COMPARISON OF REQUIREMENTS FOR BRAND MANAGERS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPETITIVENESS OF BRANDS: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY IN THE US AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to present partial results of an independent research project. The author´s choice of the position "Brand Manager" was influenced by the fact that branding is a very powerful tool in striving for competitiveness in the 21st century. The paper focuses on a set of requirements in terms of educational level, professional experience, knowledge, technical competence, and business management skills for candidates for the position of "Brand Manager". Berelson´s content analysis method was used to study recruitment advertisement texts. A cross-national study was conducted to compare requirements in the US and in the Czech Republic. The result of the present research project in the US confirmed a fundamental need for a university education, knowledge of marketing, and experience in the field of the advertising company´s business. An unexpected result was that the groups of technical competences as well as required practices and work experience for brand managers in the US and the Czech Republic had statistically significant differences. The article concludes with a number of recommendations formulated for the implementation of the human resource management practices of recruiting and selection, as their inappropriate strategy and implementation is common and the consequences are costly.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first works recognizing brands as key assets were published in 1980s. At present, brands are fully accepted as a component of intangible assets and their role in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage is widely discussed (de Chernatony, 2009, Kotler and Keller, 2013, Keller 2013, and others). Those, who are responsible for every-day tactical manoeuvring and who also manage brands at the strategic level in overwhelming majority of companies, deserve attention of professional public. The dynamic environment exposes brand managers to frequently make decision in conditions of uncertainty, in comparison with other corporate or management positions. Moreover, they must permanently deal with the fact that their brand and its communication will be perceived by a hard-to-understand customer involved in an avid exchange of opinions in the social media environment. Undoubtedly, successful managers must have a high

degree of technical competence and at the same time, they must have traits and abilities that are necessary for effective communication and show developed behavioural competencies. Needless to say, both professional circles and business practice agree that an ability to find and retain talented individuals is one of the critical tasks of the strategic notion of human resource management. Each organisation seeking to be competitive through its people must pay an extraordinary attention to the recruitment and selection process (Armstrong and Taylor, 2015, Bláha et al., 2013, Horváthová et al., 2016, Noe et al., 2017). When organising individual recruitment projects professionals recommend first to apply the principle "who" and then "how".

Due to the fact that the search for complex characteristics of a job role of a brand manager has not lead to a sufficient understanding of requirements placed on brand managers, the author started to set up and carry out her own research project, the partial outcomes of which will be presented in this paper. When preparing and carrying out the research project, an interdisciplinary approach was used. The set of data obtained in a primary research in the US — in the country where brand management has its roots — will be compared with the results gathered in the same year in the Czech Republic.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Marketing management and product management

The essence of classic marketing, marketing planning process and arrangement of marketing function is defined and characterised by many authors (McDonald and Wilson, 2012, Kotler and Keller, 2012, and others). The new concept introduced by Kotler in the first decade of the 21st century is based on the notion that "everything is dependent on everything" in marketing (Kotler and Keller, 2007, p. 30). When updating the holistic approach, Kotler accented the understanding of financial and non-financial benefits of marketing activities and programmes for business and human society (Kotler and Keller, 2013, p. 54) and confirmed the topicality of the marketing concept in day-to-day business and other areas of public and community sector.

The product management is part of marketing management and is an interdisciplinary function in the firm. Tomek and Vávrová (2009, p. 9) emphasize that product management also represents an integrated process of product creation and development which corresponds to the market needs. Gorchels (2005) integrates product management with brand management with a reference that it is the most common application of product planning in companies that produce consumer goods. The product management is often mentioned as an example of a matrix structure of organisations. The arrangement of marketing function by products and brands is more frequently chosen in organisations producing a wide range of products. It is not necessarily a substitute for a functional organisation. Such organisational arrangement rather serves as an extra management layer (Kotler and Keller, 2012). The same authors also expressed an opinion that the modern marketing department has evolved through the years from a simple sales department to an organizational structure where marketers work mainly in a cross-disciplinary teams (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

