Hiring the Good Consultant

The formation of Psychological Contracts in a small Danish consulting company

Louise Lykke Stryhn

Supervisor: Kirstine Zinck Pedersen, Department of Organisation

Handed in October 22nd 2013
Characters: 181.469 (79,8 pages)
Abstract

The motivation and purpose of this thesis has been to get an improved understanding of the formation and development of organizational relationships during the processes of recruitment and employment start. This motivation is based on the assumption that organizational relationships has both economically implications for the organization, and additionally influences job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and employee turnover.

The relationships have been investigated in the context of a small Danish consulting company. The method used has been qualitative in-depth interviews with representatives of the management and the employees. The approach in this study differs from the more normative approaches for effective recruitment as it has sought to understand how the parties involved make meaning of, and perceive the relationships.

The theoretical approach has its foundation in the Psychological Contract as a way of understanding the informal and implied parts of the employment relationship. The study has revealed how organizational and individual identity has been a central factor in the formation of the relationship, and the process of Identification is therefore seen as part of the foundation for the development of the psychological contracts in the case company.

It is furthermore revealed how the relationships have been affected by more general implications caused by being in a small company. The structural design also plays a significant role in the way the processes are being executed and affect the formation and further development of the employment relationship.

The findings of this thesis have further shown how the experiences and perceptions of the processes and the employment relationship are influenced by an ideological assumption and definition of the good consultant. The ideal of the good consultant has been found as both an enhancer of identity and creator of tensions for the parties involved. These tensions have resulted in small breaches affecting the psychological contracts and the identification processes between the employer and employees. However, the effect of the breaches has been found as existing in the relationship with relatively few complications. The breaches are therefore rather seen as resulting in a re-identification and adjustment to the new organizational setting, than causing severe damage to the relationships. The findings do, however, lead to the conclusion that even though individuals seemingly define themselves by the same ideal of the good consultant, they do not necessarily make meaning of, and perceive the employment relationship the same way.
**Table of contents**

1. Studying and working with the formation of the employment relationship ........................................... 4
   1.2 Research question ................................................................................................................................. 6

2. Research approach ................................................................................................................................. 7
   2.1 Method ................................................................................................................................................ 8
      2.11 An abductive and explorative process .............................................................................................. 8
      2.12 The context for data collection ......................................................................................................... 8
      2.13 Interviewees .................................................................................................................................. 9
      2.14 The interviews ................................................................................................................................. 11
      2.15 Document analysis .......................................................................................................................... 12

2.2 The Case-company .............................................................................................................................. 13
   2.21 A small consulting company ............................................................................................................. 13
   2.22 Employee structure ........................................................................................................................... 13
   2.23 Low formalization and selective decentralization .............................................................................. 14
   2.24 Consultants and knowledge-workers ............................................................................................... 16
   2.25 (Self-) management and control ..................................................................................................... 17
   2.26 Summary .......................................................................................................................................... 18

3. Theoretical approach ............................................................................................................................ 19
   3.1 The concept of the Psychological Contract ......................................................................................... 19
      3.11 Rousseau’s Psychological Contract ................................................................................................ 20
      3.12 Why study the contract? .................................................................................................................. 21
      3.13 When and how is the contract formed? ......................................................................................... 22
      3.14 Summary ....................................................................................................................................... 23

3.2 The Psychological Contract and Identification ............................................................................... 24
   3.21 Identity ............................................................................................................................................ 26

3.3 Summary ............................................................................................................................................. 28

4. The recruitment and employment processes from the management’s perspective .................... 29
   4.1 Recruitment ....................................................................................................................................... 29
      4.11 Recruitment as a stop-and-go process ............................................................................................ 29
      4.12 The challenges of identifying the right candidate ........................................................................... 31
      4.13 A professional, responsible, and cooperative consulting company ................................................. 32
      4.14 The right employee = a good consultant ......................................................................................... 35
      4.15 Trying to make the right match ...................................................................................................... 38
4.2 Employment start.................................................................................................................. 41
  4.21 Basic introduction meetings .............................................................................................. 41
  4.22 Important to have work to do ............................................................................................ 42
  4.23 Mentoring people into the organization........................................................................... 43
5. The processes of recruitment and employment start from the employees’ perspective ............. 46
  5.1 Recruitment .......................................................................................................................... 46
    5.11 A consulting company like any other .............................................................................. 46
    5.12 The job interview as a personality and identity clarification ........................................... 48
    5.13 The matching of job content and identity characteristics .............................................. 49
    5.14 Company size, structure, and professionalism as appealing factors ........................... 51
  5.2 Employment start ............................................................................................................... 53
    5.21 A basic “indoctrination” ............................................................................................... 53
    5.22 Getting to work! – or not .............................................................................................. 56
    5.23 General experiences: tasks as promised, self-management and small breaches .......... 57
    5.24 Mentoring program ....................................................................................................... 60
6. Discussing the two perspectives of the employer-employee relationship ..................................... 63
  6.1 Various perceptions of organizational image, identity, and attractiveness ......................... 64
  6.2 The ideal of the good consultant ....................................................................................... 66
  6.3 Self-manage your inclusion – lack of work and mentoring program .................................... 67
  6.4 Self-management as leading to both misidentification and identity enhancement ............ 68
7. Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 71
8. Bibliography ............................................................................................................................. 73
9. Appendix A ............................................................................................................................. 77
  9.1 Appendix A.1. - Interview guide management/partners ..................................................... 77
  9.2 Appendix A.2. – Interview guide employees ....................................................................... 79
1. Studying and working with the formation of the employment relationship

The motivation for this thesis has its origin in a combination of my studies and my job throughout the past year at a small recruitment company. This combination has been an insight in the process of making the right match between companies and candidates. An observation I have made working with recruitment is how the process of finding the match seems to be depending on factors not only related to the objective qualifications but also of the subjective evaluation of the candidates. Similarly the candidates also seem to choose the companies based on many different and varying factors. This has indicated how the employment relationship holds many other aspects than the merely objective and formal agreements between the employer and employee. The interest is therefore to get an insight into what these factors might be. This study will concentrate on the premises which the employer and the employees enter the employment relationship, and how it is expressed and reflected in the relationship in the initial phase of employment. The overall focus is on how this relationship is perceived by the parties involved.

The relevance of the above was confirmed at the initial interview with the case company. The first interview with the partner, who is responsible for recruitment, revealed how the management has recently initiated an improvement strategy for the company’s recruitment process. A motivational factor for this improvement was very simply put by the partner: “An unsuccessful recruitment decision can easily cost the company 500.000 DKK”. A statement like this stresses in a very simple and obvious way the importance for further research of the recruitment process. But additionally, besides from the mainly economic perspective, numerous researches show how a mismatch of organizations and individuals influence job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and turnover (Wanous, 1972; Breaugh and Starke, 2000; Vandenberg and Scarpello, 1990). This stresses the relevance from both a company and employee perspective of such research and the importance of understanding the recruitment process.

The case company’s new strategy for the recruitment process has its main focus on recruitment as branding and the importance of recruiting through specific channels based on the characteristics of the specific candidate profile. This approach to recruitment is also reflected in theoretical research, where it seems to have its ground in a somewhat normative approach for effective recruitment. The subject has been addressed by James A. Breaugh in his article “Employee Recruitment: Current knowledge and important areas for future research” (2008). The article is concerned with research
on recruitment methods such as realistic job previews, targeted recruitment, and on-line recruitment, and the suggestion for future research is also from this perspective (Breaugh, 2008). This approach to recruitment can therefore be seen as mainly concerned with the methods of recruitment and on providing various tools for hiring new employees. Thus, the overall purpose of this approach to recruitment can be argued as being mainly from the perspective of the company and as an attempt to find and present the most effective method for finding the right candidate.

The approach in this thesis will be slightly different than the one described above. Firstly, it will focus merely on the meanings and perceptions created in the case company from the organizational interrelations during the process of recruitment and employment start. The theoretical approach has its origin in the concept of the Psychological Contract, which is to be understood as the informal and unwritten agreement of the initiation of the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1990). As implied psychological contracts are therefore consisting of the parts of the employment relationship that is not included in the formal contract. The research will in this thesis be concerned with the development of the employer-employee relationship, and by this including both sides of the employment relationship, as opposite to only presenting the company perspective. This approach emphasizes the notion of both parties of the relationship, and is chosen as it has shown relevant due to the findings of contradicting perceptions in the empirical findings. To understand the factors influencing the formation and development of the psychological contracts, the concept of Identification will be applied. Identification relates to how the match between company and candidate is seen as an overlap of the organization and individual identities (Gibney et al., 2011). The use of the theory of Identification, naturally includes Identity theory, here both individual and organizational identity. Previous research has mainly dealt with how Identification or more specifically misidentification can result in breaches in the Psychological contract (Zagenczyk et al. 2011). This study will focus more on identification as part in the formation and development of the Psychological contract and the employment relationship, and therefore aim at providing additional attention to the connection of these concepts.

The purpose in this thesis is therefore not to provide a method for effective recruitment, or a checklist for finding the perfect candidate and organizational fit. The main purpose is to get an understanding of the processes and factors involved in the formation of the relations and how it is perceived by both sides. Such additional understanding could nonetheless be a foundation for developing more comprehensive understandings of the more normative approaches to the processes of recruitment and employment start.
1.2 Research question
In the previous section it has been introduced how the initial interest and motivation for this thesis is to get an increased understanding of the processes of recruitment and employment start. More specifically the research focuses on the formation and development of the employer-employee relationship during these processes. As described in the previous section, this interest has its foundation in the observations on how the recruitment process and the decision to enter the employment relationship from both sides seem to be influenced by various factors. This is to be investigated by answering the following:

*How are the employer-employee relationships in the case company formed and developed during the processes of recruitment and employment start, and how is it experienced and perceived by the employer and the employees?*

This is to be answered by some additional sub-questions. The first part of questions is focused on the management’s descriptions of the processes, while the second part focuses on the employees’.

- What does the management perceive as attractive about the company and how they present it to potential employees?
- How does the management define the employees and what and who are they looking for?
- How does the management perceive employment start?
- What did the employees find attractive about the company and the job?
- How do they define themselves as individuals and employees?
- How are their experiences and perceptions of the employment start?
- What are the characteristics of the management’s and the employees’ experiences and perceptions in relation to each other?
2. Research approach

From the research question, it is expressed that the aim of this thesis is to understand the interviewees’ experiences, and their way of understanding and creating meaning of these experiences. This approach to the area of interest and study has its origin in the phenomenological theory of science. The perspective of phenomenology has been chosen as it in this case is found best suited for getting an understanding of the research area and question.

In phenomenology subjectivity and interpretation plays a significant role, and is based on the assumption that there is no such thing as facts and objectivity and that the same situation can appear in different ways based on the individual’s experience (Fuglsang and Bitsch Olsen, 2004; Justesen and Mik-Meyer, 2010).

In the perspective of phenomenology the concept of life-world is central, which is seen as a shared world in which each individual creates their own horizon of meaning (Justesen and Mik-Meyer, 2010). The concept of life-world is also used by Kvale (2008), who considers phenomenology as a way of understanding social phenomenon by the actors own perspectives and describe the world as it is experienced by the individuals. It is therefore the subjective experience that is interesting to illuminate and not whether it is true from an objective perspective.

The concept of the Psychological Contract has been chosen as theoretical approach in this thesis as it focuses on understanding the individuals’ perception of the relationship. This can be seen as relating to the research approach of phenomenology, as “Phenomenology encourages in-depth investigations and reflections on the individuals’ experiences and development of perceptions, and the conditions for their way of perceiving and interpreting reality” (Dahl Rendtorff, 2004).

From a more realistic perspective, the phenomenological approach can be criticized for not providing the possibility to generalize based on the findings (Justesen and Mik-Meyer, 2010). But as the purpose of this study is to get a rich and in-depth description of the experiences of the interviewees in the specific case company, and does not have generalizability as a criterion. However, the concept of generalizability can from this perspective of phenomenology be reformulated to analytical generalizability, which refers to the procedure of evaluating whether the findings from one study can be used as guidance for what might happen in another situation (Kvale, 2008).
2.1 Method
Having asked a research question concerned with the individuals’ experiences and perceptions of the processes of recruitment and employment start, a phenomenological approach to method has been chosen in the form of qualitative in-depth interviews conducted in a case company. This method has been chosen based on the focus on the experiences of the interviewees’ life-world (Jepsen and Madsen, 2008 in Voxted, 2008) and their way of perceiving and creating meaning of these experiences (Kvale, 2008). The qualitative interview can be considered as a way of understanding the world from the perceptions of the interviewees, unfold the meaning linked to their experiences, and uncover their life-world (Kvale, 2008). The approach to the qualitative interviews as method is primarily based on Steinar Kvale as his approach can be ascribed to phenomenology (Kvale, 2008).

2.11 An abductive and explorative process
The approach for the study in this thesis can best be ascribed to that of abduction. The initial phase of the study was explorative (Jepsen and Madsen, 2008, in Voxted, 2008), with continuously adjustments of research question and theoretical perspective throughout the research process. The argument has been constructed by various elements in order to understand the processes in the case company. As this understanding and explanation has been constructed from various elements related to the specific setting of the case company, it is not seen as a logical construction disregarding other explanations and understandings, but merely a way of understanding the available empirical material (Fuglsang and Bitsch Olsen, 2004).

The theories applied have been chosen based on their ability to provide an understanding to the findings of the study. The theories are concerned with the structural characteristics of the company, organizational and employee characteristics and identities, and the employer-employee relationship and its formation.

2.12 The context for data collection
The context for the collection of empirical data is important to consider with regard to the choice of method. In this study, the use of a case has been chosen, as the case company is considered to be a relevant context for investigating the area of interest and research. The case company will be presented and described more thoroughly later on. Since it can be considered important to understand the context, the dynamic structure of the organizational member’s world it is relevant to use a qualitative approach to the research design (Lee, 1999). Furthermore, this approach is well suited for studies where the investigation is from the perspective of the members of the
organization, as they are at the center of the context. The qualitative method chosen for the research is the case study. This is due to its suitability for investigating organizational phenomena (Lee, 1999). Case studies can be defined as:

“When an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1984).

As the definition expresses, the case study is a method emphasizing the understanding and explanation of the studied phenomenon on the basis of its context (Nielsen, 2008, in Voxted, 2008). The case study as method is in this project considered a qualified method of getting systematic and detailed knowledge about events and phenomena as they unfold in the “real” world (Ramian, 2012), here the case company. The case study can be considered as a way of creating knowledge for strengthening, weakening or just giving more nuances to a theory or parts of that theory (Ramian, 2012). As the area of interest is to get an understanding of how the employment relationship is formed and developed from the perceptions of both sides, the main method used is qualitative in-depth interviews. This way of investigating the processes can be seen as a social production of knowledge as it is based on a conversation between the interviewed employees and me (Kvale, 2008). Furthermore, written documents are included as empirical data. As expressed in the definition of case studies, several sources of data is necessary in order to increase the quality of the research (Dahl Rendtorff, 2007, in Fuglsang, 2007).

2.13 Interviewees
The process began by contacting the case company. This resulted in an initial interview with one of the partners who is also head of recruitment. The first interview was mainly an exchange of expectations with regard to the research process. It therefore began with an introduction of my initial thoughts on the project, with the presentation of my area of interest being the recruitment process and employment start. Afterwards the partner gave an introduction of the company, first by presenting the basic structure and the services they provide. Furthermore, he had prepared an introduction to the company’s recruitment and branding strategy and a description of the onboarding processes. After the presentation of the project and the company, the agreement was that he would return with the names of the employees for my interviews. The partner can therefore be seen as a gatekeeper of my access to empirical data. This should be taken into consideration
when concluding on the analysis and could be argued as a bias in the study in favor of the partner and the management. However, my impression of the interviewees and the interviews was that it did not seem to have an impact on the interviewees or the content of the interviews. But, the possibility of the interviewees and their answers being influenced by their relation to the management cannot be completely disregarded.

