were possibilities to ask for advice at the same time as they were not entirely depended on her competence, but that absence would still be noticeable.

Respondent #7 worked in one of the largest consulting companies in Sweden and stated that the pros of working for a large consulting company is that she can work or discuss with other colleagues at any office throughout Sweden and lead larger projects. But her first choice of employer was a smaller consulting company that was purchased by the larger one. She was attracted by and chose a smaller consulting firm and argued that it was a better coherence that gave the feeling of being a big family where everyone knew each other very well. After being purchased the work environment became different, it was less family feeling and new supervisors. She explained that the smaller consulting company had a focus on both water and environment issues but was then divided into two different departments. Her work tasks combined water and environment issues, but now she was left being in between the two departments. This resulted in her feeling abandoned and dumped because nobody was asking her what she wanted. She did not feel that she really belonged to any of the departments anymore, especially when there where disagreements among which department she belonged to between her and her supervisor. This resulted in uncertainty and the feeling of being insignificant and Respondent #7 stated:

“I feel smaller than being a pawn in the game,
I'm like a molecule in the pawn in the game”.

Although, she believed that after 3 years in the small consulting company, it was a good time for a change anyway.

Personalised fit with the organisational identity
Three of the respondents from the private sector stated that it was important for them that the organisation had similar values as them.
Leadership or management of the organisation
Three of the respondents from the public sector, mentioned disadvantages with not having the manager on the same location. They all gave examples of work situations, when an employee from another department had done almost the same job as themselves, and that a lot of information got lost between the departments. In the private sector, Respondent #5 had earlier worked for a large company and where talking about the difficulties of communicating between different departments and stated:

“Sometimes it was hard to communicate with salespeople, and to understand what the customer really wanted.”

4.5 Social values

Appreciation, encourage and support
All engineers from the private sector felt that they were appreciated, encouraged and got support from managers and colleagues. The engineers from the public sector, as mentioned earlier, sometimes felt that nobody cared about what they were doing. Respondent #7 valued all support from both colleagues and supervisors, she stated that they are like a family, where they have each other’s backs. She gave an example when a client once scolded and yelled at her, where her supervisors talked to the client and both supervisors and colleagues was there for her, on her side and supported her.

Teambuilding or teamwork activities
Three respondents from the private sector argued that their teambuilding and teamwork activities was really good as mentioned earlier. Respondent #6 mentioned that they could afford better social activities in the private sector, compared to when she was working in the public sector. She stated that this contributed to a better environment at work.

Social, great or valuable relationships with colleagues or supervisors
All engineers were happy with their colleagues and the work environment. Two female respondents from the public sector wished for more female colleagues. Respondent #7 valued great coherence and that they had a fun and happy work environment. As mentioned earlier, Respondent #7 valued similar competence among her colleagues, because believed that makes a great work environment to have interesting conversations. Respondent #8 mentioned that he wanted to be surrounded with competent people that he had a professional relationship to. Respondent #6 stated that her employer really aimed at retaining their staff with an active work approach of getting employees to thrive, which she valued a lot. She believed that it was better coherence between colleagues in the private sector compared to the public sector, and stated:
“I want to hang out with my colleagues even after work now. I didn’t really want that when I worked in the public sector, only if I got paid for it.”

The work values that none of the engineers discussed was:

Economic values:
- Full-time job
- Organisational structure, job position, hierarchical positions with responsibilities, or position of power
- Hands-on inter-department experience

Development values:
- Good references for future career
- A springboard for future employment
- Organisational commitment

Application values:
- Opportunities to teach your knowledge

Interest values:
- Suitability for the job
- Self-esteem enhancement
- Creative or exciting work environment
- Personal and professional learning potential, development and growth

4.6 Recruitment strategies
Most of the engineers were happy with their employer and were not interested in applying for a new job at the moment. One of the engineers working in the private sector wanted to change job towards an employer within the public sector, to switch work tasks and contribute more to society.

Some of the engineers were passive job seekers, where they stayed updated among new job offers. Respondent #6 was a passive job seeker and stated that she would apply for a new job only if she wanted new challenges, then it would be time to actively apply for a new job.

Personal communication
Three of the engineers in the public sector got their current job through personal communications.

Digital channels
Half of the respondents applied to their employer through the company's own web page.
All interviewed engineers explained that if they would apply for another job it would be through digital channels, or through personal communication and recommendations. Six of them would use the same recruitment channel today as they did when they applied for their current job. The other two applied for their over 10 years ago, before the common use of digital channels, and would change towards applying digitally.

