How to attract talented software developers

Developing a culturally differentiated employee value proposition

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Master’s thesis LIU-IEI-TEK-A--13/01701--SE
Department of Management and Engineering
Industrial Economics
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Abstract

In today’s society, where knowledge workers within computer science and software development are becoming increasingly demanded by all types of companies, the competition for this kind of labour also becomes tougher. This report investigates the concept of extracting an employee value proposition that can help a company in need of this type of labour to become more attractive. To understand if culture has an impact on the candidate’s attraction, it is also investigated whether or not an employee value proposition can be adapted to fit different nationalities. Furthermore, it is explored if discoveries from a company’s organisational culture can help build a more accurate employee value proposition.

To extract an employee value proposition, the theories within the two fields of employer branding and culture are investigated and applied upon a case company. The case company is a fast-growing, multinational software company in the music business continuously in need of high qualitative knowledge workers. The attributes of a potential employee value proposition were obtained through 15 in-depth interviews with various employees within the case company. These attributes were then verified through a survey, which also were to distinguish any cultural differences.

The conclusions present an employee value proposition fitted for the case company and other companies within the same context, although without any cultural adoption. Some of the main attributes of the extracted employee value proposition were: great colleagues, challenging work tasks and good development possibilities. The two cultures identified within the case company were supposed to be different in many ways according to the theories found. Although in this case study, the two cultures did not seem to show any significant differences at an employee value proposition level. On the other hand, discrepancies were found between the internal and external employer brand and were one of the major recommendations for the case company.
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Preface
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____________________________  ______________________________
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1 The challenge of attraction

First, this chapter introduces the problem and the reasons behind it. Second, the theories, intended to be used in order to help frame the problem, are briefly presented. Third, the purpose is specified and finally, the disposition is presented.

1.1 Brilliant software developers wanted

Recruitment becomes increasingly important, as companies become more knowledge based. Work in western companies focuses less on standardised tasks as these are being outsourced to Asian and other regions. Creativity becomes more and more attractive as products are being replaced by services. (Soubbotina, 2000) One of the service industries that grow fast is the digital communications business. The rapid growth of the digital communications industry in recent years has led to an increasing demand for skilled, value-adding specialists within this area (Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

An example of these skilled, value-adding specialists needed in the digital communications industry is software developers. Specialists in the industry mean that the competition for software developers is now so high that the need cannot be satisfied (Efendic, 2013). This is despite the fact that labour is becoming more flexible and globalisation is ever increasing. One out of the many countries in search of highly skilled software engineers is Sweden. Numerous sources point out the lack of software engineers and indicate that the gap between supply and demand in Sweden is growing (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2001; Framtidsutveckling AB, 2011; Lindqvist, 2012). A rough estimation shows that 2,130 programmers graduated in Sweden during 2010/2011 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2012). A report from Almega, the most prominent employer and trade organisation for the Swedish service sector, indicates that there will be a need for 30,000 new IT specialists in the near future (IT och telekomföretagen, 2012). The Swedish Public Employment Service future forecast from 2012 indicates software and system developers as the professional group with the greatest demand (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2012). During the year of 2012 as many as 70 per cent of Swedish employers searched for personnel with expertise in programming/computer science (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2012). All these sources indicate that the education system in Sweden cannot supply the labour market with enough programmers. Politicians in Sweden have recognised the problem and even discuss such drastic solutions as to fly in and educate Chinese (Danielsson, 2012).

The problem is not so easily solved as to just start recruiting outside Sweden; the lack of software personnel is worldwide (Nass, 2007). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, there will be 1.4 million computer specialist job openings by 2020. Projections show that the universities in the United States will only be able to produce qualified graduates for about 30 per cent of these jobs (Field, 2013). The lack of Information and communications technology, ICT, knowledge was taken up by the European Commission under the Economic Forum in Davos. The European Commission estimates that at the beginning of 2013 there were 700,000 ICT vacancies in Europe (Worth, 2013).

1.2 How to attract and retain talent

Even though globalisation and an increasing mobility of the workforce make recruiting easier in a broader perspective, the competition makes it harder to attract and retain
employees with valuable key skills. A tougher labour market is evolving (Lee & Maurer, 1997). To retain employees, companies must increasingly act to brand themselves as attractive for their employees. This attraction is created by *Internal Marketing* or *Employer Branding* and is defined by Ambler and Barrow (1996, p. 8) as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company”.

The most prominent employees of today know that they are in demand. They have high expectations of a job and if it is not right for them, they will easily find an employer that is more willing to see to their specific needs (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). This leads to that the pressure to attract and retain the right and most competent employees has never been higher. More and more companies realise how much of the business value that consists of human capital, *i.e.* staff's experience, knowledge and skills (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). According to Dyhre and Parment (2013), up to 80 per cent of firm value may consist of human capital.

Employer branding is today something that most employers work with, regardless of size. Previously, employer branding was something that only large enterprises, engaged in those sectors where competition for talent was strong, were actively working with. Today, the competition for talent is fierce in most industries and this will only increase as industries start to compete more and more for the same type of labour (Universum, 2013a). This is the case for *e.g.* engineers and software developers whose expertise is getting more relevant for all industries with increasing technology and automation. As a result, sectors and industries that earlier were not competing for talent now are highly involved in this. (Dyhre & Parment, 2013)

Employer branding is the long-term, strategic plan to become an employer of choice. The more concrete part of the employer brand and a base for the employer branding is the employee value proposition, which contains the offer given by the employer to the employees. (Svensson, 2011) The term employee value proposition was recently coined and due to this, there are still many companies that work actively with employer branding without having a formulated employee value proposition. However, to become a winner in the war for attraction a well-formulated employee value proposition is decisive. (Quarsh, 2013)

### 1.3 Intercultural aspects of multinational companies

As the Swedish labour market cannot meet the demands for software developers, companies operating in Sweden also have to turn to other markets to find the talent they need. Even though other countries might supply with the right kind of talent, some new problems arise as a consequence of that. When working in multinational companies, understanding the differences between people’s way of thinking, feeling and acting is a basis for being able to accomplish suitable global solutions. One of the reasons as to why so many solutions is not functioning or is not feasible is that the differences in people’s way of thinking have not been acknowledged. (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, 2010)

Many researchers have made efforts in defining, linking and comparing organisational and national culture. In every culture, people have their own ways of thinking, acting and believing. Sometimes, one culture’s way of doing things collides with another culture’s way of doing things. This is called a culture clash. Cultural clashes can be an expensive experience for multinational companies (Collins, 2012). To reduce the risk of cultural
clashes one has to have an understanding of cultural differences. Many companies today apply this knowledge when marketing their products or services on new markets. For example, P&G, and many other companies, market the same product under different brand names depending on country. The same adaption could be made when marketing the employer brand. Especially when employer branding is, to high extent, about marketing people to people, while classical marketing is about marketing products to people. Understanding of cultural differences might therefore be of importance when marketing a company’s employer brand towards several different countries.

1.4 Problem description
As mentioned earlier, the need for programming skills is increasing in Sweden as well as in the whole of Europe. For successful companies whose products or services are mainly based on software technology, the growth rate is steeper than for most other companies. This is due to the fast way of spreading the good or service via the Internet and peer-to-peer networks. Unlike manufacturing companies that produce material products piece by piece for each and every customer, software companies can scale their service way faster.

This scaling is done by the hand and through the knowledge of a few skilled programmers and not by great machines. This means that the difference between manufacturing companies and software companies is that a machine often drives the production process in the first case, whilst human competence and creativity is the primary driver in the second case. Therefore, human resources and employer branding plays a greater part for software companies than in many other companies. In a way, these departments can be seen as the purchasing departments in the manufacturing companies, although in the software company’s case, it is about attracting and retaining the right talent, rather than calculating payback periods and net present values.

In order to keep up with the potential growth rate promising software companies possess, recruitment of high qualitative labour often becomes crucial. To attract and retain employees, a well-defined and appealing employee value proposition can be helpful. Although, when the labour demanding company is based in a small country like Sweden, the domestic resources might not always be sufficient and the company thereby has to turn its head towards the international labour market. By doing so, cultural differences between Swedish culture and the national culture of the candidate might give rise to further aspects within the subject of employer branding that ought not to be overlooked. For this, a culturally adapted employee value proposition might be the solution.

1.5 Purpose
Due to the reasons described above, the purpose of this report is to:

Define and design a superior employee value proposition that attracts highly talented software engineers and to find out how to culturally adapt the employee value proposition for different national cultures.

1.6 Disposition
The report consists of the introduction chapter presenting the purpose for the report followed by the six main chapters. This following chapter are all part of laying a basis and answering the purpose of the report.
2 **Current science**
In this chapter the theories of relevance for the purpose are presented. These are theories regarding employer branding, employee value proposition national culture and organisational culture.

3 **Analytical model and research questions**
In this chapter the foregoing chapter’s revised theories culminates in a model for the analytical and purpose is branched out into four research questions.

4 **Research process**
This chapter describes the underlying methodology for this study and clarifies the approaches that have been made during the gathering of the empirical data material.

5 **Empirical findings**
In this chapter all empirical information that is relevant for the purpose has been compiled. This chapter includes an introduction to the chosen case company and data from interviews and surveys regarding this company.

6 **Analysis**
In this chapter the data gathered in the ‘Empirical findings’ chapter are linked to the theories from the ‘Current science’ chapter and analysed in accordance with the analytical model from the third chapter.

7 **Conclusions**
In the conclusions chapter the results of the report are presented and the answer to the purpose is given. The chapter and the report end with suggestions of possible areas for future research.
2 Current science

This chapter identifies and summarizes the scientific theories relevant to the purpose and builds a good base for how to research within these areas of interest.

2.1 Breakdown structure

In order to answer the purpose, it was broken down into smaller more manageable constituents to create a more comprehensible picture and to facilitate the work process. The first branch of research was employer branding and subsidiary to this employee value proposition. The second branch in the breakdown is culture. Subsidiary to culture is national culture and organisational culture. This is also the order the subchapters will be found within this chapter. The problem breakdown is illustrated and can be reviewed in Figure 1.

![Figure 1 - Problem Tree](an adaptable employee value proposition for the different cultures)

During the process of compiling the literature, it has come clear that it is hard to encapsulate the different concepts of employer branding, employee value proposition and corporate culture, without getting in to one of the other two. All three overlap each other more or less, and according to some theoreticians they are to some respect synonyms. Within this report they are, to a wide extent, separated, but in some aspects and parts they inevitably go into each other trying to describe the same thing.

2.2 Talent

The concept of 'talent' appears with different meanings in literature. Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod try to sort out the concept with eloquent quotes: "A certain part of talent eludes description: You simply know it when you see it. [...] despite some blurry lines around the concept, talent is a seductive word, one which people seem to implicitly understand." (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, Axelrod, 2001, pp. 12-13) Some sources speak of talent as people who do everything right regardless of industry and task. This is not how the term will be used in this report. A talent at Microsoft is not necessarily a talent at Shell and might even be a disaster at Zara. "Each company must understand the specific talent profile that's right for it." (Michaels et al., 2001, p. 13)

In this report the notion of ‘talent’ is used coherently with Michaels et al.’s definition of talent. This thus gives that ‘talent’ in this report is someone with a high knowledge level within software development.
2.3 Employer branding

Annual reports continually highlight employees as the company's most important resource, and/or brand as its greatest asset (six degrees, 2008; Vos, 2009; Wilden, Gudergan and Lings 2010). Ambler and Barrow worked on these two facts and came up with a marketing approach to HR that they introduced as the concept of employer branding. Employer branding promotes synergies that emerge from not handling HR and marketing as two separate parts of the company. (Ambler & Barrow, 1996) The term ‘talent management’ was coined by McKinsey in 1997 and concerns the same subject but with focus on talent, in some articles the terms are used interchangeably (Michaels et al., 2001).

Winston Churchill said in 1943 “the empires of the future will be empires of the mind” (Churchill, 1943). His prediction has been right and the transition during the last half-century from heavy industry to knowledge working has changed the employer-employee relation (Botha, Bussin and de Swardt, 2011). There is research that makes it evident that there is a relationship between the employer brand and the attraction and retention of talent (Dell et al., 2001; Moroko & Uncles, 2008). There is now a skill shortage that has led to employer branding gaining a strong foothold among many organizations (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). Corporate brands are still much more common but employer brands are getting more and more focus (Dell, Ainspan, Bodenberg, Troy and Hickey, 2001). Seven out of ten employers will focus more on their employer brand the coming year (Botha et al., 2011).

2.3.1 The definition of employer branding

Ponderings about brands and what good they can bring with them is nothing new. San Bernardino of Siena (1420) summarised the benefits of the goods/services purchased by virtuositas - function, raritas - scarcity and complacibilitas - psychological benefits. This is something that still today corresponds well with the theories presented within marketing. Brand is today defined by the American Marketing association as “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers” (American Marketing Association, 2013).

Ambler and Barrow (1996, p. 8) use the above definition of brands as basis for their own definition of "Employer Branding": "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". Simon Lloyd (2002) discusses the external aspects from a marketing perspective and define employer branding as "the sum of a company’s efforts to communicate to existing and prospective staff that it is a desirable place to work". The impact of the employer brand, on both existing and potential employees, is discussed by Dell et al. (2001, p. 10) who assert that: “The employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s values, systems, policies, and behaviours towards the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”.

Gopalakrishnan, Muncherji and Dhar (2009, pp. 184-185) describe the employer brand with a parable: Building this brand is all about the marketing of ‘employment’. If we consider employees as customers and ‘employment experience’ as the ‘product’ being offered for their consideration and purchase – the ‘customer satisfaction’ would then reflect the strength of the ‘employment brand’ of the organisation.”
The attributes that today are given to employer branding and the employer brand were, before Ambler and Barrow, to a small extent, given to corporate culture. When corporate culture is discussed in this meaning it is often with a clear intent of controlling, in one way or another, the subsidiaries within the firm. Schneider (1988) gives a good literature review that concludes what the approach towards organisation culture was at the year of writing, 1988. This attitude can still be recognised in articles from the 90’s. Since then there has been a transition towards the employer branding of today where the tone is more towards giving employees a looser grip and rather to inspire than to control.

2.3.2 The use of employer branding

Once the definition is clear, there are many different approaches for how to proceed in the employer branding work. It stands clear that the effect will not show itself straight away, two to three years can be expected before the first measurable effects (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). There is no clarification to what Dyhre and Parment mean by ‘measurable’, but in Michaels et al.’s book (2001) there is a chapter called “Get Started - and Expect Huge Impact in a Year” which speaks for effect in the more close future. No matter when the effect shows Shah (2011) states that the process of building an employer brand is one of the few long term solutions to the shortage of talent-problem.

In the recent years, there has been a transformation of the view over what employer branding is good for and how the work should be taken forward. ‘Internal marketing’ was coined in 1995 by the American Marketing Association as “marketing to employees of an organisation to ensure that they are effectively carrying out desired programs and policies” (American Marketing Association, 2013). Reading between the lines in this definition gives the view of the employee as a manikin that needs to be steered in the right direction in order to fulfil their work obligations. After Ambler and Barrow presented their theories in 1995, employer branding to a great extent focused only externally on how to attract, recruit and retain the right employees (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). One of the more recent contributions in describing the meaning and benefits of actively working with the employer brand came from Dahlström (2011, p. 10), she argues: “employees who are able to deliver the best results, achieve business objectives, and contribute significantly to corporate value - that’s the purpose of employer branding”.

Among more recent articles on the subject, most agree that employer branding is about creating a good environment for the employees and a good working climate. Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, Michaels (1998) state clearly that the main thing is to “start by giving them a sense of belonging” - them referring to the employees. Only when the situation is good internally this may also be conveyed externally (Dyhe, 2013). Dahlström (2011) states that employer branding is developing towards the practice of identifying and engaging employees who share the organisation’s culture. Shah (2011) describes the objective of employer branding as to use co-workers competence and personalities to optimise the performance of the organisation.

To establish the actual employer brand of the firm, the internal and external perception of the brand as well as the perception of the management team needs to be understood. With a well-formulated and exposed employer brand the organisation’s expectations and requirements stand clear giving a true picture of the employment situation. This leads an opportunity for the employment-candidates to self-assess a culture fit before they even present themselves - rising labour that fits the organisation and the culture that prevails.
(Hunt, 2005; Dyhre, 2013) To align the co-workers’ talents and behaviours with the business targets the employer needs to attract and retain employees that identify with the company values so the employer becomes the employer of choice, not the employer by chance (Hunt, 2005).

Employer branding can in many ways be treated like ordinary branding of a corporation or a product. Hieronimus, Schaefer and Schröder (2005) state that companies must think of recruits as customers, using marketing analysis to identify key rivals and determine what corporate attributes that attract the most recruits and understand how to best reach them. Methods similar to marketing’s 4Ps - Product, Price, Promotion, Place - may be used (Holker, 2009). Despite this, few companies are as precise and rigorous in marketing themselves to potential employees as they are in branding their products and services (Hieronimus et al., 2005). Wilden et al. (2010, p. 60) give the parable “If one adopts the internal marketing view that employment opportunities (jobs) are one of the products offered by the firm, models of consumer behavior may be applied”. Furthermore, Moroko and Uncles (2008, p. 161) mean that “it is evident that employer branding shares theoretical foundations with both consumer and corporate branding”.

In the literature reviewed there is no uniformed view of how the different brands - employer, corporate and product brand – of the company correlate. But all theoreticians agree, in one way or the other, on that the communications for the different brands should align for the best effect. Botha et al. (2011, p. 6) express it as “misalignment between external brand […] and internal brand […] damage trust between employees and employer” while “companies with superior employment offerings are those where the employer brand match corporate and consumer brands” (2011, p. 4). Shah (2011) stretches as far to say that employer branding can only exercise beneficial and substantial in the long-term only if external branding is justified by the internal branding. If internal marketing, marketing and human resources fail to collaborate with the company’s employer brand, the aim will not be reached and the company only ends up with a project that burns cash and creates cynicism among employees (Botha et al., 2011).

According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), for businesses where the consumer brand and the corporate brand is the same, e.g. Spotify, Shell, the employer brand is automatically also the same. A basic illustration of the brands correlations can be seen in Figure 2 below.

![Figure 2 - The company brand’s faces (Hunt, 2005, p. 35)](image_url)

Wilden et al. (2010) have during their study seen that the alignment among the brands are of even greater importance when recruiting less experienced potential employees.
This as the consumer brand often is the only, or the dominant, signal that they get of the presumptive employer. A higher consistency among the brands leads to less effort for the jobseeker since no equivocation exists. (Wilden et al., 2010) There must be a congruity in the communication for all the brands and all the communication from the company. The reflection of the employer brand communication should be genuine, honest and coherent. (Botha et al., 2011) The significant aspect of brand consistency refers to what extent employer branding signals reflect the intended whole and to what extent these signals are in accordance with the company’s overall targets, products and corporate brand. Trustworthy brand signals relay information that has greater effect for the intended target group. (Wilden et al., 2010)

Companies with low customer awareness find it harder to attract talented human capital (Wilden et al., 2010). This makes it more important to establish an employer brand for companies with low product brand, for example, companies that work business to business whose products loses much, or all, of brand identity before it reaches the final user (Dell et al., 2001).

Wilden et al. (2010) have investigated what jobseekers perceive as investments to the employer brand. The results include, aside money to employee development, tasks like participating in job fairs, maintaining career websites, advertising in business papers and offering internships, as well as being active in alumni networks and participating in employer-of-choice awards. They also found that large investments in creating awareness about employer brand among potential and current employees, along with investments in human resources actions, creates a perception of an employer caring about its employees. Many of the respondents in Wilden et al.’s (2010) study proposed that higher brand investments concluded that a company was more desirable to work for. But to be noted: the employer market is subject to constant changes and the company’s employer brand must continuously change to maintain its relevance (Moroko & Uncle, 2008). Furthermore, to communicate relevant brand messages to the employment market it is recommended that companies use trustworthy brand ambassadors while recruitment companies are not seen as credible ambassadors. (Wilden et al., 2010) One of the most important elements in the process of conveying the brand message is that the frontline recruiters not only understand the message, but that they also understand that they are its finest ambassadors. (Holker, 2009) After all, “people join people” (Holker, 2009, p. 3).

2.3.3 The objectives of employer branding
Botha et al. (2011, p. 1) describe the situation on the labour market as “an ever shrinking global talent pool”. Dell et al. (2001, p. 9) agree on that statement by arguing “No market is more competitive than the market for employees”. Reed (2001, p. 59) is on the same line stating, “Employer brands are a tool to win the talent war”.

Companies that put more resources into recruitment and building their employer brand are perceived as being more attractive than those how do not invest. Investments to the brand also affect the perceived quality of the employment for the employees. A clear employer brand gives the potential employee a better picture of what it would be like to join the company. Moreover, the uncertainty of joining the company is reduced, which in the end increases the attraction of the employer. If there is a great effort needed to gather information about the prospective employer the potential employee will experience, consciously or subconsciously, a greater risk to join the company and the company is perceived as less attractive. (Wilden et al., 2010) If the company succeeds in attracting...
the right and great employees the new mix of employees will enhance the values and the employer brand the company are trying to emphasise. (Chambers et al., 1998)

Employer branding is multifold, with every theoretician putting emphasis one particular section of the concept. One way to formulate the objective is: to attract, retain, motivate and develop employees as well as to get candidates that fit with the company. (Parment & Dyhre, 2009)

According to Dyhre (2013) one out of five recruitments fails and no one is employed for the vacancy. With strong attraction in the employer brand this number will most certainly be improved (Botha et al., 2011). For the matter of retention the idiomatic phrase “cheaper to keep an existing customer than win a new one” is applicable if interpreted with interchangeability for customer and employee (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 9). Botha et al. (2011) claim that organisations that are very effective in communicating their brand, experience a 20 per cent lower labour turnover.

Two vital elements whose roles are not to diminish is the motivational effect and total effect of the “service-profit chain” (Dyhre & Parment, 2013). The model of the service-profit chain may also be seen as an evolvement to see the big picture of the effects of employer branding. Shah (2011, p. 30) tries to explain how a company should work for customer satisfaction by stating “to make customers happy they have to make happy employees first”. Improvement in employees’ motivation leads to enhanced employee performance, which in turn leads to improved customer experience, and that strengthens the brand, which should increase motivation, completing a virtuous circle (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser and Schlesinger (2008) give a good illustration of the service-profit chain in Figure 3. Note how obviously and clearly employee satisfaction links to revenue growth and profitability.

During Ambler and Barrow’s study to formulate the theories of employer branding one of their interviewees described the situation thru the following words: “if we have the best shops, with the best people, then we have the best word of mouth and receive the
best applications and then we will have the best shops” (1996, p. 2). Cutbacks at the expense of the workers will only provide short-term economic effect, which means that positive employee experience is the only way to gain superior long-term performance (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). There are many ways to describe the importance of the service-profit chain and the effects that come from positive employees. Wilden et al. (2010, p. 61) mean that “working for a prestigious company makes employees proud and may result in higher work moral” and that “customer service is only possible if employee satisfaction and motivation is high”. Dyhre (2013) claims, “Proud people perform”. A simile by Ygberg (2013) illustrates the importance of employee satisfaction:

*I see the company as a three-story house. The first floor is the employees. The second floor is the customers. The third floor is profitability. Anyone who would like to stay nicely on the third floor has an interest in the bearing walls on the first and second floor stands.*

Shah (2011) shows that employer branding will increase the profit of the firm, on top of this comes a belonging among employees and a feeling of pride, self-actualisation and true commitment. With a well-functioning employer brand, the firm will get great ambassadors that “if they believe in you, they’ll go to bat for you wholeheartedly” (Hunt, 2005, p. 34).

The reason that employer branding is not emphasised stronger in businesses are probably far too short-term orientations and governance with wrong economic focus. If the company were guided by goals like "Revenue per employee" instead of other key figures, the work climate would improve and the service-profit chain would be ruling. Each component and results of the employer brand shows in the key figure revenue per employee. (Harrison, 2011)

### 2.4 Employee value proposition

Almost every company have a well formulated CVP - customer value proposition (Dyhre & Parment, 2013) and the USP - unique selling point - is of importance and reflects the competitive advantages of the organisation: Why should a buyer buy from us out of all the tantamount products available? The equivalent for employer branding and the labour market is employee value proposition, or commonly abbreviated, EVP. (Parment & Dyhre, 2009) EVP is closely related to the concept of employer branding and it is a vital part of it. The EVP is used to define the offer to the employees that is promoted via the employer branding activities. (Browne, 2012) The terms ‘employer brand proposition’ (Mosley, 2007) and ‘employer value proposition’ (Universum, 2013b) are also common in the literature, but will not be used.

