



Advisory report on the implementation of USP's

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Executive summary

The USP's presented in this report were established in the research justification. Therefore, you can find references throughout this report that direct you to the research justification report to clarify the implementational advice in this report (In these references the abbreviation RJ is used). Additionally, to this report can be used after you have filled in the competitive tracking template, or on its own.

The research justification will answer the What? the template can be used a Tool and the advisory report answers the How?

User guide:

1. Research justification
2. If competitive analysis is needed: the tracking template
3. The advisory report, if no competitive analysis is needed you can also use the report after the research justification

The report will firstly shortly go over the information used to create the USP's to give these choices a bit more context, then it will demonstrate how De Pooter can create their own USP's in the future if changes in the target and competitive market take place. This part will also reference to the competitive tracking template because this can be used to analyse these changes. After that, the USP's will be presented with in relation to the needs that they fulfil (more information about this can also be found in the research justification report). And lastly the report will answer the why and how for each proposed USP.

The implementation advice will be given for the following USP's:

1. Extreme specialisation
2. Outstanding knowledge
3. Unique combination of services
4. Outstanding customer service
5. Location
6. Results from previous clients

The implementational advice was found using external desk research and gives advice on marketing, operationalisation, and HR activities. To ensure maximum efficiency of the implementations the research justification should be read first since this serves as the preliminary research for the information demonstrated in the advisory report and the competitive tracking template.

The implementations demonstrated in the report are advisory; therefore, this should not be seen as an implementation plan. If De Pooter chooses to follow up on one of the advises presented, they should first implement more research regarding the costs, timeline, and other data. It was made sure that the advice presented are suitable, acceptable, and feasible for De Pooter. You can find the proof of this throughout the report and in the conclusion.

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1.

Understanding USP's

What are USP's?

USP's or unique selling propositions are the variables of a product or service that set you apart from the competitor. They add a certain value to your services that convinces the customer to choose your product or services over others.

Why do we need USP's?

It is essential to establish your companies specific USP's to be able to target your market as effective and specific as possible. Being unique may seem simple, however it is anything but that. There are approximately 22.000 employment agencies registered with the chamber of commerce in The Netherlands (ZSW, 2018). Of course, not all these companies are a direct form of competition, if any at that. But they can still make it challenging for your own company to stand out.

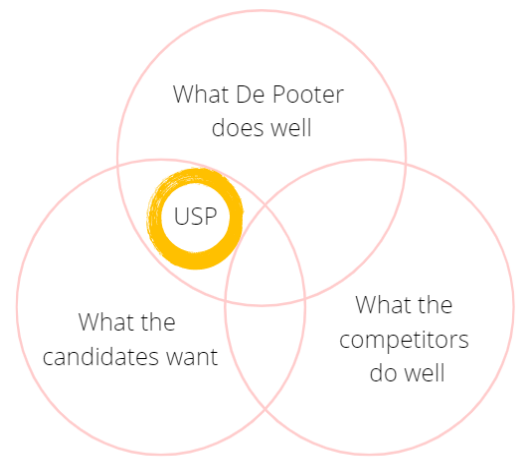


Figure 2: USP relations

For De Pooter, the main value of differentiation is that they can show their candidates what they have to offer, to who and how their services are better than the competitors. As mentioned before USP's are the added benefit of your service over the service of the competition. USP's are an intangible variable, but they affect the entire company. Some intangible variables that are affected by USP's are: Communication, content, strategies, image, and buying motivation.

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understanding and defining a USP for your business can be a pivotal decision: It involves establishing an identity that is part of the bedrock of your company (D'Angelo, 2018).

”

How can you formulate USP's?

De Pooter's USP's established in the research justification are created for the specific competition and target that were analysed in the research. However, markets and competition are ever moving and are depended on trends. Therefore, competitors and target groups are bound to change over time. Once this happens, USP's need to be revised. Are the USP's still applicable to the changed target market and competitors. If not, old USP's need to be adapted or new USP's need to be established. To do this you can follow the steps below and use the competitive tracking template to execute competitive environmental analysis. If you do this every 6 month you can keep track of changes and you can make timely adaptations.



Figure 1: USP formulation process

2.

The target market

Analysing the target market is the starting point of establishing your companies USP's. Why? You create the USP's to promote your strongest added value, but if your target market is not interested in this added value then there is not any point in **highlighting** this either.