Half of the respondents applied to their current employer through the company's own web page. Five of the respondents stated that they usually use different types of digital search engines.

**Other**
One of the engineers applied for the job through an ad in a magazine (but this was ten years ago), and stated:

“I would not do that today, now it is much easier to search for jobs online”.

**Positive aspects**
As mentioned earlier, most of the engineers were not aware of the large amount of technical or technological work assignments in the public sector. Respondent #1 was surprised when she first was a consult on a project for The Swedish Transport Administration, and stated:

“I had no idea that there were so many engineers working here, or that they had so many work tasks that required an engineering degree!”

This was this great impression that made Respondent #1 apply for a permanent job there.

Respondent #5 liked using search engines that offer job-match notifications of relevant jobs, in that way he could make sure to not miss any job offers from smaller organisations, and stated:

“It is hard to keep track of all companies and potential employees, it is easy to choose a large common company just because of recognition, reputation and personal communication.”

Respondent #6 explained that she liked the local newspaper, because the jobs were summarised in a way that made it easier to find more qualified and relevant jobs.

Respondent #7 stated that social media recruiting through Facebook would be the best way to reach her, otherwise she is usually applying directly on companies’ websites. Respondent #7 told about her great recruitment experience at her last employer, that was a small consulting firm. They had a great and very personal recruitment process, where they showed her local and beautiful nature because of her interests of outdoor life and explained that this was reason that made her move to another city and take the job.
Negative aspects

Three of the engineers from the public sector got a negative impression of the recruitment process and thought that the interviews were unprofessional. They got the feeling that the recruiter was not aware of the type of work the applicants were applying for. Two of the engineers did not believe in digital applications or formal interview processes and believed that they were a waste of time. They argued that they gave false impressions, because applicants only said what the recruiter wanted them to say, and Respondent #8 stated:

“These kinds of processes humiliate candidates and forces them to follow patterns”.

He believed that these kind of recruitment processes did not consider individual or personality qualities, creativity or productivity, and stated:

“I would like someone to value me according to my virtues and my potential to achieve and deliver results, not only based on my previous experience and a few seconds look at my CV.”

Three of the engineers believed that hiring family members or close friends in a recruitment process was unprofessional, and Respondent #3 stated:

“It excludes automatically many excellent candidates that becomes outsiders.”

Two of the respondents discussed earlier bad recruitment experiences where they did not receive any response from the company. Respondent #6 believed the most important thing in the recruitment process was clarity and getting response, and Respondent 3 stated:

“It was very unprofessional, it felt like they were wasting my time.”

Afterwards, he found out that the company already had decided before the process whom they were going to hire, which made even a worse impression.

Three out of four engineers that worked in the public sector, experienced that the recruitment process felt unprofessional compared to recruitment processes at companies within the private sector. However, all of them got a first positive impression of the initial stage of the recruitment process and from the job ads. Respondent #6 believed daily magazines was not a good way to find jobs. Respondent #1 stated that she would not use LinkedIn because it started to feel like another social media tool, like Instagram. Respondent #6 and #7 did not use LinkedIn either. Respondent #6 stated that the reason was that she is not using social media in general, and respondent #7 stated that she feels that she should because it seems to work for other people but she believes is uncomfortable that other people can see that she looked at their profile which was a matter of integrity.
5. Analysis

This chapter will connect the empirical findings from the interviews with the literature review, by analysing the most preferred work values the interviewed engineer, and important recruitment aspects when recruiting and attracting engineers.

The following are our analysis of the empirical findings:

Work values

Work values such as, work-life balance, CSR, Humanitarian, acceptance, diversity, respect, ethical and economic values, such as salary, geographical locations or placements, differ depending on country.

Work tasks

It was a great focus on the content of the work tasks, rather than the product or the brand itself, among most of the engineers, which can be connected to Dyhre and Parment's (2013) theory about similarity among work tasks regardless of industry or company. The engineers valued that the work tasks were challenging, stimulating, interesting and that they varied. Extensive literature described that work tasks should be challenging, stimulating, creative, varying, innovative, attractive or exciting (Elizur, 1984; Berthon et al., 2005; Twenge et al., 2010; Dyhre & Parment, 2013; Sengupta et al., 2015; Ronda et al., 2018; Universum, 2018; Universum, 2019; Berthon et al., 2005).

