



Talent attraction and retention

Desk Study

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Supported by UNDP Kolba Lab

Yerevan 2020

Talent attraction and retention- why important?

“The attraction and retention of skilled and professional staff to a community is critical if it is to remain vibrant and self-sufficient and to sustain itself into the future.”, Irshad, 2013, p.48

Talent attraction, acquisition policies date back to the 4th century BC and even earlier, when the ancient Greeks and Romans used different talent acquisition strategies to attract talented soldiers for their armies. In fact, the older empires used some of the strategic tools which are implemented even in today’s world; such as branding, financial rewards etc. (Schreiber, 2020). Understandably, the definition of the talent and overall nature of the talent attraction process was different in the old world, however, no doubt, that even early in history, monarchs, governments understood the importance of having talented people under their governance.

So, how talent is defined, what is talent attraction today and why countries and cities strive to have the best talent in their economies. The most common definition of talent is given by one of the world’s leading urbanists, Richard Florida (2002, p.1), as follows, *“Talent is defined as individuals with high levels of human capital, measured as the percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree and above”*. Another definition is given by Andersson et al. (2014) that describes in broader sense how talent is perceived in the 21st century *“A talent is as a person who can contribute to the prosperity of the place (and workplace) in a world where knowledge, creativity and innovation are key factors.”*, (Andersson et al., 2014, p.18).

Many studies, so far brought empirical evidence indicating that human capital, in terms of knowledge and creativity, is the most important asset for the economic growth (Barro 1991; Rauch 1991; Glaeser 1994, 1998, 2000; Glaeser et al. 1995; Glendon 1998; Simon 1998; Maskel and Malmberg, 1999). In recent years, the supporters of human capital theory have been gaining popularity by their studies that argue how human capital alone is a change maker in an economy (Lucas, 1988; Florida, 2003; Glaeser, 2003; Jacobs, 2016). It is mostly the creative talent, creative class¹, the innovators who contribute to the regional growth (Anderson et al., 2014; Florida, 2002; Florida 2014).

Currently, almost all countries and cities strive and enter into fierce competition to attract and retain the world’s best talent realizing that the future development is based on the human capital they would have rather than the natural resources or the like. Over the years, many developed countries and cities invested in strategies to attract both local and world talent as talent brings a range of benefits to the area they move to. The main two benefits outlined in the literature are:

Top talent is a kicker of productivity both at organizational and city/county level. A study conducted among different professions revealed that high performers are 400 times more productive than average ones. The percentage increases with the complexity of occupations, where high performers productivity is 800 times higher in such jobs (Keller and Meaney, 2017). Besides, the clustering of skilled people in the same place increases their productivity (Eaton and Eckstein, 1997; Black and Henderson, 1999).

Talent attracts investments and positively affects regional income; For corporations, large businesses, including high-tech industry and other innovative businesses, the existence of talent is one of the key

¹ Creative class- a fast-growing, highly educated, and well-paid segment of the workforce on whose efforts corporate profits and economic growth increasingly depend; workers associated with the creation of meaningful new forms, people in science, engineering, education, health, arts etc. (Florida, 2002, p. 3-4)

determinants for the investment in the location, both corporate and foreign direct investments (Masjutina, 2016, Florida 2002, Peña and Dessibourg-Freer, 2019).

Thus, based on the empirical evidence, countries, regions and cities understand the importance of attraction and retention of talent for maintaining economic stability and growth. So, the main task for governments is to understand the needs of the talent and create necessary conditions for the pool.

Where the talent goes now and what are the preferences of high skilled workers?

It is argued that the main incentives for high skilled talent to choose a city of residence is financial; that is income, and affordability (Emsi, 2019; Villafuerte, 2020; Anders, 2019). However, in today's world, with increasing globalization, mobility and therefore many opportunities available for high skilled professionals, the talent (comprised mainly of Millennials, that would form about 75% of workforce by 2025 and Generation Z; future workforce) tend to pay attention not only on financial incentives while choosing a city for work and living but also on the quality of life (Economy, 2019; Andersson, 2014).

Main attraction factors of cities

- ✓ **Identity and Reputation of the place-** creation of a positive unique image of a place, brand of the city as well as talent attraction arena is very important. As Millennials and Generation Z are claimed to value quality of life highly, the place should be attractive for them in that sense.
- ✓ **Future prospects-** availability of job opportunities and attractive employers, existence of strong corporate brands in the city and available jobs that promise future prospects.
- ✓ **Financial incentives-** high income, low tax burden, low cost of living, low cost of real estate
- ✓ **Beautiful and rich city-**city with rich cultural scenery, urban design and social life with cultural and recreational opportunities, a place where talent can have work-life balance, where the environment is clean, social interaction is ensured and surroundings are beautiful.
- ✓ **Availability of good housing-**that meets the preferences of the talent.
- ✓ **Good connection with outside world-** good ICT readiness, ground and air connection.
- ✓ **Safe, healthy and clean place-** city that has low criminality, is safe and ensures clean environment, nature and maintenance of healthy lifestyle.
- ✓ **Good public services-** a city that offers high quality healthcare, schools, city services etc.
- ✓ **Education and life-long learning-** a city that has good schools/colleges for the children of the talented couples. A city that provides opportunities for lifelong learning and career growth.
- ✓ **Open, inclusive city-** a city that has open, inclusive and tolerant climate, where talent is accepted into “group” and co-creation of the city continues.
- ✓ **Personal connection to the city-** having a positive memory about the place, some family connection may be a trigger for talent movement.

Sources: Andersson et al., 2014; Tuccio, 2019; Global talent, 2016, Emsi, 2019; Luis, 2009; Pedigo & Bendix, 2017, Villafuerte, 2020; WCCP, 2014

The research shows that while Generation Z that is currently comprised of students is more interested in active environment and nightlife, the millennials seek for calmer and greener areas with such amenities as good schools and hospitals (Masjutina, 2016; LinkedIn talent solutions, 2015). Work/life balance, professional development, green, walkable cities with a range of amenities are among popular choices of millennial workers (Hobkinson 2017; Pedigo, 2018, Masjutina, 2016). Access to aesthetics, culture, and rich social life are as well key factors in attracting the talent (Pedigo, 2018). Growing popularity of comparatively small cities of Denver, Austin and the movement of talent from large cities to smaller ones with sun and affordability in the U.S., supports the argument (Pedigo 2018; DCI, 2019, Emsi, 2019). Among the moving talent freelance and remote workers form a substantial part (DCI, 2019, Emsi, 2019). The phenomenon is explained by the fact that they are not attached to any company physically and move easily to a place that meets their lifestyle preferences.

How Covid-19 impacted the talent flows and preferences

With the COVID-19 virus spreading and tremendous increase in remote work, many experts think, the notion of delinking talent from place of work has already started with fast pace (EYQ, 2020; Future place leadership, 2020; Schawbel 2020; Thompson). This means, to be able to have the best team or work in the best company does not require high skilled talent to live in megacities. With the digital transformation on the go, the skilled talent can offer its services through remote work from any place in the world (Future place leadership, 2020; Schawbel 2020; Thompson, 2020). The case of Estonia digital nomad visa² initiative is a vivid example of the notion; the Estonian government invites freelance and remote workers to live in Estonia, meanwhile continuing to work legally for other companies abroad (E-residency, 2020).

