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Title of the master's thesis:

# **L'Oréal as an employer of choice for the male target group**

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### **D e c l a r a t i o n   o f   A u t h e n t i c i t y**

I hereby declare that the Master's Thesis presented herein is my own work, or fully and specifically acknowledged wherever adapted from other sources. This work has not been published or submitted elsewhere for the requirement of a degree programme.

Prague, May 14, 2018

Signature

## **A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t**

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**Title of the Master's Thesis:**

L'Oréal as an employer of choice for the male target group

**Abstract:**

The research maps out the perception of L'Oréal as an employer by the male VŠE students and fresh graduates. Based on the focus group with the male target group, L'Oréal is on one hand seen as a leader in its industry, with a lot of flexibility and desire to hire, on the other, as a female-oriented company that neglects its employees. The research also investigates on the tools which could help L'Oréal attract the male target group to join the company. Based on the comparison from focus group with the male target group and focus group with L'Oréal's employees, the author identifies that the company should adapt more complex and professional recruiting process that would illustrate the aspect of exclusivity. The company should also offer the male target group better incentives in form of more competitive salary and better benefits in order to overcome the L'Oréal's perception of a female company.

**Key words:**

Employer of choice, Employer Branding, L'Oréal, male target group, campus recruiting



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# INTRODUCTION

As for 2016, L'Oréal was ranked number four as an employer of choice for Czech business students (Universum, n.d.). When observing the results closely, for females L'Oréal appeared as the second most attractive employer whereas, for males L'Oréal ranked number 71. This significant gap is reflected by the company's employee structure as well. In 2016, out of 457 total employees, only 121 were males and 329 females (L'Oréal's private data). Being a cosmetic brand with many female hires, L'Oréal is by many perceived as a female company. One of L'Oréal's employer branding strategies is, therefore, to change this impression and diminish the gender inequality within the company's employees. To succeed in this the change, L'Oréal's HR has decided to sow the seed of amendment within students. Particularly with male students enrolled or freshly graduated from the University of Economics in Prague, which is the company's main academic partner in the Czech Republic.

These students, however, are more demanding than ever regarding their future career and it is very difficult to catch their attention. The majority of Czech students, to be precise 71%, makes money during their studies (Masevičiūtė, Šaukeckienė, Ozolinčiūtė, 2018, p. 15). The high number of working students having experience with various companies causes that once choosing for an internship or entry level job, the students have already an idea on what they demand from their ideal employer. Also, with the dynamic labour market, increasing number of students and graduates have more arduous expectations – be it working abroad, home offices, training and development or a good balance between personal and professional life.

The objective of this thesis is to aid L'Oréal in solving these two major obstacles. In other words, the goal of this thesis is to firstly map out the perception of L'Oréal to help the Talent Acquisition team understand on where they stand with the male target group. Secondly, suggest recommendations which shall help L'Oréal to attract male students and fresh graduates to join the company. To do so, the research will be based on two pillars. The first pillar will be anchored in L'Oréal's current male employees and their motivation to work for the company. The second pillar will be founded upon the pre-defined target group and their image of an ideal employer, their selection process and their motivation to join the company. Based on the analysis of these two pillars and the current employer branding strategy, the author will propose the steps the company shall incorporate in its employer branding in order to draw the attention of potential male candidates.

The author's initial hypothesis is that there are no significant barriers for the male students and graduates to not consider L'Oréal as their possible employer. The perception of L'Oréal being rather feminine company is not the major barrier and could

be erased by providing the male target group with working condition that are close to the imagination of their ideal employer.

This diploma thesis is divided into two vital parts, namely the theoretical and the practical part. The theoretical part shall get the reader acquainted with the existing theories and frameworks that illustrate the marketing in human resources with a particular focus on employer branding and employer of choice. The theoretical part also covers the question of a campus recruitment and notably its importance for all interested shareholders – the school, the company and the students. The practical part firstly analyses L'Oréal and its employer branding strategy in the Czech Republic. Secondly, it is dedicated to the description of the methodology and the research performed by the author. The practical part is terminated by the examination of the research and the proposition of male student and fresh graduate employee attraction strategies.

The motivation for choosing the topic of L'Oréal as an employer of choice for the male target group is founded in the author's relation to the topic. As a full-time student of VŠE, the author herself is the receiver of L'Oréal campus activities that shape the employer branding perception of students. The most significant impulse for writing this thesis is, however, rooted in the excitement towards the company. The author has undergone a six-month internship in the company in which she has developed herself in many aspects. The author shares the opinion that an increased number of male employees could benefit both the male employees and the company. L'Oréal would improve the overall diversity, performance and ambiance in the company and men could benefit from the advantages that L'Oréal, as one of the leaders in FMCG<sup>1</sup>, offers.

Reading through the research and the suggested recommendation, the limitations of them needs to be taken into the account. Five out of ten participants in the focus group with the male target group were CEMS students and although the CEMS students fall into the target group, wider heterogeneity in various faculties and departments could improve the outcome. Another limitation of the research is the low number of bachelor's students joining the discussion. Although L'Oréal employs particularly master's degree students for their internships, the bachelor students' perception of L'Oréal is also important to the company.

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<sup>1</sup> Fast moving consumer goods

# 1. THEORETICAL PART

## 1.1 MARKETING OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### ***1.1.1 PERSONAL MARKETING***

The importance of marketing in human resources is increasing due to the nowadays quickly changing environment in recruitment. The globalization, robotization and formation of new positions force the companies to demand skilful workforce which can adapt to this fast pace change while remaining innovative and creative. The talented workers are today the greatest asset of the companies, its competitive advantage and determines what stands behind company's success (or failure). The talents are well aware of their value and so they gather information and consider possible alternatives before applying or staying in a job position. Capturing and retaining them becomes therefore, the most crucial role of the HR executer. One tool to do so is Personal Marketing. (Těšitelová, Menšík, 2012)

The word personal marketing firstly appeared in the 1960s in Germany. Nowadays, it is a commonly used term that adopts the marketing concepts and applies them to the human resource field. Marketing as such has numerous definitions, Marjorie Clayman defines it as *"building your brand, convincing people that your brand (meaning your product/service/company) is the best and protecting the relationships you build with your customers"* (Cohen, 2011). Otherwise stated, the job of recruiters in personal marketing is in the essence the same as of marketers – to attract and foster the relationship with its customers, which are in this case the employees. The answer to the question of how a recruiter attracts and keeps employees can be found with the employees themselves. Similarly, as marketers aim to fulfil costumer's needs and wishes, the recruiter needs to do the same with his/her employees. Only, in this case, the organization's strategic goals need to be aligned with the costumer's needs and wishes. Marketers collect such information through the market research and costumers' feedbacks. Recruiters can do so via employees' surveys. These surveys shall indicate the employees' satisfaction, engagement, loyalty, motivation or preferences. Moreover, the surveys illustrate the company's interest and concern for their employees and therefore, can create so-called win-win situations for both parties. (Keil & Glowa)

Clayman (in Cohen, 2011) also talks about marketing through which the company can build its brand. In personal marketing terms, the brand is represented by the company's brand. Most commonly, in the labour market, brand building is conducted via

cooperation with partners (the universities, HR agencies etc.), its PR and most importantly through the corporate culture. In sum, personal marketing is a long-term process of influencing internal and external market with the aim to hire and retain the right employees while building the good name of the firm as an employee on the labour market. (Helena Těšitelová, Tomáš Menšík, 2012)

The HR executer can determine whether personal marketing is working through certain KPIs that come along with its successful application. Teacher from Charles University, d'Ambrosiová (2015), mentions benefits such as increased competitiveness of the firm on the labour market, higher engagement and productivity rate, lower employee retention costs and time in hiring them.

### ***1.1.2      MARKETING MIX IN PERSONAL MARKETING***

To successfully implement the personal marketing concept to the HR strategy, the HR executers use Marketing Mix. Primarily, Marketing Mix is a tool used by marketers to increase product and/ or service sales. American professor Jerome McCathy was the first one to propose the concept of Marketing Mix which includes the so-called “4Ps”: PRODUCT, PRICE, PLACE, PROMOTION. By a correct evaluation and alignment of these 4Ps, the marketing strategy of the company shall remain competitive and effective. (Holiday, 2015)

Based on these four elements, the HR recruiter can establish the Marketing Mix for the human resources department. In this case, the job candidate is becoming the firm's potential customer and the recruiter's task is to build the marketing mix through which he/she sells the job position to the target applicant. The precise aim of the marketing mix in HR is not only to obtain the addressed applicant but also to retain, develop and use the candidate's potential. Each recruiter should adapt its marketing mix to both the corporate and the national culture as well as the strategic goals of the company. The 4Ps applied in the HR marketing mix are identified as following: (Antošová, 2015)

#### **1. PRODUCT**

The product represents the job position and therefore, it is the base of the personal marketing mix. Firstly, the recruiter needs to define whether the position is new or already existent. Based on that, the recruiter creates the job offer including the enterprise overview, job description, duties and required qualifications of the ideal candidate. It is essential to make the offer distinctive to the ones already in a labour market in order to attain talented and motivated workforce. The recruiter can set the offer apart for instance through promoting the company's culture and the working environment. (Holiday, 2015) (Antošová, 2015)

## **2. PRICE**

Similarly, as in the marketing mix, where the price determines the value of the product, in the personal marketing mix, the price determines the value of the worker. In this case, the worker's value is given by his motivation and reward for a job done. The motivation is the key element that drives the employee's outcomes above the usual standards. It is represented by the employee's dedication to work, his attitude towards the job tasks and his willingness to work. The aspect of motivation is closely linked to rewards. The reward can have various forms such as income, salary, bonuses but also non-monetary forms such as employees' benefits or qualifications. Rewarding the employees is one of the most crucial issues the HR department deals with as its aim is to find fair, appropriate, stimulating and transparent processes to do so. This mechanism can be often very strategic and complex as it includes activities such as analysing the market of rewards, the company's capabilities or defining what benefits the employees value. (Antošová, 2015)

## **3. PLACE**

The corporate culture and company's image play a crucial role in job decision-making for any talented applicant. In the HR marketing mix, this factor is characterized by a "Place". The corporate culture is what distinguishes one firm from another and although it is a broad and intangible concept, the employee perceives it in day-to-day activities. For instance, it can be observed through the communication, hierarchy, relationships, mood, priorities and most importantly through the norms and values in the workplace. All these activities indicate the way the employees of the company are formed and the way they function. In substance, it is the employees who create the corporate culture. If the employees feel well in the company, the company is therefore considered as a favourable employer and it gains competitive advantage on the labour market. This factor can be influenced by the HR department as it plays a role of a mediator between the employees and managers and so the HR is in charge of forming an ambiance for a positive corporate culture. (Antošová, 2015)

## **4. PROMOTION**

The "Promotion" in the HR marketing mix focuses on the job offer and the company's presentation. As for the job offer, it shall be well structured, concrete and it shall motivate the target candidates for a job application. It shall include information about the performing tasks, duties, responsibilities and minimum requirements. For capturing the target applicant, the promptness to communicate is also crucial. When it comes to the promotion of the company itself, the recruiter shall highlight the competitive advantage of the firm in a labour market. It can advertise itself for example through displaying its working conditions, benefits it brings to the employees, the development programmes or its mission and vision. (Antošová, 2015) (Holiday, 2015)

### ***1.1.3 INTERNAL MARKETING***

In personal marketing, there are “customers” who can be divided into two groups, internal and external. The external group of customers are people seeking for a job that can be potentially employed by the company. On the other hand, the internal customers are the employees of the company. For that reason, the personal marketing is divided to two subcategories: internal marketing and external marketing.

Kotler describes the internal marketing as the “*the task of hiring, training, and motivating able employees who want to serve customers well*” (Kotler, 2000, p. 13). Simply put, the internal marketing focuses on the internal customers and assures employees’ loyalty and commitment to the company. Therefore, the internal marketing must forestall the external as the enterprise’s employees must hear and believe the company’s message first in order to convince the external applicants about it as well. Its objective is to provide effectiveness and product and/ or service excellence through aligning staff members’ attitudes and behaviours with the company’s vision and mission. In order to do so, the internal marketing’s goal is to create employees who are passionate for what they do. According to internal marketing, passionate employees are those who no longer consider the jobs as a duty rather than a contribution. It is the internal marketing that makes sure that the employees understand and even develop excitement of the company’s vision. The leaders can reach such motivated employees through using the so-called 4-Es principle described in the book *Light Their Fire* (Drake, Gulman, & Roberts, 2004): ENGAGING, ENABLING, EMPOWERING, ENSURING. These four factors imply that the staff members should be involved in creating the vision of the company and should be given the feeling they are part of the company’s vision (engaging). The staff should also be provided with a belief they can turn the vision into reality by giving them a satisfying amount of autonomy and room for creativity (enabling). The empowerment is enabled through flexibility in decision-making as long as the outcome is right. The employees are ensured by receiving guidance, recognition for their performance and also responsibility for their actions. If the 4-Es principles are fulfilled, the employees are becoming so-called “E” employees. The authors of the book *Light Their Fire* state that the “E” employees are loyal, perform and impress their customers. (Drake, Gulman, & Roberts, 2004)

To execute the internal marketing plan successfully, the HR executive shall firstly state the objectives of the internal marketing and discuss them with the management. This is a crucial step as managers, who come into contact with employees on daily basis, are the elements that connects the HR department with the employees. Without the management’s support, it would not only be complicated to target and communicate with the employees but also, the alterations of the exercise succeeding would be restrained. Secondly, after the aim is agreed on, the HR executive shall learn the needs

of its “market”. To do so, he/she shall collect all the necessary information related to the aim of the internal marketing. For instance, whether the employees are satisfied or dissatisfied, their suggestions for changes and improvements in the processes of the company etc. For gathering such information most companies nowadays ask to fill up employees’ surveys nevertheless, the face-to-face interviews derive deeper knowledge thus, are rather recommended. (Personnel Today, 2003)

### ***1.1.4 EXTERNAL MARKETING***

While the internal marketing focuses on the current employees inside company, their satisfaction, engagement, loyalty etc., the external marketing concentrates on the potential employees outside the company. The external marketing aims to attract and acquire the targeted labour force. With well-designed internal marketing, the external marketing is more likely to achieve its goals.

The external marketing is crucial because if not prepared and executed well, the best applicants lose their interest in the company and accept the competitor’s offer instead. As the success and competitiveness of the company depends on the qualified employees, failure in filling vacancies by employees with job prepositions, can result in extra costs, lower performance or deterioration of reputation of the company. The company’s reputation is together with other factors such as the market position, corporate culture, or relation within the company the decision-making factor for the potential employees. The term “potential employees” include the unemployed people, school graduates, employees who want to quit their current job, students or applicants from abroad. The hiring process hold a two-way communication. On the one side there is the applicant that collects the information about the company’s job offer and on the other side, there is the company that gathers the information concerning the applicant. Both sides try to attract one another. (Armstrong, Stephen, 2015)

For the external marketing, the company can use various tools. The most common instrument used is the job advertisement. The company can advertise the job offers via its own website, job offer websites, newspapers or professional magazines. The job offer can tell a lot about the company as an employer. That is the reason why there is no fixed format on how it shall look. Any company can structure it accordingly however, it commonly contains the name of the position, its description, minimum requirements, contact person and directions on how to submit the application. The role of the external marketing in this process is to distinguish the company’s job offer from the competition and to capture the interest of the applicants. (Martina Gogolova, 2015)

The company’s website plays a specific part in a job advertisement. The site does not only promote the job offers but the company as a whole. The website represents the company, its image, culture, values. The way the website is designed, indicates what the company stands for and which candidate is the best fit. To attract the targeted

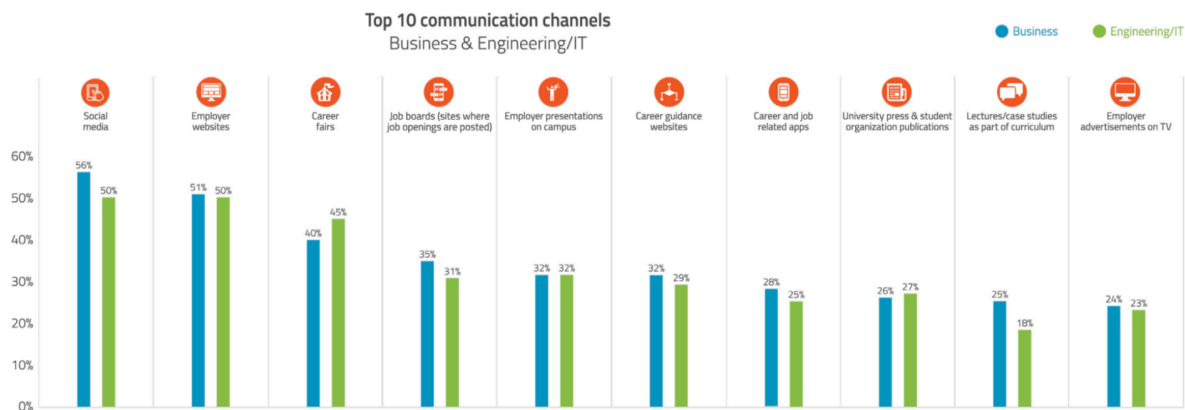


applicant's interest, the company can put an emphasis on its mission and vision, post videos from team-buildings, use testimonials of current employees speaking about what they enjoy the most about the company and their jobs, or pictures of the working environment. (Martina Gogolova, 2015)

Another frequent tool used in external marketing is the job fair. The job fairs offers access to a high amount of interested applicants, face-to-face communication to the candidates and networking with other participating companies. (Smith J. , 2014)

The external marketing can be more and more easily adapted to the company's processes thanks to the trend of social media. Particularly when targeting Millennials, who are said to spend 6 hours a week on social media, the chances they will turn to the social media while observing their career options are high. Hence, the social media such as Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn can reach big number of people for low costs. As the nowadays' talents seek for an employer who gives them a meaningful job, makes the world a better place and focuses on a friendly and stimulating working environment, the goal of external marketing on social media is to showcase the company's culture, its people, campaigns in an authentic way via brief and engaging content. Nevertheless, it is still pivotal to highlight what sets the company apart from its competition and to keep the communication strategy on point (Dorskind, 2017). To leverage social media for hiring, the recruiters can evaluate a candidate's personality and fit with the company through their online profile, they can encourage the employees to share their working experiences with the company or use social media to share various aspects of the company they experience during the day at work (Forbes contributor, 2018). The most influential tool of social media, the promotion of vacancies, is duly summarized by Nicole Mahoney, the CEO of Break the Ice Media, who stated: *"When we advertised for a position that was specific to the industry we serve, we incorporated the job posting into all of our owned media channels. The position was posted on our website and promoted through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and our weekly newsletter. We added Facebook ads to help extend our reach. The results were more qualified applicants and fewer dollars spent on recruitment"* (Forbes contributor, 2018).

To support the claim of social media and employer websites importance, the Universum's survey (Universum, World's Most Attractive Employers 2017, 2017) states that out of 294,663 evaluated business and engineering students, approximately 50% of them turn to social media and employer websites in order to communicate and inform themselves about the potential employer (Figure 1). Therefore, both these channels shall relate to one and other. Social media's purpose shall build the employer relationship and link to the employer website where more detailed information should be available.



*Figure 1: Top 10 communication channel (Universum, World's Most Attractive Employers 2017, 2017)*

## 1.2 EMPLOYER BRAND MANAGEMENT

### **1.2.1 BRAND, BRAND EQUITY, BRAND MANAGEMENT**

#### **1.2.1.1 Brand**

Brand equity is the most powerful tool of personal marketing. Much attention has been brought to the brand equity. Before conceptualizing this term however, it is important to make an understanding of the “brand” itself. According to the American Marketing Association, the brand is *“a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitor”* (Keller K. L., 1993, p. 2). Similarly, one of the most known marketing specialist David Aaker defines brand as a *“distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors. A brand thus signals to the customer the source of the product, and protects both the customer and the producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical”* (Aaker, 1991, p. 7). Although both definitions relate to a brand as a company that sells products and/ or services, there is a pattern to the employer branding as well. While explaining the branding, the “product” in the definition is in our case considered to be the job vacancy. The brand is what makes the company stands out from the other job offers and the reason why the applicant chooses to apply to the company.

The product (job vacancy) performs a task to the customer (job applicant). Therefore, it provides with a functional benefit to its user. However, brand gives the product (job vacancy) its value and so it brings non-functional benefit to the user. The non-functional benefit, also called experiential benefits, are the main components that distinguish one brand from another. Essentially, the function level is the same. Through the function level, the job applicant can hardly differentiate one job offer from another. Nevertheless, if companies are perceived as a brand, their corporate culture, the trust to the company, the status, recognition, comfort or warmth of feeling which working for the company brings, the confidence in company's strategy and its vision are the decisive motivators for a job applicant (Figure 2). (Hague)



Figure 2: Function of branding (Hague, 2013, p. 29)

### 1.2.1.2 Brand equity

*„Brand equity relates to the fact that different outcomes result from the marketing of a product or service labelled with a brand name or some other brand elements compared to results if that same product or service did not have this brand identification. Brand equity represents the “added value” endowed to a product as a result of past investment in the marketing for the brand”* (Keller L. K., 1998). Simply put, brand equity is what distinguishes the branded product from the non-branded and what increases the financial value of a brand.

Brand equity has many elements and characteristics, which need to be managed well in order to ensure the correct perception of the brand. The most influential elements are: Brand awareness, Brand loyalty, Brand image, Brand heritage, Perceived quality, Legal protection, Trade Partner and Strength/ weakness. (Machková, 2010)

**Brand awareness** is the likelihood that brand is in one's memory. In personal marketing, it is the linkage between the product, in our case the job offer, and the brand, in our case the company. Therefore, the objective of L'Oréal in regards of employer of choice is to be in applicant's mind connected as a “desirable employer”. If majority of

people list L'Oréal as “desirable employer” the brand awareness is high and so are more likely capture the targeted candidates. There are four levels of brand awareness which are listed in a Table 1.

