FACULTY OF ECONOMICS TUL

Master Thesis

Digitalization of Recruitment of Employees in an International Company

Study programme: N0413A050030 International Management
Author: **Bc. Barbora Dušátková**
Thesis Supervisors: Mgr. Anastasiia Mazurchenko, Ph.D.
Department of Business Administration and Management

Liberec 2025

Master Thesis Assignment Form

Digitalization of Recruitment of Employees in an International Company

Name and surname:	**Bc. Barbora Dušátková**
Identification number:	E23000437
Study programme:	N0413A050030 International Management
Assigning department:	Department of Business Administration and Management
Academic year:	2024/2025

Rules for Elaboration:

1. Theoretical overview of the recruitment process with a focus on the international context.
2. Corporate recruitment process influenced by digitalization.
3. Introduction of the selected international company, including the current state of the recruitment process.
4. Suggestions and recommendations for improving the recruitment process in the international environment.
5. Economic valuation of recommendations proposed and conclusion.

Scope of Graphic Work:
Scope of Report: min. 65 standard pages
Thesis Form: printed/electronic
Thesis Language: english

List of Specialised Literature:

- BARBOSA, Belem; Sandra SARABANDO FILIPE a Claudia AMARAL SANTOS, 2022. *Handbook of research on smart management for digital transformation*. Hershey: IGI Global. ISBN 978-1-7998-9008-9.
- CANTONI, Franca a Gianluigi MANGIA, 2019. *Human resource management and digitalization*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. ISBN 978-1-138-31335-4.
- HOOK, Caroline a Andrew K. JENKINS, 2019. *Introducing human resource management*. 8^{th} ed. London: Pearson. ISBN 978-12-9223-037-5.
- KONAN, Gabriel; Patrik BORŠOŠ a Milan KUBINA, 2024. The possibilities of using artifical intelligence as a key technology in the current employee recruitment process. online. *Administrative Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 7, s. 1-20. ISSN 2076-3387. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14070157.
- TROGER, Hermann, 2021. *Human resource management in a post COVID-19 world: new distribution of power, individualization, digitalization and demographic developments*. Cham: Springer. ISBN 978-3-030-67469-4.

Thesis Supervisors: Mgr. Anastasiia Mazurchenko, Ph.D.
Department of Business Administration and Management

Date of Thesis Assignment: November 1, 2024
Date of Thesis Submission: August 31, 2026

L.S.

doc. RNDr. Miroslav Brzezina, CSc., dr. h. c.
Dean

doc. Ing. Kateřina Maršíková, Ph.D.
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Klíčová slova

Digitální nástroje a technologie, mezinárodní řízení lidských zdrojů, náborový proces, SWOT analýza

Digitalization of Recruitment of Employees in an International Company

Annotation

The aim of this master's thesis is to analyze the recruitment and selection process of a selected international company, Valbek EU, a. s., and to propose improvements using digital tools and technologies. In the first chapter, based on a literature review, human resource management and its specifics in an international environment are presented. The second chapter covers the recruitment process in all its phases and considers its changes influenced by digitalization. The third chapter introduces a selected international company and describes the current state of human resource management with an emphasis on the international recruitment process. Based on semi-structured interviews conducted with HR representatives in three countries and a SWOT analysis of the international recruitment process, key challenges faced by Valbek EU, a. s. were identified. Based on it, specific recommendations were proposed to improve the recruitment process, including their economic evaluation.

Key Words

Digital tools and technologies, international human resource management, recruitment process, SWOT analysis

The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Master's Thesis

The ChatGPT artificial intelligence tool GPT-4-turbo from OpenAI was used to prepare the master's thesis. This tool formulated and edited the text with example suggestions. During the development process, the Scite.ai platform was also used to populate relevant literature and identify key works in the field. When working with Czech sources, the online translator, DeepL, was used to translate texts into English.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my master's thesis supervisor, Mgr. Anastasiia Mazurchenko, Ph.D., for her professional guidance, valuable advice, and willingness to devote time to me while writing my master's thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank Ms. Adéla Janatová from Valbek EU, a. s., for her helpfulness and for providing valuable information that was crucial for preparing the practical part.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ATS	Applicant Tracking System
CR	Czech Republic or Czechia
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CZK	Czech crowns
HR	Human Resource or Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
IHRM	International Human Resource Management
InMail	The Success Rate of Outreach Messages
ROI	Return on Investment
SK	Slovak Republic or Slovakia
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis
UA	Ukraine
Valbek EU, a. s.	Valbek

Introduction

Human resources (further HR) represent one of the key pillars of any organization - the employees fundamentally influence the company's performance, the quality of services provided, and its competitiveness. With the rapid advent of technology and the digitalization of business processes, the way companies approach recruitment is also changing. Digitalization brings room for the use of modern tools and methods that can streamline international candidate selection, improve the overall candidate experience, and reduce the administrative burden on HR departments.

This master's thesis aims to analyze a selected international company's recruitment and selection process and propose improvements by utilizing digital tools and technologies. Particular attention is paid to candidate pre-selection, active candidate search through digital portals and platforms, and artificial intelligence (further AI) as a decision-support tool in Valbek EU, a. s. (further Valbek) company.

The master's thesis is divided into three main chapters. Chapter 1 defines basic concepts related to human resource management (further HRM), its activities and approaches, and its specifics in the international context. Chapter 2 concentrates on the recruitment process in organizations, describes its individual phases, and emphasizes the possibilities and challenges of digitalization as one of the current trends influencing recruitment.

Chapter 3 investigates how the international company Valbek, operating in 4 countries, is currently approaching recruitment, what tools and methods it uses, and in which areas there is potential for improvement. The focus is mainly on searching, approaching, and assessing candidates. The analysis also includes an assessment of the contribution of modern technological solutions in recruitment, including digital platforms, Application Tracking Systems (further ATS), and AI applications supporting the decision-making process. Based on the findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted with HR specialists, specific recommendations for digitalizing a current recruitment process and their economic evaluation were proposed.

1 Theoretical Overview of Human Resource Management

The first chapter of this master's thesis introduces the basic concepts of HRM and its importance as a strategic approach to managing employees, who are the most valuable resources of organizations. It describes HRM activities such as planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling, and their impact on organizational performance. It also discusses different approaches to HRM and highlights their impact on employee motivation, development, and effective use. The methods include hard, soft, strategic, behavioral, contingent, comparative, and systemic. Finally, international human resource management (further IHRM) is defined. The application of these approaches in practice and their impact on the long-term success of organizations is also highlighted. The analysis comprehensively explains how HRM is applied in different organizational and cultural contexts.

1.1 Definition of Human Resource Management

HRM is a strategic and logical approach to managing an organization's most valuable asset: its people, who work there and contribute individually and collectively to achieving its goals (Urbancová & Vrabcová, 2023). According to Dowling et al. (2017, p. 2), *„HRM refers to those activities undertaken by an organization to effectively utilize its human resources".* As Armstrong (2007) states, *HRM* is a strategic and logical approach to managing an organization's most valuable asset — the people who work in it and contribute individually and collectively to achieving its goals.

The people working in an organization make up what is known as *human capital*. It includes employees, knowledge, and abilities that an organization needs to achieve its goals. Employees' abilities, knowledge, and skills are developed through interactions between people inside and outside the organization, constituting *social capital*. (Šikýř, 2014)

The basis for the success of any organization is the realization of the employees' values, which represent their greatest asset. It should also be noted that HRM, with the employees responsible for this area, significantly influences whether the organization will succeed in the market — the people who set other resources in motion and determine their use (Urbancová & Vrabcová, 2023). Koubek (2015) and Armstrong and Taylor (2015) concur that employees are the most important resource available to an organization, and in the market, they also become the most expensive resource.

According to Barták (2023), HRM uses the following functions to perform its tasks:

- planning,
- organizing,
- motivating,
- regulating,
- controlling.

Planning specifies strategic, tactical, and operational objectives and how to achieve them in the required time, quantity, and quality. *Organizing* means combining related activities into logically closed and hierarchically arranged organizational units. *Motivation* is based on the inner employees' motives, company belonging, and goals. *Regulating* represents operational or tactical management aimed at coordinating activities and eliminating or weakening deviations from management intentions. *Controlling* is used to assess the quality of the implementation of personnel activities. It is a feedback process that allows refinement or modification of plans (Barták, 2023). In contrast, Achu (2018, p. 63) argues that HRM primarily includes "*manpower planning, recruitment, performance management, training and development, and personnel administration.*"

1.2 Approaches to Human Resource Management

According to the author of the master's thesis, theoretical and practical approaches to HRM differ in their focus, methodology, and application. These approaches have evolved from different paradigms and perspectives that reflect the goals of the organization and the value of HRM in treating the individual as an integral part of the organization. The importance of HRM lies in the effective management of human capital, which is key to achieving organizational goals, increasing job satisfaction, motivating employees, and promoting their development. Different approaches to HRM reflect different emphases and ways of achieving these objectives. On the one hand, approaches to HRM that emphasize strategic and economic aspects are integrated. On the other hand, soft approaches to HRM are also applied, emphasizing the human dimension and personal development.

The challenging or **hard HRM approach** emphasizes the needs of the business. HR is recruited, utilized, and released according to the requirements of the corporate plans. This approach focuses mainly on quantitative aspects and takes less account of employees' needs. In contrast, the **soft**

HRM approach emphasizes developing and promoting all employees' potential, whether full-time, part-time, temporary, or freelance. This approach focuses on programs that consider the behavioral aspects of people's work and lead to a competitive advantage through the workforce. (Hook & Jenkins, 2019)

HRM primarily focuses on a **strategic approach to HRM** and all HRM activities. An organization's employees or HR are crucial for achieving its strategic goals (Koubek, 2015). To have a competitive advantage in human capital, an organization must take a strategic approach to overall management and HRM, support employees' training and development, and invest in it (Armstrong & Taylor, 2015). The **contingency** approach aligns HRM practices with competing business strategies. According to this view, there is no one-size-fits-all method—HR practices that are most effective for organizations with one strategy may not be most appropriate for organizations with a different approach (Stewart & Brown, 2014).

The **comparative** approach to HRM is primarily descriptive, as it focuses on examining the practices and dynamics in various countries. It investigates key similarities and differences in HRM systems across different nations, regions, and industrial groupings, emphasizing the national and regional levels rather than the individual or organizational level. This approach involves analyzing contextual factors, such as employment systems, and relevant institutional factors, including national employment legislation and vocational training systems, and evaluating their impact on HRM practices in organizations operating within these countries. **IHRM** focuses on understanding the impact of a company's global operations on HR practices, distinguishing it from comparative HRM, which examines external factors. This approach emphasizes areas such as employee voice management and international staffing, including decisions on expatriate assignments and pre-assignment training. Unlike comparative HRM, which views institutional factors as more binding, IHRM assumes that multinational corporations have greater autonomy in decision-making. Additionally, IHRM is more prescriptive, offering recommendations on best practices, such as minimizing expatriate assignment failures through pre-screening and cross-cultural training. While primarily focused on the organizational level, IHRM also addresses individual psychological factors affecting expatriate success, bridging into the micro level of analysis. (Wintersberger, 2017)

In particular, HRM involves linking all activities, such as recruitment, staff training, and development. The focus on external factors in forming and functioning of the organization's workforce is also essential. Contemporary HRM concerns demographic development, external economic conditions, the labor market, employee value and motivational factors, social and career

development, the environment, and legislation (Šikýř, 2016). HRM must reflect these areas, especially if specialists in the field are to be attracted and selected, positions filled with internal resources (Koubek, 2015).

HRM focuses more on the quality of work life and employee satisfaction than on original HR work (Tetřevová, 2017). In practice, this includes, for example, the application of work-life balance principles and offering flexible working hours (Dvořáková et al., 2012). At the same time, HRM emphasizes employee care, especially in the working environment, occupational safety and health, and services provided to employees. According to Koubek (2015), the substantive content of occupational health services offered can be divided into:

- monitoring the working environment and working conditions,
- supervision of the provision of counseling,
- supervision of employee health.

1.3 Human Resource Management Activities

In its most general sense, HRM makes the organization efficient and strategically enhances its performance. This strategic enhancement can only be achieved by continuously improving the use of all the resources available to the organization. Moreover, HRM is directly concerned with strategically utilizing and developing the working HR capabilities. However, since HR determines the strategic utilization of material and financial resources, HRM indirectly determines the strategic improvement of the utilization of the remaining resources of the organization. (Koubek, 2007)

As Armstrong & Taylor (2014, p. 38) argue, *"HR activities can be divided into two broad categories:*

1) *transformational activities that are concerned with developing organizational effectiveness and the alignment and implementation of HR and business strategies;*
2) *transactional activities cover the main areas of HR service delivery: resourcing, learning and development, reward, and employee relations."*

If the task of HRM were to be characterized in less general terms, Koubek (2007) states that the following tasks would be focused on:

- Creating a dynamic match between the number and structure of job tasks and the jobs they create and the number and structure of the workforce in the organization so that at any point in time, the requirements of each job are matched to the maximum extent possible by the performance capabilities of the employee assigned to that job and so that the process of developing the performance capabilities of the organization's workforce responds in advance to the variability of job requirements. In other words, strive to put the right person in the right job and to ensure that that person is constantly prepared to adapt to the changing demands of the job.
- Optimal use of the workforce in the organization, i.e., optimal use of the working time pool and optimal use of the workforce's working capacity.
- Team building, effective people management, and healthy interpersonal relationships in the organization are not just tasks but the foundation of a positive work environment. HRM plays a crucial role in fostering this environment, making employees feel valued, and contributing to their satisfaction at work.
- The personnel and social development of the organization's employees, i.e., development of their working abilities, personality, social qualities, and career, aimed at internal satisfaction from work performed, convergence, or even identification of individual interests and interests of the organization.
- Complying with all labor, employment, and human rights laws and creating a good employer reputation for the organization.

The first three tasks primarily pursue the organization's interest; the fourth task respects the legitimate interests of the individual (employee). It reflects the experience that the previous three tasks can only be fulfilled satisfactorily with proper attention to the employees' personal and social development. The fifth task pursues both the interests of the organization and the interests of the employee and his right to be treated with dignity. (Koubek, 2007)

The task of HRM consists of activities that enable an organization to effectively attract, utilize, and develop motivated and skilled employees to achieve strategic objectives. Table 1 describes the HRM activities.

Table 1: HRM Activities

HRM activities	Description of Activity
Job creation and analysis	Defining work tasks, grouping them into jobs, and preparing job descriptions and specifications for jobs in the organization.
HR planning	Planning the need, covering the need and staff development, and preparing staff activity plans.
Filling vacancies	Filling newly created or vacant posts, sourcing suitable candidates, recruiting, and adapting.
Performance management and staff appraisal	Directing and encouraging employees to perform the agreed work and achieve the desired performance by systematically soliciting and providing feedback.
Employee remuneration	Valuing actual employee performance and incentivizing employees to achieve the required performance.
Staff training and development	Shaping, deepening, and expanding employees' abilities to perform the agreed work and achieve the required performance.
Employee care	Achieving favorable values of all variables that affect employees in the work process in performing the agreed work and achieving the required performance.
Use of the personnel information system	Personnel data processing is necessary for legal obligations and personnel work in the organization.