#### 2.4.1 Definition of employee value proposition

The EVP is defined by Dyhre and Parment (2013), and Botha et al. (2011) as the total employment experience, the unique combination of financial and nonfinancial offers to the employer, in exchange for the competence, the skills and experiences the employee brings to the organisation. Moroko and Uncles (2008, p. 164) agree stating “the employee value proposition is a distinct package of benefits offered by the firm”. James and Bibb (2010, p. 1) declare the EVP to be “the deal struck between an organisation and employee in return for their contribution and performance”. Browne’s (2012, p. 30) explanation to EVP is as the answer given to the employee on the questions: “What’s in it for me?” and “What more can you offer?”. As with many other theories and concepts
there are a variegated picture of what the meaning and content of an EVP is, as seen in the aforementioned research findings. Michaels et al. (2001, p. 43) give a good summary, which includes the spirit from many other theoreticians within the field:

An EVP is the holistic sum of everything people experience and receive while they are part of a company – everything from the intrinsic satisfaction of the work to the environment, leadership, colleagues, compensation and more. It’s about how well the company fulfills people’s needs, their expectations, and even their dreams. A strong EVP attracts great people like flowers attract bees. A strong EVP excites people so they recommit daily to give their best – so that they are jazzed and feeling passionate about their work and their company.

The concept is quite new to the business, it is just in the last couple of years that the industry have recognised all the effects an EVP can have on recruitment, selection, commitment and retention. But by many HR workers it is seen, if at all, as a document that needs to be created because the concurrent companies create EVP’s while the line manager, in many cases, sees it as an ineffective document that adds to the budget but makes nothing for the result. (Browne, 2012) The EVP neither is nice words for the recruiting material, nor is it a loose connection of benefits. It is what the people employed experience every day within the company (Michaels et al., 2001). Although, an EVP that is not thought through can be much worse than not having an EVP at all, if the employees do not identify with it, they might lose their sense of belonging. Furthermore, an untrue EVP might also be deterring to presumptive applicants. However, it is evident that high performing companies have an EVP in place. More than giving the employees what they expect and raising the engagement level, a well-formulated EVP can drastically cut down turnover rates among the employees. (Browne, 2012)

2.4.2 What is a great employee value proposition and why?
Companies that have a winning EVP have the most compelling answer to “Why would a talented person want to work here?” (Chambers et al., 1998). According to Parment and Dyhre (2009), a successful EVP has to be true, attractive and different. The EVP is based on the people strategy and is aligned with the business strategy and built around attributes that really attracts and engages. James and Bibb (2010) insist that an EVP needs to be true, but not all of it, it must also contain parts that are not true which the organisation strives towards. The EVP contains five elements: work environment and affiliation - the feeling of belonging in the organisation (this contains values, culture, colleagues supervisors and leaders); work content - the satisfaction of from work (intrinsic motivation from work tasks); career - the long-term development possibilities for the employee (title, personal growth, training, advancement); monetary compensation - the money paid for work and performance, benefits - the direct nonfinancial reward (vacation, pension, health care). (Botha et al., 2011; Browne, 2012) These relations are illustrated according to Kunkle and Sorensen in Figure 4.
To engage employees in their work the three most important factors are *career development, confidence in leaders and management*, and *recognition of their work*. The employee value proposition should identify, and show, the organisation's engagement in people policies, processes and programs that enhance the employee experience for the better. (Browne, 2012) But the by far most central for a great EVP is interesting and challenging work that makes people feel passionate about their assignments. A few more benefits such as casual dress codes, salsa lessons or more generous health care will not make the difference between a strong EVP and a weak one (Michaels *et al.*, 2001). In a survey sent out by Sibson consulting called ‘Reward for work’ the respondents were grouped according to age into four groups: -30, 31-50, 51-60 and 61+. In every age group it stood clear that work content was the top driver for performance in every age group. The study also showed that the youngest group rated ‘benefits’ as the second most important, while ‘affiliation’ was rated much more important by the older respondents. (Kunkle & Sorensen, 2009)

Different industries are associated with different glamour, but even in the less attractive industry the unfavourable factor can be overcome with a great EVP. To do this the company and its job openings need to be exiting, *e.g.* by innovate faster than anyone else, successively release new products, create a mission that is inspiring and challenges the company and the employees. The organisation might need restructuring to create more varied and interesting positions for its employees. To create jobs with elbowroom and headroom, the employee roles should contain as much independence and responsibility as possible. (Michaels *et al.*, 2001)

All literature on the subject stresses the great importance of differencing the EVP. James and Bibb (2010, p. 1) put it: “*differentiation is crucial if an organisation is to stand out*
from the ‘sea of sameness’”. A clear and differenced EVP keeps the applicants attracted, while otherwise they would be lost to rivalling organisations with more appealing EVPs (James & Bibb, 2010). A distinct EVP gives further impetus to the employer brand and helps to establish a more differentiated position relative to other employers, and influences the employer brand positively by enabling a more targeted branding with its leveraged content. (Botha et al., 2011) A winning EVP has to be tailored for the segment of people whom the company seeks to attract (Chambers et al., 1998; Michaels et al., 2001).

A good EVP has a great effect on the retention and attraction of talent in good and bad times. (Chambers et al., 1998; Michaels et al., 2001) The result from Botha et al.’s (2011) study showed that companies with great EVP’s and metrics for result measuring experienced a 20 per cent lower turnover among their employees. A strong EVP leads to a strong attraction among labour, Chamber et al.’s (1998) survey yielded that 83 per cent of the companies in the top-quintile regarding strong EVP rarely experienced that their job offers were turned down. The same number for the mid-quintile was 60 per cent. Out of the top-quintile 88 per cent said that they rarely lost top performers to other companies, the corresponding figure for the mid-quintile was 73 per cent. A great EVP also enables the companies to source from a deeper pool of talent. High-performing companies draw their candidates from about 60 per cent of the labour market, including passive candidates that would otherwise be satisfied with their current job. Lesser-performing companies can only source from 40 per cent of the active labour. (Browne, 2012)

Some parts of the EVP are more extensively discussed in the literature than others. The concept of salary is one of these. Chambers et al. state that “Money alone can't make a great employee value proposition, but it can certainly break one” (Chambers et al., 1998), and this opinion is agreed upon by many (Browne, 2012; Michaels et al., 2001). Professor in organisational behaviour Jeffrey Pfeffer (1998) writes: “People work for money, but they work even more for getting meaning out of their lives. In fact, they work to have fun. Companies that ignore this fact are essentially bribing their employees and will pay the price in lack of loyalty and commitment”. The pay should not be the primary reason for the employees to come to work, but it should be a reasonable reimbursement for their time and effort (Browne, 2012). When candidates find a company’s EVP to be attractive they will settle with a lower pay than they otherwise would have done (James & Bibb, 2010). The top-performing organisations can go as far as to spend 10 per cent less on pay and reduce their new hire compensation premiums with up to 50 per cent (Browne, 2012). The commitment of new hires can be improved by up to 29 per cent and increase the probability of employees acting as advocates from 24 per cent to 47 per cent. (James & Bibb, 2010)

Michaels et al. (2001) call for attention to that one of a company’s the most valuable offer is the pleasure of having good colleagues and co-workers, e.g. by the teaching and learning from them, sharing with them and just being together with them. For a transnational company the EVP cannot be static, it must go beyond ‘one size fits all’. (CRF Institute, 2010a) The EVP must be adapted and customised so that it appeals to different groups of employees based on culture, age and function. James and Bibb (2010) state that the most successful EVPs derive from a combination of the different needs from vital parts of the work force, which is then mediated through the best channels for every segment. “A program that gives an organisation the flexibility to adapt and
communicate reward vehicles as needed, will be a more effective motivator than one that adheres to a rigid, one-size-fits-all message” (Browne, 2012, p. 34).

A concrete effect of having an EVP is highlighted by the CRF Institute (2010b) that has studied the differences in absence leave between different companies in relation to their staff orientation. In companies where development of people and career opportunities was not in the top five business priorities the absence was 5.2 per cent compared 3.7 per cent in companies that had it as a top five priority. Companies that offered the possibility to work from home had a 3.0 per cent absence leave compared to 5.0 per cent for those companies that did not offer the possibility. In those companies that offered counselling to support the work-life-balance the absence leave was 3.1 per cent lower compared to those who did not offer that help.

2.4.3 How to create a winning EVP

Exact methods for how to create a winning EVP are neither found, nor are the concrete examples applicable to other firms than the example firm. Since every company is unique and the importance of a differentiated EVP is expressed in the above paragraphs, it is reasonable to claim that there is no general solution for working out an EVP. The examples that are to be found below are vague and only to be used as skeleton frameworks, as Browne (2012) expresses it.

Dyhre and Parment (2013), as well as Wilden et al. (2010), mean that, when creating an EVP for your organisation, it must be clear, true, concrete, differentiated and preferably contain a feeling or emotion - this order to facilitate associations and to make it easier to embrace. The process of creating an EVP starts with surveying and talking to employees, this to understand what is important for them, but also to understand what might be important for potential candidates. A good way to start is to use the information that is contained from prior employee opinion surveys. (James & Bibb, 2010)

While it is often hard to find differentiated EVPs within the average firm, true and attractive attributes are often easier to find. Many organisations offer similar work positions and work tasks, although in many times, it can be difficult for a candidate to see the differences between different employers. The hardest part when formulating an EVP is to narrow it down into a few simple statements that can be agreed upon, and dress these in words and examples. Parment and Dyhre (2009) point at corporate storytelling as an effective strategy to convey the EVP message both internally and externally. As well as the content of the EVP, the way it is articulated needs to be in a style that appeals to the target audience. James and Bibb (2010, p. 3) have a clear opinion about this: “many companies write about themselves in dull corporate speak and the net result is a lot of organisations that claim to be unique, but sound the same.”

Dyhre and Parment (2013) present a method from ordinary marketing theory regarding market communication that is applicable to build an attractive EVP. It presents three parts that are to be identified and answered in order to find out a company’s EVP.

1. Identity - Who are we as an organisation?
2. Profile - How do we want to be perceived as an organisation and employer?
3. Image - How we are perceived as an employer from the outside world?
The skeleton framework Browne (2012) speaks of, visualised in Figure 4, is the five elements of the EVP form created for a Sibson consulting study: Compensation, Benefits, Work content, Career and Affiliation. Organisations need to take these five elements into consideration and design their own EVP based on preferences from the employees, and on the differences between employee expectations and the organisations ambitions compared to the current non-existent EVP.

The CRF Institute (2012) have identified four steps to get the best effect from the EVP offered, which is consistent with how outstanding employers work. Step one: Measure the discrepancy of what is given to the employee and what they really want. This should be done on at least annual basis. Step two: Make sure that the EVP fits with every specific employee group. Step three: Communicate all of the offerings to the employee. Step four: Develop a three-year strategic plan to anticipate the future need of the employees. Even the forward-looking forth step yields result momentary.

James and Bibb (2010) from the organisation development firm Talentsmoothie give a good illustration of how to proceed in the work of creating an EVP. Instead of putting their process to words their illustration is to be found in Figure 5.
A good EVP must be trustworthy and should consequently always be tested. The purpose of the testing is to make sure that all categories of employees and presumptive employees find the EVP appealing. The testing will tell whether, and how, the EVP needs to be adjusted, to appeal to the different groups included in the testing. (James & Bibb, 2010)

As more experienced employees sufficiently are affected less by the consumer brand emitted by the company, the company needs to be clearer and more consequent in its employer branding signals. Presumptive employees with less experience are to greater extent affected by the consumer brand and put less effort in to deciphering the signals emitted by the EVP and the employer brand, since they are less qualified to do so. (Wilden et al., 2010) This emphasises the importance of the EVP traits being reflected in the corporate and consumer brands. (James & Bibb, 2010) One of the main impetuses for inexperienced labour is to have a strong corporate brand in their CVs, also important for
this group is education and mentorship. The less experienced employees commonly value the aspect of salary higher in comparison to the more experienced ones, even though none of them counts it as the most important aspect. Wilden et al. (2010) emphasise that EVP should present a picture of a company that promotes strong engagement for learning and development rather than salary. The experienced labour valued a company higher that contributes to their career profile and with greater chances for promotion than the less experienced.

2.5 Culture
The word culture derives from Latin where it means, “tilling the soil”. In most western countries today, culture means “civilisation” or “intellectual refinement”. In particular, culture concerns the results of this kind of refinement in words of education, art and literature. (Hofstede et al., 2010) Since culture first was coined, numerous definitions have come to exist. Many of them seem to be unclear and quite general. In addition, multiple disciplines are interested in the matter, which might increase richness, although not necessarily increase clarity. Anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists among others, all have separate ways of investigating and describing the word culture. For these reasons, difficulties arise in reaching consensus on definitions as well as how to, in a good way, measure or operate on the subject. (Schneider, 1988) However, in this report, focus is mostly on theories concerning business and organisational culture.

2.5.1 Definitions
To be able to get a grip of what culture really is, various definitions have been collected. According to American Heritage Dictionary culture is “the totality of beliefs, values, behaviors, institutions and other results of human thought and action that are socially transmitted within a community” (Roxana, 2012, p. 421). Ferraro (1990) means that culture is everything that people have, think and do as members of their society. Hofstede (1980, p. 21) draws parallels between the human mind and computers and means “culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. Hall is oriented the same way and means that culture is a program of behaviour (Hall, 1990). Lewis (2013) presents a more dramatic approach: “the culture of a group is the end product of millennia of collected wisdom, filtered and passed down through hundreds of generations and translated into hardened core beliefs, values, notions and persistent action patterns”.

Culture concerns simple things that life is about: to great, to eat, to show or hide emotions, to keep a physical distance, to love or to manage your physical hygiene (Hofstede et al., 2010). Lewis (2013) means that, even though culture is experienced personally, it is nonetheless a shared system. No one can know all parts included in a culture, culture is a collective thing. Hofstede et al. are on the same track and mean that people who lives or have lived in the same social environment, at least partly shares some culture amongst each other. Culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game (Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.5.2 Different levels of mental programming
Culture is learned, not inherited. It derives from our social environment rather than from our genes. Culture should always be separated from both the human nature and from the individual’s personality. Exactly where the line is drawn between nature and culture, and between culture and personality is though a question commonly discussed among social scientists. (Hofstede et al., 2010)
According to Hofstede (2010), the human mind’s mental programming can be divided into three levels. The first level is universal which means that every human shares it. This is called the human nature. The human nature is inherited from generation to generation. The second level is culture, something that is, as mentioned earlier, specific for the group or category. This is taught from the environment in the humans early years. The third level is personality. The personality is both inherited and taught and is specific for the individual. In Figure 6 below, the pyramid of the mental programming of the human mind is shown.

![Figure 6 - The Pyramid of Mental Programming (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.47)](image)

Personality is very unique and specific for every different individual while the human nature is something that each man on this earth possesses. In between these two is culture. Culture is therefore neither unique, nor common for all. It is something that is specific for a group or a category of people. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

### 2.5.3 The different levels of culture

Cultural differences can be expressed in different ways. Out of all the terms that are used to describe cultural manifestations, the following four covers the whole phenomena in a good way: symbols, heroes, rituals and values. These have been figured below as peels of an onion to visualise that symbols represent the shallowest cultural manifestations, values the deepest, while heroes and rituals will fall somewhere in-between. (Hofstede et al., 2010) The onion model is visualised in Figure 7.
The layers are defined as follows:

- **Symbols** are words, gestures, pictures or objects that have a certain meaning in a certain culture, but not for others, *e.g.* jargon or clothing style.
- **Heroes** are persons - dead or alive, real or fictitious - that have abilities that are well renowned or highly appreciated within a culture, and will therefore act as role models, *e.g.* Barbie or Buddha.
- **Rituals** are collective activities that really is not needed to achieve a goal, but that are considered to be socially important within a certain culture, *e.g.* way of eating or how to show respect.
- **Values** are general tendencies to prefer certain conditions before others. Values are feelings that are either positive or negative, that have plus side or minus side, *e.g.* good/evil, dirty/clean. (Hofstede et al., 2010):

Symbols, heroes and rituals are visible for an outside beholder and are therefore placed under practices. Values are though hidden. Our societies have a remarkable ability to keep its distinct cultures in the generations to come, despite many different forces of change. While the outer layers of the onion are exposed to change, the inner layer stays stable and the culture consistently evolves from these. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

### 2.5.4 The majority is unseen

Some parts of a culture are more easily seen than others. Therefore, Hall (1976) developed the iceberg analogy of culture. If the culture of a society can be viewed upon as an iceberg, then some aspects are visible and lay above the surface, although a larger portion is hidden beneath the surface. The external, or conscious, part of culture is what people can see and is the tip of the iceberg, which includes behaviours and some beliefs. These are implicitly learned, people are generally unconscious of them, and they are difficult to change and are known as subjective knowledge. The internal, or subconscious part of culture, lies below the surface and includes some beliefs and the values and
thought patterns that underlie certain behaviour. The iceberg model is visualised in Figure 8 below.

![The Iceberg Model](image)

**Figure 8 - The Iceberg Model (Hall, 1976, p. 27)**

Hall (1976) suggests that the only way to learn the internal culture of others is to actively participate in their culture. When a person first enters a new culture, only the most obvious behaviours can be seen. As this person spends more time in that new culture, the underlying beliefs, values, and thought patterns that dictate that behaviour will be uncovered. This model shows that one cannot judge a new culture based only on what one sees when he/she first enters it. One must take the time to get to know individuals from that culture and interact with them. Only by doing so, the values and beliefs that underlie the behaviour of that society can be uncovered.

### 2.6 National culture

Culture is experienced personally. Members of a culture not only share information, they also share techniques for coding, storing and retrieving this information. The techniques used may be different in different cultures. Knowing what kind of information people from other cultures require is an important part of an effective international communication. (Hall, 1990) Therefore, much research has been done in order to be able to separate one culture from another and to classify the different types into different categories. In the following chapters a few of these models are presented.

#### 2.6.1 Halls high and low context model

Context is the information that surrounds an event and it is inseparably attached to the meaning of that event. The components that are combined to produce a given meaning - events and context - are in different proportions dependent on the culture. The cultures of the world can be compared on a scale from high context to low context. A high context communication or message is one which most of the information is already in the person, whereas only a small part is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low context communication is just the opposite, which means that most of the information lies explicitly in the code. (Hall, 1976) In a high context culture, feelings and thoughts are not clearly and openly expressed. One has to read between the lines and interpret
what the other person actually is trying to communicate. What is said, how it is said and
where it is said are significant to understand the context. In low context cultures, feelings
and thoughts are expressed in words and information is more undoubtedly stated. What
is said is of higher importance than how or where it is said. (Dadfar, 2012)

2.6.2 Hofstede’s cultural dimensions
Hofstede’s model of cultural dimensions is a yardstick for evaluating countries’ cultural
differences. Hofstede analysed a large database of employee values scores collected by
IBM between 1967 and 1973 covering more than 70 countries and found that some of
the values differed significantly between different countries. (Itim International, u.d.)
The values that distinguished countries from each other could be grouped statistically
into four clusters. These four groups became the Hofstede dimensions of national
culture: Power Distance (PDI), Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV), Masculinity
versus Femininity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). In the later years, the
research from Bond led to an additional dimension Long-term Orientation (LTO).
(Hofstede et al., 2010). Below, the six dimensions are presented.

**Power distance**
Power Distance is defined as to what extent the less influential members of organisations
and institutions within a country expect and accepts that the power is unequally
balanced. (Hofstede et al., 2010) It is the degree to which people accept power and status
differences in a society (Dadfar, 2012). It describes the extent to which employees of the
low ranking expect and accept that the decisions are taken from a higher level. In
cultures with low power distance, decisions are often made from peoples own initiatives,
while less influential individuals in cultures with high power distance accept that power
is more unevenly distributed, and that a more authoritarian leadership is applied.
(Hofstede et al., 2010)

**Individualism versus Collectivism**
This category describes the extent to which individuals act individually or if they rather
act collectivistic as members of groups or organisations. (Hofstede, 1980) Individualism
emphasises individual goals, individual needs and individual success while collectivism
emphasises group needs, group satisfaction and group performance. (Dadfar, 2012)
Hofstede et al. (2010) mean that individualism characterises societies with weak bonds
between individuals: all people are expected to take care of themselves and his/her core
family. Collectivism is its opposite and is distinctive for societies where people from
birth are integrated in self-mastered groups with strong cohesion that represents a shelter
for the individual during his/her whole life in exchange for unconditional loyalty.

**Masculinity versus Femininity**
Masculinity includes dominance and independence while femininity is about
compassion, interdependence and openness. One could also talk about this dimension in
terms of competition vs. cooperation. Hofstede (2010, p. 240) defines a masculine
society as “a society where emotional gender roles are clearly divided: men are to assert
themselves, be tough and focused on material wealth, while women are to be more
modest, tender and care for life quality” whereas a female society is a society where
“emotional gender roles overlap one another: both men and women are to be modest,
tender and care for life quality”. Masculine cultures are characterised by rivalry and
assertiveness. Material things are also something that is highly valued in contrast to
feminine cultures where relationships and quality of life claims a greater part of people’s
lifes. (Hofstede et al., 2010)
Uncertainty avoidance
The uncertainty avoidance dimension has to do with how people within a culture handle uncertainties and ambiguities. All people are exposed to uncertainties in their lives, no one really knows what is going to happen tomorrow. The future is insecure, but we have to deal with it anyway. People have different ways of handling these uncertainties, which are often included in the fields of technology, law and religion. Uncertainty Avoidance describes how society tackles the fact that the future is uncertain. Societies that have a low degree of uncertainty avoidance has an acceptance that uncertainty exists and that people take each day as it comes. Other communities with a high UAI value trying to reduce uncertainty through comprehensive legislation and formal rules. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

Long-term orientation
The long-term orientation dimension is a future oriented perspective and shows to what extent people within a culture are willing to sacrifice for the future. The fifth dimension was actually evolved by Michael Bond and combines the following four values on one side: stubbornness, thriftiness, the ability to arrange relationships according to status and live by it and also to feel shame. The other side has to do with reciprocating greetings, services and gifts, also to respect tradition, save ones face and personal statute and stability. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

2.6.3 The culture of Sweden
Derr (1987) discovered in a sample study that 70 per cent of the Swedes found it hard to relocate due to wives’ careers. In Sweden, egalitarianism, as well as the desire to keep a low profile may also make promotion less desirable. Furthermore, a promotion in many times leads to more work, which means less family and leisure time and thereby lower quality of life. Even salary increasing promotions can be less desirable than in other countries due to Swedish tax structure. (Schneider, 1988)

While Sweden is such a small country, in general, Swedes have to adapt and try to fit in internationally to international business cultures. Although, when a small Swedish company grows and holds tightly to its original culture, then the non-Swedes foreigners have to adapt to Swedish company culture. This can be hard for a foreigner while they do not always interpret things as Swedes do. Many foreigners have a “tourist picture” of Sweden, which to a wide extent does not correspond with reality. Therefore it is of high importance that both Swedes and foreigners are aware of these differences. (Berge, 2013)

Sweden is a tough country to immigrate to. This has mainly to do with the flat and informal management structure, but also in other aspects like the relationship a layman has with his doctor or teacher. A man of superior position in Sweden, such as in the above mentioned examples, many times involve the patient or student in the decision processes. This does not exist anywhere else in the world and therefore their competencies may be doubted. Also, in many cultures fun at work and balance between leisure time and work does not exist. In Sweden, this is much more common. These differences can lead to a culture shock for newly arrived. Mostly, foreigners have totally different expectations on leadership roles. (Berge, 2013)

What the rest of the world has in common is the view on hierarchy. Focus on the individual is also more evident. There is often more pressure. People are graded from
birth why it is not uncommon to show off and assert oneself. This is not an acceptable behaviour in Sweden, much because of “Jantelagen”, which derives from a long tradition of socialistic political regime. For example, a Swedish manager always speaks in terms of “us” or “we” rather than “I”. (Berge, 2013) In the Figure 9 below, different types of hierarchies in different parts of the world are visualised.

![Different types of hierarchies](image)

The figure shows that in Swedish organisational culture, the leader is only one among other members of the group or team, whilst in German culture, there is a strict hierarchy where each and everyone of his/her subordinates report to him/her. The difference between German and French organisational culture is that in German culture, subordinates can report several levels up, while in France, the subordinate have to report to his closest superior.

Berge means that there is a gap between Swedish and other types of cultures. Every culture has its own way of speaking, socialise, lead etc. (Berge, 2013). There are many good examples of when things go culturally wrong this way. One of Sweden’s many successful leaders, Carl-Henric Svanberg, chairman of the board of BP, spoke to the public about the oil leak in the Gulf in 2010, addressed the local businesses and local people as “the small people” leading to much media attention and a decrease in Svanberg’s reputation. (Franke-Ruta, 2010)

Citizens of Sweden think of themselves as international and worldly. Although Berge states that you can only be this when you know that you are Swedish, when you are aware of your Swedish values, and thereby can adapt your communication and work with the existing tools for this. One is not international just by having travelled a lot. Generally, one is never as adjustable as one thinks. Another aspect of Swedes is that they many times are seen as disloyal to the decisions that have been made, they question everything and they take too long time to discuss things. On the other hand, from a Swedish perspective, they never find themselves invited and therefore feel ignored. Also, they feel that discussions always end before consensus is reached. In fact, the Swedes do get invited, although initially declines to wait to say what they wanted to say until a second occasion appears, although in most cases, a second occasion never appears and everything is decided very quickly. The leader means that consensus has been reached, while the Swede means that the matter has not been discussed thoroughly enough. (Berge, 2013)
When it comes to culture, there is no right or wrong, good or bad. Culture is very hard, if not impossible, to change. Therefore, acceptance for the differences is of high importance. When trying to recruit personnel from other countries, it is important to bear in mind that what Swedish people finds interesting and attractive for an employer, might not be attractive at all in some countries. If a job ad are written in a Swedish way, the most attraction will be personality traits rather than cultural. The national cultural perspective should also be highlighted during pre-job interviews. In most cases, this is never brought up when interviewing candidates. Considerable amounts of money can be saved if this is conducted before signing any contracts. (Berge, 2013)

2.7 Organisational culture
Organisational culture, also known as company culture within businesses, is a more narrow orientation of culture and focuses on the people within a group, team or company. Below the concept of organisational culture is described.

