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Seasonal Employees as Brand Ambassadors?

A Bachelor Thesis about Management Strategies for Seasonal Employee Commitment and Brand Ambassadorship

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Abstract

Today, the majority of employees in the tourism industry work under contingent and fairly insecure working conditions, among them seasonal employees. In this industry, the business of amusement parks and resort hotels is one with a high quota of seasonally hired front-line employees. Research from Human Resource Management pinpoints the underlying risks of low commitment among employees in an industry afflicted by insecurity and short-term contracts. Committed employees are nevertheless desirable for service organizations because of their loyalty and engagement. Research from Internal Marketing shed light on employees as the ones that define the brand, which shines through in every service encounter. By combining these two research fields, a connection arises between committed employees, service quality and representation of brands by employees. For the amusement park and resort hotel business, the high quota of seasonal employees becomes a challenge due to the risks of lacking commitment and employee turnover. Due to the fact that these brands can be famous and associated to entertainment as well as high service, the contribution from front-line employees becomes crucially important. Their commitment is important because they need to serve as brand ambassadors. From a management perspective, three theoretical key factors for committed brand ambassadorship have been identified: orientation, benefits and socialization between co-workers. In respect of exploring how the challenges and brand ambassadorship are dealt with in reality, a comparative case study has been made between two brands in the business by the support of empirics from interviews, observations and consultation of company material. The analysis has led up to three conclusions. The conclusions highlight that committed brand ambassadorship is taken seriously by management as seasonal employees are considered to be of high value for the brands and the organizations as a whole. However, challenges for achieving committed brand ambassadorship are addressed only to a certain extent, withheld by limitations attached to seasonal employment and real-life circumstances. As it turns out, a gap between theory and practice calls for further research about seasonal employees as assets for brand representation, specifically for this complex business.

Key words: seasonal employment, contingent employment, employee commitment, branded service encounters, brand personality, brand ambassadors

Preface

After almost three years of studying Service Management, I have learnt of the enthusiasm for employees and how they contribute to service quality and the reputation of service organizations. The tourism industry is especially interesting to explore because of the numerous types of non-standard employee arrangements and the possible flaws or consequences that may entail. The choice of focusing on human resources and brands started from a genuine interest and has taught me valuable lessons for the future. Needless to say, this thesis has been incredibly inspiring and worthwhile to write. For anyone who reads this thesis, my hopes are that you will also find this topic interesting and worthwhile since employees and brands together play an important role for all service organizations.

Contributions

I would like to thank the companies that agreed upon collaborating with me: Liseberg, Hotell Liseberg Heden, Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel & Congress Center. The generosity and positive spirit from these have definitely contributed to the possibility of writing this thesis in the first place. Thank you to everyone who stood by for interviews and shared your valuable insights. Also, I would like to thank my tutor Katja Lindqvist for her valuable comments and feedback. Her contribution has been a guiding light during a time of both peaks and falls. As always, I also need to thank my grandmother for always believing in me and sending me unconditional love every day. Last but not least, my thankfulness goes to my boyfriend, my classmates, my friends and my family for their endless support and encouragement.

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Table of contents

1.0 Introduction to seasonal employment today.....	5
1.1 Seasonal employees and commitment to brands	6
1.2 The amusement park and resort hotel business - Tivoli and Liseberg.....	7
1.3 Aim and research questions	8
1.4 Disposition	9
2.0 Methods and methodology.....	10
2.1 A comparative case study.....	10
2.2 Qualitative approach	11
2.3. Semi-structured interviews	12
2.3.1 The purpose of conducting interviews	12
2.4 Observations.....	13
2.5 Consultation of internal and public company material	14
2.6 Consideration of ethical principles	15
3.0 Theory and theoretical framework.....	16
3.1 Background theory - a definition of seasonal employment.....	16
3.2 Seasonal employee commitment – a challenging task to handle.....	17
3.2.1 Fluctuations of demand in the tourism industry	17
3.2.2 Job insecurity – a cross to bear for the industry.....	18
3.3 Brand ambassadorship – committed representation of brands	19
3.3.1 A review of brand ambassadorship and familiar brands	19
3.3.2 The key factors for a brand personality – mind, heart and body	21
3.3.3. Brand ambassadorship at Disneyland	22
3.4 Employee commitment and brand ambassadorship	23
3.4.1 Orientation – a way of learning the brand.....	23
3.4.2 Benefits – signs of recognition.....	24
3.4.3 Socialization – collaboration between co-workers.....	24
4.0 Committed brand ambassadorship in reality.....	26
4.1 A presentation of the two cases Liseberg and Tivoli	26
4.2 Commitment challenges for Liseberg and Tivoli	27
4.2.1 Seasonal fluctuations and its implications for management.....	28
4.2.2 Less seasonality for the hotels.....	29
4.2.3. Company cultures and rates of returning seasonal employees	30
4.2.4. Insecure working conditions	31
4.3 Committed brand ambassadorship towards Liseberg and Tivoli	33
4.3.1 Liseberg and Tivoli – two recognized and spectacular brands	34

4.3.2 Orientation for seasonal employees	35
4.3.3 Benefits for seasonal employees	37
4.3.4 Socialization and collaboration between co-workers	39
4.4 Summary.....	42
5.0 Conclusions and discussion.....	43
5.1 The link between challenges, commitment and brand ambassadorship.....	43
5.2 Limitations for brand ambassadorship	44
5.3 The real-life circumstances	45
5.4 The importance of the topic	45
5.5 Limitations of this thesis	46
5.6 Proposals for further research	47
Bibliography.....	48
Appendixes.....	54

1.0 Introduction to seasonal employment today

Summer and other seasonal work is not just for kids anymore /---/ With the slow economy and recent recession, the profile of seasonal workers has continued to evolve (Bronson 2014).

For a number of years, the hospitality industry as a whole has been one with the highest share of non-standard employees (Whitehouse et al. 1997, p. 36). Over the past decades, one of the trends surrounding the European workforce is the rise of different types of non-permanent employment agreements (Smithson & Lewis 2000, p. 681). Seasonal employment is one such agreement. In the tourism industry especially, one of the divisions of the hospitality industry, seasonal employment is a frequently found hiring arrangement and has been for a long time (Ainsworth & Purss 2009). The term *contingent work* is probably more frequently discussed and recurs as typical for organizations in need of workers for fixed periods of time. Employees might benefit from a more flexible working arrangement, for instance in combination with studies or other work arrangements going on simultaneously. Other reasons for accepting a contingent occupation might be to try out a specific job or to increase one's income (Polivka & Nardone 1989, p. 10-13).

Contingent work arrangements are featured by contingency as an element, which takes a step away from traditional characteristics of an employment relationship (Connelly & Gallagher 2004, p. 977). Regardless of the length of the contract, contingent employees are aware that their relationship with the organization will end one day and they are usually aware of when that day will come (de Gilder 2003, p. 588). This aspect can be applied to seasonal employees as they function as an engine for organizations and the brands of these during peak seasons, whilst being completely or partially absent during the rest of the year:

/.../ most of them naturally work two to three seasons. Three seasons is pretty average. Well, of course the reason for this is a higher education or something similar they are doing, often in Gothenburg but not only /---/ So when they finish their studies they naturally find another job and that's when they stop working for us (my translation – C1, 2014-02-13).

The cyclical construction of such arrangements might open up for restrictions for employee commitment due to the hiring situation itself. In a global economy of intense competition, quick changes and indefinite hiring arrangements, the focus on keeping employees satisfied and committed is often overlooked by organizations (Thomson & Hecker 2000). To refer to a study about seasonal employees in the snow sport industry, the commitment of seasonal employees is specifically complex and might diminish in case of deficient attention and stimulation from management (Ainsworth & Purss 2009). Consequently,

although seasonal employees are important assets for the operation during peak seasons, the relationship between them and management might be restrained by a lack of full attachment.

1.1 Seasonal employees and commitment to brands

The reason for highlighting the dilemma of committed seasonal employees comes down to the importance of commitment. Committed front-line employees are desirable for most service organizations today. When management treat their employees as internal customers and build up commitment to accomplish company goals, the employees answer back with engagement. In turn, their engagement is reflected in service encounters with customers, which altogether brings a sustainable competitive advantage for the company (Thomson & Hecker 2000). As Keller & Richey (2006) emphasize, the employees are the ones representing the identity of the organization and personifying who the organization is. At the end of the day, the values, words and actions of them will affect the personality of the brand they are working for.

The importance of front-line employees is specifically crucial since their behavior shines through in service encounters with customers. Their behavior can be utilized by management as a brand-building advantage, based on a reflection of the brand during every service encounter with customers (Sirianni et al. 2013). Management of service organizations should prioritize their efforts specifically towards front-line employees, according to Jerome & Kleiner (1995, p. 22). These employees need to be trained and motivated in order to be able to perform monotonous tasks yet still maintain a positive attitude (ibid., p. 22). For all the above mentioned reasons, committed front-line employees who represent their brands fairly are likely desirable for most service organizations. Thomson & Hecker (2000, p. 168-169) pinpoint the expression *brand ambassadors* for employees who nurture their brands by showing a genuine interest and enthusiasm during service encounters with customers. Brand ambassadors are important since they affect customer loyalty and customers' willingness to recommend the company more than any traditional marketing function would (ibid., p. 168-169). Therefore, this thesis will focus on seasonal front-line employees and their contribution to the upholding of brands. As research has stressed, their representation of brands might be critical since it affects the organization, the customers and probably also themselves.

In spite of the above mentioned benefits of investing in front-line employees, research does not cover a great deal of practical examples of how such investments should be addressed specifically towards seasonal front-line employees. Even literature written about seasonal work typically overlooks the potentially cyclical nature of this specific kind of employment (Ainsworth & Purss 2009, p. 221). Due to indistinct and disputed definitions of seasonal employment, it is difficult to find relevant theoretical guidelines for management on the matter. The research gap of how to address commitment for seasonal employees in the sense of invoking brand ambassadorship makes this topic relevant to research. Based on the nature of seasonal employment, is it possible for management to unlock the full potential of seasonal employees? In respect to contributing with empirical research on the matter, this thesis is going to explore two brands in a people business with numerous seasonal front-line employees – the amusement park and resort hotel business.

1.2 The amusement park and resort hotel business - Tivoli and Liseberg

Most people probably associate the brands of amusement parks with entertainment, expectations and service quality. For amusement parks, satisfied front-line employees are essential since the number of them rise during peak seasons (Mayer 2002). Here, seasonal employees might have numerous service encounters with tourists who stay at a resort hotel and/or visit an amusement park. A holiday package for tourists typically includes everything from accommodation to dining, culture, scenery and activities (Laws 2002c, p. 67-70). A daytrip to an amusement park is another option. In any case, a visit to an amusement park and/or a resort hotel is a total experience for the customer, which might create expectations on the service delivery. Referring back to the dilemma of employee commitment, amusement parks as well as their seasonal employees might face certain challenges with regards to commitment and employees acting as brand ambassadors.

Two brands, Liseberg and Tivoli, will serve as the empirical cases for this thesis. To gather data on these brands, the following organizations will be investigated: Liseberg, Hotell Liseberg Heden (hereafter referred to as Hotell Heden), Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel & Congress Center (hereafter referred to as Tivoli Hotel). These organizations utilize seasonal employment as a tool for operating the organizations over peak seasons. Liseberg is ranked to be the third most recognized brand in Sweden (Veckans Affärer 2014) while Tivoli correspondingly holds the position as the third most recognized brand in Denmark

(*Tivoli Årsrapport* 2013, p. 15). Hence, Liseberg and Tivoli are two fairly familiar brands, likely recognized by the general public in their respective cities. This makes it relevant to investigate how the respective managements address commitment for their seasonal front-line employees in the form of enabling them to be brand ambassadors.

1.3 Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how amusement parks and resort hotels address seasonal employee commitment and their ability to act as brand ambassadors. A comparative case study will be made between management strategies for employee commitment directed towards seasonally hired front-line employees and the challenges associated with seasonal employment. The comparison between two brands, Tivoli and Liseberg, is made in order to create a richer and more dynamic empirical basis.

Research questions:

- *What are the challenges for amusement parks and resort hotels with regards to commitment and seasonal front-line employees functioning as brand ambassadors?*
- *How are the challenges addressed by management?*

The features of seasonal employment and brand ambassadorship brought up in this thesis define a specific business and organizational context. The comparison is thus made in order to highlight nuances and contrasts rather than to make generalizations for the industry as a whole.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis is built upon the following disposition:

Chapter 2: The second chapter takes the reader through the methodology behind this qualitative comparative case study. The methodology chapter will explain how the comparative case study about Liseberg and Tivoli was conducted and from which approach. Furthermore, the chapter will review the choice of methods; interviews, observations and consultation of documents. Lastly, the chapter will round off with a review of the ethical principles that have been taken in to consideration.

