



Talent beyond capitals

How university towns can attract and retain students and researchers through innovative Talent Relationship Management

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About the Baltic Sea Region Talent Attraction and Mobility Network project

This handbook is the fruit of a project carried out from 2016 to 2017 with Tartu City and the University of Tartu (Estonia), and Riga City and Riga Technical University (Latvia). The purpose of the project was to develop tools that help to increase talent mobility, attraction and retention, through better networks and support mechanisms. The project is being carried out with financial support from the Swedish Institute.

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Future Place Leadership

Table of contents

04	Introduction
05	Why this handbook?
07	Purpose of this handbook
07	Target group
07	Definitions
08	Challenges for university towns
09	Attraction factors for students and academics – why does talent come, stay and leave?
10	From marketing campaigns to Talent Relationship Management
14	Talent Relationship Management and the Baltic Sea Region
15	The toolkit
16	Branding
24	Attracting
31	Receiving
43	Living and working
65	Moving
76	From foes to friends: Baltic Sea Region collaboration in talent mobility?
78	Final words
79	Literature

Introduction

05	Why this handbook?
07	Purpose of this handbook
07	Target group
07	Definitions
08	Challenges for university towns
09	Attraction factors for students and academics – why does talent come, stay and leave?
10	From marketing campaigns to Talent Relationship Management
14	Talent Relationship Management and the Baltic Sea Region

Why this handbook?

Over the past decade or so, university towns across Northern Europe have gradually increased their efforts to attract and retain university graduates and scientists. This is for good reason. University graduates and scientists are a key driver of innovation and economic development, and are closely connected to the wealth and affluence of towns and cities, according to a large number of studies. International students and academics can add even more to local innovation capacity and economy – it is now well established that diverse teams and companies are more innovative than more homogeneous ones. Attracting and retaining more students is also a key factor for meeting the demands of the local labour market – and lack of qualified labour is increasingly becoming a challenge for companies in Europe, especially outside the larger capital city regions.

However, many challenges still persist for university towns. Even though exact figures are hard to come by, our interviews with representatives of universities and university towns reveal that up to 70–80% of all students leave their place of study after graduation, often to move to a larger capital or metropolitan region¹. Lack of jobs is typically not the main reason – this happens despite the fact

that the local economy lacks qualified labour. This instead points to a mismatch between the academic and business sectors as one explanation. This is obviously a lost opportunity for the local economy of university towns. Some people – but far from all – move back to a smaller town later in life, in some cases the town they studied in, for example when they reach their thirties and it is time to start building a family. This indicates that the battle is not lost, even though a person moves away – it might be possible to attract them back in the future (or at least make them a valuable ambassador for your particular place, even if they do not move back). That said, non-capital regions find it increasingly difficult to lure back those that are ready to settle down and start a family, as many in this group choose to remain in the bigger urban centres.

When it comes to international students and younger researchers, university towns and countries face additional challenges in retaining them. Explanations for this are many, but one of the most important ones is that international students simply cannot find a job during the course of their short stay. One fairly common reason is that many companies, especially smaller ones, hesitate to hire someone that does not speak the local language.

Another reason is that it is difficult for international students to build a professional network and get to know employers during their stay. Add to that, that international students have a limited time – on average 6 months in Northern European countries – to stay and look for a job after finishing their studies. If they have not found a job within this time, their residence permit will expire. This illustrates that efforts to integrate internationals with the local economy need to start early, ideally the day that a person starts their study period.

At the same time, many cities run expensive campaigns to attract internationals, for example ICT professionals from say India or China. But why go through all that trouble when it might already be possible to find that future Indian or Chinese software engineer in your own city? What's more, research shows that fewer international students and guest researchers stay in their place of study than would like to stay – if only it had just been easier.

As for more senior researchers that have moved with a family, other challenges kick in. They need to find housing that matches their needs (housing prices in many university towns are very high), day care or schools for their children and work for their partner.

1. This can be compared to studies in the U.S. showing that the university towns with the highest retention rate reach a figure of only 20–25 % leaving after graduation. <https://www.citylab.com/life/2016/03/which-metros-are-best-at-keeping-their-college-graduates/473604/>

International students or researchers typically study as exchange students for one or two semesters or as full undergraduates (three-year bachelor degree), on a graduate programme (e.g. two-year master's programme) or on a 3–5-year PhD programme. Even though most countries in the Baltic Sea Region charge course fees, a university programme is nevertheless subsidised by the government.

Again, this seems like a dramatic lost opportunity: we first subsidise education for people, but we do not give them a proper chance to stay and work and contribute to our society and economy.

This handbook will hopefully contribute to changing this.

Purpose of this handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to inspire and provide concrete tools for universities, city governments and business associations to enhance their efforts to attract and retain students and researchers, as well as facilitate more seamless mobility of these groups. A special focus is on how non-capital university towns can improve their efforts in this regard, especially in the Northern European Baltic Sea Region.

Case studies of practical examples of tools and strategies in use will be used to inspire and promote action among the readers of this handbook.

Target groups

The target groups are primarily universities and city governments, as these are considered to be key facilitators and coordinators of broad collaboration efforts to attract, retain and enable mobility for students and academic talent.

In addition, the ‘quadruple-helix’ stakeholders that are essential partners in such a cooperation are also targeted. Thus, apart from universities and the public sector, businesses and business associations, and the civil society sector are also in focus, as these are considered to play an important role as catalysts, initiators and/or co-financiers of initiatives to attract and retain talent.

Definitions

The focus of this handbook is on talent that studies or works at universities – this includes all categories of students and academics (scientists, guest researchers, post-docs etc.).

Some of the tools discussed focus on talent in general, or mostly international talent (‘expats’ or ‘internationals’), but can also be used to attract or retain local students and academics.

Challenges for university towns

Non-capital university towns (and other places too) face a number of challenges when it comes to attracting and retaining students and researchers. Some of these challenges are shared with places in general, whereas some are more specific to university towns.

1. The lure of urban areas is greater than ever, especially for younger and highly-educated people – a trend driven by powerful economic, lifestyle and cultural factors. Mega-city regions are growing more than ever, creating challenges for university towns, especially those that are not part of a larger city region.
2. It is getting increasingly difficult for cities and regions to stand out from the crowd as a result of increased competition and a saturated communications landscape – therefore, those places that manage to create innovative marketing and experiences for talents, and that can showcase appealing sectors or clusters and comprehensive service offers for talents, will be the winners of tomorrow.
3. More international students and researchers leave than wish to do so, and this is explained by challenges such as difficulty finding jobs and lack of social and professional integration and well-being.
4. On a larger, societal scale, populism and xenophobia are making it more difficult for societies to prioritise efforts to attract and retain internationals. There are indicators that point to a lower tolerance towards migrants in non-capital cities than in capitals and larger metropolitan regions.

Attraction factors for students and academics – why does talent come, stay and leave?

Academics and students are attracted by many of the same general attraction factors for talent, but there are also *pull* (reasons why someone moves to a region) and *push* (reasons why someone leaves a region) factors that are specific for this group.

These push and pull factors are important to keep in mind when reading this handbook, and we have strived to make sure that the different tools discussed reflect these factors.

As for academics, the following specific *pull factors* have been identified:

- Presence of centres of scientific excellence.
- The prestige of the academic institution.
- Presence of other talented researchers, leading to clustering of scientific excellence in some cities and regions.

In addition, career opportunities and quality-of-life factors play a large role in attracting academics.

Specific *pull factors* for students, that are related to academic aspects include:

- International environments, where students can get intercultural experiences and international career opportunities.
- Teaching and research quality.
- Cost of study.
- International reputation of the university.

There are also a number of general *push factors* that make it difficult to retain talent for longer periods. The most important ones are:

- Lack of social and personal integration for the talent and his/her family.
- Lack of jobs for accompanying partners.
- Language barriers, both when it comes to finding ways to learn the local language, as well as obtaining corporate and public information in English.
- Practical problems and red tape when it comes to issues such as official paperwork, finding housing, banking and insurance matters.
- Lack of career opportunities and low salary².

² ONE BSR project, 2014

From marketing campaigns to Talent Relationship Management

Most students of marketing have probably heard this: it costs five times as much to attract a new customer than to keep an existing one³. This means that businesses need to retain customers and build a loyal relationship with them, and thereby avoid the high costs of acquiring new customers.

It kind of makes sense, doesn't it? You don't have to spend time and resources going out and finding new clients – you just have to keep the ones you have happy.

The prescribed solution for businesses is usually *Customer Relationship Management* (CRM). The overall purpose of CRM is to manage a company's interaction with current and potential customers. A key factor for driving the customer relationship and loyalty is *customer experience*, meaning that customers get a tailored experience before, during and after consumption of a product or service.

3. There is even research suggesting that, depending on the industry, acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one (Harvard Business Review, 2014).

Understanding customer needs in general, and individual preferences in particular in these different phases is therefore key.

The same logic could be applied to cities and regions too. Why go all the way to China or India to attract new talent to your university, city or business, when you can more likely meet Chinese or Indian exchange students in your city, and build and manage a relationship with them to be able to understand and meet their needs?

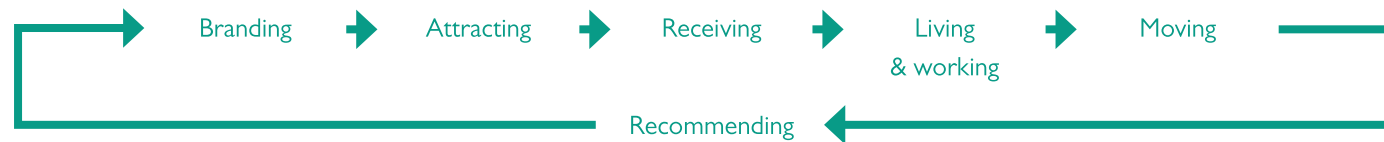
We are therefore introducing the concept of *Talent Relationship Management for Cities and Regions*.

The aim of Talent Relationship Management (TRM) is for a place to develop a long-term relationship with potential, current and former residents, in order to attract them, satisfy their current needs, get them to speak well of this place, or get them to come back if they have left this place.

As customer experience is a key factor for CRM, *talent experience* is a key factor for creating and maintaining loyalty among talents. The customer of a company will have different needs at different stages in the so-called *customer journey*, typically extending firstly from awareness of a product or service, to advocacy (i.e. that they will want to recommend it to others).