2.7.1 Introduction
What is organisational culture? Brady and Haley (2013, p. 40) mean that “organisational culture is a system of shared meaning held by its members that distinguishes their organisation from other organisations”. In Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary organisational culture is defined as “an integrated pattern of human behaviour including ways of thinking, language, action and artefacts, and which depends on human capacity about learning processes and transmits to future generations” (Roxana, 2012, p. 421). The Swedish national encyclopaedia defines corporate culture as “the rules, values and norms that characterises a company or an organisation, or, in other words, the informal perception of the company and the spirit or the climate that distinguishes this” (NE.se, 2013). Organisational culture can also be described as a set of beliefs shared by a majority of the staff within an organisation, including how people should behave at work and how to find ways to finish tasks and achieve operational goals (Roxana, 2012). Edgar H. Schein, one of the most prominent organisational culture researchers describes it as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 1990, p. 110)

Organisational culture in a company helps us to understand the differences that arise between what managers formally and officially declare, and what actually happens within a company (Hofstede et al., 2010). The main objective in terms of culture is the development of consistency and to defend the values that represent challenges of the company in relation to its environment (Roxana, 2012). Some see corporate culture as a control system for headquarters over their subsidiaries. From this point of perspective, corporate culture works as a behavioural control, advocating norms and values that result in “the way things are done around here”. This is done by recruitment of like-minded individuals, socialisation through training and personal interaction and finally by developing a strong organisational commitment through various other HR policies. Some examples of these HR policies can be lifetime employment, stock option plans, recreational and housing facilities, and international positions. (Schneider, 1988)

Adkins and Caldwell (2004) found positive correlation between job satisfaction and the degree of how well employees fit into the overall culture of the firm. A perceived
mismatch between how the organisational culture were promoted and how it actually was perceived could lead to several negative effects such as lower job satisfaction, higher job strain, general stress, and undesired turnover rates. Another argument for working with company culture is that new hires can experience clashes of culture as they gradually discover things like:

- The firm proclaims itself as “family-friendly” although expects employees to be constantly available for the business.
- The mission statement declares the customer comes first while this only applies until there is a drop in share price.
- The company is said to be lean and entrepreneurial, however, every decision is subject to never-ending meetings and protracted approval processes.

These dubious statements can lead to quick terminations and short-lived employments. (Collins, 2012) As mentioned in the employer-branding chapter this can be very costly.

### 2.7.2 Evolution of organisational culture

In the early stages of a company’s development, culture is created around a representative individual or a hero. In many times this could be a founder, first-owner or current manager. The search of something that characterises the company and makes it unique is strong within the founders and the company’s employees. If the culture deriving from the hero is successful and easy to absorb, the business efficiency increases and the human resource management runs smoothly and is made with professionalism. (Roxana, 2012)

Even as the company develops and grows, the culture remains undefined. During the company expansion, structure is developed and roles change. Due to this, subcultures emerge and evolve. Albeit cultural unification can be hard to achieve, it is essential for the company to maintain its market position. One of the big challenges at this stage is cultural diversity, while this is potentially favourable in adapting to a changing environment. Once these subcultures have developed and cultural diversity is imminent, managers have a hard time managing the blast of even more sub-cultures. The complexity of the company makes cultural changes tougher to achieve than in the earlier stages. (Roxana, 2012)

Hofstede et al. are sceptical to the thought of changeable company values. They mean that company culture is a soft and holistic concept. Company values are written statements about principles that one wishes to guide the employees’ behaviour. They mean that they belong to an ideology and are not empirically based upon people’s feelings or preferences. Hofstede et al. further suggest that the company culture is not affected by what the high management says or writes, but of what they are and how they act. If the company values are not reflected in behaviours and are maintained by sanctions against those people who do not respect them, then there is no value in them. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

### 2.7.3 Edgar Schein’s model for organisational culture

By being superior to organisational products, services, founders, leadership and all other physical aspects of an organisation, Schein (1990) claims that culture is the hardest organisational element to change. His model for describing organisational culture is built up from an observer’s perspective and categorises on three different cognitive levels, it is
visualised in Figure 10. Just like Hofstede’s onion model, each level is placed according to its visibility where artefacts and rituals are easiest to observe, thereafter underlying assumptions, while tacit assumptions cannot even be observed but need to be inferred. On the other hand, to be able to understand the meaning of the rituals, this is crucial, although complicated, as the assumptions in many times are taken for granted and out of awareness. Even though its main focus is on organisational culture, according to Schneider (1988), this model may also be applied on national cultures.

**Figure 10 – Edgar Schein’s Model for Organisational Culture (Schein, 1990, p. 78)**

**Artefacts and Rituals**
On the first level artefacts and rituals are found. Rituals are collective interpersonal behaviour and values visualised by that behaviour. The contents within myths, stories, anecdotes and tales told by the organisation and its members reveal the history of the organisation. It also determines to which extent outsiders can understand what the organisation stands for, values and believes in. When performing a ritual or ceremony, often, certain language is used or/and a specific story or myth is told. This language and these stories or myths are called verbal artefacts. Other types of artefacts are, for instant, technology or art exhibited by the members of an organisation. These are called physical artefacts. In general, artefacts are attributes of organisational culture that can be seen, felt and heard by an external observer. Artefacts are physical components that give cultural meaning. Examples of further various artefacts can be facilities, offices, furnishings, trophies, awards or diplomas, the way that members of the organisation dress or the body language they use when interacting with outsiders. Even company slogans, mission statements and other operational creeds are included in this category.

**Beliefs and Values**
On the second level one finds an organisation’s beliefs and values. These are common thought patterns for the organisations members that are often taken for granted. It is the preferred ways of acting within the organisation. For example if the company prefers to put focus on loyalty or justice, customer service or in having superior products? It is about how the organisations members perceive the organisation to be reliable, encouraging, helpful, bureaucratic etc. The organisation’s behaviour can be studied by interviews and surveys in order to bring out the attitudes of the organisation’s members.

**Tacit assumptions**
As mentioned above, tacit assumptions are harder to identify and cannot be cognitively acknowledged. Regardless of how well one studies everyday work life within the organisation and interactions between the organisations members, this part of the organisation’s culture will not be detected. To identify the tacit assumptions, high qualitative in-depth interviews are needed. The tacit assumptions can be known as the “unspoken rules” of the company. Only members with long experience within the
organisation can understand these. The underlying assumptions are reflexive and generally go unquestioned and unexamined.

For a mission-oriented company, it is of great importance that the artefacts and rituals, beliefs and values, as well as the tacit assumptions, are well in line with each other. In reality, the different levels of culture can many times be contradictable. The organisation can for example express strong moral and poetic aesthetical standards while at the same time displaying opposing behaviour at the deepest level of culture. Therefore, organisational newcomers and consultants can have a hard time understanding how to behave in and evaluate different situations. (Schein, 2010)

2.8 Organisational culture and national culture

Hofstede et al. claim that organisational culture is predominantly shown in forms of practices while national culture also includes values. Thereby, organisational culture is difficult to compare against national culture. Some significant differences in the values of the members of different organisations within the same nation are hard to find. This is because national values are so strongly rooted and does not change when a person changes his/her's job. One only exists in the organisational culture during work hours and one day you are going to leave it. Values of a national culture are acquired in young years and become harder to change as the years go by. (Hofstede et al., 2010) Research show that when a person in his young years have lived within a country for 13 years or more, that nations values are from then on part of the persons personal values (Lewis, 2013). Furthermore, a person’s organisational belonging is to some amount self-selected, in opposite to his/her national cultural belonging (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Even though Hofstede et al. are sceptic against the effect of company values and statements, they admit they might have some impact (Hofstede et al., 2010). Berge is on the same track and means that clarifying the organisational values might strengthen the organisation to some extent, although if these values go against national cultural values, resistance is to be encountered. This holds especially for multinational companies. To spread company values in a good way, it is of high importance that the employees understands what these means and that they are translated in a proper way that fits the different cultures. The cultural values of a nation can shape how people expect companies to be run, and how relationships between leaders and followers should be constructed, resulting in differences between both the employer’s and the employee’s expectations. (Berge, 2013) Followers can learn to adapt to processes and priorities set out by their superiors. Employees can be persuaded to follow the exemplary behaviours of leaders in an organisation. However, if these priorities and leadership attributes go against the well-established national cultural values of the employees, corporate values - in terms of i.e. processes and practices - will be undermined. What is seen as appropriate in one national setting can be perceived quite offensive in another. What is seen as rational in one national setting can be considered absolutely irrational in another. “Corporate culture never overcomes national culture.” (ITAP International, 2013)

These differences also raise the issue as to whether the behaviours, values, and beliefs set by the corporate culture are merely a compilation of nice statements from the management, or if they are truly incorporated and supported by all employees. This is extra relevant in subject of motivation, commitment, and the possibility of employees sharing a common “worldview” – exactly the same reasons for building a strong corporate culture. While a strong culture in terms of behaviour can result in gradual
changes in the underlying assumptions, the unconscious nature of these assumptions makes this questionable. (Schein, 2010) To summarise, the shared values and beliefs within a nation are one thing, in an organisation it is something different.

2.9 Human resource practices in different national cultures

Schneider (1988) discusses how cultural differences affect human resource practices in multinational companies. She means that there are three major categories that these practices can differ upon: planning and staffing, appraisal and compensation, and last, selection and socialisation.

In the case of planning and staffing, the process for how to select candidates can differ between different national cultures. Some countries may prefer to hire on the basis of family relations, while in other countries because of the candidates’ skills. Furthermore, skills can be evaluated upon basis such as where the candidate acquired these or his/her potential to acquire new ones. The candidate’s geographic mobility is also something that can differ between different nationalities. British, for example has shown to be more eager to relocate than Spanish. (Schneider, 1988)

When it comes to appraisal and compensation, different countries’ practices can differ in terms of how to give direct feedback, when or if to use bonuses as a compensation system and how to generally compensate for performed work. Also, the relative importance of status, money and vacation time can vary in a great extent. (Schneider, 1988)

Selection, which is one of the major tools for developing a corporate culture, can also vary. Candidates are always carefully screened to fit in to the existing corporate culture, evaluated upon behavioural styles, beliefs, and values. Though, different companies focus on different attributes. For example, in a high technological computer company, the recruiters might be less concerned of hiring “the typical Italian” rather than hiring someone that fits in with the company culture. Some select upon the basis of good grades, some companies select certain personalities. Also, socialisation is another powerful mechanism of promoting corporate culture. Socialisation can strengthen the company culture and promote development of technical qualities. The way in which this is done also varies between different countries. (Schneider, 1988)

2.10 A greater network

As companies grow, so does the social complexity of the business. For example in a company with 20 employees there are 190 different channels of communication, in a company with 40 employees there are 780! This according to the formula:

\[ N = \frac{n(n - 1)}{2} \]

The risk of culture clashes therefore rises exponentially with the number of members within the organisation. This is especially relevant for multinational companies with employees from many different countries. (Dadfar, 2012)

Media often indicates that communication technologies such as TV, e-mail, internet, cell phones and social software will bring people around the world together into a “global society” where cultural differences does not matter anymore. Hofstede et al. (2010) claim however that technology is never going to dominate over culture in this way.
Electronic communication tremendously increases the amount of information that is accessible to its users, but it neither increases their capability to absorb the information, nor does it change their values. Just like our ancestors, we read newspapers and watches TV-programs that we think will give expression to our own perceptions. When we are confronted with the almost infinite supply of electronic information it only increases the perceptions we already have. The experience of Internet has shown that people uses it to do stuff they would have done anyway. The difference is that they might do it more and faster.
3 Analytical model and research questions

This chapter synthesises the material revised and the insights gained from the literature review, which results in an analytical model. From the model, four research questions emerge. These questions later serve as basis for the data collection phase within the Empirical findings chapter and are to be answered in the Analysis chapter.

The analytical model and the research questions help to fulfil the purpose of this study, which is to:

*Define and design a superior employee value proposition that attracts highly talented software engineers and to find out how to culturally adapt the employee value proposition for different national cultures.*

3.1 Analytical model

From the theory it is understood that employer branding (see 2.3), employee value proposition (see 2.4) and organisational culture (see 2.7) have to be studied simultaneously in order to create a winning EVP (see specifically 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.4.2). Knowledge from the employer branding theories helps to anchor the EVP within the firm, as well as provides information on how to communicate the EVP towards external stakeholders. The theories within the specific area of EVP together with organisational culture assist in extracting and building the EVP.

When an EVP has been created, EVP theories point to the importance of a true EVP (see 2.4.3). Therefore, the EVP has to be tested and verified by the employees within the company it is supposed to represent. The verification will be made considering national culture aspects. The EVP test is then analysed to see if there are any aspects that might be more appealing to some national cultures than others. The analytical model is illustrated in Figure 11.

![Diagram of Analytical Model](image-url)
Each box represents a specific area within the Current Science chapter and each circle could be seen as a sub target. To further clarify the last box, only one EVP will be created. If it proves possible to culturally adapt the EVP, it will still only be one EVP. Although, the extracted EVP will have a dynamic emphasis different for each nationality it is adapted to.

### 3.2 Research questions

The theoretical framework has led to an analytical model to which four sub problems were identified. To fulfil the purpose and to simplify the problem solving, each sub problem was formulated into a research question. Each squared box in the analytical model is based upon one or two specific areas in the theoretical framework. In order to reach the last box in the analytical model, and thereby have a, if possible, nationally adapted EVP, each of the four research questions has to be answered. The four questions together with a short derivation are presented below.

From the employer branding section it was made clear that there is no such thing as a universal all-around concept of employer branding. Therefore each company has to find its own character and its own way to express this character towards both internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, the first research question follows:

**RQ1:** How does a forefront software company engage itself in employer branding and how is this work perceived by both internal and external stakeholders?

As introduced in 2.4.2 and further explained in chapter 2.9, culture and employer branding are two inseparable areas. Subordinate to employer branding, employee value proposition is found. This subject is of highest relevance for fulfilment of the purpose. For clarity of the purpose, a case EVP is needed and all theoreticians agree upon that an EVP needs to distinguish itself from the rest to be winning. With no further introduction, the second research question follows:

**RQ2:** What does an EVP for a forefront software company look like and how is it differentiated from its competitor’s EVP’s?

As explained in the culture chapter, culture is something that emerges slowly and steadily as time goes by, and once established it is hard to change or erase it. Upon and beside organisational culture, employer branding is built. Large parts of the organisational culture theories align with the EVP theories. Furthermore, the EVP theories indicate that large parts of an EVP can be extracted from the organisational culture of a company. In order to understand the links between organisational culture and EVP, research question three follows:

**RQ3:** In which ways is the organisational culture in a forefront software company noticeable and which effects do these have on the EVP?

The fourth and last research question handles the aspect of comparing and adapting the EVP to different national cultures. To attract talented software developers from not only the domestic labour market, but from all national markets that offer competent labour, it might be relevant to adapt the EVP towards different national cultures. Therefore research question four follows:
RQ4: How is the EVP of a forefront software company perceived by different national cultures and how can this EVP be customised towards these national cultures?

The sum of the results from all the research questions will result in an understanding of what excels one EVP from another, how to adjust an EVP for different nations and to what extent. The factors of importance for talented software developers will develop from the empirical work of creating a case EVP. The specific method for how to create, test and adjust for national culture will come clear in the next chapter where the entire work process is described and evaluated.
4 Research process

The Research process chapter describes the methods used for extracting the correct data needed to analyse, draw conclusions and thereby fulfil the purpose of this report. Apart from explaining how the theories in the Current Science chapter were selected, the procedures for finding and analysing the information provided in the Empirical findings chapter is also explained and evaluated.

4.1 Introduction to marketing research

Beneath American Marketing Association’s definition of marketing research is presented:

A marketing research is the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyses the results, and communicates the findings and their implications. (Bennet, 1995)

This definition is very helpful in describing what is aimed to do through this study. In the case of this report, the consumers are the candidates looking for a place to make a living and get use of their knowledge and skills, while the companies are the vendors trying to sell this to them. For the purpose of this study the marketers are trying to build a bridge between these sellers and buyers. At the table of choice there are a certain amount of information, although, to make great and even better marketing decisions, which will help companies find the talent they demand, further information is needed. Through the theoretical framework the current knowledge within the two fields of interest, culture and employer branding, is explained. Apart from describing how this chapter were created, the method used to gather further and more specific information and how it was analysed is also described.

4.2 Building the report structure

When performing a marketing research, a few standard steps for can be of great use to control that the right tasks were undertaken, but also to check that there were some kind of stringency in which order they were implemented. To do all of this a remake of a marketing research model originally developed by Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011) was used, see Figure 12. This U-model for research studies (translation by authors), as the original is named, has been scaled and tweaked in order to fit a thesis directed towards marketing research. A visualisation of this model is presented below.
On the left side, preparatory tasks are visualised and on the right side, their outcome. In between these two, the fieldwork and data compilation is performed. The arrows indicate that each preparatory task is linked to a certain outcome. Also, they show that a certain outcome can lead to a new preparatory task. (Lekvall & Wahlbin, 2011)

In addition to Lekvall and Wahlbin’s U-model, a very helpful report template written by Grundström (2012) was used as a guide when building the structure of the report as well as when searching for and developing the content within it.

4.3 Building the theoretical framework

By examining the purpose and trying to find out which knowledge that was needed to answer it, two main areas were identified: employer branding and culture. As these were further investigated, the employer branding branch employee value proposition was found. In addition, it was found that culture could be broken down into organisational and national culture. In order to find relevant information teachers were consulted, books and articles in newspapers were read, and databases were searched. Among these databases was Linköping University’s library catalogue, Google, Google Scholar, Business Retriever, among others. Keywords used were: employer branding, culture, culture definition, employer value proposition, employee value proposition, organisational culture, talent management, the war for talent and service profit chain. Also some Swedish words were used for this e.g.: arbetsgivarerbjudande and arbetsgivarlöfte. When searching for theories around the concept of culture, no problems occurred when trying to find relevant literature, most likely because this is a well-known and widespread notion. On the other hand, when exploring the literature explaining and describing employer branding, which, as of today, has not received the same amount of attention, difficulties in pinpointing the matter were recognised. Especially when it came to the process of building an employee value proposition, no academically accepted techniques could be found. Therefore, a way around this was needed to be discovered.

4.4 General approach

The difficulties in finding a good and properly established technique of how to build a strong and attractive EVP played a part when choosing research model. Pettigrew (1973)
means that the differences between performing a case study and using other research approaches is that, in case studies, the researcher aims to study phenomena in their context, rather than independent of context. Gibbert, Ruigrok and Wicki (2008) further argue that case studies are considered to be the most appropriate in the critical and early phases of new management theories and more precisely when key variables and relationships are still being explored. Also Amabile, Patterson, Mueller, Wojcik, Odomirek, Marsh, and Kramer (2001) mean that case studies are usually carried out in close interaction with practitioners and deals with real management situations. As some of the areas of interest of this report seemed to lack knowledge and a proper case company already had been found in the early stages of this report, the case study method was therefore chosen as the preferred research method.

4.5 Justifying the choice of case company

In order to perform a relevant case study, it was vital that the research based on a company that experienced the difficulties presented in the problem description. The company had to be software focused and have large recruitment needs, thereby searching for personnel from different nationalities. Furthermore, the company should also hold the ability to market itself towards these candidates.

The case company chosen was the Swedish-based, innovative and fast-growing software company, Spotify. This company was chosen because it was a company constantly in great need of high-qualitative employees with different special competencies within software engineering. It was also of sufficient size to be marketing on a large scale. Furthermore, it had high ambitions in becoming the best employer among young computer engineers in Sweden. In order to do that, new creative approaches was needed and its employees was therefore very supportive in providing information. With headquarters in Stockholm and three smaller subsidiaries in Gothenburg, New York and San Francisco a great amount of candidates can be picked up from both North America and Europe. This though does not stop candidates from other continents submitting an application. In total there are, at the time of writing, people from more than 60 different nationalities employed at Spotify. This leads to a quite culturally diversified company culture and because of this, a general EVP attractive to all types of cultures might be hard to establish.

Spotify is divided in several different departments. Some are more business supporting, like the legal, the new markets and the customer support divisions. Others demand more technical expertise, like the technology and product divisions. While one of the primary targets of this report was to find out how to become better at attracting talented software developers, focus lay on the two later departments. The employees within the technology and product departments of Spotify thereby became the target group. For more information about the company, please read the Empirical findings chapter.

While this thesis is supposed to develop the theories within EVP and Employer Branding, which have been found insufficient, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) argue that theoretical sampling from one case company might be enough. Theoretical sampling means that the case selected is “particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs”. Even though it is better to study several cases when developing new theory in order to get it more generalizable, as long as the case company is relevant, it might provide extensive theory within a certain phenomenon under certain circumstances. While Spotify at the time of the writing seemed to fit these
criteria, due to the reasons described above, the case company used was considered a legitimate choice.

4.6 Practical approach
In order to help the case company become better at attracting the right talent, as well as contributing to the world of science by this report, the below stated actions were executed. The reasons behind these actions are based in the analytical model and the research questions.

4.6.1 Determining the present situation
To determine the present situation, three major activities were undertaken. At first, general information about the case company was collected. Focus lay on recruitment, and to get better insight into how the company currently worked with these kinds of questions. This was done by interviewing various employees and management, as well as investigating internal and external sources, such as newsletters, mail conversations, reading articles in newspapers, screening annual reports etc.

Secondly, more specific information around the company’s current employer branding efforts and how the EVP was presently expressed was collected. This was done by conducting in-depth interviews with employees and attending presentations held by management, employees within the employer branding department, and superiors within the technology and the product department.

Thirdly, more specific information about the company’s current organisational culture was collected. This through examining the company’s internal culture document and interviewing people who had been responsible for producing it, among them the company’s organisational and development manager as well as an external consultant with expertise in cultural differences within larger corporations. Also, observing and just being on site as much as possible was helpful to gain insight into the subject. The information collected these people was complemented through interacting with ordinary employees. Hofstede et al. (2010) emphasise that it can be dangerous to assume that one knows what his or her own organisation’s cultural map looks like. Organisations can look very different from the top than how they look like from the middle or the bottom. Therefore a nuanced picture from all different angles and perspectives was sought.

All these three activities were conducted in order to answer Parment and Dyhre’s (2009) first question to building an EVP – *Who are we as an organisation?* (2.4.3). The activities were overlapping and conducted without any specific order. The outcomes were later assembled and analysed with help from the earlier accumulated theories. A few conclusions were drawn regarding how much more and what type of information that was needed in order to extract a good EVP. Due to this, the original purpose was slightly adjusted, partially to create a higher value for the case company, partially to build a more real and attainable time plan.

4.6.2 Conducting interviews
The initial step in the data collection phase was to interview 15 persons within the technology and product departments. This as Holker (2009) states that to find a suitable employer brand, and thereby also a suitable employee value proposition, it is worthwhile to undertake qualitative research among the already employed - especially among those whose competence is desirable and hard to recruit. Furthermore, Dyhre and Parment (2013) ask the question *how do we want to be perceived as an organisation and
employer? as step number two in the process of building an EVP (2.4.3). In order to get a good spread on the interviewees, each and every person differed from the others in senses of age, gender, area of expertise, nationality, and office location. According to Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011), small samples, 20 respondents or less, are preferred when using qualitative research methods. All respondents invited accepted the request and the non-response was therefore inexistent.

Because of their knowledge of the people working in the organisation, the selection of respondents was made with the help of one of the persons working within the Employer Branding division. According to Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011), this sample could be known as a stratified sample and leads to more precise estimations and efficiency gains. The time to select the samples is short and the statistical precision is high. Furthermore, Lekvall and Wahlbin claim that since qualitative interviews have relatively low structure, the subjective standpoints of the researcher might affect the respondents’ answers. In order to avoid this, the interviewers tried to reduce their communication as much as possible and thereby leaving room for the respondent to speak more freely without being guided to answer in a way that might be preferred by the interviewers. Especially, leading questions were avoided to a maximum.

The questions asked to the respondents were designed to get a wide perspective of the most positive attributes of the company. One of the more general questions where the respondent could answer more personally and really speak from his/hers heart was: “What do you love about working for Spotify?” Another more specific were: “What makes Spotify a great place to work in the sense of development possibilities?” where the respondents might not see their answer as the main attraction to him or her, but it is definitely a positive attribute worth mentioning. By asking more detailed questions, the most comprehensive areas that might build up a good employer brand were covered. By asking general questions, the areas, which the person felt more passionate about, could be highlighted. All the questions asked can be found in
Appendix 1 – Interview questions.