Chapter 3: In correlation with the qualitative methodology and methods, the chosen research derives from Human Resource Management and Internal Marketing. This chapter is divided into four parts, beginning with background theory before moving over to employee commitment for seasonal employees and the challenges related to such. Thirdly, brand ambassadorship will be explained and lastly, the similarities between employee commitment and brand ambassadorship will be highlighted.

Chapter 4: Continuing from the research in chapter three, the theoretical key factors for employee commitment and brand ambassadorship will be applied to the empirical cases Liseberg and Tivoli. The fourth chapter commences with a presentation of the organizations and is thereafter divided into two parts, in accordance to the research questions in chapter one. The empirics from interviews, observations and documents will be analyzed and rounds up to two findings.

Chapter 5: The fifth chapter summarizes the thesis by presenting three conclusions and a final discussion. Three conclusions will be presented, referring back to the aim and research questions in chapter one and the findings in chapter four. The discussion will highlight implications of the conclusions. Lastly, the discussion will bring up the possible limitations of this study as well as proposals for further research.

2.0 Methods and methodology

In respect to investigating the research questions, four companies have been involved in this study. This collaboration will be narrated within the first section, after which the approach, choice of methods and ethical considerations will be reviewed.

2.1 A comparative case study

This study is grounded in a genuine curiosity for how service organizations strategically strive towards higher employee commitment for seasonal employees and address the challenges related to such. The topic is especially relevant to explore since seasonal employees seldom play a role in empirical research (Ainsworth & Purss 2009). In respect to finding out how the dilemma is handled in practice, Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel were initially contacted with the purpose of compassing a case study delimited to Tivoli as a brand. These organizations were chosen because their brands are familiar and they recruit seasonal employees annually. Moreover, the organizations are associated with the same brand, allowing for internal comparisons. Due to limited access to Tivoli Gardens, Liseberg and Hotell Heden were contacted with the purpose of making a comparative case study between the two branding concepts Liseberg and Tivoli. Thereafter, I chose to formulate this thesis into a comparative case study of seasonal employee commitment towards the two brands of Liseberg and Tivoli. To delimitate the length and complexity of the study, focus is narrowed down to management strategies directed towards front-line seasonal employees in the amusement parks and seasonal receptionists in the hotels. Alvehus (2013, p. 75-78) points out that the idea of investigating cases often concerns exemplification of a more generally occurring phenomenon. Comparing two cases opens up the opportunity to find interesting contrasts and more renderings. Here, the two brands Tivoli and Liseberg serve as examples in the amusement park and resort hotel business and offer interesting similarities as well as nuances. However, Alvehus (2013, p. 75-78) asserts that a possible limitation of making a comparative case study is the deficiency for a deeper understanding of each case and the lacking of ability to draw generalizations from the findings. Therefore, I have critically reflected on this limitation and maintain the usage of these companies as examples.

2.2 Qualitative approach

This study takes off from a qualitative approach, in correlation with the chosen theoretical perspective on Human Resource Management and Internal Marketing as these research fields together relate to employees and representation of brands. Since the research questions point at challenges and internal strategies connected to management and their relationship with seasonal employees, interpretations of the theoretical and empirical materials have been prioritized during the processing of the analysis. As Bryman (2008, p. 340) explains, a qualitative approach means that the empirical material is processed in an interpretative manner rather than one where fixed measurements are quantified. Qualitative research brings up the two alternatives of inductive versus deductive approaches to the material, depending on whether the empirical or the theoretical material functions as the basis of conclusions (Svensson 2011, p. 192-193; Alvehus 2013, p. 21-22, 109). However, the development of this study process requires a side-by-side consideration of theory and empirical material; before, during and after the collection of the empirics. A parallel reflection of empirics and theory is called abduction (Alvehus 2013, p. 109), which is used here. As is the case of most social scientific research, the empirics can be rendered differently depending on research questions, previous knowledge and the theoretical perspective (Svensson 2011, p. 185). Thus, these three factors have likely influenced the interpretations and findings of this study. For instance, subjective interpretations based on my previous knowledge and studies of Service Management have presumably been influential. Besides, a theoretical management perspective has been chosen to answer the research questions and has therefore affected the findings and conclusions. This perspective was chosen because a management perspective is considered to be suitable for topics such as ensuring that everyone in an organization share common organizational values and goals (Svensson 2011, p. 189).

For this qualitative case study, three methods have been used; semi-structured interviews, observations and consultation of documents. The point of using more than one method is the allowance to grasp a phenomenon from several angles, which might enhance the credibility of the investigation (Svensson & Ahrne 2011, p. 27-28). The three methods will now be reviewed, beginning with semi-structured interviews.

2.3. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are chosen as the main choice of methods for this study because interviews are often used to find out more about how people read in their experiences (compare with Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne 2011, p. 56; Alvehus 2013, p. 81). Initially, the organizations were contacted in late January through coordinating instances found on the respective websites. Thanks to the help of the coordinators, I was offered contact with four people of strategic importance for my research questions; a Communications Consultant at Tivoli Gardens (hereafter referred to as A1), a Duty Manager at Tivoli Hotel (B1), a Human Resources Specialist at Liseberg (C1) and a Reception Manager at Hotell Heden (D1). Employees holding work positions and experiences matching research questions are classified as strategically selected informants (Alvehus 2013, p. 67). These informants are considered to be strategically important for the study because they hold management positions and are in touch with seasonal employees. By asking these informants for access to more interviews, three additional interviews were made with a Receptionist at Hotell Heden (D2), a Receptionist at Tivoli Hotel (B2) and a Reservations Duty Manager at Tivoli Hotel (B3). The purpose of conducting interviews with the receptionists was to gain inside information about how seasonal employees are introduced by them, while B3 is considered to be strategically important due to her management position and knowledge about branding. Identifying more informants through the connection of established relationships is typically categorized as snowball sampling. The advantage of snowball sampling is the effectiveness it brings in terms of reaching more informants, while a possible disadvantage could be that the informants know each other and have a common view on matters (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne 2011, p. 43; Alvehus 2013, p. 68). In this thesis, the fact that some of the informants knew each other and sometimes gave similar answers to questions is however rather advantageous. Namely, the analysis takes in to consideration that several informants have similar standpoints, which strengthens the results and conclusions.

2.3.1 The purpose of conducting interviews

Initially, the purpose of conducting the interviews was to select a homogenous group of interview informants for each case in order to make direct comparisons easier between the two cases. This turned out to fail because of a greater ease of accessing Liseberg than

Tivoli Gardens. However, I was offered an interview over e-mail with A1, at Tivoli Gardens. Sending questions over e-mail to a group of people is a common way of exercising interviews today. Nevertheless, certain limitations are important to be aware of, such as the likelihood of a fairly shallow response (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne 2011, p. 41). Here, the answers were shorter than the answers from the live interviews and thus possible to misinterpret. The issue was solved by maintaining e-mail correspondence as more answers were needed.

The remaining six interviews have been semi-structured, based on interview guides with themes relating to the research questions (to observe two of the interview guides, see appendix 1). Emphasis has been placed on creating a comfortable situation for the informants during the interviews, by listening patiently and by asking questions as a way of encouraging the informants to be comfortable to speak freely. As an interviewer, I have also strived to take a neutral position. This attitude coincides with advice on how an interviewer should approach their informants (Eriksson-Zetterquist & Ahrne 2011, p. 39-40). Moreover, the average time of each interview landed at one hour, which was discussed and set before each interview situation. All interviews were recorded on a cell phone, in agreement with each informant, and thereafter transferred to a computer before being transliterated. Some of the interview citations in chapter four have been slightly adjusted to better match written language. A copy of anonymous transcription is however available upon request.

2.4 Observations

To supplement the interview material, two observations were performed for each empirical case, e.g. one for Liseberg and one for Tivoli. Observations can be made as a way of observing naturally occurring situations (Alvehus 2013, p. 93). The amusement parks were observed externally due to closure. The reason for making these observations was to further describe and analyze the branding concepts between the respective cases, through visual impressions and photographs that illustrate how the brands are communicated externally by management and also the expectations that this communication might cause for employees. Thereby, the observations are linked to the research questions. Two short versions of the observations are found in chapter four (4.3) and the full version is available upon request. Moreover, photographs were taken to supplement the content of the observations (see appendix 2). These observations were open and performed in public

spaces as complete observations of symbols, signs and similar. With regards to taking observatory notes and photographs inside the hotels, permission was acquired from the receptions. This approach overlaps some of the advice in regards of how to be permitted access to closed environments (Bryman 2008, p. 383-384; Lalander 2011, p. 91-98).

Non-interacting observations are sometimes discussed as to whether they should be classified as ethnographic observations when the observer is not completely engaged with the surroundings. However, Bryman (2008, p. 389) points out that this type of engagement is unlikely typical for all situations and complete observations are therefore not to be completely disregarded from ethnography. For this study, the observations focused on gaining an understanding of the brands. Therefore, no interactions with people were needed for this method. During the observations, notes were carefully taken in detail, complemented by the help of the photographs. Bryman (2008, p. 395-411) underlines the importance of writing down detailed reflections, as well as using photographs as a way of remembering details more easily. Nevertheless, photographs are never completely unproblematic and can be tied to copyright questions (ibid., p. 395-411). In order to avoid such questions, permission of taking photographs was acquired when needed. Moreover, no photographs of people figure in this thesis.

2.5 Consultation of internal and public company material

Apart from the interview- and observation materials, internal and public company material have been consulted and compared in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the two brands are communicated internally and externally. In turn, this helps to strengthen the empirical material and thereby answer the research questions. The documentation stems from the company websites for Liseberg, Tivoli and the hotels, annual reports, one CSR-report, a branding book and brochures. These documents were selected on the basis of updated, readable and qualitative content. Besides, all of the documents are in some way marketing material and thus signal representation and meaning of the brands. This selection process has similarities with Scott's four criteria of quality of documents; authenticity, credibility, representation and meaningfulness (Bryman 2008, p. 489-493). The consultation of external material has resulted in a reflection on how the two brands are communicated (see appendix 3), with the purpose of highlighting how and where the general public, including employees, may confront these familiar brands. Overall, the

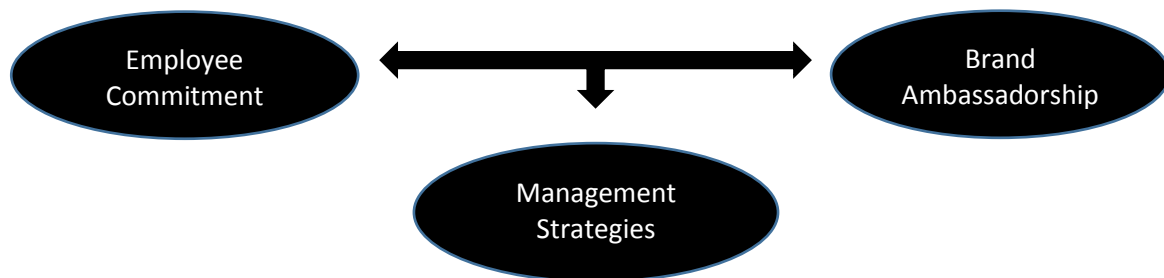
consultation of material has played a valuable function as complementary empirics for the analysis, alongside the other methods.

2.6 Consideration of ethical principles

During the process of sorting out and analyzing the empirics, ethical principles have been prioritized in order to protect the informants and the organizations. In the debate on research and ethics, three of the mentioned ethical principles are approval, confidentiality and requirements of usage (Svensson & Ahrne 2011, p. 30-31). Approval refers to the informants' right to receive information about the purpose of the study and the choice of participating on a voluntary basis. Confidentiality concerns the importance of storing and presenting information about the informants in a way that protects their anonymity. Requirement of usage concerns the author's obligation to hold back personal data from purposes which could harm the individuals (ibid., p. 30-31). To fulfill these ethical principles, all informants have been informed about the purpose and length of the study. Besides, the appreciation of their voluntary attendance has been taken into consideration. Moreover, the empirical material has been stored on a personal computer and processed only by me. Personal data is omitted in this study as all informants have been titled according to work positions. This has been done as a way of stressing their representation as employees, not as individuals. Lastly, the transliteration of the interview material is anonymized with respect to protecting the confidentiality for all informants.

3.0 Theory and theoretical framework

The main research for this thesis stems partly from the research field of Human Resource Management and partly from Internal Marketing. This chapter is divided into four parts, beginning with background theory. The second part concerns employee commitment and the challenges attached to such. Next, the third part will discuss brand ambassadorship. The expression brand ambassadorship is used as a reference to employees' representation of brands. In the fourth part, seasonal commitment and brand ambassadorship will come together since these have similar traits. The diagram below explains the different theoretical elements of the theoretical framework and how they are interlinked.