When you fail to connect the correct USP's to the target market your marketing, communication and other efforts will miss the target group and will not create any interaction.

A thorough analysis of De Pooters target market can be found in the research justification. However, a short description of the target market will help refresh your memory and make sure that you are executing the implementations with the correct group in mind.



The Target group is employed in or looking for a job in the Process, food, or production industry, they core focus group is between the ages 18 and 30 and have at least a minimal education level of Mbo4. They live in North-Brabant or Zeeland, either with their partner, family or alone. They highly value time off, this is most often spent with family and friends. They want to develop themselves through their jobs and want to gain work experience and learn to solve problems in the work field. A fair payment is very important, and they look for security and certainty in their contracts. Additionally, to that they are reaching for the stars. They are still at the start of their career path and want to find the job that really fits them. (RJ. Page 7 & 8)

The competitors



The second most important factor that needs to be analysed to establish De Pooters USP's are their competitors. To make sure that the USP that you are using is unique, you need to make sure that it is not the same USP as your competitors. Before you can establish a unique USP it is therefore of high essence that you have a clear overview of you competitors. As we learned from the research justification, De Pooter has 5 direct competitors. They each have their own USP's that need to be compared to De Pooters. Only then we can select the correct USP for

The biggest competitor of De Pooter right now is Pro-industry. While many of the competitors share similarities in their services, we saw in the SWOT comparison in the research justification (RJ. Page 14-16) that De Pooter has some strengths over their competitors that can be used as USP's. These USP's and the implementations will be further explained on the following pages.



1. Pro-industry
2. Nouvall
3. Techsharks
4. W&V
5. Manpower

3.

The USP's

The USP's have been chosen to be able to serve as a competitive advantage towards the candidates of De Pooter. Therefore, they were chosen based on results of the research executed about the demand and needs of these candidates. Additionally, to that the USP's and needs were connected to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (RJ, page 11) (Fransson, 2020). This helps to categorize the implementation of USP's and makes it easier to use the USP's as an answer to the needs of the candidates.

USP's based on needs

1 Basic needs: Basic needs are the primary needs, they need to be satisfied before people start considering a service (McLeod, 2020). The USP's that De Pooter can use to respond to this need are:

1. Extreme specialisation
2. Outstanding knowledge

2 Safety needs: This need speaks to the feeling of safety that people want from a job or that an employment agency can give them with their services. The USP that De Pooter can use to offer this safety/ security is:

1. Unique combination of services

3 Belonging and love needs: These needs are psychographic and concern the need of belonging in a company/society and the need of appreciation and acknowledgment. The USP's that De Pooter can use to fulfil these needs are:

1. Outstanding customer service
2. Location

4 Self-actualisation & esteem needs:

These needs are about personal development reached in a company and the feeling of achievement that the work activities bring. The USP that De Pooter can use to answer prove the fulfilment of this need with their services is:

1. Results from Previous clients

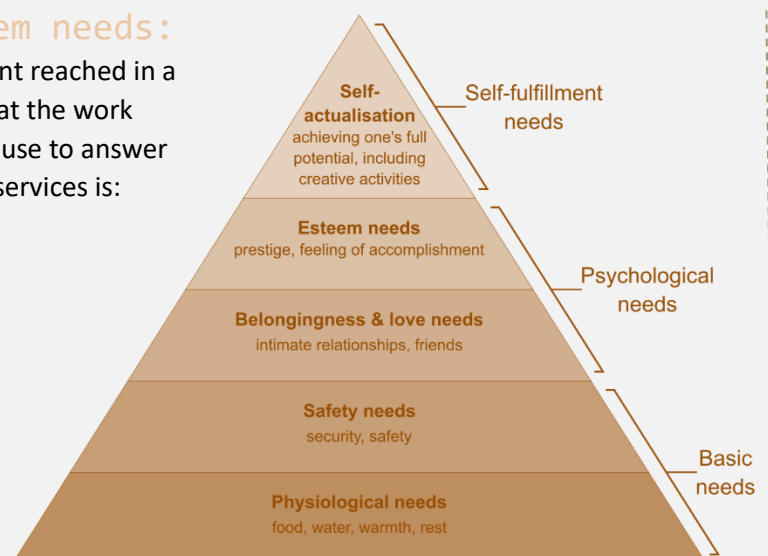


Figure 3: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Extreme specialisation:

Why use Extreme specialisation?

