

**An Employer Branding Strategy to increase Brand Awareness of a Finance Employer  
among its Target Audience**

ADVICE REPORT

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## Executive Summary

Talent&Pro is a Dutch secondment firm, which outsources specialized consultants to financial organizations and offers them professional traineeships. This advice report proposes a communication strategy for Talent&Pro, in order to boost its brand awareness and increase the number of applicants it attracts. The advice question driving the research conducted for this strategy was: *"How can we build brand awareness for Talent&Pro among its target audience by improving its employer branding (EB)?"*. This question aims to resolve the main communication issue, which is the client's struggle to generate brand awareness among its target audience of recent graduates. This is an urgent issue: although the company is the largest in its niche, it is ostensibly not reaching its full recruitment potential and is thus likely vulnerable to competition from the other secondment firms on the market.

Research demonstrates the key employer benefits sought by the target audience: the ability to self-develop and learn new skills, an appealing, pleasant corporate culture, work-life balance & flexible hours, relatable corporate values, and a fair, reliable compensation. Communicating these benefits in a consistent and credible manner builds a recognizable and attractive employer brand. This helps establish brand awareness which ultimately can lead to an increase in applicants and corporate growth. Other success factors are positive personal interactions with recruiting teams and attractive social media accounts, which display the corporate culture to interested jobseekers. Additionally, the research revealed two subtypes within the target audience: data/analysis-oriented starters and people/society-oriented starters, both also interested in the other benefits discussed earlier.

The objective of this advice report is: *to increase brand awareness of the Talent&Pro brand and its positive characteristics among its target audience by 10% by July 2022*. Based on the research findings and this objective, this report advises an employer branding strategy detailing the four key employer benefits identified: self-developed, positive social corporate culture, employment flexibility, meaningful & interesting work, and career flexibility through secondment (temporary assignments). The employer brand strategy reimagines the brand's hidden benefits through the lens of the target audience's true employment demands. The core benefits should be

communicated through an attractive visual campaign across social media, which depicts the TA as young, ambitious, and individualistic. By using fresh, rebellious images the strategy visually counteracts negative preconceptions of the financial services field. The strategy is set within a €50,000 budget, in line with overall marketing spending and sufficient for an impactful and effective one-year campaign.

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**List of abbreviations**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Adcept</b> | Advertising Concept (portmanteau)   |
| <b>AFM</b>    | Autoriteit Financiële Markten [Authority Financial Markets]   |
| <b>AIDA</b>   | Attention, Interest, Desire, Action   |
| <b>CSR</b>    | Corporate Social Responsibility   |
| <b>CTA</b>    | Call to Action  |
| <b>B2B</b>    | Business-to-business  |
| <b>BIT</b>    | Business IT   |
| <b>CBBE</b>   | Customer-based Brand Equity Model   |
| <b>CDD</b>    | Customer Due Diligence  |
| <b>CEO</b>    | Chief Executive Officer   |
| <b>CFO</b>    | Chief Financial Officer   |
| <b>CRL</b>    | Compliance, Risk & Legal  |
| <b>DESTEP</b> | Demographic, Economic, Societal, Technological, Ecological, Political   |
| <b>DMU</b>    | Decision-making Unit  |
| <b>EB</b>     | Employer Branding   |
| <b>HBO</b>    | Hoger Beroepsonderwijs [Higher Vocational Education]  |
| <b>HR</b>     | Human Resources   |
| <b>IDRQ</b>   | In-depth Research Question  |
| <b>IT</b>     | Information Technology  |
| <b>ROI</b>    | Return on Investment  |
| <b>SBB</b>    | Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven [Collaborative<br>Organization for Vocational Business Education] |
| <b>SEM</b>    | Search Engine Marketing   |
| <b>SEO</b>    | Search Engine Optimization  |
| <b>SWOT</b>   | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats   |
| <b>TA</b>     | Target Audience   |
| <b>USP</b>    | Unique Selling Point  |

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>UWV</b>  | Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen [Employee Insurance Agency] |
| <b>WO</b>   | Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs [Scientific Education]                        |
| <b>Vlog</b> | Video Blog [portmanteau]   |

**CHAPTER 1**

## Introduction

This communication advice report to Talent&Pro describes an employer branding communication strategy, which aims to increase the organization's brand awareness and increase the number of applicants it attracts. The organization has attractive employer benefits and wants to heighten its brand awareness among young adult Dutch jobseekers, to remain competitive and maintain its leadership position in the field of financial services secondment. The urgency of the issue is primarily caused by the strong competition within the field. Various other secondment agencies offer similar benefits and compete to attract the same target audience, and attraction of new applicants is the only way to continue meeting clients' growing human resourcing demands. The presented advice is based on the findings of the research report and seeks to answer the following advice question: *"How can we build brand awareness for Talent&Pro among its target audience by improving its employer branding (EB)?"*.

As the company already has an established brand image, it struggles to further increase its brand awareness among recent graduates at the beginning of their career. This is likely due to the oft-cited negative reputation of the field of financial services careers, which is considered uninteresting and unappealing by most of the target audience. Simply put, the client is attempting to communicate its ample employer benefits to an audience which may be turned off by the industry it operates in, and never even considers or encounters the brand for that reason. Therefore, the communication issue is described as the client's struggle to establish brand awareness among its target audience. The advice question seeks to resolve this issue by emphasizing the employer brand (EB), which can be a powerful tool in establishing brand awareness on the employment market.

## CHAPTER 2

## Situation Analysis

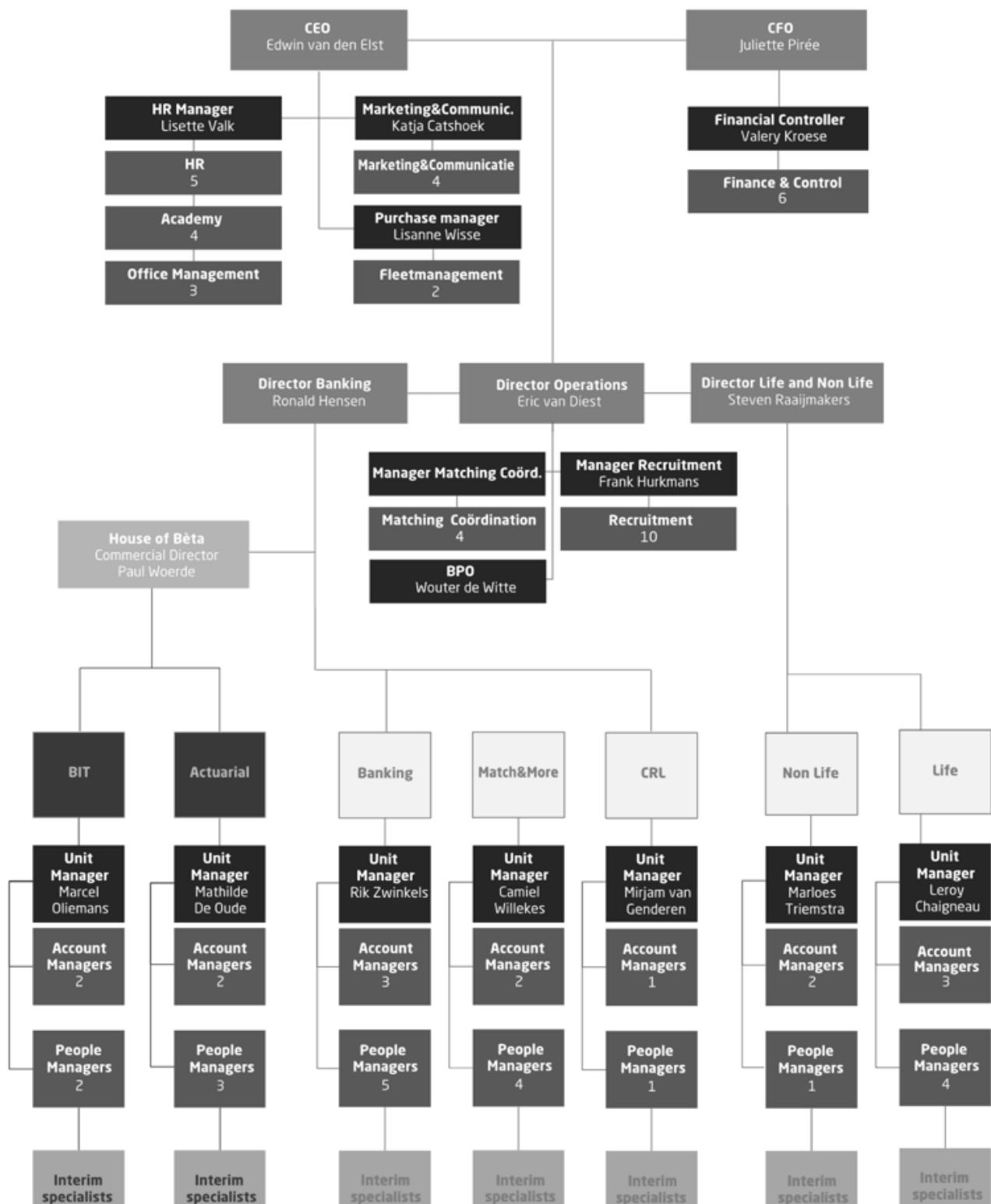
In order to assess the context of the advice question, "How can we build brand awareness for Talent&Pro among its target audience by improving its employer branding (EB)?", Talent&Pro is now analyzed at the micro, meso and macro level.

### Micro level

Talent&Pro is a secondment firm in the financial services industry, which outsources consultants to business client. Its business model provides employees with a two-year traineeship, during which new consultants are assigned temporary (interim) positions within an organization whilst partaking in courses and obtaining professional certificates. As such, it operates exclusively on the B2B market, providing business services (human resources). The core values of the organization are encompassed in the acronym POWER, which (translated to English) represents the core values Fun, Development [of people], Value creation, Energy, and the additional value; Red (The Talent&Pro color). The vision is described as "Value in People", reflecting the organization's business value provided by the body of well-educated consultants, who are trained to be specialized experts in their fields (Talent&Pro, 2018).

