

Recruitipedia

Welcome to Recruitipedia, ExecutiveSurf's regular overview of the talent landscape around the world. This month we are featuring Lapland, our special edition for Christmas.

LAPLAND

Lapland is the largest and most northerly region of Finland. Lapland is bordered in the west by Sweden, in the north by Norway, and in the east by Russia. The capital of Lapland, Rovaniemi, lies on the Arctic Circle.

Lapland is home to about 3.4% of Finland's population, and is the least densely populated area in the country. In 2014, Lapland had a population of 181,815 of whom 177,950 speak Finnish.



■ Population (96%) ■ Sami (4%)

The indigenous inhabitants, the Sami, represent a minority of only 7,000. The number of elves exceeds the Sami, representing 8,000 of the total. Finland is officially a bilingual country - Finnish and Swedish - but most Finns also speak English.

SANTA CLAUS

Legend has it that a Patras nobleman, fallen on hard times having failed to marry off his three daughters, decided to send them into a life of prostitution. It was only the intervention of the future bishop of Myra that saved them from their fate one night, by throwing a bag of coins through the window of the eldest daughter. The following night, he did the same to provide the second daughter with a dowry. But on the third night he found the window closed, so he dropped the precious bag down the chimney instead, starting a delivery mode that lasts to this day. The mystery benefactor was St. Nicholas, a saint so prodigious that its said that as a newborn, he stood up immediately and was breastfed only twice a week. Imprisoned and tortured under the persecution of Diocletian, he found his freedom with his successor Constantine. Over the centuries, the giver of gifts, became a powerful saint, the most popular bar the Holy Family. The 6th of December, the date of his death in the year of 342, marks the beginning of the Christmas season.

Protestantism and Puritanism eradicated the Saints and Christmas, but with impeccable brand awareness well beyond his spiritual training, St. Nicholas got the better of the Lutheran Reformation. He bounced back with a vengeance and took power in puritan England stealing the main holiday and becoming Father Christmas.

Not bad for a kind soul from the Middle East who moved with the times and as version 2.0 became the jolly old man, riding his white donkey and bearing gifts for every good child.

During the 1800s - a period of consolidation - the holy bearer of gifts and the little man takes the shape of a gnome able to slip down chimneys and drive a sleigh pulled by reindeers.

But the stroke of genius of the former Saint is to ride the boom of the post-recession consumer society. The contract with Coca Cola revolutionised his iconography and gave him his final colours, red and white. He now sits centre stage as the star of Christmas creating millions of (temporary) jobs and to the delight of many ageing wannabe actors.

JOB MARKET



* There are some 70 360 workplaces in Lapland. That number triples during the Christmas season.

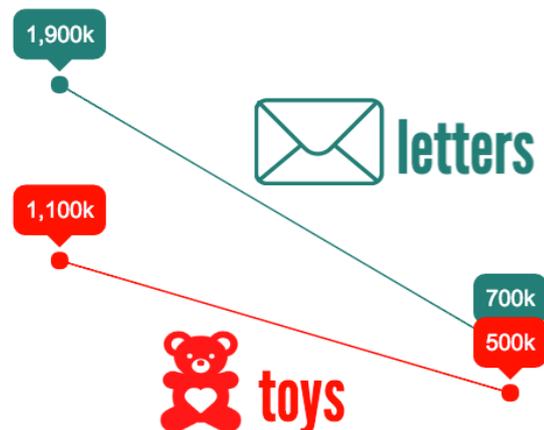
* The concept “hidden labour market” in Lapland refers to open vacancies, which employers don’t advertise publicly. These jobs can only be found via personal networks or open applications. It is estimated that about 70% of all vacancies in Lapland exist in the hidden labour market.

* Lapp executives are notoriously loyal and the idea of a “job for life” still pervades all levels of the professional elving community.

In spite of this unswerving loyalty, their profession has been decimated in recent times with most actual toy manufacturing now being outsourced to China, Vietnam and other emerging economies, whilst processing of children’s letters is predominantly outsourced to contact centres in Mumbai.

