FINDING NEW TALENT

HOW THE COMPANIES REACH OUT TO FIND NEW EMPLOYEES FOR GAME INDUSTRY.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE GAME COMPANIES IN OULU REGION

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The aim of this study is to recognize recruiting methods, tools and practices in game development industry in Oulu region. This study tries to discover how game companies recruit new personnel and are there similarities between companies. The study tries to answer five questions: Where does the game industry recruit new employees? Is it common to use social media in recruitment in the game industry? How has the recruitment process changed over the years? Is there a change from traditional recruitment methods to new, modern social networking and virtual recruitment? What are the most popular and efficient recruiting sources in the game industry?

This study is a qualitative study. The study includes introduction to previous recruitment theories and discussion about relevant findings of the previous studies in the field of recruiting. Empirical study was conducted in Oulu region by interviewing three game companies. Companies involved had to employ at least 10 full-time employees. Interviews were semi-structured interviews.

During this study, it was found out that some recruitment activities were similar among the interviewed companies. To further elaborate this, the study categorizes recruitment sources into four separate recruitment channels. Four recruitment channels are internal exploration, external exploration, external attraction and internal education. Preference to which channel the company uses is highly dependent on the age and surroundings of the company.

Companies use social media for various recruitment activities. As there are variations in social media platforms, game companies have chosen to use platforms which they find most useful for their activities. Game development industry has utilized virtual recruitment tools in their recruitment processes. They update tools frequently, in order to improve their processes. More traditional ways of recruiting is less used. Social networking and recruiting through it is highlighted.

The findings of this study can be generalized to Oulu region and other medium sized regions of game development industry in Finland. This study provides recruitment viewpoints for small businesses and especially startups in the game industry. It can be used when deciding where to start looking for potential employees.

Keywords
Recruitment, labor market, job enthusiasm, startups

Additional information
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the topic

Recruitment has always been one of the company’s core processes to expand beyond its current capabilities. When the business booms, the entrepreneur tends to need more helping hands than he has and needs to recruit more employees to balance the growing workload. Recruitment and the know-how how to recruit the right people are essential skills for the company’s success. Though finding adequate and professional employees can become rather difficult and tedious task.

How does the entrepreneur attract efficiently the right amount of job candidates he needs to make a quality, selective choice, but not too many so that the selection process does not become too heavy burden? Also how does he make sure he has the top quality candidates applying to his company? Finding the right ways to recruit and attract potential employees can make this task manageable.

Recruitment has changed much since the coming of the Internet. Traditional recruitment ads such as newspapers, roadside billboards, radio, headhunting and plain old “help wanted” signs have lost significance in today’s recruitment. As the technology has advanced and will advance over the decades, we will see more and more unique ways to recruit and attract employees to companies. True, some of recruitment practices or tools hold firmly in certain age segments but younger generations tend to find their jobs elsewhere, through more modern means.

Today, the possibilities to recruit are almost endless. Employees have been recruited from various social media sources such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp. Even multiplayer games are valid options to headhunt potential employees as they test social, learning and adaptability. For games industry these enthusiastic gamers might become the main source for recruiting new talent.
1.2 Research questions and the objective of the study

The aim of this study is to recognize the recruiting methods, recruiting tools and recruiting practices in game development industry in Finland and in Oulu region in particular. How does the game companies recruit new personnel and is there similarities between companies in the use of recruiting channels they use.

This research aims to answer the following questions.

- Where does the game industry recruit new employees?
- Is it common to use social media in recruitment in the game industry?
- How has the recruitment process changed over the years?
- Is there a change from traditional recruitment methods to new, modern social networking and virtual recruitment?
- What are the most popular and efficient external recruiting sources in game industry?

1.3 The significance and scope of the study

The base scope of the study is game industry in Oulu region, Finland. Game industry can be also known by some instances as the interactive entertainment industry or the video game industry for further elaboration. Oulu Region in this study is determined as the region encompassing the City of Oulu and the municipalities surrounding the City of Oulu, such as the municipality of Kempele. For clarification, the other game industry hub located in Kajaani, in Province Oulu, is not part of the focus of this study.

Picture 1: Oulu region as defined in this study
Oulu region host almost 30 different companies which identify themselves as game development or publishing companies. Altogether, more than 40 companies and societies in game industry base their operations in Oulu region. The focus of this study in game industry is in the game development and publishing companies. After careful evaluation, in order to efficiently study the game industry companies and their recruitment, the limitation for the minimum number of employees the company should employ in order to participate to the study was set to ten full-time employees.

Therefore the scope’s three parameters were set as follows:

- Study focuses Game industry and on Game development industry in particular
- Companies restricted to Oulu region
- Companies need to have more than 10 full-time employees

During the process of setting the scope of the study, other parameters were also considered. Other potential parameters were revenue and age of the company. Revenue was not considered as a decent parameter as it might not be related to recruiting decisions and revenue flow tends to vary greatly between game development companies. There are basically no age difference between companies as most companies in Oulu region are quite new and almost every company is less than ten years old.

The study could provide significant information for the use for the companies participating into the study, as they can reflect their recruiting processes with other companies participating in the study. This study does not only have significance for other game industry companies in Oulu region, but for companies in other regions as well, as there has not been many studies conducted around game industry and issues regarding recruitment in particular.

Non-profit organization Neogames conducts annual general data and information for game industry in Finland and some graduation theses and university projects have been done in the past, such as Olli Ylioja’s “Harrastuksesta menestysalaksi - Tampereen pelikluisterin rakentuminen, toiminta ja tulevaisuus” from Faculty of Management,
Tampere University in 2014, but in general, the game industry is relatively seldom visited field of study in terms of management sciences.

Due to rarity of this topic in game industry, the study can be of some use for startups in game industry in the immediate future. When expanding their companies, the startups can hopefully use this paper as a guideline on how to proceed after the initial steps of forming a startup has been made. Probably at first, how to recognize the places where to look for quality employees and where the newfound startups should not waste resources. Nevertheless, the practical uses of this paper will fade due time as the game industry is in a constant change and current, effective recruitment channels, practices and tools might become obsolete in a few years. This greatly limits the usefulness of this study.

1.4 Research methodology and data

This study begins with introduction to previous recruitment theories and discussion about the relevant findings of the previous studies in the field of recruiting. The objective of this review is to discuss and answer research questions in general and theoretical level as the scope of this research concentrates in gaming industry and Oulu region in particular. This will provide the basis when we compare general trends in recruitment to Oulu region and gaming industry.

The most common research materials used in this research are previous research papers and studies. They have been collected by using scholarly databases provided by University of Oulu and its partnerships, such as EBSCO-databases, ABI/Inform (ProQuest) and Emerald Insight. As the field of recruitment is in constant change, the use of the most trusted newspapers and media companies for the current data were used as well. These would include Talouselämä and YLE.

Websites relevant for the scope of the study have also been used, such as Neogames, interviewed companies websites and some of their partnership websites. Society for Human Resource Management has been collecting data of the trends and the pace of which companies have started using social media in recruiting. This data was found useful as well when comparing Oulu region to current trends.
The empirical study for this research paper was conducted in the City of Oulu and in the municipality of Kempele, by interviewing three companies working in the gaming industry in the Oulu Region. The companies were selected by their size to be approximately similar and the personnel interviewed were ones responsible for recruitment practices in their respected companies. This study focuses on these companies’ recruitment and their channels, tools and methods they had found useful for hiring new personnel into their respective companies.

The interviews were designed to be semi-structured interviews so that the person being interviewed could answer and explain his train of thought as thoroughly as possible, which would have been impossible in closed questionnaire. Completely unstructured interview was deemed unsuitable, as it was evaluated that some structure was needed. Same starting questions, the framework, were asked during the interview to increase the comparability of all responses. The framework of the interview topic was designed beforehand and every interview followed this same framework. Open ended questions included ones such as “What kind of recruitment tools does the company use?”, with preplanned follow up questions to further elaborate the question if necessary, such as and “Which ones are seen as useful to find new talent?”.

1.5 Structure of the research paper

Chapter 1 of the research paper introduces the topic, research questions and the objectives of the study. It also includes some preliminary assumptions about what kind of implications this paper could have for the gaming industry. Furthermore it describes the research methodology used in this research.

Chapter 2 discusses about the previous studies done in the field of recruitment. The focus of these studies have been the issues which are relevant to this study, mainly recruiting methods, channels and tools used, but also how the field of recruitment has embraced the used of virtual environments, social media and internet in general. Networking is issued as separate and important type of recruitment in this chapter as well.
Chapter 3 introduces and discusses the interviews conducted for this study. The methodology used for every interview was qualitative, open-ended question format. Every interview has its own subchapter for detailed information and the chapter ends with summary of the interviews combined.

Chapter 4 discusses the interview results with the theory. It presents a new four-way model, which the study finds necessary, in order to recognize recruiting channels. Discussion revolves around the presented model and its respective aspects.

Conclusion summarizes the study and discusses about possible future research regarding recruitment, game industry and region. It also presents further implications of the study and discusses the usefulness of the results.

Finally the research paper provides references for the theory, background and websites used for this research and this research paper ends with Appendix 1 which is the script used for themed the interviews with the companies who participated to this research.

### 1.6 Gaming industry in Finland

According to Neogames, the non-profit organization acting as a hub to Finnish game industry, the game industry reached all-time high in last year (2015). The whole revenue for Finnish game industry was approximately 2.4 billion euros. Compared to the year before that when the whole revenue was 1.8 billion euros, the revenue increased by 33%, although the industry giant Supercell made most of the revenue, 2.1 billion euros, and Rovio close to 150 million.

By the end of 2015, the Finnish game industry consisted of 290 companies. 29 of them were made in the year 2015. Most of the companies have lasted less than 5 years and there is only 20 which have lasted more than ten years. 40% of the companies are located in the capital region of Finland. The Finnish game industry employed around 2700 people in 2015. The employment was 200 employees more than in the year 2014, even though the second biggest game company Rovio had to let go almost 200 employees.
Worldwide, the game industry’s total value in 2015 was around 92 billion dollars. According to Neogames, Finland is among three biggest countries in Europe, when comparing total revenue in game industry. The estimates for the year 2017 predict that the worldwide sales in game industry will increase to over 100 billion dollars.

For Finnish game industry 95 percent of its revenue comes from exporting games outside the country. From global and Finnish perspective, the growth of the industry happened in the Asian markets. In 2015 the Finnish game industry published 150 games, most of which were developed for mobile platforms.

Oulu region in Finnish game industry comes as medium sized industry hub, gathering talent from Northern Finland. As the Northernmost hub in the industry with rich regional technological background from the golden era of Finnish information technology industry, the Oulu region can be as productive as the best places around the globe. The region itself was described in the Finnish business magazine Talouselämä as the Finnish Silicon Valley shortly after turn of the year from 2016 to 2017. (Mäntylä, 2017)

Finnish Game industry can be roughly separated in to different segments by, for example their revenue model or by their platform focus if they have any. Game industry segment in this research paper is defined as a “certain part of the game industry which can be defined individually by a platform the games are developed or by their revenue model”. For example a segment can be defined as company focusing on working mobile platform games, or by evaluating their revenue model as micro transaction revenue model or both, giving more defined segment.
2 RECRUITMENT THEORY AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.1 Recruitment as definition

Every one of us can determine or grasp what recruitment is. Recruitment as an idea or concept is something that fits into our “common sense” and we have defined ourselves what the idea of recruitment could be through our life experience. The problem is, the idea of recruitment varies depending on different viewpoints, cultural backgrounds and ideologies. Therefore, for this study, it is crucial to discuss what recruitment means, what it holds inside and leaves out, when discussing the topic of this study, recruiting in game industry.

For example, recruitment can be defined as widely as starting from the process of inspecting the need to fill in the position, considering the possible sources where to find suitable job candidates, planning how to contact them and how to attract them to apply for the organization (Mohiadeen, 2010). Or recruiting could be looked from a different point of view, such as an idea of selling the particular organization as a better place work than other places (Sarma, 2009).

