Università della Svizzera italiana

Faculty of Communication Sciences

Institute of Marketing and Communication Management IMCA

Message Effectiveness in Corporate Career Websites

Analysis of the Top 30 Employers in Switzerland

Alessandra Zamparini
   Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland

Paola Calegari
   Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland

Francesco Lurati
   Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland

Correspondence:
Università della Svizzera Italiana
Institute of Marketing and
Communication Management
Via Buffi 13, CH-6900 Lugano
Switzerland
Tel:+91 (0)58 666 4113
Email:alessandra.zamparini@usi.ch

Abstract

This paper proposes a comprehensive tool for analyzing online recruitment messages, drawing upon dimensions of employers' online communication effectiveness developed in the literature. A codebook is developed to analyze the content of corporate career websites, including the dimensions identified by Cober, Brown and Levy (2004), in order to evaluate employment websites. This is integrated with other dimensions that the literature acknowledges as predictive of organizational attractiveness. A content analysis of the career website of the top 30 employers in Switzerland is conducted. Results show that the selected companies provide a message that is credible, vivid, and employee-oriented. In addition, companies that express the uniqueness of their employer brand communicate more effectively with their potential candidates. The current analysis takes into consideration a limited number of companies. The study could be extended to a larger sample that includes poor-performing employers and that allows the identification of specificities by industries. The tool could be a useful grid for the creation and implementation of corporate career websites by practitioners. The paper provides a picture of best practices of online recruitment in Switzerland and, by putting together contributions of several research traditions, a comprehensive tool with which to assess career websites' messages. Moreover, empirical results highlight a relationship between employer's communication of a branding statement and excellence in conveying the effectiveness dimensions of the online recruitment message.

Keywords

1. Introduction

In the current economic landscape, the effective management of human capital has become a fundamental source of sustainable competitive advantage. The new working patterns imposed by the knowledge economy and the talent shortage stemming from changing conditions in the labor market have made the attraction and retention of a qualified workforce a business imperative (Lermusiaux & Snell, 2002; Micheals, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). Companies compete not only for customers, but also for talented employees (Allen, Van Scotter, & Otondo, 2004). Because organizational success is largely dependent on individuals, the first step in developing superior human capital is to adopt appropriate attraction and retention practices.

Recruitment communication plays a crucial role in creating a pool of applicants for jobs and, consequently, in enhancing overall corporate performance (Cober, Brown, Blumental, Doverspike, & Levy, 2000; Cober et al., 2004; Allen et al., 2004; Backhaus, 2002). The strategic importance of recruitment communication is particularly evident in the early stages of the recruitment process, when job seekers must decide, often with relatively little information about the employer, for which jobs to apply and which jobs to remove from consideration (Turban, 2001; Turban & Cable, 2003). According to signaling theory (Spence, 1974), when applicants are not adequately informed about an organization, they draw inferences from observable attributes, using available information as signals about the company's working environment. It follows that, as Barber and Roehling (1993) suggested, employers' communication materials must be perceived positively in order to generate interest from potential applicants; as positive attitudes toward an employer increase, attraction to the employer increases (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlagen, 1993). Although the decision to join one organization rather than another is primarily made in a cognitive manner, it is also influenced by affective dimensions. These

attitudes have been found to be not only salient, but also affected by the way information is provided (Allen et al., 2004; Popovich & Wanous, 1982).

In the past decade, the academic and popular press has acknowledged the Internet as the most utilized recruitment medium for attracting candidates and managing the whole hiring process (Cappelli, 2001). Among the many e-recruiting methods, corporate career websites are often considered the best resource for accessing a qualified pool of applicants (Lee, 2005; Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002). Compared to other e-recruitment platforms (e.g., job boards, specialized job sites, newsgroups), corporate career websites are less costly and can allow the exchange of more information about both the employee and the employer—a crucial factor for establishing and maintaining a positive relationship between the parties. Although the effectiveness of corporate recruitment websites in communicating relevant information is a key determinant of an organization's ability to attract talented applicants, research in this area is still limited, and experts in the field have widely advocated further studies (Cober, Brown, Levy, Keeping, & Cober, 2003; Cober et al., 2004; Williamson, Lepak, & King, 2003).

This paper focuses on online recruitment messages on corporate career websites. After a theoretical review of the recent debate on online recruitment and employer branding, the study introduces a tool with which to analyze corporate career websites and applies it to the top 30 Swiss employers. The theoretical part of the paper discusses the characteristics of online message effectiveness in the recruitment communication literature (Barber & Roheling 1993, Allen et al., 2004, Cober et al., 2004). Marketing, consumer behavior, and social psychology studies that provide relevant information about organizational attraction are also discussed (Roberson, Collins & Oreg, 2005; Barber, 1998; Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Cable & Judge, 1996), as is human-computer interaction literature (Williamson et al., 2003; Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002) in terms of how job-seekers use the web to obtain information.

The empirical part of the study includes a content website analysis and overview of the practices of the top 30 employers listed in a 2006 survey conducted among Swiss university graduates. The tool is not meant to identify new elements of online recruitment effectiveness but is a comprehensive tool for use when implementing or evaluating corporate career websites. It is based on the work of Cober and colleagues (2003, 2004), who included in their framework dimensions derived from other contributions to employer message effectiveness. The codebook considers the style and content of the message communicated and assesses whether they are aligned with what the literature has acknowledged so far. Moreover, since employer branding (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Backhaus, 2002; Ambler & Barrow, 1996) and corporate communication literature (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2003) have pointed out that companies communicate more effectively when they make their distinctive attributes clearly visible, further attention is devoted to investigating the topic of employer distinctiveness conveyed through career websites.

2. Organizational attraction and employer branding

According to interactional psychology, attraction is based on the concept of similarity. Interaction with similar others provides individuals with the opportunity to meet their fundamental need for consensual validation of their point of view; thus, the greater the sense of similarity between self and other, the greater the sense of attraction (Byrne & Neuman, 1992; Schneider, 1987). This tends to be especially true in the early stage of the interaction process. The first approach of a potential employee to an organization can be framed as the early stage of an interaction. Job search was viewed by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004: 506) "as a matching game, where job seekers and their potential employer make decisions about each other on the basis of the similarity they perceive to have in values and personality." According to Barber (1998), early recruitment stages

are characterized by extensive search and screening, the gathering of rudimentary information about multiple opportunities, and little or no personal contact between the parties involved.

Following Schneider's arguments (1987), Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) assumed that job-seekers are involved in a series of decisions in the process of choosing their employers. This process usually begins when individuals evaluate the information obtained from all the different recruitment sources and decide whether to pursue possible employment. The decision depends on multiple variables. Some authors (Kristof, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Cable & Judge, 1994, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Schneider, 1987; Kristof, 1996) have argued that applicants are more likely to join those organizations with which they perceive congruence in terms of primary values. Other authors (Cable & Turban, 2001; Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey, & Edwards, 2000; Turban, Eyring, & Champion, 1993; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998; Gatewood, et al., 1993; Rynes, 1991; Fombrun & Shanley; 1990; Tom, 1971) have suggested that an organization's ability to attract applicants is more generally influenced by organizational image. Within this broad category, which encompasses both the overall corporate image and the image of the organization as an employer, the role played by tangible attributes such as salaries, reward systems, career paths, risk orientation, and opportunities for growth can be distinguished in terms of how they contributed to attracting potential candidates (Turban & Keon, 1993, Bretz, Ash, & Dreher, 1989), as can the importance of employers' symbolic benefits to job-seekers (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Cable et al., 2000; Cable & Graham 2000; Collins, 2002).