In the same vein, the needs and wishes of talents will change as they 'travel' on their journey – the *talent journey* – from before they arrive in a place, to living in it, to after they have left it – and different strategies and activities need to be employed to ensure a positive experience along this journey.

Figure 1: Talent Relationship Management for Cities and Regions



There are many ways to conceptualise the customer journey, but one common categorisation (with corresponding ‘talent journey’ phases in parentheses, further explained below) is:

1. Awareness (Branding)
2. Consideration (Attracting)
3. Purchase (Receiving)
4. Use (Living and working)
5. Ambassador (Moving and Recommending).

Figure 1 outlines the main steps in the talent journey and the corresponding strategies/types of activities needed to build the relationship with the talent.

1. **Branding** strategies and activities are aimed at making a particular place visible and attractive to talents (creating *awareness*, to use the corresponding customer journey phase). Branding can be seen as both the beginning and the end of a self-reinforcing cycle, where

those that have had a positive stay and ‘talent experience’ will recommend the place to others, even after they leave this place, which will help strengthen the brand further.

2. The goal of **attracting** is to persuade the talent to move to a particular place, through different marketing and communication activities. In this phase, a talent is *considering* moving to a new place.
3. **Receiving** is the equivalent of the *purchase* phase in the customer journey (i.e. the talent has already decided to move). This phase is aimed at making the first point of contact with, and impression of, a new location a positive experience by helping newcomers to find information and settle in smoothly. Receiving can be divided into two types of activities: *pre-arrival information* focussing on information needs before and during the relocation process, and *soft landing*, focussing on needs after arrival.
4. The purpose of **living and working** activi-

ties are to help talents integrate into society and work life, and make sure they can realise their full potential and contribute to a particular place. The receiving, and living and working phases are, we argue, the most important phases for retention (i.e. creating conditions for a person to stay as long or longer than planned). This phase corresponds to *use* (of a product or service) in the customer journey.

5. In the **moving** phase, activities are aimed at preparing talents for mobility and for making their departure from a particular location positive – and to stay in touch with those who have left – with the dual purpose of making them *ambassadors* of the place and perhaps getting them to come back at a later stage in life.

All in all, if a particular place manages to create a positive experience in all phases, there will be a positive feedback loop in which talents speak

well of the place and **recommend** that others move (or stay longer) there, helping to enhance the **branding** phase. Of course, not only those that have lived in a particular place can recommend others, but also those that have just move there or lived there for some time.

Figure 2 on the next page outlines the concrete tools for Talent Relationship Management.

One important strategy for companies that want to enhance the customer experience and trigger loyalty towards the brand is *packaging* different parts of the so-called 'customer journey' into a complete, seamless experience, either online or physically, or both.

We argue that those cities and places that want to be successful in the future race for talents will need to consider doing this with the talent journey. Imagine a city, let's call it City of X, that manages to create the 'City of X experience' for talents through carefully packaged branding, attracting, receiving, living and moving services that cater to the needs of different phases.

Talent retention is an important concept in Talent Relationship Management, but it is never an end game in itself. Indeed, retaining talent is important, but if the talent gets a positive experience of the place, retention will follow.

However, sometimes talent mobility is of

higher importance. Bright minds are mobile, and will – no matter how satisfied they are – not stay in the same place for their entire career. In the same vein, many students will inevitably leave their university town for a bigger city after graduation. This does not mean however, that the battle is lost.

The important thing is that students have had a positive reception and living experience in the city. If so, they will stay longer than planned (or at least not be forced to leave because of negative experiences stemming from lack of services or amenities that cater to their needs). If they have had a positive experience during their stay, they will also leave happy and speak well of the place, even if they choose to move on to another place. And if they do so, they will *recommend* the place and help build its brand, and they may even return in the future, for example when it is time to settle down and build a family. Thus, the key task for the university town is to keep in touch with and continue creating value (i.e. a positive talent experience) for the former student over time, for example through an alumni network that is relevant and valuable to the person in question (read more about alumni and ambassador networks in the next chapter, in the toolkit section on *moving*).

But why is talent mobility such an important part of the equation? The short answer is

that it helps ensure that talents find their way to where they are most needed, and have the greatest opportunities. An instructive example in a European context, mentioned in the book *Innovating Talent Attraction*⁴, is Spain. Until 2011–12, Spain benefitted from a large influx of labour migrants from the rest of Europe and elsewhere, helping to grow its economy. However, in the aftermath of the economic crisis it became an emigrant country, from which young Spaniards moved to find opportunities elsewhere in Europe, to the benefit of both Spain (that needed to pay less unemployment support), the receiving country (whose employers got a larger talent pool to recruit from), and the individual, who would have found a job and acquired new skills and experiences (that, in turn, would have benefitted Spain, if the person decided to move back).

What's more, talent mobility creates new perspectives and circulation and exchange of ideas, which are so important for creativity and innovation in the economy.

4. Andersson, King-Grubert and Lubanski, 2016

Figure 2: The Talent Relationship Management Toolkit

Branding	Attracting	Receiving	Living & working	Moving
		Pre-arrival information		
Inclusive branding platforms	Marketing portal	Information portal	Professional networks	Mobility support
Innovative events	Community and content marketing	Open-house activities	Mentoring	Alumni networks
Branding toolboxes	Online campaigns	Soft landing	Regional trainee programmes	Ambassador networks
		Welcome events and programmes	Cultural understanding	
		Expat services and expat centres: <i>Public services;</i> <i>Access to housing;</i> <i>Access to schools</i>	Career advice and events	
		Dual career assistance	Open innovation and co-creation	

Talent Relationship Management and the Baltic Sea Region

It is argued here that if all locations would become better at all steps of the Talent Relationship Management model, mobility would increase. For example, the better reception a person gets when moving to a new place, the more positive the migration experience is seen as, and – perhaps paradoxically – the more prone the person will be to move again.

This also forms a rationale for increased cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region in the talent attraction and mobility field; if all cities

and regions would be better at building their reputation for attracting, welcoming and integrating talent, and at the same time increasing collaboration in promoting talent mobility in the region, the conditions for mobility between these countries would increase. In addition, concrete measures for promoting intra-Baltic Sear Region talent mobility can be implemented, which will be discussed in the final chapters of the handbook.

The toolkit

16	Branding
24	Attracting
31	Receiving
43	Living and working
65	Moving

Branding

The overall objective of branding activities is to create awareness of the place in question in the eyes of talents. Very few people will move to a place they have never heard of. Place branding is therefore a key activity for positioning a particular place as a destination of choice for talent.

Branding activities typically have a two aims:

1. To make the place visible and attractive to talents in other places and...
2. ...to increase the identification with the place among those already living in the place.

These two aims can also be mutually reinforcing: the stronger the identity of a place is with its current citizens, the easier it will be to build a coherent external brand image.

Inclusive branding platforms

One of the best starting points for coherent branding of a city or region is to create an open branding platform, comprising values that characterise the place that different stakeholders can use in their activities and communication. Such a platform should be created in close cooperation with different stakeholders of the place, to make sure that they feel ownership of it.

Users/target group

Primarily external target groups, but also internal ones such as students and academics already living in the place.

Activities required

An inclusive process that takes into account the views and opinions of a broad range of stakeholders is needed. The tools for engaging stakeholders and making sure they can have a say are interviews, focus groups, workshops, social media dialogue and surveys.

Who needs to act?

City governments typically carry the main responsibility and have the necessary clout to lead place branding processes at the city level. Universities and business associations or networks could also play key roles.

Success factors

The more *co-created* the branding platform is by different stakeholders, the more likely that it will be used by them.

Honest branding is a key factor. Do not hype, but be precise in your messages and positioning towards your target groups. Creating false expectations will backfire. This means creating a branding image that will persuade talents to come to the location, but without creating too high or false expectations that are difficult to meet.

One such example concerns the need to learn the local language. Many people arrive in European countries thinking that English will be enough to master work life in a particular location, but later find out that there is a need to learn the local language.

Authentic branding is another factor; that is, pushing those features of the location that are somewhat in line with how it is perceived by outside target groups (image) and by its residents (identity) today. It is about being true and real.

Innovative events

The purpose of these kinds of events is to create awareness and differentiation – to be seen and appreciated by target groups.

As we have seen in introduction chapter, it is becoming increasingly challenging for places to differentiate themselves. Marketing communication is rarely enough to stand out from the crowd and get noticed by target groups. Innovative events and projects can therefore become important ways of creating and conveying uniqueness for a place.

Users/target group

Primarily external target groups, but also internal stakeholders such as students and academics already living in the particular place.

Activities required

In order to launch innovative events, an inclusive, creative process that encourages ‘thinking outside the box’ to find new solutions is a good way to work.

Involving stakeholders in the creation of events is a key factor in making sure that the events really become innovative and creative. See case profile I about Polar Bear Pitching for an illustration of this.

Who needs to act?

Any stakeholder in the ‘talent ecosystem’ can take the lead in creating such events, but should ideally coordinate and collaborate with other stakeholders. The broader the partnership behind the event, the more powerful will its message be.

Success factors

Getting the ‘stamp of approval’ of the city government may have an important legitimising effect on the event, as they typically hold the main responsibility for managing the brand of the place.

It is worthwhile to note however, that a place brand belongs to all place stakeholders. Thus, as for those branding platforms mentioned before, the more *co-created* the event is by different stakeholders, the more likely that it will become innovative and cater to target groups.

Ensuring that the event is permeated with the values of the branding platform of the place in question is also a success factor in making sure that the event helps build the brand of the place. In other words, being *authentic* in the branding is a key factor. Case profile I shows how authentic values can be bred into an innovative event.

Case 1: Innovative events – Polar Bear Pitching in Oulu, Finland



Case I: Innovative events – Polar Bear Pitching in Oulu, Finland

Oulu in Northern Finland has a strong gaming cluster – but has lacked access to enough venture capital to secure growth prospects for firms, and therefore to retain start-ups and gaming talent in the city. Enter the Polar Bear Pitching event.

How it works: A hole is cut in the ice and entrepreneurs pitch their start-up ideas in the freezing cold. You can speak about your company for as long as you like – as long as you remain standing in freezing water.

The unique event is broadcasted all over the world and contributes to the image of Oulu as one of the best cities for start-ups in the world.