In fact, the situation created by the pandemic made people realize the importance of sustainability, the damages (financial and health related) overcrowded cities bring and opportunities people can have in smaller cities. The realization speeded up the process of talent movement from megacities to calmer and environmentally friendly areas, the empirical evidence of which is already observed in the United States (Schawbel 2020; Porter 2020; Florida, 2020).

Thus, the smaller cities and communities should take the chance and turn the adversity caused by COVID-19 into an opportunity to solve such problems as unemployment and demographic decline by attracting the talent into their economies. The local governments should strive to create better conditions, better quality of life and growth opportunities in the cities and work out incentive packages for talent to move to live and to work under their administration.

Who is doing the best? International experience

Different tools and techniques were developed by international communities, and organizations for measuring the success of countries and cities in their endeavors of talent attraction and retention. The most popular ones are the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) and Talent Attraction Scorecard by Emsi.

² Estonia's government created digital nomad visa, to target the talent who are engaged in jobs independent of location and attract them to live in Estonia, <https://e-resident.gov.ee/nomadvisa/>

Global Talent Competitiveness Index- GTCI uses an index comprised of six pillars³ to evaluate 132 countries and 155 cities in talent competitiveness. In 2020, the top country according to the index is Switzerland followed by US and Singapore, a list of European countries, Australia and Canada; Ireland and Iceland close the list of top 15 countries.

The index also looks at the cities independently, as the latter has already, for many years become active independent players in the world. However, in terms of the cities, the image is not much different, the top 15 cities in talent competitiveness start with New York, followed by London and Singapore, followed by other cities in US, Canada, Australia, Europe, China, Japan and Ireland.

Singapore, being a city-state is the highest ranked country in three different pillars (Enable, Attract and Global knowledge skills) and thus is considered to have the best strategy of talent acquisition and best prospects for the future (GTCI, 2020).

The report also highlights the cities that experience quick growth or implement good strategies in spite of not yet being in the top list. The case of Bilbao, Basque country is presented as a role model in the report. Though, overall, it ranked in the 83th position, Bilbao is the third among all the cities with its great potential for talent retention which means it scored high in safety, financial stability, environmental quality and mobility.

20 years ago, Bilbao transformed itself from an industrial grey city into cultural and service hub. It is claimed that the opening of the Guggenheim-museum in Bilbao in 1997 gave the start to the revitalization of the city (Azua 2006; Plaza, Haarich 2013). The development of the city is, among others, due to the talent attraction strategies employed by Basque government starting from 2005 (GTCI, 2020).

Talent Attraction Scorecard – another well-known example of talent attraction measurement tool is the Talent Attraction Scorecard by Emsi that looks at talent attraction competition inside the United States, between its counties. The tool measures the inflow of new residents and workers as well as growth of skilled and overall workforce.

The highlights of the 2019 report focus on the flows of talent into small and micro counties. Small (5000-99,999 people) and micro (less than 5000) counties draw special attention to them, as in spite of their modest place on the world map, they register continuous success in talent attraction. The trend is explained by various reasons, including change in people's preferences (skilled professionals started preferring living and working in places that are more environmentally friendly and calmer in contrast to crowded megacities), investments on local assets and/or attraction of big corporations and establishment of organizations/companies that have cultural or scientific importance that also attract many tourists (Emsi, 2019).

³ GTCI Pillars are: enable, attract, grow, retain, technical skills, global knowledge skills

Storey County, State of Nevada, USA

Storey, Nevada, tops the list of Emsi talent attraction scorecard 2019 in spite of its population size of 4,000. The county is the third in Nevada with the least population. However, starting from 2013, the population registered 7% growth with prospects for the future. The job growth is unprecedented for the size of the county; 320% increase has been registered since 2013. The number of jobs is 3 times higher than the number of population which made Storey as a commuter hub, where people come to work, earn and spend money. The job growth, is largely explained by the existence of the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center, home to the Tesla Gigafactory 1, and the largest industrial park in the world.

Cameron Parish, State of Louisiana, USA

Having 7,000 population, Cameron Parish tops the list of ten small counties by registering 94% increase in employment across the five years. The increase is explained by a large investment by an energy company that drives employment and also population increase in the county by 4% during the five years.

Burke, State of Virginia, USA

Burke, in spite of having 2% population decline and low education attainment among the population, experienced employment growth since 2014; the jobs in the county have doubled consisting of mostly skilled occupations. The growth is explained by the investment on regional infrastructure, the construction of water line and related structures, including nuclear generation plant. The lesson Burke teaches is that talent attraction can be realized, not only by attracting investments from outside but by investing on the existing infrastructure and assets. Talent attraction strategies can be pursued by any community, even by a community that have population decrease and low educational attainment.

Source: Talent Attraction Scorecard 2019, Emsi

It is also argued in the Emsi report (2019) that remote workers, are key human capital who can kick the start for talent attraction in any community. Though they may not be engaged in a local company,

by living in the community they would spend money and enrich the local economy as well as be presented as an asset while attracting businesses to the area. Remote workers are mainly employed in high-tech and creative industries, but is spreading to other professions such as legal, STEM, Management, Marketing, research etc. (Emsi, 2019). As indicated by various estimates the number of remote workers is growing in the world and they can be a really great start for talent attraction (Hering, 2020; Schallom, 2020; Younger, 2020).

Freelance, Remote workers can kick the start for talent attraction in the city.

Benefits for the city include;

- Remote workers will spend money in the city by living there.
- Remote workers can be presented as an asset for attracting investments and corporations.

The report concludes that without any talent no economic development is possible and stresses that besides attracting talent a key part of talent attraction strategy is developing home-grown talent (Emsi, 2019).

Best Practices of Talent Attraction

In the coming part, this paper discusses the best city cases that implemented talent attraction and retention strategies and registered success.

Bilbao, Basque country

Bilbao is the central city of the Basque country. It is considered to have the best quality of life in Spain and in the countries of OECD with highest scores in safety, health, and community access to services and environment, followed by education, life satisfaction, housing, income and civic engagement (OECD Regional Well-being, 2018). Bilbao has low unemployment rate, high GDP per capita (Eustat, 2019) and higher productivity rate than in Spain and EU (Orkestra IBC, 2019). The city registered biggest progress in in Startup ecosystem ranking among EU cities (StartupBlink, 2017).

The FDI Intelligence magazine of the Financial Times Group in 2019 ranked Basque country as the most attractive medium-sized region with respect to foreign investment. In 2019, 129 investment projects were handled by “Invest in the Basque Country”, 36 of which were completed resulting in creation of 642 jobs (Bizkaia Talent, 2019).

Bilbao, Basque Country

Best Quality of life in Spain

Unemployment rate decrease from 18.7% to 13.2% in 2015-2019 period

GDP per capita increase by 15% in 2012-2017 period to 34,366 euro

High productivity rate with 10% increase in 2008-2018 period

Biggest progress, by 121 positions in startup ecosystem ranking since 2017.

Population – 0.3 growth since 2017.

Source: OECD Regional Well-being, 2018, Eurostat.com, Orkestra, 2019, StartupBlink, 2017)

As of 2015, the number of foreign workers is claimed to be almost 50,000, forming 5.4% share in Basque labor market in 2015, with activity rate of 75%. Half of the foreign workers have skilled or

half-skilled jobs (Bizkaia talent, 2015). In spite of the low birth rate in Bilbao, the population of the city registered 0.3 % growth from 2017 to 2019 (Eurostat, 2019).