The organization has subdivisions servicing six industries (Banks, Insurance firms, Mortgage firms, Pension companies, IT companies, and Notary/Legal companies). Each of these so-called units is led by a unit manager, several account managers & "people managers" (personal career coaches), and staffed by a team of consultants. As of May 2021, the organization has 1080 employees, of which 910 are consultants working in the field (K. Toufik, personal communication, n.d.). The business structure is demonstrated in Figure 1 (Organogram). The business is located in Utrecht, the Netherlands, and operates predominantly in Dutch. It services a multinational clientele which includes all the major Dutch financial institutions.

Figure 1. Organogram



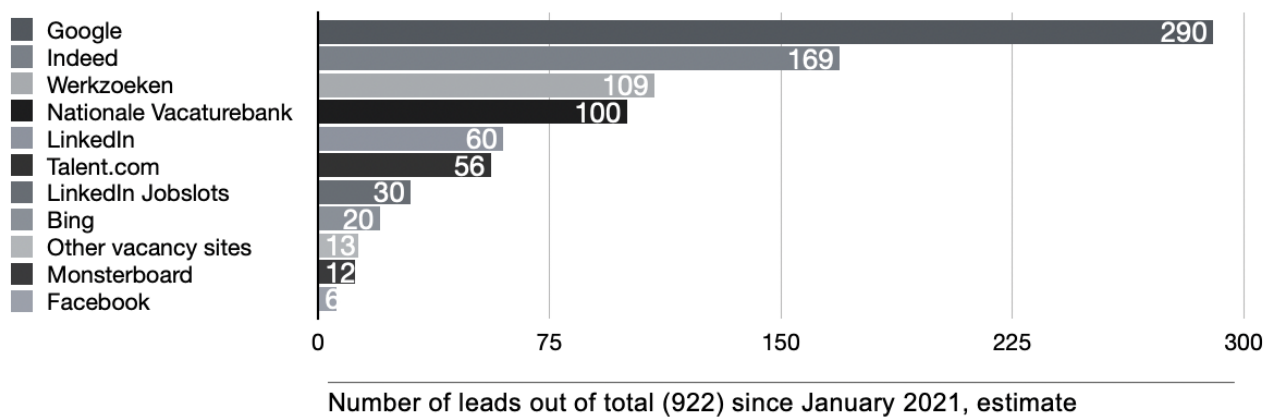
Aside from the recruitment and human resource departments, the marketing department also plays an active role in the organizational growth. The majority of marketing activities relate to the employer reputation of the organization, its visibility and brand awareness, and its relationship with current and former employees. Additionally, the organization requires strong investment in employee relations, events, and activities to maintain a strong and positive employee-employer relationship with its externally operating workforce (Talent&Pro, 2018). The organization maintains active relationships with student organizations and uses vacancy websites and services to increase the influx of applicants (M. van Dartel, personal communication, n.d.). The current employer branding/recruiting communication activities are shown in Table 1 (see next page).

**Table 1.** *Communication activities*

| Search & Display advertising      | Direct/Indirect | Activities  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Google Search advertising         | Direct          | Search result placement advertisement (Search engine advertising)   |
| Google Display advertising        | Direct          | Search engine advertising - banner                                  |
| Bing/Microsoft Search advertising | Direct          | Search engine advertising - banner                                  |
| <b>Social Media</b>               |                 |   |
| Facebook advertising              | Direct          | Targeted visual ads in feed   |
| Instagram advertising             | Direct          | Targeted visual ads in feed   |
| LinkedIn advertising              | Direct          | Targeted visual ads in feed   |
| Facebook profile posting          | Direct          | Photos, videos, blogs, challenges, giveaways, company updates, etc. |
| Instagram profile posting         | Direct          | Photos, videos, blogs, challenges, giveaways, company updates, etc. |
| LinkedIn profile posting          | Direct          | Photos, videos, blogs, company updates, etc.                        |
| <b>Vacancy bank advertising</b>   |                 |   |
| Indeed                            | Direct          | Company profile, vacancy advertising (prioritized placement)        |
| Nationale Vacaturebank            | Direct          | Company profile, vacancy advertising (prioritized placement)        |
| Werkzoeken.nl                     | Direct          | Vacancy advertising   |
| LinkedIn job slots                | Direct          | Vacancy advertising   |
| Talent.com                        | Direct          | Vacancy advertising   |
| Joblift                           | Direct          | Vacancy advertising   |
| Monsterboard                      | Direct          | Vacancy advertising   |
| Magnet.me                         | Direct          | Vacancy advertising   |
| <b>Recruitment websites</b>       |                 |   |
| Glassdoor                         | Indirect        | Company profile (regular content updates)                           |
| Qompas                            | Indirect        | Company profile (regular content updates)                           |
| Knappe Koppen                     | Indirect        | Company profile (regular content updates)                           |

An estimate of the most effective channels, based on lead production, is shown in Figure 2.

Based on these figures, the company's activities on Google, Indeed, Werkzoeken.nl, Nationale Vacaturebank and LinkedIn are the most likely to lead to applicants to the organization. This provides an incomplete but meaningful insight into the importance of some platforms. However, there is no data on the importance of other social platforms for the employer brand.

**Figure 2.** *Communication activity leads*

**Meso level*****Power-interest matrix***

As described by Mendelow (1981), the power-interest matrix facilitates analysis of the organization's stakeholder groups based on their power (ability to influence strategy or resources of the project) and interest (in the success of the organization or project). Figure 3 demonstrates Talent&Pro's key stakeholder groups, within the context of the organizational issue at hand.

**Figure 3.** *Power-interest matrix*

| <b>Low power, low interest (minimal effort)</b>       | <b>Low power, high interest (keep informed)</b>  |
|---|--|
| Business clients<br>Potential clients<br>Office staff | Consultants<br>Recruiting team<br>People Managers<br>Unit Managers<br>Account Managers<br>Competitors<br>Potential recruits (target audience)<br>Vacancy websites/services<br>Campus organizations |
| <b>High power, low interest (keep satisfied)</b>      | <b>High power, high interest (key players)</b>   |
| House of HR<br>Redmore Group                          | Executive Management<br>Marketing staff  |

### Competitor analysis

The following direct competitors have been identified: Welten, Brunel, DPA, and Eiffel.

Their messaging strategies, value propositions, advantages and disadvantages are discussed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Competitor analysis*

| Competitor | Messaging strategy/positioning  | Value Proposition   | Advantages   | Disadvantages   |
|------------|---|---|--|---|
| Welten     | Emphasis on the <i>future</i> of the target audience: kickstart of their career in financial services. Positioned as an impactful changemaker in the financial services industry. | Development, Attention and Relaxation. Welten emphasizes the opportunity to self-develop, attentive management, and a special program aimed at employee relaxation.   | Extensive training opportunities. In-house training institute (Dukers&Baelemans) which offers extensive financial traineeships (similar to client). The gross base salary provided to trainees is higher than the client's (2260 vs. 2100). A fixed contract is immediately offered. | Marketing communications are very corporate, impersonal and may be unappealing to younger applicants. Limited to Netherlands.   |
| Brunel     | Entrepreneurial, result-oriented global human resourcing firm, which can deliver success for its clients and consultants.   | Ambition, Enthusiasm, Professionalism, Result-orientation. Encapsulated under the phrase "One Brunel".  | Global firm with international opportunities for employees. Offers careers outside of finance (e.g. legal, marketing, communications).   | Brunel offers a narrower suite of finance-specific traineeships and certificates than the client.   |
| DPA        | DPA leads with fast career growth, professional challenge and variety. Furthermore, the security of a stable salary is emphasized.  | Personal, Entrepreneurial, Competent are described as the connection values that unite the organization. The company distinguishes itself as a detachment firm which invests in the personal happiness and satisfaction of its consultants. | DPA offers careers within a wide range of fields, beyond finance (e.g. legal, construction, privacy, engineering). A fixed contract is immediately offered.  | The gross base salary provided to trainees is lower than the client's (1900 vs. 2100).  |
| Eiffel     | Eiffel is unique in profiling itself primarily as a detachment firm which lets its consultants make a meaningful (societal) impact, whilst self-developing.                       | Human Powered, Data Driven, and focused on the World of Tomorrow. Eiffel stresses its sustainable business model and the "Triple P" bottom line.  | Gross base salary for most traineeships is higher than client's (2500 vs. 2100), and a fixed contract is offered. Employees are offered personal coaching and traineeships.  | Traineeship suite is narrower than the client's. Vacancies are restricted to certain diplomas/fields of higher education, unless the client's. Most vacancies don't appear to be entry level. |

The client's most direct competitor is Welten, which bears some striking similarities in employer benefits. However, Welten does not emphasize a fun corporate culture. Other competitors (Brunel & DPA) service a wider range of industries. Both the companies use a success-oriented promotional angle. Brunel is unique in its international nature and scale, therein providing unique opportunities for applicants seeking an international career. Eiffel is unique in using a value-driven angle, promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and the opportunity to "drive a meaningful impact". Talent&Pro's mission, i.e., working hard, self-development, and having fun, is similar to most of its competitors'. Talent&Pro is unique in its position as the largest Dutch secondment firm in financial services and in its fun and attractive corporate culture (e.g., company events, team events, in-house parties, employee clubs, etc.). The organization has an 8,5% market share as of May 2021 (K. Toufik, personal communication, n.d.).