The event is the outcome of a collaboration between BusinessOulu, university students and entrepreneurs, and embraces the mentality of a young start-up – taking an innovative and bold approach. The event has become

part of a broader strategy to create a venue for handpicked start-ups with potential for scalable and international business to present their ideas to potential investors. The results have been powerful: coverage in world media – and venture capital – has been pouring in.

It may, at first glance, seem like just a marketing stunt, but the event is closely linked to the habits and identity of northern Finland. In other words, it is authentic.

Branding toolboxes

The purpose of a branding toolbox is to make available different materials, such as images, videos, infographics, stories etc., that help communicate a particular place and its qualities and values. Different stakeholders such as employers or universities can use the material when communicating the advantages of studying, living and working in their city or region.

A branding toolbox can take the form of either an online portal with downloadable material or a printed handbook with guidelines and material.

Learn more about a concrete example – the Talent Attraction Denmark Toolbox – in case profile 2.

Users/target group

The users are typically recruiting companies, especially perhaps SMEs and start-ups with small resources to spend on employer branding, universities that want to attract students, and public sector organisations that want to build a brand of the region. Target groups are students, academics and other talents.

Activities required

An important first activity is to determine what the city or region wants to say about itself. The branding platform described earlier is a good starting point. The next step is to find a service provider that will help to build the online solution, and to purchase or gather information from different stakeholders that can be used in the toolbox.

Who needs to act?

Public sector organisations or universities are typically in charge of creating these types of solutions, even though business associations, such as a chamber of commerce, are suitable for taking the lead as well.

Success factors

Making sure that the toolboxes contain a good balance between appealing and informative material is one important success factor. Appealing design and user-friendliness of the portal – meaning that it should be possible to download and use the material without spending too much time – are also important criteria for success.

Case 2: Branding toolbox – Talent Attraction Denmark toolbox



Case 2: Branding toolbox – Talent Attraction Denmark toolbox

To support Danish employers in attracting international talents, Copenhagen Capacity and their partners have launched the toolbox portal www.talentattractiondenmark.dk.

An online toolbox with free content, it supports everyone from SMEs to multinational companies and universities in recruiting international talents. It comprises inspiring material for the recruiting process, consisting of videos, photos, infographics and texts.

Labelled a solution for 'employer place branding', it focusses on branding Denmark and Danish companies through unique and distinctive material that aims to provide a view of life and culture in Denmark, Danish universities and their academic credentials and innovative and strong business sectors.

Attracting

The purpose of the attracting phase is to persuade the talent to move to a particular place, through different marketing and communication activities. In this phase, a talent is *considering* moving to a new place.

Marketing portal

The purpose of a marketing portal is to attract talent by communicating the credentials of a city or region.

A marketing portal can contain information about quality of life, culture, educational opportunities, personal testimonials, and strong business sectors and centres of excellence in the region. Most portals also fulfil the dual purpose of being *information portals*, providing detailed information to those that have already decided to move or have just moved to the place (see the section on Reception for more information about information portals). Yet some have a third purpose: They are also a *recruitment portal*, whereby they feature a database of available jobs in that location.

Users/target group

Primarily external target groups, but also internal stakeholders such as students and academics already living in that place.

Activities required

An important first activity is to determine what the city or region wants to say about itself. The branding platform described under 'Branding' is a good starting point. Also deciding the scope of the portal is an important step: some portals target all talent (typically labelled 'Move to...'), whereas others target only students (typically called 'Study in...').

What's more, asking the target group for input is an important step to make sure the portal meets their wishes. The next step is to find a service provider that will help build the online solution, and gather information from different stakeholders that can be used in the portal.

Who needs to act?

Public sector organisations or universities are typically in charge of creating these types of solutions, even though business associations and individual employers need to contribute with information and links (and job opportunities, if a job search is included as a function). Also cultural organisations and NGOs may need to contribute with information about their activities.

Success factors

Success factors include:

- Finding a good balance between expressing the strengths and appeal of a particular location in an attractive, positive way, but at the same time without creating overly high expectations that are difficult to live up to.
- Understanding target group needs.
- User-friendly and appealing design of the portal.
- Planning capacity for implementation with regular updates, so that information is current and relevant.
- If including job search portals: create awareness among employers.

Community and content marketing

The aim of community and content marketing is to engage the target group and create relevant and valuable experiences for them.

Community marketing is here defined as a strategy that focusses on interacting with a group (or community) of like-minded individuals, typically in an online environment, such as a social media group, targeted blog website or online message board forum. This is a great way to foster a two-way relationship between your place and the talent, because it not only gives you valuable information about a talent's preferences and relocation habits, but also gives them an arena where they feel included, important and valued by the place itself.

Content marketing is here defined as a strategic marketing approach focussed on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience – and, ultimately, to drive relocation to a particular place. Instead of just communicating how great your place is, you are providing truly relevant and useful content to your prospective and current talent to help them solve their issues or get a positive or valuable experience.

Community and content marketing are thus key activities in *Talent Relationship Management*; these activities permit a particular place to get to know their target groups and their wishes, collect their contact information, engage in a dialogue, and can, ultimately, create a positive *talent experience* for the talent.

Community marketing also has much in common with open innovation and co-creation activities: The two-way dialogue can harness the 'wisdom of the crowds' (i.e. knowledge and input from the community that is engaged), which can contribute to individual companies' innovation and product development or to the development of the place itself. This, in turn, can make the bond between talent and a particular place even stronger; we argue that the chance to contribute will make a person feel valued and appreciated by the place, which is one of the strongest factors for developing appreciation for, and loyalty to, the place.

One of the pioneers of community and content marketing is the Brainport Eindhoven Region in the Netherlands. Read more about their work in case profile 3.

Users/target group

For *community marketing*, the users or target group are those that either already live in a particular place or that live elsewhere but have shown interest, for example by signing up to an online community that is managed by the city or university. For *content marketing*, these are primarily external target groups, but also internal stakeholders such as students and academics already living in a particular place.

Activities required

Important activities include determining what the city or region wants to say about itself in marketing communications. The branding platform described under 'Branding' is a good starting point. Also taking steps to understand target group needs and expectations is important: what content do they find relevant and valuable?

Who needs to act?

Any organisation with the responsibility to attract or retain talent could use these marketing strategies. Actions should ideally be coordinated with the organisation that is in charge of overall branding of the location, which typically is the city government.

Success factors

Being relevant and providing network members with valuable and relevant content is key. If you want talent to be interested in you, be interesting and offer them relevant content related to their professional interests and development, recruitment tips, updates about the region or a business sector, or organise events with speakers or matchmaking with companies etc.

Case 3: Content and community marketing in Brainport Eindhoven Region



Case 3: Content and community marketing in Brainport Eindhoven Region

How do you engage and mobilise talent in content-related discussions and exchange? Brainport Eindhoven Region and its development agency Brainport Development has some of the answers. Their latest innovation, the talentBOX, is the starting point. It is an online platform (as well as marketing and information portal) for tech and IT talents to find jobs, knowledge and networks, facilitating a dialogue between the talents both in the region and abroad, and employers in the region. The focus for this dialogue is the content of the jobs offered in the region; by reaching out to peer-to-peer networks with interesting and innovative content, the region is increasing its relevance for, and appeal to, talent in specific tech and IT fields.

The content-centred engagement takes three forms:

1. *Stories* – interesting stories from talent working for companies in the region will be placed on the talentBOX portal and disseminated to special interest communities via social media.
2. *Challenges* – both live and online challenges about a specific peer topic for the region's employers in which talent worldwide can participate in.
3. *Webinars* and events with relevant content for the target group.

This strategy, coupled with a strong focus on reception (Eindhoven has, for example, a full-service Expat Centre) and 'living in' activities and networks, has helped position the region as a global talent magnet.

Online campaigns

The purpose of an online campaign is to communicate the quality of a particular city as a destination for students and talent, interesting clusters and innovative sectors and/or concrete job offers.

A campaign can run from a stand-alone website that is shared through social media channels and digital advertising, or be directly integrated into social media channels such as LinkedIn or Facebook.

Users/target group

The target groups are students and researchers with a profile corresponding to the needs of the strong sectors/clusters in the city or region. Users are typically individual employers that look to recruit, as well as representatives of those business associations and cluster organisations in that place that see large recruitment needs.

Activities required

Important activities include determining what the city or region wants to say about itself in marketing communications (the branding platform described under 'Branding' is a good starting point). Also, there is a need to take steps to understand what the top sectors/clusters in the city are, in terms of appeal to target groups and the scale of talents' needs.

Finding a user-friendly digital solution is also important, making it an easy journey for the talent to go from interest in a particular place/university, to sector/cluster, to individual job offer (either through listing job offers on a landing page, or through links to employers' recruitment pages).

Who needs to act?

The city government, business association or cluster organisation can take the lead in launching online campaigns. When launching such an effort, it is important that there is cooperation between the city government, universities, business associations/cluster organisations and even individual employers, as the campaign typically will feature information about the place in question, its strong clusters and its employers that want to recruit.

Success factors

Creating and designing a seamless and user-friendly online 'journey' between the place, its strong sectors, employers and individual jobs is a key factor. If this process does not work, those showing interest in this place may give up searching for more information if they cannot easily go from interest in the place to the next level (i.e. the strong sectors).

In addition, making sure that all stakeholders – private, university and public – contribute with information and resources is also a key factor, as the campaign will feature information about jobs, business sectors and the place itself.

Receiving

Receiving is the equivalent of the *purchase* phase in the customer journey (i.e. the talent has already decided to ‘buy’ the place, or in this case, move to it). This phase is aimed at making the first point of contact with and impression of the new location a positive experience by helping newcomers to find essential information and settle in smoothly.

Receiving can be divided into two types of activities: *pre-arrival information*, focussing on information needs before and during the relocation process, and *soft landing*, focussing on needs after arrival.

Pre-arrival information

Pre-arrival information focusses on information needs before and during the relocation process.

Information portal

The purpose of information portals is to provide user-friendly information to talents about, among other things, how to find a job in a particular location, apply for work permits, register with the authorities, find accommodation, and find information on health care and social services. These are typically labelled 'Work in' or 'Move to ...' portals. They can also be targeted at students only (typically called 'Study in').

The information can cater to those that have not decided to move yet, to those that are in the process of relocating to your location (used for pre-arrival information), and to those that have already relocated (to ensure soft landing). In addition, this information can be useful for those that have lived for a while in this location (the *living and working phase*).

