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Assessing Great Place to Work in a Belgian Pharmaceutical company

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Introduction

In a business landscape where attracting and retaining talent is becoming increasingly important, companies need to adjust their strategy to accommodate this. As Jim Goodnight, CEO and Founder of SAS said, “Ninety-five percent of my assets drive out the front gate every evening. It’s my job to bring them back” (Burchell & Robin, 2011). Companies have to make sure that their employees, their most important asset, come back every day to work. Organizations have multiple tools in order to make sure that employees do come back the next day and to attract new employees. First, they can make sure that their benefits are above the market standard. Secondly, organizations can make sure that the work environment is attractive to its employees. When people are feeling part of a family, feel trusted, and experience pride at their workplace they are more willing to return the next day. While this may seem obvious, assessing how you score on these factors as an organization is not. However, there are multiple research companies who are specialized in assessing how attractive an employer an organization is to help these organizations.

One of these research companies is the Great Place to Work institute. The Great Place to Work (GPTW) institute assesses how attractive participating companies are based on their HR policies and practices and the opinion of the employees on trust, camaraderie, and pride. The HR policies and practices are appraised by the Culture Audit. The Culture Audit is a document provided by the organization that shows what they do for their employees. The opinion of the employees is collected through the Trust Index. This is an organization wide survey regarding the topics of trust, camaraderie, and pride. If an organization scores above a certain score on both assessment tools, they get the certificate of Great Place to Work that shows that the organization is an attractive employer.

The GPTW institute themselves has written theories on what it takes to be an attractive employer. This literature is based on their empirical research and experience in consulting organizations. However, since these theories are not independent and provided by GPTW themselves, there might be bias in their theories and significant disparities with scientific literature on employer attractiveness and trust, camaraderie, and pride.

Pattnaik & Misra (2014) found that employer attractiveness can be determined by querying the employees about their work experience. In their research, a five-item questionnaire is used, which includes pride, credibility, and turnover intention. Pride, defined as “An emotion generated by appraisals that one is responsible for, a socially valued outcome, or for being a socially valued person” (Mascolo & Fischer, 1995 p. 66) is also one of the main pillars of the Great Place to Work framework, as seen above. Additionally, pride also has a direct effect on turnover intention (Ghoutier & Rhein, 2011).

When looking at trust, as defined by Rousseau et al. (1998) as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectation of the intentions of behavior of another (p. 395)”, Mulki et al. (2008) found that trust in leadership has a direct effect on the turnover intention of employees. Furthermore, credibility is seen as one of the dimensions of trust by Great Place to Work, and as seen in the preceding paragraph, credibility is found as a supported item in measuring employer attractiveness.

The final concept that is used in the Great Place to Work research method is camaraderie. Camaraderie is a concept that is relatively absent in the scientific literature. When looking at a definition for camaraderie, the definition from the Cambridge dictionary will be used: “A feeling of friendliness towards people that you work or share an experience with”. The effects of camaraderie on organizations is still quite unclear. Levine (2007) states that camaraderie in the workplace can lead to individual gains for the employee, including reduction of stress, increase in motivation, job satisfaction, and developing cooperative skills. Levine (2007) also mentions increased quality and productivity as possible organizational outcomes of camaraderie. However, a direct link between camaraderie and employer attractiveness is not supported.

A Belgian affiliate of a pharmaceutical company, referred to in this paper as Organization X, is considering participating in the Great Place to Work research. HR and the leadership team are convinced of the benefits that getting a GPTW certificate will greatly help the organization in finding new talent and in reminding people who work for Organization X that the company takes great care of them. However, they came across problems that postponed the idea of participating. First, when the idea of participating in GPTW was pitched during a town hall meeting, the response of the employees was underwhelming. Most did not see the need to participate. Secondly, past employee satisfaction surveys showed that the trust in leadership is lacking at Organization X. The decision makers are worried that this might seriously hamper their chances at getting a GPTW certificate and want to know how to increase the trust in the leadership.

This research will assess Organization X current situation with regard to indicators of attractiveness as depicted by the GPTW instrument in order to discover gaps for improvement and giving recommendations on how to fill those gaps. However, there is little to no scientific literature on what companies can do to improve in order to become a Great Place to Work certified. Most of the literature about this topic is from the certification companies themselves. Therefore, this research will compare the guidelines provided by GPTW institute and compare this on dimensional level to existing scientific insights and data in order to test whether the literature written by GPTW authors is scientifically sound.

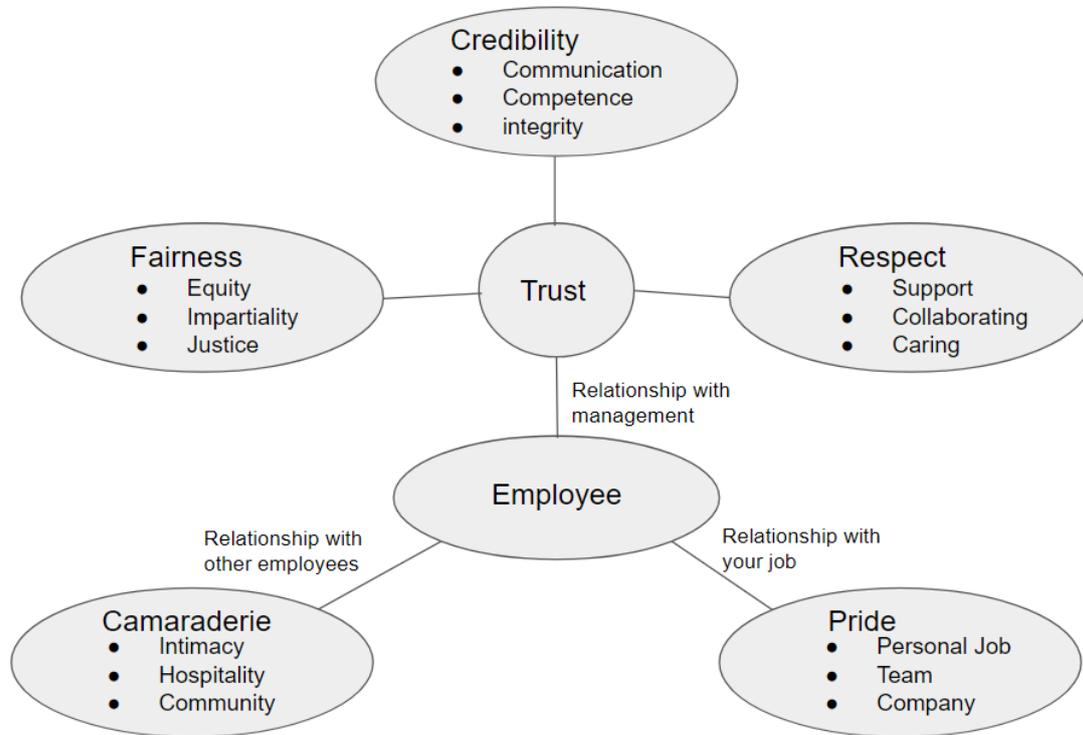
This brings us to the following research question: “What and how does Organization X need to improve with regard to trust, pride, and camaraderie in order to be an attractive employer based on the standards set by GPTW and to what extent is the model used by Great Place to Work valid for measuring employer attractiveness?”

Where the first part of the research question is more a practical question, where the current situation of Organization X with regard to trust, pride, and camaraderie will be analyzed and compared with the guidelines provided by GPTW, the second part where the GPTW model is analyzed will be theoretical. The aim of this second question is to see whether the theory provided by GPTW can be deemed as scientific, as well as indicating possible gaps or faults in the GPTW theory.

The research question shows three main concepts that will be discussed and assessed in this research: trust, camaraderie and pride. Then, the situation at Organization X will be compared to the guidelines set out by GPTW and to the insights from literature by conducting a case study. First, the theory provided by the GPTW institute will be discussed and compared with existing scientific research. Then, in the methodology chapter, there will be an explanation and justification of the tools that were used to gather the data. The chapter that follows will contain the results and analysis of our collected data. Based on this, we will discuss the results and limitations, and finally come with recommendations to the company in the last chapter.

Theory

In this chapter, we will look at the theory regarding Great Place to Work. First, we will look at what Great Place to Work actually examines during their research, what concepts do they use and how are they explained. These concepts will then be compared to theoretical concepts from literature.



(Burchell & Robin, 2011).

1. Trust

The model shown above is the main model of Great Place to Work. As seen in this model, trust is at the center of an employee's relationship with his or her manager. The framework of Great Place to Work shows that the three main dimensions of trust are Credibility, Respect and Fairness. Each of these dimensions then also has three sub-dimensions, as seen in the model. First, the definitions provided by GPTW regarding trust will be discussed.

1.1 Credibility

Credibility is defined by Burchell & Robin (2011) as "A leader's trustworthiness, expertise, and authenticity" (Burchell & Robin, 2011, p. 28). They state that credibility is gained by setting the course, supporting employees, and helping the organization to reach goals while being approachable and honest. This shows that credibility is not only gained by being competent and reaching company goals, but also by being supporting, open and by communicating with your employees. Furthermore, GPTW splits credibility in three sub-dimensions: Two-way communication, competence, and integrity.

Two-way communication

Two-way communication looks at the degree to which leaders are able to share information with people (Burchell & Robin, 2011). In the GPTW framework, two-way communication is measured by using items regarding communication with the management, like "management keeps me informed about important issues and changes" and "management is approachable, easy to talk with" (Great

Place to Work Trust Index, 2017). Two-way communication, as described here, can be seen as leader transparency. To further assess two-way communication, GPTW splits it in the level of information of the communication, and the accessibility of the communication.

First, information by management should be informative and should come from all layers of management. Usually you see that employees get their information from their direct manager, but for a Great Place to Work, employees receive informative communication from all managers, even senior leaders, because they set the direction for the work being done, they give a sense of accomplishment and meaning (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Communication should also be accessible for employees. Employees should feel comfortable around their leadership. An employee should have the feeling that his or her leader listens to them, that they feel like their leader will respond to questions that they ask. Responding in full sentences is generally seen as a sign that you are listened too. However, this is not only measured through verbal communication, but also non-verbal communication is important. Things like the leadership smiling when approached and turning their body towards the employee (Burchell & Robin, 2011). Other than accessibility in direct communication methods, leadership should also be available on an emotional and cognitive level (Burchell & Robin, 2011). Leaders should show that they care, that they can relate to the employees. Leadership accessibility is something that you need to be active in. Just an open-door policy will not cut it in a lot of organizations, as a high trust is needed in combination with an assertive culture. Otherwise, there might be an open door, but people will still not come to communicate with leadership. In this case, you should consider making changes that will make it more comfortable for employees to approach you (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

When looking at scientific literature, Vogelsang (2008) defines leader transparency as: “interactions characterized by sharing relevant information, being open to giving and receiving feedback, being forthcoming regarding motives and the reasoning behind decisions, and displaying alignment between words and actions” (p. 43). Burchell & Robin (2011) also state that when employees have information on why certain decisions are made, and the leadership communicates in a clear way on the decision-making process, employees perceive that decisions are made in a fairer way. Additionally, when people have information on decision making, they will consider their leadership more competent, even in when the decisions don’t always work out in the favor of the employees (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Norman et al. (2010) found that trust in the leadership is also influenced by transparency of the leadership. Not only did they find that a perceived high level of transparency increased the trust in the leadership, but it also increased the perceived effectiveness of their leaders. Transparency was also found to be positively linked to leader and member relationships (Kay & Christophel, 1995) and trust and organizational citizenship behaviors (Korsgaard et al., 2002) confirming the positive relationship of two-way communication on trust stated by Great Place to Work. Furthermore, when a leader is transparent, employees will know what the leader wants, what he stands for, and what his values are and the leader knows the same about the employees. This can lead to an increase in trustworthiness beliefs (Norman et al., 2010).

Competence

When looking at competence, Great Place to Work doesn’t look at the actual competence of the leadership, but at the perceived competence of the leadership by the employees; whether the employees think that the leaders know what they are doing. Employees assess the competence of leaders by how they coordinate resources, including hiring practices, how leaders let employees do their jobs without micromanaging, and how they set the course of the future through vision (Burchell & Robin, 2011). This is done by looking at whether management makes correct hiring decisions, does a good job at coordinating people, and has a good vision (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017).

