A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Masters Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

Unilever Recruitment Branding

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A. Introduction

Unilever is a company recognized worldwide. Despite the fact that in Portugal the company receives increasingly more applications for the Trainees Program every year, it still wants to guarantee that the most talented students of the country are attracted by the company. The scope of this project is therefore to help Unilever Jerónimo Martins (the name of Unilever in Portugal, herein after named "Unilever JM") improve its current recruitment branding stategy and attract the best talents from the top schools in Portugal.

Our team met with Dra. Ana Dionísio (former HR Business Partner at Unilever JM) and Professor Catherine Da Silveira on July 3, 2013 for the briefing of our Recruitment Branding Project.

It was agreed by all parties that the focus of this project would be to address the following two questions:

1) How can Unilever JM keep attracting the best talents and improve the recruiting process of people from what the company considers its core recruiting target (i.e. students from Nova and Católica Management)?

2) How can Unilever JM attract the best talents from what the company considers its secondary target (i.e. students from certain other study areas and schools)?

The two questions have been addressed via a sequential process. More specifically, our team began by conducting an unstructured observation through its presence in the Welcome Day for the trainees (September 2013), followed by a qualitative research by means of in-depth interviews. We were able to confirm some of our initial insights and hypotheses through quantitative research. At the same time, we developed parallel research around specific topics through our individual assignments that were linked to the project. After analyzing all the results gathered, we came up with recommendations for Unilever JM which we believe effectively answer the two objectives defined and will significantly improve the company's recruitment branding strategies.

B. Background

B1. Unilever in Portugal

Unilever Jerónimo Martins Joint Venture

The Anglo-Dutch multinational company Unilever is present in the Portuguese market through a joint venture that was set with Jerónimo Martins, the Portuguese retailer, in 1949.

In 2007 Unilever Jerónimo Martins is born with the merging of the companies Fima VG, Lever Elida and Olá

Unilever JM Business Activity and Mission

Unilever JM manufactures and distributes brands in the fast-moving consumer goods sector, specifically in **three areas**: food, personal care and home care, and **two channels**: supermarkets and hypermarkets, and HORECA

Through its portfolio of **renowned brands**, Unilever JM aims to help its consumers "feel good, look good and get more out of life"

Unilever JM Position in the Portuguese Market

Unilever JM is **leader** in the following domestic market: margarines, ice teas, ice creams and laundry detergents

Unilever JM has **strong and sustained commercial brands**(1) **:** "People have at least one Unilever product at home(2)". The leadership established globally and in particular in Portugal, makes this company an attractive choice among future business graduates

(1) According to Kevin K.Keller, "a Brand is more than a product, because it can have dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need". A commercial brand is a particular type of brand with its strategic focus mainly in the final customer.

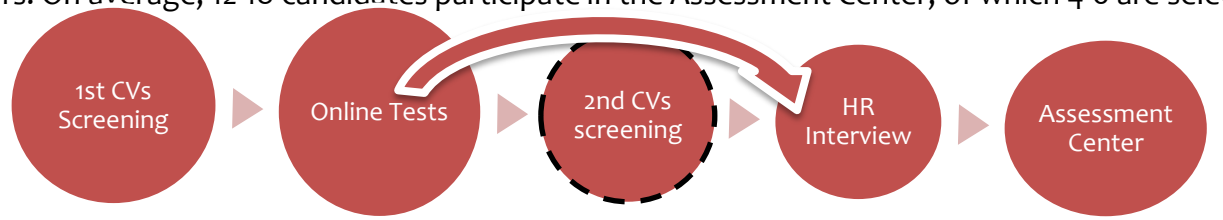
(2) Ref. Unilever JM CEO in 2013 Welcome Day to Trainees

B2. Current Recruiting Strategy of Unilever JM

Trainees Program [3]

[3] Appendix 1 - Numbers taken from Unilever JM Briefing Presentation July 2013

What is it?
An 18 month training program to develop future managers of Unilever JM
How is the selection process?
A five-step process with an average duration of six months:
1st step) CV Screening: HR Director mainly focuses on the candidate's GPA (> 13), School and study area of origin. 2800 CVs received between January and February.
2nd step) Online Tests: developed by the outsourced company Kenexa, the online tests are divided into two parts: numerical and logical reasoning tests. 800 candidates took online tests between February and March. Applicants with at least 50% in each test passes to 4th step. Applicants who score at least 50% on one of the tests and at least 30% on the other are considered for the CVs review. This exceptional number of people was not communicated to us by Unilever JM.
3rd step) Review of CVs: (internal process) some students who pass the online tests according to the criteria above can be re-selected if their CV is interesting.
4th step) Interview with Human Resources: a one-to-one interview between candidate and HR Director. 81 candidates called in for interview until end of March.
5th step) Assessment Center: group dynamics and an individual interview with the Selecting Panel composed of Unilever JM Board of Directors. On average, 12-18 candidates participate in the Assessment Center, of which 4-6 are selected at the end.



Internships

What is it? A temporary learning experience that officially varies between 12 weeks and one year.
How is the selection process? CV Screening and Interview with HR Director

B3. Communication Plan of Unilever JM

Communication Plan

- Main target: Nova School of Business and Economics, Católica Lisbon, ISEG and ISCTE
- Unilever JM's "Attraction Plan" primarily consists in direct contact, whereby company representatives are present in varied activities at the target schools and interface directly with potential future candidates. In 2013, Unilever JM spoke with **4600 students** broken down by the following schools: Nova SBE*, ISEG*, Católica Lisbon* and ISCTE*.

The communication strategy used by Unilever JM is presented below incorporating different options and presence in different schools:

Career Forum

HR Representatives **collect CVs** from students, **advertise job opportunities** and answer to doubts in the schools referred.

Communicate commercial brands and offer product samples to increase corporate brand awareness

Institutional presentations

Institutional presentations at Nova SBE, Católica Lisbon, ISEG and ISCTE: to communicate the orgranization of Unilever JM's recruitment process and answer to doubts

Direct Response

Unilever JM sends an **email** to a list of graduate students from the top Portuguese Schools. The intent of the email is to invite students to apply to the Trainees Program

Events and Partnerships

Student Pitch at ISEG: Students present themselves to company representatives

Work Project and **Brand Management course** at Nova: practical projects to solve issues of company

Word-of-Mouth (Internships)

Interns are recruited mainly through **word-of-mouth,** meaning students apply to an internship when they know through someone else there is an open position

*From now on, the names of the schools mentioned will be the abreviated ones to simplify explanations and descriptions - Nova SBE: Nova School of Business and ISEG School of Business and Economics ; ISEG: ISEG School of Economics and Management; Católica Lisbon: Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics and ISCTE : ISCTE Business School

B4. Recruiting Brand Strategy of Unilever JM

A corporate brand results from the corporate identity and communicates key corporate associations, values and expectations that are part of its ideology (Balmer, 1998) that differentiate the company from its competitors and allows it to ensure its loyalty among all stakeholders (Balmer, 2001).

Recruiting Brand Strategy

- Unilever JM currently uses its **corporate brand** as its recruiting brand. The purpose of using this particular brand strategy is to evoke associations based on people, relationships and values as opposed to associations related to a specific product or brand, which entails the commercial brand strategy.
- However, the recruiting brand strategy is still in development, which means that the company may attract a lot of applicants, but still not the most talented ones, which is their main goal.
- Contrarily to other companies in the FMCG sector, Unilever JM uses its brand name only for the corporate brand. The dissociation from its commercial brands brings both advantages and disadvantages for the company:

1. It allows the corporate brand to have control over its identity to avoid discrepencies between corporate and commercial brand identities
2. It enables the recruiting brand to communicate its values to potential employees in a clearer and more coherent way, thereby avoiding possible image distortion
3. It may benefit from attracting a more diversified group of potential employees than only the ones that would be attracted by belonging to the commercial brand target
4. A low market performance of a commercial brand will not affect the overall attractiveness of the corporate brand

1. The recruiting brand cannot take advantage of the commercial brand equity and knowledge (awareness, image and reputation)
2. This may exclude some talented graduates that either do not have a clear understanding of the corporate brand or the ones that may know the corporate brand and yet identify more with the associations evoked by the commercial brand than the ones transmitted by the corporate brand

C. Project methodology

a. Project Objectives

Objective I
How can Unilever keep attracting the best talents and improve the recruitment process of people from ***Nova SBE and Católica Lisbon's Masters in Management?***

Objective II
How can Unilever attract the best talents and improve the recruitment process of people from ***other areas and/or other schools?***

b. Fieldwork

b1. Observation

Welcome Session to Trainees

Location: Unilever JM Headquarters

Date: 2nd of September 2013

b2. Qualitative Research

In-depth Interviews

Target Blocks:

A) Masters Students n = 31
B) Applicants to Trainees Program n = 14
C) Trainees n = 17
D) Interns n = 4

b3. Quantitative Research

Online Survey
n=402

Target: Masters Students
A) Management
B) Finance
C) Economics
D) Marketing
E) Engineering
F) Communication
G) Design

b4. Additional Research

Benchmark analysis
•Google
•PT
•McKinsey
•L'Oréal
•Galp
•Morgan Stanley
•Vodafone
•Procter&Gamble
•Heineken

Individual assignment insights

b5. Analysis of the Research and final results

A) Before applying to the trainees program of Unilever JM
B) During the recruitment process of Unilever JM
C) After entering in Unilever JM

Main conclusions and main recruiting issues

c. Recommendations

Objective I

Objective II

General

C. Project methodology

a. Project objectives: During the briefing of the project in July 2013, the two objectives of the project were presented by Dra. Ana Dionísio (HR Business Partner of Unilever JM). They were presented as two different challenges: the first one was meant to understand how the company can continue attracting the best talents of management from Nova SBE and Católica Lisbon; the second challenge was meant to understand how the company can attract the best talents from other areas and/or other schools. Although we had defined two different objectives, we decided to conduct the research in an aggregated way, dealing with both objectives simultaneously. Both the qualitative and the quantitative research were designed in the same way to address the two different targets. When we reached the results we understood that for some topics the two targets had different positions whereas for others there were not differences. Therefore, in the end of the project, specific recommendations will be given, on the one hand, which address each objective separately and, on the other hand, general recommendations will be given for the topics that did not differ between the targets.

b1. Observation: We started by looking for information on Unilever JM's background and attended the Welcome Day that was part of the integration of this year' trainees. There we had the possibility to learn more about the company, its line of business and its position as a market leader, as well as the integration process of the trainees inside the company. We also had the opportunity to interface with some of the trainees, which was important for the interviews that followed.