<i>Brand awareness level</i>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<i>Brand recognition</i>	It is the minimum level of a brand awareness which is determined by performing so-called “aided recall test”. It signifies that the group is handed a list of brands (companies) and they are supposed to select those, which belong to a certain category. Regarding to employer branding, the participants would be asked to select those companies, they are interested in working for.
<i>Brand recall</i>	In brand recall, the participants are not handed any list of brands (companies). The focus group is again given a category (companies they are interested in working for) and their task is to write all brands (companies) which they recall. It is called an unaided recall test and those companies named without help have stronger brand awareness.
<i>Top of mind recognition</i>	In the unaided test, the brand (company) named first has the top of mind position. It has a unique position as there are most likely to be the first option for the participant. In our case, it will be the first company to look for and apply for a vacancy.
<i>Dominant brand</i>	A dominant brand is the brand which is the only “top of mind” brand listed by the group. It has the strongest brand awareness together with the strongest competitive advantage.

*Table 1: Levels of brand awareness (Hana Machková, 2010)*

**Brand loyalty** regards to a consumer’s commitment to a brand and the repetition of purchasing of such brand over time. Loyal customers buy products from their favourite brands regardless the marketing activities of the competitors. Applying to the employer branding, the loyalty is reflected in employee’s commitment to the employer. He either remains in his position or changes the position within the company. Thus, the brand loyalty ensures low employee turnover. (Hana Machková, 2010)

**Brand image** illustrates the associations that come along with the brand (company) to consumer's (employee) mind. The associations can be represented by emotions, feelings, preferences or information that in a way create the personality of the company. The brand image depends on the level of brand awareness – if it is high, the consumer (employee) has a more specific impression about the brand (company). Having a positive brand employer image is key, as the employment is a long-lasting commitment and the job candidate evaluates the image of each company carefully. Some companies can have a positive image thanks to the working balance they offer and the focus on bright talented people such as Google. On the other hand, some companies might have a negative image due to poorly paid and unappreciated jobs such as Amazon. (Hana Machková, 2010)

**Brand heritage** represents the story of a brand, its core message and values that have been layering to determine the perception of a brand (company) (Hana Machková, 2010).

**Perceived quality** of the company's goods or services play a crucial role in the purchase decision-making process. In brand employer terms, the quality is evaluated in regard to the company's quality as an employer. Perceived quality includes the quality of people (their skills, education, qualification), the company's culture, offices, location etc. (Hana Machková, 2010)

**Legal protection** protects the company's trademarks. Trademarks can be identified by a company's name, logo, sign, colours, design etc. It is one of the company's greatest assets, as it assures the company gets recognised by the costumers. (Hana Machková, 2010)

**Trade partner** can be used as a middle man between the company and its final consumer. In recruiting, an option is to use a specialized recruiting agency that takes care of the first steps of the hiring process. (Hana Machková, 2010)

**Strengths/ Weaknesses** are represented by the company's positive and negative qualities. (Hana Machková, 2010)

### **1.2.1.3 Brand management**

A brand is one of the most important assets, a company owns and so brand management is one of the key activities of many companies. Keller describes brand management as “*the design and implementation of marketing programmes and activities to build, measure, and manage brand equity*” (Keller K. L., 2013, p. 30). Having powerful and strong equity is one of the main drivers to company success. In order to achieve it, the marketing concept composed of three parts – target, strategy, tools – shall be implemented.

1. **Target**, in the marketing concept, must be adjusted to the targets of the corporate strategy. These targets depend on various business variables such as the development of the market, sales or finances. Accordingly, the objectives of the personal marketing are arranged. For example, if the company's goal is to expand its size, the marketing of HR concentrates on recruiting new employees.
2. **Strategy** gives obligatory guidelines on how to meet the agreed targets.
3. **Tools** represent the steps that need to be taken in order to meet the marketing targets. Generally, the tools are applied to the "4Ps" of the marketing mix.

Brand management uses these marketing techniques in order to raise the value of the brand (company). If the brand management is efficient in doing so, it builds strong and favourable brand equity. In our case, it brings benefits such as: (Keller K. L., 2013, p. 522)

- Increased loyalty of the employees to the company
- Improved perceived quality of a company as an employer
- Less vulnerability from personal marketing activities of competitors
- Less vulnerability to marketing crises
- Higher number of job applications
- Lower employee turnover
- Increased brand awareness
- Improved brand image of a company as an employer

## 1.3 EMPLOYER BRANDING

The effort of internal and external marketing result in employer branding. The concept, its framework and the tools on how to manage it will be explained in this sub-chapter.

### I. Employer branding concept

The employer branding is another essential element of a personal marketing. Ambler and Barrow were one of the first ones to define the term of "employer branding" as *"the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company"* (Tim Ambler, 1996, p. 185). According to the definition from 1996, the employer branding highlights the elements that make up the company in order to attract and retain its employees. In the 90s, employer branding was about powerful brand messages through which the company was promoting itself. However, with the time, the practice of employer branding has changed. Nowadays, thanks to the internet, easy access to information and emphasis on the people, the employer branding is mostly shaped by what people hear or read about the company or what they experience with the company themselves. Therefore, employer branding must focus on the perceptions and associations which the company as a brand evokes in both potential and current employees. These perceptions and

associations tell the company the real status and value of its employer brand. (Mosley R. , 2014)

Richard Mosley pays attention to the modern advancement of employer branding in his book *Employer Brand Management* where he has defined the concept as “... *in terms of the full spectrum of thoughts and feelings that people associate with an employer, both positive and negative, both true and untrue, both clear and impressionistic, whether based on direct experience, intentional communication, unintentional communication or hearsay. From this perspective, every employer has an employer brand, whether they’ve defined the attributes and image they’d like to be associated with, or not. In other words, brands, like reputations, are ultimately defined by people’s perceptions* “ (Mosley R. , 2014, p. 4). Later, in the article for *Harvard Business Review* Mosley adds: “*Employer branding is no longer simply a concern for recruitment marketing; it is also a key component of effective organizational leadership. If companies can’t attract, engage, and retain the right talent, they’re unlikely to achieve their business objectives* “ (Mosley R. , 2016).

Furthermore, to explain how the strategy of the employer branding shall be constructed, marketing professors Kristin Backhaus and Surinder Tikoo (2004) break the employer branding to a three-step process: employee value proposition and external and internal marketing which were described earlier in the chapter.

***The employee value proposition (EVP)*** is the message the company wants to convey by the brand (Backhaus, 2004). The message contains the qualities and related benefits the company wants to be associated with the most as an employer. The message needs to be brief and easy to understand therefore, it usually includes between three to five key elements or pillars. These elements need to be credible with its long-term tangible commitment. Lastly, to add greater value to the employer brand experience, the value proposition also needs to be distinctive and courageous. (Mosley R. , 2014)

For example, L’Oréal’s EVP is: “***A thrilling experience, a culture of excellence.*** “

*This employer value proposition is broken down into three pillars:*

- ***A thrilling experience*** – *a truly global business with a clear purpose and vision will ensure that candidates can see how they would fit this into their own trajectory*
- ***An environment that will inspire you*** – *with the amount of science, corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices, there will be something to inspire most employees*
- ***A school of excellence*** – *world leading brands and products would attract the best people and skills, as a candidate you could be attracted to that environment for your career growth.* ” (SUNDBERG, n.d.)

## II. Employer branding framework

The purpose of the employer branding remained the same through time. The employer branding's objective is to attract and retain its employees. Richard Mosley is of the opinion that any company can be judged based on the people it employs (Mosley S. B., 2011). The quote by Josh Bersin "*The war for talent is over, and the talent won.*" (Bersin, 2014) implies that the high demand for talents allows them to choose the employer that offers the best benefits as for a pay-check and opportunities. Furthermore, Mosley claims, the employment is also about the shared behaviours and beliefs between the employer and the company (Mosley S. B., 2011).

To build the employer branding, Kristin Backhaus and Surinder Tikoo developed the "Employer branding framework" (Figure 3). It shall help the company to combine human resources and marketing in order to develop propositions regarding the employer branding. The outcomes of the employer branding framework shall bring two benefits: employer brand associations and employer brand loyalty (Kristin Backhaus, 2004).

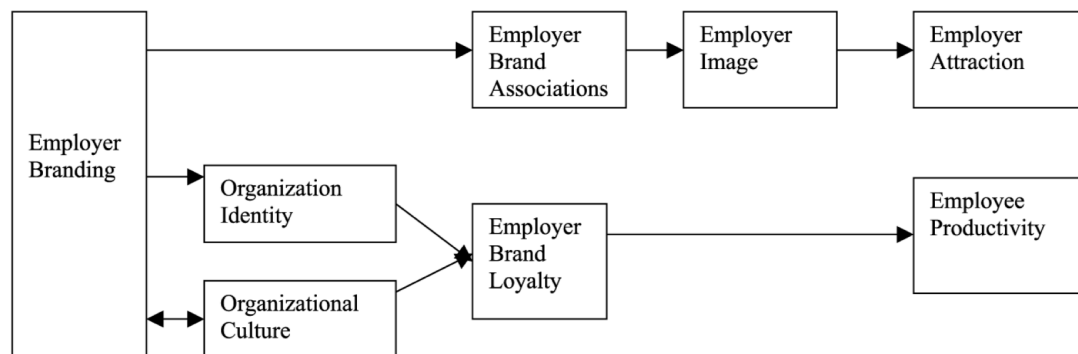


Figure 3: Employer branding framework (Kristin Backhaus, 2004)

**Employer branding associations** are the thoughts and ideas that a brand name induces in the minds of consumers (Aaker, 1991). The associations can be both verbal and non-verbal. Non-verbal associations evoke how the employee feels about the brand, his emotional impressions and can even evoke smell, taste or other sensations (Supphellen, 2000). Employer brand associations are determinants of the **employer image**. In the "Employer branding framework", the employer image plays a mediator role between the employer brand associations and the employer attraction. Kevin Keller describes the brand image as "*an amalgamation of the perceptions related to the product-related/non-product related attributes and the functional/symbolic benefits that are encompassed in the brand associations that reside in consumer memory*" (Keller K. L., 1993). The brand image can bring both the functional and symbolic benefits. The



functional benefits are job-related characteristics that include tangible aspects such as salary, benefits or leave allowance. On the other hand, symbolic benefits are not job-related, and they represent the perception of the prestige, social approval and personal expression needs. The symbolic benefits of a firm include the attitudes and beliefs the company holds and the relevance and relation of them in regard to the potential or current employee. In other words, the symbolic benefits tell the employee whether he will enjoy working for the company or not. Nowadays, the importance of the symbolic associations overarches the functional benefits. It is due to the limitation of job-related aspect and their similarities between the companies in this matter. On the contrary, the non-job-related factors are the differentiators and so they gain more importance in employer branding and **employer attraction** (Kristin Backhaus, 2004). L'Oréal carrying attributes such as beauty and innovation shall attract those, that find these characteristics interesting or can somehow relate to them. Also, these attributes differentiate L'Oréal from its competitors, other FMCG employers.

**Employer brand loyalty** represents the other part of employer branding and has positive effects on **employee productivity**. Brand loyalty is the attachment that a consumer has to a brand (Aaker, 1991). In employer sense, it is the commitment and the trust the employee has towards the firm it works for. Employer brand loyalty is shaped by both the organizational culture and organization identity. **Organizational culture** is reflected by people's behaviour in the workplace. This behaviour mediates the values and goals of the company. Therefore, the culture and the commitment are very closely linked together as the organizational commitment is represented by the acceptance of the company's goals and values, enthusiasm to work, and motivation to stay with the company. That is why one of the objective of employer branding is to create a culture that boosts desired work behaviours and high quality of working life. The **organizational identity** defines what the company stands for as a group. Employees identify themselves with the company that they find unique with attractive attitudes which were evaluated already in the employer attraction. In addition, positive identity of the company contributes to the self-esteem and self-worth of the employees. (Kristin Backhaus, 2004)

### III. Employer brand management

Having the employer brand defined is a first step. The second is to manage it well. „*While employer branding can be described as a discrete activity, employer brand management describes a higher level approach to coordinating people management activities, with important implications for how recruitment, on-boarding, talent management, performance management and leadership development takes place*” (Mosley R. , 2014, p. 3). In plain language, the employer brand management describes the means and the mechanisms the company shall apply so it would be perceived the way it wishes to be perceived. These means and mechanisms has Richard Mosey introduced in so-called “Employer brand mix” (Figure 4). Employer brand mix is a

framework of 12 dimensions which consist of two wide groups. These groups form the employer brand experience on a multinational or a national level. They are called Big Picture and Local Picture with Big Picture focusing on the broad context of the company and Local Picture analysing the local context of the company.



*Figure 4: Employer brand mix (Mosley S. B., 2011, p. 150)*

### ***Big picture***

The six factors influencing the broad company's situation are those factors, that take longer to implement. They arise from the multinational level of the company and they are also the fundamental stones of the employer branding. Without a strong Big picture basis, the Local picture cannot not be constructed. (Mosley S. B., 2011)

1. ***External reputation*** – The reputation of an employer is closely linked to the reputation of its goods and/or services. If the goods and/or services the company produces enjoy a good stature, it is generally assumed, the company is a good employer as well. The positive reputation of the company's goods and/or services influences the employees' pride and motivation to work for the company. It is because the employees appreciate the companies that are affirmatively recognized by their families and friends and have a positive status that, on top of everything, looks representatively on their CVs<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the employees follow the company's marketing communication with the same interest as the targeted costumers. Employer brand management ensures, the

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<sup>2</sup> Curriculum Vitae

external communication is discussed with the employees and is also aligned with them and the company's strategy. If the external communication's promises and claims are coordinated with the employees, the employees' engagement can be improved. (Mosley S. B., 2011)

2. **Internal communication** – For employer branding, not only the outside communication matters but also the communication within the company. Basically, any communication with the employees somehow shapes its employer branding as every piece of it indicates something about the company as an employer. The internal communication covers the routine communications such as emails, newsletters, face-to-face communication. Nevertheless, it also includes the communication of the strategic responsibilities such as values, ethics, motivation, corporate change. Employer branding management's objective is to create united coherent internal communication which ensures an efficient communicating approach. (Neill, 2016)
3. **Senior leadership** – As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the company's leaders and top management play a significant bridge between the employees and the HR department. It is the leaders whose capabilities include implementation and development of the employer branding strategy and therefore, they have the most influence. The leaders themselves must first agree with the employer branding strategy to credibly pass it onto their subordinates. The employer brand management shall always ensure that the company's leaders are aware of their influence and actions that can impact the employees' perception of the company as an employer.
4. **Values and CSR** – Implementing values and CSR to the company's employer branding improves the reputation of the company. It highlights that the company also gives back to the society through activities such as conservation of water, saving energy or responding to health, environmental or safety issues. The CSR activities are beneficial to all stakeholders as they make the brand appealing externally and help the communities in socially meaningful way. (Abubakr Suliman, Hadil Al-Khatib, 2014)
5. **Internal measurement systems** – The employer brand management's task is also to measure the strength of the employer brand. To successfully do so, the Employer Brand Manager shall apply KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that shall be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely). Satisfaction surveys, 360-degree evaluations, employees' turnover, balance score cards are such tools that can be used both in measurement and self-reflection of the employer. After analyses of the results, the results shall be published and act upon to conserve the employees' satisfaction, engagement and improvement of the employer branding.
6. **Service support** – Employer brand management also addresses the experience the employees perceive with the company and its quality of service support. If the company demands its workers to be fast and efficient, the workers naturally

demand the same from the company. If the employees receive the same treatment they are expected to deliver to their customers, the engagement and authenticity of the brand improves.

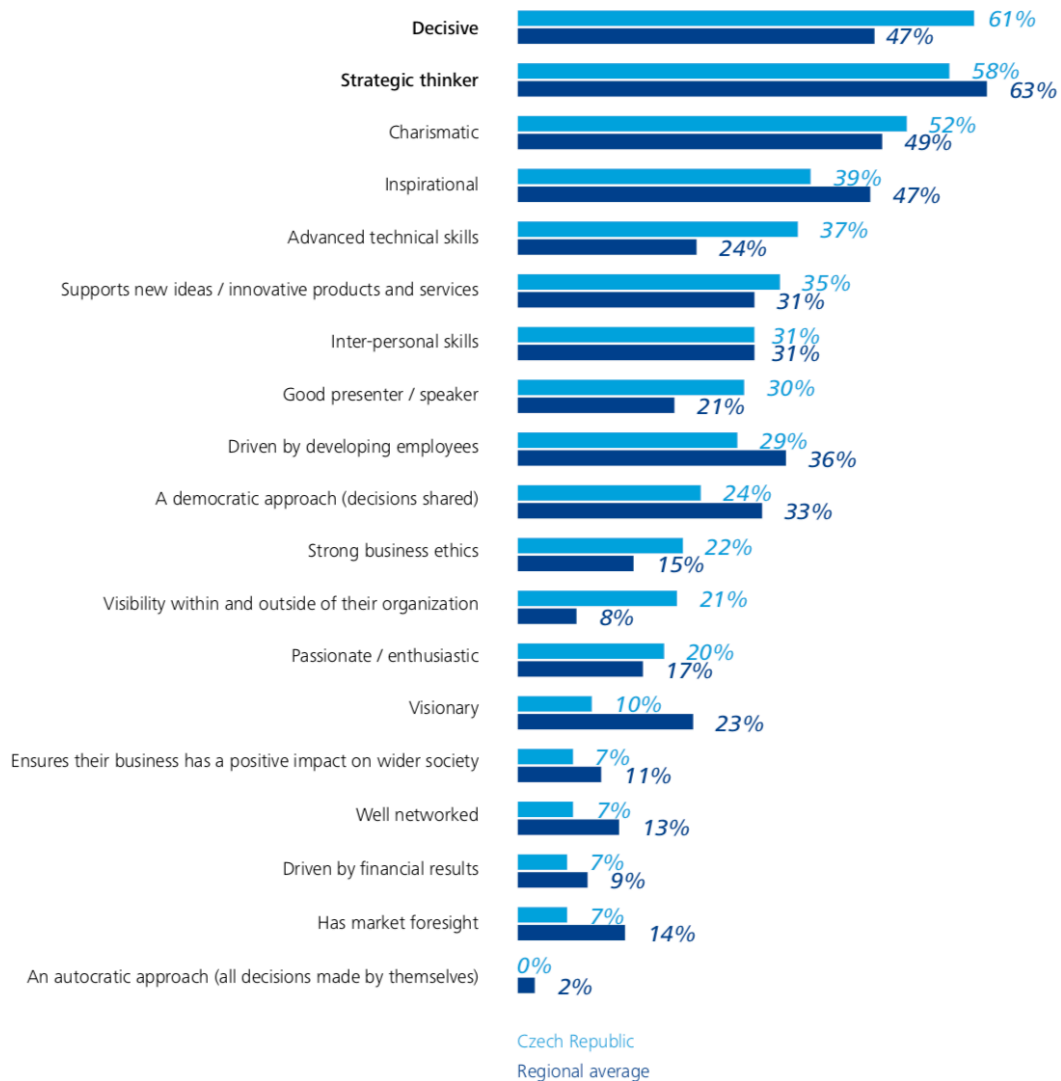
### ***Local picture***

Once the “Big picture” of the Employer brand mix is established, the focus can spread onto the so-called “Local picture”. As the name itself indicates, the Local picture takes into the account the differences between the national and the hub levels and therefore, it adapts its employer branding management to the local level. The activities are usually developed, built and implemented within the local HR department and thus, they are not as complex and time-consuming to establish as those in the “Big picture”. Yet, these activities are strongly influenced by the activities undertaken in the “Big picture”. (Mosley S. B., 2011)

1. ***Recruitment and induction*** – The employer branding starts at the recruitment as it is the first experience of the company with an employee. This first experience is a key to brand’s positive connection. The employer brand management aims to seek for the employees that are attitude-wise the right fit for the company and can relate to the values of the brand. The employer branding however, does not finish at the hiring. The induction of the new hire is one of the most critical when talking about building the employer branding satisfaction. If conducted wrongly, the company can still lose the top performers to their competitors. Therefore, to ensure the new employee’s engagement, a proper treatment shall be approached. Such treatment includes activities as adaptation weekend, introduction of organization’s vision/ mission/ goals, assignment of a contact person, effective on-boarding process, identification of appropriate trainings etc. All these activities ensure the correct employee’s engagement to the new position and builds the employer branding. (Mosley R., HOW TO ENSURE A POSITIVE EMPLOYER BRAND EXPERIENCE THROUGH INDUCTION AND ORIENTATION, n.d.)
2. ***Team management*** – While elaborating on factors in the Big picture, the Senior leadership was mentioned. The senior management relates to the top management whereas the team management accounts of leaders that are daily in touch with the employees. As the local management represents the company and shapes the employees’ brand experience, employer brand management’s task is to provide the team management with appropriate training and leadership development. The team management shall be represented by those with advanced interpersonal skills in order to be able make the employees feel valued and appreciated. This characteristic is particularly important as the demands for corporate culture strongly varies however, an open and trusted environment is demanded by the majority of employees. In addition, the study “First Steps into the Labour Market”, conducted by Deloitte in 2015 with students and recent

graduates from 14 countries in the Central Europe region, states that Czech respondents mostly value leader's decisiveness, strategic thinking and charisma (Figure 5). Therefore, employer brand management should be educated on characteristics that are the most appreciated on local level and expected from

Definitions of a true leader



the team management.