The coordination of people is defined in two parts by GPTW. First, there is the coordination of resources from a hiring perspective and secondly from a financial and human resources perspective. When looking at the coordination of resources from a hiring perspective, employees not only care about the allocation of top leaders, but also about the hiring throughout the organization. The hiring of top leaders is important for employees because of the high impact that top leadership has on the employee experience. However, it is also of great importance that the hiring throughout the rest of the organization is good, as these are the people that employees have to work with on a daily basis (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

The second part of coordination is whether things run smoothly, whether leaders allocate resources in an intelligent way from both financial and human resources perspectives.

For a Great Place to Work, it is important to rely heavily on both the employees who carry out the work, and on communication. It's both the leader's responsibility to make own decisions, but also to implement suggestions by employees. Furthermore, helping employees to understand decisions with regard to resourcing helps a great deal in order to be perceived as competent. You need to explain what is happening, explain why it is happening, and show that you have a plan for moving forward. Also, business success is seen as a measure of a leader's competence (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

When looking at micromanaging, this not only reduces the amount of time that leaders can spend on their own tasks regarding strategy, it also damages the trust of employees in their direct supervisor. When someone is looking over your shoulder all the time, it creates the impression that you are not trusted. In the best places to work, managers create a balance in supporting employees and controlling employees (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Finally, vision also affects the perceived competence of the leadership. Vision deals with the leader's ability to communicate the overarching direction of the company (Burchell & Robin, 2011). It is important for employees to be aware of the vision and values that the leadership has with regard to the organization. Employees should become aware of these values through stories, rewards, and role modeling (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Integrity

Burchell and Robin (2011) describe integrity as being created through the total sum of leader behavior and an intuition about the leader's intentions with regard to being reliable and ethical. In general, when leaders deliver on promises and when their actions match their words it is enough to be seen as integer.

It is important for leaders to be consistent in who they are externally and internally. Employees should have the feeling that leaders are genuine and consistent, that they behave in a consistent way in different environments. They should also make sure that people have an outlet to ask questions and make comments regarding the integrity of decisions. There needs to be a way to get transparency on issues, both with regard to good news, and bad news. In short, leaders should make sure that their words are not empty, but backed with behavior and explicit decisions on the part of the company (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Additionally, leaders should be honest. For a Great Place to Work, it is important that leaders hold themselves to a high standard of honesty. One of the Trust Index items, "Management is honest and ethical in its business practices" (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017) also shows how honesty is implemented in the GPTW framework. According to GPTW, even if this is sometimes against the guidelines by PR and compliance, in order to be seen as integer, employees need sincere honesty (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

1.2 Respect

The second sub dimension of trust by GPTW is respect. The GPTW argue that for gaining respect, it is important that an employee at least has the feeling that he or she has been heard. This fosters a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. Furthermore, employees should be empowered to take risks,

innovate, and create on behalf of the business. When employees are involved in meaningful work, are able to make own choices, and are able to grow and develop in their career, they will provide substantial value for the organization (Burchell & Robin, 2011). For respect, again three indicators are distinguished by Burchell & Robin (2011), namely; support, collaboration with employees, and caring for employees.

Support is manifested in the way managers support individuals' professional worth, through offering training and professional development, and through ensuring that people have the resources they need to do their job. Support also takes the form of appreciating an employee's extra effort and recognizing his or her accomplishments. The second area employees look to is a sense of collaboration or involvement in decisions that impact their work. And the third area employees note in a respectful relationship is a genuine sense of caring (Burchell & Robin, 2011). The following paragraphs will discuss support, collaboration, and caring more in depth.

Support

When looking at supporting professional worth, according to GPTW there are two ways in which a manager can set up a person for success; by thinking comprehensively about the type of development this person requires and by getting him or her the right tools, equipment, and other materials needed to complete his or her assigned work or accomplish agreed-upon goals (Burchell & Robin, 2011). In great workplaces, not only the basics of training employees on their specific job, task, or project requirements, but also the overall career development of the employees is taken into account. But also, when it comes to personal development within the organization, leaders can go out of their way by engaging in one-on-one discussions with employees about their career goals and aspirations, debriefing the learning activities they experience in training, and helping them apply their new insights into business challenges. The underlying concept of being a Great Place to Work when it comes to supporting career development is that there are not only good practices in place, but that managers also commit time and energy into making these practices successful (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Also, to be a Great Place to Work, you should support individual effort. Employees have two career questions that managers should be able to answer; "where am I and where am I going?" In great places to work, managers answer those questions regularly. The second question has been answered in the paragraph discussing supporting professional worth, for the first question, employees need ongoing feedback about their performance. Sincere appreciation and recognition go a long way in demonstrating respect to employees. But also, when an employee sometimes makes a mistake, helping the employee to learn from the mistake instead of punishing the employee or blaming him or her can signal support. This is seen in the Trust Index in the items "Management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort" and "management recognizes honest mistakes as part of doing business" (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017). In addition, when success is publicly demonstrated it will not only promote good behavior from that one individual, but it will also make other employees more committed to perform (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

When it comes to recognizing employees, there are three aspects that should be taken into account: What is being recognized, the means by which it is recognized, and the rewards themselves. In the best companies, employees are recognized for going above and beyond, for their professional contributions or achievements, and for tenure or service anniversaries. Some examples of recognition that best companies offer are in areas such as client satisfaction, new product or service ideas, referrals of new people to the organization, and employees' volunteer efforts. Giving recognition is most successful when not only line managers give recognition, but also senior leadership, like for instance messages from the CEO. When looking at the content of rewards personalized and on the spot awards are often most effective (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Collaborating with employees

For the leaders, employees are a good source for ideas. There are plenty of ideas in the organization, brought forth by individuals or groups. However, gaining access to these ideas and developing and selecting ideas is challenging. In the best workplaces, leaders gain access to the ideas of employees,

develop them, and ensure that employees know how their input was used. This shows respect of the ideas of the employees. In order to create a culture where ideas are valued and shared, there are two skills that are important; positive dissent and providing constructive criticism. When these skills are present in the leadership, there will be better collaboration with the employees. Furthermore, leaders should be able to “close the loop” with employees, meaning that they should encourage a process for ensuring that employees understand the decisions, the rationale, and how employee input was used and considered in the decision-making process (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Caring for employees

Caring for employees is judged by the extent to which managers show an interest in people’s well-being. This is done from two angles: is a safe and healthy working environment provided, and are employees supported in their lives outside of the office (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

When looking at the behavior of a person, it is a combination of a person interacting with their environment. Therefore, if you want to alter behavior, you need to look at the environment as well. It is important to build a physical environment that facilitates employees and that creates a safe working environment. The positive effect of a great physical environment is even greater when the employees are involved in design and planning of the workspace, it makes them feel as if they are in control of their work environment. When looking at the physical environment, it is also important that this matches the core values of the organization (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

When looking at supporting employees in their lives outside of the office, the first thing is supporting a positive work-life balance. As a leader, you can show a caring culture by encouraging employees to keep a healthy work-life balance and by allowing them to take time away when necessary, which is also literally asked for in the Trust Index. It is also important to be more creative in this than just following the practices in place by HR. When you show that you can adapt to the needs of an employee in case of a personal need you show that you are genuinely caring. Furthermore, to make sure the work-life balance practices that are in place are actually used, an active role by management is required (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Another important part of caring about employees is showing sincere interest, as seen in the Trust index as “management shows sincere interest in me as a person, not just an employee” (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017). This can be done for example by scheduling one-on-one meetings with new employees. It is especially important to actually show people that you care about them. This also translates to the benefits. You need to make sure that the benefits that you have in place actually make the employees feel that you care, that you have special benefits that they won’t get anywhere else (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

1.3 Fairness

Fairness is described as the “employees’ sense that a level playing field exists with regard to decisions that affect them. When fairness is experienced, people feel as though they are treated in an equitable and impartial way, and that their genders, ages, races, and sexual orientations are not factors in assessments of their performance (Burchell & Robin, 2011, p. 97).” However, in practice it is challenging to create a sense of fairness for the employees. This challenge comes forth from lack of transparency. When decision making processes are visible, employees perceive a high level of fairness. However, when there is less transparency, the perception of fairness boils down to the extent in which the employees trust their leaders’ ability to make fair decisions. Fairness is also complex in nature, as it includes parts of both credibility and respect in reliability and caring. Furthermore, it is important for leaders to realize that there is a difference between fair treatments and equal treatments. Finally, decisions should be made while acknowledging both individual needs, as well as honoring the organization as a whole. Fairness has three indicators in the Great Place to Work framework: equity, impartiality, and justice.

Equity

“Equity reflects the belief that tangible and intangible rewards are distributed in a balanced way (Burchell & Robin, 2011, p. 100)”. Tangible awards in this case are pay and profits, which is measured by asking “people here are paid fairly for the work they do” and “I feel I receive a fair share of the profits made by this organization” (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017). People need to believe that they are compensated in a fair way in order to have a sense of equity. Intangible rewards consist of feeling as though they are equal members of the organization and that they have the same opportunities for promotions and recognition as other employees in the organization. Equity does not necessarily cover the processes in place, but more the belief that employees have with regard to the fairness of these processes. It is the belief that you are paid and recognized in a fair way (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

When looking at pay equity, you can use practices such as salary benchmarking, salary surveys, and establishing pay bands to create a sense of equity. However, great places to work are not only built by practices. Leaders need to make sure that employees feel that their compensations are fair. In the best workplaces, you also see bonus systems that award bonuses to employees at all the levels of the organization, not only at the top levels (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Next, membership is also an important facet of equity. Feeling like an equal member of the organization is not tangible, but just as powerful as tangible rewards like pay. Membership equity is the belief that all employees are treated in a way that is in line with their value and worth for the company. Membership equity is not dictated by policies or practices, but is determined by behavior. The Trust Index includes the item “I am treated as a full member here regardless of my position” (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017) to illustrate the feeling of membership. Programs and practices are only there to help increase membership equity.

You can also give employees a sense of fairness by giving everyone equal opportunities to be recognized, while not taking into account their position, gender, race, department, etc. This not only regards to official promotions, but also peer recognition programs and thanking systems can help employees to feel like members of the organization.

Impartiality

Burchell & Robin (2011) describe impartiality as the “belief in evenhanded decision making.” A belief in impartiality is the belief that leaders won’t play favorites and that they enforce a fair assessment process. Impartiality means that people are judged based on the right criteria, not politics, friendships, or personal gains. The main problem with impartiality is that it is hard to find the balance between showing that you care, and being seen as playing favorites. Also, when you make a decision, there will often be people with different visions who think that they are right. For impartiality, communication is crucial, and managers are more likely to communicate their decisions when they are convinced of their decision. Therefore, managers should make the decision that they deem is best, prepare for negative comments, and plan the communication, instead of tailoring the decision to reduce fallout. It is also important for impartiality that there is consistency in the decision making and alignment with organizational values. Finally, as seen in the Trust Index item: “people avoid politicking and backstabbing as ways to get things done” (Great Place to Work Trust Index, 2017), it also includes the expectation of ethical behavior (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Justice

Justice builds on the belief that leaders are credible, and that their actions match their words. Employees perceive the workplace as just when management promotes inclusive behavior, avoids discrimination, and is committed to ensuring fair appeals. Justice can be split into two parts; how employees are treated and appeals (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Justice is grounded in ensuring a fair treatment of all employees, regardless of personal characteristics such as age, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation. What you commonly see in organizations to

ensure this are programs that support diversification of the employees and to give under-represented groups advantages in recruiting to maintain a focus on diversity (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

The other important determinant of justice is the confidence of employees that they can appeal any decision, and that they will get a fair hearing if they do. This is most of the time done with an open-door policy, which encourages employees to approach any manager, with anything. However, this kind of policy only works in organizations with an already existent high level of trust and when there are successful stories of employees challenging the status quo. In most companies, however, this is not the case. In those cases, open door policies need additional processes that encourage employees to step inside the offices of the leadership (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Scientific literature

Now, trust will be approached from a more scientific approach in order to make a comparison with the GPTW model. In the scientific literature, trust is a vital part of human behavior. It has been studied by different disciplines, like psychology, sociology, economics, political science, and moral philosophy. All these different disciplines differ in the conceptualization of trust. Dietz (2010), conceptualizes trust as: “a meso concept which integrates micro-level psychological processes (intrapersonal, interpersonal) and group dynamics with macro-level organizational, societal, and institutional forms” (p.10). When comparing this to the Great Place to Work dimensions, the three dimensions of trust shown in the model are micro-level psychological processes. The macro-level organizational, societal and institutional forms are the norms in the organization, or in this case the norms set by Great Place to Work. In the rest of the thesis, we will focus on the micro-level psychological processes.

