HR MARKETING & RECRUITMENT: AN OVERVIEW AND PROPOSALS FROM GOOGLE & ZAPPOS

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Abstract

Google and Zappos are two well-known successful models on how to run a company. In this study, we are willing to summarize which good practices they take in their recruitment process in order to attract talent with all sorts of tools including neuromarketing. We discover that there is a new trend that comprises the three determinants of a company, and that is the Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting area. With this being said, we research and carry and inductive analysis on Google and Zappos, and we find out that they have plenty common threads such as its culture as a core value, their hunting for great and valuable talent in contrast of filling faster a specific position to cover and their effort to have all the employees happy and rewarded by the company.

Keywords
Recruitment  Talent  Attraction  Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting  Neuromarketing  Human Resources Management  Google  Zappos
Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 5

2. EXPLORING DETERMINANTS AND LITERATURE .............................................................................. 6
   2.1. Talent Management & Attraction .................................................................................................. 6
   2.2. Neuromarketing ............................................................................................................................ 8
   2.3. Recruiting .................................................................................................................................... 10

3. LINKAGE: HUMAN RESOURCES MARKETING AND RECRUITING ............................................. 11
   Figure 1: Relationship between the three determinants of study and the HR Marketing & Recruiting.......................................................... 13

4. METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................................ 13

5. ANALYSIS AND CHECKLIST ............................................................................................................. 14
   Table 1: Google & Zappos 10 Core Values ......................................................................................... 18
   Table 2: Recommendations learned from Google & Zappos .............................................................. 20

6. CONCLUSIONS, FINAL REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH ................. 20

BIBLIOGRAPHY ...................................................................................................................................... 22

APPENDICES ......................................................................................................................................... 26

APPENDIX 1 ........................................................................................................................................... 27

APPENDIX 2 ........................................................................................................................................... 30
1. INTRODUCTION

How many times have you heard a sentence from your parents expressing how much they would have liked to study as we do in our generation? I am sure, most of you will have heard it at least once, and they are right. At this moment, education in Spain is compulsory until the student is 16 years old. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2019), Spain is at the 6th position of educated population between the age of 0 and 4 years old in the European Union with a 96.4%\(^1\), so it seems that Spanish human capital should be of good efficiency and high quality.

However, in the recent years, the arrival of Artificial Intelligence and the globalization phenomena\(^2\) have reconsidered the tasks a regular worker must do and have brought into discussion which job will we do and what challenges are we facing in the future.

In the moment of writing, 2019, education by itself does not mean you will achieve a steady job for the rest of your life. Projects are generally getting shorter and people need to adapt to a changing environment and different circumstances that have not been seen in decades. Automatic tasks are becoming more and more robotized, which makes people move from sector in order to get a more manual, innovative, thinkable and creative job.

With this reasoning, recruitment of especially talented people becomes more important for enterprises. Successful companies wish to have a team full of people that can exploit their talent and produce revenue.

It seems obvious that almost every company, in the process of looking for new employees, is looking for people that can develop and execute talent well at their company, that can think by themselves, improve company’s environment and culture, that can suggest and search for solutions and new ideas when needed and that are not afraid of working by themselves. Indeed, we would say that these are the most valued qualities when looking for a new worker.

Generally, a recruitment process means designing a profile of how the best applicant would be; it means continuous evaluation and evolvement of candidates and staff; it means knowing how your brand is perceived and what requirements must be kept in order to continue with a great experience for both, labourer and client. The interview is usually the key and final step of the process, but as simple as it may seem, companies work very differently with interviewers, psychologists, what they value the most or how many interviews are given.

Because of that need, a new notion that generally encompasses all these strategic activities is born; the area of Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting.

As we suggest, some companies make the difference and usually catch better talented employees by obtaining them from a talent pool and letting them develop inside their enterprise, training them and nurturing their impact on the company. Google and Zappos are two of these well-known brands that have a great image both outdoors and indoors,

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\(^1\) It is significant because other European countries, which are far more advanced than Spanish education system, prefer kids to enter to the system later.

\(^2\) As well as the movement of people, the improvement of the technology of information and intangible capital force.
and that rely on their Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting team and culture to outstandingly succeed in many ways.

In this study, we are willing to study and deduce which are the main characteristics that this section of the Human Resources (HR) department should control in order to achieve excellence in external recruitment of talent. As Berger & Berger (2004) comment, successful organizations focus on “Superkeepers”\(^3\), on key position backups and on resource classification and investment in order to obtain excellence on proactive talent management. We want to supply an outlook of good practices and tips that are proved to be successful and that companies can consider in order to revise their recruitment of top talent in their Human Resources department.

We feel there are many companies that outperform others because they have put extra effort in their people since their foundation. We feel that a structured company culture, together with a good team of human resources and good practices can lead to better results, translated both in teamwork environment and ethics and in higher income. Therefore, our duty is to investigate and make a synthesis of these guidelines for the general public, focusing on companies and students on the field.

The article follows this path. Firstly, we will introduce our main fields and determinants of study. Together with the existing literature, we will interrelate these concepts to reach a brief description of the area of Human Resources Marketing & Recruitment and to create the perfect context to employ our methodology. Our experiment will be based on a case study of how some top companies like Google and Zappos perform in recruiting and working with talent. In the conclusion section of this article, we will briefly summarize our findings and limitations, as well as suggest future lines of research.

2. EXPLORING DETERMINANTS AND LITERATURE

To begin with the investigation, we first need to return to what other authors have previously studied with special attention to the concepts that we want to develop. In this literary space, we will talk about Talent Management and Attraction, Neuromarketing and Recruiting.

2.1. Talent Management & Attraction
Defining talent is a very complex task. Authors such as Tansley (2011) or Ross (2013) write that there is no universal agreement on the definition of talent and argue that it is understood differently depending on the nature of the company. Therefore, we try to encounter similarities in dictionaries, and we observe they all coincide it is a natural innate skill or ability someone possesses and uses to do well at something, generally above average ability (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019; Collins Dictionary, 2019; & Merriam Webster, 2019).