After the observation, we understood that we had to follow a certain reasoning to structure our marketing research. This reasoning depended on the different images that a potential candidate of the trainees program can have regarding Unilever JM: the image before applying to the trainees program, the image during the recruitment process and the image after entering in the company.

b2. Qualitative research: We then started with a pre-recruitment questionnaire to confirm the validity of the interview guide. Once tested we conducted 67 in-depth interviews on a 1-to-1 basis of around 1 hour each. We considered different targets: masters students from different study areas, former applicants to the Trainees Program, trainees and interns of Unilever JM. The interviews were analyzed through content and topic analysis and the results were then divided as explained above. After that, it was possible to define hypotheses that were tested in the next phase of our research. (Appendixes 2-11)

C. Project methodology

Segmented sample of the **qualitative research:**

Table 1. Segmented sample of the qualitative research – Master Students

Masters Students	Nova SBE	Católica Lisbon	ISCTE	ISEG	FCSH	ESCS	FCH Católica	IST	TOTAL
Management	3	3	2	2					10
Finance	3	1		1					5
Marketing			2	2					4
Economics	3	3							6
Publicity and Marketing						1			1
Communication					2		1		3
Industrial Engineering								3	3
TOTAL	9	7	4	5	2	1	1	3	32

Table 2. Segmented sample of the qualitative research – Trainees and Interns

Trainees and Interns	
Trainees who started the program **previously to 2013**	6
Trainees of 2013 Program	
Who are in the company for the first time	5
Who were former interns at Unilever	6
Current Interns	4
TOTAL	21

Table 3. Segmented sample of the qualitative research – Applicants

Applicants						
Did not pass the **1st selection** phase	Did not pass the **2nd selection** phase	Passed the 2nd selection phase but were **not called for interview**	Were called for interview but were **not called for the assessment center**	Were **not selected** after the assessment center	Were selected to the program but did **not accept the offer**	TOTAL
3	2	2	3	2	2	14

C. Project methodology

b3. Quantitative research: Before launch the official version of the online survey we pre-test the initial version with 5 students. Once the pre-tests were done, we then conducted an online survey to test the hypotheses from the qualitative research, reach conclusions and understand what the main issues of the project are. We got a total of 893 respondents, of which 402 were valid responses and 491 were either incomplete questionnaires or respondents that failed in the filters. (Appendix 12)

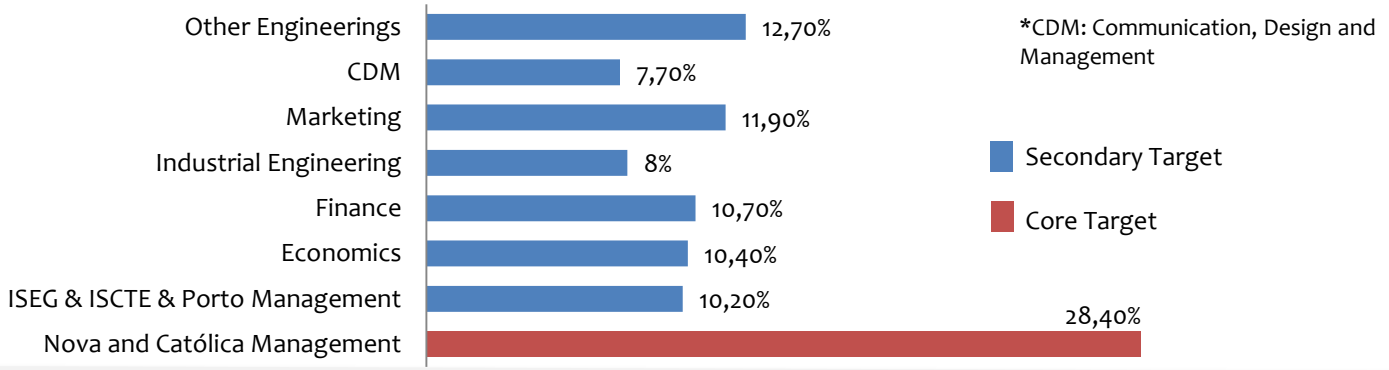
The scales that were used were the following:

- **Likert scale:** Choice among 1 to 5 points in which, in some situations, we assume negative (1 and 2), neutral (3) and positive (4 and 5) answers. In order to analyze particular results we decided to consider only the positive (4 and 5) or negative (1 and 2) answers.
- **Semantic differential:** Points equal to a likert scale but comparing two opposit ideas
- **Ranking:** Providing an order among different ideas

The hypotheses were tested through frequencies and the following statistical tools (Appendix 13):

- **Q-square test:** Using cross tabulation to identify possible relations of dependence between variables
- **Cross-tabulation:** two variables are crossed to look for meaningful correlations

Chart I. Demographics of quantitative research



C. Project methodology

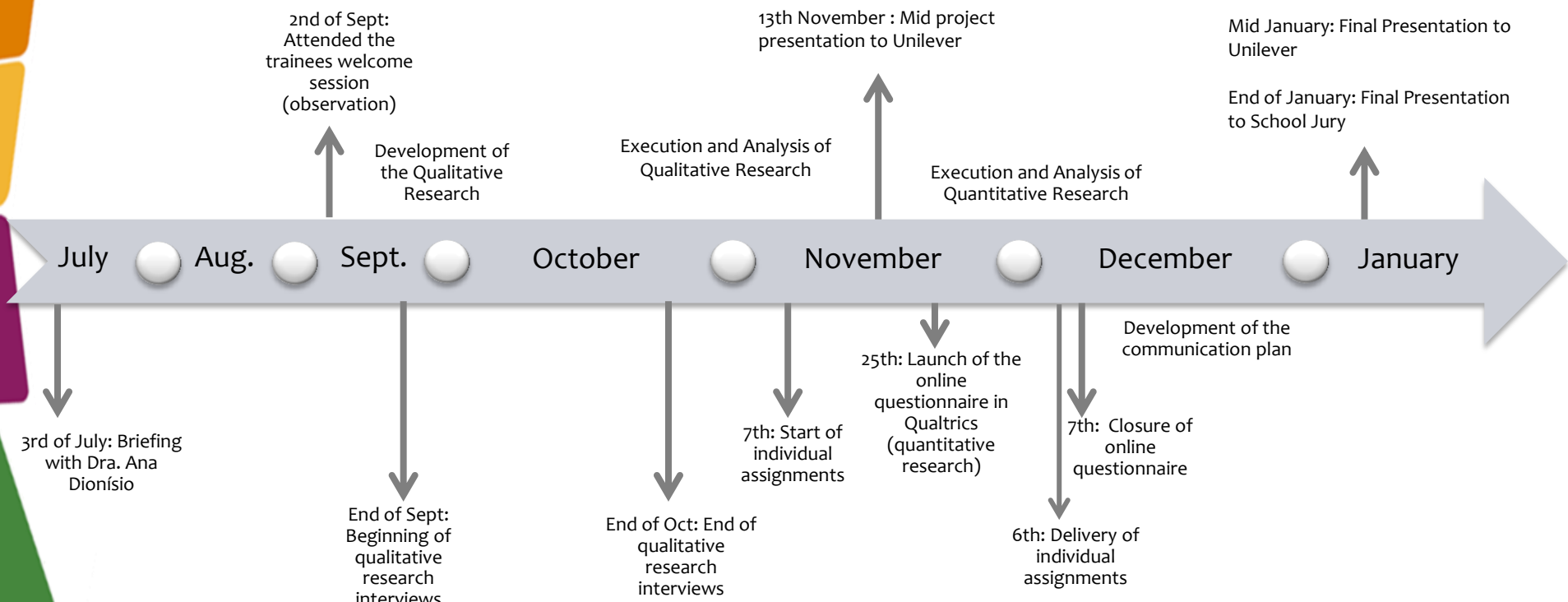
b4. Additional research: In parallel to the project, we researched information about other companies that we considered to be appropriate benchmarks of Unilever JM. These companies were discussed and defined with Dra. Ana Dionísio in the first meeting we had with her and were chosen due to their leadership in different sectors. With that, we gathered information about the career opportunities of those companies, as well as the different benefits they offer. Furthermore, the development of our individual assignments regarding different topics also provided valuable new insights to the project.

b5. . Analysis of the research and final results : Finally, we reached final results that were organized with the following structure: before applying to the Trainees Program, during the application to the Trainees Program and after entering in the Trainees Program. We could then present the main issues that resulted from the project which should be addressed in order to reach the two main objectives of the project.

c. Recommendations: This essential part presents recommendations that answer to the main issues mentioned before and that will allow Unilever JM to reach its main objectives. Recommendations are presented in terms of suggestions for the positioning of Unilever JM as an employer brand, general recommendations to address the two main targets and then each of the objectives individually. Final recommendations are suggestions to improve the recruitment process for the Trainees program as well as for internships.

C. Project methodology

Timeline of the project:



D. Marketing research results

As mentioned in the methodology, the results obtained from the observation, qualitative and quantitative research will be presented according to the following reasoning: perceptions before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM, perceptions during the recruitment process of Unilever JM's trainees program and finally the perceptions after entering in the company.