Rousseau et al. (1998), define trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectation of the intentions of behavior of another (p. 395)”. When trust is defined in this way, two components are highlighted: the willingness to be vulnerable in a situation of risk and confident positive expectations (Dietz, 2010). This definition will be the main definition of trust that will be used in this research when analyzing trust as described by GPTW.

Trust can take different forms, the three most constituent forms named in literature are: trust as a belief, as a decision, and as an action. First, trust as a belief is a subjective, aggregated, and confident set of beliefs about the other party and the relationship between the two parties. This belief will lead to an assumption that the other party will likely take actions that are positive for oneself (Dietz, 1995). Trust as a decision is the decision to actually trust the other party. Here, the trustworthiness of the trustee is assessed, and manifested in a decision to trust the trustee. In order for a state of trust to be seen as genuine both the expectation of trustworthiness and trustworthy behavior and the intention to act upon this are required (Dietz, 1995). This decision is also defined as “willingness to render oneself vulnerable” (Rousseau, 1998). When the decision of trust has been made, the trustor is willing to be subject of the risk of the actions of the trustee, on the basis that such outcomes are unlikely (Dietz, 1995). The definition of trust given above from Rousseau et al. (1998) included the intention to accept vulnerability. However, trust will only lead to risk when someone makes oneself vulnerable to the other party (Dietz, 2010). This is called trust as an action, it is an action that will display trusting behavior. Gillespie (2003), describes two categories of trusting actions in organizational contexts: reliance and disclosure. Reliance includes relying on the other party for knowledge, skills, or actions where disclosure is about sharing sensitive information with another, either work-related or personal. Trusting behavior is a likely outcome of trust. However, trust might not always be the cause of trusting behavior, there might also be factors beyond the trustee-trustor relationship that can influence trust behavior, like power relations, social implications, control systems, or the perception of risk (Dietz, 2010).

Evidence also plays a central role in the trust process. Both the quality of the actual evidence gathered and the quality of the interpretation of the gathered evidence can influence trust. Dietz (2010), describes two types of evidence with regard to trust: direct evidence and presumptive bases of trust. Direct evidence is gathered through interaction and experienced knowledge of the other party through

past performance, conduct, and character (Dietz, 2010). With presumptive bases of trust, individuals place trust in other parties while relying on other sources of evidence, with no personal direct knowledge. This includes the other party's membership of a social or organizational category or social network, information from third parties like gossip or testimonials, role expectations, and institutions and regulations (Dietz, 2010).

Both parties then weigh the evidence from all the sources to make a judgment on whether or not to trust the other party. Therefore, trust is both calculative when weighing averages and predictive when anticipating on future behavior (Dietz, 2010). Moreover, over time, information from within the relationship becomes a more valid basis of trust than presumptive and external sources of evidence (Dietz, 2010). This also means that trust can be a cyclical process, where past successful exchanges and fulfilled expectations increase the strength of the trust, and increase the resources and level of reliance on, and disclosure to, each other (Dietz, 2010). The level of trust can range from simple cost-benefit analysis, or calculative trust, to parties fully identifying with each other's interests and desires and operating with a high level of mutual understanding.

Trustworthiness, part of the definition of credibility by Burchell & Robin, is also seen within the trust literature. Dietz (2010) describes trustworthiness as "a subjective set of confident beliefs that the trustor has about the other party and their relationship with that party" (Dietz, 2010, p. 10). These beliefs are what influences the decision on whether to trust or not. When comparing trust to trustworthiness, trust as a belief is an assessment of the other party's trustworthiness. However, trustworthiness and trust are not the same. Trustworthiness is something that the trustee has, while trust is something that the trustor does (Dietz, 1995). This means that someone can be seen as trustworthy, but the trustor might still not trust that person. However, a party's trustworthiness is a strong predictor for trust. This shows that while someone might be perceived as trustworthy, this is not enough for trust, there should also be trusting behavior.

There are three important dimensions of trustworthiness described by Mayer et al. (1995): ability, benevolence and integrity. Ability is described as the competence, skills, or characteristics that someone possesses. Benevolence means that the trustor has a perception of a positive orientation of the trustee toward the trustor, and that the trustor think that the trustee has genuine concern and care. Lastly, integrity is described as the perception that the trustee adheres to principles that are deemed acceptable by the trustor, for example honesty and fairness.

Great Place to Work also added support in their framework. Therefore, scientific literature regarding support is also examined in this research. Perceived organizational support (POS) is a concept based on the social exchange theory and organizational support theory. POS is defined by Hutchinson et al. (1986) as "An employee's perception about the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and to which it values their contributions." Later, McMillin (1997) added to this that instrumental support should also be included, such as training, work-life balance, practical tools, and information.

Empirical support for POS and dimensions of attractiveness of job and employer is found in many studies. POS can lead to a stronger bond between the employee and the employer, which can increase the willingness to repay the organization, which is in line with the norm of reciprocity (Ye et al., 2017). An increase in perceived support can therefore lead to an increase in sense of belonging, engagement, and contribution to business goals (Hochwarter et al., 2003). An increase in a stronger bond between employee and employer can also be seen as an increase in trust, showing that POS is indeed also an indicator of organizational trust as seen in the GPTW model.

Comparison

When we then compare the conceptualization of trust from Great Place to the trust as described in the scientific literature, we can see that Great Place to Work looks at trust from a point of view that a trusting relationship is one-dimensional, the dimensions given only look at the leaders of an organization and how they act. However, the propensity of trust of the trustor is also of influence

when looking at the decision to trust unfamiliar actors (Dietz, 2010). Rotter (1967), describes propensity to trust as a person's tendency to trust other people. Propensity to trust is seen as a personality trait, that is influenced by experiences in early personal development and by cultural background (Dietz, 2010). This is something that is not taken into account in the Great Place to Work model when assessing trust in an organization, which can lead to a distorted conclusion on the trust in an organization as a verdict on the level of trust within an organization is made, while only looking at one aspect of trust, only the trustworthiness of the leadership.

Furthermore, Great Place to Work assesses credibility based on three indicators; two-way communication, competence and integrity. We can see that there is an overlap with the literature on both competence and integrity within the conceptualization of credibility and trustworthiness by Great Place to Work. However, Great Place to work also added two-way communication. While this is not directly added in conceptualizations of trust, we have seen that Norman et al. (2010) found evidence for a link between leadership transparency and trust.

2. Pride

Pride regards the relationship of an employee with his or her job. Someone is deemed to be proud when they share their belief that what they do matters in the organization, that their team or the organization would be less successful if it weren't for their efforts (Burchell & Robin, 2011). Pride is split into three indicators, personal pride in one's job, pride in the team, and pride in the organization.

Personal pride in one's job

Personal pride refers to how employees view their individual contributions to the organization. One contributor to the amount of pride one experiences by practicing his or her job is whether the employees believe that their efforts make a difference. Making a difference works on two levels. First, employees believe they have an impact on their actual job or sphere of responsibility. Second, employees believe they themselves actually matter in the organization, beyond their narrow function (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Other than making a difference, work should also be meaningful for an employee to experience pride. Here, the work of people gives them the feeling that they are contributing to something special. The work doesn't only matter to the company, but their part in the company's work matters for the world. This pride may come because employees know that their skills are being used in ways that benefit a greater good, or that their service or product is of value for other employees, clients, or the community (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Pride in the team

People at great workplaces also experience pride in the collective effort of their teams. In these companies, we also see that this sense doesn't just appear, but that efforts are made to support effective teamwork. Also, teams are encouraged to celebrate their successes and reflect on their failures. And finally, employees are also rewarded for team objectives and accomplishments, not only for their individual performance (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Pride in the company

Apart from the pride in personal goals and teamwork, employees in great workplaces also talk about pride in their companies. They highlight their pride in the company's reputation and standing in the community. This might be pride of the company's products, mission, service, or people. Also, the brand presence, the role it plays in the community, or even the credibility, respect, and fairness practiced by the leaders can cause pride in the company (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Scientific literature

When further looking at literature, the same split of topics of pride can be found. Tracy et al. (2010) describe a form of pride in teams, by showing that employees can also experience pride when persons close to them or team members within the organization achieve goals. Furthermore, Gold (1982) and

CHA (2004) found evidence for organizational pride. However, both define organizational pride in different ways. Gold (1982) describes organizational pride as an individual feeling pride caused by achievements that have been successfully reached by the organization. CHA (2004), however, looks at pride more from an attitude point of view. Attitudinal pride in one's job or organization is not dependent on achievements, but is more stable and based on personal attitude. In this case, the employee has a stable positive attitude about their organization which makes him/her proud.

When looking at the possible effects of organizational pride on the organization, Gouthier & Rhein, (2011) found that organizational pride negatively affects turnover intention. When looking at employee satisfaction and perceived employer quality, turnover intention is an important indicator. Therefore, pride can be seen as an important factor of perceived good employment as seen in the GPTW model.

3. Camaraderie

The last criteria for a great workplace, camaraderie, is described as when a workplace has a friendly work environment, and is welcoming to new and transferring employees. In great workplaces, people believe their coworkers see them as complete individuals. They have fun, and they celebrate both personal and company milestones. Camaraderie tends to be higher when employees are competent and when they are a match with the organization's culture. Therefore, the effectiveness of the hiring practices is crucial for camaraderie. In the Great Place to Work framework, intimacy, hospitality, and community are the three indicators for camaraderie (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Intimacy

It's a sign of intimacy when employees feel they can be themselves at work, and when people at work care about one another. One indicator of intimacy is celebrations, both celebrating personal event and company milestones. Leaders can try to increase intimacy by attending celebrations, by implementing programs that allow employees to show caring for one another, and by helping people feel as though they can be themselves (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Hospitality

The second aspect of Camaraderie is Hospitality, referring to both the friendliness and fun in the work environment, and the degree to which new employees are welcomed. First off, the friendliness and fun, or enjoyment, come from the little things. It is not just about the formal celebrations and company activities. Enjoyment can't be programmed or planned. You can however, make room for it. If you give your employees the opportunity to communicate with each other in informal ways at the coffee machine for example, you can create an enjoyable culture (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

The second part of hospitality, welcoming, regards the first days of an employee within the organization. During these days, the employees begin to build relationships, get committed to the company, and understand the importance of relationships at work. When people accept a new job they generally get excited and energized. Great workplaces use this excitement through onboarding programs, new hiring mentoring, and check-ins with new employees. Also, after a new employee is hired, great workplaces ensure that he or she will build relationships with colleagues and with the leaders of the organization. It is also important to not let the onboarding process end abruptly, but to continue checking in on new hires (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

Community

The final part of camaraderie, community, means that employees don't only cooperate with each other because it is necessary for their direct job, but also because they feel a broader sense of team, and because they believe that everyone is working together to create a great product or provide a great service. In the best workplaces, leaders also create opportunities for people in different departments to work together, in order to create an appreciation and understanding of what employees do across the organization and how their own work affect the rest of the organization. Community can be built through role modeling, formal programs, and social networking (Burchell & Robin, 2011).

4. Conclusion about Great Place to Work

When looking at the validity of the Great Place to Work model comparing it with existing theories and putting it to use, it can be concluded that the conceptualization used by GPTW does indeed measure the perceived trust in leadership, camaraderie, and pride. However, these concepts, especially trust, are conceptualized in a simplified manner, and fail to address all aspects of the concepts. When looking at trust for instance, the propensity of trust of the employees is not taken into account, which may cause wrong conclusions about the trustworthiness of the leaders in an organization.

Furthermore, there is scientific evidence of the importance of trust and pride for the perceived quality of the employer through for example turnover intention (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011), an increased sense of belonging, engagement, and contribution to business goals (Hochwarter et al., 2003). However, for camaraderie there is no such evidence. The existing scientific organizational literature has next to no evidence of the effect of camaraderie on employer quality.

Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology of the research will be explained. First, the choice for the methods used will be justified, followed by the description of the research units, observation units, and the methods of data collection. Then, the way to analyze the data will be discussed and finally we will operationalize the key concepts.

