



International Career: What Attracts Lithuanian Talent?

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Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to analyse the trends of Talent Acquisition as a marketing strategy and implement the results to create a Foreign Talent Acquisition Strategy for a boutique recruitment agency in Lithuanian market. The literature regarding the topic was analysed in order to guide the research. A qualitative research study was conducted in order to receive up to date, primary data about employees' job search preferences and attraction factors to complement the theoretical frameworks. The results gained from the empirical research were used as a guideline for the development of a Foreign Talent Acquisition strategy.

Keywords: talent acquisition, marketing, Lithuanian market, talent labour, attraction factors.

Introduction

Maltese labour market is lacking talents who could fill the available job positions. The demand for employees is growing; however, the Maltese employees are not able to meet it. The problem that BRA as a recruitment agency faces is the scarcity of

talent candidates for their clients. The solution, as the BRA management indicates, is to source applicants from abroad. While BRA is a small player in the industry, the strategic sourcing from abroad and filling the positions faster would give them competitive advantage.

Secondly, the Lithuanian market, as a potential place from where candidates could be attracted, is overviewed. The salaries in Malta are higher, that shows that the offers would appeal. The migration rate in Lithuania is negative, indicating bigger percentage of emigrants in Lithuania and the education level is higher than in Malta. Those factors reveal that Lithuanians could possibly be attracted. The education level indicates potential talents in the market from which BRA could choose.

This paper is divided in four main sections. The research starts with the literature review and an overview of the main definitions regarding talent management. Secondly, we describe and justify the methodology used in this research. Then we introduce the empirical research results and discussion of the research main findings. The paper ends with the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research.

Literature Review

Talent management in general puts the focus on people rather than on the function, and emphasizes the attraction and capture of a talent (Iles, Preece & Chuai, 2010). That overall indicates the difference of approach and the strategy when the end goal is an employment contract with a person and not a product sold. Thus, a lot of human factors regarding their behaviour and decision-making should be considered. In order to clarify talent definition for the research purposes, Tansley (2011) suggest that talents are employees who have a full potential and motivation to execute high-level performance. Ulrich, D., & Smallwood, N. (2011) extracts four factors which can put talents into the high-performance category: ambition, ability, agility and

achievement. Setting clear dimensions when retrieving talent only creates long-term benefits for the company.

According to Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005), there are five major categories, which represent the issues when choosing a migration destination: economic, political, cultural, family and career factors. All the aspects should be clearly defined to see the pattern of migration and to retrieve information about tendencies.

The impact of talent movements internationally can be described using a number of push pull factors, which act as an encouragement for skilled workers to move from one destination to another (Gheasi, & Nijkamp, 2017). Using this theory with an implication that most of the factors are individual, however, could be repetitive and put into common factors, the questionnaire will serve as an identification of influence factors. The purpose is to compare the currently Malta based Lithuanians and their experiences with Lithuanians who have never lived in Malta but have standards when choosing a country and underline any matches. For the comparison, a theory conducted by Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005) of five major categories which act as factors when making migration decisions: economic, political, cultural, family and career; will be used. Questions are created which trigger to reveal the factors while not directly asking for them will be observed and chosen as priorities in order to create an acquisition strategy.

Furthermore, a theory of Florida (2002a, 2005a) will be used to gain knowledge about the ultimate preferences when trying to attract Talents. The theory indicates that there are three signals to which Talent's react:

Table 1: Three common decision machining factors, Adapted by the author referencing work of Florida (2002a, 2005a)

No.	Factor	Explanation
1.	Quality of the Community	Talents prioritize work environment, diverse culture in the office, positive approaches, and openness and tolerance policies.
2.	Quality of the Place	Talents prioritize amenities, physical characteristics such as nature, climate, external environment, cultural facilities.
3.	Economic performance	Talents prioritize appealing job opportunities, growth possibilities, bigger places and cities with higher benefits.

Furthermore, to distinguish the most acceptable channels, it is crucial to understand the difference between two types of job seekers: active and passive. The search methods that active job seekers use are different from the passive job seekers who do not particularly search for an opportunity but rather react to one when it appears (Caliendo, Schmidl & Uhlendorff, 2011). This observation allows us to indicate another two split target groups and create different strategic approaches for passive and active candidates keeping in mind research results with their prioritized search channels.

The range of theoretical framework is presented in order to create a vast amount of questions to get the bigger range of answers that could complement each other when searching for important factors.