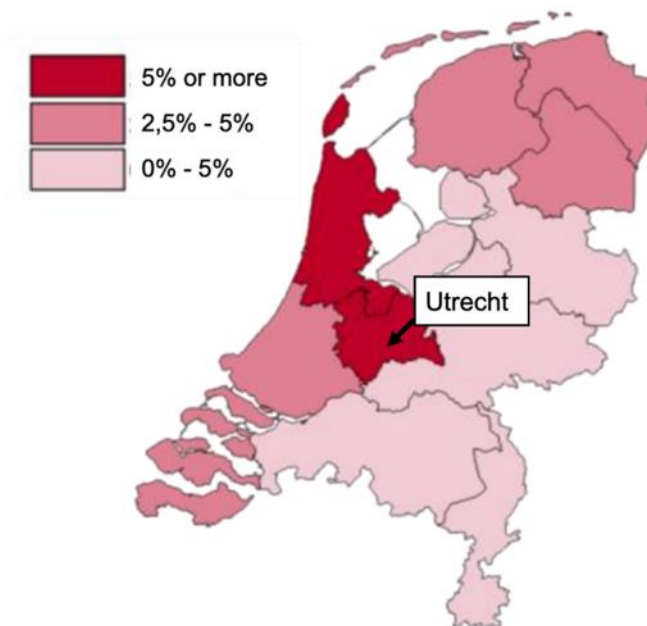
## Macro level

The external context of the advice question and the organization itself is assessed on a macro level using a partial DESTEP analysis.

## Demographic

Located in Utrecht, Talent&Pro has a geographic advantage. As shown in Figure 4, the area has a high percentage of financial services vacancies, as several Dutch banks have headquarters in the city (Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen, 2021).

**Figure 4.** *Percentage of financial services vacancies of total vacancies, per province*



*Note.* The distribution map of financial services vacancies demonstrates that the province of Utrecht boasts the highest concentrations of financial services vacancies, alongside Noord-Holland. From *UWV Barometer 2021*. Copyright 2021 by Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen.

**Economic**

Due to COVID-19, various industries, including trade, food services, and the cultural sector, have seen a sharp decrease in business activity and available jobs. This may produce a shift in interest towards sectors with more stable job prospects (Autoriteit Financiële Markten, 2019). Furthermore, unemployment is expected to increase in 2021 as government support for companies is withdrawn (ABN-AMRO, 2021). In an interesting trend, fixed jobs in the financial services industry decreased in 2020, whilst available specialized outsourced jobs increased (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021). This marks a shift away from traditional employment in financial services towards the employment type offered by the client.

The Dutch housing market is currently experiencing a period of expansion and price increase. In the first four months of 2021, 21,5% more houses were sold, and prices were 11,5% higher than in the same period last year. As a result, more mortgaging experts are likely required, increasing demand for the client's services (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021). Overall, economic trends have been beneficial to the client and are expected to remain as such in the near future.

**Socio-cultural**

Applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Dutch jobseekers score low on the power distance index, indicating that they're likely to seek independence in their careers and often seek coaching, accessible leadership which facilitates and empowers them. The Dutch culture is described as a 'feminine culture', often characterized by a demand for a good work-life balance and emphasis on quality of life (Ning, 2006). The Dutch culture is pragmatic, with high scores on the long-term orientation index. This is characterized by thrift and the perception of education as a preparation for the future, matching the client's core value of *development* (Ning, 2006). Overall, the client's values and provided employer benefits closely match the Dutch socio-cultural values and are likely to appeal to the target audience.

***Technological***

A major shift towards automatization and digitalization of processes, often replacing routine administrative tasks, can be noticed in the financial services field. As a result, fewer lower-skilled clerical employees are needed, and the remaining job positions are more often specialized, technical, and requiring specific certificates and traineeships (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven (SBB), (2018). Such specialized, high-skilled positions are a specialty of the client.

***Political***

In recent years, various legislative measures taken by the Dutch government and international governing bodies have had a considerable and widespread impact on the fields of banking, mortgaging, pensions, and insurance, as well as the financial sector at large. Customer Due Diligence (CDD) legislation passed by the Dutch government in 2008, and expanded in 2018, places a significant responsibility on all financial services providers to proactively prevent financial crime and malfeasance, driving a demand for specialized employees (Belastingdienst, n.d.). The 2020 Dutch pension accord is expected to upend the pension sector, requiring extensive reorganizations of work processes and customer communication policies (Rijksoverheid, n.d., Kevelam & Kiveron, 2020). More stringent regulations by the Dutch authority for Financial Markets (AFM) now require banks to retroactively assess their customer bodies and conduct risk analyses, whilst also requiring them to better anticipate future financial threats (K. Toufik, personal communication, n.d., Stichting Autoriteit Financiële Markten, 2020). In general, national & international financial regulations have become more impactful, and have generated increased demand for specialized temporary financial consultancy services.

## Conclusion

In the SWOT analysis, the main findings from the micro, meso and macro level analysis are presented (See Figure 5).

**Figure 5. SWOT-analysis**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Strengths</b><br><br>Specialized, expert consultant workforce<br>Skill development program<br>Personal management style<br>Attractive corporate culture<br>Flexibility of employment<br>Advantageous geographical location<br>Close match with Dutch cultural values<br>Strong client portfolio | <b>Weaknesses</b><br><br>External and possibly disconnected workforce<br>No clear CSR<br>Dependence on ebbs and flows of demand (external factors)                      |
| <b>Opportunities</b><br><br>Current and future legislative changes driving more demand for service/expertise<br>Expansion beyond financial services<br>Labor market instability may drive applicant interest   | <b>Threats</b><br><br>Economy may suffer long-term damage from COVID-19 fallout<br>Competitors may attract suitable applicants with more attractive recruiting programs |

**CHAPTER 3**

## Communication Analysis

### Interested parties

The interested parties table (Table 3) discusses the key stakeholders with an interest in the communication strategy.

**Table 3.** *Interested parties table*

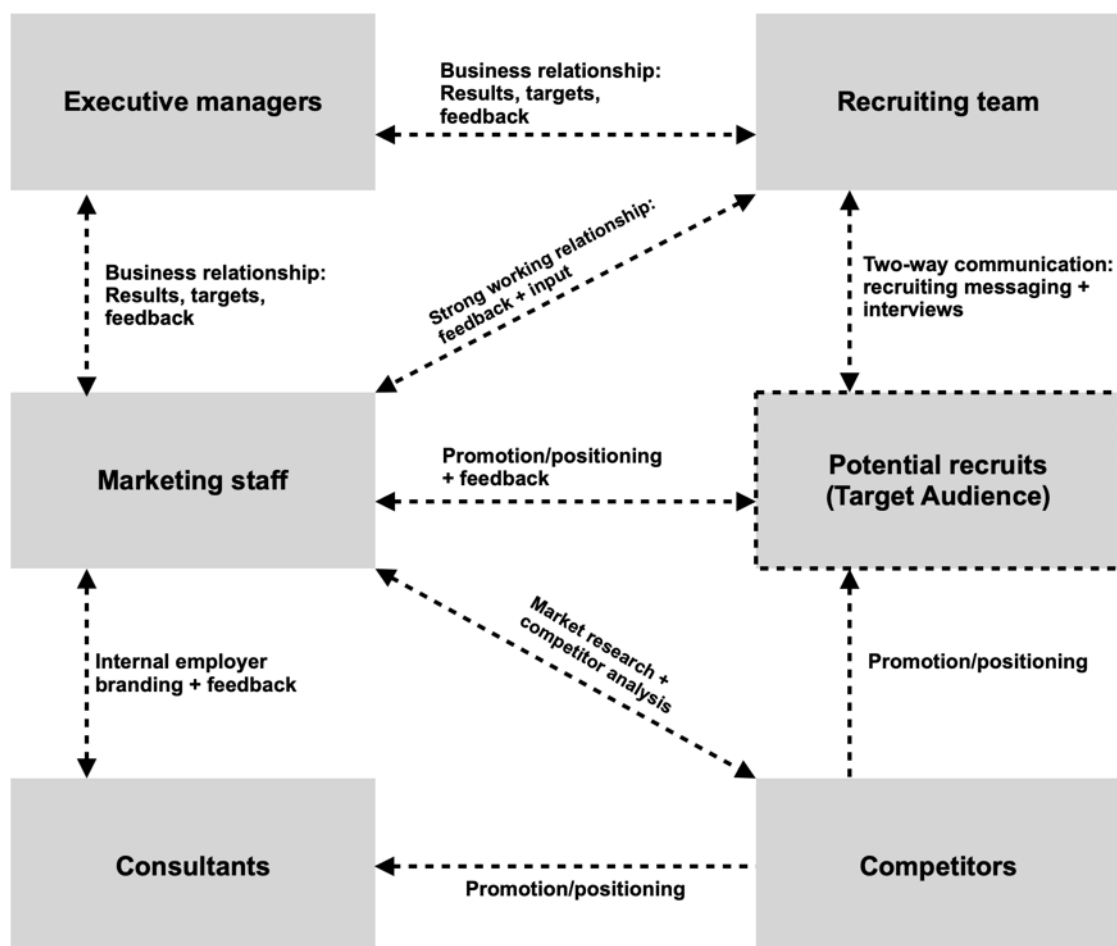
| Stakeholder          | Relationship | Role           | Message   | Influence | Structure  |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------|---|-----------|--|
| Potential recruits   | External     | Jobseeker      | Seeking an employer that offers the benefits they need/want and feels like a right fit          | Low       | Independent, may be influenced by communications |
| Consultants          | Internal     | Feedback       | Feedback on the messaging that did/did not appeal to them                                       | Low       | Dependent on performance of Talent&Pro           |
| Recruiting team      | Internal     | Influencer     | Feedback & advice on the messaging that is/is not effective based on interactions with recruits | Medium    | Dependent on performance of Talent&Pro           |
| Marketing staff      | Internal     | Decision maker | Promoting & positioning Talent&Pro to the target audience                                       | High      | Dependent on performance of Talent&Pro           |
| Executive management | Internal     | Overseer       | Demanding tangible success in attracting new talent   | High      | Dependent on performance of Talent&Pro           |
| Client companies     | External     | Influencer     | Requiring young, motivated temporary forces   | Low       | Independent company                              |

## Communication Analysis

### Communication network

As shown in Figure 6, the key stakeholders are interconnected by communication activities and business relationships. In most cases, a two-way communication stream is presented, reflecting the openness or communication discussed by research respondents and the open communicative atmosphere within the organization (Helder, 2021).