Source: own based on (Šikýř, 2014)

1.4 International Human Resource Management

According to Torrington (1994), *IHRM* differs from domestic HRM because it has a broader scope and a higher complexity associated with managing employees across different countries. In contrast, Collings et al. (2018, p. 379) state that "*IHRM is a far more complex and challenging animal and that the management of human resources in the international context is an especially complex and demanding process."*

Moreover, Lazarova (2006) argues that *IHRM* differs from HRM mainly due to the greater operational complexity that results from operating in multiple national contexts and the need to manage three different groups of employees — home, host, and third-country employees. IHRM focuses on efficiently managing HR functions globally to improve individual and organizational performance. Since 1995, IHRM has been shaped by three key perspectives: the multinational enterprise view, the cross-cultural HRM approach, and the comparative HRM framework. These perspectives provide a foundation for understanding and addressing the complexities of managing HR across diverse cultural and organizational contexts (Reiche et al., 2018).

For most organizations worldwide, HRM is key to success: the cost of the people who do the work is a significant portion of operating expenses, and the capabilities and the knowledge incorporated in an organization's HR are the keys to organizing the most significant national performance. So, on

both the cost and benefit sides of the equation, HRM is crucial to the enterprise's survival, performance, and success. For international organizations, the additional complications of dealing with differing institutional constraints and multicultural assumptions about how people should be managed become essential contributors to the chances of that success. The need for HR specialists to adopt an increasingly international orientation in their functional activities is widely acknowledged and becoming increasingly apparent. This is important to people working in giant MNCs and small and medium-sized enterprises. The more unrestricted economic environment of the 21st century, the reduction of restrictions on the labor movement in areas such as the European Union, and the advent of new technology have combined to mean that many fledgling enterprises operate internationally almost as soon as they are established. (Brewster et al., 2023)

IHRM can be divided into three distinct approaches according to the level of analysis: the macro level, which is focused on national or regional perspectives; the meso level, which concentrates on the organizational level; and the micro level, which focuses on the individual employee. (Wintersberger, 2017)

Increasingly, domestic companies are also facing the issue of IHRM. Many employees of a domestic company may have a different national background and, even if they have citizenship of the country, may display many traits of their parent country's culture. Even domestic companies may thus have quite a multicultural workforce. The company may have to hire staff from abroad to fill positions that locals cannot fill. So, even in a domestic company, HR professionals must develop international HR skills. (Klimkeit et al., 2024)

1.5 Comparison of Human Resource Management and International Human Resource Management

To better understand HRM at the national and international levels, it is necessary to identify the main differences between traditional HRM and its global dimension, or IHRM. Table 2 provides a systematic overview of these differences, focusing on key areas such as the scope, main objectives, functions, activities, and challenges associated with each approach. This analytical framework allows one to highlight the specific features of the two approaches and understand the strategic implications and requirements that organizations face in the global context of HRM.

Table 2: Comparison of Approaches to HRM and IHRM

Aspect	HRM	IHRM
Scope	National or local level.	Global or international level.
Objectives	Optimizing HR at the local level: ensuring effective recruitment, training, motivation, and staff retention.	Effective IHRM, alignment of local and global strategies, and adaptation to cultural and legislative differences.
Functions	Recruitment and selection, employee training and development, performance appraisal, career planning, compensation and benefits.	Recruitment of local and foreign employees, expat management (relocation, adaptation, repatriation), developing global leaders, cross-cultural training, and policy coordination between central and local HR departments.
Activities	Recruitment in local markets, management of local labor contracts, compliance with local legislation, conflict resolution, and labor relations.	Global mobility coordination, cross-cultural adaptation, work visa, and relocation management, ensuring compliance with multiple legal systems.
Main challenges	Recruiting and retaining talent locally, compliance with domestic legal standards, motivating and training employees.	Overcoming cultural differences, the complexity of multiple legal and political systems, balancing global and local strategies, costs and logistics of relocations, and maintaining employee engagement across regions.

Source: own based on (Alp Consulting, 2023; Bhutoria, 2024; Gajjar, 2024; Learnful, 2025; Rapid, 2023; Skuad, 2022)

The literature review results presented in Chapter 1 have shown that recruitment is a key area of HRM that fundamentally affects an organization's success or failure. Recruitment and selection are among the most strategic HR functions because they enable organizations to find and hire suitable people who fit their needs and corporate culture. At the same time, recruitment is a dynamic and innovative area and a key element in which organizations can apply state-of-the-art tools, making it an ideal topic for in-depth analysis and research. In addition, recruitment is one of the HR activities where modern digital technologies are used the most, from candidate management software to AI algorithms used to select candidates and social media to find talents.

The author chose the topic of international recruitment influenced by digitalization for further study in the master's thesis (see Chapters 2 and 3) because it reflects the current trend of HRM process digitalization, in which digital technology is becoming increasingly important and provides an opportunity to improve the efficiency and quality of the recruitment process.

2 Recruitment Process in Organizations

The second chapter of the master's thesis focuses on recruitment. Firstly, recruitment is defined through several interpretations. The chapter then looks at the historical development of recruitment and shows how it has changed over the years. Next, the various stages of the recruitment and selection process are discussed in detail — from determining job requirements through approaching candidates, sorting applications, interviewing, and testing to the final decision and offer of employment. A separate subchapter is devoted to workforce planning and subsequent job analysis. Attention is also given to the importance of onboarding and the subsequent success of the recruitment process in adapting new employees. An important part of the chapter is analyzing the recruitment strategy, objectives, and the key factors influencing its design. The specifics of international recruitment and current trends in its digitalization are also considered. The chapter discusses modern tools such as applicant tracking systems (further ATS), chatbots, and AI, and aims to show how the approach to recruitment changes over time and how modern technologies influence HR professionals' roles in this area.

2.1 Definition of Recruitment and Selection Process

There are many definitions of recruitment. Barber's (1998, p. 5) definition is that "*recruitment includes those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees.*" According to Armstrong and Taylor (2015), *recruitment* is finding and reaching out to the people an organization needs. *Recruitment* is the process of deciding which candidates should be hired. Mackay (2006) describes *recruitment* as a key part of HRM. It involves attracting, selecting, and retaining suitable candidates for an organization. At its core, recruitment is about establishing effective communication between employers and potential job applicants. This communication informs potential candidates about the job, requirements, and conditions. The quality and extent of this communication significantly impact the effectiveness of the recruitment process and the employer's reputation. Ultimately, the recruitment process should yield a reasonable number of suitable job applicants who meet the employer's requirements (Šikýř, 2016).

In HRM, recruitment is defined as any practice carried out by an organization to identify and attract potential employees. Recruitment is often part of personnel, workforce, or HR planning. The

recruitment process (plan → source → pre-screen → select → offer) balances current staffing positions with desired staffing positions. HR planning involves balancing the forecast of labor demand with estimates of labor supply. Moreover, HR planning helps managers to be as effective as possible and predict where and when HR is needed to accomplish organizational goals. According to Klikauer (2022), HR managers do this in four ways:

- determining the HR impact on the organization's objective regarding specific organizational units;
- defining the skills, expertise, and total number of employees needed to achieve the company's or a department's objectives;
- determining additional HR planning requirements (downsizing, outsourcing, restructuring);
- developing detailed action plans for the anticipated HR requirements.

Effective recruitment is crucial to an organization's competitive edge, as hiring the right talent enhances productivity and reduces costs. Highly skilled and motivated employees contribute to a company's value, whereas hiring individuals with mismatched skills or experience can jeopardize success and incur significant costs. Organizations increasingly recognize the importance of workforce diversity in achieving success. Initiatives such as employment equity programs help address imbalances in representation, ensuring a mix of employees from different cultures, religions, genders, and abilities. This broadens the talent pool and strengthens the organization's reputation as an inclusive and credible employer. Recruitment is a continuous challenge for employers, emphasizing the need for HR departments to be actively involved in strategic planning. By integrating diversity and inclusion into recruitment strategies, companies can secure a wide-ranging talent pool and align hiring practices with their long-term goals. (Patterson, 2023)

While recruitment and selection are often combined, their key differences are worth knowing. According to Klotz et al. (2013), *recruitment* concerns the activities and practices organizations utilize to attract desirable candidates, and selection pertains to the techniques used to select the most suitable applicants.

O'Meara and Petzall (2013) claim that the selection phase may include one or more interviews, psychometric testing, attending an assessment center, checking references, medical assessment where required, finalizing the training and education a successful applicant will require, job offer, induction, monitoring the performance of successful candidates, and creating feedback loops for the system.

At the selection stage, decisions are made on whether to offer a job to a candidate, under what conditions, and what financial or other resources to allocate. If an unsuitable candidate is selected, this may lead to unnecessary expenditures and resource waste. Recruitment and selection costs are further increased if the organization has to fill the same position, as the whole process must be repeated. (O'Meara & Petzall, 2013)

At this stage of the selection process, decisions are made on job offers, conditions of employment, and the allocation of financial and other resources. Selecting unsuitable candidates leads to unnecessary costs and wasted effort, as initial training and education require significant investment. If the organization needs to fill the same vacancy, these costs are further increased because the recruitment and selection process must be repeated. Hence, it is important to have an efficient and well-structured selection process that minimizes recruitment risk and increases overall efficiency. (Klikauer, 2022)

2.2 Evolution of Recruitment

The first traces of recruitment can already be found in ancient, advanced cultures such as Egypt and Rome — references for the first "recruiters" date back to around 55 BC, when the referral program was born. One of the earliest mentions of what might be considered an „employment agency" dates from 1650. In 1650, Henry Robinson came up with the idea of establishing the "Office of Addresses and Meetings." The goal was to connect applicants with suitable job offers. In the 1920s and 1930s, with the development of the industrial zone, the establishment of labor brokerages became increasingly important. These initially functioned as places where vacancies were posted. The first employment agencies emerged during this period, seeking suitable employees to fill vacancies. Over time, the agencies began to become more comprehensive in their services and to increase their level of professionalism in looking after the potential workforce. (Tegze, 2019)

As the US economy grew, so did the importance of employment agencies. The definitive change was the shift from a "passive" style, where agencies were just a place of supply and demand, to an active search for candidates. Another transformation was the outsourcing of services by companies. The company did not need its HR department; it just outsourced the request to an agency. (Tegze, 2019)

In recent years, there has been increased attention to the potential misuse of modern recruitment technologies, particularly those using AI (Wilson et al., 2021). Although these concerns are multifaceted, they often focus on the risk of inadvertently promoting bias, inadequate management of sensitive data, and threats to privacy in the so-called surveillance economy, where individuals' privacy is either eroded or lost entirely (Shank et al., 2019). The key here is not whether these challenges result from AI's technical shortcomings in recruitment, a lack of consideration for ethical principles, or an overemphasis on business efficiency at the expense of fairness to candidates. The bottom line is that, like any new tool or technology, AI can lead to unfairness and negative impacts on job candidates, often in ways employers do not fully understand (Hohenstein & Jung, 2020).

2.3 Workforce Planning and Job Description

As defined by Vetter (1967), *workforce planning* seeks to have the correct number and the right kind of people in the right place and at the right time doing the things that will lead to the organization and the individual obtaining the maximum long-term benefit. Workforce planning is also known by many names, such as people planning, workforce planning, human capital planning, or HR planning.

Strategic workforce planning is a systematic framework for analyzing and managing an organization's current and future workforce. Its main objective is identifying gaps between the current workforce mix and the desired workforce per the company's strategic objectives. The process includes an assessment of key HR metrics such as age structure, average tenure, and employee competencies, which allows the identification of potential risks related to demographic trends or critical skills shortages. For example, an organization may discover in a strategic analysis that a dominant portion of its technical staff is approaching retirement age, requiring practical knowledge transfer tools and a strategic plan to recruit the next generation of professionals. The strategic approach thus provides a data-driven basis for formulating measures to optimize the workforce and ensure the organization's long-term competitiveness. (Sparkman, 2018)

According to Àríbísálà (2021), workforce planning involves seven rights, or the “Seven Rs.” These seven Rs will ensure that the staffing plan secures the right people with the right skills in the right shape and size at the right time, place, and cost. People are the most important asset of any organization because they are responsible for how it operates, what products or services it creates, how it communicates with its customers, and how it ensures its success in the marketplace.

Skills are needed to implement the business strategy, meet the organization's objectives, and close existing gaps. Translating business strategy into specific skills is the most important and most challenging aspect of workforce planning. Equally important is the acquisition and retention of critical skills. If a change in business model requires new strategic skills, HR must acquire individuals with appropriate expertise.

The correct shape refers to the appropriate workforce arrangement regarding structure, purpose, and the ratio of managers and team leaders to professional and administrative staff. The shape of the workforce determines what work the enterprise can do in-house and what work it will outsource. This means the types of jobs it needs and the required ratio of managers and employees.

The number of employees necessary to achieve organizational goals and objectives determines the number of people needed to support its strategy. In today's dynamic business environment, companies must adapt quickly to changes in the marketplace and continually iterate this process. They risk losing competitiveness or even leaving the business if they cannot.

Getting the timing right means significant HR changes can be precisely made when needed. In a dynamic business environment, the people and skills requirements that impact the business are changing rapidly. Therefore, a key capability of HR departments is to analyze the company's state, anticipate future needs, determine the appropriate time to make HR changes, and implement training initiatives or recruit new employees, which is now a necessary part of their role.

Even in today's technological era, where buying and selling can be done online and project teams can collaborate across states and countries, the location where an organization operates remains a key factor in its success or failure. Geographic constraints on natural resources and markets often mean that companies still need employees who provide in-person customer service or perform critical value chain activities dependent on a particular location.

The right level of costs should ensure that staff are fairly remunerated for their work, competitively and within budget. It also measures and manages HR costs and their impact, including recruitment, training, development, and retention. (Àríbísálà, 2021)

One of the key aspects of workforce planning is an organization's ability to anticipate its future staffing needs while responding to the current labour market situation. The availability of skilled employees plays an important role in this regard. According to the Project Companies Study – H2

2024 (CEEC Research, 2024), more than 60 % of technically oriented companies in the Czech Republic (further CR) identify recruiting professional staff as one of the biggest obstacles to further growth. The main reasons cited include the limited number of candidates, the associated lack of qualifications, and high competition in the labor market. (CEEC Research s. r. o., 2025)

The results of the survey showed that companies are continuously placing more emphasis on strategic human resource planning. In particular, companies use digital tools to anticipate future needs, systematically build talent pools, or link HR strategies to the overall business plan. Following these steps is essential to ensure long-term sustainability and respond quickly to changing HR conditions. (CEEC Research s. r. o., 2025)

The job description is the most common HR purpose of job analysis. A *job description* is a brief written summary or snapshot of the job. The primary function of the job description is to communicate the essence of the job. It is not written primarily for the job expert but for someone just getting acquainted with the job. Of course, a professional should recognize the job description when reading it, but the main goal is to communicate with someone unfamiliar with the job. Because the goal of a job description is to bring the nature of the job to people unfamiliar with it, it is very easy to write a lousy description, but surprisingly tricky to write a good one. (Morgeson et al., 2019)

The job description characterizes the purpose, key activities, and links to upstream, concurrent, or downstream activities. It shows the candidate's knowledge, skills, and attitudinal requirements expected to fill the job and its adaptation, training, development, evaluation, and remuneration. As Barták states (2023), the job description includes:

- the job title and its organizational classification;
- the relationship with other jobs within the organization;
- the purpose of the job;
- the objectives of the job;
- the main job tasks;
- standards of performance;
- organizational issues.