The success in Bilbao's economic and social development is attributed, among others, to the talent management strategy that the city has been implementing for more than 15 years (GTCI, 2020).

Talent management strategy- Be Basque

The most important institution in Bilbao for talent attraction was established in 2005- ***Bizkaia Talent***, a non-profit agency, funded by the Basque government with the aim to attract and retain human capital, talent in the fields of knowledge and innovation in the city of Bilbao, as well as other areas of the Basque country. As the city was facing decline in human resources, and low birth rate, talent attraction looked the best strategy to be pursued under the conditions of the time.⁴ ***Be Basque strategy*** was designed and implemented in the country. The strategy received wide international recognition because of its ability to create talent management strategy based on Artificial Intelligence, and innovative digital tools (GTCI, 2020).

The main initiatives deployed by Bizkaia Talent are ***Be Basque talent network, the Basque talent observatory, and Be Basque talent conferences***.

Be Basque talent network is a network that links high qualified professionals, businesses from over the world with companies in Bilbao and other parts of the Basque country through its online platform and “*facilitates talent movement and building contacts and business relationships with all those who have had, have or want to have a relationship with the Basque Country*”.⁵ The website of the network invites every interested professional or business to register and offers many other services, including intermediation and job offers, relocation services, career advising, international professional network meetings, student work integration, and an innovative *Basque talent map* that enables the registered individuals or businesses to see the location of any organization or clusters of professionals according to various criteria in the Basque country.⁶

Basque Talent Observatory is a digital platform that through the usage of big data from various online sources analyses the labor market of Basque country and forms a big database about the labor market, employment dynamics and trends in the country. The observatory data is open to public and is used by universities, businesses and public bodies. The universities, professionals and businesses see what skills the Basque economy needs and will need in the future and, thus prepare for it.⁷

Bizkaia talent continues to expand its services, by adding new ***Dual Career*** offers for talented couples who want to move together to the Basque country. Comprehensive support to all highly qualified specialists is provided both for labor and socio-cultural integration.⁸

⁴ <https://www.bizkaialalent.eus/en/>

⁵ <http://www.bebasquetalentnetwork.eus/>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ <https://basquetalentobservatory.bizkaialalent.eus/visual/public/index>

⁸ <https://www.bizkaialalent.eus/en/te-ofrecemos/relocation-and-be-basque-dual-career-centre/be-basque-dual-career-centre/#init>

Before embarking on talent attraction initiatives, Bilbao worked on the revitalization of the city, it went through physical renewal of the city through change in urban design (decontamination of the city river, construction of museums, music halls, tower, exhibition center) and improvement in infrastructure (airport, metro, tramline), leaving the industrial past full of pollution and becoming environmentally friendly, accessible, vibrant city of culture, knowledge and innovation. It created new identity for the city and marketed it well (KPMG, 2015).

So, to summarize, the Bilbao government succeeded in its talent attraction and management initiative, as observed, because it followed a well-constructed path of city revitalization; firstly, the urban design and services of the city was improved to create better quality of life for the potential talent, then, to institutionalize and develop a strong system of talent attraction and retention it created a special agency for talent management, after which the city created new identity, reputation by the extensive use of branding and marketing and started spreading the word about the opportunities it offers. Finally, the government used the opportunities of digital transformation to have better data management and be able to make data-driven decisions in talent management.

Singapore

As stated earlier, Singapore, is the top country, city-state according to the GTCI in the pillars of Enable, Attract and Global knowledge, followed by high scores in pillar Grow and Vocational and Technical skills. This means Singapore is doing better than any other country in talent competitiveness in relation to *regulatory landscape, business and labor landscape, external openness, strong institutional capacity for ensuring life-long learning, internal openness, high employability and pool of high, technical and vocational skills* (GTCI, 2020).

Employability in Singapore is very high and has been growing dynamically since 2012. Majority of the labor force in the city-state is engaged in high skilled management and governance positions, service and sales (Yearbook of Statistics Singapore, 2019). With very low unemployment rate, high productivity rate and GDP per capita, with its focus on research and development and high quality of living Singapore positions itself as a place of knowledge and innovation where talent of any age can utilize their potential and grow meanwhile enjoying the benefits of life (Yearbook of Statistics Singapore, 2019; Mercer, 2019, Trading economies, 2020).

Singapore

- Population-5.6 million in 2018, 34% growth since 2004
- Non-residents (foreigners working, studying, living in Singapore)- 30% of total population
- Labor force-65% of population
- Unemployment rate-2%
- GDP per capita- 64 thousand USD, 14% growth since 2010
- R&D organizations- 900 in 2017
- People employed in R&D- 49 thousand
- FDI- world's 5th largest recipient of FDI in 2019, with 15% increase from 2018
- Productivity rate- 20% increase from 2010 to 2019
- Quality of living- 25th in Asia, among top cities

Source: World bank, 2020, Singapore stats, Trading economies, UNCTAD, 2020, Mercer, 2020

Singapore is among the highest-ranking cities in Asia in terms of quality of living, according to Mercer's 21st annual quality of living survey. Housing policy, waste and sewage removal infrastructure and green and clean city building policies are highlighted in the report as key factors ensuring the quality living standard in the country (Mercer, 2020).

Talent management strategy-Talent Capital, Smart Nation

Singapore aimed to build knowledge and innovation-intensive economy but the pool of local talent was not enough for the realization of the goal, so it developed strategy for talent attraction and retention.

Singapore started its talent attraction efforts as early as in 1980s. Its policy not only focused on attracting high-skilled workers but also companies, students, tourists and prominent international conferences. On later stage, it started attracting foreign scientists and researchers to improve its local capacities of talent generation and technological advancement and innovation. After that, Singaporean government focused on skilling and upskilling of its own human resources, limiting the inflow of foreigners and created cluster of highly skilled domestic and foreign workers. It is claimed, that Singapore succeeded in its talent management strategy because approached it not as a separate initiative but as a part of a bunch of initiatives that were carried out simultaneously (Sidhu, Yeo, 2010; Iwasaki, 2015; Ng, 2011).

Eminent Entrepreneurs/Professionals Scheme- One of the first initiatives, was launched as early as in 1988 to attract elite workers from Honk Kong and to relocate them to Singapore. The program gradually expanded to attract foreign workers from other countries. The process of settlement of foreign workers was facilitated, including regulatory framework (Iwasaki, 2015).

International Manpower Program and creation of ***Foreign Talent Units-*** In 1990s Singapore starting speaking about its goal of becoming a global cluster of highly skilled workers and established Singapore Talent Recruitment Committee comprised of representatives of different ministries and agencies. It was created with clear tasks to; develop and carry out strategies to attract and retain highly skilled workers, make Singapore a talent hub comprised of foreigners and Singaporeans by maintaining strong social cohesion between Singaporeans and foreigners, to assess the implementation of measures for talent attraction and retention (Sinhu, Yeo, 2010; Iwasaki, 2015).

Manpower 21: Vision of a Talent Capital- Singapore widely used the branding, including mottos to promote its agenda; one of the examples is the name of its strategy for 21st century, Manpower 21. The strategy accelerated efforts of attracting foreign talent. In 2007, ***the Global Investor Program and Financial Investor Scheme*** was introduced; the schemes facilitated permanent residence status obtaining for foreign entrepreneurs and investors, and persons with substantial financial assets.