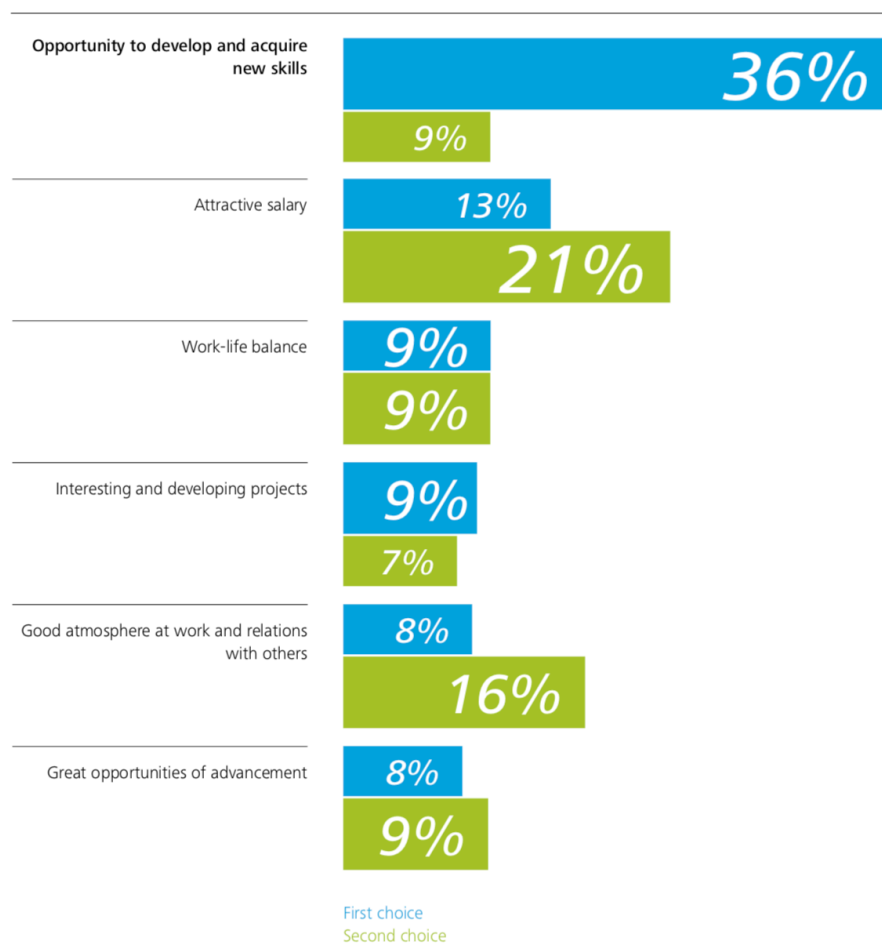
Figure 5: Definition of a true leader (First Steps into the Labour Market, 2015)

3. **Performance appraisal** – Evaluating an employees' job performance relates to the employer brand management as well. Employer brand managements assures there is guidance and transparency in the performance appraisal process. It makes sure the appraisal is well prepared, employees know what is expected from them, as well as how and based on what they are evaluated. Another employer brand management's responsibility is to make sure, the employees are

judged not only on the performance but also on their efforts and behaviour and whether they are aligned with the values and culture of the company.

4. ***Learning and development*** – Companies that invest in employees' learning and development are statistically more likely to be evaluated with a positive employer branding image. It is because by investing in employees' education, the company demonstrates care and concern in its employees' future. In return for spending resources on learning and development, the company improves its attractiveness, employees' satisfaction and engagement. Particularly, within the students and recent graduates from Central Europe, the prioritization of skills and opportunity development is ranked as the most influential factor when on a job hunt (Figure 6) (First Steps into the Labour Market, 2015). It is based on the fact that the younger generation understands that the nowadays world is constantly changing and considers learning as a mean of advancement in a career. (Younger, 2016)

The most important factors when choosing a job



*Figure 6: The most important factors when choosing a job (First Steps into the Labour Market, 2015)*

5. **Reward and recognition** –Reward and recognition plays an important role in choosing a job (Figure 5). The financial rewards demand constant attention and updates from the HR department as it is a baseline for the employer branding. McKinsey Quarterly survey (Martin Dewhurst, 2009) implies that cash bonuses, increased base pay and stock or stock options are among the highest-rated financial motivators. On the other hand, the survey also indicates that those employees with sufficient incomes appreciate some non-financial rewards no less or even more than extra money. McKinsey lists the praise from immediate managers, leadership attention (for example, one-on-one conversations), and a chance to lead projects or task forces as the three highest non-financial incentives. The non-monetary rewards usually require more time and commitment from the leaders and therefore, such recognition demonstrate company's care and concern for employees' well-being. In return, the companies create engaged and motivated employees. (Martin Dewhurst, 2009)
6. **Working environment** – The working environment may not seem as crucial as some other factors for job application (Figure 6), but it plays the key role for the job change (Figure 7). Employer brand management can use the working environment and adapt it to manifest its brand and core values. Nowadays, the friendly working environment goes beyond modern, well-furnished offices with cafeteria and kitchen space. Leading companies such as Microsoft, Google or HP design their offices to make their employees feel better than even at home. Their offices offer creative, playful and relaxed environment which demonstrates the importance of their employees' welfare. Naturally, such gesture increases the companies' attractiveness and improves the employer branding. (Abdul Raziq, 2015)

#### The main reasons to change an employer

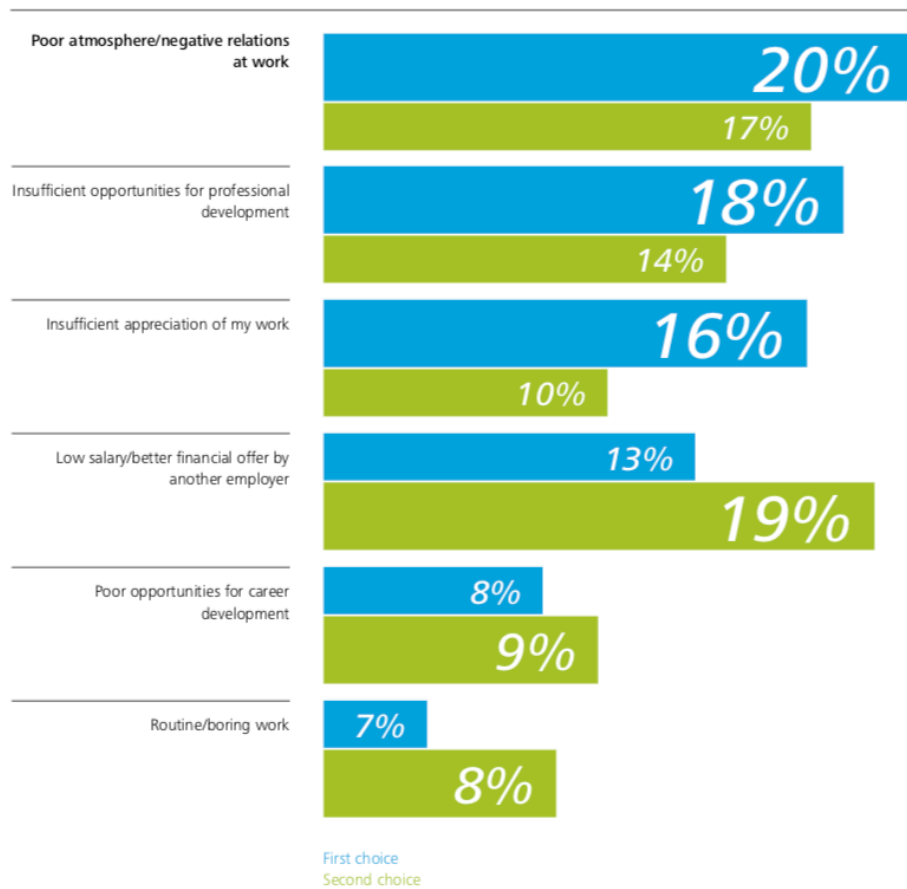


Figure 7: The main reasons to change an employer (First Steps into the Labour Market, 2015)



## 1.4 EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

The employer of choice is the ideal outcome of personal marketing efforts. Nowadays, the term “employer of choice” is becoming a buzzword in the HR spheres. If a company is tagged as an “employer of choice” it means, people choose to work for that company. Employer of choice gets the closest to fulfil the idea of an ideal employer hence, potential candidates desire to work with the company, and current employees are happy to work for the company. In addition, the current employees would stay with the company although they would be approached by different recruiter with a job offer because, as already mentioned, they are satisfied with their employer. (Roger Herman, Joyce Gioia, 2000)

As the employer of choice is the best possible accomplishment of personal marketing, the benefits the status of employer of choice brings are almost identical to those of personal marketing. Recruiting becomes significantly easier having applicants approaching the employer of choice themselves and asking for a job opportunity. The pool of applicants therefore increases with higher calibre candidates as the mediocre applicants fear the tough candidates’ competition. Therefore, as the employer of choice can choose the most talented employees who are also the best fit to the company, the works gets done faster, more accurately and with less errors. This high quality of performance leads to increased productivity. The employees performing the work feel more confident and satisfied with their conduct and therefore, are more likely to stay with the company. The decrease of the employees’ turnover results in reduction on both the recruitment and marketing. On top of that, the lower fluctuation of the employees, again encourages the performance optimization as people work better together when they know one and other due to the developed trust and amenity. (Roger Herman, Joyce Gioia, 2000)

Notwithstanding, there is also a drawback on being the most desired employer. Being on a spot light does not only attract the talents but the competitors demanding the talents too. The head hunters are aware that the most qualified people choose to work for the top employer. Therefore, the employer of choice becomes a hunting ground for the other competitors whose HR experts pay a call with a job offer or by other means try to drag the employees to work for them. (Roger Herman, Joyce Gioia, 2000)

Universum is a company which each year surveys students from the 12 most powerful economies<sup>3</sup> in order to find the most desired companies for business and engineering students. According to the review, in 2017 Google, Goldman Sachs and Apple were among the most attractive employers for business students (Table 2). L'Oréal was ranked number nine as an employer of choice worldwide (Table 2). The business students selected the work-life balance as the biggest motivator to work for companies, the second most demanded aspect for them is the job security and stability and the third most appreciated activity from the employer side is the possibility to become a manager or leader. Also, the opportunity of an international career, prospect of being competitively or intellectually challenged are among desired activities that the employer of choice shall offer.

EMPLOYER	2017
Google	1
Goldman Sachs	2
Apple	3
EY (Ernst & Young)	4
PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers)	5
Deloitte	6
Microsoft	7
L'Oréal Group	8
KPMG	9
J.P. Morgan	10
McKinsey & Company	11
The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	12
Procter & Gamble (P&G)	13
Morgan Stanley	14
Nike	15
BMW Group	16
Adidas Group	17

*Table 2: The World's Most Attractive Employers 2017 for Business Students  
(Universum, World's Most Attractive Employers 2017, 2017)*

## 1.5 3. CAMPUS RECRUITING

As the target group of this thesis were defined males who study or recently graduated, the opportunities of campus recruiting need to be defined. This sub-chapter elaborates on talented student recruiting, on the right selection of the campus and on the activities helping the companies achieve various objectives. The sub-chapter is closed with explaining the benefits of the internships.

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<sup>3</sup> Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the UK and the US

### **1.5.1 STUDENT RECRUITING**

Back in the days, campus recruiting served to fill seasonal internships and entry level positions (Deloitte Development LLC, 2015). However, the rapid changes and growth of businesses is the reason for the “War for Talent”. Due to the up-to-date skills, flexible attitudes and point of views, leaders of tomorrow are on demand today more than ever before. The HR Heads are therefore, seeking such traits with young, open and energetic work force, the students. To ensure necessary talent supply, numerous organizations have already integrated into their strategy hiring certain amounts of graduates annually. On that account, the campus recruiting appears as the most helpful tool in attracting students (Dutta, 2011).

Besides the benefits of talent acquisitions and building candidate pipelines, other crucial gains include:

- **Managing talent gaps** – Campus recruiting is not only for managing the talent gaps but also for benchmarking the skills that nowadays talents should have.
- **Improving employer branding** – The millennials tend to share their experiences and impressions be it by WOM<sup>4</sup> or on social media. University hires will broadcast their experiences with the new company’s culture or working place while building the employer branding within their graduate friends.
- **Generating new ideas** – The students can bring in fresh and diverse perspective and skills ranging from technology to management of people. (Deloitte Development LLC, 2015)

### **1.5.2 CAMPUS SELECTION**

The first contact of the company with the school shall be by the university’s department chair. The company shall introduce itself on a personal meeting and show interest in a long-lasting relationship with the school by communicating the activities it would like to hold for the students. As students’ opportunities are highly valued by the campus, the company shall make the school see those opportunities and develop them together for mutual beneficence. The faculty members shall remain neutral when supporting the companies’ activities, however, they shall always be present and well-informed in order to find the best fit for their students. (Bruce Hary Busta, D'Arcy Becker, P. Jane Saly, Richard S. Sathe, Kate Mooney, 2007)

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<sup>4</sup> Word Of Mouth

In order to be able to provide favourable opportunities for both the student and the university, the company must choose the campus carefully. Following factors play the decision-making role while selecting the targeted school: (Bruce Hary Busta, D'Arcy Becker, P. Jane Saly, Richard S. Sathe, Kate Mooney, 2007)

1. **Industry** – The industry focus of the school is the key. It is the first and easiest step in the university selection.
2. **Accreditations** – The schools' accreditations are indicators of the quality of students. Moreover, the reputation of the school and its students shall align with the reputation of the company as well.
3. **The syllabus** – Different faculties in the university have different curriculum and so some faculties are more favourable than the other giving the faculty specialization.
4. **Size of the faculty** – The size determines the potential number of students the company can target. Also, the impact of the campus activities the company holds depends on the size of the faculty.
5. **Types of degree** – The degree, be it master or bachelor, is an indicator of what recruiting practices the company shall select. As for the bachelors, the company can focus its activities to grow positive brand image and offer internships. As for the masters, the company can concentrate on hiring students for entry positions.
6. **Number of graduating students** – Number of graduates each year tells the company how many potential hires it is able to reach annually.
7. **Semester dates** – Important dates of the semester are one of the decisive factors for campus selection. If the company cannot align its activity schedule with the one of the campus, it could be a waste of company's financial and personnel resources. For example, it is commonly known that during vacations or examination periods the student engagement is very low.
8. **Diversity** – Multicultural companies are in addition interested in the composition of students' diversity (foreign vs. local). It indicates whether the students are used to cooperate and coexist with people from different backgrounds.
9. **Student clubs and associations** – The students can be reached not only through the school but also through their interests. The student clubs and associations are means of getting in touch with students directly and communicate effectively what types of activities could be helpful for both the company and the students. These groups also provide the company with students, who can be better targeted and are more proactive thanks to their extra curriculum activities. (Busta, Becker, Saly, Sathe, Mooney, 2007)

### 1.5.3 *CAMPUS ACTIVITIES*

There are various activities that a company can undertake in order to attract the interest of students. These activities build commitment and cooperation which support the relationship between the company and the school. Variant activities are differently financially demanding and therefore, the company has to evaluate the impact the activity can have before taking the action. Nevertheless, for any campus cooperation, the consistency is key. In order to build the relationship with the university, the company shall dedicate its time to the activities with the school even if it is currently not hiring (Bruce Hary Busta, D'Arcy Becker, P. Jane Saly, Richard S. Sathe, Kate Mooney, 2007). This is important, because persistent employer branding and relationship with schools helps the company to be more visible and approachable by the universities. The various campus activities give the students a true idea about the company's work culture and environment (Dutta, 2011). Managing Director Rajan Dutta summarizes the last benefit of interactions and constant employer branding flowingly: *"Employer branding is not only built by branding communication but more relevantly, how the alumni, professors and the student community perceive the company. Students rarely look at compensation and position alone, the role offered, industry and most critically the opportunity to learn and grow is what drives the students choice of company"* (Dutta, 2011, p. 52).

The activities the company can take advantage of on campus are the following:

1. ***Guest speakers for classes*** – Guest speakers in a lecture can bring new insights and perspective to the students due to sharing experience from the real-world life. Students can not only enhance the educational experience, but they can also learn about the company's culture and its working environment. Guest speakers shows the company's expertise and answer potential questions of the listeners.
2. ***Workshops*** – A workshop can provide the company with more freedom then the guest lectures as they can usually choose its location, topic and style of teaching. Workshop usually take longer, and the company can get more engaged with the students. Although a workshop is more demanding regarding time and finances, it is more effective than offering a lecture.
3. ***Career fair*** – During a career fair a company can gain access to large number of students which allows the company to meet not only with their ideal candidate but also, with the non-traditional ones. Also, career fairs increase the brand awareness and allow the company to network with the others. (Smith J. , 4 Reasons Why Job Fairs Aren't A Total Waste For Companies, 2014)
4. ***Recruiting website*** – Although this activity is not directly connected to the campus, many students can go and seek there information regarding employment possibilities. They can learn about opportunities during their studies or after their graduation.

5. **Advertising** – Using the promotional materials to attract the students is another way to attract students. There can be multitude ways to do so, such as by sending emails, having posters hanging along the campus, leaflet handling or posting articles in the university magazines.
6. **Mock interviews and Curriculum Vitae consultation** – Both these activities are highly appreciated by students as the experienced recruiters can share with them tips and tricks on how to improve themselves. Usually they can be part of a career fair.
7. **Shadowing programmes** – The internet can provide the students with any information about the company and the job offers. However, it cannot replace the experience of spending one day with the company's representatives. This way the students can explore the company and get hand-on experience with its jobs. On the other side, the recruiters can identify the potential fit for the company. (Hansen, 2018)
8. **Social events sponsorship** – Social events sponsorship is a favourite activity from student site. It is a rather informal way on how to meet the company's representatives and network with them. The company can show its care for work-life balance, corporate culture and improve its image. The type of social events can vary depending on the time and financial resources the company can offer. The social events can vary from dinner for targeted students to holding a graduation ceremony.
9. **Student ambassadors** – Companies can take advantage of student ambassadors to make the students see the company in a different light. As the student ambassador is one of the students, he can more easily reach them, more openly discuss any questions and can advise on job application. Student ambassadors can increase the brand awareness and save precious time of the company's recruiters. (Bruce Hary Busta, D'Arcy Becker, P. Jane Saly, Richard S. Sathe, Kate Mooney, 2007)

### **1.5.4 INTERNSHIPS**

One university prestige measurement is the ability of its graduates to find employment opportunities in their field of interest. The universities however, focus primarily on teaching the theoretical knowledge. On the other hand, companies nowadays demand practical experience, leaving the students without any practical skills and hardship to compete on the labour market. An internship is one way of improving the prospects for students' future career. This is, because the internship allows the students to combine the theoretical knowledge they gained at school and put it into practice. Moreover, an internship is the differentiator, an element that signifies competence and ability. Zopiatis defines the internship as following: "*in general terms, an internship is viewed as a short-term practical work experience in which students receive training and gain experience in a specific field or career area of their interest*" (Zopiatis, 2007, p. 65). It

is a bridge between the classroom and the labour market. (Gisela Sanahuja Vélez, Gabriela Ribes Giner, 2015)

The selection process has no given specifications. In general, the companies seek for leadership potential, extracurricular activities and set of skills that can address their specific needs. Most importantly, the organizations select the intern based on his attitude as it is the indicator of his motivation to work, energy and leadership skills. Also, the intern shall evaluate the internship options carefully. It is because some companies tend to exploit their interns or give them meaningless or stressful tasks. The interview is the place for both parties to gather the necessary information and learn whether they would be a right fit. (Coco, 2000)

*“The National Association of Colleges and Employers reported that 82.5% of surveyed employers offered internship programs. In a more recent study this year, NACE found that “employers extended job offers to more than 70 percent of their interns” and “nearly three-quarters of their job offers to interns were accepted” (Smith A. P., 2006, p. 332). Therefore, it is rather clear, internships bring advantages to all its stakeholders: the students, employers and schools. The five most significant benefits are summarized in the table below (Table 3) being the job offer for student from the side of employer the most influential gain. (Coco, 2000)*

For Students	For Employers	For Universities/Colleges
Employability	Qualified workers	Reputation and visibility
Higher salaries	New perspectives	Student recruitment
Skills and competencies	New skill sets	Curricular assessment
Career exploration	Academic relationships	Business relationships
Academic performance	Recruitment costs	Advancement prospects

*Table 3: Benefits of internships (Roland L. Madison, Richard T. Grenci, William N. Bockanic, 2017, p. 24)*

For the internship to be successfully led, following practices shall be kept:

- **Setting clear expectations** – The process of setting expectations shall already start during the interviews, in which both sides shall learn about what they demand from the internship. The key for the expectation clarity is the communication and mutual understanding. The performance objectives, employee behaviour, cooperation and culture shall be defined and understood. (Lipman, 2016)
- **Receiving mentoring** – At the beginning of the internship, the intern shall be assigned to one or more mentors. These mentors shall preferably work in the same team or set regular meetings with the intern in order to be able to answer the student’s questions. The availability to the student, receiving guidance and coaching is one of the fundamental learnings the internship offers to the student.

Moreover, as part of the mentoring programme, trainings for the intern shall take place. (Norma Montague, George Violette, 2017)

- ***Offering meaningful work*** – Giving an intern a meaningful task is defined as one of the engagement drivers. Moreover, the intern himself brings fresh perspective and enthusiasm which the employer can then use to enrich the work and outcome itself. (Keane, 2015)
- ***Providing feedback*** – An Internship, being mostly the first-time experience with real-life work, can bring some stress to a student. Students can come across uncertainty on whether the steps he/she takes are correct or not. Feedback is here to either secure him on his behaviour or correct some errors. Feedback is also a mean of motivating and making sure the expectations are still aligned. (Bruce Hary Busta, D'Arcy Becker, P. Jane Saly, Richard S. Sathe, Kate Mooney, 2007)

At the end of the internship the evaluation with the intern's manager, mentor and the HR is recommended. Also, the discussion of following steps regarding the potential full-time employment shall take place. If the job is not offered or declined, it is always crucial to communicate what is the reason behind it in order to give the other side room for improvements. (Bruce Hary Busta, D'Arcy Becker, P. Jane Saly, Richard S. Sathe, Kate Mooney, 2007)



## 2 PRACTICAL PART

### 2.1 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH

#### **2.1.1 *METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH***

The research for this master thesis is divided into three parts. The first part of the research was dedicated on gaining an understanding of the current employer branding of L'Oréal and the past and future student-oriented activities the company undertakes. In order to fulfil the objective of the first part of the research, a personal interview with the HR Manager and Talent Acquisition Manager of L'Oréal Czech Republic, Romana Martincová, was conducted. In Anděls's office, Romana is the key person who develops, implies and manages the employer branding activities including the attraction, selection and identification of talents to the company. The questions were aiming to detect the importance of employer branding in the company, its strategy, positioning, techniques as well as former and planned activities. Moreover, the recruitment processes for internships and entry-level positions were discussed as well as Romana's expectations from the research. Most importantly, the interview helped to pre-define the ideal young male candidate which serves for this thesis as a male target group.