The partner selected the interviewees based on our initial discussion, where my main criteria was that they should be recently hired and preferably be from various units of the organization. The interviewees are all from the case company. Two of the interviewees are partners and have both been part in the founding of the company for approximately ten years ago. These are both part of the management and involved in the recruiting of new employees, whereas one of them is head of recruitment. The two partners are responsible for different business areas and thus working in different units. The partner who is head of recruitment has been the main contact in the thesis-process and therefore he has been the organizer of my contact with the other interviewees.

The other interviewees are employees working within different areas of the company. The main criteria of the employees interviewed for the thesis has been their employment period. All of the interviewed employees have therefore been working at the company for less than a year. This criterion ensures that all of the employees have recently experienced the recruitment process and employment start. Furthermore, the employees have different backgrounds, both with regards to education and previous experience. The purpose of differentiation in interviewed employees was to provide the study with diversification and add multiple experiences of the processes being the area of interest in order to avoid a narrow perspective from only one type of individuals and employment group and thus heighten the quality of a study with a small sample of data. As the study also focuses on the individuals’ previous experiences in order to understand their way of interpretation and sense-making, the diversification in interviewees with regard to relevant factors such as education, type and years of experience has therefore also been a criterion in the selection of interviewees. Furthermore, the interviewees have all undergone the processes during the approximately same time period, and have all participated in a job interview with at least one of the partners who is also interviewed in this study. This should therefore make the foundation of understanding the processes and relationships with limited variation.
Both the case company and the interviewees are anonymous. But in order to ease the reading and understanding, aliases have been created. For easier orientation the employees are presented in a table below.

### Overview of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Partner and head of recruitment. Started the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steen</td>
<td>Partner. Has been working at the company almost since the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>Senior consultant. This is his fourth professional job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Senior consultant. This is his fourth professional job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Senior consultant. This is his second professional job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rene</td>
<td>Consultant. This is his first professional job.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own construction

#### 2.14 The interviews

The approach to data collection has been the semi-structured interview and conducted according to my interview guides. The interview guides were concerned with various subjects acting as loose guidelines, and where mainly concerned with “keeping” the conversation on track with regard to the experiences during recruitment and employment start (Kvale, 2008). Two different types of interview guides were produced – one for the management and one for the other employees (see Appendix A). All of the interviews were held at the company, both in order for the interviewees in order to see them in the contextual setting of the study.

As mentioned earlier, Christian, the partner, contacted after the first interview me with the names of employees he had chosen based on the criteria given during our initial talk. Thus the interviews with the employees and other partner were conducted afterwards, during a time period of approximately one and a half month. All of the respondents were interviewed once in separate interviews lasting about one hour. The separation of the interviews allowed for reflections and changes in interview guide and approach as additional aspects revealed along the way. The interviews did, however, to a certain degree follow the same interview guide. But given the abductive method, new findings added new aspects to the interviews during the process, which meant that findings from previous interviews lead to additional focus on some areas when conducting the rest of the interviews.
Having conducted all of the interviews with the employees and one with each partner, one last interview was held with Christian. The first interview was not recorded, while the rest of the interviews were. This was in order to heighten the quality of the interview, by providing a better foundation for concentration to focus on the various subjects revealed during the interview and give a better dynamic (Kvale, 2008). In addition to the recordings, I made notes during the interviews concerned with what I observed during the interviews. This is due to the notion of how it is not only interesting to analyze what is verbally expressed, but also what is “communicated” non-verbally. The observations were mainly concerned with the atmosphere during the interview, and my personal perception of the reactions of the interviewee throughout the conversation.

Furthermore, the recording of the interviews is the premise of the transcription. The transcription is meant as providing better conditions for the analysis of the empirical data, and is in itself part of the analytical phase (Kvale, 2008). Afterwards the transcribed interviews were coded in order to organize and structure the texts content the meaning (Kvale, 2008, p. 223). The transcribed interviews are presented in Appendix C on the attached CD (however not in the public version of this thesis).

2.15 Document analysis
In addition to the interviews as empirical data, documents provided by the case company are also included. The documents consist of a company presentation, and recruitment and branding strategy given by one of the partners. Furthermore, three job postings are included as empirical data. It is claimed that “the strength of this method [document analysis] includes the opportunity it gives the researcher to examine texts written in the participant’s own words, and often with substantial care” (Lee, 1999). Organizational document can be seen as a way of creating “a version of reality and self-presentations” (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004). This implies that we have to “approach documents for what they are and what they are used to accomplish, (...) their place in organizational settings (...) and the cultural values attached to them” (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004). The analysis of documents can be considered “unobtrusive” by how it does not require contact with the persons being investigated, meaning that the method decreases the risk of the researcher affecting the creation of the document (Dahler-Larsen, 2008). The documents can be seen in Appendix B on the attached CD (however not in the public version of this thesis).
2.2 The Case-company
The following section will present an introduction to the case company of this thesis. The section will consist of a basic introduction to the company, its business areas, and the services it delivers. Furthermore, the characteristics of the company with regard to structural factors are discussed. Emphasis has been put on the structural factors of the case company, as these have shown as influencing the processes investigated in this thesis. Furthermore, organizational and employee characteristics will be presented with focus on management types.

2.2.1 A small consulting company
The case company for this study is a small consulting company. The company has two offices in Denmark, situated in the Copenhagen area and in Jutland, and additionally an office in Norway. Since the company started in 2001 with 5 employees it has grown to 60 employees, whereas 30 are in Denmark and 30 is in Norway. The company structure is consisting of partners, chief consultants, senior consultants, consultants, and junior consultants/student workers.

The company offers consulting services in various areas such as IT, procurement and sourcing, negotiation, efficiency, and project management, and can in this notion be seen as a knowledge-intensive firm as its “work can be said to be of an intellectual nature and where well-educated, qualified employees form the major part of the workforce” (Robertson and Swan, 2003). The company’s consultants are primarily divided into two groups based on their area of competencies and expertise called Operations Management and IT-management. Furthermore, the company focuses the services into industry areas constituted of communes/municipalities, transportation, energy supply and environment, and service and IT, mainly for customers in the private and public sector with most focus on the latter.

2.2.2 Employee structure
To understand the company’s structure, it is necessary to define the basic parts of the organization which are defined as the resources available for the organization to design the structure (Mintzberg, 1980). The case company does not have a clear distinction between the operating core, strategic apex, middle line, technostructure, and support staff (Mintzberg, 1980). From the definitions by Mintzberg, the operating core consists of the employees producing the products and services of the organization. The strategic apex is the company’s top management and the personal staff. The middle line is the managers between the strategic apex and the operating core. The technostructure consists of the analysts who apply analytical techniques for the adaptation of the organization to its
environment. Last, the support staff is the indirect support to the rest of the organization (Mintzberg 1980).

Every partner has a business area he/she is in charge of. And every consultant, this being chief consultants, senior consultants, consultants, and junior consultants are assigned to one of the partners. This means that all employees have a partner who is their direct manager and is responsible for their professional development and is the one having the employee-development-interviews\(^1\). With regard to job and tasks generating, the partners are mostly in charge of creating a team to work on all new assignments. Besides from dividing the assignment between the consultants based on their specific competencies, they are also using a time registering system, in order to divide the hours between the involved and available consultants. Based on this, it can be argued that all of the members are part of the operating core, as they are all directly involved in the production of the services delivered to the costumers. Furthermore, the partners and chief consultants can be considered as also being part of the strategic and techno-structure parts in addition to the operating core. And with regard to the middle line both chief and senior consultants are part of this. At last several of the consultants fill out the tasks related to being in the support staff. So in this type of organization the distinction between the various parts as defined by Mintzberg is blurred.

### 2.23 Low formalization and selective decentralization

With regard to the management of the various industries and business areas, the company structure shows similarities of the Simple Structure as defined by Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 1980). As stated on the company web-page, the business areas are “managed by a partner [and] supported by chief-consultants in order to support the development of the area in the best way”. The resemblances with the Simple Structure can be seen in how the key part is the strategic apex, which consists of the top managers and their supporting staff (Mintzberg, 1980). As stated in the definition of Simple Structure this is often seen in simple, dynamic environments (…) and tends to be found in smaller, younger organizations (Mintzberg, 1980). However, the definition of Simple Structure also describes how it “coordinates by direct supervision; the structure is minimally elaborated and highly centralized” (Mintzberg, 1980), which is not seen as characteristic of the case company.

\(^1\) MUS-samtaler
The company’s structural design can also be seen as having similarities to the structural configuration called Adhocracy (Mintzberg, 1980). In this type of business, the tasks are almost never the same. Every customer has a unique problem, where the solution requires various competencies and thus various consultants. The lack of possibility for standardizing the services provided, leads to the need of assembling of a new team for every new project. This way of structuring the work is implied in the definition of Adhocracy, where tasks are *coordinated primarily by mutual adjustments among all of its parts* (...) *jobs are specialized* (...) *but little formalization, units are small and combines functional and market bases in matrix structures* (Mintzberg, 1980). This type of structure is found in complex, dynamic environments with the decision making being decentralized both vertically and horizontally and requires a high degree of collaboration.

Both of the mentioned structural types are characterized by a low degree of formalization, and this is considered typical for a small consulting company (Mintzberg, 1980) providing the basis of an organic structure with little formalization of behavior, selective decentralization, and low vertical job specialization in order to arrange the employees in smaller project teams (Mintzberg, 1980). On the company web-page it is described how the services provided by the company is delivered by using teams consisting of specialized consultants selected for the project, based on their competencies within the requested area. The company’s focus on projects as the main way of working is another example of having a matrix structure for producing and delivering the company’s services. As described by Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2007), this way of structuring an organization is common when the company delivers customized services.

As structure in general is regarded as providing the organizational members with a sense of focus, coordination, and stability (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2007), this lack of formalization has its implications. This is expressed by an employee from the case company: “*I have been surprised that it is still quite unclear to me how the company works across the organization. And it is still blurry how the projects are divided throughout the organization*” (Interview Jacob). This experience can be explained by the degree of decentralization as employees can experience a lack of management and predictability of organizational practices (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2007). However, the benefits of decentralization are considered to be the motivational factors that enhance initiative and responsibility. This is expressed by an employee from the case company, in how he considers it
very positive that “you get a lot of responsibility in the consulting business and in small companies. It is very professional and everyone takes responsibility” (Interview Jan). The employees’ various experiences and perceptions of the structural implications will be included later on and investigated more thoroughly.

2.24 Consultants and knowledge-workers
Returning to the initial definition of the company as being a knowledge-intensive firm, which delivers services based on their competencies and knowledge. This further implies, as mentioned earlier, how its employees are “well-educated, qualified employees” (Robertson and Swan, 2003), and can be considered to be in the category of knowledge-workers (Choi and Varney, 1995).

The assumption is that this type of employee is generally functioning well in structures with a low degree of bureaucracy, as they require freedom and independence in order to use their professional competencies when working (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2007), as “these kinds of ‘knowledge workers’ (...) are expected to demand high levels of autonomy” (Robertson and Swan 2003, 831-858). The structure of the case company can therefore be seen as enhancing self-management which is assumed to be the employees’ desired manner (Gummer, 2000).

But even though low control and increased degree of self-management by many is argued as being the most applicable and preferable way of managing these types of employees in this type of organization, it does not come without implications, as the findings of this study will reveal.

It is assumed that knowledge-workers develop a certain self-image or identity in which it is implied that “being a knowledge worker (...) means being a committed, hard-working person” (Alvesson, 2000). This is also considered as resulting in knowledge-workers being more loyal to themselves and their own profession, than to the company in which they work (Alvesson, 2000). However, it has been argued that: “Knowledge workers are less likely to behave in a self-interested manner and more likely to be motivated towards the achievement of organisational goals when they work in an organisation in which shared values emphasise collegial interdependence and goal congruity” (Mitchell and Meacheam, 2011).

The following will continue with this emphasis on shared values, whereas it has been argued that culture and identity can be a form of management and control in knowledge-intensive firms (Robertson and Swan, 2003; Alvesson, 2000; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004).
2.25 (Self-) management and control  
As mentioned above, knowledge-workers are considered as being independent (Robertson and Swan, 2003) and are assumed to demand autonomy and a high degree of responsibility with regard to their own work and their way of solving tasks (Drucker, 1999a; Gummer, 2000). This can often be seen as resulting in the assumption “if clever people have one characteristics, it is that they do not want to be led” (Goffee and Jones, 2007), leading to increased self-management and the expectation that knowledge-workers prefer to be self-managing (Drucker, 1999b).

As described in the previous section, the challenge can lie in creating loyalty and commitment when employing knowledge-workers (Alvesson, 2000). The challenge can be seen as trying to create compliance between the organization and the individuals, and create a common perception of the direction of the company. It is argued by Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2007), that this compliance between organization and individual can be directed in the desired direction by the management using various control mechanisms. Relating it to Mintzberg’s approach to control, he mentions five coordination mechanisms, direct supervision, standardization of skills, procedures, or output, and mutual adjustment, the last one is seen in the Adhocary structures such as the one in the case company (Mintzberg, 1980). Mutual adjustment is distanced from the more bureaucratic types of control, which is further seen in research of knowledge-intensive firms “where the role of more bureaucratic types of control have been downplayed, in favour of other types of organizational control” (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004). One type of control is the use of “social identity and the corporatization of the self as a mode for managerial control” (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004). The focus on control in knowledge-intensive companies is how to create a shared understanding of organizational identity in which an employee’s identity should fit and thereby enhance identification “assumed to provide means for the integration and orchestration of work” (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004).

This approach to control has its origin in the assumption of knowledge-intensive firms by its members has “multiple, competing identities and the space for employees to act based on their own understanding [and that] management may act in order to safeguard the 'right' identity in order to attain loyalty, including disarming/neutralizing competing social identifications” (Alvesson, 2000).
2.26 Summary
The previous has shown how the case company can be characterized as a knowledge-intensive firm. The structure of the case company has most similarities to the Adhocracy structure. This is seen by the horizontal structure, low degree of formalization, and selective decentralization. The characteristics of the employees have been described as related to the concept of knowledge-workers. This has led to elaborating on how this type of structure provides the employees with the possibilities for responsibility and self-management. Furthermore, the concept of control in knowledge-intensive firms and management of knowledge-workers have been introduced.
3. Theoretical approach

In the following section, the theories used for the analysis of the empirical data are presented. The theory of the Psychological Contract is presented as the overall framework of the analysis. This theory is complemented by the theory of Identification, in which theory of identity is central. The theories are meant to provide a theoretical framework in which the findings can be evolved and explained, in order to answer the research question and provide an understanding of the research area. It is important to stress that the theories used have been chosen along the way, according to the abductive process. They have been chosen based on their applicability in this study in order to explain and understand the findings revealed during the process.

3.1 The concept of the Psychological Contract

The relationships formed in organizations have been receiving much interest from both academics and practitioners on (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006). This interest is based on the assumption that a successful employment relationship results in sustained employee motivation, commitment, and retention (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006). The research on organizational relationships resulted in Chris Argyris using the term “Psychological work Contract” in his book "Understanding Organizational Behavior (1960)" as part of his description of the relationship between an employer and his employees at a factory (Argyris, 1960). However, he did not provide an exact definition of it (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Rousseau, 1989). The concept was further developed by Harry Levinson, who described it as being the unwritten part of the employment contract, consisting of “the sum of mutual expectations between the organization and the employee” (Anderson and Schalk, 1998; Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Herriot, Manning, and Kidd, 1997).

Edgar Schein’s (1965) elaboration on the descriptions of the contract recognized it as consisting of unwritten expectations existing at two levels of the organization, the individual and organizational. He further added that the psychological contract was an “important determinant of behavior in organizations” (Anderson and Schalk, 1998).

Following this initial development of the concept Psychological Contract, it has been an area of interest among researchers, leading to the literature of the subject expanding considerably (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006; Anderson and Schalk, 1998). Among the researchers contributing to the theory is Denise M. Rousseau, who by many is considered the key contributor to the research and being the primary influence of the theory of the Psychological Contract (Anderson and Schalk,
The main approach to the theory of the Psychological Contract will be based on the research and theory of Rousseau.