\(^3\) They call Superkeepers to that reduced group of people very high on talent because achieve superior accomplishments, fit perfectly with the values of the company and inspire the other teammates.
One of the most challenging and important objectives a company faces is the management of its talented workers and the creation of a talent pool. With notions of Tansley (2011) and Collings & Mellahi (2008), we define a talent pool as a group composed of talented individuals with high potential and high performance that a company needs to care for in order to obtain future workers that can ensure culture, values and success. As we see, acquiring talent is more important than ever in a more competitive and open world.

Talent management has been also examined many times. Known as a multi-faceted strategic concept championed by HR practitioners (Christensen Hughes & Rog, 2008), it has been difficult to define with exactitude.

In a way to synthesize previous’ articles and inform the world about the concept of strategic talent management, authors like Collings & Mellahi (2009) define it as follows:

[...] Strategic talent management as activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization’s sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource organization [...].

For them, modelling talent management starts by identifying pivotal talent positions, where the employee can differentially impact on the company's progression. After, a company must develop a talent pool from where to obtain them. The third step of this approach is to create a differentiated HR architecture, where talent scout promotes motivation, commitment and learning for these pooled individuals. If a company succeeds in the beforementioned steps, the last step comes in the form of an improved outcome (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Even though at the beginning talent seems to be a difficult concept to study and measure, we are trying to compare and uncover its real meaning.

By many, including Ashton & Morton (2005) and Christensen Hughes & Rog (2008), hiring and retaining talent, as well as employee engagement, are extremely primordial to talent management, as they may help leading to a long-term success and better organizational outcomes. Dezube (2019) adds that a well-defined recruiting strategy can help attracting the right employee while using less time. New sources of information as databases and big data can be also of great help to analyse candidates, taking better decisions, reducing time in the hiring process, creating target groups for the talent pool and bringing insights from social media (Agarwal, 2018).

According to Vaiman, V., Scullion, H., & Collings, D. (2012), a clear corporate culture and strategy implemented and linked to the recruitment process improve the effectiveness of decision making in talent management. Depending on how the company works

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4 Also called “A position”.
5 They also explore the AMO framework, consisting on the employee’s performance resulting on a function of the employee’s ability, motivation and opportunity to perform. Further information can be found in their article.
6 Even though this topic of big data in Human Resources activities is very interesting and can be subjected to much research, we will not be going in depth into it in this analysis.
internationally, this focus may change. For instance, Farndale, Scullion & Sparrow (2010) propose four roles for global talent management in HR corporations now, these being champion of processes, guardian of culture, network leadership and intelligence, and managers of internal receptivity.

We, authors, think that if we contract a talented person and we want that person to stay and grow with us putting all our efforts, probably our company will perform with a lower level of employee turnover and absence, since they will feel more prestigious and will not want neither need to search for a better-recognised job. Factors like a good corporate culture will be determinant in the levels of integration, commitment or loyalty. For instance, Luna-Arocas & Morley (2015) support our point of view when they comment that there is an important relationship between talent management and positive results for a company, such as higher commitment and efficiency, and less turnover.

It is a key aspect to discover, invest and maintain talent to keep a competitive advantage in the immediate future and prevent big human capital and monetary losses due to an unworried management and human resource department. For example and not necessarily, it may be better to put more attention to the job satisfaction of contemporary workers and recognize them better if they are relevant for the company and that assures their continuity, because better results can be achieved and compensation will not need to be paid, thus we will not spend much more comparatively, in many occasions.

So far, we have found many authors referring to talent management. However, they mostly include talent attraction into one of its activities, or an activity held by the HR department.

We believe talent attraction has more to do with reputation (Tarique & Schuler, 2010), storytelling and branding (Fernandez, 2018), while talent management has more to do with its development in the company, its fitting and its overall improvement. According to Botha et al. (2011), research shows evidence in supporting the relationship between attraction and retention with employer brand. By many companies, attracting and recruiting high-talented people comes first, before positioning them.

For all these reasons, we think talent attraction deserves its own interest and attention and we will focus more on it, since it comes before talent can be managed, in time and in importance. A perfect example comes in the world of soccer. For example, there has been a huge investment until a player signs with our team, economically and with time, in attracting and engaging him or storytelling how great it is to play for us.

2.2. Neuromarketing
Defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2019), Neuroscience is the scientific study of the nervous system and the brain. Being a member of the family of life sciences, the nature of neuroscience can also be interesting to study for marketing specialists.

Marketing also defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2019) involves the creation of a feeling of wish and need of a certain product. Ultimately addressing to population with the goal of selling attributes and characteristics a product or service has, it requires of a

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7 Not necessarily translated into paying more.
well-defined strategy to attract customers and reach people’s desires through the study of what they want, therefore studying people’s brain and mind. That is how neuromarketing is born, as it is the study of how human brain takes decisions reacting and related to advertising (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). Thus, it is based on addressing to the inconscient preferences of people.

We assume that as leaders and top performers they are, both Zappos and Google use neuromarketing to address their customers and to sell their branding. For instance, Singer (2010) says CBS, Disney or Google use neuromarketing to test consumer impressions. Also, Elesseily (2019) comments that Zappos anchors higher priced items and shows them in a decreasing order to improve reptilian brain retention. Brands want loyalty from their customers, and that is why they invest lots of money in marketing and neuromarketing. For instance, as Dooley (2011) writes, Zappos creates positive feelings to their consumers by a free shipping upgrade, mostly during the night or the following day (p.210). He continues, techniques as engines’ recommendations, enabling ratings and reviews of customers or the ranking of features are very valuable information for both clients and our company (p.30).

At this moment, from our standpoint, we assume neuromarketing is a crucial aspect in today’s world. However, we yet do not recognise entirely its relationship with talent and recruitment. Trying to reach this connection, we found two tangential precedents of this relationship. The first one is the “Grönholm Method”, a movie and theatre play exhibited all over the world. We base our description with the 2005 Spanish version of the movie.