The main goal of recruitment is to attract future employees. In order to do this, there has to be identification of the appropriate pool of potential job applicants. Recruitment sources are intended to help to locate those potential job applicants and persuade them to seek and apply, and finally accept the employment with the organization. Possible recruitment sources emphasized and discussed later on chapter 2.3.

For this study, definition made by Barber (1998) suits as the basis of our definition, as it recognizes that recruitment includes activities and practices carried on by the organization with the main goal of identifying and attracting potential employees. It is seen important that the definition distinguishes recruitment activities and practices as separate from their attraction, identification and outcomes, for structuring and analyzing purposes.

Our definition of recruitment consists of a wide range of activities in organization, from such as advertising and producing brochures, to creating alternative employment
schedule in order to attract new employees. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that other forces besides recruitment actions affect recruitment as well, although some could argue there can be job applicants who make decisions based on available recruitment practices alone. Other forces could also include the nature of the vacancy, personal “qualifications” such as being exceptionally attractive or extremely unattractive, making the recruitment much easier or harder. Most, but not all other forces can be taken into account and recognizing them when making recruitment strategy.

This aforementioned definitions restricts the study less and adopts a broad view to recognize that recruitment can have other consequences, secondary objectives such as marketing, aligned to the main goal. Also it does not restrict itself with the outcome of the recruitment. For this study, it does not matter if the recruitment or part of it fails or succeeds as this study is also interested about why some parts might fail or why other ways work better than others.

2.2 Internal promotions and external recruiting

As this study concentrates on hiring new personnel into organizations, it is necessary to recognize that recruiting as a concept does include internal promotions and recruitment as well. Therefore it is important to see the difference between promotions, transfers, internal and external recruiting as this study concentrates mostly on hiring new personnel into the organization, which internal promotions or transfers do not do.

The difference in internal and external recruiting has also been identified in some cases in the literature by identifying the information that is available or presented to insiders only. That recruitment information, is compared to information that is presented to public, the outsiders, which any potential job applicant can access. This creates the inside-outside axis of recruitment, those who have access to secure information inside the organization are part of internal recruiting, those who have only general data are part of external recruiting. (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000)

When job seekers can apply and use inside recruitment sources, for example a friend working in a company, they have access to information about the organization before
they even officially apply or enter the organization. In the past literature, inside sources for recruitment have been methods such as internships, in-job postings, rehires, referrals and promotions. (Moser 2005)

It has been noted in literature, that when recruiting from inside sources, the potential employees can receive information regarding the position whereas when company uses external recruitment channels, the potential employees do not typically receive information regarding the position or the organization before they have applied or have been hired into the company. (Moser 2005) Examples of the outside recruitment sources have been in literature private and governmental employment agencies, advertisements, executive search firms, educational placement offices, campus fairs, and job employment websites. (Moser, 2005; Zottoli & Wanous, 2000; Mohiadeen, 2010)

2.3 Formal and informal recruitment

Recruitment sources can also be classified into informal and formal sources. Saks and Ashforth (1997) provided an excellent distinction to identify whether the source used is informal or formal. Their research described formal sources of recruitment as involving the use of formal intermediaries between the job applicant and the organization in question. Informal sources do not involve the use of formal intermediaries between the job applicant and the relevant organization. Formal intermediaries are those actors that mediate the communication of information between the job applicant and the organization.

Formal intermediaries are for example, job fairs, college placement offices, search firms, job employment agencies, advertisements and direct applications. Informal intermediaries can be word-of-mouth, rehires, employee referrals, referrals by friends and family, walk-ins and company advertisements in social media.

Both formal and informal can have positive and negative outcomes compared to one another. The studies conducted in the literature show the use of informal recruitment sources typically yield more positive outcomes for the organization than formal sources. It is seen that informal sources can provide more specific, realistic and
accurate information than formal sources. (Saks 1994). The results of informal recruitment was higher job satisfaction and less unmet expectations than in formal sources.

Formal sources of recruitment have been found to positively affect job offers, satisfaction, perceived job fit and negatively to intentions to quit when comparing to informal sources (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Also formal sources are capable of attracting more diverse and larger job applicant population of potential employees, (Tanova, 2003), increasing the possibility to find new employees better suited for the vacancy.

It has discussed and pointed out in the literature, that if organization access informal sources of recruitment only, it is more likely to attract job applicant which are similar to current workforce. (Blau, 1990) By using formal sources of recruitment in conjunction to informal sources, hiring can access different set of individuals, therefore resulting into more diverse pool of job applicants and they are expected to have different abilities and skill sets, leading into more diverse workforce.

The Figure 1 below visualizes the phase of deciding which way to recruit. Both dimensions, the inside-outside and formal-informal have been taken into account. The recruitment are sources divided into four categories: internal formal, internal informal, external formal and external informal. It has to be kept in mind that different sources do not exclude the other and even every type of recruitment can be in some cases the most valid option.

Some of the determinations to which category the recruitment source belong might be little thin and they could in some cases belong into one of the other categories. For example, online recruiting consists of various aspects, it could belong in some cases into internal formal sources as the online applications and information might be provided solely for current company employees. Still, it is evident that more sources are situated into the external recruitment section of sources available.
2.4 Applicant attraction and employer knowledge

It is known from past researches that applicants use information to evaluate potential employers (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993). Potential job candidates use this information to gain knowledge and opinion about the possible recruiting companies and choose which ones to apply (Lawler, Kuleck, Rhode, & Sorensen, 1975). Study about early recruitment activities compared the effect of printed recruitment advertisements and recruitment websites on applicant attraction. They
found out that websites have much stronger impact on applicant attraction than printed media (Baum & Kabst, 2014).

Cable and Turban (2001) suggested that there is three essential dimensions of employer knowledge or brand equity, being familiarity, reputation and job information. According to their research, the first dimension, is applicant’s familiarity with the potential company, an ability where the job applicant recognizes the company one of the workplaces he considers working in. Applicants are in general more positive about the companies they are familiar with. (Collins, 2007; Gatewood et al., 1993)

Second dimension identified by Cable and Turban was the employer reputation, which included the applicants understanding of how others direct and indirect environments view the company at hand. Job information as the last dimension of employer knowledge comprises of individual perceptions of specific job and organizational characteristics, such as career possibilities. These three dimensions can be affected by recruitment activities (Allen et al., 2007), for example by promoting the organization, providing easily accessible information and passing on the good word.

Employer knowledge in turn influences applicant attraction (Collins & Stevens, 2002). Applicant attraction can be set of positive, neutral, or negative attitudes the applicant has toward the organization looking to hire quality employees (Highhouse et al., 2003). Therefore the more positive attitude public and job applicants have towards the organization, the better the chance of recruiting high quality employees.

When actively looking for employees, the company has to think carefully how to promote itself in the most efficient way as possible, it has to offer enough information to the applicant that he or she becomes interested and might think about applying for future job openings. The brand image as a trusted, well-known and respected employer ads more high-level applicants as the social value to the applicant increases as others value the potential applicant applying to respected company.

Still, it is safe to say, that any information source, whether it comes from organization’s social media marketing team or from word of mouth during Friday evening at the local pub, affects the job candidates employer knowledge (Cable &
Turban, 2001), either improving or deteriorating the it. Thus everything cannot be controlled by the organization’s recruitment planning and strategy and this is one thing they should be prepared of.

2.5 Media richness theory

With media richness theory we can further try to categorize recruitment sources by dividing sources to low- and high-information recruitment sources. Low-information recruitment sources include conventional means of advertisements, such as printed media, and high-information recruitment sources include recruitment websites, personal connections. The base of the categorization, the media richness theory, states that the richer the media, the more information and more personal data it can convey, as one cannot fit every bit of information into newspaper ad, such as explaining core values, work benefits, detailed job information and other important factors (Cable, & Yu, 2006).

Richer the media, for example face-to-face discussion compared to brochures, the more effective it can be to provide more equivocal information. This also affects the applications sent to company from job applicants using richer, high information recruitment channels to differ from leaner, low-information ones. (Allen et al., 2004). Bearing that in mind richer media is regarded as more accurate (Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey, & Edwards, 2000) and generally gains more credibility (Cable & Yu, 2006).

The more the job seeker knows about the organization, the higher the chance the seeker will apply to the organization. Media richness theory supports the importance employer knowledge and vice versa. Employer knowledge shows the value or strength of the brand and highlights the beliefs held by job seekers about recruiting organization as an employer.

There is suggestion that richer media is able to correct popular misconceptions about the company, (Walker, Berneth, Feild, Giles, & Armenakis, 2009) improving its image and familiarity. Organizations with high reputation, employer familiarity and image have significant independent relationship with the job seeker and with his intentions to make an application for the organization (Collins, 2007).
In previous literature, there has been empirical support that applicant attraction is mediated together with employer knowledge and the simultaneous use of multiple recruitment activities. It has been proven that these factors directly influence applicant attraction to the company. (Baum, & Kabst, 2014). Therefore it is evident that recruitment activities such as choosing right recruitment sources need to increase employer knowledge in order to affect applicant attraction and through that process attract more, high quality job seekers for the open vacancy.

When using low-information recruitment channels, there is a possibility that the employer knowledge might actually decrease. According to study made by Baum & Kabst, 2014, if a company is already well-known and quite reputable, it is difficult for low-information recruitment practices such as newspaper ads to convey new associations that increase employer knowledge. Therefore, use of high-information sources are more preferable.

Previous research has proved that high-information recruitment practices, for example conversations, websites have a significant positive effect on the employer knowledge of potential applicants. It is discussed that low-information recruitment practices generally produce a significantly lesser effect, and, if presented without high-information practices, did not significantly impact employer knowledge or applicant attraction.

There has been evidence that the influence of recruitment activities on applicant attraction is mediated by employer knowledge. However, according to previous studies, this relationship can be bypassed by utilizing multiple recruitment activities and combining high- and low-information activities. When planning recruitment, the organization should carefully plan the use of their recruitment measures, as different practices have different and diverse effects on potential applicants. (Baum & Kabst, 2014)

To summarize, when organization plans on attracting new job applicants, they should weigh carefully what kind of recruitment sources or channels should be used together in order not to cause any harm to organization knowledge and reputation. The key point is evaluating the past recruitment practices and choosing the ones which improve
employer knowledge and terminating ones which do not contribute or might even harm employer knowledge.

Still there should be multiple recruitment sources and information available for the organization as each of them strengthen the whole recruitment process. The initial interest in newspaper ad might lead to finding more information in organization website or Facebook page. These synergies should be considered when organization plans their recruitment strategy (Collins & Stevens, 2002). This type of synergy is supported by “mere exposure effect”- theory (Janiszewski, 1993; Zajonc, 1968), which has highlighted that multiple exposures from different sources can affect the individual as it lets them better absorb relative information, so use of multiple recruitment channels at the same time is advised.

2.6 Traditional recruitment methods

In theory, possible recruiting sources are almost unlimited can be specifically described and defined. Usually, in external recruiting, the recruitment methods used varies depending on the need and policies of the organization. The most common, traditional recruiting types which have been used over time include:

- Type 1. Recruitment from educational institutions such as universities, business schools and colleges
- Type 2. Governmental employment agencies
- Type 3. Recommendations from individuals such as current employees, politicians, colleagues and from friends and family
- Type 4. Private Job broking agencies, headhunters and consultants
- Type 5. Advertising in places such as newspapers or television commercials.

According to Chaudhuri (2010), there are advantages and disadvantages in all of the recruiting methods, making them more usable in other situations and environments than in others. Even when unemployment is high, it still might be difficult to find individuals for certain tasks when which require special skills. In those circumstances, the employer might have to use more expensive ways of recruitment to attract
applicants. On the other hand in some cases when the company seeks workforce for mundane tasks, the applicants may be found through more inexpensive ways.

Type 1 consists of universities and other educational institutions. Employers usually maintain connections with the universities, colleges and other institutions in order to be able to choose from the desired pool of exceptional students. Applicants from these sources are usually available only for a certain time of a year when the school-leavers graduate. This can develop certain complications for the company as the desired workforce is not always available which can be temporarily solved by filling the vacancy by individual inside the company or by hiring a temporal employees labor markets or from employee brokering organizations (Mohiadeen 2010).