2.2 Brand management and the job role "Brand manager"

Kotler and Keller (2012, p. 28) adopt the definition of a brand from the American Marketing Association — with the "brand" being a name, term, sign, symbol or design or their combination serving to identify products and services of one or more vendors to differentiate them on the market. The essence of brand management was defined by Kapferer (1998), an author of the brand identity concept, when he underlined the superiority of strategy and consistent integrated vision. The identity of brands that improve their position on the market is characteristic by their clear differentiating brand positioning, different brand personality embodying the brand and consistent brand communication (Floor, 2006). Building of a brand with a unique identity is done in the process of creation and application of brand visual identity, the so-called branding. The second key conception is the brand value; see Aaker (2003). The creation of brand identity is one of the four steps of CBBE model (Consumer-based brand equity), in which the manager entrusted with building a powerful brand manages to build a loyal relationship of a consumer to the brand through the determination of brand identity (Keller, 1993 in Nguyen et al., 2015). Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006, p. 3) emphasise that on B2B markets, brands fulfil the same purpose as on consumer markets, because "they facilitate the identification of products, services and businesses as well as differentiate them from the competition".

The starting point to derive requirements for brand managers is to state their role in the process of strategic brand management where the strategic, tactical and operative tasks are as follows: (1) identifying and establishing brand positioning, (2) planning and implementing the brand marketing programmes, (3) measuring and interpreting brand performance, and (4) growing and sustaining brand equity (Keller, 2008). By their research oriented at methods of brand identity determination, Nguyen and her collaborators (2015) show that currently, the brand value must be increased through managing the activities of customer brand experience instead of the intensification and increasing the number of contacts with the brand. Their findings indicate that the set of main tasks of the brand manager's job role extends with impacts into the structure of requirements to the executor of this job role. To be able to develop a truly holistic marketing in the business organisation, marketers need a new set of skills and competencies for strategic and tactical tasks that they are entrusted with (Kotler and Keller, 2013). The list of the most important areas, according to Kotler and Keller, also include brand building and brand-asset management. The key advice from the list of their recommendations for the work of a brand manager is to take social media and using the media amplify the brand message, communicate with clients through blogs, support on-line communities and use the interest stirred by brand ambassadors; for more details, please also refer to Kotler and Keller (2013, p. 44).

The requirements placed on human factor are not specified in more detail by Kotler and Keller (2012). However, their demanding nature can be inferred from the inclination of these authors to using brand-asset management teams to manage brands with a supporter of the team work at the highest levels of business organisation hierarchy. Team coverage of selected tasks of the brand manager's job role is also mentioned by de Chernatony (2009) when commenting on the demanding nature of implementation of the brand strategy provided an added value over the competition. In connection with seeking a method to implement such a strategy, de Chernatony propose to transfer some activities to other organisations, however, at the same time he empha-

sizes that the task for the brand development team is to identify and evaluate key competencies constituting a brand core and to decide how to use it optimally. He defines the key competencies in relation to the brand as a selected number of small skills, set of expertise or activities that the organisation has or performs better than the competition and provide room for dominant a position on the market and allow the brand to develop (de Chernatony, 2009, p. 259).

2.3 Intellectual capital and knowledge management

The intellectual capital that can be defined for the purposes of this paper in accord with Subramaniam and Youndt (2005) as a sum of knowledge which is available to the organisation and that can be used to create and sustain competitive advantage represents a set of intangible assets. The intellectual capital that can be usually divided into structural capital and human capital was included by Ulrich (1998 in Armstrong, 2012) in the list of problems in the area of competitiveness because it is hard for the firms to find, adapt, remunerate and maintain the human capital in the form of talented individuals which they need to be drive global organisations responding sensitively both to their customers and continuous advancements in technology. According to Bontis (1999 in Armstrong, 2012), human capital represented by skills, intelligence and experience of people is what gives organisations their unique character. The human capital is inherently tied to the source approach towards creating a competitive advantage; for more details, please see Barney (1991 in Armstrong, 2006).

Knowledge management and human capital are closely related, as knowledge is one of the attributes of the human capital. Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be easily documented, stated and transferred, as opposed to tacit knowledge that is tied to a person having such knowledge available (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995 in Noe et al., 2017). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi, staff having the knowledge (1995 in Mládková, 2004) may be all employees of the organisation with sufficient knowledge who are able to apply it at the right time. However, Mládková (2004) elaborates that the main characteristics of a knowledge worker is that while working, he/she creates, distributes and applies the knowledge.