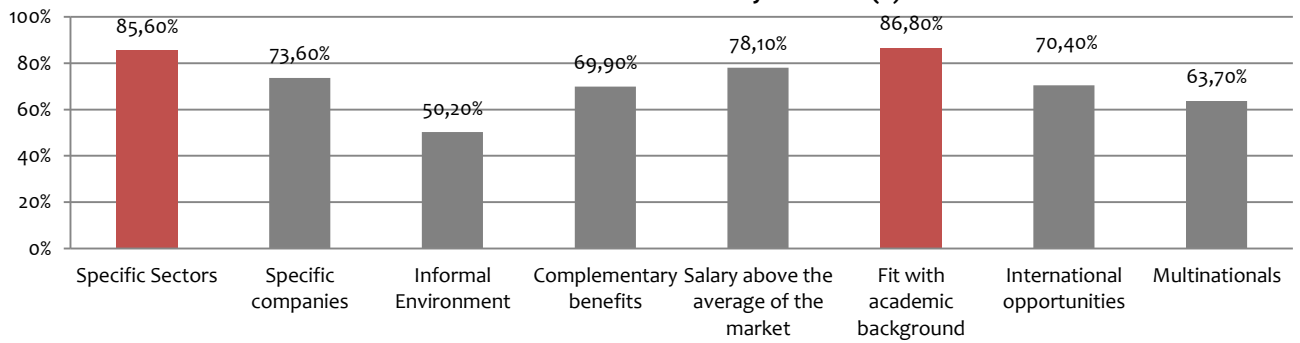
Therefore, we will firstly present what students consider before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM, mainly the criteria that they consider when choosing a company and their main touch points with companies. We will also present the image that they have of the fast-moving consumer goods sector and of Unilever JM.

Before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM

Result I: Masters Students choose firstly job positions that fit with the academic background within specific sectors.

Masters students start looking for jobs that fit with their academic background (86,8%) in specific sectors (85,6%). They are also concerned with the salary (78,1%), the reputation of the companies (73,6%) and international opportunities (70,4%). Also informal environment is considered an important criteria (50,3%).

Chart II. Criteria most valued by students (%)



Question 9
n=402

D1. Before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM

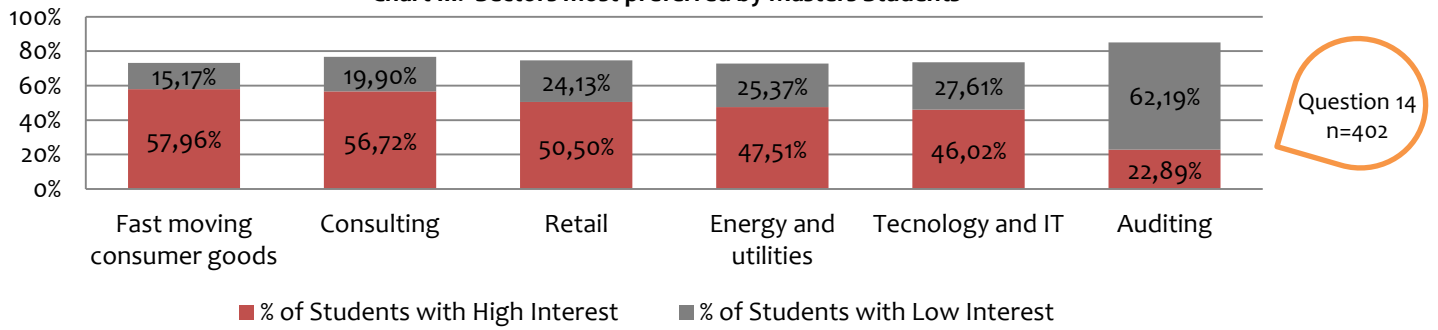
Result II: Through the qualitative research, students in general prefer an informal environment. Finance students also prefer an informal environment, although knowing beforehand that their future is associated to companies with a more strict environment, which seems to be a paradox.

- *"Se eu entrasse num Banco e me perguntassem se eu preferia estar mais informal ou formal,* ***eu escolhia informal!"*** (Católica, Finance, ST 16)
- *"Eu prefiro* ***um bom ambiente*** *com o director, um sítio onde haja* ***abertura para falar com toda a gente"*** (ISEG, Finance, ST 35)

The **fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector is mostly considered as a sector of high interest by all students.**

As seen before, masters students tend to select certain sectors to work in. Those sectors are Consulting and FMCG.

Chart III. Sectors most preferred by Masters Students



Result IV: Economics and engineering are the masters students that have the lowest interest in working for FMCG.

Since Unilever belongs to the sector of FMCG, we wanted to understand who are the 15,17% students that have a low interest in this sector. We discovered that 39,2% are from several Engineerings, 35,7% are from Economics, and the third course with lower interest is Communication, Design and Publicity with 25,8%. (Appendix 14 - Table I)

D1. Before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM

Result V: Friends, Company websites, Career Forum, University job platforms and social networks are the most common touchpoints used by masters students.

Certain touchpoints play a major role in what concerns the probability of students applying to a company. Friends are the touchpoint with more weight and importance for students (83,33%), followed by the websites (79,35%). The other 3 touchpoints (Career Forum, University job platforms and social networks) from the top 5 are positioned close to 60%. Therefore, these channels are the ones where the communication by companies should be strong and sustainable. (Appendix 14 - Chart I)

Result VI: Courses or Projects developed by students to companies increasethe engagement with that company and therefore rises the willingness to apply.

Through the in-depth interviews we understood the importance of projects in terms of both parties' involvement and the increased probability to apply to a certain company.

- *"O interesse da Unilever surgiu também com **um trabalho que tive em Brand Management** com a Unilever e **com a marca Olá**." (failed in the interview with the HR, APP 11)*

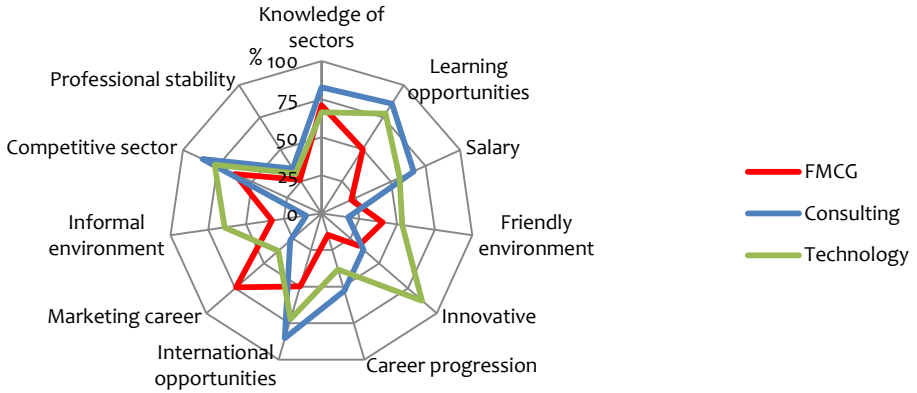
Result VII: In career forums, Unilever JM in particular, creates misleading expectations since students are not contacted afterwards as expected.

- *"In the business forum **I gave my CV to Unilever**. She said (…) applications would open later but if I was interested I could leave it there with my name and saying that I was interested in a summer internship. She told me that **we didn't need to send the application** because that would valid it, **but I never received any answer**."* (failed in the first CV screening, APP 1)

D1. Before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM

Sectors image (FMCG, Consulting and Technology)

Chart IV. Comparison of the Image of the FMCG, Consulting and Technology sectors



Questions 15,16, 17
N=402

In the qualitative research, it was clear that **FMCG sector is sometimes confused with retailers or supermarkets:** *"Fast-Moving Consumer Goods… it's like H&M, Zara Group, Continente, Pingo Doce, Nike, Adidas, Kraft, P&G"* (Nova, Economics, ST4)

In comparison with Consulting and Technology, FMCG is perceived as having:

- Lower salary
- Slower career progression
- Lower professional stability
- Higher association with Marketing → Economic and Finance students are the group that recalled this association more often in the in-depth interviews: *"Não vou aprender tanto nessas empresas porque são* ***mais especializadas em Marketing***" (Nova, Finance, ST 8)

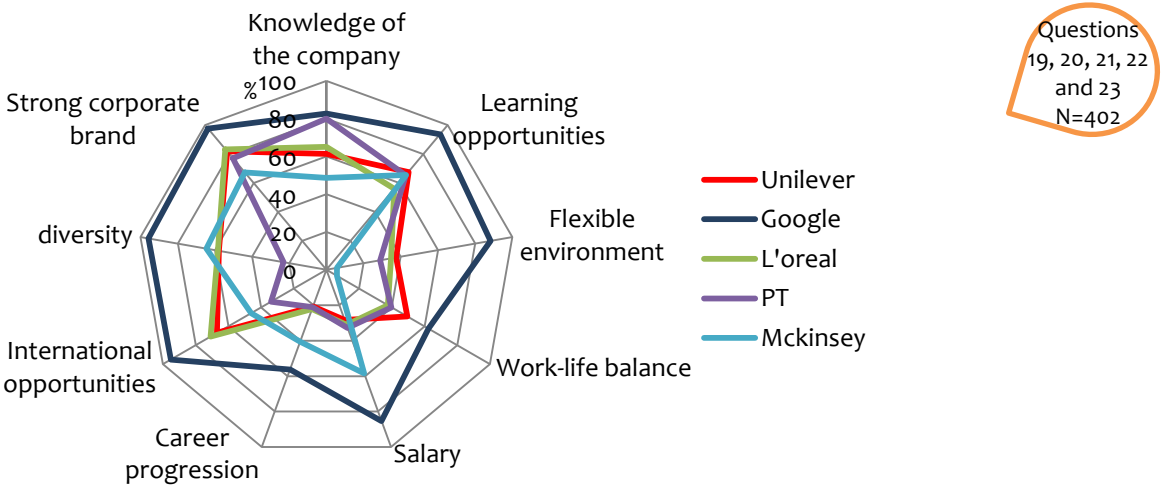
Using the qualitative research, it is also possible to link FMCG sector with high working standards and its presence in the daily life:

- *"Most of students that work there are really well prepared so I would* ***expect a really competent work*** *and really high working standards."* (Nova, Management, ST 2)
- *"É uma empresa e um sector onde eu gostava de trabalhar,* ***sei que ia chegar ao supermercado e ia sempre ver os produtos da minha empresa*** *."* (Nova, Management, ST 3)

D1. Before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM

Unilever JM Image (versus the benchmarks)

Chart V. Comparison of the Image of Unilever towards Google , L'Oréal, PT, and McKinsey



Unilever JM and L´Oréal are very similar in all criteria, being always positioned in the middle in each criterion. Moreover, since Unilever is a global big player in domestic markets, students believe the company offers international opportunities even if in reality these opportunities are reduced or null.