Technological or technical work tasks was also something highly valued by the engineers. It is regarding the work tasks, that they are interesting specifically by engineers, but was not directly stated by literature as a work value, which makes it unexpected. The fact that engineers can apply their knowledge and educational experience in their work if the work tasks are technological is connected to Berthon et al.’s (2005) value, ‘opportunities to apply knowledge’. This is especially interesting regarding the fact that the employees had engineering degrees, but it is also expected that engineers find technological work tasks especially interesting. This was regardless of sector.

The interest regarding work tasks, was regarding competent colleagues that made the work interesting because of the discussions at work. It was interesting and unexpected that rather than the social relationships and conversations, the engineers seemed to value competent colleagues so that there would be interesting conversations with colleagues about work.

Regarding variating work tasks, there were differences within how professional engineers wanted to vary their work tasks. In the public sector, the engineers wanted to vary the work tasks “horizontally” by changing department and in the private sector the engineers wanted to climb the hierarchy “vertically” and had a larger focus on promotional opportunities. This was
unexpected. This was interesting and unexpected that it was depended on the sector. Organisations in the public sector are more bureaucratic since they are controlled by the government and the law, and are politically steered, and some private companies are starting to try out flatter organisational structure. However, it could be depended on the size of the company, where larger companies have a larger hierarchy with more promotional opportunities. This could vary in different countries because of different cultures, for example when it comes to respect to higher status, and the differences in leadership depending on the culture.

Flexibility

Flexibility and working with freedom under responsibility, was something all engineers discussed and valued highly, but with different meanings. This factor was discussed by the authors, Dyhre and Parment (2013), Elizur (1984) and Twenge et al. (2010), as an important work value. Some engineers discussed the importance trustworthiness from managers, however, with too much freedom the engineers sometimes felt forgotten. Managers should communicate, give feedback and show appreciation. Engineers from both sectors talked about flexibility in the matter of time, to be able to work flexible hours. For example, regarding family situations, which is expected because of the more equal society where family issues regard both parents. The flexibility is also expected because of the changing society and more digital world with possibilities to work from home.

Work-life balance

The engineers in the public sector, valued that they did not have to work overtime or uncomfortable hours, like during weekends. They thought that working in the private sector was too stressful, because of the requirements of meeting customers’ demands. The working speed, and the extent of customer-orientation, seemed to be the biggest difference between sectors, which is also supported by Dyhre and Parment (2013). All engineers in our research mentioned the need for work-life balance and having a meaningful purpose at work as an important value, which match the studies by Universum (2017) and Universum (2018). Many of the interviewed engineers highlighted that the largest differences between working in the two different sectors was in the private sector, stress that can arise due to the pressure of meeting the clients’ demands, compared to the public sector where they are their own client. Work-life balance is an expected work value because of the increasing importance and realisation of work-life balance, because studies showing that working too hard leads to stress, burned-out people, people going off sick and problems with family life. This differs depending on culture and country, especially when Sweden is a role model when it comes to equality.

Making a difference

The feeling of making a difference, altruistic awards and having an impact was highly valued and was mostly discussed simultaneously with the values of contributing to society and being involved in improving the environment. The contribution was strongly connected to how proud
the engineers were of working at their employer, which establish strong moral values (Moroko & Uncles, 2008), and contribute to the feeling of meaningfulness (Dyhre & Parment, 2013), regardless of sector. These factors were also important according to Twenge et al. (2010), Sengupta et al. (2015) and Korac et al. (2018). It was considered as important by Backhaus, Stone and Heiner (2002) to influence the employer attractiveness. All these factors were important among all engineers regardless of sector. In the private sector, the engineers seemed to value the possibility of having an impact in an internal way and the engineers working at the public sector that discussed making an impact on society, which is external. The engineers in the private sector mostly valued the importance of improving the environment and focused on environmentally friendly products which is contributing to society and can be seen as a public service motivation. The engineers in the public sector was discussing contribution more thorough and wanted to contribute to society in a wider aspect, both with sustainability issues and to help others. This partly align with Wittmer’s (1991) theory and theories about Public Service Motivation (PSM) (Perry & Wise, 1990; Korac et al, 2018). This difference was unexpected and interesting. Dyhre and Parment (2013) stated that this should be communicated in companies’ EVP specifically in the public sector, but something that was unexpected was that from our empirical study it seems like PSM is not only applicable in organisations within the public sector. As Backhaus, Stone and Heiner (2002) stated: the corporate social performance, such as its ethical environment, community relations and diversity dimensions, have the most substantial effect on the attractiveness ratings of the company. In today’s society the environment is a critical issue and there is a large focus on the environment with protests, demonstrations and that more and more products need to be environmentally friendly. If companies in the private sector are more digital developed and more innovative there are a large possibility to invent innovative environmentally friendly solutions, which contribute to society. This is critical to be aware of when competing in the war for talent with companies in the private sector. Contributing to the environment could be especially valuable to Swedish professional engineers since Sweden is a role model in the world regarding sustainability.