2.4 Recruitment and Selection Process Stages

One of the key HRM processes is recruitment. This starts with planning staffing needs in terms of quantity, quality, time, and location. For the recruitment process, the role of the HR marketing expert is paramount. Starting from the premise that employees are the most important resource of an organization, even as their numbers decline, they become increasingly unpredictable and unwilling to commit to an employer. The goal is therefore to increase the attractiveness of the company, attract new employees, and retain existing ones. (Troger, 2021)

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014, p. 226), „*the stages of recruitment and selection are:*

1. *Defining requirements.*
2. *Attracting candidates.*
3. *Sifting applications.*
4. *Interviewing.*
5. *Testing.*
6. *Assessing candidates.*
7. *Obtaining references.*
8. *Checking applications.*
9. *Offering employment.*
10. *Following up.”*

2.4.1 Defining Requirements

Defining the job requirements is a key step in the recruitment process. This will ensure that the employer gets the right candidates and facilitates an effective selection process. It is necessary to have clearly defined requirements, as these help candidates assess their suitability for the position and help employers identify candidates. Requirements may include work experience, technical experience, required education, or soft skills. Some positions may require candidates to have specific certifications or licenses that confirm the candidate's expertise needed for the position. Other positions may require physical fitness or availability to work shifts. Defining these requirements is key to proper and effective recruitment. (Indeed Editorial Team, 2025b)

2.4.2 Attracting Candidates

Attracting candidates is the job of recruiters. They should identify, evaluate, and tap the most appropriate source of potential candidates. When a recruiter analyzes the most suitable sources of potential candidates, he or she is effectively working with two basic sources:

- internal;
- external.

Internal resources are current employees. External resources include people in the labor market, the unemployed, and employees of other companies. To inform the world that we are looking for someone, recruiters often use advertising, which requires careful consideration of the content, form, and medium of information. Remembering that the goal is to reach the desired candidate is also important. (Pilařová, 2016)

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), the following steps should be followed when planning how to attract suitable candidates:

- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the recruitment process to create attractive employment;
- analyze the requirements for the position to understand what type of candidates are best suited for the position;
- identify candidate sources such as job portals, social networks, or internal referrals.

Employee search plays an important role in the recruitment process. The most common options include social media searches, recommendations from existing employees, job portals, or the career sites of the companies themselves. Social networks, especially LinkedIn, have recently become a key tool for reaching passive candidates, i.e., those who are not actively looking for a job but may be open to new opportunities. Regarding Facebook and Instagram, these social networks are used more for employer branding and reaching out to the public. Internal referrals from existing employees are another form of candidate recruitment. This is a cost-saving way for the company, so many companies are implementing internal referral programs that encourage and reward their existing employees when they bring a new employee into the company. Traditional portals like Jobs.cz remain an important source of candidate searches and targeted advertising. Companies also use their career sites to reach candidates. If designed correctly, they can be an effective recruitment

tool. These sites should be straightforward and user-friendly. They can offer the candidate an insight into the company culture through photos, videos, or employee articles. Using these options, as mentioned above, companies can reach out to both active and passive candidates and expand their overall recruitment activities. (Moltke, 2025)

2.4.3 Sifting Applications

It is important to ensure a systematic and fair approach when processing applications for positions. If the organization does not use the services of recruitment agencies, it must sort applications itself. This usually starts by creating a database of candidates, recording their names, the date the application was received, and other steps, such as inviting or rejecting them for an interview. An important stage is the sorting of applications, which is carried out based on the criteria set out in the staffing specification. These criteria should be analyzed and categorized as essential, highly desirable, or desirable, which will facilitate uniform decision-making on the suitability of applicants. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) also recommend using structured application forms and considering only relevant data. The biodata method effectively sorts applications, using objectively measurable data from experience and qualifications to predict a candidate's future performance. Once analyzed, candidates can be categorized into suitable, borderline, and unsuitable, and repeated sorting against more stringent criteria can help narrow the shortlist. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), the ideal number of shortlisted candidates is between four and eight.

According to Amos (2020), the sifting process can be divided into three parts:

- The initial sift — this section identifies and eliminates candidates who do not meet the basic requirements for the position or have not completed the application correctly; it can be done manually or with automated tools, which is faster and more efficient.
- The individual stage — at this stage, the panel members or recruiters review the applications of candidates who have passed the initial screening and make their assessments.
- The collective stage — in this section, the panel will meet to decide which candidates will be invited to interview.

2.4.4 Candidate Interviewing

Interviews are most often conducted in the form of an individual meeting between the recruiter and the candidate. However, to reduce the risk of a subjective or superficial assessment, it is advisable to involve a second interviewer. An alternative may be a selection panel. This method allows the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process. However, the disadvantages can be the unpreparedness of the questions, their randomness, and the limited opportunity for candidates to elaborate on their answers. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014)

There are two types of interviews — structured and unstructured interviews. *A structured interview* is one in which the recruiter asks all candidates predetermined questions in the same order. Since all candidates answer the same questions, consistency in the assessment is ensured, and their answers can be objectively compared. Structured interviews provide more reliable and accurate information about the candidate's skills and suitability for the job and are more effective than unstructured interviews (Indeed Editorial Team, 2025a). The second type is *the unstructured interview*, a method of data collection in which the researcher asks questions in no particular order. It can also be called a non-directive interview because it allows it to proceed spontaneously, as the questions are based on the respondent's previous answers. This type of interview is often used in qualitative studies, especially in the social sciences or humanities, focusing on personal experiences and a deeper understanding of the topic. Unstructured interviews are informal and open-ended, which can lead to detailed information useful for exploratory research (George, 2025).

Between the two basic interviews, there is a semi-structured interview, which combines aspects of both structured and unstructured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher prepares a set of predetermined questions or themes to guide the interview with the participant, but there is also room for flexibility and follow-up questions based on the participant's responses. This allows for a more conversational and exploratory approach that allows the researcher to delve deeper into specific areas of interest and capture detailed and nuanced information. These interviews allow the researcher to explore in depth the perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of the participants. (Salomão, 2023)

The behavioral interview is a structured selection method aimed at assessing the specific competencies of the candidate. This is done through their past work behavior. As stated in the SHL Talent Assessment (2025), a key principle of this method is the assumption that a candidate's past response in a particular situation is the best indicator of their future behavior. In this interview, the

recruiter may ask questions such as "Describe a situation where you had to ....." or "How did you handle conflict in the workplace?". The focus is on how the candidate acted but also, of course, on the outcome. This method makes the selection process more objective and allows candidates to be compared based on real experience.

The assessment center is a comprehensive training program based on an appropriate structure of selection methods, primarily a series of simulations of typical managerial work activities. These activities test the managerial candidate's job competency and development potential. By using assessment centers, it is possible to evaluate current managers' performance or provide training in management skills. Thus, these centers also serve to assess and develop managerial potential. The procedures used by the centers include group and individual tasks. Participants complete a suitably designed series of tasks and are assessed by managers at different levels or experienced psychologists. Since simulated work samples and managers' everyday challenges are used for the assessments, the results accurately account for future job performance. In addition to the tasks that candidates have to solve, the assessment centers include interviews, personality tests, and aptitude tests. (Koubek, 2007)

2.4.5 Candidate Testing

Selection tests obtain accurate and reliable information about candidates' abilities, intelligence, personality characteristics, talents, and achievements. Psychological tests, often called psychometric tests, focus on mental measurements and primarily assess intelligence or personality. These tests use systematic and standardized procedures to assess individual differences between candidates, enabling a better understanding of their potential and predicting their success in a given job role. In addition to psychometric tests, aptitude tests are also used, which focus on specific skills and predispositions of candidates. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014)

Psychological tests or work aptitude tests form a range of tests of varying focus and varying validity and reliability. Generally, these tests are considered an auxiliary or supplementary tool for selecting employees. According to Koubek (2007), the most common types of aptitude tests are:

- **Intelligence tests** assess the ability to think and perform specific mental tasks, such as verbal ability, memory, and spatial vision.

- **Ability tests** assess an individual's existing and potential abilities and the prerequisites for their development. These tests focus on mechanical and motor skills, manual dexterity, aptitude, spatial orientation, and mental abilities. They overlap with or include intelligence, knowledge, and skills tests in this context. This type also includes educational aptitude tests, which assess the candidate's ability to cope with new working practices and knowledge, i.e., to assess the ability to learn and adapt to change.
- Another type is **knowledge and skills tests**, which are designed to test the depth of knowledge or mastery of vocational habits that a candidate has learned at school or during training for a career. This category also includes tests in which the candidate demonstrates a particular work procedure or demonstration.
- Another category is **personality tests**, a group of often differently named tests of varying scopes that could be described as truly psychological. These tests are designed to show different aspects of a candidate's personality and basic traits of his or her character, such as whether he or she is an extrovert or an introvert, rational or emotional. In the test, the person being tested indicates the activities, objects, or people he or she accepts and those he or she rejects. Personality characteristics, interests, and attitudes are examined in this way. This is based on the empirically proven fact that people in a particular field of study and expertise tend to have similar interests and personality characteristics.
- The tests also include **group selection methods**. These can take different forms but always involve simulating the solution to a practical problem or role-play. These tests are suitable for selecting employees for managerial and leadership positions.

2.4.6 Assessing Candidates

Candidate assessment is a key part of the recruitment process, and in many cases, it is the first step in selecting the right candidate. The assessment should focus on identifying the key qualities and skills for the job, as highlighting these skills will enable recruiters to select those who meet the requirements more quickly. Another key point is a structured approach, which means that recruiters will divide the Curriculum Vitae (further CV) into categories, making it easier to compare candidates. For example, this could be by educational attainment, work experience, or technical skills. It is also important to assess the candidate's work history, considering length of employment, professional growth, and, among other things, the candidate's contribution to their former job. CV editing alone can tell a lot about candidates, their diligence, and motivation. Using a rating scale of 1 to 10 is recommended to make it easier to compare candidates with each other. Soft skills also

play an important role in assessing candidates, as they significantly impact how a new employee integrates into the work team. Soft skills include, for example, teamwork and communication. Finally, it is advisable to check the information on the candidate's CV with the previous employer through references (Pinya s. r. o., 2023). Once all the candidates have been evaluated, it is time to decide which candidate will be selected for the next round of the selection process (ARWA Personaldienstleistungen s. r. o., 2024a).

2.4.7 Obtaining References

Once the interviews and testing have been completed, the employer may make a preliminary decision to offer the position, usually subject to the presentation of satisfactory references. These should include objective information such as length of service, job description, reason for leaving, salary, and record of absenteeism. Subjective assessments of ability and performance tend to be inaccurate, as only the employer can judge a candidate's suitability. Personal references are irrelevant as they only confirm that the candidate has friends willing to recommend him/her. Keeping some in reserve is a good idea if there are several suitable candidates, as some may refuse the offer. Written requests for references should be brief and focused primarily on verifying the applicant's work history. A standardized form can be used to ensure consistent responses, which include questions on the length of employment, job description, salary, and whether the previous employer is willing to rehire the individual. Telephone reference checks are often quicker and more reliable, allowing for the asking of follow-up questions and getting immediate answers. It can serve as an alternative or complement to the written form. In both cases, however, focusing only on verifiable facts is important. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014)

2.4.8 Checking Applications

An important step in the recruitment process is the CV check, which allows recruiters to assess whether a candidate is suitable for a given position before the interview. The first stage is a quick scan of CVs, where recruiters pay particular attention to the clarity of the document, the format, and key information such as contact details, work experience, and skills. If a candidate's CV passes the initial screening, a more detailed analysis of its content follows. In the second stage, previous work experience, professional growth, and overall professionalism are examined in detail. An important addition is usually the candidate's cover letter, which allows candidates to express their

interest in the position on offer, explain any shortcomings or gaps in their CV, and add information about themselves. However, recruiters still encounter mistakes in practice that lead to the immediate elimination of a candidate from the selection process. These mistakes include grammatical errors, typos, disorganized information, and missing important information. An essential condition for selection for the next round of the selection procedure or any position is the careful preparation of a CV and, where appropriate, a motivation letter. (CV Vzor, 2025)

2.4.9 Offering Employment

Once the selection process is complete and CVs have been reviewed, the next step is to offer the position to the selected candidate. At this stage, the recruiter will make an offer to the candidate via a job offer letter, which will include the start date, the agreed gross salary, working hours, and basic information regarding the agreed job performance. If the candidate accepts the offer, the onboarding phase follows, which is crucial in adapting new employees. The onboarding process aims to adapt the employee to the company's operations to familiarize him/her with the company's culture, i.e., to introduce the company's values, goals, and strategies. In some companies, the onboarding process usually includes a plan of performance goals for the first months, which helps the employee better orient himself in his new role. (Morgan, 2025)

2.4.10 Following up

The last step in the recruitment process is to monitor how new employees have settled in and check how they are doing in the company. Identifying emerging issues early on is far better than letting them fester. If a mistake has been made in selecting a candidate, it is important to analyze the whole situation. Who is to blame, how did it happened, and what should be done to prevent it from happening next time? There are various reasons, such as inadequate advertising, poor candidate sourcing, poor interview technique, or an inappropriate or unsuccessful selection process, can cause mistakes (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Sloneek Europe (2025) also mentions the correct evaluation and importance of feedback for new employees, stressing that monitoring the success of the selection should not end with the signing of the contract. Monitoring should include how the new employees fit into the new team and company culture. Monitoring these factors helps a company increase recruitment success, reduce employee turnover, and strengthen internal stability. Four phases characterize each adaptation process (Váchal & Vochozka, 2013):

- preparatory, which includes the period before changes in living and working conditions,
- the global orientation, which occurs at the beginning of the exposure to the new conditions,
- the conscious orientation, when the person begins to consciously reshape his or her relationship to the changed life conditions and can fully use his or her inner potential to cope with the changes,
- assimilation into the new conditions.