Extreme specialisation can only be used when your company works with candidates in a specific, niche branch. Since De Pooter only operates in the logistic and technical sector in the industrial branch (production, process & food), they can cater to the needs of these candidates with more insight and knowledge of the market than their competitors that operate in a much larger variety of branches.

Moreover, we learned in the research justification that their candidates highly value the specialisation that De Pooter has in the market, especially in Zeeland. Additionally, specialisation was rated as the second biggest added value that agencies have according to the results from the survey. Therefore, De Pooter will be able to fulfil this need of their candidates. In short, it can be said that candidates like working with specialists, and it gives an edge to your company, which convinces prospective candidates (Sakas, 2016).

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Your agency can either stand out as experts in a narrow field or fade into the sea of thousands of generalist agencies. In short, specialize or die.

(Sakas, 2016)

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How can De Pooter use “extreme specialisation” as their USP?

There are two different types of specialisation to focus on. Horizontal specialisation focusses on a specific problem while vertical specialisation is the specialisation of a specific target (Brodie, 2021). In De Pooter's case, the best differentiation method is Vertical specification, because they can direct the specialisation to their targeted candidates. Horizontal specialisation is not applicable since not all candidates will have the same problem. A good USP is part of the marketing plan; it affects the storytelling, your image and the look and feel of the company (EZ Marketing, 2018).

By focussing on a specific industry and target group, a company has immediately set their position on the market, and it is clear to the candidate what type of services you offer and what you can do for them. But how can you use your specialisation as a competitive advantage, well...

Specialisation makes it easier for candidates to compare companies, makes it easier for De Pooter to obtain expertise and makes them stand out. Since De Pooter focusses, a specific sector and they have a strong focus region they have more knowledge of the companies in this region and the wishes of candidates in the sector. This means that they know exactly what candidates are looking for, what their aspirations are, and which companies are a match with them. Moreover, their specialisation has resulted in a pool of well-recognised companies in the industrial sector. Since they have connections with the biggest industrial companies in Zeeland, and they have the biggest offer of vacancies in Zeeland (in comparison with their competitors), they can use this in their story telling and use it to make a guarantee to their candidates as a competitive advantage/USP (EZ Marketing, 2018). For example:

Choosing for De Pooter means that you are assured of a placement at a well-recognised international employer. We have the biggest offer in vacancies in Zeeland and know our customers and candidates like no other. We know what you are looking for and help you find companies that fulfil your wishes.

De Pooter offers the best job opportunities in well-recognised companies. With our broad array in vacancies, we will always find a place where you can shine, grow, and build up experience. We follow you every step of the way and help you set out your career path.

Outstanding knowledge:

Why use outstanding knowledge?

While specialisation and knowledge may seem similar as USP since they are both based on expertise, there definitely is a difference between the two. Outstanding knowledge is directed towards the management of knowledge. Knowledge management has two purposes. It involves the intake of external knowledge and the way you use this to your advantage in processes. And simultaneously can be used to demonstrate internal knowledge to show your expertise to the candidate/customers (Rahimli, 2012). Demonstrating your knowledge allows you to open up a conversation with your candidates and convinces them of your expertise and knowledge in the sector (jpimedialocal, 2017).

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When it comes to marketing your business, promoting your products or services may be important, however sharing your expertise is equally effective in helping to win more customers.
(jpimedialocal, 2017)

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How can De Pooter use “Outstanding knowledge” as their USP?

Since De Pooter has a specialised target and sector, they are aware of all the trends and they know how to use this information to their advantage. They are on top of all the changes in the labour market. For example, they know that there is a scarcity in technical employees in the labour market. This may be a disadvantage to their customers but is an advantage to their candidates. By demonstrating how they can help candidates use this to their advantage in the freedom and options they have when they are applying to a vacancy. De Pooter shows their candidates that they have the knowledge to help them get the best deals. Moreover, you can also use knowledge to recommend new services (Robin, sd). De Pooter recently launched De Pooter Academy to promote this new service they shared information about the problem of scarcity and choice stress of candidates on their socials. The information/knowledge shared in this case served as a nice conversation opener/tool to promote De Pooter academy.

Not all their competitors are as specialised as they are in sector, target group and services, and they often do not have a specialised department in their company who keep track of all the changes in the technical sector. Therefore, they can use the expertise that they have over their competitors as a competitive advantage. But how can they implement this and demonstrate this to their candidates?