Whether describing tangible attributes or symbolic benefits, organizations must make their values and distinctive features visible so job-seekers who sense a match perceive them as attractive employers. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004:42) used the term *employer branding* to define practices aimed at "building an identifiable and unique employer identity"; these practices are related to

communicating clearly what makes the firm unique and attractive as an employer to both current and prospective employees. Employer branding enables organizations to attract and retain the human capital needed to gain a competitive advantage (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Barrow & Mosley, 2005). Although the academic research in this area remains limited, ample evidence suggests that branding is becoming a fast-growing tool for major firms. As Spitzmüller, Huntington, and Crozier (2002) suggested, the employer brand is not focused simply on the recruitment issue, but consists of a more comprehensive approach that manages the relationships among values, systems, policies, and behaviors that are peculiar to a company willing to reach performance objectives through its people.

3. Recruitment message effectiveness

To communicate the employer brand and attract qualified applicants, a recruitment message should have certain characteristics (Allen et al., 2004; Cober et al., 2000, 2003, 2004; Steuer, 1992; Popovich & Wanous 1982), which can be grouped within three broad dimensions: *credibility*, *vividness*, and *employee orientation*.

Recruitment communication must be perceived as trustworthy by individuals whom organizations are interested in attracting (Breaugh & Billings, 1988). *Credibility* is defined as "perceptions of the accuracy, appropriateness and believability of the information" (Allen, 2004: 150). Perceptions of credibility are primarily driven by perceptions that the source is qualified to provide information and is helpful, attractive, and similar to the receiver. In this way, individuals can more easily identify with the source of information. According to Breaugh and Starke's (2000) review, research has largely documented that employer expertise and trustworthiness enhance recruitment message credibility. Employer credibility can also be increased via consistent information from multiple sources (Harkins & Petty, 1981). With regard to expertise,

individuals closest to a given company are considered an informed source of employment-related information, so current employees' opinions are especially relevant to job-seekers (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

Research has also demonstrated that unexpected information from the message source leads to greater credibility. Therefore, companies who provide realistic information, rather than information that exclusively supports their position, will be more likely to be perceived as trustworthy. In contrast, companies that communicate only positive information are more likely to be considered as lacking credibility (Meglino & Ravlin, 1999; Breaugh & Billings, 1998; Bretz & Judge, 1996; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis., 1992; Rynes, 1991; Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991; Popovich & Wanous, 1982). In addition, particularly within a website context, credibility is affected by organizations' attention to privacy issues, protection of personal data, and updated web content (Sullivan, 2004; Snell, 2007; Rothberg, 1995).

In regards to *vividness*, consumer behavior literature has argued that, in order to be persuasive, communication messages must include pictorial representations of the message object, detailed verbal descriptions of these features, and prompts to suggest a personal interaction with it (Keller & Block, 1991). In order to enhance informed decision-making by potential recruits, employer messages should not be too general, since job-seekers pay more attention to specific details than to general information (Barber & Roheling, 1993; Rynes & Miller, 1983). Barber and Roheling (1993) came to the same conclusion, arguing that communicating more detailed and specific information is important for generating potential applicants' interest. By being more concrete and specific, recruitment messages are more tangible to job-seekers (Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005; Tybout & Artz, 1994), and vividly presented information is more impactful and persuasive (Taylor & Thompson, 1982) because it provides a greater sense of direct experience (Tybout & Artz, 1994). Compared to general information, vivid information attracts more attention and is

more emotionally arousing and memorable; moreover, it is easier to elaborate upon (Keller & Block, 1997). Therefore, as reported by Allen et al. (2004), messages with colorful images, graphics, pictures, personal anecdotes, or emotionally stimulating information are more likely to influence job seekers' attitudes positively by increasing their ability to process the message, and are more likely to be perceived as relevant. Allen et al. also concluded that, by providing detailed information to potential employees, organizations may generate a large pool of applicants who are likely to accept a job offer.

Because of its persuasive nature, recruitment communication involves a personal connection between employers and potential employees (Allen et al., 2004), so *employee orientation* is a fundamental dimension of message effectiveness. The primary goal of an employer willing to recruit the best talent is to establish and maintain positive relationships with potential candidates and Allen and colleagues suggested that "more personally tailored messages are more effective at influencing perceptions of similarity, liking and identification" (Allen et al., 2004: 150). Several authors (Tybout & Artz, 2004; Breaugh & Starke, 2000) have agreed, arguing that messages conveyed in face-to-face conversations and providing personally relevant information are more effective. Terzis and Economides (2005) suggested that a lack of personal communication limits real communication flow, leading to frustration and missed opportunities. According to studies in linguistics, interaction in written messages can be obtained in many ways but, in particular, the reader should be assigned an active role rather than a passive one. This can be carried out through certain linguistic features, such as personal pronouns, direct speech, active voice, short and simple sentences, proper names, and personalization patterns (Thompson & Thetela, 1995).

Credibility, vividness, and employee orientation are also clearly influenced by the amount and type of content that the recruitment message conveys. Strong evidence in the literature has suggested that, in order to evaluate an employer's level of attractiveness, job-seekers must

possess enough information to generate accurate impressions of the company's image and to judge their personal fit with the organization (Cober et al., 2004; Dineen et al., 2002; Barber, 1998). It is widely acknowledged that organizational attraction is based on inferences from all the information available in one's environment about companies. Moreover, information not directly targeted to individuals has been proved to have an impact in determining the relative level of attraction (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Cober, et al. 2000; Cober et al., 2004; Turban & Cable, 2003).

In addition to providing potential candidates with the information they need to choose one employer over another, the content of recruitment communication may reinforce identification and, thereby, increase the likelihood that the individual will be attracted by the firm (Cober et al., 2004). Following this logic, Cober and colleagues (2004) argued that, given the natural human attraction to similar entities, job-seekers need information about employer attributes that match their own. More specifically, extant research has suggested that message content is crucial in enabling potential applicants to evaluate whether their abilities, expectations, and values fit with those of the company (Cable & Judge, 1996; Schneider, 1987). This reasoning is further supported by studies that have found that job-seekers perceive missing information as a signal that companies are careless or not interested in attracting applicants. For example, Barber and Roheling (1993) pointed out that employers' failure to provide information may be seen as a lack of professionalism since, without such information, individuals are less able to select jobs that are a good fit in terms of their skills and interests (Barber & Roheling, 1993). Given that job-seekers, as decision-makers, avoid uncertainty, they will tend to devalue a job description that fails to supply adequate information.