Each interview took around 30-60 minutes to conduct. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to gain a higher validity (Lekvall & Wahlbin, 2011). These transcriptions are although not attached in order to protect the respondents’ anonymities. Large parts of the interviews addressed personal events and feelings which make it rather easy to identify the respondent. By guaranteeing the respondents anonymity, more exact information could be extracted (Lekvall & Wahlbin, 2011). Pratt (2009) means that a list with general information of the respondents can be useful to increase the validity. Therefore, this list is attached in Appendix 2 - Interviewees. Even though Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011) promote it in order to increase validity, any types of later verifications by the respondents were not made. The recordings were considered sufficient enough for fulfilling their purpose – to get a general view of the organisations employee value proposition.

4.6.3 Analysing the interviews

When done transcribing, almost 150 pages of data written text needed to be analysed and summarised in some way. Hycner (1985) states that when several qualitative in-depth interviews are to be compiled and reviewed a few simple but time-consuming steps can help make this process more structured. He further proposes steps like listening through the interviews interpreting pauses, voice volumes etc. Using all of these steps did not seem worthwhile, much due to limited time resources. Therefore a customised, compressed version out of these was used. In short, these were the steps followed:

1. Transcribe each and every interview.
2. Bracket as much as possible, that is, only keep the parts that have some kind of meaning.
3. Delete parts that do not have any meaning relevant for the purpose.
4. Cluster units of relevant meaning.
5. Determine the themes of the clusters.
6. Check the themes’ names accuracy with external contributors.

One step suggested by Hycner (1985) is to delete redundancies, although, because the amount of times a statement was mentioned could be interesting in order to see which parts of the EVP were more attractive than others, this step was not carried out. The summary of the interviews can be found in Appendix 3 – Summary of Interviews. Furthermore, a visualisation of the themes were produced to show some early results for case company representatives, but also in order to get a more general view of the EVP draft that these in-depth interviews resulted in. A standard text size of 12 was given to each theme although for every extra statement that backed-up the theme, an extra +1 in text size was given. Therefore, the theme Smart and Driven Colleagues, that had over 15 backing statements, is much bigger than inspiring workplace that had less than three. The visualisation can be found in Appendix 4 – Visualisation of the Interviews.

When all the information extracted from the interviews had been gathered and summarised, a main target within the analytical model had been reached - to create a multicultural EVP. Now to process of verifying and culturally analysing this EVP began.

4.6.4 Developing a survey

The next step was to produce a survey where the entire target group could verify whether or not everyone within the departments of interest could back up the statements extracted
during the interview phase. In order to do that, the summary of bullets needed to be reformulated in some way.

According to Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011), there are several disadvantages with sending out a survey:

- They are often time consuming, the time it takes to produce and send out the survey and receive the results may be long.
- The non-response can be relatively big. The best way to reduce is to have a well-structured survey and small number of questions.
- The control over the interview situation is often weak. This means that corrections cannot be made and that the responses cannot be checked before they are handed in.
- Too long surveys can be strenuous and lead to unserious answers.

The last statement in the above list was also stressed by representatives from Spotify. To assure that these disadvantages affected the survey to a minimum, a short but comprehensive survey was made. To keep a simple structure, the survey should only consist of a short but informative introduction in the header upon 25 questions would follow. Short and concise surveys are also promoted by Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011) who means that the respondents focus decreases with time. Due to time limits, the time from distribution to collection was set to nine days, from Wednesday to Friday the following week, with a reminder in-between. Since the goal was to reach as many of the target population’s opinions as possible, to minimise the non-response, a goal to reach at least 25 per cent of the target population was set. If the amount of answers were less than that, actions would be taken.

The summary of bullets consisted of 18 computer written pages and these were to be reduced and compressed into 25 statements. In order to do this, those statements or those clustered themes were further combined with other statements/themes that seemed to be in the same direction. When doing so, three criteria were set. The first one was to avoid saying the same thing although in different statements. Two statements could not be too alike. The second criterion was to only use positively valued words in order to make the statements attractive. The third and last criterion was to avoid ambiguous statements. The output became an EVP draft that could be somewhat selling and slightly impersonal. This because these attributes were to represent the company as a whole and not only one individual. Below is an example.

*Smart, driven and dedicated colleagues around the world are what make this company move forward every day, every hour, every minute.*

The statements were then adjusted into first person singular in as many statements as possible, although regarding team questions “we” or “us”, had to be used. Additionally some of the imagery was decreased. These actions were made in order to get a more personal relation between the statements and the respondent.

To be able to perform a more extensive analysis, two of the statements differed from the others. Both of these two statements acted as control statements. Statement 23 – “A big salary is my highest motivation” – was a bogus statement that none of the employees had mentioned during the interviews and a statement that contradicted the general opinion. The second statement, statement 25, was a more general statement – “To sum it all up, I
really love my work”. This was applied in order to later correlate it against the other statements and thereby discover interrelations and to see which reasons that had the highest impact on making the case company attractive. By applying these statements to the survey, the respondents’ answers could be controlled in terms of consistence and truth, and thereby increasing reliability (Lekvall & Wahlbin, 2011).

Each and every statement was acknowledged or neglected by the employees using a scale from one to four. One meant that the respondent strongly disagreed to the statement while a four meant that he/she strongly agreed. Many of the statements used in the survey were actually quite similar to statements that came up several times during the interviews. Because of the positive nature of an EVP, they were intentionally somewhat leading. The meaning of the survey was not to find new subjects that made Spotify a great place to work, rather than verifying the ones already extracted through the interviews. Furthermore, for the employees’ sake, the statements were not broken down into too small pieces, partially to keep down the time it takes to fill out the survey, partially to preserve the feelings the respondent gets when hearing a whole sentence rather than just a few words. Because of this, some more detailed information got lost along the way, although hopefully compensation for this was given through a higher response rate. The survey questions can be found in Appendix 5 – Survey Questions.

Two questions were asked concerning the respondents’ office location and nationality. These questions were asked to later be able to analyse if there were any cultural differences between the nationalities as well as to be able to investigate if there were any differences in the answers between the different offices. The opportunity not to answer these questions was also given.

4.6.5 Distributing and responding the survey

The web-based employee survey was sent out via e-mail to the entire technology and product departments within Sweden and the United States. The survey platform used was Google Survey.

While the survey was directed towards the entire technology and product department, no precise selection was made. The potential amount of respondents represented the entire target group in this survey.

Initially, the survey received some critique from the employees within the technology and product departments. This critique was mainly directed towards the leading nature of the statements. Many of the employees were used to answering employee satisfaction surveys where the respondents are allowed to think and express themselves more freely without being given direction from the survey producers. As stated earlier this was not the purpose of the survey, although this could have been explained more in detail within the introduction part of the survey.

While the critique in one case was given directly in the email thread used for distributing the survey, this may have affected the number of respondents. In order to avoid this in the future, a quick response was given in the email thread answering the critique and pleading the respondents to, if so wanted, give further critique personally rather than officially.
4.6.6 Analysing the survey

The data was automatically collected in a Google spreadsheet and after the survey period the answers were transferred to Microsoft Excel. The analysis was made with the functions preprogrammed in Microsoft Excel. Out of the 384 respondents within Spotify’s Technology and Product departments 129 responded the survey, which results in a response rate of 33.6 per cent. All of the answers were legitimate for the survey’s purpose and none of the responses were left unused.

It is, according to Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011), meaningful to discuss the reasons for non-response. The non-response in this survey was 66.4 per cent or 255 respondents. While the survey was only available for 9 days, some of the employees might have been unavailable during this whole time. Other employees might have had too many other obligations to focus on and might not even have had the time to read through the email. Not to be able to contact the entire target population is, according to Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011), a common reason for non-response and might lead to a distorted result. Also, while doing the interviews, one respondent mentioned that he did not answer any internal surveys that were sent out due to the large amount of time it took to respond to all of them. Probable more than only the interviewed thought this way. Lekvall and Wahlbin (2011) mean that this type of declination is a reason as to why the non-response might have affected the result. Other reasons to the non-response have not been identified.

The first step taken was to summarise the number of times each of the response alternatives had been given for each statement and to calculate the total average score for each individual statement. Thereafter the average score was used to see to what extent a statement was to be regarded as verified by the employees. The responses for each of the statements showed to be normally distributed when this was tested. The correlation between each statement and the summarising statement number 25 was also calculated. This correlation could then be used to see which attributes that affected the total employment experience the most and to what extent. See Table 3 - National differences and correlations of the different statements for more information.

The next step was to see the distribution of the respondents for each office and for the different nationalities and thereafter to which extent these concur. It was only Sweden and the United States that had enough respondents so that conclusions could be drawn according to their responses. Thereafter the responses from those two nationalities were separated and the average for each statement was calculated for both nationalities. The discrepancy between the two national specific averages could then be used to analyse how the different statement had been received by the nationalities. Out of the 61 nationalities within Spotify representatives from 18 countries chose to participate and 18 participants left this field empty. Out of the respondents 69 were from Sweden, 20 from the United States, 3 from Great Britain and 2 each from the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Serbia. The countries with only 1 respondent are grouped together. These countries are Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, Slovakia, and Spain. See Figure 13.
Four respondents chose not to answer the question regarding which office the respondent was employed at. Out of the remaining respondents 27 were from the United States offices – 23 from New York and 4 from San Francisco – and 98 from the Swedish offices – 89 from Stockholm and 9 from Gothenburg – the distribution can be seen in Figure 14.

4.6.7 Collection of secondary data
The last step in building an EVP according to Dyhre and Parment’s (2013) suggested method for building an EVP is to try to answer the question how are we perceived as an employer from the outside world? (2.4.3). To do this, findings from an external survey
conducted by the talent-networking organisation Nova Agentum (2012) was summarised.

As a result of the internal survey analysis, a compilation of the research of Hofstede (The Hofstede Centre, 2005) around the differences between Swedish and American culture were also gathered. This data was compared with the internal survey findings and gave further input for a good analysis on research question 4.

4.7 Reliability

Reliability can be compared with the measuring instrument’s trustworthiness. The reliability answer whether, or not, the same results will be obtained if the study is redone (Björklund & Paulsson, 2010).

Björklund and Paulsson (2010) argue that the reliability of a study can be increased through triangulation. Triangulation involves reasoning tested by examining several sources. During interviews and surveys control questions can be used to ensure that the respondents have interpreted the questions in the way they were meant to be interpreted.

The survey questions were formulated to all respondents in the same way to increase the reliability. The interviews questions were in Swedish or English depending on the native tongue of the respondent. This could perhaps lower the reliability somewhat but that trade-off worth taking since people can speak more freely in their native tongue and express their opinions better. The interpretations of the answers are subjective and may affect reliability.

Different conditions at various times may have affected how the respondents answered the questions. Some of the interviews were done virtually and some in person, this could have affected the answers given. The bias statements in the survey resulted in some questions and opinions. The comment field was used by the respondents to leave comments on the survey and there were some that had complaints about the ambiguous questions. As said prior an EVP is positive in its nature and the bias in the interview questions and the survey statements should therefore not affect the reliability. The purpose of the survey and the interviews were explained, so that the respondent knew that the investigation had an academic purpose.

4.8 Validity

A study’s validity describes if the study really measures what it intends to measure (Björklund & Paulsson, 2010). Validity is difficult to determine with certainty when it requires that a measurement can be measured against a true result. Since every case study is different such a comparison loses its relevance. The result is that the measurement of validity is always based on subjective grounds (Lekvall & Wahlbin, 2011).

To increase the validity of the study triangulation of revised theory and collected data was used. Various theories were compared to ensure that they were saying the same thing, and all the interviewees and survey respondents were asked the same questions for each respective data collection phase. The validity of an interview is increased by avoiding biased questions, but the positive nature of an EVP required the whole interview to have a positive bias. The questions asked were open and the respondents were free to answer whatever they liked. The survey had a positive bias since the data obtained from the interviews had a positive nature. This affects the EVP but not the
validity of the survey since an EVP is meant to be positive, if it were not it would defeat the purpose of itself.

To ensure as high level of validity as possible, the entire report was built to answer the purpose. The research questions were linked with the theoretical framework, which in turn was built by taking into account the fundamental problems in the background. Interview guides were designed to collect data that combined with the survey could answer that research questions.

4.9 Objectivity
Objectivity is about how the author’s/authors’ own values influence(s) the study. It occurs, e.g. when references and facts are in some sense not retained completely objective. To the longest extent possible the researcher/researchers should remain distant to what they study so that the results depend on the nature of what has been studied rather than the personality, beliefs and values of the researcher/researchers. The result of the study should not be affected of whom the researcher/researchers were. (Payne & Payne, 2004)

Values and personal experiences have an inevitable impact but by motivating and clarifying the choices made in the study, the reader is given the possibility to determine objectivity. The corporate culture of the case company have certainly affected the researchers, but the positive nature of an EVP and that it should contain feelings motivates a positive bias towards the case company during the research process.
5 Empirical findings

In this chapter, information about and from the case company is collected and summarised. This information helps clarify the picture of the case company, but also, it will be used for later comparison and analysis against the general theories in the Current science chapter.

5.1 Case company introduction

Spotify was founded in 2006 by the two Swedes Daniel Ek and Martin Lorentzon who wanted to combine their interest in programming and music. They both shared the same idea about music: “There must be a way to utilise new technology and liberate music, a way that is easier than piracy, but at the same time fairly compensates the music creators” (Spotify, 2013). At that time the music industry had gone down for eight years in a row, much due to Internet piracy. While Napster was being sued by many large music corporations, Daniel Ek started knocking on their doors trying to convince them to release their songs for free only backed up by ad sales. The preconditions were not easy, although today it seems like the company have succeeded and other companies follow to reap the profits. In last year, 2012, record sales figures showed the first positive result in many years which points to a rising music industry. (IFPI, 2013)

The mission for Spotify was “to help people to listen to whatever music they want, whenever they want, wherever they want” (2007), which put high pressure on its employees to be experts in their specific areas.

Spotify was a rapidly expanding company that had grown to a turnover of 1,1 billion Swedish kronor, in the fiscal year of 2011. By April 2013, Spotify was established in 28 markets, had over 24 million active users (Universum, 2013c) and was said to be the world’s second biggest music distributor (Merlin network, 2013). For Spotify that was a relatively new company, with aggressive expansion plans and an impressive current growth rate, difficulties in finding new personnel were an ever-increasing issue (Weiderholm, 2013). Spotify handled large amounts of data and serviced a great amount of unique users. Due to this, high talented labour was constantly in demand. Even though Spotify received almost 1000 applications per week (Axelsson, 2013) and was entitled the third most attractive company for young computer engineers (Universum, 2013c), the right talent were not always easily identified. Spotify had in recent years increased its workforce by about 50 per cent each year. The company had, by January 2013, about 750 employees and during the first quarter of 2013 there were 133 new hires. A goal of hiring roughly 400 new employees during the year of 2013 had been set. (Spotify, 2013).

Spotify consisted of four departments and three support functions as showed in the figure below:

![Organisation structure](Spotify, 2013, p. 4)
Product Development and Design and Technology were mainly orientated around software engineering. It was also these two departments that had the toughest conditions for finding new labour. The Technology department alone had gone from 30 to 300 employees in 3 years. (Weiderholm, 2013)

Today, Spotify received job applications from all around the world, but there were clear differences in application rates from different countries, e.g. many applications were obtained from Poland but very few from Germany. This difference was acknowledged between countries even though Spotify was equally active in marketing and branding itself towards the different markets. For this phenomenon they had not yet found a valid explanation (Weiderholm, 2013).

5.2 The target group
The people working within the Technology and Product departments were automation engineers, designers, backend developers, agile coaches, software testers, product managers, mobile developers, big data analysts and many more. (Spotify, 2013) Some positions were easier to fill, e.g. backend developers, while e.g. mobile developers were more difficult to get hold of. (Åman, 2013)

Important attributes of a candidate were technological knowledge, good team player skills, comfortable with agile work process and in general to fit in in the overall culture.

An engineer-hiring guide declared that it was equally important that the candidate would be a good fit for the company, but also that the company would be a suitable employer for the candidate. Further it explained which types of traits that were attractive in a candidate:

- Smart – demonstrated impressive intellectual depth, creativity and insight.
- Communication Skills – effectively articulated ideas and listened to others.
- Commitment to Company and Team – put team and company needs ahead of own needs and were devoted to making things better.
- Self-Direction – functioned well in a loosely organized structure and had the ability to take initiative.
- Resolve – got things done, saw things through to completion and delivered high quality results.
- Diversity – had diverse perspectives, thus providing views and experience that the company did not already had.

5.3 Employer branding activities
The employer branding activities were led by the People Operations team, which were based within the Technology department. As stated by the team lead, People Operations were about finding, attracting and retaining talent. On the internal pages one could find that: “To win this game we want to have better technology than all our competitors and we want top-of-the-line technology to give users the best possible experience. To make this happen we need to continue to build a best in class engineering team” and those were the reasons to why the People Operations team was formed. (Spotify, 2013)

In year 2011, there were only two persons working within the team, at the time of the writing, there were seven, and more to come. The main responsibilities for the team involved defining, documenting, communicating and maintaining desired targets for the
company’s work environment and culture. Also, branding Spotify as a top employer for
the most skilled engineers, as well as managing the implementation of the defined targets
for the company’s work environment and culture. Furthermore to build, own and manage
an optimised recruitment process for annual growth of 50-100 per cent with sustained
high skill level – all of these responsibilities with a focus on the Product and Technology
departments. A list of example tasks for the People Operations team can be found below.
(Spotify, 2013)

Work with the engineering team to continuously and creatively improve the working
environment and culture for all engineers including, but not limited to:
  • Engineering career development paths
  • Innovative perks for pleasant work environment
  • Physical environment
  • Mentoring schemas
  • Training schemas
  • Guest speakers or skill sharing programs with other organizations
  • Research the industry for inspiration
  • Management coaching
Continuously broadcast the message of Spotify as a great work environment including,
but not limited to:
  • Creation of material such as banners, press releases etc.
  • Plan marketing activities
  • Plan and participate in events and seminars
  • Work with the press
  • Manage budget for related activities
Build up and manage an innovative and scaling recruitment process including:
  • Define and implement a creative strategy for recruitment
  • Create and manage plan and budget for recruitment
  • Own vendor relations to manage tools and services required for the process
  • Ensure smooth execution of the process on a day to day business
  • Search out and attend seminars and conferences to attract talent (Spotify, 2013)

This means that the People Operations team did not handle any specific recruitment
cases, except from the ones directed towards their own team. A People Operations
representative clarifies that all tasks concerning administrative tasks such as legal
agreements, payroll handling, most interviews, CV screening or arranging social
activities like parties, after works etc. were not included within the People Operations
team’s domains even though these should be accounted as employer branding activities.
(Sannebro, 2013)

A main criterion for the People Operations team was to focus on internal employer
branding activities. By making the employees happy and satisfied, they meant that all of
the employees would be ambassadors instead of just having a few from the Employer
branding department doing this. (Åman, 2013)

“if you love your job you’ll never work a day in your life”
(Presentation: Employer branding at Spotify, 2011).
The construction of an EVP had been discussed before. One of the employees meant that as the company grows, documentation becomes more important to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next. He further meant that one of these documentation needs lied within building an EVP – with a clear, attractive and differentiated EVP, all recruiters would have a standard template adjustable to fit a specific position. Also, with an EVP, the company could attract more of the right type of talent instead of just broadcasting widely towards all types of candidates. (Åman, 2013)

The employer branding activities seemed to pay off. In 2011, only one person had quit his/her job within the technology department, while in year 2012, the number was slightly higher with 10 persons resigning. Reasons of resignation differed from finding the company too large, to receiving more interesting offers from competitors. A few wrong recruits had also been made where the candidate had to quit after their trial period, the reasons of those were cultural misfits, a lacking technological expertise and bad team working skills. (Åman, 2013)

Something that could have been used as an EVP already existed within the company. It was a document explaining the benefits of working at the company. Although, these benefits were more formal offerings rather than the real reasons to why their employees worked there. Some examples of the benefits proposed within this document were workout possibilities, insurance, social events, employee stock ownership plan etc. (Axelsson, 2013)

5.4 Organisational culture at Spotify

Cultural discoveries were made while talking to various persons, making observations, and doing pre-research on the internal pages. Furthermore, a culture document, which was supposed to keep the original culture as the company is expanding, also laid a base for the organisational culture. In this chapter, these findings are presented.

5.4.1 Cultural discoveries

The organisational culture could very easily be seen only by walking through the headquarter office in Stockholm. Cosy sofas, relaxing game rooms, a library and trophy room, fridges with food and graffiti on the walls were just a few examples of how the organisational culture was expressed. The most desks were placed in open space environments where each team had its own area. Sometimes this area was directly connected to another team’s area. Every team were very accessible and there were only a few doors, which were mostly to shut out the noise from FIFA game roars. There were many meeting rooms with whiteboards and comfortable chairs, some bookable, some not, to discuss all kind of topics. Often there were also a video camera and TV in the meeting rooms to be able to connect to employees out of office or to employees from other offices. The same type of environment was said to be endeavoured in the other offices.

Many of the developers were said to be very creative and almost like artists within their specific areas. (Axelsson, 2013) The creativity was noticed in almost every department where the teams had put up funny pictures of Internet memes, guitars, radio-controlled mini-helicopters and skateboards laying around. Another aspect that separated the case company from many others within its business was the concept of having fancy Fridays whereas most other companies had casual Fridays. Normally the dress code was not at a very high level and therefore many employees thought that it would be fun to change this
one day a week. To further make Fridays a bit more special, everyone was allowed to add songs to the playlist, which could be heard thru the loudspeakers on every floor during this day. It had been mentioned several times from different sources within the case company that computer engineers, software developers and other people around those categories, commonly named geeks or nerds, was said to have their own type of culture. A few of the examples mentioned above might help to understand this. (Axelsson, 2013; Berge, 2013; von Celsing, 2013)

Even though it, at first glance, seemed like a playhouse, the people at Spotify were very knowledgeable and hard working. A large amount of engineers within the company meant that problem solving were something exciting and challenging. Knowledge sharing and performing several iterations was the preferred technique for doing so. To share knowledge meetings were held. Meetings were one of the things that filled the employee’s time. It was hard to find an employee who did not have a fully booked schedule. Workshops, presentations and of course a lot of programming were common activities for the employees within the Product and Technology departments. When it came to time aspects, not many arrived before 9 am, although it was not uncommon that many of the employees were still at the office at 7 pm. Even though having such flexible timetables, a vast majority of the employees always seemed to be on time to their meetings. Sometimes people worked from other offices, sometimes people worked from home. To work from home was although not promoted and to prevent this, stand-up meetings were held at least once a week depending on which team you belonged to and it was recommended not to miss these.

Common activities were e.g. lunch breaks in the Cafeteria, Friday after works with different themes, bands playing and karaoke sessions. There were also training activities to engage in, e.g. squash, tennis, climbing, yoga or group circuit training. However, none of the employees received any company health care contributions. Even though this is quite common in Sweden, a People Operations representative meant that the reason for not providing this was that the People Operations team did not see any specific company gains from doing so. They would rather promote sport activities that can be exercised together with others within the company.

If you wanted something done at Spotify, you had to do it yourself. Although, many were very keen on helping you as long as you had a good idea. This could be understood from the extensive amount of courses that were available. There were often people with specific interests who wanted to engage more in these and therefore started up a course. This was promoted by the company and the range of interests was very wide. Tango and guitar lessons, inspiring mindfulness courses or more profession-specific courses such as Python or Java fundamentals courses were just a few examples of these courses. This promoted personal development in many different areas, but also socialisation and thereby strengthened the bonds between the employees.

The most conflicts were said to arise only due to the large engagement everyone felt for the product. Everyone had very strong feelings about how the product should look like, how it should work, etc. and did not want to give after very easily when someone else thought otherwise. (Axelsson, 2013) To avoid these types of conflicts and make it easier to understand in which direction each individual wanted to be heading, hack days and hack weeks had been introduced. During these days or this week, every employee and every team could spend time to build on whatever they wanted. If a person did not know
what he wanted to build, he could join somebody else in his or her project. The outcomes of these hack days/hack weeks were bug fixes, new features and great cohesion.

About every month, or bimonthly, so-called town halls were held. During these the whole company, or at least those who were interested, gathered in the Cafeteria to listen to the founder Daniel Ek speaking about the company’s future. The other offices were also welcomed to join these town halls via video link. Sometimes Ek spoke about which difficulties that might arise in the near future, sometimes he introduced new management techniques, sometimes he revealed collaborations or new features. Largely he talked about what the company had accomplished, where they were at the moment and where they were headed in the future. These strategically and visionary talks were followed by questions from the employees and thereafter usually Friday beers and after work.