2.4 Human resource management practices: recruiting and selection

The concept of Human Capital Management is perceived as a "shift of the paradigm" from traditional HR approach to HR management (Armstrong, 2006). Human Capital Management created a framework of a historically earlier concept of HR management, in relation to policies, practices and systems shaping behaviours, attitudes and performance of employees (Noe et al., 2017, p. 4).

The process of work analysis and related recruitment process is considered by Armstrong (2006) to be the most important processes of HR management. Job analysis and job design bringing and utilising information of tasks that constitute a functional description of a particular position are subsequently used in the process of recruitment, selection, assessment and development of staff. Armstrong (2006) views the work analysis as a fundamental tool of HR management, but at the same time, he points out to the tendency taking a hold in business practice, consisting of replacing the classical outcome of the job analysis with the role profile design.

Job design is a subject of an intensive research by both academics and practitioners. In relation to

the problem in question, it is more than appropriate to make a note of the so-called team-based job design that became very popular in business practice at the beginning of the 21st century. Stewart and Barrick (2000 in Noe et al., 2010, p. 155) explain that the definition of all requirements is based on the determination of the final outcome and if an individual is unable to succeed, the work is assigned to a work team.

Recruitment can be defined as a process of identifying and attracting intentional employees and selection is a process where the organisation tries to identify those job candidates who have the knowledge, skills and competencies and who can help to achieve organisation's goals (Noe et al., 2017). The professional circles generally recognize that both processes have been strategically oriented in recent years. In case of knowledge workers, there is a common opinion that the activities in the process of recruitment and selection must be conceived as activities of strategic meaning, as they focus on acquisition of a source of intellectual capital (Armstrong, 2012, Noe et al., 2017, and others). With regard to practical implementation of both processes, an e-recruitment is a rise owing to the development of information and communication technologies and on-line psychometric tests are widely applied in both initial and subsequent selection rounds. In addition, job casting, social networks, 'native' advertisements (Sullivan, 2016) and other new opportunities of the Internet and mobile devices are used in competing for talents; for more details, please refer to Armstrong and Taylor (2015) or Horváthová, Čopíková and Bláha (2016).

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Purpose and methodology

The author´s interest focuses on the qualifications, skills and professional experience of brand managers as powerful brands are considered to give competitive advantage. The purpose of the article is to present the partial results of an independent research study and to connect them with the knowledge base in human resource management, knowledge management and human factor in brand management. The secondary aim is to provide an output in the form of recommendations for the strategy and implementation of recruitment and selection processes relating to applicants for the position titled "Brand Manager".

When addressing the issues raised, an interdisciplinary approach was applied, as knowledge of the theoretical background and the analysis of the current state of the issues and the tendencies in their development required the research to be conducted across several fields of study. The methods used in the research were partly empirical (primary research) and partly logical, particularly using deduction when working with secondary data, analysis and synthesis. The determination of research assumptions proceeded from a knowledge base. To verify the hypotheses, the method of comparison was also used, the results of which were examined using the test of independence of variables.

3.2 Scientific aim

The primary goal of the research project was to examine the situation of "Brand Manager" positions offered in the researched labour markets and to provide answers to the questions arising from the research assumptions. The research project was drawn up to examine the assumption

that a brand manager is an example of a knowledge worker, and is seen as such in business practice. The secondary objective was to identify differences in requirements for brand managers in the US and the Czech Republic.

For this purpose, the following assumptions were made:

- the set of requirements for candidates for the job of a brand manager in the US labour market will confirm that a brand manager is a worker who has knowledge, skills and experience;

- the requirements for qualifications and professional experience for brand managers in the US and the Czech Republic do not differ.

3.3 Methods

The research project was designed in such a way that it would be possible to compare the outputs of the actual research with the results of earlier stages of the research project conducted by Wroblowská (2016b). Therefore, the validated content analysis method was used, according to the concept of Bernard Berelson (1952), who defined it as a research method for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the content of the text. Information on the requirements for applicants for the position of "Brand Manager" in three selected states of the USA (Illinois, New York and California) was taken from publicly available recruitment advertising on the Monster.com career portal. According to the Census Bureau (2017), almost 25% of American enterprises have their place of business in those three selected states and, moreover, enterprises with employment size 500+ show 78.9% share. The reason for choosing Illinois, New York and California was also an assumption made that those states might appear highly attractive for talented knowledge workers.