Type 2 consists of governmental agencies such as public employment services (TE-employment services in Finland, mol.fi, etc.) and other services provided by the government offer means of recruitment which are either free of charge or the cost is minimal. Usually the choice of employees offered is limited as some of the most qualified unemployed prefer to seek jobs by using other methods and do not either register or check the services frequently (Mohiadeen, 2010).

Type 3 consists of personal connections, such as current employees, friends, family members. The personal connections of the current workforce can access somewhat limited pool of possible job candidates. This type of recruitment highly depends on what kind of collective employee resources are available for the company.

Type 4 consists of private agencies, organizations which are run as commercial enterprises with a main purpose of supplying employers with candidates suitable for job openings. These are usually used to hire more highly valued employees such as senior staff. The agency analyses the job and tries to find employees suitable for the company’s needs, making a shortlist for selection process. The downsides of private agencies are usually quite costly fees and the agency might not necessarily understand what kind of employee the company needs (Mohiadeen, 2010).

Type 5 consist of advertising, such as roadside signs, newspapers and radio advertisements. The most popular method of recruitment is to advertise the vacancy
and invite candidates to apply to the company. It has been estimated in the literature that 10% of all press advertising expenditure is devoted to vacant advertising. Because advertising is relatively expensive, job advertisements should aim to at procuring a small number of well-qualified candidates as cheaply as possible. Therefore, the advertisement should appear in proper publication concerning the vacancy in order to prevent too many terrible applications and to appeal better ones (Mohiadeen, 2010).

2.7 New ways of recruiting: The emergence of Internet and social recruiting

Recruitment has changed in many ways over the last two decades. For example article “Slow-Motion Hiring”, written by Roy Maurer to June 2016’s HR Magazine provided interesting viewpoint of how recruiting has for finding a suitable person for open vacancies. According to the article, filling an open position takes mean average of 26 days longer than it did five years ago. Studies done by American consultant companies in the U.S point out that the time to find a suitable employee has increased significantly, although technology has advanced and recruiting should be more efficient and faster.

In article “Slow-Motion Hiring”, it was pointed out that hiring is deeply contextual and has multiple factors needs to be taken into account. These might include tight job market, all manner of tests and rise of hiring by committee. As the labor market has continued to tighten, it is only natural to have difficulties to find the right hire for the job. One of the issues pointed out in the global level is that recent recession has affected the employer’s willingness to hire in general (Maurer, 2016).

The companies have tightened their search and are more willing to wait to find the perfect employee. Passive headhunting has increased, companies use social tools, such as permanent staff, social media and job fairs to attract people who are not actively looking for a job. Article states that technology has made things more complicated as meanwhile the potential workforce has diminished. Still it is entirely possible to contact the “perfect candidate” and therefore it might be wise to seek for new employees a little while longer (Maurer, 2016).
2.7.1 Internet based recruitment

Due to reasonably easy way of collecting information, the online recruitment does not only contain structured and specified social media and job employment websites, it can be done in almost every website. Highly customized job postings in the web can, for example, use cookie-based targeting to relay job advertisements for extremely defined group of people. Based on their online activity and behavior, job advertisements can relay job information no less than straight to potential job applicant’s phone or web browser. (Rossheim, 2011).

Researchers have suggested that electronic job boards, social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn, job employment websites are not basically electronic versions of more traditional paper-based job advertisements, classified ads or employee referrals. It has been suggested that Internet-based technology has changed the nature of recruitment practices, organizational communication and job seekers’ expectations. (Dineen & Allen, 2013)

It has been discussed in the literature that relationship building in Internet-based recruiting with potential job candidates is the cornerstone of web-based recruiting. It can often occur before organizations start generating applicant pool from potential applicants (Dineen & Allen, 2013). Examples for this type of interaction could be between developers and play testers or public relations and social media followers.

When searching for viable job candidates, organization needs to make some decisions in terms of recruitment targeting strategy. It needs to decide, whether the organization targets individual job seekers or broader spectrum of candidates. Also decision must be made whether to target active or passive job candidates. This stage of recruitment and decision making has been called “Generating Viable Candidates Stage” by Dineen & Soltis (2011). It is seen aspect of Internet recruiting as technology available at the time and applications used impact greatly in targeting decisions.

It has been argued by Dineen & Allen (2013), that this is where web based recruiting as new methods of recruitment clearly differentiates from past recruiting methods. First, the ability to perceive the pool potential vacancies in real time has been made
available through technology and its interactive, informational capabilities. It is true that job candidates have always searched and evaluated organizations offering vacancies, but today information made available by the organization for the individual applying for job is more out in the open than ever.

Secondly, increase in prevalence in job candidate management has made it easier to manage recruiting processes by technology, especially through social media. Ability to effortlessly develop and manage long-term relationships across the globe with individuals who are thought to be potential key employees in the future can be similar to customer relationship management (Dineen & Allen, 2013). Thirdly, ability to decide whether to target passive or active job seekers, and mass messages to targeted one-on-one discussions with individuals makes internet particularly versatile.

It has to be remembered, that even though the focus of chapter is discussing and finding key recruitment sources, it is reasonable to note that internet helps in later stages of recruitment as well. The ability to maintain connection, making interviews easier to schedule as the job candidates do not need to travel on site on every occasion is a great asset in managing recruitment processes.

### 2.7.2 Employment websites, organization websites and job brokering

As early as 2002, Feldman and Klaas found out that job seekers tend to perceive Internet as more effective tool than newspaper ads when they surveyed managers and other professionals. Quite recent research has studied interaction among organizational image and website characteristics. It was found out that certain effectiveness of website attributes depend on firm reputation and there is three-way interaction among organization’s reputation, information and vividness. (Willamson, King, Lepak, and Sarma, 2010). In a sense, bad reputation does affect how we perceive the organization websites, no matter how well-made and visually appealing it is.

Previous study by Jattuso and Sinar (2003) has compared employment websites. They found out that generic employment websites were less effective than industry- or position-specific employment websites. Industry- or position specific employment websites were able to generate more high-quality applicants.
When designing organizations recruitment website, the organization needs to measure its options carefully as it might affect the image of the organization in job seekers mind. For example, with less known company, with website with high technological advances can boost the job applicants with personal interest technological matters or with websites with expressed high minority account, will result in more minorities or people overseas into applying for the organization. (Walker, Feild, Giles, Bernerth, & Short, 2011) With the right website design, the organization can target the right segment of job applicants and talent they need.

Dineen & Allen (2013) have argued that Internet has changed recruitment by altering the trade-offs among reach, targeting, and richness. The traditional decisions made to choose generalized versus targeted audience or providing limited versus extensive information do not apply any more. For example before the internet, the way to reach as broad audiences as possible was through media ads such as newspapers. The problem was that the information conveyed through newspapers were low in media richness, the ad could not convey great amounts of information and it cannot make two-way communication. Other way around, communication sources which use high media richness, such as referrals through the organization employees, had trouble of reaching wide audiences.

Second argument by Dineen & Allen (2013) was that people involved in recruitment processes have started to expect easiness of use from the recruitment process and source involved. As the job seekers have started to actively search more information on their own, they started to expect organizations to provide more information than before, with more rapid communication. (Dineen & Noe, 2009) If the information presented in websites are not clear and readily available, the potential job applicant might abandon their search for information or see the organization less attractive than before. (Braddy et. al, 2003)

As technologies have changed the way of how organizations and recruiters communicate with job seekers, it can be expected that the use of web based technology will increase in the future as the recruitment processes are introduced with newer technologies. The customization available for the organization when choosing recruitment strategies through internet makes finding the right people from wider
audiences to apply for the organization with much less resources spent than before (Dineen & Allen, 2013). This applies for the job seekers as well (Lievens & Harris 2003).

### 2.7.3 Targeting passive job candidates

In the context of Australian environment and organizations, researchers studied twelve different Australian organizations to analyze whether social recruiting has some impact in recruiting process. They found it evident from the interviewees that organizations adopting social recruiting technology tend to gain several benefits, such as efficiency gain, strategic re-orientation and more effective management of candidate relationships. (Kashi, Zheng, & Molineux, 2016)

Efficiency gains can mean multiple elements, such as greater accessibility to more specialized labor markets and skills, less time and cost used per hire, easier to target specific job levels and better dissemination of job-specific information. Also the ability to target passive candidates was the driving factor for adoption. As part of strategic re-orientation, employer branding and enhancing organizations reputation and image can be the driving factor for social recruitment technology adoption as well as the organizations can take more proactive approach for finding potential job candidates.

Even though social recruitment technologies can be found attractive and effective, the interviewees pointed out that in most cases it is difficult to generate a sufficient pool of quality job applicants by solely relying on social recruiting channels. Applicant readiness, which means that can the applicant find the social recruiting channels and have the necessary understanding to use it, must be taken into account as it determines whether social recruiting can be translated into successful recruitment endeavor or not. (Kashi, Zheng & Molineux, 2016)

According to survey made by Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2013, 77 percent of participating companies in the United States have been using social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The study also showed significant increase when they compared the results to previous studies made in 2008 and 2011.
According to the study, the private and publicly owned for-profit organizations have more tendencies towards this type of use of social networking sites.

When asked why they use social networking sites for recruitment, majority of the respondents said that the primary reason was to recruit passive candidates, ones who would not otherwise apply for the job. Organizations also use social networking for raising interest, contributing to discussion, posting information and job opportunities. According to the study, three-quarters of organizations which were not using social networking sites in recruitment were concerned about legal risks such as accidents which might occur due to breach of privacy or some other protected characteristics.

In 2015 survey made by the SHRM there was a clear shift towards accommodation and introduction of mobile users to the job market. Two thirds of the survey had made effort to use smartphones in different stages of recruitment. Use of social media had increased as well, up to 84 percent among organizations. Looking for job opportunities has become more common when using mobile devices and being online as the use of mobile platforms has become more common.

### 2.7.4 Social media and social recruiting

The last decade has seen a rapid rise of social media in the field of recruitment. According to previous research, in 2015 84% of organizations use social media in their recruitment, a steep rise from 2011 when only 56% of organizations used it (SHRM 2015). Even though social media has grown rapidly as one of the methods and platforms to do external recruiting and its benefits have been widely recognized and widely used, still there is only small amount of empirical studies and theoretical discussion concerning the use of social media as a recruiting method.

Social recruiting can be defined as way of sourcing, attracting, and initiating main contacts which hold potential job applicants through the use of social network websites. Social recruiting affects the field of recruitment in three different levels, individual, organizational and societal level. These issues must be recognized and noted when doing social recruiting. In individual level, the applicant forms an opinion of the organization recruiting, either positive or negative (Madia, 2011), but the
organization also forms a social opinion of the applicant as well, which might be distorted by the social network and affect hiring decisions (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009).

In the organizational level, the managing of the social network forms an issue for the organizations human resource personnel and how well they manage the employer to employee relationships (Tyagi, & Tyagi, 2012). The use of social networking as an attraction and screening tool should remembered as well (Faliagka, Tsakalidis, & Tzimas 2012; Ollington, Gibb, & Harcourt 2013), but it has been noted that use for lesser value jobs is not necessarily encouraged due time, effort and cost efficiency issues (Ollington, Gibb, & Harcourt 2013).

Societal level consists of issues concerning about legal, ethical and individual privacy issues of which the use of social recruitment websites raises to question (Black, Stone, & Johnson 2015; Davison, Maraist, & Bing 2011; Hugl 2011). Organizations tend to lack the policies of how to use social media, regardless of it being used to recruiting, selecting or terminating (Davison, Maraist, & Bing 2011). Job applicants tend to react negatively to social media screening, though good practices such as authorization and advanced notice reduces the negative opinion (Black, Stone, & Johnson 2015). Identity thefts, such as fake accounts, data mining and selling data to third parties are concerns of recruitment as well (Hugl, 2011).

There is also difference between different social media processes in terms of efficiency. Previous exploratory study compared three different social media platforms, Facebook, QR-code postcards and Twitter with high-school students. Response rates were much higher with QR postcards, but in general every social media platform saved both time and money, with speedy recruitment and data collection as the young adults can access them freely though smartphones and tablets (Gu, Skierkowski, Florin, Friend, & Ye (2016).