Google clearly stands out from the competition in terms of image and its unique culture, scoring very positively in all criteria (higher than the other companies): *"First, **it was Google**, so it was an opportunity that I don't think I could have not taken at that moment "* (Went through all process, APP 17). Therefore, Google uses its great working environment as point of difference to attract the best talents, regardless the job position.

D1. Before applying to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM

Image of Unilever JM (towards the benchmark)

Through the **qualitative research,** it was possible to infer that overall graduates of Management from Nova SBE and Católica Lisbon associate Unilever with **learning opportunities and rotation** (*"They can let us rotate in different areas. (Católica, Management, ST12)*) and a **balanced lifestyle** (using a projective technique: *"Se a Unilever fosse uma pessoa, saía, ia para o ginásio, chegava a casa e brincava com os filhos e tinha a família à sua espera."* (Católica, Management, ST 12)).

Additionally, all masters students recall Unilever's **great portfolio of products and brands** when associating an image to the corporate brand which means that the corporate brand is still not sufficiently strong to attract the best talents.

Finally, there is a perception that the company has a **lack of corporate brand identity** (***"Falta de identidade*** *da marca em si e mais pelas marcas que detém. Ligação directa com o retalho através da Jerónimo Martins"* (Católica, Management, ST 10)). Besides that, Unilever is not only confused with the retailer Jerónimo Martins, mainly due to their joint venture, but also with other companies in the FMCG sectors such as Nestlé and Diageo as shown in the in-depth interviews. Thus, students recognize that Unilever was a hidden corporate brand for a long time and that their positioning is not so clear for other people. This is consequently weakening their branding strategy, negatively impacting the achievement of the goals and becoming an issue regarding the recruitment.

D2. During the application to Unilever's Trainees Program

In this phase of the project we analyzed what people think about Unilever JM during the recruitment process of the Trainees Program. In order to effectively understand the image of the overall recruitment process at Unilever JM from the point of view of the company's targets, we asked them for the reasons that drove them to apply to the company.

Main reasons to apply to Unilever JM

There are two main reasons why people apply to Unilever JM. Firstly, people voluntarily send their application to the company because they want to train for different recruitment processes. Secondly, people apply to Unilever JM because either they are interested in working in the FMCG sector or they have a positive image of Unilever JM. These latter see it as a great marketing school, therefore a good company to develop a career in marketing, and a company with powerful commercial brands.

Great Marketing school and with powerful commercial brands

*"Unilever era uma **boa escola** para começar a trabalhar e **aprender marketing**" (failed in CVs Review, APP9)*

*"I think **Unilever has the most powerful brands**, especially in the Portuguese market. The brands are really meaningful and have a lot of tradition" (TR 6)*

Interest in FMCG

"O que me fez escolher a Unilever foi eu gostar muito da área onde eles estão" (Failed in CV Review, APP8)

Training reasons

"Mandei para todo o lado, tinha ideia de que tinham coisas para Finanças e 1) podia treinar 2) podia gostar da empresa" (Failed in Interview with HR, APP12)

D2. During the application to Unilever's Trainees Program

4th Phase: Assessment center (cont.)

Terrible but challenging

- The interviewees who reached this phase all report that the experience of the selecting panel is very unique and, although "terrible" because they put applicants in uncomfortable situations, it is actually a great and challenging experience overall that they view positively
- *"The most horrifying but the best thing I have ever done." (TR2)*
- *"If you don't know that they are going to treat you badly, you're going to die" (TR5)*

Too elitist

- The only candidate that reached this final phase felt that the company is too elitist because, with the exception of this candidate, all the other candidates present were only from the schools Nova SBE and Católica Lisbon. This could lead to negative word-of-mouth and discourage potential applicants coming from other schools from applying to Unilever JM
- *"Senti que o ambiente era muito elitista, só havia pessoas da Nova e Católica." (Went through all process, APP18)*

Generally, all of our interviewees made positive comments on this particular phase of the selection process. However, one interviewee who did not know what the selecting panel would have consisted in beforehand did not enjoy the experience and made some harsh comments. This could be damaging to the company due to the negative word of mouth this candidate may have already spread to peers and friends

- *"A experiência na Unilever foi de todo a pior que eu tive em toda a minha vida! Ficam coisas boas desse dia, mas a Unilever foi o pior processo que tive em toda a minha vida." (Went through all process, APP18)*

D2. During the application to Unilever's Trainees Program

Cunhas

Throughout the in-depth interviews, many of our interviewees mentioned their suspicions of the existence of *cunhas* in the recruiting and selection process of internships and the Trainee Program at Unilever JM.

This perception can lead to a negative corporate brand image of Unilever JM and may potentially negatively impact the willingness to apply of potential good candidates for the company in the sense that students assume they will not be selected unless they know someone inside and therefore do not apply.

From the quotes selected below, it is clear that these suspicions are present in peoples' minds from the selection process of both internships and Trainee Program and remain intact even after they work in the company, after knowing better their colleagues and the environment they work in. Since we have stated that word of mouth among friends and peers can either have very positive or very negative outcomes for an employer brand, it is best that Unilever JM is aware of this problem and tackles it firsthand.

"Uma rapariga disse-me 'O quê, tu não tens cunha? É que se não esquece, nunca vais passar! " (TR10)

"There shouldn't be someone who gets in just from talking to HR and someone who only needs to make a phone call to get in. Everything should be clear. (…) What about diversity?" (TR 13)

"O meu pai conhecia uma rapariga que estava lá a trabalhar e ela inscreveu-me no programa de trainees" (Failed in Interview with HR, APP13)

"Nowadays, it happens a lot to recruit trainees that didn't go through the whole process because they are sons or daughters of friends of CEO or directors and I think it's not acceptable and it gives a bad image, it looks bad for the company. The trainees that enter through merit might feel a little frustrated" (TR7)

D2. During the application to Unilever's Trainees Program

Overall Perspective of the Process of the Trainee Program

Complete recruiting process

When compared to other recruiting processes, our interviewees felt that the overall selection process at Unilever JM was very complete and the company makes an effort to really assess its candidates and get to know them in order to choose the best. This is very positive for the company because they transmit concern with its applicants

- *"De todos os processos de recrutamento onde fui, aquele foi de longe o melhor e mais bem preparado" (TR3)*

Unclear recruitment process & international opportunities

Our interviewees reported that Unilever JM does not provide its candidates with clear information regarding both the stages of the recruitment process and its duration. Additionally, the international opportunities available were also not clearly communicated and they are only arranged if required by the Trainee.

Delayed communication of results

Our interviewees mentioned that Unilever JM provides delayed communication of results after each phase, even if positive. More specifically, they report that this occurs after the online tests and interview with the HR. This could be negative because candidates may assume in that long period of waiting that they have simply not been chosen to proceed to the next phases of the selection process and, consequently, may concentrate their efforts more towards other companies that they receive feedback from quicker such as Consulting firms that are faster.

No feedback given

Lastly, some of our interviewees stated that they simply do not receive feedback at all from Unilever JM. As reported by them, this has occurred after the CV screening and interview with HR Director. This also leads to a negative image of the company and potential negative word of mouth. In addition, this contrasts the idea that other candidates have of the company being concerned with its applicants.

D2. During the application to Unilever's Trainees Program

Image of FMCG

The FMCG image during the recruitment process of Unilever JM is very similar to the image before applying to the trainees program, which means that there is no need of referring again. This reflects that there is no evolution of the image of this sector or this evolution is not significant.

Image of Unilever JM

As regards the image of Unilever JM, our interviewees associated the company to having a cool and friendly working environment, always in comparison with the benchmarks, more specifically, consulting and banking. The image that Unilever JM gives is the one of a collaborative environment among colleagues and, more generally, an environment where employees can feel comfortable. In addition, Unilever JM is seen as offering good quality work due to its impressive reputation in Portugal stemming from the leading positions many of its brands enjoy on the domestic market. Lastly, Unilever JM is associated with being a great marketing school, especially for those who are just entering the working world and want to pursue a career in marketing or, more generally, in the FMCG industry.

*"That kind of companies have a **cool environment,** people feel more easy-going"*, (failed in the 1st CVs screening, APP 1)

*"Tem **boa reputação**, é rigorosa e tem qualidade"*, (failed in the 1st CVs screening, APP 3)

*"A Unilever era **uma boa escola para começar** a trabalhar e aprender marketing"* (failed in the 2nd CVs screening, APP 9)

*"Tenho ideia que tem um **ambiente bastante jovem e amigável**"*, (failed the interview with the HR, APP 13)

D3. After entering in Unilever JM

Working experience at Unilever JM

Unilever JM offers the Trainees Program as a professional learning program to graduate students younger than 25 years old, in which the company focuses its recruiting strategy. The company also offers the opportunity of doing internships to students without previous professional experience, according to temporary needs of the company.

The Trainees Program intends to give talented graduates the opportunity to build a career in the company and become a future leader. Due to the differences in the career path, the classification of a Trainee and an Intern as well as the selection process and the conditions of both programs are different, as can be seen below in more detail:

Internships

- The intern is an employee with a temporary position.
- The selection process consists in CV screening and interview with HR and it is a fast process.
- Internship opening positions arise according to the company's needs.
- Internships have an official duration from a minimum of 3 months to a maximum of 1 year.
- The contract can be extended until 1 year.
- The salary is around 500 euros/month.
- It is difficult to stay in the company with a contract and therefore interns are incentivized to apply to the Trainees program.

