

**SPREADING THE WORD:  
USING BRAND MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION IN  
PROCESSES TO DEVELOP A SERVICE BUSINESS.  
THE CASE OF HAYS IN LUXEMBOURG**



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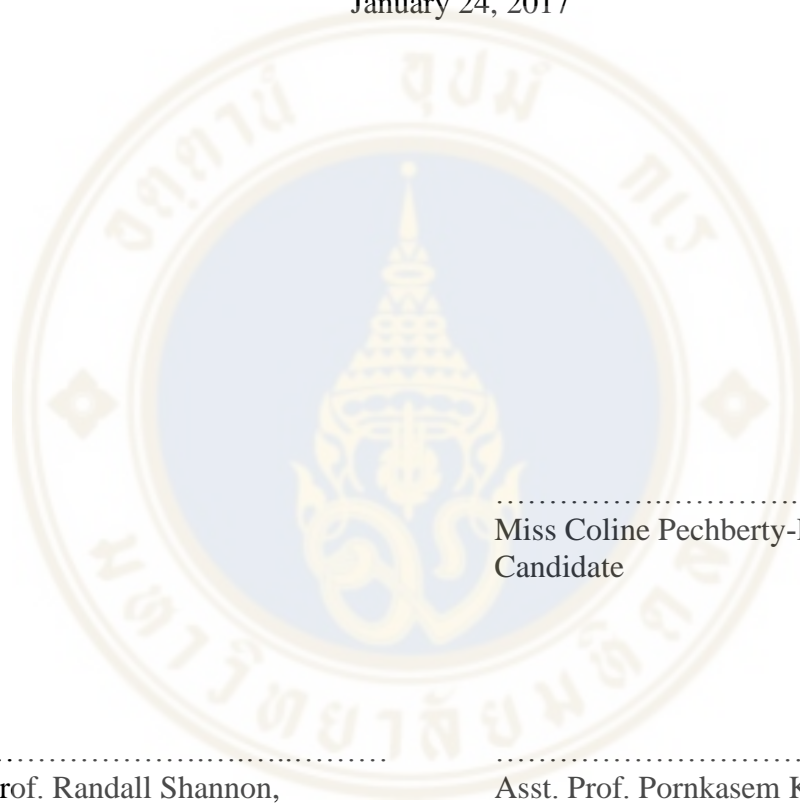
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Thematic paper  
entitled  
**SPREADING THE WORD:  
USING BRAND MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION IN  
PROCESSES TO DEVELOP A SERVICE BUSINESS.  
THE CASE OF HAYS IN LUXEMBOURG**

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**ABSTRACT**

This thematic paper has for objective to study how innovation in processes and brand management can improve the activity of a service company, focusing on the international recruitment company Hays, and its offices in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This focus is interesting as this country and offices, by being small, can be a good starting point for initiating change, trying ideas and if they work to broaden their application to the rest of the company. The researches made to write this paper were mainly done through the different classes attended during the two years of the International Management Master's Degree offered by the IAE Toulouse and the CMMU. But also based on my own observations and conversations with co-workers.

**KEY WORDS:** Recruitment / Marketing / Luxembourg / Brand Management / Service Industry

37 pages

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thematic paper is written in the context of the double Master's Degree in International Management and International Management in an Asian Context, delivered by the IAE, School of Management, of Toulouse, France, and the College of Management of Mahidol University, Thailand. As part of this degree, and while doing my end-of-studies internship as a junior recruitment consultant for Hays in Luxembourg, I have chosen to work on the link(s) between marketing and recruitment.

The problematic is enounced as follow: *How brand management can be used to innovate in a service industry, and especially in the recruitment sector?*

The objective of this thematic paper is to demonstrate how innovation in a service industry can be led by developing the company's brand. To continue, it is first important to understand the exact role and position of a consultant and a recruitment company, and, in this configuration, of the client and the candidate. The online Cambridge Dictionary defines a recruitment company as '*a business that is paid to find suitable workers for other companies and organizations*'<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, a recruitment company's role is to make the link between a company looking to fill a job position and a person looking for a new job position. It sources candidates as much as it sources job vacancies. And, as described here, the client of such a firm is another company who has job vacancies, the need of one or more new employee for its organisation. The candidate is then a person, already working, just graduated or in-between jobs, who is looking for her/his next position. In order to study this link(s), we are going to consider Hays plc as the focal company, its clients and candidates as consumers. Hays plc, the company used in this thesis, is the one I am currently working for. It is one of the world's leading specialist recruitment fir, with offices in 33 countries and more than 9000 consultants. It visions is stated as '*To be the undisputed world leader in specialist recruitment*'. In

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<sup>1</sup> [www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/recruitment-agency](http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/recruitment-agency)



order to achieve this vision Hays will continue *‘to deliver well-diversified, profitable and cash-generative growth’*. As a service company, it enters in the following definition: *‘a commercial enterprise that provides work performed in an expert manner by an individual or team for the benefit of its customers. The typical service business provides intangible products [...]’*.<sup>2</sup> We will use tools and theories studied during the two years of the Master’s program in order to approach the problematic. But also, my own observations while working for this company. Firstly, we are going to study the Luxembourgish employment market and Hays’ competitors. Secondly, we will take a closer look at Hays, its corporate culture, the services it offers to its customers and the way it does it. Thirdly, we will draw from the two first parts strategic choices that Hays could make in order to improve its activity. In conclusion, we will see how to implement those choices and how to assess the results they will bring.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com)

## **CHAPTER II**

### **MARKET ANALYSIS**

#### **2.1 The Macro-Environment: application of the PESTEL Analysis**

During our first year of Master's Degree, we often, and firstly in the Corporate Strategy class, talked about the PESTEL Analysis, this system used to help understand the environment surrounding a company, by studying the political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal factors of the country it is working within. The macro-environment is the highest-level layer that can be studied, and as such the first we are going to discover, here about the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

##### **Political Influences**

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (further simply called Luxembourg) is ruled by hereditary right by the Nassau family as a representative democracy and constitutional monarchy. The country has been an independent sovereign state since the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1839, with the signature of the Treaty of London. The main political institutions of the country are the Head of State, since 2000 the Grand Duke Henry, the Parliament, the Government, the Council of State, the Courts & Tribunals, the Ombudsman (public mediator), the Court of Auditors, the Professional Chambers and the Economic & Social Council. Many relations exist between the executive, composed of the Grand Duke and the Government, and the legislative, composed of the Parliament, the Government and the Council of State, making for a flexible separation of power. However, the judiciary is kept entirely independent. Luxembourg is known for its political stability, proven by the smooth changes in governments over the years and with the recurrent coalition governments between the 3 main political parties: the Christian-Social People's party, the Luxembourg Socialist Workers' party and the Democratic party.