2.5 Job Analysis

The workplace is an elementary element of the organizational structure. The creation of jobs is linked to the specific work tasks of an individual or group. The jobs are intended to ensure that the organization's needs are effectively met while matching the needs and capabilities of the employees assigned to these jobs. By taking up a job, an individual becomes part of the company's organizational structure, taking on specific tasks and responsibilities that should be commensurate with their abilities. (Barták, 2023)

According to Šikýr (2016), *job analysis* examines and processes data about jobs and job requirements for employees. In addition, a job analysis identifies and understands a job that results in a written report or summary. The main objective of any job analysis is to assess the position and its value, considering the current and future needs of the organization. This process involves gathering data on job duties, responsibilities, work environment, materials, equipment, required knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualifications. Based on this information, a standardized assessment is used to determine the appropriate level of the position and its pay range (Picardi, 2019).

As Barták (2023) states, the job analysis must answer specific questions:

- How does the position contribute to the organization's goals?
- How do the activities performed on the job contribute to the overall outcome?
- Is the position a mere relic of the past, with no contribution to the present and future of the organization?

According to Picardi (2019), organizations implement the job analysis process in five phases, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Job Analysis Process
Source: own based on (Picardi, 2019)

The output of the job analysis is documents referred to as job descriptions and specifications, which summarize the job details and define the job requirements for the employees. Šikýř (2016) emphasizes that a job description and job specification contain data on:

- title, organizational structure, superiors, subordinates, tasks, duties, powers, responsibilities, and conditions;
- job requirements include educational qualifications, previous experience, specific knowledge and skills, expected behavior, and motivation; they also include the qualifications for performing the required work specified by specific legislation (e.g., criminal record, medical fitness).

According to Barták (2023), the job analysis provides and ensures:

- An up-to-date overview of the tasks, duties, responsibilities, and conditions associated with the job and a specification of its links to other employment;
- the attractiveness of vacancies to a sufficient number of suitable applicants for the posts at a reasonable cost and within the required timeframe;
- recognition and sourcing of suitable employment resources;
- providing information on job vacancies;
- offering these vacancies;
- persuading suitable individuals of the merits of working for the organization;
- dealing systematically with applicants; obtaining relevant information;
- organizational, administrative, and methodological assistance;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the methods and procedures applied.

The job analysis aims to describe the job, including the associated job tasks.

2.6 Recruitment Strategy

The main goal of a recruitment strategy is to create a compelling job promotion that attracts qualified potential applicants while discouraging unqualified people from applying for the job. Suppose a recruiter or consultant has been recruiting for some time. In that case, he or she knows the value of a compelling job offer or advertisement, including its wording, placement, and timing. He or she knows the importance of balancing reaching potential job candidates too broadly and narrowly. This is the "art" of recruiting. In addition, recruiters and consultants should be adept at evaluating recruitment methods for effectiveness, resource efficiency, ethical practices, and legal compliance. Many different metrics and assessment tools can examine the short- and long-term success of applying a chosen recruitment strategy to a specific job (Picardi, 2019).

This approach is followed by Nascimento et al. (2024), who stress that recruitment strategy should not be seen as an operational activity only but as an integral part of strategic HRM. According to the authors, strategic recruitment focuses not only on filling currently vacant positions but, above all, on ensuring alignment between the competencies of new employees and the organization's long-term goals. This approach requires planning based on expected needs, systematic evaluation of recruitment effectiveness, and the ability to adapt the process to changing labor market conditions.

Recruitment is influenced by various factors, which may be internal or external. The most important are labor market conditions, the organization's reputation, competition from other organizations, and available recruitment resources. The first factor affecting recruitment is the pool of job seekers available at any given time, also known as the labor market. The labor market — often depicted through employment/unemployment rate statistics — fluctuates with other trends such as economic ups and downs, demographic changes, government and regulatory requirements, timing over a calendar or fiscal year, and more localized changes in specific geographic locations. When there are more active job seekers than jobs, supply is more significant than demand. It is considered a market for employers because they have many qualified job seekers to consider. Conversely, if there are more job openings than qualified applicants, it is considered a job seeker's market, and organizations may struggle for talented candidates in a shallow pool. (Picardi, 2019)

In this context, Nascimento et al. (2024) point out that organizations that adapt their recruitment strategy to current trends and labor market dynamics show higher efficiency in talent acquisition.

Therefore, they recommend using predictive analytics tools and flexible recruitment models that better respond to labor supply and demand fluctuations.

An organization's reputation is undoubtedly a major attractiveness factor, although this factor also depends on economic and labor market conditions. Suppose the labor market is slow, with more job applicants than vacancies. In this case, the image and reputation of the organization are unlikely to be a high priority because the priority will be to find a job anywhere. However, this factor will be necessary for job seekers in a relatively good economy with plenty of job openings. (Picardi, 2019)

Nascimento et al. (2024) add that employer branding is one of the key aspects of strategic recruitment. Organizations that invest in making their values, culture, and vision visible increase their attractiveness to active candidates and to so-called passive candidates who are not currently in the job search process but can be reached through targeted and value-based communication.

Another factor affecting recruitment is competition for talent between organizations, which is usually related to the previous factor — labor market conditions. When fewer job seekers seek jobs, the labor supply becomes thinner. Organizations must consider techniques that attract the most talented candidates to their job opportunities rather than those of other organizations. "Competing" organizations can be perceived as competitors based on several different elements: geographic proximity, industry, and type of job openings. (Picardi, 2019)

According to a study by Nascimento et al. (2024), organizations that have set a long-term talent management plan perform best in a competitive environment. According to the authors, a strategic approach to recruitment is for companies to proactively identify key positions and build a database of potential candidates whose competencies match the organization's future needs.

The availability of the necessary resources also influences the effectiveness of the recruitment process. Among the most important are financial resources and time, because every business process depends on an adequate budget and time allocation. The recruitment process is specific in that budget and time needs vary from job to job. It is not a one-size-fits-all process, and the financial and time requirements vary significantly from job to job. However, it is not impossible to predict what will be needed for recruitment activities for a particular job if the HR department keeps track of the resource requirements for each open position and can refer to this information when a particular job is reopened. (Picardi, 2019)

2.6.1 Internal Approach

Posting job opportunities among existing employees allows them to apply for these positions before external recruitment begins. Internal recruitment is aimed at all currently employed staff, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and trainee staff. This procedure allows for the suitability of internal candidates to be assessed first, promoting staff professional development and stability within the organization. Employees often perceive internal offers as an opportunity for professional growth, to change their working hours, to move up to a higher position, to another department, or to another less demanding position. (Picardi, 2019)

2.6.2 External Approach

Informing internal staff about a job vacancy allows them to apply and be evaluated before seeking external candidates. External recruitment, on the other hand, offers various methods ranging from simple, cost-free approaches like posting a “Help Wanted” sign to more sophisticated and costly strategies, such as partnering with executive search companies. While these methods have similarities, selecting the right approach requires careful consideration, as the best strategy depends on the job and circumstances. Experienced recruiters, including HR professionals, hiring managers, and consultants, understand the time and budget investments needed to find, hire, and retain skilled employees. Choosing an unsuitable recruitment method to save time or money can result in insufficiently qualified candidates, wasted resources, and the need to restart the process if the hire is not a good fit. (Picardi, 2019)

2.7 Objectives and Nature of International Recruitment

Organizations continuously interact with their environment, and the recruitment process directly engages with the external world. Influencing factors include the legal framework and financial constraints. Within this context, the objective of recruitment is (Foot et al., 2015):

- to hire suitable candidates for vacancies,
- using a fair process and being able to show that the process was fair,
- ensuring that all recruitment activities contribute to achieving organizational objectives and the organization's desired image,
- making recruiting cost-effective and efficient.

Adopting a structured approach to ensure that each step of the recruitment and selection process is aligned with the organization's HR strategy and diversity and equality objectives is essential to achieving recruitment objectives. The approach's heart is developing and implementing clear policies and procedures that provide a consistent framework for coordinating recruitment efforts while promoting fairness and inclusiveness. This method helps organizations effectively manage stakeholder inclusion and maintain focus on strategic recruitment goals. (Foot et al., 2015)

A recruitment policy allows employees to actively participate in the hiring process and align their efforts with the organization’s objectives. At a minimum, such a policy should outline the organization’s overarching recruitment goals and commitment to equal opportunities. Organizations may implement policies that prioritize qualified internal candidates over external ones. This approach reflects their commitment to valuing and retaining employees while providing them with ample opportunities for growth and development within the company.

In addition to regular domestic hiring responsibilities, which in today’s global economy often involve recruiting and selecting employees from numerous nationalities and cultures, the international staffing manager takes on several new responsibilities, including recruiting and staffing the traditional types of employees utilized by global businesses. (Tarique et al., 2022)

Companies rarely start as truly multinational enterprises but go through a sometimes lengthy, sometimes rapid internationalization process. One of the main reasons why companies choose to internationalize is to increase competitiveness by creating advantageous networks abroad. These networks may include production, assembly, sales, and distribution. However, not all companies expand into international markets, and their decision depends on various internal and external factors. One of the challenges of recruitment and selection is that even if a company hires the right candidate for the current position, the requirements for that role may soon change. This can lead to limitations in the organization's flexibility and make it difficult to respond to dynamic working conditions.

There are many different recruitment methods, and choosing a particular method can affect the number and quality of candidates for a given position. Some of the most commonly used methods, according to Wintersberger (2017), include:

- employer branding; corporate website; social media;

- internal job board, including employee referral programs;
- national, local, and international press; trade journals; radio; and television;
- external agencies such as job centers, employment agencies, and headhunters.

2.8 Digitalization of the Recruitment Process: Opportunities and Challenges

Gartner (2025) defines digitalization as *„the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business.“*

Digitalization is significantly impacting the HR department's current functioning, especially in improving the efficiency of day-to-day processes. Automating routine tasks such as payroll processing, attendance records, or employee benefits administration allows HR professionals to focus on strategic activities that have a long-term impact on human capital development (Algotech a.s., 2025). Furthermore, digital tools enable the automatic sorting of resumes and scheduling of job interviews, thus speeding up the recruitment process and reducing errors caused by manual processing (Joura, 2024).

Digitalization also positively impacts communication and collaboration between employees and management. Modern tools like cloud platforms or corporate communication systems enable real-time information sharing and promote teamwork across different departments (Recruitis.io s.r.o., 2025). Thanks to cloud technologies and remote working options, employees gain more flexibility, increasing employee satisfaction and a better work-life balance (IVITERA a. s., 2022). Data collection and analysis — the so-called data-driven approach — also plays an important role, enabling HR managers to make decisions based on specific indicators, plan development activities, and effectively manage employee performance (Joura, 2024).

Digitalization is fundamentally transforming the traditional role of the HR department, not only in terms of process efficiency but also in the very concept of HR as a whole. Increasing levels of automation and the shift to digital solutions lead to some activities previously handled by HR departments being taken over by IT or marketing teams, for example. Thus, there is a gradual change in competencies and emphasis on new skills, such as working with data, understanding digital tools, or adaptability to technological change. (Recruitis.io, 2025)

Other positive impacts of digitalization include the environmental dimension. The move to electronic documents, electronic signatures, and online forms reduces paper consumption and administrative waste. Thus, the digital HR agenda makes work more efficient and supports corporate sustainability goals. (Signi.com, 2022)

Attracting and retaining talented employees is crucial for organisations today, but the labour market is becoming increasingly difficult in this regard. Companies are competing with each other for talent, looking for effective ways to reach, attract, and motivate them in the long term, while supporting their training and professional development. Digital transformation, which is in full swing in the 21st century, plays a key role in this regard, especially through talent management. This takes advantage of digital applications, tools, and resources, as well as the viral potential of social networks that enable global reach. (Barbosa, et al., 2022)

Digitalization also has a significant impact on recruitment through the use of new technologies. Targeted recruitment campaigns on social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook, or Instagram allow for reaching specific groups of candidates and flexible responses to the needs of the labor market (Dubová, 2024). Advanced organizations use virtual and augmented reality to simulate work activities in a selection process or to train employees. The metaverse offers a whole new range of recruitment and training opportunities, where companies can conduct virtual interviews, onboarding, or training in an interactive environment (Qin and Xiaotun, 2024).

In addition to the practical benefits of digitalization outlined above, Cantoni and Mangia (2019) emphasize that successful digital transformation in HR is about implementing new technologies and fostering cultural change within organizations. HR must strategically promote innovation, encourage openness to change, and align digital tools with the organization's goals. This means digitalization must go hand in hand with developing digital skills, critical thinking, and a mindset ready to adapt to constant change. Thus, HR becomes a key player in facilitating this transformation by managing the tools and actively shaping the organization's digital culture.

Today, AI is one of the most important technologies transforming recruitment. AI enables the automation of routine activities, such as sorting CVs, significantly reducing the time-consuming process of pre-selecting candidates. It also allows faster and more accurate matching between a job’s requirements and candidates’ competencies, contributing to more effective hiring decisions. This technology frees recruiters to focus on more strategic tasks and improves the overall quality of decision-making processes. (Konan et al., 2024)

Among the most commonly used tools in digital recruitment are electronic forms and applicant management systems. These include ATS, chatbots for initial candidate interaction, algorithms for interview scheduling, and tools for analyzing video interviews. These systems can evaluate candidates' verbal and non-verbal behavior to estimate their potential or suitability for a specific position. However, the study's authors warn about several risks associated with using AI in recruitment, such as concerns regarding discrimination, a lack of transparency, and insufficient data protection. The ethical, legal, and liability aspects of implementing such technologies must be carefully considered (Konan et al., 2024).

ATS also plays an important role in the digitalization of recruitment. These software solutions enable recruiters to manage the entire recruitment process efficiently. ATS systems act as a central database for keeping track of applicants and individual positions, automating many sub-steps – from posting advertisements, receiving and sorting CVs, scheduling interviews, managing feedback, or generating job offers. These tools ensure a significant speeding up of the selection process, clarity of the entire process, and compliance with the set rules. With ATS, candidates can track the status of their application, be automatically informed about the progress of the selection process, or communicate with recruiters via automated notifications or chatbots. (SAP, 2025)

Modern ATS are usually provided as cloud-based software (SaaS), making them accessible even to smaller companies. Their advantages include lower costs and easy implementation. Today's ATS systems support various recruitment forms, from individual selection to mass recruitment events and virtual selection. They also often include diversity, inclusion, and internal employee mobility modules. When combined with other digital tools like chatbots and AI-based analytics, ATSs become comprehensive platforms for managing the candidate experience. Adopting these systems represents a strategic advantage for companies, especially in times of increased competition for skilled labor and the need to respond flexibly to labor market developments. (SAP, 2025)

Researchers and industry experts continually explore new methods and technologies to enhance and accelerate recruitment processes, which are essential for organizational success (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022; Kutieshat & Farmanesh, 2022). While there are a number of technology solutions that support recruitment, not all are practical and applicable in every market (Adisa, 2024). Transparent and fair recruitment processes help attract diverse talent and strengthen an employer's reputation. Nevertheless, there remains a tension between ethical conduct and profitability — some companies may engage in "virtue signaling," presenting themselves as ethical primarily for marketing purposes. In the long term, however, an approach grounded in genuine

fairness and justice proves more sustainable, reducing the risk of regulatory intervention and public criticism. In the future, digital recruitment will be increasingly influenced by demands for transparency, privacy, and anti-discrimination, and successful organizations will actively integrate these principles into their processes (Leutner et al., 2022).