3.1 Background theory - a definition of seasonal employment

In respect to background theory about seasonal employment and brand ambassadorship, research is limited. Seasonal employment often falls in to the category of contingent work and has not on its own been a major point of attention in empirical research (Ainsworth & Purss 2009). Thus, definitions of seasonal employment per se are difficult to find, whereas there are definitions for contingent work. One earlier academic article about contingent employment is written by Polivka & Nardone (1989) and concerns definitions on contingent work. Polivka & Nardone (1989) narrate that Audrey Freedman coined the term *contingent employment arrangement* in 1985. This arrangement was described as an expression for the employment situation faced by companies in need of preliminary workforces "... at a particular place at a specific time" (Polivka & Nardone 1989, p. 9-10). The term has been associated to numerous employment practices, going all the way from part-time work to home-based work. As a development from the earlier definition, Polivka & Nardone themselves have established a definition for contingent work:

Any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a nonsystematic manner (Polivka & Nardone 1989, p. 11).

This definition will serve as praxis for seasonal employment in this thesis. Seasonal employment will thereby be categorized as a type of contingent work, a kind of employment that depends on the need of the employer rather than a guarantee for long-term employment. An important observation made by Polivka & Nardone (1989, p. 10-11) is the non-consistent link between contingent employees and commitment. According to them, the impossibility of promising contingent employees a continuing relationship with the organization is also why full employee commitment will not fall into place.

3.2 Seasonal employee commitment – a challenging task to handle

Employee commitment is important for most service organizations. The term employee commitment refers to an emotional attachment between the employee and the organization or the “petrol to a car” (Thomson & Hecker 2000, p. 161). According to Thomson & Hecker (2000), a lack of such emotional attachment would affect the organizational brand negatively, which concerns everything from the identity to the reputation of the organization. Therefore, challenges attached to seasonal employment will now be presented in order to gain a deeper understanding of this dilemma. The identified challenges are fluctuations of demand and job insecurity, since these can be associated to seasonal employee arrangements. These challenges will relate to the first research question: *What are the challenges for amusement parks and resort hotels with regards to commitment and seasonal front-line employees functioning as brand ambassadors?*

3.2.1 Fluctuations of demand in the tourism industry

Fluctuations of demand will be studied as the first challenge since it is a criticized characteristic of the tourism industry, generally regarded as more of an issue than an opportunity (Whitehouse et al. 1997; Krakover 2000; de Gilder 2003). Fluctuations are there because of a constant reliance on matters such as levels of economic growth and interest rates. Due to this, some fluctuations of labor supply will always be a necessity for the industry to function. The number of employees are manifold during peak periods and the results are therefore potentially irregular (Whitehouse et al. 1997, p. 35-37). Having said this, organizations seemingly have other priorities at heart than developing higher commitment among their seasonal employees. Contingent hiring arrangements can be explained as a way of controlling expenses, a goal being fulfilled when employees work for a limited period of

time or at less than full capacity. Organizations generally evaluate the use of contingent employees in a positive manner, a strategy that works in most types of situations from a practical point of view (de Gilder 2003). These theories are brought up because lack of commitment among seasonal employees is often discussed as a phenomenon interlinked with the very nature of the seasonal work arrangement.

Apart from the fluctuations of demand in general for the industry, this thesis is also going to take hotels in to consideration. Some theory brings up fluctuations of demand for hotels precisely. Krakover (2000) describes seasonal employees working in hotels as a category of peripheral labor, as opposite to core labor. The majority of employees in the tourism industry belong to the peripheral labor pool today, which facilitates the hotel business in terms of finding employees for peak seasons. Krakover's study (2000) demonstrates how management foresees and adapts to factors which cause fluctuations of demand throughout the year. In hotels, seasonally hired employees are not only present during the expected seasonal changes but also between seasons, to be ready to fill in as changes of demands suddenly occur (Krakover 2000, p. 461-468).

3.2.2 Job insecurity – a cross to bear for the industry

Lack of commitment is often discussed as a phenomenon interlinked with the very nature of seasonal employment or other types of contingent work arrangements. Seasonality and contingent hiring arrangements are considered to be the root cause for a series of problems within the tourist industry, according to theory (Ismert & Petrick 2004; Ainsworth & Purs 2009; de Gilder 2003). Job insecurity is one standpoint for the academic discussion about weak employee commitment, especially referring to young people. Due to the short-term status of a contingent job, employees are typically more eagerly aware of the importance to keep an eye open for alternative workplaces, according to de Gilder (2003). According to Smithson & Lewis (2000), it is important to understand that the commitment of employees has historically been linked to the job security that the organization offered them in return for loyalty. The cycle was completed as organizations provided their employees a series of benefits for a lifetime, whereupon the employees responded to their gratefulness with loyalty and commitment. Results from Smithson & Lewis's study (2000) about young employees show that labor security has become a means not expected by the majority of young people today, although they would like to have it. Therefore, they often choose to

take care of their own career paths instead of waiting for their employers to do it (Smithson & Lewis 2000). Similarly, Koene & van Riemsdijk (2005) mention that contingent employees might show signs of low commitment, typically reflected by an unreliable attitude. This is manifested by, for instance, a high rate of employee turnover, even in the beginning of the employment. As far as management goes, Ainsworth & Purss (2009) mention that they may not see the point of seasonal workers feeling significantly committed to the organization either. If they did, an identification process could start between the seasonal worker and the organization, which would open the question about long-term employment. Another statement from internal marketing about employee commitment, not solely for seasonal employees, underlines that management often overlooks commitment:

The mistake many managers make is to concentrate solely on understanding or on winning minds without also striving to build commitment or winning hearts (Thomson & Hecker 2000, p. 161).

According to Thomson & Hecker (2000), employees who lack attachment and passion to deliver service might bad-mouth the company or become weak links. This research is important to discuss because insecure hiring arrangements and attitude issues from both employees and management might obstruct commitment and thus also brand ambassadorship. To summarize, the challenges presented indicate that further support might be needed for commitment and brand ambassadorship. Thus, brand ambassadorship will be defined next to understand how the challenges can be overcome.

3.3 Brand ambassadorship – committed representation of brands

In the following part, key factors for brand ambassadorship will be discussed. This part will include a model for corporate brand personality, followed by a review of brand representation at Disneyland. This part will be discussed in relation to the second research question: *How are the challenges addressed by management?* Before that, brand ambassadorship and familiar brands will be defined and explained.

3.3.1 A review of brand ambassadorship and familiar brands

Brand ambassadorship concerns how service organizations ensure that employees at all levels are committed to one brand. Keller & Richey (2006) claim that each brand has a

personality of its own. Brand personalities have become essentially important to manage for modern organizations. As markets become more mature and competition within industries increases, products and services are no longer enough for organizations' capacity to be competitive: "... the success of a 21st century business will be defined as much by *who* it is as *what* it does (Keller & Richey 2006, p. 74). Whereas the identity of an organization used to be tied rather to what the company was doing, the persona of the organization and its employees are now playing a more settling role for success (Joshi 2007; Grönroos 2008; Keller & Richey 2006; Sirianni et al. 2013).

In the discussion of creating qualitative service encounters, front-line employees stand out as a factor worth taking in to consideration because they are the ones who deliver the service (Laws 2002b; Sirianni et al. 2013; Joshi 2007; Grönroos 2008; Jerome & Kleiner 1995). A rising trend is to include front-line employees as an essential source of organizations' brand building efforts (Sirianni et al. 2013). The concept ventures away from the traditional notions of service encounters into the new term *branded service encounters*. The characteristic of branded service encounters is that employee behavior and brand positioning go hand in hand, reflected in the employee's approach, appearance and personal manners. When employee behavior and brand personality coincide, the brand will be perceived as more holistic and balanced (Sirianni et al. 2013, p. 108-119). These theories are emphasized in this thesis because they indicate that successful service organizations need committed employees, willing to represent their brands.

In this thesis, two fairly familiar brands, Liseberg and Tivoli, are in focus. Intangible assets and liabilities seem to be shaped for brands which have their heritages bound to a specific country (Laws 2002c). A feature of this form of destination branding is the unique position that the destination enjoys, something that produces effects on the general public. Namely, people come to differentiate the destination and the associated products from competing destinations, according to traits which are important for their personal inspirations. This way, an emotional boundary builds up between the products and the customers, which goes hand in hand with people's self-image and life-style concepts. Laws (2002c) makes this very clear as he points out that "brand advantage is obtained by image building which emphasizes specific benefits and contributes to an overall impression of one brand's superiority" (2002c, p. 63). As the definitions of brand ambassadorship and familiar brands have now been reviewed, it is time to discuss key factors for brands and how employees play an important role for the personality of brands.

3.3.2 The key factors for a brand personality – mind, heart and body

A brand can be identified by what and who it is – its personality. According to Keller & Richey (2006), corporate brands are different from product brands. The personality of a corporate brand offers a broader range of associations connected to the brand, such as people, relationships and values. A corporate brand personality is made up by what the organization does as much as by who it is, namely the employees. The key constituents of a brand personality are *Mind*, *Heart* and *Body*, which together create a synergy since the traits can be strengthened by the co-presence of one another (Keller & Richey 2006, p. 74-75), which will be resubmitted and further explained in chapter five.

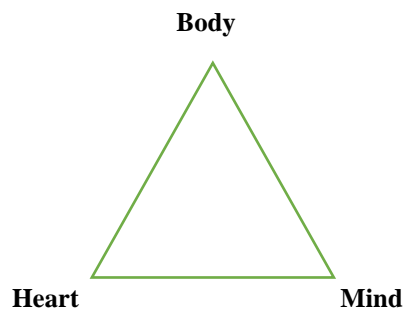


Figure 1:3 Corporate Personality Traits (remodeled, after Keller & Richey 2006, p. 76)

According to this model, a brand personality is made up by the interpretations of employees at all levels in the organization, whom together represent the brand as one. This means that their actions and words are visualized in the brand. These traits can influence employees and affect how the organization will be perceived by the general public (Keller & Richey 2006). The mind of an organization (see figure 1:3) comes down to its ability to deal with customer service in a creative manner and to hold a winning position in the market. According to Keller & Richey (2006, p. 76-79), disciplined attitude is how the organization secures adequate and consistent employee behavior throughout the whole company. In order to attain creativity and discipline, the organization needs to inform all employees about the directions relevant for the organization to ensure that everyone is confident with the business goals (ibid., p. 76-79).

The heart (see figure 1:3) refers to the organization as a passionate organization, a company that competes passionately on the market and directs attention to all stakeholders, including their employees. This includes that employees need to feel a passion and liking of what they do and the respective roles they attend in order for the organization to be

successful. According to the model, employees must feel especially passionate about serving customers since the customers are the center of attention. With respect to employees feeling appreciated for their contributions, they need different types of recognition for their efforts, such as increasing benefits (Keller & Richey 2006, p. 76-77).

The body of an organization (see figure 1:3) denotes the organization's capability to ensure a collaborative attitude inside and outside of the company. The company needs to function as one entity, working towards the same goals. This means that the organization needs to promote collaboration between the employees and strive towards a cooperative setting with business partners. Internally, this requires an inter-departmental teamwork culture - an atmosphere where employees naturally look for opportunities to cooperate with each other (Keller & Richey 2006, p. 76-80). This model is reviewed since it emphasizes the essential role that all employees play for brands. In turn, it also indicates what employees need from management to become successful brand ambassadors.

3.3.3. Brand ambassadorship at Disneyland

To discuss how brand ambassadorship can be implemented by management in practice, Disneyland will serve as an example since this thesis focuses on the amusement park and resort hotel business. Similar to the model presented (see figure 1:3), Disneyland approaches their employees according to resembling factors that they believe support the delivery of service quality. According to Jerome & Kleiner (1995), Disneyland works with thousands of seasonal employees each year and stands out as a role model for excellence in terms of giving their employees attention in a way that reflects back in the form of enhanced customer service quality. New employees at Disneyland are introduced to their work through an orientation program on their first day, a program which includes company history, viewpoints and Disney customs. The orientation is held before department-specific training takes over for each individual. The purpose of this program is to allow the employees to gain a comprehension of the company culture and to see how their specific roles contribute to the business goals. Disneyland strives to turn the employees in to people experts; people who can identify customer needs and answer to questions or know where to find the answers as need occurs (Jerome & Kleiner 1995). This type of orientation has similar characteristics as the trait mind (see figure 1:3).

