

Creating an attractive employer brand in the blogosphere

*The influence of the source and message valence on
online perceived organizational attractiveness*



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ABSTRACT

Nowadays many companies are struggling with their online-, social media- and weblogging policies for employees. Companies fear negative postings online and therefore forbid employees to post in general or forbid to post negative content about the company. But is this a good policy? Or do negative reviews contribute to a favorable employer brand image as well?

Online marketing- and offline recruitment literature already confirmed the importance of the source and message valence in reviews and its influence on purchase intention and attractiveness of the company as an employer. But can this be translated into online recruitment setting as well? Therefore, the present study examines the effects of the source, message valence and a combination of both on *online perceived organizational attractiveness* (from now on *oPOA*) in the blogosphere.

Multiple analyses of variance showed that in this student sample positive weblogs did score higher on intention- and attribution elements compared to weblogs with positive- and negative elements. Furthermore, weblogs written by company-dependent sources are perceived as less sceptical compared to weblogs written by company-independent sources. However, a combination of the source and message valence does not result in higher or lower oPOA. Explanations for these results can be found in the self-selection hypothesis, expectancy theory, positivity effect, diagnostic perceptions and the credibility and expertise of company-dependent and company-independent sources.

Implications can be found in the different approach of weblogs in online recruitment literature compared to online reviews in marketing literature. Furthermore a step-by-step plan for managers was generated which shows how to use weblogs in a way that contributes to perceptions of organizational attractiveness.

Key words: *Message valence, source, perceived organizational attractiveness, online recruitment tools, blogosphere.*

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years there has been found an uneasy relationship between employees who become bloggers and companies which employ them. Apple, McDonalds and the Dutch retailer Blokker have fired employees as a result of posting negative comments about their employer. Logically companies do believe that negative posts negatively influence their corporate- and their employer brand attractiveness, which is confirmed by research in offline recruitment tools (Coleman & Irving, 1997). However, marketing literature does not confirm this: it states that a combination of positive- and negative reviews increases purchase intentions (Colins & Stevens, 2002; van Hoya & Lievens, 2007; van Hoya & Lievens, 2005; Xia & Bechwati, 2008; Sher & Lerman, 2007). In online recruitment literature there has been a lack of research in the web-based sources of employment information other than recruitment websites, which aims for more research into the effects of online tools and weblogs in this research field.

This research focuses on creating an attractive employer brand in the blogosphere through the source and message valence. It shows the influence of company-dependent- and company-independent sources and the message valence (positive ways or using a combination of positive and negative elements) its effects on online perceived organizational attractiveness (oPOA). oPOA comprises the extent to which an company is perceived as attractive or unattractive as an employer in online context. It consists out of intention -, attraction elements (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003) and scepticism.

Against the background, this paper has the main objective to show the extent to which the weblog its source in combination with the message valence influences the oPOA. This results in the following research question: “To what extent does the combination of source and message valence influence oPOA?” The following sub questions are formulated in order to answer the main question: “To what extent does the source influence attraction, intention to apply, intention to seek information, electronic word-of-mouth and scepticism?” and “To what extent does the message valence influence attraction, intention to apply, intention to seek information, electronic word-of-mouth and scepticism?”

First the corporate blogosphere will be described. Second, there will be elaborated on the source and the message valence. Third, oPOA and the effects of the source and message valence on oPOA will be shown. Fourth the methodology and results will be discussed. Fifth, the discussion elaborates on the insights and explanations for the results and the practical implications show how it can be translated into practice. Finally, the conclusion section answers the main question.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

CORPORATE BLOGOSPHERE

The World Wide Web (from now on WWW) can be defined as a large, heterogeneous, distributed collection of documents connected by hypertext links (Mendelzon, Mihaila, & Milo, 1996). The WWW changes from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. The first version of the WWW, also known as Web 1.0, was about connecting information and getting on the net. It allowed us to search and read information (O'Reilly, 2007). The next version of the web, Web 2.0 is about connecting people putting the "I" in user interface, and the "we" into a web of social participation (O'Reilly, 2007). Web 2.0 focuses on content and interaction (Agerdal-Hjermand, 2014).

But, what are weblogs? Weblogs are easily published Web 2.0 tools that serve as sources of commentary, opinion and uncensored, unfiltered sources of information on a variety of topics (Wright & Hinson, 2008). Companies use weblogs to increase traffic to their website. The content of weblogs is frequently updated which results in higher ranking by search engines (Wood, Behrling & Haugen, 2006).

The corporate blogosphere consists of internal- and external weblogs. Internal weblogs are only visible to employees within the company and can be work-related, social or both (Yard, Golder, & Brzozowski, 2009). External weblogs represent a corporation's public presentation of itself and is the responsibility of the corporation's marketing or public relations departments (Yard *et al.*, 2009). Logically, only external weblogs can directly influence the attractiveness of the company as an employer because potential employees have the opportunity to read these.

There are five types of corporate weblogs, which can be divided based on source and the purpose of writing: employee weblogs, group weblogs, executive weblogs (e.g. CEO weblogs), promotional weblogs, and newsletter weblogs (Agerdal-Hjermand, 2014). Employee weblogs are often associated with staff member's weblogging externally on behalf of their company so as to maintain a favorable image for the company. Group weblogs are mostly used for project-related purposes. Executive or CEO weblogs are written by executives to put forward ideas and engage with members of the public through feedback; and promotional blogs are used specifically for advertising products while newsletter weblogs deal with issues relation to company information (Agerdal-Hjermand, 2014). This study focuses on external employee weblogs, and promotional weblogs. In recruitment setting these promotional weblogs are called testimonials (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2005).

In the corporate blogosphere, research showed that the source and message valence influence separately and combined the perception of online reviews and weblogs (Coleman &

Irving, 1997; Van Hoya & Lievens, 2007). Therefore, the next sections elaborate on the influence of the source and message valence on the perception of a weblog or online review.

SOURCE

On- and offline potential applicants receive employment information from a many different sources including as friends, employees, recruiters and publicity. In recruitment setting these sources can be divided in two types: company-dependent and company-independent recruitment sources (Van Hoya & Lievens, 2005).

But, is the source important in the perception of messages in online setting? The source was found to be an important quality signal in online setting; people rely on the source in the absence of brand name, price and warranty. People become uncertain in case the source is not perceived as credible (Jain & Posavac, 1999; Xia & Bechwati, 2008)

Company dependent versus company independent

As already stated, there can be made a distinction between company-dependent – and company-independent sources in recruitment setting. Company-dependent sources are sources such as advertising, are part of the recruitment strategies can directly be controlled by a company and are positively formulated whereas company-independent sources such as employees can only be indirectly influenced through other recruitment activities and can contain positive as well as negative information (Van Hoya & Lieves, 2005, 2007). Companies can easier control company-dependent sources. Companies use company-dependent sources directly to promote a favorable image (Van Hoya & Lievens, 2007).

But what are advantages and disadvantages for companies regarding the use of company-dependent sources versus company independent sources for weblogs? Agerdal-Hjermind (2014) shows some advantages of the use of company-independent sources: they are easier accessible to external users, they increase the visibility of the individual employee and his/her competences, potential informality in writing style, they are giving a human face to the company, and easy and uncomplicated information and knowledge sharing. For companies there are two potential risks of using company independent sources. The first risk is about the, amount of control companies have over weblog its content. When companies do not write the weblogs their selves, it is possible that the content is not line with the companies' image and identity. Secondly companies perceive the risk of information security: employees possibly post information outsiders should not know as well (Wood *et al.*, 2006)

MESSAGE VALENCE

The message valence is about the nature of the message. The nature of the message can be positive- or negative (Sheer & Chen, 2004). This research consists out of positively written weblogs and weblogs consisting out of positive- and negative elements.

Positive- and negative reviews

When consumers spend time online they encounter positive- and negative reviews.