A study conducted by Gatewood and colleagues (1993) documented that perception of image[1] and intention to apply are directly related to the total amount of information provided through the employer message. Similarly, other authors noted a direct relationship between the amount of information presented in recruitment material and the attraction to an employer (Cober et al., 2004). More specifically, research has indicated that the level of detail in recruitment messages impacts applicants' intention to pursue employment with organizations (Abernethy & Franke, 1996). As documented by Barber and Roheling (1993), messages that convey more information are viewed positively by job applicants. Herriot and Rothwell (1981) found a consistently positive relationship between complete information about job requirements and intention to apply for jobs. In a similar manner, Mason and Belt (1986) found that more specific information tends to discourage less qualified employees from applying.

The type of information may also be helpful in increasing the utility of a company's whole recruitment system. Several studies have focused on how the type of information determines the potential applicants' interest in pursuing employment with an organization. Abernethy and Franke (1996) documented that providing job-seekers with information that they see as relevant to themselves positively influences the quality and quantity of the applicant pool. Cober and colleagues (2003, 2004) extensively reviewed research in this area, observing that information regarding compensation, organizational culture, and opportunities for personal and professional development are strong predictors of attractiveness. More specifically, studies have pointed out that job-seekers' interest is influenced by the pay level and the economic benefits offered (Cable & Graham, 2000; Cable & Judge, 1994; Barber & Roheling, 1993). Barber & Roheling (1993) concluded that applicants pay the greatest attention to location and compensation in making job-

---

[1] The study took into account both the overall corporate image and the image as an employer.

related decisions. Other authors found attributes such as organizational size, reward structure, and business strategy to be relevant as well (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003, Highhouse et al., 2003; Turban & Keon, 1993). With respect to job compensation, Rynes (1991) pointed out that unusual compensation packages are perceived as more attractive by potential candidates because these packages may be more effective in distinguishing employers from their competitors. Individuals' perceptions of a company's culture and values (Cable et al., 2000; Barber, 1998) also influence the attractiveness of the organization. Moreover, perceptions of employer image are highly affected by organizational prestige and reputation, as are the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices, philanthropic efforts, stance on environmental issues, and interest in hiring and supporting females and minorities (Backhaus, Stone, & Heiner, 2002; Cable & Turban, 2001; Greening & Turban, 2000; Turban & Greening, 1997). Research has also found that job-seekers are more attracted by employers who offer personal development and job challenges (Rafaeli, 1998). Thus, content related to training opportunities, career advancement plans, and additional recruitment activities such as job fairs plays a relevant role in potential employees' decisions to apply (Cable & Graham, 2000; Cober et al., 2004).

4. Research model and methodology

The empirical part of this article provides a picture of the practice of online recruitment through the corporate career websites of the top 30 employers in Switzerland. A content analysis of the websites' career section is conducted using a comprehensive tool to determine whether the message-effectiveness dimensions discussed in the literature so far are present.

	CREDIBILITY	VIVIDNESS	EMPLOYEES' ORIENTATION
FORM (visual)	PICTURES (*current employees; CEO; recruiters*)	COLOR PICTURES (*working environment; organizational values*) COLOR FONT COLOR BACKGROUND	PICTURES (*people; company's products, awards, buildings*)
FORM (textual)	APPROPRIATE WORDING AND SPEECH TESTIMONIALS (*any testimonial; testimonial from more than one source*) REALISTIC INFORMATION	DESCRIPTIVE TERMS DETAILED INFORMATION SPECIFIC INFORMATION EMOTIONAL TERMS PERSONAL ANECDOTES	LINGUISTIC FEATURES (*personal pronouns; direct speech; active voice; short/simple sentences; proper names*) PERSONALIZATION PATTERNS JOB SEEKERS' SERVICE INFORMATION (*FAQ; interview tips; résumé tips; guidelines for candidates*)
FUNCTIONALITY (web tools)	PRIVACY ISSUES WEB PAGES UPDATED	VIDEOS ANIMATION	NAVIGATIONAL MENU E-MAIL EMPLOYEE JOB SEARCH ENGINE APPLICATION FEEDBACK SUPPORT TOOLS (*news; brochure*)

Table 1. Research model: The style of the message communicated through the corporate career website

4.1 Research model

The overall research framework encompasses three main parts. The first two parts seek to observe whether the online recruitment message of the top 30 employers is consistent with existing theoretical knowledge in this area. More specifically, the first part of the research model examines the style of the employers' online message (i.e., how it is communicated), while the second part investigates the message content. A further purpose is to understand whether the top 30 employers attempt to projecting the employers' brand.[2]

---

[2] According to Williamson and colleagues (2003), based on the employer's purpose, an employment website can have three kinds of orientation: recruiting orientation, when promoting or selling the company to potential

Style of the message. The analysis of the style of the message is conducted according to the dimensions of *credibility*, *vividness*, and *employee orientation.* Because the analysis is performed on a website, these dimensions should be considered not only in terms of their written text (form - textual), but also in terms of their visual (form - visual) and interactive features (functionality – web tools), both of which play a relevant role in message effectiveness (Cober et al., 2000, 2003, 2004). These dimensions and message levels (textual, visual, and functional) constitute the reference grid (see Table 1), on which the first part of the codebook is built.

Message content. Effective employer messages should include information about corporate and employer-related attributes. When evaluating organizational attractiveness, job-seekers consider both tangible and intangible (or symbolic) characteristics of the company (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Turban & Keon, 1993; Rynes & Barber, 1990). In the research model, these attributes have been grouped according to their nature (tangible and intangible) and to whether they are related more to the organization as a whole or to the employer. Table 2 provides the reference grid upon which the second part of the codebook is built.

---

candidates; screening orientation, when evaluating and screening prospective applicants on the basis of their qualifications; dual-purpose orientation, when both recruiting and screening individuals. The authors investigated the effects that the different websites' orientations have on job-seekers' perceptions and found that potential employees react more positively to recruiting and dual-purpose employment websites than to sites more focused on screening. Consistent with the overall aim of the study, the current analysis focuses on the interaction of the various elements of the website message, rather than emphasizing the website's instrumentality alone. As such, although the academic literature has acknowledged that websites' ability to accomplish specific recruitment functions impacts job-seekers' perceptions of their effectiveness (Cober, 2004; Williamson et al., 2003), the current analysis will be carried out apart from the classification made by Williamson and colleagues. In addition, usability issues will not be taken into consideration; we have assumed that the status of the "top employers" among the companies analyzed may be predictive of an excellent (or at least adequate) implementation of website usability principles.

ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRIBUTES	EMPLOYER ATTRIBUTES
Tangible Attributes *(size; structure; location; business strategy; organizational demographics)*	**Tangible Attributes** *(job openings; job descriptions; internships and training; career paths; recruitment events; recruitment process)*
Symbolic Attributes (*culture and values; mission; CSR practices; history; reputation and prestige)*	**Symbolic Attributes** (*attention to diversity; working environment; personal and professional development; history; reputation and prestige; teamwork)*

Table 2. Research model: Contents communicated through the corporate career website.