The data collection took place in four weeks in October 2015. Thus 60 advertisements were gathered with the exclusion of adverts supplemented with the adjectives "senior" or "junior"; after that, one advert was excluded because the job responsibilities did not correspond with the functional characteristics of product and/or brand management. After removing duplicates, the final sample showed 58 advertisements.

The data processing was applied in a manner consistent with the procedure referred to in the monograph by Wroblowská (2016a), which enable for an international comparison. The data segments were transferred into an electronic format. The work with the transferred data applied a so-called manifest content analysis according to Plichtová (1996 in Miovský, 2006) which only studies the explicit content of the text. In the categorisation of requirements, the classification of the competencies database in the project of The National System of Professions in the Czech Republic (NSP, 2012) was taken into account. A comparison was made of the requirements that had a cumulated frequency in the analysed samples which exceeded a 5% threshold in at least one of the processed data files. A statistical verification of the results was undertaken using test criteria in the Pearson chi-square test according to Řezanková (2007).

The theoretical background and part of the discussion is based on the analysis of references which included the following three types: scientific and expert monographs and collections available in the university library under the key words "product management" and "brand management"; reviewed scientific and expert articles accessed from the EBSCO service using the key

words: "brand manager", "knowledge", "product management", "recruitment", and "skills" (the Scopus and Web of Science databases were prioritised); and, finally, one article publicly available on the Web.

4. RESULTS

This paper presents and discusses data and results which are directly related to its goal. Partial results related to requirements for the interpersonal skills and personality traits of brand managers in the US will be presented to the experts in another scientific paper which is now being revised.

4.1 Secondary data applied in the research project

In the discussion of findings, the empirical surveys available conducted outside and inside the Czech Republic will be mentioned. When preparing the methodology for the independent research, no new information was available from the empirical research, i.e. on the human factor of brand managers in addition to that which had already been published by the author.

4.2 Content analysis and comparison of requirements in job advertisements

The sorted data segments from researched US advertisement texts are presented in the form of a frequency chart in Table 1. The table also includes information on the results of the survey conducted by Wroblowská (2016b) in the Czech Republic. In the US in 2015, applying the selection procedure described in Section 3.3, the sample of single adverts reached a total of 58. Fifty-six advertisements from the Czech Republic in 2015 were analysed.

In accordance with a recognised expert opinion that the knowledge worker is characterised not only by his/her training and expertise, but also by his/her experience, requirements for the professional experience for the position of "Brand Manager" also form the part of the presented outputs.

With the author´s special interest in proving the strategic function of a brand manager in brand management processes, requirements for possessing a strategic and business-oriented mind-set are also presented; this group is marked with the letter "S".

Tab. 1 – Requirements for a brand manager by advertisers in the US and the Czech Republic. Source: Author´s independent research.

Group	Job Requirements Qualifications and Experience	Brand Manager US		Brand Manager CZ	
		n	%	n	%
Q	education, knowledge, business management skills and transferable skills				
1	business management skills	3	5.2%	0	0.0%
2	knowledge of product management	12	20.7%	4	7.1%
3	knowledge of marketing/preferred knowledge of marketing	33	56.9%	5	8.9%

4	knowledge of project management/preferred knowledge	5	8.6%	4	7.1%
5	expertise alined with a company business	8	13.8%	7	12.5%
6	university	34	58.6%	35	62.5%
7	high school or university	1	1.7%	13	23.2%
8	high school or higher education, not university	0	0.0%	5	8.9%
9	driver's license of czech category B	2	3.4%	25	44.6%
10	work with internet/PC/proficient in MS Office application	26	44.8%	24	42.9%
S	strategic and business-oriented thinking				
1	business thinking/mindset	7	12.1%	6	10.7%
2	strategic thinking/mindset	32	55.2%	8	14.3%
3	entrepreneurial thinking/mindset	6	10.3%	4	7.1%
R	required practice and work experience				
1	previous sales experience	1	1.7%	5	8.9%
2	professional experience	20	34.5%	22	39.3%
3	work experience in marketing	28	48.3%	25	44.6%
4	experience in the field/preferred experience	1	1.7%	23	41.1%
5	experience with this position at least 2 years	6	10.3%	18	32.1%
6	experience with this position at least 3 years	18	31.0%	13	23.2%
7	experience with this position at least 5 years	20	34.5%	2	3.6%