In order to answer the research question, What and how does Organization X need to improve with regard to trust, pride, and camaraderie in order to be an attractive employer based on the standards set by GPTW and to what extent is the model used by Great Place to Work valid for measuring employer attractiveness, this research was conducted using a combination of existing quantitative data and new qualitative data. The reason for this was to first get a more complete view of the current situation, in order to see how present trust, camaraderie, and pride were within Organization X. The existing quantitative data was an earlier employee survey within the company. This was used to predict the outcomes of GPTW Trust Index survey, which is a comparable survey to the survey that provided the existing data. Qualitative data was used in order to gain insights for the “why” and “how” questions to come to a more complete view of the trust, camaraderie, and pride within Organization X. In this way, certain lacking dimensions could come to light, and causes of potential shortcomings can be found. More specifically, qualitative data collection methods were used in order to get in depth answers about the current situation within the company. Qualitative research offers the abilities to gather in depth information of a smaller group of participants, in contrast to quantitative research, which generally provides more superficial data from a large population. Simple yes/no or agree/disagree questions will probably fail to expose the underlying sentiments of the participants. These sentiments however are necessary in order to come up with recommendations tailored to the specific problems that the organization faces. However, qualitative data is more suitable to get deep insights in a few topics, where quantitative data can be used to get more superficial data about a larger array of topics. Therefore, first quantitative data has been analyzed, in order to accurately zoom in on the topics for the qualitative research.

Moreover, this qualitative research started with a deductive approach. The interview items have been based on the operationalization of the core concepts. The choice for a deductive approach was made in order to get a clear structured view of all the concepts that are of relevance in becoming a Great Place to Work and the questions used for the data collection are based on the GPTW framework. However, there will also be elements used from inductive research methods. Emerging concepts will also be coded during the analysis of the data, to make sure that no potential important concepts are missed due to limitations of the GPTW framework.

Validity and reliability safeguarding

In order to make sure that the research was done in a way that was both valid and reliable, certain checks and methods were used during the research. Those safeguarding methods will be discussed in this paragraph.

First, in order to safeguard construct validity, the concepts that were being used, the interview protocol, and the focus group protocols have been checked by key informants on neutrality and objectivity. The protocols were examined by three parties who looked at both content and formulation of the questions. Content wise, the questions were checked on whether the questions were relevant and didn't contain opinions from the researchers. When looking at formulation, the questions were checked whether they might already contain a bias towards a specific answer. Then, to safeguard the internal validity, participants of the interviews and focus groups were asked to review their interview transcripts. Furthermore, we used multiple ways of data collection to increase the credibility of the research. By using multiple tools of data collection, we were able to check the consistency of the findings of the research. The research methods that were used were: interviews, focus groups, observation, and existing survey results. Lastly, analyst triangulation was applied by doing the data collection with two researchers in order to reduce possible blind spots.

Given the narrowness of the studied case, only part of the research has external validity. The specific case study on the trust, camaraderie, and pride within Organization X has little external validity. The comparison between the GPTW model and scientific literature, however, is not bound to this narrow case. The testing of the model is externally valid, as the theories are not compared in a specific case or situation, but existing general theories are examined.

For reliability safeguarding, it is important that repetition of the research will yield the same results. In order to make this chance as high as possible, protocols for the interviews and focus groups have been made. These protocols include introduction texts and possible follow up questions. When these protocols are followed by the interviewer or focus group moderator the same way during every repetition, the outcomes should remain the same. Furthermore, the interviews and focus groups have been conducted by two researchers, to make sure that there is no influence from who is conducting the interviews and focus groups.

Ethical considerations

Especially in qualitative research, ethical issues can arise. Bryman and Bell (2007) present the ten most important ethical considerations in research that need to be safeguarded: Participants should not be subjected to harm, participants should be treated with respect and dignity, participants should only participate with full consent, the privacy of the participants should be protected, the confidentiality of the research data should be ensured, anonymity of the participants has to be ensured, exaggeration or deception in the description of the research goals have to be avoided, any possible affiliations or possible conflicts of interest have to be declared, all the communication with regard to the research should be done in an honest and transparent way, and bias and misleading information must be avoided. In order to address these considerations, it was made sure that all participants were invited on a voluntarily basis and they could withdraw whenever deemed necessary. Furthermore, the participants were made aware of the scope, aims, and content of the research as well as the target audience of the research before participating. Lastly, all the data that has been collected for the research has been done in an anonymous way, and this anonymity has been communicated with the participants.

Methods of data collection

Research units and observation units

For the quantitative data, existing data from an external survey has been used. This survey has been distributed among all employees of Organization X and had a response rate of 97%, with a total of 140 respondents. This includes all layers and functions of the organizations, giving a complete overview of the company.

Additionally, in order to get the required information and insights, interviews and focus groups have been conducted with employees of Organization X. In order to make sure that the participants of the interviews and focus groups were representative of the organization, and because different groups and different layers of the organization might experience the company culture in different ways, it was made sure that people were interviewed from all the departments, seniority levels, genders, ages, and functions present in the organization. Moreover, for the focus group it was made sure that the people who participated all worked in a similar working environment, to make sure that there was room for useful discussion and to avoid confusion. For example, the people from the sales team, who are mostly on the road, were in a separate focus group, people from support departments were in separate focus groups, and people who are in medical departments were in a separate focus group. All of the interviews and focus groups were recorded and notes were taken during the sessions. The recordings were transcribed afterwards. During the focus groups, participants were also given handouts of the questions on which they were asked to briefly write down their answers to the questions.

The following table (Table 1) shows the key demographics of the interview and focus group participants.

Table 1: Research participant demographics.

		Focus groups			Interviews	
Participant	Department	Function	Seniority	Department	Function	Seniority
1	Sales	Employee	5-10	CCO	employee	0-5
2	Sales	Employee	10+	Business Operations	Employee	0-5
3	Sales	Employee	0-5	Product strategy	Line manager	10+
4	Compliance	Employee	5-10	Compliance	Leadership Team	0-5
5	External affairs	Employee	10+	Medical	Employee	0-5
6	Product strategy	Employee	5-10	Product Strategy	Leadership Team	0-5
7	Finance	Employee	10+	Sales	Line Manager	10+
8	Medical	Employee	0-5	IT	Employee	10+
9	CCO	Line manager	10+	Finance	Employee	0-5
10				CCO	Employee	5-10

In order to assess the current situation at Organization X and to come up with suitable solutions to fill possible gaps between the current situation and the desired situation for GPTW participation, ten interviews have been conducted and three focus groups. The interviews were Semi-structured. The main advantage of semi-structured interviews is getting a lot of in depth information from a small group. Since the goal of the research was to come up with solutions, in depth information about the

current situation was needed, to accurately pinpoint the current problems. Another advantage of the semi-structured interview is that the interviewer keeps a certain degree of freedom during the interview to go deeper into some interesting topics. The protocol that was used when conducting interviews can be found in the appendix.

The focus groups provided more discussion about topics, and helped to get a clearer view on possible polarization on topics. Furthermore, focus groups are a way to reach more people than in an interview setting, while still gaining somewhat in-depth information. Therefore, the focus groups were also used to gain an insight in the current situation at Organization X, however, more emphasis was put on topics that can lead to discussion within the groups of participants.

Analysis of the data

In order to analyze the collected data, the interview and focus group transcripts have been coded. For the coding, an axial coding approach has been used and the codes have been based on the operationalization below. The codes were determined first on a categorical level. These categories were the dimensions provided by great place to work, and emerging topics. The codes themselves have been derived from the indicators in the operationalization and also from emerging topics. Furthermore, during the coding process, new codes can be added for emerging concepts that were not anticipated for. After all the data was collected, the interview and focus group transcripts were analyzed and the most useful data for the research were highlighted. Based on the highlighted text, codes will be made to group the relevant information.

Furthermore, when looking at the analysis of the data from the GEOS survey, unfortunately the only data that was available were percentages of answers of “strongly agree” plus “agree” and “somewhat agree”. Therefore, this data is not suitable for comprehensive quantitative data analysis. The results of the GEOS were mainly to figure out a starting situation and to use as a method to increase validity of the interview and focus groups data. The GEOS data that was available has been analyzed by listing the items in a table together with the corresponding Trust Index item. Then, the scores of the GEOS survey were compared to the minimum score of 70% from the Trust Index to get an indication of the situation at Organization X from the survey.

Operationalization

The operationalization of the constructs is find below.

Trust:

Definition: “A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectation of the intentions of behavior of another” (Rousseau et al., 1989 p. 395).

Dimensions:

Indicators:

Credibility

Communication
Competence
Integrity

Interview and focus group items:

Communication:

Do you have the feeling that your leadership listens to you? Can you explain this with an example?

In what way does management generally communicate with you?

I communicate clearly and easily with my managers

Management genuinely seeks and responds to suggestions and ideas

Competence:

Do you have the feeling that your leadership is competent? What makes you think this way?

How would you describe the leadership at X?

Management is competent at running the business

Integrity:

Do you trust your managers? Can you explain why you do or don't trust them?

Would you describe your management as integer and honorable? What are your reasons for this?

Management practices what they preach

There is mutual trust between managers and employees

I don't have the feeling that management is constantly watching me

Respect

Support

Collaborating

Caring

Interview and focus group items:

Support:

In what way does the company support you as an employee?

From what department or what functions in the company does this support come from?

Are you satisfied with the support you get from the company? why yes/no?

Physically and emotionally, this is a safe place to work

Collaborating:

Approximately how often do you need to collaborate with colleagues for your job on a weekly basis?

How would you describe this collaboration?

Caring:

Do you have the feeling that the company cares about you? Why do you feel this way?

Fairness

Equity

Impartiality

Justice

Interview and focus group items:

Equity

In which way do you think the company applies equal policies?

Everyone has an opportunity to get special recognition

Is it safe/fair place for everyone? (e.g. Age, Sex, Race, Position...)

Impartiality

To what extent do you agree with the sentence "Senior management acts impartially"? Why so?

Have you ever experienced senior management playing favorites? Was it with regard to an impactful decision in your opinion?

Managers avoid playing favorites

Justice:

Have you ever experienced injustice inside the company? What kind of injustice was this?

Promotions go to those who most deserve them

Pride:

Definition: "An emotion generated by appraisals that one is responsible for, a socially valued outcome, or for being a socially valued person" (Marcelo & Fischer, 1995 p.66).

Pride

Personal job

Team

Company

Interview and focus group items:

Personal Job

How frequently do you give extra to get the job done?

To what extent do you experience pride after doing so?

Team

How frequently do you work in teams?

How would you describe this teamwork?

When working in a team, do you have the feeling that you can trust your team members? What makes you feel this way?

When team goals are reached do you feel proud as a personal goal?

Company

To what extent would you suggest another person to apply for a job in your company?

Camaraderie:

Definition: "A feeling of friendliness towards people that you work or share an experience with" (Cambridge Dictionary).

Camaraderie

Intimacy

Hospitality

Community

Interview and focus group items:

Intimacy

Did this experience change now you've worked here for longer? And how so?

How would you describe your relationship with colleagues at Organization X?

People care about each other here. Why y/n?

Do you have strong relationships with colleagues at Organization X? Are there also relationships with people from other departments?

Hospitality

How did you experience your first week in the company?

Do you think there's a welcoming environment for new employees? How does this show?

Community

How would you describe the company climate/atmosphere?

Could you tell me the last company outdoor activity you participated? How did you feel doing this?

Can you give some examples of events that get celebrated at Organization X? How do you celebrate it?

The environment is friendly/funny. Does this cross departments?

Results

In this chapter, the results of both the existing quantitative data analysis and the qualitative data analysis will be provided. The first part will discuss the comparison of the existing employee satisfaction survey (GEOS) data and the content of the Trust Index by Great Place to Work. After that, all the results are derived from the coded transcripts of the interviews and focus groups.