Indeed, social conflicts are almost non-existent, due to a more than 60 years' tradition of negotiation and dialogue making for '*peaceful industrial relations, social*

*progress, social justice and respect for labour*<sup>3</sup>. It is called the 'Luxembourg Model': progressing thanks to consensus. *Fact: In comparison with France, where voting is a non-mandatory right, voting in Luxembourg is a compulsory act of citizenship and as such, not voting can be punished by a fine.*

### **Economical Influences**

As host of some of the European institutions, such as the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Investment Bank, Luxembourg is considered as one of the three European Capitals, with Brussels and Strasbourg. This, plus interesting financial advantages for companies, have made the country an important working hub. One of the main advantage is the tax system linked with investors protection and anti money-laundering policies. To briefly explain this tax system, it is important to know that Luxembourg taxes the companies established on its soil on their worldwide income and the others only on their income made in the country. For a business with more than €15 000 taxable income, the Corporate Income Tax (CIT) is at a rate of 21%, to which is added 7% of solidarity surtax and the Municipal Business Tax (MBT) on income. This last one depends on the city the business is established in. For Luxembourg city, the rate is of 6.75%. Everything added, it makes a 29.22% taxation on corporate income. For comparison, the French tax rate is of 33.33% and the Thai one is of 20%<sup>4</sup>. However, there is an exemption of 80% for incomes coming from Intellectual Property rights and a 25% exemption for up to 8 years on incomes coming from the creation of new businesses, use of a new manufacturing process or high technology service, that applies on both CIT and MBT. Thanks to that, its political, social and legal stability, Luxembourg is the second biggest investment fund centre in the world. And are added to this, a strategic localisation at the centre of the European continent, the high quality of life and the modern infrastructures available. In March 2014, 392 131 employees were working in Luxembourg, with 70% of the workforce being immigrants and cross-borders

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<sup>3</sup> [www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/systeme-politique/concertation/index.html](http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/systeme-politique/concertation/index.html)

<sup>4</sup> [www.home.kpmg.com/xx/en/home/services/tax/tax-tools-and-resources/tax-rates-online/corporate-tax-rates-table.html](http://www.home.kpmg.com/xx/en/home/services/tax/tax-tools-and-resources/tax-rates-online/corporate-tax-rates-table.html)

employees. The unemployment rate of 6.2%, in July 2016, is largely under the European average, which is at 8.6%<sup>5</sup>, or under France, with its 9.9% of unemployed in July, 2016. Only Thailand keeps a very low level of unemployment, with 1.01%<sup>6</sup> in July 2016. However, some conditions are to be taken into consideration for this last number: in 2013, it was 64% of the employed that were working in the ‘informal sector’, meaning for example as self-employed or moto taxi drivers. In 2012, with a GDP per capita of 87 700 euros, Luxembourg is the richest country in the world. The major part (86.8% then) of this wealth was, and still is, coming from the tertiary sector. And especially from the financial sector, with more than 150 banks located in the country, attracting international highly qualified workers. Prevision for 2016 are foreseeing a GDP growth rate of 3.4% in Luxembourg. In 2015, the annual inflation (December to December) was at 1.09% and the average by year in 2016 at 0.12%. In France, the annual inflation in 2015 was at 0.18%, with an average by year in 2016 at 0.04%.<sup>7</sup> For the year 2015 in Thailand, the inflation was at -0.9%<sup>8</sup>. We can understand from these numbers that higher standard of living and higher salaries in Luxembourg influence the price of products and services. Indeed, Luxembourg is a very well developed country, with 99.4% of the households in 2013 which had a mobile phone and 95% had access to internet at home.

### **Social Influences**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2016, 576 000 people were registered as living in the Duchy. However, on a demographic point of view, Luxembourg’s situation can seem unusual. Indeed, with 250 522 foreigners living in the country at the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2011, it was 43.04% of the total population that was from another country, and, with 87% of them, mainly from other UE countries. There were 291 831 people with the Luxemburgish nationality, and the native population only represented 48,67% of the country’s population<sup>9</sup>, with an average life expectancy at birth of 82 years. On January

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<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Unemployment\\_rates,\\_seasonally\\_adjusted,\\_July\\_2016.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Unemployment_rates,_seasonally_adjusted,_July_2016.png)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/thailand/unemployment-rate>

<sup>7</sup> [www.inflation.eu](http://www.inflation.eu)

<sup>8</sup> [www.data.worldbank.org](http://www.data.worldbank.org)

<sup>9</sup> [www.statistiques.public.lu/en/news/population/population/2012/08/20120821/index.html](http://www.statistiques.public.lu/en/news/population/population/2012/08/20120821/index.html)

2016, it was 46.7% of the population that did not have Luxembourg papers. And from the more than 170 nationalities living in the Duchy, the first foreign nationality is Portuguese, who represents 16.2% of the total population, then the French, with 7.2%. This foreign population represents 71% of the active population, with 45% of them being cross-border employees<sup>10</sup>. Luxembourg, as a working hub, attracts a young crowd, with the average age for foreigners being 35 years old, which is 6 years younger than the average age of the national population, and the people between 25 and 54 years old represented 42,1% of the 520 672 people registered in July 2014. This age range was composed of 109 528 males and 109 662 females. As another proof of the development state of the country: 100% of the population aged 15 and over can read and write (2000), and children can expect to receive 14 years of schooling. Making 82% of the 25-64 years old to have completed upper secondary education.

**Table 2.1 Income Distribution in Luxembourg, 1995-2013 – Summary statistics**

	1995	2004	2013
Mean	30 797	36 451	36 981
Median	26 628	32 541	32 649
5th percentile	11 988	13 800	14 347
95th percentile	62 023	70 230	71 976
Gini inequality index	0,289	0,258	0,296
Theil inequality index	0,148	0,115	0,174
Wolfson polarization index	0,234	0,221	0,232

Source: *Income distribution and inequality in Luxembourg and the neighbouring countries, 1995-2013*, by Conchita d'Ambrosio and Marta Barazzetta, from the University of Luxembourg.

*Fact: there are three official languages in Luxembourg: Luxemburgish, German and French. However, with all the international corporations established in the country, the English has stayed for a lot of them the working language.*

<sup>10</sup> [www.luxembourg.public.lu](http://www.luxembourg.public.lu)



### **Technological Influences**

In 1981, with the creation of a dedicated credit in the Ministry of the Economy's budget, has started Luxembourg's policy of support for innovation and research, in order to promote the realisation of programs and projects of Research & Development (R&D) initiated by Luxemburgish companies. In 1984, the national agency for the promotion of innovation and research, Luxinnovation, was founded. In 1999 was created the National Funds for the Research, to support public research. The latest big innovation and research event of the country was the opening of the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST), on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2015, with a total budget of 64 million euros. The institute is made of 3 departments: Environmental Research and Innovation, IT for Innovative Services and Materials Research and Technologies. Then, on a more global aspect, with the households' global access on internet, new ways have been created. Linked to recruitment, we can find numerous job boards, such as Indeed, Jobs, Monster, but also professional networks, such as LinkedIn, and even applications to facilitate communication over borders, like for example Skype.

### **Ecological influences**

Researches on sustainable Information Technology (Green IT) have been conducted. Every electricity provider in Luxembourg is able to offer green energy tariffs, so that every building, office, shop, house can, technically, be powered by 100% green energy. As of today, it is 8 businesses out of 10 which apply a 'Green IT' policy. Luxembourg is a small country, and not the one with the most wind or sun, but still some efforts are being made by the Government to develop ecological energy solutions and the Government promotes the use of renewable energies by various financial aids. The country has 50 wind turbines on 8 sites, a number that is growing every year, for a total generation capacity of 58 330 kW. And an increasing number of solar panels are installed on buildings, farms and supermarkets. In 2012, it was a total of 38.28 GWh generated this way, against 17.70 GWh in 2005.<sup>11</sup> Since 1998, companies in Luxembourg have to follow a procedure of packaging collection, with the presence of a

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<sup>11</sup> [www.letzgreen.lu/solar-power](http://www.letzgreen.lu/solar-power)

green dot on it to inform of the recyclability of the product. Or to participate to Valorlux, the company responsible for the organisation and collection of households packaging waste. With the companies' contribution to recycling, households are also responsible for their part. Blue bins for paper are provided by the state and blue bags are also put at the disposition of everyone, for free, at the City Halls. Luxembourg has also installed a network of glass containers all over the countries and a glass bottles return policy in supermarkets.