Research Method and Data Collection Method

When choosing the research methodology and the way the data are collected, the aim of the research has a high influence. The Aim of the research is to find out the relevant information about Lithuanian talents' recruitment process preferences in order to create a Talent Acquisition strategy for this target market for BRA. Qualitative method is selected in order to have a smaller sample but deeper answers, which lead to quality of data analysis (Anyan, 2013). According to Morgan, D. L. (2016) qualitative research output in many cases does imply numerical boundaries and results through the use of certain words.

To collect the data in qualitative research, in-depth interviews are chosen as a tool. In qualitative social research methods, interviews are profound method of data collection (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). Since the research is in need of updated data, the primary sources are explored and approached. The interviews for this particular research are selected to be semi-structured, which as Doody and Noonan (2013) claim are the most used in qualitative research, the reasoning behind - the need of flexibility when approaching different respondents with an ability to change some questions and vary the wordings. Naturally, the people who are already living in Malta and have years of experience in that market will need quite an alteration for the questions as opposed to respondents who are looking for opportunities abroad and perhaps have never heard of Malta. Anyan (2013) ensures that semi-structured interview method allows an extent of flexibility to communicate easily and adapt to situations. Moreover, the interview format was virtual (via Skype) or actual face-to-face, which allowed respondents to share candidly.

Research Samples and Sampling procedure

According to Sandelowski (1996), qualitative research does not simply examine variables and numbers but in-depth cases. Preferably the cases reached for are information specific (Sandelowski, 1995). The respondents were approached using personal connections and seeking for more people to recommend respondents for a particular target group. The target group being Lithuanian Talent who is seeking

career opportunities abroad. To identify the crowd, which could potentially fall under "Talent" definition, Tansley's (2011) description is used, thus, people that the research is aiming for are employees who have the motivation and a potential to execute and aim for higher-level performances. People, who search for opportunities abroad in order to educate themselves and gain experience in cultural and work environment to become leaders and specialists in their field. According to internal sources of BRA managers, higher education is closely linked to higher responsibility positions and at least Bachelor degree is required in the job descriptions for the positions, therefore, naturally, the target group also should have a higher education degree or be in the end of obtaining it. The sample size indicates 15 respondents (with an age rate 21 to 33), which could be divided into three crowds with an equal respondent number in each of them:

- Lithuanian Talents living and working in Malta
- Lithuanian Talents living and working abroad
- Lithuanian Talents living and working in Lithuania (potentially looking for opportunities abroad).

Research Conduction

A questionnaire was constructed for the semi-structured qualitative research interviews. The interviews were recorded by the author and the GDPR form of involvement agreement was presented beforehand. The questionnaire has some flexible parts according to the group that was interviewed. The questions are related with experience in the country for the respondents who have been living in Malta and related to job and life quality expectation for the other groups, which have not had career opportunities in Malta. However, the base of the questions was the same. The respondents had the opportunity to share in an open manner, as widely as they thought is acceptable and even answering several other questions ahead without even knowing them. The interviews were conducted in English language to avoid interpretation mistakes. The questionnaire that is presented during the face-to-face live or online interviews (using Skype) is divided into three major parts containing 18 to 20 questions.

Table 2: Part-Objective-Question model

Part	Objective	Sample Questions
The life and work experience abroad	To gain information about the motivation to emigrate, the factors which play the lead role of decision-making, quality of living and experiences in order to calculate Maltese market compatibility.	Why live and work abroad? The difficulty level of attaining a job? Opinion about workplace environment and quality of living at the moment? Culture comparison -XXX to Lithuanian? Work environment comparison?
Influence factors of workplace and country selection	To understand what respondents look for when choosing a destination and a workplace, what priorities do they have and how they rate their current education level and experience in order to calculate Maltese market compatibility and gain insights for further attracting strategies.	What are your priorities when choosing a new position/workplace? Main priorities when choosing a country abroad to work in? Do you think you have advantage or excellence over other candidates when going for a position when having in mind your education level? What would make you change your current living place now and move somewhere else?
Common used	To gain insights for further	What kind of websites do you usually use

channels for job search abroad	attracting strategies using the information about channels used for job hunt, experience with recruitment agencies and overall suggestions.	for job search? Why? Would you ever pay attention to job adverts on social media such as Facebook, Instagram? Why, Why not? What is your opinion about opportunities in Malta? What is your prejudice about this country and why would you consider/ not consider working there? How would you rate awareness of opportunities in Malta amongst your Lithuanian friends/family who are interested in working abroad?
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Data Analysis Methods

After the interviews were conducted, the recorded information was transmitted into Question-Answer table and the data were analysed. In this stage, the author and the interview conductor have a privilege to analyse what the respondent meant and report it to draw conclusions (Anyan, 2013). The data of all respondents were compared and examined until certain common patterns were found and results were drawn.