Today, recruitment faces several practical challenges that are not unique to individual companies but are evident across the labor market, particularly in technical and project-oriented industries. The current Project Companies Study — H2 2024 (CEEC Research, 2024) shows that more than 60 % of the surveyed companies in the CR consider recruiting skilled employees to be one of the biggest obstacles to their further development. The most frequently cited issues are the low number of relevant candidates, poor response to job advertising, and lack of professional skills.

The research also shows that over 50 % of companies plan to invest in streamlining their recruitment process over the next two years, primarily using digital tools. The main directions of modernization include active search for candidates on professional platforms (e.g., LinkedIn), recruitment software use, and partial selection process automation. The survey also shows that companies are trying to work more with targeted employer branding. They are trying to do this through social media, websites, or video presentations from their workplace. These trends show the need to fundamentally rethink recruitment strategies and adapt to the realities of the current labor market. Traditional advertising-only methods are losing their effectiveness, and proactive, reactive, and technological tools that allow companies to reach all candidates, even those not actively looking for a job, are taking the lead. (CEEC Research, 2024)

In addition to the challenges described in the CEEC study, aspects have emerged in recent years that fundamentally change the shape of the recruitment process. These changes are mainly due to technological advances, particularly in AI and the automation of all processes. Today's recruitment no longer relies solely on traditional advertising and passive candidate response but already uses tools that help recruiters actively seek out candidates.

AI is already used to analyze candidates' work experience, education, and skills and make personalized recommendations based on the data. This speeds up the selection process and increases the chances of a candidate matching the company's needs and fitting into the new team more quickly. Automated systems can already use pre-set filters to filter out CVs of candidates who do not meet the company's requirements. This gives recruiters more time to focus on those CVs and candidates who meet the requirements.

Some companies use chatbots to communicate with candidates, and this practice has become widespread. With the help of a chatbot, a candidate or applicant can find out basic information about the position, the deadline, or the selection process. Thanks to chatbots, communication with candidates is continuous and fast. This contributes to a better perception of the company as a possible future employer. (ARWA Personaldienstleistungen s. r. o., 2024b)

The main findings from the literature review presented in Chapters 1 and 2 have demonstrated that human resource management plays a vital role in the successful functioning of organisations. Employees represent a key asset that affects the competitiveness and long-term stability of the firm. In addition to the core functions of HRM, international HRM is gaining importance in response to globalisation and the need to adapt to different legal and cultural conditions in different countries.

At the same time, there is a shift from traditional forms of recruitment to digital solutions such as ATS systems, chatbots, or targeted social media campaigns. These tools speed up candidate selection, improve the candidate experience, and strengthen the employer image. Research also confirms the importance of a strategic approach - planning, building a talent pool, and being able to reach both active and passive candidates.

3 Recruitment Process in Valbek

The third chapter is devoted to the practical part of the thesis, which aims to analyse the recruitment process in Valbek and propose measures that could contribute to its efficiency. The chapter describes the current state of the recruitment process and the methods and tools used. It focuses on the specifics of the individual branches of the company in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Sweden. The chapter starts by introducing the company structure and the organisation of the HR department. It then describes the recruitment methods and explains in detail the selection process itself. The chapter also compares recruitment processes in different countries, reflecting differences in the labour market and local conditions.

An important part of this is the analysis of qualitative research conducted through semi-structured interviews with representatives of the HR departments of each branch, which provides deeper insights into how recruitment works in practice and the views of employees on its further development. On the basis of these findings, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the current state of recruitment was prepared. The chapter also includes suggestions for improvement, including the possibility of using LinkedIn Recruiter to actively seek candidates and an economic evaluation of this proposal. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive view of the current state of the recruitment process at Valbek, identify its weaknesses, and propose specific steps that could contribute to more effective filling of vacant positions, especially in design and technical professions.

3.1 Introduction of the International Company Valbek

The international company Valbek operates in the Czech Republic (further CR), S (further SK), Ukraine (further UA), and Sweden. The company's head office is located in Liberec, CR. It is a design office that has been designing linear buildings since 1990. Valbek's areas of expertise include projects, surveys, consultancy, implementation, and research and development. The design category includes civil and industrial engineering, road construction, bridges, tunnels, geotechnics, rail construction, water management, structural engineering, process engineering, and visualization. The company's surveys include land surveying, geological and geotechnical surveys, civil engineering surveys, soil mechanics laboratories, and environmental services. (Valbek, spol. s. r. o., 2025)

According to the CZ-NACE economic activity classification, Valbek, spol. s. r. o. is classified under 71129 — Other engineering activities and related technical consulting. The total number of Valbek international employees is approximately 610. These employees are in the CR, SK, UA, and Sweden. Of this total, 460 are in the CR. Ukrainians are the most represented among foreign employees. A higher proportion of foreigners is found in Prague, where Ukrainian employees predominate.

As of 1 January 2025, the organizational structure of the Valbek, as shown in Figure 2, includes an extensive network of subsidiaries operating in several countries and specializing in various fields of engineering, design, geology, ecology, and construction. The leading company is Valbek, spol. s. r. o., based in Liberec, and together with Valbek, the main pillars of the group are in Prague. Other major institutions in the CR include BUNG CZ, s. r. o., TES Consulting, s. r. o., IBR Consulting, s. r. o., and Hyperon Advisory, s. r. o. Some of these companies have offices in other cities, such as Pilsen, Ústí nad Labem, and Brno.

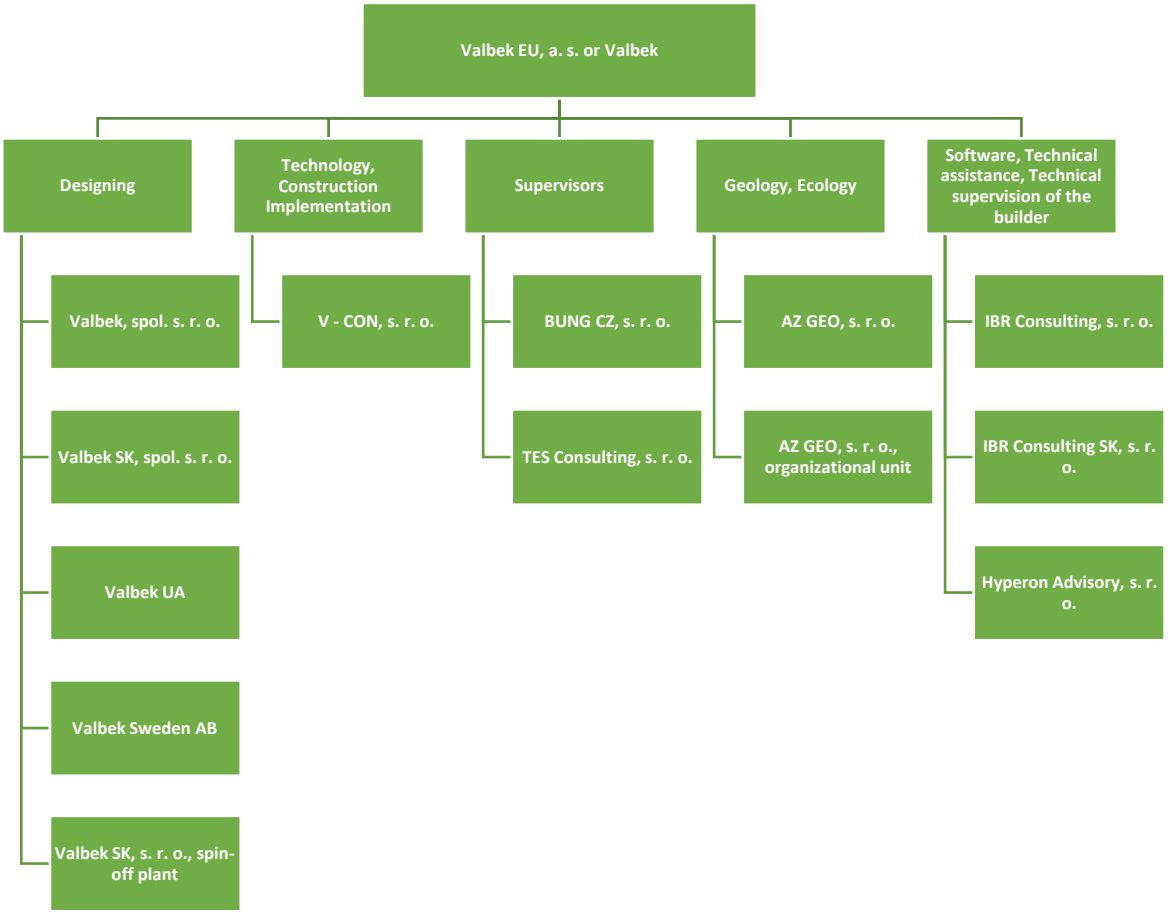


Figure 2: Subsidiaries of Valbek EU, a. s.
Source: own based on (Valbek, spol. s.r.o., 2025)

Valbek is strongly represented in SK through IBR Consulting SK, s. r. o., Valbek SK, spol. s. r. o., and its subsidiaries. These companies operate in Bratislava, Žilina, and Košice. It is also expanding its international activities in the UA, where AZ GEO, s. r. o. represents it. This is done through Valbek UA, which is based in Kyiv. Valbek also operates in Sweden through Valbek Sweden AB with offices in Gothenburg and Malmö.

Another important part of the group is V-CON, s. r. o., with offices in Prague, Liberec, and Žilina, complementing its extensive engineering design and construction expertise. This structure is, therefore, highly decentralized and enables efficient project management at an international level, with each unit playing a key role in the development of the group within its field and expertise.

Valbek, spol. s. r. o. was chosen for the master's thesis because it is the largest company, and its consultants can provide the author with the most information about this company. This company is in charge of the design part and is also represented under a different name in the SK, UA, and Sweden.

Figure 3 shows the structure of the parent company, Valbek EU, a. s. This company offers services to all companies under it. Valbek EU, a. s., houses the supervisory board, the board of directors, and management. The HR, marketing, economics, and IT departments are also here. All services and departments are provided to all companies under Valbek EU, a. s.

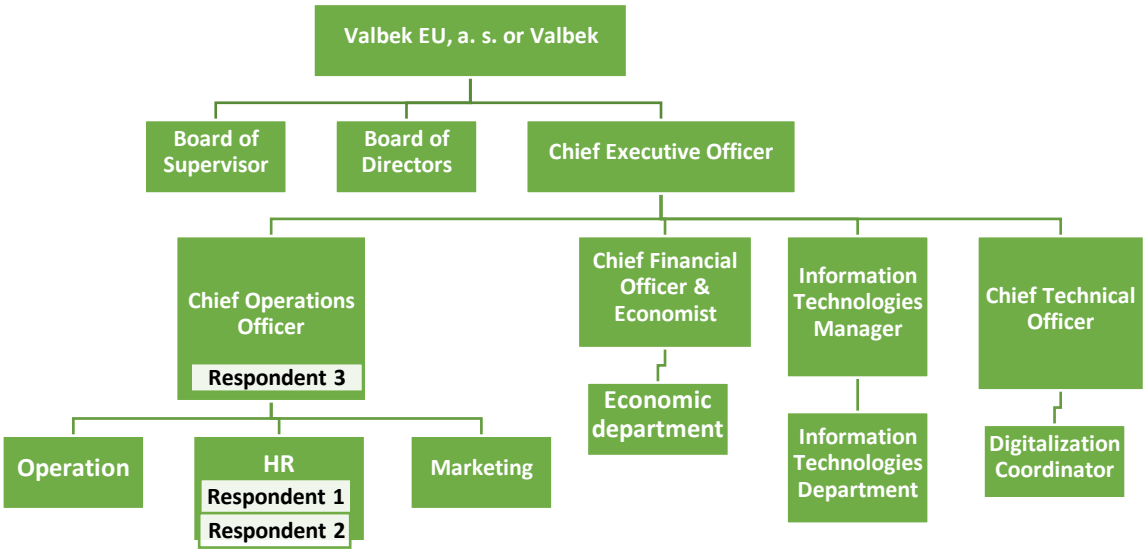


Figure 3: Organizational Structure of Valbek EU, a. s.
Source: own based on (Valbek spol., s. r. o., 2025)

3.2 Structure and Responsibilities of the Company's HR Department

The HR department is divided between the head office and the individual branches. The central department is in the parent company, Valbek EU, a. s. or Valbek. This department supports the other branches and sets the main HR strategies. It handles recruitment, contract documentation, benefits programs, and the organization's general HRM policy. HR manager and master's thesis consultant work with her colleague at the HR headquarters. Together with their supervisor they set the main rules for HRM.

Each company has an HR specialist responsible for HRM issues at each location. In these branches, HR specialists are in charge of HRM and other administrative tasks, such as accounting. They focus mainly on individual cases and needs at each branch. Regular monthly meetings are held between the HR branches and the head office to exchange information and align procedures.

This method of communication enables the alignment of processes between the different branches and, at the same time, ensures flexibility according to the specific requirements of each region. In smaller branches, the HRM agenda often falls under the administrative staff, who, in addition to recruitment, also cover other agendas such as accounting or operational administration.

Recruitment is managed centrally in cooperation with HR specialists at individual branches. The HR departments of the subsidiaries provide the central HR department with information on current needs, e.g., when someone leaves or when a new position needs to be filled. The most frequently recruited positions are project engineers, which are very professional positions. Recruitment is based on local needs. In Liberec, CR, for example, the most significant demand is for civil engineering designers, while in Prague, CR, the most important demand is for transport designers, who are road and motorway designers. In Plzen, CR, designers of water management structures are most needed.

Currently, the company does not organize systematic training of HR specialists through centralized training programs. Nevertheless, experiences and best practices are shared, mainly through regular communication, monthly meetings, and informal phone calls between recruiters. This information exchange helps ensure that all HR professionals have an up-to-date overview of needs, changes, and developments in recruitment processes.

3.3 Recruitment and Selection Methods in Volbek

Valbek uses a combination of external and internal recruitment methods. The methods differ mainly in type, advantages, and disadvantages, each with a specific application. Table 3 gives an overview of the company's methods.

External recruitment methods include Valbek Job's career website, job portal Jobs.cz, the online ATS Teamio, and cooperation with recruitment agencies. Of the internal recruitment methods, the company uses only employee referrals, which are mainly used for managerial positions. Each of the mentioned methods has its advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include time savings or using an existing employee database, and disadvantages include high financial costs, a limited number of candidates, and the risk of unsuitable selection.