Results GEOS

When we compare the GEOS questions by Organization X with the Trust Index questions by Great Place to Work, we found a clear overlap of 60% of the questions. This comparison was done by relating questions from both the GEOS and the Trust Index to indicators of the GPTW model, and then matching questions on these indicators. These questions are presented in table 2 below. The first columns of the table show respectively the Trust Index items and the GEOS survey items. Then, the results on these items from the GEOS survey are split in two columns, the first displays the results from the core departments of the organization while the second column shows the results from the CCO department. These scores have been split by the bureau responsible for the analysis of the survey because the CCO acts like a separate organization within Organization X. The columns with the results have been split in the percentages of answers of “agree” and “strongly agree” named “strongly positive”, the percentage of “somewhat agree” answers named “positive” and a total average. When we look at the results of the GEOS questions that overlap, we see that overall 66% of the answers to the questions that are relevant for the Trust Index are “agree” or “strongly agree”, and another 22% of the answers is “somewhat agree”. A table with all the available values of the GEOS data and the corresponding Trust Index items can be found in the appendix. For the Trust index, there is no category for “somewhat agree”, and only answers of “agree” and “strongly agree” are counted as positive answers. Instead of the answers “somewhat agree” and “somewhat disagree”, the Trust Index uses one answer in the middle: “neutral”. Therefore, it is uncertain whether answers of “somewhat agree” in the GEOS survey will lead to answers that are seen as positive in the Trust Index, as they can go either to “neutral” or “agree”. This means that when all the answers of “somewhat agree” in the GEOS will be answers of “neutral” in the Trust Index, Organization X currently is 4% below the threshold for Great Place to Work certification. When we look for the lowest scoring sections, we see that “Management is competent at running the business”, “Promotions go to those who best deserve them”, and “Management is approachable, easy to talk with” are the lowest scoring items. We may interpret from these results that the GEOS survey shows a lack of trust in leadership.

Table 2: Comparison of GEOS and Trust Index questions.

	Trust Index Survey	GEOS Survey	Strongly Positive	Positive	Total	Average	Strongly Positive	Positive	Total	Average	Overall		
Credibility Management keeps me informed about important issues and changes. Management is approachable, easy to talk with. Management is competent at running the business. Management hires people who fit in well here. Management does a good job of assigning and coordinating people. Management delivers on its promises. Management is honest and ethical in its business practices.	I am sufficiently informed about what is going on in Roche Brussels (strategy, projects, targets, challenges). Senior leadership is appropriately visible and accessible to employees. I see strong evidence of effective leadership from senior leaders We are attracting the people we need to achieve our business goals My manager holds people appropriately accountable for performance. This organization delivers on the promises it makes to its employees My manager acts with integrity	65% 61% 65% 68% 77% 75% 60% 61%	28% 25% 28% 13% 20% 13%	93% 70% 63% 86% 90% 93% 93%	80% 43% 65% 77% 87% 81%	43% 35% 30% 13% 12% 9%	73% 78% 95% 90% 100% 100%	80%	83%				
	Respect I am offered training or development to further myself professionally. Management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort. Management genuinely seeks and responds to suggestions and ideas. Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment. People are encouraged to balance their work life and their personal life. We have special and unique benefits here.	My learning and development is strongly supported I receive appropriate recognition (beyond my pay and benefits) for my contributions and accomplishments Sufficient effort is made by senior leaders to listen and consider the opinions of employees My manager involves me in decisions that affect me My managers supports my need to find balance between work and personal commitments I can clearly explain what makes working here different from other companies	63% 61% 72% 77% 66% 64%	24% 28% 13% 17% 22%	87% 89% 76% 90% 91% 89%	67% 61% 69% 87% 83% 74%	39% 35% 9% 17% 17%	96% 100% 96% 100% 91%	87%	86%			
		Fairness People here are paid fairly for the work they do. Promotions go to those who best deserve them. People here are treated fairly regardless of their age. People here are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnicity. People here are treated fairly regardless of their sex. People here are treated fairly regardless of their sexual orientation. People here are treated fairly regardless of disability. If I am unfairly treated, I believe I'll be given a fair shake if I appeal.	I am paid fairly for the contributions I make Career opportunities go to the most qualified people My manager treats people fairly I feel this organization values diversity My manager treats people fairly I feel this organization values diversity My manager treats people fairly If I have an issue with being treated fairly in the workplace, I am confident that action will be taken	64% 62% 77% 81% 77% 81% 64% 68%	25% 13% 15% 13% 15% 13% 10%	89% 65% 90% 90% 90% 98% 90% 84%	48% 43% 78% 81% 78% 87% 78% 65%	35% 26% 22% 13% 22% 13% 22% 13%	83% 69% 100% 100% 100% 100% 100% 78%	92%	86%		
			Pride My work has special meaning; this is not 'just a job'. When I look at what we accomplish, I feel a sense of pride. People here are willing to give extra to get the job done. I want to work here for a long time. I'm proud to tell others I work here. People look forward to coming to work here. I feel good about the ways we contribute to the community.	I get a sense of accomplishment from my work The organization inspires me to do my best work The organization motivates me to contribute more than is normally required to complete my work It would take a lot to get me to leave this organization I am proud to work for this organization I truly enjoy my day-to-day work tasks The organization acts responsibly within the community here	63% 71% 67% 68% 65% 77% 79% 74%	26% 22% 23% 23% 12% 18% 18%	94% 93% 90% 91% 100% 95% 97%	78% 70% 61% 83% 86% 74% 87%	17% 26% 35% 9% 14% 22% 13%	95% 96% 92% 100% 96% 100%	96%	95%	
				Camaraderie I can be myself around here. You can count on people to cooperate. Taking everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work.	My co-workers respect my thoughts and feelings There is effective cooperation between different groups/departments in the organization This organization is considered one of the best places to work in this area	69% 61% 74%	15% 13% 19%	95% 74% 93%	87% 39% 74%	13% 38% 17%	100% 78% 91%	92%	88%
					Average Overall Index		67%	21%	88%	70%	22%	92%	89%

Interview and Focus group results

In this section, the results from the focus groups and interviews will be discussed. The results will be divided based on the most relevant findings from the data based on the coding of the interview and focus group transcripts.

In order to better understand the results given in this chapter, first Organization X will be briefly described. Organization X is a Belgian affiliate of a multi-national pharmaceutical company. There are approximately 200 employees working in this affiliate. The organization is split in departments, such as sales and finance. Each department has a director at the top of the department. Directly under the director are several line managers of which the amount depends on the department. The leadership team of Organization X (LT) consists only of the general manager (GM) and the director of each department. When people speak about leadership within Organization X, they speak about the LT.

1. Trust in leadership

First, the trust in leadership will be discussed. This part will describe the data regarding competency, support, communication, impartiality, integrity, transparency, fairness and safety. There will also be a small subsection focusing on line-managers.

1.1 Competency

With the important role that leadership played in our data collection, we saw that the competence of the LT also played an important role. When looking at the whole, the perception of the respondents on the competency of the LT was moderately positive. When we look at whether the respondents think that the members of the leadership team were competent in each of their respective business fields everyone was positive. The team was described as; “driven”, “confident”, “knowledgeable”, and “experts in their subjects”. The reasons people gave for this was that you don’t get in that position if you are not competent and that the good company results reflect the competency of the leadership team.

When it comes to leadership skills and alignment, there were more hesitant responses. The leadership team was described as: “not always 100% aligned”, “heterogeneous in a way”, and “how leadership is projected to the organization, I think that’s an area where they can become more competent” (interview respondent 6, Leadership team member, transcript 6). With regard to leadership, the team is seen more as individuals with different approaches, levels of transparency, and leadership skills. Some people responded that there was a large difference in the leadership competences within the team, making it hard to assess the leadership competences of the LT in general, however, the amount of people who voiced this was only one fourth of the population.

Finally, some people lacked visibility of the LT to form their opinion on their competency. Therefore, they based their opinion on “what they hear in the hallway”. This also looks to be a problematic aspect, which will be discussed more in depth later in this chapter.

1.2 Support

For support, we coded general trust in LT, as well as whether people thought that the LT supported their development and that they were supportive in case of issues in the private lives. When we look at the results, we see only two real negative remarks with regard to support, and both of these are about the trust in the LT. The first concern with regard to trust in the LT is based on the decisions that were made. The respondent didn’t agree with some of the decisions. On top of that, there was the perception that the LT was disconnected with the customers, and the real problems, since most of their time was spent in meetings. The other problem when it comes to trusting the LT was unclarity. The respondent didn’t trust the LT, because there was no indication of how far the LT could be trusted. It wasn’t clear to what extent the LT would support the employee, and therefore there was a lack of trust. Other than the two people who had negative remarks, there were some hesitant answers that some of the LT could be trusted and was supportive, where other members were not as trustworthy. This also relates to the lack of a holistic team as discussed above. Other than that, there were also a lot of positive remarks, that the members of the LT have an open-door policy, that there are good interactions, and that the respondents could trust their leaders in general.

When we look at support of LT in general, and exclude the remarks on trust, all the respondents were very positive. There were examples about support in cases of business failure, in case of issues in personal lives of employees, and support in maintaining a positive work-life balance.

1.3 Communication

When we look at the way the LT communicates everyone was at least somewhat positive. The only negative remarks we got were that not everyone from the LT is equally open, but that also has to do with personalities and priorities between departments. Also, it was only a handful of people who mentioned this. Other than that, everyone experienced an open-door culture without any barriers for communication. We even had one example of a participant saying: “I told stories to her (the general manager) and afterwards I was like, “oh my god”, did I just tell that to the general manager? (focus group respondent 9, line manager, focus group transcript 3)” This is a clear indicator that on both professional and informal level the LT is accessible and open for communication.

1.4 Impartiality

With regard to having experienced impartiality, the answer is generally divided in two parts. Almost no respondents agree that LT acts entirely impartial. However, everyone who says that LT is not always impartial adds that this is part of human behavior, that in their eyes no one is ever completely impartial. They then also add that the behavior of LT does not cross any lines, it is impartial enough, but in their eyes, you can never be completely impartial. Therefore, we can conclude that the perception of LT in a vacuum is positive with regard to impartiality. Another common answer is that respondents have experienced some form of injustice or impartiality in any form once or twice, but never on impactful decisions or in high quantities.

There were also some respondents who noticed that sometimes the chances are given to a select group of people, instead of to everyone in the organization. An important mark with this observation was however, that this select group of people was always selected based on performance, not on personality. This does however create an exposure loop, where the people who have the most exposure to start with, will keep gaining more and more exposure, where the rest is left behind. This was only observed by two respondents however, so it looks to be a minor problem.

Another interesting observation, is that while respondents generally say that in their experiences and in their departments, there are no signs of impartiality, they say that they think that this is vastly different in other departments and that they have heard rumors of impartiality. These responses are also coded for the gossip culture, and we will discuss them further in that part of the results.

1.5 Integrity

When we look at integrity, the responses are mixed. About half of the respondents say that they would describe the LT as honorable and integer, and that they have never experienced injustice in any way in the company. Others are not necessarily negative, but they place more question marks with regard to integrity. Examples of this are cases of people getting fired with unsatisfactory reasons for the respondent, that the LT sometimes focuses only on sales, or that LT puts the perception of Basel over what is best for the affiliate.

Another issue that a handful of respondents had with regard to leadership was the lack of “walking the talk” and “leading by example” (focus group respondent 5, employee, focus group transcript 2).

Examples were given of LT members going over the maximum budget for lunches with doctors, which was the same for everyone. Another example of this regarded the leadership competencies that line managers have to follow these leadership competencies strictly, while members of the LT don't follow those themselves. This leading by example is also reflected in meeting habits, where meetings get cancelled last minute or LT members aren't focused on the meeting while there.

1.6 Transparency

When we look at the leadership, the most major issue we found was transparency. During our interviews and focus groups we found that most of the issue with trust in the leadership could be explained by the lack of transparency. When looking at individual cases, like asking for information and getting feedback on personal development, there were some satisfying results. However, when we look at the complete picture of transparency from the leadership team, we found that almost everyone found this lacking. This lack of transparency regards reasons behind promotions, long term strategy,

what leadership is working on, performance appraisal, and in general differences in transparency between LT members. This lack of transparency then affects the perception of employees on all the indicators of leadership credibility, fairness, and respect. The lack of transparency on long term strategy and on what leadership is working on, makes people question whether the LT is competent. An example is someone who questions changes in strategy, because only the ad hoc situation is known to the employees. Then, if something that has been working perfectly fine is suddenly changed, without information why, the competency of the LT gets questioned.