Trainees Program

- The Trainee is an official employee of the company.
- The selection process consists in CV screening, online tests, CV review, interview with HR and assessment center. It is a slow, challenging and difficult process.
- There is an annual beginning date, generally in September.
- Trainees Program have the duration of one year and a half.
- The salary is around 1500 euros/month.
- Most of the trainees stay in the company after the program and are promoted to other functions.

D3. After entering in Unilever JM

Interns

Working experience at Unilever JM

Besides the goal of evaluating Unilever brand image, we make use of the qualitative research to infer the perceptions of both interns and trainees' working experience at Unilever JM. For this, we asked interns and trainees to describe and evaluate their path in the company.

Interns' working experience perception

The Interns complain about their working conditions in general. For them working as an intern means having lack of support from the company and of recognition for their work that is also reflected in a low salary. There is even a feeling of exploitation and bad environment in some departments and therefore the department where they are allocated and their supervisors seem to have an important role in their perception of the working experience, either negatively or positively.

Moreover, Interns do not see their expectations being met and they perceive that there are differences in treatment between interns and Trainees and therefore they do not see themselves valued at all.

Low salary

*"Somos **pessimamente mal pagos(...)**"* (INT 4)

*"É **ridiculo o que se recebe;** a Unilever pode fazer isso porque as pessoas valorizam mais ter aquilo no curriculo, agora se **as pessoas passam a gostar da Unilever... Não!"*** (TR 12)

Unmet expectations

*"Senti que **nunca me davam o trabalho que eu queria** fazer e depois de ter estado imenso tempo num departamento, não poderes fazer algo **só porque estás de passagem**, é um bocadinho **frustrante**"* (TR 16)

No recognition and support by the company

*"I have this feeling that **interns** are very under-rated, they are **not valued at all**. I think that is just stupid because interns here do a lot..."* (TR 13)

*"Mas tenho noção que dão **muito mais apoio a um trainee** do que a um estagiário."* (INT 3)

Departments and supervisors influence interns' experience

*"Nós somos mesmo **explorados,** há dias em que és mesmo **maltratado,** no meu departamento o **ambiente é mesmo, mesmo mau**"* (INT 4)

*"Tive **vários chefes** e **gostei de todos**. Quanto ao meu chefe de agora é uma **pessoa impecável**, faz tudo pelos colaboradores, preocupado, atento.."* (INT 5)

Great School and provides experience and a good reputation

"Sabes que estás numa grande escola e vais ganhar curriculo e experiencia" (INT5)

D3. After entering in Unilever JM

Working experience at Unilever JM

Trainees

Trainees' working experience perception of the First Month

Conversely to Interns that do not have a clear program structure, Trainees benefit from having a more structured program. The Trainees Program is divided in phases in the following order: 1) integration that consists in a welcome day with presentations, ethical and safety code of the company given by members of Unilever JM; 2) 2-weeks training and 1-month field experience as a salesman; 3) Trainee Program for 18 months where Trainees have the possibility to rotate among different areas; 4) evaluation, where Trainees are evaluated based on their performance and their future in the company is decided.

Integration in the company - Welcome day → Training for 2 weeks + 1-month field experience → **Trainees Program for 18 months** → Evaluation

Throughout the qualitative research, Trainees were asked to describe their first month working experience at Unilever JM and then their overall perception of the program. When they spoke about the first weeks in the company, they positively recalled the support received from the executive board and the importance of the training and field experience as a salesman to learn the business and get to know the clients and the commercial brands.

Regardless of all the support felt by the trainees, specifically trainees former interns complained about not having the same support and training opportunities as Trainees with no previous experience in the company.

Great support from the executive board

"A comissão executiva perde imenso tempo a preparar apresentações para ti. Portanto ***tens logo um apoio."*** (TR 9)

Starting as salesman is an enriching learning experience

*"****Familiarizei-me muito com as marcas****, deu para* ***conhecer o cliente de uma maneira mais pessoal***" *"se fosse logo para o* ***escritório*** *se calhar ainda* ***não sabia metade das coisas de vendas***" (TR 3)

Differences in treatment between new trainees and former interns

" Como tínhamos de assumir as nossas funções, ***não fizemos o programa de vendas****, que eu gostava de ter feito."* (TR 16) *"Nós* ***não tivemos muito apoio*** *porque já estávamos cá dentro"* (TR 14)

D3. After entering in Unilever JM

Working experience at Unilever JM

Trainees

Overall Trainees' working experience perception

Contrarily to interns, when Trainees spoke about their overall experience at Unilever JM, they manifested a positive perception particularly in terms of professional recognition. In that sense, Trainees feel valuable and trusted by all the members of the company which is reflected in their good salary and in the autonomy opportunities that they enjoy. Moreover, Trainees highlight the learning opportunities that they receive within an amazing corporate environment.

Responsibility

*"They gave me **immediately responsibility** and you feel that you are important to the company and **make a difference**"* (TR 8)

Recognition by the company and other employees

"Não é «lá vem o puto da universidade»!" (TR 10)

"(…) Everyone knows who you are now. Everyone smiles at you." (TR 15)

Friendly and young corporate environment

*"People are very **friendly, young**. The environment was **even better than what I was expecting**"* (TR 6) *" Como o ambiente da Unilever **não há igual**"* (TR 9)

Autonomy

*"Dão te uma **autonomia** diferente acreditam que seremos **os futuros líderes e managers da Unilever**"* (TR 7)

Great learning experience

*"É espectacular porque é uma **escola**, então se quiseres ir para **marketing ou vendas**"* (TR 16)

Good salary

*"O programa de trainees é um programa de formação **bem remunerado**"* (TR 14)

*"You are really **well paid**, which is not common"* (TR 2)

D3. After entering in Unilever JM

Working experience at Unilever JM

Trainees

Overall Trainees' working experience perception (cont.)

Although Trainees praise their working conditions and the Unilever JM environment in general, according to Trainees there are some points in the Trainees Program and in the career prospects that are contestable and ambiguous. Regarding the Program, they claim there is a mismatch of job description, which is disappointing. With regards to career propects, within the company, Trainees claim that the company is not clear on their career paths.

Unknown career path

*"The only thing not so good is the fact that we **don't know exactly our career path** within the company due to the constant changes"* (TR 8)*"**Ainda não sei** muito bem **o que vou fazer**, eles ainda não me disseram"* (TR 3)

Mismatch of job description

*"Há muita gente em que lhes dizem **que vão rodar e depois ficam** imenso tempo sempre **na mesma funçao"*** (TR 16) *"You spend one year and a half **supposedly changing** between functions, but there are **people who don't .**And I am a bit **disappointed**"* (TR 13)

D3. After entering in Unilever JM

Trainees & Interns

Image of FMCG sector

Once again the image of the FMCG is really similar, in this case between during the recruitment process and after entering in Unilever JM.

Image of Unilever JM

In order to evaluate Unilever JM image, we asked also both Trainees and Interns to describe what comes to their mind about the company and to compare it with other competitors such as Google, L'Oréal, Portugal Telecom and Mcksinsey.

Although Interns claim about their working conditions in general at Unilever JM, they recognize and see the company as a great school particularly in marketing and as company with a young and informal environment by having young people in all positions, which is something that attracts them. On other hand, there are some Interns that have a negative overall Unilever image, especially in terms of its recruitment and human resources team.

In its turn, Trainees, by having autonomy opportunities in their program, see Unilever JM as a corporation that allows their employees to get earlier responsability. On the other hand, although Trainees generally positively recall their working conditions and have a positive image of Unilever JM.

Great (marketing) School

*"É indiscutivelmente bom no sentido em que **é uma escola mais completa**,(...) o conhecimento que eles te dão é incrível"* (INT 4)

Young and informal and environment

*"Uma coisa boa da Unilever é que tem um **ambiente informal, jovem,** tem muitas pessoas jovens, mesmo em cargos de chefia e isso é uma coisa que me cativa"* (INT 1)

Responsability to employees

"Sei que na Unilever dão-te responsabilidade mais cedo" (TR 1)

Reduced employees rewards:

"As pessoas da Unilever são baratas no mercado porque têm imenso conhecimento e experiência, e o salário ou outras compensações monetárias não aumentam com a progressão de carreira" (TR 11)

E. Additional Research

Besides developing a qualitative and a quantitative research we also gathered additional insights from an analysis of the companies considered as the benchmarks of Unilever JM and in the individual assignments elaborated.

Analysis of the benchmarks

The companies used as benchmark defined by Dra. Ana Dionísio are Galp Energia, Portugal Telecom, Heineken, Google and Procter & Gamble. Morgan Stanley, Mckinsey & Company, L'Oréal and Vodafone were added since we understood from the qualitative research that these companies were referred several times by applicants. They are leaders in different sectors and have programs that can be compared to Unilever's Trainees Program, since they offer entry level opportunities or trainees programs that applicants consider at the same time. This happens because all of these companies offer the opportunity to have career growth and learning experiences in a company with a good reputation and market leadership. Also, some of these companies were chosen by some applicants over Unilever. It was therefore useful to create a better image of the competition and the advantages and disadvantages faced by the company. (Benchmark analysis in Appendix 15).

Moreover, each one of us made an assignment regarding a specific topic that is incorporated in the whole report. For additional insights of our report, we considered that the following topics should be mentioned since they are the ones that add extra information to what was referred in the rest of the report.

Importance of communicating "company culture" to job seekers

Receivers of communication (potential applicants):

- Generally, if job seekers perceive to have a strong fit with a company they will be more likely to apply and join that company. This occurs because job seekers are attracted to companies offering work environments that fit with their personalities.
- "Company culture" is part of the evoked set of attributes in the minds of applicants since it is recalled as an important factor from the start to the end of the recruitment process.

E. Additional Research

Sender of communication (Unilever JM):

- While it is crucial to communicate information about company culture that accurately reflects the reality of the organization, companies may be inclined to provide more positive and less accurate information regarding this particular organizational attribute.
- "Company culture" should be communicated to potential applicants, as long as the information provided is an accurate representation of the actual culture and work environment of the company.