To compare with the trait heart (see figure 1:3), Disneyland also prioritizes recognition and benefits for their employees. One of the take-off points for enhanced benefits at Disneyland, as well as other amusement parks, is the ability for employees to deliver service quality. Benefits could be free entrance to the amusement park for family and friends, company discounts and access to previews and parties during premiers. Variations of benefits, or multiple satisfiers as they are called in amusement parks, are offered to increase the likelihood of job satisfaction and job performance from as many employees as possible (Jerome & Kleiner 1995, p. 23-24).

Lastly, socialization and collaboration between co-workers is also a recurring keyword at Disneyland, similar to the trait body (see figure 1:3). Teamwork between co-workers is a clear point of direction at Disneyland, seen as a means of dealing with stress and endless customer encounters through togetherness and humor. The combined efforts of all employees is seen as a key factor for success at Disneyland, according to Jerome & Kleiner (1995, p. 22-25).

3.4 Employee commitment and brand ambassadorship

The model (see figure 1:3) as well as the presentation of resembling practical factors at Disneyland have been presented since they are similar and thereby work well in combination. By taking both in to consideration, the three key factors for brand ambassadorship are orientation, benefits and socialization between employees. To go back to seasonal employees and their commitment, research about contingent/seasonal employees also brings up similar key words for strengthening employee commitment, which will now be presented. Thus, the interlinked relationship between employee commitment and brand ambassadorship for seasonal employees is now visible.

3.4.1 Orientation – a way of learning the brand

In the academic discussion about seasonal/contingent employees, a persistent key factor is orientation. As training and other support mechanisms are carefully operated by management and special attention is directed toward contingent employees, they will probably interpret a stronger sense of independence and gain a stronger socio-emotional attachment to the organization. Koene & van Riemsdijk (2005) conclude that such efforts can result in a higher employee commitment because the employees are given good reasons to identify

themselves with the organization. These positive effects on employee commitment can be applied to amusement parks. A study from Florida Theme Park clarifies that investment in social orientation programs for new and existing employees has multiple advantages, for example higher employee motivation (Mayer 2002).

3.4.2 Benefits – signs of recognition

Another recurring key factor in research about contingent/seasonal employees is benefits. Results from studies of ski resorts reveal the relevance of providing benefits to seasonal employees, an effort which can spur employee performance and their willingness to return to the workplace from season to season (Ainsworth & Purss 2009; Ismert & Petrick 2004). On the other hand, benefits are not necessarily the answer for stronger commitment among contingent workers (Alverén et al. 2012; de Gilder 2003). According to a study of seasonal employees made by Alverén et al. (2012), benefits or higher payment did not seem to be a significant parameter for job satisfaction. The results concerning the unimportance of payments and benefits connects to *Herzberg's two-factor theory*, according to Alverén et al (2012, p. 1968). Herzberg's two-factor theory depicts that payment is a hygiene factor that prevents job dissatisfaction. Consequently, higher payment does not automatically result in higher job satisfaction (ibid., p 1968). Both of these views on benefits will be taken in to consideration in this thesis as benefits might be an advantage for employee commitment yet not suitable for all situations where seasonal employees are involved.

3.4.3 Socialization – collaboration between co-workers

A third key factor in research about seasonal employees is socialization between co-workers. In studies of seasonal employees at ski resorts, one of the most important factors for returning over seasons and feeling satisfied at work was the level of socialization with co-workers (Ismert & Petrick 2004; Alverén et al. 2012). Results from a second study of an American amusement park demonstrate that front-line employees who are satisfied with socialization with co-workers perform better during customer encounters and thereby contribute to enhanced service quality (Wagenheim & Anderson 2008).

However, other researchers oppose the idea of a management-steered approach to integration between contingent workers. Connelly & Gallagher (2004) argue that a management-steered strategy of building up integration among contingent workers per se

could build fences for knowledge sharing between them and permanently hired employees. Lastly, neither orientation nor benefits nor socialization serve as the sole answers regarding raising employee commitment for seasonal employees. Other importance factors might be the employees' personal interpretations of the organization, job challenges, management attitude and the customers (Alverén et al. 2012; Jerome & Kleiner 1995; Ismert & Petrick 2004). However, these aspects will not be further discussed because they deal directly with the employee perspective and career developments, factors which are not directly linked to the research questions of this thesis.

A short summary

To summarize, the theoretical framework has concerned employee commitment for seasonal employees and brand ambassadorship as well as the management challenges for achieving brand commitment for seasonal employees. This chapter has explained the link between employee commitment and brand ambassadorship, which is also why both of these are in focus in this thesis. According to research, the challenge for the tourism industry is the risk of low commitment among seasonal employees, deriving from fluctuating demands and job insecurity. The framework has generally indicated that a deep understanding and consideration of seasonal employees is vital for management. According to my understanding of the theory, employee commitment likely results in higher satisfaction for both the employees and customers, which will reflect back as improved performance and reputation for the company. Hence, the model (see figure 1:3) and the three key factors presented; orientation, benefits and socialization, may altogether be utilized as important management tools for overcoming the challenges. In the following chapter, the challenges and the theoretical key factors will be applied to the empirical cases.

4.0 Committed brand ambassadorship in reality

In this chapter, the challenges and the ways of overcoming the challenges will be analyzed and discussed in relation to the empirical material. This chapter will be introduced with a presentation of the empirical cases. Next, the challenges presented in the theoretical framework will be analyzed and integrated into the first finding. Secondly, an analysis of brand ambassadorship in relation to the theoretical key factors will be conducted, leading to the second finding. Lastly, the two findings will be summarized.

4.1 A presentation of the two cases Liseberg and Tivoli

Liseberg and Hotell Heden

Liseberg is the largest amusement park in the Nordic countries, according to Liseberg's website (Liseberg 2014a). Liseberg is owned by Liseberg AB, a subsidiary company owned by Göteborgs Kommunala Förvaltnings AB which in turned is owned by the municipality, Göteborgs Stad (Liseberg 2014b). The amusement park has two seasons: summer, from the end of April until October, and Christmas, from mid-November until the end of December (Liseberg 2014c). During the summer season, Liseberg has approximately 2,300 seasonally hired employees. Among these, approximately 500 are newly recruited for each year (Liseberg 2014d).

Liseberg recommends accommodations in close proximity to the park, for instance Hotell Heden. This is a four-star hotel that is suitable for both leisure- and business guests (Liseberg 2014e), stationed approximately one kilometer away from the park. Hotell Heden is included in the Liseberg corporate group by being a subsidiary company under Liseberg AB (*Lisebergs Årsredovisning 2013*, p. 10).



Figure 2:4 Pictures of Liseberg and Hotell Heden (author's photographs)

Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel

Tivoli Gardens is the most popular visitor attraction in Scandinavia, according to Tivoli's website. Tivoli Gardens is a privately owned organization and is listed on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange. The garden has three seasons: over summer between mid-April and mid-September, over Halloween for two weeks in October and over Christmas from mid-November until the end of December (Tivoli 2014a). For the time of the year when the gardens are open, the organization recruits approximately 1,500 employees and otherwise around 500 employees (Tivoli 2014b).

Tivoli Gardens recommend visitors to stay at accommodations found inside or nearby the amusement park. One of these is Tivoli Hotel, for leisure and business guests (Tivoli Hotel 2014a), situated approximately one kilometer away from Tivoli Gardens. Tivoli Hotel is part of the hotel chain Arp-Hansen Hotel Group, consisting of privately owned hotels (Tivoli Hotel 2014b). The hotel is a themed hotel and finds inspiration from Tivoli in terms of colors and design (Tivoli Hotel 2014c).

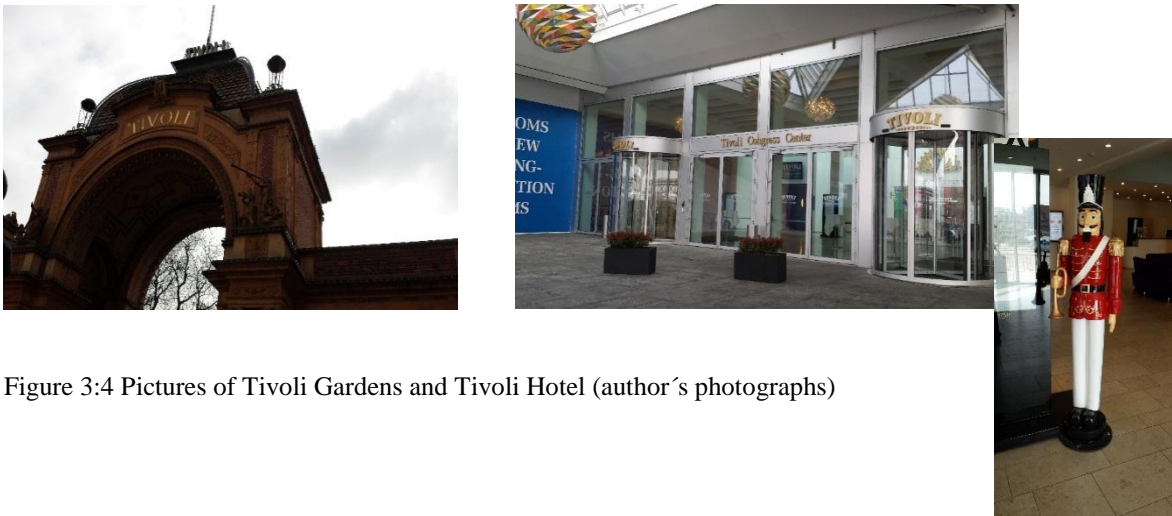


Figure 3:4 Pictures of Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel (author's photographs)

4.2 Commitment challenges for Liseberg and Tivoli

The challenges for employee commitment, according to theory, can be deducted as factors relating to seasonality and seasonal hiring arrangements. First and foremost, fluctuating demands and how numerical flexibility affects management operations are seemingly challenging and therefore important to observe. In turn, the insecurity attached to seasonal hiring arrangements can be seen as an extension of the first challenge.

4.2.1 Seasonal fluctuations and its implications for management

Liseberg and Tivoli Gardens as well as the hotels are attached to rapidly changing seasons, twice a year versus three times a year (Liseberg 2014c/Tivoli 2014a). The numbers of seasonal employees at Liseberg and Tivoli are approximately 2,300 versus 1,500 during peak seasons (Liseberg 2014d/Tivoli 2014b). The information gathered from the company websites is generally narrowed down to peak seasons, when the amusement parks are open, as the most attractive time of the year for recruitment. This is the time of the year when most of the events and attractions occur. The high number of seasonal employees during peak seasons in relation to the seemingly eventless low seasons indicates that Liseberg and Tivoli deal with fluctuations of demand. According to theory, this numerical flexibility can be a burden to cope with for management, an ongoing task which could serve as a hindrance for management discussions about improvements directed to employees. Hence, management needs to focus on how to manage these fluctuations when the fluctuations and non-attendance of full-time employees typically are fairly foreseeable (Whitehouse et al. 1997).

The foreseeable factor seems to be of main importance at Liseberg, Tivoli and the hotels. All of them are aware of the approximate number of seasonal employees that they require throughout the year (A1; B1; C1; D1), numbers which can indicate how many seasonal employees to recruit each season. Also, seasonal employees at Liseberg are often hired on the basis that they are available for both the summer- and Christmas seasons (C1). It appears that one possible way to ease the dilemma is to reutilize seasonal employees from previous seasons. Overall, both Tivoli Gardens and Liseberg appreciate returning seasonal employees and strive towards investing in employee satisfaction and safety for their seasonal employees (A1; B1; C1; D1). This example illustrates this approach:

Tivoli has annual follow-up meetings between employee and immediate superior in which you discuss the need for further training /---/ Training and development are essential to achieve success and budget is allocated accordingly (A1, 2014-02-25).

Based on the examples given, it appears that the companies face the challenge of dealing with numerical flexibility as focus is placed on control mechanisms such as recruiting a sensible number of employees, reutilizing employees over seasons and allocating budgets. To refer back to de Gilder (2003), contingent hiring arrangements are constrained by their nature as the employees work due to a set time limit or on a more casual basis. These

arrangements would be managed differently than more traditional hiring arrangements. In relation to theory (Whitehouse et al. 1997), the management tasks concerning the operation of this employment might steer attention away from building relationships with the employees. When the decision to stay or leave is not held by the employee, the tie of commitment between the employee and the organization automatically becomes weaker than is the case for permanently hired employees (de Gilder 2003). Hence, the challenge for Liseberg, Tivoli Gardens and the hotels might be to uphold positive relationships with their seasonal employees in spite of fluctuating demands.