3.11 Rousseau’s Psychological Contract
Denise M. Rousseau defines the Psychological Contract the following way:

“Psychological contracts are individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between the individual and the organization” (Rousseau, 1989)

Whereas the initial research, presented in the previous section, on the Psychological Contract focuses on how the contract is considered as “a bilateral relationship between two parties at different levels (individual and organizational)” (Anderson and Schalk, 1998), Rousseau has a slightly different approach to the concept. As implied in the definition, Rousseau puts the concept of the contract solely in the mind of the individual, thus making it a “unilateral, singular level of the individual” (Anderson and Schalk, 1998). As Rousseau stresses: "Note that this conceptualization of a psychological contract focuses on the employee's experience. Individuals have psychological contracts, organizations do not. The organization, as the other party in the relationship, provides the context for the creation of a psychological contract, but cannot in turn have a psychological contract with its members” (Rousseau, 1989), residing on the notion that “organizations cannot “perceive”” (Rousseau, 1989).

The definition emphasizes how the contract is the individual’s expectations and perception of what the organization is obligated to provide and additionally the individual’s perception of what he/she is obligated to provide to the organization in return. However, to the statement of organizations not having contracts, Rousseau adds that “individual managers can themselves personally perceive a psychological contract with employees and respond accordingly” (Rousseau, 1989), somewhat including representatives of the organization and its management when investigating the contracts representing the employer-employee relationships.

According to Rousseau, the obligations in the contract are derived from a set of promises made prior to and during the formation of the contract. As stated: “A psychological contract emerges when one party believes that a promise of future return has been made” (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a). This means that a contract “is comprised of a belief that some form of a promise has been made and that the terms and conditions of the contract have been accepted by both parties”
The notion of promises is therefore central to the concept of the contract, and is defined by Rousseau as being a building block of the contract (Rousseau, 2001).

The Psychological Contract from the view of Rousseau is thus considered as based on the individual’s perception of the promises made by both parties, resulting in a set of obligations forming an exchange relationship. Having defined the concept of the Psychological Contract which is the basis of the theoretical approach of this thesis, the reasons of why it is considered relevant for research are explained.

### 3.12 Why study the contract?

The definition by Rousseau does not only provide us with an understanding of the content of the contract but also with the implications it has for the employer-employee relationship. The word perception implies how the understanding of the contract and the obligations are highly subjective and a matter of individual interpretation. This subjectivity can therefore result in various understandings of the obligations, which therefore might lead to the individual being disappointed due to unfulfilled expectations, based on what the individual perceived as promises made by the organization/employer.

The importance of understanding the contract is exemplified in the statement that “The concept of a psychological contract is tied to the individual’s commitment to the organization (…) and desire to remain an employee” (Rousseau, 1989), and expresses how the contract and the perception of it has an effect on the individual’s commitment to the organization. But how this commitment and desire to remain an employee are a result from the contract is not obvious from this quote. The contract’s impact on the above is derived from the notion of promises and obligations and whether these are considered fulfilled. And if they are not, this can result in what Rousseau calls breaches in or violation of the contract as the following states: “A violation occurs when one party in a relationship perceives another to have failed to fulfill promised obligation(s)” (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a). If an employee feels as if the perceived promises are not being kept, it results in a reaction which will affect the relationship with the employer. Research by Rousseau shows that “the experience of psychological contract violation, involving a breach of promise and trust, goes beyond disappointment and produces feelings of betrayal” (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a) indicating that breaches results in a strong emotional reaction from the employee, and that
“Psychological contracts can, when violated, generate distrust, dissatisfaction, and possibly the dissolution of the relationship itself” (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a).

However, based on how Rousseau considers the contract’s breaches and violations to have an impact on employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention, it is relevant as a focus of study. As the Psychological Contract can be argued as representing the relationship between an employer and the employees, it is considered relevant as theoretical framework in order to understand the actions of the case company members.

In the above concept, the content, and why it is relevant have been explained. But in order to further understand it in relation to this specific case company and research area, it is necessary to include when and how the contract starts its formation.

3.13 When and how is the contract formed?
According to Robinson and Rousseau (1994b), the formation of the psychological contract starts in the initial phase of the employment phase, more specifically it was found by Rousseau that “employees developed psychological contracts during the recruitment process”.

With regard to the factors influencing it Rousseau describes that “Prior to employment, workers can possess beliefs regarding work, their occupations, and organizations generally that set in motion certain responses to joining with an employer” (Rousseau, 2001). These beliefs are by Rousseau considered as represented by a mental model or schema defined as a “prototypical abstraction of a complex concept, one that gradually develops from past experience, and subsequently guides the way new information is organized” (Rousseau, 2001). These schemas can be concerned with experience of past employment, other companies, recruitment processes, and periods of life as for example being a student or an employee. This means that subsequent information is interpreted in light of these existing schemas (Rousseau, 2001).

This means that the existing schemas are the lenses through which the individuals view the new employment relationship and the promises and obligations involved (Rousseau, 2001), and according to Rousseau, the existing schemas function as help and guidelines when the individual enters the relationship with the new employer.

The concept of schemas can therefore be used as a way of understanding how the various contracts and the relationships are developed and how the employees make meaning of and interpret new information and new situations. Taking into consideration the research area of this thesis and the
prior description of violation of the contract “research indicates that workers with different types of psychological contracts respond differently” (Rousseau, 2001) which expresses the importance of understanding the building blocks and the individual contracts held by the employees, as a way of understanding the various reactions of the employees.

3.14 Summary
The Psychological Contract has been subject to several definitions and interpreted in various ways. The previous description of the initial use of the concept where it was considered as being a contract held by all parties of a relationship consisting on the factors not included in the formal, written contract representing the relationship and agreement between the employer and the employee. This focus on the contract as being a mutual agreement of the informal obligations developed between the parties at the establishment of the relation, later on shifted to being seen as the individual’s perception of the mutual obligations based on the promises made at the beginning of the relationship. These perceptions are considered as being interpreted based on the individual’s schemas representing prior experience and shaping the way a new relationship is interpreted. This emphasis on the employee’s interpretation of the content of the contract, the promises made, and the obligations of the employer can be a way of understanding the relationships in organizations. However, the definition of the contract made by Rousseau includes how organizations cannot hold contracts since it cannot “perceive”, Rousseau adds to the definition that managers and representatives of the organization can hold Psychological contracts therefore including them in the understanding of the relations.
3.2 The Psychological Contract and Identification

In the article “Psychological Contracts and Organizational Identification: The Mediating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support” from 2011, Thomas Zagenczyk et.al investigated the relation between Psychological Contracts and Organizational Identification.

The article’s approach to the psychological contract and employer-employee relationship was based in the assumption of how “Understanding the processes through which employees incorporate the organization’s identity into their own identity is critical to building positive employer-employee relationships” (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). This perspective on the processes of the Psychological contract introduces the concept of Organizational Identity as being a factor in the establishment of an employment relation.

More specifically, the focus was on whether there was a “relationship between psychological contract breach and organizational identification” (Zagenczyk et al., 2011), in the sense of whether breaches of the contract would have an impact on the identification process of the individual. The findings in the research showed a “relationship between psychological contract breach and organizational identification [and] disidentification” (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

These findings are furthermore supported by Kreiner and Ashforth (2004), and the belief of an interrelation between the two concepts has recently been acknowledged by numerous researchers (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004; Gibney et al., 2011; Zagenczyk et al., 2011; Restubog et al., 2008).

The theory of Identification addresses the process of an individual becoming a member of an organization, with the identification process beginning as the individual initiates a relation with the organization (Sluss et al., 2012a), thus being in the recruitment process and employment start. The statement of how “identification is the outcome of a process in which employees seek to understand themselves in relation to the organization” (Ashforth et al., 2008), meaning that identification is a process in which the employee makes sense of him- or herself as an organizational member.

Returning to the article by Zagenczyk et al. (2011), it is stated that “an individual will identify with the organization when a meaningful overlap exists between a person’s self-identity and the perceived identity of the organization” (Zagenczyk et al., 2011; Gibney et al., 2011), which indicates the necessity of a common ground of identity in order for the identification to happen.
The emphasis on how organizational identity influences the process is expressed in the statement “an employee will be more likely to identify with the organization when he or she comes to see that aspects of the organization’s identity—core values and beliefs—are similar to his or her own beliefs” (Zagenczyk et al., 2011), here referring to the definition of organizational identity by Albert and Whetten (1985), which will be presented later on.

Continuing to what is considered a “successful” identification process, Dutton et al defines it as “the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization” (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994a) and that it is “when a person’s self-concept contains the same attributes as those in the perceived organizational identity” (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994a). These quotes describe how an identification process results in the employee having incorporated the same characteristics as what is believed to be the ones of the organization, which results in a cognitive connection between the individual and the organization perceived as “oneness” with the organization (Zagenczyk et al., 2011; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994a). This is further stressed by the description of how the identification process includes the individual stating: “When I think about myself, I often think about myself as a member of this organization” (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

Taking into consideration the previous section of Psychological Contract, the identification process is by Zagenczyk et al. (2011) considered as being “harmed” by violation of the contract. This means that breaches in the contract leads to misidentification and damaging of the employer-employee relationship.

The focus and research on an interrelation between the psychological contract and identification is relatively new and thus literature on this subject is limited. Furthermore, as mentioned, the article by Zagenczyk et al. investigated the connection by using a framework of several theoretical approaches. This is also the case of several other studies based on social identity theory, as the is considered the foundation for understanding breaches in the Psychological contract (Restubog et al., 2008; Zagenczyk et al., 2011). This lack of research with The Psychological Contract and Identification as the main focus makes it a relevant area of further investigation. And additionally, whereas focus mainly have been concerned with the link between breaches of the contract and how it affects identification in a negative way, research of how The Psychological Contract and
Identification are related in general and whether Identification plays a role in the formation of the Psychological Contract have not been thoroughly investigated, thus making it relevant as area of interest in this thesis.

Having described how researchers have found that breaches in The Psychological Contract as having an impact on Identification, a further introduction to the theory of Identity is needed, as this is implied in the concept of Identification.

3.21 Identity
The previous sections have dealt with the Psychological Contract as representative of the relationship between the employer and the employees. Additionally, the Psychological Contract has been related to the theory of Identification, as this is also seen as part of the establishment of the relation between the employer and employees, whereas the emphasis is on how these are interrelated and both useful as theoretical approaches in order to develop an understanding of the processes of recruitment and employment start. The inclusion of the theory of Identification leads to the necessity of presenting the theory of Identity, as the identification process revolves around the identities of the organization and the individual. The following will therefore deal with the concepts of individual and organizational identity.

3.21.1 Individual Identity
Based on Mead’s (1932) approach to identity, the individual’s identity, or the self, is created in an ongoing interaction between the “I” and the “me”. Mead describes the “I” as “the response of the organism to the attitudes of others”, while the “me” is “the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes” (Mead, 1932), meaning that the “me” constitutes of the attitudes of others, while the “I” respond and reacts to those attitudes. It is then in this ongoing relationship between the “I” and the “me” that identity arises. Or as simplified by Hatch and Schultz (2008): “[identity] occurs as the product of continuous negotiation between the individual and those with whom the individual forms relationships” (Hatch and Schultz, 2008). Taking time and experience into consideration, the “I” is “something that is responding to a social situation which is within the experience of the individual (...) [and] the attitudes he is taking toward them are present in his own experience” (Mead, 1932), which emphasizes how the individual’s identity is based on previous experiences and lays the foundation of the individual’s reactions and actions.
The essence of the previous is how the identity creation of the individual is an ongoing process, based on an interaction between the individual, the context, and past experience, and that these factors continuously influence each other and cannot be seen as separate elements.

The perspective on Individual Identity, its formation, and the factors influencing it will be applied in the employee analysis.

3.212 Organizational Identity
The basis of the Identity theory presented by Mead (1932) is the individual. However, the concept can be modified to the field of organizational identity. The individual “I” is represented by the organizational “we”, but it is somewhat more complicated. This is due to the “we” being divided among all organizational members and thus each member holds a piece of it (Hatch and Schultz, 2008). But even though the “we” is divided among the members, it is not seen as completely fragmented due to “the interpretive context organizational culture provides. Because people make meaning in a social way, their cultures contribute to the creation of organizational identity” (Hatch and Schultz, 2008). Hatch and Schultz therefore argue that the organizational “we” can be considered the culture of the organization, and that this culture influences the collective identity. As in the case of the individual, the organizational identity is also developed on conversation between “Who am I?” and “What do they think about me?”, whereas the first is represented by the “we” and the other by the “us”. This “us” is therefore influenced by “how the company looks to others” (Hatch and Schultz, 2008), and organizational identity is as the individual identity influenced by the organization and its context.

An addition to the theory of Organizational Identity is given by Ravasi and Schultz (2006), and emphasizes how organizational identity is “arising from the interplay between identity claims and understandings” where identity claims are to be understood as reflecting organizational leader’s interpretations of the identity in order to influence other members’ understanding. And understandings are as given from the previous sentence, who the organizational members believe they are (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006).

This understanding of organizational identity is to some degree emphasized by the definition of Corporate Culture as defined by Hatch and Schultz as “The values, beliefs, and basic assumptions espoused by an organization’s top-level executives” (Hatch and Schultz, 2008), which is a definition residing on the research of Albert and Whetten (1985), where organizational identity is
considered as being how “organizations (...) characterize aspects of themselves” (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

Compared to the previous, this definition relates to the one of “organizational claims”, whereas “understandings” are closely related to “Organizational Culture” defined as “The internal values, beliefs, and basic assumptions that embody the heritage of the company and manifest in the ways employees think and feel about the company they are working for” (Hatch and Schultz, 2008). This approach to organizational identity considers both Corporate Culture and Organizational Culture as factors influencing the Organizational Identity of the company. As in the case of the individual, the development of identity happens under continuous influence of these factors, and evolves and changes over time.

This section has described how Organizational Identity is created under the influence of several factors and the organizational members. This will be the basis of the analysis of the case company and how it is presented by the management base on how they perceive it.

3.3 Summary
The theory of the Psychological Contract has been presented as the overall frame of organizational relationships. The main concepts drawn from this perspective are the employment relationship, perceived promises and obligations, schemas, and breaches and violation. Furthermore, the theory of Identification have been introduced as complementary to the Psychological Contract, as these are considered interrelated. The main focus from the Identification theory is the notion of perceived overlap between organizational and individual identity, and misidentification.

The Identification theory leads to the introduction of Identity Theory, whereas both individual and organizational are included in the approach to understanding the formation of the employment relationship and the various experiences and perceptions of it.
4. The recruitment and employment processes from the management’s perspective

This chapter provides an analysis of the case company and is meant to give an insight into how the partners intent, perceive and make meaning of the recruitment and employment process and what they consider important during these processes. The purpose of this section is to provide a prior understanding of the organizational processes involved in the recruitment and employment start, before analyzing how the employees experience these. As the following will show, the processes can be seen as influenced by the company’s structure (Mintzberg, 1980). It will also be presented how there seems to be much emphasis and value put into the organizational identity of being a consulting company (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). This is also expressed in how new employees are expected to fit the profile of a consultant in order to fit into the organization.

4.1 Recruitment

First of all a description of the recruitment process of the case company is given in the following. As it will be described, the company does not follow a strict or standardized method when recruiting new employees. Recalling the initial introduction of the company and its structure, the following will therefore also present the implications of this way of structuring the processes (Mintzberg, 1980).

4.11 Recruitment as a stop-and-go process

When asking what the company’s typical recruitment process looks like, the partner Christian who is the main responsible for recruitment said: "We use kind of a mixed model. We often start out by looking at the market and tries with job postings to see what we can get from that. If that turned out to be a waste of time then we use our connections. And if that does not work, we either consider to do an actual headhunting by using a recruitment company. So it is always a stop-and-go process where we are constantly evaluating. So we do not have a model we follow all the time”. The citation shows how the company uses various methods when initiating a recruitment process. This means that every time a need for hiring new people occurs, the partner responsible for recruitment, and the consultants from the unit looking for a new employee, sit down and make a plan for the process. As the quote expresses, this can result in either producing a job posting for distribution among various channels, contacting specific potential candidates, or including an external recruitment partner. Afterwards, the process is following a “stop-and-go” format and is evaluated frequently in order to decide on the next step. This is a good example of how the structure of the
company is characterized by a low degree of standardization of processes in general (Mintzberg, 1980). This is well reflected in the way the recruitment process is executed and continuously the current situation and organizational needs. The advantage of such an approach to recruitment is therefore obviously the flexibility and possibilities for evaluating it continuously along the way, in order to direct it in the appropriate direction.