Employer branding statement. In order to investigate the effort required in communicating the employer brand through the online recruitment message, the employer brand has been operationalized in the codebook with the variable *employer branding statement.* More specifically, each employer's career home page is checked for the presence of statements devoted to communicating the organizations' distinctive and unique attributes as an employer (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sullivan, 2004).

4.2 Methodology

The career section of the top 30 employers in Switzerland was analyzed using a content analysis method (Neuendorf, 2002) in January 2007, and, consistent with the research model, a codebook of 65 variables was generated (Weber, 1985). The population consisted of the companies ranked in the first 30 positions in the 2006 edition of the "Swiss Graduate Survey" (Table 3).

A survey ranking the 100 best employers according to Swiss students' preferences[3] was conducted by Universum, a global company leader in the field of employer branding consultancy. For analysis purposes, the employment websites of the first 30 companies listed in the business students' ranking were used. The top-rated employers were chosen because their ranking indicated a relevant interest in showing progressive HR practices to external audiences (Cober et

---

[3] The original population of Universum's survey included business, science, and engineering students.

al., 2004; Levering & Moskovitz, 2000); thus, they were an appropriate group of companies for evaluating employment websites, even if they were not necessarily representative of all Swiss employers. According to Universum researchers, their top rankings indicate that these organizations are likely to have a well established employer brand and a strong image among graduates.

Items have been coded only for the presence of characteristics, regardless of the quality of the implementation of the various message features. The choice to use a simple, dichotomous scheme is consistent with the descriptive aim of the analysis. The data collected were subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics.

5. Results

The fact that all but one company (Raiffaisen) has an employment website points to the majority of the population's acknowledging the importance of effectively communicating with their potential employees. Concerning both the style and content of the communication, those organizations that choose to invest resources in a career website generally communicate adequately with job seekers. Although differences exist in the way the online platform is exploited and in the level of detail of the information provided, the companies on the list convey their employer messages in appropriate ways based on style and content effectiveness features.

RANK 2006	COMPANY NAME	% OF SWISS BUSINESS GRADUATES RANKING THE COMPANY FIRST
1	UBS	28.55
2	Credit Suisse	18.80
3	Nestlé	15.26
4	Pricewaterhouse Coopers	10.70
5	Procter & Gamble	8.55
6	L' Oréal	8.19
7	Novartis	7.87
8	McKinsey & Company	7.68
9	Ernst & Young	7.27
10	KPMG	6.10
11	Swatch Group	6.07
12	Kuoni	5.07
13	ICRC	5.04
14	Swisscom	4.99
15	Roche	4.97
16	Swiss Federal Authorities	4.86
17	Migros	4.84
18	IKEA	4.73
19	The Boston Consulting Group	4.65
20	IBM	4.33
21	SBB CFF FFS	4.27
22	SWISS (Swiss Airlines)	4.05
23	Coca-Cola	3.14
24	Unilever	3.12
25	Goldman Sachs	3.07
26	JP Morgan	3.00
27	Bank Julius Baer	2.99
28	ABB	2.85
29	Raiffaisen	2.84
30	Deloitte	2.73

Table 3. Top 30 employers in 2006 for Swiss business graduates (Source: Universum)

5.1 Style of the message

Credibility. The employment websites analyzed possess most of the characteristics that signal employer credibility. With regard to their visual form, approximately 80 % of the companies present pictures of the current employees on the career section of their websites. The practice of including the company's CEO and recruiters' pictures as well is less common (48.3 % and 27.6

%, respectively). The level of expression (wording and speech) is appropriate for 96.6 % of the employers. In addition, two-thirds of the websites provide testimonials that, in most cases, describe organizational experiences from current employees' points of view, although some organizations (e.g., Novartis and Coca-Cola) also give testimonials by the company's CEO and recruiters. An important exception to this positive trend toward signaling *credibility* is represented by the communication of a realistic employer message. Although the literature widely acknowledges the importance of providing potential candidates with realistic information (Meglino & Ravlin, 1999; Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Bretz & Judge, 1996; Wanous et al., 1992; Rynes, 1991; Rynes et al., 1991; Popovich & Wanous, 1982), all companies on the list communicate only positive attributes of working for the organization and mention no potential drawbacks of a career in the company.

In terms of website functionality, 86.2 % of the corporate career websites have updated web pages (the date of the last updating is shown) and job descriptions, while 7.3 % explicitly address privacy issues, particularly in regard to the submission of job-seekers' personal data. UBS is a very effective example of a company whose employment website displays prominent privacy policy links on each of its pages.

Vividness. The companies analyzed try to make their career web pages more vivid by manipulating the textual and visual forms, particularly through the inclusion of pictures (93.1 %) and descriptive terms (89.7 %). Many of these top employers include images representing the company's working environment (72.4 %) and images linked to organizational values (65.5 %). The inclusion of such imagery is likely to have an impact on job-seekers surfing the site by reinforcing the employer's verbal message and facilitating web users' ability to imagine themselves working there. In terms of textual form, the majority of the employment websites provide detailed (88.9 %) and specific (62.1 %) messages, and about 50 % of the companies

address their targets with a comparatively emotional tone. For instance, by including sentences like "we know that visionaries are as valuable as magicians" and "[the] passion of our people is our greatest strength," Unilever leverages emotional elements to grab job-seekers' attention and interest. In particular, Unilever's message emphasizes abstract concepts and terms, rather than communicating only the objective and tangible characteristics associated with the company. Regarding website function, only a minority of employers try to provide job-seekers with more vivid experiences by including features such as videos (31 %) and animation (44.8 %) on their career pages.

Employee orientation. The top 30 employers differ significantly in how they use form, tone and function to address their potential employees. In terms of form, 93.2 % of the companies on the list include pictures of people (employees, directors, or customers) on their career websites, and a lower percentage present only other kinds of images, representing the company's products, awards won by the organization, or corporate buildings. The top 30 employers use a mostly direct tone in delivering their messages, with a wide use of personal pronouns, short and simple sentences, active voice, etc. Many employers also include some personalization patterns. All these elements are particularly evident when surfing Nestlé's employment homepage, where the tone of the message is strongly employee-oriented thanks to the presence of important linguistic features to personalize the communication (Thompson & Thetela, 1995) and expressions such as "we are pleased that you (...)" and "As a Nestlé employee you will be privileged (…)." A minority of companies also support job-seekers by providing additional information that helps users of the career site, such as answers to frequently asked questions (37.9 %), tips about how to prepare for an interview (34.5 %), tips on writing a résumé (24.1 %), and guidelines for candidates (37.9 %).

Website function was operationalized with regard to employee orientation as the existence of interactive tools that facilitate users' job searches. The navigational menu is included in 89.7 % of the websites analyzed, and most employers further enhance their instrumental value by simplifying the application process through the inclusion of search engines (62.1 %); organizing jobs by profession, task, and location; and providing job seekers with the opportunity to apply directly online (72.4 %). Some companies also leverage a more interactive web experience, offering online assessment tools (e.g., Goldman Sachs, Unilever, UBS) or allowing applicants to send their feedback to the company or leave a comment (e.g., UBS).