An information portal can be combined with a *marketing portal*, which may also include a *recruitment function*.

Users/target group

The target groups for these services are mainly international students and academics, even though people moving within a country can make use of some of the information – for example how to find jobs or accommodation. Many smaller cities run portals in the local language, which mainly target people from their own country.

Activities required

Activities include gathering information from stakeholders – for example, government agencies, universities, employers, relocation firms, event organisers. Steps must be taken to understand target group needs and to design and set up the portal.

Who needs to act?

City governments or national government agencies carry the main responsibility for setting up these types of portals. Event organisers, univer-

sities, cultural organisations, employment agencies and/or business associations need to contribute with information.

Success factors

Success factors include:

- Understanding target group information needs, before, during and just after the relocation process.
- Providing relevant and comprehensible information in order to tackle information needs, and create reasonable expectations.
- A user-friendly and appealing design of portal and its user interface.
- Planning capacity for implementation and regular updating, so that information is current and relevant.
- Long-term commitment from those stakeholders that provide the portal with information.

Open-house activities

The aim of open-house activities is to invite those that are considering relocation, or that have just relocated, to get information about studying, living and working in a particular place. In addition, these activities can be aimed at students that live in the place in question, with the aim of fostering a relationship with them, better understanding their needs and showcasing job opportunities to ultimately offer them a more complete 'talent experience', and get them to take up a job and stay in the city after graduation. Offering interesting presentations, entertainment, and food and drinks can also be an important aspect, to make sure people take the time to attend.

Such activities can also take a virtual form. One example is the government-backed programme TalentScotland, which organised a full-day webinar during which those considering relocating to the country got the chance to ask questions to members of their Digital Talent Ambassador Network (IT people from European countries that already lived in Scotland). Read more about ambassador networks later in this chapter.

Users/target group

The target groups for these activities are both students and academics in other locations as well as those presently living in the location in question.

Activities required

Activities include marketing events through the information/marketing portal, social media, and/or with partners (networks and organisations dealing with talent). One prerequisite is to create new or coordinate existing databases with contact details of talents, or to proactively use social media platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn, to be able to invite them to introductory events and programmes. In the same way that companies have CRM⁵-systems to manage customer relations, a particular location would benefit much from managing their relationship with talent through a system/software (a 'TRM-system', if you like).

It is necessary to invite speakers and exhibitors that can showcase what a given place has to offer in terms of quality of life,

jobs, culture and sports. One important feature to increase the appeal of the event can be to integrate networking opportunities, so that newcomers can build their social and professional network.

Also, importantly, making sure that there is some kind of follow-up after the event by continuing to communicate and build the relationship with those that attended is an often-overlooked aspect. Deciding to relocate is a decision-making process that can take a long time. In addition, those who take the decision to move will need support once they start their relocation journey.

Who needs to act?

City governments or universities usually take the lead in organising open-house activities, but individual employers, business associations and cluster organisations can also arrange such activities. Organisers may need to work with a broad range of different stakeholders and service providers to be able to provide useful content for talents, such as employment agencies,

5. Customer Relationship Management

recruitment firms, employers, language training providers, and cultural and sports organisations.

Success factors

Success factors include understanding target group needs and finding a good balance between marketing and information – how can interest in the location be generated, and at the same time relevant information be provided? It is also important to make sure not to ‘over-sell’ the city – creating sound expectations is an important criterion for fostering a positive talent experience over time. Finally, creating a long-term partnership with different stakeholders and service providers that need to attend open-house events is a success criterion.

Soft landing

Soft landing activities focus on needs after arrival to a particular location

Welcome events/ programmes

The general aim of welcoming and introductory efforts is to facilitate a positive welcome to newcomers to a location and give them relevant information about accommodation, jobs and leisure, and social and cultural activities. Many international students and academics are also interested in introductions to the academic traditions of the universities they study or work at.

Activities can range from introductory meetings to larger events to introductory programmes over several weeks. Universities typically organise 'welcome weeks' for new students and guest researchers and an increasing number of cities and companies do the same. An example is the Helsinki Region Welcome Weeks, organised until recently and soon to be replaced by an International House that Helsinki plans to open in 2018.

These activities can be complemented with a 'city tour' showing newcomers around in the city.

Users/target group

The target groups for these activities are students and academics that have recently relocated to the location.

Activities required

Organising events or programmes that showcase what a region (or university) has to offer in terms of social events, culture, food, sports, accommodation, language courses and more, and to give opportunities to newcomers to meet other newcomers as well as locals.

One prerequisite is to create new or coordinate existing databases with contact details of talents, or to proactively use social media network opportunities such as Facebook or LinkedIn, to be able to invite talent to introductory events and programmes. Ideally, this process should already start in the attraction

phase, by identifying people that show interest in the place or that have decided to move as a result of online activities such as community marketing or those online campaigns described in the previous section 'Attracting'.

These networks/databases can be used at later stages to invite people to social or professional networks and events, career-related events, and to support the creation of alumni or ambassador networks (read more about these tools in the coming chapters). As already underlined, there is a need to create a long-term relationship and cater to the needs of talent over their *entire* stay (and after leaving, as will be discussed in the *moving* section)

Who needs to act?

For larger events/programmes encompassing several issues: ideally a 'quadruple-helix' part-

nership between business associations, relocation firms, universities, city/regional governments and NGOs as organisers.

For more focussed events/programmes: larger organisations/employers such as universities and larger companies can launch their own activities. Chambers of commerce, business associations or cluster organisations that gather many small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can launch introductory events or programmes for their member firms.

Success factors

Involving international talents themselves in the planning and execution of introductory events or programmes is a good recipe for creating a positive *talent experience*, as they best know the needs of newcomers. Also involving locals, for example volunteers, in the execution of these events or programmes, so contact is promoted between internationals and locals is vital. Being able to communicate effortlessly with talents to invite them to events/programmes is also important.

Expat services and expat centres

Expat services is an umbrella term for assistance with public services (typically tax, immigration, pension and employment authorities), access to schools and childcare, access to housing, and access to language courses.

More and more locations set up expat centres (other names include ‘welcome centres’, ‘international houses’ or ‘international service centres’) to *package* services into a seamless experience.

The purpose of expat services is to:

1. Make sure that arriving talents can get their official paperwork done, such as getting work permits, registering their address with the authorities, sorting out tax papers, health insurance and so on in a seamless, efficient way.
2. Help expat families and international professionals in particular to find housing and schools and day care for their children when arriving in a certain destination. Finding international schools is an especially important task. Provide both temporary housing (both to facilitate short-term mobility and soft landing for newcomers) and more long-term solutions – these are key factors.
3. Make sure that international talents get access to language training and the support needed around language learning that serves their social and professional purposes, and, in the longer run, settling in and integration prospects. Naturally, introducing opportunities for language training also plays a role in the later *living and working phase*.

All in all, a positive relocation experience may create a lasting bond between a given location and the newcomer, and paves the way for successful integration (the *living and working phase*). In the longer run, a good first impression also enhances the possibility of a talent becoming an ambassador for the place, and they will want to recommend it to their network – and even come back to it some time in the future.

Conversely, a negative first experience may result in a shortened stay (yes, we have seen many cases where a talent or his/her family have faced difficult bureaucracy, a heavy administrative burden and non-service-minded public officials, and have simply given up and moved back home). Such an experience often translates into the person in question spreading a negative image of the location.

Users/target group

Both students and academics. Those that are international typically need more assistance.

Activities required

For access to *public services*, building a logical, transparent and comprehensible process that arriving talents can overview and follow is important. This necessitates that different public service providers engage in dialogue and take steps to align their activities (which is often easier said than done. As an example, public records can be difficult to integrate and may be built on different electronic platforms that are incompatible). There is, we think, much opportunity to *package* this process into a comprehensive and 'brandable' experience, alongside the other phases in the *talent journey* (cf. the City of X experience discussed in the introduction to this handbook).

For *access to housing*: Engaging in dialogue with rental and letting agents and relocation firms, creating a database with rental opportunities and possibly setting up a portal where those who want to sublet to internationals can register.

For *access to schools*: Mapping schools and engaging in dialogue with them to learn about their profile and availability to take on new students.

For both *housing and schools*: Engage in dialogue with employers to understand their

current and future needs for assistance.

For *language training*: It is important to develop language learning in a more working-life-oriented direction by combining teaching in the local language with a student's own field of study. Also, language studies should cater to different needs and be offered at different times of the day. Finally, students should be offered opportunities to improve their language skills even after completing their degrees.

To create *expat centres*, working with a broad range of partners is needed – government agencies, city and regional governments, universities, business associations and civil society. Should an immigration centre already exist for example, then consider not only reviewing and amplifying the services, but also making the centre more open to locals, essentially attaching integration, networking and matchmaking qualities to it by organising events, seminars, exhibitions etc.

Who needs to act?

For *public services*: primarily city governments and national government agencies need to coordinate and align their different services. In some cases private service providers, such as banks, also need to be involved in dialogue (for example, in some countries it is difficult to get a bank account unless you have a permanent address, and it is difficult to find permanent accommodation with-

out having a bank account).

When it comes to *access to housing and schools*, city governments or university relocation centres can either act as service providers or as facilitators to form a platform that provides seamless access to commercial or non-profit relocation services.

For housing too, collaboration with real estate and letting agents may be advantageous to make sure that the talents can be offered housing that meets their needs (and it is in the interest of the agents that demand for the property they sell or rent out increases).

As for *language training*, ideally a triple-helix partnership of city and regional governments, employers and universities needs to provide access to training.

Finally, to create *expat centres*, typically city or regional governments in collaboration with universities need to take on a lead role, supported by government agencies, and ideally also business associations or large employers.

Success factors

One-stop-shop solutions, such as International House Copenhagen (see case profile 4), where different public and expat service providers are co-located with private and civil society service providers, are considered a success factor for efficient service delivery.

If co-location is not feasible, a transparent, sequential and logical process, whereby those arriving at a particular location can easily comprehend what steps they need to take and in what order, is a success factor.

Success factors for language training include meeting the individual professional and social needs of each talent as much as possible, as well as flexibility; offering language studies that correspond to the person's educational background, profession and current level of language knowledge. Finally cooperation with employers in offering internships in working environments where the local language can be practised and ensuring that language training can continue after a person has been employed is important.