The interview with the HR Manager and Talent Acquisition Manager was pivotal for the following part of the research – focus group with the predefined male target group. Thanks to the participant's interest in the topic, the discussion took over one hour and half during which the men spoke about their employment search process, the factors that influence their job choice and about their perception of L'Oréal as an employer.

The method focus group was selected based on the recommendation of the supervisor of this thesis, doc. PhDr. Daniela Pauknerová, Ph.D., and agreed with Romana Martincová and was held also for the third part of thesis' research. The last part of the research aimed to gain understanding on motivation of L'Oréal's male employees to work for the company. The debate was elaborating on three different factors that influence participants while applying, joining and staying with the company - the employer search process, the recruitment process and job selection, and the employment for L'Oréal.

#### **2.1.1.1 Research questions**

The questions of the research were in alignment with the expectations of HR Manager Romana Martincová.

The research questions were the following:

2. How is L'Oréal perceived as an employer by the male students and fresh graduates?
3. How can L'Oréal attract more male students and fresh graduates?

### **2.1.1.2 Interview with an expert**

This face-to-face interview with Romana Martincová was conducted in the Czech Republic headquarter in Prague on 16.3.2017. The interview took 45 minutes and the conversation was held in English in order to avoid the eventual translation nuances. As the author is Romana's former colleague, the discussion was rather informal.

Four main areas of interest were researched:

#### **I. L'Oréal's employer branding**

Through the first part of the interview the author investigated on the L'Oréal's employer branding. Romana was asked to elaborate on the positioning of L'Oréal's employer branding, what stage of development L'Oréal's employer branding is, whether it is just a combination of various activities or a comprehensive strategy. The objectives, former and planned activities within the employer branding, the history together with the future focus of employer branding were also discussed. The aim of this area of the interview was to acquire the necessary knowledge and vision of L'Oréal's employer branding.

#### **II. L'Oréal's recruitment process**

The second area of the interview was solely focused on the recruitment process for both the internships and the entry positions. Romana was asked to describe the hiring practices used in the company to fill the job vacancies for students and fresh graduates. The objective of this part was to afterwards be able to compare it with preferred practices of the target group and raise some recommendations if necessary.

#### **III. The male target group**

In order to select the right participants for the focus group with students and fresh graduates, Romana was asked to specify L'Oréal's target group within male students and recent graduates. Moreover, the HR manager was also encouraged to identify the job positions that are most likely to be employed by the predefined target group and those which are rather difficult to filled by the target group

#### **IV. Expectations from the cooperation on the thesis**

To close up the interview, the expectations from the cooperation on the thesis were discussed. Based on the expectation, the research questions were constructed. Lastly, the methodology of thesis' research was decided upon.

### **2.1.1.3 Focus group – male target group**

*The focus group was organized on 18<sup>th</sup> of April of 2018, Wednesday at 19:30 p.m. Ten participants falling under the criteria of the target group participated in the research whose profile is to be found in the appendix (Attachment 1: Profile of male target group, Focus Group*

). 1 bachelor student, 2 graduates and 7 master students met in the wine cellar “Na Skleničku” which was privately reserved just for the focus group purposes.

Three main areas of interest were researched:

#### **I. The employment search process**

Firstly, the goal of the discussion was to gather the information about the employment process. This part was divided into two parts – the employment search in general and the recruitment process. As for the employment search, the questions were aiming to acquaint the author with the approach the male students impose while searching for the job. The participants were asked to share their steps while seeking for the employment, highlighting the first place where they mostly start their search at. Also, the participants were asked to name specific channels which help them in their employment search process and the aspects that play a role before applying to the vacancy. While approaching to the second part, the recruitment process, the participants were encouraged to give their opinions on the importance of the recruitment process while choosing a job. The boys also shared their most and least pleasant hiring process they have undergone and how it influenced their decision in the job search.

#### **II. Influencers defining target group’s employer choice**

After gathering knowledge on the aspects that play a role in the employment search, the discussion elaborated on the elements that define the target group’s employer of choice. The focus group was asked to specify the factors that motivate the participants while working, the benefits they demand from their employer and the values they seek at the employer. The author also investigated on the elements that the employer shall, in the opinion of the participants, possess in order to make them proud working for it. To sum up the second part of the debate, the focus group members were firstly emboldened to imagine their ideal employer and describe it and secondly, to list names of their employer of choice. To link the second part of the focus group with the third part, the author invited the participants to talk about their preferred industry and potential switches in such preferences.

#### **III. L’Oréal as an employer of choice and its employer branding perception**

The third area of the discussion addressed L'Oréal as an employer and its employer branding. The author investigated on the knowledge of L'Oréal, the associations that comes with the company and how the company is perceived as an employer. The discussion mediator also reviewed the positions the participants could imagine themselves to work for at L'Oréal and whether they would feel proud to be employed at the company. The whole focus group discussion was closed by elaborating on the consideration to work for L'Oréal.

The last part of the research was conducted in order to be compared with the previous part of the discussion that was analysing the preferences that potential candidate takes into account while applying for a vacancy.

### **2.1.1.1 Focus group - male employees of L'Oréal**

The focus group was organized on 25<sup>th</sup> of April of 2018, Wednesday at 12:00 p.m. at L'Oréal's offices. The participants were selected by Romana Martinová, who helped to organize the discussion which took one hour and five minutes. Prior to the meeting, the participants, who are currently undergoing their internships or hold junior positions, were not informed about the aim of the project. Ten employees were encouraged by the discussion mediator to be completely honest with their answers even if their opinions could speak negatively about their employer. To support the open atmosphere, in which the participants could feel free to express their genuine opinions, they were promised not to be named at the thesis. In addition, they were offered lunch and drinks, provided by L'Oréal.

Three main areas of interest were researched:

#### **I. The employment search process**

Similarly, as with the male student and fresh graduate's focus group, the first part of the discussion was aiming at understanding the employment search process. This time, the questions were addressing the search process for L'Oréal. The author structured the questions to see what stands behind applying for L'Oréal, whether the application is rather a coincidence or a well-thought process. Most importantly, the first part of the focus group discussed the convincing aspects that made the participants apply for the job position they are currently holding.

#### **II. The recruitment process and job selection**

The second part of the debate was elaborating on the recruitment process at L'Oréal and the selection of the position over other vacancies on the labour market. The participants were asked to go through their hiring experience with L'Oréal and the aspects that put the company above the other job vacancies they were interested in. On

the other hand, the employees were also asked to list the elements that were holding them back from accepting the position they are currently holding and whether it appears as an issue to them even after joining the company. The second part of the focus group was aiming to gather both the pros and cons of L'Oréal recruitment process, compare it with the favourite practices of the male target group in order to suggest recommendations, if necessary.

### **III. L'Oréal as an employer of choice**

The last area of the focus group with L'Oréal's employees was focused on highlighting the most positive and negative things about their current employer. The participants were encouraged to share what they enjoy about their jobs, what motivates them to work for L'Oréal, what values of the company they can identify themselves with and whether they are proud to be employed by L'Oréal and why. On the contrary, the participants were also asked to point out what they feel that could be improved by L'Oréal in order to create better working conditions and attract more men to the company.

The objective of the last part was to compare the factors that students and fresh graduates seek at their employer of choice with what the current employees enjoy the most about working at L'Oréal. Analysing the similarities shall lead to the suggestions on what to communicate to the male target group.

#### ***2.1.2 L'ORÉAL GROUP***

L'Oréal is the world's largest cosmetics company with its headquarters in Paris. The story of L'Oréal dates back to 1909, when a French chemist Eugene Paul Louis Schueller invented a hair dye. He established a company named "Société Française de Teintures Inoffensives pour Cheveux" that was a predecessor to L'Oréal and started to sell his hair dyes to Parisian hairdressers. Schueller started in the hair colouring field nevertheless, the company branched-out quite quickly. Nowadays, L'Oréal's activities focus not only on hair colouring but also on hair care, skin care, make-up, sun protection and fragrances. The company accounts of 34 brands that are divided into four divisions: L'Oréal Luxe (e.g. Lancôme, Giorgio Armani, Yves Saint Laurent), Active Cosmetics Division (e.g. Vichy, La Roche-Posay), Consumer Products Division (e.g. L'Oréal Paris, Garnier, Maybelline New York) and Professional Products Division (L'Oréal Professionel, Kérastase, Redken). The wide portfolio of brands, that are complementary to one and other, covers all lines of cosmetics and is therefore able to fulfil various needs of various costumers all over the globe. Furthermore, the diversity of products is reflected in the diverse distribution channels where L'Oréal products can be bought. They can be found for example in professional hair salon, perfumeries, hyper/supermarkets, beauty stores, own boutiques, pharmacies or online.

L'Oréal's powerful strategy is reflected in its financials, which are strong on a continuous basis. In 2017, the company's total sales reached US\$44 billion with 9.9% of global market share. The US, China and France are the three most important markets for L'Oréal. Nevertheless, the developed countries contribute the largest share to L'Oréal's revenue. (Euromonitor, 2017)

Nowadays, L'Oréal employs over 82,600 people, out of which almost 4 000 work in research and innovation. Research and innovation are deeply rooted in L'Oréal's guiding principles and science is one of the pillars of the company. To prove so, L'Oréal spends 3.3% of its sales on the R&D annually, which is one of the highest spending shares in the industry. The company owns six research and development centres in France, the US, Japan, China and India. *"L'Oréal has regional research and development centres to enable it to better understand local preferences and thus develop products suited to local tastes. For example, the research centre in China studied Chinese hair types and hair care customs for three years, which eventually led to the development of a range of hair care products designed for Chinese hair based on local preferences and hair care practices (Euromonitor, 2017)."*

### **2.1.2.1 L'Oréal Czech Republic**

L'Oréal entered the Czech Republic in 1994 and immediately became one of the most influential players in the beauty and care industry. *"L'Oréal Czech Republic led beauty and personal care in the Czech Republic in 2016 with a value share of 10%. Its position was the strongest within sets/kits, where it ranked first with an 18% value share, followed by skin care, hair care and sun care where it ranked second in 2016, holding a 17%, 21% and 19% value share respectively"* (Euromonitor International, 2017). In 2015, the company earned 93CZK million of net profit. (Euromonitor International, 2017)

Nowadays, there is a headquarter in Prague for three central European countries: the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary. These countries construct a hub which is by size the largest in Europe within the L'Oréal group. The role of Country Managing Director for the hub is currently led by Tomáš Hruška. (L'ORÉAL ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA A SLOVENSKO, 2018)

In the Czech Republic, L'Oréal employs over 350 employees. These people take care of 24 brands that are present in the Czech market. Those 24 brands are furthermore divided into four divisions – the Luxury division, accounting for 12 brands, the Consumer product division, accounting for 5 brands, the Professional product division, accounting for 5 brands and the Active cosmetics division, accounting for 2 brands. This wide portfolio is firstly positioned in a way that the brands would not cannibalized themselves and secondly, that it allows L'Oréal to attract every costumer. The brands

are to be found in department stores, supermarkets, drug stores, pharmacies, hair salons, perfumeries or duty frees depending on their nature and usage occasions. (L'ORÉAL ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA A SLOVENSKO, 2018)

### **2.1.3 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH**

The findings of the research are divided into three categories in the same manner as in the methodology.

#### **2.1.3.1 Interview with an expert**

##### **I. L'Oréal's employer branding**

Currently, the employer branding positioning is in question. As for now, L'Oréal has three main areas of focus. Candidates with 3 to 5 years of experience fall in the first target group. These people have already been in the market and can compare different employers, however, they are impacted by the poor reputation of L'Oréal. This negative opinion has its roots in bad managerial style that was common at the company ten to five years ago. At that time, the managers were creating an atmosphere of fear and pressure. People were pushed to work without any sense or purpose and therefore, many people left, sharing the bad reputation on the market. Although the situation in the company has changed, the perception outside the company has not so much. The second target group are males. As L'Oréal is facing a gender imbalance within its employees, employer branding is trying to attract males by showing them the real business of L'Oréal which is definitely not only for ladies. The last and for now the most targeted area of employer branding focus are students. Through strong campus presence L'Oréal tries to capture their interest and attract them for entry level positions. The company aims to develop them and help them grow. Nevertheless, HR experiences the difficulty to retain the fresh graduates as they wish to change the position faster than the company can offer to them. For this reason, the main focus of employer branding positioning is now in question.

*Generally speaking, every aspect included in employer branding is now in question. It is due to the fact that until Romana has joined L'Oréal, nobody in the company paid attention to the employer branding. There were some activities such as BRANDSTORM competition (Attachment 6: L'Oréal's employer branding activities*

) or contracts with universities, however, nobody was taking the advantage of promoting L'Oréal through them. The opposite, students were not aware of the marketing competition, L'Oréal was paying for the partnerships with campuses but not attending their events or talking to the students. This has changed one and half year ago when L'Oréal started realizing the importance of employer branding. For now, the

Talent Acquisition managers are fixing the basis and are preparing the employer branding strategy that would be consistent and meaningful. The process is lengthy, complex and time-consuming. Firstly, due to the missing resources, both financial and personnel and secondly, due to the absence of company's culture on which the employer branding is planned to be built.

Nowadays, the perception of the company is on the edge of two extremes. There are either people who love and dream to work for L'Oréal, Romana claims, or on the opposite, those who do not care at all for working there. These candidates are side-tracked by the perception of long-working hours, messy organization, wrong managerial style, French culture and international marketing that cannot be adapted to local level. Overall, candidates hesitate to join the company because they perceive the work-life as tough. Romana sees that the situation is not like that anymore, or at least is rapidly improving. The indicators of that are for example company's referrals. In 2016, there were only 6 referrals of L'Oréal as an employer and in 2017, the number increased to 32 referrals. Such leap demonstrates that the employees' satisfaction is raising, and that employees feel sharing it with their acquaintances.

Thus, no matter what target group the employer branding addresses, it is the communication that is the key. Romana aims to launch the communication strategy as a first step of the whole employer branding strategy. As Romana does not wish to communicate something that is not true, the early stage of the communication will be focused on the employees and implementation of the company's culture. After the employees start observing the change in the company's culture - which shall be unique, inspiring and motivating - and start to live it the company will communicate this new culture also outside the company. In order to create the communication strategy right, the HR team has organized three IBP<sup>5</sup> workshops that shall serve as a base for the employer branding strategy. The objective of the workshops was to define values and reasons why employees enjoy working for L'Oréal. To reach as complex results as possible, employees across the whole CZ-SK-HU hub were invited. They came from different positions, divisions, nationalities and age groups. The outcomes are now ready and are being matched with the external surveys<sup>6</sup>, in order to compare it with the market. Based on where the market is going, what values the candidates are seeking for, concrete steps of employer branding campaign will be constructed.

For now, there are couple of steps that are planned and are only waiting to be executed. The objective of all the steps is to create a stimulating environment, in which people are happy and inspired to work at. The first step is the employer branding video. The

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<sup>5</sup> Implementing Best Practices

<sup>6</sup> e.g. CEMS projects, Universum report



concept is ready, the HR is just waiting for the termination of the reconstruction of the offices. Promoting new offices, sharing the working ambiance and making those who work in such an environment proud is the whole purpose of shooting. The second step is the social media communication. As for now, Romana succeeded to expand the necessary budget thanks to which the editorial plan is under construction. The editorial plan shall combine all planned steps together as it would be sharing them online. The social media communication shall be consistent and ahead of L'Oréal's competition. The third step is the success stories sharing. To create an inspiring environment, Romana prepared a list of people who career-wise experienced something great and would be able to share it with the rest of the company. The goal of this step is to communicate promotions, be transparent about them and most importantly to inspire and show the company's employees what is possible to achieve within L'Oréal. Again, the HR managers are aiming to gather diverse stories to be able to touch a wider audience. People would therefore be sharing histories about growing up in one division and moving up to the other, changing functions or going abroad and coming back. The fourth step, which is now in a discussion is the gentleman's club. The last step is aligning the HR and corporate communication and making both spheres cooperate and support one and other. In Romana's view, L'Oréal truly is a great company because it does great things, however, nobody is aware of them because nobody shares them with the employees. To support her opinion, Romana shared an example of top managers being surprised on how L'Oréal contributes to sustainability and how concerned they were by the fact that nor themselves neither their employees know about such achievements. The fourth step aims to change the absence of communication and aspires to keep the employees updated on what is happening within the company and tell them about all the little victories the company reaches. Such efforts shall again contribute to employees' pride that could be spread outside the company as well. Overall, the Talent Acquisition team desires to think outside the box when launching the steps. They wish the employer branding to be bold to display the courage of the company as well.

On the other hand, there are the current activities that are aiming to fix the basis of the employer branding. Thanks to the initiation of CEO Tomáš Hruška, L'Oréal invests into its employees who are the core of the company. For now, the most significant change is the reconstruction of Anděl's offices. New offices shall stimulate the L'Oréal spirit and create a place where people like to spend their time. Most importantly, this act supports the company's culture creation. Among other investments, that L'Oréal has implemented, belong giving interns laptops or enforcing home-offices for full-timers. Outside L'Oréal, Romana and her team focuses on students and university activities. As already mentioned, before Romana joined L'Oréal, there was a marketing competition BRANDSTORM that had very low awareness among its target group, the students. Romana has decided to boost the awareness among the university students by launching a large communication campaign. The result was an increased number of

people registering and attending the competition. In addition, for this year's round, Romana has decided to improve the process of the whole competition through linking the competition to the emotions. The updated BRANDSTORM was taking the participants through an experience, introducing them to the cosmetics business and making them to feel part of something special. Other activities, that are targeting students are lectures and seminars at the university where L'Oréal's managers do not only introduce the company and their jobs but also, they share the real successful cases from cosmetic's industry. Moreover, L'Oréal actively joins career forums at VŠE where it promotes both the job openings and the company as a whole. To make L'Oréal stand out from the other exhibiting companies, L'Oréal presented the virtual reality to the students. Also, Romana asked her male colleagues to join the stand to again exhibit that not only talented females work at the company. Another activity at which L'Oréal is involved, is the partnership with the CEMS programme, the Honours Academy and the Faculty of Economics and master's minors in marketing and sales. The partnership not only includes L'Oréal holding lectures for the students but also organizing Business projects, skill seminars and informal activities which the students can join. Overall, Romana aims the campus activities to be more visible and more exciting than their competition's activities, so they would stick at student's mind.

*Other current activities that do not fall into Romana's responsibilities, however, contribute to the employer branding are the Citizen day, the Ethic Day, the Sustainability week and the L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards for Women in Science ( Attachment 6: L'Oréal's employer branding activities*

). These activities are part of internal marketing and are organized at every L'Oréal subsidiary around the globe.

## **II. L'Oréal's recruitment process**

The recruitment process is similar for both the internship positions and entry level positions. Firstly, there is a pre-selection where the HR scans candidate's CVs, afterwards candidates undergo so-called DM1 testing. This testing was developed by Google and Pepsi and serves in assessing people's potential to be successful in digital marketing environment. Romana claims, the testing evaluates rather the common sense and how people think and work with information. L'Oréal is given a score scale from which it is either recommendable or not to hire the candidate. If the candidate successfully passes through the DM1 testing, he/she continues with an interview with his/her potential manager. L'Oréal at times combines these interviews with an assessment centre as it is a better way to present the company and it is also more effective in case the company needs to fill-up more vacancies. The assessment centre usually starts with the introduction of L'Oréal and with the position that are currently open, then it continues with candidates' introduction that is done in English. This exercise proves the candidate's English knowledge and his/her ability of public speech.

This exercise is followed with the team task and individual task to assess the competence in working with the others as well as on his/her own. Lastly, the assessment centre is closed with the logical testing that includes basic calculations.

Full-time workers being part of the company's culture bear more careful selection than in case of interns. As the objective of the new employer branding strategy is implementation of the L'Oréal culture, Romana not only assesses the candidate's abilities but also whether their behaviour is based on simplicity. Simplicity is an internal transformation programme that moves towards greater collaboration and cooperation. According to the programme, L'Oréal leaders shall possess nine characteristics that infuse the company with trust, flexibility and strategic vision. It is particularly important to follow the simplicity programme in order not to repeat the mistakes from the past. Romana will soon introduce so-called "Leadership quality gate" which assesses the psychological way of thinking, personal, managerial and communication style and stress-resilience. In addition, not only new-comers will be evaluated, but the current managers as well. As Romana believes, it is the managers who create the environment which she targets to change with the implementation of employer branding strategy. Therefore, change needs to come from them as well. In case they will not succeed at the testing and they will not be willing to align their behaviours with the Simplicity programme, L'Oréal will no longer have a place for them.

### **III. The male target group**

The author and the HR manager agreed to narrow down the focus of the thesis to male students and fresh graduates from VŠE. As VŠE is the university from where most interns and junior managers come, it is also the target campus regarding L'Oréal's activities. Having the male students and recent graduates analysed could help the company with further employer branding activities.