In social media, there are websites which are more used in more career enhancing, professional way of job search. For example LinkedIn profiles are more steered towards career contacts and advancement, whereas Facebook is used in more general type of social media communication. There are also hybrids, for example DeviantArt,
the largest online art gallery and community which hosts people who are artist and designers for fun, and those who use their DeviantArt profile as their portfolio.

This non-professional and professional social media profiles has to be taken into account as it ties into ethical, legal and privacy issues, when screening in social media and considering who to hire. In general when searching for talent through social media, the recruiters go through the professional profiles. Finding non-professional content in job applicants or seekers profile has been found detrimental for his chances to get hired. Highlighting professional content helps the applicant, but it is also the recruiter’s responsibility to highlight equality and having standard screening procedures to ensure fairness for every job applicant (El Ouirdi, Pais, Segers, & El Ouirdi, 2016).

2.8 Word of mouth as a recruitment method

Word of mouth, the much discussed form of passing information from person to person by oral communication can also be a recruitment method. It has been defined as an form of interpersonal communication where two or more people exchange information, either directly or indirectly. In recruitment, it is independent of other organization’s recruitment practices and more about communication of how good an organization is as an employer or just simply specific job positions. (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009)

Word of mouth conversations can happen, for example, between friends and relatives, or with teachers and seminar attendees. Word of mouth recruitment has three key characteristics. As a social phenomenon, it occurs between people in an informal manner (Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey & Edwards, 2000). This differs greatly when comparing other recruitment methods which organizations use, such as formal sources where employment related information require the use of public intermediaries, such as newspapers and employment agencies, or private intermediaries such as relatives (Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

Even though the main focus is on transferring information, word of mouth also represents a certain type of informational social influence. Accepting information provided by other people as reality changes how the potential job candidate reviews
his environment and changes decisions, making word of mouth a relevant and influential recruitment method.

As word of mouth is not under the direct control of the organization, it is categorized as a company-independent source of recruitment (Cable & Turban, 2001). People who generate word of mouth are considered to have no commercial self-interest in promoting the organization, which is contrary to company dependent sources, such as recruiters and advertisements.

It has been further implied by Van Hoye (2013) that organizations can only attempt to influence word of mouth indirectly through other recruitment activities such as building relationships with key influentals and opinion leaders, internships, job fairs and referral programs such as providing monetary bonuses for successful referrals.

Word of mouth is traditionally conveyed through face-to-face conversation, although it can be done through other media as well, for example via emails, social media and telephone. The importance of web-based word of mouth has been increasing steadily for a while now (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009). People are more and more connected through technology and devices and distance between two individuals is irrelevant. It also makes the location of potential job candidate less significant, as the word of mouth influences through technology even further and faster.

Even though word of mouth can be a powerful involuntary tool for recruitment purposes, it can also do harm as it can involuntarily contain both positive and negative information about the company (Cable & Turban, 2001). This can be based on the motives, satisfaction or the dissatisfaction of the job or the organization, of the source. Also it has to be remembered, anyone can be the source, friends, family, acquaintances and even complete strangers.

In a broader sense, employee referrals can be described as a certain type of word of mouth as well. As the information is provided by the current employees, they convey more positive message about the organization, making it to appear more favorable for the recipient. Also networking has been defined to have recruitment purpose, even though the job seeker does not necessarily search for a particular job. Previous
recruitment research has defined networking as “individual actions directed toward contacting friends, acquaintances, and other people to whom the job seeker has been referred for the main purpose of getting job information, leads, or advice on getting a job” (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000).

Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007a have argued that compared to company-dependent sources, company-independent sources such as word of mouth are likely to be perceived as providing more credible, “real-life” information because they are assumed to have no explicit self-interest in promoting the organization. In addition, job seekers have tendency to perceive information gained through direct employee communication as more credible than indirect impersonal information such as websites (Allen et al., 2004; Cable & Turban, 2001).

2.9 Research questions in light of recruitment theory and previous studies

With theories and studies previously discussed in this chapter, we can assume that we can categorize and define the sources where the game industry recruits new employees. Hopefully, with the theory, we can identify and discuss why some of these recruitment sources are more efficient than others. Regarding the nature of game industry as it is almost entirely concentrated on virtual environment, it can be safely assumed that social media is used in some form or other in recruitment processes. Still, it remains as interesting notion to explore whether it is a significant contributor to recruitment practices or not.

As previous studies have stated, the recruitment has changed a lot since the coming of internet, it will be intriguing to see how has the gaming industry changed in the view of the interviewees, because their timeframe is within the past 10 years, during which the development of communication, internet and information technology has been almost exponential. Also when comparing the interviews and theory, it is interesting to see if there is a shift into aforementioned new ways of recruiting, focusing more into targeting passive job candidates, using social media, highly focused internet advertising and employment websites.
3 INTERVIEWS

3.1 Interview methodology

After consulting relevant researching theories from the literature and the Oulu Business school faculty members, it was evident that the best method to conduct the interviews for this research was by performing and using Qualitative research approach. Qualitative research was seen as a better format than Quantitative research due to the fact that it can gather more in-depth understanding about human behavior issues such as for example, why people have better view about the certain workplace than the other and does that view affect the decision making of which open vacancy and organization potential job candidate chooses.

Through literature research and after some discussion, the decision was made that the interviews would be conducted in themed open ended format. The researcher would ask open-ended question or questions about certain topic and the person interviewed would answer as well as he can and how he feels about the topic at hand, which could lead to more specific questions about the topic.

Oulu region has only a handful of potential companies which could be interviewed for this research paper, even though the region holds almost 30 organizations which are considered working in the game development industry. (Neogames, 2016). The main limiting factor was the relevant companies’ workforce requirement. Most of the companies working in the Oulu region had less than 10 people working, which was under the set scope for the research.

Finally, through inquiries and research from various potential game development companies’ websites, it was decided that for the research, it would seem possible to interview three companies, LudoCraft Ltd., Koukoi Games Ltd. and Fingersoft Ltd. This was thought to give an overall perspective of the recruiting in the gaming industry in Oulu region, as the companies chosen are relatively different in terms of focus, keeping the data saturation small and every interview could bring new information to the research.
3.2 Interview with LudoCraft Ltd.

The interview with LudoCraft Ltd.’s CCO Mr. Ville Wittenberg took about 2 hours. The interview was conducted on 14th of November, in their office at Kasarminranta 23, Oulu. First he gave the tour of the company premises and explained why they have such an unusual workplace compared to regular office work environment. For example their office was dimly lit, included soundproof band room, corner full of Legos and a huge 32 thousand piece puzzle.

According to Mr. Wittenberg this was their working community’s idea of incorporating innovation into workplace, occasional coffee machine discussion and exchange of new ideas was spread into the whole office premises. According to him “when you create a laidback environment from elements of circus, daycare and a bouncing castle, you get a workplace with no boundaries, promoting creativity”.

When company hires new employees, Mr. Wittenberg acts as a standard entry point, collecting candidates and applications sent to the company. Then the candidate pool goes to heads-of-department and to the creative director as well. Finally best ones are evaluated in the team where the new employee could be assigned and after checkups, the interview process begins.

3.2.1 History, philosophy and size of the company

The company LudoCraft Ltd. (later referred as Ludocraft) was established 10 years ago in December 2006 by the people working in the Oulu University’s Faculty of Information Technology. The basis for the company was laid in the year 2000 when the future core members of LudoCraft met as employees in the Game Research Unit of the faculty. This included the company’s CEO Tony Manninen, who was doing his doctoral thesis at the time and the initial company was established around him. Even today, all of the core members of the original team are connected to the company, one way or the other.

At first, during the Game Research Unit era and after the company was established, LudoCraft made most of its early projects with educationists. The idea of making
games which could work as educational platforms resulted into their first commercial
game NoviCraft, where researchers could analyze how teams work and how to
improve their team’s productivity and cohesion.

Their innovation idea was to bring games into other fields of science. How can games
be developed and used in other industries? The goal for the company’s existence was
set as “We want to save the world through games”. They wanted to help others to solve
problems and through problem solving they could make the world a better place.

At the time of the interview Ludocraft employed 20 people, all them stationed at their
office near the Oulu river. Common job descriptions in the company includes, coder,
artist, game designer etc. Employee’s education background varies greatly, but most
of them come from information processing sciences. Their yearly revenue in 2015 was
844 thousand euros. (Kauppalehti, 2016)

Ludocraft feels that the company doesn’t work in a particular game industry segment.
For Ludocraft, through the game design process with the customer, the ongoing
discussions and needs define which platform they end up using for the final product.
For example, they have done games for educational purposes used in PC, gambling
machines for RAY and tablet/phone casual game Catch the Fish! for Hätälä. It could
be said that their industry segment is making personalized games for their clients, even
though they make their own game development as well.

3.2.2 Recruiting philosophy

The company has always aimed to hire permanent workforce. To avoid letting people
go, the goal has been to keep the amount of workforce quite steady and recruiting were
to be done only in cases were the need for permanent workforce has increased. The
company employs few trainees regularly, in collaboration with education institutions,
to help the local talents to get some work experience in the game industry.

Through training tryouts, the company has employed people in the past. Their policy
has been that they need to get to know the applicant before the person can be hired.
Some kind of contact, whether meeting at a convention, being good friends with
current employer or completing training in the company, needs to be established with the potential job applicant. This means that some connection has been made before the applicant is taken into shortlist, which the company consults when searching for new employees.

Mr. Wittenberg sees that recruiting is a continuous process in their company. This does not necessarily mean they are actively recruiting new talent, but more in a guidelines of staying aware of their surroundings. They see that part or recruiting is also promoting the company image and keeping people aware of LudoCraft. The reason for this is that even though they are not recruiting actively, when they are they need the right guy for the right job as fast as possible.

LudoCraft’s recruiting philosophy emphasizes company identity. Their methods of choosing the right recruiting channels is that the companies should think about which recruiting channel would be the best way express the company identity in the recruiting process and they should act in accordance of that guideline. The tools for recruiting should be chosen according to that guideline, whether it being social media, websites or some other form of communication.

### 3.2.3 Recruiting sources

According to Mr. Wittenberg, Ludocraft does not recruit through particular mechanical tool, website or system. Their main recruiting source is the contacts they have made through last 6 months, in other terms, people who have showed interest towards the company and who they have found interesting or who have asked for training period. They don’t have all enclosing database of potential candidates, more like a list of good people who might be worth calling if the need for a new employees occurs.

They actively use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to bring forth information about the company culture and their identity. They have profiled their social media sites for different uses. Facebook has events and detailed production logs, Instagram has work culture, day to day pictures, and Twitter has comments and feelings. They believe, that people through liking or following the company in social media shows some
interest in the company and they are more eager to come and meet at conventions, have a discussion with the employees and make the first contact to the company.

Making connections with the potential job seekers are done by organizing “developers meet the fans” gatherings, educational institution collaborations, being active in social media, joining in all sorts of conventions by either being there physically or virtually, giving lectures at schools and making the company and the ideology known in other fields of science and industry.

LudoCraft does not use traditional recruiting methods, such as newspapers, recruiting conventions or roadside ads. They have found that traditional recruiting methods do not necessarily meet their requirement of specific employees and skillsets. According to Mr. Wittenberg, the use of websites, such as mol.fi or other recruiting websites, for recruitment is minimal. Even their own website does not have much information of how to apply or if they have openings. The only recruiting-related info is Mr. Wittenberg’s personal information in contact page as a PR, Communications and Recruiting person. In a sense, even webpages are too “old-school”.

The problem with the previously mentioned unused recruiting tools is according to Mr. Wittenberg that they gather too much unwanted attention. As the company’s required skillset for new employees is quite specific, they don’t want to go through all the applications which public “were hiring” add might attract.

LudoCraft does not use headhunting agencies even though they look employees from a particularly small labor market. That they trust their current system and they feel it has yielded best results. They have also taken into account that when hiring a headhunting agency, they would need to make sure that they understand the company philosophy and they feel that it would be unnecessary step in recruiting process.