Contact Singapore- an advising body was created for investors and entrepreneurs and foreign talent who want to set up in Singapore. It has offices in major countries in the world, as well as presence on the Internet. It is also engaged in recruitment activities with its website where vacancies in Singapore are available.

Organization of international conferences, networking opportunities, enhancing culture, arts, sport- the initiatives pursued by Singaporean government ensure that living and working in the country is not only financially beneficial but also offers high quality of life to its residents.

Education and life-long learning-

Internalization of education was one of the early steps in the whole process in Singapore, with the aim to become an education hub. As early as in 1998, Economic development Board established different initiatives aimed at attracting foreign students and teachers and foreign world class universities to open facilities in Singapore (Ng 2011; Sinho, Yeoh 2010; Chan 2011). As a result, as of 2016, 18% of all students in Singapore were foreigners and it is a common practice to have 50-70% foreign teachers in Singapore (Global Talent, 2016)

Schemes for students

Study/work grants- financial support to study provided 3-year mandatory work in a company based in Singapore

Work Holiday Program- Internships in Singapore for students from world top universities

Scholarships- for Singaporean and foreign students to study in world's best universities, provided temporary engagement in science and technology R&D in Singapore upon graduation

Source: Iwasaki, 2015; Chan, 2011

So, Singapore engaged in the cultivation of human resources, for contribution to Singapore's development, irrespective of citizenship of the talent. Singapore acknowledging innovation as a

Schemes for talent (including scientists, researchers, businesses)

Financial incentives- high salaries, coverage of travel expenses, allowances for housing, business grants, tax incentives

Family (spouse, children) support- education, job, social integration

Professional incentives- research funding, networking, job opportunities, potential for career and professional growth

Source: Iwasaki, 2015, EDB website, 2020

driving force, importance of R&D for economic development created the agency for Science, technology and research that was a central body that coordinated all research institutions and served as a link between industry and research organizations. It started headhunting of scientists through personal networks, research and meetings. As a result, pool of scientists was brought to Singapore (Iwasaki, 2015).

The result is that National University of Singapore is the 4th most

internationalized university and 23rd in the world top universities according to the 2019 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, improving its position from 2010 by 11.

SkillsFuture-life-long learning is prioritized in Singapore and a system is designed that ensures every citizen in the country have the opportunity to improve his/her skills. The initiative provides 1500\$ credit to each citizen in three stages during the lifetime to choose from the programs (internships, career advising, trainings), services that would provide skilling and upskilling both in terms of trainings and work experience. *Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ)* national credential system was created to develop the skills of the workforce, assess and certify the labor force. The WSQ approves all the trainings and programs under SkillsFuture initiative so as the citizens have opportunities to

acquire skills in the areas that have current and future demand in local market and that their skills are recognized by the employers.⁹

Smart Nation-Smart city initiative under the name Smart Nation was announced in Singapore that encourages usage of digital innovation and technology to drive the economy of the country, so as all segments of society have opportunities to take the best of digital transformation. To achieve the aim Strategic National projects are designed and implemented around key pillars of creating digital government, digital economy and digital society.

The initiative is the continuation of e-governance efforts the city-state started in 1980s that so far resulted in 1600 online services delivered to the public by 2005, integration of data, process and systems of government agencies with 300 mobile government services by 2011 and established e-collaboration between and outside government by 2015. According to the public survey conducted by the Singaporean government in 2016, more than 80% of respondents transacted with government e-services online during the year and more than 90% were satisfied with the ease of completing transactions online and with the adequacy of support provided by the e-services. The success of e-governance efforts in Singapore is explained by the strong political leadership, central management and funding of the initiative, focus on engagement of all the stakeholders, including wider public through specially designed education programs for computer literacy and e-governance awareness.¹⁰

To conclude, it is the comprehensive approach implemented by Singapore that ensured its success in talent management. The country implemented simultaneous efforts, backed by strong mechanisms, with monitoring and assessment system, for bringing foreign businesses, highly skilled talent and students into the country, ensuring that businesses which come will find the needed talent and the talented people or students will have job opportunities. Establishment of business corporations attracted talent from various areas of business operation and presence of highly skilled researchers, lecturers attracted foreign students. This accumulation of human resources paved the way for attracting new businesses to Singapore and cultivating the local talent. The branding strategy of a city-state also played a great part in the initiative, as placing it as tourist destination for both leisure and business tourism, improved its standing on the world map and attracted more talent into the country.

By talent management strategy, Singapore managed to have necessary resources that enabled it to be among the top cities today that moves with time, stays competitive and is able to become one of leading economies in this fast pacing digital world.

Key milestone of Strategic National Projects

- National Digital identity, E-payments,
- Moments of Life, implying support to families, parents, Singaporean citizens in their various activities,
- Gobusinesses platform for the support for businesses,
- CODEX; digitalization of government tools, enabling, facilitating data collection and sharing between agencies and many more,
- Smart Nation Sensor Platform to maximize the use of street lampposts, make available city level sensor data for public and industry,
- Smart Urban mobility (hands-free ticketing technology, autonomous buses and shuttles, smart traffic control system)

Source: Smart Nation Singapore, 2020

⁹ SkillsFuture- <https://www.skillsfuture.sg/>

¹⁰ eGov Masterplans- <https://www.tech.gov.sg/media/corporate-publications/egov-masterplans>

Other examples

DUBLIN, IRELAND

Dublin, capital city of the Republic of Ireland is among the leading talent hubs in the world, ranking 13th in the GTCI and 22nd in the pillar of enable, which means it has high GDP per capita, good ICT readiness and facilitated system for doing business (GTCI, 2020).

Dublin has low level of unemployment rate because of its knowledge economy that it started to build, among others, through talent attraction and local cultivation (Grimes & White, 2004).

Dublin, like Singapore, started combined efforts of talent management as follows; i) attracting foreigners to work in the tech center of the country, ii) attracting businesses to operate through facilitated immigration policy and other initiatives iii) conducting city branding to fill the talent needs for local companies and country local needs, iv) started an initiative for local skill cultivation.

Dublin.ie- is the city branding website aimed to attract skilled talent, students, businesses, investments and tourists to Dublin to experience the city, live and work in the city. The branding of the city played important role in attracting both businesses and talent. Dublin city council is responsible for the brand of the city, city is presented as world class city that “makes things happen” but maintains sense of community. The brand identity is designed and open for anyone in the city to use for their campaign.¹¹

Springboard education initiative was introduced by the Irish government in 2011 for the unemployed and job seekers. The primary objective of the program was to make unemployed people remain valuable and engaged in labor market and to facilitate job acquisition for job seekers. It provided access to education, upskilling and reskilling opportunities in the areas where more need for labor exist and may arise in the country; that is information and communication, medical devices, green economy, food and beverages, international finances. Free degrees, courses and other education opportunities were provided to people.¹²

Succeed in Ireland initiative through ConnectIreland.com, introduced by the Irish government in 2012 aimed to connect and use the large diaspora resources that country has for the development of Dublin, and Ireland. ConnectIreland, was a crowdsourcing initiative aimed to create 5000 more jobs over the five years. The initiative asks the Irish all over the world to connect them to businesses in the world that have plans of expansion. An individual who introduces a company that ultimately invests in Ireland and creates jobs, receives financial rewards per job created (WCCP, 2014).