**Size**
The size of the company was valued and widely discussed by all engineers. Different sizes seemed to suit different individuals. All engineers in the public sector valued a large-sized company and the engineers in the private sector had different opinions. In large companies it was easier to switch work tasks and relocate. In small companies there was a family feeling that showed more appreciation and support, more varied work tasks, the feeling of having a larger impact and the possibilities of being a part of the whole process and to see the result of a project. This was an unexpected work value, because it was not something that considered be a direct work value, according to the literature review, and was not found in the literature review as a work value. Although, it can be included in organisational traits or characteristics of the company according to Ronda et al. (2018), but this was not directly discussed in our empirical study. Size can be connected to theories about person-organisation fit and the social identity theory (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Tajfel, 1982), that the size of the company is something that fits different kinds of people. The size of the company was something that was attractive and affected the engineers intent to join the company, where some of the engineers
even based their choice of employer on the size of the company, which supports the link between the employer brand image and attraction (Wilden et al., 2010; Sivertzen et al., 2013; Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Tajfel, 1982).

**Job security**
Job security was not the most prioritised work value. We believe this was expected and can depend partly on Sweden being safe in general and that Swedish citizens usually take security for granted compared to in other countries. Another reason could be the high employment rate and low unemployment rate in Sweden (Schermmer, 2019, 9 January; Virgin, 2018, 12 April; Arbetsförmedlingen, 2018), which shows the security specifically in Sweden of getting a job with an engineering education, which is different in other countries. However, it does not align with the Swedish studies by Universum and the internal report by the Swedish Transport Administration, where job security was highly valued, which we actually believed was unexpected because of Sweden being safe in general. This could be because that job security is defined in different ways and the different type of studies. From our empirical research, most engineers discussed appreciation, encourage and support from managers regarding the job or the family situation that can be seen as job security, and was not connected to sector. Parental leave and pension were also included in job security. The definition of job security is not completely in line with Korac et al.’s (2018) definition and that job security makes jobs in the public sector is seen as more attractive (Korac et al., 2018). This is something that could be unique with Sweden and can differ depending on country.

**Salary**
All engineers discussed salary but none of the respondents believed that salary was the most important work value, which aligns with the Swedish study by Universum (2018) and not with the Spanish study by Martínez-León et al. (2018). Sweden provide health care and education which cover expenses comparing to other countries and could be a reason why salary is of less importance by Swedish engineers.

There were different opinions regarding the difference in salary among depending on sector. It was in general of more importance among the engineers in the private sector and of less importance in the public sector. This was expected since actively choosing an employer with lower pay means that the employee has other values than salary. According to Sveriges Ingenjörer (2018) there was a difference depending on sector, with a higher salary in the private sector, which explains why engineers that valued salary was working in the private sector. One of the engineers within the private sector confirmed that there was a significant difference in the salary depending on sector, but the engineers in the public sector believed the difference was insignificant, which partly align with Wittmer’s (1991) or Universum’s (2018) theory. Salary can be a way of showing appreciation, but appreciation is possible to gain in other ways than salary. However, something unexpected was that our result showed that there were weaknesses in the public sector in getting appreciation, but the engineers were still happy with salary.
Recruitment aspects

**Employer Value Proposition (EVP)**
The EVP is different in each company and should include the unique selling points from the specific company. The work values mentioned above could be important to consider when creating an Employer Value Proposition, as the unique selling point (Polovoy, 2015), as the desired or ideal employer identity (Theurer et al., 2018), or as the employee promise (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). It shows the reason why the potential employee should choose a specific employer, according to Polovoy (2015). Especially when wanting to specifically attract professional engineers, since according to the literature the EVP should be adapted towards the desired employees (Dyhre & Parment, 2013; Ronda et al., 2018).