Marketing- and offline recruitment literature show three streams on the effects of message valence: negativity bias, positivity effect and the influence of positive- and negative reviews.

First, research shows a negativity bias. This means that unfavorable information (or negative reviews) tends to carry greater weight to consumers compared to favorable information (or positive reviews). Therefore consumers weight negative information more heavily than positive information, in both judgment and decisionmaking tasks, because people perceive it as more diagnostic (Ahluwalia & Shiv, 1997; Feldman, 1966; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987; Weinberger, Allen, & Dillon, 1981 as cited by Sen & Lerman, 2007). Reason for the occurrence of the negativity effect can be found in the scarce availability of negative online information compared to positive information (Lee & Koo, 2012). Therefore, negative reviews tend to carry greater weight (Basuroy, Chatterjee, and Ravid 2003, as cited by Xia & Bechwati, 2008).

Paradoxically, there exists a positivity effect as well. The positivity effect states that positive reviews have greater influence on purchase intentions compared to negative reviews in online setting (Lee & Koo, 2012). The positivity effect seems to occur under two circumstances; (1) their prior belief is strong or (2) their commitment to their choices is high (Ahluwalia, 2000 as cited by Xia & Bechwati, 2008). People tend to use the positive reviews when they have already formed their preferences, and then use online reviews to confirm this preference. Consumers filter information that confirms their choices. In this case, positive information that is in line with the preference decreases the effect of negative reviews. One negative review will not be sufficient to motivate consumers to drop these preferences (Xia & Bechwati, 2008).

Finally, another line of research shows the influence of a combination of both positive- and negative reviews. Websites which encompass a combination of positive- and negative elements increase the levels of product attractiveness, purchase intention and trustworthiness compared to websites including only positive - or negative reviews (Zhang, Craciun & Shin, 2010; Park & Kim, 2009; Lee, Park & Han, 2008). A combination of both positive- and negative online consumer reviews is found to be trustworthy (Keller, 2007, as

cited by Sher & Lee, 2009). When messages are perceived as trustworthy, they are found to be more credible and diagnostic (Xie, Miao, Kua & Lee, 2011).

As a result of posting negative weblogs companies like McDonalds, Apple and Blokker fired employees. Companies fear that negative postings written by employees impact the corporate reputation. Therefore, most companies forbid blogging by employees or forbid negative postings (Wood *et al.*, 2006). Literature and practice show evidence that companies (almost) never accept negative postings about the company. This makes clear why a combination of positive- and negative weblogs is used in this research instead of exclusively negatively written weblogs.

ONLINE PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS

Perceived organizational attractiveness (*POA*) is defined as the extent to which the tangibles and intangibles of a company as an employer are perceived as unattractive or attractive (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003). Several studies show that the context influences the perception of corporate image and – reputation (Alwi & Da Silva, 2007; Da Silva & Alwi, 2008). Therefore, it is assumed that the perception of the attractiveness of a company is different in online context compared to offline context. This makes clear that oPOA can be defined as POA in online context. oPOA is described as the extent to which the tangibles and intangibles from a company as an employer are perceived as unattractive or attractive in online context. Logically, oPOA contributes to a strong employer brand image; the more attractive the company the stronger the employer brand image, and the other way around (Weekhout, 2011).

Highhouse *et al.* (2003) shows that perceived organizational attractiveness consists of attraction- and intention elements. The attraction element includes attraction, and intention elements include electronic word of mouth, intention to seek information and intention to apply. Scepticism was added because of the importance in the context of online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth. Attraction elements, intention elements and skepticism constitute oPOA.

Attraction elements

Attraction is about an individuals' affective and attitudinal thoughts about particular companies as potential places for employment (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). It is passive in its nature. It does not imply any further action towards the company, which shows that individuals can be attracted to many companies simultaneously (Barber, 1998, as cited by Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). Still, it can influence people's actions towards the company. Ajzen (1991) its theory of planned behavior suggests that attitudes that relate to a given behavior

result in behavioral intentions (as cited by Chapman, Uggerslec, Carroll, Piasentin & Jones, 2005). These behavioral intentions predict subsequent behavior. Studies in recruitment show that applicant attraction to a company predicts acceptance intentions, which in turn predicts applicant job choice (Chapman *et al.*, 2005).

Job-company attractiveness

Job-company attractiveness involves the applicant's overall evaluation of the attractiveness of the job and/or company (Chapman *et al.*, 2005). It exists out of three components: (1) reflecting on the job he or she is applying for, (2) the extent to which an applicant is personally attracted to the prospective company, (3) attractiveness from the company in general, which is without any reference to an applicant's level of attraction (Chapman *et al.*, 2005).

Intention elements

The intention elements found for oPOA are: intention to engage in word of mouth and job pursuit intentions. In this research, job pursuit intentions are specified in intention to apply and intention to seek information. Intention items refer to perceptions about a company and imply further action (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). These are not passive intentions of company attractiveness but do involve active intentions for a job. Less people have intentions to an employer compared to attraction, because it requires action (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003).

Intention to engage in EWOM

In a recruitment context, *word-of-mouth* (from now on *WOM*) involves an interpersonal communication, independent of the company's recruitment activities, about an company as an employer or about specific jobs (Van Hove & Lievens, 2004, as cited by Van Hove en Lievens, 2005). It is the basis of interpersonal communication and has been recognized as an important and credible information source (Uen, Peng, Chen & Chien, 2011). WOM refers to face-to-face communication, but it can be provided in all sorts of media. In online context, word of mouth is defined as *electronic word of mouth* or word-of-mouse (from now on *EWOM*) (Van Hove & Lieves, 2005, 2007). Research shows EWOM affects organizational attractiveness and image, which makes clear why it is added as an important element of oPOA (Collins and Stevens, 2002; Rynes et al., 1991, as cited by Uen *et al.*, 2011).

Job pursuit intentions

Job pursuit intentions exist of the intention to seek information and intention to apply. Intention to apply refers to the person's desire to submit an application (Chapman *et al.*,

2005). The information seeking can be done through a site visit, second interview or getting additional information (Chapman *et al.*, 2005).

Scepticism

Scepticism can be defined as the tendency toward disbelief (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). In general the Internet fosters scepticism, because of the absence of physical/tangible cues (Hurt, 2010). Many recruitment- and marketing studies also show the effects of the source and message valence on the level of scepticism (Coleman & Irving, 1997; van Hove & Lievens, 2005; van Hove & Lievens, 2007).

First of all, there was found evidence for the influence of message valence on the level of scepticism. A combination of both positive- and negative online consumer reviews is found to be trustworthy (Keller, 2007, as cited by Sher & Lee, 2009). When messages are perceived as trustworthy, they are found to be more credible and diagnostic and the level of scepticism therefore decreases (Xie *et al.*, 2011). The message credibility results in stronger persuasion and more attitude change compared to less credible ones (Eagly *et al.*, 1978; Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Mills and Jellison, 1967; Petty and Wegener, 1998; Pornpitakpan, 2002; Rhine and Severance, 1970 as cited by Xie *et al.*, 2011).

Moreover, there was also found evidence in the recruitment literature for the influence of the source on scepticism. Company-independent sources are found to result in less scepticism compared to company-dependent sources (Van Hove & Lievens, 2005, 2007; Sher & Lee, 2009).

All aforementioned research shows the importance of scepticism with regard to source and message valence in online- and offline context, which validates the addition of scepticism to construct oPOA.