The plight of the elves has been exacerbated by some allegedly sharp working practices and contractual arrangements, which do not reach EU legal basic criteria. So-called ‘zero hours’ contracts are widely used. Recruitipedia contacted the office of Santa Claus to challenge them on this point: “We take the welfare of our employees extremely seriously. We refute any allegations of sub-standard treatment.”, said their Head of Corporate Communications.

offshoring: 1990-2015



No surprises from a well-oiled PR machine that has brushed off recent scandals including a global fiscal ‘sweetheart’ deal mooting a re-location of Santa’s headquarters to the Republic of Ireland and animal welfare scandals, which exposed reindeer forced to work a 36 hour day on the 25th of December which took them from the Christmas Islands around the world and back again - all on a single night shift. “Our workers are our most important asset. We take great pride

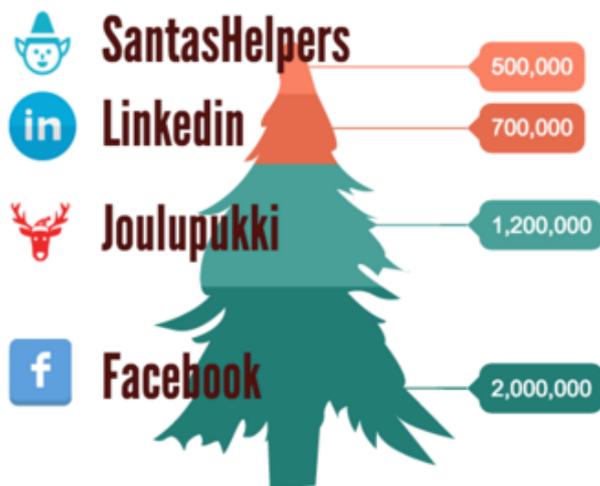
in the way we have cleaned up both working conditions and also our global supply chain. Additionally we have ambitious plans for rolling out a broad reaching corporate social responsibility program which aims to put something back into the local community.” continues the spokesperson.

But that community is seemingly keen to diversify regardless. Millennial elves have swiftly re-invented themselves as knowledge workers. Aided by a level of connectivity befitting the Baltic and Nordic States, these knowledge workers, whilst performing all their Christmas duties in a fraction of the time it took to their forebears, have used their expertise in logistics, particularly in the gaming industry to diversify into parallel and affiliated fields. Lapp elves are now considered world leaders in the digital postproduction, digital media and music industries. Not bad for a land which was once considered the epitome of tradition where the fat-cat CEO seat has only ever been occupied by one person.

RECRUITMENT TRENDS

Elves are highly connected and their rapacious social networking activity is widely considered to have been the blueprint for later online versions such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

Studies show the Nordics are some of the most connected markets in the world in terms of Internet use, and this is reflected in their adoption of professional networking online. In 2010 over 90% of Finnish companies were using social media for business purposes. The most commonly used social networks are LinkedIn and Facebook. In Finland, there are 700,000 LinkedIn users and there are more than 2 million Facebook users - that is over 40% of the population.



Although LinkedIn network is increasing in popularity among Finns, Facebook is still the primary way for them to follow and to communicate with each other and with companies. But at least in one half of the year, there are other networks that are more effective than LinkedIn and Facebook.

These networks were created for recruiters and job seekers specialising in the Christmas industry, but they are becoming effective year-round and are less and less restricted to temporary Christmas jobs.

The concept of the hidden job market cuts both ways and foreign firms hiring managers would do well to tap into it. This can be done by identifying and then communicating opportunities through a small, but selected, number of opinion leaders. These leaders will then subtly spread the word both through online and offline social channels.

It's no surprise that social networking is the primary executive recruitment channel in Lapland, but beware of imitations. Authenticity must be double checked by knowledgeable talent market observers. There are hundreds of false Santa profiles on social media as well as thousands of companies claiming to have his address in Lapland. Fake elf profiles known as Trolls are known to operate, particularly in the run-up to Christmas when folk are at their most vulnerable/drunk. Many executive search firms can find themselves sending unwitting candidates to interview with fake or non-existent versions of Santa and his company.

As ever, the message is 'Know your market'. It's easy to think that connecting on LinkedIn in English will be good enough. Nowhere is this less the case than in Lapland!

Wishing you a Merry Christmas from ExecutiveSurf.

Please note that the content and data of this Recruitipedia is almost entirely fictitious (for those who don't believe in Santa Claus). Nevertheless, we would like to reassure our valued readers that no elves were harmed in the writing of this issue.