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# Corporate Image Branding Strategies to Attract Engineering Talent

A'Shawn Lora Mitchell  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

A'Shawn L. Mitchell

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Abstract

Corporate Image Branding Strategies to Attract Engineering Talent

by

A'Shawn L. Mitchell

MS, New York University, 2006

BS, North Carolina State University, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2019

## Abstract

Aerospace and defense leaders need corporate image branding strategies to improve their attraction of engineering talent to the industry. The purpose of this single case study was to explore corporate image branding strategies leaders use at an aerospace and defense company to attract talent and increase competitive advantage. The framework for this study was the recruitment equity model. The sample population consisted of 5 marketing leaders and 5 talent acquisition leaders of an aerospace and defense company in the eastern region of the United States. The study participants had a minimum of 5 years of experience attracting engineering talent using branding strategies. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and a review of the company's talent attraction plan. The data analysis process included methodological triangulation, coding, and identifying themes. Four themes emerged: having an attractive place to work, using social media to attract talent, ensuring the mission is the basis for attracting talent, and attracting untapped talent. Findings from this study might assist aerospace and defense leaders in implementing corporate image branding strategies that close the gap of talent attraction to the aerospace and defense industry. The implications for positive social change include the potential to increase innovation and reduce national security vulnerabilities by attracting talent to the aerospace and defense industry. The business leaders of aerospace and defense will keep the industry viable by attracting top engineering talent to a workforce that is responsible for eliminating the advanced threats to the nation and its allies.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this body of work to Major Shawn Mitchell. How blessed I am to be your mother. God truly blessed me by choosing me to birth such an intelligent, kind-hearted young man with a magnetic personality. Every day I have to better myself to be the mom that you need. You keep me on my toes; you keep me learning and loving at your every turn. Although this doctorate has been the hardest thing I have ever accomplished, the tools I used to get through are the same tools I am applying while raising you: tenacity, courage, strength, and endurance. Tenacity is about determination, will, and staying power; I am determined to pour in to you and contribute to you being an extraordinary human being. I have to have courage to parent you using unconventional methods that are foreign to me and outside of how I grew up. I need strength when I think I have failed you and don't respond in the way that you may need. However, I stay the course and my endurance always pays off. It is my heavenly request that all the sacrifice, tears, and hard work I put in to my dissertation will always contribute to you having the best life. I am so proud of you, my love. Mommy loves you past the sky.

I also want to dedicate this work to the little Black girls and boys in the world who dare to be courageous and different despite where they come from. I pray that this body of work opens doors for me so that I can leave them open for you.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In an ever-evolving digital world, technology companies and engineering jobs have become plentiful (Patel, 2015). Companies such as Google and Facebook compete fiercely for talent, but aerospace and defense contractors have to work harder for a similar result (Westphal, 2015). Organizational leaders failing to attract top talent experience a competitive disadvantage, especially in science, engineering, and mathematics careers (Amelia & Nasution, 2016). Company leaders have cited poor company image and business sector image as a reason for having difficulty attracting talent (Cairns, 2015). Überschaer, Baum, Bietz, and Kabst (2017) argued that, in the recruitment process, knowledge of the image of a firm is critical for job seekers. Applicants' knowledge of a potential employer influences their behaviors and decisions involving an organization, including whether to apply for a job there (Cable & Turban, 2001).

### **Background of the Problem**

Employer branding can position a company's image for potential employees to view the organization as a great place to work (Verma & Ahmad, 2016). Stariņeca (2015) identified employer branding as a solution to attracting talent. In a competitive work environment, positioning a company favorably is key to recruiting top talent (Verma & Ahmad, 2016). Westphal (2015) postulated that science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers are highly sought after, but aerospace or the aerospace and defense (A&D) industry, interchangeably, remains behind in attracting talent. Based on the lack

of success in recruitment efforts, employer attractiveness is a challenge in the A&D industry (Westphal, 2015).