Job attributes increasing attraction and intention

As already shown, oPOA consists of intention-, attraction elements and scepticism. But which specific job characteristics result in oPOA? Some job attributes are perceived as attractive by job applicants such as: job security, opportunity to learn, freedom to do the job in your own way, opportunity to use my abilities, variety of activities, opportunity for rapid advancement, challenging and interesting work, competent and sociable co-workers, opportunity of effectively performance, type of work or service, fringe benefits, location of work or company, salary, reputation of the company and training programs (Chapman *et al.*, 2005; Powell, 1984; Turban, Forret, Hendrickson, 1998). In general, an attitude results in an intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1980 as cited by Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). In case people find a company attractive, it can result in intention to pursuit for a job. Thus, when an employee

expresses the job attributes in a positive way, the job and therefore the company can be perceived as attractive and results in job pursuit behaviors by the job seeker (Chapman *et al.*, 2005).

There was found a strong relationship between organizational attractiveness and employer branding experience. A positive employer brand experiences result in a higher level of organizational attractiveness and vice versa (Weekhout, 2011), which is the reason why job attributes are compared with the elements of the employer brand experience (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). Companies will be seen as more attractive when elements of the employer brand experience, and especially the related job attributes, are positively described in the weblog and vice versa.

As shown, both constructs (employer brand experience versus job attributes) have the ability to influence the attraction and intention elements. The comparison shows which job attributes result in intention and attitudes (see table 1). This comparison distilled three components of which a weblog should consists in order to create an oPOA and therefore a favorable image. These element should be described in a positive way in order to create an attractive perception of the company: (1) leadership style (*sub categories are: freedom to do the job in your own way and opportunity to show that I can effectively perform*), (2) learning and development (*sub categories are: opportunity to learn, opportunity for rapid advancement and training programs*) and (3) organizational culture (*sub categories are: working environment and social cohesion and work-life balance*).

Table 1

Overlap between job attributes and employer brand experience elements

Employer brand experience elements	Job attributes										
	Reputation of the company	Salary	Location of work or company	Fringe benefits	Type of work or service performed	Opportunity to show that I can effectively perform	Competent and sociable co-workers	Challenging and interesting work	Opportunity for rapid advancement	Variety of activities	Working conditions
Reputation management	X										
Recruitment and induction											
Internal communication											
Employee research and feedback											
Learning and development											
Compensation benefits											
Working environment											
Social cohesion/ work-life balance											
Performance management											
Talent management											
Leadership style											

EFFECTS OPOA ON SOURCE AND MESSAGE VALENCE

In relation to POA, there has been done research into the effects of message valence and the source in offline context (Fisher, Ilgen, & Hoyer, 1979). In online context (oPOA), there needs to be referred to the online marketing- and online recruitment literature which focuses on the effects on consumer behavior and organizational attractiveness.

Main effects

In order to enhance organizational attractiveness, recruitment often involves a procedure in which a particular message about the company as an employer is communicated to a target group of (potential) applicants, through a specific channel or source (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2005). This makes clear that recruitment-related information sources and their characteristics is one of the important antecedents a recruitment message.

In online recruitment context there was found that company independent sources are seen as more credible and diagnostic, and therefore should increase organizational attractiveness (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2005, 2007; Lee & Koo, 2012). Based on the effect of

company-dependent - and company-independent sources the following hypothesis is formulated:

- ❖ **H1- main effect source:** *Compared to a weblog written by a company-dependent source the weblog written by a company-independent source results in higher levels of (a) intention to engage in EWOM, (b) intention to apply, (c) information seeking behavior and (d) attraction and (e) lower on scepticism.*

The effect of message valence on POA can be explained by the expectancy theory in offline context. The expectancy theory states that individuals select the company which presents the best package of alternatives determined by the assessment of probabilities (instrumentalities) of various outcomes, and the desirability of those outcomes (valences) (Coleman & Irving, 1997). This makes clear that the most attractive company will be chosen among those that make a job offer. Thus, in offline context a positive weblog would be perceived as more attractive compared to the weblog with positive - and negative elements.

Literature in online marketing states the opposite. It states higher levels of purchase intention and credibility of EWOM compared to advertising (Jain & Posavac, 1999; Xia & Bechwati, 2008). In recruitment advertising, researchers found as well that positive - and negative reviews influenced organizational attractiveness (Colins & Stevens, 2002; van Hoyer & Lievens, 2007; van Hoyer & Lievens, 2005). Because of the online nature of this research, the online marketing and online recruitment literature will be used. In other words, there is assumed that the expectancy theory cannot be applied into online setting. Therefore, following hypothesis will be stated:

- ❖ **H2- main effect message valence:** *Compared to a weblog that describes exclusively positive information, a weblog which consists out of positive- and negative information results in higher levels of (a) intention to engage in EWOM, (b) intention to apply, (c) information seeking behavior and (d) attraction and (e) lower on scepticism.*

Interaction effect

The literature shows interaction effects between source and message valence with regard to oPOA. First of all the self-selection hypothesis in offline context states that when the author takes an unexpected position, or one that is contrary to their best interest, the external cause becomes less plausible (Coleman & Irving, 1997). People are in this case more likely to attribute the cause to internal factors, and will therefore more focus on the source. Recruiters who reported negative information about the job were perceived as more credible compared

to recruiters who described positive job information (Saks, Wiesner & Summers, 1994 as cited by Coleman and Irving, 1997). In line with the aforementioned research, Coleman & Irving (1997) found that exclusively positively weblogs written by company-dependent sources result in higher levels of credibility and organizational attractiveness compared to positively- and negatively written (Coleman & Irving, 1997). In line with the self-selection hypothesis, the following hypothesis will be stated:

- ❖ **H3- interaction effect:** *Compared to a weblog with exclusively positive information written by a company-dependent source, a weblog with exclusively positive information written by a company-independent source results in a higher level of (a) intention to engage in EWOM, (b) higher intention to apply, (c) higher information seeking behavior and (d) higher levels of attraction and a (e) lower level of scepticism.*

The expectancy theory states that company-dependent sources may be seen as trying to persuade candidates to join the company, exclusively positive communications from these individuals may create perceptions of reporting bias (Coleman & Irving, 1977). People expect company-independent sources to write positive- and negative information (can be seen as electronic word-of-mouth or *EWOM*). Company-dependent sources are not expected to write positive- and negative information. Therefore, there would be carried less weight to company-dependent sources writing exclusively positive information compared to company-independent sources writing positive- and negative information. Based on the expectancy theory, the following hypothesis is stated:

- ❖ **H4 - interaction effect:** *Compared to a weblog written by a company-dependent source that consists exclusively out of positive elements, a weblog with positive and negative information written by a company-independent source results in higher levels of (a) attractiveness, experience (b) higher levels of EWOM, (c) higher intention to seek information, (d) higher intention to apply and (e) a lower level of scepticism.*

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A 2x2 between-subject experimental design was conducted. This experimental design consisted of weblogs in which the source (company-independent versus company-dependent source) and message valence (positive or positive and negative) were manipulated. The company-dependent source in this research is the company itself and the company-independent source is the employee.

In the following two conditions the employee was the weblog its author:

- ❖ **Condition 1:** exclusive positively written: *'I like to work for MUYH inc.'*
- ❖ **Condition 2:** positively and negatively written: *'There is a good ambience at work, however I miss ambition from colleagues.'*

In the following two conditions the company was the weblog its author:

- ❖ **Condition 3:** exclusive positively written weblog: *'In this team there is a good ambience.'*
- ❖ **Condition 4:** positively and negatively written weblog: *'Project Innoplan is one of the biggest projects within the company. The workload for this project increased compared to the job I perviously had.'*

PROCEDURE

Participants were first confronted to an instruction form (see appendix A). Second, participants answered demographical questions (see appendix B) such as *'What is your age?'* and *'What is your educational level?'* Moreover questions about online behavior were asked in order to find the employer of their choice such as *'Do you use the internet to determine if the job and employer fit your needs?'*

Secondly, participants were confronted with one weblog. The weblogs were in every condition divided in two parts (1) a description of the source, and (2) the weblog itself (see Appendix C). The weblog itself described how it is to work for project Innoplan for MUYH inc. A basic HTML design was used to create an online experience which is as realistic as possible (see appendix E).