**Figure 6.** *Communication network*



**Information climate**

As shown in Table 4, the key stakeholders have different information requirements. The TA's information requirements deserve the most emphasis, as their requirements need to be met in order to drive them towards the brand. Management and the recruiting team have informative needs and need to be kept up to date. Consultants should remain informed about the brand's Unique Selling Points (USP) using employer branding methods, in order to retain them. Employee retention is influenced positively by employer branding (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016).

**Table 4.** *Information climate*

| Stakeholder             | Information requirement  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Executive managers      | KPIs: review on performance analysis and results, challenges/difficulties, team requirements (budget/employees). Market position/success |
| Recruiting team         | Current communication strategy, USP proposition.   |
| Marketing staff         | USPs that will likely improve brand awareness + drive interest among the TA, best practice strategies                                    |
| Potential recruits (TA) | Talent&Pro's USPs: which benefits to expect, corporate culture, work-life balance, compensation, etc.                                    |
| Consultants             | Talent&Pro's USP proposition, awareness of the brand's current image   |
| Competitors             | Talent&Pro's USPs and marketing strategies, their efficacy on the TA, their reach/visibility   |

### Role of communication

Because the objective of the client is to generate brand awareness, the role of communication is identified as education (see Table 5). As defined by Vos et al. (2003), the Education role may consist of promotion and positioning activities.

**Table 5.** *Role of communication: education*

| Education activity  | Target                                       |
|---|--|
| <b>Promotion</b> of positive employer characteristics: contract, compensation, developmental opportunities, (personal) people manager, positive social atmosphere, etc.                           | Potential recruits (TA), current consultants |
| <b>Promotion</b> of the type of employment: temporary assignments with various employers, which allows the TA to quickly develop themselves professionally and have an exciting career            | Potential recruits (TA)                      |
| <b>Positioning</b> of the brand as a unique employer in the field of secondment, by highlighting emotional/psychological benefits   | Potential recruits (TA), current consultants |
| <b>Positioning</b> of financial services careers as interesting, challenging, and attractive career paths for many different people (rather than just those with educations in finance/economics) | Potential recruits (TA)                      |

### Communication goal

Based on the communication analysis, the communication goal for this project is:

"To increase brand awareness of Talent&Pro among its TA, in order to drive more applicants toward it and increase its organizational growth". The company's main goal is to grow its team of consultants further in order to better meet its clients' needs, and this communication goal is set in extension of that overarching company goal. The goal should be accomplished within a year from onset, using a combination of various external communication methods, by *educating* the target audience. The one-year period allows for a thorough and effective execution of the strategy.

By staying within a budget of €50,000, the goal falls within reasonable range of the company's overall marketing budget of circa €300,000-400,000 (K. Toufik, personal communication, n.d.). The company currently seeks to redevelop its employer brand and build more brand awareness, and its current communication policy is in line with this goal. By communicating the brand values already present throughout the client's communication channels, the final strategy strengthens and complements existing policies.

## CHAPTER 4

## **Target Audience Analysis**

### **Preliminary target audience**

Talent&Pro's target audience can be described as: young adult, higher-educated recent graduates and professionals (aged 20-30) with an interest in self-development. Not many descriptors of the target audience are used beyond that, as applicants with any type of higher education (Dutch HBO or WO level) are considered for the starter consultant positions.

### **Decision-making unit (DMU)**

The DMU can be described as the jobseeker or potential applicant. The choice of a career path is a uniquely personal one. Whilst jobseekers might seek the advice of certain influencers, e.g., career coaches, colleagues, acquaintances, or family, ultimately the decision to pursue a job lies with the applicant, making them the sole decision-maker.

### **Marketing strategy**

Talent&Pro relies on a combination of "push" and "pull" marketing strategies in its employer branding. "Push marketing" delivers messages and incentives to customer at the time and place of the marketer's choosing, using mass communication forms and sales promotion, to introduce the customer to the product (Schultz et al., 2009). Examples of push marketing conducted by the client are its online advertising promotions and its campus marketing activities, which "push" the brand toward the target audience. Meanwhile, "pull marketing" can be described as communications sought out by the customer, having been made available and appealing to them by the brand (Schultz et al., 2009). The client relies on this form of marketing too, using a combination of content types and channels (blogs, social media, website articles, videos, podcasts, attractive job listings) to make themselves visible to the target audience, "pulling" them towards them.

## Market segmentation & targeting

The client's target group segmentation variables are identified and justified in Table 6, based on the Research Report.

**Table 6.** *Segmentation variables*

| Segmentation type                | Variable  | Justification  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Geographic: Country           | Netherlands   | Demanded by client. Most clients/assignments require Dutch-speaking consultants and require consultants who live in the country.   |
| 2. Geographic: Metropolitan area | Randstad  | Demanded by client. Most major financial organizations are located in/around the Randstad metropolitan area. Whilst remote working has become the temporary norm, proximity to B2B clients is still a requirement.   |
| 3. Demographic: Age              | Ages 20-30  | Likely age for starter/entry-level positions, self-development, career guidance. While other age groups are also occasionally hired, the organization has specialized in starter positions.  |
| 4. Demographic: Education level  | In possession of higher level (HBO/WO) bachelor's degree              | Demanded by client. Consultant positions quickly develop into demanding, specialized job profiles which require this minimum level.  |
| 5. Psychographic: Activities     | Jobseeking  | Jobseekers may be both unemployed and employed young professionals, as well as students. Current occupation is irrelevant, whilst this variable is critically important.   |
| 6. Psychographic: Interests      | Interested in self-development, learning new skills                   | This was found to be the most sought-after employer characteristic, and is reflected by the client's core value "development/ontwikkeling". Therefore, this variable is a requirement.   |
| 7. Psychographic: Attitudes      | Willingness to make positive social/societal contribution with career | A large percentage of jobseekers in this age bracket seeks to make a positive social/societal impact with their careers, and wants their career to have meaning beyond being a job. The client can offer this benefit and should consider targeting these individuals. |

The target group is divided into two distinct target audiences: applicants who are mostly interested in the analytical, data-oriented nature of careers in the financial services field (TA1) and applicants who are mostly interested in the social/societal impact they can make with careers in the financial services field (TA2). There is ample overlap between the audiences: both are interested in self-development, a positive social corporate culture, healthy work-life balance, and a fair salary (Helder, 2021). The divide is proposed based on the distinct nature of the two described motivators, which allows for targeted messaging and matches clients' vacancies provided by the client. The research suggests respondents are likely to consider switching to the financial services field if they feel a vacancy matches skills & experiences they already possess, or if they feel they can make a positive social/societal impact through the work (Helder, 2021).

### Attractiveness indicators

The TAs are discussed in terms of the attractiveness indicators priority, urgency, feasibility, and accessibility (See Table 7).

**Table 7.** *Target audience attractiveness indicators*

| Indicators    | TA      | Level of attractiveness  |
|---------------|---------|--|
| Priority      | TA1/TA2 | Both TAs have <i>priority</i> over other jobseekers as their attitudes and demands more closely match the client's employer brand values, i.e., self-development, positive social corporate culture (Helder, 2021)<br><br>Their demographic and geographical variables make them suitable to the client. |
| Urgency       | TA1/TA2 | There is currently a high demand for and shortage of specialized finance professionals, and jobseekers falling within the TAs are likely to also consider its competitors (Helder, 2021). Thus, attracting these jobseekers is of urgent priority.   |
| Feasibility   | TA1/TA2 | Depends on segmentation variable: demographic/geographic variables are feasible, psychographic variables are more unlikely   |
| Accessibility | TA1/TA2 | (however, pull marketing methods using specific attractive keywords and descriptions can 'pull in' these TAs, as they seek out an employer that appeals to them and matches their search criteria (Helder, 2021).)   |

## Target audiences descriptions

### Target Audience 1

TA1 is described as "The puzzle-solver", a primary target audience, consisting of young professionals aged 20-30, and currently seeking a job. This TA is interested in self-development, a positive social corporate culture, healthy work-life balance, and a fair compensation. They may be either male or female but are predominantly male. They possess an HBO/WO level bachelor's degree (see Figure 7). What sets TA1 apart is their integral interest in data, math, analysis, and other non-social, technical elements of work in the financial services field.

**Figure 7.** TA1. *The puzzle-solver*



## Target Audience 2

TA1 is described as "The people-person", a primary target audience, consisting of young professionals aged 20-30, currently seeking a job. This TA is interested in self-development, a positive social corporate culture, healthy work-life balance, and a fair compensation. They may be either male or female but are predominantly female. They possess an HBO/WO level bachelor's degree (see Figure 8). What sets TA2 apart is their integral interest in people, social benefits, teamwork, and other social elements of work in the financial services field.

**Figure 8.** TA2. *The people-person*



**CHAPTER 5**

### Communication objective

The communication objective for both TAs is discussed within the context of the issue. Although both TAs have different motivators driving their interest in careers in financial services, the objective for both TAs is the same. Thus, the communication objective is singular, and described as such.

### Communication objective for TA1 & TA2

To increase brand awareness of the Talent&Pro brand and its positive characteristics among its target audience by 10% by July 2022.

The communication objective is described through Keller's Customer-based Brand Equity Model (see Figure 9). As shown in the model, the client should focus mostly on building salience, a deep, broad brand awareness among on the target audience. It may also begin distinguishing itself using the USPs relevant to its TA (Batra & Keller, 2016).