5.4.2 Establishing organisational culture at Spotify
As the workforce of Spotify increased and new functions with different type of people were established, the core values became more and more diffuse and new values evolved. To be able to keep the original culture actions were needed to be taken. In the year of 2011, a mission to define the present and past culture of Spotify was set up. At first, no one really knew where this project would end up, but something to preserve the entrepreneurial, fun and missionary culture had to be done. (Persson, 2013)

Two pages on the internal website were set up where the employees could give their opinions on what Spotify stood for. The first page was oriented towards what Spotify wanted to achieve, e.g. “music everywhere”. The other was more oriented towards how to accomplish this. What type of people should be working there? E.g. should it be people who were risk taking or risk reluctant? (Persson, 2013)

The information retrieved from these two pages was later presented to the management group. Meetings were held to discuss whether or not the statements fitted Spotify well and to select the best ones. In the end there were two statements that defined the culture accurately. In addition to these two, the management group presented two statements of their own. (Persson, 2013)

These statements were then, in collaboration with a designer, transformed into four value mantras that would help guide the employees in tough decisions and to bind the company together. The question was now how to get the whole company to accept these. This was made through 35 workshops summoning every employee within the firm. Here the value mantras were presented and discussed. (Persson, 2013)

The final value mantras introduced were:

**Change the perception of what’s possible**
History is written about leaps that create a long-term impact. We dare to make these leaps.
**The quicker we learn, the faster we improve**
Everything we do teaches us important lessons. With each iteration, we get valuable feedback and data. And if we iterate frequently we end up with something truly great. Speed of iteration beats quality of iteration.

**Bring your passion to every gig**
What we’re trying to achieve demands extraordinary efforts from extraordinary people. Millions of fans want access to their favorite music. They will expect that you give it everything you’ve got.

**Make sure to sleep well at night**
Millions of people trust us to do the right thing. They want us to play fair, and they’ll be tough on us if we don’t. Let’s be remembered for the right reasons. Would your family, friends, dog and favourite artist be proud of you if they knew what you did today? Good.

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Signs of the value mantras could be found in different places in the office, but also on stickers on computers, bags or other things alike. Even though these value mantras were appreciated and were found to be exemplary by the employees, many stated during the in-depth interviews that all of them were not particularly commonly used, partly because the employees could not relate to all of them, partly because they could not see any situations where these could be usable. A People Operations representative stated that sometimes they could be brought up during quarrels to back up an argument or they could be used as lead words for planning an activity.

### 5.5 Internal perception of the Spotify’s EVP
The 15 interviews gave a great amount of input data. The data is presented by subject, which means that similar categories are combined and presented this way where this is applicable. At the end of each subchapter the themes of each category is presented followed by the number of statements accounted for that category. To make it easier to understand which categories were more commonly mentioned than others, the categories receiving more than 12 statements are bolded. The number is arbitrary. For further information, each and every statement is accounted for and presented in Appendix 6 – Survey Results.

“I’m certainly very satisfied.”
(Tribe Lead, Stockholm)

#### 5.5.1 Colleagues
Something mentioned by every interviewee was the subject of colleagues. During the interviews there was never a negative opinion regarding the interviewee’s fellow colleagues. There was a broad spectra of opinions about what it was that made the colleagues fantastic, many of the opinions were categorised into ‘Smart colleagues with
a drive’, ‘Friendly and familiar people’, ‘Teaming for success’ and ‘Fun and relaxed environment’. These categories could not include all aspects of the colleagues, but these categories were dominated by the colleagues.

“The colleagues are a large part of what makes this an incredible company.”

(Tribe Lead, Stockholm)

To summarise the opinions from ‘Smart colleagues with a drive’, most people agreed that everyone working at the case company kept a very high level in terms of knowledge and skills in their field of work. This meant that while working at Spotify the employees never felt they were the smartest in the room, unlike how it had been at earlier employers. The level of the colleagues resulted in that the employees felt challenged through mutual competition and that they developed continuously. The colleagues had a great drive and were greatly dedicated. Some of the employees were said to even use their spare time to fix minor bugs. The high level of the colleagues was inspiring and also the broad background the employees came from, both regarding nationality, but mostly work experience. Some colleagues had, before their employment at Spotify, made software that was, or had been, used by millions of users and was known to the common man. Software such as Napster and µTorrent was mentioned among others as well as one colleague whose previous job was to develop the programming language Java, which was one of languages that were used by Spotify at the time of the writing.

Regarding the three other categories, the interviewees said that all colleagues were friendly and nice people, many of them were seen more as friends than colleagues and that they would very much miss their colleagues if they had to quit. The colleagues were said to be likeminded, welcoming and driven. One of them that had moved to Sweden from abroad said that the Swedes within Spotify were friendlier than the ordinary Swedes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart colleagues with drive</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly and familiar people</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaming for success</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, fun and relaxed environment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.2 Work tasks and environment
One other subject that was frequently mentioned was the work tasks and work environment. One interviewee said that the greatest reward working at the case company was the fun and exciting work tasks. The tasks were very varying, always new challenges and new problems to solve, it was said to never be any repetitive work at Spotify. The work tasks was said to challenge the employees to think on their own and to come up with new ideas. It was said that the level of the technical challenges within Spotify made the company unique and more attractive as an employer than other software firms. One of the interviewees said that his job satisfied his theoretical interest. The challenges were said to be broad and that it was up to each and everyone to find something that fitted their expertise. If an employee wanted to switch from working in a more technical manner to a more general manner, it was said to be easy to switch team. Many of the interviewees mentioned that it was a fast moving workplace where there was always something happening and never a dull moment or an everyday trot.

“The autonomy makes you value your work”

(Software engineer, New York)
The work environment was according to all the interviewees defined by autonomy, freedom and mutual trust. The team set the goals together and thereafter it was up to each and every individual to reach these goals in whatever way they seemed to be the best, both regarding work hours and problem solving approach. This made the employees feel empowered rather than directed. Freedom with responsibility were a distinctive component of an employment at the case company, the leadership was said to be exercised by leaders rather than managers. One interviewee said that there was freedom with responsibility to the extent that, as long as he did something that was good for Spotify, he could often do whatever he wanted. The interviewees from the United States emphasised that the work autonomy was much higher at Spotify than their previous employments could offer. The freedom to schedule their work hours themselves was experienced as a great benefit by the interviewees and helped them handle stress in a better way and kept them motivated.

Autonomy in work 27
Freedom, flexibility and mutual trust 26
Challenging work tasks 12
Fast moving and never a dull moment 11
Leading edge with innovation and creativeness 7
Varying work tasks 6
Great available tools 3
Permission to fail 1

5.5.3 Involvement and making a change
One of the interview questions was “Do you know how your work contributes for Spotify to reach the goals?”. All interviewees saw a very clear connection between their work efforts and how that helped Spotify towards the company goals. Many of these answers were categorised into “Involvement, contribution and making a change”.

“Clear direction, it’s crystal clear at any point in time where we are going”
(Tribe Lead, Stockholm)

All interviewees felt that they helped the company forward, many of them felt they were part of changing the world and changing how people experience music. A couple of the interviewees used the CEO Daniel Ek’s notion of revolutionising the music industry and how people consume music. Even the employees that did not use the concept of ‘revolutionising’ still felt that their work effort had great importance since the product was used by millions of users and the employees had a responsibility for the user experience.

“When I see someone using Spotify on their phone I think: ‘A little bit of me is in their pocket!’”
(Software engineer, New York)

One employee said he was proud every time he saw someone using Spotify, he felt he had enhanced that person’s life by being a part of the team behind the product. Many of the employees felt that it was fantastic to be allowed to work directly towards the end consumers, which many of them had not experienced, in their previous employments. The straightaway feedback they received by working with a consumer product was very appreciated by many of the employees. The feedback came from direct user input, but also from following the rate of downloads of the client and the ratings at for example
Apple App Store or Google Play. This level of feedback was new to many of the interviewees, and especially the rapidness of the feedback was appreciated. Another, by the interviewees, much appreciated attribute was that the product was known to many and that they had feelings, opinions and questions for and about the company’s product.

| Participation, contribution and making a change | 27 |
| Reaching millions of people | 17 |
| Intrinsic rewards and recognition | 8 |
| Change the world | 7 |
| Straight away consumer feedback | 4 |

5.5.4 Personal development possibilities

All interviewees gave numerous examples of the personal development possibilities that they received as employees at Spotify. If the employee would be interested in taking a course many said they would never get a ‘No’ for an answer if they asked for permission to attend that course. Spotify was also experienced as very bountiful when it came to allowing their employees to travel to the different offices.

Several of the interviewees said that Spotify offered great development possibilities and that this was greatly encouraged by the company and the management. One interviewee described his evolvement with the company as the “evolutionary red queen problem” – “you have to evolve, or even run, to be able to even stay in the same place or position”. It was also said that the personal development were very much up to each individual, if the employees were driven, the sky was said to be the limit for their development at Spotify. Attributes that yielded these development possibilities was to great extent the level of the colleagues and their varied backgrounds, and the very good feedback system that ensured every employee 360 degree feedback. The autonomy in how to take on a job and the challenging work tasks was also emphasised as one of the better ways to development.

During the interviews, the knowledge within Spotify was said to be a shared thing and to share information and bump ideas among the employees were always promoted. The interviewees also said that it was easy to ask colleagues if they ever bumped in to problems in their work or if there were anything else they wanted to know. Furthermore, the interviewees said that knowledge sharing with external parts was also encouraged, e.g. by attending conferences and hold meetings with other companies.

The company acted as a great programming community according to many of the interviewees. It was said that the enthusiasm for programming among the fellow employees at Spotify created a sense of community among the programmers and strong drive for the work.

| Great personal development possibilities | 30 |
| Knowledge sharing | 16 |
| Programing community | 8 |
| Design community | 1 |

5.5.5 Organisation

The interviewees agreed that the organisational structure at Spotify were very flat with few hierarchy levels between themselves and the CEO. The management were seen as approachable by anyone within the firm. An example was given by one of the
interviewees that the CEO used to sit and play Xbox with one of the receptionists. It could just as well be discussion about the product and new desirable features to add on to the client that a new employee discussed with the CTO or CEO in the cafeteria. The upper management were said to still be in contact with the grassroots. Before changes were made, e.g. reorganising the teams in terms of office location or members there was always a community discussion with all of the affected. Most of the interviewees expressed great confidence in the leadership of the firm, the leaders were said to be very flexible and adaptable and always a step ahead in the development of the product. The flatness of the organisation and the approachable management were pointed out by several of the American employees as something unique to the company and also as something very attractive in an employer.

“The Swedish culture is very clear and it’s very preferable to the American corporate culture.”

(Software engineer, New York)

The size of the company and the rapid expansion, both in terms of users and employees, were appreciated by many for the excitement and challenges this brought along. That the case company were a company commonly discussed in the news around the world every week were also appreciated by many of the employees. It was also said by one employee in the Stockholm office that:

“I just don’t think there is another company with this pace of growth that is floating around in Europe.”

(Tribe Lead, Stockholm)

Meaning that if he wanted to work in a company with the same level of users and with this sort of company culture, he needed to move to the United States. Moving to the United States was not something that he was very keen on doing. There were some more of the interviewees that agreed in the belief that Spotify was a company that was one of a kind in Europe.

Flat organisation with approachable management 21
Scale advantages 10
Confident, competent and caring leaders 6
Integrated departments 1

5.5.6 Passion

Many, but not all of the interviewees, felt great passion for the product and it was also something many of them used many hours every day. There were a dedication for both the company and the product; many of the employees had been users and paying users for as long as it had been possible. The passion for the product was tightly connected to their love and passion for music.

“Music is a very important aspect of people’s life. It [the task/mission] is not about creating a business system or anything like that. It is people who do something they love to do, that you get to affect.”

(Web developer, Stockholm)

One interviewee meant that the passion for music came from interacting with non-employees who had opinions about the Spotify employees’ work and the client. Many of the interviewees agreed that music is of great importance to people’s life. One employee said that the reason Spotify was so fantastic was that he could combine his greatest hobby with his field of work. Some interviewees said that they got to combine their love
for music with their job. Yet another interviewee was motivated by doing the world a little bit better every day by spreading music. Some of the interviewees said that they were motivated by working with a world leading product and best of its kind. One person said that they were doing something good for the bigger cause.

**Passion for the product**  
On a mission to succeed 9  
Passion for music 6  
Making a change 6  
People at Spotify play fair 2

### 5.5.7 The caring company

In all offices there were social activities, i.e. beer brewing interest groups, yoga classes, lunches, after works, parties, concerts, table tennis tournaments *etc.* There were many non-work related activities offered with an employment at Spotify and most of the interviewees mentioned these as great perks and benefits. Since many of the employed have a large music interest, the concerts and the artists that come and visit is well appreciated by the majority. Two interviewees said that it was hard to differ between work and leisure time at Spotify. They also said that Spotify ought to come up with a new term that described this preferable relation in a better way. When rewards are handed out it is never monetary rewards, it is often *e.g.* trips together with the team or activities, dinners, extra days of for Christmas *etc.* The pay was never said to be too small – a few interviewees had even lowered their wage when starting at Spotify. One interviewee said that Spotify paid well.

“*Spotify was a place that just seemed incredibly exciting place to work, but the thing that attracted my attention initially was the fact that we had a People Operations department, to have a technology company that cares enough about people that it is prepared to set aside a department within the technology that’s just focused on making the technology organisation awesome. Why would you not want to work there?*”

(Tribe Lead, Stockholm)

The company was said to genuinely care for its employees, making sure that all employees enjoyed and thrived at the workplace. One of the interviewees said that it was unique that a company cared to the extent that Spotify did. One interviewee said that Spotify was in the forefront of employer branding trend in this aspect. People that were employed at the Stockholm office were very pleased over the office they worked at, especially in aspects of functionality and design.

The stock option program that was offered to every new employed was also greatly appreciated, also that the employed was offered stock options straight away was highly valued by many employees. Those that had been in the company for a longer time was not as pleased, with how the stock option program worked and were designed, when they started.

**Social activities**  
Extrinsic rewards and recognition 8  
A company that cares for the employees 7  
Inspiring workplace and nice office location 7  
Everyone can be a part 4  
A special kind of work/life balance 3
5.6 External perception of the Spotify’s EVP

The external perception is based on a survey report from Nova Agentum (2012) a part of Universum Group. The survey, henceforth also called the external survey, was conducted during 2012, there were 1,210 respondents. It is partly because of this survey that Universum awarded Spotify a third price as the most attractive employer in Sweden for young professionals. Important to have in mind when viewing the results are that the survey was not answered only by the target group, but from talented candidates within all fields (Universum, 2013c).

From the respondents 107 saw Spotify as ‘Ideal employer’, this group came mainly from ‘Management consulting’, ‘Software and computer services’ and thirdly ‘Media and advertisement’, their top career goal were “To be competitively or intellectually challenged”, “To be entrepreneurial or creative/innovative” and thirdly “To be a leader or manager of people”.

The respondents were asked to select attributes from four categories that they felt where applicable to Spotify, they were free to choose as many as they thought applied. But before they got to do this for Spotify, the respondents were asked to rate all the parameters within each category in the order of attractiveness. In the four graphs below the attributes are sorted in order of attractiveness according to the respondents, with the most attractive at the top. In the report Spotify’s score is compared to five competitor’s scores. The competitors were not chosen from the same field of work. They are chosen since they also scored high in Universum’s list for attractive employers.

5.6.1 Employer reputation and image

The attribute for this category and Spotify’s scores can be found in Figure 17. The first attribute scored above average compared to the competitors. The second attribute scored on average and next one above average and the following two scores well above average that is on 60 and 50 per cent. The last five attributes scored below average, but it was only on ‘Financial strength’ that Spotify scored well below average.
5.6.2 Job characteristics
The attribute for this second category and Spotify’s scores can be found in Figure 18. The first two attributes are on average but the third is just above half of average. The following four are below average, but within ten per cent units of the average. ‘Team oriented work’ is on average but the last two attributes are below average.

5.6.3 People and culture
The attribute for this third category and Spotify’s scores can be found in graph Figure 19. For the first attribute Spotify scores just a bit above half of the average score. The second and fourth is above average while the third is below. The fifth, eighth and ninth parameter is below average while the sixth, seventh and tenth parameter is above average. Spotify scores quite close to average for all attributes except the first.
5.6.4 Remuneration and advancement opportunities

The attributes in the fourth and last category and Spotify’s scores can be found in graph Figure 20. In the most attractive attributes Spotify scores the lowest among the compared firms where the average is 54 per cent. The second is just below average and the third is on average. The following three are below average, whereby of the fifth is well below average that is 36 per cent. The seventh is above average, the following two are below and the last attribute are on average.

![Figure 20 - External view on Spotify’s remuneration and advancement opportunities (Nova Agentum, 2010, p. 16)](image)

5.7 Result of survey

In this chapter a brief presentation of the internal survey results is presented. The complete survey with the 25 statements can be found in Appendix 5 – Survey Questions and the full result of the survey with illustrations can be found in Appendix 6 – Survey Results.

In column 2-6 in Table 1 the distribution between the answer options are shown. In the seventh column, the average total score from all respondents are shown followed by the average score given by the Swedish and American respondents in column eight and nine.
The first statement regarding colleagues received only fours and threes, every single respondent took a positive position towards their fellow colleagues and agreed that they were smart, driven and dedicated.

In the total average column there were eight statements that scored above 3.5. Statement 1, 2, 12 and 14 all concerned colleagues and knowledge sharing within the company and the possibility to develop thru coming to work and speaking to colleagues. Statement 5 and 6 concerned care for the product and that the product was used by millions and changed how people consume music. Flexible work hours were very appreciated according to the approval level of statement 11. The summarising statement, statement 25, received a high approval.

Number 4 and 13 received scores below 3. Statement 4 regarded autonomy in the squads and statement 13 said that there was no clear line between work and leisure time – these attributes were both highly appreciated attributes.

Table 2 below shows the average score given office by office, to the extent this was filled in. From Gothenburg and San Francisco there were only nine respectively four employees that participated in the survey.
Table 2 - Scores by office in the internal survey

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5.8 Swedish versus American culture
A comparison between Sweden and the United States in Hofstede’s five dimensions can be seen in Figure 21. The score for each dimension can stretch between zero and one hundred, there is not data enough to compile the sixth, and newest, dimension.

![Figure 21 - Cultural differences in Swedish and US culture](The Hofstede Centre, 2005, p.1)

**Power distance**
Both Sweden and the United States score low on this dimension: 31 respectively 40. This implies an organisational culture where hierarchy is only for convenience, equal rights are promoted, superiors are always accessible and managers rely on individuals and teams for their expertise. In Sweden the power is somewhat more decentralised. Both managers and employees expect to be consulted and information is shared frequently. At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participative in both countries. All of the above mentioned is more present among Swedes than Americans since they scored even lower. (The Hofstede Centre, 2005) Berge (2013) on the other hand means that the Americans are much more hierarchic than the Swedes and that the managers are stricter and make decisions on their own without involving the group.

**Individualism versus Collectivism**
Both Sweden and the United states are highly individualistic cultures. This translate to loosely-knit social framework were individuals are expected to take care of themself their immediate families only. In an individualistic society the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantages, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, management is the management of individuals. Americans are less shy about approaching their prospective counterparts in order to obtain and seek information. All of this is stronger among the Americans with their higher score. (The Hofstede Centre, 2005)

**Masculinity versus Femininity**
On this dimension there is a big discrepancy between Sweden and the United States that score 5 respectively 62. Sweden’s score is among the lowest out of all countries and is therefore a feminine country where work/life balance is important and that all are
included. In a feminine society an effective manager is supportive and decisions are made through involvement and consensus is strived for. Conflicts are solved through long discussions and consensus. Equality, solidarity and quality in the working life are highly valued and incitements such as free and flexible working hours and flexible work place are favoured. Swedes do not brag or try to put themselves above others, in school there is low level of competition among individuals. (The Hofstede Centre, 2005) The strive for consensus among Swedes can often be perceived by other nationalities as Swedes talk too much and question everything. (Berge, 2013)

The United States are regarded as a masculine society. Behaviour from an early stage is work and play based on based on shared values that people should strive to be the best they can be and ‘the winner takes it all’. Americans speaks widely about their successes and achievements in life, which results in another basis for hires and promotion decisions in the workplace. Americans ‘live to work’ so that they can receive higher monetary rewards and ‘achieve’ a higher status based on how good they are. Conflicts are solved on individual level and the goal is to win. (The Hofstede Centre, 2005) Americans are often perceived as egoistic and as time-servers that do not care about the co-workers. (Berge, 2013)

**Uncertainty avoidance**
Both Sweden and the United States are described as uncertainty accepting with a score of 29 respectively 46. Low score societies have a relaxed attitude where practice counts more than principles and have a higher acceptance towards deviations from the norm. People in these societies do not feel a need for more rules and if they are incorrect the rules are revised. Hard work is undertaken when necessary but not for own sake, there is a high tolerance towards new ideas and opinions from anyone and freedom of expression. All of this is a bit more among the Swedes since the lower score. (The Hofstede Centre, 2005)

**Long-term orientation**
Both countries are categorised as short-term oriented with a Swedish score of 20 and the United States scored 29. Societies with a short-term orientation show a great respect for traditions and are focused on fulfilling social obligations. There is an impatience to reach fast results and a need to have an ‘absolute truth’ in all matters. Companies are run on a short term basis with profit and loss statements being issued quarterly. (The Hofstede Centre, 2005)
6 Analysis

Initially the analysis of the internal survey is presented. Thereafter the empirical findings are compared with the theories in the Current Science chapter as visualised in the analytical model. Through this analysis, each of the four research questions is answered.

6.1 Analysis of survey

For the research purpose it is of interest how different nationalities interpret and perceive different parts of the EVP. If any statement were interpreted differently the statements would receive different scores from the nationalities. Column three in Table 3 shows the average score given by the Swedes subtracted by the average score given by the Americans. In a multiple choice survey like the one undertaken in this research it is of interest to see the correlations between the questions or towards a summarizing question, in this survey statement number 25, “To sum it all up, I really love my work”. The correlations for each statement with statement number 25 are shown in column four below.

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<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the third column that shows national differences there are eight statements that have discrepancy equal to or larger than 0.2. The Americans agreed more with statement 2 and 13, regarding that knowledge sharing is promoted within Spotify and that there is no clear difference between work and leisure time. The Swedes experience the work environment relaxed and appreciate the flexible work hours more according to the discrepancy for statement 10 and 11. The Swedes also experience that they get better
support and more resources to solve the problems. The Swedes also gave a higher score to the statement saying that the colleagues are ‘young, fun and friendly’ and that the company is equal and fair. Control statement number 23 was given a higher score by the Swedes.

The fourth column displaying correlation with statement 25 shows seven value above 0.4—which is to regarded as a strong relationship (Quinnipiac University, 2013) – and one negative. A high correlation means that the statement has a great impact on the overall employee value proposition. The statements with a correlation above 0.4 are: Statement 3 and 10 saying that environment is flat, relaxed, open and inspiring. Statement 9 regarding varying work tasks and environment is clearly related to number 25. Statement 12 and 14 saying that the colleagues are great and friendly and that they learn a lot from them. The 16th statement says that they seek to become the best within their field of interest and that this can be used in their work. Also number 22, regarding a clear vision and goals from management, have a clear correlation with number 25. Statement 23 – “A big salary is my highest motivation.” – had a very small correlation, although negative. This statement was used as a control statement and the negative correlation was expected. This is a validation of the surveys credibility.

6.2 Evaluation of employer branding activities
In this chapter an analysis of the empirical data gathered to answer research question 1 is made. The question was:

How does a forefront software company engage itself in employer branding and how is this work perceived by both internal and external stakeholders?

As described in 5.3 there is no doubt the case company has made great investments in employer branding activities in order to reap the benefits a good employer branding work brings along (2.3). Seven full-time employees directing many different projects is proof of this. Even though many job applications are received each week, to fill the quota for growing 50-100 per cent each year and at the same time maintaining a high skill level, these investments are definitely necessary. While also facing challenges only a few people in the world can solve, a far-reaching and eminent employer brand is vital. According to the definitions in 2.3.1 this is exactly what an employer brand is for, “to communicate to existing and prospective staff”, to quote but one theoretician (Lloyd, 2002).

The responsibilities for the Employer Branding department within the case company included attending job fairs, maintaining the job site, advertising in papers and on the internet, offering internships and thesis projects. All of the above tasks is also recommended employer branding activities by Wilden et al. (2010) in 2.3.1. There is only one activity proposed by Wilden et al. (2010) that is not listed in the agenda for the employer branding department: being active in alumni networks. As Shah (2011) in 2.3.2 and Harrison in 2.3.3 suggests the process of building an employer brand is a long-term process and the construction of an alumni network should therefore not be too far away in the pipeline.

6.2.1 Internal and external perceptions
Dyhre and Hunt states in 2.3.2 that, to establish the actual employer brand of the firm, the internal and external perception of the brand as well as the perception of the
management needs to be understood. Even though a management perspective was hard to get hold of, both internal and external perceptions have been presented in the empirical findings chapter (5.4, 5.5). These are analysed in the following sub chapters.

**Employer reputation and image**

In 5.6.1, the parameter ‘Innovation and fast-growing/entrepreneurial’ within the category employer brand scored above average and generally a high score in the external survey performed by Nova Agentum. The interviews also showed that ‘innovation and creativeness’ was a highly appreciated matter as well as ‘inspiring workplace and nice office location’. In the survey, the statement “I work in a relaxed and inspiring environment” received 89 per cent agrees or strongly agrees. These positive attributes of the case company can to a wide extent be awarded to the People Operations team who, as stated in 5.3, continuously and creatively works with improving the working environment and the culture.