4.2.2 Less seasonality for the hotels

However, all businesses attached to amusement parks might not handle the challenge of fluctuating demands in the exact same way. Hotels might view their employees more as a resource all year round due to the nature of the hotel business; a hotel offers various services to customers all year. At both Hotell Heden and Tivoli Hotel, seasonal employees are welcome to work on a payroll during and between seasons temporarily, for example over weekends (B1; D1). This citation illustrates this phenomenon:

.../ many of them have worked here at least two, three or even four summers. But that also indicates that this is a popular workplace... but anyway, these employees, the summer people... I prefer to distribute shifts for them during fall and winter as well, and over weekends (my translation - D1, 2014-02-13).

These examples coincide with Krakover's illustration (2000) of fluctuating demands in a hotel case. According to the case, some employees work continuously throughout the year, including in between peak seasons, in order to answer to sudden changes of demand. According to Krakover (2000), this arrangement enables hotels to maintain access to cheaper labor and simultaneously be reassured that these casual employees will not leave for other occupations. However, Krakover (2000) also stresses that seasonal employees are a part of the peripheral workforce, which is significantly separated from the core workforce. What this implies is that although hotels might have a somewhat closer relationship with seasonal employees, they are not necessarily as integrated as the permanent employees. An example of this phenomenon is found at Hotell Heden:

.../ But then of course it'll over for the temporary staff one day because they'll naturally find other jobs. Of course they study, most of them, and nobody keeps this job exclusively because you sort of can't make a living out of a summer job (my translation - D1, 2014-02-13).

This example indicates that seasonal employees are, in spite of extra shifts between peak seasons, still considered to be a workforce different from permanent employees. This can be understood as a challenge coming with the fluctuating demands of hotels specifically. To continue from fluctuating demands and the separation between seasonal versus permanent workforces, the rates of returning employees and the insecurity attached to seasonal working conditions will be analyzed next.

4.2.3. Company cultures and rates of returning seasonal employees

In spite of fluctuating demands, Tivoli Gardens and Liseberg as well as the hotels strive towards involving their seasonal employees in the family of their organizations during the time the employees are present. The two company cultures are similarly depicted as warm and family-oriented. Words like “involvement” and “working together to achieve results” are expressions which follow with the Tivoli culture (A1). Regarding the Liseberg culture, “compassion” is one of the words mentioned (my translation - Liseberg 2013, p. 21). Moreover, all employees working for Liseberg share a common identity as they are referred to as “lisebergare” (D2). These expressions characterize the atmosphere in the organizations and the striving towards being two united and family-oriented work cultures. Moreover, annual job satisfaction surveys at Tivoli Gardens show that job satisfaction has been around 90 percent over the past few years (*Tivoli CSR Report 2012*, p. 28-29). Besides, the rates of returning seasonal employees to Tivoli Gardens and Liseberg are 85 percent versus 75 percent (A1/C1) while the rate for the hotels is at least 50 percent (B1/D1). The positive aspect of returning employees is generally emphasized (B1; B2; D1; D2) and is further illustrated in the following citation:

Most of them are coming back. I would say we have a good atmosphere at the reception and we are like friends. And... so there's a good harmony here at the reception, actually all over Tivoli Hotel (B1, 2014-03-04).

These examples show signs of how the managements provide work environments where seasonal employees feel welcomed and appreciated. In spite of theoretical views on the connection between short-term hiring arrangements and low commitment (compare with Ainsworth & Purss 2009), the examples presented demonstrate that these workplaces at least provide prerequisites for employee commitment.

Nevertheless, the arrangement for a seasonal employee should probably not be compared with permanent or ongoing working arrangements. Seasonal employment sometimes appears to be considered as more of a one-time experience for the employee than an ongoing occupation:

.../ I know many people, especially in the service industry, who've been and worked a season in Disney always refer to 'oh back then, when we worked at Disney' /---/ You know, Disney still comes up in you know their adult conversations with other people so I think it's also really important to think about that even a seasonal worker might actually represent your brand for a lot longer than the actual employment was (B3, 2014-01-01).

This citation illustrates that even though seasonal employees represent a brand during and after their time of employment, they spend a limited period of time on an occupation that they might interpret as an experience. A parallel can be drawn to the dilemma that employees are willing to unlock their commitment and represent a brand fully only when they know what is in it for them (Thomson & Hecker 2000). By saying this, the experience might answer to what the employees are seeking for, not mainly to be emotionally attached to the organization. However, positive word-of-mouth from the employee after the end of a season would likely contribute to the reputation of the brand. Still, new seasonal employees appear at Liseberg and Tivoli Gardens at the beginning of every peak season. For management, it would likely be challenging to invest in relationships and employee commitment with all of them for such a limited period of time.

4.2.4. Insecure working conditions

To continue from the short-term relationship that a seasonal employment constitutes, insecure working conditions are important to observe. According to de Gilder (2003), contingent employees might pose more negative behaviors than permanently hired employees, exhibited in different ways such as turnover, active seeking for other jobs and carelessness. A practical example of this phenomenon can be seen at Hotell Heden, where seasonal summer receptionists sometimes choose to leave the hotel after the first season or even during the start of the first season. After a series of such events, some permanently hired employees have started to feel less dedicated to introduce new employees:

.../ You dish about the same thing; 'alright, we get a new one tomorrow' and then this person might realize after a week that 'oh, I guess this wasn't my kind of thing' and then you've already been on and on about it for a week or two just to see them realize that it's not working out for them and then they get out of here. That happens too, of course /---/ But... I'd say it's

more common to have them here and introduce them for one season, which feels... it's too bad that they quit after one season because if they just know how things work after the first season it'd be easier to have them back and then we also want to have them back (my translation - D2, 2014-04-11).

Although generalizations should not be drawn from a few turns of events, employee turnover does not rhyme with commitment for a brand and is seemingly unappreciated by other employees. A parallel can be drawn to research about dropouts after a few days as a sign of attitude issues among contingent workers (Koene & van Riemsdijk 2005, p. 78). Also, this could be a practical example from the theoretical discussion on current trends of job insecurity and the negative commitment consequences that may follow (compare with de Gilder 2003; Smithson & Lewis 2000; Koene & van Riemsdijk 2005), such as an unreliable attitude from the employees themselves. Smithson & Lewis (2000) depict that today's labor market is featured by insecure hiring arrangements for young people, mirroring back to the organizations as lesser employee commitment and loyalty than earlier in history. To refer back to the challenge of dealing with seasonality, it appears again that the challenge for management is to find the time for building relationships with their seasonal employees.

In short – what are the challenges?

To summarize, Liseberg, Tivoli Gardens and the hotels are afflicted by challenges relating to the operating of a great number of seasonal employees every year. Fluctuations of demand require ongoing work to ensure that the rate of returning employees and budgets allocated to employees are under control. The restrictions of seasonal hiring arrangements indicate that insecure hiring arrangements might be challenging for management and that many of them will leave eventually. For these reasons, management might be withheld from prioritizing relationship-building with their employees. Concerning the hotels, the challenges are slightly different since they appear to have a comparatively stretched set up of fluctuating demands, leaning to less seasonality in itself. The challenge for the hotels is rather that the seasonal workforce is after all a differentiated workforce. As the challenges imply, there is a certain insecurity attached to seasonal employment and therefore one should ask whether the challenges can be overcome to reach brand ambassadorship in this setting. This is what the next part of this chapter is going to discuss.

4.3 Committed brand ambassadorship towards Liseberg and Tivoli

In this part, the possible ways of overcoming the challenges will be explored. As an introduction, two short observations are presented.

Liseberg & Hotell Heden

In the middle of Gothenburg, Liseberg rises up with its tremendous size and forceful impression. It is situated on a hill, highly visible for anyone who passes by. Even though the park is currently closed, a passerby can still catch a great number of glimpses of what the park has to offer. The logotype is significantly grand and difficult to miss, wherever you happen to see it. The elegant texting, almost as if it was handwritten, gives a proud and magnificent yet personal impression. Other than the logotype, the main colors that meet the eye are light pink and light green. A third color, often combined with these as in fences and street lamps, is white (Observation 2014-04-11).

A ten minute walk from Liseberg, one finds Hotell Heden. From the outside, the hotel exteriors have significant characteristics in common with Liseberg. The building has the same light pink shade as around the park. By the entrance, the principal feature of the roof and the lineaments around the door and the windows are light green. Once inside the hotel reception, one can sense the feeling of the Liseberg atmosphere as in the encompassing light green color around the windows. The reception area welcomes the guest with an immediate friendly and elegant atmosphere (Observation 2014-02-13).

Tivoli Gardens & Tivoli Hotel

From the outside, one easily notices the marvelous size and central positioning of Tivoli Gardens. The amusement park is situated in the very middle of Copenhagen, enclosed by walls and shaped as a rectangle. Around the main entrance, the golden logotype rises up on a tall arc. This main entrance gives the impression of being marvelous, old-fashioned and slightly mysterious. Moreover, there are a great number of posters and advertisements around the main entrance and alongside some of the walls of the gardens. The impression of these posters are significantly colorful and playful, often as a mishmash between different pastel colors such as light pink, light green, light blue and light yellow (Observation 2014-04-01).

Tivoli Hotel is situated a fifteen minute walk from the gardens. From the look of the outside of the hotel, there are quite a few branding similarities with Tivoli Gardens as in the golden Tivoli logotype found on top of the main entrance and on flags. The reception area breathes of the Tivoli brand in both its design and colors. On the walls, there are playful pictures with the Tivoli sign on them and also one with a Tivoli clown. The colors in the reception are manifold, such as the posters and attractions around Tivoli Gardens (Observation 2014-03-04).

4.3.1 Liseberg and Tivoli – two recognized and spectacular brands

The purpose of presenting the observations is to enhance the understanding of how the brands of Liseberg and Tivoli are communicated. The observations highlight the phenomenon of recurring colors, patterns and even feelings attached to the amusement parks and the hotels. In between the lines, the observations and marketing material (see appendix 3) present two colorful brands where emphasis is placed on creating a certain feeling and elegance, something which might lean on to emotional attachment between the general public and the brands. The brands play on distinctive styles, differentiation and colorfulness, for example seen in the three signature colors for Liseberg (Observation 2014-04-11) and the mishmash between different colors for Tivoli (Observation 2014-04-01). Liseberg is positioned as the third most famous brand in Sweden (Veckans Affärer 2014) whereas Tivoli correspondingly is ranked as the third most recognized brand in Denmark (*Tivoli Årsrapport 2013*, p. 15). Representation of such brands probably creates expectation and therefore requires something additional from employees than a simple understanding of the brand. Numerous comments from Liseberg and Tivoli indicate that seasonal employees should feel motivated and enthusiastic about delivering service quality to customers (A1; B1; B2; C1; D1; D2). For instance, the need of motivation and commitment at Tivoli Gardens seems to be essentially important:

Situations [for front-line employees] could be anything from dealing with children, receiving complaints or answering questions about Tivoli's history to evacuating a ride or giving first aid. One service attendant looked after some Dutch guests' dog so they could visit Tivoli, where dogs aren't allowed. One gave his extra pair of glasses to a Norwegian guest, so he could drive back to Norway. Regularly, staff give tourist information, deal with people who drank too much, kids who lost sight of their parents, photographers, reporters, celebrities, royalty – and the crowds that follow (A1 – 2014-02-25).

This citation leans towards the importance of responsibility and the sensing of what is required from employees during encounters with customers. A parallel can be drawn to Keller & Richey (2006) as they point out that a brand personality is made up by all employees and their values, words and actions. Moreover, a comparison could be made with brand-alignment behavior among employees, which means "...to deliver evidence of the brand positioning at every customer touch point" (Sirianni et al. 2013, p. 108-109). It is all about making sure the employees believe in their organization since this belief will be reflected in all encounters with customers (Joshi 2007; Grönroos 2008). For well-known

brands, the expectations from customers are significantly important to consider. According to Laws (2002c), well-known brands often cause a certain image to be constructed around the destination, as the point is to get people mentally stuck with a certain brand. From this angle, Liseberg and Tivoli are two familiar brands which likely come with expectations for employees to deliver and live up to the brands during all service encounters. The remaining part of this chapter will explore orientation, benefits and socialization between co-workers as three possible management tools for overcoming commitment challenges in order to reach brand ambassadorship.