The company does not have monetary employee incentives when it comes to recruiting. According to Mr. Wittenberg, this could be seen to contradict company culture as they feel that money is not the most important thing in life. It was said that the best incentive to get the best people through the current employee’s contacts is that they get a good co-worker and a friend into the company.
3.2.4 Job applicant enthusiasm and employer expectations

For LudoCraft it is really important that people know where they are applying for and that’s why they value job seekers who have made contact, trained or discussed with them in the past. This method could also be called pre-screening, which they do actively so if a position opens, they would call the job seekers who have some knowledge of the company philosophy already and potential right skillset, therefore raising the chances of finding the right person for the right job.

The skills of employees they are seeking vary depending on the job positions they are looking to fill. Still, there are quite a few abilities which they look and search as they are required for most of their employees. In a way, creating new content and ideas can be as exhausting mentally as construction work is physically. During the interview, Mr. Wittenberg presented skills which they think makes people good employees.

These included the passion for gaming, ability to play, interest to improve your skills and will to show others that “you can”, spontaneous attitude, excellent concentration, guts and humility, ability to handle different tasks, responsibility, ability to handle stress, teamwork skills, doing instead of talking, superhuman speed and getting things done.

The company sees that Oulu region is already part of the global job markets in the game industry. They see that talented workforce can leave Northern Finland to other parts of the world but they don’t necessarily have to. The region has enough startups and game development studios that employees with ambition can make their hopes and dreams come true here as well.

The experience LudoCraft has with global job markets, is that if somebody currently outside of Finland seeks game industry jobs from Oulu region, they have other motives or reasons to do that. It could be they have studied there, they have romantic interests or some other form of connection. In their experience, most of the global interest comes from Europe, but the furthest geographical nationality of the company comes from China. They have keenly believe that Oulu Region will be, in the future, even
more interesting place globally to work at. They hope that recruiting process changes in the future for more “game oriented”.

LudoCraft feels that they can grow quite a lot if it is in their interests. In the past they have tested what would happen if they had increased workforce with “LudoCraft academy” project. They feel that the basics of their company ideology of how they work would not change even if the employee capacity would double.

### 3.3 Interview with Koukoi Games Ltd.

The interview with Koukoi Games Ltd.’s (later referred as Koukoi) CEO Mr. Antti Kananen took around 50 minutes. The interview was conducted in 22th of November in their office at Valtatie 67, Oulu. The office was more traditional looking workspace when comparing to LudoCraft’s for example, neat rooms with lot of electronics and clearly employers were busy.

Koukoi highly promotes entrepreneurship and by working hard, you can achieve success. Mr. Kananen’s background comes from university, having Master’s degree of Science in Technology. He has triple degree from high school and graduated university in four years while working at the same time. Before he became entrepreneur he was a project manager in a Finnish company.

The idea of the company, Koukoi was established in early part of the year 2015. The company was established by Mr. Kananen to pursue his dream of having his own game development company and make games. During an interview which he was doing for another company for another industry segment, he found a potential partner for his gaming company and through couple of contacts after that they were able to establish the core team for the game development company.

Job applications are sent into Koukoi’s generic email mailbox which is moderated by couple of employees in the company. Usually CEO reads the applications first, as he has most experience with team management and recruitment, and discusses about the possible potential applicants with the person who is in charge of the team relating to
the application. Other employees and team members can also check the applications if needed.

3.3.1 History, philosophy and size of the company

The company was officially established and registered in the summer of 2015. At first, when they started the thought of making a game required some testing, models and different tryouts as they worked with six different ideas which the company decided to discard. Through these first steps and learning process, they found their first game, Crashing Season (Koukoi Games Ltd., 2016), which they were satisfied and willing to push and make it all the way to the consumers.

In October 2015, group of investors invested one million dollars to the company to reach international success. This was one of the biggest first round investments any game development company has gathered in Northern Finland. As the company funds increased, they were able to scale the company upwards, hire more employees and reach more customers. The game launched globally in May 2016 with publishing deals to Japan, China, Middle-East and North Africa.

Due to the need of scaling required to succeed globally, Koukoi recruited more staff and currently employs 12 full time employees and couple trainees. They aim to recruit more staff as more employees will be needed for future projects in year 2017. The aim is to assemble another game development team as parallel to the current development team when the company has enough employees. Therefore they need to recruit employees to almost every position, the need for programmers and game designers is constant.

Koukoi currently operates in the mobile game segment. The company has developed its games for the two most well supported mobile platforms, android and iOS. Their games are free to play, revenue coming from optional micro transactions and advertisement videos. Koukoi’s vision and reason why they exist is to “create unforgettable experiences for gamers”.

In the future, the focus of game development will continue in their own game ideas, but the company will also do joint licensing productions with third parties relating to their partners intellectual property. Platform focus of their own and joint productions will stay at mobile platforms.

3.3.2 Future aspirations

Koukoi believes that their chances to grow to a decent size game studio is possible. During next year, they will try to hire couple of employees more, making their company total around 15 people. In the future they believe it would be good to have over 20 employees so that they could field two to three teams depending on size of productions they are having. This could be achieved in the current state Oulu region is in the game industry.

If they think it is necessary to grow even more, there would be operations needed to be done in the region in order to make it possible. Starting point would be to focus on potential employees coming straight out from school system, so that the new faces can get straight into working into company processes, some sort of training program in practice. If they cannot attract enough people to Oulu region, they would need to make entry point somewhere else, mainly abroad.

For them, it would be common sense to make entry point either in United States or somewhere in Asia, for example to China or Japan, in order to make it easier for their products to enter new markets. The most important decision when establishing new office abroad would be to determine where the key partners operate and recognizing where the talent is found regarding to the team assembled there. Team assembled overseas could for example consist and focus wholly on marketing or business development.

Koukoi’s yearly revenue is 700 thousand euros. They have gathered funding of 2 million euros in total. The funding consists from both private and public sector. They are constantly looking for more funding, but also partners with varying resources, such as marketing tools, knowledge of how to enter certain markets and interesting intellectual property rights which could be made into games.
It is likely that the company will have higher operating losses than profit, but they firmly believe their long term strategy will work and more product will be brought to consumers and after year and a half they will turn out to be profitable. Their down to earth thinking is that they know they cannot do everything by themselves. That is why Koukoi believes that active networking, seeking partnerships with different resources at their disposal is key to success. They know that the mobile game market is highly competed and saturated market. Mr. Kananen reminds of the saying they have among industry entrepreneurs that ”It is good to wake up in the morning when you know that markets have become more intense since yesterday” – entrepreneur in the game industry.

3.3.3 Recruitment philosophy

Koukoi gets quality applications around three to five applications per month. Applications which are not suited for their needs tend to be plentiful, around 20-30 applications per month. The amount of applications sent per month depends greatly on how the company is having open vacancies and how actively they are informing and seen in media. If there’s an article about the company and its activities, the amount of job applications rise significantly.

The company advertises its open positions by volume. By posting new job offers in every relevant website and social media, bringing also greater media coverage and helps the company to develop its brand further. They have seen it as a way and a tool to move the company forward. They see that Finnish game industry’s labor markets are so small, that if the company applications are not seen by some potential applicants, that it is the job seekers inefficiency to recognize potential job offers. Active job seekers in the game industry are aware of the recruiting channels which Koukoi frequently use.

Koukoi believes that traditional media such as newspapers cannot reach their potential employees with great efficiency. In their viewpoint, the employee must be a so-called ”digital native”, a digitally fluent person who greatly understands and uses digital technology, as business is developed and executed in the digital world. Using only
digital applications is the first step in ensuring that the new employee is right for the company.

Mr. Kananen points out that the company does not have rewarding system for finding potential new employees. According to him, if employee knows a great person and employee is able to convince the new employee come to work for Koukoi, it itself is a reward as the team gets a great person to work with. Mr. Kananen sees that rewarding employees for such matters does not work well in creative business as there are other things to consider besides money. He sees that startups have the culture of being as open as possible to everyone, so there is no point creating boundaries with employee rewards and recommendations. In startup companies, such as Koukoi, the employees get a chance to greatly influence their work environment.

Koukoi receives plenty of applications from outside of Finland and overseas as well. However, Koukoi has decided to not employ foreign job seekers at the moment, due to the processing time to get a new employee settled in Oulu region. In their described situation, when the company decides to hire a new employee, the faster new person can start working, the better. As the company mentality is still closely related to startup thinking, the need to get a new employee to produce new content as fast as possible is the main factor. The risk of taking and investing a new employee from overseas, and the process of backfiring and taking months, is in their current situation too great. In later stages, when revenue and funding increases, they aim to open the possibility to recruit people from other parts of the world.

Koukoi has decided that they should not use headhunting agencies. Only as a last measure they should consider using headhunting services. They acknowledge that headhunting might be a working concept, but for finding persons from outside national borders. Therefore, headhunting might become relevant recruiting method in the future, if they decide to start looking for talent from other countries.

3.3.4 Recruitment sources

First employees Koukoi was able to hire through recommendations and asking potential candidates through contacts. After that they started using public channels,
looking for people which could work as employees or as part-time entrepreneurs and owners. Through this process, the first full team of eight people formed and they could start making their product.

The first recruitment external tool they used were job employment websites in Oulu region, Duunaamo.fi, government supported TE-palvelut and mol.fi. They have used other cities local employment websites as well, such RekryPro.fi in Joensuu. Today, they also use social media as people are following them more and more.

In national level, Koukoi uses websites such as Duunitori.fi and Gamesjobs.fi. The idea for them is to make their company known and try reach as many potential job applicants as possible, by promoting the vacant position in relevant job search websites. Gamesjobs Finland is the only specific job search website, which they use when looking for new personnel. The website specializes in mediating job offers and available workforce in game industry. The company has also tried chargeable services such promoting its vacant positons in Gamesjobs and registering into Monster.fi job search website.

In social media, Koukoi uses Facebook, Linkedin and Twitter actively for varying tasks and communication. Koukoi has used Facebook groups related to game industry in promoting their open vacancies. In addition to specified groups, they have used other Facebook groups which they have found relevant for promoting their open vacancies. When the company use social media to promote open job vacancies, they try to separate the company brand from their game brands. Use of multiple communication channels in social media has been seen effective as it creates better impression and greater interest.

Advertising and informing vacancies in social media provides other functions as well. It improves the general media coverage and improves company visibility which makes the company and its brand more interesting to job applicants and other stakeholders as well such as current partners and possible new investors.

Koukoi tries to be well seen in local events related to their industry. These include general entrepreneurship events such as Polar Bear Pitching and Midnight Pitch Fest,
and game development related Game Spring Oulu. The company and its employees also do cooperation with Oulu Game LAB, appearing as guest lecturers or telling about their own experiences to the students. Koukoi visits the capital region quite often, appearing in the game industry and startup events actively. The plan is to reach forward and visit events outside national border as well.

Mr. Kananen sees that Games Jobs has been the best recruitment website for searching new talent, according to applications. The company behind Games Jobs is Barona Group, which specializes in mediating vacancies and job applications. Mr. Kananen argues that the expertise behind Games Jobs is the reason why it is working better compared to other recruitment websites. Second comes advertising available vacancies in social media. Through liking and sharing they have seen increase in applications. Thirdly comes the governmental services, TE-palvelut and mol.fi. The applications through governmental services provide generic applications.

When recruiting, the company has not recognized some recruitment methods would work more efficiently or differently when recruiting personnel for particular job descriptions. For example, when recruiting programmers or artists, they have not seen any evidence that they should concentrate more in recruiting through mol.fi for artists and GamesJobs for programmers to get better results.

From his experience, Mr. Kananen sees that in the future, recruiting methods will vary between industries, but he sees that gaming industry will steer more towards community recruitment, networking and somebody knowing a potential candidate for the company. From their experience, they believe that companies will soon start to fight over the best possible employees. According to their sources,”the war for talent” has already begun in the capital region of Finland. For Koukoi, it means that they have to start training new employees fast, or they might need to search for talent from other countries as well.