Table 3: Pros and Cons of the Recruitment and Selection Methods Used in Valbek

Method	Description	Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Valbek Job	The company's career page includes job ads, employee storytelling, and news.	External	Cost-effective, promotes company culture, direct communication with candidates.	Dependent on self-promotion, lower traffic than other portals.
Teamio	Online tool for managing the recruitment process and sharing applicants.	External	Time-saving, structured communication, centralized candidate management.	High costs, limited to platforms it connects with.
Jobs.cz	Czech job portal for advertising vacancies.	External	High reach, high number of applicants.	High costs, many irrelevant applications.
Recruitment agencies	Focus on recruiting registered administrative and sales staff.	External	Convenient, saves time, and draws on an established pool of candidates.	Limited pool, expensive, unsuitable candidates.
Internal staff	Selecting within the company, especially for manager roles.	Internal	Supports internal growth, know-how, faster adaptation, and motivation of current employees.	Limited candidate pool, risk of internal bias.

Source: own based on (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Pilařová, 2016; Sloneek Europe, 2025; Nascimento et al., 2024)

3.4 International Recruitment Process in Valbek Company

The HR department coordinates recruitment in the company with the individual branches. Because Valbek has no high employee turnover, recruitment does not happen daily. However, when a position needs to be filled, the company follows a clear and structured process to ensure that the right person is chosen. The first step is always to define whether there is a real need for a new employee. This can happen either as part of the yearly HR workforce planning or because of unexpected changes, such as someone leaving the company or starting a new project. Once this

need is confirmed, the department manager works with the recruiter to specify what kind of person they are looking for. The requirements for applicants include the required qualifications, previous work experience, a certain level of language skills, and the skills needed for the job.

The company's recruitment method depends on the position being sought. For more essential positions, such as managerial positions, the company tries to find employees from within its ranks, so it recruits internally. This supports the long-term development of current employees and helps with succession planning. The company uses external recruitment methods for other positions, primarily technical or specialized roles, such as advertising on job portals, using the career site, or cooperating with recruitment agencies. After the position is advertised or candidates are contacted directly, the recruiter collects and reviews the applications. The HR department does the first screening and selects the most suitable candidates for the first round of interviews. These interviews usually focus on the candidate’s experience, motivation, and basic skills. If the candidate moves on to the next round, the department manager joins the process and checks the technical knowledge and fit for the specific team.

As far as managerial positions are concerned, Valbek tries to recruit from its existing internal ranks. It has not worked well for them when a candidate comes to them from "outside," so managers are gradually grooming their successors. In this way, the company encourages long-term professional growth and has succession plans to help them maintain know-how and ensure the stability of their teams.

Valbek also uses recruitment agencies, as some professions require particular skills. Agencies help the company find experienced professionals because there are few such people, and it is impossible to approach people directly or recruit them from another company. At present, i.e., at the beginning of 2025, the company is assisted by three recruitment agencies.

If the company decides to offer the position to a candidate, the recruiter prepares the job offer. After the candidate accepts the offer, the onboarding process begins. The HR department ensures that all necessary documents are ready, and the new colleague receives the correct information about the company and the work environment before the first day. The goal is to help the new employee settle in quickly and feel comfortable in the new role.

Although this recruitment process is the same across all company branches, some slight differences depend on the local situation. The following section describes in more detail the tools and platforms

Valbek uses for recruitment and how the process works. The first and foremost of these tools is the Valbek Job career site, where recruiters advertise positions. On this site, they engage potential candidates with videos, articles about employees, storytelling, and enjoyable company success stories.

The second essential tool is the Teamio.cz platform. Teamio is an ATS that makes recruitment more straightforward and efficient for recruiters. All job offers created by recruiters in Teamio are automatically displayed on Jobs.cz and prace.cz joib portals. In recent years, Teamio has been developed to be simple, helpful, straightforward, and easy for recruiters. Here, they can find all the applicants' and recruitment records. Advertisements are always displayed in Teamio for a month; it is up to the recruiters whether they renew them again after the time has elapsed or let them expire. For specific advertisements, it is possible to set that applicants have been unselected or, on the contrary, pre-selected. Who has been selected for the first or second round can also be set. All the documents in the applicant’s possession can also be shared in the application. This means that colleagues from different branches can forward, for example, the CVs of applicants. Through Teamio, a candidate can write a message to send an offer, which also contains samples of what it could look like. Otherwise, the applicant is rejected.

Advertising through Jobs.cz is quite expensive. Placing and registering one advertisement costs approximately 8,000 Czech crowns (further CZK). However, the company has subscribed to a package containing 100 advertisements, so issuing one is a few hundred crowns cheaper. The advert can be topped, moved, or highlighted to the top positions in searches on the job portal. This option is charged an additional nine thousand crowns. The amount of money for mediating the advertisement is enormous, but it is worth investing in the portal because Jobs.cz still leads in the number of applicants. The company receives monthly calls and emails from other job portals asking if they want to work with them. However, higher investment in these portals is not considered necessary due to relatively low employee turnover. Recruitment is often focused on professional design positions, where finding suitable applicants can sometimes be challenging. Therefore, Teamio is the second most common option for recruiting candidates after career sites.

The interview in this company occurs when the recruiter contacts the selected candidate via email or phone. Both parties must agree on whether the interest is still in the position. The meeting always takes place in person at the chosen branch. The interview is always attended by the HR manager of the branch and the head of the position for which the candidate is applying. The interviews are on a get-to-know-you basis; the candidate tells essential information about himself

and describes more about the information listed in his CV. Based on this, they talk to the manager to see if this matches the position offered or if there are other alternatives. Then, the recruiter adds information about the company. Information such as the company's structure, functions, and organizational issues, such as working hours and contracts, is key. Towards the end of the interview, the company asks about the candidate's salary. Usually, a range of a given amount is requested; this is further discussed to see if it matches and is acceptable.

Valbek's interviews are conducted in the same way at all locations. The branch in UA is relatively small, with fifteen people. They do not use recruitment agencies; any recruitment is done independently. In SK, they work with recruitment in the same way as in the CR. Sweden has a different work system because, in this industry, people go to a company that already has a contract. This means that people who want to work at Valbek in Sweden must bring an order to the company to be hired. The system is different again once they have worked or handed in some work.

If necessary, a second round of interviews will be arranged. Certain things that were missed or not adequately explained in the first round will be clarified. After that, organizational matters are dealt with, i.e., the candidate sends in all the necessary information. The HR department prepares all employment documents, such as a contract or pay slip, to be ready before the start date. Before the start date, the HR manager must meet the prospective employee again, and the prepared documents must be signed. During onboarding, the HR manager sends the prospective employee a welcome brochure with basic information one week before the start date. What will happen on the first day, what does the employee expect, and what documents are needed from the employee? The brochure also contains a procedure for logging in to internal systems, the systems used, and the organizational structure of the company and its management.

3.5 Primary Data Collection and Processing Methodology

To realize the main objective of the master's thesis, which focuses on the digitalization of recruitment at the international Company Valbek, qualitative research, specifically semi-structured interviews, was chosen. This approach allows for obtaining deeper and more detailed information about the topic while giving the respondents a space to express their opinions and experiences.

The interviews were conducted in person with two HR managers, Respondent 1 and Respondent 2, and their supervisor, Respondent 3, from Valbek, spol. s. r. o. They took place at the end of March

2025 and lasted approximately 30 minutes. In addition to the Czech office, interviews were conducted with representatives of the HR department from SK (Respondent 4) and from UA (Respondent 5). All respondents provided informed consent to the author of the master's thesis for the recording and academic use of their responses. The in-depth interviews were conducted voluntarily, and respondents were informed in advance of the purpose and scope of the research. To ensure respondents' privacy and anonymity, their responses were anonymized, and respondents were named as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 4, and Respondent 5.

The literature review conducted enabled the author of the master's thesis to draw on actual and verified data to prepare the questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A), which includes open questions and focuses on three main parts:

- respondent profile;
- the current progress of the recruitment process in the company;
- views and expectations on the future development of the recruitment process.

The in-depth interview questions focused on digital recruitment, the use of AI in HRM, and current recruitment strategies. The supervisor consulted on the structure and content of the questions, which were phrased as open-ended to encourage detailed responses. At the Liberec office in CR, the interviews were recorded using a dictaphone. At the SK and UA branches, the respondents were first sent in-depth interviews, and then an online meeting was arranged.

Five HR managers from different Valbek branches were interviewed. The holding employs 12 HR managers. Three are dedicated to pure HR. The remaining 9 have cumulative functions, which means that in addition to HR, they also deal with, for example, accounting.

The HR department in Sweden was not involved in the research for organisational reasons. According to the company's consultant, communication with Swedish colleagues is complicated because they are not very involved in company processes and tend to work independently. In addition, the working system in Sweden is different. Candidates come to them with a specific order to be implemented. The whole recruitment process here is therefore different from that in other countries.

The information gathered from the interviews served as the basis for the subsequent analysis of strengths and weaknesses and the identification of opportunities and threats (further SWOT), which is described in detail in section 3.6.6.

3.6 Interviews Summary

As mentioned in the previous subchapter 3.5, the practical part of the master's thesis included interviews with three representatives of the Czech HR department and a representative from Slovakia and Ukraine from Valbek. All interviewees have experience in recruitment and are actively involved in communicating with candidates and cooperating with heads of individual departments.

The interviews showed that the current recruitment process works reliably, but there are areas where further improvements could make the recruiter's work easier and more efficient. One of the most frequently mentioned challenges was the high time demand for manual tasks, especially the scheduling of interviews, repeated communication with candidates, and the processing of received applications. Most respondents pointed out that if these routine steps could be partially automated, it would free up time for more strategic HR activities, such as talent development or employer branding.

All respondents also agreed that the future of recruitment in the company could lie in a greater focus on proactive candidate search and the development of employer branding. At the same time, introducing these changes would not be possible without adjusting the overall approach to recruitment, not just by adding new tools. According to the HR managers, the current labor market is very narrow, especially regarding technical roles, and traditional job advertisements often fail to reach the right group of candidates.

Based on the interviews, it can be summarized that although the company already uses some digital elements in recruitment, there is still room for further development. The following steps to improve the overall process are the introduction of active sourcing, digital scheduling tools, or more advanced data analysis of recruitment activities.

3.6.1 Respondents' Profile

To obtain a comprehensive overview of the current state of recruitment and its potential for further development at Valbek, in-depth interviews were conducted with three representatives of the HR department, Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 4, and Respondent 5. These interviewees were selected based on their active involvement in the company's recruitment processes and their knowledge of internal HR procedures and external labor market challenges.

Respondent 1 joined the company in August 2024 and holds a similar position to her colleague, Respondent 2. Her primary focus is training and annual appraisals of employees across Valbek while also assisting with day-to-day HR activities. Her role includes maintaining internal standards and supporting employee development at all company levels.

Respondent 2 has been part of Valbek's HR team for six years, initially part-time and for the last three years full-time. She works as an HR generalist and is responsible for a wide range of tasks, including employment law matters, payroll documentation, event coordination, and cooperation with universities. Her comprehensive view of HR allows her to be involved in the company's strategic and operational areas.

Respondent 3 has been with Valbek for approximately six months. Before that, he worked in HR at another Valbek company, gaining approximately one year of experience. He currently covers the entire group's HR agenda, including six key divisions. His broad responsibilities include recruitment and employee relations, payroll systems, internal communication with management, and strategic planning. In addition to overseeing operational HR matters, he is also involved in digitalizing HR processes, benefits programs, and internal coordination with HR colleagues.

Respondent 4 from Slovakia has been working in the company since May 2000 as an economic director. She is in charge of all economic and HR processes in Slovakia. Within HR, she deals with recruitment, employment law documents, and benefit programmes.

Respondent 5 has been working at the company since March 2019 and has been working in Ukraine as an operations manager since 2022. Her main responsibilities are HR processes, accounting activities, and invoicing.

3.6.2 Current Recruitment Process in Valbek

Based on interviews with HR specialists at Valbek in CR, SK and UA, the recruitment process in this company has specifications which are mainly related to technical design. In this area, the supply of qualified candidates is significantly lower than the demand for them, which causes complications in filling some positions. Employers face strong competition and must try to attract candidates to choose their company.

The most challenging positions are those of designers, especially chartered designers, who have the relevant education, experience, and professional authorization to guarantee the accuracy of designs and sign off on projects. It is also difficult to find specialists in railway or traction equipment or tunnel design. In some of these specializations, these fields are not even represented among graduates of technical faculties. As a result, it is difficult to attract candidates from the labor market and among recent graduates, of whom there are very few. This forces the company to react individually to each open position and to make an extra effort to reach out to suitable people.

Recruitment at Valbek is primarily done through the ATS Teamio, where recruiters manage candidates, create job ads, and monitor the entire process. At the same time, they use job portals such as Jobs.cz and Práce.cz or company career sites. Although these are digital tools, some steps - such as selecting candidates or scheduling interviews - are still handled manually. In practice, for example, candidates' CVs are sent directly to heads of departments, who decide whether the candidate has the right profile. While this method is relatively flexible, it often depends on the time available to managers, which can slow down recruitment.

A particular challenge from the point of view of recruiters is the long time between receiving the application and arranging the interview, which is due to the time available to managers. However, for more common administrative positions, the situation is usually the opposite - for example, when filling a position in the sales department, over 100 CVs were received. However, this type of position is rare in the company.

In terms of recruitment analysis, the company tracks several key indicators: the cost of recruitment, the time taken to recruit candidates, and the conversion rate between the number of candidates recruited and those who actually attend the interview. It also monitors the total number of candidates over a given period and how they found out about the company (e.g., referrals, job portals). This data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of each channel and optimize the next steps.

The digitalization of recruitment is partially implemented at Valbek, mainly thanks to the ATS Teamio and the electronic registration of applicants. AI is not yet used in recruitment. The introduction of a chatbot has been considered, but more in internal communication and employee support than in the recruitment process. Recruiters agreed that, due to the small number of applicants, introducing tools such as chatbots does not make sense now - they emphasize the individual approach and personal communication.

These findings show that although partially digitalized, the recruitment process at Valbek still relies in many ways on manual activities and close cooperation with managers. This approach is based on the company's needs and the specificities of the labor market for technical professions.

3.6.3 Views and Expectations on the Further Recruitment Process Development

Interviews with representatives of the HR department of Valbek revealed that several obstacles in international recruitment slow down and complicate the whole process. One of the main challenges is the complexity of legislative procedures for employing foreign employees. Respondents agreed that simplifying the processes would be very helpful, for example, in the case of UA candidates who often do not have permanent residency or the necessary visas. These legislative obstacles increase the overall length of selection procedures and reduce recruitment flexibility.

Another challenge mentioned by respondents is the lack of information on what specifically needs to be provided to recruit from each country. They would welcome the creation of a clear internal database containing country-specific requirements, both within and outside the EU. Such a tool would, they said, make it much easier to navigate the rules and reduce the administrative burden.