The potential candidates shall be working towards their bachelor or master's degree or be fresh graduate from a master's study programme. Candidates shall have some working experience, however, not necessarily in the field they are applying for. It is the student's characteristics that makes him ideal candidate for the company. Romana seeks for a male with an entrepreneurial spirit, who is not afraid of challenges. L'Oréal does not seek for students who study only for the sake of studying but for those who are proactive and can recognize opportunities and take advantage of them. Those candidates who are in line with the 9 pillars of the simplicity programme and who are on top of that modest and flexible are the ideal candidates. If the male candidate does not possess these attributes, Romana is certain he will not succeed in the company.

Romana stated that the positions that are troublesome to fill with the male target group are in marketing and social media. It is due to the fact the males do not see the business perspective while applying. They do not realize L'Oréal is the trend setter in social

media, e-commerce, digital and marketing and therefore is ahead of its competition. They do not see the opportunity of learning and executing their job at top level within these departments. The opposite, they see the factor of having to work with products which they cannot identify themselves with. On the other hand, the positions that are appealing to males are those in finance and supply chain, which Romana believes is due to not having to work with the products.

#### **IV. Expectations from the cooperation on the thesis**

For now, as Romana admits, L'Oréal's employer branding is learning by doing. Although L'Oréal carefully considers all the activities, it can never predict the impact on what the activity will deliver. Currently, the most significant struggle Romana encounters with the student target group. Romana perceives, students do not care for the employer branding activities, they are disgraceful and not modest. Also, as already mentioned, their desire is to rotate within the positions more frequently than the company can offer them. Another struggle the company meets is the low interest of males in the company. The majority of the candidates are females and it is generally more difficult for L'Oréal to attract males.

For these reasons, the HR manager would like to investigate how L'Oréal is perceived by the male students and fresh graduates. How L'Oréal stands in their eyes as an employer in comparison to their competitors such as P&G and Henkel who are also international FMCG corporations. These companies target similar students and recent graduates and are assumingly preferred by males who wish to work in the FMCG industry. Romana wishes to learn what she shall communicate or offer to the students and fresh graduates in order to make L'Oréal more appealing to them. The last question the Talent Acquisition manager wants to answer. is whether male students and recent graduates shall remain one of the main focus groups or if they should switch the focus to males with 3 to 5-year experience.

### **2.1.3.2 Focus group – male target group**

#### **I. The employment search process**

The participants experienced the employment search process on many levels. They all agreed, they use various types of sources and never rely only on one source whilst searching for a vacancy. Moreover, they are all very cautious about the companies they are applying for. The company itself plays often a more important role than the job itself as in many cases, the participants recognize the industry they would be interested in, nevertheless, they are open to more job positions to work at. The most reliable source of information is for everyone the word-of-mouth. The recommendation from a person they know is the most influential factor while deciding on what vacancies to apply to. The target group uses word-of-mouth to learn about the experience the current

employees have with the company – such as the working atmosphere, the work-life balance and overall satisfaction with the employer. Majority of the males also use the job-related websites such as Proudly, Glassdoor and Cems.org. Preponderance of the participants particularly appreciate Proudly and Glassdoor for presenting the bigger picture of the companies. Both of the websites not only offer the companies' vacancies but also the reviews of current or former employees, give opportunities to learn more about the hiring process and see pictures or videos of the working environment in the offices. What makes LinkedIn stand out from the other channels is the filtering tool which Robert uses in order to approach the employment search process more efficiently. Hung added that LinkedIn helps him to see what acquaintances he has within the preferred companies so before he applies, he connects with them to gather more information. The participants also acknowledged the job fairs as one of the possible means to get a better idea about the companies' culture and possible openings. The participants agreed that they join the career fairs, yet they were not really satisfied with the quality the fairs have in the Czech Republic. Mostly, they come to the fairs to obtain a direct contact. Another tool to receive the contact was through workshops the companies hold in their premises as well as at the university. Martin M. listed such a process as one of his most frequent ways to get in touch with the company and get to talk to the people within the company. Another approach named was going to the website directly. Reading the information about the company, going through the vacancies is also a usual way to access the employment search process. Martin M. and Tomas admitted that if their desired position is not posted on the website, they seek for the email of the HR and apply directly while asking for the specific field they would be interested in. They expressed positive experience as the HR experts would always keep their CVs in case there would be no openings for them at that moment. Overall, the participants agreed that there is no particular place or channel they would usually start their employment search. But the approach is usually similar – trying to check as many sources as possible.

Having the necessary information gathered about the potential employers, there are many aspects that can make one company stand out from the others. By definition, the students and recent graduates seek primarily for the right mixture of the meaning, the tasks and the field of the potential job. Once these three factors are met, the participants proceed further with their interest in the company. As already mentioned, the references lead the decision-making as well as people in the company. It is not only the acquaintance's recommendations but also the people the participant meets at the interviews who are the potential colleagues to-be. Especially, it is the boss the participants need to be a good fit with and feel they can learn a lot from him/her. Furthermore, as any other millennials, the participants seek for international exposure, how fast they can grow within the company, possible rotations and challenging assignments. The participants suggested having these possibilities within some graduation programme would be the best possible option for them. Martin P. also

added, he wishes his job to have an impact. He needs to work for a company whose products can positively influence people's lives. On this topic, Kristian replied that although he appreciates such vision, he also cares for a good salary as most jobs which are fulfilling in this sense are not fulfilling money-wise. The others join Kristian with the opinion that salary is not the most decisive factor however, plays an important role while deciding on what company to apply for.

On the experience of recruitment processes the participants had many things to share with the group as well. Martin P. told his experience with KPMG, when after passing the assessment centre, the partner with whom he was supposed to meet up for another round of interviews, took over one month to find a free time. Such an approach made him not only felt non-appreciated in the company but also showed him how much he would get to work with his potential boss. Tomas has a negative recruitment experience with Google when the recruitment day was not very well-prepared, the presentations were rather boring, and the HR executives did not display the right attitude towards the candidates. This disappointment made him change his complete view on the company. Hung did not enjoy the approach when he got invited to a casual conversation about the job position and after coming the HR instead of discussing the position with him, was demanding to solve complex case studies. Hung admitted he does not mind having challenging tasks during his recruitment process nevertheless, not being told and being misled he considers unfair. The last negative recruitment process shared with the group was from L'Oréal. David applied to an internship position but was told such position would not be for him and instead was offered a full-time position. At the end, he was not even told he did not obtain the position. David did not like the fact that he was told what would be or would not be a position for him, he was also discouraged by being offered a full-time position instead of an internship when as a student he cannot handle such a busy schedule. Lastly, not being told he did not get the position discouraged him to ever apply to the company ever again.

On the other hand, there were also many positive recruiting experiences mentioned. Robert applied to a position which was above his expertise and instead of receiving a general decline message, he received a highly personalized mail. When he asked for feedback, the company immediately called him on the review how he did. For this pleasant experience, he came back to them again when after a while seeking for a position. There were three rounds of interviews and each time he received a call elaborating on how he did and what the next steps are going to be. By the time the application was finished the company was his first choice thanks to the high-quality recruitment process. David also remembered the personal approach at Google. He was impressed by the recruiter remembering his CV by heart together with little details about him. Such friendly and kind approach really made him want the job. The participants summed up the positive experiences with recruitment processes by saying, that they usually have a good impression from the interview when they feel it is not

only them trying to sell themselves to the company, but it works vice versa as well. Overall, the members of the group did not highlight one particular recruitment process that would suit them the best. Only Robert was having his preferred style – the home-take assignment. He enjoys being assessed on something he had time to prepare and give it the right thoughts and afterwards present his results to the HR or manager. In general, the boys demand an adequate level challenge in the hiring process in order to raise their interest but need to be told in advance what to expect. Tomas added to this point that having the right expectations not only from a task perspective but also how the recruitment process will look like is very important to him. As an example, he stated Google's AdCamp where he and David were both coming with different expectations therefore, he was leaving disappointed and David, on the other hand, pleased. Lastly, no matter the stage of the process or its approach, the communication is considered the key to be left with a good impression.

## **II. Influencers defining target group's employer choice**

There are many influencers that keep the participants motivated while working. The participants highlighted the trust of the employer. The students and recent graduates enjoy being rather independent and do the things their way. Therefore, they need the employer to trust them with their style of work as long as they achieve what is demanded from them. Tomas added on this topic that he also enjoys independence in a sense that he does not have to follow tight schedule when he is expected to do what. On top of that, Tomas with the agreement of the others does not enjoy routine. He needs his job to make him to think, develop himself. Martin M. added that the creativity in coming up with new ideas, ways or processes motivates him to work more efficiently. Closely linked to the topic of trust are responsibility and pressure which were also listed among the motivators. Participants are encouraged by right level of autonomy and pressure as it pushes them to perform better. Martin M. said that he tries to compensate the manager the trust and the responsibility he is given by going an extra mile in order not to disappoint him. David added to this point that it is actually the relationship he has with the boss that motivates him at work. As he works for his manager, the good or bad relationship determines whether he is motivated to work for him or not. He introduced an expel saying that if he likes the boss he never wants to let him down, he wants to show him he cares and does not have a problem to stay at work over-hours. If he does not enjoy working with him he will not be staying at the office longer with him although it is necessary. The other joint this opinion not only with the boss but with the whole team. They claimed people play pivotal aspect in whether they are motivated to work or not. Other aspects mentioned were appreciation and praise.

On the topic of benefits Hung shared his view that the benefits that are usually provided he does not consider benefits anymore but as a standard. What he could, however, take as a benefit and what the companies could improve and provide with to their employees are the benefits that enhance the company's culture. As an example, he has named

lunches at work, free snacks at the cafeteria and a gym in the company's building. The others join him by saying that these benefits would not only make the company's environment to feel more like home but could also help in networking where people from other departments would be meeting in the common spaces. Tomas added that he does not see lunch vouchers or multisport cards as a benefit if his salary is sufficient. What he considered as a benefit is the work flexibility – whether he is able to work remotely, take home-offices etc.

On the issue of values, the participants agreed that all the companies shall teach what they preach but unfortunately, this is not always the case. Therefore, participants listed compliance as the most important value that the company shall possess. They would not feel comfortable working at the company that is harming anyone or breaking a rule. Martin P. expressed that for him it is not as much values that he cares about, but more the final product. He could not imagine working for Phillip Morris or a company that manufactures guns. Although the company itself would not cause any damage its products would, and Martin and some others could not identify themselves with that. Also, the value of sustainability was mentioned in regard of daily work such as recycling, printing less etc. Hung was the only member that does not care about the company's values. He is of the opinion that the company's values do not influence his day-to-day work and therefore, he instead cares for the values of the people working around him.

When the participants were invited to imagine their ideal employer without calling any names, they summed up basically everything what was already said. They need to enjoy the work, be motivated and feel right by working for the company. Most importantly, the perfect employer is about people with whom the participants get to work with. When the discussion mediator asked for specific names, various companies from various fields were mentioned. For Martin M. the employer of choice is ExxonMobil as he very much enjoys the company's culture. Kristian hopes to work at Lasvit. David's ideal employer is Coca-Cola as its products unites its employees. Hung named Ogilvy and Google as his preferred companies based on the companies' culture and benefits. Peter and Robert are satisfied at their current employers therefore, they named them - Hilti and CA technologies. Robert also added Microsoft, iPrice and Salesforce among his most desired companies. Tomas and Vašek did not have names in their minds.

The last question in the second area of the discussion was aiming to learn more about the preferred industry. The author wished to elaborate on the desired industries and whether the participants would be willing to change their choice and under what circumstances. Interestingly, only Robert had his mind made up saying he wants to work in tech industry. He would be willing to change only if the offered position would be either in tech department within a company that operates in different industry or if thanks to the potential position he would have a positive impact and a high level of responsibility. Tomas said that in his case, it is not the industry but the position he



would like to pursue his career in. As he wishes to work in e-commerce, he feels that nowadays he can work in any company. The rest of the participants agreed that at this stage of their career they do have their desired industries, however, they do not require to work only for that particular industry, nor position. The opposite, they only know what industries they do not want to work at. As previously mentioned they would not feel comfortable supporting an industry that would have a negative impact on lives of others. Domik added to this topic, that in his view, the industry matters only if you directly work with the product. Other than that, if they would have to give up their preferred industries, they would need to be offered a higher salary and a more interesting position.

### **III. L'Oréal as an employer of choice and its employer branding perception**

Everyone in the group knew L'Oréal and things like girls, cosmetics, lipstick, Bettencourt, make-up and face-cream came to the participants mind while mentioning the company. After calling-out associations that the boys linked with L'Oréal, they started discussing how they see L'Oréal. Robert appreciates that the company tries to adapt to the changing trends through driving e-commerce, hiring more males or re-thinking their business model. Martin sees L'Oréal being ahead of its competition thanks to its presence in every shopping channel. Kristian added to the thought that L'Oréal is well-established, stable company that produces premium products. On the other hand, David did not perceive the company so positively. He believes L'Oréal is another FMCG company that tends to look cool on the surface but in its core, it is not.

The negative comment continued by Hung who was answering the question how the focus group members perceive L'Oréal as an employer. Hung has heart from his surrounding that L'Oréal does not treat its employees very well, not providing them with favourable working conditions and with a salary that is not adequate to the complexity and responsibility of the job. Someone else added that he observed that the French cosmetics company continuously seek for new hires. This point opened up a discussion about the positive discrimination of males at L'Oréal. As some members of the group have heart, L'Oréal tries to hire men in order to diminish the high number of female workers, they started to share their opinions on whether it is good or bad to artificially support such efforts.

Another question within the last area of the focus group discussion was aiming on learning whether the male students and fresh graduates see opportunities in internships and entry level positions at L'Oréal. The participants had a unified answer – definitely yes. Tomas is aware of the high quality of e-commerce at L'Oréal and so he could easily imagine himself working there. And Hung would join the company if he could pursue his career in in-house strategy. Overall, the participants agreed that they would be indifferent of the cosmetic industry, however, they would dislike working directly with the cosmetics products. Therefore, the participants admitted, they could see themselves

working in L'Oréal later in their career on higher positions where there would have more responsibilities, working rather with hard numbers than with the products.

The participants would have mixed feeling over working for L'Oréal. They agreed, it would again depend on the position. If the position would demand working with the products directly, they would not feel comfortable working at L'Oréal. On the other hand, if the position would be rather strategic, they would feel comfortable. Hung admitted, if his role would be similar to brand management where he would get to work with the feminine products, he would feel embarrassed. Martin M. joined him saying that he would feel ashamed and bothered if he would have to explain his friends what his role is within a girly company such as L'Oréal is. On the other hand, Martin P. and Kristián would feel proud due to the high and positive perception of the company. Kristián added to his view that he has took part in the seminar held by L'Oréal's CEO where the manager presented himself as heavy weight boss working in serious business. Kristián admired the way how the manager introduced himself and the company, leaving the seminar with an impression there is nothing feminine about the company. Afterwards, the discussion again tackled the question of females. At this moment, the boys were discussing the issue of how it would feel to work in the company where they would be perceived as a minority. Overall, they agreed that to some extent, it could appear as an advantage. On one hand, they would be hesitant whether they would manage working in environment without a gender balance, on the other hand, they felt that as a minority they could stand out, which could help them to progress in their career faster. Petr was the only one that was at this moment persuaded he would not want to take a job, where the majority of his colleagues are females. Also, Martin P. and Tomas shared their negative experience when working surrounded by mostly females as they did not find any friends and topic to talk about while working in such ambiance. Robert opposed to that that knowing some girls working in L'Oréal, he would be confident that would not be the case as all the L'Oréal girls are very stimulating to work with. In addition, they are perceived as beautiful and at the same time very hard-working and achievers.

Another question was more specific and handled with the feeling of pride. The author wanted to know whether the boys would be proud to work for L'Oréal. Again, the feelings in the group were rather mixed. Generally speaking, the participants would all be proud working for L'Oréal in five years, but they could not say the same about the entry or internship positions. Robert said that at this stage of his career, he would be proud of the company but not himself. He explained that the company being the leader would be something to be proud of, however, he wanting to work in different industries would not be satisfied. David believes giving his career background, he would be offered junior brand manager position. At first, receiving the job offer he would not be proud, nevertheless, after a while, seeing the impact of his work, managing a product which would be his little baby, he would feel proud. Tom closed the issue of the pride by saying that he would feel proud if he would first work for L'Oréal as an outsource

employee and they would after a while bring him in-house. This would make him proud telling his friends that his service was of great quality and therefore, a powerful brand as L'Oréal hired him to work only for them.

When the discussion mediators asked whether any of the students and recent graduates considered working for L'Oréal, only Martin P. answered positively. He has considered the company thanks to a friend's recommendation. The rest did not consider L'Oréal as an employee yet. When the author asked for a reason, Vašek mentioned the salary that does not seem competitive enough and it seems to him that there are mostly marketing positions. For Robert, it was his interest in the tech industry that did not make him consider L'Oréal. Kristián said that after his graduation, when he starts to seek for a full-time position he will consider L'Oréal as his potential employer, but he did not consider L'Oréal for the internship position due to the rumour of poor treatment of interns. On the question, what would make those who have not considered L'Oréal for the entry level position or for the internship change their mind, the participants did not know the exact answer. Vašek elaborated on his previous opinion about the low salary saying that it would be the income that would have to increase in order to take the company into an account. Kristián and Robert joined him saying the same. Hung added to their views that at this moment, L'Oréal needs to offer something more than other companies in order to overcome the fear of being laughed at by his friends and that they would perceive him as a homosexual. He continued saying for that, as an employer, L'Oréal would have to compensate this by some advantages or benefits that would be worth of handling the female image he would take on himself by joining the company. Only Tomas did not mention the financials that would change his mind. For him, it would be rather an interesting position that would make him consider applying to L'Oréal.

### **2.1.3.3 Focus group - male employees of L'Oréal**

#### **I. The employment search process**

During the first part of the discussion, the participants were divided into two groups – those who considered L'Oréal as their potential employer whilst on the job hunt and those who did not. For those, who wished to work for the French cosmetic company, various factors played a role. The most significant aspect listed was the company's industry focus. The participants desired to work for one of the leading companies in the fast-moving consumer goods industry with a sound name, therefore, L'Oréal belongs to one of them. Second most frequent reason for including L'Oréal among favoured employers, was the marketing field. According to participant's opinions, the company is highly recognized for its marketing activities, thus, those participants who wished to work in marketing placed L'Oréal among their preferences while searching for a position. Participants also considered L'Oréal due to its cooperation with universities they studied at. Three participants have decided to apply for the company due to

different university activities. One participant included L'Oréal in his employment search process thanks to a tutor at the university who recommended him to the current boss he works for now. A second participant applied thanks to his participation in BRANDSTORM competition which helped him to get to know the company better and understand its culture. The last participant considered L'Oréal due to its strong promotion on the campus.

On the other hand, approximately half of the group did not consider L'Oréal while seeking for an employment. The reasons for each of the participants varied but most common was a fear – fear from working in a huge corporate, fear for not being able to speak French and fear for working for a company that is known as girly. One of the participants admitted that due to the L'Oréal's perception as a female company, he went to his first round of interviews only for fun. Notwithstanding, there was also a participant who did not think of L'Oréal simply because he did not have any particular employer of choice in his mind or other, who did not see himself in FMCG at first therefore, L'Oréal was excluded from his employer consideration.

While asking about how a participant has learned about the position he is currently holding, four acknowledged that they have applied through a friend who works at L'Oréal. It was a friend or in one case a mentor, who has recommended the company together with the position to them and forwarded their CV to the responsible person. Another two participants checked L'Oréal's website and applied directly to one of the positions listed there. The remaining participants used other channels for the search and the application – Jobs.cz, a hiring agency and LinkedIn which was used by the intern. The other intern received the list of vacancies after participating in the already mentioned BRANDSTORM competition organized by L'Oréal and applied directly. Interestingly, many participants admitted they joined L'Oréal after being unsatisfied with their former position or employer.

After reading the job offer, none of the participants had L'Oréal as dominant option. With one exception, it was for the rest the recruitment process that made the participants desire to work for the company. The one exception was in case of the Management Trainee Programme that L'Oréal offers. The participant admitted, while seeking for a job, he was not certain about in what field particularly he would like to pursue his career. For that reason, he wanted to take the advantage of the trainee programme which would allow him to try various positions and get to see the bigger picture of the company. The reason for filing the application for the rest of the group was mostly upon the job description. They were encouraged by the challenging tasks that would be part of their agenda, the complexity of the work itself and the perception that there is a lot to learn while working for L'Oréal. Also, the participants got convinced by the sound name that accordingly, appears valuable on the CV and implies the candidate has hard-working and can-do attitude. Lastly, one participant admitted, he applied to L'Oréal

because it offered to start on a responsible position without having much of working experience.

## **II. The recruitment process and job selection**

When the question regarding the recruitment process popped-in, the answers were rather disunited. Although most of the participants went through only face-to-face interviews, the approach to the recruitment process mostly varied. Some participants met with the potential manager straight away, some had to go through a round with the HR first. One experienced six rounds of interviews with various stakeholders from L'Oréal, others rather informal meeting because the decision has been made prior to the interview, based on a friend's recommendation and therefore, was rather a formality. Only one employee experienced a home-take assignment. He expressed dissatisfaction over such recruitment process as the task was according to him too difficult and he did not know how to tackle the problem. Ironically, the most complex hiring process was experienced by an intern who participated at the assessment centre. In his opinion, the process was maybe too demanding giving the fact it was only for an intern position however, he said he had enjoyed some of the tasks. What he however did not enjoy is the fact that various interns obtained their positions differently. He expressed an opinion that the recruitment system for interns shall be homogeneous given the fact the students' working experiences are roughly identical.

Different participants undergone different recruitment processes. Notwithstanding, all of them agreed no matter what recruitment style, the admission process was very fast. On this topic, the participants opened a passionate discussion as during the recruitment process, they were torn apart on what to think about it. On one hand, they perceived the fast-pace hiring process as an advantage as they enjoyed how quickly the things could get forward and the processes were not rigid at all as it was expected in a corporate of such size. On the other hand, they got a sense that the company is in a desperate need of new hires and they were confused on how to regard to such perception.