However, once a potential candidate is identified, the phase of the process with direct contact and dialogue is initiated. This phase is described by the other partner, Steen, as comprising of "two meetings with the candidate at least (...) and there are always two persons from our company involved in the meetings". He further describes that in between the two interviews "we have started using test, but I am not sure whether we are using them consistently". This is another example of how it is a stop-and-go process, where it is continuously evaluated, if necessary, in the specific case. However, his description of the use of tests can also indicate that the process is not completely clear to the partners involved. This is further expressed in how Steen numerous times says "you will have to ask Christian about that" when asked more specific questions about the recruitment process. This is an interesting observation since every partner is frequently involved in the recruitment of new employees and therefore ought to have a quite profound knowledge of the elements in the process. This can therefore be seen as indicating how lack of standardization, seemingly makes the process unclear to the various parties involved (Mintzberg, 1980). This could be argued as leading to possible misunderstandings with regard to the responsibility, purpose, and content of the recruitment process.

Steen further explains that the choice of using tests depends on whether they find it necessary in the specific situation, in order to get more information about the candidate. I then asked to what kind of information he was referring to, and he explains that the use of tests is used in cases when they have doubts or feel that "we do not know this candidate at all". He further adds that they sometimes include more current employees in the process in addition to the use of tests, in order to get a better understanding of the candidate. This could be seen as an indication that the decision of whether to initiate an employment relationship is also depending on factors other than the merely objective professional skills and competencies.

This leads to the next section which deals with what the partners consider the challenges to be when deciding whether a candidate is the right match for the company.
4.12 The challenges of identifying the right candidate

When asked what they found to be most difficult when looking for new employees, Steen answered that it was evaluation the candidate’s “actual competencies”. He further explained that what he meant by actual competencies: “there are a lot of skilled people out there, who are good at what they do, but they also have to be good consultants”. This shows that he considers the most challenging part is to find a really good consultant, and not just someone who has great skills and competencies on paper. This is something he focuses on continuously throughout the interview, and his definition of a good consultant is described later on.

Steen further describes the challenges in clarifying the true competencies of the candidates: “maybe you have been working within certain areas as a manager, but the question is whether you can do it yourself, and not just manage others doing it”. The partner further explains that this is something they have particularly experienced “if they have not been consultants before”. Furthermore, he says that the challenge is merely a question of whether a candidate, even if highly qualified, is capable of performing in this specific setting since “there are certain things in the consulting business, and the ones we are looking for are a bit different and have to function in something other than the more hierarchical structure (…) they have to be able to perform in the context that is ours. And that has shown to be more difficult to identify”. The example from the partner, is first of all dealing with the need to clarify whether a candidate does in fact have the skills and the competencies they describe. But what is more interesting is how he has previously experienced this problem if the candidate has not been a consultant before. This further adds to the observation of how the partner emphasizes the need for the employees to be good consultants. It is also worth to notice how he refers to the structural design of the company to have an influence on the desired characteristics of a new employee (Robertson and Swan, 2003). Here Steen describes how some candidates may be able to perform in various settings but the question is whether they are capable of performing in the specific context being the case company. When the partner talks about how a candidate is expected to fit into their company, he keeps referring to how he seems to perceive their specific organization to differ from other companies. The partner mentions "the context that is ours" but does not specify what he considers this context to be. But even though he is not completely clear in his definition of it, it seems very important to him to point out how the company is distinct from other companies and that they are special in some way. This will be the focus in section 4.12.
This focus on how it is a question of finding a candidate that fits into the organization is also described by the other partner Christian, who explains how they occasionally use a headhunting company as external recruitment partner. He mentions a specific example where the employee profile was different from what the company had experience in finding. He explained that “we actually had a discussion in the management team whether to use that recruitment company or not. And we agreed that the fact that they knew us was more important than having experience with finding IT-candidates”. This can be seen as another example of how the management seems to consider it important to find a candidate that “fit the characteristics of an organization, not just the requirements of a particular job” (Bowen, Ledford and Nathan, 1991).

It has been stated how the partners have a shared and seemingly implied understanding of the organizational identity from the way they characterize it as being different from other companies (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Furthermore, it is expressed how a new employee is supposed to have certain characteristics in order to fit into the organization. This will be the focus of section 4.14. The focus in the next section will be to understand how the management of the company more specifically defines the context in which a future employee should fit.

4.13 A professional, responsible, and cooperative consulting company
This section will include the perceived organizational identity, and what the management considers to be important from the perspective of the candidates.

In the current job postings from the case company, it is described as: “a company that delivers services to well-known public and private customers” and the company is being characterized as “a flat organization, which ensures you influence, involvement and responsibility”.

On the company webpage and in the job postings, the company values are highlighted:

**We are:**
- ambitious
- dedicated
- responsible
- $1 + 1 > 2$
The word engaging is used most often, and as a description of the company work-life it is stated that: “it has to be a good place to work where everyone thinks it is engaging going to work”. Furthermore, they describe their approach to the work and services delivered as “we are a professional company characterized by credibility and common sense” and “we have to be serious and professional”. What is characteristic of the words used to describe the company is how it is a professional company with engaged employees, with a structure that enhances influence and responsibility (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2007).

On the company web-page a whole section under the headline “Clear focus on the individual”, which is dedicated to how the company wishes to “ensure the best possible competencies” by taking “co-responsibility in your development”. The way this is to be achieved is by “on the job training, both individual and formalized educational courses, mentor system, and one primary partner focusing on your career”. Besides the partner assigned to each employee as responsible for personal and professional development, this process is also seen as initiated by teamwork in the sense that “we all take responsibility for the company’s, our own and younger employees’ development. Focus is on what I can do for others, and not just on what others can do for me”.

On the web-page and in the documents, there is much elaboration on the high degree of cooperation. On the company’s web-page one tab is named “Team”. Behind this tab you will find all of the employees lined up with name, picture, title, and contact information. What is noticeable in the way they are presented, is that there is no ranking, but are randomly listed. The junior consultants are for example presented alongside with the partners and so on, supporting the statement of the company having a horizontal structure. Describing the service provided by the company it is written that “assignments are solved in cooperation between several employees” and that “we strive toward (...) a high degree of knowledge sharing through internal cooperation”, which further stresses the company’s view on the importance of teamwork and also as complying with the structural design (Mintzberg, 1980). When presenting the company values and way of living, the section on internal values adds to the cooperation by how “actions are shared and developed with others”.
The interviews led to the content of the job postings and more specifically the part about the company as Christian says that “here we have to consider what kind of brand we have. And we are not exactly Novo Nordisk yet (laughs) and this of course affects the job posting” which is further stressed by the other partner Steen “So the branding part with regard to recruitment is that: here is a good company well on its way with exciting projects and good colleagues. And then we try to differentiate us by saying that if we solve the same tasks as the big consulting companies, it has to be something else that makes our employees wanting to stay”. Both of the partners uses the term ”branding” with regard to how they present the company to potential employees. When the partners are using the term branding, they use it in the sense of how they define the company and which factors that differentiates them from other consulting companies. What is interesting is Steen’s remark that they basically provide the same services as their competitors. Ultimately if they do not differentiate themselves from the other consulting companies with regard to services and assignments, it has to be other, more undefinable factors that make the employees wanting to stay.

During the interview with Steen it was further discussed what he highlights about the company in general and during interviews. He says that he tries to give an insight to “what kind of colleagues is it. Everybody wants to work with skilled and competent people”. In this statement he mentions the assumption that candidates are generally interested in knowing about their potential future colleagues. Furthermore, he focuses on providing information about the culture of the company ”what kind of a culture is it. And here we try to cultivate a culture where you help each other, where we want to work in teams”. This description of a culture where people help each other and everyone is encouraged to work in teams corresponds well with the company’s description on the company web-page, company presentation, and job-postings. This description can therefore be considered to be how the partner experiences and perceives it, but also how he, as he is part of management, wishes it to be, which is further expressed in his saying of how cooperation is ”something we believe in and is part of our brand”.

In this section it has been described how the branding of the company seems to revolve around professionalism, individualism, and teamwork. What is interesting is how this seems to be the company’s values and how the management consider it to be different from other companies. The first part of the section presents the company’s values from the company web-page. Throughout the interviews with the partners, they both kept referring to company values and how they are very
important, but neither one of them ever used the words from the web-page. Is quite unclear what it is that makes them different in their perception, but nevertheless it seems important for them to stress that they are different in order to define themselves and the organizational identity (Hatch and Schultz, 2008). Even though it seems difficult for them to express exactly what it is that makes them different, there are similarities in their descriptions of the company and its culture. For example there seem to be consistency in the emphasis put on collaboration and teamwork, which therefore seem to be a shared value (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006), and something the partners as members of the organization “believe(s) is distinctive, central, and enduring about the organization, is defined as perceived organizational identity” (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b).

Having described how the management perceives the organization identity and therefore the context a new employee should fit into, the next section will return to how the management describes what they are looking for in a new employee.

4.14 The right employee = a good consultant
This section provides an insight into the management’s perception of the right employee, and which characteristics are needed in order to fit into their context. The purpose of defining the type of employee they are looking for by setting up characteristics of their definition of a good consultant. This type of individual is supposedly expected to contain various and very comprehensive characteristics. The descriptions can be seen as related to the previously mentioned definition of a knowledge-worker (Robertson and Swan, 2003) as the partners emphasize characteristics such as a high academic degree and ability to be self-managing.

In the job postings from the company, the description of the various work tasks is followed by a description of how the employee is expected to “take responsibility for maintaining a highly professional environment and cooperation as well as being a good model of the company’s values and ethic”. This expectation of the future employee being a role model and representative of the company values is also expressed in the presentation of core values and rules of living “we recruit consultants with high academic educations, which we expect to live up to our values”. This relates to the assumption of shared goals and values as the management’s approach to control in order to ensure the achievement of organizational goals (Mitchell and Meacham, 2011). The employees are described as being well educated and nothing less than masters are accepted, as highlighted in the
presentations material “our employees: master’s degree!” On the company web-page all new employees are presented, and the presentation is characterized by focusing on which area the new employee is going to work, what education he/she has, and a summary of past work experience. Additionally, the partner Steen describes: “we just have to say that experience has taught us that if you have not been able to get a master’s degree, then it will just be a mess”. This way of emphasizing the characteristics of the employees with regard to education and professional experience relates to the way the company were presented by the partners, as constituted of well-educated consultants. However, it can be seen as contradicting in some way with the focus on how the partners focused more on the importance of fitting into the organization rather than having the right set of skills. But considering how much effort there is put into highlighting how the employees have high academic achievements and are very experienced within the various business areas, it can be considered as being a big part of both the way the organizational identity is perceived by the management (Hatch and Schultz, 2008) and by this trying to attract candidates that are characterized by the same attributes (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). However, the changing emphasis on what is considered most important could also result in confusion for potential candidates. As described in the theory-section of identification, this could be seen as creating misunderstanding of the whether they fit into the organizational identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003).

Besides focusing on how a candidate should, at the minimum, have a master’s degree other characteristics of the perfect employee were defined. During the interview with Steen, I asked about the profile they were looking for when recruiting new employees and he said: “what we are looking for, is candidates with curiosity and the capability to cope very fast with new things. The candidates needs to have the ability to emphasize with the customers, and used to be ”on the scene” and exposed every day. We don’t want candidates who prefer to be at our office and in a safe base. Our candidates also have to be creative but still focus on quality. At the same time there needs to be a professional balance and a capability to ensure a useful solution for the problems or challenges that their customer is facing. The candidate also needs to respect agreements and follow deadlines”. This description can be considered as being his perception of the perfect candidate for the company. As the quote shows, such a candidate is expected to contain many, and to some degree, conflicting characteristics.
The partner further describes how the employee is going to work in an “environment with freedom with responsibility. You have the chance to affect a lot of things in the organization, whether you come straight from the university or are more experienced. But you have to know that you will not be given tasks all the time, you have to find them yourself. Some people find that amazing while others need a launching pad". This quote can be seen as related to the company structure, and how the partners described the company previously as being characterized by having a horizontal and loose structure. The partner expresses how a new employee is expected to function in such a structure and being able to handle the freedom and responsibility that comes with it (Robertson and Swan, 2003). He add that this means you as an employee are expected to create your own tasks and define your own work, which in short can be characterized as self-managing (Gummer, 2000). The quote also includes how this means that the employees who are not comfortable with this, and who need a “launching pad” does not fit in and will be sorted out.

The other partner Christian further explains that being a consultant means that the worst that can happen is not having anything to do, and as the other partner explains “The thing consultants hate the most is to sit on the bench, but feels useful when you are out with the customers. There is this fantastic effect that our people hate being bored. They love to have something to do”. The way this partner describes the employees at the company can be seen as based very much on how he considers consultants to be in general and is reflecting the general assumptions of knowledge-workers (Robertson and Swan, 2003). This is something that is consistent in both of the partners’ descriptions, how they themselves are consultants and that the employees are consultants. The emphasis on the importance of having a consultant’s mentality is further expressed in how they described one of the challenges when hiring new people was if they had not been working as consultants before (see section 4.12). Thus, being a consultant can be considered as being an important aspect of the identity of the partners and the current employees, and presenting this during the recruitment process can be seen as an attempt to ensure that the candidates “develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives” (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This way of presenting the perceived organizational identity and also the perceived identity of the employees, can be seen as a way for the partners to signal to candidates that in order to become an organizational member they are expected to identify with this image. This attempt of signaling the organizational identity and the desired identity of a new
employee could be seen as a way of creating a foundation for the identification process and a right match. This attempt of making the right match is the focus in the next section.

4.15 Trying to make the right match
The previous sections have been concerned with the management’s presentation of the company and the organizational identity. Furthermore, their perceived challenges in the recruitment process, have been defined as merely concerned with the identification of a good consultant who will fit in to the organization. This section will focus on how the management is approaching these challenges, and how they are trying to make the match between organization and individual.

The partner Christian who is head of recruitment expressed how he is not satisfied with their previous recruitments methods and results: “we did not get the right people. It was more friends of friends, instead of considering what kind of competencies do we need and what are we actually getting”, which led them to evaluating the processes and initiating the development of the company’s current recruitment and branding program as mentioned earlier. Even though this is an example of him expressing discontent with this way of recruiting, he also mentions that this does not mean “that the employees does not come with connections or relations and says that this really good people. That does happen”. This means that he still considers it as a valuable way of getting information about qualified candidates, and that the new program of planning is merely an adjustment, in order to increase quality by variation and make sure that it does not become the sole recruitment method. When talking about the production of the job postings and the quality of the content, Christian tells that he recently had an evaluation of their current job postings to see if they had generated the attention and both the amount and type of applicants as intended. With regards to the content of the job posting he told that the recent evaluation focused on “is this in fact a good job posting?”. And he further told “We have had a lot about the company at the beginning of the job posting. But our standard observations have been that people does not want to read about that first, they want to know “what is in for me?”, and if that is interesting then they want to read about the company”, with further focus on the importance of making it interesting and ”within the first ten lines there has to be something that makes you want to read the rest”. This take on the content of the job posting can be seen as concerned with getting the attention of and attracting potential candidates. By comparing these statements to how the partners described the recruitment process as a process of branding the company, it can be argued that the approach is to sell the company towards potential employees. However, the partner seems to be conflicted with regards to presenting a overly positive picture of the company “A too positive image might get you more
people onboard, but you would also get more people to leave because you cannot live up to the high expectations they would have gotten”.