4.3.2 Orientation for seasonal employees

The first step towards overcoming commitment challenges to reach brand ambassadorship is for management to provide orientation for their employees (compare with figure 1:3; Keller & Richey 2006; Jerome & Kleiner 1995). Both Liseberg and Tivoli carefully apprehend their well-known brands and point at employee motivation from seasonal employees as remarkably significant for success (A1; B2; B3; C1; D1; D2). Comments from the informants have underlined that although the looks of the companies are intensely attractive from the outside, seasonal employees need to be sufficiently motivated to handle difficult customer encounters and stressful situations on a daily basis (A1; B2; C1; D1; D2). Thus, they clearly pinpoint the importance of keeping their employees well informed about the essence of their brands and policies already from the start. For example, Tivoli Gardens introduce the Tivoli brand to new employees in multiple ways; by providing them two handbooks about Tivoli, a binder for each station and an intranet called TivoliNet with information about the Tivoli policies, for instance (A1). The employees are thus provided multiple choices of written information with the purpose of facilitating their understanding and learning process of how to contribute to the organization. Liseberg similarly hands out a pink book about the Liseberg brand and introduce new employees to their intranet called “The Pink Pages” (my translation) where employees find information about the entitlements of Liseberg as a brand (C1; D1). The branding book for Liseberg generally stresses the importance of taking the brand to one’s heart and to be proud of it, for example since the mission for Liseberg is to be “the heart of Gothenburg” (my translation - Liseberg 2013, p. 7-9). Moreover, the branding book recurrently urges employees to work together towards the same goal and to encounter all people with a warm approach (Liseberg 2013). Apart from these examples of internal marketing, the external marketing about the two

brands is both extensive and informative (see appendix 3). Through brochures, TV, advertisement pillars or other media, employees are given an opportunity to encounter current events and happenings. This way, the employees seem to be given numerous prerequisites to stay updated and to get a feeling for what the brands stand for. A parallel can be drawn from this to the importance of mind (see figure 1:3) - all employees ought to be informed about business goals and how to answer to them (Keller & Richey 2006, p. 79).

Both Liseberg and Tivoli Gardens provide an orientation day for their employees. Liseberg versus Tivoli Gardens offer new employees a service course focusing on the organization, its history, a park tour and how to understand the brand in reality (A1; C1). This citation illustrates what the orientation entitles at Liseberg:

It goes on for five hours and includes a thorough review of the company, the amusement park, its history, what it looks like and how it's built up organization-wise, to ensure that they kind of know where they are. And also, to know that we're a municipal corporation, we're owned by Göteborgs Stad after all /.../ And then we also have a park tour, for example, and we have quite a few exercises regarding how you act in respect to using our words of value in everyday situations when you encounter guests (my translation – C1, 2014-02-13).

Hotel employees are given an orientation in the respective parks as well, however containing a slightly different content adjusted for hotels (B1; B3). Thereafter, the employees are transferred to department-specific introductions (A1; B1; C1; D1). A parallel can be drawn to orientation held at Disneyland (compare with Jerome & Kleiner 1995). Similarly to what Disneyland promotes, the employees at Liseberg, Tivoli and the hotels learn about history, customs and values of the organizational brands before moving on to practical tasks for each department. In this way, the orientation can be understood as teaching the employees to comprehend company policies, procedures and the specific service standards for the respective organizations (Jerome & Kleiner 1995). Similarly, Koene & van Riemsdijk (2005) promote special attention from management to contingent hired employees. Based on successful results, they conclude that careful operational management of temporary employees is advantageous because it increases the likelihood of having employees who sense a committed identification with the organization. Such an approach is better than choosing a "let-it-go" or laissez-faire tactic, which often follows the management strategy for dealing with contingent employees (ibid., p. 90-91).

4.3.3 Benefits for seasonal employees

As a second step towards overcoming commitment challenges to reach brand ambassadorship, benefits directed to employees are to be taken in to consideration by management (compare with figure 1:3; Keller & Richey 2006; Jerome & Kleiner 1995). Liseberg and Tivoli Gardens, as well as the hotels, all provide benefits and recognition to their seasonal employees in various ways, from materialistic benefits to feedback (A1; B1; B2; C1; D1; D2). Some examples of benefits are free entrance to the amusement park, gift certificates, staff dinners, diplomas as a sign of appreciation and bottles of wine (A1; B1; B2; D2). Generally, this approach can be interpreted as a sign of attachment towards the employees, manifested through recognition and benefits as a reassurance that the employees feel more passionate about serving the customers (compare with Keller & Richey 2006; Jerome & Kleiner 1995). This way of providing various kinds of benefits can also be compared to the term multiple satisfiers, used at Disneyland and other amusement parks. Offering a range of benefits, or multiple satisfiers, is usually done by organizations of high ranking and has the purpose of ensuring that everyone fancies something (Jerome & Kleiner 1995, p. 23-24).

In the comparison between the two cases, a slight difference is found in the sense of why benefits are in place. Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel generally pronounce a somewhat stronger emphasis on providing benefits for service results; rewards-for-results. To take Tivoli Gardens as an example, an individual reward for employees would equal a bottle of wine while a group reward would be a trip to Liseberg for all employees after a good year or something similar (A1). As far as Tivoli Hotel goes, different rewards for different results are in place for receptionists, such as tips for room upgrades and gift certificates (B1; B2). The essence of providing rewards at Tivoli Hotel is clearly underlined:

/---/ Money, you know, gives good motivation to people all the time. But you have to know the exact, you know, things about giving the money to the staff. They should be happy of course when they get money /---/ But they shouldn't do this only for money, they should do this also for the service. I'm selling [the guest] a suite, a nice suite and breakfast and better products and [the guest] will be happier so this is... this is one of the most important things, to make the customer happy. But on the other hand, [the guest] spends extra money in our hotel and I get a benefit [so] I will be also happy (B1, 2014-03-04).

This citation is one of the examples of how rewards-for-results are used to motivate employees to perform. A natural statement in research is that benefits or rewards for

seasonal employees need to be connected to service results in order to influence employee motivation. For example, employees need to be provided more rewards the more outstanding their service delivery is (Jerome & Kleiner 1995, p. 23-24). Similarly, results of how seasonal employees stay committed demonstrate that satisfaction with money, praise and benefits is an important indicator for the choice of returning to the workplace in the long run, not only after the first season (Ismert & Petrick 2004). In the long run, seasonal employees often sense if they are not properly rewarded by management for their results, as if the organization knows that there will always be people coming up for the next season. Employee motivation decreases as they ask themselves why they should perform any higher than the minimum level (Ainsworth & Purss 2009). In comparison to this research, Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel are likely raising employee commitment through the provision of rewards-for-results.

4.3.3.1 A different view on benefits

On the other hand, Liseberg management has made a choice of not promoting rewards-for-results for seasonal workers. One example of such is the reward for suggestions that could improve the organization:

.../ the 'suggestions box', as it so nicely was called, has been taken away by us /---/ We experienced that focus moved over to 'I'll do only what I have to do and whatever additional I do, I should receive something additional for'. And we don't agree with that, instead I think such things belong to the job itself /---/ (my translation – C1, 2014-02-13).

Nonetheless, employees receive benefits such as free entrance and free rides at Liseberg during their time off work (C1). Still, such benefits are given to all employees and are not connected to performance. In the specific setting of seasonal employees at Liseberg, seasonal employees work casually – two times a year or temporarily in between seasons at the hotel. Hence, benefits might be inappropriate since there is no promise for a long-term hiring arrangement. According to research, benefits in themselves are marked by a more committed long-term relationship between the organization and the employee in the first place. This relationship contradicts the very nature of temporary work (Polivka & Nardone 1989). Also, in alignment with Herzberg's two-factor theory, benefits might not automatically result in higher job satisfaction for employees (Alverén et al. 2012, p. 1968). Thus, benefits would rather prevent the employees from being dissatisfied than raising their commitment. The approach of not providing rewards-for-results might therefore be

relevant, taking in to account that short-term contract and individual interests might contradict such benefits. This means that seasonal employees might not necessarily become more committed or become better brand ambassadors for a short period of time due to rewards. At last, results have shown that a more crucial factor for seasonal employees to be committed is socialization between co-workers (Alverén et al. 2012), which will be analyzed next.

4.3.4 Socialization and collaboration between co-workers

At Liseberg, the importance of integrating the social ties between the hotel and the park is particularly essential. From the start of next year, the park and the hotel are going to gather in a business fusion between the subsidiary companies (C1; D1; D2). The hotel and the park already cooperate when it comes to social employee activities. For example, seasonal receptionists from the hotel can sometimes enjoy shows at Liseberg before premiers:

/---/ well, if they ask we can try and arrange for them to have... sometimes a fill-in of audience is needed /.../ So there's a purpose of meeting half ways. If that would be the case, we could call [Liseberg] up and say 'we have three girls who work here then and then and they would really like to come and watch, is there any way we can fix this?' /.../ And then [Liseberg] might have a busload giving a last-minute cancellation that leaves an opening of thirty empty seats and of course that's no good for neither the artist nor /.../ the audience... so then, of course they have the opportunity to go (my translation - D2, 2014-02-13).

Referring to this citation, there appears to be a social connection between Liseberg and the hotel, which somewhat leaves the door open for seasonal employees to socialize. Other comments from the informants similarly confirm the strong social ties between the hotel and the park (C1; D1; D2). The external marketing of Liseberg also illustrates Liseberg as one cohesive brand. For example, brochures are usually themed in the same colors and the green rabbit appears both in the park and in the hotel (see appendix 3). A parallel can be drawn to the body of a corporate brand (see figure 1:3) since collaboration between organizational entities is seen as a way of establishing relationships with all people or companies which could contribute to success. According to Keller & Richey (2006, p. 80), the winning organizations will be the ones maintaining a strong notion of cooperation, for instance by building networks. In comparison to Disneyland, the involvement of employees at all levels is seen as a key factor for success (Jerome & Kleiner 1995, p. 25). Consequently, the way Liseberg and Hotell Heden facilitate socialization between co-

workers and organizational entities can be seen as a step towards overcoming commitment challenges.

4.3.4.1 A different view on socialization

Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel view collaboration between the two in a different way, in comparison to Liseberg and Hotell Heden. Although the exteriors as well as the external marketing point at similar theme colors and designs between the two (see appendix 2; 3), social integration is not exactly a part of the branding relationship:

.../ Sometimes, I mean, we are two different companies but sometimes it would be nicer to feel as one but it's difficult, you cannot do that. When you are a theme park and a hotel, even though you carry the same name, you are just...then you should... when you have two different, what do you call it, strategic levels /---/ (B2, 2014-04-01).

Other comments from the informants also indicate that the two companies are two separate private companies. After all, the hotel belongs to the hotel chain Arp-Hansen while Tivoli is a private business of its own (A1; B1; B2; B3). However, strong internal communication and efforts to improve social activities in each workplace are well prioritized (A1; B1; B2; B3; *Tivoli Årsrapport 2013*, p. 34). For instance, hotel colleagues go out at least every other month for after works, dinners or activities like paintball (B2). Regarding Tivoli Gardens, arranged events for employees are considered to be an aspect of strengthening employee satisfaction, which is of high priority for the company (*Tivoli Årsrapport 2013*, p. 34). Nonetheless, the lack of social integration between Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel can cause difficulties for seasonal workers:

.../ But it's difficult, there's a lot of seasonal workers. You can't give them all a free stay at the Tivoli Hotel, that's why we try and do the Tivoli School and involve and you know... but that's only [a] one time orientation, and sometimes if you only have one orientation you get so much information on one day in five hours that you might have heard a lot of things about the hotel and maybe you only remember two of them, so. So that also makes the relationship for seasonal workers difficult; 'How do we get to Tivoli Hotel?', 'where...?' and, you know /---/ (B3, 2014-04-01).

This citation indicates that the lack of social integration could affect the ability for seasonal employees to learn. Integration can also be associated with learning through mobilization, which is mentioned as an important aspect for employees in studies of amusement parks and resort hotels (Mayer 2002; Wagenheim & Anderson 2008). Consequently, the lacking connections between Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel could be a hindrance, not solely for

socialization but for knowledge about co-workers and the Tivoli brand as a whole since seasonal employees might forget important information about the brand over time.

However, social activities directed to seasonal employees per se appear to be quite difficult to handle during peak seasons. These organizations are particularly busy during these periods of time as they are under the pressure of delivering service at high speed. At Liseberg, social activities for employees are generally avoided during the summer season due to lack of time resources and the impossibility to close down the hotel at the expense of a social event (C1). Moreover, Tivoli Gardens tends to consider social activities more as rewards, for instance in the form of after works after busy nights or a trip to Liseberg as the finale of a good year (A1). As far as the hotels are concerned, social events are frequently described as something that employees take initiatives to arrange themselves (B1; D2). The examples indicate that social activities for seasonal employees are slightly difficult to guarantee during busy peak seasons. This dilemma slightly contradicts studies. According to Ismert & Petrick (2004), the majority of seasonal employees would hesitate to return the next season in case their previous season only offered socialization with a few or even none of the fellow seasonal employees. On the other hand, other researchers suggest that an integration-steered management strategy could cause segregation between the contingent employees and the permanently hired employees. When contingent employees socialize solely with each other, they might lose the chance to build social and trustworthy relationships with the rest of their colleagues (Connelly & Gallagher 2004). Hence, socialization directed towards seasonal employees is probably difficult as it might disturb the operation over peak seasons and contradict collaboration between employees as a whole.