The Grönholm Method can be defined as a well-organized and executed selection process that covers many sought aspects such as leadership, capacity to agree, negotiation, trustworthiness and cooperation, but by using very differentiated techniques, non-conventional activities and pushing the applicants to the very limit of their capacities. Therefore, the company is looking to find the best talented person by reaching his mind and his brain just like neuromarketing, and by finding the person who has succeeded in all different stages of the hiring process. In this method, no conventional interview is held, instead, many applicants meet at the beginning of the method and have to follow rules and norms from the computer program such as electing a group leader, trying to guess which one of them is a member of a company and a mole or deciding who would stay out and so lose the chance to continue with the hiring process if a world war was coming and there was a cave.

Therefore, we see that the Grönholm Method is minimally and tangentially setting a precedent of the relationship between marketing and recruitment, because both the company and the potential candidates are selling themselves in this hiring process and a group of HR workers and psychologists evaluate them.

Although it is not an employee selection, another reminiscence is found in the 1997 film “The Game”. In this psychological thriller, Nicholas Van Orton, a successful financial investment banker, is brought to a limit state after joining the Consumer Recreation Services (CSR) game, that has been given as a present by his brother Conrad. Like the abovementioned example, in The Game, CSR knows everything about his customer and controls every situation and every person involved. They are controlling what Nicholas is doing and what he is thinking at every moment, in order to deliver to their objective.
After a lot of uncertainty and incredulity, everything was set to be a birthday party surprise in the end, but Nicholas lost his faith and almost died because of this game, becoming almost paranoiac. Just like in “The Truman Show”, the world is organized, and he finds this out to reveal the truth.

Both movies seem to be a parallelism and show activities that could perfectly be applied to extreme situations, also in a recruitment process. We think the usage of unconventional but useful techniques is growing. We wonder if Google or Zappos use any of these techniques. At this moment, we are not able to determine whether they do it or not.

2.3. Recruiting

In this analysis we are using recruiting and recruitment as synonyms, without any further distinction.

We want to find an understandable and theoretical framework for recruitment, so we are turning to An introduction to human resource management (2007), by Wendy Bloisi.

In this context, recruiting can be understood in two different versions. The broad version, that includes all the processes and activities done in order to attract and incorporate applicants to the company, and the narrow version, that excludes selection and only focuses on generating this pool of attractive people. We observe that, no matter the definition we choose to use, it involves looking for talent. Since she uses the narrow definition, we will do that too.

Recruitment is therefore seen as a double activity: the formative recruitment activities and the arrival of applications. First comes recruiting needs to study vacancies, roles and characteristics needed and wanted in the enterprise, so we are not doing anything randomly but with a clear purpose. Any good process starts by planning and analysing the person we need for the job description we have created. Afterwards, recruitment sources and methods come along, making selection possible.

We have in general two main opposed sources of including talent to our team: internal and external recruitment. While the first one looks for the talented person already inside the organization to cover specific needs and positions, the second option looks for new possible candidates which are not inside the organization at the moment. While the second option is generally seen as more expensive, it may be a better choice depending on what the company wants, needs, and how well they have hired earlier, since a well done internal recruitment in the past may represent less costs and time used now while contributing to the internal development and motivation of internal workers.

For instance, let us imagine we are a soccer team that has poor performances. In an attempt to improve results, the club decides to fire the former coach and signs a new one. On the one hand, if he signs the coach from the second team, methods of training and strategies will not change much resulting in a poor overall performance. On the other hand, if he signs another coach, he most probably will come with new ideas and another style of playing, impacting much more and even causing a revolution to the team, ending
with better overall results in what the team needed. In this analysis, as we will link in the next section, we will be focusing on external recruitment⁸.

Dessain (2016) refers to recruiting as the activities – planning, sourcing the candidate, pre-assessment, final selection, job offer and contracting - to add potential workers to the company. By creating a profile and a job description of what the company offers and needs from a potential worker, which indeed may require more time and expenditure, the number of applicators will be reduced and, theoretically speaking, you should get a better fit.

According to Armstrong & Taylor (2014) book, selection is deciding which candidates will be chosen for the job required. Selection methods usually include interviews, either structured or unstructured, and selection testing, that ranges from intelligence and aptitude to ability and personality tests. After all results obtained, the company will study which applicant suits better the position before offering him a position in the company (p.226).

We will later see how our companies of case study work, if they follow the original guidelines or move away with a better and newer method. By now, let us follow the writing by connecting these three elements explained before.

3. LINKAGE: HUMAN RESOURCES MARKETING AND RECRUITING

In 2016, Matthias Zeuch reunited in his book *Handbook of Human Resources Management* more than 85 authors from different countries to explore in its first part the concept of Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting, being an area of the HR itself.

Although it may be still a young and new concept, it is very important and remarkable for us, as we would like to create a checklist with the main characteristics of success an HR system needs to consider.

This area of an enterprise focuses on the attraction, recruiting and retention of external talent who displays the values, skills and behaviours the company is looking for. It is external because it talks about the way the company interacts and presents itself with the exterior. As Dessain (2016) comments, they base its framework on a mixture of a talent and business strategy, that encompasses talent brand, workforce planning, sourcing, service delivery and technology. Each aspect of this integrated HR Marketing and Recruiting strategy is crucial and important for the satisfactory performance.

As we see, this area integrates our determinants in two subareas. It incorporates talent management and attraction because this is the main source of external recruitment in the company, looking to find the best possible candidate. Today, many authors such as Aguinis et al. (2012) consider there is a talent war because all companies are fighting against each other to obtain this advantage in acquiring talent for a substantially better future in a globalized world. It also incorporates neuromarketing because this team of HR and psychologists need to, somehow, discover how candidates think and analyse them in

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⁸ We will later show some examples and explain why we focus, on this new terminology, on the external focus of Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting.
order to try predicting their adaptability and real vision of the company. Lastly, it incorporates recruitment as it is the basic activity that permits the creation of the team, by having an effective process carried by the human resources team and all the members of the company.