He adds how he has experienced candidates who were asking about the social activities of the company during the job interviews, which has lead him to consider putting more emphasis on this factor in the company presentation. But throughout the interviews with the partners the social activities have not been central in their descriptions of the company and are only briefly mentioned on the company web-page. And during the interview with the other partner Steen it is stressed how he sees it as something secondary and does not consider it to be an essential factor of the company. He does acknowledge the importance of them and describes the activities they have, but ends up stating: “At this point we are really boring. The people here have too much to go home to. And that is something we tell the candidates. We still have activities but at a level we find appropriate, so if they are looking for more they have to look somewhere else”. In this he expresses that it is even highlighted in the job interviews that, if you want to work somewhere with a lot of social activities, you should work someplace else. So the consideration by Christian to include more about the social activities in the job postings and interviews can be seen as contradicting with the perception of the other partner. This could leave the question of whether it would be a basic selling-point of the company towards potential candidates in an attempt to attract more candidates.

What is also important to notice here, is how one of the partners apparently considers the social activities as something that attracts the employees and make them want to join the company. This is interesting, as this can be seen as the partner’s perception of others image of the company and their motivation for entering the employment relationship (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b). Furthermore, this approach to the job postings and the presentation of the company can be seen as relating to the approach to recruitment briefly mentioned in the introduction, where focus is mainly on producing what is called a Realistic Job Preview in order to attract multiple candidates by including information that is considered relevant, objective, and realistic (Popovich and Wanous, 1982). It is also argued that in order to provide the candidate with a Realistic Job Preview is by presenting them to “coworkers (...) and work unit climate” (Wanous, Poland, Premack, and Davis, 1992). This approach can also be argued as present in the way the partners perceive the process. As a way of creating an accurate picture of the job, Christian highlights how they try to avoid new employees being surprised when starting their employment, by making sure that they are not hired
“without having talked to the partner responsible for the unit they are going to work in. That is in order to give them a better understanding of what it is and what type of projects we have”. The other partner also describes the importance of the candidate meeting future colleagues "That is in order for the candidate to get a better idea of the company based on the people they meet, but also for us to get more people to meet and evaluate the candidate”. By introducing the candidate to the future colleagues, the company therefore tries to give the employee the chance to make a qualified decision of whether to join the organization or not.

The previous section has been concerned with the management’s presentation and perception of the organizational identity. Taking into consideration the theory of Identification, the organization’s identity is seen as part of the foundation for the process and influencing the decision of whether to initiate the employment relationship (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b). The way the company is presented is in this term largely influencing the recruitment process and the candidates’ perception of the company and to what degree they consider the organizational identity to be compatible with their own (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). Returning to section 2.4 and the structural characteristics of the company, the notion of management and control was introduced. Here the recruitment process was described as a way for the management to exercise control by recruiting individuals with similar goals and interests (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This approach to the conducting of control can be seen as particularly adequate in this type of organization with a high degree of decentralization. The management’s way of presenting the company can therefore be seen as an attempt of control by providing the candidates with information about the company, and therefore hoping to attract candidates with similar goals and values as the company. The presentation of the company can be argued as the management’s attempt to influence the process of organizational identity and the formation of the identification process as it is constituted in the identity narratives from the management (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003).
4.2 Employment start
In the previous section the focus has been on the recruitment process and the factors involved in and influencing the process of finding the right match. The following will be concerned with what happens during the employment start. The following will illustrate how the basic introduction seems to be considered less relevant, and that having specific work tasks are seen as the most effective inclusion tool. Furthermore, the section presents how the mentoring program is highlighted by the partners as a big focus point and a valuable inclusion tool. It will show how the processes and inclusion tools seem to be affected by the structural design of the company. Furthermore, the partners’ understanding of the introduction and employment start can be argued as influenced by their general assumption of the employee characteristics, which can be seen as creating a small tension in their approach to this phase of employment.

4.21 Basic introduction meetings
With regard to the introduction and the employee start-up phase, Christian describes it this way:

“We have this kind of introduction with our administration manager who informs them about registration of hours, IT, and gives them their phone and computer. Then they get assigned to a mentor, however we have just had an incident were a new employee did not get a mentor, but I just recently found out. This is something were I thought someone else had handled it, so that can happen sometimes, that is how the world is sometimes. But it is approximately one or two days of introduction, and then we try to get people to work right away. That is propably not something we make money from, but we want to get people included”

The description implies how the introduction is basic with a few introduction meetings concerning IT and company systems. The partner also describes how he has recently been made aware of a new employee not getting the proper introduction. As previously mentioned this might be a consequence of the lack of standardized processes (Mintzberg, 1980), leading to confusion of responsibility. The last part of the quote indicates how providing new employees with work, is considered an important way of including them in the organization.

A similar description is given from the other partner Steen:

”Besides getting your phone and computer, you are introduced to the company values, the important processes and routines, your colleagues and their competencies, where you can get info
about previous projects and customers, so just a level deeper than the standard presentation. But it is basically a crash-course about how to maneuver. Then you are ready. That’s it”

The description given from both of them is of an introductory process that is pretty much as in any other company. The attitude from both of them was signaling that they considered my question about it to be quite irrelevant and kind of a waste of time describing it. This is interesting in the sense that it is an indication that they do not consider the aspects of this part of the process to be important or valuable. This might have to do with the partners’ perceptions of the employees and how they expect the employees to be very independent, self-managing and capable of handling most things on their own as characteristic consultants and knowledge-workers (Gummer, 2000; Robertson and Swan, 2003).

4.22 Important to have work to do
When asked what the partners considered most important when a new employee starts at the company they both highlighted the importance of having a project to work on. As Christian says:

“It is possible that there is not any work for you and this is almost the worst thing that can happen in this phase. Because when you start as a consultant then you know what it is about and that you are supposed to work for customers and you are ready to run and show what you can do, and then it kind of does not start.”

What is emphasized here is also the notion of how it is expected to be when you start working as a consultant. This focus on how consultants are, builds on the previous description of the characteristics of the company’s employees. In this quote it is obvious how important they consider it to be to a new employee to have something to do in order to feel as a consultant, who by himself previously was defined as resisting boredom.

In order to make sure this does not happen they say that “the partner focuses on this new person and on getting him/her something to do. So you ask around in the group if there is anything he/she can help with”. This quote indicates that they actually consider it so important that if necessary, they invent assignments in order to help the new employee, and in that way “tries to get them to work on day one”. However, this emphasis on providing the new employees with work can be seen as contradicting whit the partners’ general perception of how the employees should be able to
handle this on their own and not expect a launching pad (Robertson and Swan, 2003; Gummer, 2000). With regard to the previous observation of how they considered the actual introduction to be less important, this is further emphasized in the way one of the partners describe this focus on job tasks as being “this is the way we try to create the inclusion. Because no matter how many social activities you participate in, the real inclusion happens by workin”. This can also be seen as further stressing the lack of focus on social activities.

4.23 Mentoring people into the organization
Another factor both of the partners put much emphasis on is the mentoring program offered to new employees. They both describe it as an “attempt of creating an inclusion into the business and the network”. The mentor is characterized by being someone relatively experienced in the company, but who are still able to remember how it was like to be a new employee. Furthermore, effort is put into finding someone who is “not that much older”. The purpose of the mentor is described by Christian “as being a buddy inside the organization. So if there is a problem, then you can discuss it on an informal and confidential way. So if you are employed here and have problems with the partner, then you don’t have to shut up but can say it to your mentor” The description focuses much on the importance of it being an informal arrangement, characterized by a relationship being somewhat close to a friendship. This is expressed by the continuous use of the words buddy, informal, and confidential from both of the partners. The emphasis on how the mentor should feel a responsibility towards making the new employee successful and how what is important is what you can do for others, corresponds well to the values described on the company web-page and in the job postings, which is another example of this seemingly being well thought-of and a big part of how the management wishes it to be. However, as the case with providing new employees with work, this can also be argued as contradicting with the assumption of how the employees should be independent and able of handle things on their own (Robertson and Swan, 2003). Both of the partners put much effort into stressing the importance of it being confidential “so we do not ask to what they have talked about” and makes sure that “a mentor does not feel that they have to tell the partner what the employee says” and describes it as being a safe place, the employee’s free space that they control themselves.

I furthermore wanted to know if they differentiate in the introduction base on whether it is a experienced or relatively new consultant, and the partner told that ”we assume that the more experienced employees know the name of the game. So we focus more on the more inexperienced,
and try to provide them with work from day one, and invent tasks if necessary”. This is further expressed in a comment from the other partner about the purpose of the mentoring program to be a way of “helping the young people”. It is interesting to notice how the mentoring program by this description seems to be mainly for the new and inexperienced employees. There seems to be an expectation of the more experienced consultants, though new at the company, being capable of handling the introduction on their own.

When discussing if they have ever experienced employees being disappointed in any way the response from the first partner was “I do not want to give any names or examples”, indicating how he considers it a sensitive subject. The other partner answers by saying “I actually do not think I have ever heard of it”. But throughout our conversation about the subject examples are being revealed. He says that disappointments “especially can happen if you are young and comes straight from your studies. In this period they often hear what they want. So if you are coming straight from your last exam and expect to handle a big strategy project, then you will be disappointed here”. What is characteristic of this description is how he considers it to be mainly young candidates who create unrealistic expectations. This assumption can furthermore explain why the company has increased focus on the process of integrating inexperienced employees. The partner does, however, consider it possible that “we have said to much” and in this way have contributed to the development of the expectations, but he concludes that “I do not think that is the case, but maybe it is more related to how you want to go in a certain direction”, making it clear that he considers it to be mainly the candidates’ wishes for the future that is responsible for the expectations and the possible disappointment. As a concluding comment he says that “I think we have been able to handle it pretty well. But maybe your notes says otherwise (laughs)

The partners’ perceptions of the employment start can be seen as largely influenced by their understanding and perception of the employee characteristics and the perceived identity of a consultant. The basic introduction is considered mainly irrelevant, and the real inclusion happens when starting to work. Here the focus lies on providing new employees with specific work tasks in order to facilitate this inclusion. Furthermore, the mentoring program is expressed as being important and as a way of helping the new employees. However, the mentoring program seems to be mainly targeted at the young and inexperienced employees, whereas the other employees are expected to self-manage the introduction as the consultants and knowledge-workers they are (Choi
and Varney, 1995; Gummer, 2000). It further seems as if this is also the management’s perception of how the employees themselves want the introduction to be.

The management’s perception of the employment start seem to be influenced by how they expect new employees to be able to handle it on their own and as something they consider them to be obligated to as part of the contract (Rousseau, 1989). Having presented the new employees with the perceived image of the company and the organizational identity during the recruitment process, they seem to consider the foundation for the identification process being made (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b).
5. The processes of recruitment and employment start from the employees’ perspective

This chapter provides an analysis of the employees’ descriptions of the processes of recruitment and employment start. The purpose is to get an understanding of how they experienced them and make meaning of them with regard to the formation and further development of the employer-employee relationship.

5.1 Recruitment

In this section, the experiences during the recruitment process from the perspective of the employees are described and analyzed. The purpose of this section is to get an insight into how the employee-employer relationship was initiated. The focus is on how the employees experienced it, what they highlight as being important during when recalling the process, and on which premises they entered the relationship. The following will show how the concept of schemas (Rousseau, 2001) seem to be relate to the way the employees make meaning of the job and the company. Furthermore, the structural characteristics and what these imply seem to have played a significant role in the employees’ identification with the company (Zagenczyk et al., 2011) and in the formation of the employment relationship.

5.1.1 A consulting company like any other

All of the employees express that they did not have a specifically clear picture of the company before starting their employment and have a hard time describing their initial impression of what they perceived as the company characteristics. Seemingly, most of the employees had the impression of the company being like most other consulting companies and how it did not stand out in any particular way. The employees express how it was therefore other factors influencing their decision to join the company. As described in the section of The Psychological Contract, Rousseau argues how employees’ perception and way of making sense of a new situation can be ascribed to their individual schemas (Rousseau, 2001). From this perspective, the schemas are constituted of prior experiences and understandings of situations that have similarities with the new one, thus making the schemas the foundation for understanding the new situation. In the following, it will be presented how some of the findings from the interviews, can be considered as relating to the concept of schemas.
Asking Martin to give a description of his first impression of the company, he answered: “(thinking) that is difficult to say... (Thinks for a long time) the only thing I was told was that it is a small consulting company providing similar services as [my previous company]. That was it”. As the quote indicates, the employee finds it difficult to remember what he first thought about the company. When he remembers his initial impression, he simply describes how he only knew that the company was a small consulting company delivering services similar to the ones at his previous company. This way of him describing his new company by referring to his old work place can be considered as an example of schemas (Rousseau, 2001). Martin seems to understand and make sense of the, at that point, unknown company, by comparing it to something similar he has experience with. This can be seen as his way of creating a qualified foundation for his decision making process of whether to enter an employment relationship. Furthermore, he describes how his first impression was based on what he was told and presented with during the interviews. His way of stressing how he developed his image of the company because of what the management told him, indicates that the description the partners gave him influenced his understanding of the company. Additionally, this highlighting of how he remembers what the partners said, can be considered as expressing what he perceived as promises made by the management with regard to what he can expect to work with when starting at the company, and his perception of what the company is obligated to provide as their part of the employment contract and relationship (Rousseau, 1989).

Asking Jacob about his first impression of the case company he answered: “The image was of a consulting company like many others and then divided into some core areas and more clear was the image not to me before I started”. He seems to have the same difficulties as the other one based on how he says that his picture of the company was quite unclear. Just like Martin he further describes how he found the company as pretty much similar to any other consulting company and refers to how it is divided into specific business areas. He further uses the adjective consulting in order to characterize the company and in this way he presents how his perception of the company identity is founded in being a consulting company. Jan has a similar first impression: “It is a small company, you have not heard much about when you have a background from the private sector, like I have”. Just like Jacob he mentions how he did not know that much about the company before starting there. He also includes in his understanding of it that it is different from what he is used to, as it primarily has public customers. This way of describing the company by what it is not, can be considered as his way of making sense of it, by comparing it to what he knows (Rousseau, 2001).
Furthermore, his mentioning of being from the private business is mentioned some other places during our interview, and it seems as if it until know has been part of his professional identity.

The previous has presented how the employees did not know very much about the company prior to the recruitment process. What is characteristic of the employees’ descriptions is how they all use the term “consulting” in their definitions of the company. Seemingly, all of the employees have a certain perception of consulting companies, and therefore use that in order to understand the unknown company. An interesting finding is how the employees highlight the size and structure of the company as being the things they remembered and found appealing and influencing their decision to accept the job (Robertson and Swan, 2003). This is worth noticing since it can be seen as quite different from what the partners stressed as characteristics and appealing about the company. The factors mentioned by the employees can be considered as rather contradicting with the softer and undefinable factors like values mentioned by the partners. The employees’ descriptions of the company size and structure will be the focus later on, as these factors seem to imply something specific to them.

5.12 The job interview as a personality and identity clarification
When talking with the different employees I asked them about their experiences during the job interviews in the recruitment process. Rene remembered how he was slightly surprised with regard to the content of one of his interviews: “I would say I was surprised, in the sense that I had expected it to be more difficult and longer”. He tries to explain it and reasons: “My impression was that the partner just wanted to see who I was. Not with regard to my professional skills, but to test me to see if we could have a conversation and if I seemed reasonable” and “I think it was merely to see if I had the profile of a consultant”. His way of understanding and making sense of why the interview was different from what he expected seems to be divided in two ways. First he says that he felt that the partners were mainly interested in finding out whom he was as a person and if he seemed reasonable. He furthermore felt that he was measured up against a precise and desirable profile in order to find out whether he matched the profile of a consultant.

Martin has the same perception as the previous, but describes it more as a process of finding a match or an overlap of identities and characteristics. This can be seen as expressed in the way he describes one of the interviews as a matter of finding out “*What do you do, what do I do, and what types are we. Just a talk*”. In this description he includes himself and describes the interview as a
mutual process, in which both parties had the opportunity to see who the other was, in order to see who they were and who they were in relation to each other. He further explains his own purpose of the interview the following way: "I like to talk to the people working at the company, in order to find out who they are and whether I sympathize with them or thinks they are arrogant bastards.” This quote can be seen as stressing how he considers the interview and thus the recruitment process as an opportunity to get an idea of the people involved in order to make a qualified decision about whether or not to initiate an employment. As he says himself, it was important for him to see if they were someone he sympathized with. The word sympathize reflects how this had to do with factors other than professionalism and the like. What was important was if he could relate to them, in the sense of having shared values and an overlap in perceived identities (Gibney et al., 2011).