### 3.3.5 Job applicant enthusiasm and employer expectations

When Koukoi starts recruiting, they define the required skillset for every positon. However, in general, they are currently looking to employ people which already have
enough previous work experience, so that the person can start working faster. That is one of the reasons why they look for potential job candidates from other parts of Finland, as the Oulu region lacks suitable job candidates with notable work experience. Most of the current employees come from Oulu region, but they have few employees from Southern and Eastern Finland as well. They have also realized that in order to balance experience, they need to recruit fresh faces with fresh ideas from time to time.

Koukoi’s strategy in placing job descriptions is interesting. They overshoot the job descriptions on purpose, so that the people with not enough motivation for the job would not even send an application. In the interview they value if the applicant agrees and is willing to commit in their values, working methods and processes. The company has strict policy about skill level and other necessary qualities depending of the position. Usually they arrange multiple interviews to get to know the applicant.

After initial selection, the trial period and valuation ensures if the new employee is suitable for the company. When hiring a new employee, the company also tries to value what kind of skills the employee has which they do not currently use and whether it could be turned into an asset in the future. Common job descriptions for them are programmer, graphic designer, marketing personnel, producer, business developer and game developer.

Game industry in Oulu region sees a decent amount of employees and talent switch companies from time to time. During this interview the amount of game companies located in Oulu region were around 30. Great part of the companies are small, one to three man startups or projects, which try their wings without regarding realities, going up and down quite often. The region has a lot of talent, but not all the companies have steady cash flow, and that is one of the main reasons among others why companies go down often.

If a company grows big, some of the employees want to change jobs as they like to work in smaller companies. Mr. Kananen sees that region needs more success stories to stabilize the game industry, bringing more competition for acquiring talent between companies, but making people more secure and confident to switch jobs if they want to, as there would be more companies being able to pay steady wages. Mr. Kananen
believes that the region’s game industry will be very community based, startup culture, networking and game industry events supporting the community well.

Mr. Kananen thinks that game industry in Oulu region is becoming more and more part of the global labor markets. But right now it might be more of a people leaving to companies abroad than coming to Oulu region. He sees that in order attract more talent, the region needs more success stories to become more appealing. Later, if company hires an employee from abroad, and after that even if the company goes down, it would be more likely for the person coming abroad to find a new, stable company in the region. Mr. Kananen sees that there would be potential job candidates in countries where median income is low, affected by poverty, war or instability coming to Finland in search for better living. There are many, very talented people across the world who want to escape instability in their lives. Moving to Finland as a company employee would be everything for them.

Even today, Koukoi gets applications across the world from professionals. Right now there are not any applications from the people who play their games themselves and have submitted the application because of that. It is seen that the more they have made themselves known across the world and have had good PR and media coverage campaigns, the will get more international applications all over the world as well.

3.4 Interview with Fingersoft Ltd.

The interview with Fingersoft Ltd.’s (later referred as Fingersoft) COO Ville Rauma around 1 hour. The interview was conducted in their office at Eeronpolku 2, Kempele. The office building was spacious and well thought out to improve creativity. A mix between LudoCraft and Koukoi. The interview took place in the game room of the company building. The interview took place on 7th of December 2016. Mr. Rauma has 10 years of work experience in the game development industry. Before joining Fingersoft, he worked in Happy Vice, Tuonela, Ludocraft and Vivid Works. In the company, COO is responsible of the day to day operations and functions of the company.
When Fingersoft opens a vacant position, they have a straightforward recruitment process thought out. When the decision to look for a new employee is made, the marketing department sends the job descriptions to relevant job mediation websites. Then the stakeholder and the team leader into whose team the new employee will be working with goes through the applications with Mr. Rauma and they call the best job applicants to the interview. The goal is to schedule the interviews as close as possible to each other, so the process is as efficient as possible and the applicants don’t have to wait for long periods of time.

Fingersoft is in a middle of developing their company structure to the next level. They are moving from their old office in Kempele to their new office into the city center of Oulu. This is mainly due to the fact that their current premises cannot offer more space and sensible locations for workstations, therefore they cannot hire new employees and expand any further. Some of the employees come quite far away but they have decided not to establish branch offices. For employees coming from further away, they have made other arrangements, such as providing place to sleep from time to time and allowing to do some of the assignment from home.

3.4.1 History, philosophy and size of the company

Fingersoft Ltd. was established by Tony Fingeroos in 2012. Before that, the company was Mr. Fingeroos’s sole proprietor entity for specific projects. At first, the company made camera software and through that the company was able to make its first game, Hill Climb Racing. First, there was only few employees, the company’s current CEO and the owner’s relative, but when the company’s first game skyrocketed, made 15.5 million euros in 14 months, net profit being 9.4 million euros (Talouselämä, 31.1.2014), and the company was set for growth. Currently Fingersoft employs 26 people as full time employees. The company revenue was 15 million euros in year 2015. In 2016, revenue will be around the same figure, but it was hard to estimate at the time of the interview due to the corporate restructuring.

Mr. Ranta defines the company’s expertise and key game industry segment as mobile games using IOS and android platforms. The company’s focus is on developing their own mobile games but also publishing mobile video games for smaller game
development companies with less experience. Their biggest product by volume of sales is Hill Climb Racing, being downloaded over half a billion times. Other successful games developed by Fingersoft include Hill Climb Racing 2 and Make More! They have also published games such as Fail Hard and Benji Bananas.

Currently, according to Mr. Rauma, Fingersoft is the only game publishing company in Finland in mobile game segment. Their focus is on finding games which are quite ready to be launched from other game developing companies and evaluating if they would match Fingersoft’s game portfolio. For that they have developed a process, with key performance indicators and other parameters, to make sure if the game is healthy, has promise and is worth investing.

If the game development company and Fingersoft come into terms with publishing, the publishing deal is made, which could be defined as a profit distribution agreement as well. From that point on, Fingersoft takes active role in makes the work needed for good publishing, such as testing, translations and marketing. Mr. Rauma notes that this makes game development and pushing the game to consumers much easier for companies. Especially this can help small, two man startups, which don’t have all the necessary resources at their disposal to succeed.

Fingersoft has not confined itself to just mobile games, for example hill climb racing is also available for traditional desktop Windows computers as well, but their focus is on mobile gaming, iOS and Android softwares. Fingersoft does not make contract work, although the company has some sub-contractors working for the company. Fingersoft does not aim to grow into a big company in the terms of employee figures. Mr. Rauma estimates that the current maximum could be around forty employees. Sense of community is very important in game development companies, for example companies as big as Supercell has weekly meetings among all their staff.

3.4.2 Recruitment philosophy

As a relatively high profile game development company in Finland, Fingersoft gets plenty of job applications on a daily basis. Especially artist department gets plenty of applications, national and international. Even with a high amount of applications
coming in a daily basis, the company still keeps its eyes open for potential star talents. Fingersoft does not promote their open vacancies in social media, as they see it as a poor platform due to the high amount of followers (Facebook 4.4 million, Twitter 17.2 thousand followers) they have in social media.

Fingersoft does not have rewarding system for employees, but they have considered establishing one. It has been thought about in the programming department as there is a steady lack of new competent programmers in the game development industry. They will probably try it out in the future, probably during the year 2017 as there is a need for new programming personnel. The exact reward meant for the employee is still under consideration but they have also thought about rewarding people outside the company for tipping out potential employees as well.

In Fingersoft’s thinking, everybody in their industry wants to start making games, the problem is that all the talented people are already working. Mr. Rauma argues that there might be incidence problem among the graduating students and game development companies. It might be that fresh graduates cannot find or dare not to apply for open positions game development companies offer.

Almost every employee in Fingersoft has some technical background in their resume. When the company looks for new potential employees, they send applications to all the necessary websites. They do not feel that they need to differentiate whether they have vacancy in artist or programming department. They recognize that they might need to do focusing on which recruitment channels they use when the company is looking for new talent for artist or programmer department.

Mr. Rauma sees that Fingersoft can grow more in the future, but the fluctuating game development industry must be taken into account, when deciding reasonable actions. For example, Rovio was a bad example of things going wrong and not taking into account the special nature of game development industry. Rovio expanded very rapidly and hired employees by hundreds. Mr. Rauma sees that corporate thinking does not work necessarily in places where artistic work is extremely important. Probably the maximum amount of employees a game development company should hire is close to few hundred. For example, making mobile game with hundred people does not bring
anything new to the game, probably only making the development process more rigid and unrewarding.

According to Mr. Rauma, mobile games are made in small teams. The core product of the mobile game could be made between two to three people. Around that, the companies could add people for production. Fingersoft has found out that as a producer, their own employee capacity does not need to grow as fast as if they would be making all the games by themselves. They are already using sub-contractors, if the company recognizes a problem they do not know or have time to solve themselves.

In some cases, it is reasonable to buy the sub-contractor. For example, when Fingersoft was working as a producer for Viima Games, it realized that the sub-contractors employees were extremely talented and functioned well with Fingersoft’s own employees, so the company decided to acquire the sub-contractor as they saw excellent synergy benefits. Mr. Rauma sees that the hype of outsourcing some aspects of the company into other parts of the world has passed in business in general. Fingersoft has also decided that they would not do outsourcing more than they are doing right now, for example they have outsourced a quite straightforward task to a Vietnamese company who does QA and testing for them.

3.4.3 Recruitment sources

When Fingersoft started to grow due to the success of Hill Climb Racing, they first hired people they knew and had immediate contact with. After that when they had talked with all the relevant people which could come and start working with the company, they started looking through other sources, such as employment websites. In Finland, there is an unwritten rule, a code of conduct, about not stealing employees from other game development companies. If people are searching to switch jobs, that is naturally allowed.

Fingersoft uses mostly online websites for recruitment, such as mol.fi, GamesJobs Finland, Monster and some other subscription required websites. Mol.fi receives every vacant job information, but the company staff has discussed if the government provided job mediation is no longer necessary as applications the company gets
through it are mostly applications which are not suitable for the company, for example people applying from completely different fields of work.

Fingersoft has tried headhunting agencies as well, but they have not made any contracts with new employees through headhunting. There has been few potential candidates which have made to interviews have come through headhunting agencies, but the company feels that the headhunting as a relevant recruiting method is not useful in their current situation. To their demand, technical work, for example programming experts, is a really specific niche labor market and they feel that headhunting agencies do not understand that. For example, when the company requested that they need programmers who know how to program C++, headhunting agencies offer just programmers without sorting or bothering to find out if the job candidate actually knows the C++ language.

Fingersoft actively participates in various game conventions and education fairs. They have tried frequently to be well seen in Northern Finland, especially through sponsorships. They have been less active in the capital region of Finland, because the competition for employees and talent is more demanding there than in other parts of Finland.

Fingersoft does not use some of the more traditional recruitment methods. They see that printed media, such as newspaper advertisements don’t necessarily work on their industry. The company also feels that it might stop using the government job mediation service, the mol.fi. They argue that the government service does not necessarily offer any help for the modern labor markets. Job search should start within the person looking for a job. There should be motivation behind the effort. The company sees that there is no point getting 100 applications a day with no real intent behind the applications, meaning none of them are worth inviting to the interview.

Fingersoft has not singled out which recruitment method is the most effective, they have not researched where the applicant finds the vacant position for the first time. Fingersoft gets multiple emails per day into their jobs@ email address, most of them freeform job applications. The company does not have designated HR manager and
the policy is if the company does not actively look for new talent, they won’t be answering the job application emails.

Mr. Rauma sees that recruiting has changed in the game development industry. When he started, the industry contained less experience, it could have been said that everybody were “noobs”. The companies were not so professional back then, the only criteria for hiring a new person was that the applicant had enthusiasm for making games. When he started, the best way of recruiting and finding new employees were the university mass email lists.

3.4.4 Job applicant enthusiasm and employer expectations

It has been pointed out and questioned that does the employment office force the people to “just apply somewhere”, making the companies search for potential new employees much tedious and time consuming. The government agency’s parameters does not help to find companies to find certain talent for specific industry segment. For Fingersoft, taking the initiative as a person looking for job is considered extremely valuable quality.