The parameter inspiring management in the external survey scored above its competitors, although did not in general receive a very high score – 59 per cent. Only six statements were put under the ‘confident, competent and caring leaders’ bullet. In the internal survey the statement “My managers give me vision and clear goals to strive for, although how to reach the goals is up to me and my team” received 73 per cent agrees/strongly agrees, which is not a very high score in this survey. The reasons behind this are debatable, due to the ambiguous nature of the statement, although the combined results all point in the same direction. In the list of People Operations responsibilities, management coaching and mentoring schemas are mentioned. This means that improvements could be made within the case company’s employer branding activities directed towards leadership.

The parameter prestige received a relatively low result within the external survey and is not a very prominent statement in neither the interviews nor the internal survey. Neither is it stated anywhere that promoting prestige is a task for the People Operations team. The interesting thing about this is that prestige is in common mouth often linked to talent and that the case company demands high qualitative talent. In 5.4.1 it is stated that geeks or nerds has their own culture and maybe this is the reason why the case company nevertheless attracts high talented personnel. Though, if this is not the case, maybe initiating employer branding activities to promote prestige might be of relevance for the case company.

**Job characteristics**

The professional training and development parameter within the external survey received a low score where only 29 per cent of the respondents meant that this was evident at Spotify. However, the employees of Spotify meant the opposite. Statement 14 in the internal survey “There are many knowledgeable people at Spotify, which help me to solve difficult tasks and help me develop” received an astonishing 95 per cent agrees/strongly agrees. Also, from the interviews, the bullet ‘great development possibilities’ was backed up by 30 statements – more than any of the other bullets. As this responsibility belongs to the People Operations team, no internal improvements are needed to be made, although to better market these activities towards potential candidates might be a good idea.

‘Opportunities for international travel and relocation’ was claimed by 66 per cent of the external survey respondents, to be a job characteristic at the case company. Relocation
can be seen as a way for an engineer to develop his career. According to the People Operations team’s list of example task, the team should support this activity. The interesting thing here is that, internally, this type of benefit or characteristic was barely mentioned. Maybe this is not an attractive attribute for the target group or maybe traveling and relocation is hard to realise within the case company. To know the answer to this, more detailed research around the subject is needed.

**People and culture**

‘Leaders will support my development’ was another parameter that received a low score in the external survey. As discussed earlier (see employer reputation and image, paragraph 2), management coaching lied within People Operations’ responsibilities and this result further enhances the need for improvements within this area.

The parameter ‘A creative and dynamic environment’ received a high score, 89 per cent agrees/strongly agrees, and the only competitor able to beat that was Google. The employees of Spotify confirms this in the interviews by giving seven statements within the bullet ‘Leading edge with innovation and creativeness’ and nine within the ‘Young, fun and relaxed environment’ bullet. Furthermore, the statement “There is never a dull moment at Spotify. Varying work tasks, approachable people, events and social activities are a few examples that keeps me alert and motivated.” were agreed upon by 84 per cent and the “I work in a relaxed and inspiring environment” statement were backed up by 89 per cent of the employees. Once again, to creatively improve the work environment for the employees is one of the main objectives for the People Operations team and the efforts seem to pay off.

As many as 76 per cent of the external respondents stated that ‘Interaction with international clients and colleagues’ was evident at Spotify. Internally, even though this quality was not specifically mentioned, great colleagues were one of the highest scoring attributes. The bullet social activities received 15 statements, friendly and familiar people received 15 and a few other high scoring bullets also revolved around this topic. As there are over 60 different nationalities working within the company – the internal survey alone received responses from over 15 different nationalities – an international mix of employees is evident at the case company. Socialisation among international colleagues is common at the case company. Whether or not socialisation with international clients happens or not can although not be verified through the empirical data. The case company’s employer branding activities definitely make impact on this subject by arranging hack week/hack days, after works and other social activities, as described in 5.4.1. A potential higher score from the external respondents could although probably be reached.

Within the people and culture category of the external survey, the parameter ‘Enabling me to integrate personal interests in my schedule’ received a low score of 34 per cent. The internal survey yielded a 92 per cent agreement level on the statement “I seek to become the best within my areas of interest and I am able to use many of these skills at work”. The fact that there is no problem for an employee to teach his/her skills in a personal interest to other employees, rather it is promoted (5.4.1), points to differentiations between the internal and external perceptions.

The meaning of the parameter ‘Respect for its people’ is ambiguous, although interesting. From the researchers perspective this will be interpreted as how well the
management takes care of and respects its employees. In the external survey, the above mentioned parameter only received a score of 52 per cent. Also, close to this parameter is ‘A friendly work environment’ that received 42 per cent agreements which is also a quite low score. While having a value mantra named ‘play fair’ (5.4.2), an employer branding department whose main objective is to take care of the employees (5.3) and the fact that many of the statements who received high scores in the internal survey, statement 2, 3, 9, 11, 17 and especially 21 and 24 in Appendix 6 – Survey Result concerns this subject, the external picture could definitely be raised a few levels.

The parameter ‘Recruiting only the best talent’ was not ranked as a very attractive quality in the external survey and received an average score of 52 per cent. Currently around 100 job ads on the job site receiving 1000 applications per week whereof only 400 will be accepted this year points to a quite detailed selection process. If this was not enough, the statement one in the internal survey “I have great colleagues that are smart, driven and dedicated, together we move the company forward” was to 100 per cent backed up by the employees. Further marketing efforts could also be made around this subject.

**Remuneration and advancement opportunities**

Both parameters ‘competitive base salary’ and ‘high future earnings’ received low scores in the external survey – only around 30 per cent. During the interviews, high monetary compensation was neither mentioned as a prominent attribute, nor did anyone complain about its default. According to 5.3, the employer-branding department has influence in this matter and seems to handle it properly.

Working for Spotify seemed to be a ‘Good reference for future career’, which was backed up by 80 per cent of the respondents in the external survey. This is definitely a good attribute that always ought to be promoted by the employer branding department. If the reasons behind this quite high score can be awarded to employer branding activities is hard to know, although they definitely play some part in the matter. While the company should try to hold on to its employees, as stated by Ambler and Barrow and Botha et al. in 2.3.3, this quality is not very interesting to promote internally although should definitely be marketed towards external stakeholders.

The last and also the least scoring parameter in the external survey ‘Clear path for advancement’ received only 5 per cent – an alarming low score! As mentioned before, the great development possibilities was the highest scoring bullet which means that personal development possibilities definitely exist, although whether or not these are linked to career advancements is not clear. Improving this score is definitely a task for the People Operations team. They should at least try to explain their view of career advancement at Spotify. External stakeholders need understand that the career path at Spotify might not be the usual way to climb, although that there is a way to climb.

**6.2.2 Summarising the internal and external perceptions**

While the external picture is in many cases much lower than the internal pictures, the employer branding activities within the case company must be considered to have a more internal focus. As stated by Dyhre and Parment in 2.3.2, when Ambler and Barrow introduced their theories in 1995, the focus was put on external stakeholders and potential candidates. Nowadays the employer branding theories has a more internal focus (Dyhre and Parment and Dahlström in 2.3.2). This proves that the case company has a forefront view on how employer branding should be applied.
It is also stressed several times that the employer brand communication should be genuine, honest and coherent (Botha et al. in 2.3.2). This is also a reason to try to lift the external employer brand. As long as the external perceptions do not overweigh the internal perceptions, more bragging can be made.

6.3 The case company’s EVP

In this chapter an analysis of the empirical data gathered to answer research question 2 is made. The question was:

What does an EVP for a forefront software company look like and how is it differentiated from its competitor’s EVP’s?

Since the EVP comes from in-depth interviews (5.3) with employees and the interviewees where chosen randomly from different positions within the firm it is very likely that the EVP from the interviews are the true EVP and not a product by management and HR-department. In 2.4.2 Parment and Dyhre (2009), Wilden et al. (2010), and James and Bibb (2010) all state that one of the most important attributes of an EVP is that it is true. In 2.4.1 Michaels, et al. (2001) agree that an EVP cannot be a paper product with loosely connected superlatives, an EVP should be what the employees experience everyday within the company.

6.3.1 The five elements of an EVP

According to Botha et al. (2011) and Browne (2012) an EVP contains five elements and it is according to these the EVP will be analysed, followed by a look how the EVP is differentiated.

The feeling of belonging in the organisation

The most emphasised part, by all interviewees, out of the whole employment experience was the colleagues at Spotify. This was thereafter confirmed via the survey since all the statements regarding colleagues were among those that scored the highest. The importance of the colleagues is also emphasised by the management (5.5.1, 5.7) All of this agrees very well with Michaels et al.’s (2001) opinion in (2.4.2) where they state that colleagues and co-workers is a company’s most valuable offering. Also James and Bibb (2010) agree that colleagues are an important part of an EVP.

All interviewees expressed in one way or another appreciation for that they felt they were an integrated part of the company and the group. That the connection to the end customer was so clear was also appreciated and agreed upon by the respondents. The fact that it is a well known company was very appreciated by many of the employees, which of many also felt a great passion for the product and really believes in it.(5.5.3, 5.5.6, 5.7). According to Wilden et al. (2010), Shah (2011) and Dyhre (2013) theories in (2.3) this is not only good for an EVP, it is also good for all the employer branding activities and the work moral among the employees. Creating a sense of belonging is pursuant to Chambers et al. (1998) and Bradley and Haley (2013) theories (2.3, 2.7.1). The external respondents rate the product as very attractive and thought that an employment at Spotify was very prestigious would be a great reference for the future career (5.6).

Many of the interviewees described the organisational structure as flat and the management as approachable. The autonomy in how to work and in problem solving was
also appreciated by several interviewees.(5.5.5) Statement 3 regarding flat organisation shows a high correlation with the final statement (6.1).

**Work content**

One frequently mentioned attribute was the varying, and fun, work tasks that also were continuously challenging with autonomy for the employees and the teams. Several interviewees said that the intrinsic motivation from the work tasks was the biggest reward.(5.5.2, 5.7) The statement regarding varying work tasks showed a very high correlation with the final statement.(6.1) This agrees very well with what Michaels *et al.*’s (2001) theories states: the by far most important ingredient of a great EVP is interesting and challenging work and also that the jobs should have elbowroom and headroom. It is also aligned with Botha *et al.*’s (2011) and Browne’s (2012) theories that an EVP should contain intrinsic motivation. In the external survey Spotify did not record a very high score compared to their competitors on varying work assignments but a very much higher score on challenging work. The environment was believed to be more creative and dynamic than that environment of the competitors according to the external respondents.(5.6) Since there is a big discrepancy between Spotify’s score and the competitors’ of how varying the work tasks are this might be something that should be communicated more.

**Career**

Since the organisation is relatively flat the possibility to do career in traditional meaning is reduced. This has not been mentioned as a disadvantage during the interviews, this might be since it still is a young company.(5.1, 5.5) This is not in line with Browne’s (2012) theories who say that career development is one of the most important factors for a strong EVP.

The People Operations team are aware of that this might be a problem and work with career development paths for engineers. They also work a lot with sending the people to courses and conferences as well as promoting in-house knowledge sharing.(5.3) During the interviews the knowledge sharing was mentioned several times and that the employees developed every day from the work tasks and speaking to colleagues.(5.5) From the survey the knowledge sharing and that people learn from coming to work was clearly agreed upon in the statements regarding this.(5.7) Some of these statements also show high correlation with statement 25.(6.1) This is according to Wilden *et al.* (2010) and Botha *et al.*’s (2011) theories, they mean that it is not obliged to be career development. The important is that the employees learn and develop in one way or another. In the external comparison Spotify generally scores lower on career and development, there are five questions regarding this and Spotify scores below average in four of them and much lower than average in some of them. For ’Rapid promotion’ Spotify scores above average.(5.6) The external perception of the learning and development is lacking in comparison and since the internal perception is higher it should be promoted more.

**Monetary compensation**

The pay was not never said to be too little, even dough a few interviewees hade lowered their wage when starting at Spotify. One interviewee said that Spotify paid well.(5.5.7) From the survey the question whether the respondents highest motivation was a high pay it was verified that this is not the case.(5.7) This is an attribute that is widely discussed by the theorists, they agree that the pay should be enough but will not do much to raise perception of the company if it is high. This is said by Pfeffer (1998), Chambers *et al.*
That some started at Spotify even though they lowered their pay verifies Browne (2012) and James and Bibb’s (2010) theories saying that top-performing companies can pay less and reduce their new hire costs. On the external survey Spotify scored lower than average regarding ‘High future earnings’ and ‘Competitive base salary’ (5.6.4). The external comparison shows that the salary level might be something that could do well from some more focus.

**Benefits**
The employees very much appreciate the social activities that are undertaken. Spotify is thought of as a caring company that still is in contact with the grassroots whit employees best for their eyes. It was also mentioned that there were problems to differ between work and leisure time. Thing like days of for Christmas and trips abroad was mentioned as valued benefits.(5.5.7) The survey confirmed that there never is a dull moment at Spotify and that the social activities are appreciated.(5.7) This is according to Browne (2012) and the CRF Institute’s (2010) theories and will also result in a lower absence leave for the company. The external survey gave Spotify a lower comparison score for the possibility to integrate personal interest in the schedule. Regarding respect for its people and about a friendly work environment Spotify scored about average.(5.6.3) All indicates that there is a discrepancy in the perception of the EVP that ought to be filled.

**6.3.2 Differentiation**
It was said that Spotify is the only company of its kind in Europe (5.5.5). Several interviewees said that the level of colleagues was much higher than they had experienced before and that they learnt a lot from them. The passion for the product, from the employees and the users, was also something that had not been experienced before. Some appreciated very much that they could combine their interest in music with their work. The work tasks were more varying than people had experienced before and the autonomy in how to proceed and solve the problems was also new. The extent to which there are social involvements and activities was mentioned as unique. There are several aspects of the Spotify EVP that is matchless and of course are not.(5.4, 5.5) Externally there are some fields where Spotify is well above average, quite a few were they are on average and some where they are below.(5.6) Every revised theoretician discussing the content and design of the EVP states clearly that the EVP needs to been differentiated from all other companies’ EVPs.(2.4) In some field Spotify’s EVP absolutely manage to stick out of the crowd considerably and in most fields it sticks out more or less.

**6.4 Organisational culture’s effect on the EVP**
In this chapter an analysis of the empirical data gathered to answer research question 3 is made. The question was:

*In which ways is the organisational culture in a forefront software company noticeable and which effects do these have on the EVP?*

**6.4.1 The company culture’s evolvement**
As Roxanna (2012) explained in 2.7.2, the development of a culture starts with the founder, first owner or current manager. In 5.1, Daniel Ek is described and he fits each and every attribute of this role. Martin Lorentzon could probably also be a candidate although not to the same extent as he currently has a less active position within the company. In a cultural aspect Daniel Ek can therefore be seen as the hero who to a wide extent helped building the initial culture and therefore his personal, as well as national values have been transferred into the company.
In the beginning of 2013, as the company has above 800 employees (5.1) the culture has developed and along with it quite a few subcultures too. The creation of the value mantras as described in 5.4.2 is one step towards withholding the original culture, differentiate from others, and to see to that the subcultures does not take overhand and thereby making the culture uncontrollable, which are risks Roxanna alerts of in 2.7.2.

6.4.2 Categorising the empirical findings
According to Schein’s model for organisational culture, as described in chapter 2.7.3, organisational culture can be divided into three categories: artefacts and rituals, beliefs and values, and tacit assumptions. The more attributes awarded to a certain category, the stronger the culture. The empirical findings is discussed below and categorised accordingly in order to understand how strong the organisational culture of the case company is.

Artefacts and rituals
Several artefacts and rituals within the case company could be recognised. As presented in 5.4.1, the whole office expresses a strong organisational culture through the artefacts like the painted walls, the game and relaxing rooms, the trophy room and the value mantra signs and stickers. Activities that could be recognised as rituals are e.g. the town halls, the stand-up meetings and the Friday after works. According to Schein in 2.7.3, all of the above mentioned objects and activities are deliberate or unintentional reasons to a strong company culture.

In chapter 5.4.1 the notice of guitar and tango lessons and a casual dress code with the exception of “fancy Fridays” are presented. In 2.4.2 Michaels et al states that dancing lessons, more casual dress codes or other benefits might not be the main attributes of an attractive EVP and only make small contributions to this. This again raises the question on which parts of the organisational culture that promotes an attractive EVP the most. As explained in 2.4.3 every company has to find its own method for extracting their EVP and it is therefore hard to pinpoint which attributes that plays the bigger part. Investigating and mapping the organisational culture can help develop part of the EVP. Although, which parts of the culture that is of highest value to its employees will have to be established through interviews or surveys – just like James and Bibb state in chapter 2.4.3 and have been done in this report. The significance of each attribute within the EVP can be seen in chapter 5.5.

Beliefs and values
In 2.7.3 Schein describes Beliefs and values as the common thought patterns often taken for granted or the preferred ways of acting. While attributes of this category are harder to detect than the ones in Artefacts and rituals, even though a few was found, the findings were not as extensive as in the previous chapter.

The development of the value mantras, presented in chapter 5.4.2, was the most obvious way the management promoted a strong organisational culture within the case company. In chapter 2.3.1 it is mentioned that employer branding today is more about inspiring and engaging the employees rather than controlling them. Even though the value mantras were extracted through collaboration with the employees, a tactic promoted by Berge in 2.8, in the end, it was still the management that had the last word on how these value mantras should look like. By doing so, this action of creating the value mantras must be seen more as controlling rather than inspiring. This finding could be underpinned by the
interviewed employees who definitely found the value mantras exemplary, even though they did not always use these value mantras themselves (5.4.2). According to theories within organisational theory (2.8, 2.7.2) the creation of these value mantras is a supported act. However, from an employer branding perspective where inspiring rather than controlling is the preferred way of working, it might not have been the most correct way to work out these value mantras. This finding seems to enhance the differences between the two different theories.

Other discoveries within the Beliefs and values category (2.7.3) were the approaches of problem solving and importance of time, also illustrated in figure 8. Common problem solving techniques were to discuss the problem with a colleague who might have a higher expertise in the area or to make several iterations until the final solution worked. The importance of time seemed to be dubious, when an employee entered or left the office did not seem to matter although when having a meeting scheduled, not many arrived late. Both of these two findings seemed to have a great effect on the EVP where freedom, flexibility, knowledge sharing through accessible colleagues all received high points in the survey (5.5.2, 5.5.4)

**Tacit assumptions**

While attributes within this category is very hard to recognise and the researchers only spent a relatively short period at the case company, no findings under this category could be discovered.

**6.4.3 A general perspective of the categories**

Schein highlights in 2.7.3 the importance for a mission-oriented company of having these categories well aligned. So, are they aligned? As the culture has developed from the programming and music-loving Daniel Ek, the passion for these two interests pervades the company. Music in the loudspeakers, bands playing on after works, hack weeks/hack days and a playful and creative office as mentioned in 5.4.1 is but a few of the examples of an aligned company culture. However, as the company now is transforming into a multinational cooperation where more and more business support functions, new departments and thereby new types of colleagues are necessary, the original culture might diminish (2.7.2). Therefore it is important to keep on strengthening the original culture but also, as mentioned by Schneider in 2.7.1, to continue recruit like-minded people and promote socialisation between different functions.

To summarise, many empirical discoveries can be awarded to the organisational culture category and thereby promote a strong company culture. One of the interesting aspects of this is that this strong culture have emerged under just a few years while the company has only been active since 2006. This goes against Lewis and others, in 2.5.1, who means that culture takes a very long time to develop. Reasons behind this are debateable, although a lot of time and effort and in later years a lot of resources spent in/on the office are probable causes. While the theories have proven that there is a connection between EVP and organisational culture (2.3.1, 2.3.2 2.4.2, 2.7.1), the question is if the fast development of a strong culture also can help produce a strong and attractive EVP? Many of the EVP discoveries made in 6.4 can be related to the organisational culture described in chapter 5.4.1 so the answer to this question is yes – a strong company culture can make it easier to build an attractive EVP.
6.5 Cultural customisation

In this chapter an analysis of the empirical data gathered to answer research question 4 is made. The question was:

How is the EVP of a forefront software company perceived by different national cultures and how can this EVP be customised towards these national cultures?

During the interviews there were differences in how frequent some subjects were mentioned among the different nationalities. The survey clearly shows differences in how the different statements are perceived by Swedes and Americans. When the differences are taken in to account it is possible to emphasise the EVP according to the preferences for each nationality that has been taken in to consideration. That a EVP should not be static but dynamic and customised so that it appeals to all different groups of interest for the company according to Michaels, et al. (2001), Chambers, et al. (1998) the CRF Institute (2010), James and Bibb (2010), and Browne (2012).

Looking at the third column in Table 3 it is easy to see the score given by Swedes and Americans in comparison. However the comparison is somewhat complicated by the fact that the majority of the of the Swedish respondents work in the Stockholm office and the majority of the Americans work in the New York office. Between those two offices it is said to be several differences. (5.5)

6.5.1 The national differences within Spotify

The differences between the two countries in Hofstede’s five dimensions can be seen in chapter 5.8. Hofstede’s five dimensions will be the following subchapters according to which the analysis will follow.

Power distance
Both countries scored low in this category and within ten per cent from each other (5.8). According to this there should not be any bigger differences between how the EVP is perceived. That is not the picture that emerged during the interviews with some of the Americans. The Americans experience the hierarchy as very flat, pleasantly marvelled by the approachable managers and discussion that precedes decisions. Some Americans stretched as far as to say that the organisational culture was very preferable to the American corporate culture and unique to them. (5.5.5) The Americans gave a higher score on statement 18, indicating that they have more freedom to decide how to solve the problems they encounter (5.8). With the knowledge of the scores according to Hofstede in 5.8 it is probably so that they interpret the same level of freedom differently because of the national culture. Consequently Spotify’s EVP will stand out a bit more in this respect to Americans and other nationalities that score higher on this dimension. That is very much in line with Parment and Dyhre (2009), James and Bibb (2010) and Wilden et al.’s (2010) theories, which suggest that an EVP needs to be differentiated.

Individualism versus Collectivism
Both countries scored high on this dimension even though the Americans scored 20 per cent higher (5.8). During the interviews there was no question that drew focus to this dimension and the differences were not that large to be mentioned by the interviewees. (5.5) Statement 2 gets a higher score by the Americans. This is probably because knowledge sharing in some sense has more to do with collectivism, which is more evident in Swedish national culture than the in American. This ought to be more
appreciated by the Swedes for the same reason. Statement 19 gets higher score by the Swedes, according to Hofstede in 5.8.

**Masculinity versus Femininity**

This dimension is where the countries differs the most, Sweden is a very feminine society were as the United States is a masculine society (5.8). According to the interviewees responses the Swedish feminine corporate culture is transparently obvious in the corporate culture. A lot of team work, the extensive feedback given by the managers, knowledge sharing, extensive discussions before changes are being done, flexible work hours, autonomy and mutual trust etc. (5.5). On control statement 23 in the survey regarding high wage the Swedes gave a higher score than the Americans (6.1). Which is not in accordance with Hofstede empirical findings in 5.8, could it be that the Americans, or Swedes, within Spotify are different from general person in each country? The Swedes like the flexible working hour more – statement 11 –, while the Americans gave higher score to the fact that there was no clear line between leisure time and work due to inter alia, flexible working hours – statement 13 – (6.1). The first part is in accordance with Hofstede’s as well as the second where Hofstede says that Americans ‘live to work’ (5.8). There ought to be more differences according to Hofstede’s findings, but they have not been detected.

**Uncertainty avoidance**

Both countries are uncertainty accepting, the Americans score higher but it is within 20 per cent (5.8). The varying work tasks, the fast moving company and the constant changes in the organisation structure creates uncertainty but it is handled well by the employees (5.5). On the external survey Spotify scored lowest among all the comparison firms regarding ‘secure employment’ (5.6). This is not verified via the survey but seems as organisational culture is consistent with both countries national cultures. All the parts that add to the uncertainty ought to be more appreciated by the Swedes than the Americans (5.8).

**Long-term orientation**

Both countries are short-term oriented and within less than ten per cent from each other (5.8). This fits well with an organisation that is fast moving, with a rapid expansion rate, constant reorganisations and constant improvements. Most interviewees mentioned all the social activities as something very positive and the good colleagues that were regarded as close friend by several were also mentioned.(5.5) There are no differences to be seen between the two nationalities in the survey responses.(6.1) The short-term attributes should be a bit more appreciated by the Swedes according to Hofstede’s findings (5.8).

6.5.2 Degree of customisation

There are differences between the two nationalities but the differences ought to be greater according to Hofstede’s empirical findings than they are according to that that have emerged preceding paragraphs. The differences in the scores given on the survey are never greater than 15 per cent, and that is not at all as great as expected. Especially for the dimension ‘Masculinity / Femininity’ the differences should show much more.

The analysis gives quite clear that the organisation culture is feminine just like the Swedish culture, according to Hofstede the general American should show greater resistance towards this. This complies very well the statement that ‘geeks’ have their own culture and that they are not to the same extent affected by national cultures as non-‘geeks’ (5.4.1).
7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Through the conclusions, the purpose of the report is fulfilled and a final EVP for the case company is presented. Moreover a discussion about the findings is offered, as well as recommendations for the case company and opportunities for future research.

7.1 The unadapted EVP

The main purpose of this study was to find an EVP and thereby the attributes that are the most compelling to attract talented software developers. By investigating the findings from the case company’s employees, many of them very talented within their specific areas, and connecting these findings with the theories from the empirical chapter, the most valuable parts of an EVP for the case company could be recognised.

