

Analysis and improvement of the current candidate experience in RUAG Ltd

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As the shortage of skilled workers is a general issue, employer attractiveness gets more essential for companies. To be an attractive employer, the candidate experience plays a key role. For companies in the defence industry, it is challenging to provide a satisfactory candidate experience as they face high security regulations. The goal of this study is to analyze and improve the current candidate experience of RUAG Ltd.

Introduction and Objective

RUAG Ltd is the technology partner of the Swiss Armed Forces and responsible for the life-cycle management, operations, and the availability of military systems for land and air. The company roughly employs 2,500 employees at 18 different locations in Switzerland. Currently, there are more than 130 vacancies of which at least 50% are in the occupational fields with a strong indication of a shortage of skilled workers. To keep up in the competition about recruiting skilled workers, increasing employer attractiveness is one of the RUAG goals for the fiscal year 2023. I examine the following research question: How can the candidate experience of the recruiting process be improved in a company with high security measures based on projects with the military?

Research Design

The focus of this research is on the three last phases of the candidate experience: „Application“, „Selection“, and „Hire“ (see Figure 1). First, I conducted a literature review on the topic of candidate experience also in relation to employer attractiveness, to obtain an idea of the current state. Second, I provided an overview of the challenges and restrictions for RUAG Ltd as a defence company. To analyze the current candidate experience of RUAG Ltd., I, third, conducted expert interviews with employees from RUAG Ltd. and I documented the current recruiting process from the candidate's point of view. Then, I summarized pain points and good points of the current candidate experience and compared them with the findings of the literature research. Further, I evaluated different hypotheses about the candidate experience of RUAG Ltd. from which I derived the questions for a survey. The survey was sent to 185 employees who had joined RUAG Ltd. in the last six months and 123 responded. Finally, I analyzed the answers of the survey to provide recommendations on how to improve the candidate experience.

Results

The preliminary study led to the hypothesis that the current response times in the recruiting process are too long. The analysis of the survey shows that the most important aspect for a positive candidate experience is to provide a response time of maximum 4-7 days. Another hypothesis was that it would be more practical for the candidates to receive the contract documents digitally. The results show that 66% prefer to receive them physically. As expected for 61% it would be valuable to see the course of the recruiting process and its KPIs on the homepage of RUAG Ltd. 74% perceive it to be important to have the opportunity to talk with their potential work colleagues without an HR responsible or the supervisor during the second interview.



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Implications and recommendations

I recommend defining internal KPIs regarding the response times and showing them on the homepage. In addition, it would be good to provide a description of the next process steps in the recruiting process. I also recommend to the process of the second interview according to the preferences of the respondents. If contract documents are to be digitized, I suggest pilot testing so that the candidate experience is not negatively impacted. The agile project team of the group function unit HR Operations and Digitalization consolidates the results of this study and incorporates them into the design of new processes along the candidate experience.

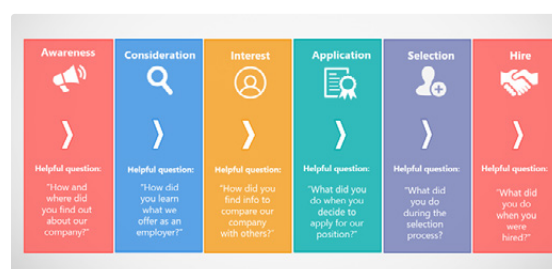


Figure 1: The six phases of a candidate experience (Anja Zojceska, 2018)