The results were statistically verified using test criteria in the Pearson chi-square test. This tested at the significance levels of 0.1%, 1%, and 5% whether the null hypothesis regarding the independence of the analysed variable on the sign representing the country of the content analysis of advertisements can or cannot be rejected.

Table 2 illustrates the results of the Pearson chi-square test. A statistically significant difference in the distribution of requirements for qualifications (marked "Q") including technical competence, knowledge, business management skills, education and transferable skills was confirmed for & = 0.05, & = 0.01, and even for & = 0.001.

Tab. 2 – Overview of results of individual requirement group testing. Source: Author´s independent research.

	groups of tested requirements	chi-square value	df	test result
Q	qualifications	62.71233593	9	H_0 rejected
S	strategic and business-oriented thinking	4.049230769	2	H_0 not rejected
R	required practice and work experience	43.87254969	6	H_0 rejected

The same result was confirmed for the group "R" that aggregates requirements for work experience and required practice.

Table 3 demonstrates the statistical verification procedure and the result of applying the independence test.

Tab. 3 – Two-dimensional analysis for a group of requirements for required practice and work experience. Source: Author´s independent research.

OVERALL CONCLUSION: On the significance level of 0.1%, 1%, and 5% we can reject the null hypothesis; the probability distribution of the individual characters does not differ in groups ´brand managers (USA)´ and ´brand managers (CZ)´.		level			
		0.1%	1%	5%	
The hypothesis that the columns and rows are independent of the level		refuse	refuse	refuse	
				rows	7
TESTED DATA				columns	2
			test of independence		
Required practice and work experience	**BM USA** **BM CZ**		chi-square	43.8725490	
advertiser's requirements - group R	**A1** **A2**		level	0.0%	
previous sales experience = **R1**	1	5			6
professional experience = **R2**	20	22			42
work experience in marketing = **R3**	28	25			53
experience in the field/preferred experience = **R4**	1	23			24
experience with this position at least 2 years = **R5**	6	18			24
experience with this position at least 3 years = **R6**	18	13			31
experience with this position at least 5 years = **R7**	20	2			22
	94	108	0	0	0	202

A = position and country of data collection			**expected frequency**		
Signs of group R	**A1**	**A2**			
R1	2.8	3.2			
R2	19.5	22.5			
R3	24.7	28.3			
R4	11.2	12.8			
R5	11.2	12.8			
R6	14.4	16.6			
R7	10.2	11.8			

			post hoc - chi-square		
Signs of group R	**A1**	**A2**			
R1	1.2	1.0			
R2	0.0	0.0			
R3	0.5	0.4			
R4	9.3	8.1			
R5	2.4	2.1			
R6	0.9	0.8			
R7	9.3	8.1			

			adjusted residuals		
Signs of group R	**A1**	**A2**			
R1	-1.4890	1.4890			
R2	0.1583	-0.1583			
R3	1.0699	-1.0699			
R4	-4.4329	4.4329			
R5	-2.2531	2.2531			
R6	1.3988	-1.3988			
R7	4.4204	-4.4204			

A statistically significant difference in the distribution of requirements for group of work experience and required practice (marked "R") was confirmed for & = 0.05, & = 0.01, and & = 0.001, as proven by the calculations in Table 3.

Only for the above mentioned group "S", the changes in the representation of the requirements for the positions of "Brand Manager" in the US and the Czech Republic are statistically insignificant.

5. DISCUSSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results presented in Section 4.2 have a direct link to objectives formulated in Section 3. 2. The discussion will first deal with the evaluation of benefits, then with the degree of fulfillment of scientific aims.