After reading one weblog, participants filled in the questionnaire (see appendix D) which determines the perceived organizational attractiveness.

Finally, there was checked whether the manipulation was applied properly. There was asked how the participant perceived (positive/positive versus negative) the weblog, and who wrote the blog in their opinion (employee versus copywriter communication department).

Furthermore there were asked three control questions, to check if the respondent read the weblog properly.

INSTRUMENTS

Materials

Two elements of the weblog were manipulated in this study: the source and message valence. First, the weblog its source was manipulated in the first paragraph. This paragraph describes employee Anne who wrote the weblog by itself (company-independent source) or Anne who wrote the weblog in the company's name MUYH inc. (company-dependent source). In the Netherlands Anne can be a name for both male and female individuals. The company for which Anne works was called MUYH inc. that did not exist. Second, the message valence was manipulated. All elements described in table 1 were or exclusive positively described or positively - and negative described. Only the elements salary, job security and fringe benefits were not mentioned in the weblog because employees experience these questions as 'sensitive', and would therefore not write this information in a weblog (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007).

Independent sample t-tests showed that participants answered significantly different on the manipulation questions of the source '*Who wrote the weblog?*' ($t(361,272) = -8,358, p = 0,00, M = 1,58$) and on the perception of the message valence '*how did you perceive the weblog?*' ($t(450) = 7,053, p = 0,00, M = 2,44$). The manipulation worked out well for the whole sample, which means that the questions for the manipulation check were not used to exclude participants.

Furthermore there was not found a significant difference between the participants who answered two or more control questions in the right and participants who answered less than two questions in the right. This means control questions were not used to exclude participants ($t(455) = -1,167, p > 0,05, M = 1,20$).

Measures

The validated POA scale from Highhouse *et al.* (2008) was used as a basis for the construction of the oPOA scale. Intention to engage in EWOM ('*I recommend this company to a friend who is looking for a job*', $a = 0,659$), intention to apply ('*I would engage into a vacancy from this company*', $a = 0,787$), information seeking behavior ('*I would like to receive more information about this company*', $a = 0,830$) and attraction ('*a job at this company is attractive*', $a = 0,872$) were used as variables to measure POA. In this research some EWOM (Goyette, Ricard, Bergeron & Marticotte, 2010) and information seeking items were added.

Scepticism (*'the weblog its content is not trustworthy'*, $\alpha = 0,501$) was added. This construct was not found to be internal consistent. The internal consistency is particular low, but removing items did not increase the Cronbach's Alpha. Scepticism was added because Coleman and Irving (1997) measured POA in offline context and this research measures POA in online context. Scepticism gives an indication of the extent of trust someone has in online context. The SKEP-scale from Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) originally focused on scepticism towards advertising. In this research the SKEP-scale items (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998) were transformed into scepticism towards the weblog.

Pilot study

Before conducting the questionnaire, there were eight different people assigned to read the weblogs from the company-dependent – and company-independent sources, in a positive- and positive versus negative condition. These eight people (two people per condition) were asked to fill in the whole questionnaire on the computer. After the questionnaire was finished, the researcher asked why the respondent perceived the weblog as, for example, positive - negative or positive versus written by the employee – company. Based on this pilot study, formulations like *'the weblog consists out of positive information'* were changed into *'the weblog exists exclusively out of positive information'*, in order to emphasize the only positively formulated content from the weblog. Small differences between some statements were questioned (e.g. *'this company is an attractive place to work'* versus *'a job with this company is attractive'*), in order to make sure the participants perceived these in the right way. Furthermore the researcher asked if the participants perceived it as a weblog, which includes the perception of the design and the writing style. All participants perceived the design as 'basic but realistic'. The writing style sometimes needed to be more suggestive; in a way the employee his or her opinion would be highlighted, for example, inserting the word *'naturally'* and revising the sentence *'the different expertise of colleagues are making the job interesting'* instead of *'the project could not successfully be finished without the colleagues their expertise'*.

PARTICIPANTS

First of all, this research excluded some participants for several reasons. Participants who did not study ($N = 17$), who were older than 29 years old ($N = 20$) or dropped off the questionnaire before they even read the weblog ($N = 630$) were excluded. In total the research consists of 457 Dutch students who are all in-between the 17 and 29 years old, which fits with the research subject employer branding. Students are likely to engage in organizational choice as they are near the end of their academic careers. Furthermore, empirical evidence shows

that students are the most impressionable audience with regard to corporate reputation (Collins, 2006). Which makes clear that students are the perfect target audience to create an attractive employer brand.

The participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions as described in the section ‘research design’. Condition 1 consisted out of 84 participants whereas condition 2 exists of 107 participants. Condition 3 counts 147 participants and condition 4 consisted consists out of 161 participants. The number of participants (N) per condition for gender and level of education can be found in table 2.

In total 199 (43,5%) participants did not use the Internet in the past to find the employer that matches his or her needs. Followed by the people who just look at the vacancy online (N = 173, 37,9%) and the general information on the company website (N = 153, 12,7%). Less people looked at the social media activities (N = 58, 12,7%) and weblogs written by the employees. Finally 13 (2,8%) people found the employee of their choice in different ways.

Table 2

Distribution of participants (N) and the percentage per condition (%) for gender and the educational level per condition

	Gender		Educational level				
	Men	Women	MBO	HBO bachelor	HBO master	WO bachelor	WO master
Condition 1	17	61	2	27	4	7	38
(total N= 78)	22,8%	78,2%					
Condition 2	22	75	1	7	3	59	27
(total N= 97)	22,6%	77,4%					
Condition 3	31	107	1	17	4	89	27
(total N= 138)	22,5%	77,5%					
Condition 4	36	108	2	46	6	54	36
(total N= 144)	25%	75%					
Cumulative N	106	351	6	97	17	209	128
(total N = 457)	23,2%	76,8%	1,3%	21,2%	3,7%	45,7%	28,1%

ANALYSIS

The data could be perceived as normally distributed because of the number of participants (N = 457). Another assumption for normal distribution is based on equal distributions for gender, educational level and age within the conditions. First of all, gender was not equally divided (70%/ 30%) within every condition. However, men did not score significantly different on source ($t(455) = 0,362, p = 0,718, M = 1,63$) and message valence ($t(455) = 0,465, p = 0,642, M = 1,55$) compared to woman. Secondly, nearly every participant was in-between the

17 and 29 years old, which means the age is normally distributed. At last, the educational level is not equally divided within the conditions. However, the one-way ANOVA test ($F = 3,559, p = 0,007$) confirmed differences in the source ($M = 1,62$) and the message valence ($M = 1,53$) among the different educational levels.

RESULTS

A multivariate analysis of variance, MANOVA, was performed to test the research hypothesis (see table 3). As the table shows, there are no interaction effects found. However, there were found main effects for as well the source as message valence (see table 3).

Table 3

Main and interaction effects for the source and message valence per variable

	F	p	X²
Source			
Intention to engage in WOM	0,88	0,35	3,90
Attraction	0,27	0,65	8,34
Intention to apply	0,03	0,86	0,20
Intention to seek information	0,19	0,67	1,67
Scepticism	0,88	0,00*	389,80
Message valence			
Intention to engage in WOM	7,18	0,01*	31,89
Attraction	21,76	0,00*	801,65
Intention to apply	7,97	0,01*	51,48
Intention to seek information	7,64	0,01*	69,21
Scepticism	3,52	0,06**	60,63
Source x Message valence			
Intention to engage in WOM	0,20	0,65	0,91
Attraction	2,98	0,09**	109,52
Intention to apply	0,62	0,43	3,97
Intention to seek information	0,65	0,42	5,87
Scepticism	0,37	0,54	0,43

Note 1: * indicates significance level: $p < 0,01$

Note 2: ** indicates significance level: $p < 0,1$

MAIN EFFECT SOURCE

As shown in table 3, no main effects for the source were found for the following variables: intention to engage in EWOM ($p > 0,05$), attraction ($p > 0,05$), intention to apply ($p > 0,05$) and information seeking behavior ($p > 0,05$).