5.2 Message content

Information about organizational attributes. Results show that 66.5 % of the top 30 employers' employment websites include information about organizational size and 62.1 about location. Fifty-five percent of the organizations on the list display information about the company's structure, and 31.1 % inform job-seekers about business strategies. Only two companies (6.9 %) provide descriptions of the demographic characteristics of their current employees. Still, in communicating organizational attributes, the top 30 employers seem to place more emphasis on the symbolic rather than tangible characteristics. More specifically, 28 of 29 employers (96.6 %) include at least a token amount of information related to organizational culture and values, while a significant majority of the companies provide information explicitly referencing their mission (86.2 %), corporate history (72.4 %), and interest in implementing CSR activities (79.3 %).

Information about employer attributes. Eighty-two percent of the employers describe the job opportunity, including job requirements, for each vacant position, and the information is detailed in 72 % of the cases. Although the recruitment literature regarding salary and compensation is known to be salient to potential candidates (Barber & Roheling, 1993; Rynes, 1991), only 37.9 %

of the employers on the list provide at least some general information about these attributes, and in none of the cases is the information detailed or specific. Most employers communicate possible benefits associated with a given job opportunity, such as leave allowances, training activities and internship opportunities. A diversity message is present in 69 % of the websites analyzed, and 63.1 % include a description of the company's working environment. A lower percentage provides job seekers with information concerning opportunities for personal development (55.2 %) and teamwork (44.8 %).

5.3 Employer branding statements

Approximately 62 % of the employers provide an employer branding statement, and this group includes in their message the attributes that are predictive of organizational attraction (Allen et al., 2004; Cober et al., 2004; Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Barber, 1998; Barber & Rohelig, 1993) more than the group of employers not providing an employer branding statement. The gap between the companies that communicate the brand and those that don't is particularly evident in their use of the dimensions of credibility and vividness. For instance, in terms of credibility, approximately two-thirds of the employers that provide a branding statement also have a picture of the company's CEO; in the second group, only one company in ten includes such an image (see fig. 1). Similarly, all of the employers that provide a branding statement address privacy issues on their career websites, versus 45.5 % of those that don't provide one (see fig. 1). Regarding vividness, 77.8 % of employers that provide a branding statement also provide specific information, compared to only 36.4 % of companies without such a statement (see fig. 2). The use of website features to enrich users' experiences (such as animation and videos) is also more common among organizations that communicate their branding statement. In terms of

elements related to employee orientation, the difference between companies that do and do not communicate their branding statements is less evident, but still visible (see fig. 3).
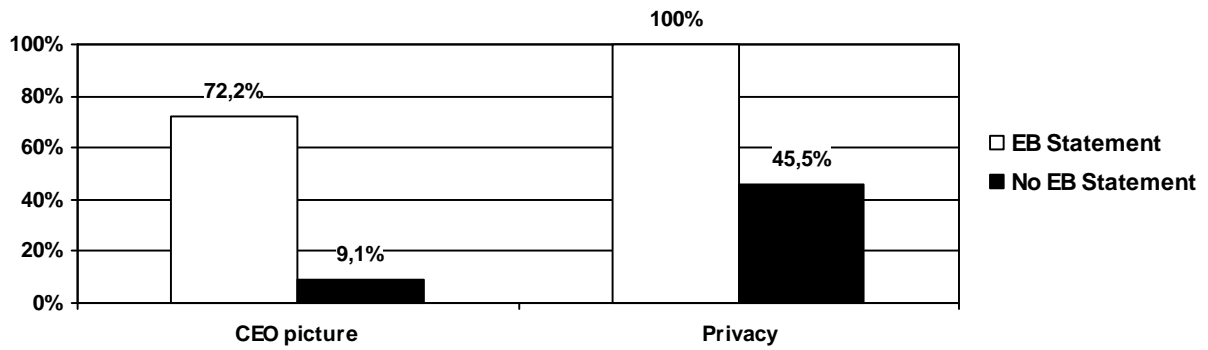

Figure 1. Percentage of employers showing both employer branding statement and elements of credibility (CEO picture and privacy issues), and percentage of employers showing elements of credibility (CEO picture and privacy issues), but no employer branding statement.
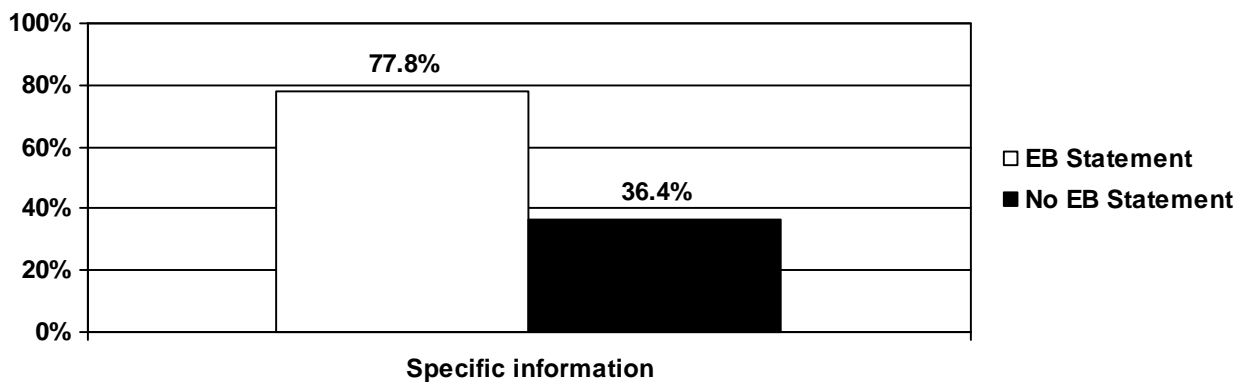

Figure 2. Percentage of employers showing both employer branding statement and elements of vividness (specific information), and percentage of employers showing elements of vividness (specific information), but no employer branding statement.
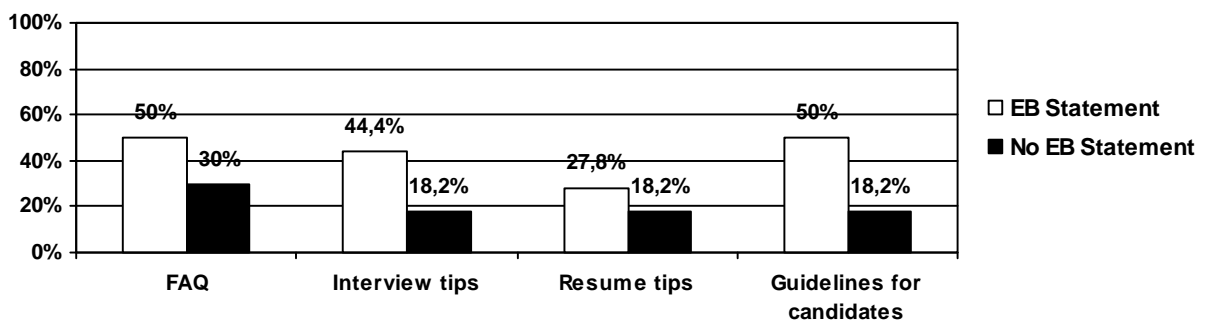

Figure 3. Percentage of employers showing both employer branding statement and elements of employee orientation (FAQ, Interview tips, Resume tips, and Guidelines for candidates), and percentage of employers showing elements of employee orientation (FAQ, Interview tips, Resume tips, and Guidelines for candidates), but no employer branding statement.