An EVP focusing on great colleagues

Some of the most prominent proposals the case company had to offer, presented without any specific order, were:

- Great colleagues
- Close connection between employee and end customer
- Well known company
- Great passion for the product
- Belief in the product
- Autonomy in the work
- Flat organisation
- Varying and fun work tasks
- Challenging work tasks
- Opportunities to attend courses and attend conferences
- In-house-knowledge sharing
- Learning and development
- Social activities
- Never a dull moment
- A high skill level on the colleagues
- Ability for the employee to combine his/her interests with their work

Every EVP is unique

Important to have in mind when looking at these offerings is that they may be attractive for the case company’s target group, although, while an EVP has to be true and differentiated, they cannot be seen as a feasible general solution for attracting all types of talented software developers. Each and every company has to find its own way to do this.

A strong company culture has a great effect on the EVP

Due to the great similarities between a company’s EVP and its organisational culture, it was decided to investigate organisational culture as well. The main target was to extract an EVP and some of the EVP was assumed to be hidden inside the organisational culture. From the analysis in 6.4, no new attributes in addition to the ones discovered through the interviews could be found. But the company has great impact on the EVP even though it is hard to extract, it still affects everything within the company and very much a vital part of the company.
**National adaption not needed**

Culture was also thought to have an impact on the emphasis of different attributes between different nationalities. This aspect was expected to be extra relevant for multinational companies. In the analysis in 6.5, even though some minor differences were found, a cultural adaption of the case company’s EVP does not seem to be required.

### 7.2 Discussion

As proposed by Wilden *et al* (2010), building alumni networks is an employer branding activity companies should engage in. While extracting empirical data, a low engagement in building alumni networks was found (6.2). Reasons for this are probably that the company is still young and the turnover rate is low, and thereby also the number of alumni. A recommendation for action was therefore not made.

The comparison between internal and external view in 6.2.1 yielded interesting results. Even though the external had many more parameters, analysing all of them did not seem worthwhile to investigate to fulfil the purpose of this report. If there were no clear links between the employer branding activities and the results from the external survey, the internal survey and the interviews, no analysis was made. If for example the parameter within the external survey did not seem to be an activity that could have been strengthened by the employer-branding department alone or if the parameter did not seem to be attractive for the target group, then no connections could be established and therefore an analysis would not create any value. This may have affected the conclusions on a minor degree although from a more general perspective, these parameters ought not to have any impact on the final EVP.

In the Current Science chapter several similarities between organisational culture and employer branding were found. The researchers’ hopes’ were to find support within the culture that could help build the EVP. This was also the case, although, none of the findings provided any information that the interviews and the survey could not also provide. In addition, the attributes extracted through the survey and the interviews could be rated. To objectively study the organisational culture and make an internal rating of the discovered attributes is difficult. Maybe if a deeper investigation of Hofstede’s cultural research had been made, this rating could have been made and organisational culture could then have been meaningful to examine.

As a result of the analysis in 6.5.2, culture might not play a part in a multinational company’s EVP. When investigating the customisation of the EVP towards different nations, only a few differences were found. According to prior research, many more differences between the two nations investigated, Sweden and the United states should have been discovered and those that were discovered should have been greater. It is said that ‘geeks’ might have a culture of their own (5.4.1). Chapter 2.5.1 states that culture will not be changed easily. However, maybe in forefront industries, such as the IT business, where information exchange is much more rapid, the cultural evolvement might happen much faster. As found in 6.4.1, the case company’s culture has evolved very fast. The research from Hofstede is said to demonstrate stable results (2.10), although in this particular branch, his results might not be applicable. Whether or not this is true cannot be claimed through the results of this study.
7.3 Recommendations

As stated several times in the Current Science chapter it is important to have a true EVP. In order to have a true EVP the internal brand and the external brand ought to be equivalent, although this is not the reality for the case company. From the analysis in 5.3 some recommendations to the case company was found. Table 4 - Improvement proposals for the employer branding activities of the case company highlights the discrepancies between the internal and external brand as well as presents internal improvement areas. Furthermore, a column of areas where no improvements were needed to be made is also presented. These areas either already exhibited a very high level of attraction or there was not enough information about the specific area to make any recommendation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal improvements</th>
<th>External Improvements</th>
<th>No actions recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring management</td>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>Fast growing/entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders will support my development</td>
<td>Professional training and development</td>
<td>A creative and dynamic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear path for advancement</td>
<td>Opportunities for international travel and relocation</td>
<td>Competitive base salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction with international clients and colleagues</td>
<td>High future earnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enabling me to integrate personal interests in my schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect for its people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A friendly work environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruiting only the best talent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good reference for future career</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated above, while an EVP should be true, the internal improvements have to be made before the external improvements. Therefore management and clear career paths are areas, which have to be improved through internal marketing activities before any of these can be included within the EVP.

The external improvements on the other hand address areas that definitely should be included in the EVP in order to get a more equivalent and thereby more true picture.

An example of an EVP for the case company containing 13 statements can be found in Appendix 7 – EVP 1. A shorter EVP that describes what an EVP is good for and the process that has been put in to making it can be found in Appendix 8 – EVP 2. In Appendix 9 – EVP 3 there is a graphical EVP that is not very concrete but more contains a feeling of what it is like to be a part of the case company.
7.4 Future research

The analysis in 6.5.2 and the discussion in the above chapter have opened up for further research regarding if ‘geeks’ are less affected by national culture than others. The small differences that were visible between the nationalities points towards verifying the statement expressed by several employees – geeks and nerds have their own type of culture. To verify this, further research in the subject ought to be made.

To investigate organisational culture in order to build a good EVP seemed to be unnecessary in this case. Although, as many theoreticians states, there is no precise way for building an EVP, every company has to find its own way to do this. Even if the findings were not helpful in this case, they might have been helpful for another company. No definite conclusions can therefore be drawn from this single report on whether or not organisational culture should be investigated or not when extracting an EVP. To be able to claim this, more detailed research in the area ought to be made.
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Appendix 1 – Interview questions

Questions for creating an EVP

1. What do you love about working at Spotify?
2. Why did you decide to join the band in the first place?
3. What defines Spotify’s employment experience?
4. Which are the unique offerings to the employees?
5. What makes this workplace more attractive than its competitor’s?
6. What makes you get up in the morning and go to work?
7. What is expected of you?
8. What drives you in your work?
9. Do you know how your work contributes for Spotify to reach the goals? How?
10. What is positive with your work environment?
11. How do you believe other employees experience Spotify as an employer?
12. Which values guide your work?
13. Is ‘Play everywhere’ and the other value mantras in line with how you experience your situation at Spotify?
14. What makes Spotify a great place to work in the sense of:
   a. Work tasks?
   b. The organisation?
   c. Development possibilities?
   d. Leadership?
   e. Lifestyle?
   f. Rewards?
   g. Colleagues?
15. Describe in a few words what is special or unique about your organisation or what it provides.
16. Would you be willing to trade a raise in salary for some other benefit? What kind of benefit would that be?
17. How do you think Spotify could develop itself to become a more attractive as an employer?
18. You are at a BBQ. What would you brag about to your old colleagues?
19. What is the craziest thing you’ve experienced since you started here?
Appendix 2 – Interviewees

Interview 1 – Web Developer, Stockholm
Interview 2 – Test Automation Developer, Stockholm
Interview 3 – Android Developer, Stockholm
Interview 4 – Director of Product Development, Stockholm
Interview 5 – Legal Counsel, San Francisco
Interview 6 – Tribe Lead, Stockholm
Interview 7 – Product Designer, Stockholm
Interview 8 – Content Engineer, Stockholm
Interview 9 – Product Owner, Mobile, Stockholm
Interview 10 – Software Engineer, New York
Interview 11 – Director of Product Design, Stockholm
Interview 12 – Desktop Team Lead, Stockholm
Interview 13 – Senior Software Engineer, Stockholm
Interview 14 – Software Engineer, New York
Interview 15 – Site Reliability Engineer, New York
Appendix 3 – Summary of Interviews

Summary of Bullets

Passion for music
- At Spotify I can combine my biggest hobby with my field of work.
- The combination of music and programming made me join the band.
- The best thing with Spotify is that I get to work with what I love, music.
- That you can work really close to the music industry if you’re a big music fan.
- That my work tasks are related to music makes Spotify a great place to work.
- There are many benefits working within a company in the music industry

Teaming for success
- I love the people around me and the challenges we end up solving together.
- You’ve got smart people around you and it’s up to your squad and you to decide how to work and what we build.
- The main drive is the will to do a good job and appreciation. You know that you do really good stuff together and deliver a really good product.
- Strong team spirit and tight relationships makes my colleagues great
- My foremost inspiration comes from my team. Everyone is so driven and wants to move forward.
- The opportunity to work in small team that works with a lot of cool stuff is awesome.
- Each individual squad works as a start-up.
- Here we work together in teams where everyone feels responsible.
- Teamwork and continuous communication between teammates. We have team meetings every day.
- To be in a good team that’s really dedicated and no matter where you are in the organisation it’s easy to get influence.

Programming community
- The enthusiasm for programming among colleagues creates a drive for the work.
- There’s a sense of community among the programmers with the same level of interest of programming.
- The hackathons and programming conferences and so on are very appreciated.
- The job satisfies my theoretical interest.
- We aim to become experts at our different areas, not to climb a ladder.
- Doing interesting things with interesting and like minded people.
- Programming values exist here, things should be readable and be able to pass on to others.
- Some people come here only because of the technical challenges and does not care at all about music.

Design community
- Design week makes people share knowledge and gain experience
Smart colleagues with a drive
- It’s an extremely inspiring environment with smart, driven and dedicated colleagues.
- There is a strong drive to see the result of the work being done, by me or by my colleagues.
- Colleagues keep a very high level and they are smart and dedicated. You can truly trust that the job gets done.
- The colleagues are a large part of what makes this an incredible company.
- The calibre of the people pushes you to learn and it is great people to work with.
- The colleagues are extremely competent.
- My colleagues is the best with my work environment, they are all extremely competent.
- The colleagues are really smart and engaged and that makes it fun to work with them.
- The colleagues make me want to come to work everyday. It’s very high class on the people you work with. You’re challenged and develop all the time.
- Really awesome colleagues that keep really high class, that’s motivating and challenging.
- The colleagues are the best things, all of them keep a really high level and I learn a lot from them.
- The colleagues are great! Everyone is crazily interested about what they are doing and have exciting project on the side. There is engagement to 110%, some can sit and fix small bugs on their spare time.
- The mix of smart and driven people is something I love with Spotify
- Mutual competition, although always in a good way, to get more driven and efficient co-workers.
- The people at Spotify are very welcoming, social and insanely smart.
- All people here is very driven.
- We have people who’ve built utorrent, we have people who have done this, we have people who’ve done that...
- My colleagues drive me in my work.
- I love the people I work with. They are driven, passionate and they have a lot of opinions.
- Driven, good, smart and fun colleagues.
- The confidence of my peers is what makes it exciting to come to work everyday.
- Smart colleagues with a lot of knowledge.
- My colleagues possess a lot of knowledge.
- The challenges and the colleagues is what make me go to work in the morning.

Passion for the product
- The product is something that I really believe in and really, really care about. I loved the product from the start.
- There’s an enormous dedication for the product and the company among employees.
- The thing I love about Spotify is the passion for the product among employees and customers. People care whether it works and how it works.
- It’s a product that is fun to work with and to use.
- I joined the band since it was an exciting product that I used daily before starting here.
- I’ve loved the product from the start and have been a paying subscriber for as long as it’s been possible.
- The best is that you get to work on a product that you use and really like.
- We provide our user with a terrific music experience.
- The product and the future of the music industry is awesome.
- I joined the band because of the amazing product that Spotify delivers.
- The product is music, which is an important part of people’s lives.
- We work with music. People love music.
- We all want to make a really good product. The job offers challenging and fun solutions.
- There’s a lot of passion, everyone - at every level - is passionate about what they’re doing.

**On a mission to succeed**

- I’ve got a will for Spotify to succeed. I want us to win.
- I get up in the morning for us to be the best music experience and make sure that happens.
- Within Spotify there’s an attitude of ‘Just do it’ and ‘Can do’.
- We are here to win and therefore takes on problems that other people find impossible to solve
- Helpful colleagues that are here for a bigger cause
- I joined the band because I want to help the company in reaching its goals
- Our value mantra “go big or go home” is crucial for success.
- There is always a way to find a solution in some way within this organisation.
- Everyone tries to do their best.

**Reaching millions of people**

- The real reward is to see your friend use something that you built. ‘I made this persons life better’ you can feel.
- When I see someone using Spotify on their phone I think: ‘A little bit of me is in their pocket!’
- We deliver a product of quality to millions of users.
- It is amazing to work directly towards the customer with a strong impact on millions.
- It’s not just a job, it’s emotions attached to what we are doing. That’s makes it so that people are engaged in the product we are building. Believe in the product and care about it.
- Reach a vast amount of paying users
- The product is music which affects many people
- The ability to change something and affect millions of people
- Through your work, you reach millions of users
- The many customers/users we reach everyday drives me.
- This organisation is great because of the reach of what you work with
- We influence many people’s lives
- We reach out to millions of people.
What we do is seen by a lot of people - it is both a possibility to affect a great mass but also to almost instantly get rewarded for your work.

My friends using Spotify can get mad at me as well if I don’t do things well. Therefore I always try to do things as good as I can.

People have a personal relation to the company. That is something quite unique.

It’s a nice bonus that the change affects millions of people.

**Change the world**

This workplace attractive when you believe in the revolution of music.

The work is great since I get the possibility to affect something that’s used by millions of users.

It’s not just a job, I know that I’m going to affect peoples lives, not any lives, mine and my friends as well.

The biggest reward is being a part of building something that changes people’s lives.

The unique thing here is that you’re a part of revolutionizing people’s music experience.

The possibilities to affect other people drive me in my work.

The vision to change the world and how people consume music and the approach to achieving that mission.

**Making a change**

The potential of this company is one of the reasons I joined the band.

To spread music is more important than deliver high revenue for the investors.

Music affects and has great impact on people. At Spotify we are making the world a little better everyday by spreading that music.

My work is fun and that motivates me. It’s fun to work with something that is the best of it’s kind in the world.

I like that I get to job with consumer goods that goes well and is fast growing with millions of user.

Belief in what Spotify does and belief in the product itself is motivating.

**Challenging work tasks**

Very fun work assignments with problems that are very fun to solve, very complex most of all.

What's unique about Spotify is that you’re challenged to think on your own and come up with new solutions.

It is fun and challenging to work here. I get a lot of energy and excitement of coming to work everyday but it is certainly never an easy thing.

Advanced technical challenges made me join Spotify.

Technical and challenging tasks make this company different from other software companies.

The work itself and the challenges makes me want to go to work in the morning.

The technical challenges we face are in many times unique.

Here you get a lot of challenges you never would have encountered at other places.
Challenging problem solving. You can be thinking about a problem during your leisure time and suddenly you feel that you’ve come up with a possible solution and want to go to work just to see if it works.

- The challenges drive me in my work.
- Challenging work tasks.
- It’s interesting challenges that are encountered in the work, no stress even though there is a lot to do.

**Varying work tasks**

- There are a huge variety of work tasks so everyone should be able to find something that fits them.
- The mix between doing something that is fun but at the same time quite serious
- The challenges here are very broad and covers many different areas
- You can easily switch teams if you want to try something else
- A variety of problems, but technical and more general, it’s up to you
- The work tasks at Spotify are very varying. There are always new challenges and new problems to solve. Never repetitive. You get to do stuff you never thought you would work with.

**Participation, contribution and making a difference**

- The reason to go to work in the morning is involvement.
- There’s a clear link between my work and how that helps Spotify to reach its goals.
- It is super important what I do and I absolutely see a clear mapping between what I do and how that maps to reaching the goals of Spotify.
- At this workplace you feel that it makes a big difference what you do, you can affect the product with your efforts.
- There’s a very clear mapping between my work versus how Spotify is growing.
- Yes it’s a very clear link between what I do and Spotify's goal.
- I feel that I do difference, what I do matters. We’re building Spotify’s future.
- There is a desire, among the employees, to achieve something and to make a contribution.
- It’s fun to know that the stuff is being used and that you feel that you fill a function.
- You can work in almost any position within this company and make an impact.
- The possibility to make a difference drives me.
- The more work you do, the better the product becomes, the more people it reaches and the more people it affects.
- Working at Spotify at this time is a unique opportunity. Here you still have a lot of power to influence major decisions.
- The challenge is the best thing working here, to build a product that can become really good and even best in the world. Feel a meaning with the work, making the user happy around the world.
- People like working here, there are not many complaints, you always see how your work contributes to Spotify
● If you believe in something, you can make it happen.
● It is expected of me that I deliver
● It is expected of me that I drive the organization forward
● I can see how my work helps Spotify reach its goals.
● A lot of interaction and discussion, there is no best way to do things.
● I know how my work contributes to Spotify’s goals.
● It’s good that we talk about everything, as the company grows bigger, the mistakes you do also have greater impact, therefore it gets more and more important to avoid them.
● Continuous delivery is very important. Also there’s a will to perform well at all times.
● Discussion and compromising is important for continuous improvement.
● You can easily see your contribution. We’re continuously improving the product.
● There’s a very clear mapping between what I do in my everyday work and how that leads to Spotify reaching their goals.

**Great personal development possibilities**
● It's very fun problems to solve and that makes you continuously evolve and develop.
● The biggest development possibilities come from the smart colleagues and learning by doing is allowed.
● There are a lot of opportunities to learn from the people within Spotify.
● You have developed to be able to even stay in your position, the red queen problem.
● Good feedback, initiatives that ensure that employees get 360-degree feedback.
● Are you driven the sky is the limit to your development, working at Spotify.
● All employees come from a varied background, which make that you can learn from everybody.
● As employed within Spotify you grow and learn as an engineer, and it’s encouraged. All the feedback makes the work environment incredibly positive.
● There is a lot of recruitments from within and there is a lot of support for people in new positions. Heaps of courses and help to move you forward, there is never a NO given for a request to attend a course.
● Your development at Spotify is all up to you. Driven people evolve rapidly. Not so driven, not so rapidly.
● If you are ready to pitch in, there is great opportunity for you to develop.
● Feedback, coaching, peers... Just a few of the things that make you develop at Spotify.
● No detailed controlling from managers. Let’s you evolve in the direction you want.
● There are no direct development possibilities but if you put yourself forward you will also grow. There’s always possibilities to career and move to a new position.
● The teammates and that you learn new stuff everyday is motivating.
● I have no desire to be the smartest guy in the company. I have a need for continuous learning.
● Trainings, conferences, colleagues.. You can develop in whatever way you find is the best.
● The backpack of experience grows fast.
● Having people with more experience in your surrounding opens your mind.
● By performing different various tasks all the time, I develop a lot.
• I learn by executing tasks and finding my own way to solve them.
• I learn through the knowledge of my colleagues.
• Spotify is an interesting, developing and challenging work place.
• Here is a lot of people who can teach me a lot.
• You learn a lot here.
• My colleagues are great, I can learn a lot from them.
• At Spotify you learn a lot of new things, one example is new programming languages.
• Very easy to move around within the company.
• Smart colleagues with a lot of knowledge.
• Courses, conferences, add-ons (Knowledge sharing). Great development opportunities

Knowledge sharing
• At Spotify knowledge is a shared thing. Everyone can easily find out what’s going on.
• At Spotify it’s easy to bump ideas and learn.
• Colleagues are willing to share information and learn.
• Knowledge sharing between departments is great.
• You can reach out to anyone in the office, this makes you grow personally.
• A lot of innovation and knowledge sharing is needed to create new solutions.
• People here strive to be open and helpful.
• I get inspiration from meeting with other companies and discussing similar problems with them as we bump into.
• People are always available here.
• It’s a lot of give and take.
• You can share your opinion easily and by getting feedback on your opinions you learn a lot.
• Relaxed colleagues are more easily available. Here you can ask anyone anything.
• People know a lot and they share with pleasure. No egocentrism or anything like that. It’s more of a let’s learn-attitude.
• Helpful colleagues that share knowledge.
• The organisation encourages partnership.
• There is a lot of knowledge sharing and that’s encouraged thru a lot of external courses and meetings within the company and with other companies.

Autonomy in work
• Freedom in what you do.
• The expectations set for me is to achieve the goals that have been made by me within the group.
• The job comes with the autonomy to plan your future yourself, the autonomy make you value your work. You get to build and plan for the future of the product.
• That I’m a part of planning my own work makes a lot for getting me to work each day since the effort needed for the day is clear.
• There’s a drive to develop personally and learn, you get that from great responsibility without exact guidelines.
● The autonomous teams work really well. They’re very effective and deliver in a fast phase. Every employee has power in the organisation.

● Freedom in how to achieve goals

● You get your own area of responsibility

● The ability to affect your own work tasks so that what you do helps Spotify in the way it was originally intended.

● Leaders empowers you

● I do what I think is fun and don’t care too much about the leaders.

● Responsibility for what you do. Here we want to get back to the workplace after a semester

● Freedom with responsibility is the most distinctive component with an employment here.

● Working here is freedom with responsibility, as long as you do something that’s good for Spotify you can often do what you want. The Americans tend to have a bit harder with the freedom at start, but it’s more based on individual than nationality.

● You can work with whatever you want to work with

● The company empowers you, both in terms of time and money, to both conquer great challenges or organize activities in the leisure time

● What I do makes sense, the goals are clear and I understand how I contribute.

● Everyone trusts each other here. Everyone expects that you do your job in some way or another. How you do it is up to you.

● At Spotify you get to decide which challenges you want to work with, you feel empowered rather than directed

● I can help Spotify advance in a various amount of tasks.

● Everyone is responsible for leading the company. Everyone wants to move forward.

● Squads are to a wide extent independent.

● At first the colleagues drives you, then you start proposing tasks yourself.

● You don’t follow other peoples command. Here are so many things to do, you just grab one of them end start working.

● You get your own area of responsibility and therefore you have an extra level of focus in all that you do.

● From an early stage in your employment you get freedom and trust.

● Freedom with responsibility is a big difference at least in the US. To Sweden it’s a cool IT-company, one of it’s kind in Europe.

Freedom, flexibility and mutual trust

● Freedom with responsibility.

● You can have any lifestyle you want, you can work whenever you want to and spend the time as you like. I love being at work.

● Spotify offers a very free lifestyle with flexibility in the workplace and in working time.

● Spotify offers a very flexible lifestyle, focus on contribution rather than on hours.

● Spotify offers a great flexibility in that you can work whatever hours you want. Every employee decides how to apply Spotify to his or her lifestyle.

● You’re not locked to your craft. You can broaden and move around.

● Freedom in what you do is something I love with Spotify.
● Freedom and driven people makes a very good combination
● The freedom of scheduling your own time makes you able to handle a lot of stress and keeps you motivated.
● Flexibility and freedom over which periods you want to work more or less.
● Expected of me is something, but at the same time nothing. Freedom with responsibility. Everyone delivers his or her promise.
● People trust each other
● Freedom and responsibility combined is what makes Spotify a great place to work.
● Internally Spotify is a very open company
● Work times are truly flexible
● Flexible time table and the opportunity to work whenever I find it appropriate
● Freedom with responsibility rules here.
● It is expected of me that I plan my time on my own
● We don’t have super specific times of when to go to work, it’s up to you.
● I don’t feel stressed about going to work because there are not any restrictions.
● Not too much pressure, not too little either.
● You are never forced into completing a task.
● A lot of freedom leads to stronger motivation.
● No one judges you if you do not work the usual 8-5.
● Freedom with responsibility.
● There’s a lot of trust, the leadership trust that you know what you are doing and that increases your will to contribute, you get a freedom in how you operate. They are more leaders than managers, never micromanaging.

**Fast moving and never a dull moment**

● There’s a lot of communication in the workplace and a stress level that make you perform at your best. There is always something happening.
● Working at Spotify means high pace and everyone is willing to go all in when it’s needed.
● It's a versatile exciting environment generally in the office. There are very smart people in the company.
● An employment here is defined as being eventful, challenging, hard and though.
● The company and the organisation is flexible and fast moving.
● Spotify is a organisation that is optimized for speed, so no problem changing it to match the goals and communication is encouraged.
● The drive and the speed is really good, it’s never stands still. There’s never an everyday trot, very much happens all the time.
● There is always something happening at Spotify. Spotify never stops.
● The feeling of missing out on good and interesting things when not showing up at the office.
● Here we handle things fast
● This is an ever-changing fast paced workplace. Here stuff happen all the time. We are constantly moving forward
**Straight away consumer feedback**
- You get feedback straight away what the users think of the product.
- You work almost directly towards the end consumer and get straight away feedback, at least when something is wrong.
- There’s a short link between the job and appreciation from the user.
- Straight away feedback from friends, colleagues and of course data.