In short – how are the challenges addressed?

In summation, Liseberg and Tivoli are two recognizable brands, where the well-known factor is associated to expectations for seasonal employees to be motivated and committed. Orientation is handled in similar ways in these four workplaces, through a series of internal marketing and information to the employees. The external marketing might also fulfill the purpose of informing employees about the brands, to some extent. Furthermore, benefits are addressed and can be compared to the theoretical term multiple satisfiers (Jerome & Kleiner 1995). At Liseberg and Hotell Heden, rewards-for-results are not exactly pronounced, which contradicts research about benefits as a response to good service per-

formance (compare with Jerome & Kleiner 1995; Ismert & Petrick 2004). Reversely, Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel hold a slightly stronger focus on rewards-for-results. Regarding socialization, Liseberg appears to point a more distinct focus on socialization between co-workers across organizational entities. In contrast, Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel rather overlook social integration between the two. This aspect slightly disaffirms research regarding collaboration over borders as a key factor for socialization and learning (compare with Mayer 2002; Wagenheim & Anderson 2008). Lastly, both cases hold a low profile concerning social activities directed at seasonal employees over peak seasons, which also contradicts studies to some extent (compare with Ismert & Petrick 2004; Alverén et al. 2012).

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, various challenges for employee commitment and key factors for brand ambassadorship have been analyzed, as a way of overcoming the challenges. Regarding the challenges, the first finding is that management might be distracted by the operation around seasonal fluctuations and planning such as allocating budgets and measuring how many employees they need for each season. This can withhold them from building relationships with the seasonal employees, which would exacerbate employee commitment. Moreover, seasonal employees typically work under insecure work conditions and are likely considered to be a differentiated workforce than permanently hired employees. Therefore their commitment might not be of main attention for management. The second finding commences that the challenges have turned out to be important to meet for management since the brands come with expectations for seasonal employees to deliver. Henceforth, the response from management is seen in the way they invest in orientation, benefits and socialization, which was reviewed within the previous section. Orientation is handled quite similarly by the two cases while benefits and socialization are dealt with in slightly different ways. In the next chapter, these findings will converge upon three conclusions whereupon a discussion follows.

5.0 Conclusions and discussion

Continuing from the two findings, this chapter will present three conclusions in relation to the research questions. The conclusions are followed by a discussion to reflect on the topic from a wider perspective, limitations of this study and proposals for further research.

5.1 The link between challenges, commitment and brand ambassadorship

The theoretical framework and analysis have demonstrated the relevance of commitment among seasonal employees as in the link between employees and the representation of brands (for example Thomson & Hecker 2000; Keller & Richey 2006; Sirianni et al. 2013). To reflect on the first research question - *What are the challenges for amusement parks and resort hotels with regards to commitment and seasonal front-line employees functioning as brand ambassadors?* – the first finding has pinpointed that the main challenge for management is to build relationships with seasonal employees. The second finding stresses a willingness from management to still have committed employees who represent their well-known brands. This combination could be seen as the missing link, the very reason why management needs to address employee commitment. This is where brand ambassadorship comes into the picture.

To reflect on the second research question - *How are the challenges addressed by management?* – the second finding has revealed that Liseberg, Tivoli Gardens and the hotels each address their challenges by answering to the three theoretical key factors (compare with Keller & Richey 2006; Jerome & Kleiner 1995). Their investments in orientation, benefits and socialization have shown that seasonal employees are given multiple opportunities to learn about the brands as well as finding out how to represent them. According to Keller & Richey (2006, p. 80-81) positive synergy effects are developed when these three factors are taken into consideration. For instance, passion to deliver service (heart) can be the driver for creativity (mind). In turn, creativity (mind) eases agility (body) since creative organizations can better answer competition (ibid., p. 80-81). However, these theoretical key factors are not particularly adapted to seasonal employment, which makes them non-applicable to a full extent. Therefore, the first conclusion showcases that the challenges are addressed to a certain extent by the support of the key factors, yet the key factors should not be considered as completely applicable to seasonal employment. For Liseberg and Tivoli as brands, some positive synergy effects are

however likely feasible due to the way their managements handle employee commitment and brand ambassadorship.

5.2 Limitations for brand ambassadorship

To continue from the first conclusion, it could be justified to declare that Liseberg and Tivoli, as brands, have already succeeded. Nevertheless, the specific situation of two brands in the amusement park and resort hotel business opens up for certain limitations. To refer again to the first research question and the first finding, seasonal employment is by various degrees afflicted by short-term relationships between the employee and the employer. Also, Liseberg and Tivoli are not the only brands present in these contexts. Arp-Hansen, the hotel chain that Tivoli Hotel belongs to, is also a recognized brand in Denmark (B1; B2; B3), for instance. Similarly, Liseberg is attached to other brands such as Burger King, which is situated in the park. At Burger King, employees are supposed to follow the Burger King concept yet also attend the orientation day that Liseberg provides (C1). Generally for amusement parks, other brands might certainly be present. On top of this lies the condition of building relationships with employees during a limited period of time. To refer back to the definition of seasonal employees used for this thesis, the hiring arrangement is based upon a certain need held by the employer and as soon as the need is fulfilled, the employee has come to the end of the working relationship (Polivka & Nardone 1989). This means that there is only so much time for management to teach and encourage seasonal employees to represent their brands.

To refer back to the second research question, all theoretical key factors are considered to a full extent by neither of the workplaces. As far as Liseberg and Hotell Heden go, the lack of rewards-for-results slightly contradicts research about strengthening employee commitment and their willingness to perform (compare with Jerome & Kleiner 1995; Ismert & Petrick 2004; Keller & Richey 2006). Similarly, the deficiency of social integration between Tivoli Hotel and Tivoli Gardens slightly contradicts some research about the importance of socialization and learning (compare with Mayer 2002; Wagenheim & Anderson 2008). Overall, the second finding also pinpoints that social activities directed towards seasonal employees seem to be somewhat limited over peak seasons for both amusement parks. From a theoretical standpoint, brand ambassadorship is thus not to be completely fulfilled due to the specific situation that surrounds the amusement parks and

the resort hotels over peak seasons. Therefore, the second conclusion reveals that limitations obstruct all commitment challenges to be addressed and brand ambassadorship to come true to a full extent. Due to the challenges and the limitations of integrating seasonal employees fully, there is probably no guarantee for brand ambassadorship to fall in to place completely.

5.3 The real-life circumstances

The discrepancies between theory and practice that were just mentioned could also be a sign of something else. As the second finding showed, these organizations handle the theoretical key factors (compare with Keller & Richey 2006; Jerome & Kleiner 1995) in different ways, although the challenges are principally the same. Liseberg and Hotell Heden generally address socialization between co-workers more than rewards-for-results while the opposite can be said about Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel. In other words, each workplace appears to have found its own way of approaching seasonal employees, which probably means that all the theoretical key factors are not equally relevant for all workplaces. Although the business and the challenges are more or less the same, real-life circumstances such as busy summer seasons or other brands might get in the way of following the theoretical rules of the book. Whether this is positive or negative is not relevant here. What is important is that research about seasonal employees and brand ambassadorship has turned out to be too general to fit real-life circumstances. This problem is not new, as researchers have already suggested that seasonal employment often falls into other categories and has not yet won full academic attention (for example Ainsworth & Purss 2009). Thus, the third conclusion reveals that the practical implementations of addressing commitment challenges to reach brand ambassadorship somewhat differ from theoretical standpoints. Different workplaces and circumstances specific for seasonality afflict theory and calls for further research about the topic.

5.4 The importance of the topic

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate how amusement parks and resort hotels address seasonal employee commitment and their ability to act as brand ambassadors. A qualitative approach and a combination of methods have allowed nuanced interpretations during the comparison of the two cases Liseberg and Tivoli. The theoretical framework

and analysis have shown that there is a link between committed employees, service quality and representation of brands and yet also certain challenges specifically linked to seasonal employment. In turn, the findings and conclusions assert that brand ambassadorship is not fully applicable and guaranteed for seasonal employees in the context of this complex business, for a number of reasons.

This thesis makes an empirical contribution because seasonal employment has up to date been given limited research attention. The topic is important to discuss since seasonal employment is a common hiring arrangement for the tourism industry and since it is associated with challenges and flaws. Also, it lacks in statistics and research. The two cases, Liseberg and Tivoli, have served as examples for well-known brands in a complex business containing numerous workplaces, brands and seasonal employees. Their seasonal operations mark them as quite typical for modern-day non-traditional working arrangements, typical for the tourism industry in specific. Other companies attached to amusement parks might face similar challenges as the ones presented in this thesis. Hence, brand commitment would probably be useful to explore for other similarly complex brand settings, such as other visitor attractions operating during peak seasons. Other examples from the industry could have been examined and the thesis could reversely be in use when examining other types of seasonal visitor attractions.

5.5 Limitations of this thesis

The first limitation of this thesis is that a longer study could have included several amusement parks and hotels from different cultures, to see a more defined pattern and to draw generalizations. Some of the contrasts found between the two cases in this thesis might fall short to two different labor markets as well as national cultures, which have not been analyzed here. Secondly, a management perspective has steered the path as the focus has been to find out how to address seasonal employees rather than how the employees address the organization. Other important factors, such as an unfortunate recruitment process or disengaged employees, might contribute to weak employee commitment and less successful brand ambassadorship. When asking the employees themselves, different findings might have explained what brand identification and commitment come down to for them. This topic is fairly psychological as employee commitment depends on several factors, not only depending on management efforts but also on the individuals themselves.

Lastly, one challenge during the case study was the lesser access to Tivoli Gardens than Liseberg, something which might have influenced interpretations and findings. However, the use of observations and documents has partly been an attempt to fill this gap.

5.6 Proposals for further research

Due to the gaps between theory and practice that the conclusions highlighted, further research is proposed. The question of how management deal with committed brand ambassadorship for seasonal employees per se requires more research and theoretical models adapted for seasonal employment. The purpose of investigating further would be that both seasonal employment and branding are up-to-date. The number of seasonal employees is vast, while the inclusion of employees in branding strategies is becoming more and more common for service organizations. As this thesis has highlighted, seasonal employment is attached to challenges and limitations which are specific for this hiring arrangement. By investigating more, findings might pinpoint important factors. For instance, one factor would be how management should turn around the limitation of building relationships with seasonal employees for a short period of time. A model or guideline specifically developed for seasonal employment would support organizations that are dealing with these issues. Moreover, more research is also needed in order to notice the exceptions of the rule in each work setting and/or business. More empirical research might highlight and compare how different types of organizations deal with the dilemma, to see trends and contradictions. Questions to ask should be:

- how management should deal with seasonal employees in different business settings, for example different businesses connecting to an amusement park.
- where seasonal employees stand in the question of acting as brand ambassadorship, based on answers coming directly from them.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Interview guides

Interview with HR Specialist, Liseberg (in Swedish)

Date: 2014-02-13

Time duration: 01:09

1) Allmänna frågor:

- Antal säsongsanställda per år (i rent antal och i procent) samt deras genomsnittsålder och ungefärlig lön per timme.

2) Utplärning och utveckling (utbildning):

- Hur ser introduktionsfasen ut för frontpersonalen (lika överallt/olika ingångar, tillsammans med hotellet/enskilt för varje del av Liseberg)?
- Hur följer ni upp upplärningsfasen?
- Vilka riktlinjer ges till frontpersonalen i fråga om kundkontakt och servicekompetens?
- Ge ett exempel på kommunikation mellan frontpersonal och kunder, t.ex. ett problem som måste lösas. Internationella kunder – hur ser ni på kommunikation här?
- Vad betyder frontpersonalens motivation för er? Möjlighet att få reda på antal återkommande säsongsarbetare?
- Ge ett exempel på skiljetecken mellan vad frontpersonalen får fatta beslut om respektive inte fatta beslut om, gärna i relation till pengar. Förändringar under resans gång, dvs. mer handlingsfrihet efter en viss tid? (empowerment)
- Vad krävs för att frontpersonalen ska ta del av belöningar för sitt arbete (utöver förmåner som gäller alla)? Vilken typ av belöningar finns? Vad tycker du om förmånerna som finns? (Human Resource Management)
- Hur ser ni på kostnaden av upplärning och utbildning för frontpersonalen?
- Möjligt att få låna med eller kopiera en personalhandbok?