Employers also differ significantly in communicating the attributes relevant for attractive purposes, depending on whether they include a branding statement. More specifically, a greater percentage of the companies that communicate the employer brand provide information about characteristics that are salient to job-seekers. For example, 66.7 % of the employers who include branding statements convey information about career paths in the company, while only 18.2 % of the remaining employers do (see fig. 4).

Although the low number of cases did not allow analysis of whether the presence of the employer branding statements and other variables of message effectiveness are significantly related, the analysis of frequencies alone strongly suggests that this correlation may exist and that it should be further investigated with larger samples.
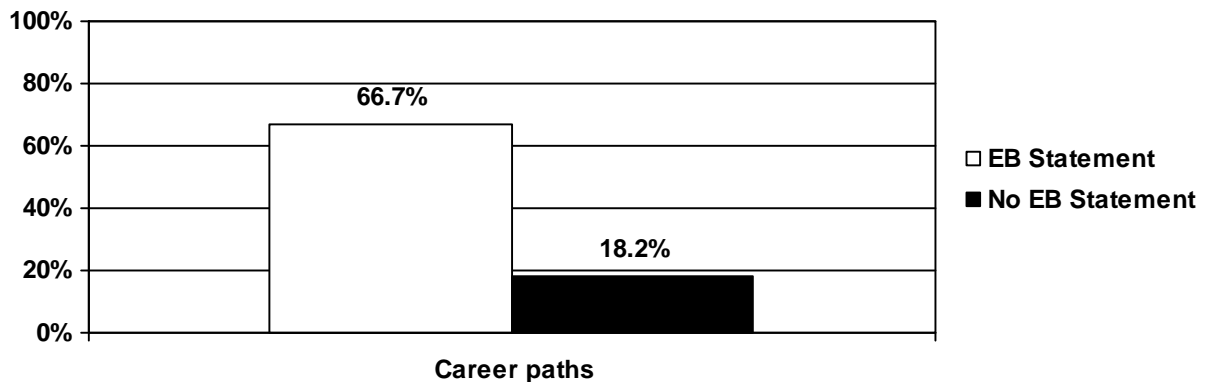

Figure 4. Percentage of employers showing both employer branding statement and the message content *career paths*, and percentage of employers showing the message content *career paths*, but no employer branding statement.

6. Discussion and conclusion

It is reasonable to conclude that, although there are opportunities for considerable improvement, the 30 companies considered as best employers by Swiss graduates are aware that effective employer communication through the corporate career website is vital for generating a higher-quality applicant pool. This is demonstrated by the fact that, in all cases, the employer message is credible, vivid, and employee-oriented.

Most companies include most of the elements regarded as indicators of *credibility* on their employment websites. Privacy concerns are widely addressed, and some kind of testimonial is present in almost all the career websites analyzed. In addition, *vividness* is highly regarded, a conclusion supported by the inclusion of specific and detailed messages in an engaging and attractive format. In the majority of cases, this is carried out either by including interactive tools such as videos and animations and/or by the extensive use of colors and pictures. Analogous considerations can be made with regard to the *employee orientation* of the top 30 employers' messages. Targeted recruitment messages are used, along with information and web tools (navigational tools, job search engines, etc.) that support job-seekers during the online application process.

The results of the analysis support the findings of the literature on recruitment in regard to content. The companies in the sample convey the general information job-seekers need to evaluate job opportunities. However, while the majority of the employers provide information about attributes such as culture, values and the corporate mission, a lower percentage make explicit reference to the equally important characteristics of organizational demographics, business strategy, and compensation (Cober et al., 2004; Backhaus, 2002; Barber & Rohelig, 1993).

Our analysis also revealed insights contrary to findings in the extant literature about organizational attraction. In particular, studies have suggested that providing realistic information (i.e., both favorable and unfavorable attributes) is important to job-seekers (Meglino & Ravlin, 1999; Breaugh & Billings, 1998; Bretz & Judge, 1996; Wanous et al., 1992; Rynes, 1991; Rynes et al., 1991; Popovich & Wanous, 1982); however, all employers ranked on Universum's list present only positive information. Moreover, only a minority of the companies convey information meaningful to job-seekers, such as salary and compensation, even if it has been empirically demonstrated (Barber & Roheling, 1993) that such information plays a prominent role in job decisions.

Finally, more than half of the organizations analyzed project their employer brand through explicit statements of distinctiveness and uniqueness. Compared to the others in the population analyzed, these companies are more attentive to communicating their distinctiveness as employers and invest more resources in communicating with their potential candidates in an engaging and attractive way.

In addition to providing a picture of best practices of online recruitment in Switzerland, this paper provides a comprehensive tool with which the message effectiveness of career websites by building on the work of Cober and colleagues (2003, 2004), and putting together contributions from a variety of research traditions. The tool could also be a useful grid in creating and implementating corporate career websites.

The application of the tool to the top 30 Swiss employer highlighted a relationship between communication of an employer's branding statement and excellence in conveying the effectiveness elements of the online recruitment message. Although a significant correlation between variables is not investigated here, our results lead to a question and a follow-up: does the explicit projection of the employer brand influence the overall effectiveness of the recruitment

message? If so, what are the reasons for this correlation? A quantitative investigation on a broader sample could provide new insights on this issue.

This paper proposes an empirical operationalization of employer branding practices via the web through the presence of an explicit statement aimed at communicating the company's distinctive and unique attributes as an employer. This is a narrow operationalization of the practice, built upon the recent suggestions of the literature on employer branding (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sullivan, 2004a). However, other elements may also indicate whether a company is engaged in employer branding activities. It would be interesting to investigate the practice of employer branding in this population further in order to explore the development of their employer brands in different contexts than online recruitment.

The current analysis has taken into consideration a limited number of companies perceived as excellent employers by Swiss graduates, but the study could be extended to a larger group of organizations in order to observe the relationship between the ranking achieved according to students' preferences and the effectiveness of the employers' online communication. Findings may be further compared to the results of an analogous analysis conducted on a sample of poor-performing employers.

Finally, an analysis aimed at identifying specificities by industry may lead to valuable insights, especially if carried out with the purpose of identifying patterns that differentiate effective from ineffective websites.

References

Abernethy, A. M., & Franke, G. R. (1996). The information content of advertising: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Advertising*, 25, 1-17.

Allen, D. G., Van Scotter, J. R., & Otondo, R. F. (2004). Recruitment communication media: impact on prehire outcomes. *Personnel Psychology*, 57, 143-171.

Ambler, T., & Barrow, S. (1996). The employer brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 4, 185-206.