Results

Decision making and attractiveness factors

This section will provide in-depth understanding about the decision-making factors and attractiveness factors which play a big role when choosing to work abroad and determining motivation and, in the end, compare the results to testify the overall topic's relevance.

When the general picture is formed it is important to start the comparison part. What this research aims for is to not only find similar thinking patterns amongst all people but to find strong experiences of one group who is living in Malta and working there and compare those experiences with people's expectations or requirements when choosing a country to live in and start a career. In order to create a thoughtful and relevant strategy for BRA, compatibility must be proven.

Table 3: Adapted three common decision-making factors

No.	Factor	Data input
1.	Quality of the Community	Maltese culture is very laid back, not stressful. Maltese people are very friendly and helpful, more positive. They cater a nice environment for easy going people. Disorganization may occur as a result of relaxed work environment. People are open to international expats and everybody speaks English from young to old.
2.	Quality of the Place	Easily enjoyable environment, always sunny, the sea is seen as a big priority, warm days. Island life creates difficulties such as wide population resulting in bigger traffic.
3.	Economic performance	Maltese labour market is a treasure for a foreigner. There is a high demand on upper level jobs and there are no difficulties for Lithuanians to obtain them. Head hunters are targeting international people. There is a significant growth opportunity, promotions are not rare. The career seems to be achieved easier and quite faster in Malta. International companies adjust their salaries according to the economy.

Note. Table created using Florida (2002a, 2005a) theory according to answers of Lithuanians who have experience in Malta.

There are some clearly visible thought patterns thorough the interview process when talking about experiences in Malta. Most of them are highly repetitive. Firstly, people do underline the benefits of Maltese cultural aspects, which intersect with Living Abroad Pull Factors data provided above. Respondent No. 4 claims that “people are so warm, welcoming, they are not selfish at all, this really was helping us to adapt and continue help us grow”. While Respondent No. 2 indicates quality of place ad great: “It’s an island - nice, convenient island, you always have ocean next to you, the weather is very good. People are friendly, a lot of international people, easy to have a social life “. Furthermore, when examining career factor, a common answer includes quick career opportunities. Respondent No. 3 explains that “we have experience in Malta, for us to find a job in finance industry is a piece of cake” and Respondent No. 5 also comments about the career opportunities: “I’ve never searched for a job here, only the first time I’ve arrived here. After 1 year, firms just started constantly offering me jobs; there is a need of my field employees

here. They are trying to import as many foreigners as possible.”

The figure below indicates systemized answers of sample group that has no knowledge of Malta and work opportunities there but answered their preferred factors, which would make a country appeal to them. As seen from three main priorities which are culture, language and economy, the previous group experience overlaps over these pull factors, which could be used as a topic relevance indicator when applying Malta as a suitable migration destination. Most of the results emphasize the great and welcoming culture with demand of international talent in the workplace and naturally the common spoken language is English, which makes the adaptation and job search time shorter. Since the economy itself is quite unpredictable variable, the argument stating of overwhelming job demand on the island (according to BRA’s CEO and Head of Recruitment) implies the broad career opportunity leading to better salaries and life quality.

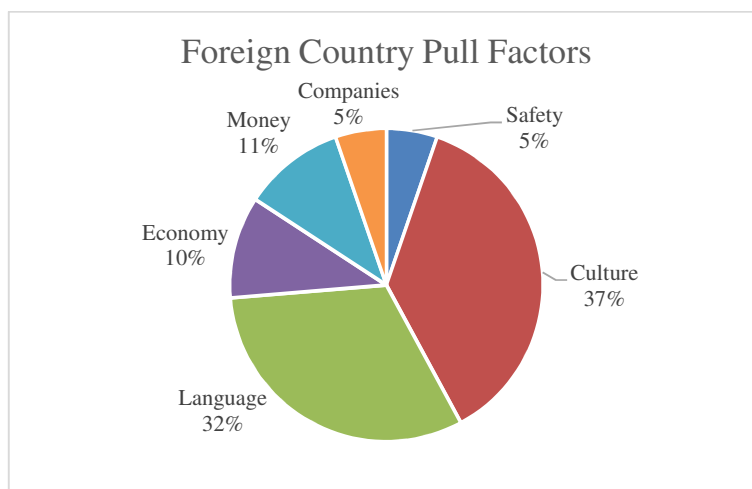


Fig. 1: Foreign Country Pull Factors

Note: The graph was created with the common answer pattern from people who had no experience in Malta but do have country priorities.