**Case 4: International House
Copenhagen – a one-stop shop
for seamless access to expat
services**

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Case 4: International House Copenhagen – a one-stop shop for seamless access to expat services

International House Copenhagen (IHC) is a unique and innovative initiative in the area of reception and integration of talent, initiated by the City of Copenhagen and University of Copenhagen.

Inaugurated in June 2013, at one location, the International House Copenhagen, state, municipality, academia and the private sector join forces to make international citizens and their family members who are looking for work or study feel at home. At the centrally located International House, international citizens get coordinated assistance with all the necessary official paperwork, and an array of offers of services, including advice on job hunting, language studies, dual career services, introduction to Danish working and living conditions, and help to create a social network. Other services include various help for accompanying spouses, relocation help, CV writing and more.

The International House has a strong focus on the academic community: it is a hub for visiting professors, PhD students and researchers, providing services, courses in cultural understanding, a social network and a researcher hotel.

Reducing any unnecessary time spent for expats to get their paperwork done is one of the main missions of the house. Four out of seven internationally-oriented authorities work under the same roof. The vision is 'It only takes one hour to become a Copenhagener'. Clear guidelines on how to move between different service providers in the house, as well as generous opening hours, facilitate the fulfilment of this goal. All in all, IHC is a very successful example of packaging different talent services into a seamless *talent experience*.

Dual career assistance

The goal of dual career assistance is to help partners/spouses of incoming talents to find a relevant job corresponding to their experience and qualifications. This assistance mainly plays a role in the *receiving/soft landing phase*, but can also play a role in the later *living and working phase* (in many cases the partner of the person that has been offered a job or study place will wait until after the first settling-in phase to begin looking for a job for themselves).

Dual career assistance can take the form of, for example, matchmaking, information or networking events, network building, job application advice, a recruitment portal or job placements.

Users/target group

Partners/spouses of incoming, especially international, talents

Activities required

First of all, the responsible organisation needs to initiate a dialogue with employers to get in touch with couples that need dual career assis-

tance. If relationship building has been successful in the earlier attracting, pre-arrival or soft landing phases (through for example open-house or introductory activities), this information should be available in databases – the ‘TRM-system’ for example – with contact details of newcomers. A concrete viable solution is to make it possible to register for dual career assistance at open-house or introductory events.

A recommended next step is to approach companies that may have needs to recruit and build a network among HR professionals in those companies. After that, building a database of HR contacts and possibly also a portal for matching talent with companies is a good strategy (or adding this feature to an existing marketing/information portal). Finally, events or other activities need to be organised to match talents with employers or empower them to find jobs on their own.

Who needs to act?

City governments or university relocation centres need to take on the role of service

providers or as facilitators of a platform that provides seamless access to commercial or non-profit dual career services. Working closely with employers is critical for success.

In Germany, for example, all large universities have a dual career centre, offering services to all incoming researchers and PhD students. The federal government funds the programme.

Success factors

Success factors include a close dialogue between service providers/facilitators in the public sector and at universities on the one hand, and the employers on the other hand. One-stop-shop solutions – that is, that the service is offered at the same location as other types of services, such as access to public services and housing/schools as described in the previous section and case 4 – is another success factor.

Living and working

The purpose of living and working activities are to help talents integrate into society and work life and make sure they can realise their full potential and contribute to a particular place. The *receiving, and living and working phases* are, we argue, the most important phases for retention (i.e. creating conditions for a person to stay as long or longer than planned). This phase corresponds to *use* (of a product or service) in the customer journey.

Professional networks

The aim of facilitating access to professional networks is to speed up the professional and social integration of talents, both academics and students, into a particular place and promote contacts to businesses and employers.

Even though professional networks mainly play a role in enhancing social and professional integration, they can also be utilised in facilitating *reception and soft landing* for talents and *open innovation and co-creation*. Case profile 5 on the work of Mjärdevi Science Park in Linköping, Sweden, is one such network.

Networks can take many forms – some are exclusively built for internationals or newcomers, some are established networks to which newcomers get invitations to join, whereas others focus on linking all talents to businesses and employers. Also, *community marketing* initiatives, described earlier, aim to build a professional network in which relevant and valuable content can be disseminated. Community marketing efforts can therefore be used to link and promote exchange between an existing network in a given location to a larger virtual (national, international or even global) network.

Users/target group

Mainly internationals, but also nationals who have moved within a country.

Activities required

City governments, universities and business associations can take a range of steps to promote professional networks:

- *Creating awareness*: Dialogue with and between existing networks and stimulate them to take a more proactive role in opening up to internationals (many professionally-oriented networks are usually quite closed and difficult to access for newcomers, Rotary clubs being one of the most obvious examples).
- *Capacity building*: Support professional networks in building capacity for including internationals, for example by giving information in English or using new, more open communication channels such as social media.
- *Financing*: Sponsoring networks or the creation of new networks with financial assistance.

- *Initiation* of their own networks, for example ambassador networks (read more under ‘ambassador networks’).

In order to run networks and connect them with international networks, the use of social media, such as LinkedIn and other digital platforms are useful.

Who needs to act?

City governments and universities can act as catalysts, facilitators and/or sponsors of international networks. Business associations and business development agencies, as well as NGOs and civil society in general, are better placed to play a role in setting up and running professional networks; in particular they can play the role of service provider for network building, and be organisers of professional events.

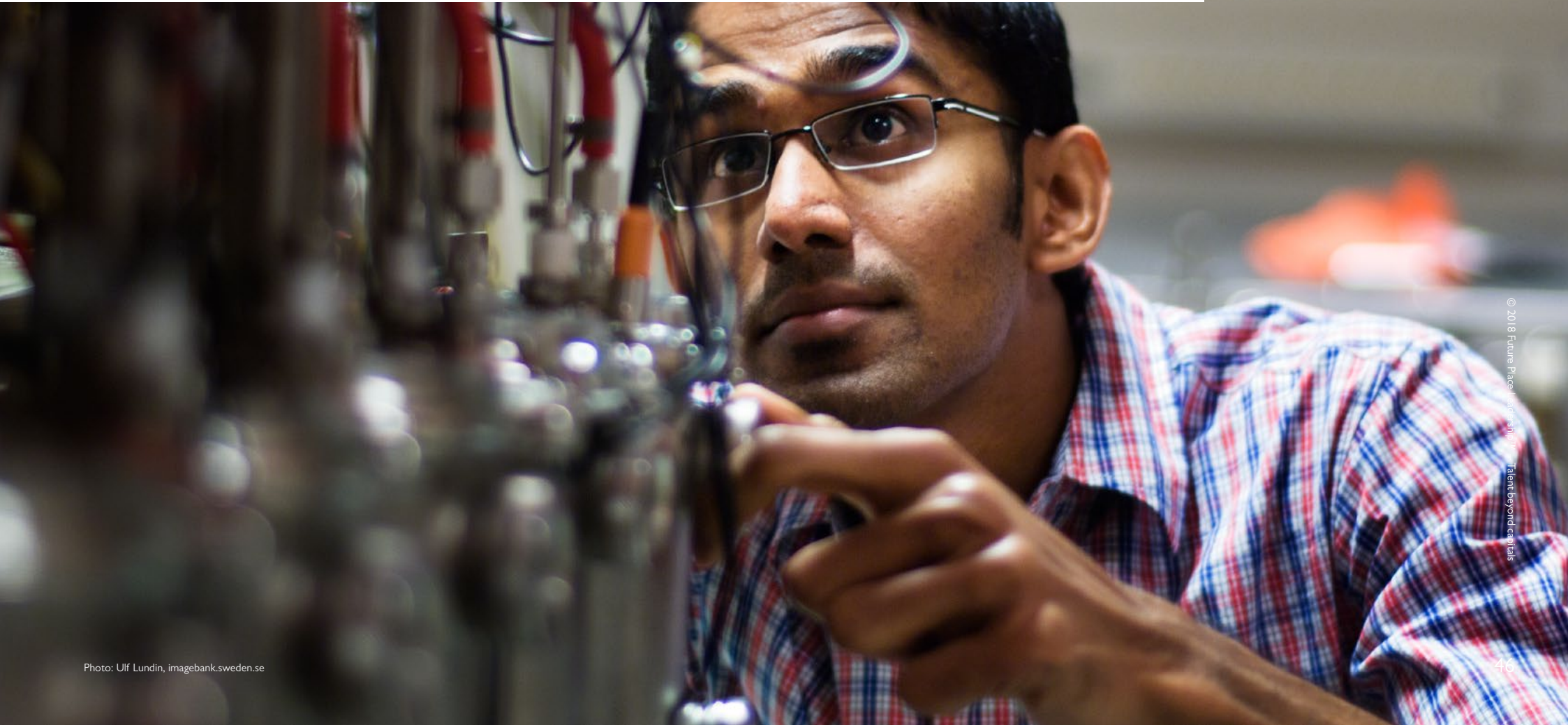
Ambassador networks can also be important tools for *professional networking*. Some networks also include elements of *leaving support, co-creation and open innovation*. These types of networks are often initiated and run by city or regional governments or universities.

Success factors

Making sure that the professional networks are perceived as adding value for talents is a key success factor. For example, networking activities (such as ‘mingling’) may not be enough. Inviting interesting speakers to events, dissemination of relevant news⁶ and other information that adds value to the professional life of talents, and communication of job opportunities are examples of value-adding activities. Involving international talents themselves in the setting up and running of networks, as they know the needs of newcomers, is also an important aspect.

6. A study on ambassador networks found that ‘privileged access’ to news before it has become widely known is seen as one of the strongest benefits to network members (Andersson and Ekman, 2009).

Case 5: Professional networks – connecting students and young talent to the local innovation ecosystem in Mjärdevi Science Park, Sweden



Case 5: Professional networks – connecting students and young talent to the local innovation ecosystem in Mjärdevi Science Park, Sweden

Mjärdevi Science Park in Linköping in Sweden has, during the last 30 years, developed into a hub for 350 companies that work in close cooperation with Linköping University, which has 28 000 students.

The City of Linköping, like many other university towns, struggles to retain students that graduate from the university. In addition, access to new knowledge and talent are today important challenges for the science park and its companies, and many activities therefore focus on linking students and talent to the innovation ecosystem, and to individual, fast-growing companies. Two of the most important and innovative initiatives to that end are *CreActive* and *Tech Pilots*.