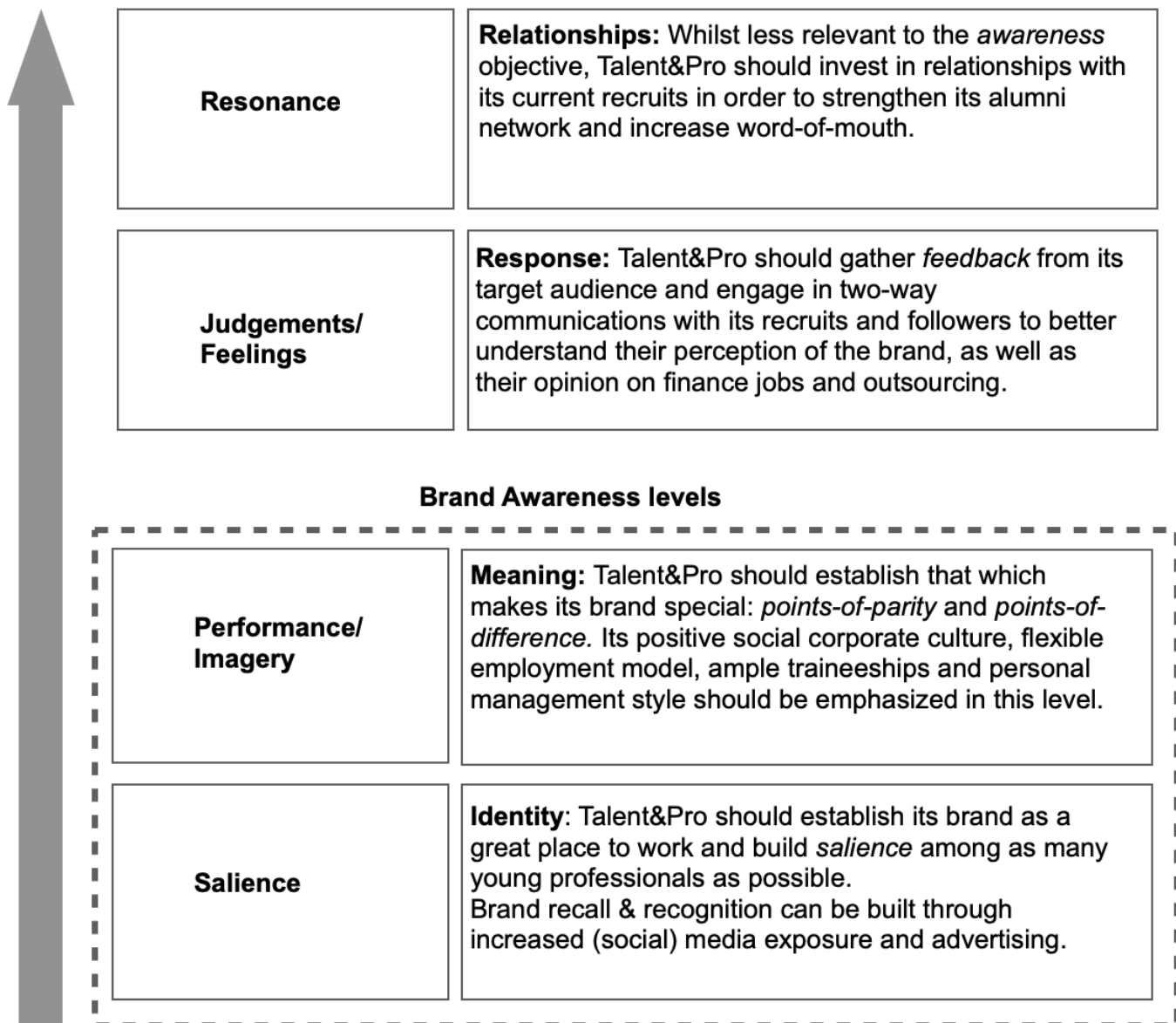
**Figure 9.** Keller's CBBE-model



*Note.* Keller's CBBE-model depicts the necessary steps towards a successful equitable brand. From *Integrated Marketing Communications: New Findings, New Lessons and New Ideas* by R. Batra and K.L. Keller, 2016. *Journal of Marketing* 80(6), 122-145. Copyright 2016 by Journal of Marketing.

The steps are applied to client's objective in Figure 10. Brand awareness is typically measured using Google Search Console or through awareness survey (Corkery, 2020). A 10% measurable survey among the TA would mark a distinct success of the strategy and is still attainable within the confines of budget and time. The 1-year period is selected to cover the peak period of applications after the summer, and to ensure continuity after that initial peak (see Chapter 7, Scheduling).

**Figure 10.** Keller's CBBE model applied to Talent&Pro



Talent&Pro's main communication activities are focused on the final stage of the AIDA model (*action*), i.e., focused on recruitment conversion (M. van Gessel, personal communication, n.d.). In order to build brand awareness and strengthen the salience of its employer brand among its target audience, the client should observe the first stage of the AIDA model: *attention*. To gain the audience's attention, the brand should take a cognitive approach, describing factually its competitive advantages and offerings (Fill, 2005).

Applied to the case of Talent&Pro, the brand should focus on establishing awareness of its identity among its target audience by highlighting the benefits of working for the brand *in general*, thereby focusing on the "wide end" of the AIDA funnel (*attention*), rather than focusing solely on specific vacancies, which focuses on the "narrow end" of the AIDA funnel (*action*).

**CHAPTER 6**

## Strategic Approach

### Brand positioning

The Talent&Pro brand positioning statement is described in Table 8.

**Table 8.** *Brand positioning statement*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>(Target)</b> To...                         | Young-adult (aged 20-30) jobseekers with an interest in self-development located in the Randstad metropolitan area, the Netherlands   |
| <b>(Category)</b> Talent&Pro is...            | The development-oriented, fun employer option   |
| <b>(Benefit)</b> That is the...               | Fun employer which lets you self-develop, learn new skills, and have a flexible, meaningful career start  |
| <b>(Support points)</b> That it is because... | It is the only employer where you'll be able to start your career by working at multiple major brands and following free traineeships to develop yourself, whilst being guided by a career coach and doing societally meaningful, interesting and challenging work. |

### Strategic communication approach

#### ***One-way communication***

In line with the awareness goal, the company's communications will be predominantly one-way (informative). As the company builds its employer brand, occasional feedback may be received (see Figure 9, Resonance). However, the main lines of messaging will be clearly linear, with the brand as the sender and the target audience as the receiver.

***Direct communication***

Currently, the brand engages almost exclusively in direct communications (see Table 1, Communication Activities). Because the brand is profiling itself and informing its audience about itself, it should continue to use this approach. By using paid advertising on platforms which are likely to be frequented by jobseekers, it can increase the salience of its employer brand among the right audience. Whilst the platforms are not owned by the brand, the messaging is direct as the brand communicates to its audience directly. This approach is also easier to measure and manage, and more cost-efficient than indirect communications.

***Proactive approach***

The proactive or "thought-leadership" approach is suitable to Talent&Pro, as it needs to profile itself as a uniquely attractive employer brand offering an innovative approach to employment. Its value proposition and employer benefits are a close match to the demands of many young adult Dutch jobseekers (Helder, 2021), which allows it to be proactive in its communications. Establishing a thought leadership position within the field through high-quality, consistent content is an effective way of improving the visibility of an employer brand (Laine, 2021).

***Inbound/outbound approach***

As discussed in *Marketing Strategy*, the company currently uses a "push/pull" strategy. It should continue to use outbound/push methods (e.g., paid advertising), as well as inbound/pull methods (e.g., content marketing), in order to maximize both the reach of the communication and the quality and visibility of the employer brand.

**Brand essence**

The brand's essence is discussed in the form of four promises, which capture the main benefits offered by the client and sought by the target audience (See Figure 11). Each promise describes two characteristics of the company.

**Figure 11.** *Brand essence*

**CHAPTER 7**

## Central theme

### Core creative concept

The "Big Idea" of the campaign is described in the following the action statement: "*Kickstart your career at the fun workplace that's invested in you and your development*". This action statement mentions the key benefits of self-development and a positive social corporate culture (see Figure 10) while appealing specifically to starters (TA1 and TA2) at the beginning of their career. By specifying "*invested in you and your development*", the personal management style is emphasized along with the ample self-development opportunities. The action statement can be adapted into messaging for both TAs, highlighting the different employment benefits sought by them.

### Messaging strategy

Although the choice of employer is mostly influenced by rational considerations, jobseekers also weigh emotional and psychological factors when applying for jobs (Helder, 2021). However, as discussed in Chapter 5, a rational approach matches the awareness objective of the strategy. The logical approach is to use a *cognitive* strategy, specifically a *unique selling proposition*. A cognitive approach, which factually discusses what sets Talent&Pro apart as a uniquely advantageous employer for starters, will aid in the communication goal of increasing brand awareness, and will help establish an employer brand that is credible, convincing, and memorable.

Typically, employees chose to work at Talent&Pro because the factual statements in the employer communications resonated with them personally (Helder, 2021). For example, the description of a certain field or position seemed relevant to their experiences, or the emphasis on personal development appealed to them.

## Execution

### *Message source, execution, and appeal*

The message source should be both the brand itself and its employees. Communication with actual employees at an employer increases the perceived attractiveness of that employer (Knox & Freeman, 2006). Additionally, the messages from employees are often perceived as more credible than messages from management or communication employees (Helder, 2021).

The communication strategy should appeal to *success* and *happiness* as the appeal types; by describing the promise of self-development, career growth and contractual stability, while also mentioning the personal angle, the fulfillment, and the positive social corporate culture, these are the two core appeals made in the strategy. This also works with the organization's core values. The suggested styles of *execution* are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** *Message execution styles*

| Execution style            | Example  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Testimonial                | Recently recruited consultants discuss what made them interested in Talent&Pro (e.g., development opportunities)<br><br>People managers explain how they contribute to the career of the consultants they manage |
| Description                | Visual ad which lists the key benefits of the brand<br>Textual ad which lists the key benefits of the brand  |
| Slice-of-life              | Consultant shares a vlog demonstrating a day-in-the-life: their assignment, traineeship, etc.  |
| (Partially animated) video | Video which highlights the key benefits of the brand using visually attractive animation features combined with filmed footage   |

**Samples**

Samples 1-4 depict a testimonial-style visual advertisement, in which supposed consultants share what they want from their career. Figure 12 and Figure 13 apply to TA1 and TA2, while Figure 14 is tailored specifically for TA1, and Figure 15 is tailored specifically for TA2. Sample 5 depicts a "vlog-style" video in which a consultant demonstrates a day in their life as a consultant for Talent&Pro (see Figure 16). Vlogs are an engaging and attractive format to convey a realistic portrayal of the employer. Sample 6 depicts a written blog with testimonial from a people manager (see Figure 17).