### **Legal Influences**

A normal work week in Luxembourg is constituted of 40 hours, meaning about 173 hours a month, over 12 months and with 25 days of vacation per year. Then, it can change depending on the company or even its overall activity sector. For example, in banks, the convention states that there is 13 months of pay and 33 days of vacation for every employee. The minimum qualified wage is of €2307.56 gross per month and the minimum unqualified wage is of €1 922.96 gross per month. This minimum social wage is calculated depending on the age and qualification of a person, on an index of 775,17, which has not changed since the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2013<sup>12</sup>. When this index will be raised, by the Government, so will be the wages. In Luxembourg, the employees are represented on two levels: voluntarily and mandatory. For this last one, employees have to register in one of the five professional chambers. Every 5 years, employees vote for the representatives of the sector in which he/she works in. Meanwhile, the law organises social security, health coverage and recreational time for each employee. The constitution has first been drafted in 1841. The current one was instituted on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1868, revised multiple times since and is currently being reviewed by the Parliament in order for it to reflect the evolution of our modern society. It's composed of 121 articles divided into 13 chapters. In the exercise of their right of initiative, the Parliament makes 'propositions of law' and the government 'bills of law'. A law finally adopted by the Parliament only enters into force after it has been granted royal assent and published. From this global view of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, we can take out some key drivers for change that could, and should, be used in order to succeed in

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<sup>12</sup> [www.guichet.public.lu](http://www.guichet.public.lu)



this country, and especially as a recruitment company. Its first strong point is its political stability and lack of social conflicts thanks to the dialogue in place between the different parties: government – employers and employees. It also insures stability for developing businesses. Second important point: the favourable tax system, encouraging companies to come to the country. Third point, with a foreseen growth rate of 3.4% for 2016, the country is still developing. Fourth, with projects such as the Centre Belval Ouest, a place for data centres and innovative companies, Luxembourg is starting to diversify its economic activity, in order to not be dependent only on the financial sector. Then, the modern infrastructures available and the geographical localisation of the country at the centre of Europe, are making the country a European working hub attracting businesses as well as workers. For a recruitment company, the high turnover of employees, especially in audit and consulting companies, can be also added in the interesting point. Indeed, Luxembourg is known to be used as a career springboard, a place where people come to work for a few years, before leaving to other places. And to this can be added the high education rate, higher salary and standard of living.

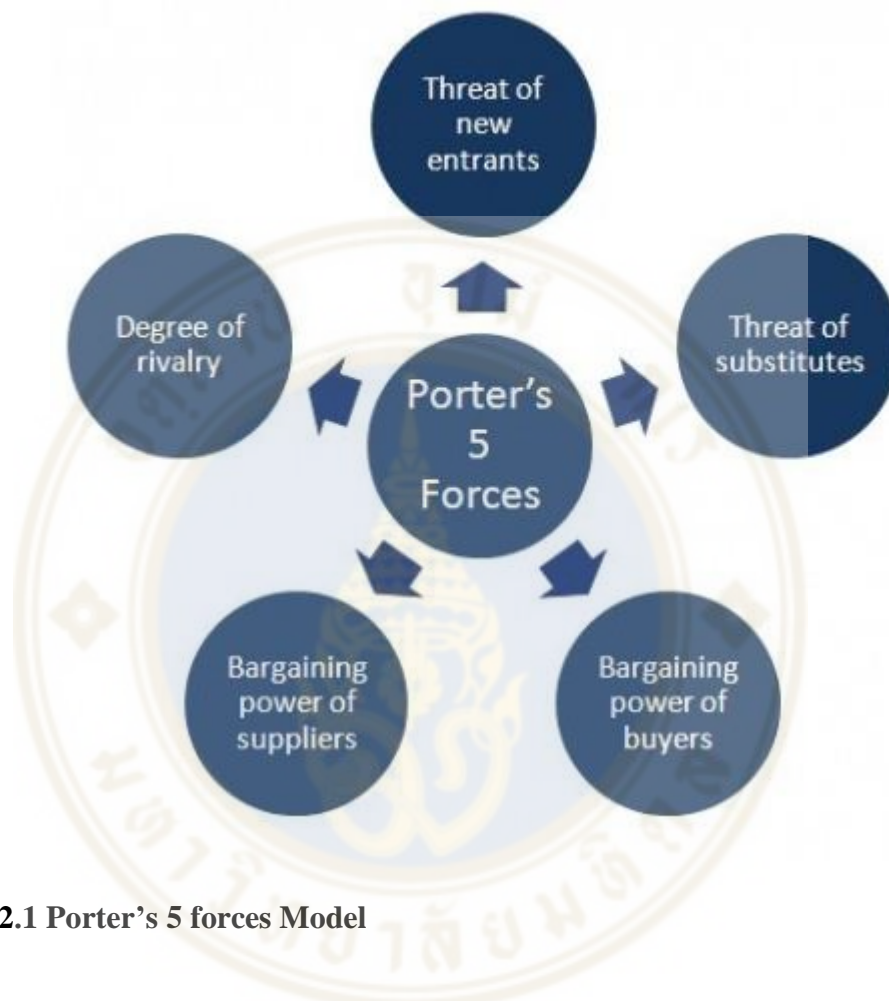
## **2.2 The Recruitment industry: Five Forces Model**

### **The industry**

The recruitment companies are offering their services in term of recruitment; it can be to help find a specific, rare, profile or to gain time by delegating the long and fastidious process of finding the right candidates in the middle of all the applications, in permanent or temporary contracts or even in contracting for freelance. This industry, as much services industry, and especially in Luxembourg, is a rather fragmented one. Indeed, there is a lot (more than 70 brands of temporary work agencies in the Duchy), of relatively small firms with no real dominant one. As a service, there is no economy of scale really possible and there is no actual technology involved. The processes used are overall similar between all the companies. The opportunity on this still growing market would be either to consolidate the firm's presence by buying competitors, and then acquiring market shares, or by building market power and increasing the recognition associated with the brand name.

### Five Forces Model

The Five Forces Model was created by Porter in order to help determine the attractiveness of an industry, to differentiate an industry that offers interesting potential in term of profit from one that would be a dead-end.



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**Figure 2.1** Porter's 5 forces Model

The **threat of entry** represents the obstacles in the way of a company to enter a new market. It can be linked with the access to a specific technology or to the distribution channels, but also with government's limitations or even a possible retaliation from the existing firms. In our case, the threat of entry in Luxembourg's recruitment market is low. The biggest companies already present have been there for more than 10 years and have established their brand image both in this country, but also on an international level, as multinational groups. They have had the time to create their own space and name with the other businesses and candidates alike and have developed

trust. It is also important to note that most of the companies, especially in Luxembourg, are specialised in specific types of profiles: finance, skilled worker, logistic, construction... Plus, the market, even though growing, is still limited by the size of the country itself. However, with a very active and growing employment market, Luxembourg is a country of recruitment opportunities.

The **threat of substitutes**, meaning of services that could offer a similar result but using a different way, is low. Indeed, even with internet and the numerous free job boards (Monster.lu, Jobs.lu...), professional social networks (LinkedIn) and even ads in newspaper, all the work of preselection of the candidates done by a consultant, as we will see in the presentation of Hays and its services, cannot be replaced by a website.

However, the **power of buyers** is about analysing the impact decisions made by the immediate customers can have on the industry and in the recruitment industry's case, their power is high. Indeed, the switching cost is low, with many companies offering the same service and low prices' difference (Hays 25% - Mickael Page 25% - Randstad/Manpower 15-18% of margin, but different types of profile recruited). The companies' leverage is their ability to find the right candidate, the one the client will want and need, before their competitors. Furthermore, if the client companies really want to avoid the cost or have generally no problem finding the right candidate, they can choose to supply themselves and to not go through a recruitment agency at all.