For scepticism there was found a main effect of the source ($p < 0,01$). Participants experienced higher levels of scepticism when the employee wrote the weblog compared to the weblog written by the communication department. This result is not in line with the first hypothesis, the weblog written by the company resulted in lower levels of scepticism (figure 1).

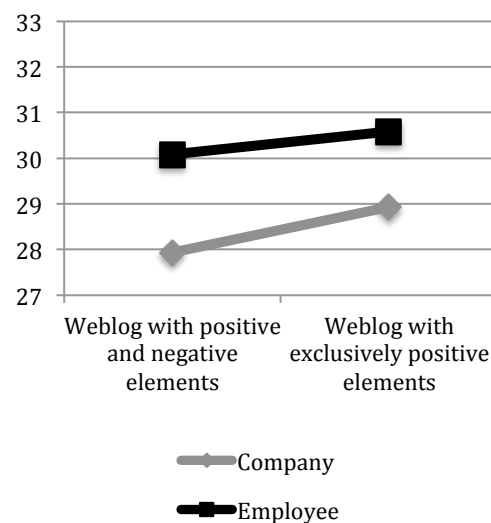


Figure 1. *Main effect scepticism*

MAIN EFFECT MESSAGE VALENCE

The results are not in line with hypothesis 2. There was not found evidence that weblogs with positive and negative elements are perceived as more attractive and do not result in a intention to engage in EWOM, a higher intention to apply and more information seeking behavior compared to the exclusive positively written weblogs (table 3, figure 2 and 3). Participants did perceive a higher level of attraction ($p < 0,01$, figure 2), a higher intention to seek information ($p < 0,01$, figure 2), a higher intention to apply ($p < 0,01$, figure 2) and a higher intention to engage in EWOM ($p < 0,01$, figure 2) when confronted with exclusively positive weblogs compared to weblogs with positive- and negative elements.

Scepticism was found to be marginally significant ($p = 0,06$), but the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = 0,008$). Therefore, almost no main effect for scepticism on the message valence was found (see table 3). Participants were not more or less sceptical after reading the positively- and negatively written weblog compared to the weblog with exclusively positive elements. This means that the results for the variable scepticism were opposite to the second

hypothesis: participants did not experience higher levels of scepticism when reading a positive weblog compared to a weblog with positive- and negative elements.

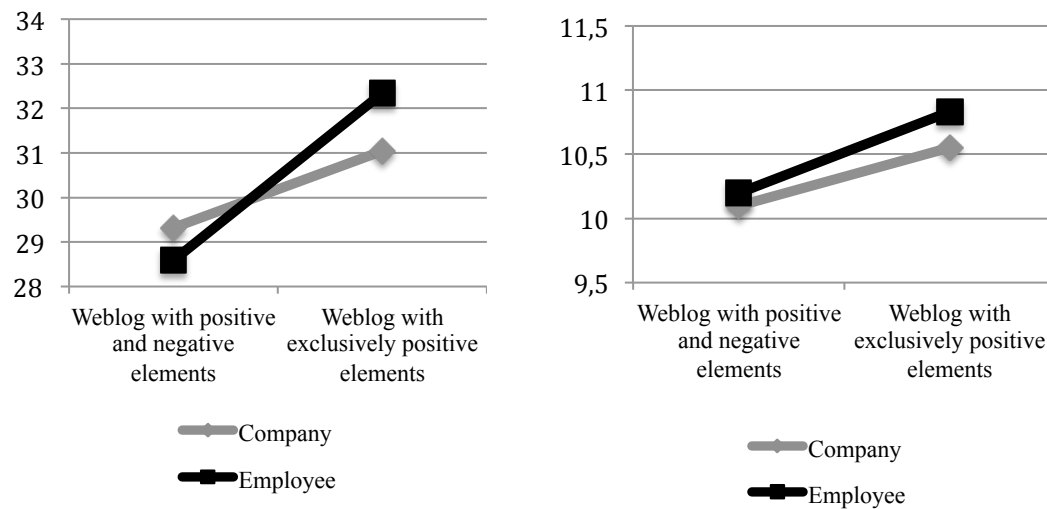


Figure 2. Main effect attraction (left) and intention to engage in EWOM (right)

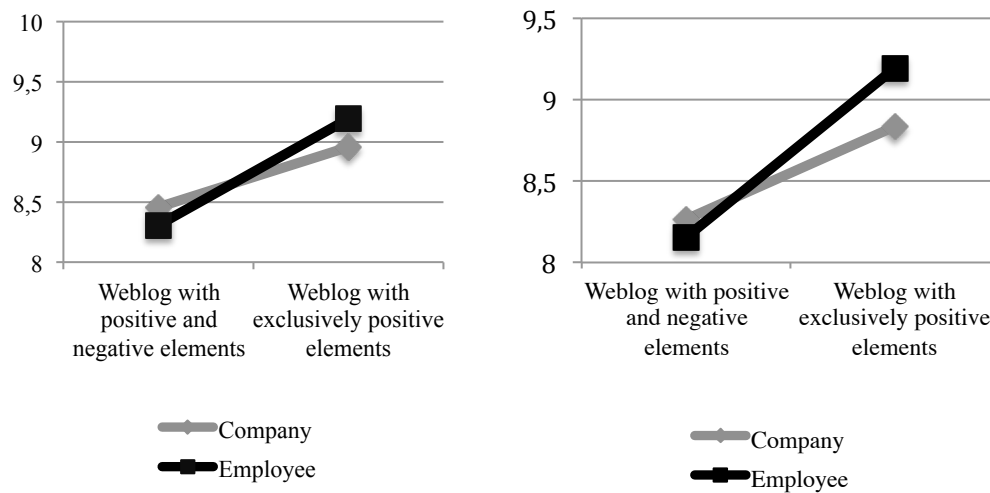


Figure 3. Main effect intention to apply (left) and information seeking behavior (right)

INTERACTION EFFECTS

For attraction a marginally significant ($p = 0,09$) interaction effect was found. However, the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = 0,007$). There were almost no interaction effects found for intention to engage in EWOM, attraction, information seeking behavior, intention to apply and scepticism (see table 3). This makes clear that the third and fourth hypotheses can be rejected.

DISCUSSION

Although the struggle companies have in creating a policy for online corporate- and employer brand attractiveness, there is scarce literature available on web-based sources of employment information other than official recruitment websites (Cable & Turban, 2001; Lievens & Harris, 2003; Rynes & Cable, 2003; Saks, 2005; Taylor & Collins, 2000, as cited by Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2007). The current study contributes to the recruitment literature by examining the influence of both the source of the message (company dependent versus company independent sources) and message valence (positive versus positive and negative) on oPOA.

The study yields several important conclusions. First of all, the expectancy theory and the positivity effect can be translated into online recruitment literature and oPOA. This means that the most attractively presented company will be chosen among those that make a job offer, which means that positive weblogs do result in higher levels of oPOA compared to weblogs with a positive - and negative message valence. Explanations for these results can be found in the circumstances under which the positivity effect occurs. It only occurs when people have a prior belief about, for example, the company or the job (Lee & Koo, 2012; Xia & Bechawati, 2008). The construction of the company name, employee's name Anne, the general job 'project manager' and the unique project name should have decreased the prior beliefs. However, participants who were already looking for a job as a 'project manager' could have a prior preference and therefore used their 'positive filter'. Future research should confirm the effect of the job title on oPOA and should validate if this type of positivity effect can be translated to online recruitment setting.