Creating an EVP was the first step in the employer branding process (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) and since the EVP is often found in recruitment advertisements, according to Barber (1998), it is important to market the work values so that potential employees can identify themselves and apply for the job. Especially regarding the theory about person-organisation fit and the social identity theory (Cable & Judge, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Korac et al., 2018; Tajfel, 1982). After the EVP is created, the second step in the employer branding process is external marketing, or external branding strategies. Firstly, the work value preferences were investigated to know what to focus on when attracting professional engineers, then important recruitment aspects need to be considered when entering the second step, to further know how to market the EVP.

**Reputations**
It is important for organisations to have in mind that employer attractiveness and a positive corporate reputation could increase the number of applicants and the intentions to apply for a job (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Sharma & Prasad, 2018), and provide a strategic advantage to the firm (Wilden et al., 2010). Especially when organisations want employees with high quality, such as engineers, as the quality of the applicants increases with the employer brand attractiveness and positive reputations, according to Sullivan (2004) and Berthon et al. (2005). Some reputations towards the public sector from the literature (Duivenboden & Thaen, 2008; Krögerström, 2017; Dyhre & Parment, 2013; PWC, 2018) were confirmed, which was expected. The preconceptions about working in the public sector we found were true about slower processes and less digital developed systems. As expected, there are mostly negative prejudices of working in the public sector. The engineers in the private sector argued that processes in public sector was too slow and resulted in boring working days and is also strengthen by the engineers in the public sector. However, unexpectedly this were also seen as a positive aspect that gave opportunities to be innovative. This can be difficult to affect as one company, because of stereotypes towards the public sector. It is something that needs to be shaped by the sector as a whole.

Many of the engineers was not aware of the amount of technical or technological work tasks in the public sector and were positively surprised about this, which means that it was not
expected by the potential employees and needs to be promoted. This contributed to that the engineers did not even consider the company as a potential employer. As the authors Melanthiou et al. (2015) stated, that recognition is the key element to a successful business strategy. It is crucial to be well-known as an organisation among potential employees to succeed with recruitment campaigns according to The Recruitment of Engineers Is Doomed without Employer Branding and Marketing, (2016).

Recruitment process
The recruitment process can affect the corporate brand reputation and is an important step in employer branding that affects the potential employees’ perceptions of the company. All engineers had in general a positive recruitment experience at their employers, however, in the public sector, the engineers experienced some unprofessionalism, and weaknesses in taking care of newly employees at the beginning of their learning period. Having a negative recruitment experience gave a negative impression about the company. Both the literature review (Wilden et al., 2010; Korac et al., 2018; Theurer et al., 2018; Dyhre & Parment, 2013) and the empirical result showed that the all actions by a company affect the employer brand, and that a company benefits by having an attractive reputation on the market in the long run. The employer brand seemed to have more impact when applying for a job compared to when working at the employer. Indeed, and as expected, it seemed to be a relationship between the employer brand and intent to join (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Sharma & Prasad, 2018) and that the brand is important (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). It is also important for organisations to be aware of the significant cost reduces that comes with an attractive brand (Berthon et al., 2005; Wilden et al., 2010; Dyhre & Parment, 2013).

Recruitment channel
In general, many engineers seemed to apply directly through the company’s website, when actively searching for jobs, but mostly the engineers was not active applicants, which Dyhre and Parment (2013) stated. Many engineers applied through the website after having a positive experience with the organisation or through positive word-of-mouth, which is a sign of a positive reputation. Applying through companies’ own web pages we believe is a sign that the company has an attractive reputation and a strong brand on the market. Factors that increases employer preferences are a positive corporate reputation (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Berthon et al., 2005; Wilden et al., 2010; Ronda et al., 2018), recognition and being well-known (Melanthiou et al., 2015), cherishing the company brand (Dyhre & Parment, 2013) and establishing the image and the success of promoting themselves as a “great place to work”, or the “employer of choice” (Roy, 2008; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). A high employer brand equity also tells how attractive and employer is (Berthon et al., 2005; Ewing, Pitt, De Bussy & Berthon, 2002; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018).
6. Conclusions

This chapter will conclude the study and answer the research questions. We will present our suggestions and our constructed framework for future research. The chapter will also discuss research limitations and lastly recommend future research within the area.