As a service industry with no production process, there is therefore no suppliers.

With the information seen above, we understand that the **competitive rivalry** is high, with a large number of competitors, low service differentiation and powerful buyers. It forces the firms into a fierce competition between each other in order to attract clients and candidates, but also to keep them and develop loyalty.

To conclude, the recruitment industry has potential, and especially for already installed companies. In order to get stronger in this industry, a firm should consider increasing the barriers of entry by finding ways to improve loyalty. To do that, looking for new process in order to increase productivity and result but also working on developing the brand image are interesting leads to study. Reducing the competition by

merger and/or acquisition could also be looked at, allowing to lessen the high number of competitors in the industry and then extend one's specialisation to new ones, therefore developing the services offered and reaching toward new customers and candidate' profiles.

### **2.3 Competitors: Permanent Recruitment & Interim Agencies**

Between the multiple actors in the industry, some stand out and especially as direct competitors to Hays and its temporary work division.

Firstly, Michael Page, an English company founded in 1976 by Michael Page and Bill McGregor, and today managed by CEO Steve Ingham. It states its positioning as *'one of the world's leading professional recruitment consultancies, specializing in the placement of candidates in permanent, contract, temporary and interim positions with clients around the world'*<sup>14</sup>, for confirmed managers type of profile. It has 155 offices in 36 countries, 25 specialist businesses and about 5800 consultants. Since 2001, Michael Page is listed on the London stock market. On the 24 of August 2016, its share price was worth £359.90 (+0.70). The PageGroup, composed of Michael Page, Page Personnel, Page Executive, but also Page Assessment, Page Consulting, Page Outsourcing and Page Talent, had made a gross profit of £556.1 million in 2015.

Randstad, founded in the Netherlands in 1960 by Frits Goldschmeding, is the second provider of HR services in the world. Today, Randstad is composed of 4300 agencies, 28 000 collaborators and declares 450 000 candidate placements every day. Its slogan is *'Good to know you'* and its values are represented by the words *'To know, To Serve, To Trust'*<sup>15</sup>. In Luxembourg, it opened in 1995, first only for the tertiary sector then it extended to other sectors of activity. Now, 5 agencies are opened in the country with about 65 employees., placing more than 100 temporary workers per day.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.michaelpage.com](http://www.michaelpage.com)

<sup>15</sup> [www.randstad.com](http://www.randstad.com)

Randstad offers staffing, professionals, search and selection, HR solutions and in-house services. Randstad is a generalist recruitment agency and competes with Hays mainly on the temporary work segment.

Manpower Group is an American company founded in 1948 by Aaron Scheinfeld and Elmer Winter. Today, the firm is the '*world leader in innovative workforce solutions*'<sup>16</sup> with 4000 offices in 82 countries, 400 000 clients per year and, in 2010, about 30 000 employees for about 400 000 candidate placements per day in permanent, temporary and contract positions. Its worldwide benefit in 2010 was of \$19 billion, with 65% of the revenue coming from Europe.

Randstad offers recruitment, assessment, training and development solutions. After opening offices in Canada, England and France, it opened the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 1965, in Luxembourg and became a pioneer in the temporary work market. Nowadays, about 25 employees are working in one of the 6 agencies (5 specialised in specific profiles and markets and 1 generalist) in Luxembourg and are placing around 900 temporary workers (full time equivalent) per year.

And finally, Adecco, the '*world's leading provider of HR solutions*'<sup>17</sup> based in Switzerland and created from the merger in 1996 of Adia (European leader) and Ecco (French leader) by Klaus Johann Jacobs. Adecco today is a Global Fortune 500 company listed in the Six Swiss Exchange and managed by CEO Alain Dehaze. It is composed of 33 000 collaborators dispatched in 5100 agencies in 60 countries. The company offers services in temporary staffing, permanent placement, career transition, talent development, outsourcing and consulting.

In Luxembourg, three brands have been launched: Adecco, temporary work leader, in 1991; Ajilon, specialised recruitment in office support, IT, HR and marketing industries, and HR solutions, in 1994, and Badenoch & Clark, head hunter specialised in banking, finance, accounting and legal recruitment, acquired in 2010. Adecco Luxembourg was elected best workplace in 2016.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.manpowergroup.com](http://www.manpowergroup.com)

<sup>17</sup> [www.adecco.com](http://www.adecco.com)



From these brief presentations, we can understand that the main competitive advantages of these companies, compared to the dozens of others, are their historical presence in the market and industry, and thus their brand image. Also, the strength of the groups supports their growth in Luxembourg, thanks to an international network of offices and clients.

All these are advantages that Hays has too, as we are going to see. Then, what makes or could make Hays different?



## **CHAPTER III**

### **COMPANY ANALYSIS**

#### **3. 1 Global Presentation and Temporary contract focus**

As seen previously, Hays plc is one of the leading recruitment company in the world. It was founded in 1969 under the name the Career Care Group, then acquired by Hays plc in 1986. Since first and former CEO Denis Waxman retirement in November 2007, the position is now held by Alistair Cox. Tina Ling is the managing director of Hays France & Luxembourg since January 2001, when she opened the offices there, with 6 people. Today, the French branch counts more than 500 collaborators and the Luxembourg one about 17. In Luxembourg, the offices have opened 11 years ago, and the temporary work sector has started about 3 years ago. Maxime Alexandre is the executive director of Hays Luxembourg. With an estimated benefit of £4231 million for 2016, meaning an increase of 10% compared to 2015<sup>18</sup>, and with 240 offices in 33 countries over 4 continents, the more than 9000 consultants have placed, in 2015, 63 000 people into permanent position and 200 000 into temporary jobs. Hays offers recruitment services for permanent, temporary and contract positions but also gives advices in HR, to other companies. Each consultant working for Hays is specialised in a type of profile and a type of contract. More than 20 specialisms are covered by Hays' services, including: Accountancy & Finance, Construction & Property, Engineering, IT, Sales & Marketing, Procurement & Supply Chain and Office Support. These are the ones represented in the Luxembourg's office. What makes Hays unique is that specialism of each consultant, which is more profound than in any other recruitment company. This specialism means that a consultant meets every day with candidates that correspond to that specialism and only works on positions that fit into it too, making the consultant a true expert. The payment of Hays' service by its clients come in form of fees proportionate to the salary of the placed candidate. For permanent

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<sup>18</sup> [www.boursorama.fr](http://www.boursorama.fr), on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2016



positions, it usually amounts to about 25% of the annual salary of the candidate, and the amount is paid at once when he/she starts working. For temporary positions, the fees are calculated at about 15, 20 or 25% of the monthly salary depending on the coefficient chosen by the client (hourly or monthly) or if it is a management of contract (meaning the client had found the candidate by itself and Hays is only managing the temporary contract). The fees are paid every month for the duration of the contract. Now, we are going to look a little further into Temporary Work and its interest for candidates and companies alike. The interest for accepting that type of contract can be to gain experience for newcomers on the work market, or to put money aside in order to travel the rest of the time for others. It can be to put a first foot in a company, meet people and create opportunities. But now a new use for temporary work is also developing: to replace the trial period on a permanent contract. Meaning that for 3 to 6 month (period after which the candidate is free for employment) a temporary contract is used and at the end, if both the candidate and the client want to continue working together, then a permanent contract is signed. The trial period on a temp contract is shorter than on a perm contract, as its maximum is 7 open days for a contract that is longer than 3 months. For the employers, this type of contract offers more flexibility: at the end of the temp contract, it is just over if the company does not want to pursue; the temp contract is also only a bill to pay for the company who does not have the budget or the authorisation from the mother company for an actual recruitment. And, back to its first use, a temp contract is useful for short-term replacements, for an employee gone on holydays or sick, but also for temporary extra activity.