Companies' inability to maintain an attractive image is detrimental to the businesses' success and branding becomes critical to competitive advantage (Veljković & Kaličanin, 2016). To remain competitive, companies have to become highly responsive and adopt creative talent management strategies (Schlechter & Bussin, 2015). Within an organization, employer attractiveness is the core of talent acquisition (Schlechter & Bussin, 2015). Organizational leaders have a competitive advantage when they incorporate branding strategies in their recruiting practices (Rampl, Opitz, Welpel, & Kenning, 2016). The A&D industry could benefit from implementing branding strategies that positively impact employer attractiveness.

### **Problem Statement**

High-tech companies are breaking into the advanced technology market space and attracting quality human resources, leaving the A&D industry at a competitive disadvantage for attracting top talent (Tellier, 2017). Among 3,700 company leaders, 70% identified attracting new or different talent as critical to competing effectively (Kane, Palmer, Phillips, & Kiron, 2017). Furthermore, Rampl et al. (2016) postulated a need for business leaders to leverage organizational branding strategies to positively impact talent attraction. The general business problem is that some business leaders lack the ability to attract workplace talent, which may lead to a competitive disadvantage when recruiting. The specific business problem is that some A&D talent acquisition and

marketing leaders lack corporate image branding strategies to increase a competitive advantage in engineering talent attraction.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to explore corporate image branding strategies that A&D talent acquisition and marketing leaders use to increase a competitive advantage in attracting engineering talent. The targeted population consisted of five marketing and five talent acquisition leaders with at least 5 years of successful engineering talent attraction experience that used branding strategies to increase their competitive advantage in engineering talent attraction. The population came from one company in the A&D industry in the eastern region of the United States. The engineering workforce is essential to innovation and economic growth, and innovation is a critical factor for society's economic development (Calabrese, Campisi, Costa, & Di Pillo, 2013; Landivar, 2013). The corporate image branding strategies of A&D recruiting and marketing leaders may be critical to attracting talent that might increase product development and innovation as well as contribute to national security.

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a qualitative method for this study. A researcher uses the qualitative method for gathering experiences with phenomena directly from participants (Birkinshaw, Brannen, & Tung, 2011). A qualitative method is appropriate for this study because the participants' personal testimony can provide insights into their experiences in relation to the research question. Quantitative researchers use numerical data to test hypotheses about variables' relationships or differences (Babones, 2015). Because I did

not use numerical data to test a hypothesis, a quantitative method was not applicable for this study. Mixed-method researchers combine qualitative and quantitative research, and mixed methodology can be extremely demanding for the novice researcher (Greenwood & Terry, 2012). Coupling quantitative statistical data and qualitative collected data requires an experienced researcher's skill set (Greenwood & Terry, 2012). I am a novice researcher; therefore, I did not use mixed methods.

I used a single case study design for this research. A case study researcher investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within the context of a real-world environment, using observation, interviews, and archival data (Yin, 2018). A phenomenological researcher focuses on the meanings of the participants' lived experiences (Willis, Sullivan-Bolyai, Knafl, & Cohen, 2016). A phenomenological design was inappropriate for this study because I used multiple sources, such as interviews and archival data, to achieve triangulation and did not concentrate solely on the lived experience of the participants. An ethnographic researcher immerses into the culture of the participants to obtain a better understanding of behaviors and background related to the research (Wolcott, 2008). My research did not include immersion into the culture of the participants; therefore, an ethnographic design was not suitable for this study.

### **Research Question**

The central research question for this study is: What corporate image branding strategies do aerospace and defense talent acquisition and marketing leaders use to maintain a competitive advantage for attracting engineering talent?

### **Interview Questions**

The following interview questions were used to obtain data toward answering the research question:

1. How does your firm attract engineering talent?
2. What strategies does your company use to increase an engineering job seeker's knowledge regarding your organization?
3. How does your firm use employer image to attract engineering talent?
4. How does your firm use employer reputation to attract engineering talent?
5. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of the strategies for attracting engineering talent using corporate image branding?
6. What other information can you share that may assist with this study?