Furthermore, in contrast with the recruitment literature weblogs written by company-dependent sources result in higher levels of oPOA compared to weblogs written by company-independent sources (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2005, 2007). This research shows that the weblog written by a company-dependent source was perceived as more attractive compared to a weblog written by a company-independent source. Explanations for this result can be found in the weblog its content, which existed out of the following elements: leadership style, learning and development of a culture. Participants could have perceived company-dependent as having more expertise about these particular elements compared to the company-independent source. Another possible reason for the lack of effect for the source is that each participant was exposed to only one source of information. Participants were not aware of the existence of the other conditions of which this research exists (in total four). This could have influenced the participant's information processing, because participants did not know that there were also other conditions available. However reporting bias effects might be stronger when participants are aware of multiple sources of information or conditions (Coleman & Irving,

1997). In future research participants could read two different weblogs and determine after the organizational attractiveness after reading both weblogs.

A combination of source and message valence did not result significantly in higher or lower levels of oPOA. There was found a trend significant effect for attraction. Further research should indicate if this effect really exists. Several factors could explain the lack of interaction effects. The first factor is the level of experience that students in general have on the Internet. There was found that the more experience people have on the Internet the lower the higher the trust online in using the web (Metzger 2006, as cited by Beldad *et al.*, 2010; Wood *et al.*, 2006). Students have in general much experience with the Internet. They were born in the time in which Internet became booming and gain Internet experience in order to finish assignments and tests. This sample could therefore be less influenced by the source and message valence, because they trust in general online messages and focus therefore less on the source and message valence.

Moreover, the content of the weblogs could be a reason for the current result. Although the literature study underlying the content of the weblog, people could have perceived the content (leadership, culture and learning and development) and writing style not as realistic. This could have influenced their perceptions of the attractiveness. Furthermore, participants who studied to become, for example, a teacher or nurse were not familiar with the term 'project manager' and could therefore be less influenced by the weblog. Future research should avoid this by selecting a sample in a specific field of expertise. Uncontrollable external factors like demographic, personal, cultural, sociological, economic, legal and environmental could have influenced the interaction effect (Osika, Johnson, & Butea, 2009). Future research needs to be conducted into the influence of these external elements on the perception of online tools.

The generalizability of the findings may be limited by the highly educated student sample. There can be assumed that this group has a high level of online experience (Beldad *et al.*, 2010; Wood *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, students are most impressionable by company its reputation (Collins, 2006) and are likely to be engaging in organizational choice as they near the end of their academic careers. However, it is necessary to determine whether the identified effects would count for actual jobs and job applicants, which could be an approach for future research.

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. The most important limitation should be found in the unequal distribution among the different conditions. In an experimental design the distributions should be equal in order to compare the conditions with each other (Kleijnen, 1998). This could explain the result for a higher score on oPOA for the company-dependent source compared to the weblog written by the company-independent

source. Moreover, the internal consistency for scepticism is particularly low, which could have resulted in the lack of results for scepticism. In this case, deleting items did not increase the internal consistency. Other limitations can mainly be found in the lack of research into the construction, use and effects of online recruitment tools. First of all, because of the lack of research into weblogging in online recruitment context, there was assumed that companies use the three elements distilled from table 1 to create an attractive image. However it is not clear if participants perceived this weblogs as a realistic one. Content analysis on a great number of employee- and company weblogs should confirm the general elements of a weblog in recruitment related context. Another limitations can be found in the lack of existing literature into the influence of online recruitment tools in general and specifically on oPOA. Van Hoya and Lievens (2005, 2007) did some research into this field, but there are still many gaps to fill. Now, marketing- and offline recruitment literature and small research into online recruitment literature were used as a foundation and translated into the recruitment blogosphere. Future research needs to focus on the elements of which weblogs and other Web 2.0 tools in general consist in online recruitment, and on the influence of these tools (like weblogs, micro blogging and other social media) on the perception of the company, employer brand and specifically oPOA. The current research can be used as a theoretical and practical foundation.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results found in the current study suggest several theoretical and practical implications. First, the findings suggest that the results in online marketing literature cannot be translated into the online recruitment literature. The current study does not reaffirm the conclusion of previous studies in online marketing. It is in line with the offline recruitment literature, which shows that the online marketing field and online recruitment field need to be researched separately.

Practically, the findings suggest an easy and inexpensive way in which the effectiveness of weblogs for employer branding might be increased. However, it should be noted that weblogs are not a substitute for the traditional company communications and PR activities of a company. Weblogs could only serve as a complement to the traditional activities (Wood *et al.*, 2006). The following step-by-step plan is constructed based on this study. It provides tools for managers to use weblogs in a way that contributes to the organizational attractiveness.

STEP 1: GOAL

Starting point for companies is determining the strategic goals they want to reach with weblogs. Goals can vary from employer branding to recruitment tools. Do companies want to use weblogs as a substitute to maintain, create or change their employer brand? Or does the company want to focus on recruitment? Furthermore, it is important to determine whether the weblogs harm or contribute to the traditional activities from the company.

STEP 2: TYPE OF WEBLOG

Secondly, the type of weblog that fits with the goal should be determined. There are internal - and external weblogs. External weblogs have a higher chance to influence potential applicants' perception of the organization because applicants have the opportunity to read these weblogs.

There are employee weblogs, group weblogs, executive weblogs, promotional weblogs and newsletter weblogs. Every type of weblog can be used to reach other type of goals. Companies should determine which type of weblog fits with their strategy.

STEP 3: CONTENT WEBLOG

Source and message valence are found to be important constructs in the weblog's content and the perception of the organizational attractiveness. This research shows applicants are less sceptical in case the company-dependent source writes a weblog instead of company-independent source. At a practical level, this implies that companies can maintain their control over the content without any scepticism or doubts about diagnostic perceptions and credibility. Companies can use weblogs written by company-dependent sources directly to promote a favorable image. Furthermore, companies can use positive information to increase the attraction of the company and the intention to take further action towards the company.

STEP 4: EVALUATE

Finally, companies need to measure and evaluate if the weblogs contributed to the organizational attractiveness. As already stated, weblogs are always a substitute to traditional corporate- and marketing communications. That is the reason why companies should take a look at all marketing- and corporate communications if the weblogs do not contribute to the attractiveness.

CONCLUSION

From a practical- and theoretical perspective it is important to gain a complete understanding of the effect of the source and message valence on oPOA. Marketing literature already elaborates on the influence of source a message valence on purchase intention and more. Still, the question remains if these results could be translated into corporate setting as well? Nowadays companies like McDonalds, Apple, the Dutch retailer Blokker struggle with their online strategies for employees and therefore fire employees.

The current research does not show influence of the source and message valence or a combination of both on oPOA. However, there was found support for the influence of the source on the level of scepticism: the weblog written by a company-dependent source was found to be more sceptical than a weblog written by a company-independent source. Furthermore, the message valence did affect intention- and attitude elements: positive weblogs increase intention- and attitude elements.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTIONS

**Wil je kans maken op een waardebon ter waarde van €50 van bol.com?
Like, deel en vul deze enquête zelf in!**

Bedankt dat je mee wilt doen aan dit onderzoek naar weblogs over werk en organisaties! We hopen hierdoor beter te begrijpen welke invloed blogs hebben op de lezers. Het onderzoek duurt ongeveer 10 minuten en heeft de volgende onderdelen:

1. Allereerst worden er een aantal vragen gesteld over jou en jouw internetgebruik.
2. Vervolgens krijg je een korte blogtekst te lezen. Lees deze tekst aandachtig door.
3. Daarna krijg je stellingen voorgelegd om je mening te peilen. Het gaat echt om je mening, er zijn dus geen 'foute' antwoorden.
4. Tot slot zijn er een paar meerkeuze-vragen over de gelezen weblog.