- 1) **Use whitepapers, blogs to share information.** Whitepapers allow you to share your knowledge and build thought leadership. You can present your unique advice and experiences. Moreover, they generate leads and help build a mailing list (Knight, 2019).
- 2) **Present social proof:** Social proof can be a testimonial of an active candidate, ask them to write a short story about their perception of the level of knowledge that De Pooter has of the sector (target market), and how De Pooter has helped them to find their place in the labour market. Testimonials score with candidates because they come across as honest and less biased. They show real stories and experiences. Additionally, you can increase the click through rates of these posts by adding a face to the testimonial. This gives of an even stronger impression (Egan, 2016).
- 3) **Visualise your knowledge:** Create a video, infographic, factsheet, or any other form of visualisation. Bring data to life, by visualising achievements you will reach a much larger group and don't bore them with data. Visualised data has much more impact and is easier to rap your head around (Analytik, 2020).

6.

USP for safety need

Unique combination of services:

Why use unique combination of services?

Most of the respondent from the survey are either interested in a contract form that offers them security and diversity (secondment) or a contract that offers them flexibility and diversity (temporary placement). Moreover, most respondents answered that their ideal period at one employer is 2 years (RJ page 25) De Pooter has a variety of services that they offer namely, secondment: With secondment, you offer employees a contract at the agency and send them to one of your customers for a max period of 2 years on average. And temporary placement, the candidate is employed by De Pooter and will be placed for a very short period or for a project. Additionally, to that De Pooter offers full-time and part-time placements. Not all competitors have such varying contract forms, some of them offer only project based, temporary based or secondment-based contracts. Therefore, they can use this variation as a unique selling point.

Generally speaking, the temporary/secondment branch has a bad reputation among people. Most of this date back to the time that agencies only offered temporary placements. Most often people have negative perceptions that aren't really based on actual facts or experiences. This also originates from the thought that flex work doesn't offer any kind of job assurance or certainty. One of the most important motivators to feel happy at work is the feeling of security and the assurance that you have an income, pension, and social securities. With the option of secondment De pooter can attract more people than other agencies who don't offer this contract form. Moreover, one of the points with which De Pooter differentiates themselves is that they often offer the opportunity of a fixed contract and that they always pay on time. This is for a lot of other agencies not the case.

"While you might think that providing job security is only important because it increases company bottom line and improves productivity, this is not the case. It is important for many other reasons, namely that boosts company reputation as a good employer."

(ENME, 2017)

How can De Pooter use "Unique combination of services" as their USP?

If De Pooter wants to promote their unique offer in services as an USP they need to make sure that their candidates are aware of the benefits of each service. They need to take away the negative image around flex work and highlight the positives. Most important they need to educate candidates about the security that secondment can offer them. With the correct positioning activities, you can turn almost every negative image around (Uebbing, 2015). Brand employment can easily be shared through social media posts that highlight the advantages of a company or service, but what is the image that De Pooter should portray with their unique skill set in mind?

- ➔ **Abolish negative image around the branch:** Flex work offers much more security and opportunities than it used to. With secondment, you have a contract and therefore all the benefits of this as well such as: Secure income, pension accumulation, social securities and paid vacations and sick leave (Moore, sd).
- ➔ **No reason to be ashamed to work through an agency:** People often feel ashamed to admit that they work through an agency because people think they were unsuccessful in getting hired by themselves. However, many employers encourage flex work, and it offers tons of opportunities such as: building experience, you gain exposure and build connections and can enjoy flexible hours, become a more versatile employee. Therefore, flex work is no longer seen a negative from of work, (Moore, sd).

7.

USP's for belonging & love needs 1

Outstanding customer service:

Why use outstanding customer service?

Qualitatively good services are the main reason why people choose to go to your agency. However, the customer service that comes with these services is just as, if not even more important. Therefore, this is one of the most important USP's that you can create. Go that extra mile! Make sure the candidates feel heard and appreciated. De Pooter evaluates the feedback on intake experiences monthly. With this evaluation, they can monitor the experiences of the candidates and it allows them to respond to negative feedback. Acknowledging feedback and complaints and reacting to these give the candidate the feeling that they are acknowledged as well and that their employer cares for them. De Pooter often hear from freelancers that they hire that they have the feeling that they find themselves in a warm bath when they first start working at De Pooter. This is because of the uphold low-threshold services and have short communication lines with all levels of the company. In case of the candidate level of customer service, we refer to the Backoffice experience. Since they answer and arrange activities such as salary, administration, labour hours, etc.