### **Conceptual Framework**

In this study, I used the recruitment equity model (REM) as the conceptual framework. Cable and Turban (2001) defined REM as the value of a job seeker's employer knowledge, based on the effect of the recruitment process in an organization. Business leaders use REM as their primary framework to measure success or failure when recruiting (Cable & Turban, 2001). An investment in REM is valuable to an organization because a job seeker's response to REM tenets can determine the likelihood of attraction to a company (Cable & Turban, 2001). Cable and Turban noted REM has three tenets: (a) employer familiarity, (b) employer reputation, and (c) employer image.

Organizational leaders can use the REM framework to increase employee attraction (Yu & Davis, 2017). A core tenet of REM is positive employee reputation,



which results in differentiation from competitors, exponential recruitment outcomes, and better financial returns (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Similar to a consumer's preference for a brand, organizational leaders can use REM to enhance employer familiarity. Furthermore, job seekers' partiality to an organization serves as an indicator of their knowledge about the company (Alshathry, Clarke, & Goodman, 2017). The development of REM components, such as an employer's image, can result in measurable returns on talent attraction, attrition, and internal satisfaction (Lane, 2016). A leader's use of REM within the aerospace industry may prove vital to understanding the strategies needed to increase engineering talent attraction. The use of REM could reveal best practices needed to increase engineering talent attraction and improve competitive advantage.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Corporate image:* The main source of corporate reputation and corporate branding and a powerful discriminator from competitors (Kant, Jaiswal, & Mishra, 2017).

*Employer attractiveness:* The benefits a job seeker sees when identifying the desirability of working for a company (Altmann & Sues, 2015).

*Employee branding:* Managing corporate identities by creating an image of the firm, both internally and externally, that displays the firm as a distinct and desirable employer (Kashive & Khanna, 2017).

*War for talent:* The increased intensity of competition among organizations to create, attract, and retain the best talent (Porschitz, Smircich, & Calás, 2016).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Assumptions are factors in a study considered to be true without proof (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2014). The first assumption in this study was that all participants answered the interview questions openly and honestly. The second assumption was that marketing and talent acquisition leaders were the correct population of participants for the study. The third assumption was that marketing and talent acquisition in the A&D industry is linked to corporate image and continues to be a problem for the industry.

Marshall and Rossman (2014) defined limitations as weaknesses in a study beyond the control of the researcher. The first limitation in this study was that, because of the small sample size, the findings may not apply to a larger population. Next, limiting data collection to interviews and archival documents may not have captured findings evident from other instruments.

Delimitations are scope confines of the research under study (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). My first delimitation in this study was the use of REM as the sole conceptual framework to analyze the findings. The second delimitation was that I limited my sample size to five marketing leaders and five talent acquisition leaders in the United States. Furthermore, the perspective of just the marketing and talent acquisition leaders of the company under study limits the breadth of my research.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The study's findings may reduce the gap in business practice regarding the coupling of branding and attracting engineering talent in the A&D industry. Slaughter,

Cable, and Turban (2015) postulated that corporate branding images have become essential to recruiting practices. Employer image is often used in the labor market to differentiate companies from their competitors (Slaughter et al., 2015). Successful corporate image branding strategies for attracting engineering talent might be revealed in the results of this study's findings to enable other organizations to improve their competitive advantage.

### **Implications for Social Change**

STEM workers make up only 6% of the U.S. workforce and are critical to economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness globally (Landivar, 2013). Identifying possible pathways for improving the A&D industry's ability to recruit engineering talent may contribute to the United States' robustness to innovate. Innovation and technology are critical factors in a highly technical industry such as A&D (Satta, Esposito De Falco, Penco, & Parola, 2015). Innovation activities impact a business's competitiveness, business survival, growth, and employment (Calabrese et al., 2013). Innovation is also a key influencer for social and economic change (Abella, Ortiz-de-Urbina-Criado, & De-Pablos-Heredero, 2017). Businesses that take advantage of innovation play a pivotal role in creating new markets, developing rapid technological progress, and enhancing of employees and families' living standards (Saray, Patache, & Ceran, 2017).