CreActive is platform for meetings, events and projects designed to stimulate creativity and innovation. It is a physical, open area with an inspiring environment to study, work, and hold events and meetings.

The mission of *CreActive* is to:

- Involve more students in the innovation system
- Enable new network ideas
- Find enthusiasts
- Grow talents and talent diversity

The area is designed with creative spaces and study places, and everyone can arrange their own events and get help with marketing them. It strives to be ‘a place for everyone’ and a natural meeting spot for people with ideas, which also connects with people in the regional innovation system. The effort, hence, also include elements of open innovation (discussed in the section on open innovation and co-creation).

CreActive had 47,000 visitors in total during 2016. It started as a publicly financed project and is now a well-functioning forum

where students, academics, public actors and companies can meet. Volunteers, ambassadors and three employees manage *CreActive*.

The other effort, *Tech Pilots*, was a project that ran between 2015 and 2016 with the purpose of attracting talent and companies by letting young talents follow nine companies for one year and participate in their product development. The talents met the companies four times to test products, share experiences and provide their opinions.

The recruiting process was a global campaign highlighting the project and the companies as an opportunity to work with top class technology, getting unique access to a network of talents. The project also focussed on diversity in knowledge, nationalities and gender. From the applicants from all over the world, Mjärdevi Science Park choose ten tech pilots – six women and four men from Asia,

America and Europe. During the year, the project management ran a blog with 120 followers each month and a webpage where the technology and innovations were highlighted.

The results were quite convincing: A total of eight of 10 of the talents stayed in Sweden. Three of them started their own business, of which two of them did so in Mjärdevi Science Park. In addition, the companies learned and found out what the next generation of talents are searching for among employers, thereby improving their future talent attraction and employer branding. What's more, today the Tech Pilots are ambassadors for the companies and the city.

Mentoring programmes

The goal of mentoring programmes is to promote contacts between students and businesses and employers.

The aim is to both promote professional and social integration of students into the region in which they study, but also to enhance their readiness for the labour market and the labour market's readiness to employ them.

A practical example from Tampere, Finland, will be presented in case profile 6.

Users/target group

Both international and domestic students and academics.

Activities required

Reaching out to businesses and recruiting mentors, and setting up a database/portal showcasing opportunities is a useful first step. Organising, for example, cross-cultural training for companies that want to take on an international mentee is also an opportunity that may be worth considering.

Who needs to act?

Universities, especially career service functions, play an important role in facilitating mentoring programmes for students and academics. Programmes can also be initiated and managed by city governments, business associations and civil society.

Success factors

It is key that both mentor and mentee are motivated and prioritise meeting and learning from each other, and it is therefore important to showcase examples of how both the mentee and the mentors, as well as the mentor's employer, can benefit from mentoring programmes.

Case 6: Talent Tampere Mentoring Programme in Tampere, Finland



Case 6: Talent Tampere Mentoring Programme in Tampere, Finland

The Talent Tampere Mentoring Programme is tailored to international degree students at the three universities located in Tampere, as well as at other international talents living in the region who are the beginning of their careers in Finland. The overall purpose of the programme is to offer international talents better access to working life by bringing employers and talents together.

The programme was first piloted in 2010–2011 through European Union funding, but is now run as a permanent service of the Talent Tampere network. The network, whose members are business and educational organisations working in the region, aims to bring together services provided by different organisations that create links between employers and international talents. Currently, the Talent Tampere Mentoring Programme is coordinated by Tampere University of Technology.

The programme is conducted annually from November to April and the working

language is English. It consists of group meetings as well as one-to-one meetings between the mentoring pair. In evaluations, the effects of the programme have been shown to be many. Among the benefits for mentees, one finds networks, and gains job-hunting skills, information about professional opportunities in the region, self-knowledge and confidence. As for retention effects, there are indications that many of the mentees have stayed in the region and have embarked on qualified career paths after the programme. In addition, the programme provides a range of benefits for mentors that are important to keep in mind when recruiting mentors: networks, developing intercultural skills, getting to know another culture, fresh views for one's own job and self-confidence. The programme has gained nationwide popularity and has been used as a benchmark by other universities around Finland.

Regional trainee programmes

The goal of regional trainee programmes is to promote contact between students and employers, and enhance their readiness for the labour market and the labour market's readiness to employ them. A dual goal can also be to harness the creativity of the students through engaging them in discussion aimed at developing the place they live in (see *open innovation and co-creation* for more information).

The idea behind regional trainee programmes is that employers share the responsibility of offering traineeships to talents, who rotate between different companies. Read more on an example from southern Norway, Trainee Sør, in case profile 7, and one example from West Virginia in the U.S., Impact West Virginia Fellowship, in case profile 8.

Users/target group

International and domestic students.

Activities required

Building a partnership with a critical mass of companies that agree to share talent is an important first step. Making sure that employers have processes in place to welcome and give meaningful tasks to talents is also an important activity, which can be achieved with training efforts offered to employers to prepare them for taking on a student. Finally, establishing a presence at universities and marketing the regional trainee programme opportunities to students are also key activities.

Who needs to act?

Regional trainee programmes are usually initiated and run by triple-helix partnerships and cluster organisations.

Success factors

Making sure that employers have processes in place to welcome and give meaningful tasks to talents is critical for success. Establishing a presence at universities and marketing opportunities aimed at students is also important for recruitment of students.

Case 7: Regional trainee programme – Trainee SØR Programme in Southern Norway – a ‘talent factory’ with clear effects



Case 7: Regional trainee programme – Trainee SØR Programme in Southern Norway – a ‘talent factory’ with clear effects

The regional trainee programme was established in 2004 as a collaboration between the regional energy company, the regional competency development fund, the City of Kristiansand, and the regional university, all of which are located in the business region of Kristiansand in Southern Norway.

The overall purpose of the programme is to recruit ambitious, highly skilled talents to the 35 member companies. During the programme period of 18 months, the trainee gets to work for three different employers – mostly private companies and but also public organisations – for six months each. Modules aimed at professional and personal development are also part of the programme. Examples of this include providing a mentor for each trainee, who is available throughout the programme, courses, study excursions, and team building and social events. As a result, the programme provides both

a professional network and a social network for trainees joining the programme from outside the region, as all the trainees taking part in the project meet each other and former trainees through common activities.

Since 2009, the programme has been entirely funded by its member companies, each of which pays an annual fee of 9,000 NOK (≈€ 1080) to the Trainee SØR association. When employing a trainee for six months they pay the salary for the trainee, a recruitment and mentoring fee of 25,000 NOK (≈€ 3018) and a fee for administration and courses of 54,000 NOK (≈€ 6500). In 2016, 21 trainees were part of the programme.

The attraction and retention effects of the programme are clear:

- 35% of the 112 trainees that have gone through the programme since its inception in 2004 were not originally from the region.
- 90% of trainees received a job offer from a company in the region – 79% within the member companies – after the programme had finished, and...
- ...71% still work and live in the region.

One effect of this programme, among others, is that many of those who worked one of the periods for a public organisation say that that period made them change their views of work in this sector. The fact that the trainees rotate between three workplaces also creates conditions for innovation and knowledge sharing.

Case 8: Regional trainee programme – Impact West Virginia Fellowship connecting graduates with business and society in West Virginia, USA



Case 8: Regional trainee programme – Impact West Virginia Fellowship connecting graduates with business and society in West Virginia, USA

Generation West Virginia (GWV) is a state-wide non-profit organisation with the purpose of attracting, retaining, and helping young talents advance in the state. West Virginia is the only state in the USA with a declining population, and this initiative sets out to change that.

In 2017 GWV started a new, innovative initiative called Impact West Virginia Fellowship (IWVF), which aims to attract talents and leaders of tomorrow. The programme offers recent graduates a year-long, paid fellowship at one of the leading and most innovative companies in the state. The fellows will work at the company four days a week, and one day a week contribute to a local non-profit organisation. The fellow will gain professional experience as well as a nuanced understanding of the challenges the state faces, while having the opportunity to help

identify possible creative solutions.

IWVF, therefore, also comprises elements of open innovation and co-creation. The initiative is inspired after Challenge Detroit – an organisation with a mission to challenge leaders to learn by doing.

The overall goal is that IWVF will offer new opportunities for young leaders to stay in West Virginia, come home after having moved away, or experience all the state has to offer for the first time.

The programme is a private partnership with six host companies, partners and economic authorities, and it will enable seven fellowships per year. The idea is also that smaller places in the state have the advantage of making much faster connections among different stakeholders and professionals, being part of making an

impact, and developing their own community. Each company pays a salary to the fellow, and also a programme fee.

The initiative's first recruitment round attracted 200 applicants. A question that the programme managers are currently considering is how to keep the other 193 applicants interested in West Virginia, even though they could not be offered a fellowship.

To retain the fellows that have been part of the programme's first year, the ambition is to get them to find a full-time job, make them feel part of society in different ways, and engage them by making their ideas contribute to the place. Finally, the programme will also help them find a place to stay.

Cultural understanding

The idea behind promoting mutual cultural understanding between those who are new to a particular place and the host population is to improve the integration and satisfaction of newcomers.

Activities can take many forms, ranging from introductory courses for all new students and university staff, to events. Read more about a concrete example from Ireland in case profile 9.

Users/target group

Locals in general, employers and university staff, and international talents.

Activities required

Organising events and training and creating meeting places where locals and hosts can meet.

Who needs to act?

City and regional governments, employers, universities and civil society representatives, individually and in collaboration; this is, in the 'quadruple-helix' partnership configuration.

Success factors

Reciprocity is a key factor; those who move to a place and the local population and those who are hosts at universities and employers need to improve their cultural intelligence.

Case 9: Irish universities focus on mutual cultural understanding



Case 9: Irish universities focus on mutual cultural understanding

One of the best examples in practice of university career services promoting mutual cultural understanding has been found in Ireland. Many Irish higher education institutions organise training courses for both academic and support staff in cultural awareness, and teaching and learning skills for working in a cross-cultural environment. Incoming students also get the chance to learn about Irish culture and society. In the annual International Student Barometer, Irish universities score above average. The institutions surveyed performed especially well in the areas of language support, host culture, career services and employability.

Career advice and events

This entails efforts aimed at giving international and local talents appropriate career advice, and organising events where they can meet employers. The purpose is to make sure that they find jobs in the region that correspond to their qualifications.