Evaluation of Career Opportunities

Every respondent, who was asked to share his or her knowledge about Malta, showed a very low awareness level. Respondent No. 9 explains the prejudice “I think it is an island, so a nice country but never heard about any

job opportunities there. Malta is not my field of interest and maybe salaries are not high enough”. However, some respondents such as Respondent No. 7 did not hesitate to consider “I don’t know much about it, I’ve never seen anything negative about it, I guess if somebody would offer me a job

there with a good pay and good position I would take it". Extending the thought – respondents who were asked about the influence factors that would make them pack their things and move to a different country indicated an amazing job opportunity, some of them elaborated more that they would consider that job opportunity in Malta if it approached at the right time. Respondent No. 10 elaborated on opportunities: "I would accept a job if I would find an interesting and a well-paid position. I am open for opportunities constantly". Thus, even though the awareness is low, with the right tools of

advertising and approaches, opportunities presented to Lithuanian talents would potentially be taken.

The priorities which people indicate as the main decision factors will be used in further strategy when adjusting the job roles and advertising process while phone screening candidates and emphasizing the triggers. People who choose a job abroad indicate these as the main priorities in a workplace (a person described 3-4 factors each):

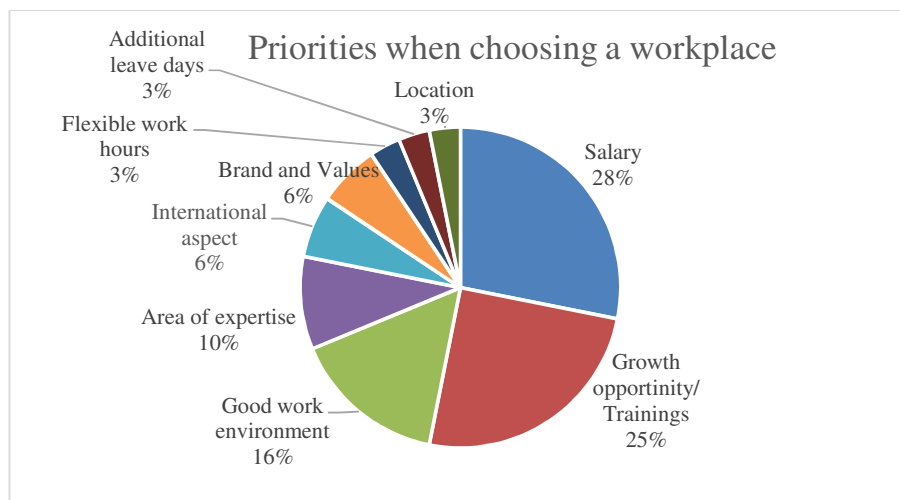


Fig. 2: Priorities when choosing a workplace. Note. The data were gathered using all the respondents 3-4 priorities.

The data show that respondents mostly value the salary opportunity, however, importance is given to growth opportunities, personal development and training possibility which was indeed a common answer. Respondent No. 6 elaborated that he/she prioritizes "development opportunities, I like a challenge", also Respondent No. 5 indicated that he/she sees the "growth opportunity, possibility to go up the ladder". Furthermore, a good work environment was mentioned quite often as an attraction factor, Respondent No. 1 stated that it is important to "feel good in the working environment".

Initial purpose of coming to Malta

All of the respondents who are Lithuanians living and working in Malta said that they came here for an internship. Respondent No. 3 explains that she easily found an opportunity "It just happened, I found my internship here in Malta. I simply wanted to go abroad for my internship and then I was offered a position". Respondent No. 4 even lists the benefits that attracted him/her to this destination: "I chose Malta for an internship, lots of sunny days, English language". The pattern shows that people took a risk and wanted to rather enjoy their time here, in a widely-known holiday destination, but in the end appreciated the opportunities and quality of life enough to stay and continue their career path abroad.