The outcomes in a form of a set of requirements placed on candidates for positions of "Brand Managers" improve the current state of knowledge of the addressed problem which is characterised by an absence of complex and classified information that would have a potential to saturate needs of Human Resources business departments and at the same time, would make the orientation of "Brand Manager" job applicants easier. It is both given by the fact that the work of a brand manager is not performance of a profession with fixed standards, and by the absence of a standardized "Brand Manager" position which would provide support to business organisations. A proposal of a type-position by Wroblowská (2012) is not publicly available.

If a recommended standard is missing, the definition of requirements is approached through the analysis of work or job role, on which two important sets of information regarding job description and person specification are based; for more details, please refer to Werther and Davis (1992 in Wroblowská, 2016a). These outcomes of work analysis are not independent and there is a relationship between them. In prevailing practice, and particularly in the event of recruitment on the external labour market, the role content formulates a set of requirements placed on a candidate for the offered job position. If a new job role is filled from internal resources, the role profile is adjusted to the specific worker in some cases; for more details, please refer to Hroník (2007).

Although some experts recognize the coordination role of a holder of this position (Gorchels, 2005, Kotler and Keller, 2012), the research of Wroblowská (2012) performed in 148 firms in the Czech Republic revealed another prevailing character of the brand manager's role. It turned out that they are implementers of marketing plans not coordinators of tasks in the process of integrated product management in a form as characterised by Tomek and Vávrová (2009). The same authors point out to the fact that the execution in practice may result in different positions of product management and staff performing it. According to Gorchels (1995 in Wroblowská, 2016a), the decisive factor for defining the content of the job role of both product manager and brand manager is to balance the degree of responsibility of the administrative and business function. In this regard, we must add that each offer of a job position, each analysed text were unique, as every advertising company had their own product portfolio, their unique brand or brands, their business strategy and corporate culture.

Now, the results will be analysed and the degree of how the objectives are fulfilled will be evaluated. The most frequent requirement for a university degree is in 34 cases, and in 25 cases, this requirement was accompanied by information regarding the required or desirable post-graduate education or MBA diploma, and at the same time, a marginal requirement for other than university degree, are a confirmation of the demand for university degree holders. Without jumping to

the evaluation of the research assumptions regarding the identical requirements for candidates in both countries, it is appropriate to supplement the findings with information on the existence of a requirement for university degree in the Czech Republic. If we leave out the requirements for characteristics and skills and behavioural competencies arise from them, it was also the most frequently published requirement in the Czech Republic, save for the fact that the requirement for MBA and/or doctoral degree was published only in 2 job advertisements; for more details, please see Wroblowská (2016b).

The second most frequent requirement - 57% - was the requirement for the knowledge of marketing. In the US, this requirement was always formulated with a note "required", but in the Czech Republic differently with a note "preferred". Also, other requirements for technical knowledge and skills are more often published in the US advertisements. Even though none of the requirements for experience was formulated in a majority of the US advertisements, as the word expressions regarding the nature of expectations of employers who required "people with experience" differed and experience is defined in the published advertisements in different ways, thereby reducing the resulting frequency of individual characters, the analysis of requirements leads us to conclude that the first research hypothesis formulated as "The set of requirements for candidates for the job of a brand manager in the US labour market will confirm that a brand manager is a worker who has knowledge, skills and experience" is valid.

A reflection over the affinity of research results and the state-of-the art of the knowledge management was subject to a discussion regarding the results of the content analysis of the Czech recruitment practice and is available in papers by Wroblowská (2016b, 2016c), and thus, it is intentionally left out with regard to the permitted scope of the paper.

Before proceeding with the evaluation of another research assumption, we will briefly reflect on the third most common requirement "strategic thinking/strategic mind-set". A high frequency of requirements of advertisers for strategic thinking corresponds with increasing demands on branding and managing brands in the world driven by the globalisation phenomenon. Steenkamp (2017, p. 181) expressed an opinion that "to manage global brands effectively, companies need to take the process seriously and make a strategic priority", which justifies this statement.

Now, the results will be analysed and the degree of fulfilment of the second research assumption "The requirements for qualifications and professional experience for brand managers in the US and the Czech Republic do not differ" will be evaluated.