Human Capital Trend

Flexibilty in the workplace is becoming a human capital trend (potential competitive point of parity):

- Analyzing the human capital trends of 2013 (Deloitte, Company Report), **workplace flexibility** appears as one trend that contributes directly to the development of the best employer brand image of a company. Nowadays, technology is always evolving, new means of communication are available and people need to be *elastic* in their professional and personal life. Moreover, any employer brand providing flexible working schedules or giving freedom to employees to manage their time and location of work, will be able to salient from competition. Unilever should invest in this concept since it fits in their vitality and sustainability culture but has to be worked on.

Strong competitor

Google stands out from the competition offering a lot of special benefits

- Google guarantees special benefits on campus such as first-class dining facilities, gyms, laundry rooms, massage rooms, haircuts, carwashes, dry cleaning, commuting buses, on-site medical and dental care, yoga, free drinks, snacks and meals (Thinking Book, Publications). Moreover, Google also stands out from the competition with a unique recruitment process where peers integrate the process and are responsible for interviewing potential employees. Consequently, the cool workplace association is immediately associated to Google in applicants' minds.

E. Additional Research

Importance of communicating the sector in which the company operates to job seekers

- First of all, not all job seekers have the same concerns and preferences when applying for a job, which means that a job can be chosen according to one of three perspectives: search for specific companies, search for preferred functional areas, **search for a preferred sector**.

- For the third perspective, the **sector works definitively as an influencer**, however **not always in a positive way**, since the sector might not be well defined or be negatively perceived. In that sense, a company that communicates a sector in those situations can be damaging its image and will not attract the best talents to work there.

- This happens in some sectors in specific, such as the fast moving consumer goods, which means that if a company in this sector, particularly Unilever, tries to attract applicants through the communication of the sector, this will end up keeping them away.

- Therefore, specifically for Unilever, instead of mentioning the sector, this **company should mention**:
  - **Its own advantages** that can match the advantages of the sector, or not, such as the reputation, the learning experience gained, the informal environment, the powerful brands, or other.
  - **The functional areas** that exist in the company (marketing, sales, finance, supply chain…) in order to attract talent with different backgrounds instead of repelling them since they perceive the company and the job position in the wrong way (work in supermarkets or work only in marketing).

F. Conclusions and main recruiting issues

After presenting the results of the fieldwork, it is important to highlight the most important conclusions and the main recruiting related issues, that should receive special attention. They are presented following the reasoning of the two different targets defined in the objectives: conclusions and issues related to both targets, conclusions and issues related to the core target and finally the ones related to the secondary target. Issues will be then addressed in the recommendations part, where we will try to answer to them.

F1. For both targets

CONCLUSIONS:

- Masters Students choose firstly job positions that fit with the academic background within specific sectors;
- Students in general prefer an informal environment (including finance students, although it seems a paradox);
- Friends, companies' websites, career forums, schools's job platforms and social networks are the most common touchpoints used by master students to get in touch with companies;
- Courses or projects developed by students in partnership with companies develop the involvement with that company and therefore the willingness to apply;
- A direct contact from the company increases the willingness to apply of the students.

RECRUITING RELATED ISSUES:

- The career forum creates mismatching expectations because students are informed that they may deliver their CV to application proposes, but afterwards they do not receive any answer;
- The career section of the website is not clear;
- Applicants complain about the unfairness of the recruitment process. They mention that there are "cunhas" that facilitate the entry in the Trainees Program and that the online tests are too restrictive because they only evaluate logical and numerical skills and besides that they can be done in group;
- People who went through the recruiting process complain about not having personalized feedback after each of the phases;
- Although the recruitment process is perceived to be complete, applicants claim about the unclearness regarding international opportunities and about the delayed communication of results after each phase.

F. Conclusions and main recruiting issues

RECRUITING RELATED ISSUES (cont.):

There are people who end up refusing an Unilever JM' offer due to faster and earlier recruitment process of consulting firms or due to the irresistible incentives of other companies such as Google. It is important to understand what are the advantages that other companies might offer and particularly, from these advantages, what are the ones that can be used by Unilever JM to attract the best talent.

As referred before, some companies are better perceived by people which can make them choose those companies over Unilever JM. In some situations Unilever JM also possesses the same advantages but do not uses them in their own benefit. This happens particularly with Google in which its informal environment and unique culture attract some of the best talent. This company already attracted applicants that were in the process of Unilever and quit to join Google or that were already inside Unilever JM and left the company.

Regarding consulting firms, the main issue that Unilever should take into consideration is their reduced selection process compared with the one of Unilever. These companies recruit the best talents before Unilever because they end their process before. Moreover, consulting firms also start their process earlier which is another way of reaching the applicants in advance.

WORKING EXPERIENCE RELATED ISSUES

Trainees feel that their overall working experience is positive since they fit in the friendly and young environment of Unilever JM, can grow as professionals and feel that their work is recognized by the company. However, they complain about the unknown career path;

F. Conclusions and main recruiting issues

WORKING EXPERIENCE RELATED ISSUES (cont.)

Negative image caused by internships' conditions

An important issue that is not related directly with the trainees program is the negative image associated with the internships. Below are presented four examples of situations in which Unilever could improve in order to reduce the internal issues caused in internships. If the company doesn't reduce or eliminate these issues, it can became a serious problem because not only interns get a worst image of Unilever but also other people, potential applicant, due to word-of-mouth that they hear from the interns that work at Unilever.

Interns perceive they do not have enough support, they are not recognized by their work which is also reflected in their low salary. They feel exploited in some situations and it might be influenced by the department in which they are working and by their supervisor. Moreover, interns do not see their expectations met and they perceive that there are differences in the treatment between interns and trainees and therefore they do not see themselves valued as they think they deserve.

Perception of disorganization in the recruitment process

Finally, the recruitment process is also considered a main issue since applicants are contacted due to their connections with other applicants or through other way that shows lack of organization in the company. Interviews can be done in one day and on the next one they already start working. This perception lead to an image of disorder and interns feel, in some situations, that their internship is not planned and that they are only doing the job of everyone who needs and "filling gaps".

Word-of-mouth

As was referred above, several issues lead to bad word-of-mouth. We have concluded from our qualitative research that opinion influencers (such as friends, family, etc…) play a major role on the willingness of graduates to apply to a company. Thus, positive word-of-mouth is crucial to increase Unilever's brand image and willingness to apply among potential candidates. An idea that is spread throughout the company is the existence of "cunhas" to get access to certain job positions which make people perceive the process and the company as unfair.

F. Conclusions and main recruiting issues

IMAGE RELATED ISSUES

F2. For core target

Although the primary target has an overall positive image about Unilever and manifests willingness to apply, it perceives Unilever's identity as weak hidden by the incorporation of strong commercial brands and by the partnership with a colossal group leader in Portugal, Jerónimo Martins: **ISSUE**

F3. For secondary target

- Finance people do not associate Unilever with finance vacancies/opportunities: **ISSUE**
- FMCG is not a clear sector in the minds of students, mainly in the secondary target where it is confused with retailers: **ISSUE**
- The secondary targets reveals confusion about Unilever in three different ways: with its business activity, with Jerónimo Martins and with other companies in the same sector, such as Nestlé and Diageo: **ISSUE**
- This target only recall the Unilever's products, categories and commercial brands without any specific reference to the corporate brand itself: **ISSUE**

F. Conclusions and main recruiting issues

F4. Evolution of Unilever JM Image

After having analysed the perceptions of people who never applied to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM, applicants and both interns and Trainees in the company, we concluded that Unilever JM's image starts becoming clearer as they go through all the application process and enter in the company.

Before applying, there are graduates who have a general image about the sector where Unilever JM operates, Unilever brands, the comfortable environment and the learning and rotation opportunities that they can enjoy through the Trainees Program with no specific information about working conditions , benefits and the company in itself. Besides that, there are people who come from other study areas and schools who confused Unilever in three ways: with Unilever's business activity, with Jerónimo Martins, and with Nestlé and Diageo.

In addition, when people go through the application process, they start becoming aware of the internal aspects of the company and start seeing Unilever JM also as a great marketing school and with a good quality work.

After entering in the company, people end up building a formal and more secure image of Unilever JM and in particular about the corporate environment, the working conditions, the incentives, and the career perspectives in the company. They start seeing Unilever as a company with a collaborative environment which gives responsibility to their employees but low employee rewards in terms of salary as they grow in the company.

Graduates in general:

Comfortable environment

Company to learn & rotate

Competitive/ Challenging

Great portfolio of products and brands

Confusion with retailers or other companies (other schools besides Nova ad Católica management):

- Jerónimo Martins
- Nestlé
- Diageo

Before Applying

During application

+ Great marketing school

+ Good quality work

After entering in Unilever

+ Collaborative environment

+ Low employee rewards/recognition

+ Responsibility to employees

F. Conclusions and main recruiting issues

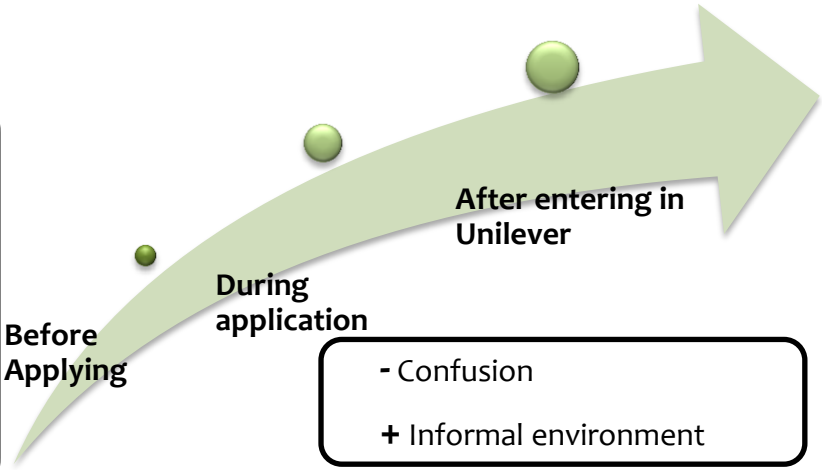
F5. Evolution of FMCG Image

After having analyzed also the FMCG sector's perceptions of people who never applied to the Trainees Program of Unilever JM, applicants and both interns and Trainees in the company, here we concluded that the FMCG's image does not change a lot along the process.