These experiences during the recruitment process can be seen as an example of how the employees feel that the partners focus on other factors than merely the professional skills and academic achievement in finding out whether this person is a potential employee. Furthermore, one of the employees described how he found the purpose of one of the interviews to be concerned with whether his profile matched the one of a consultant, which corresponds to the description of the job interview given by the partners. Another of the employees additionally seemed to consider the process as a mutual process, where both parties had the chance of seeing who the other was, with regard to identity. Martin’s way of describing the job interviews can be seen as indicating how the perceived identity of the organization and whether there is an overlap with the individual’s identity was part of the decision to enter the employment relationship (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

5.13 The matching of job content and identity characteristics

In the following the focus is on which factors made the employees consider the job and the company interesting for them and made them accept the job. This section will illustrate how they describe various factors as having influenced their decision process and what significance these specific factors have had in the formation of the relationships.

During the interviews the employees were asked what they had found appealing about the job. Martin said “it was the focus on the IT-related tasks that made me interested”. Martin describes the job tasks and the professional content with regard to IT as something important when deciding whether the job was something for him. As suggested by Rousseau, this way of describing what he
found interesting and made him wanting to enter the employment relationship can be seen as being part of the relationships foundation (Rousseau, 2001). Martin’s decision to accept the job seems to be highly related to how he expects it to consist mainly of IT related tasks and something the company had promised to him and therefore something they are, in his perception, obligated to provide in order to fulfill their side of the contract (Rousseau, 1990).

Martin’s focus on the job containing IT-related tasks seems to be very important to him. As described previously, individual identity can be considered as a factor involved in the relationship that is developed during the recruitment process. At another point in the interview he further tries to describe why this job was relevant for him by saying: “I am IT-educated and has a background in IT and wanted to get back to that”. The way he adds to his explanation of accepting the job, that he is educated within IT and has great experience within this fields, can be considered as how he defines himself. He uses the words “I am” which therefore can be seen as his own self-perception and as part of his identity (Mead, 1932). Considering how important it seems to be to him that he is IT-educated and how he continuously brings it up during our conversation, it is plausible to consider that the focus on this area in the company by him is perceived as what is defined by Zagenczyk et al. as a “meaningful” overlap of identity characteristics (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

Rene had another way of describing what he found interesting about the job before starting the employment. He said that it was the possibility of “changing between the various types of customer in order to find out what you find interesting”. He describes the fact that there were both public and private customers as something he found very interesting and is something he keeps referring to during our interview. As with the other employee, these factors can be considered as having had a great influence in the decision to accept the job and enter the employment relationship. When talking about what he found interesting he kept referring to what he had read in the job posting, which therefore can be considered as what he experienced as promises made by the company in the recruitment process and as something the company is supposed to live up to as part of their contract (Rousseau, 1990). He continues to talk about the two customer groups, the public and private and stresses that he clearly expected and wanted to primarily work with the private customers. He said: “I was primarily, or is primarily, interested in the private sector. It is ok to try the public customers but the private is what I find interesting”. Here he describes that he finds working with private customers as being his main interest. What is interesting here is how there seem to be some
confusion and on-going “self-talk” with regard to what he finds interesting. He starts the sentence by saying that “I was”, but quickly corrects it to “I am” when talking about his interest in the private market. This is not the only time he describes how he had been looking forward to working either within the private market or with customers from the private market once he had finished his education. From his description here there seem to be a conflict with his old self whose work identity revolved around the private area and his new self where the public is suddenly a part of it (Mead, 1932). This could indicate a tension with regard to his identity and identification process in the employment relationship. This will be investigated further when describing his experiences and perceptions during his employment start.

5.14 Company size, structure, and professionalism as appealing factors
When talking further about what the employees remember as being highlighted by the company and what they themselves found appealing, the talk lead to concerning the size of the company, the flat structure and the competent and professional colleagues.

When asked what was presented by the company during the first interviews, Rene remembers how “what was highlighted, or what I recall, was that the company had a flat organization which was a positive factor for me. This means that you are closer to the top and can talk and work with partners and chief consultants, which you cannot do in larger organizations”. Another employee, Jan, further elaborates on how the company is small and includes the flat structure as something that was highlighted by the partners during the interviews. Just like Rene he continues his description by adding his perception of the effects of a flat hierarchy “in the consulting business you get a lot of responsibility in small organizations. It is extremely professional and everybody takes on responsibility. And in a small company like this the employees are very competent, and help each other out”. In this quote the employee take his starting point in describing the company by the notion of it being a consulting company. As in some of the previous examples, it seems as if the employees’ use of the single word “consulting” is enough to describe the company and to them represents something very specific that does not need further explanation. This concept seems to implicitly contain certain values and provides members of the “consulting-world” with a shared sense of identity (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b). Jan describes the company more thoroughly afterwards in the quote, but this seems to relate more to the size of the company (Mintzberg, 1980), and that in small companies everyone is professional and take on a lot of responsibility (Alvesson, 2000). He further stresses how the size results in people helping each
other, indicating a perception of team-work similar to the partners’ descriptions. Furthermore, his description of the employees being in a specific way can be seen as what he perceives as shared identity and also as representing his own identity as part of the organization (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). As he very concretely states, he considers persons in small organizations to naturally have strong competencies, which is a statement that can seem odd, but clearly seems as a conclusion he finds plausible.

Martin has a slightly different perception of how this specific company should be different from other companies. He describes how the management during the interviews “put much emphasis on how the company tried to be a different consulting company. But what I heard and what I experience here is that it is quite similar to what I am used to”. He too seems to create his perception of the company based on his previous working experience from companies similar to the new one (Rousseau, 2001). Throughout his description of the job interviews he kept referring to how the management was “trying” and “attempted” to present the company as being very different from other companies and consulting companies in particular. This can be argued as an example of how he does not completely buy into what he hears and expresses how he has tried this type of process several times and has been exposed to company selling-points and attempts of control (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004) from various managements and that the differentiating factors were vaguely defined by the management during the job interviews.

Though he does not seem to completely adopt the idea of the company being special and different from any other company, he still chose to accept a job there and be part of the employment relationship. One of the reasons he mentions is, however, very similar to the ones above: "I found that the people here seemed very competent and that I might learn something from them. Not that I have not done this before, but this is a very small group of very intense, so I thought it could be an opportunity to be involved in everything and not being lost in the crowd". He too describes competent colleagues as an appealing factor and mentions the fact that he could learn from them when working at the company. Furthermore, as the other employees he highlights the positive sides of working in a small company as a chance of being part of everything and not being lost in the crowd (Mintzberg, 1980).
This section has presented how the employees seem to have found the company’s size and flat structure as appealing and as influencing their decision to join the company. As described, the employees seem to put much emphasis on the effects of having a flat structure, and elaborate on how this will provide them with more responsibility, and independence (Robertson and Swan, 2003). They further add that being in a small company enhances the possibilities for teamwork, learning, and not being “lost in the crowd”. As these factors seem to have been a big part of their decision to enter the employment relationship, it is argued that they are also part of the foundation of what the employees will expect from the relationship in the sense of perceived promises and obligations held by the management (Rousseau, 1990).

5.2 Employment start

In this section, the experiences once the employees started working at the case company are being described and analyzed. Here the focus is on getting an insight into how the employees experience the beginning of employment with regard to how they had expected it, and how they understand and make meaning of it. The first part reveals how the employees just like the partners briefly mention the introduction meetings as something secondary. Furthermore, it will be shown how there seem to be implications from the company structure and also what might be implications from the partners’ assumptions of the employees characteristics and identities. Additionally it is seen how there seem to be a conflict in the employees’ identities with regard to their expectations and what they end up experience.

5.21 A basic “indoctrination”

The employees had close to similar introduction days. However, one of them, Jacob, was called in earlier during his vacation due to busyness at the office. As part of the employees’ descriptions of this process, they all start out by saying how the first couple of days were concerned with practical things, such as getting a phone, computer, and an introduction into the company-specific systems, as one of them describes: "I had my computer set up with mail and stuff, had my phone activated and all those basic things”, which is a description similar to the others. He uses the word basic in order to describe the introduction indicating that it was pretty much as expected and like any other workplace. This description is quite similar to the partners’ descriptions of the introduction meetings and the employees’ does not put much emphasis on it.
Another employee, Martin, further describes the introduction days by how they had meetings "where we heard about the sales process. It was two or three meetings, which I think [another new employee] was responsible of arranging (laughs), and where we were indoctrinated intro what it means to be [the company]". He described how the intro days also included learning about the sales-processes of the company in order to understand how things work around here. Going to the last half of the quote, he includes how his introduction was held alongside another employee who he also had most of his meetings with. When he talked about how the meetings came about, he laughs when describing how it was actually the other new employee who was put in charge of organizing them. His way of describing it, could indicate that he found it a bit unusual that it was actually another employee who was just as new as him who basically had to plan their introduction to the company. Furthermore, he describes how he seems to consider the purpose of the meetings and the whole process to be a way for the management to “indoctrinate” the new employees to what is means to work at the company. The use of the word indoctrination and my overall impression during the interview was that he finds the meetings to be an attempt to impose organizational values into new employees. However, it is worth noticing that he did not express direct discontent with the whole process, but rather expressed how he found it a bit peculiar and did not put much value into being taught how to be in this new setting. However, he also said: "I would say that it is a good thing that it is not as comprehensive as at my previous company, where you can feel that it is kind of a waste of time. Here it was more like ‘get started’, indicating that even though he has some trouble with the way it has been done, it apparently still suits him better than at his previous workplace. But even though he expresses that he does not really need that much introduction he still says that: “it is nice to know how things work around here and how the sales process is”, indicating that he still found some security in getting an introduction to the organization. The notion of introduction as being a little bit of waste is an opinion shared by Jacob. The employee who started his employment earlier than planned describes that his start was during a vacation and this meant that there was not that many people at the office. Furthermore, he started working on a project right away and did not have any of the introduction meetings as the others. When I asked him whether he had them later on when it was not that busy he said: "I had been working there for a month, so there was no reason to waste a lot of time on a formal introduction". Like Martin he expresses how a formal introduction is a waste of time, and that "I had been working, and have consulting experience so I know how things work”. This indicates how what seems to be important
to him is to just start functioning and working at the company, and that to him this is a good way to be introduced. However, it could also simply be a way of defending the fact that he did not have an introduction, by understating the importance of having one. Furthermore, what is interesting is how he explains how his lack of need for a formal introduction is largely based in how he has been working as a consultant before. According to his quote, having this background means that he knows how things work and how to act. It can therefore be argued that being a consultant and belief in own competencies has an impact on his way of coping with being in a new company (Alvesson, 2000).

One of the other employees, Jan, puts much emphasis on how the social arrangements were something he found important: "I started in September, but in August I had participated in a sommer-weekend activity. Once I started I also participated in the DHL-race, so I knew some of the people, and I think that it is very important and appreciate how the management focuses on inviting new employees along". He expresses how he feels that much effort is put into welcoming new members by including them in social activities. He is the first employee who highlights this aspect of the introduction and as the quote expresses he seems to consider social activities as something that ties people together and helps “getting to know each other”.

With regard to the introduction and presentation to the other employees Martin describes "I introduced myself to the rest of the company at a Friday meeting. That was it". Here he describes how you introduce yourself to the other employees, and just as his previous description of the introduction process he finishes it by saying “that’s it”. Jan describes it the same way, and this is yet another example of how they indicate that the employees seem to be highly responsible for the introduction themselves. An interesting observation considering how the previous two employees describe that the introduction of new employees happen at a company meeting, Jacob suddenly remembers that when he started he was not introduced to the other employees. He finds this as being very important and insists that I write it down. "Another important thing! When you are a new employee you are not introduced to the other employees. It is important that you write this down! No one has any idea of who you are, why you are here, and what you can do". Jan does not only express how he was not introduced himself, but says that nobody gets introduced. This contradicts with the description given by the other employees. The different experiences in the introduction might be an implication of the company structure (Mintzberg, 1980) and how the
responsibility of introducing new employees might be unclear due to the lack of standardization. Considering how he insists that I write it down, can be seen as implying that he does not find the introduction to be optimal and that the management has neglected this part a little bit.

5.22 Getting to work! – or not
Having described the initial introduction to the work place, the focus in the next will be on what happens afterwards. Jan describes the initial phase of employment the following way: “the beginning is a bit hard, and if you have not tried this type of business before it can be really hard to start, especially when there are no projects for you to work on, because that is what you do. That is quite different from being in other companies. And that was something I was not prepared for, or maybe had not been informed about”. He explains how his insecurity had to do with not having any projects to work on, and further elaborates on the consulting business in general and states how it is different in this company compared to a “normal” company. It is interesting how he returns to his previous description of how the consulting business and this company is very different and uses this as a way of explaining his experiences. Furthermore, what it interesting is how he expresses that this was not something he was prepared for. First he explains it by saying that he had not understood it, but adds that maybe it was in fact because he had not been told that there could be phases like this. In this case the comparison reveals a mismatch between expectations and reality, and his description seems to show how he tries to understand whether that was his own fault or whether he had been misinformed during the recruitment process.

Rene had the same experience to begin with, and describes how "there was actually no work for me. They also said that if they had known it would be like this, they would not have hired me. I was actually kind of bored and that is not what you want when starting a new job". He had the same start as Jan and did not have any projects when he started. He even describes how the management admits that they would not have hired him if they had known it would be like this. He further describes that he found it hard, not what he had expected, and especially not something he wanted at his first job. However, he adds "but it is not their fault, because every one wants to have customers and projects" signaling that he does not blame the management due to how they naturally would prefer having projects.

Yet another employee Martin had the same experience when he started working: "There was a while without any projects. I had the impression, or it was presented at the job interviews that I
should basically start by running. But that was not exactly what I experienced”. Just like the others he had a slow start and further described how the partner from his unit tries to get him in on some projects. He recalls how he had gotten the perception during the job interviews that they were so busy that he should practically start running, but concludes that it was certainly not the case. His way of describing it indicates how he feels misinformed and promised something else about the amount of work and the level of activity. This seems to leave him with a sense of disappointment and maybe even with a small sense of distrust with regard to the management (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a). But when asked whether the low activity had made him worried and uncomfortable he answered “No I was not worried. I have been in the consulting business for some years and experienced how there are ups and downs”. This can be seen as indicating that the dissatisfaction is merely lying in the fact that he was disappointed rather than worried about the situation. His way of including how he has experience as a consultant is another example of him referring to his profession and experience in order to explain his way of dealing with new situations (Rousseau, 2001) And furthermore, he seems to put more value into how it was his own experience an independence that had an influence on how he handled the slow start, rather than his notion on how his partner tried to create assignments to him.

As described, all but one of the employees, were disappointed with the lack of work when starting at the company. They express that it was not the best way to start the employment and where a bit disappointed, and did not consider it to be what they had been promised (Rousseau, 1990). However, they also acknowledge that this is how it can be in small consulting companies where the amount of work varies all the time.

5.23 General experiences: tasks as promised, self-management and small breaches
Martin describes how he felt his experience at the job to be what he had expected and said: “I would say that the assignments have been considerably more IT-related than project orientated. So all in all the assignments have lived up to what I was promised”. Considering how this seemed to be his main reason for accepting the job and joining the organization, he seems to be content with regard to this and consider the company and management to have fulfilled their obligations (Rousseau, 1990).