Our purpose in this research has been to explore how companies within the Swedish public sector should attract professional engineers. To succeed with this, our study focused on enhancing understanding of the concept of employer branding, and to investigate work value preferences among professional engineers in Sweden. Our conclusions from the literature review and the empirical analysis are following:

Organisations in the public sector (as well as organisations in the private sector) should create an EVP, to have a clear view of what they should focus on in their external employer branding strategies. Organisations in the public sector should focus on attracting professional engineers that want to contribute to society but be aware of the competition among private companies that the society today has a large focus on contribute to the environment.

There were some differences between what professional engineers valued depending on the two sectors. One difference was about contributing to society, that engineers working in the private sector wanted to contribute to the society mostly through contributing to the environment and engineers working in the public sector wanted to contribute to society in a wider aspect. Engineers in the public sector believed that it was too stressful to work in the private sector because of deadlines and customer expectations where they valued the work-life balance and not working overtime. They understood why the pace in the public sector was slow. The engineers in the private sector liked the fast-moving environment and thought the pace was too slow in the public sector, but still valued work-life balance. Another difference was regarding variating work tasks, that engineers in the private sector wanted promotional opportunities and wanted to vary work tasks by being promoted, and the engineers in the public sector liked to change work tasks by changing job internally and work in other departments and were happy with their level in the hierarchy. Work values may differ depending on gender or age within Sweden.

Based on our research, the following work values are preferred by professional engineers in Sweden, that are between the ages 30-49 years old with at least 3 years of education within engineering, with a Master of Science or a bachelor’s degree, and that has at least 5 years of professional experience within engineering:

RQ1: Which work values are crucial for professional engineers when deciding on an employer?

- Technological or technical, variating, stimulating and challenging work tasks
- Flexibility and freedom under responsibility, but not to forget showing appreciation and giving feedback.
- Work-life balance
- Making a difference and contribution towards society and the environment
- Company's reputation
- Size of the company and the strengths that comes depending on the size

These factors should all be highlighted in employers’ EVP when attracting potential employees with engineering degrees. For public organisations, to win the war, specifically to attract towards the public sector from the private sector, public organisations should put an emphasis on work-life balance that implies less stress and contributing to society in a wider aspect, and not only the environment, because these are strong reasons why engineers initiate a career specifically within the public sector. When trying to attract engineers, the work values or the EVP with the included work values could be used on the website where engineers apply for jobs, and the work values could be used in personal communication when trying to attract professional engineers.

We adapted our theoretical framework that was based on the EmpAt scale, based on the empirical findings from the data collection in our study. Our framework is a widely used framework, where we studied work values through extensive literature, integrated the work values and tested them in our study. We have utilized experience-based knowledge and to highlight the subjective through qualitative research and adapted the framework based on our findings. This strengthen the reliability and validity in our framework and make it possible for us to make scientific suggestions. In addition to work values from the literature, and the 25 indicators from the EmpAt scale, one new indicator were added in this study; ‘size’, that emerged as an important variable. Some indicators were also merged together because of similarity and some needed to be separated. This is our suggestions for the new framework based on our research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic values</th>
<th>Extrinsic work values</th>
<th>Economic benefits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary and benefits</td>
<td>Work conditions and tangible work values, that provide convenience</td>
<td>Material and monetary rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible, convenient work hours, vacation and leisure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographical location or placements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prestige, status or reputation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swift growth and fast-moving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size of the organisation or other organisational traits or characteristics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Intrinsic work values
*Personal and cultural variables, and intangible work values*

#### Functional benefits
*Developmental or useful activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development values</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career and promotion opportunities, opportunities for advancement, educations or skill developments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Intrinsic work values
*Personal and cultural variables, and intangible work values*

#### Functional benefits
*Developmental or useful activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development values</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-worth, recognition, appreciation, confidence</td>
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<td>Freedom or independence</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application, ethical and moral values</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to apply knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and environmental responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Altruistic rewards, society contribution, helping others and having a meaningful purpose</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride of membership of the organisation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The possibility to make a difference and have an impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian, acceptance, diversity, respect, ethical</td>
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</table>

#### Psychological benefits
*Feelings of belonging, direction and purpose*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest values</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance or family conflicts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging, interesting, stimulating, creative or variating works tasks or having opportunities to be creative or innovative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting, innovative, attractive, qualitative or technical products or services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational culture or values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personalised fit with the organisational identity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership or management of the organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social values</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social, great or valuable relationships with colleagues or supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation, encourage and support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teambuilding or teamwork activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeable, happy and fun work environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the second research question, these following recruitment aspects are important to consider:

RQ2: Which recruitment aspects are important to consider when attracting professional engineers?