Na de vragenlijst heb je de mogelijkheid je e-mailadres in te vullen. Dat hoeft natuurlijk niet, want het onderzoek is anoniem, maar als jij kans wilt maken op een waardebon heb ik dat e-mail adres nodig om je te kunnen berichten. Ook wanneer je de resultaten van het onderzoek wilt lezen kun je jouw e-mail invullen. Verder doe ik niets met het e-mail adres.

Vragen, onduidelijkheden, reacties? Neem gerust contact met me op via het volgende e-mail adres: j.w.reinders@student.utwente.nl

Groetjes,
Jolien Reinders

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE BEFORE READING BLOGS

1. Ik ben:

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Vrouw

2. Mijn geboortjaar:

.....

3. Volg je op dit moment een studie?

- ☐ Nee
- ☐ Ja, MBO
- ☐ Ja, HBO bachelor
- ☐ Ja, HBO master
- ☐ Ja, WO bachelor
- ☐ Ja, WO master

4. Gebruik je het internet om te bepalen of een werkgever goed bij jou past? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.

- ☐ Nee
- ☐ Ja, ik gebruik hiervoor de algemene informatie op de bedrijfswebsite
- ☐ Ja, ik lees de berichten die de medewerkers posten op social media (zoals LinkedIn en Facebook) en ik lees de weblogs.
- ☐ Ja, ik lees puur de vacature die online geplaatst is.
- ☐ Ja, anders namelijk.....

APPENDIX C: MANIPULATED WEBLOGS

Blog 1: Employee – Positive

Mijn naam is Anne, en ik ben projectmedewerker bij het bedrijf MUYH inc. Ik schrijf blogs voor de organisatie waarin ik vertel over hoe het is om te werken aan project “Innoplan”. Ik werk al 2 jaar bij het bedrijf en 6 maanden aan project Innoplan. Voor alle duidelijkheid, ik mag schrijven wat ik zelf wil. De inhoud van de weblogs worden niet gecontroleerd door het management voordat het online wordt geplaatst.

Werken aan project Innoplan.

Ik werk inmiddels bijna 2 jaar bij deze organisatie. Dit jaar heb ik binnen de organisatie de overstap gemaakt naar project Innoplan. Mijn vorige functie gaf mij voldoening, maar ik kan mij in dit project meer ontwikkelen. Ik werk graag voor MUYH inc.

Ik zal wat dieper ingaan op project Innoplan. Dit één van de grootste projecten binnen de organisatie. Ik vervul de functie van projectmedewerker, die veel verantwoordelijkheden kent. Uiteraard werk ik niet alleen aan dit project. Ik ben blij met het team van 20 collega's die samen met mij aan dit project werken. Zonder de verschillende expertises van mijn collega's zou het project niet kunnen slagen. Binnen het team is er een goede sfeer. Iedereen heeft respect voor elkaar, geeft elkaar de ruimte om zelf beslissingen te nemen en helpt elkaar ook waar het nodig is. Bijvoorbeeld: Laatst moest één collega overwerken om een deadline te halen. De druk was erg hoog. Het hele team hielp waar nodig en zo hebben wij de deadline gehaald. Iedereen kon hierdoor op tijd naar huis gaan.

Ik vind het fijn dat ik de vrijheid krijg om mijn taken te doen, op de manier zoals ik denk dat het goed is. We leggen nieuwe ideeën altijd aan onze leidinggevende voor. Deze manier van leidinggeven past het beste bij mij.

Wel merk ik dat ik van sommige disciplines nog niet voldoende kennis heb. Ik werk natuurlijk ook nog maar zes maanden voor project Innoplan. Ik heb hier laatst met mijn leidinggevende een gesprek over gehad. Hij zag het nut in van extra trainingen in, waardoor ik vanaf volgende week één dag in de week een training ga volgen. Bovendien heeft de leidinggevende aangegeven dat ik, na afronding van deze cursussen en project Innoplan, kans maak op een andere functie binnen het bedrijf. Project Innoplan is nog niet afgerond, maar ik ben blij dat men vertrouwen in mij heeft.

Weblog 2: Employee – Positive and Negative

Mijn naam is Anne, en ik ben projectmedewerker bij het bedrijf MUYH inc. Ik schrijf blogs voor de organisatie waarin ik vertel over hoe het is om te werken aan project “Innoplan”. Ik werk al 2 jaar bij het bedrijf en 6 maanden aan project Innoplan. Voor alle duidelijkheid, ik mag schrijven wat ik zelf wil. De inhoud van de weblogs worden niet gecontroleerd door het management voordat het online wordt geplaatst.

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Ik zal wat dieper ingaan op project Innoplan. Dit één van de grootste projecten binnen de organisatie. Ik vervul functie projectmedewerker, die veel verantwoordelijkheden kent. Ik ervaar daardoor een veel hogere werkdruk dan in mijn vorige functie.

Uiteraard werk ik niet alleen aan dit project. Ik ben blij met het team van 20 collega's die samen met mij aan dit project werken. Zonder de verschillende expertises van mijn collega's zou het project niet kunnen slagen. Binnen het team is er een goede sfeer. Iedereen heeft respect voor elkaar, geeft elkaar de ruimte om zelf beslissingen te nemen en helpt elkaar ook waar het nodig is. Bijvoorbeeld: Laatst moest één collega overwerken om een deadline te halen. De druk was erg hoog. Het hele team hielp waar nodig en zo hebben wij de deadline gehaald. Iedereen kon hierdoor op tijd naar huis gaan.

Er heerst een goede sfeer op het werk, maar ik mis af en toe ambitie bij de collega's. Er wordt veel gepraat over onderwerpen die niets met werk te maken hebben. Hierdoor vind ik het soms lastig om geconcentreerd te blijven en mijn taken op tijd af te krijgen.

Ik vind het fijn dat ik de vrijheid krijg om mijn taken te doen, op de manier zoals ik denk dat het goed is. We leggen nieuwe ideeën altijd aan onze leidinggevende voor. Ik merk dat deze manier van leidinggeven het beste uit mijzelf haalt. Wel ervaar ik dat het beslissingsproces meer tijd in beslag neemt, wat ik soms lastig vind.

Wel merk ik dat ik van sommige disciplines nog niet voldoende kennis heb. Ik werk natuurlijk ook nog maar zes maanden voor project Innoplan. Ik heb hier laatst met de leidinggevende een gesprek over gehad. De leidinggevende zag het nut van extra trainingen in, waardoor ik vanaf volgende week één dag in de week een training ga volgen. Ook heeft de leidinggevende aangegeven dat ik, na afronding van deze cursussen en project Innoplan, kans maak op een andere functie binnen het bedrijf. Wel dien ik deze cursussen en trainingen na werktijd te volgen, waardoor ik weinig tijd heb om privé afspraken te maken.

Weblog 3: Communication department – Positive

Ik ben Anne en ik werk voor de communicatie afdeling van bedrijf MUYH inc. Voor ons weblog huren we een professionele tekstschrijver in. Hij beschrijft hoe het is om te werken voor onze organisatie. Daarvoor doet hij in blogs alsof hij projectmedewerker is bij het project Innoplan. Samen met mijn collega's van de communicatie afdeling controleer ik de blogtekst voordat deze online wordt gezet.

Werken aan project Innoplan.

Ik werk inmiddels bijna 2 jaar bij MUYH inc. Dit jaar heb ik binnen de organisatie de overstap gemaakt naar project Innoplan. Mijn vorige functie gaf mij voldoening, maar ik kan mij met dit project meer ontwikkelen. Ik werk graag voor MUYH inc.