### **3.2 Corporate Culture**

The corporate culture is a group of elements (attitudes, values, behavioural norms and convictions) shared by the members of an organisation. Worldwide, Hays is perceived as a qualitative, trust worthy and efficient company by both clients and candidates, thanks to its long history as a recruitment company, its international presence, and the numerous job ads posted on the internet. Hays's reputation growth mainly by word of mouth, as the company has chosen not to use advertising. As such,

people recognise the brand by seeing it when browsing the web and thanks to its brand logo and associated colours, blue and white.



**Figure 3.1** Hays' logo

Edgar Schien's approach sees corporate culture as formed by different levels that are being assimilated by employees over time. Visible artefacts are signs visible to each and every one. For example, the colours chart, which is found on Hays website and official documents but also in the decoration of the offices.



**Figure 3.2** Corporate sentence – Hays' Luxembourg offices



**Figure 3.3** The interview rooms – Hays’ Luxembourg office.

Some specific words are also part of the company’s language, often taken from the English and directly used in French, such as ‘spec’ (to send speculative CV to clients), ‘BUD’ (short for Business Development), but also ‘temp’ and ‘perm’ (shorts for temporary and permanent).

There is also a lot of activities organised, demonstrating a strong corporate culture. For starter, when you arrive in the company, a picture of you is taken and sent by email to all the consultants of France and Luxembourg with a welcoming message.

The same kind of emails are also sent when someone has closed a deal with a client, declared fees and so has rung the bell, presents in every office for this occasion. Team events are regularly organised, from after-works, celebrating one’s birthday to team building activities during a day or half a day. On another level, events are also set up, such as yearly or mid yearly reviews of the business activity with Tina Ling, the managing director of Hays France and Luxembourg, and rewards for the best performers are given, regrouping two or more offices. But also companywide events, with a certain budget allotted, such as, once a year, the Company Conference, regrouping all the offices of France and Luxembourg. For this corporate event, everyone is brought to Paris and dressing up, a location is rented, rewards are distributed and speeches said by the company’s top management, Tina Ling, Alistair Cox...



**Figure 3.4 Company Conference – Hays – Luxembourg team - 09/09/2016, Paris**

Another event, organised about every month, is the ‘BUD day’, which is a day during which, for a total of 3 hours, all the consultants in the office are dressing up according to a theme (the European football championship, Halloween...) and are calling (potential) clients in order to develop the business and win jobs, clients’ meeting or even job’s leads for another consultant. Points are counted according to the number of jobs, meeting and lead the consultant has received during this day, and symbolic rewards are given.

Values and norms are standards/guiding principles that are determine companywide to define the desirable (or undesirable) behaviours and state of mind of the employees. Hays lives up to its core values: ‘Expert – Ambitious – Inquisitive – Passionate about People’. As for the norms, they translate into the informal way people interact between each other inside the company but the formal and professional way they seem from outside; into the basic absence of power structure; into a reward system based on thanking individual and team performances. The assumptions made about the corporate culture, might they be basic, underlying or shared, are harder to determine.



From my observations, I would say that helpfulness toward co-workers but also competitiveness are the two other main values defining Hays employees' behaviours. From Cameron and Quinn framework's point of view<sup>19</sup>, I think Hays' corporate culture and values are a mix between an internal and external focus but also between flexibility and stability. From the clan culture type, Hays takes collective goals, an interest for its employees' well-being and integration through a family feeling. From the market culture, we can observe a high competitiveness and a culture oriented towards productivity and results.

### 3.3 Leadership style

As for the leadership style, I would define it as following the Human Relationship Approach, researched by Elton Mayo and as studied during our Organisational Theory and Leadership class. This theory put into light the importance of social factors at work and how management's leadership influences employees' motivation. The website business.com defines it as '*a researched belief that people desire to be part of a supportive team that facilitates development and growth*'<sup>20</sup>. With all the events organised by each regional offices and at a national level, the rewards distributed, we can see that the recognition and sense of belonging to the company are well developed at Hays. Managers and juniors are all working in the same open space, at the same tables. There is very little physical differentiation between the highest and lowest hierarchical levels of the company, everyone is calling each other on a first name basis and using 'tu', the informal French way to talk to someone else.

### 3.4 Competitive advantage: RBV & VRIO Framework

As defined in class, 'the competitive advantage and superior performance of an organisation is explained by the distinctiveness of its strategic capabilities', which

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<sup>19</sup> Cf Appendix B - Cameron & Quinn - Competing Values Framework p.42

<sup>20</sup> www.business.com

contributes to the long-term sustainability of the company. This competitive advantage is composed of both tangible and intangible resources but also competences (skills and abilities).

### **Resource-Based View (RBV)**

There are two important assumptions to take into consideration when talking about the Resource-Based View. First, the resources are heterogenic, meaning that not all companies competing together have the same resources and competences. Second, the resources are immobile, meaning that differences can be long lasting for example because too expensive to acquire or develop for the others. For the tangible resources, Hays has financial ones, with its growing benefit that can be re invested into the company for development; its employees, as for a firm working in human resources, its own is at the centre of its business; and a strong organisational structure, build on years of practice. Currently, Hays France and Luxembourg are renewing its physical resources with new, bigger, offices to accompany the company's growth. For the intangible resources, Hays has the strength of its brand, its culture and its identity. But also, the company has its processes, as similar as they can be with other companies, some are also unique to Hays. For example, it is the only recruitment firm having a quality survey about the satisfaction of both clients and candidates on its services and consultants, but also the only one which has applied the recruitment processes used for permanent positions onto temporary ones. Indeed, for every type of contract the same process is followed: every candidate sent for an interview with a client has first been met by a consultant, his/her languages' level has been tested and a reference has been taken with one of his/her previous employers. Also, Hays' consultants are the most specialised in specific type of profiles and activity sectors.

### **The VRIO Framework**

The VRIO (Valuable Rarity Inimitable Organisation) Framework is used in order to analyse a firm's resources and capabilities according to these criteria in order to understand what could be this firm's competitive advantage.

From what we have seen before, I drew the following table for Hays plc:

**Table 3.1 VRIO Framework for Hays**

	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Processes</b>	<b>Finances</b>	<b>Offices</b>	<b>Culture</b>
<i>Valuable</i>	X	X	X			
<i>Rarity</i>						
<i>Inimitable</i>	X					
<i>Organisation</i>		X	X	X	X	X

The Hays' brand is valuable in the sense that another company can't reproduce it, it is a recognition from candidates and clients that comes from years of being in the business and that inspires trust. As such, it is also difficult to imitate it. However, other recruitment firms have such good brand reputation, but also corporate culture, finances and processes. Furthermore, Hays might not be using this advantage to its fullest, as its brand is known by people recruiting or looking for a new job but rarely outside. It is still pretty much a 'premium' brand only known to the 'happy few', that should develop its presence more broadly into people's mind. The human resources are an advantage because of their specialisation, commitment and output. The organisation, by its family, cheerful, and rewarding culture and the formations each employee has to participate to, is using this resource efficiently. However, some employees criticise the long hours of work, the barely taken lunch time and a stressful job entirely turned toward results<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)