Before applying to the Trainees Program, people in general have a global image of the sector and they do not mention anything about the sector environment. They associate FMCG sector to marketing and to daily life and say that the sector is constantly changing everyday what makes it being a dynamic and competitive sector. Moreover, there are people from others schools and study areas besides Nova and Católica Management that although having an image of the industry, they confuse it with the retail sector. Comparing to other sectors, FMCG is perceived to offer a lower salary, slower career progression and lower professional stability.

From the moment people go through the recruitment process on, they start having also a clearer image about the working conditions in the sector and making less confusion. This people's image remains with their entry in the company.

- Association with Marketing
- Sector present in people's daily life
- Dynamic and challenging
- Confusion with retailers (others schools and study areas)
- Low salary
- Slow career progression
- Low professional stability



G. Recommendations

G1. Positioning

According to Keller, "*positioning is all about identifying the optimal location of a brand and its competitors in the minds of consumers to maximize potential benefit to the firm*". 1 As such, in order to define the positioning of Unilever JM as an employer brand, we are going to identify the target, frame of reference, the ideal points of parity (PoP) and points of difference (PoD) brand associations, given the frame of reference and the reasons to believe in the points of difference.
First of all, we have to say that two positionings are going to be defined, since we are considering the Trainee program and the internships separately.

Trainees

TRAINEES

The **target** was defined by Dra. Ana Dionísio for the project and it takes into consideration students finishing their second degree. From what we understood from our qualitative research, students that are interested in applying to a Trainees Program seek for learning opportunities and the opportunity to grow in their career. This is particularly relevant because it is exactly what a Trainees Program is meant to be: a powerful learning experience and a way to guarantee a future contract inside the company, since Unilever JM' Trainees Program is meant to create the future leaders of the company.

The **frame of reference** is clearly defined as being an employer brand that offers a Trainees Program, with the following points of parity developed in the next paragraph.

In terms of **points of parity** regarding the benchmark that was defined, we understood that the mobility across functions and markets was one of them, since other Trainees Programs such as the one of Vodafone also offers the possibility to rotate between different functional areas (Sales, Finance, Marketing, etc…). Another point of parity is the autonomy that the job in itself allows the Trainee to have: in the entry level positions and other Trainees programs that we are considering, employees have the autonomy to work by themselves.

1 Strategic Brand Management – A European Perspective , Kevin Lane Keller, Tony Apéria, Mats Georgson, Second Edition, FT Prentice Hall

G1. Positioning

G. Recommendations

Trainees

Regarding the **points of difference** , given the frame of reference established above, we can point out: the young and passionate working environment, since the workforce is young and the working environment is particularly informal (parties are thrown to celebrate brands' birthdays, the company celebrates the women's day), people work in teams and help each other, there is the feeling of "belonging to a family" among workers: "Integration is very easy (…) people are very friendly, young and they accept you. You don't feel apart." (TR 6); a long-term career stability, since the company hires the trainees in order for them to stay in the company after the end of the trainees program: "A Unilever acredita que seremos os futuros líderes e managers da empresa e é mesmo verdade! Apostam muito em nós" (TR 7); another PoD is the sustainability core and future concerns that the company embodies and try to transmit to all its employees: a proof of that is the Sustainable Living Plan Unilever global started in 2010, under what Unilever JM started to use only environmental friendly cars, and other practices such as "Programa Vitalidade" (see appendix picture) to improve employees' health. Despite the fact that these sustainability values were put in practice recently, some of the employees interviewed already mention this important side of the company's culture environment: "A Unilever actua no mercado sempre com uma preocupação ética e ambiental" (TR 10).

Positioning Statement

"For students finishing their 2nd degree whose benefits sought are learning opportunities and career growth (***Target***)
Unilever Jerónimo Martins is an employer brand offering a Trainees Program with possible mobility across functions and markets and autonomy (***Frame of reference***)
which offers a young and passionate working environment oriented by sustainability values and a long-term career stability (***Points of difference***)
because

- Many activities and celebrations inside the company make the working environment a friendly and informal one, made of teams helpful to each other, which creates a feeling of "belonging to a family"
- Unilever created the Sustainable Living Plan, under which Unilever JM adopted several sustainable local practices such as the use of environmental friendly cars and "Programa Vitalidade" created, for instance, to improve employees' health
- The trainees program is designed to offer a career stability in the sense that the goal is for trainees to stay in the company after 1 year and a half of training and become future leaders (***Reasons to believe***)

G. Recommendations

G1. Positioning

Interns

In terms of **target**, we should consider students from a first or a second degree and also recent graduates that are looking for learning opportunities. That is the idea of an internship, since the main objective is to provide a valuable learning experience to the student.

The **frame of reference** here is an employer brand that offers internships from 3 months to 1 year, which covers the possible durations for internships.

The main **point of parity** regarding the benchmark is the fixed duration of the internship, which is something common in most internships, guaranteed by a formal contract signed in the beginning of the internship.

In terms of **points of difference**, the most important one is the young and passionate working environment, since the workforce is young and the working environment is particularly informal (parties are thrown to celebrate brands' birthdays, the company celebrates the women's day), people work in teams and help each other, there is the feeling of "belonging to a family" among workers. Another PoD is the fact that working in Unilever JM is considered to be a "stamp" in the CV of any person for the reputation the company has and for being considered a "great marketing school"(as refered during the in-depth interviews); finally, the sustainable practices and concerns about the future are another PoD since it affects all employees inside the company.

Positioning Statement

"For university students and recent graduates looking for learning opportunities (***Target***)
Unilever Jerónimo Martins is an employer brand offering internships with a fixed duration from 3 months to 1 year
(***Frame of reference***)
which offers a young and passionate working environment oriented by sustainability values and the stamp in the CV of a company with reputation (***Points of difference***)
because

- It has a young workforce and a friendly and informal working environment, made of teams helpful to each other, which creates a feeling of "belonging to a family"
- It is a considered a company with reputation, many times referred as a "great marketing school" in our qualitative research
- The company is increasingly adopting new sustainable practices, following the Sustainable Living Plan and "Programa Vitalidade" (***Reasons to believe***)

G2. Recommendations to address both objectives

What does Unilever JM currently do?	What should be kept and why?	What should be changed?	What should be added?
Presence in the Career Forum of some schools: Nova School of Business and Economics Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics ISCTE Business School ISEG Lisboa School of Economics and Management	• Give information regarding current job opportunities and answer to the students' doubts since it is the goal of the Forum • Distribution of samples from the commercial brands to create the link between the corporate and the commercial brands	•Do not collect CVs in a physical format and give to students a card with the email and the application dates to send their CVs in order to better manage the amount of Cvs received and the students' applications.	• Information should be given specifically regarding the application process to the Trainees Program and Internships. Information about the career opportunities in the different functional areas and environment at Unilever JM should be added. Students could play interactive games with the companies' representatives to increase the involvement with the employer brand
Insititutional presentations in schools	• Present the company, its business activity and the organization of the recuitment process • Answer to students' doubts	• Clearly explain the organization of the recruitment process for both internships and Trainees Program	• Given that the target are young masters students and Unilever JM as an employer brand needs to transmit their young and friendly working environment, it should choose young collaborators such as recent trainees to be present in the presentations
Presence in some schools' events (eg: Student Pitch in ISEG, speed networking in Nova SBE	• This presence is important because it creates awareness and it is an easy way to engage with the target and evaluate potential good candidates		• Create more events like this to give the possibility to students to learn from these experience;

G2. Recommendations to address both objectives

What does Unilever JM currently do?	What should be kept and why?	What should be changed?	What should be added?
Send emails directly to students, inviting them to apply to the Trainees Program	• Keep sending the emails directly to the masters students in order to get in contact with them	• The emails should be sent to students from different study areas because Unilever JM offers positions in different functional areas and therefore satisfy the need of the fit with academic background, found in the research	• In order to address each of its target groups, an explanation of the different functional areas, in which the trainees will be able to work (Marketing, Finance, Sales, …) should be added

Through email, Unilever should contact students from the :

- Send an automatic email to masters students from Management, Finance, Marketing and Industrial Engineering from the following schools: Nova School, Católica Lisbon, ISCTE and ISEG, IST and FCT covering the following topics
  - Catchy interesting phrase
  - Brief introduction of Unilever JM and its line of business
  - Description of the departments that potential candidates can work in, to attract people from different study areas; this will give a clear information to Finance students about the Finance department in Unilever JM, so that they do not associate it with "mere" Accounting
  - Provide a link to the website to provide more information
  - Link to the online platform in order for students to apply

Word-of-mouth control: One way to do it is trying to control in the best way possible the internal working environment by ensuring the satisfaction of employees (e.g. raising the salary of interns, making sure that supervisors are guiding the interns through their job, ...). If the company manages to monitor word-of-mouth, the willingness to apply may not be influenced by a negative image.

G2. Recommendations to address both objectives

What does Unilever JM currently do?	What should be kept and why?	What should be changed?	What should be added?
Online presence through the website	• The website tool should be kept as well as the career section and the link to apply	• A clear link to apply in the website to the Trainees Program is necessary: "If interested please click here to apply…" Next to the link should be the deadline of the delivery of the CV (1month in total)	• A section under the **tab "Carreiras"** dedicated to explain local opportunities and global ones: inside the local, clearly explain the Trainees Program and the internships; inside the global, clearly explain the Future Leaders Program. In more detail, the Trainees program section should include the specific minimum requirements to apply, such as the areas in which a student is expected to have knowledge in.