Ik zal wat dieper ingaan op project Innoplan. Dit één van de grootste projecten binnen de organisatie. Ik vervul functie projectmedewerker, die veel verantwoordelijkheden kent. Uiteraard werk ik niet alleen aan dit project. Ik ben blij met het team van 20 collega's die samen met mij aan dit project werken. Zonder de verschillende expertises van mijn collega's zou het project niet kunnen slagen. Binnen het team is er een goede sfeer. Iedereen heeft respect voor elkaar, geeft elkaar de ruimte om zelf beslissingen te nemen en helpt elkaar ook waar het nodig is. Bijvoorbeeld: Laatst moest één collega overwerken om een deadline te halen. De druk was erg hoog. Het hele team hielp waar nodig en zo hebben wij de deadline gehaald. Iedereen kon hierdoor op tijd naar huis gaan.

Ik vind het fijn dat ik de vrijheid krijg om mijn taken te doen, op de manier zoals ik denk dat het goed is. We leggen nieuwe ideeën altijd aan onze leidinggevende voor. Deze manier van leidinggeven haalt het beste uit mijzelf.

Wel merk ik dat ik van sommige disciplines nog niet voldoende kennis heb. Ik werk natuurlijk ook nog maar zes maanden voor project Innoplan. Ik heb hier laatst met de leidinggevende een gesprek over gehad. De leidinggevende zag het nut van extra trainingen in, waardoor ik vanaf volgende week één dag in de week een training ga volgen. Bovendien heeft de leidinggevende aangegeven dat ik, na afronding van deze cursussen en project Innoplan, kans maak op een andere functie binnen het bedrijf. Project Innoplan is nog niet afgerond, maar ik ben blij dat men vertrouwen in mij heeft.

Weblog 4: Communication department – Positive and Negative

Ik ben Anne en ik werk voor de communicatie afdeling van bedrijf MUYH inc. Voor ons weblog huren we een professionele tekstschrijver in. Hij beschrijft hoe het is om te werken voor onze organisatie. Daarvoor doet hij in blogs alsof hij projectmedewerker is bij het project Innoplan. Samen met mijn collega's van de communicatie afdeling controleer ik de blogtekst voordat deze online wordt gezet.

Werken aan project Innoplan.

Ik werk inmiddels bijna 2 jaar bij MUYH inc. Dit jaar heb ik binnen de organisatie de overstap gemaakt naar project Innoplan. Mijn vorige functie gaf mij voldoening, maar ik kan mij met dit project meer ontwikkelen. Ik werk graag voor MUYH inc.

Ik zal wat dieper ingaan op project Innoplan. Dit één van de grootste projecten binnen de organisatie. Ik vervul functie projectmedewerker, die veel verantwoordelijkheden kent. Dit heeft zijn weerslag op de werkdruk. Ik ervaar een hogere werkdruk.

Uiteraard werk ik niet alleen aan dit project. Ik ben blij met het team van 20 collega's die samen met mij aan dit project werken. Zonder de verschillende expertises van mijn collega's zou het project niet kunnen slagen. Binnen het team is er een goede sfeer. Iedereen heeft respect voor elkaar, geeft elkaar de ruimte om zelf beslissingen te nemen en helpt elkaar ook waar het nodig is. Bijvoorbeeld: Laatst moest één collega overwerken om een deadline te halen. De druk was erg hoog. Het hele team hielp waar nodig en zo hebben wij de deadline gehaald. Iedereen kon hierdoor op tijd naar huis gaan.

Er heerst een goede sfeer op het werk, maar ik mis af en toe de ambitie van collega's. Er wordt veel gepraat over onderwerpen die niet gerelateerd zijn aan het werk. Hierdoor vind ik het soms lastig mijn concentratie te behouden, en mijn taken binnen de gewenste tijd uit te voeren.

Ik vind het fijn dat ik de vrijheid krijg om mijn taken te doen, op de manier zoals ik denk dat het goed is. We leggen nieuwe ideeën altijd aan onze leidinggevende voor. Ik merk dat deze manier van leidinggeven het beste uit mijzelf haalt. Wel ervaar ik dat het beslissingsproces meer tijd in beslag neemt, wat ik soms lastig vind.

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APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE POA AFTER READING WEBLOGS

Kunt u naar aanleiding van de gelezen weblog aangeven in hoeverre u het helemaal eens, mee eens, niet mee eens/niet mee oneens, mee oneens of helemaal mee oneens bent met de volgende stellingen?

(1= helemaal mee oneens, 2= mee eens, 3= niet mee eens/niet mee oneens, 4= mee eens, 5= helemaal mee eens)

Elements:	Questionnaire items:
Attraction (how the person perceives it)	Dit bedrijf zou een goede plek voor mij zijn om te werken.
	1 2 3 4
Attraction (how the person perceives it)	Ik ben niet geïnteresseerd in dit bedrijf, tenzij ik geen beter alternatief kan vinden.
	1 2 3 4
Information seeking (positive – through company)	Ik zou graag meer informatie ontvangen over dit bedrijf.
	1 2 3 4
Information seeking (Negative)	Extra informatie over deze organisatie hoef ik niet te ontvangen.
	1 2 3 4
Information seeking (positive – through employee)	Ik wil graag in contact komen met medewerkers die mij extra informatie over dit bedrijf kunnen verschaffen.
	1 2 3 4
Attraction (how the person perceives it)	Dit bedrijf is een aantrekkelijke plek voor mij om te werken.
	1 2 3 4
Attraction (how the person	Een baan bij deze organisatie is aantrekkelijk.

perceives it)	
	1 2 3 4
Intention to apply	Ik zou op een vacature van dit bedrijf ingaan.
	1 2 3 4
Intention to apply	Ik zou voor dit bedrijf als werkgever als eerste kiezen.
	1 2 3 4
Intention to apply	Als dit bedrijf mij zou uitnodigen voor een sollicitatie, zou ik komen.
	1 2 3 4
Attraction (how the person perceives it)	Ik zou moeite doen om voor dit bedrijf te kunnen werken.
	1 2 3 4
Word of mouse (positive valance)	Ik zou dit bedrijf aanbevelen aan een vriend die opzoek is naar een baan.
	1 2 3 4
Word of mouse (negative valance)	Ik zou mij negatief uitlaten over dit bedrijf.
	1 2 3 4 5
Word of mouse (Positive valance)	Over dit bedrijf zou ik mij vaker positief dan negatief uitlaten.
	1 2 3 4 5
Attraction (how you think others perceive it)	Medewerkers zijn trots om te zeggen dat ze voor dit bedrijf werken.
	1 2 3 4 5
Attraction (how you think others perceive it)	Het is een gerenommeerde organisatie om voor te werken.
	1 2 3 4 5
Attraction	Dit bedrijf heeft een reputatie als excellente werkgever.

(how you think others perceive it)					
	1	2	3	4	5
Attraction (how the person perceives it)	Ik vind dit een gerenommeerde organisatie om voor te werken.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Attraction (how you think others perceive it)	Er zijn waarschijnlijk velen die willen werken voor deze organisatie.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (high scepticism)	Ik kan er vanuit gaan dat ik de informatie die ik lees in deze weblog niet de waarheid is.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (low scepticism)	Het doel van deze weblog is om mensen te informeren.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (low scepticism)	Ik ben van mening <u>dat</u> deze weblog informatief is.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (high scepticism)	Deze weblog is onbetrouwbaar.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (low scepticism)	Deze weblog is een betrouwbare bron van informatie om te bepalen of een werkgever bij jou past.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (high in scepticism)	Deze weblog beschrijft de werkelijkheid in <u>deze</u> organisatie op een aantrekkelijke manier.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Skpticism (high scepticism)	Deze weblog geeft een vertekend beeld over de organisatie.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (low scepticism)	Ik heb het gevoel dat ik goed ben geïnformeerd na het lezen van deze weblog.				

	1	2	3	4	5
Scepticism (high in scepticism)	Deze weblog geeft geen betrouwbare informatie over de organisatie.				
	1	2	3	4	5
Skepticism (low scepticism)	Deze weblog geeft potentiële werknemers essentiële informatie.				
	1	2	3	4	5

MUYH inc.

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