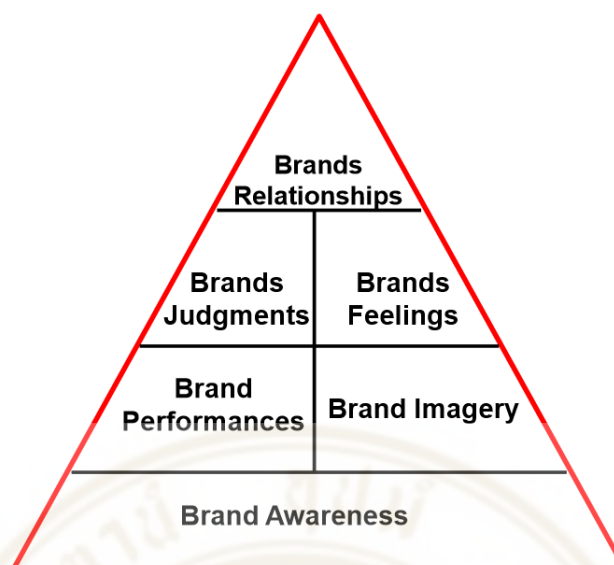
## **CHAPTER IV**

### **STRATEGIC CHOICES**

We have seen that the two main assets Hays has are its brand and its processes. However, for a service company it can seem difficult to find ways of innovating and being creative. And one whose core business is human capital especially has to trade carefully. The product sold cannot be directly seen, adding a difficulty in the brand recognition. Indeed, Hays' customers don't wear the brand on them, don't post it on social media, don't hang it on their walls. In the contrary, having to require the help of a recruitment company may even be seen as something to hide, as it can either mean that I need help to find a new job, maybe because I am unemployed and that is not something people are usually proud of; or that I am a company that has difficulties finding the right candidate, maybe because my internal recruitment process is not efficient or because my own employer brand is not so well perceived. However, Hays' customers talk and that is how the brand recognition is growing. But the company needs to find new ways of spreading the word.

#### **4.1 Brand management: Building and Spreading the Hays brand**

A brand is not a symbol, a name nor product, it is a mental picture, a representation. According to Jeff Bezos, the founder and CEO of Amazon.com, 'A brand is about what people say about you when you are not in the room'. It was a corporate strategy choice made by Hays top management to not use advertising. So, other ways of making the brand known have to be developed. A brand is important in the thought mechanism of a customer about to choose to buy this or that product/service. Indeed, for a lot of people, a good experience with a brand can make them overlook a higher price. So, as the brand will help differentiate one company to another, it will also help build customer loyalty and thus boost the firm's financial performance. A strong brand is unique and has a relevant meaning in people's mind.



***Customer Knowledge Brand Equity. Keller***

**Figure 4.1 Keller's Customer Knowledge Brand Equity<sup>22</sup>**

In order to build such a brand, it is important to first define what the brand stands for. Hays' values expertise, ambition, curiosity and passion about people, and aims to stand for quality, performance and trust. It has now to expend its brand awareness, build a brand meaning and create a positive emotional response to its name. Brand awareness is the ability to recall and recognise the brand.

Let's make an experiment.

First, tell me the names of 5 recruitment and interim companies, excluding the ones we already talked about earlier:

.....

That's brand recall.

Second, amid the following names, which to you recognise?

- Staff
- Kelly Services
- DO Recruit

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Aj. Gerard Tocquer, Adjunct Professor College of Management Mahidol University, course of Strategic Brand Management, session 1.

- Robert Half
- Fast
- Greenfield
- Activ Solutions
- Rowlands International
- Sofitex
- Xpertize

This is brand recognition.

Brand recognition without brand recall is a brand dead-end. So, Hays should aim to be recalled. To do that, it has to build its meaning but also a relationship with its customers, highlighting brand performance and associated imagery, in order to show how it meets customer's need. Today, Hays' image can be confusing, unclear. Some people don't know what type of profiles Hays recruits, some don't even know Hays is also a temporary work agency, other don't know Hays at all. Brand imagery association can be linked, for example, with the brand usage, a group of people or even with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It could be to work with famous entrepreneurs who would be Hays spokespersons, faces, explaining how the collaboration was interesting, a success, brought an improvement in their recruitment processes... It would show that Hays fulfils customer's needs by the testimony of actual clients with a certain aura. Who could be repaid, for example, with discount on their recruitments with Hays. The usage of story-telling is an interesting way to show Hays' efficiency and interest for its customers. It would allow to explain what Hays does for its customers, without just listing its services but by giving concrete examples. Developing actions linked to CSR could also show how Hays improve individual's life but also the overall society and even planet. Doing this will help Hays differentiate itself from its competitors, which are not known for initiating this type of actions, creating a unique and relevant association in people's mind which will bring a positive response when the Hays' brand is mentioned. Building this positive emotional response is one of the step to take in order for Hays to, indeed, gain in popularity and space into people's thoughts. In the case of Hays, that response could be for example trust, as it is one of the word the brand could be looking for to be associated with, viewing its core business. Hays is more of a functional brand, which should be associated with reliability, practicality and

ease of access for everyone. But it could also develop an emotional side: finding a new position is something happy, and the brand could then be also associated with a 'friendly' aspect: Hays is here to help you, candidate, and you, company. This will then help develop a brand promise that will set Hays apart from its competitors in the way it makes people *feel*. You feel serene working with Hays, you feel confident in its capability to help you, you feel privileged when a consultant enters in contact with you to offer you his/her help. You don't feel like something is being sold to you, you don't feel like one out of many other candidates, you don't feel like it was all useless and a waste of time. There again, storytelling would help to show that to potential customers. Hays' brand positioning has to be clear and simple, credible. And then again, unique and relevant. It has to show a consistency with Hays' values and services. For example, to could be done by owning a word: trust – safety – efficiency – success, plus the simple brand name, Hays, with the objective to be the first to change the way recruitment is done by always looking for improvements and innovations in the processes, while still reinforcing the original concept: specialised consultants, results and quality focused. Branding is about defining the identity, creating the brand's story and making it live through websites, cards, videos, articles, in order to create a strong brand and a stronger link with customers. Hays could also develop customers' recognition by working on its visual presentation: Hays' logo is simple and charted, and visible on all the communication supports used by the company, but it could still be worked on to make it more eye-catching and accompanied by a tag line that will bring even more dynamism to it. Currently, under Hays' logo is often written 'Recruiting experts worldwide', which explains simply what the company does. But not really what the clients' gain from the experience. For example, it could use a sentence already present in its communication, but that, I think, show quite well what Hays does and is about: *'The right job can transform a person's life, the right person can transform a company's life'*; which could be turned into: *'Trusting Hays: The right person, the right company'*. Then, it talks to both the candidate and the client and gives an idea of what it does: putting together the right person and the right company. But it also talks about the right person being the specialised consultant that is going to take care of you, and Hays, the right company to help you. Employees' involvement is also a factor to use to develop the brand: in such a demanding job, as is recruitment consultant, they are a central way to communicate