**Leading edge with innovation and creativeness**
- The best with the work is that you get to work with new features and not revising ancient code and that the code you write is deploy to millions of users.
- This is one of few company of this kind in Europe, regarding expansion rate, users and culture. There isn’t another company with this pace of growth that is floating around in Europe.
- It’s awesome to work with new challenging technique, and the approach to the technique it’s never ‘off the shelf’, we build new technique and solutions - really developing challenges.
- See stuff you never would have seen at other companies.
- Not many companies do what we do.
- I would say that new thinking and creativity define the work.
- Yes, everyday I can see the change I make and we’re on the frontline so that makes a matter.

**Young, fun and relaxed environment**
- All colleagues are young and do fun stuff and are fun to work with and hang with.
- It is easy to relax, even if you feel stressed and have a hundred things to do. Just play some Ping-Pong and you’ll soon be effective again.
- A lot of the things we do at Spotify is so much fun that they’d easily be categorized as leisure time.
- The work environment is awesome.
- Spotify has a very relaxed work environment. No costumes, flexible work hours, you can be yourself at Spotify.
- Spotify is a music company It’s young. It’s relaxed. Here you never count the hours. If you feel feed up with your work you can always take a break and play Ping-Pong.
- I can skate in the office.
- It’s okay to use the Ping-Pong game or try to record something in the studio.
- The passion is very pervasive also the care that’s shown for the employees and the culture that makes work fun and stress free are all parts that makes Spotify more attractive as an employer.

**Friendly and familiar people**
- I’ve got some of my best friends within the firm.
- There’s a good cohesion within the workplace, we’re all friends not only colleagues. It’s a fun place to work.
- Spotify is just generally a nice place to work with great people.
• I would miss all of my colleagues if I had to quit. They are all talented and good people that I’ve learnt a lot from.
• I love the people here. They are smart and care about the product.
• I really like my colleagues. It’s a familiar atmosphere in the office.
• Good, accommodating and approachable colleagues
• Spotify is a second home.
• Good colleagues that I hang a lot with outside working hours.
• New friends who are likeminded and driven.
• Many have moved here from abroad, which creates an interesting culture. People are welcoming.
• The Swedish people at Spotify are more friendly than the ordinary Swedes.
• Spotify is more like a big family rather than a workplace.
• You care for other colleagues and treat others, as you would like to be treated yourself.
• There’s passion, collaboration and good ‘camerado’ will among people. All employees have actively chosen to work here. They’re not here just by incident.

**Intrinsic rewards and recognition**
• There is a great intrinsic reward that is enhanced through recognition from your peers within the company.
• There are no real rewards being handed out.
• Recognition by peers is more valuable than bonuses.
• People do not work here for the money.
• Gaining experience and the challenging work is just a few of the rewards here.
• The reward of working at Spotify is that it is a fun and interesting place to work at.
• Doing a good job motivates me.
• We have a good culture of thanking people, a feedback culture.

**Extrinsic rewards and recognition**
• You get rewards to do stuff with your team after a making a good effort and reaching a goal.
• The rewards can be at anytime when it’s motivated, when people have worked hard.
• There are frequent rewards in different forms eg. days of for Xmas, concerts etc.
• Performance based salary
• Feeling of reward through improvement and experience gaining
• Social events, concerts, food, Ping-Pong, relaxing are just some of the rewards at Spotify.
• To work with something that create joy of life for the so many is the biggest reward.
• They pay well, nice monetary compensation. The whole package is very competitive, not shining above everyone else but competitive.

**Flat organisation with approachable management**
• It’s a very flat and open organisation where everyone can talk to anyone
• A very flat organisation where you can speak to anyone and it’s still a young leadership that aren’t tired and stiff with processes, there’s still a feeling of start-up.
• The management team are available and you can speak to them, they’ve got contact with the grassroots.
The unique offering in NY is the flat hierarchy that anyone can speak to the upper management, the Swedish culture is very clear and it's very preferable to the American corporate culture.

The leadership is great, every employee can speak about the abstract, bigger picture with the upper management, and that gives purpose to what you do.

The very flat nature of the organisation makes it awesome and I hope that we don’t lose that as we grow in employees, as long as we have this Spotify will stay ahead of everyone.

It’s very good that you are listened to and can voice what’s good what isn’t in the work and in the environment.

A nice flat organisation where you can speak to CEO and CTO with problems, a prestigeless organisation.

Everyone can have a say in everything

Approachable and concerning leaders

We have an accepting and free culture

Spotify is a flat organization, at prod and tech everyone is just engineers

Everyone can have a say in anything if they want to

On Spotify, the employees have a lot of influence no matter where in the organization you are.

Flat power structure. Much influence within both product questions as well as in the way we work.

Spotify is a very flat organization. It’s not a top down rather it consists of many small autonomous teams.

The distance between management and employees is short.

If you want to, you can always have a say in anything.

No strong hierarchy here.

It’s nice that there is a lot of community discussions before changes are being made, everyone is being listened to. That everything is discussed in the team results in a better product.

From a American perspective it’s some parts of the organisation structure that is unique, the flatness especially.

**Sweden**

- Sweden is quite a beneficial country to live in
- Swedish culture is interesting
- The possibility to work from Sweden a couple of weeks every year is really good.
- I really like that I can work in a Swedish company living in NY.

**International atmosphere**

- There is an internationalized atmosphere
- Workplaces in many countries.

**People at Spotify play fair**
People at Spotify are very fair. People are here to create something good and something for the bigger cause.
I like to be fair and work in a right or correct manner.

**Confident, young but insightful, competent, caring... leaders**
- Big confidence for the leadership, they’re smart and always one step ahead for the product on the market. There’s still energy in the young leaders.
- Spotify looks for leaders and not managers, if it’s not a match the person will be removed.
- Big confidence in the leadership within the firm.
- Flexible and adaptable leaders
- Leaders care and address problems and give valuable feedback.
- I really trust my leaders. They clear the road, train me, give me feedback and help me develop.

**Scale advantages**
- What’s unique with Spotify is big challenges, big growth, a lot of user and the potential what Spotify can become.
- Nice to work in a well-known company with a good reputation, loved by many.
- It’s unique to have a product that doesn’t need to be explained, that both employees and users engage in.
- The size and the rate of the company’s growth makes Spotify different from other software companies in Europe.
- The work is on a massive scale and reaches a lot of users.
- Not many companies does what we do.
- It is a cool and well-known company to work for.
- A well-known organisation in Sweden, everyone knows what it is. That’s cool.
- A lot of people know about the product. I never have to explain what I do.
- Many companies are not working in the same scale that gives a lot of unique challenges that comes with that and that’s motivating.

**A company that cares for the employees**
- “Spotify was a place that just seemed incredibly exciting place to work, but the thing that attracted my attention initially was the fact that we had a people operations department, to have a technology company that cares enough about people that it is prepared to set aside a department within technology that’s just focused on making the technology organisation awesome. Why would you not want to work there?”
- The company really cares that everyone is enjoying and thrive.
- Spotify is always trying to improve the situation and the work.
- Spotify cares about its employees
- We always try to adapt to the current situation and what is best for the moment in terms of employee engagement.
- The company is in the forefront of employer branding trends.
- It’s a company that’s very concerned about having happy and satisfied employees. Very proactive. It’s a caring company. It’s unique that a company cares to the extent that Spotify does.

**Everyone can be a part**
- Stock option offer to all employees.
- Fantastic that you get the stock option straight away when you start.
- Everyone that works here have the ability to become partners.
- Spotify has a attractive stock option plan

**Social activities**
- There are no monetary rewards but a lot of others. Like trips to Iceland och dinners and go-cart.
- Concerts and after works are awesome perks that enhance the employment experience.
- It’s very fun that I comes artist here every now and then.
- It’s very much non-work that’s offered a lot of gigs and artist that come here and play, we celebrate things often.
- The artist and concerts is a awesome perk
- We have bands playing in the office because we are a music company, not because we paid them to come here. It feels more genuine that way. We live our brand.
- Christmas party: three floors of party and an ice skating rink
- Friday beers and concerts is nice
- Concerts, food, drinks, BBQ: s, you can bring people from outside the office to Friday beers is something I brag about
- Meeting celebrities is cool
- Social events, hack week, parties is great.
- The social events, concerts and food is very nice.
- On the Friday beers we speak both about both work and leisure activities.
- We have fun stuff happening all the time.
- Flexibility in time, schedule and responsibility. Things are encouraged outside work, e.g. a home brewing group in NY.

**Inspiring workplace and nice office location**
- Awesomely inspiring workplace with inspiring colleagues.
- The office space is an inspiring workplace. Its made for the employees rather than as a show off.
- The office is located very nicely, not only in a Stockholm perspective, but also in a world perspective. There are not many big tech companies in Europe of the same calibre as Spotify.
- It is a nice work environment.
- Nice furniture in the office spaces.
- Open space work environment although quite cosy.
- Private boardrooms for team discussions are nice.

**Great available tools**
- You always get the gears you need.
- New technologies that help you in your work.
- You got great tools to work with: laptop, monitor...

**Engagement outside of the company**
- Good student interaction between Spotify and Swedish universities.

**A special kind of work/life balance**
- Spotify ought to invent a new term for life/work balance. Here they are so much intervene.
- It’s hard to differ between work and leisure time.
- No clear line between work and leisure here.

**Permission to fail**
- Crazy failings that have been needed to be solved and late night work with colleagues.

**Pride**
- I try to recommend Spotify to my old work colleagues.
- It’s an attractive employer, especially among students. That makes me proud.
- It is nice that you can show how you work for friends and family.
- Spotify is a highly attractive workplace among my friends.

**Gratefulness**
- I’m grateful for what I get.

**Integrated departments**
- All parts of the company can be involved in one specific task. It’s good integration between departments.

**Hard to categorize**

The statements within this category have been deleted because they were not relevant for the study.
Appendix 5 – Survey Questions

Your employment experience

Dear Spotifyers,

This will take approximately <10 minutes and will be of great help to us! The survey will be open for your participation until the Friday the 3rd of May.

The survey is anonymous, the results are confidential and cannot be pinned down to any individual. To fill out office and country of nationality is optional, we will use it to see for trends among the answers.

The statements are followed by a scale graded 1-4 with the option of not giving an answer by clicking 'No opinion'.

If there is anything you would like to say regarding the following statements there's a comment field at the end of the survey.

Thank you very much for your participation

______________________________

Office (optional): ______

Nationality (optional): ______

1. I have great colleagues that are smart, driven and dedicated, together we move the company forward.

2. Here, at Spotify, knowledge sharing is of great importance, it's encouraged, and it's easy to bump ideas and get feedback.

3. I work in a very flat and open organisation where everyone can talk to anyone, if I’d like to, I can have a say in anything.

4. It’s up to my squad/team and me to decide how to work and what we build. We’re autonomous within the bigger company and can therefore keep up a speed that’s higher than normal in a company of this size.

5. I really care about our product and it’s a great reward to see someone use something that I’ve built.
6. It feels great to be a part of revolutionizing the music experience for millions of people, and that our product makes an impact all over the world.

7. On our mission to succeed we don’t back down to challenges others might find impossible to solve.

8. I learn by executing challenging work tasks and by finding my own way to solve them.

9. There is never a dull moment at Spotify. Varying work tasks, approachable people, events and social activities are a few examples that keep me alert and motivated.

10. I work in a relaxed and inspiring environment.

11. I have flexible work hours, which gives me an extra sense of freedom.

12. I have great and friendly colleagues that create a familiar work atmosphere.

13. Because of reasons like flexible work hours, the freedom in what I work with, and the large amount of fun events and social activities, the line between work and leisure time is diffuse and I prefer to have it that way.

14. There are many knowledgeable people at Spotify which help me to solve difficult tasks and helps me develop.

15. The best way for me to advance and develop is through exchanging knowledge and gain experience.

16. I seek to become the best within my areas of interest and I am able to use many of these skills at work.

17. Expertise has a greater impact on me than formal power. This is something that is realized at Spotify.

18. I have the freedom to decide how I want to solve the problems that come in my way.

19. I get the support and resources I need to solve the problems that come in my way.

20. My colleagues are young, fun and friendly.

21. Equality, freedom and fairness is something I together with the rest of the company stand for.
22. My managers give me vision and clear goals to strive for, although how to reach the goals is up to my team and me.

23. A big salary is my highest motivation.

24. I like the fact that I can approach my managers and that they will listen to what I have to say, no matter what “rank” the leader has.

25. To sum it all up, I really love my work.

Final summarizing comments
Appendix 6 – Survey Results

The survey was sent out on Wednesday the 24\textsuperscript{th} of April to 384 employees within Technology and Product with duration of 9 days until Friday the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of May. The survey yielded 129 responses, which equals a response rate of 33.6 per cent. Regarding which office the respondents were employed at four chose not to answer. The remaining responders were 27 from the US offices, 23 from New York and 4 from San Francisco, and 98 from the Swedish offices, 89 from Stockholm and 9 from Gothenburg. The distribution can be seen in the graph below.

Out of the 61 nationalities within Spotify representatives from 18 countries chose to participate and 18 participants left this field empty. Out of the responders 69 were from Sweden, 20 from the US, 3 from Great Britain and 2 each from the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Serbia. The countries with only 1 respondent are grouped together in the graph below; these countries are Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, Slovakia, and Spain.

The following pages present the result of the survey question by question. The result is presented graphically for each question, on an aggregated level for all respondents. The graph is followed by the matrix that first shows the combined results with the average score followed by the distribution of responses for each response alternative, then the result for Swedes and then Americans.
1. I have great colleagues that are smart, driven and dedicated, together we move the company forward.

There were only ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly agree’ given as answer to this question, it yielded a high average on 3.83. There is no significant difference between Swedes and Americans.

### Distribution of answers - Statement 1

- 4 Strongly agree: 83%
- 3 Agree: 17%

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2 (26)
2. Here, at Spotify, knowledge sharing is of great importance, it's encouraged, and it's easy to bump ideas and get feedback.

This question yielded a high result of 3.51 even though it received 5 disapprovals. The Americans agreed to greater extent than the Swedes and gave a 5 per cent higher score. This could speak for that the Spotify culture is more unique to Americans than Swedes in the aspect of knowledge sharing.

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Swedes - Americans = -0.22

3 (26)
3. I work in a very flat and open organisation where everyone can talk to anyone, if I’d like to, I can have a say in anything.

Mostly positive answers with no significant difference between the nationalities.

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4. It’s up to my squad/team and me to decide how to work and what we build. We’re autonomous within the bigger company and can therefore keep up a speed that’s higher than normal in a company of this size.

This question yielded a score below three, with no significant difference between the nationalities. In the comment field there was opinions that said they agreed on that there were autonomy for ‘how to work’ but not in deciding on ‘what we build’. There were also complaints about micromanagement from one respondent.
5. I really care about our product and it’s a great reward to see someone use something that I’ve built.

This question yielded strong agrees, with a score of 3.78. The Americans gave this statement a higher score than the Swedes which is notable since the product is less well known in the US than in Sweden. This maybe can be explained by the fact that there are more competitors for the product in the US than in Sweden.

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6 (26)
6. It feels great to be a part of revolutionizing the music experience for millions of people, and that our product makes an impact all over the world.

With 97 per cent being positive to this statement it’s clear that the employees appreciate the fact that they effect the world for millions, this is something that is unique to many software developers compared to their previous employments. No significant difference between the nationalities.

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7. On our mission to succeed we don’t back down to challenges others might find impossible to solve.

A strong statement with a high approval. Greater approval from the Americans which is notable since it was said that this type of company was more common in the US than in Europe.

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8 (26)
8. I learn by executing challenging work tasks and by finding my own way to solve them.

The approval of 89 per cent indicates that Spotify is a meritocracy. The disapprovals might come from the ambiguous statement or that it’s maybe not just the best way for the respondent to learn and not something connected with their work environment.

![Distribution of answers - Statement 8](image)

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| Swedes - Americans | 0.05 |
9. There is never a dull moment at Spotify. Varying work tasks, approachable people, events and social activities are a few examples that keeps me alert and motivated.

A very bold statement that still yielded an approval of 84 per cent. The Americans approved to a greater extent which wasn’t expected since there’s a bit less activities going on in the US offices, may be the difference in corporate culture between Spotify and other American firms that shows.

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Swedes - Americans  = -0.14
10. I work in a relaxed and inspiring environment.

A strong approval of 89 per cent, but a lower average on 3.22 with less ‘Strongly agree’. Comments were made that respondents agreed on half the statement but not the other half. The Americans gave a lower score which is odd since compared to other statements were there might be national corporate differences this statement was expected to yield the same result.

![Distribution of answers - Statement 10](image)

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11. I have flexible work hours which gives me an extra sense of freedom.

Great portion of ‘Strongly agree’, the Americans scored 0.28 lower – is the work hour perceived as less flexible by the Americans or don’t they experience the same freedom form the flexible work hours.

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Swedes - Americans

69% - 22% - 8% - 1% - 0%

Distribution of answers - Statement 11
12. I have great and friendly colleagues that create a familiar work atmosphere.

All statements regarding colleagues score high results, including this one. Approval from 98 per cent of the respondents, no significant difference between nationalities.

Distribution of answers - Statement 12

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Swedes - Americans: 0.05
13. Because of reasons like flexible work hours, the freedom in what I work with, and the large amount of fun events and social activities, the line between work and leisure time is diffuse and I prefer to have it that way.

This is a very ambiguous question and there were some comments about the wording. The statement yielded a lower score of 2.98 but still approved by 69 per cent. The Americans liked it more than the Swedes.

![Distribution of answers - Statement 13](image)

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Swedes - Americans = 0.25
14. There are many knowledgeable people at Spotify, which help me to solve difficult tasks and help me develop.

Statements regarding colleagues score high, this statement has an approval of 95 per cent with no significant difference between the nationalities. The colleagues are sharp and helpful.

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Swedes - Americans 0.09
15. The best way for me to advance and develop is through exchanging knowledge and gain experience.

That knowledge sharing thrives within Spotify gets 87 per cent approval. No differences in approval between Swedes and Americans but the other nationalities give higher scores.

![Distribution of answers - Statement 15](image)

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Swedes - Americans 0.00
16. I seek to become the best within my areas of interest and I am able to use many of these skills at work.

A strong approval with no significant difference between the nationalities was given. One Swede commented that he would rather use ‘better’ than ‘best’ to describe what he aimed for.

### Distribution of answers - Statement 16

- **4 Strongly agree**: 50%
- **3 Agree**: 42%
- **2 Disagree**: 1%
- **1 Strongly disagree**: 5%
- **No opinion**: 2%

#### Total

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#### Swedes

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#### Americans

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#### Swedes - Americans

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<tr>
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17. Expertise has a greater impact on me than formal power. This is something that is realized at Spotify.

A total score of 3.19, lower score given by the Americans. Has expertise lower impact on Americans or don’t they see the statement being true within Spotify?

![Distribution of answers - Statement 17](image)

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Swedes - Americans = 0.15
18. I have the freedom to decide how I want to solve the problems that come in my way.

A high approval, but a higher score than 3.25 was expected since autonomy in the part of solving the problems has been very clear on the comment field. Might be that when the question is clearly formulated the respondents are more critical than when the statement contains more parts.

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Swedes - Americans = 0.12
19. I get the support and resources I need to solve the problems that come in my way.

Majority approval but with a low score, the Americans gave a score 0.30 points lower. Can that be since they are more used to more direct management and thereby also closer interaction with management on how to solve the problems that they encounter.

![Distribution of answers - Statement 19](image)

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20. My colleagues are young, fun and friendly.

A great approval of 90 per cent but there was very many comments on ‘young’, the statement wished to contain a feeling and not an actual age. The Americans gave 0.28 lower in score, this might be that they are more used to an work environment like the one within Spotify.

Distribution of answers - Statement 20

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| Swedees | Americans | - | 0.28 |
21. Equality, freedom and fairness is something I together with the rest of the company stand for.

92 per cent approval and a score on 3.46. The Swedes gave a score that was 0.21 higher than the Americans’ score.

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Swedes

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Swedes - Americans 0.21
22. My managers give me vision and clear goals to strive for, although how to reach the goals is up to me and my team.

Before the survey there was clear indication from the interviews that there were clear goals and that the employees could solve the problems autonomously with the team so the score of 3.07 is lower than expected. The Swedes gave a bit higher score.

### Distribution of answers - Statement 22

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23. A big salary is my highest motivation.

This was a control statement. It was expected that there would be zero ‘Strongly agree’, many comments on this question. One comment said that if high salary was the most important they wouldn’t be working at Spotify. The Swedes gave this statement 0.22 higher score.

Distribution of answers - Statement 23

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Average

- Total 2.06
- Swedes 2.06
- Americans 1.84

Pie chart showing distribution of answers:
- 21% Strongly agree
- 4% Agree
- 23% Disagree
- 2% Strongly disagree
- 50% No opinion
24. I like the fact that I can approach my managers and that they will listen to what I have to say, no matter what “rank” the leader has.

50 per cent on ‘Strongly agree’ and a 91 per cent approval, no significant difference between nationalities.

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No significant difference between nationalities.

Swedes - Americans: 0.11

Distribution of answers - Statement 24

4 Strongly agree
3 Agree
2 Disagree
1 Strongly disagree
No opinion
25. To sum it all up, I really love my work.

A bold statement that still receives 98 per cent approval, even though respondents dislikes parts of their employment they are really satisfied with the their employment. No major difference between the nationalities.

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Swedes - Americans

0.11
Appendix 7 – EVP 1

Spotify’s Tech and Product Employee Value Proposition

1. Our passion for our product keeps us motivated. Not only we, but our friends, family, old school mates, fellow citizens and millions of other people across the globe pushes us towards creating a supreme music experience accessible for everyone, everywhere.

   #passion for product #reach millions of people #familiar product #feedback 
   #better music experience #change the world #purpose #making an impact

2. A relaxed and inspiring environment, flexible work hours and friendly and familiar colleagues gives the concept of work/life balance a whole new meaning.

   #relaxed environment #flexible work hours #friendly and familiar colleagues 
   #work/life balance

3. Small, autonomous teams combined with scale advantages of a powerful and resourceful larger corporation gives us the speed and the flexibility to move fast.

   #small teams #autonomous teams #scale advantages #great resources #speed 
   #flexibility

4. Smart, driven and dedicated colleagues around the world are what make this company move forward every day, every hour, every minute.

   #smart colleagues #driven colleagues #never a dull moment #on a mission to 
   succeed #international atmosphere

5. We move mountains. The challenges we face together are not easily overcome, but thanks to a strong will and great minds we conquer and learn a lot along the way.

   #great challenges #team spirit #smart colleagues #on a mission to succeed 
   #learning by doing

6. At Spotify, there’s never a dull moment. Varying work tasks, approachable people, events and social activities are just a few examples that keep us motivated, agile and alert.

   #never a dull moment #varying work tasks #approachable people #events 
   #social activities #agile

7. At Spotify knowledge sharing rules. Everyone can have a say in anything. This assures good decisions and clear and commonly shared goals.
8. Your work has a strong impact. You decide on what you want to do. Get support and together we’ll create something beautiful.

#making a difference #autonomy #innovation #creation

9. We live in a cloud of knowledge. Absorb the drops of experience and gain height. Here, expertise trumps formal power.

#development opportunities #experience gaining #expertise

10. To master our individual areas of interests is more important for us than to climb the career ladder. This helps us build a diversified and powerful base of knowledge.

#mastery #equality #broad knowledge base #power

11. The stage is yours. In what way you accomplish your missions is up to you. We provide you with the gears and the support you need.

#autonomy #freedom #gears #support #take care of employees

12. Welcome to the greatest music festival of all time. We’re young, fun and friendly. Peace, love and rock n’ roll is in our spirits. Equality, freedom and fairness is our keystones.

#young colleagues #fun colleagues #friendly colleagues #equality #freedom #play fair

13. Our insightful and caring leaders create visions and clears your path. Wherever you are, among the grassroots or in the top of the trees, they will be accessible for your input.

#insightful leaders #caring leaders #vision #clear path #accessible leaders
Appendix 8 – EVP 2

An Employee Value Proposition for Technology and Product

An Employee Value Proposition (commonly abbreviated EVP) describes what the employees receive in return for their time and effort for being a part of Tech and Product. Mainly it is a promise that is given to our current and potential Tech and Product employees that clarifies our core values and our commitment to them.

To extract the EVP for Tech and Product, in-depth interviews from all around the departments and a departments-wide survey were conducted. We received responses from 18 nationalities from all our offices about what they love the most about working at Tech and Product at Spotify.

From this feedback key themes were identified that our employees within Tech and Product value the most. These values must be consistent over all offices and continuously tweaked to enforce a united experience of being a part. These themes are:

- Our passion for our product keeps us motivated. Not only we, but our friends, family, old school mates, fellow citizens and millions of other people across the globe pushes us towards creating a supreme music experience accessible for everyone, everywhere.

- A relaxed and inspiring environment, flexible work hours and friendly and familiar colleagues gives the concept of work/life balance a whole new meaning.

- Small, autonomous teams combined with scale advantages of a powerful and resourceful larger corporation gives us the speed and the flexibility to move fast.

- Smart, driven and dedicated colleagues around the world is what makes this company move forward every day, every hour, every minute.

- We move mountains. The challenges we face together are not easily overcome, but thanks to a strong will and great minds we conquer and learn a lot along the way.

- At Spotify, there’s never a dull moment. Varying work tasks, approachable people, events and social activities are just a few examples that keeps us motivated, agile and alert.