Users/target group

All students, but perhaps mostly international talents who tend to lack local networks and knowledge about how the labour market works. Some academics may want to change career from academia to the business or public sector and will need advice and contacts too.

Activities required

First of all, establishing a close dialogue with employers and mapping their recruitment needs is important to be able to match talent with needs. Attracting employers to join events is one next step, as well as marketing career advice services and events to students/academics.

Who needs to act?

University career services play an important role in matching *career advice* with current and forecasted labour market needs and trends.

As for *career events*, city or regional governments and/or universities especially play an important role as organisers of career events and matchmaking. Business associations and

cluster organisations can also fill this role.

Success factors

For events: ensuring that employers that have a real need are attracted to career events, and that those who are looking for a job are matched to these needs.

In general, a long-term perspective is critical. These activities should be offered early on, already in the first year of a student's stay, so as to really prepare the student for working life, making sure they know what is expected of them and adapting their studies accordingly. A common mistake is that career advice and events are only offered to those that are close to finishing their studies, but then it is too late to make any meaningful impact. For example the need for international students to learn the local language to get a job is something that too many find out too late into their study programme. If they knew this earlier they could make sure that they include language studies to prepare for the labour market.

For career services: ensuring that career service professionals have the right skills and tools at their disposal.

Open innovation and co-creation

Open innovation relies on the idea that firms and public organisations use external as well as internal ideas and resources to create new solutions. One way of opening up an organisation's innovation process is to involve students and researchers, to benefit from their creativity and academic perspectives and get to know potential employees.

Co-creation is about working together with different stakeholders to jointly solve business and societal problems and challenges. Students helping a company or public organisation developing new products, services or solutions is an example.

The purpose of these types of activities in a *Talent Relationship Management* context is to promote contacts between talents and businesses through involving them in platforms for open innovation and co-creation, which can be powerful tools for enhancing their stay. Open innovation and co-creation activities can increase talents' sense of community and affinity with a given place and its firms, thus enhancing social and professional integration.

In addition, these platforms can also help in promoting new networks and labour market readiness. They also make it easier to recruit companies and public sector organisations willing to take on a student, as they will typically get help from the students to solve concrete problems.

Read more about a concrete case of an open innovation platform, Openlab in Stockholm, in case profile 10.

Users/target group

All students and academics. International students can benefit especially from open innovation and co-creation activities, as they often need to build their professional network from scratch and build up an understanding of local business culture and/or of the city they study in.

Activities required

Mapping and contacting companies and public organisations that are interested in having a student or researcher who could help them with a concrete problem or innovation challenge is an important first step. Establishing a presence at universities and market opportunities aimed at students are also important.

Who needs to act?

City and regional governments, cluster organisations and universities can initiate activities and platforms for open innovation and co-creation. The best platforms represent the 'triple-helix' (i.e. public sector, academia and business).

Success factors

Success factors include:

- Making sure that the business or societal challenges taken on by students are meaningful, inspiring and have real value for the place in question or business, and that they can be formally incorporated into studies, is critical to success.
- The establishment of a platform on neutral ground, not dependent on any one partner or university, can allow for flexibility in growth and give confidence to potential new partners joining.
- To ensure sustainability and growth of a platform, integrating innovation projects into the university curriculum is important.
- Open innovation activities challenge the way conventional organisations work, and the public sector and universities in particular need to be ready to make changes to be able to work in collaborative innovation projects.

Case 10: Open innovation and co-creation – Openlab in Stockholm, Sweden



Case 10: Open innovation and co-creation – Openlab in Stockholm, Sweden

Openlab is an open innovation platform founded by the City of Stockholm, Stockholm County Council, Stockholm County Administrative Board and some of the main universities in Stockholm (Royal Institute of Technology, University of Stockholm, Karolinska Institute, Södertörn University). Openlab is located in a renovated building on the Royal Institute of Technology campus.

The initiative manages to engage students and other citizens and use their input to improve the city's living environment, making it an inclusive tool that improves the attractiveness of a place.

Openlab wants to be a global centre for societal innovation, improving quality of life. It focusses on grand challenges such as ageing population, future of healthcare, and sustainable city development. Methods used include master's courses, co-working space with companies working in the same field, and training courses.

It has been successful in creating a method and platform (physical and digital) that has attracted students to use it for its intended purpose of co-creating a better urban environ-

ment and together finding solutions to challenges that the partners have provided.

WeQ beats IQ in Openlab. Complex challenges cannot be solved alone and in silos. Collaboration and co-creation is key. The idea is to reach beyond the building and partners to reach citizens and businesses.

The Openlab comprises a café, co-working space, maker space, offices and meeting rooms. Openlab runs a master's course on which students from four partner universities work with real-life challenges from Stockholm and Stockholm County. Problems are solved as teams via design thinking and scrum, a framework of agile software product development. Challenge-driven processes and matching innovation are the basis for the work.

Openlab also has an online platform 'Develop Your City' (*Utveckla din stad*). Develop Your City is a digital ideation and innovation platform open for anyone to post societal challenges and ideas on how to solve them. It is one of the tools Openlab uses to bring people together and spark their creativity and innovativeness.

While private employers are not a part of the exercises (the tasks for workshops and studies are taken from the city and its stakeholders, not private companies), students get to work on the same tasks that the professionals in the city are working with.

Students get to work with real challenges submitted by Openlab and the stakeholders, on how to respond to societal challenges in the city, which creates a bond between them and the city. They get to know the city, expand their professional network and become aware of possible career paths, which will enhance their chances of finding a job after studies and, thus, retention prospects. Roughly 50% of the students are internationals, who most likely benefit even more from these effects, which increase their chances of finding a job in Stockholm.

The courses have a big impact on how students consider their future careers, according to feedback. It has been described as eye opening and inspiring. The groups are very mixed and interdisciplinary, which will serve to enhance both the students' – especially international ones – professional and social integration.

Moving

Support around moving from a place, such as via mobility support, and ambassador and alumni networks, which make the leaving experience and onwards mobility experience more positive (and hence arrival to the next place a better experience), can be used to maintain contact with talents after they leave and make them ambassadors of the place they leave.

That said, both ambassador and alumni networks also help fulfil several other functions, which have already been touched upon earlier in the toolkit and which will be further explained below.

Mobility support

The purpose of mobility support is to prepare talent for global mobility. Many talents will leave a particular place, no matter how much they like their stay. For example, some international students may work for a few years after graduation, before going back home or to a new career destination. For some groups, such as PhD students, moving to different places for short-term research grants to gain experience ('post-doc') is a natural step, and mobility is encouraged for more senior researchers too. Why not help them prepare for mobility and, at the same time, increase the likelihood that they want to stay in touch with, speak well of, and eventually come back to the place?

Mobility support can take the form of training or networking events, individual coaching, informative materials or by providing useful contacts in the place a person is moving to (for example through alumni networks that often have chapters in different locations).

Users/target group

Students and academics.

Activities required

Mapping demand among the target group and creating activities that meet the demand. In the spirit of *co-creation*, inviting talents themselves to be part of the design of activities is a good strategy, both for creating better services but also to engage talents in a closer dialogue and relationship.

Who needs to act?

Universities in particular, but city governments and business associations can also initiate mobility support activities. Many large corporations with much intra-firm mobility tend to have their own global mobility support functions, with which it can be worthwhile for universities and city governments to cooperate and exchange experiences.

Success factors

Understanding target group needs is an important success factor, as is the need to make the activities informative and relevant, yet appealing to attract people to attend.

Alumni networks

The goal of alumni networks is to maintain contact with talents after they have left a certain place, and support mobility, for example by providing welcoming and soft landing into a new place.

For example, many alumni networks have chapters in other parts of the world, and a talent who moves from the place where they have studied to another place can, through their alumni network, find people who have studied at the same university in the new location, something that will help with social and professional settling in to the new place.

We argue that the better the settling in to the new location is perceived, the more positively the leaving process is seen. In turn, the reputation of the location/university that has helped will become more positive. Thus, with proper execution, the networks function as branding vehicles.

As applies to ambassador networks, alumni networks can also play a role as providers of word-of-mouth testimonies about living, working or studying in a location, that function as a channel for marketing and branding.

Universities most commonly use alumni networks, but locations can also set them up. Case profile 11 features a university-run network, and case profile 12 is an example of a country running a network (i.e. a place-based network).

Users/target group

Students and academics.

Activities required

Make sure that there is long-term commitment and funding to maintain the network, and establish a clear understanding of what motivates alumni to join networks. Set up a database and communication channel to reach network members. If the relationship building – in line with the idea of *Talent Relationship Management* – has worked well in the previous phases, a database should already exist, and communication to recruit new members as well as communication with existing members can utilise that same database.

Who needs to act?

Alumni networks are typically initiated by universities, even though more place-bound networks can be initiated by city and regional governments or national government agencies. One case example (case profile 11) is an example of a network managed by a university, whereas the other one (case profile 12) is an example of a network managed by a government.

Success factors

Long-term commitment from network coordinators, and that alumni perceive value in being part of the network.

Case I I: HSG Alumni Network – an active and effective network focussing on a range of ‘talent experiences’



Case 11: HSG Alumni Network – an active and effective network focussing on a range of ‘talent experiences’

HSG Alumni is an independent and non-profit-making association, working in cooperation with the University of St. Gallen (HSG). HSG is a highly ranked university situated in eastern Switzerland, focussing on business and management, political science and international relations.

The network has developed a wide range of activities to maintain a relationship with its members, provide value and create a relevant *talent experience*.

The goal of the network is to promote networking among former students to maintain their relation to HSG, so that benefits can be created for the university, the current students, researchers and alumni. The network is separate from HSG and completely depends on fees from life-long or annual memberships and partners. The network has 26 000 members in total. The HSG Alumni Network is managed by a board consisting of elected alumni and is responsible for developing the strategy and

implementation of projects. The management of the operational part, such as events, communication and member support, is managed by an office, which is located nearby the HSG campus and houses 8 permanent staff and a team of students.

The network creates value for its members in many ways, and thus maintains a long-term relationship with them: it has its own member magazine ‘Alma’ and offers career services focussing on jobs, events, workshops and career advice, which are easy to find on the well-designed webpage. Each year, members are invited to take part in various large-scale events. In 2015 they began becoming more digitalised by launching an *HSG Alumni App*, making it easy for members to find each other when they travel to new places for business or leisure.