A visual comparison of the requirements as seen in Table 1, showed differences between the findings from the US and the Czech Republic. The statistical verification confirmed the difference in both, the group of requirements for required practice and work experience (group "R") and the group of requirements for qualifications (marked "Q") including technical competence, knowledge, business management skills, education and transferable skills. The chi-square test confirmed the shift at the significance levels of 0.1%, 1%, and 5%. The conclusion that the second research assumption was not confirmed cannot be changed by the fact that with regard to requirements mapping strategic competence and business thinking shown in Table 2 under letter "S", statistically significant difference were not found at any level of significance. The match in this category of requirements was not part of the assumption.

In both countries, advertisers did not forget to state that they need brand managers skilled to work in the Internet and proficient in MS Office application. Here we can offer a comparison with the research performed in cooperation with the American Society for Human Resource Management Association in cooperation with the US National Association of Manufacturing that was published by Casner-Lotto and Barrington (2006 in Noe et al., 2010). Working with the Internet and good skills with regard to working in MS Office programs was at the second place in the set of 10 general competencies that the respondents find critical for success on the labour market in the near future. The most frequent requirement of the US respondents was critical thinking and ability of job candidates to solve problems. As a side note, it must be said that expert knowledge and skills were not subject to the questionnaire and that many behavioural competencies ranked in "Top 10" of requirements for employees. It is clear that due to the lack of professional experience, the position of "Brand Manager" is not within reach for fresh university graduates, and the results presented confirm the results published by Kačerová (2016).

A wrong strategy of recruitment and unprofessional selection procedure of staff member who have knowledge of tacit nature are unfortunately nothing extraordinary in business practice and the consequences are painful. The following recommendations are formulated based on the results of the analysis of recruitment advertising and will be in the part based on professional literature on human resource management. The primary intention of the author of the paper is that the research results would serve to both academics and business practice as it is very hard to select the most suitable candidate for the position of a "Brand manager" and "Product manager". For more details regarding the content of the product manager's role, please see Wroblowská (2016a).

First, it must be clearly defined who the "Brand Manager" vacancy is for. In this particular case, the vacancy is for knowledge workers equipped with a set of hard-skills and soft-skills and adequate experience who may but do not necessarily have to actively seek new job opportunities. This will determine the method of how the information will be delivered to the target group. In relation to the content of Section 2.4, we may recommend to combine e-recruitment via specialized portals with search in social networks and to use also native advertisements, job casting and social networks to address those who do not seek a job actively, but are attractive brand managers for the firm (Sullivan, 2016), particularly LinkedIn (Armstrong and Taylor, 2015 or Horváthová, Čopíková, and Bláha, 2016). Classic methods of advertising generally give way to e-recruitment, as confirmed by the research by CIPD (Armstrong and Taylor, 2015, p. 276). Talent management experts find referrals to the most effective recruitment tool (Noe et al., 2017).

The recruitment and selection must be understood as a public relations activity, as people who have worked in marketing and are applicants for "Brand Manager" positions carefully evaluate all contacts with the firm and its staff members. Therefore, close attention must be paid to the quality of communication with turned-down candidates during the whole process of selection procedure and evaluate it. Even in spite of choosing a candidate from internal sources or using a referral, the organisation is recommended to review competency of a candidate and verify how the company values and motivation structure of a person, whose expertise and qualities seem fit to in the position, correspond. In case that an expert with knowledge of behavioural interview method is not available for the final interview, a questionnaire for finding motivational factors

is a suitable tool. With the exception of the more costly Assessment Centre method, which is not common in the Czech environment in selection procedures for positions in marketing due to its time and financial demands, but can differentiate candidates with excellent self-marketing from those who can both present themselves and can their statements support by real experience and demonstrable success. The behavioural interview above mentioned is the most suitable method.

The test oriented at identifying the current state - tests of functional competencies (expertise tests), performance tests and personality questionnaires - and tests that help to estimate future behaviours of the person tested are a pillar of the selection procedure. In the event of selection from candidates with experience and education, it is suitable to test expertise aligned with a company business. The usability of technical competencies of the candidate and experience gained in the line of business of the future employer are thus critical for future ability to contribute to competitiveness of the firm. The testing of technical competence is a specific and demanding matter. Tests that are not commercially available can be substituted with an interview. Nevertheless, the interview must be objectively led and evaluated, therefore, even a method "examples of work" can be considered.