When it comes to selection criteria for new hires and promotions, the results are going both ways. Some people say that the processes are transparent, where some say they aren't. This further confirms the lack of consistency between how transparency is handled within the LT. The lack of transparency with regard to selection processes also raises question marks with regard to the fairness of the LT. While we've seen that most respondents think in a positive way about LT impartiality and integrity, the only times where there were negative responses on that it had to do with transparency. People were not satisfied with the answer they got, or they did not get an answer at all.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency is also linked to the two other main reasons for the lack of trust in the LT; the Belgian culture and the gossip culture. The Belgian culture is one where people rather not speak up to each other and keep things for themselves; this is a clear indicator for lack of transparency. The gossip culture is fostered by inconsistent levels of transparency of the LT. When information is given to certain people, but not openly released, the information will spread through the informal channels instead of through the formal channels and therefore create gossip. Both the Belgian culture and gossip culture will be discussed more in depth later in this chapter.

1.7 Perceptions on Line managers

When we talk about leadership, most of it is about the LT. However, we also got some insights on how the respondents perceive their direct line managers. We found that all the responses that regard the direct line managers were positive. There were not even hesitant or neutral responses. Respondents confirmed that their line managers listen to them, are open, integer, and trustworthy.

1.8 Fairness

When we look at fairness, we see some overlap with the impartiality and integrity of the leadership. Since we already discussed these topics in the paragraph about leadership, we will focus mainly on fairness with regard to companywide equal policies and perceived justice. When we look at the results, we see that there are no differences made based on function, ethnicity, or gender. All respondents mentioned that there were no gaps with regard to those demographics. Leadership was as accessible as everyone, and in theory had to follow the same rules and got the same benefit packages, people from different ethnicities and genders get the same opportunities within the company, and during selection processes there is no bias towards specific races or genders. However, respondents did mention a gap between departments. A gap between sales and the rest of the organization was mentioned by about five respondents, and even though this gap has been shrinking over the past couple of years, it was still noticeably there. Where in the past celebrations for successful business were only for the sales teams, now the entire organization is involved. However, when you look at who get the spotlight for business achievements, it is always sales and marketing, some respondents say.

1.9 Safety

Safety was only tested in the focus groups, as this was a topic that was only there to fill a gap in the GEOS survey. We asked the participants about both the perceived physical and emotional safety of the job. When it comes to physical safety, everyone gave a positive answer. This was supported by both the arguments that there has never been a case of physical abuse, as well as that the company supports well-being by giving their employees customizable desks that allow them to work while standing, by having a gym in place, and facilitating employees to go running or cycling in breaks. For emotional safety, the answers were less positive. We saw that during the focus groups participants mentioned the high pressure within the company to deliver. However, it was noted that this is a general trend in the industry, and not specific to Organization X. Also in interview, an increase in workload and an increasing danger of stress was mentioned. Both during the focus groups and the interviews the respondents added that even though the pressure was increasing, that Organization X

did try to support its employees with presentations on how to avoid burnouts and by fully supporting its employees during a burnout.

2. Pride

Here, the different result regarding pride will be disclosed. This section is split between individual pride and team pride.

2.1 Individual pride

For pride, we first looked at to what extent people were willing to give extra on the job, either to finish tasks that took unexpectedly long to finish, or to take up extra tasks. Every single respondent replied that they regularly give extra to get the job done, and most even said that they give extra every single day.

Then we asked whether people experience pride when they give extra to get their job done, or when they finish tasks. There was only one respondent who responded that giving extra didn't increase pride. Then one respondent answered that the experienced pride was dependent on the outcome of the extra work. If there was significant extra work in a task, but the result was still not satisfying, there was no experienced pride, but when the outcome was positive, there was more pride. The rest of the respondents all replied that they experience pride in their work, and especially when they give more on the job. There were also responses that this pride was a crucial aspect of the job satisfaction, and that job satisfaction would significantly decrease when they no longer experience pride in their job.

2.2 Team pride

To test for the extent to which respondents experienced pride when working in teams, we asked whether they experience pride when they reach team goals, and how this team pride relates to individual pride. When we look at the results, we see that the respondents experience pride also when working in teams, and most of the time even more than when they accomplish personal goals. Part of this is explained by the fact that almost all of the impactful goals are team goals rather than personal goals. Another part is explained by the positive atmosphere people experience when working within teams and the high level of collaboration. For respondents that have a managing role, the pride they experience with regard to group work is different than the pride they experience from accomplishing personal goals. One respondent described this difference in the following way: "When for instance I would meet a goal with my team, I would kind of feel proud for my team. Kind of as a father when his children graduate, I would feel proud, but it is a different definition of pride. (interview respondent 4, leadership team, interview transcript 4)"

3. Camaraderie

This section will cover the results regarding camaraderie. There are four different paragraphs in this section, namely: Informal atmosphere, formal atmosphere, celebrating, and welcoming.

3.1 Informal atmosphere

The first topic refers to the company atmosphere, specifically the informal one. The overall outcome is extremely positive because all of the people that were interviewed referred to it as a "nice" or "friendly" environment, focusing particularly on the "family" idea. One aspect that is stressed during interviews refers to the "possibility" for the employees to have small talk in front of the coffee machine, in the morning or during breaks. Those are moments in which employees feel freer to talk and, as a consequence, more relaxed. Another frequently mentioned argument is the outdoor activities that are being done by Organization X, both affiliate and holding. The general idea here is positive, especially because people consider outdoor activities as a way to step back from business be a little off the grid, in order to spend time with colleagues outside the company boundaries in a more informal setting.

Some other people referred to the environment as "good but professional" and this specific topic could generate discussions: a part of the people interviewed consider people within the company simply as colleague; others instead, have a stronger idea of "family": employees at Organization X are not simply colleagues but part of a big family, to whom you can talk with even about private things. Still, it appears to be a debatable topic.

That being said, there are still downsides of this "family" environment: the most frequent consequence is that there can come out groups, or "camps" as mentioned by one the interviewed

(interview respondent 6, leadership team, interview transcript 6), in which there is openness and a welcoming environment, but it doesn't get out of the "camp" boundaries. A second negative consequence of this "family" environment, and this is often mentioned, are the leaking information via gossip. This topic will be discussed further in this report.

3.2 Formal Atmosphere

We are going to move to the second topic of Camaraderie, which refers to formal atmosphere within the company. The overall outcome of the interviews is quite equally distributed and opinions are conflicting: while everyone responded that the general collaboration and atmosphere very good is, there are also some negative remarks about the structure of teamwork. The concern that is raised is that, especially within cross-functional teams, there is no structure. A minority of Respondents described the teamwork as "chaos", "rules aren't clear", and "communication happens after a meeting through email". When looking at other teams than the cross-functional teams, the results are a lot more positive, and most people say that they trust their teams. There were only two examples where respondents say that they have the feeling that team members have hidden agendas and don't follow up on their promises.

However, when we look at collaboration and formal atmosphere, all respondents react positive on this. People are respectful of each other, are willing to help, and the working atmosphere was even described as "relaxing". One reason that is mentioned by a couple of respondents for this strong working environment is the quality of the employees. The colleagues at Organization X are described as "smart people", "educated" and "super teams". Because of this perception of highly competent colleagues, people trust their colleagues and are willing to collaborate with each other.

3.3 Celebrating

When it comes to the Celebrating subsection, the overall opinion of the people interviewed is extremely positive: it is widely considered as a topic that enhances the pride of being part of this company. All of the people think that celebrations such as outdoor activities are taken in serious consideration by the company and that they are the best way to step back from the business and focus on doing something that can help somebody else less fortunate or simply relax and chill with colleagues. Another argument has been brought up to the attention of the discussion as a way to further demonstrate the validity of this topic: the example rotates around the fact that there has been a meeting in August in a sea place where, in theory, only people from Sales department should participate. This procedure has been changed, in order to have all the people from any department who could have enjoyed that event. "That makes a real difference to the approach between the internal people and the sales people. Now we have a very closer contact with that people who are not coming very often to the company" (interview respondent 8, employee, interview transcript 8).

During the interviews, a couple of remarks have been made: sometimes it is mentioned that these outdoor activities are exclusive interest of people who are rather athletic or linked to a specific disease area of work. So, this is to say that some people consider these practices not so inclusive. Another remark that has been made referred to the nature of these celebrations: "I thought about when I was writing it and I thought 'Gosh, we celebrate only when someone is leaving!' But we never tend to celebrate when someone joins in but we celebrate when they leave" (focus group respondent 9, line manager, focus group transcript 3). From this extract is quite evident how the type of celebration is sometimes perceived as a one direction.

3.4 Welcoming

From an atmosphere perspective, we see that every respondent except for one gives a positive answer. The most respondents describe Organization X as "welcoming", "warm", "helping", and "friendly". Multiple people mentioned the nice gesture of having flowers delivered to your home on the first day of work, and that all the employees show genuine interest in the newcomers and start conversations with the newcomers. However, from one point of view the atmosphere was seen as less welcoming. It was described as "cliquey" and that it could be "lonely and confusing" at the start.

With regard to the induction program, the responses are mixed. Some people like the fact that you meet a lot of people in the first week, and that you are in control of it yourself, that you can plan your meetings yourself. However, this was also seen as a negative part by others. The induction program was also described as: "this long shopping list of over 40 people that you need to see, and you have no

idea how to proceed, there is no sense of prioritization clearly, and it isn't even set up for you" (Interview respondent 6, leadership team, interview transcript 6) This sentiment was shared by some other respondents, and it was further called "old-fashioned" and "complex".

4. New insights

During the data collection, there were also some new insights that were not anticipated for at the start of the data collection. Those topics are gossip and Belgian culture.

4.1 Gossip

One topic that has been taken seriously into consideration during our interviews, is the one referred to the title of this section: Gossip. The overall analysis of the interviews reveals that this topic is a crucial issue inside this company.

During almost every interview and focus group, we heard sentences like "I think it's very different in the other departments" or "I hear also stuff sometimes..." This brought the attention to this topic, because it was also directly addressed as a serious issue here at Organization X. "The problem that we see from that though is that they create their own discussion bubbles around a lot of gossip, and that is a bit problematic". This is an example of someone speaking about this. It is considered a struggle that actually can undermine the performances results. "Sometimes again, the challenge that I find with Organization X is as a small affiliate, there is a lot of corridor talk. There is a lot of behind closed-door talk. And one part that I question, and I don't fault anybody, but information tends to leak" (Interview respondent 6, leadership team, interview transcript 6). The last point connected to Gossip is strictly related to decision making process and the reasons why some decisions have been taken: there were some cases where people tend to follow up the rumors and corridor talk regarding a promotion of one person, addressing it with the typical sentence "...This person was closer to the manager...".

4.2 Belgian culture

As already briefly mentioned in the paragraph about transparency, we have found that the Belgian culture also plays a role in the perceived lack of trust in the leadership. Belgians are less likely to speak up about their problems, and are more inclined to keep issues for themselves, or share them in informal contexts. This goes two ways, first from the LT point of view; employees are less likely to speak up about potential issues or problems, which then translate to a lack of trust. But also, the other way around, employees raised concerns during the focus groups and interviews that management also doesn't speak up when there is something wrong. To quote a respondent: "I have the impression that we are not directed enough, we don't dare to say no, you may say no if you explain why, if that's the rule, that I am missing" (Focus group respondent 7, employee, focus group transcript 2). This shows the nature of the Belgian culture, and applies to both the LT perspective as well as the employee perspective.

5. Great Place to Work

There were also general questions asked about what the participants thought about Organization X participating in Great Place to Work, this section will be split in the paragraphs: reason why, gaps, benefits, and caring.

5.1 Reason why

During our interviews, we briefly described what Great Place to Work is at the end, and asked people whether they think Organization X is a Great Place to Work and the reasons why they think this. The analysis of the interviews suggests that there is a spread awareness of the fact that Organization X is a great place to work, and none of the people interviewed had a doubt about it. There are a lot of quotes that could be added, but we can summarize it in a very simple way: all people, when asked the question "Do you think Organization X is a great place to work?" answered "Yes, absolutely" or "100% yes". Another example that can be mentioned, regards the following question: "To what extent would you suggest another person to apply for a job in your company?" The replies were quite positive as well in many interviews.