Jacob describes that at the beginning there where much that was unclear to him and that he had to learn the way to do things at the company. As he said: "why are things the way they are and how it
worked around here was kind of unclear. So I had to fall back on my own competencies in order to find a platform of previous experience”. As the quote indicates, he seems to have relied much on his previous experience and on the knowledge and belief in his own competencies. He further stresses that when needing help "you talk with the people you have worked on projects with and the ones you have a professional connection to. I am educated within economics and law, and [mentions names] also have the same education”. This way of describing his colleagues can be seen as an indication of how he has “chosen” the persons needed during his employment start in order for him to understand how to be in this new place. The only description he gave of the colleagues was their names and their academic degree/title. The reasoning for choosing people in an organization can be seen as explained by how “individuals who feel the need to obtain (...) information typically look toward people of similar background” (Rousseau, 1994). By interacting with people he feels similar to, he sees them as reliable representatives of the company and as valuable informants and referents of what is to be expected for him when working at the company. This comparison with other colleagues influences the “beliefs individuals hold about their own contract (and) are likely to be more greatly affected by observations of people who are believed to be party to the same contract” (Rousseau, 1994) and therefore contributes to his way of making meaning of his organizational membership and identity, but also contributes to his understanding of his own psychological contract. Furthermore, his academic background seems to be a big part of his self-definition and thus his identity (Mead, 1932), as he keeps referring to his “comprehensive legal competencies” when explaining how he dealt with the new situations at the new workplace. His way of turning to people similar background and thus similar identity characteristics can therefore be seen as part of the identification process. The way he keeps referring to academic degrees can be compared to the partners’ continuous use of the same when describing the employees, which therefore can be considered an overlap of perceived identities (Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

What can additionally be observed here is how the process of handling the introduction is presented by the employee to have been largely up to him. The notion of handling things on their own is something he adds to his description of working in general at the company. As he says: “It takes a lot of self-management here and in the consulting business in general. But you have to be really strong, but also not too much and not believe you know it all in order to handle the strokes that come”. In this he includes how self-management is necessary in the consulting business, and further he includes what can be seen as his perception of consultant characteristics (Gummer, 2000). He
further adds that "I would say that the consulting business in general and this company is a hard place to start as newly educated" and “that I would probably not dare” including how he would not recommend this type of company or the consulting business in general to someone who is inexperienced. It further relates to how he considered his previous experience and own competencies as being a big part of him being able to handle the employment start, also including how he seems to consider himself as having handled it mostly on his own.

Rene had describes how there was especially one thing that was not how he had hoped. Continuously throughout the interview he refers to how he found the content of the job very interesting based on the job posting and what he was presented with during the interviews, where he mainly refers to the company’s seemingly focus on private customers. However once he started working “I can see that there were in fact no projects in the privae sector. So that was kind of a negative experience compared to what I had expected and what had been presented with”, expressing how he was faced with a disappointment based on what he expected based on both the job posting and the interviews (Rousseau, 1990). But he does say that he does not blame the company entirely for the disappointment and that “it is not that they do not want it and just say no to private customers”, implying that he thinks the company would have fulfilled his expectations if possible. This leads to him focusing on whether it could have been his own fault ”and maybe I had not done my home-work and research good enough” implying that he blames himself for not having investigating everything thoroughly before starting the employment. But even so, he still expresses that if the management really considered the private market to be a focus area "then why are all of our employees experienced within the public sector? ", which can be seen as an example of how he still seems to think they promised something they knew they were not able to live up to. This all indicates how he to some degree find himself in an employment relationship which he entered based on other premises and that his perception of the relationship and company’s obligations does not match the current situation (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a). His concluding remark on the subject was: "this is an experience I have made which I can use for a possible job interview somewhere else”. The unmet expectations and to him a violation of the perceived promises and obligations seem to have influenced the relationship and to a small degree his commitment to the job and company (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a).
5.24 Mentoring program
In the previous section, the employees have described how several of them found the employment start a bit hard and surprising due to the lack of work and to some degree unexpected situations. In the next section the focus is the mentoring program, which by the partners was described as their way of on-boarding new employees and providing them with a free space with their new “buddy”. This section will look at the employees’ experiences with the mentoring program. The employees’ have widely different experiences and descriptions of the concept of a mentor and the interviews reveal how the program seems to have varied in each case, but seems to be something all of them would have appreciated.

Jan described how the mentoring program was a natural part of his introduction and employment start: “you are assigned to a mentor, who is another employee and whom you have regularly conversations with, especially at the beginning. There you get an introduction to the company, the social activities, and an informal conversation about the other employees”. He explains that he has met with his mentor three or four times, and that he considers it as having a ”buddy” inside the company. He primarily used the mentor in order to handle the phase of not having any projects to work on. As he explains: ”it was more like a talk about how it is normal in small consulting companies to have these phases of low activity. It was kind of stressful and uncomfortable when you are a new employee and has no gotten that information, because you start out with being really ready to start and perform, and then there is nothing to do”. As the quote states, he once again gave the impression that he had not been informed about the possibility of a phase like that. When asked directly if he was concerned, he says no, but when we are talking further about it, he says that he had the thought: ”Why did they hire me if there is no work?” which indicates a higher degree of concern that what he says. However, he ends up praising the company and management’s way of handling the introduction process: ”It is really structured in this company and that is not something you can just assume in small companies, but that is how it has been choosen to be here and has much focus on”.

However, Rene has a different experience during the introduction process: “I was assigned to a mentor and it said so in the job posting, but it has not been initiated. I do not really know if it is something I am supposed to initiate... I do not know if it is because it is such a small office, so I can just ask him if there is anything I want to know about my work... Anyway, it is none-existing”. When asked whether it was something he would have used he answered: “yes I would have liked to
have one. I do not know if I have needed it, but I guess it is nice to have. Maybe for professional advice. And for example with regard to the lack of private customers, and get rid of some frustrations”

This conversation reveals how the employee does not seem to feel that he was provided with the benefits of the mentoring program which he was promised in the interviews. He mentions how he has been assigned to a mentor, but expresses that he does not consider it his responsibility to initiate the contact. He tries to justify him not using the mentor by stating that it is not necessary when they are working closely together and thus can provide him with the evaluations of his work whenever needed. But this only includes the professional evaluation of his way of working and not the personal and buddy side of the program as it is intended by the management.

However, he adds that he could have used someone for an informal talk about his frustrations and how he does not understand the lack of focus on private customers which he considered as promised during the recruitment process (Rousseau, 1990). This way of saying how he does get the evaluation needed with regard to his working skills, can be seen as revealing how he is not completely familiar with the concept of the mentoring program at the company and either he has not been presented with it or understood it accordingly. But including what seems to trouble him and as something he could have used some help to handle, shows how it is in fact what the mentor is supposed to help him with, indicating a gap in what he looks for and what he perceives as available to him.

Jacob describes how he did not have a mentor program and adds that “it was more in relation to the projects and the cooperation with the chief consultants. But I had a mentor at my previous job, kind of an ‘apprenticeship’”. When talking about the beginning of employment, he compares his experience with his previous job when explaining how he was surprised with the relationship between him and his partner as mentioned previously. He says: “maybe my image was influenced by how my previous consulting company had a very close mentoring program, which is also presented here, but not in the same way”. What is interesting here is how he mentions his last workplace as having a mentoring program, expressed in the sense that it is not something he can have here. However, his explanation of the mentoring program at his previous workplace describes it as being an “apprenticeship” and a way of learning about the procedures of that specific company. This description of the content of a mentoring program is just like Rene’s different from the description given by the partners. Either way, what is important here, is how his perception of the mentoring program differs from the one that is intended by the management. When asked if he
could have needed a mentor during his introduction he answered: “I think it is hard to define the kind of help you need. But a support in understanding the company, where you have an evaluation by yourself or in a team evaluating your experiences, and find out if there is anything you do not understand, want to know or is missing. That might be a good idea”. His suggestions for improvements relate to some degree to what is being described by the partners as the role of the mentor and can be seen as indicating that he in fact would have appreciated a mentor in the purpose thought by the management and not the type of mentor he had before and kept referring to.

The previous shows how only one of the employees has had a mentoring program. The other employees all seem to express how they could have used a mentor, which can be argued as conflicting with how they throughout the interviews have described themselves as independent and self-managing. The seemingly unsuccessful execution of the mentoring program is an important observation, as it was expressed by the management to be of high priority. This could be argued as being a complication of the structural design of the company (Mintzberg, 1980), where the lack of standardization of processes leads to it not working as intended. The lack of initiated mentoring programs could also be argued as a result of the management’s perception and expectation of the employees being able to initiate the program themselves if necessary as they should be self-managing (Robertson and Hammersley, 2000a) resulting in the organizational processes being affected.
6. Discussing the two perspectives of the employer-employee relationship

In this section the similarities and differences between the two perspectives in the employer-employee relationship will be discussed based on the findings of the conducted study. Generally it can be concluded that the investigated case seems relatively unproblematic as there was not discovered any noticeable differences between the perceptions of the process of recruitment and the employment start. It can therefore be seen as the development of the psychological contracts seems to have been developed relatively effortlessly. However, there have been identified various small differences that are worth discussing and elaborating on, as these can be seen as possibly affecting the general well-being and commitment in an organization (Rousseau, 1989)

It has been seen that there are many factors involved in the formation and development of the employer-employee relationship and the psychological contract. The perceived organizational and individual identity have shown to be essential aspects of the choices to enter the relationship, making identification process part of the formation of the contract (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). The perceived identities are highly related to, and influenced by, the general assumptions of knowledge-intensive firms and knowledge-workers (Robertson and Hammersley, 2000a). There have been identified several places where the psychological contract have been violated (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994b). These breaches were identified by the unmet expectations of work assignments and work area, lack of mentoring program, and the high degree of self-management. However, these breaches have not resulted in extensive challenges as predicted by theory.

The findings in the analysis seem to have various characteristics. It was revealed how the processes have been affected by what could be seen as general implications from being a small company. It is therefor plausible that the same findings would occur when studying companies with similar characteristics, thus being a natural outcome of the processes in small companies.

Furthermore, the structural design seems to influence the way the processes have been executed, and therefore also resulting in both the recruitment process and the desired inclusion tools varying from time to time (Mintzberg, 1980). Some of the differences could therefore be argued as inevitable implications caused by the type and size of the case company.
Additionally, there seem to be a shared understanding and perception of the organizational and employee characteristics which can be argued as having its foundation in a general assumption of the identities of knowledge-intensive firms and knowledge-workers (Robertson and Hammersley, 2000a; Alvesson, 2000). This general assumption is expressed in the various perceptions and ways of making meaning of the experienced situations.

The following will discuss the various findings more thoroughly, and it will be shown how the above seem to influence the findings in several ways.

6.1 Various perceptions of organizational image, identity, and attractiveness

The findings show how the management highlights factors such as the company values and how the company differentiates itself in order to be perceived as attractive by potential new employees. The employees however, do not mention company values but refer to the structural factors as the main appealing factor during the recruitment process. These structural factors seem to imply something very specific and identity enhancing to the employees and as influencing their identification with the organization and the basis for the psychological contract (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

The different descriptions of the company and its appealing features can be considered as influencing the various identification processes. What is present here could be seen as “two key organizational images: one based on what a member believes is distinctive, central, and enduring about his or her organization and one based on a member’s beliefs about what outsiders think about the organization” (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b). The attractiveness of the organization is in this approach based on how well the perceived image strengthens the individual’s self-perception and therefore the identification process. Considering the management’s description it can be argued that they themselves find organizational characteristics and values and their perceived differentiation as a big part of their image of the organizational identity (Robertson and Hammersley, 2000a), and also something that is a big part in their self-definition from being part of the organization (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b). However, it seems to be difficult for the management to point at exactly what this differentiation lays is. The company values are described in the documents where the employees are defined as ambitious, dedicated, responsible, and cooperative. The partners do not use those exact words during the interviews, but their descriptions focus very much on cooperation and teamwork, in an ambitious and professional environment, which has similarities to the presented company values. Furthermore, the management seems to
believe that this is also something outsiders, here the candidates in the recruitment process, seem to value and part of their organizational image (Robertson and Hammersley, 2000b).

Interestingly, none of the employees mention the company’s values at any point during the interviews. Furthermore, none of them describe how their initial interest of the job and the company was concerned with how it differs from other consulting companies. In fact, they all express how they consider the company as “any other consulting company” (see section 5.11). However, the employees all highlight how the structure and size of the company constituted their main image of the company and were the factors that made them find the company appealing. Turning the focus to the formation of the employment relationship, and the psychological contract, this can be argued as an example of “the subjectivity in contracts” which is the basis of the discussion of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989). Considering how the management seems to have another perception of why the employees decided to enter the employment relationship, this can in the concept of the psychological contract be seen as having an impact on the perceptions of the content of the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1990) as there are different understandings of the premises on which the relationship is based.

Considering the employees mentioning of the size and structure it was not these characteristics in its simple meaning that seemed important to the employees. It was rather what was considered as implied in having such a structure and the effects it would have on the organization. Here the employees referred to how they considered small consulting companies as providing its employees with increased possibilities for influence and responsibility (Mintzberg, 1980). Recalling the introduction of the knowledge-worker’s assumed wish for influence and self-management a structure as the one perceived by the employees is considered suitable (Gummer, 2000; Robertson and Hammersley, 2000a). The employees can therefore see themselves fit into the organization based on their perceived image as they “assess the attractiveness (...) by how well the image preserves the continuity of their self-concept” (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b).

Furthermore, all of the employees mention how they perceived the company as being very professional, which they all considered to be positive and something they could learn from. For example Martin described how he found the job and the organization appealing due to the professionalism and focus on having skilled employees within specific areas. As he keeps referring
to himself as being IT-educated and experienced indicated that it is a big part of his professional identity, which therefore could be a perceived match with what he found characteristic about the organization and its identity (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). This focus on professionalism seemed to be the basis of his decision to enter the organization and as something that could be categorized as what he perceived as promised by the management and something they were obligated to live up to (Rousseau, 1990). This is further stressed by how he evaluated the success of his initial employment by how the expectations had been met with regards to professionalism and his possibilities to “live out” his professional identity. It can therefore be argued that there is an overlap in perceived organizational image and identity, which therefore has enhanced the identification process (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b).

Based on the previous, it can be argued that the management considers organizational values as being part of the identification process and as part of the foundation of the employer-employee relationship (Rousseau, 1998). The employees however, were more concerned with the structural factors and how they would provide them with an identity enhancing setting (Drucker, 1999b; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b; Mintzberg, 1980). It can therefore be argued that the parties involved in the relationship have different perception of the premises of its foundation.

6.2 The ideal of the good consultant

Another interesting observation revealed throughout the study is the emphasis put on being a consultant. As the previous showed both the partners and the employees use the word consulting when describing the company, indicating how it seems to be part of their perception of the organizational identity (Hatch and Schultz, 2008; Albert and Whetten, 1985). The emphasis put on consulting and consultants is further expressed in the interviews with the partners. When discussing the challenges of finding the right employees during the recruitment process, Steen says how the main challenge is to identify the good consultant. Furthermore, he gave me a description of what they were looking for, and told how a new employee should be curious, extrovert, innovative, but also well-grounded, in balance, reliable, and capable of initiating own tasks and be self-managing. These factors can be seen as quite comprehensive and in some ways also conflicting, and the image seems to be founded in the assumption of the identity characteristics of consultants as being knowledge-workers (Alvesson, 2000). The other partner, Christian, further adds to the picture of the ideal consultant and employee that they are always looking for work and resist boredom. There seems to be a shared and “dominant identity narrative of the organization” (Humphreys and
Brown, 2002) and its members which is presented in the way the partners describe the employees. This way of presenting the desired profile of an employee and consultant, could be seen as the managements attempt to exercise “organizational control accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work and organization with which they may become more or less identified and committed” (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). This take on the partners’ presentation of the desired identity of the employees, includes the matters of control and imposed identities in the process of identification (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004). However, Martin’s way of describing the introduction and how the management attempted to impose them with their values and belief, indicate that this type of control and the attempt of “producing the appropriate individual” (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) is not blindly adopted.

The assumption of the ideal consultan is also present in the way the employees describe the employment start and how most of them found it to be difficult. Several of them explained their way of handling the process simply by stating how they have been consultants before. They seemed to find some sort of security in their professional experience and by how they seem to define themselves as consultants (Alvesson, 2000) and therefore capable of handling the insecure and unstructured start. The emphasis put on how they are able to function in an unstructured context, can be seen as related to their attraction of the company as a place where you can be self-managing (Gummer, 2000), also enhancing their perceived identity of being a consultant and thus the identification process.