Being successful at the "Brand Manager" position is conditioned by creativity; for details please see, Wroblowská (2016c), and not only an intellect but also high level of behavioural competencies is necessary to apply creativity at work. With regard to demands of the job role, a candidate with ability to work in a team, communicate effectively and solve problem will be sought. The Assessment Centre method is considered to be an optimal one for the selection of the most suitable candidate for a job role with high complexity, as it can evaluate a high number of required competencies. And finally, and it cannot be emphasised enough, when taking a decision on the most suitable candidate, a non-discriminatory approach must be taken unconditionally. In cases where the employer has a choice, the last recommendation is to prefer a candidate with a positive personality open to new ideas and with internal values aligned with those that are not in conflict with values of the organisation.

6. CONCLUSION

The paper focuses on human factor in product management, specifically with the role of a brand manager performing tasks related to making a strong brand position on the market, which is a prerequisite for obtaining a competitive edge, or it represents a key competition advantage of the firm owning the brand in many industries.

A knowledge base that as used in the discussion connecting already formulated opinions of experts and available empirical findings with partial results of the author´s empirical research project was created by the research in the field of secondary data. A long-term purpose of this project is to collect and analyse requirements for brand managers and product managers who are responsible for product and/or brand management at strategic and tactical level.

This paper represents a set of requirements placed on brand managers when they are first approached by advertisers both in the US and the Czech Republic. The sets of requirements for qualification and experience supplemented with requirements related to the identification of prerequisites for fulfilment of strategically and business-oriented tasks were subject to an analy-

sis. The data gained by studying publicly available recruitment adverts in the selected states of the US provided information of the most frequently published requirements for the required education and professional competencies based on professional knowledge, skills, type and length of experience. The findings led the author to provide recommendations for recruitment and selection of brand managers.

The requirement with the highest frequency of 58.6% - "university degree" - was followed by the requirement of knowledge of marketing. Also, the percentage of "proficient in MS Office application and/or having a good level of work with the Internet" exceeded 40%. These findings together with the identification of an increased interest in professional experience with marketing and the fact that the experience with the position on average exceeded four years confirms the research´s premise that brand managers belong to a group of knowledge workers.

There were differences between the sets of data obtained in the same year in the US and the Czech Republic. The assumption regarding the matching requirements obtained in the US and the Czech Republic was refused on the basis of statistical verification. By applying the test of independence, in which the test criterion of chi-square distribution was chosen, there were confirmed differences in the group of "required practice and work experience" and also in the group of requirements concerning education, knowledge and so-called hard-skills. The statistical verification process confirmed the difference for $\& = 0.05$, $\& = 0.01$, and $\& = 0.001$ in the tested sets of requirements for the positions of "Brand Manager" in the US and the Czech Republic.

For Czech brand manager´s positions, a shorter period of work experience (less than 2 years) is significantly more often acceptable than in the US. As a lower degree of education is more often required there, with the exception of possessing a driver´s licence, we can say that Czech advertisers are less demanding. As the coming years bring the demise of marketing intuition and the rise of marketing science (Kotler and Keller, 2012), a successful candidate for the "Brand Manager" position in the US seems to have a better prospect for achieving mastery in the future.

The paper has mentioned the following limitations: this study considers results from one national labour market (Czech Republic) and from US labour market, but only from three selected regions. The research was conducted in the selected states of the USA, not in the national labour market of the USA, due to the fact that the author was mainly concerned with analysing the comparable data sets and the size of the Czech labour market is too small for obtaining a larger amount of adverts for the position of "Brand Manager" over a short period of time. In this paper, the author has not compared recruitment adverts from various industries; there is a scope to do so.

The article can inspire professional training providers for future brand managers as well as help human resource managers, as positions in marketing are among those permanently being advertised, and finding the most appropriate candidate is associated with considerable requirements for human and financial resources.

Finally, the author is carrying out her research on job advertising in Ukraine at present, and it is expected that after its completion, it will be possible to expand knowledge of the issue so this under-researched topic will be of interest to academicians and practitioners alike.

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