**Figure 12.** Visual sample 1: Testimonial (TA1 & TA2)



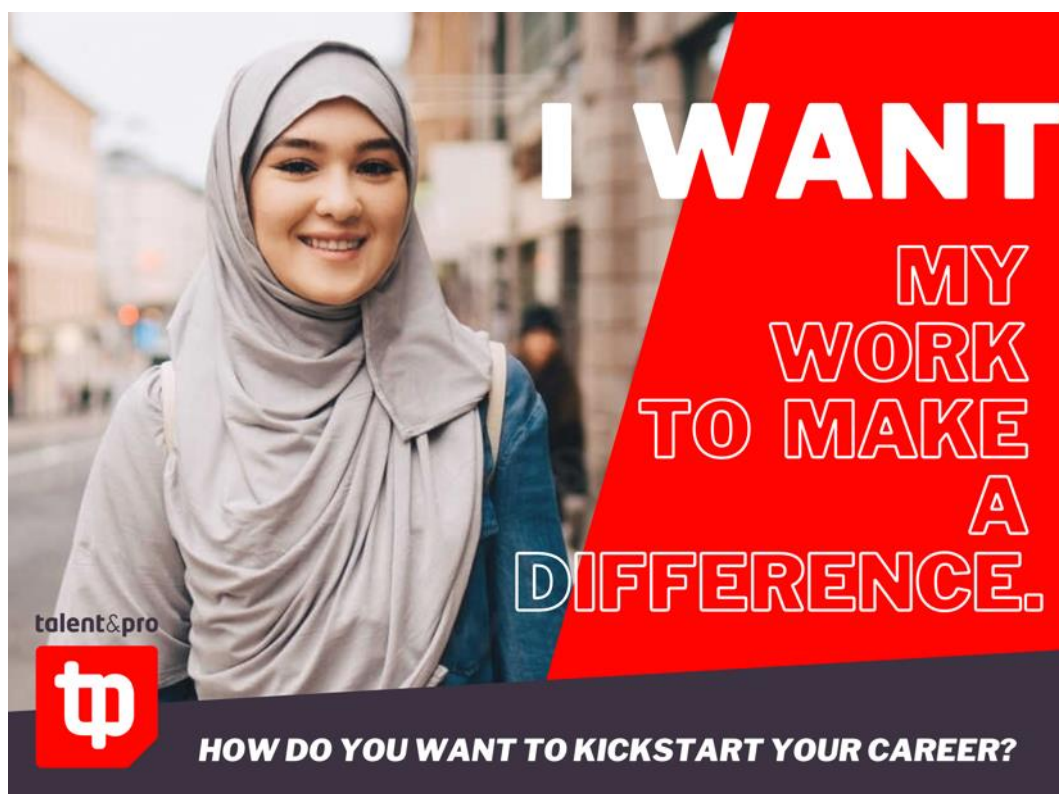
**Figure 13.** Visual sample 2: Testimonial (TA1 & TA2)



**Figure 14.** Visual sample 3: Testimonial (TA1)



**Figure 15.** Visual sample 4: Testimonial (TA2)



**Figure 16.** Sample 5: Slice-of-life vlog video**Figure 17.** Sample 6: Testimonial blog

## Let's Talk People met Laila Bijk | People Manager Pensioen & Leven

*In Let's Talk People duiken we de diepte in met een van onze superhelden: de People Manager. Deze is bijna niet weg te denken als coach en sparringpartner van elke consultant bij Talent&Pro. Maar wat doet zo'n People Manager nou eigenlijk? Hoe helpt een People Manager jou als starter óf ervaren professional in je carrière? En hoe ziet een supernormale, stampvolle werkdag er eigenlijk uit in hun agenda? Deze keer spreken we met Laila Bijk, voorheen zelf consultant, nu People Manager van een team pensioenconsultants.*

- Wat maakt dat sommige starters voor een carrière in de pensioenwereld kiezen en wat is jouw rol als People Manager?



Mijn rol is om startende consultants te begeleiden in hun carrière, aan de zijlijn te staan van hun persoonlijke ontwikkeling en daaraan bij te dragen. Op het eerste gezicht heeft de unit Pensioen & Leven misschien niet de grootste aantrekkingskracht. Ik let dan ook vooral op bepaalde eigenschappen in starters: behulpzaamheid, klantgerichtheid, analytisch vermogen, mensen aware willen maken van hun pensioen en daarmee van een belangrijk onderdeel van hun toekomst. Dat is het type persoon dat heel goed in onze unit past. Als zoekende starter ben je bij Talent&Pro natuurlijk sowieso aan het juiste adres, omdat we echt maatwerk kunnen bieden voor je ontwikkeling. Er zijn heel wat paden die je kunt bewandelen bij Talent&Pro, van het **Traineeship Business Analyst** tot het traject voor **Pensioencoach** dat nu online staat. Het is ontzettend breed.

**CHAPTER 8**

### **Communication mix**

The employer branding strategy requires specific communication instruments, channels, and content types, which are discussed in this chapter. The communication architecture is also included.

### **Communication instruments**

Firstly, the organization should invest strongly in social media marketing, as this is a known success factor in employer branding strategies. Typically, the target audience looks to a potential employer's social media channels to form their opinion on the corporate culture and values (Helder, 2021). Targeted advertising allows the brand to target TA1 and TA2 specifically, using demographic variables such as age, gender, and interests. Targeted advertising saves money and yields higher conversions (Reske, 2017). Secondly, the organization should invest in search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO), by means of search engine advertising and high-quality content. SEO is incredibly important when establishing a credible, visible, and findable online employer brand (Mosley & Schmidt, 2017). This leads to the third instrument: website marketing. The organization should continue generating high-quality written content (i.e., original, in-depth, and using popular search words) for three main reasons:

1. To improve its SEO
2. To position a thought-leadership position within the field
3. To educate its TAs on the intrinsic benefits of careers in the financial services field. Finally, the organization should continue developing and maintaining its profiles on vacancy websites and employment websites (e.g., Indeed, Monsterboard, etc.).

### **Communication channels**

The organization should continue building its LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram profiles. Additionally, it should invest in its YouTube profile, which currently has 101 subscribers and minimal engagement. These four platforms are most suitable to the organization's message and

TA; LinkedIn is strongly associated with employment and considered the most important professional social network by the TA (Helder, 2021), while Instagram and Facebook are suitable platforms for conveying the corporate culture. The company should invest both in high-quality content on its owned channels, and in paid advertisements (e.g., Figures 11-14). Using YouTube advertising, it should promote and push its video content (e.g., vlogs). As discussed, the website (owned channel) is important in establishing online visibility and providing in-depth information on the employer benefits.

## Content types

The chosen content types, their message and desired impact are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10.** *Content types*

| Content type         | Content message   | Visual elements/execution  | Desired impact  |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Visual advertisement | Talent&Pro can truly offer what you seek in an employer (key benefits, i.e., self-development, positive social corporate culture, intrinsic interest in work, social/societal impact) | Striking portraits of diverse young people, with fashionable/modern looks (piercings, jeans, sneakers, etc.). Bold font. Bright color scheme (emphasis on red to match the branding) | TA1 & TA2 associate Talent&Pro with key benefits, a youthful/flexible/attractive employer. Contradicts "stuffy" image of financial services field   |
| Vlog video           | Talent&Pro has helped me have a fun, challenging and rewarding career (personal approach, hear from a consultant)   | Down-to-earth, no-nonsense, realistic appearance of vlogger and portrayed life. Relatable, credible and trustworthy.   | TA1 & TA2 understand better what the organization can offer them, hear from a peer, be introduced to the brand in a positive way  |
| Interview/article    | These are the people/careers/facilities that make Talent&Pro an attractive employer   | Drawn portraits to add visually attractive element, individuality and level of depth. Overall consistent with brand language.  | TA1 & TA2 gain in-depth understanding of the brand and its values. SEO improvement increases reach/visibility of the brand online.  |
| Photo post           | Demonstrates the corporate culture/values/benefits of Talent&Pro  | Attractive photography of fun, social scenes. Design should be consistent with brand language (colors, fonts, etc).  | TA1 & TA2 see at a glance what the company culture is like, what are the company's benefits and values. Shares (especially on LinkedIn) also strongly benefit visibility and reach towards potential employers. |
| Animated video       | Talent&Pro can truly offer what you seek in an employer (key benefits, i.e., self-development, positive social corporate culture, intrinsic interest in work, social/societal impact) | Cast of diverse, young people (different ethnic profiles, diverse appearances, fashion etc). Bright colors, animations, fonts, etc.  | TA1 & TA2 associate Talent&Pro with key benefits, a youthful/flexible/attractive employer. Contradicts "stuffy" image of financial services field   |

## Communication architecture

The communication architecture for both TAs is shown in Table 11.