with the customers, as they often are the first contact they have with the brand. Thus, the dress code and the way to talk and specially to present the company have to be fairly similar to each of the employees. Loyalty is the goal for the brand. And this loyalty must come as much from the customers than from the employees. This loyalty is built by being a trustworthy employer which awards well its employees' successes, encourages them and gives them occasions to relax (e.g. the internal social events we talked about earlier). Some other actions Hays could develop would be, for example: to simply have a sign on the outside of its offices. Indeed, people walk by Hays Luxembourg's offices without even noticing it's there, because there is nothing signalling its presence. Or also, to use more Press Relation. Hays is already very active on professional network, such as LinkedIn with the publication of articles. These articles could be retransmitted on national newspapers (e.g. L'Essentiel), on partner companies' website... Hays' corporate culture is all about events. Organising one with already existing and potential clients could be a way to make people talk. It would also allow to humanise Hays' consultants and to build this more 'friendly', reachable, image. Such events, like barbecues, are often seen in Luxembourg business world and Hays' consultants are sometimes even invented. It could be time to return the favour. It is important to provide a better and clearer explanation of what Hays is about (permanent, temporary and contract recruitment, HR advices). But also, to work on changing the image people have of the temporary work: it is seen as something unstable and unqualified, while it actually is not. Thus, Hays has to work in its message to the clients toward democratising this type of recruitment. It is essential to remember that consistency is the key for a strong, recognizable and relevant brand. But flexibility is also essential to be able to adapt to market changes: the company and its brand have to always to ready to adapt, to be the first one to react on a news. Thus, also the importance of keeping an eye on the competitors. And all of this is in order to occupy a special position in the customer's mind: Hays is here to help me, Hays is trustworthy and efficient. Hays is different from all the other recruitment companies and interim agencies.



## **4.2 Hays' processes: Efficiency and Innovation**

First, let's explain more in details the everyday work of a recruitment consultant, such as myself, and gives as examples my own numeric objectives. Our week is composed of a few main actions that we have to accomplish in order to develop our business. First, meeting candidates, with an objective of 5 to 10 per week in my case in the temporary work sector, for between 30 minutes to 1 hour, during which we go through his/her professional experiences, languages' level, job aspirations, salary expectations and so on. The candidates we are going to meet are selected when we call them, after they have applied to one of the job we have posted online, in order to do a first review of their applications. The second part is to maintain the relationship with clients. To do that, we send them speculative CV, meaning the CV of candidates we have met, even though the client has not asked for it, either because we saw that said client has recently posted an online ad for that type of profile or because we assume this profile might interest them. These CVs will help us to start a conversation when we follow up the sending by calling. During this call, we will try to present the candidate, gather information about the client's needs and preferences, job vacancies and to make him/her meet the candidate and/or ourselves. My weekly goal is to send about 20 CVs, which is supposed to correspond with 20 business development calls. Hays' gage of quality to its clients are that every candidate presented has been met beforehand by one of the consultant, his/her language level has been tested and a reference from a previous employer has been taken. The CVs are transformed to make them anonymous before being sent to clients. This is done firstly in order for the client to not be able to contact the candidate if he/she is interested, without going through us. But also to erase discriminatory information, such as the age, the nationality, the gender, the place of living of the candidate, the picture. The only information left being the first name and the core of the CV (formation, experiences...). If this practice has some very interesting sides, such as limiting a discriminatory preselection from the clients who have to focus mainly on the competences exposed in the CV and in the synthesis made from the consultant, it also means that all CVs are alike, written in Arial black size 10, taking out some of its personality, of its humanity and creating instead a form of uniformity, with always the same elements highlighted, not always catching to the eyes. A follow up is always put in place on both the client and the candidate side by the consultant, about the

job position, the interviews, their feedback. And, only put in place by Hays, every time a client and a candidate meet, both receive a quality survey to give their impression on working with Hays. Hays' processes are well formatted and mastered by its consultants. The main difference with competitors' processes being the quality survey. These processes could be improved, in order to make them more efficient, to help the relation client/consultant but also to improve the communication about the brand through them. For example, the formatting of the anonymous CVs is a good idea because it represents Hays' image and allow recognition at first glance. But it could be reviewed in order to look more appealing and less dull, to allow certain elements to be put into light in order to catch the reader's eyes more easily. Also, Hays, and it goes for the recruitment in its overall, wants to be reactive, and this aspect is especially important with temporary work. New ways of communicating with the candidates could be considered. Today, the young generations are more about typing on their phone than actually calling. Knowing that, messaging apps, such as Line (which, by the use of pseudonym and not showing the phone number, allows anonymity), could be used for a faster contact. Let's imagine a group conversation with candidates the consultant already met, immediately available and with the same type of profile. With one message from the consultant describing briefly the vacant position, the candidates could answer about their interest and availabilities. And maybe even, in the long run, building a community of people who exchange information, interview tips, encouragements...



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Summary**

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is a promising, growing, market, which attracts lot of firms and employees every year. It is a politically, socially, economically and legally stable environment propitious for business development. The recruitment industry in Luxembourg has potential for growth, and especially for an already installed company with its own network of clients and candidates. Hays plc is a global service company with very specialised consultants and a strong corporate culture. With a Human Relation Approach type of leadership but a results-focused mindset, it is a mix between a flexible and stable work environment with still a lot of room for improvement. Hays should develop the use of its brand in order to make it stronger and thus grow brand awareness among customers. It could achieve this goal by using events, press relations, signalisation, business partnerships or even CSR. It could also innovate in its processes in order to gain in reactivity, clarity in its positioning and to keep communicating about its brand.

#### **Assessing results**

To assess the results such changes and improvements would bring, Hays can monitor:

- the entering business development calls, meaning how often a client calls in order to give a job to a consultant (instead of the other way around);
- the rate of transformation job given by a client / interview of a candidate by the client, plus the transformation from this interview to the conclusion of a contract;
- the number of positive answers to the quality survey sent to every client and candidate after working with Hays;
- but also, even more simple, the number of people who answers 'Yes, I know a recruitment company/temporary work agency: Hays'.

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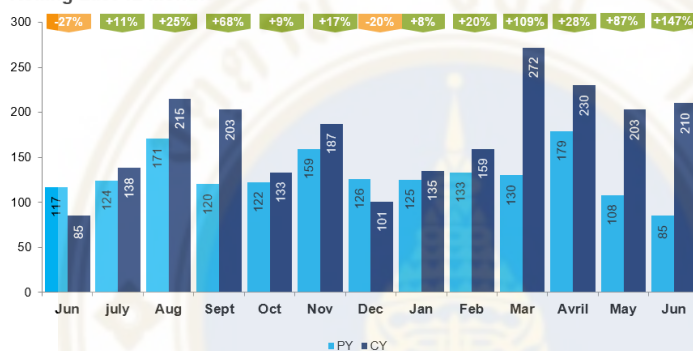


## Appendix A: Luxembourg Monthly Management Meeting – July 2016

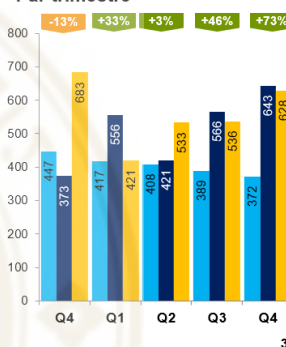
### BILAN MENSUEL LUXEMBOURG

	LAST MONTH		YTD	
	FEES (KE)	%	FEES (KE)	%
PERM	174	+328%	1529	+47%
DCS	3,1	+7%	66	+42%
TEMP TO PERM	-	-	107	+202%
TEMP	16	+0%	130	+83%
CONTRACTING	25	+0%	365	-7%
<b>NET FEES REGION</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>147%</b>	<b>2188</b>	<b>+37%</b>