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

This review of the professional and academic literature includes an exploration of various sources to address strategies for attracting talent in the A&D industry for competitive advantage. To find relevant articles to conduct the literature review, I used

the Walden University library to access ABI/Inform Complete, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Emerald Management Journals, SAGE, and Google Scholar. The literature review includes an overview of leadership for human resources, talent management, talent acquisition, marketing leaders, the aerospace and defense industry, the state of the STEM workforce, REM, and comparative theories. The findings of this study may help bridge the gap in business strategies for the A&D industry when REM is incorporated in their talent attraction activities. In this study, I used peer-reviewed articles, seminal books, business-focused textbooks, and government reports found using the following search terms: *aerospace and defense industry, branding strategies, corporate image, corporate image branding, employee attraction, employer attraction, employer of choice, employer familiarity, employer image, employer reputation, human resource management, marketing leaders, recruitment equity model, science, technology, engineering and math recruitment, talent acquisition, and war for talent.*

The 140 references that comprise the literature review include 135 scholarly peer-reviewed articles, representing 96.4%, and three government websites and two seminal books representing. The literature review contains 124 references published within the past 5 years (2014–2018), which is 88.6%. Earlier work shared in the literature review consists of 11.4%.

### **Recruitment Equity Model**

Cable and Turban (2001) defined REM as the value of a job seeker's employer knowledge, which is derived from the response to a recruiting organization during the recruitment process. Literature that focuses on organizational attractiveness applies the

REM construct (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Identifying qualified talent and attracting the best and brightest to an organization has become a war for talent (Cable & Turban, 2001). In a competitive labor market, being viewed as a great place to work has gained momentum, and thus, employer branding is critical to recruitment (Cable & Turban, 2001). Employer branding is the cumulative perception associated with a product or service held by a consumer that differentiates companies from their competitors (Kashive & Khanna, 2017; Keller, 1993). Employer branding is an organizational strategy that makes a firm desirable and individualizes the company, creating a competitive advantage in the labor market (Theurer et al., 2018). The idea behind the REM framework is that a job seekers attraction originates from the brand equity or perception of the potential employer (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

Cable and Turban (2001) defined *brand equity* as the value placed on a brand by consumers' brand knowledge and the measurement of consumer responsiveness versus other brands in the same market. Keller (1998) described *brand equity* as the variance in preference obtained due to brand identification compared to the preference of the same product without brand identification. Cable and Turban suggested the same concept of brand equity could be tied to recruiting in which job seekers apply the same beliefs to a potential employer that consumers link to a product or service. Firms invest in building their brand equity and make a return on their investment through increased market share and financial performance outcomes (Datta, Ailawadi, & Van Heerde, 2017). Cable and Turban's REM framework was derived from brand equity literature to understand the role organizations play in recruitment. For an applicant to consider a firm as a place for

employment, the job seeker has to see important value or equity in the potential employer (Arijs, Botero, Michiels, Molly, 2018). Cable and Turban applied the concept of brand equity to recruitment for the REM framework. Similar to a brand equity perception, job seekers' employer knowledge results in positive or negative beliefs about an organization (Kashive & Khanna, 2017).

### **Employer Knowledge**

Employer knowledge is how knowledgeable a potential applicant is about an employer's brand (Cable & Turban, 2001). Employer knowledge drives a job seeker's partiality to an organization (Alshathry et al., 2017). The sources of a job seeker's employer knowledge and the outcomes that increase employee attraction originate from the REM construct (Cable & Turban, 2001; Kashive & Khanna, 2017; Yu & Davis, 2017). Cable and Turban contended that the sources of employer knowledge are (a) employer familiarity, (b) employer reputation, and (c) employer image. The tenets of REM influence an applicant's attraction to an organization (Kashive & Khanna, 2017).