More connections are related in *The Oxford Handbook of Recruitment* (2013), of great importance to us. The following are some examples we have found in the book. For instance, a more effective attraction will result in a more effective recruitment and selection, which are complementary (p.5, Ployhart & Youngsang, 2013). Van Hoye (2013) comments that sometimes a marketing metaphor can improve overall organizational attraction (p.252), and that both recruitment and marketing share the same goal: attract the best individuals. Rynes-Weller et al. (2013) include the information a company provides in the job advertisement as a differential factor in the recruitment image, that together with reputation and corporate image affects directly the attractiveness an applicant perceives from a specific company (p.342).

Even though Zappos and Google do not rely much anymore on traditional job advertisements and instead use their own careers and social networks, as we will see later on the analysis, part of their success lies on their approach to the potential candidate by telling him how they recruit and what they value the most. This, we think, stimulates talented candidates to provide a better response on the recruitment process since they already know the rules and can prepare better their fit to the company.

At the same time, this area is inseparable from the corporate culture, which can be defined as a shaped pattern of assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, norms and values everyone in a company knows, works with and behaves accordingly (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). To have a prosperous company, a clear mission, a steady vision and shared values are essential. Culture can encompass them, since it is naturally seen as a driver to a long-term goal of better benefits. We will observe that later in the analytical part of our article.

Achieving excellence in the external recruitment of talent, according to our judgement, means that the company obtains high-talented employees from an external talented pool. To do that, they must have an effective recruitment system that demands of an easy communication with managers and co-workers, a well-known strategy that includes clear needs and wishes of the company when hiring and a synergy of efforts throughout the whole process and at the entrance of new staff.

Below, we have elaborated a figure that shows the relationship we have reached, our added value, with information taken from the existing literature. As we can observe in it, these three components come together to this new area we are talking of. Below, there would be the companies that we think can work with this area, such as Google and Zappos, but who also share the importance of culture in their teams. In the end, we find the objective of our project, which is to set general proposals that we have observed seem to work for successful companies and that can help achieving results such as low level of absence rate, lesser level in turnover of new employees (Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015), higher level of income or higher level of appropriateness of the company9. This relationship could be enlarged by adding more components to the HR Marketing and

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9 Assumptions we do after the readings we have done.
Recruitment area or by offering more detailed results. In this analysis, we have chosen these as the essential ones and the study will carry on. The diagram has been an own creation.

**Figure 1: Relationship between the three determinants of study and the HR Marketing & Recruiting**

4. METHODOLOGY

In her 2016 collaboration to Martin Zeuch’s *Handbook of Human Resources Management*, Nicole Dessain said Zappos and Google are two of the front-runner companies in questioning “Why do we need a job requisition?10” and “What data points really predict success in a certain role?11” (p.19).

So far, we have presented the concepts of talent management and attraction, neuromarketing and recruitment, and together with culture, we have united them to the concept of Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting.

As we want to study if these attributes are perceptible and being placed and used by major companies, and how, we decided to study some cases of real businesses. We will focus our attention on studying the cases of private companies Google and Zappos, just like Dessain (2016) suggests, as they are very important and appreciated companies worldwide.

We will be carrying an observational analysis, in which we will analyse how their HR departments work by obtaining information at books, internet transcripts and previous

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10 Question that Dessain relates to Zappos.
11 Question that Dessain relates to Google.
articles and material proven to be real. We want to obtain answers and recommendations to, in the end, present a few key suggestions that can be applied to all companies and studied further in the future.

Our study method is the inductive method, because we want to extract general conclusions that can be employed in other companies from two cases. We will be basing our future tips in the observation of facts and phenomenon of real cases. In the end, our discoveries could be written in a brochure format, easy to read and to share with the teammates.

Besides analysing these companies, this methodological section has the objective to respond to the hypothesis we formulated in the introductory section of this transcript. That was written as follow.

Ho: Top companies as Google and Zappos show great results in their research and capture of talented people by an extraordinary recruitment process in their Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting area.

Future studies of this topic of research could include the study of successful middle-range companies as well, a comparison between the way of functioning of a big versus a medium-ranged company or the formal application of the propositions a HR manager can do and later analysis on the results.

After describing how we will proceed with the analysis, the next section presents the companies and the most important strategic recommendations we can learn from them.

It is important to mention that we are focusing on their HR areas and activities, not on their business activities or goals. Our study means to be objective by the acquirement of relevant data and information, not by the own opinion of the author or others.

5. ANALYSIS AND CHECKLIST

In this section, we first analyse the two business cases of Google and Zappos based on our research and methodology. Afterwards, we present the results and most important practices we have found and think companies should try to implement in order to succeed.

We take these two companies as an example of what people see as a having a successful career and business. We believe that, generally speaking, the first thing that comes to mind when a person hears about those companies is something good, perhaps their branding and image has played an important role, perhaps it is their huge international impact and revenue, but perhaps it is as well related to the way their team works and their recruitment process succeeds. We want to find out similarities in how they work and their common threads.

Google, currently a subsidiary of its partner Alphabet Inc., is an American company based on internet-related services and products. Founded in 1998, Google became popular in the early twenty-first century as being the most used web searcher worldwide, honorific title that still keeps. Google products are a mixture of subsidiaries, bought companies and own products, from the before mentioned search engine, entertainment platforms such as
YouTube and Play Games, office platforms such as Drive and Translate, social platforms such as the Hangouts, navigation platforms such as Earth and Maps, to business and marketing complements such as AdWords and the complete Android system. Their mission, they say, is to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful (Google, 2019a).

Zappos, founded in 1999, is an American company that specializes in the online commercialization of shoes. As they say, their main idea is to supply a huge offer of well-designed shoes with lots of colours, styles and sizes, but their fundamental focus remains on the client, to whom they dedicate their existence and essence delivering happiness (Zappos, 2018). Remarkably, one of their happiness paths is their great return policy since they do not charge the customer for transportation in a purchase, neither if he has to return the product back due to size or material problems. In 2009, Amazon bought the company, which now acts as a subsidiary.