**Table 11.** *Communication architecture*

| Target Audience 1 & Target Audience 2  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Communication objective: To increase brand awareness of the Talent&Pro brand and its positive characteristics among its target audience by 10% by July 2022. |   |  |   |
| Message: "Kickstart your career at the fun workplace that's invested in you and your development"  |   |  |   |
| Communication mix  |   |  |   |
| Instruments  | Channels  | Content types  | Justification   |
| Social media marketing   | LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube  | Visual advertisement, vlog, interview/article, photo post, animated video.<br>Survey/interactive posts (Instagram) | Precise targeting to reach TA1 and TA2 with tailored messages (Figures 11-14).<br>Sharing/redistributing increases overall visibility. Builds a corporate image which supports employer branding. |
| Search engine marketing  | Google, Bing  | Text advertisement   | Drives traffic to website, namely jobseekers within the TA.<br>Increases overall brand awareness.   |
| Website  | Company website (talent-pro.com)  | Interview/article, photo post, video   | Builds employer brand as thought-leader, allows in-depth explanation of key employer benefits. Allows for more information on job listings, corporate values, background information, etc.        |
| Search engine optimization   | Company website (talent-pro.com)  | Interview/article  | High-quality written content is likely to drive increased traffic to the company websites, which boosts brand awareness   |
| Vacancy website promotion  | Indeed, Nationale Vacaturebank, Werkzoeken.nl, LinkedIn Job Slots, Talent.com, Joblift, Monsterboard, Magnet.me, Glassdoor, Qompas, Knappe Koppen | Visual advertisement, tekst advertisement, (links to) interview/article  | Builds strong employer brand / corporate image on platforms frequented by TAs (jobseekers).<br>Drives awareness overall.  |

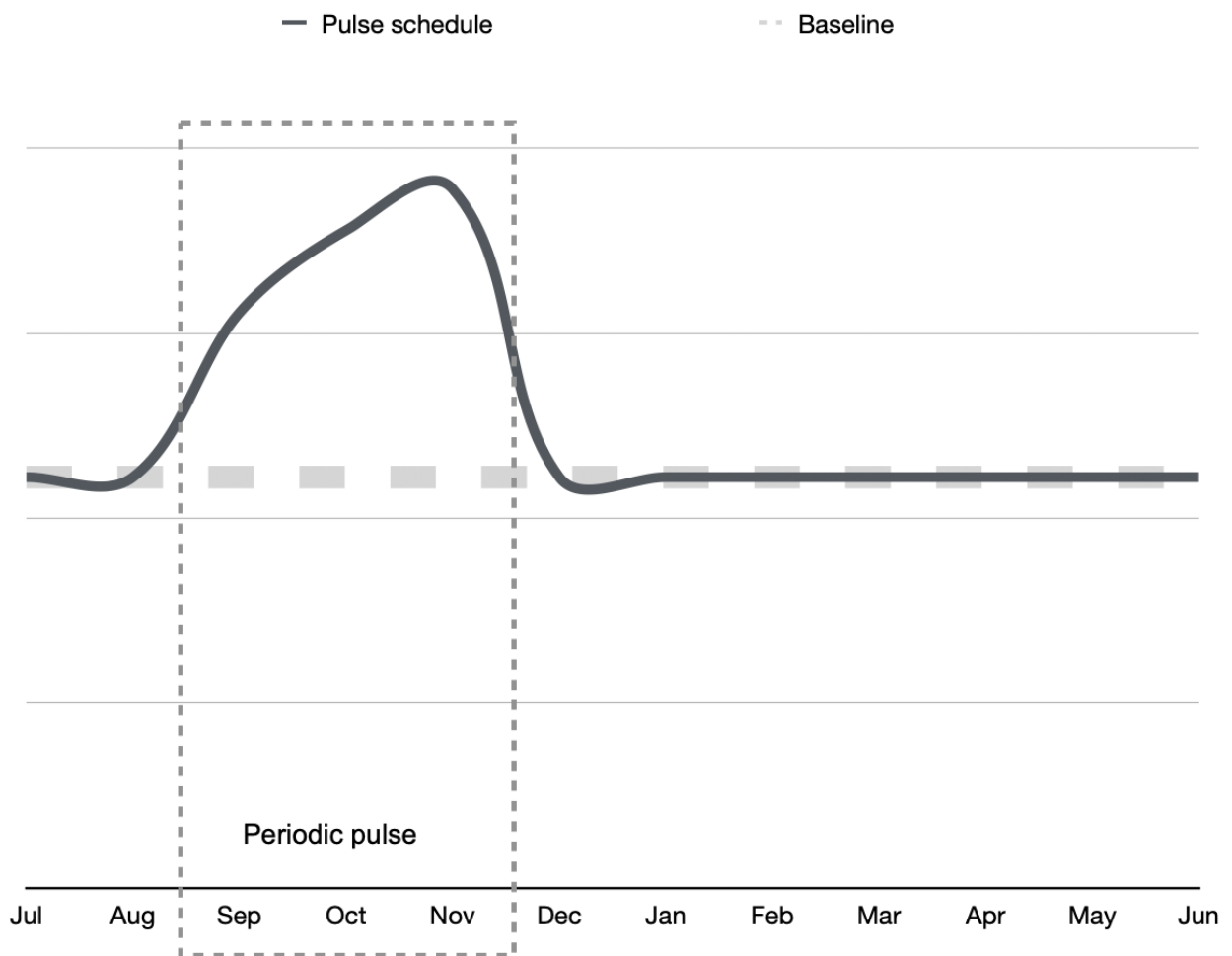
**CHAPTER 9**

### **Scheduling**

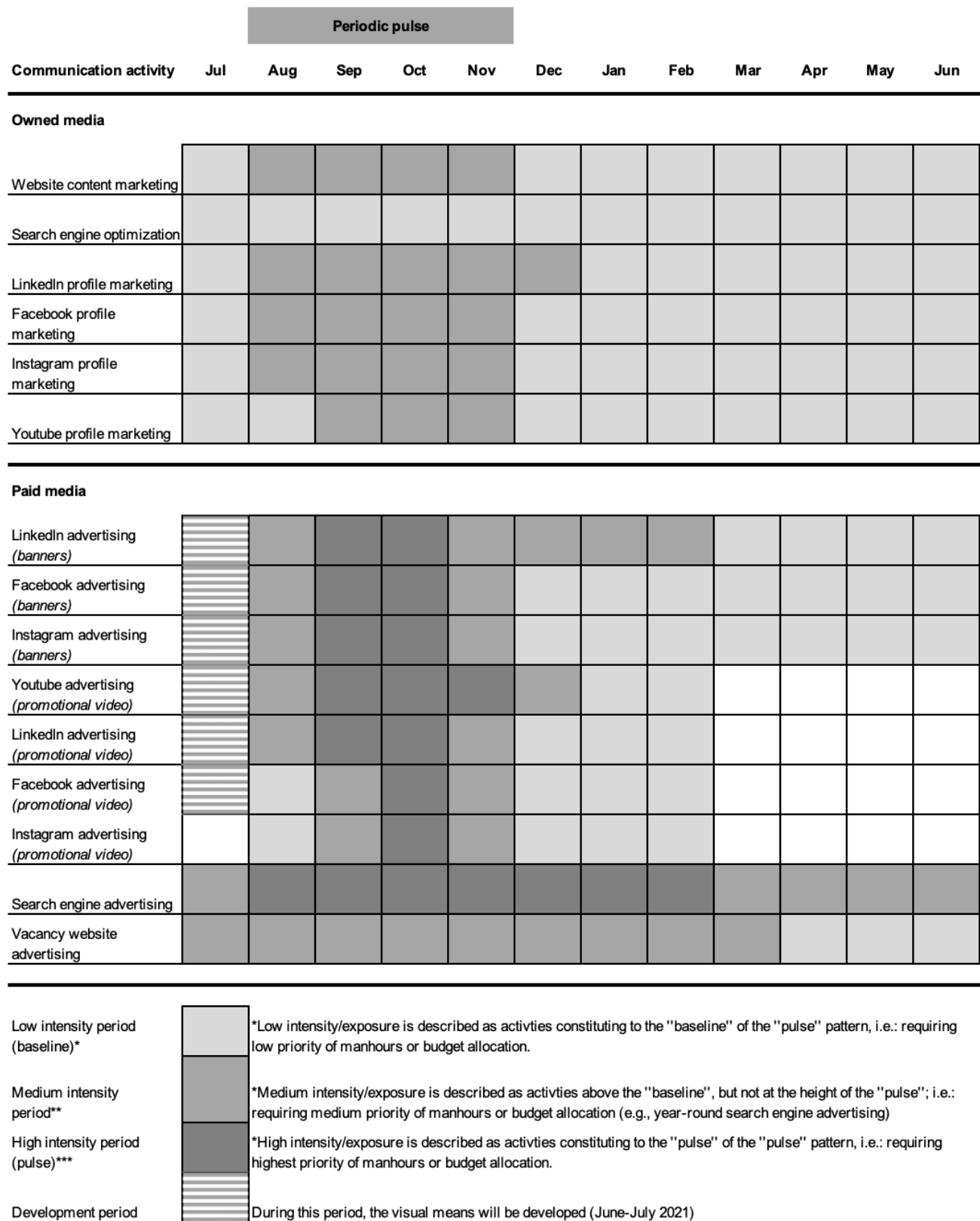
As described in the communication objective, the strategy pertains to a one-year period (July 2021 - July 2022). Employer branding is not of an inherently seasonal nature, as continuity and consistency in communication output are strongly recommended for employer brands (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Foster et al., 2010, Backhaus, 2016; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). However, due the fact the TAs are most likely to seek employment after graduating in the summer, there is one suggested peak period (September - November). Therefore, the organization should follow a "pulsing" pattern, which combines the consistency of a "continuity" pattern with the occasional peaks seen in the "flighting" pattern. Specifically, the "periodic pulsing" pattern is advised. As shown in Figure 18, the organization maintains year-round media coverage, with an increase between September and November.

This communications schedule is designed to accomplish two things:

1. to build a consistent and continuous employer brand image by establishing brand awareness and visibility throughout the year
2. to strategically respond to the increased applicant interest around the 'peak season' to draw an increased amount of job- seekers towards the organization, improving applicant numbers and boosting overall organizational growth.

**Figure 18.** *Periodic pulsing scheduling*

Certain activities are highly effective in establishing an employer brand and thus require year-round emphasis, e.g., search engine advertising and vacancy website advertising. Other activities require lower effort or are only emphasized during the seasonal pulse (see Figure 19).

**Figure 19.** *Communication scheduling*

## CHAPTER 10

## Resourcing

The execution of the communication advise requires a strategic collaboration between the organization's in-house professionals and external forces. For the visual campaign (banner/visual ads, semi-animated commercial video), the organization requires the assistance of an advertising agency. Table 12 displays the internal and external resourcing of activities as discussed in the communication mix.

The internal team contains a digital marketing analyst and multiple all-round marketing employees, who are proficient at executing the other tasks in the strategy. There are also established working relationships with digital marketing agency SDim, and website design agency NewFountain. Because both internal and external parties will carry a share of the responsibility for the final communication products, the described resourcing method is the "*managed team*" method. A managed team combines the reliability of internal team members and concrete, comprehensive service agreements, with the advantage of industry experts delivering high-end solutions in real-time (Mistry, 2019). The organization benefits optimally from external input without becoming reliant on it or losing control over the final product. (See next page for Table 12).

