

## **Thesis proposal VT25 – Unit of Management & Technology**

### **Title: Industry-University Collaborations: The Role of the Master Thesis in Companies' Talent Management Strategies**

There is a common understanding that the workforce of an organization is a key factor driving competitiveness and change. However, in times of disruptive technological change an organization's existing workforce might end up becoming a "rigidity. Digitalization, AI, electrification, battery technology and sustainability technologies are all examples of new technologies that imply a renewal of an organization's competence base.

Within the Talent Management literature there is a debate about "Make or Buy" when it comes to renewal of competence. The "Buy" strategy means that organizations recruit and thereby compete on the job market in order to attract candidates, often to fill predefined roles. Conversely, the "Make" strategy means that organizations develop the competence internally, for example via trainee programs and training. Noteworthy however is that a Master Thesis from technical universities is somewhere in between. On the one hand, a student that is recruited via a Master Thesis can be seen as a "Buy" approach to recruitment. But, on the other hand, the recruitment contains also traces of a "Make" recruitment strategy as the student has spent half a year on a topic predefined by the organizations and often conducted within the organization.

This Master Thesis project will address this above mentioned phenomenon. Example of research questions are:

- Which are the companies that systematic use master Thesis as recruitment tool over several years?
- How have the topic of the Master Thesis change depending on the need for (new) competence in the organizations?
- How large percentage of the Master Thesis students receive job offerings at the same company that they have done their Master Thesis? How long have they stayed at that company?
- ...

This Master thesis links to INDEK's strategic development and aims to investigate how companies use Master Thesis in their Talent Management approach.

Methodological approach:

- Secondary data based on a review of existing theses from Dept. of Industrial Economics & Management
- Interviews with relevant people at selected companies. The selection of companies is done based on findings from the above.

No. of students:

- 2 students who are interested in competence transformation in organizations

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