The result of the initiative is that multi-cultural companies are attracted to and support Ireland due to cultural connections. Many world-known companies, such as Yroo, Cargurus and others established their offices in Dublin and other cities of the country and created jobs for local economy.¹³

Make IT in Ireland- Another initiative that started in 2013 with the funding by big companies in Ireland, including Google, Twitter, Facebook, Microsoft, Paypal. Make IT in Ireland, with Dublin

¹¹ Dublin's Place Brand- <https://dublin.ie/about/dublins-place-brand/>

¹² Springboard- <https://springboardcourses.ie/>

¹³ Connect Ireland-<https://www.connectireland.com/>

being the forerunner, the initiative attracted talent to the tech center of the city and country (Global Talent, 2016; WCCP, 2014).

City continues its talent attraction strategy today, in the 2018-2021 development strategy of the city, Dublin aims to “*to enhance the ability of the city to attract and retain world class talent through Placemaking*”. It aims at strengthening talent retention and have the focus on gig economy (freelancers and remote workers). Dublin city government aims to increase affordable working space capacity in the city; special spaces and clusters of startups will be supported. The brand of the city will be enhanced through digital marketing (Dublin City Council, 2018).

RURAL CITIES, CANADA

Rural communities, even in developed countries, face many challenges in terms of economic development; primarily because of the shortage of human resources and decline in population. Talent attraction and retention strategy is one of the anchors that can help communities to revitalize their economies. The current trend of shift in talent preferences from megacities to smaller, calmer areas, gives a chance to small cities.

Though it is more challenging for small rural cities to attract talent because of lack of job opportunities, lack of infrastructure, public services such as health and education, local recreational and social activities, the cities have other features that present added-value, such as sense of community, calmer, cleaner environment, local culture and heritage, walkable and cozy urban design that can be utilized to create specially designed ecosystems, that would attract the high skilled professionals.

Return to Rural, Alberta – an economic development project of a rural community, an initiative of SAMDA economic partnership aimed to attract early and mid-career families into rural communities of Alberta. The brand and motto of the project tries to deliver the message that in this technological, advanced world, where technology is an inseparable part of people, living in rural area can be beneficial for the youth; they won't be secluded from the world due to technology, meanwhile will enjoy the clean air, calmness and sense of community that can be found in rural areas.

The initiative leverages digital communication opportunities, to archive the goal. It has a website which presents job, business and social opportunities in the community, the support that is provided to talent who wants to move. The initiative utilizes also social network to spread the word about available jobs and other opportunities in rural communities of Alberta. It provides training for civic leaders, and businesses and helps them with initiatives of talent attraction.¹⁴

Make Way for Youth-Nova Scotia-Nova Scotia rural province's government ran a project bringing young people from across Canada to be acquainted and matched with the local opportunities. The suitability of the youth was assessed and targeted exploratory visits were conducted to match the young people with the local entrepreneurship, industry, culture, heritage and employment opportunities. The project also aimed to cut emigration from the province, to retain local resources through educational programs (Irshad, 2013).

Youth Strategy Program in Quebec- the program encourages the acquisition, establishment, expansion, modernization or transition of a business by one or more young people. It offers financing,

¹⁴ Return to Rural- <https://returntorural.ca/>

and personalized support, advice and support with market research and partnerships to the youth for their projects, thus attracting them to the region.¹⁵

Rural physician recruitment and retention, Alberta- the aim of the initiative is to attract and retain physicians into the rural Alberta to serve the needs of rural community. The initiative consists of several programs; Rural Remote Northern Program provided financial support to physicians to work in underserved communities, Rural Health Professions Action plan that provides financial support for enhancement of skills and education for rural physicians, supporting with accommodation and providing relief for practical work in rural community, Rural Medical Education programs, aimed to increase interest among medical students in practicing their careers in rural communities.

As a result, the number of physicians per capita in Alberta went up by 50% between 2001 and 2018, higher than in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. Alberta, as of 2020, does not have any physician shortages.¹⁶

Northern Student Teacher Bursary Program- is a financial incentive initiative by combined efforts of Alberta Education, Alberta Scholarships Program and the Northern Alberta Development Council. The program provides bursaries to teacher education program students provided the students commit to provide teaching in the schools of rural communities in Alberta upon graduation during the initially agreed period. In this way, the program initiators try to attract teachers to the rural areas and retain them by the assumption that building a life in the community will make the teachers stay even after the agreed period of the contract.¹⁷ As of 2019, 26 students participate in the

program. They have communities total of 73 years of service in rural communities of Alberta. Rural Practicum Bursary Program and the Math Bursary Program are similar programs aimed to attract and retain high quality teaching staff to rural communities (Alberta Government, 2020).

Pinawa, Manitoba- Imagine yourself in a place...the case of Pinawa shows how a tiny community with good strategy of talent attraction can succeed. Th city of Pinawa, in the Manitoba region of Canada with population of 1,331, according to the available recent statistics, managed to register average yearly growth of 0.12% in the employment rate, and average 0.52% yearly population growth across 2011-2016 years. The percentage of immigrants in total population of Pinawa, increased from 8.8% to 21.9 % in the period of 2011 to 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

So, how this small community succeeded in retaining and even experiencing some growth in its population size and employment rate in this age of globalization?

Pinawa started its talent attraction efforts by highlighting city's uniqueness, by branding itself as a place, everyone dreams of, a place you can call home. The city started it campaign with launch of a website, where all the information about the local opportunities are available. The motto of the campaign reads; "Imagine yourself in a place...", stating that Pinawa is the city where there are countless opportunities for seasonal recreation, living and doing business.¹⁸

The local government launched international entrepreneurship program (educational, financial, consulting support), offering different support packages in Pinawa to attract entrepreneurs from all over the world and revitalize the community.¹⁹ Tax incentives for residence are also offered to the

¹⁵SADC- <https://www.sadc-cae.ca/en/entrepreneurs-assistance/business-start-up-and-expansion>

¹⁶ Rural physician recruitment and retention initiatives, <https://www.alberta.ca/physician-resource-planning.aspx#toc-6>

¹⁷ Northern Student Teacher Bursary Program, <https://www.nadc.ca/our-bursaries/northern-student-teacher-bursary/>

¹⁸ <http://pinawa.com/>

¹⁹ Pinawa International entrepreneurship program, <http://pinawa.com/doing-business/pinawa-international-entrepreneurship-program-2/>

talent and their families who decide to move.²⁰ The strategy aimed to attract both the entrepreneurs who are looking for business support as well as high skilled talent who besides work are interested in the quality of life the city offers.

In its campaign Pinawa stresses its most competitive factors as a location; rich natural setting with forests and lakes and recreational activities for having quality lifestyle. It highlights the calmness and sunshine during the summers and active recreational activities during winter months. Pinawa created a reputation of comfort and coziness.

Thus, the city, in spite of its size and limited resources, managed to create a community that is home to scientists, entrepreneurs and their families.

U.S. CITIES

Topeka, Kansas- Choose Topeka-Core part of talent attraction initiative in Topeka is a financial support to the talent that move to their city through relocation support; financial reimbursement for obtaining or renting a house for a set period of time to those individuals who receive a job offer from local companies or for remote workers who move to live in the city (Richardson, 2019).