Fingersoft requires specific skillset depending on whether they require programmer or artist for example. Personality is one of the main criteria when employing a new person for the company. Fingersoft points out that they are very thorough, when determining personality and if they are suitable for the company and the team or not. According to Fingersoft, being a game developer is very intensive and demanding work. The chemistry inside the team and the company has to work out in order to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

Mr. Rauma points out that team chemistry is probably most important aspect when choosing new employees. Therefore, when making interviews, the interviews are conducted by the team leader relevant to the position, Mr. Rauma and a third suitable person depending on vacant position. When they choose the employee, they have to be unanimous about the decision.
When determining suitable job candidates, the technical skills also matter. The interviewers check if the applicant has high enough general skill level for the vacant job description, what kind of hobbies the applicant has and what else they do on their free time. It does not matter if the applicant does not have portfolio, the important thing is that the applicant has been active, for example being active in sports, culture or politics. To Fingersoft, it tells a story about the applicant and if he has been passionate about something.

Mr. Rauma thinks that Oulu region is already part of the global recruiting markets, for example, Fingersoft employs two foreign employees. According to him, the recruiting philosophy for companies should be that the most suitable person looking gets chosen and the nationality of the new employee does not matter. Mr. Rauma sees that the main reason for people from overseas applying to Fingersoft is that the job applicant is honestly interested about the activities of the company.

According to him, the global labor markets are already full of cosmopolitans and they do not care where they live. Also, when entering as an employee in to the global labor markets, the employees have to be prepared to move around. Mr. Rauma sees that in the future, the company might want to search for more talent from the overseas as well. This is due to their belief that in creative jobs it is important to have varying degrees of diversity and cultural background. This will make the creative work of the company more versatile and diverse.

### 3.4.5 Oulu Game Campus

As stated before, Fingersoft will be moving into their new offices sometime during the year 2017. This will be part of the Oulu Game Campus project, which aims to bring companies, educational institutions and other partners closer to each other in game development industry. Major stakeholders in the project are Fingersoft and Rakennusteho which provide the premises in Aleksanterinkatu 4-6, Oulu. First inhabitant, the Oulu University of Applied Science’s Oulu Game LAB, has already moved in and Fingersoft will move during some point of early 2017. The vision of the project is to have a place where “Game development business will flourish, when you can find your partners, sponsors, publishers and student in your backyard.”
The Game Campus project was the brainchild of the company founder, Mr. Fingeroos. He envisioned this in order to create a place for the industry to concentrate their creativity and focus into one place, a project they have named Oulu Game Campus. According to Mr. Rauma when the game development companies find the Game Campus, starting from the small startups to bigger developers, the students and the potential employees will find it as well. The access to every part of the industry would be present, from seminars to funding and companies, having interaction among partners as much as possible.

Fingersoft thrives to develop the gaming industry in Finland and especially in Northern Finland and Oulu region. Northern Finnish people tend to want to stay in region, so the company wanted to develop more tools for improving business activities in gaming industry. The company figured out that the most concrete way to develop the industry was to buy a city block in the middle of Oulu city center.

The company plans to take one trainee for every team they currently have, they see that there is a lack of professionals in the Finnish gaming industry and the educational system does not necessarily educate enough students for their specific needs, and therefore they plan to take more active role in training students. In Northern Finland, there is also Kajaani University of Applied Sciences which specializes in training students for the game development industry.

Fingersoft sees that Oulu region needs big and small game development companies in order to flourish. Even the small startups in Oulu region have the necessary skills to make quality games. Of course luck plays a key role in successful business stories in the game industry. Currently the region waits for the next big thing to happen, in order to get more success stories and more drive to push the region forward.

The game development industry in Oulu region is considered of having a good solidarity and comradery, a fact which is often wondered when companies from capital region visit companies located in Oulu region. If somebody wants to leave the company, the person is helped as much as possible to find another place or by giving advice if the people might want to establish their own company. Reason for this
solidarity between employees and companies in region might be that the game
development industry and competition is relatively nonexistent in Oulu region.

3.5 Interview Summary

It seems that the interviewed companies, LudoCraft Ltd., Koukoi Games Ltd. and
Fingersoft Ltd. have some similarities in their recruitment. It could be said that certain
recruitment pattern emerged from the interviews, which could hold true for the whole
game development industry in the Oulu Region.

When companies were created, the first employees to the companies came from the
close vicinity of the company’s founders. This could mean for example university
classmates, fellow researchers, friends, family and previous co-workers. Most offers
at this point include the new employees becoming shareholders when they enter the
company, to keep labor expenses as minimal as possible. The company projects and
the company success becomes the binding responsibility, as the employees future
potential income is tied to the company’s success instead of employment contracts.

After people who established the companies have depleted their reserve of known
talent, the close vicinity of people with willingness, skill and necessary abilities
important to the newfound company, the companies start to look elsewhere for more
talent and more employees. This usually happens after the first complete team has been
established, the actual amount of personnel required varies depending on every
founder’s network of potential new employees.

After that, the sphere of people where to look for new talent, expand to company
employees’ personal connections. Game development industry relies heavily on
personal connections and networking, as the industry is relatively small on terms of
labor markets and having employees who know great employees is important. At this
point, the risk of hiring new employees rises as the company probably needs to start
providing steady paychecks.

At some point, the available quality workforce to certain field of expertise through
companies connections are depleted and company has to start looking for new talent
through mediums. This can happen simultaneously with the hiring done through company’s own connections or as a completely own process. For example a company CEO might know plenty of free game artists through his network of people but might need to look outside for an accountant.

The companies interviewed had personnel from 12 to 26 full time employees. Koukoi had 12, LudoCraft 20 and Fingersoft 26 permanent, full time employees. During the interviews, it was pointed out that the companies interviewed might actually be the only companies in Oulu Region which hold more than 10 permanent personnel.

Table 1: Company Summarized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LudoCraft Ltd.</th>
<th>Koukoi Games Ltd.</th>
<th>Fingersoft Ltd.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel size</td>
<td>20 employees</td>
<td>12 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>844 thousand euros</td>
<td>700 thousand euros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years active</td>
<td>Since 2006</td>
<td>Since 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>“We want to save the world through games”</td>
<td>“Create unforgettable experiences for gamers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Philosophy</td>
<td>Emphasize company identity. Recruiting is a continuous process. Hire permanent workforce. Know the person you hire.</td>
<td>We look for “digital natives”. Digitally advertise open positions by volume. Active job seekers will find us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment sources</td>
<td>Contacts made through the last six months. Connections done by conventions, collaborations with educational institutions, social media, “devs meet fans”, etc.</td>
<td>Duunaamo.fi, TE-services (mol.fi), local employment websites, startup and game conventions, social media, monster.fi gamesjobs.fi and rekrypro.fi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of social media</td>
<td>LudoCraft Ltd.</td>
<td>Koukoi Games Ltd.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Uses Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to bring forth information and stories about the company culture and their identity.</td>
<td>Uses Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter actively for varying tasks and communication. Separate company brand from game brands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant enthusiasm</td>
<td>Highlight job seekers who have made contact and have some knowledge of the company philosophy. It is really important that people know where they are applying for.</td>
<td>Overshoot the job descriptions on purpose, so that the people with not enough motivation for the job would not even consider sending an application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer expectations</td>
<td>Internalizes the company idea and philosophy. Has multiple traits such as “I can” attitude and passion for gaming. Is able to work in teams with good concentration and anticipation.</td>
<td>Applicant agrees and is willing to commit in their values, working methods and processes. The job candidate has to have a certain skill level in order to be chosen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewpoint on Global labor markets and Oulu region</td>
<td>Has multinational personnel, coming to work in Oulu requires some sort of personal connection, job candidates can leave Oulu but they don’t necessarily have to.</td>
<td>Has only Finnish personnel. Right now, recruiting from global markets is too time consuming. Oulu region is gradually becoming part of the global labor markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future of recruitment</td>
<td>Recruiting process could be in the future “game oriented”.</td>
<td>It will steer more towards community recruitment, networking and knowing a potential candidate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 DISCUSSION AND FINNISH GAME INDUSTRY RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

It is evident that companies in game development industry have embraced the new ways of recruiting. Recruiting in the companies is done by using virtual tools or by socializing and making personal connections with potential job candidates. With the data presented by the interviews and previous theoretical framework in this study, it was possible to distinguish the used recruitment sources of game development companies into four separate channels or categories, depending on their age, size of the company and job enthusiasm.

In recruitment theory, when companies are interviewed and recruitment evaluated, the focus of studies are in the present, not in the past or future. Research done in large corporations rarely focus on how the corporations first twenty employees were recruited and what incentives were promised in order to attract the best talent. In Finnish game development industry, where most companies have less than 10 full-time employees, the initial recruitment channel provides most of the workforce and when the company grows in size, other recruitment activities become necessary.

This is why new definitions were necessary, as there were certain indications that the recruitment channel highly depends on the company’s environment and its limitations. Each channel presented below added some new aspects of recruitment when comparing to other channels and they could work independently from the other. The channels were defined as recruiting through:

- internal exploration,
- external exploration,
- external attraction,
- internal education.

Regarding the companies interviewed, it could be said that the companies have depleted most of their internal exploration sources. Koukoi Games Ltd. mainly uses external exploration tools, whereas LudoCraft Ltd. almost solely uses external
attraction, though in the past they have extensively used internal education as well. Fingersoft has used external exploration and attraction in the past, but they are gradually shifting towards internal education. Next subchapters will elaborate and define these channels further.

### 4.1 Internal Exploration

When the companies are established, personal connections play key role in the initial formation of the company. First employees, who are readily available and have enough experience, come from the close vicinity of the founders, as the company explores the recruitment options presented through their own sphere of influence. The information is spread internally, as the best potential job candidates are ones which the newfound company knows. It decreases uncertainty and team chemistry is more easily predictable with people they know.

There are couple of reasons to why this very effective way of starting the company. Good example is LudoCraft, where most of the original core members were people working at the same faculty when the company was established. Instead of starting to form the team from scratch, they started working with the people they knew and who were willing to commit. Ability to form the initial team fast gave them a chance to start developing ideas and games early, not wasting any valuable resources.

Calling a friend if he wants to join the startup uses much less energy and time than using mediums and having interviews with dozen personnel. Koukoi used it efficiently when they started, called people they knew who could be interested. In that sense, networking, being informal and socializing and getting to know the industry segment, “pre-screening the field” is one of the key elements when entrepreneur wants start the game development company.

### 4.2 External Exploration

As the companies have formed their initial team, had some success in order to grow and the sphere of influence has been depleted of best potential job applicants for the company, the company starts to look externally for more workforce, using mediums
to reach out for new talent. This can start before the initial success as well, as in cases where there are no relevant workforce available through internal exploration.

In many ways, external exploration is the time where companies start to fire shots with as wide spread as possible. Being relatively new company and urging to move forward, the need to find new people fast is crucial. It could be argued that Koukoi can be considered to be focusing on this recruitment channel at the time of the interview. Recruitment is seldom completely separate process from other company objectives and this channel has much to do in making the company known as well.

The company sends notifications to every relevant direction, boosting the company knowledgeability in process as well, trying to build more well-known image. As the applicants are aware of the company and become more attracted of it, the higher the chances are for the company to receive quality job applications. Recruitment sources such as GamesJobs and mol.fi among other mediums are chosen to carry out the message and social media is used as a supporting tool to spread the message through relevant channels.

It has to be noted that game development companies have embraced the use of multimedia platforms and the idea of using richer media whenever possible. They send high context messages, through social media and internet. The interactive use of social media, such as Facebook, has the ability to correspond to questions regarding vacant job positions in real-time, reducing misconceptions which might have occurred.

4.3 External Attraction

As the company grows from the initial establishment phase of forming a company, they start to gather certain reputation. This reputation can be used as a recruitment tool as effectively as it can be used as a marketing tool. By refining, creating attractive company culture and influencing positively to applicant attitudes toward the company, companies can attract quality applications. Having been employed by well-known and respected employer ads more high-level applicants as the social value to the applicant increases.
Some companies, especially LudoCraft, have nowadays chosen to recruit and look for people through their own brand image, positive attitude and company philosophy instead of sending open vacancy postings. They trust that increasing company reputation leads to quality applications as potential job applicants who are knowledgeable about their company, will send open applications or try to contact them due to the fact that they find the company interesting.