If we look at their hiring process, we will find out interesting insights. If you are an applicant and you want to work for one of these two companies, we have good news for you because both organizations have a specific place in their website for you and others who wish to work there. Google has its own Google Careers and Zappos has its own Jobvite. Along with these, they also have a space where they inform you about how they hire. Considering the latest as a great source of information, we look there to find information on how they recruit people.

According to Google Careers (Google, 2019b), Google divides their recruitment process in three steps: Apply, Interview and Decide.

1. **Apply.** Find the job that matches your skills and mindset with Google requirements and needs in Careers’ website. Focus on your resume as well as on writing an optional cover letter (Klazema 2018). Since these applications will be read, they tip what and how the candidate should write to outperform and be considered by the company. Referrals are a plus, more if they come from another Googler.

2. **Interview.** If you have succeeded in the abovementioned step, you are invited to take the interviews. The first interview consists of a 30 to 45 minutes interaction by phone or Google Hangout and covers behavioural, case-based and hypothetical questions. If the coverage is successful and Google is interested, you will get invited to Google’s home for an onsite interview, where you will converse with four other Googlers¹² for 30 to 45 minutes each and be asked about general cognitive abilities, leadership, role-related knowledge and “Googleyness”¹³ (pp.122-123, Bock, 2015).

In this second interview you will need to show off your abilities and prove why you think you are valid for the charge. Candidates can also be asked technical and coding questions if they apply for a more technical position, but no longer can be asked creative off-the-wall questions as they did in the past to assess on creativity.

¹² Todd Carlisle, head of the HR of one of their businesses, found out that four interviews predict an 86% of the candidate, enough to decide whether they choose him or not for the company (p.126, Bock, 2015).

¹³ How well you fit with Google’s company culture.
and imagination\(^\text{14}\) (Bastone, 2018). Be ready to answer anything and practice before facing this challenging task.

3. Decide. You can no longer do anything in this process since reviews are still taking place. Initially, an independent hiring committee formed by other Googlers examines your profile, interview responses, abilities and matching in the enterprise. If they agree on your fit, your data package is sent to a senior leader, that will accept or decline your proposal and transmit his decision to the executive. After a background check, if passed confirmatory, an executive of the company will make the very last decision of offering you a position or not. Then, it is your turn to decide.

As Klazema (2018) writes, Google’s hiring process does not start so differently from other companies. Because they have been working with this model for years, their primary focus is clear: incorporate multifaceted talented people, who can rotate tasks and boost and provide their best talent during their stay at the company.

Their system is specially valued for their assessment, because not only leaders take part of recruitment, but also “regular” team workers analyse candidates’ flexibility and acceptance. As Umoh, R. (2018) writes, making hiring decisions demands consensus and more time, but the hiring committees are the key that explain Google’s success in obtaining and retaining talent. According to her, the hiring manager that does the interview has to write notes and feedback about the session, as well as attaching either internal and external references (if the person has given them), and then gives all that package to the independent committees, who are able to judge without any contact with the person, with distance and perspective.

Google permits your appliance for multiple jobs, precisely three within 30 days, and will help you with anything if you get to the interview at their headquarters in Mountain View, California (Google Careers). Also, if you get hired and start working for the company, you will not have the pressure to prove yourself in front of the others because you will already have been selected due to your matching, so the whole team will have extreme confidence with you since the beginning.

According to Hall & Yip (2016), Google’s hiring filter is seen as a great success because their goal is to hire better people than the existing current team and because of their differentiation focus to find the best “Googley” person. The company looks for autonomous, creative and adaptable talent.

If we look now at Zappos Jobvite and at their recruitment process (Zappos, 2019b), we observe the steps you need to take to work for Hsieh’s company.

1. Apply for a job via online, in their career website. You must send them a resume, and optionally you can share your LinkedIn social profile and additional files as well as a cover letter, in which they encourage you to be creative and perhaps record it on video.

\(^\text{14}\) As sort of an example, they used to ask bizarre questions such as: “A man pushed his car to a hotel and lost his fortune. What happened?”.
2. Revision held by the recruiting and hiring team. They will contact you for further steps.

3. Interview. If you have been successfully accepted, you will get the chance to get one or more interviews that can be virtually, testing, phone and onsite. According to Hsieh, there is usually one made by the hiring manager to evaluate standards and another by the HR team to evaluate culture fit (Business Insider, 2010). You can dress the way you want, as there are no dressing codes, but both teams must agree on your fitting.

4. Decide. If you have successfully passed the previous steps, you are sent an offer letter and new information. Then, it is your turn to decide.

If that opportunity still has not arrived to you but you want to be in connection with the company, you can also become a member of Zappos Insider, their social network, to receive their latest information (Zappos, 2019b). Hall & Yip (2016) explain that Zappos has definitely left behind the old-fashioned job offer advertisements and posts for this new social network, in which they look to keep a pool of talent to hire the best candidates available when needed. They say that those that really want to be part of their family will keep updated and reach their news and posts. Hsieh (2010) learned from poker that we have to surround ourselves with talented players (p.66) to achieve more, and that is what he tries to do at Zappos. Once a talented employee is hired, they use a software that helps adjusting that individual to the position that makes him the happiest and where he performs the best.

Their most unusual and singular practice in their recruitment comes with the newcomers. A week after the employee has been in the organization, doing his training and being on the telephone no matter the charge he has, he gets an offer to leave the company, if he wants, in compensation of a week’s salary and 2,000$ extra (McFarland, 2016). Although at the beginning this may sound controversial and weird, indeed it is a fabulous strategy because in the long run only those employees who want to stay at Zappos will keep committed, declining the offer, whereas others that doubt their philosophy and alignment of values will leave. In this way, the company assures their future viability, because they prefer to sacrifice present revenue and profit for a better long-term benefit (p. 158, Hsieh, 2010).