Notwithstanding, in many cases the recruiting process, which went faster than at the competitors, was the reason they accepted the job offer. Some participants agreed, they were offered the job at L'Oréal while the rest of their interviews were yet the its beginnings. Also, everyone in the focus group agreed, it was the people they met along the recruitment process who made them want the job. They perceived everyone as very kind and passionate about the job and the company as a whole. One of the participants particularly appreciated the meeting with his to-be manager and the click they had together at the interview which proved him the future cooperation will be pleasant. Another participant praised HR's very personalized approach and willingness to meet his needs. Besides the future colleagues, other aspects that made the participants to join the company were similar to those which made them apply to the position - the

fulfilment of the job and the industry. Moreover, one participant mentioned the proposed salary as an aspect that made him sign the contract.

On the contrary, there were numerous elements which were holding the members of the focus group back from the job offer acceptance. Some boys found a constraint at the perception of L'Oréal as a female company. The boys used a term "Avon-lady" effect to explain that those people who are not educated at the university, where L'Oréal is highly promoted, do not know what it is like to work at L'Oréal. Those who are not exposed to L'Oréal's employer branding perceive a job at the company similarly as a job at Avon where Avon ladies sell the products from the catalogue. Not only it is recognized as a female job, moreover it is recognized as a job that is not adequate to university graduates. To the female-oriented company issue also belonged the worry to work in environment where there is significantly higher proportion of women. Another agreed concern while considering the job offer was the salary. One participant admitted, the salary was a step-back for him. A second participant disliked the fact that the salary is not changing much through the time with the company and a third one was more specific and said he is missing a target he could achieve. He explained that unlike at other companies, L'Oréal does not award its employees for their loyalty. In other companies, the participant claimed, there is usually a target such 5% rise in salary after one year with the company. At L'Oréal, such target is absent and therefore, the employees lack the motivation as they do not know if and when they will be awarded for their hard work and loyalty. Another restraint to sign the contract, which many of the participants acknowledged, was their "messy agenda" as they called it. Many participants were not certain what the scope of their job is going to be. They had a rough idea based on the job description, however, no concrete agenda and tasks within their responsibilities. Knowing about the high employee fluctuation within the company, some expressed apprehension about it as well. For example, one participant has shared his uncertainty about the high fluctuation of employees on his position. He told the group there were two girls at his position within only one year. Other participants were concerned before joining L'Oréal due to the absence of his predecessor who would hand-over the position to him. Only one member of the focus group claimed there was nothing holding him back before joining the company.

### **III. L'Oréal as an employer of choice**

When asking for what the participants enjoy about the company, there was a unified answer: the people and the freedom. All ten participants appreciate the most their colleagues they get to work with. The element of freedom is perceived thanks to little limitations the employees come across while working. The opposite, the company has objectives it is aiming to achieve but not given processes on how to accomplish them. Thanks to that, it grants the employees with flexibility and necessary resources. The participants agreed, they enjoy the support they receive from the company, be it money

or technology, to make their campaigns or ideas bring to life. Other aspects the boys considered as most enjoyable were free products and beautiful girls around the offices.

The mentioned females, raised another emotional discussion. Not that the members of the focus group would not enjoy their beautiful colleagues, however, some expressed dissatisfaction over the high proportion of them in comparison to males. Someone does not feel it is healthy for the culture as there is very little diversity in the company. Someone else, although he would personally welcome higher diversity too, does not perceive positively the efforts to equal the ratios. There were also those, who did not mind being the minority at the company. Overall, this little sub-discussion was closed with an opinion that the high ratio of female will decrease over the time as new generation with less stereotyped minds is coming to the labour market.

Another downside of working at L'Oréal was also already mentioned, it is the fluctuation of employees. The participants overall feel unpleasantly having to cooperate every other week with someone different who is not experienced and does not know how the processes at L'Oréal work. One participant who has been at his position for over two years illustrated, that he sometimes needs to explain the new-comers from totally different departments on what to do in order to be able to proceed further with his own work. Also, another participant added to the discussion that due to the high fluctuation, the experts in the field are at times missing which is not encouraging as there is nobody to learn from. On this topic, other participants elaborated that with the change of people, there is a change in the culture. He expressed that each person coming to L'Oréal brings different values and attitudes depending on from what company he/she is coming from. Owing to that, he does not feel there is a unique L'Oréal culture anymore. Last point, that was mentioned on regard of this subject and which was acknowledged by the majority, was the "fast come, fast go" rule. The participants explained that this rule is based on the fast and not so selective recruitment process which results in fast-comers and also fast-leavers to and from the company. Another drawback which got disclosed after joining the company and which was already mentioned was the slope of the job. Straight after joining, not having the given processes, responsibilities and clear organization appeared rather chaotic and frustrating. On the other hand, after undergoing the first shock of disorganization, the participants have realized such working culture leads also to the freedom they enjoy that much. Therefore, it is still perceived as a disadvantage of the job at L'Oréal however, the participants admitted, there is something valuable to take from it as well.

Another topic discussed within the last area of the focus group was the issue of proudness. On the question whether the participants are proud to work for L'Oréal, the answer was rather yes. Overall, the participants are proud to work for the company as they feel proud to work for one of the leaders in the industry. This allows them to see the impact of their work on the Czech market and make them believe in the company's values, changing the world of beauty. They also appreciate the recognition having the

L'Oréal name on their CV. Notwithstanding, when the participants came across to the comparison of other multinational corporations and where they would feel prouder to work at, a certain amount of hesitance entered the room. The name of one of the biggest competitors, P&G, was mentioned which opened little discussion. One participant claimed that he feels prouder to sell beauty rather than washing powders, another added that as a marketer he can identify himself better with cosmetics then with softener. Someone else replied, that he feels prouder because people in general know at least L'Oréal's name which is not always the case with P&G. Other continued speaking about the fact that now he is already annoyed by having to explain what he as a man does within such "female company", however, with P&G he would have to explain both – what the company does and what his position is. On the other hand, when not comparing L'Oréal to its FMCG competitors but to other global enterprises with a sound name and not female-product-oriented perception, some participants agreed they would feel prouder to work for such company (mentioning names of Google and Škoda). The main reason that holds the participants back from being proud of being part of L'Oréal is the already discussed "Avon lady effect". One participant admitted that due to the general perception that he sells shampoos, or he is a hairdresser, he does not feel proud to be part of the company. Afterwards, some joined him on the view of the frustration of having to explain each time what working at L'Oréal is about to their friends and families. At these moments, when they repeatedly need to clarify what they do for living, they do not feel proud although they know that L'Oréal is a prestigious employer and there are very many things to be proud about.

The discussion was closed by the question on opinions what could increase the attractiveness of L'Oréal for males. One member of the focus group thinks that L'Oréal cannot offer anything to become a desired employer for males as the restraint lies in the society. The boys are afraid of being called "Avon ladies" by their surroundings for working at L'Oréal therefore, they prefer to work somewhere else. Other members replied to such a view that there are means to change the cliché, L'Oréal can take an active part in it by supporting the campus activities, by holding seminars and spreading what L'Oréal does. Further, some participants believed L'Oréal could become an employer of choice for the male target group thanks to fostering the current male employees who would be setting the example by show-casing that it is an acceptable standard for guys to work for a cosmetics company. Last point mentioned were the benefits. One participant, with the support of some others, has the impression, L'Oréal has generous benefits for females, particularly those with a kid or on maternity leave, however, not for males. Benefits which would be relevant to man would be highly welcomed by male employees. The multisport card, or a better car were two benefits that popped into the participants minds while discussing the topic.



## **2.1.4 CONCLUSIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH**

### **2.1.4.1 The male target group**

#### **1. The employment search process**

While searching for an employment, the candidates first search for the companies they are interested in and afterwards they look for the positions within that companies. This is due to the stage of their career, in which they are rather open to more fields or even industries, however, they already know what their requirements are in regards of their ideal employer. Simply put, they need the company to be the right fit with them and their needs.

The participants are aware of the War for Talents on the market. The participants, who are pro-active, speak foreign languages, have international experiences and wide network, recognize they are a target group for many well-established companies. Therefore, they are very selective in regards of what companies they would like to pursue their careers at. To be as well informed as possible, they gather information about companies already during their studies. Thus, when they start the employment search process, they already have a rough idea on what the companies do and what they stand for. To build on their ideas, they check as many sources as possible to select those few companies they would be interested in applying for. The author identified the eight most common sources, the target group turns to while gathering information. Different sources usually serve to provide different information as Table 4 indicates.

THE SOURCE	THE INFORMATION GATHERING
WOM	Atmosphere at the company, work-life balance, satisfaction with the employer, references
Proudly& Glassdoor	Vacancies, reviews of employees, pictures and videos of working environment
Jobteaser	Vacancies
LinkedIn	Vacancies, more effective search, acquaintances within candidate's network
Career fair	Discussing the job opportunities, obtaining a direct contact
Seminars, Lectures	Listen about the business, see the people who work at the company
Workshops	See the people who work at the company, listen about their business, obtain direct contact
Company's website	Information about the company, its activities, vacancies, direct HR contact

*Table 4: The type of information gathered at each source [Source: Author]*

The most reliable source of gathering information is **WOM**. Knowing someone who works at the company helps the male candidate to get an idea on how the life at the company is. Through acquaintances, the target group learns about the working atmosphere, the work-life balance or the overall satisfaction of the employees with the employer. Often, the WOM serves for references in both directions – the company to the candidate and vice versa. Another channel widely used are job related websites, namely **Proudly and Glassdoor**. These websites not only display new openings, they serve as alternatives to WOM. It is because the candidate can read reviews of current and former employees, learn about the recruitment process experience or watch photos or videos of the working environment. **Jobteaser** is another job-related website used by the target group, however, it is accessible only to the CEMS community and promotes only the vacancies. Another online source is the **company's website**. Information about the company, its activities and overall ambiance is what the participants seek for, together with the job openings. The added value to the company's website is the HR representative direct contact to which the candidates can send their CVs with asking for a position that is not available on the website. Another place, where the participants can obtain a direct contact are **career fairs**. The participants usually join the fairs in order to discuss the job openings, and the information around them such as the responsibilities, daily agenda or size of the teams. **Seminars, lectures** at schools and **workshops** at the companies serves as a source of information before the candidate is on the job hunt. These activities shape the candidate's idea about the company's business, its activities and let the candidates meet with potential colleagues or high management.

Having the necessary information collected, the participants send out their CVs to the companies they think, they would be a good fit with. If their CV is pre-selected to the

first interview round with the companies, it is afterwards the recruitment process that plays a very important role. Of course, the job, its meaning and fulfilment is very important, however, the participants usually apply to similar positions and similar companies. Therefore, the hiring experience together with the proposed salary are the elements which distinguish the companies from one and other. According to Figure 8, there are certain aspects that the participants appreciate when undergoing the recruitment process and elements that discourage them from joining the company.

Positive recruitment experience	Negative recruitment experience
Kind people along the interview process	Lengthy recruitment process
Personalized approach	Not aligning expectations
Communication & feedbacks	Poor preparation
Adequately challenging tasks	Putting the needs of the company ahead of the candidate's needs
Meeting the managers & the rest of the team	One-sided effort

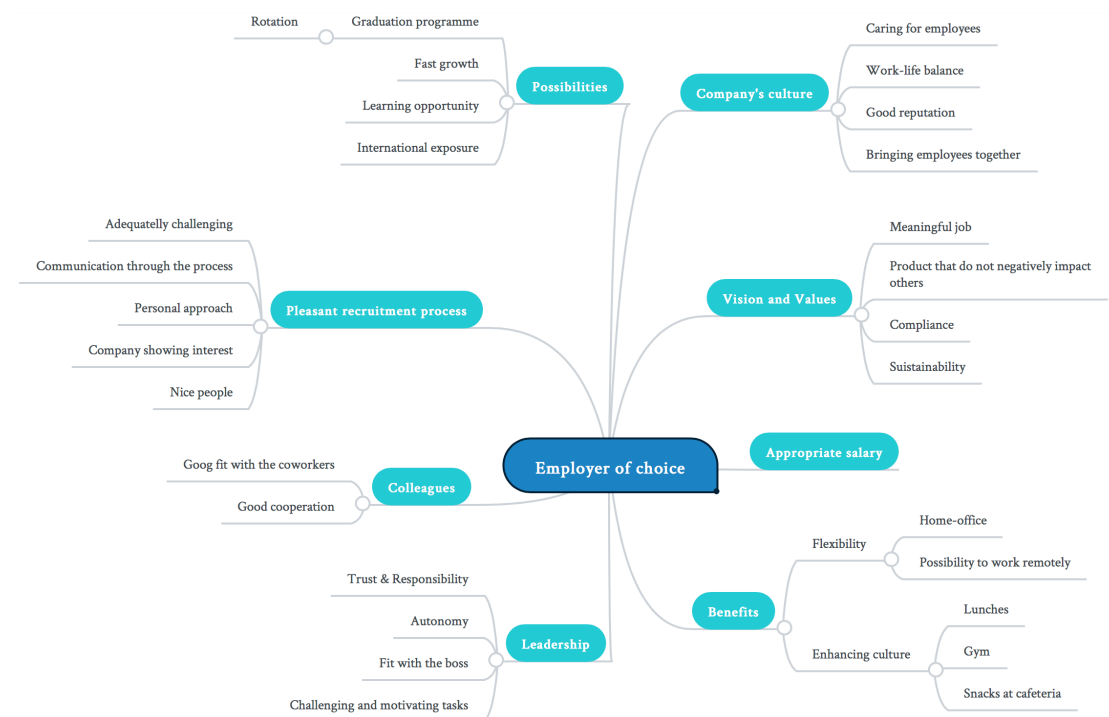
*Figure 8: The positive and negative recruitment experiences [Source: Author]*

As the colleagues play prim in whether the male feels comfortable in the company or not, the **people** who the participant meets during the recruitment process play also the pivotal role whether the recruitment experience was pleasant or not. Kind, friendly and not too formal recruiters are a sign that the company's employees would be a good fit with the applicant. The recruiters shall also pursuit a **personalized approach** – knowing the CV of the candidate and his needs. The personal approach should be also reflected in the recruitment steps. The male target group wishes to be informed about the steps and what to expect from them and how to best prepare for them. He appreciates a good flow of a **communication and feedback** for each round of the process to see how he is doing and if there is a room for improvement. The whole process shall be **adequately difficult**. There is no style, that the participants prefer. They are ready to solve case studies for consultancy positions and financial statements for finance positions as long as the task corresponds to the level of position they are applying for. The last point relates with the first point. **Meeting the managers and the members of the team** is an added value to the whole recruitment process. It shows the managers care along whom they will work with, however it also indicates whether the candidates and the manager would be a good fit for each other.

On the other hand, there are mechanisms that put the company in the candidate's eyes to an unfavourable position. The candidates do not appreciate a **lengthy recruitment process** which evokes the feeling in the candidates that their time does not matter to the company. Moreover, the candidates need to have their **expectations aligned** before going to the interview and while on the interview, they do not appreciate if the recruiter is **not well prepared**. The unprofessionalism reflects the working attitude of the company's employees and the little emphasis they would put on their employees. Also, the candidates stop being interested in the company if they gain an **impression that it is only them who put an effort to make an impression**. If the company's attitude evokes a feeling that it is only the candidates who try to get the job and not the company trying to get the candidates, the candidates lose their interest. The last negative experience occurs when the candidates apply to a position and the company tries to persuade them, there is a better position for them and does not let them decide on whether this is true or not. This approach induces an impression that the company does not care for the needs of the single candidate but only for the company's need to fill up urgent vacancies.

## **2. Influencers defining target group's employer choice**

Throughout the whole focus group, the participants were expressing their needs and desires which they seek at their potential employer. The participants consider the ideal employer to be the one that keeps them motivated and where they enjoy working. This rather vague definition was summarized by eight pillars that characterize the employer of choice for the male target group. These eight pillars were based on the preferences that were mentioned during the focus group and are usually determined by other elements presented in Figure 9.



*Figure 9: Eight pillars of the employer of choice [Source: Author]*

The most essential feature of an ideal employer was considered to be the **colleagues**. As a person spends most of his time at work, he needs to feel comfortable around the people who surround him. By definition, it is the good fit on both the personal and the professional level that indicates whether the employee wants to work at the company or not. It is mostly the management, particularly the direct boss, with whom the participants need to get on well. The boss determines how the participant feels and how he is motivated to work and deliver his best. Therefore, participants need to some admiration for their manager. The good fit with the boss falls into the second most important pillar, the **leadership**. The participants seek for the employer who practices the democratic leadership style by providing them with high amount of trust, responsibility and autonomy. Being awarded with these three elements, the participants tend to be more motivated and tend to over-deliver in order to demonstrate the employer he made a right decision. Among another motivational drivers, belong challenging tasks, which pushes the participants to think and test their intelligence.

The participants saw a **company's culture** as the third most important pillar of an employer of choice. It is mostly due to the fact that a company's culture is predominantly shaped by the company's employees who play the prim at the participant's decision-making. The perfect company shall display with its culture that it cares for its employees and that it realizes the employees are the most valuable asset it has. The culture should be shaped in a way that it would be bringing the employees

together, also it shall display that the company values its employee's free time. For this reason, the work-life balance is highly demanded.

In the company's culture, **values and vision** that the company possesses shall be reflected. The values and the vision have to be aligned with the participants' ones, otherwise, the job would not have any meaning to them. The two values that the male target group seeks for is sustainability and compliance. In general, the goods or services that the company produces shall not harm or negatively impact the community.

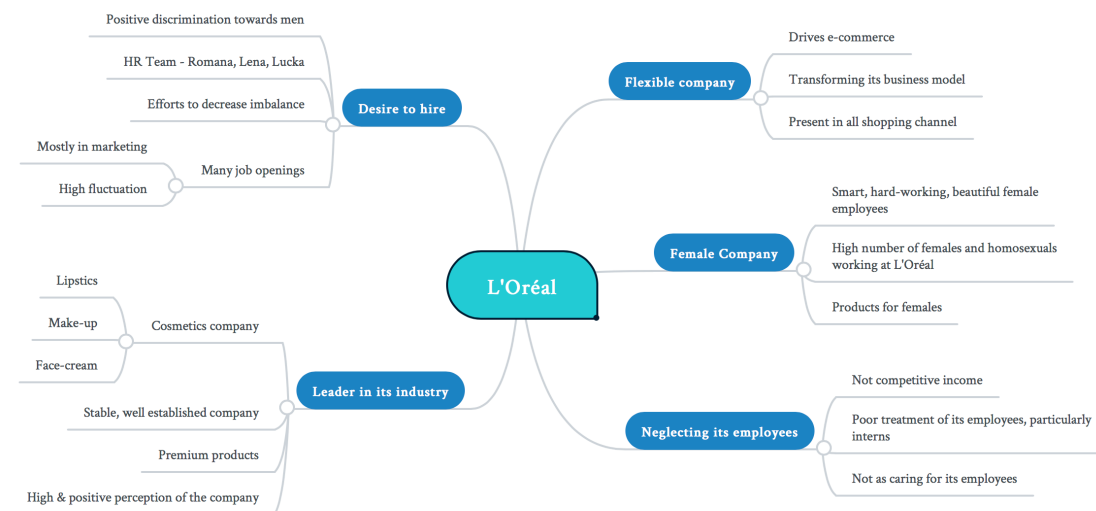
The **possibilities** that the company offers decide whether the participants see it as their preferred choice or not. At this career stage, the participants desire to join graduation programmes which would allow them to rotate on numerous position within the company. Being part of the graduate scheme or not, the male target group seek for an employer that is able to let them grow fast and find international placement. The opportunities are enhanced with the possibility to learn as much as possible.

The already mentioned care for people is reflected in **benefits**, which is the sixth most important pillar. The benefits such as lunch vouchers or laptops are no longer seen as benefits. The male target group demands the benefit of the twenty-first century: flexibility. The males do not want to be locked at their desk from 8 – 17h every day. They request adaptability and home office with the possibility to work remotely. Furthermore, they seek for an employer that would enhance the company's culture through the benefits. Suggestions such as free snacks, lunches or a gym at the office came to participant's minds.

Although an **appropriate salary** is not the most important factor when choosing the ideal employer, it is however a factor that the male target group takes into the account. Particularly, this aspect gains its significance when comparing similar employers. Usually, when a participant needs to make a decision between employers who offer fairly the same, it is the income which decides. Another factor that has its hidden importance, is **the recruitment process**. Although it does not play a prim, it shapes the candidate's idea of how the previously mentioned pillars will look like if he joins the company. Therefore, the perfect employer shall provide the male target group with a pleasant recruitment experience. The whole process shall have the appropriate level of difficulty. It should not be too difficult nor too easy as the candidate would lose its interest. The communication through the process is the key here, together with the personal approach and showing genuine interest in the candidate. The whole recruitment package is highlighted by the people, who are the potential future colleagues which leads us again back to the pillar number one.

### **3. L'Oréal as an employer of choice and its employer branding perception**

As all the participants knew L'Oréal, both as a company and as an employer, they had many things to discuss about. The first associations that came to their minds were cosmetics, lipsticks, face-creams and make-up, however, they afterwards digged deeper to other aspects of the company and were not even afraid to open rather controversial topics. Everything mentioned in regards of L'Oréal was afterwards analysed by the author who summarized the outcome in five main pillars. These pillars characterize the perception of L'Oréal as an employer and were determined by other aspects introduced in Figure 10.



*Figure 10: Perception of L'Oréal as an employer [Source: Author]*

At the first place, L'Oréal is perceived as a **leader in its industry**. The participants see L'Oréal as the best cosmetics company with premium products especially in comparison to its competitors. Moreover, L'Oréal is in their eyes a stable, well established company that has high and positive awareness on the labour market. In this sense, L'Oréal is viewed very positively as the participants aspire to work for the best player in the market. On the other hand, not as positively is seen the perception of L'Oréal being a **female company**. The male target group has classified L'Oréal as a female company due to the products that it sells. As it is hard for males to identify with the products, they perceived it is the reason why mostly females and homosexuals work at the company. Nevertheless, the women who are at the company are seen as smart, hard-working, beautiful females who can work as hard as any man.