3) Paketerbudanden för kunder:

- Hur ser relationen ut mellan frontpersonalen på Lisebergs nöjesfält och receptionisterna som arbetar på Hotell Liseberg Heden? Hur skickas information däremellan?
- Hur ser ni på arbetsrotation (mellan de olika arbetsstationerna på Liseberg samt mellan Liseberg och Hotell Liseberg Heden)? Vad tycker du om relationen mellan frontpersonal som arbetar på olika stationer?

4) Frontpersonalens arbetsramar:

- Vad tycker du om hanteringen av frontpersonalen feedback gällande idéer om prestationsförbättringar, förbättrad kundservice och liknande? Vilka möjligheter ges för att kommunicera med ledningen om sådant?
- Ge ett exempel på hur kommunikationen går till frontpersonalen när ett nytt erbjudande dyker upp på Lisebergs hemsida (en av tre nivåer).
- Hur tidigt/sent brukar denna information nå frontpersonalen (en av tre nivåer)?
- Vad tycker du om kommunikationen mellan olika avdelningar och mellan Liseberg och Hotell Liseberg Heden?
- Nämn ett ledord för Lisebergs interna kultur.

Interview with Duty Manager, Tivoli Hotel (in English)

Date: 2014-03-04

Time duration: 01:14

1) General Questions:

- Please state the number of seasonally employed front staff at Tivoli Hotel each year, numerically and by percent. Specify their average age (if there is such an age) and an example of the initial hourly salary for a new seasonal front-line employee. Lastly, how many languages are seasonal front workers generally required to speak and write (if there is such a requirement)?

2) Training & Development

- Describe the introduction phase for a new receptionist (the same for everyone/different directions for different people). Specify whether the introduction takes place separately or in correlation with other departments at Tivoli Hotel and/or Tivoli Gardens.
- How would the introduction phase be followed up later for this front worker?
- Please tell me about the directions given to receptionists in terms of customer contact and competence specialized in service and communication.
- Give an example of a surprising situation that this front worker needs to be able to deal with in his/her meetings with customers, for example an issue that should be solved immediately. How do you perceive communication between seasonal receptionists and international guests?
- What does the motivation of this front worker mean for Tivoli Hotel? If statistics are present, please fill in last year's percent rate of returning seasonal workers (approximate numbers, for the summer holiday for instance).

- Give an example of what this receptionist is allowed to make a decision about vs. something that is beyond this person's decision zone (preferably in relation to money). Do you acknowledge any changes as receptionists stay on for a longer time, e.g. more empowerment the longer the receptionist works at the hotel?
- Give two examples of rewards given to receptionists (seasonal or permanent), either monetary or non-monetary (please note that staff benefits, such as free entrance to Tivoli Gardens, are not defined as rewards here). What does it take for the receptionists to say or do in order to receive such rewards? What do you think about the staff benefits? (Human Resource Management)
- What is your view of expenses for training and development for seasonal front staff? Have there been any budget changes over the years?
- Are any handbooks for new receptionists in use? If so, please describe how the Tivoli Hotel works with these and why they are in use. If possible, I would very much appreciate to borrow a handbook (which can be returned on April 1st).

3) *Interrelations between front staff*

- From your point of view, narrate what the relationship looks like between the receptionists working for Tivoli Hotel and the other front workers at Tivoli Gardens. How is information exchanged between these two groups?
- What do you think about cross-training and job-rotation (between different work stations at Tivoli Hotel and between the hotel and the Tivoli Gardens)? Generally, how would you describe the relationship between front staff working with different duties?

4) *Communication & Culture*

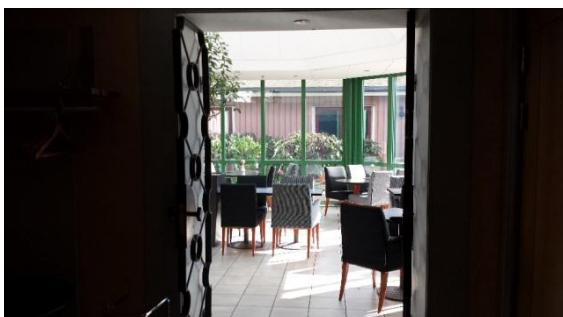
- Describe the possibilities for receptionists (seasonal and permanent) to provide feedback regarding their ideas of improvements, such as better customer service and similar. How are these ideas or suggestions met by the organization? Please mention an example.
- New package offers appear at Tivoli's website over the seasons, sometimes including both accommodation, free entrance and what more. Describe how and when receptionists (seasonal and permanent) are informed about the new offers. In the answer, clarify **WHEN** front staff find out, e.g. if they are informed before the serialization on the website or after, and **WHETHER** they are invited to watch new shows, theatre performances etc.
- What is your opinion about the way communication flows between the various departments of Tivoli Hotel and between the hotel and Tivoli Gardens?
- When thinking about the Tivoli Hotel culture, what comes to mind first?

Appendix 2 - Photographs

Liseberg



Hotell Heden

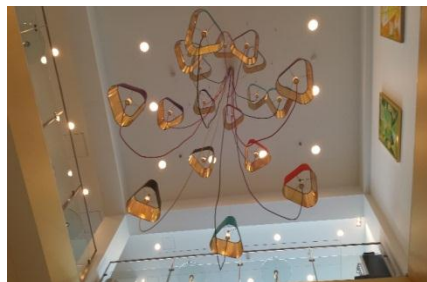


Tivoli Gardens



Author's photographs

Tivoli Hotel



Author's photographs

Appendix 3 – A reflection on marketing material

This appendix concerns a short reflection on marketing material about the brands Liseberg and Tivoli, based on six brochures for each brand. Alongside this information, parallels will be drawn to photographs (see appendix 2) to make it easier for the reader to visualize the brands.

Liseberg – a pastel palette of pink and green

Due to its variety of happenings and events, Liseberg is a noticed brand that most locals probably have recognized or even identify themselves with in some way. Marketing material about Liseberg is often recognized by the signature colors light pink and light green. The latest version of the logotype is light pink itself. The same colors recur in the exteriors of Liseberg and Hotell Heden, the signature colors which signal to visitors or people passing by what the places represent (see appendix 2). It appears to be essential for Liseberg to maintain a united and attractive brand, where colors and spirits are easily recognizable to the general public. The brand often figures alongside a light green rabbit who looks like Liseberg himself. Alongside the branding of Liseberg, one often sees pictures of the rabbit, for example in one brochure about the 90th anniversary of the park in 2013. In one of the pictures, the green rabbit hugs a child while a group of children watch and laugh in the Rabbit Land (*A Guide to Our 90th Anniversary*. 2013). The rabbit appears to be a mascot for the brand, a figure which has the purpose of signaling fun and entertainment in the park as well as in the hotel. The rabbit is somewhat of a representative for the Liseberg brand – a metaphor of carelessness, fun and innocence, wrapped up in light pastel colors. Overall, the colors and associations of the Liseberg brand signal that Liseberg is all about entertainment and having fun.

Liseberg over the seasons

Liseberg is frequently heard and seen and operates during summer, Christmas and partially in between the seasons as shows or other happenings take place. During the summer season, marketing material about the attractions and sights at Liseberg are manifold. For example, a brochure about the Gothenburg city card clarifies that free entrance to Liseberg is included in the price. Brochures illustrates that Liseberg holds not only forty attractions

but also a marvelous amount of flowers, games, dance, music and dining. All of this makes it the largest amusement park in Scandinavia (*One City One Card* 2014). Other characteristics of Liseberg are summer events such as the sing-along with Lotta Engberg and guest performers, an ongoing summer show that is broadcast live on TV (*All About Liseberg* 2013.). Another famous trait Liseberg is the garden days in May, which makes up for the largest garden exhibition in the west of Sweden (*Lisebergs Trädgårdsdagar* 2014). Apart from the summer season, Liseberg is also famous for its Christmas atmosphere and the millions of lights that glow and create a dreamlike air. The Christmas market is the largest one in Sweden (*One City One Card* 2014).

These examples illustrate different ways of confronting the brand of Liseberg over seasons, through brochures but also through TV or from passing by the park. Brochures about Liseberg are generally colorful and full of illustrating pictures of rides, smiling visitors and happy children. In other words, locals would probably find it difficult to miss out on the existence of Liseberg since the exposure of the brand is grand and repetitive throughout the year. Without even entering the park, one can easily access information about Liseberg and what it stands for.

Liseberg and Hotell Heden side by side

Hotell Heden figures in various brochures, for instance in the latest city guide for Gothenburg (*Göteborg Cityguide 2014/2015*, p. 48-50). The exteriors for Hotell Heden are connected to Liseberg through the same colors and similar styles (see appendix 2). Besides, Liseberg is frequently advertised alongside the hotel (*A Guide to Our 90th Anniversary*. 2013). In various ways, advertisement about Liseberg and Hotell Heden coincide with one another. For example, the green Liseberg rabbit poses beside information about the hotel breakfast. Apparently, the hotel serves pancakes for breakfast and the rabbit pays visits to those breakfasts. In correlation to this message, the reader is informed that tickets for Liseberg can be purchased at the hotel reception (*Business is Pleasure* 2014). Another example of the connection is when pictures of Liseberg and the hotel pose side-by-side. One such is a picture of a business woman placed next to a picture of people riding a roller coaster at Liseberg on a sunny day (*Business is Pleasure* 2014). One gets the feeling that the hotel and the park clearly strive towards a similar image.

Tivoli – a rainbow of colors

Similarly to Liseberg, Tivoli is frequently portrayed in marketing material and offers a wide range of happenings and attractions. Due to the broadness of colorful marketing material about Tivoli, most locals are probably in touch with the brand or even identify themselves with it somehow. For example, Tivoli has its own spot on the city map of Copenhagen (*Copenhagen City Guide & Map 2013-2014*, p. 58). Marketing material is often colored in black, with a golden signature for the name Tivoli. However, some brochures are characterized by several colors and patterns. In contrast to the brand of Liseberg and its setup of three signature colors, Tivoli often comes with a range of colors. The color palette corresponds to the mishmash of color impressions around the exteriors of Tivoli Gardens and Tivoli Hotel as well as the interiors of Tivoli Hotel (see appendix 2). Although the look of the brand does not appear to be as assembled as Liseberg's, it is easily recognizable due to its manifold colors and spectacular appearance.

Tivoli over the seasons

Tivoli is impersonated as a seasonal visitor attraction, which is underlined in a city map where the summer-, Halloween- and Christmas seasons are pinpointed (CityMap Malmö/København 2013). The summer season is associated to a range of events and attractions. For instance, this summer a show called "Tam tam" opens (*Tivoli*, 2014). Such shows and happenings are widely advertised on walls and advertisement pillars around the gardens (see appendix 2). Tivoli is also advertised as a visitor attraction in the Øresund region and is found in brochures at the tourist office in Malmoe, for instance. In one such brochure, a picture of Tivoli at night figures alongside information about happenings and attractions in the gardens (Öresundsregionen – Gratis Guide 2013/2014, p. 34). Apart from the summer season, the Christmas season at Tivoli is also well recognized. In a brochure from 2013, the Christmas season is described with the words "The Christmas of Tivoli is the party of light" (my translation – *Tivoli* 2014). Tivoli is pictured as a light itself during a time of darkness, a place that people can lean on to celebrate Christmas with their closest family members and friends (*Tivoli* 2014). Lastly, the Tivoli online casino (*Tivoli-Casino.dk* 2014) is yet another way of getting to know Tivoli, from the view of a computer screen. This means that people can easily recognize the Tivoli brand without even being physically present in the park.

These are a few examples of how the general public, in Copenhagen as well as in the rest of the Øresund region, might encounter and interpret the brand of Tivoli. Brochures, maps, internet or a sight of the gardens while passing by are only a few ways of confronting the brand.

Tivoli and Tivoli Hotel

Tivoli and Tivoli Hotel are often advertised side-by-side. For example, one brochure from Tivoli Hotel demonstrates a mini break in Copenhagen where a stay at the hotel could be combined with a visit at Tivoli due to the short walking distance between the two (*Mini Break in Copenhagen – For the Whole Family* 2014). As was pointed out earlier, the gardens and the hotel share theme colors (see appendix 2). Nonetheless, the bonding between the two is not as obviously pinpointed in brochures as for Liseberg and Hotell Heden. After all, Tivoli Hotel belongs to a privately owned hotel group (Tivoli Hotel 2014b) and is therefore separated from Tivoli Gardens business-wise. Conversely, Liseberg and Hotell Heden belong to the same corporate group (*Lisebergs Årsredovisning 2013*, p. 10).

This short reflection has demonstrated how the two brands are communicated through various media. Without doubt, the brands are difficult to miss due to the extravagant appearances of the brands as well as the great amount of possibilities to encounter them.