The HSG Alumni Network is unique when it comes to its international network. Members have the possibility of participating in more than 160 different chapters and clubs

worldwide, all organised by industries, regions, topics and companies, and which offer local platforms and activities without any additional fees, organised on a voluntary basis by its members. When it comes to expats (researchers for example) coming to HSG, the HSG Alumni Network has services and cooperation with the university and the region to ensure integration is possible. The network, thus, also plays an important role in the *reception* and *living and working* phases.

The top three reasons to be a member are the access to the network, taking part in events, and giving something back. Despite having a long tradition and track record of being an attractive network creating benefits for its members and partners, it still faces the challenges of appealing to the new generation of graduates who find their own networks, and keeping up with digitalisation and globalisation.

A clear and distinctive element that helps them to keep the network ongoing and rele-

vant to stakeholders is a very active community with engaged alumni who organise their chapters, clubs and lots of events. To this end, a professional alumni office provides an effective support function.

Lessons learned from HSG include the following: that the most important thing to get started with creating a successful network is to find 3–4 people who are loyal to the purpose and university. The person responsible for the network/club should be, in the best case scenario, a known, high-profile person that can attract media attention and new members.

Another important aspect is segmentation; by segmenting alumni (by age, interests, etc.) and using it as a basis for communication and designing events and services, etc., it is easier to be relevant and valuable to the members. Last but not least, one key factor is to foster an entrepreneurial and innovative culture when running a network.

Case 12: The Swedish Institute's Alumni Network



Case 12: The Swedish Institute's Alumni Network

A good example of a *place-based alumni network* is the *Swedish Institute's Alumni Network*. The Swedish Institute (SI) seeks to establish cooperation by maintaining relations with former international students or researchers who have studied in Sweden, as well as Swedish language students abroad. The network promotes alumni staying in touch with both each other and with Sweden, which is meant to be both socially and professionally rewarding.

At the time of writing, the network includes almost 14,000 talented individuals from ca 140 countries. Members of the network are those that have:

- received a scholarship from the Swedish Institute
- participated in a Swedish Institute Leadership Programme
- received the Global Swede Award
- participated in summer courses financed by the Swedish Institute

- been a digital ambassador for the Swedish Institute
- studied, or are studying, Swedish abroad at university level

SI keeps in touch with alumni through a blog and local chapters in a few countries, and offers different types of opportunities for alumni, such as coming back to Sweden, attending conferences globally for professional development or financial support for event organisation (a grant for organising a local event, for which alumni can apply).

There is also a *reception and soft landing* component to the programme, with alumni sharing their experiences from their time in Sweden with new scholarship holders through activities and social media networks. Finally, the programme also plays a role in *marketing* and providing *pre-arrival* information, as the alumni can be expected to communicate opportunities to study or research in their own circles and

sometimes also participate in organised information activities.

The alumni are also invited to alumni gatherings or events like 'Sweden Days' at Swedish embassies and consulates after having returned to their home countries, which are activities aimed at maintaining a sustainable and value-adding network.

Read more here:

<https://eng.si.se/areas-of-operation/scholarships-and-grants/si-alumni-network/>

Ambassador networks

The goals of ambassador networks can be to make the leaving of place a smoother and more positive experience, and to maintain contact with talents after they have left, ideally by continuing to provide them with value-adding communication or services.

Ambassador networks can play a role in promoting social and professional integration in the *living and working phase* (for example through matchmaking between network members and companies), as already touched upon in several instances of the toolkit. They can also play a role in providing *reception and soft landing*. Ambassador networks can also comprise *open innovation and co-creation* elements (i.e. focusing on involving network members in providing input to firms or public organisations on, for example, place development – case profile 13 is an example).

Finally, they can play a key role in *branding, attracting and communicating pre-arrival information*, especially in terms of providing marketing and branding that is honest/authentic. Word-of-mouth testimonials are one of the most credible forms of marketing, and people giving word-of-mouth testimonies about living,

working or studying in a location may form one of the most important channels for marketing and branding.

An ambassador network can consist of talent living in the location, or those with a link to the location but who live elsewhere. Most networks consist of both.

An example of a best-practice network, Youth Goodwill Ambassador Network of Denmark (YGA), is found in case profile 13.

Users/target group

Students and academics.

Activities required

Making sure that there is long-term commitment and funding to maintain the network, and establishing a clear understanding of what motivates ambassadors/target groups to join networks are important activities and prerequisites. Setting up a database and communication channel to reach network members is also a helpful step.

In addition, it is important to decide if the network should:

1. Be open to many or be more exclusive?
2. Include people in their professional or private role?
3. Include only international talent, or also local talent?

Who needs to act?

Ambassador networks are often initiated and run by city or regional governments or universities.

Success factors

Long-term commitment from network co-ordinators and their partners is a key success factor – to build up and maintain a network is time-consuming, but worthwhile if it works. Also, that the network provides value and relevance to its members – be it interesting information and news, networking, professional development or learning opportunities, or matchmaking opportunities with employers.

Case 13: Youth Goodwill Ambassador Network of Denmark



Case 13: Youth Goodwill Ambassador Network of Denmark

The Youth Goodwill Ambassador Network of Denmark (YGA) is a global network of talented international students. They brand Denmark as an attractive study destination while working to increase the job opportunities for the appointed youth ambassadors as well as international talents in Denmark. All members of the network study in Denmark while taking part in a unique talent development programme and work with key Danish stakeholders within business, culture and academia. The students can also remain part of the network even if they move back to their home country, thereby enabling Copenhagen and Denmark to build a long-term relationship with the talent in question, and encouraging them to become ambassadors for Denmark.

In 2017, the network consisted of 800 international students from more than 70 countries worldwide.

Founded in 2010 by Copenhagen Capacity and Wonderful Copenhagen, in part-

nership with the Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, and leading Danish universities, the network is managed by Copenhagen Capacity's Talent Department. It is modelled after the Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassador Corps, active since 1996.

The Ambassadors are also active in international press activities, whereby Copenhagen has found a way to make the ambassadors the centrepiece of the storyline, thereby providing a win-win situation. The ambassadors get personal branding (it is their name/picture in the news) and the location (Denmark) get targeted publicity that is personalised with a positive case. So far, more than 35 countries have picked up stories about Denmark as a student destination based on the work of the Youth Ambassadors.

With the Youth Goodwill Ambassador Corps, Copenhagen has also found a way to adopt a more personal approach to digital marketing. The youth ambassadors are active on social media in study abroad forums in their

home countries, responding to questions about study in Denmark. They offer their personal experience as examples and give advice on topics ranging from how to apply to a university to the best café in the local neighbourhood.

Many of the network's activities are based on the ideas of *co-creation* and idea generation through crowdsourcing and 'crowd-marketing', harnessing the engagement and creativity of the network members. For example, a City Branding Battle was organised a couple of years ago, in which students, with the help of professional guidance, competed against each other in creating marketing material for Danish cities.

In recent years the programme has narrowed its focus towards retention of international students in the region, and as such, today acts as more of a *career programme* than for branding activities. This is to more directly support local market conditions and economic development.

From foes to friends: Baltic Sea Region collaboration in talent mobility?

From foes to friends: Baltic Sea Region collaboration in talent mobility?

What are the future opportunities for collaboration around talent mobility between university towns (and relevant stakeholders) in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)? How can cities go from being competitors to cooperation partners that share talent?

Competition for talents between locations in the BSR will pose a challenge to regional collaboration in the field and needs to be kept in mind when forging new cooperation.

Yet there are many opportunities for further exchange within, as well as between, university towns in the BSR countries – for example through knowledge-sharing and activities aimed at raising awareness of talent attraction and talent relationship practices and tools. Sharing experiences would help cities and regions to become better equipped to actively work with talent attraction and for policymakers to be more aware of what policy steps are needed to make the region's countries more attractive to talents.

And – as argued in the introduction – the better each city or region would become at all steps of the *Talent Relationship Management* model, the more mobility would increase. For example, the

better reception a person gets when moving to a new place, the more positive the migration experience is seen as and – perhaps paradoxically – the more prone the person will be to move again.

This also forms a rationale for increased cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region in the talent attraction and mobility field; if all cities and regions would be better at building their reputation for attracting, welcoming and integrating talent, and at the same time increase collaboration in promoting talent mobility in the region, the conditions for mobility between these countries would increase. In addition, concrete measures for promoting intra-BSR talent mobility can be implemented, which will be discussed in this chapter.

The following possible areas for future collaboration can be identified:

- *Networks of networks*: there are opportunities to link up different place-based networks, such as local, social or professional networks or alumni and ambassador networks, to each other across the Baltic Sea Region. This way, a more comprehensive service offer

can be forged. For example, an ambassador network functioning as leaving support in one city can be linked to a local network in other locations, which can function as welcoming and soft landing support for a talent moving from one place to another.

- *Making mobile talents change agents*: mobile talents have different experiences and learn different lessons in their migration process that can be useful to understand for the next location they come to (irrespective of whether they move back to their home country or on to another new location). Therefore, cities and regions and their partnerships for talent retention can involve these talents as a resource in their development work by drawing on their experiences and, possibly, their will to help make their new home city more talent-friendly.

Final words

Final Words

Where to begin, and which tools to prioritise?
How to get partners on board in this work?
How can we ensure that our activities are relevant and successful?

The questions might be many after reading a handbook such as this.

Here is our final piece of advice for successful *Talent Relationship Management* for university towns:

1. **Experiment and innovate** – dare to try new things and dare to fail – the most successful cities and regions in talent attraction are those that have innovated and stirred up or even disrupted the field.
2. **Co-create** – involving the target group in designing and implementing solutions will ensure that services become better, and that the target group will feel more appreciated by your city (which will increase the likelihood that they will both stay and say nice things about it).
3. **Engage and build relationships with the talents.**
4. **Understand talent needs** – it will make it easier to respond to them.
5. **Collaborate with different stakeholders** to make sure you do what is best for your target group – the talent. Forget about bureaucratic hurdles and prestige – without collaboration, not much of what is proposed in this handbook will happen.
6. Finally, **share talents with your neighbouring regions and countries** – more talent mobility will ensure that talents find the best opportunities, and that talents find their way to your location, right when you need them.

Good luck!

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