Among other pillars identified was the **desire to hire** new employees. The participants perceived L'Oréal has many vacancies that are mostly due to the high fluctuation of the employees rather than due to its expansion. The positions that L'Oréal mostly desires to fill are in marketing. When hiring, the males believe there is a positive discrimination towards men as the company desires to decrease the gender imbalance. Lastly, with this

pillar, the CEMS students associate the whole HR team by their first names – Romana, Lucie, Lena which indicates the HR team is pro-active on working with students.

The participants notice the company does not stand idly in nowadays fast changing era. The fourth pillar, the **flexible company** summarizes the participants' observation about the overall transformation of the company. The students and recent graduates see L'Oréal as a strong player in e-commerce and how it adapts its business model to play a crucial part in the digital world.

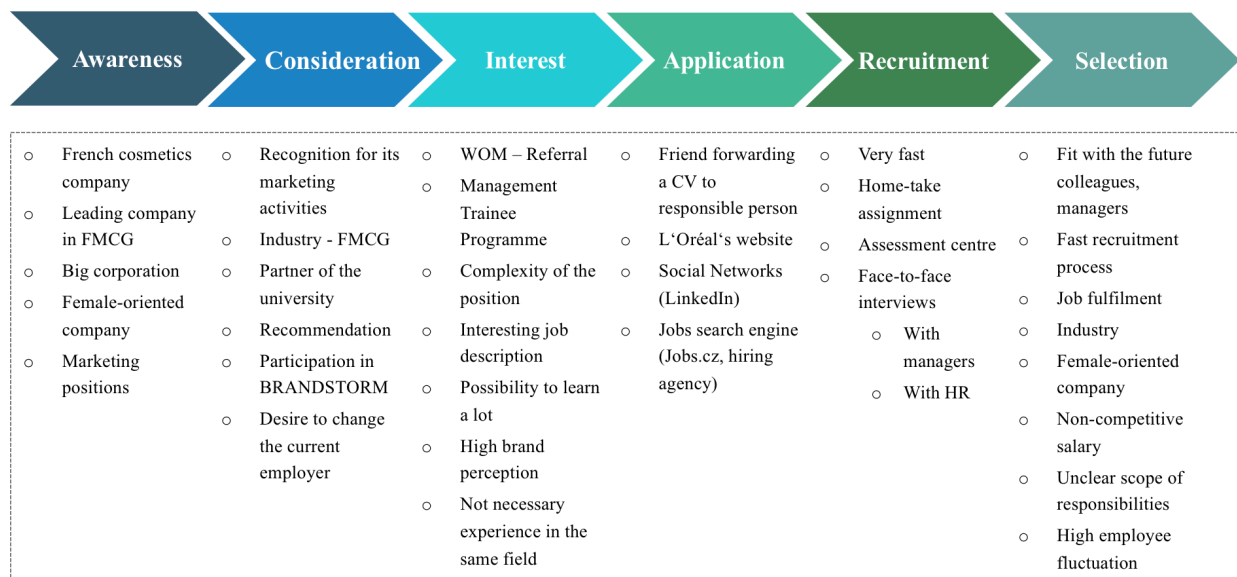
On the other hand, the participants confirmed Romana's assumption that L'Oréal is perceived as a company that is **neglecting its employees**. The participants heart about a poor reputation in regards of L'Oréal's employees, particularly interns. They perceived L'Oréal as a company that does not treat its employees as well as they should. The prove of it to them is also the not competitive salary L'Oréal offers to its interns and junior managers.

#### **2.1.4.2 Male employees of L'Oréal**

##### **I.+ II. The employment search process + The recruitment process and job selection**

The employees in the focus group were asked to go through the whole employment search and recruitment process which terminated by accepting an offer from L'Oréal. With the help of additional questions, they described the entire process and what they liked about it and what they did not. Afterwards, the author analysed the procedure that L'Oréal applies to its candidates and compiled the candidate's journey in six steps that are introduced in Figure 11.





*Figure 11: Candidates' journey at L'Oréal [Source: Author]*

The first step of the candidates' journey is his/her **awareness** of the company. Before the participants even considered L'Oréal as their potential employer, they had a very high awareness about the company. Not only they knew the brand, but also they could associate it with L'Oréal being a French cosmetics company, a big corporation and offering many marketing position, where it usually has some openings. They also thought about L'Oréal as female-oriented due to the products it sells, and they saw L'Oréal as one of the leader in FMCG. The industry, FMCG, was one of the most influencing factors that made them move to the second step, the **consideration**. The second most named reason was the recommendation from an acquiesce and because the participants were unhappy with their former employer and wanted a change. Linked to the industry was the field of marketing, which also played a significant role. The male employees were informed about the high level of marketing at L'Oréal and they wanted to take an advantage of being able to work on the best level possible and be recognized for it. Other three factors that pushed two different participants to consider L'Oréal as their potential employer was a high promotion of L'Oréal at the campus and the participation at a BRANDSTORM competition. Having L'Oréal in the view, there were many influencers that got them actually interested in the company. The second step, the **interest**, was still very much influenced by the WOM and by the opinions the participants' acquaintances shared with them. However, at this stage, it was also the complexity and fulfilment, as well as the steep learning curve of the work itself that mostly attracted the candidates to L'Oréal's. Moreover, the participants appreciated the sound name that was behind the job offer. Two participants had particular interests – one wanted to try the Management Trainee Programme that would let him try different positions and the second got interested in L'Oréal because it did not demand experience in the same field. The fourth step of the candidates' journey is the **application**. After gaining the necessary interest, they decided to join the application process. The majority

of the focus group again used their acquaintances who worked at the company and who passed their CV together with the recommendation to the responsible person at the company. The rest of the group used the internet as an application tool. L'Oréal's website was most frequently used, then it was the jobs' search engine Jobs.cz, a hiring agency and lastly, LinkedIn. After the application, the participants were invited to join the next step of the candidate's journey, the **recruitment** process. All participants did not have to wait long between they send out their application and receiving the first call from L'Oréal. Furthermore, the whole hiring procedure was very fast. Most of the participants, probably due to the recommendations, only experienced face-to-face interviews. Either way, they first needed to go through a round with the HR and afterwards they were admitted to the second round with the manager or they went to talk with the manager at the first round straight away. The hiring process for interns differs from that. One intern experienced only one interview and the other needed to first pass the assessment centre in order to proceed to the interview. Those who wish to join the Management Trainee programme, need to pass through six-round face-to-face interviews. Only one participant experienced a take-home task. The participants agreed, that not only the recruitment went quickly but besides the AC<sup>7</sup> and the home-take assignment, it was a convenient process.

The last step of the candidate's journey was the job **selection**. All ten participants received the acceptance letter from L'Oréal and from that moment on, it was up to them whether they will decide to take the job or not. While weighting the advantages and disadvantages against each other, they took into consideration their perception, the reputation, the recommendation, the recruitment experience and many other factors. These factors can be divided into two groups: to those which played in favour to L'Oréal and those which hold the candidates back from accepting the offer.

- *Positive factors of L'Oréal:* The most significant aspect that made the participants join the company, were the people they met along the recruitment process. Especially, the personal and professional fit with the manager. Also, they appreciated how the whole process went fast and smooth. While they were still at first rounds with other employers, L'Oréal's offer was already on the table. Moreover, the job description was also very appealing together with the FMCG industry.
- *Negative factors of L'Oréal:* On the other hand, the quick and easy hiring process left some negative feelings too. The participants had the impression L'Oréal needs new hires fast and under any circumstance. That linked to their other worry, the high employee fluctuation and their fear of the impact it could have on them. The other factor, which was holding them back from the job

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<sup>7</sup> Assessment Centre

acceptance, was the salary, which they hoped to be higher and about which L'Oréal was not ready to negotiate. Moreover, the unclear scope of their responsibilities and the perception of L'Oréal as a female company was making them hesitant. Some perceived it difficult as a male to join a company, that is by the outside world seen as girly - the stereotype was holding them back.

#### IV. L'Oréal as an employer of choice

Being employed at L'Oréal for some time, the author identified the elements that motivate the male employees to work at the company and which, on the contrary, discourage them. The statement of the main points is illustrated in Figure 12 below.

Incentives for working at L'Oréal	Disincentives for working at L'Oréal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Colleagues the participants work with</li> <li>✓ Freedom in the working style</li> <li>✓ Support on obtaining resources</li> <li>✓ Leader on the market</li> <li>✓ Benefits of receiving free products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Recruitment process</li> <li>✗ Fluctuation of employees</li> <li>✗ Absence of L'Oréal's culture</li> <li>✗ Unclear scope of responsibilities</li> <li>✗ Gender imbalance at the offices</li> <li>✗ Female company</li> </ul>

Figure 12: Incentives and disincentives for working at L'Oréal [Source: Author]

- *Incentives for working at L'Oréal:* The impression the candidates got at the interview about the right fit with their future colleagues, continues to be right even after working at L'Oréal for some time. The **colleagues** whom the participants like working besides and spend time even after the working hours are the main motivator to remain at L'Oréal. An equally enjoyable element is **freedom**. In L'Oréal, the employees are given freedom in the selection of the working style and how to achieve their goals. The participants appreciate this independence and autonomy as having trust in their abilities motivates them to work towards even better outcomes. The confidence in their competencies results in another important aspect that the participants listed among incentives to work at L'Oréal, the **support on obtaining resources**. L'Oréal never puts barriers to its employees' ideas, the opposite, it encourages them with the necessary resources be it financials, personnel or technology. L'Oréal's support in flexibility and bringing ideas to live is mostly due to its **leadership on the market**. That also results in the possibility to work on complex campaigns, new

mechanisms and challenging tasks. The participants appreciate that the hard work that they dedicate to L'Oréal will be recognized in the later stage as L'Oréal is a highly acknowledged employer whose reputation is spread over the market. Lastly, employees are motivated with a benefit of receiving free or discounted products.

- *Disincentives for working at L'Oréal:* On the other hand, the doubt about the recruiting process proved the participants right as well. As the recruitment process is not as selective as usually and hold in very fast-paced manner, there are many people that join the company without thinking in advance what working in L'Oréal involves. Their expectations afterwards differ from the reality and the newcomers find it difficult to fit to the company. What intimidates the new employees is the lack of trainings or explanations of the boss or the predecessor in the position. Not only that the newcomer needs to learn how to swim in the cosmetics company on his own, but he also has an **unclear scope of responsibilities**. There is many new information and yet the employee is uncertain about the outlook of his duties and obligations. In addition to that, the participants admitted, that not everyone can enjoy the lack of mechanisms and processes. This disorganization leads to employees leaving the company as fast as they entered it. The **high fluctuation** of the employees also negatively influences the employees as the cooperation within departments does not go as fast and smooth. Moreover, it is better for the culture and the feeling of belonging, if the collective does not alter as much. The opposite, with newcomers to the company, the working environment changes which results in an **absence of L'Oréal's culture**. The participants do not know what really constitutes L'Oréal's culture, as it feels the company lets every new employee to bring a bit of their spirit that they carry from their former employer. Therefore, there are managers working in a German manner and others in an American style and nobody is surprised of that. Another drawback that the male participants encounter is **the gender imbalance** in the company. Males being a minority do not always feel comfortable being surrounded by only females, most importantly they perceive the diversity and the culture suffers under such a trend. This disadvantage is closely linked with the last point, the term "**female company**". This expression defines the perception that L'Oréal is a company whose products are for females and where mostly females work. Working at L'Oréal, the community immediately thinks that the participant works with the products with which he needs to identify himself. This perception is a little bit embarrassing as they do not identify themselves with feminine products. Nevertheless, what bothers the male employees the most is that the job at L'Oréal is associated with the brand of L'Oréal Paris or L'Oréal Professionnel. Therefore, the society believes their responsibility is to sell products as shampoos or lipsticks as if they would be Avon ladies. That not only undermines their manhood but most importantly, it undermines their education of which

they are proud. Therefore, in order to change that view, they must repeatedly explain that the responsibility of their job is not to sell a shampoo but to manage a million-euro budget. That is not only tiring, but also it does not have any honouring effect.

### 2.1.4.3 Comparison of focus groups researches and interview with an expert

In order to suggest L'Oréal how it shall attract the male target group, the comparisons from both focus groups are necessary.

#### 1. The employment search process

L'Oréal has a very high awareness and the company is well-established in all sources where the male target group goes to seek information for, be it vacancies or the company. As Table 5 illustrates, besides the web site Jobteaser, which is accessible to only the CEMS community, L'Oréal is represented in all sources that are used by the male target group.

THE SOURCE	L'ORÉAL'S PRESENCE
WOM	✓
Proudly& Glassdoor	✓
Jobteaser	✗
LinkedIn	✓
Career fair	✓
Seminars, Lectures	✓ – VŠE: CEMS programme, the Honours Academy, Faculty of Economics and master's minors in marketing and sales
Workshops	✓ – CEMS skill seminars
Company's website	✓

*Table 5: Comparison between source of information that the male target group uses in his recruitment search process and L'Oréal's presence in those sources [Source: Author]*

Although L'Oréal attracts the males by being accessible in both reliable online and offline channels, it is not fulfilling their needs during the recruitment process. The recruitment process, being one of the decision-making aspects during the job offer selection, lacks approaches that the male target group assesses positively, and, on the other hand, applies mechanisms that the male target group assesses negatively. The Figure 13 illustrates the positive and negative experiences in the hiring process that were already identified and the activities that L'Oréal applies or not.

Approach	Positive recruitment experience	Approach	Negative recruitment experience
✓	Kind people along the interview process	✗	Lengthy recruitment process
✓	Personalized approach	✗ ✓	Not aligning expectations
✗	Communication & feedbacks	✗ ✓	Poor preparation
✗	Adequately challenging tasks	✓	Putting the needs of the company ahead of the candidate's needs
✓ ✗	Meeting the managers & the rest of the team	✗	One-sided effort

*Figure 13: Comparison between positive and negative recruitment process and what L'Oréal does or does not [Source: Author]*

The most important aspect, the kind of people accompanying the interview process, L'Oréal fulfils. L'Oréal's employees agreed that the most positive element during the hiring process were indeed the friendly people. They also talked about the personalized approach which is one of the demands of the male target group as well. The hiring process which L'Oréal employees experienced, was very personalized, very friendly and made the impression that the HR cares for their needs. Nevertheless, the process lacked continuous communications regarding following steps and feedbacks. It was most likely due to the fast speed of the selection process, which did not provide any room for those two steps. Moreover, the selection process lacked adequately challenging tasks – either it was too easy or a bit too ambitious giving the positions that the males wanted to obtain. The differences in tasks for the same position, namely intern, were also not adequate either. The male employees met the direct manager of theirs however, they did not get to meet their potential colleagues. Although the interview with the manager is more important than a meeting with the rest of the team,

it is an added value to the male target group as the fit with the colleagues is the most important element at their jobs.

The male students and recent graduates do not enjoy lengthy recruitment process and it is something they would not encounter at L'Oréal. The process goes very fast, is very flexible and not rigid. The fast pace of it can even evoke the urgent need for new hires. This urge is one of the reasons, the company adapts its approach, by putting an effort on attracting the candidate. The candidates have a feeling that he is appreciated by the company. The urge also results in putting the needs of the company ahead of the candidate's needs. If there is a position that needs to be urgently filled, the company tries to offer this position to the people who might not have much of an interest in it, do not have the necessary skills or their expectations differ from the reality. The last point concerns the poor preparation. There are cases when the interview is very well prepared, however, there are also cases when the interview is not prepared at all, because the decision is already made prior the meeting. Interviews, where tasks, feedbacks and multiple rounds are absent indicate a poor preparation of the recruitment process.

## 2. Influencers defining target group's employer choice

In order to make suggestions on how L'Oréal should attract the male target group, the comparison between male target's group employer of choice and on what L'Oréal offers was conducted. The Figure 14 illustrates the eight pillars introduced earlier in the chapter and an analysis what demands L'Oréal can or cannot fulfil. The blue ticks imply the alignment of the desired characters of employer of choice with the reality, the red crosses imply the opposite.



*Figure 14: Comparison between male target group's employer of choice and L'Oréal*  
[Source: Author]

L'Oréal has a fit with three out of eight pillars. L'Oréal employs inspiring, kind people whose attitude is very collaborating and friendly. Furthermore, L'Oréal praises a leadership that illustrates trust, responsibility and autonomy together with challenging tasks that motivate the employees. In addition, the vision and values of the company is aligned with the male target group's desires. Not only that L'Oréal's products do not harm anyone, their mission is to make the world a more beautiful place. Also, L'Oréal cares very much for sustainability, compliance and other activities that encourage the company and its employees to act ethically and well towards the planet and others. The jobs therefore have meanings not only regarding the vision but also from the personal perspective as the males get to learn a lot and get to grow with the company. On the other hand, as L'Oréal's male employees and the HR manager agree, the company's culture is absent and rather mixed with other cultures that the employees brought to the company with them. The company is aware of that and already establishes steps that are supposed to counter this trend. Since L'Oréal offers the desired work-life balance and recently started to invest in its employees, the reputation is becoming better. One further improvement would be the launch of further activities that would bring the employees closer together. The male target group believes this would benefit the culture and bring the employees together. Nevertheless, what is provided is the possibility of home-offices. The company transforms itself and adapts to the new needs of employees, working remotely. However, the desire of the male target group, to work three days from time to time not from the office, is yet not possible.

Another pillar, the possibilities, L'Oréal fulfils only partially. L'Oréal does offer the graduate programme with rotation, nevertheless within the programme, the international rotation is not possible. Overall, the international exposure is not proposed to those at the internship or junior positions. Once the employee proves his abilities and loyalty to the company, the company lets him grow, be it internationally or in the hub. Throughout the career in L'Oréal, the employee learns a lot. However, it is not that L'Oréal would offer trainings and seminars to their employees it is mostly through the trust, responsibility and autonomy that they develop. Therefore, the employee himself can set his limits and optimums on how much he wishes to work and learn.

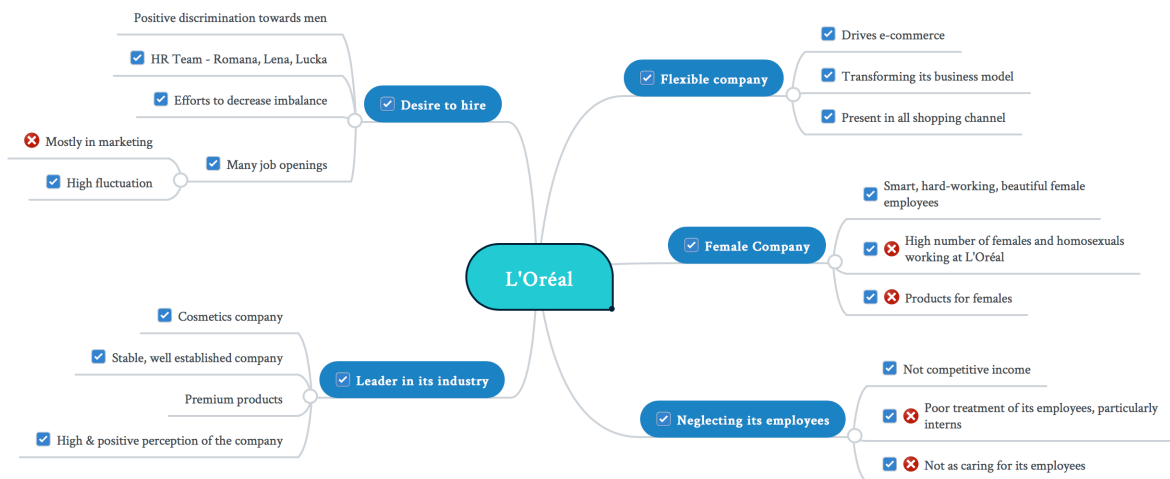
The issue of the appropriate salary was already discussed and neither the male target group nor the participants are satisfied with what L'Oréal offers them. Further, the pleasant recruitment process was reviewed earlier in this sub-chapter as well.

### **3. L'Oréal as an employer of choice and its employer branding perception**

There are many factors that influence the perception of the male target group. To analyse whether their perception is based on the reality or on some stereotypes, they



were compared with the reality described by the L'Oréal's male employees during their focus group. As the Figure 15 illustrates, the male target group has a rather clear and unbiased idea about L'Oréal as an employer. The blue ticks imply the alignment of the perception with the reality, the red crosses imply the opposite.



*Figure 15: Comparison of the male target group's perception of L'Oréal with the reality [Source: Author]*

The male target group correctly sees L'Oréal as a leader in its industry. The participants associate L'Oréal with the cosmetics, however, not directly with FMCG. The participants are also accurately aware of the high and positive perception of the French cosmetics company in comparison to other employers. They, as well as the male employees, see the advantage of having the corporation in their CV. Both of the groups also agree on the desire to hire new employees. The male target group, particularly the CEMS students and one participant who went through the interview round with L'Oréal, knows the HR executive and refers to them as very nice people. That is aligned with the experience of the current employees who encountered very kind interviewees themselves. In regards to the desire to hire, the participants correctly observe L'Oréal's ambition to decrease the gender imbalance at the office and handle employees' high fluctuation within the organization. However, the misperception occurs in regard of **job openings mostly in the marketing field**. There are opportunities in marketing, nevertheless, L'Oréal offers many other positions that could be interesting for the male target group.

During the interview with the expert, Romana expressed an opinion that the community outside L'Oréal is not aware of the great things the company does and how much it has been changing. This belief turned out to be not entirely true. As illustrated during the target's group employment search process, the participants gather many information about companies by joining their seminars and lectures. Therefore, they are aware about L'Oréal's efforts of becoming a more agile company. It is correct that they do not know the details or all the activities, nevertheless, they are aware of the fact that L'Oréal tends to go towards digitalization, social media and e-commerce due to which it transforms its business model.