As Hsieh (2010) expresses, they believe Brand, Culture and Pipeline (BCP) are the only competitive advantages they will keep in the long run. Because their will to live is to supply the best customer experience ever, by doing this, they are branding their company and stretching their potential employees, thus attracting talent that fits better (pp.137-142). Zappos, continues, lets talent grow within the enterprise, for instance, with a “skill set” system that lets employees decide whether to get trained and certified or not, also being rewarded accordingly with a bit more money (p.233).

---

15 They actually think that instead of losing talent they are nurturing it, because those that do not care that much about the company will not follow posts, so overall, people who keep with them will be more involved.

16 Zappos understands Pipeline as employee training and development.
Google seems to have a small advantage as they check information and candidacies more times and through more committees, but in fact Zappos has also built an incredible advantage in their recent network, where they follow and access to talent. Also, both companies have expressed they use structured interviews to identify top applicants (Bock, 2015 & Hsieh, 2010). As we can observe from our findings, both companies work similarly with their hiring process. Moreover, we need to note both companies work as subsidiaries, they belong to Amazon and Alphabet respectively.

Besides recruitment, Google and Zappos have more threads in common. Both companies have been told to have and share an important career culture. Hall & Yip (2016) classify Google and Zappos as organizations that empower employees to chart their own career paths. They share the Protean Culture, which is based on intrinsic rewarding and a differentiation emphasis on uniqueness; intrinsic rewarding because workers learn something or accomplish a task, and differentiation because that makes them unique. Maybe, that is why Bock (2015) writes Google’s culture secret is fun (p.46).

Part of their culture lies on their company’s culture and core values. Following, in Table 1, we present the ten core values they have.

Table 1: Google & Zappos 10 Core Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOOGLE</th>
<th>ZAPPOS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Focus on the user and all else will follow</td>
<td>Deliver WOW through service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is best to do one thing really, really well</td>
<td>Embrace and drive change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fast is better than slow</td>
<td>Create fun and a little weirdness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Democracy on the web works</td>
<td>Be adventurous, creative and open-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You do not need to be at your desk to need an answer</td>
<td>Pursue growth and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. You can make money without doing evil</td>
<td>Build open and honest relationships with communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is always more information out there</td>
<td>Build a positive team and family spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The need for information crosses all borders</td>
<td>Do more with less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. You can be serious without a suit</td>
<td>Be passionate and determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Great just is not good enough</td>
<td>Be humble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adaptation of Zappos (2019a) and Element 360 (2015) information. Own elaboration.

As we can observe, both companies have a very clear mindset when talking about the values their workers must have. For instance, Zappos publishes occasionally a Culture Book to provide a glimpse of their culture from the perspective of their employees and how their company differentiates from others. Dezube (2019) adds it is another good example of attracting and branding talent because they explain their potential candidates
how great it is to work there. Therefore, culture is an essential element to consider for the area of Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting and cannot be omitted.

Besides their recruitment system and cultural elements, Google and Zappos have more common points. As Auriemma (2014) explained, Zappos works in a non-hierarchical organization, which does not present high levels of authority and in fact is more horizontal. As his CEO Tony Hsieh expresses, the company practices Holacracy, which favours communication and innovation. At Zappos there are no real positions or roles, everyone follows their holacracy constitution and works in a team, with a department and either managers or individually, holding regularly meetings and exchanging information in order to set priorities and achieve all tasks to be done (CNN, 2014). Although they do not say they experiment holacracy too, Google is also a quite flat and horizontal organization, that listens to their customers and workers and that leads the market in innovation.

Getting back to talent, as Google’s former senior vice-president of people operations Laszlo Bock (2015) explains, to hire the best people you need to know what you need and what you want. If you do not have a clear idea of the person you need to hire and his abilities, the hiring most probably will be based on perception and false expectations. Bock has four principles to find the best candidates: rely on networking, assess them objectively (as we observed before with their committees), give them a reason to join and most importantly set a high bar for quality to hire people who are better than you (pp.139-140). Moreover, a good capacity in storytelling is increasingly needed, because in today’s world it is not only what we do but how we express it.

Google does this and Zappos similarly, because they want their talented team to be excited and happy, since Zappos’ core value of “Delivering Happiness” is not only focused on the customer but also in its own workers (Fernandez, 2018). As a result of Hsieh’s book and the feedback he received, him and Jenn Lim decided to set up a company called Delivering Happiness, which is a coaching and consulting company that provides masterclasses, workshops and electronic courses to teach how to improve values and culture to other companies (Delivering Happiness, 2019) 17.

One last thing we would like to check is Glassdoor, the reference portal of official opinions, information and databases about practices in a company 18. According to them (Glassdoor, 2019), Google is rated with 4.4 out of 5 stars, while Zappos has only 3.5 out of 5 stars. More than 90% of employees approve their CEO and would recommend a friend to work at Google, in Zappos numbers are few lower with 75% approving the CEO and only a 58% agreeing to recommend it to a friend 19. Both Google and Zappos coincide in their most graded category, being compensation and benefits, and their weakest category being their senior management 20. Of much interest are the reviews on the interviews. Both companies experience a very similar performance, graded with 3.3 and

17 Their offer is a bit more extensive. From our point of view, we have selected the most important services. More information can be found at their website (cited at our bibliography).
18 They are mostly anonymous, encouraging openness and honesty.
19 Numbers show that Google has more than 8,300 reviews, while Zappos has only 358, so reader must be aware that numbers are taken with pegs.
20 All these numbers and data correspond to information extracted from their portal on Wednesday, April 24, 2019.
3 out of 5 in difficulty and more than 80% evaluate the experience as positive or neutral. Where they disagree the most is on how you can get an interview there, with both capturing their applications mostly online, but Google also through employee referrals and recruiters.

After this analysis, we think we have covered quite extensively many sides of interest of our analysis and it is now time to summarize and offer our common threads and suggestions.