Backhaus, K. (2002). An exploration of corporate recruitment descriptions on Monster.com. *Journal of Business Communication*, 41 (2), 115-136.

Backhaus, K., Stone, B. A., & Heiner, K. (2002). Exploring the relationship between corporate social performance and employer attractiveness. *Business and Society*, 419, 291-320.

Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004). Conceptualizing and researching employer branding. *Career Development International*, 9, 501-517.

Barber, A. (1998). *Recruiting Employees. Individual and Organizational Perspectives.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Barber, A. E., & Roheling, M. V. (1993). Job postings and the decision to interview: A Verbal Protocol Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 845-856.

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

Breaugh, J. A., & Billings, R. S. (1988). The realistic job preview: five key elements and their importance for research and practice. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 2, 291-305.

Breaugh, J. A., & Starke, M. (2000). Research on employee recruitment: so many studies, so many questions. *Journal of Management*, 26, 405-430.

Bretz, R. D., Ash, R. A., & Dreher, G. F. (1989). Do people make the place: an examination of the attraction. *Personnel Psychology*, 42, 561-582.

Bretz, R. D., & Judge, T. A. (1996). Realistic job previews: a test of the adverse self selection hypothesis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83, 330-337.

Byrne, D., & Neuman, J. (1992). The Implication of Attraction Research for Organizational Issues. In Kelley, K. (Ed.), *Theory and Research in Industrial/Organization Psychology* (pp. 29-70). New York: Elsevier Science Publishers.

Cable, D. M., & Judge, T. A. (1994). Pay preferences and job decisions: a person-organization fit perspective. *Personnel Psychology*, 47, 317-349.

Cable, D. M., & Judge, T. A. (1996). Person-organization fit, job choice decisions and organizational entry. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decisions Processes*, 67, 249-311.

Cable, D. M., Aiman-Smith, L., Mulvey, P. W., & Edwards J. R. (2000). The sources of accuracy and job applicants' beliefs about organizational culture. *Academy of Management Journal*. 43 (6), 1076-1085.

Cable, D. M., & Graham, M. E. (2000). The determinants of job seekers' reputation perceptions. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour and Human Decisions Processes*, 21, 929-947.

Cable, D. M., & Turban, D. B. (2001). Establishing the dimensions, sources and values of job seekers' employer knowledge during recruitment. in Joseph Martocchio, Hui Liao and Aparna Joshi (ed.). *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 20, (pp. 115-163). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Cappelli, P. (2001).Making the most of online recruiting. *Harvard Business Review*, 79 (2), 139-146.

Chatman, J. A. (1989). Improving interactional organizational research: a model of person-organization fit. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 333-349.

Cober, R. T., Brown, D. J., Blumental, A., Doverspike, D., & Levy, P. E. (2000). The quest for the qualified job surfer: it's time the public sector catches the waves. *Public Personnel Management*, 29, 479-497.

Cober, R. T., Brown, D. J., Levy, P. E., Keeping, L., & Cober, A. B. (2003). Organizational websites: website content and style as determinants of organizational attraction. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 11 (1), 158-169.

Cober, R. T., Brown, D. J., & Levy, P. E. (2004). Form, content and function: an evaluative methodology for corporate employment web sites. *Human Resource Management*, 4 (3), 201-218.

Collins, C. J. (2002). The relationship between early recruitment and the application decision of new labor-market entrants: a brand new equity approach to recruitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 1121-1133.

Dineen, B. R., Ash, S. R., & Noe, R. A. (2002). A web of applicant attraction: person-organization fit in the context of web-based recruitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87 (4), 723-734.

Fombrun, C. J., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 233-258.

Fombrun, C., & Van Riel, C. B. M. (2003). *Fame and Fortune. How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations*. Upper Saddle River : Prentice Hall.

Gatewood, R. D., Gowan, M. A., & Lautenschlager, G. J. (1993). Corporate image, recruitment image and initial job choice decisions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 414-427.

Greening, D. W., & Turban, D. B. (2000). Corporate social performance as a competitive advantage in attracting a quality workforce. *Business and Society*, 39, 254-280.

Harkins, S. G., & Petty, R. E. (1981). Information utility and the multiple source effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 260-278.

Herriot, P., & Rothwell, C. (1981). Organizational Choice and Decision Theory: Effects of Employers' Literature and Selection Interview. *Journal of Occupational Psychology,* 54, 17-31.

Highhouse, S., Lievens, F., & Sinar E. F. (2003). Measuring attraction to organizations. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 63, 986-1001.

Keller, P. A., & Block, L. G. (1997). Vividness effects: a resource matching perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 3, 295-304.

Kristof, A. L. (1996). Person-organization tit: an integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement and implications. *Personnel Psychology*, 54, 17-31.

Kristof, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences of individuals' fit at work: a meta analysis of person-job, person-organization, person group, and person-supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 281-343.

Lee, I. (2005). Evaluation of Fortune's 100 companies career web sites. *Human Systems Management*, 24, 175-182.

Lermusiaux, Y., & Snell, A. (2001). *Perceptions vs. Reality: Job Seekers Behavior Online.* San Francisco: ILogos Research.

Lermusiaux, Y. (2002). Managing capital in a downturn. *Ivey Business Journal*, 66, 14-17.

Levering R., & Moskowitz, M. (2000). The 100 best companies to work for. *Fortune*, January, 83-110.

Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003). The Relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer. *Personnel Psychology*, 49, 1-50.

Mason, N.A.,& Belt, J.A. (1986). Effectiveness of Specificity in Recruitment

Advertising. *Journal of Management*, 12, 425-432.

Meglino, B. M., & Ravlin, E. (1999). When are realistic job previews most effective? In Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004), Conceptualizing and Researching Employer Branding. *Career Development International*, 9, 507.

Michaels, E. G., Handfield-Jones, H., & Axelrod, B. (2001). *The War for Talent.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The Content Analysis Guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Popovich, P., & Wanous, J. P. (1982). The realistic job preview as a persuasive communication. *Academy of Management Review*, 7, 570-578.

Rafaeli, A. (1998). Impression management in organizational recruiting: lessons from employment advertising. Cited in Cober, R. T., Brown, D. J., Levy, P. E., Keeping, L., & Cober, A. B. (2003). Form, content and function: an evaluative methodology for corporate employment web sites. *Human Resource Management*, 4 (3), 159.

Roberson, Q. M., Collins, C. J., & Oreg, S. (2005). The effects of recruitment message specificity on applicant attraction to organizations. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 19, 319-338.

Rothberg, S. (1995, November). *Best practices for your career web site. Retrieved from: www.erexchange.com*

Rynes, S. L., & Miller, H. E. (1983). Recruiters and job influences on candidates for employment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 147-155.

Rynes, S. L. (1991). Recruitment, job choice and post hire consequences. In Dunnette, M. D., & Hough, L. M. (Eds.). *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (pp. 399-444). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Rynes, S. L., & Barber, A. E. (1990). Applicant attraction strategies: an organizational perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 15 (2), 286-311.