ChooseTopeka.com website is launched to provide necessary information and support to the interested candidates.²¹ The initiative is beneficial for both sides; while the city gets high skilled talent for the local companies, solves demographic issue in the city, people with high skills get support in solving their housing problem. The initiative is carried out by Global Partnership Topeka that combines efforts of different entities, including government.

Tusla, Oklahoma- Tusla Remote- City of Tusla through its initiative attracts remote workers by offering them relocation grants, solely for moving and living in the city for one year. The remote workers who move will receive funds for relocation expenses, discounted rate for the apartment, monthly stipend across the year.²² Besides, the financial incentives, the city offers remote workers good working conditions in a coworking space as well as professional networking opportunities with local businesses and professionals (Holder, 2020).

The ultimate aim of the program is to make the remote workers settle down in the city, find work in local companies or start their own ventures and contribute to the economic growth of the city. The focus is on tech professionals, researchers, writers and corporate recruiters (Umoh, 2018).

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Copenhagen, capital city of Denmark is among the leading talent hubs in the world, ranking 15th in GTC Index and among the top ten cities in the subsection of enable with high GDP per capita, ICT readiness and ease of doing business. The city also distinguished itself on the following criteria; presence of Forbes 2000 companies, being a hub for major universities, FDI jobs created, safety and environmental quality. The city according to the index shows proven ability for future readiness, with activities in fields of advanced technologies, including fintech and medtech (GTCI, 2020).

²⁰ Pinawa residential advantages available at: <http://pinawa.com/moving-to-pinawa/pinawa-residential-advantages/>

²¹ <https://choosetopeka.com/>

²² <https://tulsaremove.com/>

Among, the talent management initiatives, Copenhagen Capacity was established in the city to implement and coordinate both talent attraction and cultivation initiatives.

Copenhagen Capacity-an official organization in cooperation with Invest in Denmark that assists businesses, talent and investors to move to Copenhagen for working and living.

It has special programs for

- attracting businesses and investments to the city by supporting interested entrepreneurs on the following major components; information gathering & analysis, business establishment, expansion and development
- attracting international talent by providing guidance for small and medium businesses in their efforts to recruit talent through one-to-one matchmaking, international talent attraction campaigns, provision of branding materials available at toolbox portal, etc.²³

Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassador Corps is another talent attraction initiative established in 1996. It is a network of global top talent aimed to attract international conferences, investments and tourists to Copenhagen.²⁴ In 2010 it transformed itself to the Youth Goodwill of Ambassador Corps, a global network of international students who voluntarily work to promote Copenhagen and Denmark as a place to study, do business and work. The network is comprised of students and alumni who study/ed in Denmark, participated in special talent development program and cooperate with business, academia and culture. The Corps is almost fully funded by the public but efforts come from all sectors; business, academia etc. The initiative not only managed to spread the word about opportunities in Denmark and create international PR but as well retain the ambassadors as talents in the country (Andersson et al. 2014).

International House Copenhagen- It only takes one hour to become a Copenhagener- is a joint initiative of city of Copenhagen and University of Copenhagen launched in 2013 to facilitate the integration of internationals into the city and retain them through family support. It is a one-stop place, where public and private agencies joined their efforts to provide all the necessary information and assistance the international talent and their spouses coming to Copenhagen. The assistance includes official paperwork, information about working or studying conditions in Copenhagen, about jobs, social networks, support with relocation and integration for visitors and their spouses.²⁵

The Copenhagen Challenge-Do you speak our language? - an initiative aimed to recruit tech talent for local companies. Copenhagen Capacity partnered with Denmark's largest e-sport event that was attended by high number of people, broadcasted through media and reached to almost 300 million households all over the world. Copenhagen Challenge invited gamers to break the code; the social media campaign targeted the coders by presenting them with competition clues written in coding language. In the campaign, the initiative also promoted Copenhagen as a great fun place with high quality of life offering different lifestyle opportunities. The result was that by the end of competition, Copenhagen had a talent pool of over 3000 tech-savvy professionals interested to move to Copenhagen (City Nation Place, 2020).

²³ Copenhagen Capacity, <https://www.copcap.com/how-we-help/set-up-business>

²⁴ Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassador Corps, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/copenhagengoodwillambassadors/>

²⁵ International House Copenhagen, <https://ihcph.kk.dk/>

HAIFA, ISRAEL

Haifa- the case of Haifa shows how city-university collaboration can contribute to the development of the city, how a city with the reputation of port city may co-brand itself as knowledge city.

The Port Campus project initiated by Haifa local government is an example of urban restoration through higher education. The city of Haifa before 2008 experienced an economic decline and outmigration of young talent, the lower city once filled with factories and government building was an abandoned area. And it was there when the mayor of the city announced construction of Port Campus in the downtown for the redevelopment of the city. With the aim to attract and retain young talent in the city, the Haifa local government invested in public infrastructure by redesigning the city and attracting educational institutions to make the area attractive for the youth. Programs for ensuring higher quality of life for students were also supported; including organization of musical festivals and so on. The government aimed to use the presence of the students in the area to make Haifa attractive for other businesses like restaurants, shops, entertainment businesses and other (WCCP, 2014).

As of 2014, there were quite a few universities in the area, including the Carmel Academic Center, Tiltan College of Design and Visual Communication, the Haifa University Port Campus extension, Megged – the School of Advanced Psychotherapy, Adler Institute and others, that served 8,000 students. 1000 students were living in Port Campus area thus attracting real-estate businesses who offer different private dormitories or small apartments to the students. Currently, there are many businesses operating in Port Campus area, including cultural institutes such as galleries that make this part of the city as a hub of young creators. Young artists inspired by the urban design of the area and presence of galleries also moved to the Campus and gave the area even more attractiveness by organization of art workshops (WCCP, 2014; Captcha, 2020).

The night-life in the downtown is also revitalized; many pubs, restaurants, entertainment businesses moved to the area to be close to the youth, the main consumers of their services (WCCP, 2014).

Another effort to position Haifa on the innovation and technology map was the establishment of **HiCenter**, business accelerator in Port Campus, backed by the Office of Chief scientist in Israel that focuses on businesses based on technology.

Branding Haifa as Israel's Startup City, Hicenter experts help (financial support, education, consulting) entrepreneurs to establish their businesses provided the businesses are established in Haifa with the continuous operation in the area for five consecutive years. The center also offers workspace for the talent for working and networking with the peers. Eight companies are presented in the portfolio of the center, each presenting an innovative technological products or services.²⁶

Currently, Haifa besides being a port city, is known as knowledge and research center because of the presence of many universities, schools and colleges in the area, including two leading universities of Israel; University of Haifa and Technion Israel Institute of Technology (CoE, 2019).

²⁶ HiCenter, <https://hicenter.co.il/>

So, how to attract talent to your city?

Key factor to be kept in mind while embarking on the big journey of talent attraction is; talent attraction to be successful should be implemented within wider context of human resource development and in line with other activities directed to the economic development of the community (US. scorecard. Iwaskai 2015, Andersson et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the studied cases show that any community can launch and benefit from talent management strategy; irrespective of its size, location, population, education attainment, development level etc. In other words, any community can succeed in the endeavor provided well-designed and implemented strategy is on place.