Respondents' views were reserved regarding investing in the digitalization of the recruitment process. Currently, there is no active planning for digitalization, specifically in recruitment, mainly due to the specifics of the technical field in which Valbek operates. The number of suitable candidates is minimal; therefore, an individual approach prevails. Most selection procedures are conducted in person because candidates must be convinced of the position's attractiveness. Respondents agreed that introducing chatbots or other automated tools might not be practical in such a context.

At the same time, however, they admitted that digitalization is taking place in other areas of HRM work (e.g., internal communication or data processing) by introducing a tool like Copilot. In

recruitment, however, digitalization is still lagging behind. However, if the number of applicants increased significantly, e.g., for administrative positions, a chatbot could quickly sort responses based on keywords.

If a chatbot were to be introduced into recruitment in the future, respondents agreed that its benefits would lie mainly in speeding up the first stages of recruitment - i.e., sorting CVs, selecting according to selected criteria, and communicating with candidates. The chatbot should consider the required qualifications, language skills, or qualifications, such as designers' authorization, as the main selection criteria. In the case of foreign candidates, the tool should also automatically consider the legal conditions of their employment in the CR according to their country of origin.

In terms of language skills, the chatbot should communicate at least in Czech and English. Although there are, for example, Ukrainian employees in the company, regular communication is in English, and new colleagues have the opportunity to attend Czech language courses. Ukrainian is, therefore, not currently used as a language of communication.

In conclusion, although active digital recruitment is not currently planned at Valbek, respondents perceive its potential in cases where the number of responses to job offers would increase. However, due to the limited number of suitable candidates, an individual approach is currently prevailing and is considered more effective. Digital tools such as chatbots could be considered if labor market conditions change.

3.6.4 Summary of Key Interviews Findings

The interviews revealed that Valbek currently uses traditional advertising methods in recruitment, primarily through job portals such as Jobs.cz or práce.cz or its career pages on the company's website. The selection process usually involves candidates sending in their CVs, pre-selection of suitable candidates, interviews, and, in some cases, the head of the relevant department to which the candidate applies is also involved in the decision-making process.

Respondents also said that the company uses the ATS Teamio to organize responses to job advertisements, keep track of candidates, and communicate with them. Job advertisements are created and posted on job portals through this platform. Automated candidate search, chatbots, or other advanced digital tools have not yet been used in the company.

Another important finding from the interviews was the recruiters' perception that further digitalization could make their work somewhat easier, especially in speeding up the process and making it more transparent. On the other hand, they also perceive certain limits based on the current situation in the labor market. According to the employees interviewed, there are relatively few applicants for the positions on offer, especially for professional design roles. For this reason, they believe that introducing a chatbot for automatic pre-selection of candidates, for example, would not be practical for them at the moment, as there is no need to deal with many responses.

This situation is also similar in the offices in SK and UA. The Slovak branch recruits similarly to the Czech branch and most often fills positions with candidates from SK. In international recruitment, the company cooperates mainly with the Czech market. Therefore, they reach out to university graduates and use the services of recruitment agencies.

The situation is different in the Ukrainian branch. The branch is smaller, with approximately 15 employees, so recruitment is not very frequent, and there are currently no agencies or recruitment platforms like Teamio. Recruitment is rather “on your own” and without the support of digital tools. International recruitment in the Ukrainian office is not currently an active topic but could be one of the key points in the future expansion of the office.

Based on the assessment, it would be advisable to recommend an active candidate search where the company could seek both active and passive candidates. The interviews also revealed some differences in the approach between individual branches. While the Czech and Slovak branches work with recruitment agencies and use structured tools such as Teamio, the Ukrainian branch relies mainly on personal contacts and local advertising. This comparison confirms that it is important to adapt recruitment strategies to local conditions while looking for ways to unify some processes and tools to make work easier for recruiters across the company. The interviews' results confirmed that the current recruitment process in Valbek is working reliably, but there is still room for improvement. Therefore, the findings suggest that the company should develop strategies to seek candidates and actively consider digitalizing the recruitment process. These suggestions are further elaborated in the following sections.

3.6.5 Comparison of Recruitment Processes in Different Countries

As mentioned, Valbek operates in several markets other than CR. It also operates in SK, UA, and Sweden. Each of these markets has its specifics that affect the recruitment process. Even though the recruitment is centrally managed, and the basic procedures are set uniformly, the individual branches search for and select candidates differently. Differences in recruitment are mainly based on the size of the branch, the availability of quality candidates, and local customs.

The recruitment process in the CR and SK is very similar. Both offices use the online platform Teamio.cz, which enables efficient management of recruitment advertisements, an overview of candidates, and communication with them. Through the Teamio platform, job ads created there are automatically displayed on Jobs.cz and práce.cz. A wider range of candidates is reached by showing the advert on more portals. A key role in the selection process is also played by the personal approach of the recruiters, who try to communicate with each candidate individually and adapt the method to the current needs of each department. Where appropriate, the company also cooperates with recruitment agencies, especially in the search for specialists for positions where the supply of candidates is low.

The situation in UA is different, as the local branch is smaller and has approximately 15 employees. Due to the smaller number of open positions and lower employee turnover, the company does not use recruitment agencies or the Teamio platform. The recruitment process is mainly carried out independently, without the support of digital tools. Candidates are approached through direct contact; advertising is more likely through local portals or personal recommendations. Due to the size of the team and the specifics of the labor market at UA, there is no need to use more sophisticated recruitment management tools.

In Sweden, the recruitment system is specific in that the design and engineering services industry often operates a different collaboration model. Here, employees often join the company only after they have their project or contract with which they come to the company. This system differs from the traditional recruitment process because the candidate does not just come with an offer of their labor but also brings a specific job. It is only based on this fact that cooperation is established. This makes the Swedish subsidiary fundamentally different from other countries where the traditional selection process is applied.

A comparison of these approaches shows that although basic recruitment practices are set uniformly across the company, local conditions need to be respected and adapted. The use of digital tools, recruitment agencies, or personal referrals varies according to the size of the office, the availability of candidates, and the nature of the labor market in each country. Table 4 compares recruitment processes in different countries where Valbek operates for a better overview.

Table 4: Comparison of the Valbek's Recruitment Processes in Different Countries

Country	Subsidiary	Digital Tools Used	Cooperation with Personal Agencies	Recruitment Specifications
CR	Valbek, s. r. o.	ATS Teamio, job portals Jobs.cz and prace.cz.	Yes, if needed.	Mostly designers; active candidate management via ATS Teamio; and individual communication.
SK	Valbek SK, spol. s. r. o.	Teamio, locals job portals.	Yes, if needed.	A similar approach as in the CR; cooperation with recruitment agencies for specialized positions.
UA	Valbek UA	Local job portals, direct contact.	No	Small branch; no recruitment agencies; no use of ATS Teamio; recruitment handled independently.
Sweden	Valbek Sweden AB	No traditional job portals.	No	Recruitment tied to specific contracts; the candidate brings their own project.

Source: own

This comparison confirms that the setting up of recruitment processes must reflect the company's organizational structure and the regional specifics of the labour market. This flexibility allows for recruiting suitable candidates in different locations while maintaining unified recruitment management at the headquarters level.

3.6.6 SWOT Analysis of the Current State of Recruitment

A SWOT analysis was prepared to better understand the current recruitment situation at Valbek, identifying the internal and external factors listed in Table 5.

Table 5: SWOT Analysis of the Current State of Valbek's Recruitment Process

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Using the ATS Teamio. Personal approach. Stable HR team. Basic level of the digitalization.	Low number for technical positions. Manual scheduling. Lack of HR processes automation.
Opportunities	Threats
Introduction of AI for active candidate sourcing. Use of social media for recruitment. Reinforcing the employer brand.	Lack of professionals in the labor market. Time-consuming implementation of digital tools

Source: own

Among the *strengths* of the current recruitment process is the Teamio system, which is used for basic candidate registration, creating advertisements, and ensuring communication with candidates. The company has a high-quality and experienced HR team, which provides an individual approach to candidates and quality selection based on the specific needs of individual departments.

Weaknesses were identified mainly as the low number of applicants for professional technical positions, which was confirmed by the interviews conducted with the HR representatives. Additionally, certain activities within the recruitment process, such as scheduling or candidate selection, still require manual work, which increases recruiters' time demands.

In terms of *opportunities*, implementing tools for active candidate search through professional platforms such as LinkedIn could help a company effectively target suitable candidates who are not currently active but fit the desired profile. The company has also not paid much attention to employer branding through digital channels, which could help reach a wider group of candidates.

Threats include the risk of resistance to introducing digital solutions or the fear of losing personal access to candidates. Another obstacle may be the lack of capacity or technological expertise within the HR department that is necessary to implement new tools. The low availability of qualified professionals on the labour market, which limits the effectiveness of recruitment activities, also remains a long-term problem.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the current recruitment process could be improved, particularly in candidate outreach. If a company chooses the right digital tools, it can respond to current recruitment needs and improve its position on the labour market.

3.7 Reccomendations for Valbek

This subchapter focuses on the proposal of a specific solution for Valbek, which improves the international recruitment process in the company. This proposal aims to suggest measures that can contribute to more effective recruitment and promote the use of digital tools and technologies. The proposed actions consider the company's current needs, the current state of recruitment, and the evolution of digital technologies.

As identified in the previous subchapters, the main challenge of the current recruitment process is the limited number of suitable applicants, especially for professional design positions. Based on these findings, the following proposal introduces active sourcing strategies and digital tools and technologies to support the recruitment process. Figure 4 shows which three options were included to attract candidates to interviews.



Figure 4: Suggestions for More Efficient Recruitment at Valbek EU, a. s.
Source: own

One suggestion is the **introduction of an internal employee referral or referral system**. Employees can recommend suitable candidates for a desired position based on personal contacts and acquaintances. The motivation for employees who bring in a new employee is typically an appropriate financial reward. Another way of **attracting new employees is by actively using social groups or communities on social networks such as Facebook or Reddit**. Due to the prevalence of these networks, the communities tend to be full of qualified professionals sharing their work experience and possibly looking for new positions. An example of such a group on Facebook is the "Designers, Architects - Group for Construction Professionals", which at the time of writing has 13,000 members. The last option explored is the **active search for candidates using professional social networks**. Active sourcing is a recruitment strategy in which an active search for potential

candidates occurs. It is a strategy that requires the active involvement of the recruiter or the recruiting company. This type of candidate search is used when a small number of candidates are available on the job market, the company is looking for candidates for professional positions, or the company does not want to rely solely on responses to advertisements. The most used platform for active search is the professional social network LinkedIn.

Four basic properties can characterize the active search process. As already mentioned, this process aims for the recruiter to search for potential candidates, even those who are not actively looking for a job. One of the characteristics is therefore searching on professional networks such as LinkedIn. Another related point is reaching out to all possible candidates, whether actively looking for a job or those already employed. Another characteristic of the process is registering the so-called talent database, which means that recruiters keep contact information of potential candidates who might be suitable for a position in the future or for possible external collaborations. The last characteristic feature is the maintenance of personalised communication with potential candidates.

In practice, the way to search for candidates on LinkedIn is that the recruiter uses filters to specify the specific criteria they want to search for. The criteria can be different, but most often they are job position, skills, work experience, or location. After a list of people who meet these requirements comes up, the recruiter looks at their profiles and selects suitable candidates. He then communicates with the selected candidates via message and preliminarily determines whether the candidate would be suitable for the next round of the selection process. This method allows us to reach candidates actively looking for a new job and professionals who are not planning to change jobs but may be open to a new and interesting opportunity.

From a recruiter's perspective, the search process takes several steps. First, it is necessary to use an advanced search, which can be LinkedIn Recruiter or even the free version of LinkedIn, to specify the search criteria. Based on the criteria, the recruiter defines what kind of candidate they are specifically looking for. After looking at their profile, the recruiter will select the most suitable candidates. If the recruiter is impressed by the selected candidate's profile, they will send a personalized message. Messages via LinkedIn or the success rate of outreach messages (further InMail) are usually brief and personalized, and recruiters try to engage potential candidates with them. For example, messages can be designed in one of the following styles:

1. **Neutral style:**

Hello, Mr. Novak,

I came across your profile, which caught my eye. We are looking for a colleague to join our company, Valbek EU, a. s., as a railway designer in our branch in Liberec.

I would be happy to meet with you if you want to learn more about the position.

Have a nice day

Barbora Dušátková

HR Generalist

2. **Technically oriented style:**

Hi,

I am interested in your work at XXX and I see you have experience with projects.

We are currently looking for new designers to join our team.

Can I send you more information about this?

Thanks, take care

Bára from HR

3. **Headhunting style:**

Dear Mr. Novak,

I am contacting you based on your references and track record on railroad projects.

I am currently representing a client implementing a railway project and am looking for an experienced designer with experience in railway construction.

I would be happy to provide you with more information if you are open to meeting and discussing the position in more detail.

Best regards

Barbora Dušátková

HR Generalist

If candidates express an interest in the next selection round, a further selection round is usually arranged. This round usually aims to check their profiles and expertise. From a candidate's perspective, recruiters can approach LinkedIn users even if they are not actively looking for a new job. If their profile matches the required criteria, they can be offered a job. The recruiter will make a short approach in which the candidate will easily learn the position and why they have been selected. If the candidate is interested in the offer, they can respond to the message and arrange a possible interview. This process allows candidates to gain access to opportunities that they might not otherwise have known about.

This section describes the possibilities and procedures for actively searching for candidates via the social network LinkedIn. This can help support the recruitment process at Valbek. The following chapter proposes specific steps and procedures for implementing this process in the company.

3.7.1 Proposals for the Recruitment Process Digitalization

An active search for candidates could be an effective tool for Valbek, to strengthen its recruitment strategy. It would especially help with the high demand for professional designers in the infrastructure sector.

Since Valbek specializes in transportation and civil engineering design, the company could use an active search for positions such as railroad designer, traction equipment designer, and road construction designer. These would not be the only positions sought by the company; they are the most frequently sought.

The real process would take place through the professional network LinkedIn, where candidates can be searched by industry, location, current employer, or skills, and by keywords. A recruiter in Valbek could enter parameters such as “designer”, “railway construction”, ‘traction’ or “transport infrastructure”, and search for profiles that match these keywords. It would then analyse the profiles, either on their own or with the help of AI, and, if interested, reach out to individual candidates with a personalised message. The message would introduce the company, the specific job, and, if applicable, the specifics of the project in which the candidate might already be involved.