Rynes, S. L., Bretz, R. D., & Gerhart, P. (1991). The importance of recruitment in job choice: a different way of looking. *Personnel Psychology*, 39, 529-542.

Schneider, B. (1987). The people make the place. *Personnel Psychology*, 40, 437-454.

Snell, A. (2007). Measuring the Financial Impact of HR. *Strategic HR Review*, 6, 28-32.

Spence, A. M. (1974). *Marketing Signaling: Informational Transfer in Hiring and Related Screening Processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Spitzmueller, M., Huntington, R., & Crozier, A. (2002). Building a company brand to attract talent. *Workspan*, July, p. 30.

Steuer, J. (1992). Defining Virtual Reality: Dimension Defining Telepresence. *Journal of Communication,* 42, 73-93.

Sullivan, J. (2004, February). *The 8 elements of a successful employment brand. Retrieved from: www.erexchange.com*

Sullivan, J. (2004, April). *Employer branding: calculating the economic impacts*. *Retrieved from: www.erexchange.com*

Taylor, S. E., & Thompson, S. C. (1982). Stalking the illusive "vividness" effect. *Psychological Review*, 89, 155-181.

Terzis, V., & Economides, M. (2005). Job site evaluation framework (JSEF) and comparison of Greek and foreign job sites. *Human Systems Management*, 24 (3), 223-237.

Thompson, G., & Thetela, P. (1995). The sound of one hand clapping: the management of interaction in written discourse. *Text*, 15, 103-127.

Tom, V. R. (1971). The role of personality and organizational images in recruitment processes. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance*, 6, 573-592.

Turban, D. B., Eyring, A. R., & Champion, J. E. (1993). Job attributes: preferences compared with reasons given for accepting and rejecting offers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 66, 71-81.

Turban, D. B., & Keon (1993). Organizational attractiveness: an interactionist perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 78 (2), 184-193.

Turban, D. B., & Greening, D. W. (1997). Corporate social Performance and organizational attractiveness to prospective employees. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 658-673.

Turban, D. B., Forret, M. L., & Hendrickson, C. L. (1998). Applicant attraction to firms: influences of organization reputation, job and organizational attributes and recruiters behaviors. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 52, 24-44.

Turban, D. B. (2001). Organizational attractiveness as an employer on college campuses: an examination of the applicant population. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 52, 24-44.

Turban, D. B., & Cable, D. M. (2003). Firm reputation and applicant pool characteristics. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24, 733-745.

Tybout, A. M., & Artz, N. (1994). Consumer psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 45, 131-169.

Wanous, J. P., Poland, T. D., Premack, S. L., Davis, K. S. (1992). The effects of met expectations on newcomer attitudes and behaviors: a review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 301-326.

Weber, R. P. (1985). *Basic Content Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Williamson I., Lepak, D. P., & King, J. (2003). The effects of company recruitment web site orientation on individual's perceptions of organizational attractiveness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 63, 242-263.

Previous IMCA Working Papers

Comi A., & Eppler M. (2009). Building and Managing Strategic Alliances in Technology-Driven Start-Ups: A Critical Review of Literature. *IMCA Working Paper 1/2009*, Lugano, Switzerland

Zamparini, A., Lurati, Francesco & Illia, L. (2008). Auditing regional wine brands: the Merlot Ticino case. *ICA # 3/2008 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Li, Y., Guohui, S. & Eppler, M. J. (2008). Making strategy work: a literature review on the factors influencing strategy implementation. *ICA # 2/2008 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Bresciani, S. & Eppler, M.J. (2008). The perils of visualization: a classification of risks associated with graphic representations of information. *ICA # 1/2008 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Eppler, M.J. & Ge, J. (2007). Communicating with diagrams: how intuitive and cross-cultural are business graphics? Results of image sorting experiments with strategy students in the United Kingdom and China. *ICA # 1/2007 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Eppler, M.J., Platts, K. & Kazancioglu, E. (2006). Visual Strategizing. The Systematic Use ofVisualization in the Strategy Process *ICA # 7/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Illia, L. (2006). Perceived threat to change in organizational identity and collective selfefficacy in organizations. *ICA # 6/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Mengis, J. & Eppler, M. J. (2006). Knowledge integration in face-to-face communication and the moderating effect of a collaborative visualization tool. *ICA # 5/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Illia, L. (2006). In changing the traits of organizational identity. *ICA # 4/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Illia, L., Lurati, F. & Previatello, S. (2006). Consumer Boycotts in Switzerland 1994-2004: Typologies and Strategies. *ICA # 3/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Birth, G., Illia, L. Lurati, F. & Zamparini, A. (2006). Communicating CSR: The practice in the top 300 companies in Switzerland. *ICA # 2/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Illia, L., Lurati,F. & La Rocca, A (2006). Communication Flow, Channels, Content and Climate in Downsizing? *ICA # 1/2006 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Illia, L., (2005). Why is there resistance to change the traits of organizational identity? *ICA # 3/2005 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Illia, L. & Lurati, F. (2005). Stakeholder perspectives on organizational identity: searching for a relationship approach. *ICA # 2/2005 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Eppler, M. J. & Mengis, J. (2005). Understanding and managing knowledge-intensive conversations: an appreciative reading of the literature on conversations in organizations and an integrative approach for their management. *ICA # 1/2005 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Poncini, G. (2004). Exploring the image of new world wine producers: website texts for wineries in Australia and New Zealand. *ICA # 4/2004 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Zorzi, Y. (2004). Sviluppo degli studi museali e crisi dell'identità dell'istituzione. *ICA # 3/2004 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Eppler, M. J. & Burkhard, R. A. (2004). Knowledge Visualization. Towards a New Discipline and its Fields of Application. *ICA # 2/2004 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Eppler, M. J. (2004). Knowledge Communication Problems between Experts and Managers. An Analysis of Knowledge Transfer in Decision Processes. *ICA # 1/2004 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Eppler, M. J. & Mengis, J. (2003). A Framework for Information Overload Research in Organizations, Insights from Organization Science, Accounting, Marketing, MIS, and Related Disciplines. *ICA # 1/2003 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Zorzi, Y. (2002). Il marketing museale e l'organizzazione a rete. *ICA # 2/2002 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Poncini, G. (2002). Exploring Common Ground in Multilingual Brochures for Mountain Areas in Lombardy, Italy. *ICA # 1/2002 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Venzin, M. (1999). The concept of foresight in times of uncertainty and ambiguity. *ICA # 5/1999 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Fiocca, R. (1999) Evolution of the firm and new characteristics of communication. *ICA # 4/1999 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Corvi, E. & Vanacore B. (1999). Un'analisi comparativa della comunicazione commerciale nelle banche: il confronto Svizzera – Italia. *ICA # 3/1999 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Poncini, G & Mirjaliisa, C. (1999). Teaching intercultural negotiation and communication skills: an international experiment. *ICA # 2/1999 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.

Fiocca, R. & Poncini, G. (1999). Corporate communication: understanding and managing

paradoxes. *ICA # 1/1999 Working Paper*, Lugano, Switzerland.