Rolling Last 12 Months

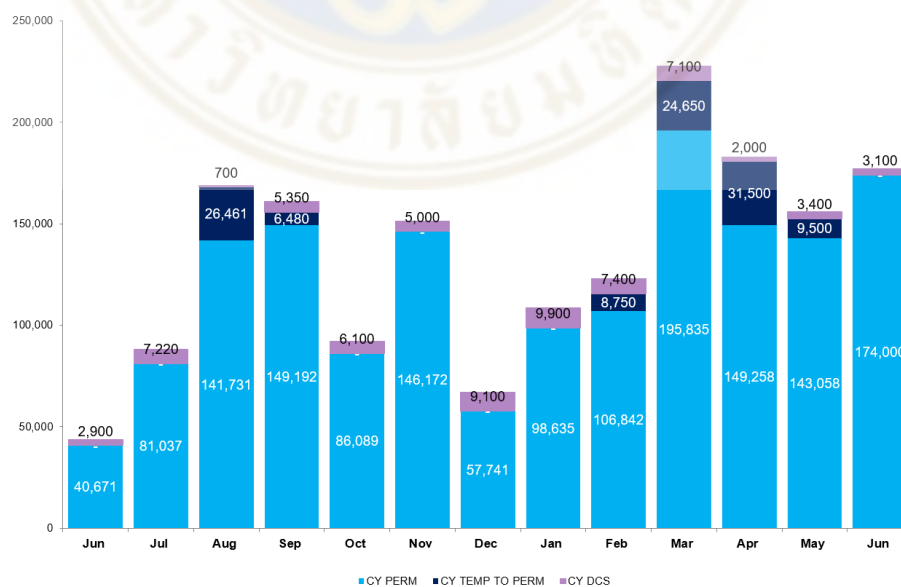


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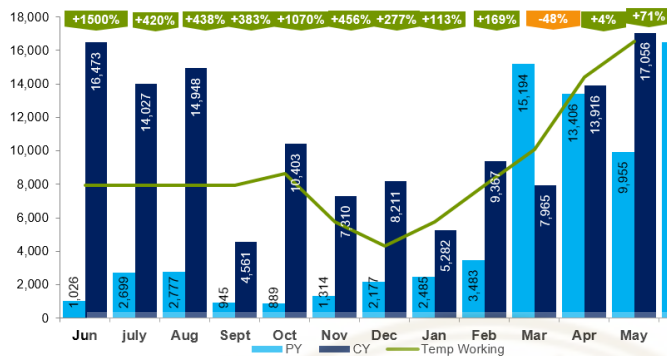


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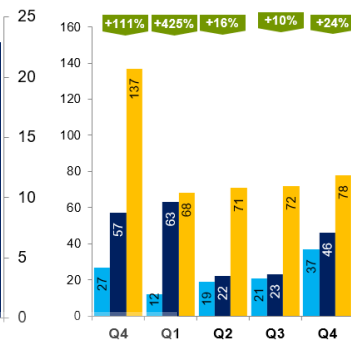
Rolling FEES Last 12 Months



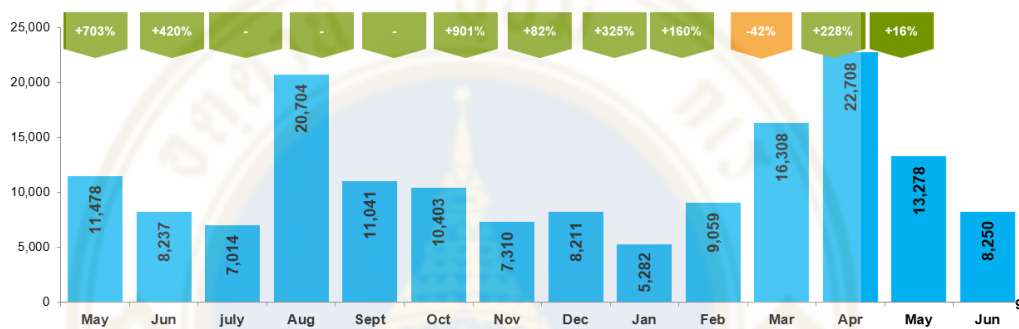
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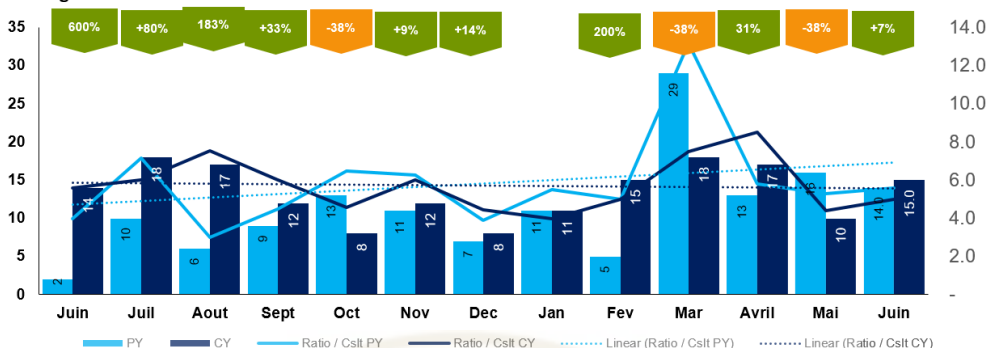


**Rolling PRODUCTIVITÉ Last 12 Months**

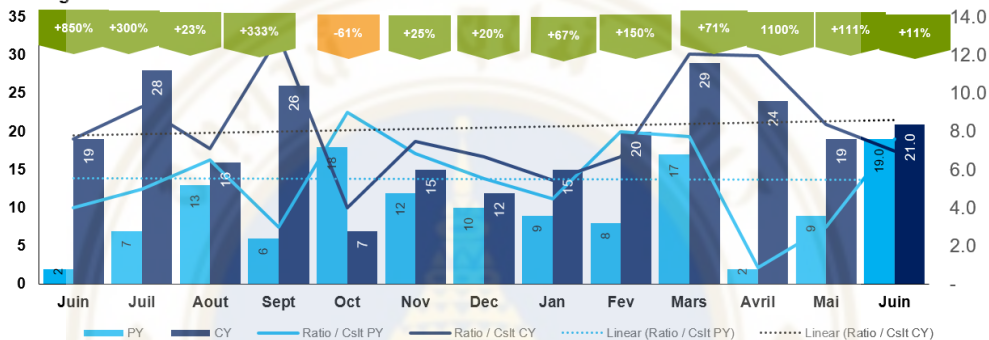




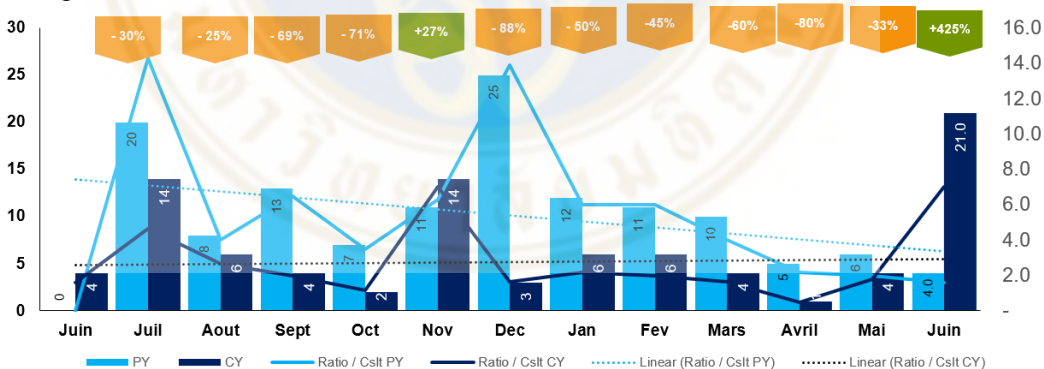
Rolling last 12 months



Rolling last 12 months



Rolling last 12 months



## Appendix B: Cameron & Quinn, Competing Values Framework