Job applicants rely on employer knowledge in the decision-making process of applying for a position (Wei, Chang, Lin, Liang, 2015). Employer knowledge is the template that applicants use to store and recall any information related to an organization (Kashive & Khanna, 2017). Without knowledge, an individual's ability to make a decision diminishes and they are left to draw on other available information about an organization (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011). A job seeker gains information about a company through recruitment messaging, which provides a look into the company's culture and exposes the applicant to information about the position and the

company (Wei et al., 2015). Sommer et al. (2016) stated a company's popularity is highly influenced by the available knowledge and information about the organization. Corporate websites and social media allow recruiting firms to share company information with potential employees via profiles, posts, and videos (Priyadarshini, Kumar, & Jha, 2017). Potential applicants' perceptions of an organization are obtained through information gathered about the company and are the first indicator of attraction (Magbool et al., 2016). Employer knowledge consists of employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image (Cable & Turban, 2001; Theurer et al., 2018).

**Employer familiarity.** Employer familiarity is described as a job seeker's level of awareness of a company and information about the firm (Theurer et al., 2018). Cable and Turban (2001) stated that employer familiarity is the overall perception a potential employee has of an employer's organizational attractiveness. The most attractive employers are the organizations that candidates are most familiar with; employer familiarity is vital to job pursuit decisions (Khan, 2017). Kashive and Khanna (2017) depicted employer familiarity as the recall and recognition of a company's name and brand.

A job seeker's decision to apply for a position is driven by employer familiarity or awareness, which motivates the overall organizational attractiveness (Kashive & Khanna, 2018). Cable and Turban (2001) use employer awareness and employer familiarity synonymously. Organizations that are more familiar to job seekers have been viewed as the most attractive places to work (Cable & Turban, 2001). Sun (2018) stated that a

potential applicant's familiarization of an organization, directly and indirectly, impacts the attractiveness of a company, which can be a positive or negative impact.

Employer familiarity can also produce an unattractive perception to a job seeker when negative opinions exist, causing the applicant not to apply for a position within a company (Sun, 2018). According to Brooks et al. (2003), employer familiarity is anything linked to a job applicant's memory about a company, favorable or unfavorable. Theurer et al. (2018) posited that employer familiarity can have a downside that negatively impacts organizational attractiveness. Both positive and negative information is available about an organization; people tend to focus more on the negative, tarnishing a job seeker's recollection about an employer (Wei et al., 2017). Alshathry et al. (2017) advocated that contradictory associations about a company could cause a person to build a belief about an organization negatively impacting the brand. The relationship between employer familiarity and reputation is significant; employer familiarity is the precursor to employer reputation and employer image (Brooks et al., 2003; Theurer et al., 2018).

**Employer reputation.** A more reputable company is more likely to have increased familiarity in the labor market (Alshathry et al., 2017). Cable and Turban (2001) described employer reputation as a potential employee's beliefs regarding the public's opinion about an organization. Employer reputation is a collective construct of impressions on how others perceive the firm (Helm, 2011). Corporate reputations are shaped by stakeholders' expectations and negative or positive value judgments that shape the perception of the organization (Puncheva-Michelotti, Vocino, Michelotti, & Gahan, 2018). Stakeholders may give a firm the benefit of the doubt if the organization has a



good reputation (Verčič & Ćorić, 2018). Khan (2017) explained that candidates are more attracted to organizations with a brand they are familiar with and that has a positive reputation; being a part of a firm with these attributes brings a sense of pride to the applicant.

Superior firm performance can be attributed to a positive corporate reputation (Schaarschmidt, 2016). Puncheva-Michelotti et al. (2018) identified employer reputation as a direct influence on organizational competitiveness. Competitive enablers, productivity, morale, and employee commitment are also driven by employer reputation (Kucukusta, Denizci Guillet, & Chan, 2016). Khan (2017) noted that high premiums are being placed on the reputation and brand of an employer as a discriminator for competitive advantage in the war for talent. An employer's reputation determines its position of workplace attractiveness in the labor market and is a differentiator for competitive advantage (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Höflinger, Nagel, and Sandner (2018) emphasized that, to have a compelling competitive advantage, an employer must have a reputation with attributes that rivals are unable to reproduce or implement.