Table 2: Recommendations learned from Google & Zappos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect with your talent. Feed your pool of talent, assuring your future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a good environment during the recruitment process to improve overall branding and feeling about the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create also a work-life balance, in the measure you can, and good bonuses to be part of the company (not only monetary bonuses).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not distinguish between charges or roles. Instead, create open teams, change their names and responsibilities to improve general results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embrace culture as a strategy. Company’s culture and company’s brand are two sides of the same coin. Focus on them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally, choose firstly a talented person to later locate him. Do not do the opposite, do not take an expertise in only one task but take instead a multifaceted candidate that can be a good team-player but can also take leadership when required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If possible, include more than a person to your hiring. If you take more than one interview and interviewers must agree, objectively the hiring will be much better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you develop an exceptional innovative interview or selection process, practice it and use it. Get the closest to the candidate’s brain to outlook all you need to know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never outsource your core competency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own creation.

These are our ideal recommendations that we can learn from Google and Zappos. Although this is only an analysis and synthesis, we would expect readers to consider and try them in their companies to strengthen their culture.

6. CONCLUSIONS, FINAL REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH

We started this article by wondering how we could connect the present concepts and literature referring to talent management and attraction, recruitment process and neuromarketing. Among others, we were astonished with the image that some big companies, such as Google and Zappos project to the population. We somehow wanted to analyse if this good branding and image was only a good perception we had or if in fact this was also due to a good team selection, talent pool growth and Human Resources department in general.
After a theoretical approach on these three concepts, we were able to establish a connection that brought us to the Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting area, which include attraction, recruiting and retention of external talent who display the values, skills and behaviours that the company is looking for.

Based on this concept, we conducted an inductive analysis on real business cases of Google and Zappos in order to provide ideal clues of how they work with their HR department and achieve such successful levels of effectiveness and happiness in their workplace.

Some of these contributions are that they embrace culture as an emblematic pillar with which they work on, create a comfortable environment during the recruitment process to brand while choosing only the most talented, keep connection with a pool of talent and involve more than a person and a team for a better objective selection.

We are happy with the results obtained because we can support the hypothesis contemplated and we are providing a framework that all companies can work with. We would be very pleased if companies that read us wonder if our suggestions would improve their overall performance and results.

At the moment of this article submission, May 2019, once this writing was finished and in order to continue with the contrast of our findings and recommendations, we contacted with Google and Zappos and we obtained a positive answer from Zappos. We hope we will be able to validate all this information talking directly with them in the near future.

This project also encourages readers to continue with this exploration by further researching and providing differences between big, medium and small-sized companies, or by analysing if temporary employment agencies are nowadays performing their duties the way we suggest, or they otherwise act differently. Also, an inclusion of a few well-thought and designed interviews to some HR members in charge of hiring could add more qualitative information and results for a better picture of the whole context.

Overall, we feel Google and Zappos are two companies that have done well in the past, in concept, innovation, practices and stepping forward in order to become mentors of other companies for how they work.

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21 You can find in the Appendices of this article how we contacted with them and what we expressed.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

All these academic articles, books, movies, online articles, videos and webography have been consulted during the writing of this essay, from the end of January 2019 until the end of May 2019. We can confirm that, at the moment of writing, all links work and can be consulted.

Academic Articles


**Books**


**Movies**


**Online Articles**


Bastone, N. (2018). 16 Google interview questions that were so tough the company eventually banned them. Business Insider. At: https://www.businessinsider.es/hard-google-interview-questions-2016-10?r=US&IR=T


Videos


CNN (2014). How Zappos will run with no job titles. CNN Business YouTube channel. At: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DYigfNJQIg

Webography


Zappos (2019a). Zappos 10 Core Values! Zappos Insights. At: https://www.zapposinsights.com/about/core-values

APPENDICES

This is the future orientation of this article we meant to do. As we finished our writing, we wanted to corroborate if our findings were a faithful reflection of the company’s real everyday and we wanted as well to ask their cooperation to obtain an interview with someone from their companies.

In the following pages of the two different appendices, you can find how we addressed to them and the answers we have received, if so.
APPENDIX 1

Concerning Zappos, we first sent an email to their Press section.

Bachelor Thesis "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos" - Request to contact

Andreu Safont
Di. 2/5/2019 2009
Pers: pr@zappos.com - pr@zappos.com
Go: jordi.balague@udg.edu - jordi.balague@udg.edu - Andreu Safont <andreusafont5@hotmail.com>

Dear Zappos media team,

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Andreu Safont, and I am a student from the University of Girona, Spain.

In the current stage of my double degree in Business Administration and Economics, I am writing my bachelor thesis titled "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos", in which I go through the information I have found in books and official websites to build the following hypothesis: "Top companies as Google and Zappos show great results in their research and capture of talented people by an extraordinary recruitment process in their Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting Area".

Indeed, I am assuming that Zappos is one of the companies that encompass Talent Attraction, Neuromarketing Tools and an Effective Recruitment in their HR strategy, and that together with Culture, that makes the difference and make your company a mentor of good practices.

After the exploration, I obtained a few proposals of good practices such as:

| Create a good environment during the recruitment process to improve overall branding and feeling about the company. |
| Embrace culture as a strategy. Company’s culture and brand are two sides of the same coin. |
| Generally, choose a talented person to later locate him/her into a certain team or position. |
| If you develop an exceptional innovative interview or selection process, practice it and use it. (Like the offer of 2,000$+ a week’s salary to leave to rather keep those employees who are really engaged). |
| Never outsource your core competency. |

What do you think about these results? Do you confirm them? Is there any chance for me to interview a member of the Zappos family or contact via email in order to corroborate these results I have found out?

Thank you very much in advance, I am very happy and proud to have carried an investigation about your company and your culture. It seems a fascinating project and company and it must so great to work there! Lots of success in the upcoming future!

Ben cordialment,
Cordialmente,
With regards,

Andreu Safont
In addition, we decided to try to contact as well with its CEO, Tony Hsieh. That is what we explained to him.