L'Oréal is perceived as a female company not only from the outside but also from the inside. The employees agree that there is a significantly higher number of females

around the offices. The perception of those males working in the company being from the majority homosexuals is a very subjective topic, however during the discussion **none of the participants acted in a feminine matter**. Therefore, the author identified such perception as false. When the men associated L'Oréal with cosmetics, from top-of-their mind, only female products were called-out. The male students and recent graduates do not see that **L'Oréal sells as well products for males**, with which the male target group could identify itself. On the other hand, the male target group perceives correctly jobs at L'Oréal are rather complex and therefore, these females who work at L'Oréal are smart, hardworking and on top of that, beautiful.

The question of salary is on both sides perceived as unsatisfactory. The students and recent graduates believe they can receive better income at other employers and L'Oréal's employees believe they should be awarded better. The neglect of employees in regards of treatment and care belongs to subjective topics. During the focus group with the male employees, this subject was not directly touched. There were indicated a few things that L'Oréal could do differently to prove itself as a better employer, the salaries being included. **Better trainings and fostering and rewarding the loyalty to the company** were identified as elements that could demonstrate a company's interest in their employees. Nevertheless, none of the things mentioned implied a poor treatment of the interns which could be influenced by only two male interns being presented in the focus group.

The only topic that was not touched during the focus group with L'Oréal's male employees and therefore, cannot be analysed by the author is the perception of L'Oréal positively discriminating males in order to encourage them to join the company.

### ***2.1.5 RECOMMENDATION***

#### **The employment search process**

Based on the research outcomes, the fit with the company overweighs the fit with job positions offered. Simply put, it is more important to the candidate to perceive the company as suitable to him then the position he applies to. Therefore, the employer branding influences the male candidate's preference setting. Create the right image at the candidate's mind, build the relationship with him and be accessible and present are pivotal steps. In the meantime, the company should adapt an aspect of exclusivity. Table 6 identifies the results from the research that could be improve and Table 7 suggests practical recommendations that could be applied.

PRACTICAL LEARNING	
✓	Engage administrators from partner programmes to create additional point of contact
✓	Use the other sources that the partner programme provide to promote vacancies
✓	Illustrate your interest through active coursing
✓	Use the targeted events to show the business that is not only feminine
✓	Allow the company to connect with the male target group in familiar environment
✓	Include the interns to be part of the employer branding activities
✓	Describe the different positions' opportunities and life at L'Oréal
✓	Make yourself more approachable

*Table 6: Results for employer search process of candidate's journey [Source: Author]*

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS	
✓	Emails from programme administration with Management Trainee opportunity, vacancies and BRANDSTORM competition
✓	Job offers available on Jobteaser
✓	Active sourcing through LinkedIn
✓	Male ambassadors figuring on social media, introducing them on L'Oréal's website
✓	Interns included in the employer branding activities, promoting the intern positions
✓	Lectures and seminars on male-oriented topics, male lecturers
✓	Fields and job positions available on local website, highlighting the opportunities and learning possibilities
✓	HR contact with the possibility to keep candidate's CV

*Table 7: Suggestions for employer search process of candidate's journey*

As many male students and fresh graduates do not know what the job at L'Oréal involves, it is crucial to target the employer branding activities, so the male target group would get to see what L'Oréal offers, to provide them with hands-on experience and make them see the L'Oréal business, not only its products. One way to do so is through the paid partnerships with the VŠE programmes and minors. With the help of office

administrators, the company can share the information about the Management Trainee Programme, the marketing BRANDSTORM competition or the vacancies. It can also invite them to join the activities offered by L'Oréal. Approaching students directly by email is a common mean, nevertheless, the administrators do not seek for the information themselves, they share the information given to them by the companies. L'Oréal can also take advantage of the partnership with the CEMS programme and use its exclusive job portal Jobteaser to promote the vacancies.

As a majority of the male employees joined L'Oréal due to their dissatisfaction with their former job, the active sourcing through LinkedIn can encourage those men who are willing to switch an employer. Nowadays, the male target group is used to be contacted by the HR expert and consider it as one of the recruiting mechanisms.

Male ambassadors are also another mechanism used by the companies. L'Oréal could employ male ambassadors that could provide on-campus support and help the company better understand the student's expectations. The male ambassadors could promote and increase awareness of L'Oréal's activities on the social media that are accessible only to the students. In addition, the male ambassadors could serve as a direct contact to students and have their profile on the company's website. In addition to that, all the male interns who are employed at L'Oréal can take on the role of temporary ambassadors. The company could involve them at the employer branding activities - such as career fairs, the CEMS activities etc - and let them share with the students their experiences with the company, the recruitment process or they daily agenda. The male interns who work in other fields than marketing could help to change the perception of the male target group that there are mostly marketing positions available. Moreover, the male interns could be also a prove that the poor treatment of the interns lies in the past.

Although lectures and seminars are rather time-consuming activities, they are activities that build the relationship with the male target group and which are not focus on hiring. Talking about L'Oréal's business, its complexity and challenges, providing the students with real examples can change the whole perspective on the cosmetics business. By making large audience seeing cosmetics industry as tough business where L'Oréal is way ahead of its competitors and where its employees get to do their jobs are the highest standards, will diminish the perception of L'Oréal as a female-oriented company and will establish relationships with potential candidates for a future. L'Oréal can build on the example of Deloitte, which launched at VŠE an elective course named Critical Thinking in Business Futurology worth three credits. Or on example of Škoda, when its manager hosted at VŠE a three-days intensive course teaching about branding. If possible, L'Oréal should try to host the seminars/lectures/workshops at their premises in order to show the participants the working environment at the company and provide them with a glance at work. Moreover, the lectures on VŠE could be streamed online on FB or periscope in order get a wider audience.

The male target group assumes, that there are mostly marketing positions available and they cannot imagine what a job at L'Oréal involves. Not only male ambassadors and interns can alter this view but also the L'Oréal official webpage itself. Currently, L'Oréal's website does not emphasize on the opportunities at the company, testimonials or pictures and videos of the working environment. Furthermore, if the candidate wishes to see the job offers, the webpage transfers him directly to the international intranet. If the candidate does not find position of his liking available and he wishes to leave his CV or in case the candidate has additional questions, there is no contact available on the Czech page. Establishing a website that would be specially dedicated to the careers at L'Oréal, explaining them why they should join the company and what are the possibilities within the company, could also help to change the male target group's false perspective that there are only marketing positions available. The example of such activity could be taken from L'Oréal's competitor, P&G.

### **The recruitment process and job selection**

According to the research, the male target group perceives L'Oréal as having application shortage, they also feel, there are always some positions available. In addition to that, the recruiting process is not challenging enough to attract the best male talents. Therefore, together with the employer branding communication strategy, the company should establish a new recruitment strategy that would ensure the exclusivity and professionalism of joining the company. The recruitment process shall compose of two to three rounds. Before each round the candidate shall be communicated on what he shall expect and what the task focuses on. The assignment shall be adequate to the field and the seniority of the position. After each interview, the candidates shall receive feedback. If possible, the candidates could meet not only their managers but their potential colleagues in order to enhance the most important aspect that the male target group values – the fit with their potential co-workers. Based on numerous face-to-face interviews, the managers should receive trainings on the topic of how to avoid possible mistakes in interviews and appropriately represent the company. The recruiters shall know the CV of the candidates and not drive the recruiting process too fast. The quickly progressing process is perceived positively however, the too fast process evokes the feeling of high urge for new-comers and little competition in interested candidates. Lastly, the new hiring strategy shall be aligned with the internship positions as well.

### **L'Oréal as an employer of choice**

The research outcomes imply that the barrier of L'Oréal being perceived as a feminine company is not the only limitation, why it is difficult for L'Oréal to attract men. The male would overcome this perception if they would be offered incentives that would exceed L'Oréal's competitors. Therefore, L'Oréal has to offer more competitive salary as neither L'Oréal male employees nor the students find it satisfactory. In addition to that, the company could offer benefits that would be primarily fulfilling the needs of

males. As suggested by the male L'Oréal employees, the benefits could include better, more masculine cars or multisport cards. In addition to the benefits, the male target group seek for the benefits that would enhance the company's culture. Besides the activities that Romana has listed during the interview, that are now being prepared, free snacks at cafeteria, free soft drinks or thematic free breakfasts on Fridays could get the whole company meet up and network which would aid to create the company's culture. This activity could also improve the male target group perception that the company does not care much for its employees. Employing activities such as Google or Microsoft could show the opposite. The example could be installing ping-pong or foosball tables, darts or free hair-cuts at the Hair Academy or more masculine team buildings such as escape rooms, go-kart racing, paintball or pub quizzes. The activity that could embrace both the company's culture and the learning opportunity that is also not as promoted within the company, are the all-hands meetings. The all-hands meetings shall be led by somebody who has recently achieved something within the company, to tell the interested participants about the project, what was the objectives and what are the outcomes. There should be always place for discussion. By this way, the employees could learn on what happens in other departments, what different people are responsible for, see the successes of the company and its transparency about it. It could also ease up the communication within the company and increase employees' pride for working for such goal-oriented company.

## CONCLUSION

The labour market experiences high demand for young talents. It is difficult for the companies to catch their attention as the talents are becoming more demanding on what they expect from their future employer. To distinguish itself from the other employers, the companies use internal and external marketing tools whose efforts result in employer branding. Thanks to the easy access to the information and faster moving trends, the employer branding needs to be carefully managed both on local and international levels. The company's objective of the employer branding is to become an employer of choice for its target group. Obtaining the status signifies the talents choose to join, work and stay at the company.

L'Oréal is a leader in the cosmetic industry employing over 350 employees in the Czech Republic. The company is fully aware of the power of the employer branding activities and plans soon launching a new consistent employer branding strategy. With the help of this project, L'Oréal aimed to research on what is the perception of the male students and recent graduates from the University of Economics in Prague. Based on the focus group with the male target group, L'Oréal is on the one hand seen as a leader in its industry, with a lot of flexibility and desire to hire, but on the other hand, as a female-oriented company that neglects its employees.

According to the research, the author suggested tools and activities that would help L'Oréal to better target and attract the male target group. Among the tools that could better target the male focus group belongs engagement of administrators from partner programmes, interns and male lecturers. Launching a website dedicated only to career at L'Oréal and employing male ambassadors who would provide on-campus support would increase the targeting as well.

On the other hand, in order to catch the male target group's interest, the company shall completely alter its current recruiting process and base it on friendliness, professionalism and exclusivity. Also, L'Oréal needs to establish a company culture that would be unique and would be bringing its employees closer together. Lastly, the company should offer the male target group better incentives in form of a more competitive salary and better benefits, so the male target group would be willing to overcome the perception of L'Oréal being a female company and join it.



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*Attachment 1: Profile of male target group, Focus Group*

**Hung N.** (Faculty of Business Administration, VŠE)

Hung is a master student of International Management. It is his second year of CEMS programme therefore, he is expected to graduate this November. Moreover, he works as an intern for Deloitte where he is a part of a strategy team.

**Martin M.** (Faculty of International Business, VŠE)

Martin is a bachelor's degree student with a focus on international trade. He is a student of sixth semester out of which one he has spent abroad on Tsinghua University in Beijing. Also, he is currently employed as a Deployment trainee at ExxonMobil.

**Robert P.** (Faculty of Business Administration, VŠE)

Robert is on his last semester of his master studies, majoring in International Management. During his studies, he took a role as Student Board Representative of Czech students within the international programme he is a part of. This March he has decided to join CA Technologies where he works as an Operations Analyst.

**Dominik T.** (Faculty of Accounting and Finance, VŠE)

Dominik has graduated this January from Faculty of Accounting and Finance. After over one and half year as a Business assistant in Bayer, with the graduation, Dominik has changed the role within a company and now holds CRM & Digital Expert position.

**Petr B.** (Faculty of Business Administration, VŠE)

Petr is a master student of International management and also the President of the CEMS Club Prague. Besides his studies and extra-curriculum activities, he works part-time as Product Marketing Intern at Hilti.

**Kristián P.** (Faculty of International Business, VŠE)

Kristián is on his last semester of his master studies, majoring in International Business. He is expected to graduate this June when he would like to start working for multinational corporation.

**Martin P.** (Faculty of Management, VŠE)

Martin is a fresh graduate from the University of Economics in Jindřichův Hradec where he graduated this January. He currently holds an entry position as a Quality Data Analyst at Mondi Group where he is responsible for the quality, effectivity and scheduling checking.

**Tomáš K.** (Faculty of Business Administration, VŠE)

Tomáš is a CEMS student on his final semester. He has been always keen on online marketing and in this field, he is also pursuing his career as an Online Marketing Specialist at EDUA Group. On top of everything, he is a freelancer and help within CEMS Club Prague with alumni matters.

**David D.** (Faculty of Business Administration, VŠE)

David is currently finishing his master studies in International Management, after graduating he was offered a contract with Google in Dublin.

**Vašek R.** (Faculty of International Business, VŠE)

Vašek is a master student of International Business. Moreover, he is a founder of a project [prosteprim.cz](http://prosteprim.cz) where he sells antique Prim watch. After his studies he is determined to continue with his entrepreneurship activities.



## *Attachment 2: Profile of L'Oréal's male employees of L'Oréal*

### **Roman P.** (E-Trade Marketing Manager)

Roman has joined L'Oréal in September 2017 and ever since he has been responsible for e-commerce trade with L'Oréal's partner Notino. Roman has graduated from his undergraduate degree in 2016 at Ostravská Universita.

### **Jiří Š.** (Key Account Executive)

Jiří is a VŠE graduate. He finished his studies in 2016 and in the same year, in November, he joined L'Oréal as Management Trainee in Sales.

### **Antonín T.** (Retail Design Intern)

Antonín is an intern at Luxe division where he is responsible for Retail Design since July 2017. Regarding his studies, Antonín is pursuing his master's degree in International politics and diplomacy with minor in Commercial Communication.

### **Jakub H.** (Master Data Specialist)

Jakub has been with L'Oréal for over two years as a Data Quality Manager. Jakub has graduated from his undergraduate degree in 2013 from Technická Universita Liberec.

### **Martin B.** (Junior Financial Controller)

Martin has graduated from the University of Economics and currently works

### **Vít Bartoš** (Consumer Marketing Intelligence Specialist)

Vít has graduated from VŠE in 2016 and this year, he left his position in British American Tobacco for joining L'Oréal. In L'Oréal, Vít works as Consumer Marketing Intelligence Specialist.

### **Jan Herodek** (Product, Trade and Digital Manager)

Jan has started his career in L'Oréal in January 2018. Beyond his most important responsibilities belong launching new cosmetics brand on the Czech market. Jan is a proud graduate from Imperial Business College in London where he successfully completed his studies in 2017.

### **Jan Pištěk** (Marketing Intern)

Jan joined the six-month internship programme at L'Oréal in March 2018. He occupies marketing position. Among that, he is on his second year of master's degree in VŠE in faculty of Business Administration.

**Václav Bolech** (Trade Marketing Manager)

Václav graduated from Jihočeská universita v Českých Budějovicích from Economics faculty. After graduation he joined Plzeňský Prazdroj and MONETA Money Bank. Since 2017 he is employed at L'Oréal where he works as a Trade Marketing Manager.

*Attachment 3: Interview questionnaire: Interview with of HR Manager and Talent Acquisition Manager Romana Martincová*

**1. L'Oréal's employer branding**

- a. What is the positioning of L'Oréal's employer branding?
- b. What are the objectives of employer branding?
- c. What are the activities of employer branding?
- d. Does L'Oréal's have strategical attitude towards employer branding or is employer branding more of different step thing?
- e. When does L'Oréal started to pay attention to employer branding?
- f. What are the future focuses of employer branding?

**2. L'Oréal's recruitment process**

- a. What does the recruiting process look like for students and fresh graduates?
  - ii. The process for internships
  - iii. The process for new entry positions?

**3. The male target group**

- a. What is the profile of the ideal male candidate for internships and entry positions? What is L'Oréal's male target group?
- b. What are the positions that are easy to recruit by males and what positions are not so favourite for male target group?

**4. Expectations from the cooperation on the thesis**

- a. What is the expectation of L'Oréal from the project?

*Attachment 4: Interview questionnaire: Interview with L'Oréal's male junior managers and male interns*

**1. The employment search process**

- a. Have you considered L'Oréal as your employer while on your studies? Why yes, why not?
- b. How have you learnt about the position you are now holding?
- c. What was the most convincing aspect that made you apply to the job position?

**2. The recruitment process and job selection**

- a. How was the recruitment process structured? Did you enjoy it? Would you prefer different recruitment style?
- b. What caught your attention during the recruiting process and made you want the job?
- c. What made you chose L'Oréal over the other job opportunities?
- d. Was there something that was holding you back from accepting the position for L'Oréal? Why? Is it still a problem for you?

**3. L'Oréal as an employer of choice**

- a. What do you enjoy the most about working for L'Oréal? What motives you working for the company?
- b. What are L'Oréal's most important values for you? Can you identify yourself with any of the values?
- c. Are you proud of being part of L'Oréal? What makes you proud? What doesn't?
- d. Is there something what would you improve on L'Oréal that could help attract more males to the company?

Is there anything that was not discussed and you would like to add?

*Attachment 5: Interview questionnaire: Interview with male target group*

- 1. The employment search process**
  - a. How do you approach the employment search process? Are you rather passive - finding the job and applying? Or are you rather active – seeking additional information, asking your around for the job position, checking up on websites, talking to the recruiters on career fairs?
  - b. Where do you usually start with your job search?
  - c. What communication technique or channels do you use while searching for a job?
  - d. What aspects play a role before applying to the vacancy?
  - e. Does the recruitment process have influence on your decision to consider a potential employer?
  - f. Describe the most pleasant and unpleasant recruitment process according to you, could you give any example you have experienced yourself?
- 2. Influencers defining target group's employer choice**
  - a. What motivates you while working?
  - b. What employees' benefits do you demand from your employer?
  - c. What values shall the company possess?
  - d. What element/s shall the company possess so you would be proud working for it?
  - e. Imagine the ideal employer – how would the company look like? No names, just description
  - f. Now list of the names. Why did you pick these?
  - g. What are your preferred industries to work in? Would you consider working in a different industry? What would influence the change of your mind?
- 3. L'Oréal as an employer of choice and its employer branding perception**
  - a. Do you know L'Oréal? What comes to your mind when speaking about L'Oréal?
  - b. How do you perceive L'Oréal as an employer?
  - c. What opportunities the internship and entry level position in L'Oréal could, in your opinion, provide you with?
  - d. How would you feel working for such company as a male?
  - e. Do you think you could be proud to work for the company?
  - f. What position do you think could be the most fitted to you within the company?
  - g. Have you ever considered working for L'Oréal? Why yes, why not?
  - h. If not, what would change your preferences?

## *Attachment 6: L'Oréal's employer branding activities*

### **1. L'Oréal Citizen Day**

Citizen Day is a volunteering event that has been taking place since 2010. One day in a year L'Oréal's employees dedicate the office day to a higher cause and offer their energy and enthusiasm to hundreds of non-profit organizations all over the globe. *"In 2016, L'Oréal Citizen Day supported 515 non-profits in 70 countries, with some 28,000 participants volunteering."* (L'ORÉAL CITIZEN DAY, n.d.) The volunteering activities can have various focus, be it social, cultural or environmental. The aim of Citizen Day is to show that everyone has a role to play. In case of L'Oréal Czech Republic, home for the elderly in Prague was chosen to be supported. In 2017, over 150 volunteers have spent a day in the retirement home helping with the gardening, building library, keeping the company to the elderly, creating decorations for the house etc. (L'ORÉAL CITIZEN DAY, n.d.)

### **2. L'Oréal BRANDSTORM**

L'Oréal BRANDSTORM is a business competition for any undergraduate or graduate student who study in one of the 60 participating countries. Since 1992, when the first competition was hold, each year teams accounting of 3 students can tackle a real business case and bring innovative ideas and concepts. L'Oréal Brandstorm's objective is to combine the academic and professional experience with the opportunity to become a brand leader for one of the L'Oréal brand. The global competition is based on four pillars: Experiment – Learn – Connect – Enjoy. Brandstorm encourages the students to choose any direction and experiment along the way as much as possible. Also, the competition aims to teach the participants along facing up the challenges. The academic mentor and L'Oréal coach are two personas to lead the teams along their journey and help to transform the ideas to feasible projects. On top of that the students obtain an access to L'Oréal's company market data and bank of e-learning tool. Brandstorm is also about connecting the people, be it new friends within other students or L'Oréal experts and executives. The most talented groups can make it to Paris for the World Finals where they can visit L'Oréal's headquarters, join prepared events and compete for the final monetary price. (L'Oréal, 2018) , (All you need to know about BRANDSTORM 2018, 2017)

### **3. L'Oréal-UNESCO Awards for Women in Science**

L'Oréal CZ aims to improve the position of young talented females in a science by holding annual awards for them. The programme was introduced in the Czech Republic in 2006 and ever since 30 female scientists were awarded. Every year, the participants are divided to two groups according to their age (to 35 years and 36 – 45 years). From each group one skilful female scientist is able to win 250 000CZK. L'Oréal's objective

is to encourage female scientists to join careers in science and show the public the importance of their jobs in the Czech Republic. (L'Oréal, 2017)

#### **4. Ethics Day**

Ethics day takes place in October and almost 70 countries take part in it. The event aims to raise awareness in terms of ethics within the company and leads a discussion on topics such integrity, respect, courage or transparency. The main event of the fay is a webchat with L'Oréal's CEO who answers questions and discusses issues regarding ethics live. The employees can send their questions either to him or the to the Managing Director of each country as each hub also holds a local conversation on ethics. Not only issues are addressed but also employees' ideas and suggestions on how to work more effectively in regards of ethics. As for 2016, L'Oréal employees shared over 1000 recommendations on how to better work together. (L'Oréal, L'Oréal, 2016)