NEW SUGGESTIONS

Youtube Career channel with videos created by Unilever JM:

- Videos with a **tour of the company**, clearly showing the informal environment of the office
- **Testimonials** of trainees from different areas and brands, focusing on the good environment of the company
- Creation of a **viral video**: the idea is to show how passionate employees from Unilever JM can be about the brands they work for; some ideas can be: employees freaking out in a supermarket corridor, putting their brands' products in front of the others; the tone of the video is humoristic; the goal is to create willingness to apply to the company.

Create a **Unilever Jerónimo Martins Facebook page,** where the company could not only advertise the corporate brand, but also the career opportunities, job openings, processes that are occurring, etc.

G3. Recommendations to address objective I

HOW TO KEEP ATTRACTING THE BEST TALENTS FROM THE CORE TARGET?

What does Unilever JM currently do?	What should be kept and why?	What should be changed?	What should be added?
Partnerships with Work Projects in Nova SBE	• The partnership should be kept since it increases the willingness to apply to the company	-	-
Partnership with Brand Management course in Nova	• The possibility to work with a real brand in a real context is very enriching for the students; it creates not only awareness but a good image of the company	• Nothing should be changed, since it is always considered as a great experience for students and most of them apply to the company in the end of the course	-

NEW SUGGESTIONS

• Unilever Brand-Off Challenge:

The challenge consists in 1 entire day in Lisbon and Oporto, in which teams of 3 have to compete in different challenges regarding finance, marketing and supply chain subjects and problems. At the end of the day. 3 winning teams will be selected in each city. The 6 final winning teams of the local challenge compete in a final in Lisbon . The final challenge would be a series of problems to solve during a specific time, in which leadership, team work and communication skills would be tested. The winning team gets the prize of a 6-months internship. The recommendation is to implement the challenge maximum in the next 2 years. The objective for the core target would be:

- To give to Management students even more knowledge about Unilever JM (through the possibility of working with problems of the company's brands)
- To give them an enriching experience with the company – which not only affects the image of the brand Unilever JM, but can also motivate people to apply
- Discover talented people and evaluate potential good candidates; the best ones can even be directly contacted to apply.

G4. Recommendations to address objective II

HOW TO ATTRACT THE BEST TALENTS FROM THE SECONDARY TARGET?

What does Unilever JM currently do?	What should be kept and why?	What should be changed?	What should be added?
Visits to Unilever JM' plants	• The visit in itself	• The visit has to be planned with the goal of attracting students from Industrial Engineering for instance	• A presentation of the company and the career opportunities inside Unilever JM

NEW SUGGESTIONS

• Partnerships with other courses from different study areas:

Eg: Finance courses such as Venture capital and Mergers & Acquisitons, in order to attract Finance students.

The reasoning behind is to make Finance students get to know Unilever JM and make them understand the kind of financial activity the company has, so that they do not have the idea that it is "only accounting".

• Unilever Brand-Off Challenge:

Same event as explained before for the core target, but where the objective would be:

- Create awareness of the company among the secondary target
- Put the students in contact with Unilever JM' brands and its line of business, so that students get to know the company better
- Understand whether different courses from the secondary target would fit the needs of the company or not
- Try to evaluate potential good candidates for future admissions

• Organize Open days to Unilever's offices in Lisbon for students to:

Have an experience inside the company, get to know the different departments/brands, have a virtual visit to plants (Olá,...), get to experience the fun part of the company and its culture (cooking activities in the Vaqueiro kitchen, networking with employees and trainees, play a game to guess the brand each person represents).

G5. Recommendations for the recruitment process of the Trainee Program

After concluding what are the main issues regarding the recruiment process for the Trainees Program, suggestions are given ir order to make it more effective.

Create an automatic feedback for each phase

Applicants need to receive an answer from the HR department after each fase. In the first 2 phases, the suggestion is to create an automatic feedback through email. Then, we suggest to directly call the applicants for positive and negative answers regarding the HR interview and the Selecting Panel with a general feedback to the applicant.

Make the process shorter

Since many good candidates may be being lost to other companies that recruit earlier than Unilever JM (as it is the case of most consulting companies), it is really important that the entire recruitment process for the Trainees Program become shorter than it is.

- Applications should start earlier (in November instead of December)
- Applicants should be warned about the time they have to wait for each phase's answer (eg: "you will have an aswer until the 15th January")
- Each phase should not be separated by more then 1 month, so that aplicants do not lose interest nor accept any other offer from another company while waiting for an answer from Unilever JM

G5. Recommendations for the recruitment process of the Trainees Program

Online tests

After the CVs In the email inviting to take the online tests, a message should state that the tests should be done alone . It should also refer that in the next phase (HR interview), applicants would be tested through logic and numeric questions (during the interview), in order to test the actual knowledge of the candidate.

Peers Counseling

Like other companies that already take advantage of the knowledge acquired by other employees, Unilever JM could create the possibility for applicants that pass the HR interview, to meet with potential peers. The idea would be to make the process less stressful, where applicants could share some doubts with actual employees from the company that are used to the business and the type of sector.

Career Mentor for the integration in Unilever JM

In order for the new Trainees to feel more integrated and to have someone in who they can count for during their learning period, a career mentor could be established. The role would be to help during the integration phase to get to learn the company, the office, the business and to advise in terms of career path. This opportunity should be communicated to students during institutional presentations, so that they are aware that they will be helped through.

G6. Recommendations for the recruitment process of interns

Particularly through the qualitative research, problems were found out regarding the recruiment process of interns. The way of recruiting people to internship positions seems confusing and disorganized. People simply apply because they know there is a vacancy but this is not clearly communicated, which makes it more complicated for students to apply to internships in the company. Suggestions regarding the recruitment process of interns are given in order for the company to better deal with candidates' expectations.

Selection of the interns:

- Candidates should be able to freely apply whenever they wish, through a platform present in the website of Unilever JM
- With the CVs collected, the HR department can create a "pool of talents", so that when the company needs a new intern, people from this pool are contacted. The pool of talents can have a limited duration of 1 year, in order to make a refresh of the possible candidates every year.

Candidates should also be clearly informed, on the website, about:

- The specific recruiting process for internships
- What the company is looking for in a intern
- The current opportunities that exist inside the company for internships positions
- The fact that interns are recruited according to the needs of the company

Once interns are selected, the company should:

- Integrate them in Unilever's events or employees' activities (e.g. give new products, innovations as a gift, which already happens with other employees)
- Give feedback to interns regarding their performance half-way and in the end of the internship

H. Discussion and limitations

During the project we faced some limitations. Dra. Ana Dionísio, former Unilever JM HR Business Partner and our touch point with the company who defined the objectives with the team, left the company in the beginning of the project. This led to a restructuring of the HR department and recruitment team. As such, a new HR employee took the position and the new team seemed to be more reluctant to the project. However, all the support was given from the company's side, which helped a lot in terms of inside contacts and inside information, to complete the project. Many of the interviews were also conducted inside Unilever JM' offices.

Another limitation found was the difficulty in finding available people from all the study areas and schools that we defined in the beginning for the qualitative research. For some groups, we had to establish results with less people than what would have been preferable. In any case, the 67 interviews made were incredibly enriching in terms of experience for us as future professionals as well as in terms of content for the project.

Finally, we found out that some issues regarding the recruitment process cannot be avoided due to the recruitment rules from Unilever Global. Therefore, it is impossible to make recommendations to solve particular issues since our project is for Unilever JM and this local company does not have enough power to take decisions regarding some of the steps of the recruitment process. Also under the recruitment process issues, Unilever image is often related to *Cunhas* but this a sensible topic to control and overcome.

Additionally, besides the limitations we believe that our project has potential for further discussions on certain topics. Despite the fact that it is mainly focused on the image Unilever JM as a corporate brand among current students and recent graduates who plan on pursuing a career in Portugal, the project also aims to uncover the underlying criteria that push job seekers to apply to a certain company within a certain sector in the Portuguese market and what are the most common means through which future candidates have their first touch points with companies. As a result, the information provided at this general level, through the execution of appropriate marketing research, can be a useful tool for other companies in Portugal that want to understand what makes a company attractive.

H. Discussion and limitations

The project also reveals what an applicant is looking for in a job (pre-applying) may not be what is most valued afterwards (post-employment). The comparison between the perceptions of the job market from students and from actual employees highlights that students are normally not aware of what it really means to be working, have a lack of knowledge about some sectors and most of all have specific common (and, at times, incorrect or confused) associations regarding some companies and some sectors.

Although the project tackles the recruitment process specific to Unilever JM, the insights gained on the different phases of the process can be useful not only to Unilever JM since the four phases described earlier share some similarities with a broader range of companies. The perception that recent applicants have shared with us provide a point-of-view that companies would not have access to otherwise, which can also be interesting to explore.

Through this project we have understood the importance of certain criteria among job seekers, namely wanting to work in a company that is multinational, offers an informal working environment and offers a job that relates to the person's academic background. In addition, we have seen the level of importance that factors such as word-of-mouth and the influence of peers and friends have on the decision to apply, which is representative of the society we live in today, where individuals base their decisions on other people's experiences. Moreover, we have seen that future candidates seek clarity from companies, both throughout the selection process and regarding the job description for the future position they will cover. This is something companies must not overlook.

Under the scope of the globalization, the labor market is also extending to a more broad and international recruiting strategy. In this project we also understood how important international opportunities are in the Portuguese market for job seekers and therefore we would like to suggest a further research on the possibility of developing and clearly defining an international program within offices of a company, similar to the "Erasmus Program" within schools. Moreover, until what extend could the program be a major and sustainable point-of-difference in Portugal?

As final remark, it would be interesting to conduct a future research which serves as a follow up to the implementation of the recommendations provided in this project. A team could monitor the outcome of the actions proposed and implemented and contrast them with the initial situation of the company prior to our project. Consequently we would be able to verify the conclusions we reached from our market research as well as the effectiveness of the suggestions proposed.

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