Talent management comprises of 4 main activities:

- ✓ talent attraction-marketing;
- ✓ talent reception-welcoming,
- ✓ talent integration both socially and professionally
- ✓ talent reputation-branding

All four components should work together to ensure the success of talent management. Below, is the roadmap designed for talent attraction and retention based on studied reports, handbooks, recommendations and success cases.

Roadmap

FIRST stage-Understanding the City and the Talent

To be able to attract talented people and thus contribute to economic development of the city, need assessment and overall evaluation of the city should be conducted; what talent the existing businesses need? What are the available jobs, including working conditions? What are the shortages? What are the competitive factors of the city? What are the weaknesses?

How? Through data collection and mobilization²⁷

1. Define and connect with key stakeholders; businesses, academia, public sector and civil society to learn about the needs and potential cooperation opportunities. Explain the importance and benefits of talent management.

²⁷ Interviews, focus groups with the business owners, existing talent and target talent, social media research to understand the labor market trends, talent preferences etc.

2. Together with stakeholders collect data about the community; how many available jobs for high skilled workers, including working conditions, cost of living in the community, existence of amenities, conduct SWOT analysis for the city.
3. Create database of labor market of the city; what are the needs, what are the trends, job opportunities, etc. The database should have public access, like Basque talent observatory to help stakeholders make informed decisions.
4. Together with stakeholders define the target talent and find them;
 - I. Map the needs of local employers
 - II. Follow the trends in labor market and map the talent migration patterns
 - III. Understand the perception of the place for in and out talent
 - IV. Define target talent (profession, skill level, social status etc.)
 - V. Identify the needs and preferences of the target talent
 - VI. Find talent in the city who moved and examine satisfaction level and motivations
 - VII. Based on the data collected create the persona of the target talent whom the city wants to attract. The monitoring of shifting needs, preferences of target talent is a must for the implementation of the strategy.
 - VIII. Remote workers who are more flexible in their movement potential, students and recent graduates whose demands are comparatively lower are good choices to start. First, target those who have connection to the region (youth that left for studies and so on).

Persona of target talent

Age, place of birth, citizenship, marital status, education, profession, skills, skill level, preferences

Persona types of generations

Generation X (1961-1983)- More loyal to employer than other generations, requiring open dialogue and responsibility in working relations.

Generation Y-(1984-2000)- Millennials form the main workforce currently with the forecast to form 75% of global workforce by 2025. The millennials value work-life balance, they think of what employer can do for them rather than what they can do, so they question loyalty and norms. Technology is of no concern for them. As of 2018-2020 data there is a tendency of millennial workers of moving into suburbs, calmer and environmentally friendly cities with affordable pricing of housing and higher quality of life.

Generation Z- (2001-)- the new “digital” generation, who are tech savvy. It is expected that they would give preference to corporate social responsibility, transparency etc. The talent of this generation pays more attention to income and night life the cities offer.

Source: Tendensor.se; Lanvin & Monteiro, 2020

SECOND stage-Strategy Formation and Coordination

Create institutional model of talent management, including central coordination body and partnerships. The central body should explain the value of talent attraction and it should be understood and shared by all the stakeholders and partners (businesses, NGOs, academia etc.). Based on findings from the first stage;

1. Start forming the strategy
2. Create institutional body that would deal with all the coordination of talent attraction, in cooperation with the city government. The organization can have various small agencies,
 - *talent hubs* which will be responsible for career advising for those who want to move and businesses who want to recruit talent (those can be partner NGOs, business organizations)
 - *Research & monitoring agency*, responsible for continuous updating of the data on the city, including labor market, demographics. Through monitoring and evaluation the agency would measure performance of the effort and follow-up on the changing needs of the target talent. Monitoring tool like Emsi Talent Attraction Scorecard should be created.
3. Create partnerships, networks and secure financing
4. Create tools and techniques for talent attraction

Partnerships, Networks and Financing

There are different models how talent management is conducted in different countries, that can be

- Public driven, financed and operated by the public sector solely
- Public-private partnership where services are provided by public bodies while financing is coming from the businesses
- the division model, where the strategy is led by the public office but private sector is expected to take active role in its implementation
- Social entrepreneurship model, where the program is conducted by an NGO
- Network model, the most participatory approach, where talent comes through different channels.

However, hybrid of all the models can be implemented based on the city needs and participatory framework, such as public led model can be created backed with some external funding that can grow into the public-private model or division model when local businesses see the benefits etc.

It is likely, as backed by the research, that larger companies, may be more interested in engaging partnerships and facilitating talent management, including city branding, recruitment, etc. Large companies will foresee their future needs for labor and will be prone to engage into the process.

THIRD stage- City Development; Making it Attractive for Target Talent

As most of the current and future workforce value the quality of life, the city government should focus on improving the city to meet the needs of the talent. Development of place quality should start as early as the needs of the target talent and purpose of talent management is defined;

So, what quality entails?

- natural environment- flora and fauna, weather, forests, mountains, sea etc.
- social environment- attitudes to outsiders, access to social networks

- built environment- urban design, walkability, interesting architecture, transport infrastructure, clean air and water
- public and private services offered to citizens; schools, police, emergency, libraries, recreation centers, entertainment centers, museums, shopping malls, restaurants other entertainment venues.

The natural environment and social environment are less likely to be influenced by the local authorities on a short-term basis, but the built environment and public and private services can be improved to meet the needs of the locals and target talent;

Urban design

First thing to start with, can be revisiting the urban design that follows the below described general principles. However, each city has its unique attributes and the design should be made around them, of course taking also into account the fact what reputation the city wants to create and who is the target talent; is it going to become hub for IT workers, for artists or for writers?

General rules include;

- Assembling its functions together to ensure mass of people and events
- Integrating diverse functions and forms of buildings, old and new together
- Inviting; the city should be comfortable for walking and bicycling
- Increasing the number of city spaces

In fact, urban renewal, redesign is the way to build the city on its strengths and previously not used assets and potential.

Amenities and services

Next, on the list is to improve the amenities and services provided in the city. The first ones can be those that are most demanded by the target talent. It is suggested to create an ecosystem of amenities around the talent attraction arena; a science park, district for creative industries (a district in the city can be transformed into a mixture of high-quality leisure, hotel, office, coworking, restaurant, and residential facilities which while combined with different events will form an ecosystem). The uniqueness and culture of the city should be part of the ecosystem.

It is argued that existence of cultural amenities in the city increase the chances of talent attraction and retention as more people build a lifestyle in the new city and are more likely to stay. Organization of festivals (music, dance, creative art etc.), creation of cultural, recreational hubs and other events can boost active lifestyle in the city.