6.3 Self-manage your inclusion – lack of work and mentoring program
From the interview with the partners, they both mentioned how they were aware of the importance for new employees to have an assignment immediately. This was reasoned by how it relates to the nature of a consultant, but also to how it would facilitate the inclusion into the company. The partners describe how they even try to make up assignments in order for the new employees to have something to do. However, all of the employees except for one experienced a really slow start, resulting in some kind of insecurity and frustration. The employees’ reactions to the lack of work correspond well to how the partners anticipated it and to the general assumption of the employees resisting boredom due to their characteristics as consultants and knowledge-workers (Gummer, 2000). However, even though the way the partners reason about this, it can also be seen as a
reaction to be expected by most new employees in general and not specific for consultants. As one of the employees describes it “Why did they hire me if there is not any work?”

What is also interesting here is the contradiction in how the management expresses that providing new employees with work is a top-priority, and the employees’ description of how this is not the case. Even though the partners express the importance of making sure new employees have work to do, the partner Steen also states that if employees are in need of a “launching pad”, then this is not the company for them. This statement indicates how the perception might be based on the assumption that clever people does not want to be managed (Goffee and Jones, 2007) which is reflected in how the employment start is actually being executed.

As with the case of not having any work and how this is expressed as a big focus-point by the company, so is the mentoring program. The partners describe how all new employees are assigned to a mentor who is supposed to be a “buddy in the business”, and that this is very important in order to cope with being in a new company. However, as the findings have shown, only one of the employees has had a mentoring program the way it is intended by the management. This raises the question of whether it is really the top-priority they claim, and that having a mentoring program might be the “easy-way-out” for the management, having other employees handle the inclusion of new members. However, it might also just be a natural implication from the lack of standardization in this types of structure (Mintzberg, 1980) and in small companies in general. Another suggestion could be that the lack of actual focus on providing new employees with a mentor even though saying it is important might be a result from the expectations of the employees matching the profile of a consultant and therefore being self-managing (Gummer, 2000). This perception of the employees seem to be embedded deeply in the partners, and the focus they claim to have on the mentoring program might be affected by this perception, resulting in a tension between wanting to provide the employees with an inclusion tool and expecting them to do it themselves.

6.4 Self-management as leading to both misidentification and identity enhancement
From the descriptions given by the employees it is expressed how they did not seem to have gotten the help they needed. They all express how they found the employment start to be different from what they had expected with regard to amount and type of work, and not similar to the impression they had gotten from the management during the job interviews. This disappointment can be seen as an example of how the situation does not live up to what was perceived as promised by the
management (Rousseau, 1990). In this case it is seen how the unfulfilled perceived obligations led to disappointment and some insecurity (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994b). However, it does not seem as if the disappointment which from the approach of the Psychological Contract is defined as breaches and expected to result in severe damages to the relationship as the theory suggests (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a). However, the descriptions given by the employees seem to relate more to how the situation does not match their perceived image of themselves as hard-working consultants, and therefore results in insecurity, confusion, and some degree of misidentification (Restubog et al., 2008; Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

An example of how experiences after having started the employment seem to have an impact on the employees’ identity can be seen in how Rene seemed to have a conflicting perception of his work identity with regard to desired work area. He kept on referring back to how he defined himself before entering the relationship and how he defines himself now. There seemed to be a clash where he still tried to identify himself in the old way, but several places seemed to have changed or at least were confused about the current state of identity. Thus, the breaches in the psychological contract due to different work area than expected could in this case be seen as leading to misidentification as suggested by theory (Zagenczyk et al., 2011). However, it could also be suggested that it is merely resulting in some degree of a re-identification, where the individual has to reconsider who he was, who he wanted to be, who he is now, and who he wants to be. It could therefore be argued that misidentification and breaches does not have severe impact on the employment relationship and psychological contract and the degree to which the employee identifies with the organization, but rather cause the employee as a newcomer to facilitate adjustment in their new organizational setting (Sluss et al., 2012b; Ashforth and Mael, 1989), by asking the question “Who am I (now)?” (Sluss et al., 2012b).

Returning the focus to self-management, several of the employees express throughout the interviews how they seem to consider the success of their employment start and inclusion to the organization to have been mainly thanks to themselves. Rene describes how his mentoring program has not been initiated, and both Martin and Jan say that they did not get a mentor at all. All of them seem to express some kind of dissatisfaction due to this lack of help during the employment start, and express that it was something they could have needed and would have appreciated. Considering how they were all told at the job interviews that they would be given a mentor, and their expressed
disappointment, indicates how they might consider the management to have failed to provide what it was obligated to (Rousseau, 1990; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994a). However, the employees’ descriptions of the employment start and the challenges they have faced also show how they consider themselves to have self-managed the process. And these descriptions are not given without some sort of pride in their own capabilities to handle it on their own. When describing the way they have handled it, they refer to it being based on “my previous experience as a consultant” and founded in “my broad academic and professional competencies”. The ways they are describing it seem to provide them with some sense of pride and enhancement of their belief in themselves and their identity as self-managing consultants. A tension can therefore be seen in how they to some degree express dissatisfaction with not having gotten enough help during employment start as promised, but also seem to appreciate the possibility to be self-managing. What is interesting here, is how self-management also seemed to be a big part of the employees’ self-definition and identity (Drucker, 1999b), and also was highlighted previously as appealing about the company from the start, and seemed to be part of the foundation of the employment relationship and the identification process (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994b). Therefore, one of the factors that are seemingly important in the identification process during recruitment and influencing the decision to initiate the employment relationship also seems to be a big factor in the disappointments during employment start. This tension is also seen in how the management to some degree wants to help new employees with the inclusion by providing assignments and a mentor, but also seem to expect the employees to handle it themselves.

However the mentioned tensions and breaches do not seem to have resulted in damages harming the relationship severely. An important finding can therefore be that breaches can seemingly exist in an employment relationship, leading to the suggestion that future evaluation of the effect of the breach should consider the type of the breach as well as the fulfillment of other perceived obligations and overall satisfaction with the relationship. Another noticable finding is how the individuals, both partners and employees, seem to have different perceptions of the premises on which the relationship is founded. Even though it can be argued that the basis for the relationship could be uncertain, it does not seem to have big implications for the further development of the relationship. This might be due to how there seems to be an overall shared understanding and assumption of being a consultant, which also influences the foundation for the relationship.
7. Conclusion
The project has investigated the experiences of the partners and the employees by analyzing how they have explained and perceived the formation and development of psychological contracts during the processes of recruitment and employment start. The study has found how the formation of the contracts is influenced by several varying factors.

An overall observation has been how the size and structure of the case company has implications for the processes and the way they are executed, which is reflected in the varying recruitment process and mentoring program. This observation can be seen as a result of the lack of possibility for standardization of processes and might be a general condition for small organizations. It could, therefore, be argued that similar findings may appear in other context of small companies as well.

Furthermore, it has been identified how various assumptions of the characteristics of the organization and the employees seem to permeate the recruitment process, the creation of meaning, and development of the employer-employee relationship. It can therefore be seen as plausible that the findings could also be present in other consulting companies, as the experiences and perceptions of the individuals are influenced by a general assumption and ideal of the good consultant.

In the initial phase of the recruitment process, the management focuses on presenting the company values and how the company is a different consulting company. The company values are not explicitly mentioned during the interviews, but by comparing the partners’ descriptions there is a shared perception of professionalism and team-work which can be seen as reflecting the company values ambitious and cooperative. From the employees’ descriptions it has shown how they all seemed to find the size and structure of the company to be appealing to begin with, but other than that found the company to be very similar to most other consulting companies.

Another important aspect of the recruitment process is how it seems to be influenced by the quest for finding the ideal consultant. The consultant as a stereotype is something that is recurring in all the interviews and seems to be a big part of the perceived identities of the organization and the employees. This is also reflected in the further process of becoming an integrated employee. The partners say how they focus on providing new employees with assignments and a mentor as part of the inclusion process. However, the findings have revealed that this does not seem to be executed the way it was intended. Only one of the employees has had a mentor, while the others either do not really know about the mentoring program, or have been assigned to one but not started the process. This might be seen as an implication from the structural design of the company, but might also be a
reflection of how the management is biased by their assumption of the employees’ ability to self-manage their work and inclusion. The lack of work and mentor seem to cause some dissatisfaction and it is expressed that this has not been what the employees perceived as promised to them. However, it also seems as if the lack of help with inclusion seems to impose some sort of pride in the employees, and enhance their perceived identity as self-managing consultants. What can be seen as important, is how the factors that were found to be appealing by the employees to begin with, are also part of what causes distress and possibly could harm the employment relationship. However, the findings from this study does not point to that there have been severe harm to the relationship or the future commitment of the employees.

In sum the findings have shown how the identification process of individual and organizational identity plays a significant role in the formation of the employment relationship and the psychological contract. The observed breaches in the contract have been observed as related to the perceived identity and assumptions of being a knowledge-worker/consultant in a knowledge-intensive/consulting company. These assumptions of the ideal consultant have not shown to be wrong, however, there seem to be more complicated aspects of this ideal. This could lead to the general suggestion of not assuming that individuals, who are seemingly characterized by the same attributes, can be expected to make meaning in the same way, and therefore it is necessary to take the possibility of differences into consideration. However, the breaches found in this study do not seem to result in severe damage to the relationship as expected based on theory, but rather as leading to an adjustment and re-identification. It can therefore be argued that small breaches can exist in an employer-employee relationship without it being seriously damaged, and that the process of inclusion, is characterized by the employees’ naturally adjusting to the new organizational setting. As mentioned previously, this observation of how breaches does not seem to have the expected impact on the psychological contract leads to the suggestion that future research should evaluate breaches in relation to the general fulfillment of other perceived obligations and overall satisfaction with the relationship.
8. Bibliography


Atkinson, P. and Coffey, A. 2004 “Analyzing documentary realities” I Silverman “Qualitative Research Theory, Method and Practice (56-75)” Sage


Dahler-Larsen, P. 2008 “Dokumenter som objekttiveret social virkelighed” (235-254) i Järvinen og Mik-Meyer ”Kvalitative metoder i et interaktionistisk perspektiv” Hans Reitzels Forlag


Fuglsang, Lars og Bitsch Olsen, Poul 2004 "Videnskabsteori i samfundsvidenskaberne" Roskilde Universitetsforlag

Fuglsang, Lars, Hagedorn-Rasmussen, Peter, and Bitsch Olsen, Poul, 2010 “Teknikker I Samfundsvidenskaberne” Roskilde Universitetsforlag


Jacobsen, Dag Ingvar og Thorsvik, Jan 2008 "Hvordan Organisationer Fungerer” Hans Reitzels Forlag

Jepsen, Anna Lund og Madsen, Svend Ole 2008 ”Om at foretage kvalitative interviews” i Voxted, Søren 2008 “Valg der skaber viden – om samfundsvidenskabelige metoder” Academica

Justesen, L. and N. Mik-Meyer 2010 ”Kvalitative metoder i organisations- og ledelsesstudier” Hans Reitzels Forlag


Kvale, Steinar 2008 ”Interview” Hans Reitzels Forlag


Nielsen, Kjeld 2008 "Casestudiemetoder anvendt i arbejds- og organisationssociologien” i Voxted, Søren 2008 “Valg der skaber viden – om samfundsvidsenskabelige metoder” (153-171) Academica


Ramian, Knud 2012 "Casestudiet i praksis” Hans Reitzels Forlag


Rousseau, Denise M. 1995 "Psychological Contracts in Organizations – Understanding Written and Unwritten Agreements” Sage Publications, Inc.


Voxted, Søren 2008 “Valg der skaber viden – om samfundsvidenskabelige metoder” Academica


Yin, R.K. 1984 “Case study research: Design and methods” Sage

9. Appendix A

9.1 Appendix A.1. - Interview guide management/partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>• Brief intro about myself and the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory questions</td>
<td>• Name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of years in case company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How many years and type of experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment process description</td>
<td>• How often are there new recruitments? – new positions, new hiring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How many recruitments have there been in your time here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How is the recruitment process normally initiated here? – discovering new needs, firing, people leaving, company growing etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you usually doing the recruitment yourself or using a recruitment company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do you decide whether to do it yourself or use a recruitment company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– What are the general characteristics of choosing one or the other?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Company presentation</td>
<td>• How do you try to brand the company? pre-hiring-process: job posting, internet add, conference, social media, social activities (from company presentation), friends, colleagues etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why this/these way(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the messages you want to send?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are your selling points to potential employees?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Content of job postings</td>
<td>• Who writes the job postings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How is the content decided?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the selling points?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The psychological contract 1</td>
<td>• How are the culture and the values presented to a new candidate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is indicated as expected from the company?</td>
<td>– commitment, working late, team-spirit, working weekends etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is highlighted as important when being an employee here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of employment</td>
<td>– How is a typical first day for a new employee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Describe your mentor-system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>– Are there any arrangements in order to keep employees? – education, courses, dinners, presents, team days, company days etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Do you know how a new employee has perceived the first contact with the company? - Is the recruitment process evaluated with the employee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Have there been times when new employees experienced that their job wasn’t what they expected? – describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The psychological contract 2</td>
<td>– Have you experienced employees who didn’t “fit” into the culture and values of the company? – describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Have you experienced employees who didn’t live up to what is expected? Or what is seen as good behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally about recruitment and employment (If this hasn’t been answered earlier)</td>
<td>– Can you describe the newest hired employee’s recruitment and employment process? – welcoming procedure, breakfast, presents etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– What are the initiatives from the management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– What is your role? - formal and informal, demanded or by own initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 9.2 Appendix A.2. – Interview guide employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>• Brief intro about myself and the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory questions</strong></td>
<td>• Name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Number of years at case company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Newly educated or many years of experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment process description</strong></td>
<td>• Can you describe the process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company presentation</strong></td>
<td>• How were you first introduced to the company? - pre-hiring-process: job posting, internet add, conference, social media, social activities(from company presentation), friends, colleagues etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What was your impression of the company? – image, identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impression of job</strong></td>
<td>• How were you introduced to the job to begin with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can you describe your first impression of the job? – job description, tasks, responsibility etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What were the selling points from the recruiter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The psychological contract 1</strong></td>
<td>• What was your impression about the culture in the case company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What did you find attractive when hearing about the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What did you find less attractive? – any points of concern?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What were the selling-points? – from the recruiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start of employment</strong></td>
<td>• Can you describe your first day? – who welcomed you, how where you welcomed, start-up meeting, breakfast, present, mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe your mentor-system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiences after starting</strong></td>
<td>• What is it like to work here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparing - expectations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compared to your initial impression of the company? – image, identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What would you give as selling points to potential employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any arrangements/initiatives by management? - education, courses, dinners, presents, team days, company days etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When thinking back – how will you describe the impression you got from your first contact with what you are experiencing now?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you give any examples, where the situation today has changed compared to your first impression?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was your impression of the job once you started your employment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was as expected and what wasn’t?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there anything that was different from your impressions before the employment? – with regards to: job content, tasks, responsibility etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was there anything you think could have been included in the job description, should have been left out, changed, “warned” about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Was there anything you yourself had interpreted in a “wrong” way?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The psychological contract 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is your impression about the culture now you’ve started your employment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have there been any disappointments? – with regards to what was indicated in the interviews for example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have there been any positive surprises?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generally about recruitment and employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How often are there new recruitments? – new positions, new hiring.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How many recruitments have there been in your time here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any standard procedures for the introduction process? – welcoming procedure, breakfast, presents etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can you describe the newest hired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Description of previous recruitment processes and first part of employment | employee’s recruitment and employment process?  
| | ● What are the initiatives from the management?  
| | ● What is your role? - formal and informal, demanded or by own initiative  
| Current phase of employment | Can you describe your recruitment process at your previous work place? – what was good, bad, different/similar to the one here  
| - After having looked back at the first contact with the company and the first time of employment, get the employee to talk about how it is now – both with regards to the job and culture. | Which features of your job would you like to highlight?  
| | ● What do you find motivating in your current job?  
| | ● How would you describe the culture?  
| | ● What is motivating about working here? – unity, lack of hierarchy (according to material), education programs (material), etc.  
| | ● How would you describe the relationship among the employees?  
| | ● How would you characterize your relationship with the management? |