When it comes to the reasons why Organization X can be addressed as a great place to work, the interviewees got very different reasons but with a common root: the giving-back characteristic of the company. Giving back has to be interpreted as those benefits and solutions that Organization X puts on the table for its employees. The following quote represents and explains perfectly the sense of this

giving back culture: “Organization X Belgium offers its employees a lot, if not too much. It is a very accommodating company for employee wellbeing. There are a lot of initiatives; there is a lot of compensating, services and factors that are available to you” (interview respondent 6, leadership team, interview transcript 6).

Another example of this giving back culture has to be referred to what we can call an “emergency situation”: some people interviewed told stories about having a burnout, and how the company reacted to that. “I have been ill last year. I had a burnout or I was about to reach a burnout. I was not happy with my position at that moment and I wanted to stop working at Organization X I’m honest about that and at a certain moment I was with a job coach and we were looking at how I can create my best job, what I would like to have it and in that discussion with my coach I was also in discussion with the HR and other people and I said to Organization X “Well I’m not happy here where I am now, there are two possibilities or I leave go to do something else like yoga teacher or we can find a solution and maybe you have something else in the company and now well I’m still here. And I have a completely different position and from the first moment at my new job I’m very happy. I feel like this is the best match for me, so for me that’s really an example of Organization X” (Focus group respondent 5, employee, focus group transcript 2).

5.2 Gaps

In this section, we will summarize the suggestions that came from the people interviewed. Not a lot of people were able to name a gap. Twice we heard: “Perhaps the problem within Organization X is that people are there for so long, that they think everything is normal” (interview respondent 1, employee, interview transcript 1). Apart from this general remark, the others are very specific and linked to a personal situation rather than a company one.

5.3 Benefits

One topic discussed during this interview was with regard to the benefits both for Organization X and the employees of the participation to the Great Place to Work research. The overall analysis explains that people interviewed are aware of the benefits that Organization X could get from the participation, while on a more personal side, about half of the people consider this participation quite irrelevant for them, they don’t see how participating in the GPTW research will benefit them.

If we look at the benefits for the organization, the analysis shows that people have a clear idea of the main benefits of this participation: “I think it’s a deserving competitor, cause I compare to the previous company I worked for, it’s really world of difference” (interview respondent 2, employee, interview transcript 2) or “Yes, if we get high quality people, who can support us. Yes, it is for our interest as well” (interview respondent 3, line manager, interview transcript 3), and more “Well I think it is a good branding as an employer to attract great colleagues for instance when you have a vacancy” (interview respondent 4, leadership team, interview transcript 4). Employer branding here stands out pretty clearly.

Referring to the personal benefits, the opinions were overall positive, although some consider this participation irrelevant for their professional career: “...but for me personally it wouldn’t make a difference” is just one example of the sentence that some people pronounced during the interviews.

5.4 Caring

The last topic that will be discussed is related to the caring attitude of the company. This topic is significantly important for people at Organization X and it comes strictly related to arguments already exposed in this report such as Support and giving back culture. The qualitative analysis made here suggests us that the feedback from the people interviewed regarding this topic is positive. Reasons like “support when a person is sick” or “possibility of development” or simply a demonstration of empathy are some of the answers we received during the interviews. The comprehension is frequently stressed and marked as a positive point of the company: “they care for their people here. When you have problems in your private life, they always try to find a solution, like part-time and they have a lot of comprehension. And if you need time to get better, they try to find solutions. It is not always business, business and business. They care for their people. We have some examples he, we had people who had big problems in their private life, but Organization X has a lot of comprehension for this. If you need time, they give time to get better” (Interview respondent 1, employee, interview transcript 1).

One example of why they consider this topic greatly positive is that company actively does something in the health of its employees: “here we have the standing desks for example, that’s a great example. For people who are doing a desk job, it’s unhealthy to be sitting down all day, all companies know that. Organization X is doing something about it, so that’s good” (Interview respondent 2, employee, interview transcript 2).

6. Summary

When summarizing this chapter, we can see that when it comes to trust, camaraderie, and pride, Organization X scores high on the dimensions of GPTW. However, there are factors that have not been anticipated for by the GPTW framework like ethnic background, gossip, and transparency that revealed to be of influence on the trust within the organization. This might cause lower levels of trust than revealed by the GPTW dimensions.

Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter, an answer will be given to the research question: “What and how does Organization X need to improve with regard to trust, pride, and camaraderie in order to be an attractive employer based on the standards set by GPTW and to what extent is the model used by Great Place to Work valid for measuring employer attractiveness?” This answer will be based on the analysis of the existing survey results, the focus group results, the interview results discussed in the preceding chapter, and the literature study in the second chapter. First, the main results will be discussed and the research question will be answered. In the second section of this chapter, the practical and scientific implications and gaps for future research will be discussed.

The main results can be split into two different categories. First the results regarding the GPTW readiness of Organization X will be discussed. Then, the validity of the GPTW model will be discussed.

1. Trust

When looking at the results on the trust in the leadership within Organization X, we may interpret that there is a moderate to high amount of trust in the leadership based on the dimensions provided by Great Place to Work. On the dimensions of credibility, fairness and respect, most answers were positive. As seen in the theory chapter, the dimensions of Great Place to Work, however simplified, do a good job at measuring trust in organizations. However, there were still aspects that can be linked to trust which were barely mentioned by GPTW, that have more negative results. Those will be discussed next.

2. Transparency

From the analysis made on our interviews and focus groups, as mentioned previously in this report, one of the issues frequently addressed by the people interviewed was the lack of transparency within the company, in particular by the Leadership Team. While transparency has been conceptualized as an indicator of trust, it appeared to of greater influence than anticipated. Therefore, transparency will be further defined and described in this section, and possible methods for the improvement of transparency within Organization X will be proposed.

2.1 Definition

The Business Dictionary defines transparency as: “Lack of hidden agendas and conditions, accompanied by the availability of full information required for collaboration, cooperation, and collective decision making.” Additionally, Drucker & Gumpert (2007) describe transparency as: “Transparency, the opposite of opacity, is a worthy, but unattainable ideal in the social relationships of people, the workplace, and between government and the governed. Degrees of clarity and clearness characterize the continuum of transparency to opacity with technical, social and psychological filters imposed intentionally and unintentionally in between those who observe and those who are observed”

(Drucker & Gumpert, 2007, p. 494). When it comes to transparency in organizations, transparency with regard to decision making is seen as the most important form of transparency (Farrell, 2016).

2.2 The function of Transparency

The main goal of transparency is to provide access to the greatest amount of suitable information with minimal suppression (Drucker & Gumpert, 2007). In this way employees can have access to information that they consider relevant and crucial for themselves and the organization. Not all information can be shared, obviously; that is when, according to Drucker & Gumpert (2007), filters come in. “Filtering is a dynamic and fluid process altering the flow of information and data essential to the governance of organizations” (Drucker & Gumpert, 2007, p. 495). Due to the fact that not all information can be shown, there will be layers of access via filters. The more filter a policy, communication, organization has, the less transparent and opaquer a company is. However, Farrell (2016) states that when there is too less transparency the trust in the leadership decreases. Additionally, an increase in transparency will also decrease rumor and gossip and increase the active engagement and knowledge sharing of employees within the organization (Farrell, 2016). Lastly, transparency is driven by communication. When people get the facts straight and upfront, emotional uncertainty will be avoided, even when it regards bad news (Farrell, 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that a high level of transparency is necessary to build trust, however, there need to be filters in place in order be consistent in what information is not shared. It needs however to be taken into account that even when there are filters in place, the process should always be transparent. Only the content should be filtered (Farrell, 2016).

2.3 Suggestions

In order to increase transparency inside the company and increase the trust in order to become a GPTW, first the leadership should make sure that their strategy and goals are clear, and are repeated often in order to keep the employees up to date on organizational objectives. Also, information from the upper levels of the organization should be shared with employees to make them feel part of the loop (Farrell, 2017). Additionally, to be consistent in filtering the information, the organization should draft and implement a stated organizational policy with regard to disclosure and access. As Drucker & Gumpert state in their article, this policy should be considered as “an informational “bill of rights” that symbolizes the policy that decisions and actions of an organization are of legitimate concern to those within the organization, the organization is accessible and accountable, and to the extent practicable under articulated guidelines, information will be published or open for review by a population deemed appropriate. The broader this population, the greater the perception of openness” (Drucker & Gumpert, 2007, p. 497). This policy should follow these criteria:

- Clear guidelines on restricted and unrestricted access to information;
- Articulated exemptions to disclosure accompanied by rationale for each exemption;
- Training in which the inherent technological filters and policies for each unique information technology is articulated;
- Published policies. Even policies which limit disclosure or presume non-disclosure can enhance the appearance of transparency with a thoughtful and reasoned statement which recognizes the legitimate interest of organizational members.

In short, the document should include what will, and also what will not be shared through the organization. Furthermore, it should address the reasons why certain information is not shared. When this plan is followed by the entire leadership team, the inconsistency in transparency will be reduced, employees know when they can and when they cannot expect information and why, and it should be stated that the process will always be transparent.

3. Gossip

As seen in the results chapter, there is a significant amount of gossip within Organization X. This gossip includes rumors about the leadership team. While gossip was not included in the operationalization of trust, gossip can damage the trust in the leadership, while it might not be justified. Therefore, we will look at how the amount of gossip within Organization X Belgium can be reduced in this paragraph.

3.1 Definition

For a social exchange to be considered gossip it is argued that it must be evaluative talk between two or more persons about a third party that is absent from the conversation (Grosser et al., 2012, p. 41). In other words, within the context of rumor or gossip, due to a lack of clear organizational information, the speaker might simply “stretch the facts” which allows for over or underestimation of the contingencies described by the information (Houmanfar & Johnson., 2004, p. 128). Individuals engage in gossip to achieve status, intimacy, information, power, and entertainment (Houmanfar & Johnson, 2004). Furthermore, gossip is mainly used to discuss faults and weaknesses of others (Michelson et al., 2010).

Gossip generally stems from ambiguity and a lack of transparency (Houmanfar & Johnson, 2004). When there is ambiguity with regard to the environment or organizational change, people start spreading their own rumors through gossip. The same is true when there is a lack of transparency, or when there is an information mismatch (Houmanfar & Johnson, 2004). Lastly, “lazy management” can cause gossip (Houmanfar & Johnson, 2004). Lazy management refers to a style of leadership that only gives feedback during designated feedback moments, instead of constant feedback. This leadership style causes ambiguity, and therefore increases gossip (Houmanfar & Johnson, 2004).

3.2 The harm of gossip

In the following section, we will discuss how gossip can be harmful for your organization. Gossip can serve six functions in an organization: getting information, gaining influence, releasing pent-up emotions, providing intellectual stimulation, fostering interpersonal intimacy, and maintaining and enforcing group values and norms (Grosser et al., 2012). It is important to note that anyone gossip exchange can serve more than one function simultaneously (Grosser et al., 2012). Some of these functions can be positive for an organization. However, Gossip can also have significant harm for your organization, for example getting information and gaining influence can be damaging for your organization, as described below.

Gossip is, according to the literature, one of the best ways to get information no matter the verifiability of the source. Gossip is so efficient for three main reasons: it is timely, because information tends to move through informal communication networks with greater speed than when it travels through formal channels. Secondly, getting information via gossip is inexpensive in terms of effort of speaking. It is easier to gain information from a third party than to directly ask for the information at the source most of the time. Thirdly, gossip is the only way to get information that is actually unavailable or confidential. Gossip and rumor are sometimes the only means by which employees can obtain information about the happenings in an organization (Grosser et al., 2012). Therefore, when gossip is used to gain information, employees get the information second hand, instead of through the valid sources. This may contaminate the information or confidential information can be spread.

Additionally, gossip can be a valid way to gain influence. When a person inside a group of people has information that is hard to attain, he or she will gain influence in that group. The individual who always knows the latest juicy piece of gossip is seen by his or her peers as being well-connected in the workplace social network and therefore influential. At this point, influential people can also use this gossip as a way to affect the opinions of other. This makes the process of gossip a process of social influence (Grosser et al., 2012). When you take this in consideration in addition to the statement mentioned before about gossip generally being about faults and weaknesses, it shows that gossip can have a negative influence on the work floor.

Finally, gossip can reduce the trust in the leadership. As gossip is used to spread negative messages, when these messages regard the leadership it can be harmful for the trust in the leadership. For example, when rumors get spread that a certain person got a raise because of a strong relationship with his or her managers, the integrity of that manager will be questioned, even though it might not be justified.