Social interaction

Creation of third places, that is clubs, cafes, parks, bookstores with coffee shops, libraries etc. where people socialize out of work, exchange ideas and enjoy being in the city is important for fostering social interaction. The places should have the following general characteristics;

- Place where people with same interests prefer to meet, like sport arenas in parks, music clubs, bookstores with special book discussion events, language clubs etc.
- Professional clubs, where people with same profession can meet.
- Just cafes, or parks

Benefits for the talent

Besides, preferring to work in a beautiful and cozy place, the skilled talent pay much attention on the income and affordability. Thus, the city should create benefit packages for the talent to make working or living in the city beneficial with competitive advantages over others. So, talent and businesses can be offered the following;

For businesses

- Tax incentives; businesses can have low tax burden
- Facilitated process of business registration
- Affordable business space
- Entrepreneurship programs for SMEs- education, consultations, financial grants
- Other

For talent

- Affordable housing
- Relocation support, both by information provision, coordination and financial means
- Special programs for different target groups; e.g. internships with housing and remuneration support, free coworking spaces for freelancers, special integration programs for spouses and children of the talent (integration to schools, to social clubs etc.)
- Other

FOURTH stage- Reputation, Branding and Marketing

As stated, earlier reputation and branding of the city is one of the key factors in talent attraction. The long-term goal of city branding and marketing is to make the city stand out and attract professionals, entrepreneurs and foreign investments to the community. Branding of the city should be conducted in line with development of the city. *The city should have purpose-* where it sees itself in the future, what kind of place it wants to become, based on it the brand of the city should be created (e.g. Bilbao-Innovation hub, Singapore-Talent Capital, Smart city, Copenhagen- Green city etc.)

Talent-Oriented Place Branding

Visibility-to become known and recognized

Reputation- Building Trust

Identity- ensure belonging and identity

Authenticity- be unique and real

Purpose- have a role to play

Source: Tendenson.se

1. The brand of the city should be created, after the following;

- **Defining the identity** of the city by looking at its historical, cultural and social development. The city should have its own unique identity that is not repetitive and raises emotions among local and foreign talent. What is about the city that is different. The focus can be on specialized knowledge area combined with the natural and cultural assets of the city.
- Understanding the **perception of the city** among the inside and outside talent,

- Identification of **competitive factors** of the city that meet the needs of target talent
- Decision on **talent attraction arenas**²⁸
- Development of **long-term development strategy** of the city.

Good reputation needs to be created and maintained to attract and retain talent.

2. Co-branding can also be employed in the process, where corporate brands besides using their company brand, use the city brand to show the talent what quality of life they can have while living in the city.

3. Marketing strategy, with strong digital presence should be developed;

- Talent markets should be defined:
 - i. Business investors (locals, internationals)
 - ii. Visitors (tourists, business visitors)
 - iii. Talents (present talents, potential talents)
- Mass marketing, visibility of the city should be enhanced; city target talent and other entities should be able to learn about the city and all the opportunities (open jobs, working areas, business opportunities) and services (for family settlements, financial incentives, lifestyle). In other words, why the city is the best choice for them.
- The visibility can be enhanced through communication and various activities;
 - i. Website, which can target specific group of professionals like in the case of *Make IT in Ireland* or be broader toolkit or network like *Be Basque Talent Network* offering lots of information and support both for professionals, entrepreneurs and investors.
 - ii. Social media (FB, Instagram, LinkedIn), where targeted talent can be approached directly through campaigns and talent ambassadors. In fact, currently, most of headhunting is conducted through social media. The professional qualifications of the candidates can be tracked through LinkedIn while the personal preferences and interests through Facebook and Instagram. Social media can be used also, to create online presence of talent attraction arenas, professional community groups for communication and interaction. Online talent campaigns can be organized.
 - iii. Advertisement (billboards, TV)
 - iv. Content marketing should be used to spread the word about the success stories of the city and raise emotions among the target talent.
 - v. Conferences, professional events, networks, career events, organized to single out the talent, including diaspora talent.
 - vi. Marketing through front staff and residents, front staff in public areas like, airports, restaurants, taxis etc. can be trained how to present the image of the city.

The taxi driver initiative

In a small town in the Scottish Highlands, Aberdeen, city mayor aimed to change the reputation and brand of the city. He identified that it is the front staff; particularly taxi drivers who mostly “introduce” the city to the visitors. The mayor organized a one-day training for taxi drivers presenting them a document with unique selling propositions of the city. Thus, with one move, he changed taxi drivers into place managers.

Source: Tendenson.se

²⁸ Innovation centers for professionals of the same or related profession, talent clusters through investments on certain economic area; e.g. creative art, creating co-working places for remote workers etc.

- vii. Small cities with global networks; initiatives of talent ambassadors should be implemented. Talent ambassadors are people who are engaged, among others, in spreading the word about the opportunities of the city through professional and business networks. The ambassadors join the initiative by different motivations that include being part of the good change, expansion of their own network, etc.

The studied city cases show that earning a new reputation is a long process and the improvements in the city and city branding should go hand-in-hand. All the stakeholders need to be engaged in the process of branding the city.

FOURTH Stage: Reception and Integration

1. First impression is very important; welcoming the talent from early step is crucial. The billboards welcoming the talent is one of the examples.
2. The pre-arrival communication is even more important. The communication with the potential talent should be conducted at high level; explaining all the regulatory framework, honest introduction to city opportunities, cultural and social traits and available options for education, career growth etc. *The expectations of the talent should be rightly set and managed.*
3. An agency or institutionalized system (supported by public, private and civil society sectors) should be created to help the new talent and their families to settle in the new city.
 - a. Dual career-facilitation of finding a job or education opportunity for the recruited talent's spouse is very important for talent retention.
 - b. Introduction to schools and other activities for children of talent and facilitation of their social integration also plays a pivotal role.
 - c. All official paperwork, finding of dwelling should be supported by a specially trained body.
4. Introduction to networks, both professional and social (academia-business, leisure) should be conducted to help the newcomers to integrate.
5. All of the support should be facilitated and delivered in the most convenient way for the talent like in the case of International House Copenhagen discussed above.

FIFTH stage-Ensure Life-Long Learning

- 1. Just-in-time upskilling** - To keep the attracted talent in the city and to grow the local one, schemes for institutionalization of life-long learning should be put on place; trainings, internships and work-study opportunities should be created. The focus should be on skill building, and upskilling based on the market needs.
 - Create institutional internship and work-study schemes (this can be beneficial for the students that left the city for studying)
 - The body responsible for career advising can be responsible for career coaching; consulting businesses and professionals on the market trends and up-skilling opportunities.
 - Get free-schemes should be developed both for skilling and upskilling
 - On later stage, technical training and certification programs should be established
- 2. Certifications, Technical Programs and Higher education-** for the long-term talent attraction, retention and cultivation, certificate and technical programs, higher education programs should be revised based on the plans for the development of the city; what industry is planned to be developed, is the emphasis on IT, architecture, energy or something else? The education programs should be in line with the community development plan. One should complement another.

Having well set up research capacity that continuously assesses the needs of the market and cooperation with businesses, educational institutions and government can result in successful talent attraction, retention and ultimately cultivation.

SIXTH stage: Plan for the Future – The ultimate aim of talent acquisition should be talent cultivation. For the purpose, the following needs to be achieved;

1. Skilling and upskilling (masterclasses, internships, different clubs)- starting from the school level
2. Career counseling- starting from the school level
3. Career fares starting from school years
4. Raise awareness about all the opportunities existing in the community

Important Tips:

Focus on data to guide the strategy – To be able to create right strategy, to monitor the performance of the talent attraction program and move forward, data driven decisions should be made. Institutional framework for data collection and analysis should be created that would provide data on current SWOT of the community, needs of the labor market, needs of the target talent and finally the performance of talent attraction strategy; whether the city is on the right track.

Establish cohesive collaboration- Effective collaboration between policy makers, civil society organizations, businesses and academia are key for the success of talent attraction strategy for the city.

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