To summarize, the research indicated similar factors in the favour of company which wants to attract Lithuanian talents since the expectations of Lithuanians are similar to experiences in a workplace of Lithuanians living in Malta, the culture factor, the more than sufficient salary and huge growth opportunities with warm office culture that helps a talent to develop and trains him/her. Using this compatibility, a further strategy could be executed using the prioritised factors as guidance.

Gaining awareness to Maltese job market

Since most of the respondents did admit taking a work opportunity in Malta if a good offer would be presented to them, they were asked to elaborate on ways to increase awareness for Maltese labor market. Respondents shared ways they thought were the most suitable to approach Lithuanians and could potentially work on them as well.

Broadcasted Success stories. The common suggestion was to spread general awareness not only about the specific job roles but also about the possible industries, environment and most importantly Lithuanian success stories. Respondents believe that people could be influenced and inspired by a fellow Lithuanian's in-depth story. Respondent No. 2 emphasizes that it is crucial to use "Some stories, from people who come back. They could present the opportunities. For example: in Malta you could get a job in these and these industries and you can get salaries as high. Spread the word about work possibilities and salary. People would take a risk". Respondent No. 4 shares his/her experience "Seminar in University with last year students, giving a success story could help", claiming that also the last year students could be targeted at some student fairs.

Internship opportunities. The option to emphasize the internship opportunities overlaps with success stories because respondents suggest to provide internships, collaborate with Lithuanian institutions and sell the success stories there as well. Respondent No. 7 explains that "going into universities and offering work placements in Malta with success stories would help as well". Some of the respondents started their work career in Malta with an internship,

thus, it is a reliable way of adapting into a new culture and growing within their field of expertise.

Ads on social media. The majority of respondents (72.72%) who answered that they would pay attention to job ads on social media advise to use them as a channel. Respondent No. 9 suggest a solution "market it, use platforms, where Lithuanians are looking for jobs. Market the whole country on social media, also work on LinkedIn". Respondents suggest social media because of their target group and high popularity, Respondent No. 11 suggests that "young people are the easiest to make impact on. Discover channels and broadcast it, use social media to advertise".

Articles about Malta and opportunities there. The same respondents who emphasize the use of social media suggest that not only jobs should be advertised but the entire country as well, to gain overall awareness of where Malta is, what is the culture there, the economic situation and demand for jobs, which fields are the most attractive to Maltese market etc. Respondent No. 7 advises to "research what are the most used pages in Lithuania and then promote in those pages not necessarily as an advert but maybe through an article of opportunities."

Head hunting on LinkedIn. Respondent No. 10 believes that there is high usage of LinkedIn in Lithuanian labor market and the research data indicate the same, thus, the thought is "depending on the roles and industries I think is relatively easy to headhunt people through LinkedIn". To use social media for business as a tool to explore Lithuanian market and present opportunities emphasizing the influence factors.

Conclusions

The data reveal common patterns are found and the main, most important comparison factor achieved – Lithuanians living in Malta have similar experiences in work and life environment as the Lithuanians who are open to opportunities and have certain expectations from a country and work environment. The results show high potential of a market, which is open to discover new career paths only if

approached correctly. The results allow elaborating and creating a Foreign Talent Acquisition Strategy for BRA in Lithuania, since the data provide the insight of influence factors to be taken into consideration: culture, language, economy and environment. Furthermore, common patterns of answers suggest awareness methods - such as broadcasted success stories, marketed internship opportunities, ads on social media platforms and articles about the country as a whole - the living experience - which will also have an impact on the managerial solution and overall attraction strategy.

The main limitations of this study were related with the empirical research. Firstly, it was quite challenging to find people for the first group (Lithuanians living in Malta) and for the third group (Lithuanians living in Lithuania wanting to work abroad). The bigger issue when searching for people in Lithuania was that most of the available respondents were still in university and that was why they were open to new opportunities. It is very demanding to find for respondents in Lithuania, since if a person is willing to chase the career path abroad they have already done it, immediately after achieving a degree. When asked for referrals for possible respondents, the common answer was that people who are willing to leave have already left.

Secondly, other sources, such as recruitment agencies in Lithuania, were not available to elaborate on the research topic. The lack of interest in participating is explained as the uncommon destination (not enough information) and potential threat of BRA as Competitor Company (unwillingness to share information).

End Notes

¹ We use the Initials BRA for Boutique Recruitment Agency as the Agency wants to remain anonymous.

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