- Recruitment strategies could enhance, improve or damage the brand, and there is a demand for professionalism. The corporate reputation affects the opinion of the company, and this should also be considered during the recruitment process.
- Organisations need to actively attract engineers through a great corporate reputation, positive experiences with the company or personal communication.
- For engineers to apply for jobs directly through companies’ website implies that the organisation needs to have an attractive and strong employer brand, and that the company need to create brand awareness.

6.1 Recommendations

We suggest using our framework as a guide to help and enable to attract and recruit engineers towards the public sector. Our framework is a clear compilation of work values preferred by engineers, based on the literature review, and on our qualitative research.

We suggest considering using the mentioned preferred work values when creating an Employer Value Proposition when trying to attract professional engineers, especially regarding work-life balance and contributing to society when trying to attract engineers towards the public sector.

To the Swedish Transport Administration, we suggest improving the recruitment process to give a more professional impression, since all steps in the recruitment process affect the perceived image of the employer brand. We recommend the Swedish Transport Administration to also put an extra emphasis on creating awareness about the fact that there are work tasks that are technological and technical to attract professional engineers, that there are specific jobs for professional engineers, and the advantages that comes with being a large-sized organisation should also be marketed. We suggest all companies within the public sector to recognise when professional engineers have similar values as the company to succeed with a person-organisation fit, because this will be beneficial in the long-run.

6.2 Contributions

For theoretical implications, our constructed framework could be used as a generic guideline and as a database with preferred work values by Swedish professional engineers. As practical implications, companies, managers, the human resources or the employer branding department could use the framework as a guide when choosing between work values to use when creating their Employer Value Proposition, that matches the company’s values. Our framework does not only need to be used when creating an EVP, it could also be used in any external employer branding strategy when trying to attract or recruit professional engineers.
6.3 Research limitations

There are some limitations to this research that needs to be taken into consideration. Firstly, this research has focused on eight handpicked employees, four from the public sector and four from the private. The participants representing the public sector was all from the same case company, and the four participants from the private were all from different companies. This means that a generalisation to the entire population of engineers may not be appropriate. Secondly, the reason for the different results compared to earlier studies may be due to cultural differences, where Swedish engineers might prefer other work values compared to in other countries. The EmpAt scale have not been used when studying Swedish citizens before, or specifically with engineers. The EmpAt scale is also mostly used in quantitative studies, in this study we wanted to transform the scale to a qualitative approach.

6.4 Future research

Our framework is a foundation that future and further research could be built upon. It would give interesting insights with further empirical studies within the research area. The research could continue with additional organisations within the public sector, municipalities or county councils. It would also be interesting to study work value preferences among professional engineers specifically depended on gender, geographical area, age or different specialisations or orientations within the area of engineering.

Another suggestion for future research is statistics and rankings among work value preferences by Swedish professional engineers through a quantitative research.
## Appendix I. EmpAt scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work values</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest values</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in an exciting environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative employer - novel work practises/forward-thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation both values and makes use of creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation produces high-quality product and services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation produces innovative products and services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social values</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fun working environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a good relationship with your superiors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a good relationship with your colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive and encouraging colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy work environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic values</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good promotion opportunities within the organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security within the organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on inter-department experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An above average basic salary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An attractive overall compensation package</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development values</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition/appreciation from management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A springboard for future employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining career-enhancing experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application values</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian organisation – gives back to society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to teach others what you have learned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance and belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation is customer-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Modified from Berthon et al. (2005).
Appendix II. Brev

Hej!

Vi är två studenter, Nicole Lejdeby och Carolin Östman, som studerar Civilingenjör Industriell ekonomi med master inom industriell marknadsföring. Vi skriver examensarbete inom området Employer Branding på uppdrag av Trafikverket.


Vid intervjuns genomförande tar vi hänsyn till de forskningsetiska principerna vilket medför att deltagandet är frivilligt och anonymt. Du som deltagare får besvara frågorna precis som du vill, du får även avbryta intervjun när som helst. Det som kommer att finnas med i rapporten är ålder, kön samt examen och det insamlade materialet behandlas konfidentiellt och kommer endast användas till forskningens ändamål.

Vi önskar att spela in den här intervjun, det är bara för att vi själva ska kunna lyssna igenom intervjun igen för att inte missa något. Godkänner du att intervjun spelas in?