Social media provides means to convey images and ideas but it also increases the employer knowledge of potential active and passive job candidates as well. As the technology provides more opportunities to contact and potentially influence passive job candidates, the need for straightforward job postings are not mandatory. Companies which are not actively recruiting personnel benefit greatly from good reputation as they are still likely to receive open job applications. When they do decide to hire new personnel, they have “database” full potential job candidates they can approach first.

This type of recruitment can be extremely useful for companies looking for star talent due to the Finnish game industry’s current limitations. The game industry’s labor market is small and specific, sometimes lacking competitive workforce in certain areas, for example at time of this study, game programmers, which are crucial for game development industry. Being inviting with good reputation and attitude is key to attract the best talent.

4.4 Internal Education

Due to limited availability of personnel in the Finnish gaming industry, the companies in Oulu have tendency towards deep relationships with educational institutions in terms of training and employing trainees, students and apprentices. By internally educating and training personnel to suit their needs, the companies can be sure that necessary technical skills are in the right level of expertise.

In the big picture, the industry has expanded in the last 5 years at such a pace that the educational institutions have not been able to meet with the demand. In terms of personnel the people working in game industry has almost tripled since 2010. Another
problem is that, even though regionally there might be enough manpower for every company, most of them are fresh out of school with not enough work experience and knowledge for specific company positions.

Therefore, the use of extensive training programs is relatively safe, yet quite slow process to gather the necessary staff for the company. One issue worth mentioning with this internal education is that, the potential amount of new knowledge brought through this process to the company is diminished, as the people educating and training new personnel are part of the existing staff.

Still, even though internal education is slow, the general tendencies in the field of recruitment suggest that recruiting new personnel has not become any faster through new technologies and in some cases there are indications that recruiting new personnel has become even more prolonged process. Lastly in terms of cost efficiency, the trainees are not as productive and it will take time until they are as useful as more experienced workers.

Also, it has to be noted, that the companies interviewed for this study are all either planning to use or are using internal education as means of recruiting new permanent personnel for the company. All the companies see this as one of the main tools of attracting permanent employees for the company if the company experiences need of expansion in terms of permanent workforce. When doing long term planning, internal education will also increase the general availability of workforce in the labor market as there are some exchange between jobs.
Figure 2 below shows the interaction between recruitment channels. As stated before, internal exploration has been the top choice when companies are established. After the initial establishment of the company, the chosen channel or channels depend mostly on what kind of manpower needs are required and available.

**Internal Exploration**
- When company is established
- Recruitment in close vicinity
- through friends, family, colleagues, etc.

**External Exploration**
- Company needs to expand and get workforce fast
- Through mediums
- Boost knowledgeability
- Recruitment is part of process, make the company known

**External Attraction**
- No need to actively recruit new workforce
- Job applicant attraction through brand image and stories
- One with the best company image gets the star talent

**Internal Education**
- Company trains employees for specific job
- Safe, yet quite expensive and slow process
- When labor markets lack decent workers, the need for training increases

Figure 2: Recruitment Channels
5 CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Conclusions

During this study, we have determined and discussed issues revolving around recruitment and different aspects of it. The aim of this study was to answer five questions regarding recruitment in the scope of game industry and Oulu region in particular. Three companies were chosen, from game development industry segment, with the limiting factor of having ten or more permanent employees. Even though there were differences with the companies interviewed, the similarities regarding the decisions they had taken in terms of recruitment practices were similar enough that, we can, with certainty, generalize the answers of this study’s research questions as the regional standard.

Research Questions:

- Where does the game industry recruit new employees?
- Is it common to use social media in recruitment in the game industry?
- How has the recruitment process changed over the years?
- Is there a change from traditional recruitment channels to new, modern social networking and virtual recruitment?
- What are the most popular and efficient external recruiting sources in game industry?

Game industry recruits new employees from variety of sources, depending on the company’s age, needs and philosophy. To elaborate the sources and the timing of different recruitment practices, this study determined that recruitment sources and practices can be aligned into four different categories of recruitment channels which companies use, depending on their time of need.

Recently established companies tend to look through their own sources and connections first, as they are readily available and relatively well-known. Later, the companies make decisions whether they try to focus on internal training or reaching for external workforce, the latter meaning either through company attraction or by
volume of advertisement. Recruitment channels vary and companies have and they should be encouraged to change their recruitment channel focus from time to time.

When comparing recruiting channels, the internal exploration is by far the most numerous in terms of employment decisions as every company has started with it and initial employees recruited were through internal exploration. Still, its effectiveness is limited as the pool of potential employees quite small and personal. Internal education has provided steady amount of employees when companies have decided to invest through it. Still sometimes the need for rapid, fast, expansion is required, which is where external exploration is needed. Finally, as a creative industry, external attraction, the company culture, is important to attract the necessary star talent.

Companies in gaming industry use social media as they see fit. Common platforms include Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Most of the companies use it for recruitment purposes, for example by telling stories, expressing feelings or by posting and spreading vacant job positions in their company. Social media is also used to communicate between the industry enthusiasts and professionals through discussion boards and threads.

Companies market and make their brand and games well-known though social media. Social media is seen as valuable tool to communicate and convey information to interest groups from partners to end users. It can give immediate feedback and reduce chance to cause misconceptions. It is likely that game industry companies follow social media trends quite rapidly, engaging new platforms, as the companies are born digital natives.

According to the interviewees, there has been some change in recruitment processes over the years. Especially the emergence of internet as a recruitment tool has had some concrete changes in the processes. The importance of recruitment mediation websites has increased as they are relatively cheap and can reach long distances in terms of attracting applications. Video conference interviews are part of interview process, although companies still require some interviews to be done on site. Personal connections and networking are important aspects of successful recruitment.
For Oulu Regions perspective, as the game industry has expanded and developed in the region and the knowledge of how to recruit efficiently has taken forward steps at the same time. The industry has matured and so have recruitment practices as well. Scenarios for future industry employment practices include more game oriented recruitment, steering more towards networking and community recruitment, headhunting for specific talent, even from overseas, and developing own training programs in order to increase employee availability.

According to the interviewees and theory, there is some movement from traditional recruitment channels such as newspapers and other physical advertisements to new kind of recruitment. For game industry’s perspective the industry recruitment has mostly been digital, only the means have changed. Ten years ago, advertisements for open vacations were done through mass emails, now it is done through social media and other digital applications.

It could be said that recruitment and companies follow technology and adopt the means they deem necessary to reach potential job applicants and discard means which have become obsolete. There also seems to be some enthusiasm to move away from governmentally provided employee mediation, which holds huge pool of unemployed workforce, but is seen as ineffective and unstructured recruitment tool. Movement has been towards privately owned mediation tools, where workforce is selected either regionally or being industry specific, which have resulted into smaller but in general higher quality pool of applications.

When companies in the industry were interviewed, it was hard to determine and deduct which of the external recruiting sources or tools were the most popular or efficient. This was due to the fact that small companies rarely have human resource personnel which systematically keeps track of recruitment practices, and even the companies interviewed, the “regional giants”, are still relatively small and can recruit only handful of personnel per year.

It is customary for the companies to receive every application to designated email box from every source, but during job interviews when companies could figure out the effective ways of recruitment, it is the most rarely asked question “where the job
applicant had found the open vacancy information” in the first place. Therefore, in this study, definitive answer and conclusion cannot be given, although some assumptions and indications can be made.

5.2 Further implications of the study

As mentioned above, the answers for the most popular and effective external recruitment sources are not definitive. This would be one of the issues which require more research and time, possibly some participation to interviews and questionnaires for job applicants and company leadership in order to reach definitive conclusion. Particularly questionnaires done among job applicants could shed some light into behavior and applicant decisions regarding to or not to apply to open job position.

This study has provided a viewpoint to small businesses regarding the field of recruitment and its theoretical frameworks. Framework provided in this study is one which even the small businesses can utilize and use when considering recruitment options. Previous theories have focused on much larger enterprises and the theories beyond those have been somewhat hard to utilize for smaller companies. The “recruitment channels” framework presented in this study has expanded and combined previous theories and transformed them for more useful framework.

Empirically, this study has shed some light into mindset of game industry companies and provided some information of how game companies recruit in general. Previously this has been rarely visited field of industry and currently as the game industry booms, every bit of data made available provides more useful information for future research and researchers. As this study is regionally specific, this will be more useful when studying same region or comparing it to another region.

For new managers or small company CEOs this study can be a useful tool when problem solving or making recruitment decisions. When company resources are stretched thin, the chances to fully plan recruitment strategy from scratch can feel quite overwhelming. This study can give some guidelines where to look for answers as well as direct options where to focus.
It has to be noted that this study is highly limited to by its region and it can be expected that for example in the capital region of Finland, some issues such as the availability of foreign workforce could be quite different. Still it can hold true in circumstances more similar to Oulu region. The timeframe of this study was in the winter 2016/2017 and it can be expected that some issues change over time, such as tools for recruitment, limiting the usefulness of this study.

5.3 Future research

This study mainly considered the company’s point of view on recruitment and the existing means to reach labor markets and suitable applicants. The job applicant decisions and job search was not considered as the main focus, but it would certainly be a fruitful topic to dwell on. Even though Finland struggles with high unemployment rates, there is still a problem with job applicants actually not finding job notifications and therefore open vacancies are not being filled. One reason for that might be the lack of right education in order to meet the requirements of the specific industry or the terms of employment contract is inadequate (Ali-Hokka, 2016).

It remains uncertain if the problem exists in the game industry as well. In some cases the managers in the companies this study interviewed suggested that there could be problems with fresh graduates of not finding the right job or not trusting their skills they have trained in educational institutions.

From entrepreneurial viewpoint, studying startup companies and the willingness of potential talent to become part of the company instead of just working there would be interesting as it trades more steady income into unstable but more potentially higher personal gain. It could be argued and some of the interviews suggest that startups in game industry have rather significant portion of individuals which take this opportunity and even some of the personnel are chosen by this standard of willingness to become part of the owners.

For much longer research, comparing the company provided educational training programs to the Finnish educational systems institutionalized counterparts in terms of performance and suitability could bring some insight how both sides could educate
and manage even more talent for the industry. For example, some companies might be willing to do even more deeper collaboration with educational institutions as the current workforce is not necessarily diverse enough and in some regions some particular talent groups are lacking altogether.
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Appendix 1

OUTLINE OF THEMED INTERVIEW

Foreword to be presented for the person interviewed: My topic which I am studying as master’s thesis is the Finnish game industry and its recruitment. Thesis will be done in English, but we can conduct the interviews by either Finnish or English. By recruitment I mean I study theme of how Finnish game companies recruit new personnel to the company. My scope is Oulu region as I see it’s specific enough to conduct this kind of research. This study want’s to figure out how game industry companies find the new employees and talent for their companies. The goal is to interview companies which hold over 10 permanent employees.

Recruiting in Finnish game industry

1. Could you elaborate how your company operates?
   - Size, numbers, etc.
   - How long has it operated?
   - How many employees?
   - Do you operate at certain game segment?

2. What kind of recruitment tools does the company use?
   - mol.fi? company websites? newspaper ads?
   - Headhunting, projects, rewarding system?
   - Which ones are seen as useful to find new talent?

3. When you are looking for new employees, what kind of requirements or “skillsets” do you look for?
   - Does the means to find new employees differ, depending on the skillsets the company is looking for? For example, are artists found through unique way straight from social media?
• Do you have structured, clear recruitment plan?

4. Do you have certain type of recruitment tools which you do not use?

5. In 21st century, have the new tools or sources of recruitment such as internet, social media, game conventions replaced/are replacing more traditional recruitment tools, such as newspapers. How do you see, what are the next big thing in terms of recruitment in game industry?

6. How do you see, regarding game industry and its labor markets in Oulu region? Do companies search for new talent overseas and does potential job candidates part to overseas? Is Oulu region part of the global network, where people search for job opportunities across the globe?

• How does global recruiting differ from local recruiting?