Customer service is part of the customer experience (Schwager, 2017). The customer experience greatly influences the image of the company and helps with the word-of-mouth marketing of your brand. Moreover, it affects the retention of your candidate. Because a happy candidate is more likely to come back (Jason Bordeaux, 2020). While USP's from tangible factors such as unique products are easily duplicable, customer service is unique to every company and can pull your candidates towards you (Blount, 2019).

How can De Pooter use "Outstanding customer service" as their USP?

There are multiple levels of customer service that all each have their own complexity of interactions. These levels are described in the customer service experience pyramid (Groot, 2020). Depending on the choice of the customers' service level that De Pooter chooses to use, the following USP implementations are advised.

Expert level: The factors that can be implemented are a chatbot or other automated self-service options. This makes it easy for candidates to find information and lowers the barrier (Groot, 2020). These services are often offer general solutions and therefore feel less personal, which can also be a disadvantage.

Customer service: This is the average level of customer service; employees are available by phone and E-mail. This level of expertise relies on human interaction and therefore feels much more personal. However, labour hours spend on customer services tasks often cost much more than automated services. (Groot, 2020).

Self-service: Customers often try to look for answers themselves. 91% of the people use online knowledge databases to find information. Therefore, it is essential to have your SEO in order. With this, you make sure that you are at the top of the search engines when candidates are looking for keywords related to their answers around your services. By adding an FAQ to your website, you can answer questions that people may have without them having to wait for a response (Groot, 2020). In 2021

In 2021 the most preferred form of customer experience is: Self-service is the most preferred form of customer service. People nowadays prefer limited interactions to find information, or they want to know what is going on behind the scenes and prefer to do things themselves. Therefore, this form of customer service is recommended. This can be used as an USP by the implementation of web chat bots, or a self-service portal where candidates have full access to al their data and have an overview of FAQ (Kulbytté, 2021).

Location:

Why use location?

From the desk research of the research justification, we learned that the candidates and the prospective candidates highly value the personal relationship between them and the agency. By offering the candidates, the possibility to have physical meetings De Pooter can answer to this need. With Covid measurements in full force around the world we have all noticed how restricting non-physical contact can be. Entering a new job without even having seen your employer or at least a company representative can be demotivating. Of course, candidates want to know what kind of employee they are working for. Since De Pooter also offer secondment services, this is an important factor since De Pooter is actually the employer of their candidates. De Pooter has 3 physical locations, 2 in Zeeland (Axel & Middelburg) and 1 in Brabant (bergen op Zoom). With these locations, they can meet face to face with their candidates and form a more personal relationship. This is a competitive advantage since not all competitors have physical locations in the same targeted areas as De Pooter. It makes them much more accessible to all kind of candidates and fulfils the need of the candidate to belong and form a relationship. Moreover, the location of the offices also helps with the establishment of relationships between De Pooter and their customers and gives them more insight in the companies in the regions that they are operating in. It makes it much easier for De Pooter to visit the sites to discuss placements with the customers and shows the candidates that De Pooter has personal relationships with their placement employers.

How can De Pooter use "location" as their USP?

Another term that can be used for the USP location is customer proximity this translates to "The mean distance from the firm to the customer. The question you need to ask yourself when you are thinking of using this as an USP is: Are we customer proximate? Since De Pooter can answer yes to the following questions they are seen as a CPO (Customer proximate organisation) (Insurgence, sd)".

- ? Do you have physical stores that are easily accessible for your target market?
- ? Do you have multiple touch points with your customer (before admission, during and after)?
- ? Do most of the roles in your organisation have contact with the customer?

But how can you use this as USP and promote this?

The proximity of your company to your certain target group in a certain region makes your company local. According to google, half of all internet searches are for local business. Most people looking for local searches engage with the business they searched for on the same day (Duffy, 2019).