Bachelor Thesis "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos" - Request to contact

Andreu Safont
Dr. 7/5/2015 16:52
Per.: tony@zappos.com <tony@zappos.com>
A/c: ceo@zappos.com <ceo@zappos.com>
C/o: jordi.balague@udg.edu, jordi.balague@udg.edu, Andreu Safont <andreusafont@hotmail.com>

Dear Mr. Tony Hsieh,

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Andreu Safont, and I am a student from the University of Girona, Spain. Perhaps you have read some of my messages about Zappos in LinkedIn and Twitter, to be honest, it is an absolutely honour to have the chance to talk to you, even more after reading parts of your book about Zappos and culture!

In the current stage of my double degree in Business Administration and Economics, I am writing my bachelor thesis titled "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos", in which I go through the information I have found in books and official websites to build the following hypothesis: “Top companies as Google and Zappos show great results in their research and capture of talented people by an extraordinary recruitment process in their Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting Area”.

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Ben cordialment,

Cordialmente,

With regards,

We thought we would hardly get an answer before the time of submission of this article, but then, almost at the very last minute, Molly “the elf” wrote us back.
At the moment of concluding the article, we are very thankful for fast their answer and confident that we will make an appointment for a future interview in order to corroborate our results and learn more from them.
APPENDIX 2

Concerning Google, we have done a very similar job. At first, we wrote to their Press section.

Bachelor Thesis "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos" - Request to contact

Andreu Safont
Dj 2/5/2016 20:30
Per a: press@google.com <press@google.com>
C/o jordi.balague@udg.edu <jordi.balague@udg.edu>; Andreu Safont <andreu.safont@ Hotmail.com>
Dear Google media team,

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Andreu Safont, and I am a student from the University of Girona, Spain.

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| Create a good environment during the recruitment process to improve overall branding and feeling about the company. |
| Embrace culture as a strategy. Company’s culture and brand are two sides of the same coin. |
| Follow the Nirvana state or state of flow. |
| Generally, choose a talented person to later locate him/her into a certain team or position. |
| If you develop an exceptional innovative interview or selection process, practice it and use it. (Like the action of independent hiring committees and involving other Googlers into the recruitment process). |
| Never outsource your core competency. |

What do you think about these results? Do you confirm them? Is there any chance for me to interview a member of the Google family or contact via email in order to corroborate these results I have found out?

Thank you very much in advance, I am very happy and proud to have carried an investigation about your company and your culture. It seems a fascinating project and company and it must so great to work there! Lots of success in the upcoming future!

Ben cordialment,
Cordialmente,
With regards,

Andreu Safont
Just like we did with Zappos, we decided to try to contact as well with Google’s CEO, Sundar Pichai. That is what we explained to him.

Bachelor Thesis "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos" - Request to contact

Andreu Safont
Dt. 7/5/2018 19:17
Per. e. sundar@google.com: <sundar@google.com>; sundarpichai@gmail.com: <sundarpichai@gmail.com>
C/c. jordi.balleu@udg.edu: <jordi.balleu@udg.edu>; Andreu Safont: andreusafont@hotmail.com

Dear Mr. Sundar Pichai,

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Andreu Safont, and I am a student from the University of Girona, Spain. Perhaps you have read some of my messages about Google in LinkedIn and Twitter, to be honest, it is an absolutely honour to have the chance to talk to you.

In the current stage of my double degree in Business Administration and Economics, I am writing my bachelor thesis titled "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos", in which I go through the information I have found in books and official websites to build the following hypothesis: "Top companies as Google and Zappos show great results in their research and capture of talented people by an extraordinary recruitment process in their Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting Area".

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- Generally, choose a talented person to later locate him/her into a certain team or position.
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Ben cordialment,

Cordialmente,

With regards,
Surprisingly, and compared to the situation with Zappos, we received a response from Google. It was an automatic response sent from Google’s Press server.

Thank you for contacting press@google.com Re: Bachelor Thesis "HR Marketing & Recruitment: An Overview and Proposals from Google & Zappos" - Request to contact

Google Press <press@google.com>
Date: 2/5/2010 20:30
Recipient: andreusafon5@hotmail.com, andreusafon5@hotmail.com

Hi there,

Thanks for reaching out!

If you are a member of the press, we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

If you are not a member of the press, you should not expect to receive a response beyond this email.

If you're looking for the latest Google news, photos, or b-roll, visit the Google Press Website or follow us @GoogleComms.

If you're experiencing any product-related issues, please visit our Help Center or follow the links below for helpful resources:

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- I can't access my YouTube account
- I want to use the Google brand for a project
- I want to remove information from Google search results
- I want to report a YouTube video
- I want to report a YouTube privacy, safety, or abuse issue
- I'm having trouble with Google Maps

Thank you,
The Google Press Team

--

Google Press Team
For news, updates, and tips & tricks, follow-us on Twitter or Facebook

Even though we have not obtained any further information than this email at the moment of concluding the article, we do not give up and we are confident that in the future we will obtain answers from Google as well.
HR MARKETING & RECRUITMENT: AN OVERVIEW AND PROPOSALS FROM GOOGLE & ZAPPOS

Talent Attraction
Neuromarketing Tools
Effective Recruitment

Hypothesis
Top companies as Google and Zappos show great results in their research and capture of talented people by an extraordinary recruitment process in their Human Resource Marketing and Recruiting area.

Human Resource Marketing & Recruiting Area
It is the area of an enterprise that focuses on the attraction, recruiting and retention of external talent who display the values, skills and behaviours that the company is looking for. Inseperable from culture.

Methodology
We carry an observational analysis study at two well-known brands, Google and Zappos, by obtaining information from books and academic articles mainly. By using an inductive reasoning, our goal is to supply an outlook of good practices and tips proved to be successful for the excellence in external recruitment of talent.

Google & Zappos

+ Culture

Proposals

Recommendations
- Connect and feed your talent pool.
- Create a good environment during recruitment to improve branding.
- Do not differentiate much between roles and charges. Create unity.
- Embrace culture as a strategy. Follow Nirvana state.
- Choose a talented person and locate him later.
- Include more than a person to your hiring.

Recommended Bibliography

Author: Andreu Safont Bagué
Professor: Jordi Balagué i Canadell
Bachelor in Business Administration