Tack för att du vill bidra till vår studie och vi ser fram emot att intervjua dig!

Om du har frågor är du välkommen att kontakta oss.

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Nicole Lejdeby
niclej-4@student.ltu.se

Carolin Östman
carost-3@student.ltu.se
Appendix III. Letter

Hi!

We are two students, Nicole Lejdeby and Carolin Östman, who are studying the MSc Industrial Engineering and Management with a master’s in industrial marketing. We are writing a master thesis in the field of employer branding on behalf of the Swedish Transport Administration (Trafikverket).

The infrastructure industry is in need of an expansion and developments; therefore, it is considered of high importance to add expertise in the form of engineers. The purpose of our thesis is to enhance understanding of what engineers prioritise and value at an employer and important aspects and success factors on how to attract engineers. We have done a lot of research in the field, especially quantitative research, and want to supplement that knowledge with this our qualitative research. We will ask open questions about the topic, where our aim is that you talk openly about your opinions and experiences if you. There will also be some sub-questions.

When conducting the interview, we consider the principles of research ethics, which means that participation is voluntary and anonymous. As a participant, you can answer the questions exactly as you want, y and you can also cancel the interview at any time. What will be included in the report is age, gender, and degree and the collected material will be treated confidentially and will only be used for research purposes.

We wish to record this interview; it is only to be used by ourselves to be able to listen through the interview again to not miss anything. Do you accept the interview being recorded?

Thank you for contributing to our study and we look forward to interviewing you!

If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact us.

Best regards,

Nicole Lejdeby  
niclej-4@student.ltu.se

Carolin Östman  
carost-3@student.ltu.se
Appendix IV. Intervjuguide

Berätta om ditt val av arbetsgivare och hur du fick reda på din tjänst.
- Vad var det som gjorde att du sökte ditt nuvarande jobb?
- Vilken rekryteringskanal använde du dig av?

Berätta om dina prioriteringar och värderingar om varför du ville arbeta hos företaget.
- Vad värderar du högst hos en arbetsgivare?
- Utveckla vad dessa värderingar innebär och betyder för dig?
- Vad anser du är företagets styrkor eller finns någon unik fördel med företaget?

Berätta om din upplevelse av att jobba för ett företag inom offentlig/privat sektor. Om du har jobbat inom både privat och offentlig sektor, berätta skillnader, fördelar och nackdelar.
- Spelar det någon roll för dig om du arbetar inom offentlig eller privat sektor? Varför?
- Vad skulle kunna få dig att byta sektor?
- Skulle du rekommendera personer att byta sektor? Varför?

Berätta om dina tankar kring att eventuellt söka ett nytt jobb i framtiden.
- Vad letar du efter när du söker ett nytt jobb?
- Finns det något du saknar du hos din nuvarande arbetsgivare?
- Vart letar du efter nya tjänster? Hur hade du velat hitta en ny tjänst?
- Finns det någon metod du inte använder dig av när du söker ett nytt jobb eller någon metod du anser inte har fungerat bra?
- Har du haft en mindre bra upplevelse av en rekryteringsprocess förut? Berätta.

Har du något mer att tillägga? Har du några frågor till mig? Tack för din tid!
Appendix V. Interview guide

Tell us about your choice of employer and how you found out about your job.
  ● What was the motivation why you applied for your current job?
  ● Which recruitment channel did you use?

Tell us about your priorities and values about why you wanted to work at the company.
  ● What do you value the most at an employer?
  ● Could you elaborate what these values imply and mean to you?
  ● What are the company’s strengths or are there any unique advantages with the company, in your opinion?

Tell us about your experience working within public/private sector. If you have worked in both sectors, tell us about differences, similarities, advantages and disadvantages.
  ● Does it matter which sector you work within? Why does it matter?
  ● What would make you switch to work within the other sector?
  ● Would you recommend other people to switch sector? Why?

Tell us about your thoughts around possibly apply for a new job in the future.
  ● What are you searching for when you apply for a new job?
  ● Is there anything you miss at your current employer?
  ● Where do you search for new vacancies? How do you prefer to find a vacancy?
  ● Is there a method you are not using when applying for a new job or is there a method that you consider not worked out well?
  ● Have you had a less positive recruitment experience before? Tell us about it.

Do you have anything more to add? Do you have any questions for us?
Thank you for your time!
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