Valbek could therefore use a digital tool on LinkedIn called LinkedIn Recruiter. This tool is designed to search for candidates actively and offers more options to filter candidates than the traditional version of LinkedIn. In this version, recruiters can filter by job title, industry, experience level,

education, language skills, location, or whether the candidate is open to a new job offer (“open to work”). The advantage over the traditional version is that sending InMails to candidates without direct contact with the recruiter is possible. This makes it possible to reach out to passive candidates who are not actively looking for a job but might be considering a new offer. (LinkedIn, 2025a)

LinkedIn Recruiter comes in two versions. The first is Recruiter Lite, suitable for individual recruiters or smaller companies. It can write up to 30 InMail messages per month. The second is the full version of Recruiter, which makes it possible to reach more candidates and send up to 150 InMails. In addition, the full version allows for more filtering, offering about 40 more filters than the Lite version, for example, the ability to filter by past employment or company name. The full version also includes access to analytics reports that include the ability to track the success rate of InMail sent, applicant response rates, and overall communication effectiveness. In this version, LinkedIn offers insight into how many candidates for a given position are currently on the market and which companies candidates most often come from. Another advantage of the full version is the team collaboration option, meaning that the variant allows multiple recruitment team members to work in a joint team. For example, other members can add notes to profiles, track history with candidates, and coordinate further progress. This makes it possible to connect the future manager with the candidate and easily decide whether inviting them to the next round of the selection process makes sense. (LinkedIn, 2025b)

On top of that, LinkedIn Recruiter uses AI to find suitable candidates. Features include Recommended Matches, which use filters to recommend suitable profiles to recruiters. Another feature is Spotlights, which highlights candidates more likely to respond to an offer (LinkedIn, 2025a). For Valbek, using LinkedIn Recruiter could help streamline active candidate searches and build the aforementioned talent pool. The company could build good relationships through personalised messages, newsletters, or event invitations, and reduce the time it takes to fill positions when they open up in the future (LinkedIn, 2025a).

As mentioned in the previous subsection, the advantage of this approach is the possibility of reaching out to so-called passive candidates, i.e., those who are not actively looking for a job but are open to negotiating new opportunities. This could happen if they are interested in the job, the project, or the company environment. Given Valbek's professional focus, it is likely that most of the target candidates belong to this group. They tend to be stably employed in companies with a similar focus to Valbek and will only consider a change if a specific offer appeals to them.

A communication phase will follow once contact has been made and the candidate has expressed interest. This would take place via an initial phone call or online call. During the call, the recruiter would present the candidate with details about the position and get background information about the candidate's work history, motivation, and experience. If there is mutual interest, a formal selection round would be arranged. The format of this depends on the nature of the position, and could be a technical interview, a face-to-face meeting with the team leader, or a test assignment.

Building a talent pool could be part of a long-term recruitment strategy at Valbek. In other words, a database of potentially interesting professionals who have not been selected or are not available for a currently open position but could be expected to be suitable candidates in the future. Therefore, the talent pool would allow for a significantly shorter and cheaper recruitment cycle in the following process. At the same time, it is crucial to keep in touch with candidates through occasional messages, newsletters, or invitations to professional events to keep them up to date with what is happening in the company.

Thus, introducing active candidate search could respond to current staffing needs and be a strategic tool to strengthen the company's competitive position in the market. Since most competitors in the design industry operate in a similar labor market, the ability to reach passive candidates and build long-term relationships could be a significant factor for success.

3.7.2 Economic Evaluation of the Recommendations Proposed

The LinkedIn Recruiter tool was chosen based on the needs identified in the previous analysis of the current recruitment process at Valbek. The company's main challenge is insufficient qualified candidates for specialized design positions, which are difficult to fill through traditional recruitment methods alone. LinkedIn Recruiter allows for active sourcing of candidates, including those who are not actively looking for a new job but could be interested in the right offer. This feature, combined with advanced filtering options, makes LinkedIn Recruiter a suitable tool for targeting the specific segment of passive candidates the company needs (LinkedIn, 2025b).

Table 6 shows the estimated costs in CZK, potential savings, and expected return on investment (further ROI). Both versions of LinkedIn Recruiter illustrate these financial summaries. The comparison is based on the projected number of positions filled and the associated recruiting costs.

Table 6: Economic Evaluation of LinkedIn Recruiter Options

Item	Recruiter Lite	Recruiter (Full Version)
License price (per year, excluding VAT)	27,500 CZK	225,000 CZK
Number of InMail / month	30	150
Annual outreach capacity	360 candidates	1,800 candidates
Estimated number of occupied seats	10 – 20	10 – 20
Cost of recruiter's time	15,000 – 30,000 CZK	15,000 – 30,000 CZK
Total annual cost	42,500 – 57,500 CZK	240,000 – 255,000 CZK
Savings compared to agency (cca)	Up to 200,000 – 400,000 CZK	Up to 200,000 – 400,000 CZK
ROI (if 15 positions are filled)	Approximately 170 – 300 %	Approximately 80 – 150 %

Source: own

Valbek does not currently use an active search for employees. They are not actively discussing its introduction, but this tool would be handy, especially for design positions that are hard to fill and that the company needs to fill. The economic evaluation section quantifies the costs of active search with the potential returns or money saved on recruitment. The economic evaluation aims to assess whether the introduction of active candidate search would be beneficial and effective for Valbek.

The most significant cost would be the licensing cost for using the LinkedIn Recruiter tool. The company would pay approximately 225,000 CZK annually if it chose the full version. A significant cost to the company is the work of a recruiter who spends approximately 2 to 3 hours per active search. If the company were looking for about 15 candidates during the year, and the hourly rate would be around CZK 300, this wage cost can be rounded to CZK 20,000 per year. Therefore, if a company opted for the full LinkedIn Recruiter option, its annual costs for active search would be between CZK 240,000 and CZK 250,000.

The recruiter's time spent on this process includes identifying suitable candidates, analysing their profiles, reaching out to them with a personalised message, and scheduling initial interviews if necessary. These activities are essential to the recruitment process and have already partly influenced its success.

As far as the benefits for the company are concerned, they consist primarily of the fact that it is possible to target and reach candidates who are not actively looking for a new job but may be willing to at least negotiate for it. A key benefit is the possibility of reducing the company's costs on cooperation with recruitment agencies. The commissions of recruitment agencies can reach up to

CZK 70,000 per candidate. If a company filled at least 10 to 20 design positions through LinkedIn Recruiter and did not use recruitment agencies, it would save roughly CZK 500,000 to CZK 1,400,000 per year, depending on how many candidates it found.

Of course, active search can yield indirect savings in addition to direct financial savings. These can include reducing the time taken to recruit and improving the quality of recruitment. Based on the costs and benefits, a return on investment (ROI) of 150 % and 300 % was expected if an active search was used. The calculation included the annual cost of a full LinkedIn Recruiter license, estimated at 225,000 CZK. In addition, the estimated salary costs for the recruiter's work were included, assuming 15 candidates, which comes out to CZK 18,000. In total, the costs amount to CZK 243,000. The savings from not using recruitment agencies were used to calculate the revenue, approximately between CZK 500,000 and CZK 1,400,000.

The ROI was calculated according to Formula 1:

$$ROI = \frac{Revenue - Investment}{Investment} * 100 = \ \% \quad (1)$$

For example, if 15 new employees were hired through an active search on LinkedIn Recruiter, the savings would amount to CZK 900,000. The resulting ROI in this particular case was 270 % (see Formula 2). If the company had filled fewer jobs, the ROI would have been at the lower end, around 150 %. If, on the other hand, the company recruited more candidates, the ROI could be as high as 300 %. The resulting value of 270% means that every crown invested will bring back the coverage of this investment and an additional CZK 2,7 as savings.

$$ROI = \frac{900\,000 - 243\,000}{243\,000} * 100 = \ \% \quad (2)$$

$$ROI = \frac{657\,000}{243\,000} * 100 =. \%$$

$$ROI = \ 270 \ \%$$

This economic assessment aims to calculate the direct financial returns and provide broader insight into whether this recruitment approach would be sustainable and beneficial for the company in the long term. Regularly calculating and evaluating ROI allows the company to make informed decisions

regarding the efficiency of recruitment activities and the benefits of using the LinkedIn Recruiter tool.

The ROI calculation, depending on the number of positions filled, shows that the return on investment can vary depending on how actively the tool is used. To achieve the expected and satisfactory savings, it is essential to ensure that filtering is set up correctly and that recruiters actively participate in the entire search process.

To maximize the efficiency of the investment, it is also recommended that the company regularly monitor key recruitment metrics, such as the number of positions filled through active sourcing, the average time to hire, candidate response rate, and InMails. Monitoring these indicators would allow the company to continuously optimize the process and ensure that the LinkedIn Recruiter tool remains an effective part of the recruitment strategy.

This final value confirms that actively searching for candidates via LinkedIn Recruiter would pay off for Valbek, as it has a high potential ROI. However, the effectiveness of the entire recruitment process depends on this tool's regular use. The recruiter in charge of the search at Valbek must set up the search filters correctly, address potential candidates sufficiently, and communicate with them appropriately.

The key to this implementation would be regular monitoring and evaluation of whether the service is effective for the company. Whether in terms of the number of positions filled, the quality of candidates, or the overall time to recruit. Through regular monitoring, the company would find out whether the tool is delivering the expected results.

Based on the results obtained, Valbek should consider introducing active candidate sourcing as part of its long-term recruitment strategy. As part of the implementation, the company should focus on the effective use of LinkedIn Recruiter, of course, but also regularly evaluate its benefits. In the future, the company could focus on using other digital tools in HR. This could include, for example, the involvement of chatbots in communication with potential candidates or expanding employer branding through social media.

Conclusion

The aim of this master's thesis was to analyze a selected international company's recruitment and selection process and propose improvements by utilizing digital tools and technologies. The focus was mainly on design positions, which are key to Valbek's company activities, and recruiting qualified professionals remains a long-term challenge.

Based on the analysis of the current situation, including the SWOT analysis and interviews with representatives of the HR department, it was found that the biggest challenge in the recruitment process is the lack of candidates for professional design positions. These positions often require particular qualifications and experience, and the usual forms of advertising or cooperation with recruitment agencies are not always effective enough. In addition, these traditional approaches are often time-consuming and financially demanding, mainly when the company receives only a limited number of relevant responses.

Implementing active candidate search via LinkedIn Recruiter was proposed as a suitable solution to address this issue. This tool allows recruiters to target active candidates and so-called passive candidates, i.e., professionals who are not currently actively seeking new employment but may be open to an attractive offer. This approach increases the chances of finding qualified applicants for hard-to-fill positions. It supports building a database of potential candidates for future hiring needs, referred to as a talent pool. The master's thesis also included an economic evaluation of the proposed solution. The ROI was calculated by estimating the annual cost of using the full version of LinkedIn Recruiter, including the recruiter's salary costs, and comparing these costs with the commissions that the company would otherwise pay to recruitment agencies.

From this result, the recommended solution has the potential to save the company costs from an economic point of view and at the same time reduce the time needed to fill vacancies. In addition to the financial benefits, the main advantages of the proposed solution include greater transparency of the selection procedure, more effective cooperation between HR managers and the heads of individual departments, and, above all, the higher quality of the candidates approached. How candidates perceive a company can be significantly influenced by how they actively seek out and communicate with candidates. One of the other benefits is the strengthening of the employer brand. Targeted communication with selected candidates and building long-term

relationships with professionals in the field can increase awareness of Valbek as an attractive and stable employer in the CR, SK and UA, where the company actively operates.

The current recruitment process in Valbek is generally functional, but there is still space for improvement, particularly in automation and proactive candidate sourcing. The qualitative research conducted through interviews confirmed that recruiters face challenges such as a low number of applicants for professional design positions and time-consuming manual tasks. A key aspect of the company's recruitment is its international structure, with offices in the CR, SK, UA, and Sweden. While the overall recruitment coordination is centralized, the recruiters' approach is adapted to each country's local conditions. The branch comparison showed that SK operates similarly to the CR in terms of using digital tools and recruitment agencies. In contrast, the Ukrainian and Swedish branches follow different recruitment strategies based on their size and market specifics.

Currently, Valbek does not actively recruit employees from outside its organizational structure. The majority of foreign employees are either recruited through local recruitment channels or are transferred to a given branch within the Valbek company. Given the growing demand for professional positions and the lack of qualified candidates on the Czech market, it may prove necessary for the Czech branch to expand its search for new employees beyond the CR. Although the current strategy is focused more on recruiting within individual branches abroad, in the future, the company could take the path of a more systematic and targeted search for foreign candidates, supported by appropriate digital tools and adequate legal support.

The results from the semi-structured interviews confirmed that although Valbek already uses specific digital tools and technologies in recruitment, such as the Teamio platform, there is still room for further development and digitalization of the recruitment process. Using the LinkedIn Recruiter module to search for candidates proactively will allow the company to take the proper steps to streamline and modernize its operations. Finally, it was shown that the proposed solution can logically complement the existing recruitment process in Valbek and contribute to building a competitive advantage on the labor market through modern recruitment practices and the strategic use of digital tools and technologies.

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Appendix A In-depth Interview „Digitalization of International Recruitment in a Selected Company" 94

Appendix A In-depth Interview „Digitalization of International Recruitment in a Selected Company"

In-depth interview: "Digitalization of international recruitment in a selected company."

*__Chatbot__ *is the name given to computer programs that simulate a conversation with an end user; they are automated computer programs equipped with artificial intelligence and use neuro-linguistic programming to respond to questions based on predetermined scenarios, taking into account the context of the situation.*

Profile of the respondent

1. How long have you worked in the HR department of Valbek, s.r. o.?
2. What are your main responsibilities in this position?

Current recruitment process in Valbek EU, a. s.

1. What are the specifics of recruitment in the engineering and technical consulting sector in which your company operates?
2. Are you facing any challenges in international recruitment, sourcing, and recruitment for the company? If so, which challenges are they?
3. Do you have approaches to seeing how many graduates leave/leave these schools in the future?
4. Which positions in your company are the most difficult to find employees for and why?
5. Does your company monitor and analyze any recruitment indicators on an ongoing basis? If so, which ones?
6. How long does it take you, on average, to screen one candidate (i.e., CV selection, first contact, pre-selection)?
7. How long does it take to recruit for one position?
8. How many persons or % of foreigners work in your company as of 1.1.2025? From which countries are most of them?
9. What is the current level of digitalization of the recruitment process (i.e., what digital tools and technologies do you use to select, attract, and recruit candidates in your company)?

10. But you had artificial intelligence included in the plan somehow, I remember we talked about it.

11. Do you see any advantages of digital recruitment in your company?

Views and expectations on the further development of the recruitment process

1. Can you think of any suggestions for improving the international recruitment process in your company?

2. Is your company's management planning to invest in digitalizing the recruitment process in the coming months? If so, why yes/no, and what specifically is involved?

3. Who is involved in the digitalisation of the recruitment process in your company (i.e. internal IT department, external suppliers)?

4. Would you welcome the introduction of a chatbot into your company's international recruitment process?
    a. If yes, what functions do you think he/she should perform (i.e. what work tasks and to what extent could he/she take over from you)?
    b. If not, why not?
5. At what stage of recruitment do you think a chatbot could bring the most value/advantage and why?

6. What are the main criteria and factors it should consider if a chatbot were to search for candidates in an international recruitment process?

7. If a chatbot were to pre-select candidates for international recruitment, what are the main criteria and factors it should consider?

8. If the chatbot would inform the candidate about changes and updates in their recruitment process and answer any questions, what languages should it support?