- 1) Increase the changes of getting found locally with google my business. Google my business can be used to provoke engagement and to manage your online presence and accessibility such as offering the google map's location of your company, easy contact via phone or mail. It is the information you see on the right side of the search page (Heitman, 2020).
- 2) Use SEO to make sure that your company pops up when candidates search with the search term of locality. Don't use organic SEO but specialise and use local SEO (Heitman, 2020).
- 3) Use local advertisement: Find out where you can find your target group and promote within the area. This can be done with online advertisement on local sites, or local Google ads campaigns and offline advertisement with posters, banners, and local news outlets (Heitman, 2020).
- 4) Use local branded content: De Pooter has the knowledge over the region, the candidates, and companies in the region. Use this to your advantage and post content that interests them. Are there

9. USP for self-actualization & esteem need

Results from previous clients

Why use Results from previous clients?

The experience, results and expertise of a company can push a candidate to choose for your company. But how can you demonstrate this? The best way to showcase this, is by building up a portfolio. A portfolio can consist of your experiences and the results from previous clients. Since there are many competitors in the branch it helps the customer decide which agency they prefer when you provide them with results of your expertise. 38% of the candidates from the survey respondents noted that they find the possibility of personal development in their job very important. By presenting success stories of previous candidates De Pooter can show them what kind of possibilities that they can offer the candidate, which motivates them to choose for their services.

How can De Pooter use “results from previous clients” as their USP?

Showing the possibilities of personal growth, development and valuing achievements sounds nice, but candidates want to see proof. So how do you prove that you are not just bragging, but actually walk your talk?

- 1) Show hard figures: Present the achievements of your previous candidates. This can for example be done with a best practise. Choose a candidate that wants to participate and present their career path at De Pooter. If someone was able to move upwards in their job, you can use this as proof for candidates that you are able to help them make these steps (THAT, 2017).
- 2) Use brand ambassadors: By using brand ambassadors you humanise your brand, this increases the credibility of your claims. And provide positive word of mouth (Sideqik, 2017).
- 3) Involve the customers: Increase the credibility even more by asking the customers (placement companies) to share their willingness to help the candidates develop. By showing that you work with companies that are interested in the future of their candidates, you make sure that you place your candidates first.
- 4) Promote De Pooter Academy, De Pooter Academy is a nice example of showing the interested in employee development. With de Pooter Academy, de Pooter is personally helping candidates to develop themselves by helping them obtain a diploma.



10.

Conclusion

The professional product has solved the problem of lacking information concerning the USP that De Pooter can use and implementations of these USP's can be connected to the field/tool, marketing, and sales. Since the report is only an advisory report, further research into an actual implementation plan that involves the costs and planning will still need to be executed. However, the advisor report already offers ideas that can be used.

The most important USP's that need to be implemented are "Extreme specialization, since this USP is linked to the basic need of the candidates. Therefore, this USP is a tipping point in their decision making. This means that this need needs to be satisfied before the candidate even starts to think about De Pooter as a possible option. The second most important USP is the USP Unique combination of safety derived from the need of safety. This can also be traced back to the field research in the research justification (RJ....) Candidates find the feeling of security and safety very important in their job. De Pooter has a strong position in this field since they differentiate themselves with their timely payments and the contract forms that they offer. Lastly the USP Results from previous clients linked to the need for self-actualization and esteem. This USP can be used as the final push for candidates to choose for De Pooter since it provides them with data and real stories of peer-candidates.

"Perhaps the most important insight of Nina's research and professional product is the fact that it clearly maps out which USPs we can use to distinguish ourselves in the market. This is the basis for rolling out our services to candidates in the coming years, and especially for expanding our marketing efforts towards this target group. Moreover, we will be able to make our own choices on implementation based on the advice and we can use our own experience to create a plan" (Pieter Jan Peene, In-company coach).

The advisory report can be used by De Pooter and the current team to base their implementation report on. Since De Pooter already has focus groups for employer branding and other customer experience topics, they will be able to easily incorporate the advice offered in this report to make further plans. Therefore, De Pooter has the proper resources and capabilities which makes the professional product **suitable**. According to the quote mentioned above from the in-company coach, the advisory report fulfils the need of insight in the possibilities of differentiation with USP's that can be used as a competitive advantage. Therefore, the report is **acceptable**. Since this is an advisory report, further research into the financials will still need to be executed this means that no real claims about the financial feasibility can be made. However, De Pooter will be able to execute the implementations rather quickly since they have the capabilities and the experience with their candidates and in the market. Therefore, the advisory report is **feasible** (Lücidity, sd).

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