3.3 Suggestions

In this section, we will explain how to solve the gossip issue through some suggestions. First, the suggestions given in the transparency section should already help in reducing gossip, as gossip gets fueled by a lack of transparency. Furthermore, our suggestions are based on the literature and on the data, we analyzed from our research. The solutions listed in this section should be considered as a blueprint in which specific company requirements can be applied.

3.3.1 Formally Communicate Information

Gossip comes among the employees when there is a leak in communication by the management. If the management doesn't communicate in a proper way, the consequences will be that there is left room for assumptions.

Our suggestion is to have a proactive and honest communication: first thing to be established is what can be said and what can't. At this point, the details that can be revealed should be told to the employees, in the same way by the entire management team. When it comes to confidential information, employees should be told what information they will not receive and the reasons why of it (Grosser et al., 2012 p. 56).

Third point is to give the employees a clear timeline about revealing of information and stick to it as much as possible. In this way employees would feel treated with respect and as adults instead of being treated as children saying: "you can't have access to this information simply because you can't". All this can be done using a document, a simple "Gossip Communication Plan" in which list this process of communicating information formally. This can be also a section of the larger "Communication plan" document.

3.3.2 Foster a Culture of Civility

One of the biggest risks that a company can run into is to develop a culture of incivility: In their book entitled *The Cost of Bad Behavior*, Pearson and Porath (2009) define workplace incivility as "the exchange of seemingly inconsequential inconsiderate words and deeds that violate conventional norms of workplace conduct". (Pearson & Porath, 2009, p. 70)

Some example of a incivil culture inside a company are to be seen with these symptoms: being condescending toward others, ignoring the opinions of others, blaming others for your mistakes, throwing tantrums when you don't get your way, making hurtful remarks to colleagues, and generally failing to be polite in social situations. These kind of negative comments and attitudes almost always lead to the spread of gossip among the employees. To reduce this negative scenario and to establish a culture that goes the opposite direction, it is mandatory to implement a culture of civility (Grosser et al., 2012 p. 57).

The possible solutions are based on the logic of curing and preventing: first, to cure the situation training programs on interpersonal skills can be an effective means to reducing incivility. Courses about dealing with difficult people, conflict resolution, negotiation, and classes on effective communication skills would all be helpful in promoting more civility (Grosser et al., 2012, p. 57).

The second type of solution can be referred to the 360° feedback theory: according to Hoffman (1995) 360° feedback is "an approach that gathers behavioral observations from many layers within the organization and includes self-assessment" (Hoffman 1995, p. 83).

This theory should be implemented into the performance appraisal system. This is because frequently it is difficult for managers to see this incivil culture exposed clearly. Rarely they are addressed directly with this kind of culture and even more rarely people who were victims of this type of culture, make formal complaints about a specific behavior. According to Grosser et al. (2012), "instituting 360°-feedback surveys and making uncivil behavior a dimension upon which employees are rated are measures that an organization can take to begin to deter incivility" (Grosser et al., 2012 p. 57).

3.3.3 Promote Organizational Justice

One of the base elements of good management is to treat all employees equally. Organizational Justice is defined by Grosser et al. (2012) as "fairness in the workplace" (Grosser et al., 2012 p. 58). Nevertheless, frequently employees feel to be treated unequally regarding several issues; one of this is the potential participation to the decision-making process. According to Grosser et al. (2012) this kind of organizational justice is defined as "procedural justice" (Grosser et al., 2012 p. 58). Procedural justice is mainly based on the perception of fairness regarding the procedures by which outcomes are

determined and allocated. In order to implement and deploy procedural justice in an organization, one possibility could be the one of allowing employees to have a say in decisions. The benefits of this have long been known by managers who practice participative decision making (Grosser et al., 2012 p. 58). Even if the final decision is against to the employees' opinions, they will feel that the decision-making procedure was fairer if their input was honestly taken into consideration. There are a number of HRM practices that can be instituted to provide employees with more voice, such as: formal dispute resolution and grievance procedures, self-managed work teams, quality circles, employee suggestion mechanisms, attitude surveys, joint consultative committees, and work councils (Grosser et al. 2012, p. 58).

4. Pride

Pride showed similar results as trust, except when it comes to pride, all results were positive. Employees of Organization X do experience pride in their jobs. As described before, Gouthier & Rhein, (2011) found that pride within an organization is negatively related to turnover intention, as well as positively related to commitment and creativity. When looking at these results combined with the scientific evidence provided, we can interpret that the high amount of perceived pride in Organization X can indeed lead to a higher sense of employer attractiveness.

5. Camaraderie

For camaraderie, intimacy, hospitality, and community were all perceived as extremely positive. Additionally, people also felt that they were welcomed in a good way and that events that required a celebration were celebrated. All these factors point towards a high level of camaraderie according to the GPTW framework. However, there is no evidence that a high level of camaraderie will also lead to higher employer attractiveness as there was no support found in scientific literature for this relation. This will not have further implications for Organization X' participation in the Great Place to Work research, but does have implications for the GPTW model as discussed later in this chapter.

Followed by the three dimensions of GPTW, relevant emerged topics will be discussed based on both the results from the data as on theoretical data. The first topic is transparency. This topic is only tersely described by the GPTW framework. However, it was one of the more impactful topics in this research. Moreover, gossip is also not discussed by GPTW, where it appeared to be the major cause of mistrust within Organization X. Therefore, Gossip will also be discussed in this chapter.

6. The Great Place to Work Model

In the theory chapter of this research the GPTW model has been discussed and compared with scientific literature. It has been found that trust and pride are indeed related to employer attractiveness. However, the relationship between camaraderie and employer attractiveness could not be supported by a lack of scientific literature on the effects of camaraderie on organizations. When looking at dimension level, we can see support for the dimensions that are used by GPTW in the scientific literature. However, in case of trust these dimensions are not exhaustive. GPTW only looks at trustworthiness through the actions of the leader, while the propensity of trust of the employee also affects trust.

Finally, when looking at the research question "What and how does Organization X need to improve with regard to trust, pride, and camaraderie in order to be an attractive employer based on the standards set by GPTW and to what extent is the model used by Great Place to Work valid for measuring employer attractiveness?" we can conclude that when looking purely at the indicators used by GPTW, Organization X meets most of these criteria on a high level, and when transparency is increased and gossip is decreased, the trust within Organization X will also improve. When it comes to the validity of the GPTW model, we can say that while most of the model is supported, it is not always exhaustive. This opens the door for oversights in the research.

Discussion

Limitations

First off, some practical limitations will be reviewed. Where this research does give a realistic and thorough view on Organization X' participation in the Great Place to Work research, some hurdles were encountered. First, it was aspired to have five participants per focus group, in order to create optimal group dynamics. Unfortunately, numerous last-minute cancellations for the focus groups were encountered, rendering us unable to reach our aspired membership count. This lower participation count resulted in less discussions within the focus groups and less opinions overall. While the sample size of the qualitative research was still adequate, there is a possibility that important information is lost due to the smaller sample size.

Additionally, the data from the GEOS survey was already analyzed by a third-party research company, and we had no access to the full data set, only to certain outcomes. This made in depth analysis of this data hard and only the face values of this data could be analyzed. This may have implication for reliability of the research. To mitigate this downside as much as possible, the GEOS data was only used for orientation at the start of the research and for triangulation purposes.

Finally, time restraint has been a limitation for this research. The research at Organization X effectively lasted for 10 weeks, which put a lot of time pressure on the project. Due to this, a choice had to be made to focus on either the Trust Index or the Culture Audit. Considering the amount of policies and practices in place at Organization X Belgium, and the higher importance of the Trust Index, we decided to focus on that. This does mean however, that the Culture Audit is assessed to a lesser extent.

When looking at scientific limitations, a significant part of the theoretical concepts is based on literature written either by the GPTW institute or commissioned by GPTW. This might indicate a bias in the literature. This research has aimed to reduce this bias as much as possible by comparing the theories provided by GPTW with other scientific sources, however, there might still be biased theories presented in this research.

Further research

When it comes to further research, the Culture Audit could be researched more in depth as described above. In our eyes, the current practices and policies will be more than enough to get the score of 50% on the Culture Audit; we did however not research how the score could be further improved here.

Additionally, when looking at gaps in the literature, there is next to no scientific literature about employer assessment institutions and the benefits of certification. There are numerous institutions that assess organizations on their employer attractiveness and certificate their "top employers". However, when it comes to the benefits of those certificates for the organizations and the employees there is no evidence for these certificates help organizations. Further research in the benefits of these certifications can help employers in making their employees excited for participation in an employer attractiveness assessment.

Also, while it is found that trust and pride are indeed of influence on employer attractiveness, GPTW also uses camaraderie as one of its dimensions for employer attractiveness, while there is no evidence for this relationship in the scientific literature. Research that examines the relationship between camaraderie and employer attractiveness can help to further assess the model that is used by the GPTW institute.

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Appendix 1: Interview Protocol

Begin the meeting:

“Hello ----. Thanks for coming to this interview. Let me introduce myself: I am ----- and this is ----- and we are to here as interns to develop a process regarding “Great Place to Work” research. I’ll be the interviewer while ----- will be the coordinator, taking notes on our discussion.

We are here as two interns participating in a European HRM program, and our project regards Organization X’ participation in Great Place to Work. For our project, we are looking at the current state of the culture of Organization X, and for this we would like to ask you some questions. We would like to record the interview, but the recordings and the transcripts will be kept anonymous, and will be kept within the universities. No one at Organization X will have access to the transcripts of the interviews.

Opening Question: *“Can you briefly introduce yourself and describe what you do at Organization X?”*

Research shows that one of the most important factors in a good work environment is Trust. Trust is also one of the driving concepts in the Great Place to Work process. Therefore, the main subject of this interview will be trust. The following questions will be about factors that are linked to trust.

- **Credibility** (Two-way communication; Integrity; Competence)
 - *Do you have the feeling that your leadership listens to you? Can you explain this with an example?*
 - *How would you describe the leadership at Organization X?*
 - *Would you describe your management as integer and honorable? What are your reasons for this?*
 - *In what way does management generally communicate with you?*
 - *Do you have the feeling that your leadership is competent? What makes you think this way?*
 - *Do you trust your managers? Can you explain why you do or don’t trust them?*
- **Respect** (Support; Collaboration; Caring)
 - *In what way does the company support you as an employee?*
 - *From what department or what functions in the company does this support come from?*
 - *Are you satisfied with the support you get from the company? why yes/no?*
 - *Approximately how often do you need to collaborate with colleagues for your job on a weekly basis?*
 - *How would you describe this collaboration?*
 - *Do you have the feeling that the company cares about you? Why do you feel this way?*
- **Fairness** (Equity; Impartiality; Justice)
 - *In which way do you think the company applies equal policies?*
 - *To what extent do you agree with the sentence “Senior management acts impartially”? Why so?*
 - *Have you ever experienced senior management playing favorites? Was it with regard to an impactful decision in your opinion?*
 - *Have you ever experienced injustice inside the company? What kind of injustice was this?*
- **Camaraderie** (Intimacy; Hospitality; Community)

- *How would you describe the company climate/atmosphere?*
- *How did you experience your first week in the company?*
- *Did this experience change now you've worked here for longer? And how so?*
- *Could you tell me the last company outdoor activity you participated? How did you feel doing this?*
- *How would you describe your relation with colleagues at Organization X?*

- **Pride (Personal Job; Team; Organization)**
 - *How frequently do you give extra to get the job done?*
 - *To what extent do you experience pride after doing so?*
 - *How frequently do you work in teams?*
 - *How would you describe this teamwork?*
 - *When working in a team, do you have the feeling that you can trust your team members? What makes you feel this way?*
 - *When team goals are reached do you feel proud as a personal goal? To what extent would you suggest another person to apply for a job in your company?*

- **General questions**
 - *To what extent do you regularly check the company media like intranet and google+? And what is your preferred medium?*
 - *Can you share a story or experience that for you shows best what kind of employer Organization X is?*
 - *What is your view on Organization X participating in the Great Place to Work competition? Do you think Organization X is a great place to work?*
 - *What are the gaps for improvement if Organization X wants to be a GPTW?*
 - *In your opinion, what would be the biggest benefit by participating in Great Place to Work? Both for the organization, and for you personal?*