SDim provides mostly procedural and analytical services, e.g., advertising space buying/negotiating, reach analysis and effectiveness evaluation. Therefore, their services will also be requested for the evaluation process (see *Evaluation*). The additional financial cost of these services is calculated within the budget (see *Budgeting*).

**Table 12.** *Communication resourcing*

| Field                       | Task/activity                                   | Internal resource  | External resource          |
|-----------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Website</b>              | Written content creation                        | Content marketer   |                            |
|                             | Search engine optimization (SEO)                | Digital marketing analyst  |                            |
|                             | Content management (upload, maintain, organize) | Allround marketer  |                            |
|                             | Webpage management                              |  | NewFountain website design |
|                             | Reach/visitors analysis                         | Digital marketing analyst  |                            |
| <b>Advertising campaign</b> | Visual advertisement design                     | Managed team collaboration (Internal marketing team / external advertising agency) |                            |
|                             | Video advertisement production                  |  |                            |
|                             | LinkedIn advertisement purchasing               | Managed team collaboration (Internal digital analysts / Sdim)                      |                            |
|                             | Facebook advertisement purchasing               |  |                            |
|                             | Instagram advertisement purchasing              |  |                            |
|                             | Youtube advertisement purchasing                |  |                            |
|                             | Social media advertisement reach analysis       |  |                            |
|                             | Search engine advertisement purchasing          |  |                            |
|                             | Search engine advertisement reach analysis      |  |                            |
|                             | Vacancy website advertisement purchasing        |  |                            |
|                             | Vacancy website advertisement reach analysis    |  |                            |
| <b>Social media</b>         | Visual content creation                         | Allround marketer / Social media marketer  |                            |
|                             | Visual content publication                      |  |                            |
|                             | Engagement (comments/messages)                  |  |                            |
|                             | Written content creation                        | Content marketer   |                            |
|                             | Written content publication                     | Content marketer/social media marketer   |                            |
|                             | Interactive posts/surveys (Instagram)           | Social media marketer  |                            |

**CHAPTER 11**

### Budgeting

The suggested budgeting method is a *top-down, ROI* strategy set at €50,000. The return-on-investment (ROI) budgeting method is in line with the proposed activities, which are expected to pay off over time in increased brand awareness, applicant numbers and eventual corporate and revenue growth. The ROI method is difficult to assess accurately and should not be the only marketing budgeting method deployed by an organization. Since this strategy is designed to take place alongside the standard marketing/communication activities, the strategy is applicable and strategically sound (Bird, 2004). A top-down approach limits the spending, in line with the temporary (one-year) nature of the strategy. All budgeted expenses are based on market averages or organizational sources (see Table 13). As discussed in *Scheduling*, the heaviest emphasis is placed on social media advertising activities and the external development of the visual campaign (see Table 14).

**Table 13.** *Communication budget justification*

|   | Expense type                           | Source                            |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| a | External advertising agency            | Lekens, 2020                      |
| b | Sdim marketing agency                  | Personal communication, n.d.      |
| c | LinkedIn advertisements                | Advertise on LinkedIn, n.d.       |
| d | Facebook advertisements                | Pricing, n.d.                     |
| e | Instagram advertisements               | Pricing, n.d.                     |
| f | Youtube advertisements                 | Pricing, n.d.                     |
| g | Search engine advertisements           | Pricing, n.d., Bing Ads, n.d.     |
| h | Vacancy website profile fees           | Indeed, n.d.                      |
| i | LinkedIn premium business profile fees | Welcome to LinkedIn Premium, n.d. |
| j | Newfountain website design/maintenance | Personal communication, n.d.      |

**Table 14.** *Communication budget***1-year ROI Employer Branding Budget**

| Category of expenses                                | Direct/<br>Indirect | Fixed/<br>Variable | Internal/<br>External | Estimated<br>quantity | Estimated<br>cost | Estimated<br>subtotal |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Payroll</b>                                      |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   |                       |
| External advertising agency <sup>a</sup>            | Direct              | Fixed              | External              | 1                     | 10000             | 10000                 |
| Sdim marketing agency <sup>b</sup>                  | Indirect            | Variable           | Internal              | N/A                   | 8000              | 8000                  |
| Internal marketing personnel                        | Indirect            | Variable           | Internal              | N/A                   | N/A               | -                     |
| <b>Payroll total</b>                                |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   | 18000                 |
| <b>Paid advertising</b>                             |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   |                       |
| LinkedIn advertisements <sup>c</sup>                | Direct              | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 4000              | 4000                  |
| Facebook advertisements <sup>d</sup>                | Direct              | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 4000              | 4000                  |
| Instagram advertisements <sup>e</sup>               | Direct              | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 6000              | 6000                  |
| Youtube advertisements <sup>f</sup>                 | Direct              | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 5500              | 5500                  |
| Search engine advertisements <sup>g</sup>           | Direct              | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 6000              | 6000                  |
| Vacancy website advertisements                      | Direct              | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 1200              | 1200                  |
| <b>Paid advertising total</b>                       |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   | 26700                 |
| <b>Fixed communication expenses</b>                 |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   |                       |
| Vacancy website profile fees <sup>h</sup>           | Indirect            | Fixed              | External              | 1                     | 800               | 800                   |
| LinkedIn Premium Business profile fees <sup>i</sup> | Indirect            | Fixed              | External              | 1                     | 400               | 400                   |
| <b>Fixed communication expenses total</b>           |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   | 1200                  |
| <b>Other/fixed expenses</b>                         |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   |                       |
| Newfountain website design/maintenance <sup>j</sup> | Indirect            | Variable           | External              | N/A                   | 3800              | 3800                  |
| Office space  | Indirect            | Fixed              | Internal              | N/A                   | N/A               | -                     |
| Utility expenses                                    | Indirect            | Fixed              | Internal              | N/A                   | N/A               | -                     |
| Tax expenses  | Indirect            | Variable           | Internal              | N/A                   | N/A               | -                     |
| Insurance expenses                                  | Indirect            | Fixed              | Internal              | N/A                   | N/A               | -                     |
| <b>Other/fixed expenses total</b>                   |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   | 3800                  |
| <b>Total expenses</b>                               |                     |                    |                       |                       |                   | 49700                 |

**CHAPTER 12**

## Evaluation

### Introduction

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication strategy at multiple stages is essential to its success and demonstrates its value to the client. Hill et al. (2012) argue that various performance indicators must be collected to gain a holistic view of the strategy's performance. Financial gain alone is a "lagging indicator" and cannot be relied on to assess the campaign's effectiveness as it's being deployed. By assessing other indicators of effectiveness, possibly necessary adjustments to the strategy can be made if required (Hill et al., 2012). As discussed in *Resourcing*, digital marketing agency SDim's services will be requested for the multiphasic evaluation of the campaign.

The evaluation strategy is presented in Table 15.

**Table 15. Evaluation**

| Type/ phase     | What?                      | RO   | Stimuli  | Metric  | Methodology   | Sample   | Timing                 | Frequency       |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Concept</b>  | Employer brand indicators  | Attractiveness of employer brand elements                    | Description of "Big Idea" and brand essence        | Willingness to apply at such employer. Stated likability/interest.  | Focus groups  | Men/women aged 20-30 (starters/ jobseekers)                    | July 2021 (pre-launch) | 2x              |
| <b>Pre-test</b> | Employer branding strategy | Intention to apply based on samples, memorability of adcepts | Visual ads (image and video)                       | Intention to apply at such employer. Memorability of adcepts.   | Digital surveys + focus group   | Men/women aged 20-30 (starters/ jobseekers)                    | July 2021 (pre-launch) | 2x              |
| <b>Effect</b>   | Branding strategy          | Brand awareness  | Communication strategy (social media, advertising) | Measured increase of awareness of the brand among TA. Measured increase in applicant numbers (as compared to 2020 numbers). | Digital surveys, Google Search Console, personal interviews with applicants (to determine impact of branding) | Men/women aged 20-30 (starters/ jobseekers), recent applicants | July 2021- June 2022   | Monthly (12x)   |
| <b>Process</b>  | Budget                     | Budget variance  | Administration, billings                           | Compliance with allocated budget: advertising spending, outsourcing fees  | Digital analysis of administration  | N/A  | July 2021- June 2022   | Bi-monthly (6x) |

## Discussion of phases/types

### **Concept**

Focus group testing in the Concept phase introduces small sample groups (+/- 6 people) to the proposed "Big Idea" and brand essence (see *Strategic Approach* and *Creative Theme*), in order to gauge their interest in an employer based on the described characteristics, as well as their willingness to apply at such an employer. Carson et al. (2001) describe the main advantage of focus groups: the social interactions between respondents lead to valuable discussions which provide rich, contextual insights to the researcher.

### **Pre-test**

Once the visual concepts have been developed, their efficacy and attractiveness should be assessed with a focus group and through surveys, to ensure their readiness for execution. Specifically, their effect on the TA should be checked: are the "adcepts" memorable, and does it lead to an intent to apply at the described employer? Using digital surveys and focus groups, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data is collected, allowing for high-accuracy insights and final adjustments to the strategy before launch.

### **Effect**

The measurement of brand awareness should take place both through survey measurement (monthly, starting July 2021) and through the service Google Search Console, which can be used to gain insights into online indicators of brand awareness among specific audiences (Corkery, 2020). By establishing a baseline of awareness, the real effect of the strategy can be measured, and adjustments can be made if required. Beyond the awareness objective, an increase in applicant numbers should also be measured, compared to last year's numbers.

**Process**

By assessing the budget goals on a bi-monthly basis, the organization can prevent undue expenses. As the advertising spending is conducted according to set agreements and can easily be capped, the biggest budgetary risk factor is the outsourced creative work. The organization should set clear agreements regarding the fees for the deliverables, and continuously assess the overall spending to ensure that the budgetary restrictions are upheld.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Report received by assignment provider



PPT Received by  
assignment