Employer reputation is influenced by employer familiarity even if the opinion is negative (Theurer et al., 2018). Alshathry et al. (2017) wrote that firms with strong employer reputations are more likely to have increased publicity than employers that do not. Unfavorable communications about a company can have negative consequences to their reputation (Walsh, Schaarschmidt, & von Kortzfleisch, 2016). Jain and Bhatt (2015) mentioned that an applicant is inclined to accept a decrease in pay from a company with a positive reputation versus entertaining employment at an unfavorable company.

Subsequently, employers with negative reputations are deemed as unattractive to job seekers (Zhan, Noe, & Klein, 2017).

A company's reputation impacts the employer image of the organization (Kaur & Pingle, 2018). Reputation differs from image because reputation is about a general public evaluation of a firm (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Employee attraction is about focusing on the whole entity of an organization and not solely focusing on a single factor such as employer reputation (Alshathry et al., 2017).

**Employer image.** Cable and Turban (2001) described employer image— analogous to brands—as the set of beliefs and attributes a potential applicant has derived about an organization. Employer image is a job seekers' synthesis of cognitive representations as an employer at a particular organization (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Lievens (2017) designated employer image as an individual's global impression of a firm and the recollection of organization-related information. Furthermore, Jacek (2016) noted that employer image is not derived solely from information the enterprise disseminates to the public; the image is formed from a multitude of messages from various sources. There is a positive connection between employer image and organizational attractiveness (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

Building an employer image can help with organization attractiveness (Vnouckova, Urbancova, & Smolova, 2018). Employer image plays a critical role in a job seeker's willingness to pursue a job at an organization (Breugh & Stake, 2000). Wei et al. (2016) postulated that employer image has a direct impact on intentions to apply. In addition, Claus, Giardini, and Kabst (2015) divulged that an excellent employer image

contributes to the organization's ability to attract highly qualified applicants. Pursuit intentions are driven by the employer image of that sector (Peiffer, Habibpour, Jegers, & Pepermans, 2018). Due to shortages in the labor market, employer image has become necessary for companies to make themselves attractive to job seekers and competitive within their industry (Lievens, 2017; Lievens, & Highhouse, 2003).

The ability to attract superior human resources gives an organization a sustainable competitive advantage (Baum & Kabst, 2013). Employer image can have positive consequences for stakeholders and the organization by distinguishing itself from competitors (Lievens, 2017). Baum and Kabst (2013) stated that strong employer images create points of differentiation among competitors. The inability to attract top talent impacts a firm's competitiveness (Vnouckova et al., 2018). Firms with positive images have the competitive leverage to attract and sustain new investors; the contrast is also real (Baruk Agnieszka, & Goliszek, 2017; Lievens, 2017).

Employer image is based on the attributes a potential job seeker believes are held about a firm and the people who work there (Cable & Turban, 2001). Lievens (2017) maintained that an employer's image affects the level of attraction applicants have for that employer. Further, Kaur and Pingle (2018) highlighted that employer image has various advantages to recruiting, such as attracting the best talent. There is some coupling between recruitment activity, employer image, and job seeker outcomes (Theurer et al., 2018). In addition, Theurer et al. (2018) stated that employer image influences an applicant's reaction to an employer. An employer's image is a strong predictor of a potential employee's organizational attractiveness (Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018).

Moreover, Lievens and Slaughter (2016) posited organizations that invest in employer image to make their workplace attractive yield better organizational performance.

### **Comparative Recruitment Theories**

Cable and Turban (2001) discovered the majority of the research that has been conducted has not focused on employer knowledge, but rather on organizational attractiveness versus what the job seeker believes about an organization. REM focuses on the job seekers' employer knowledge, which goes in depth and explains job choice decisions (Cable & Turban, 2001). Cable and Turban also found that firms make a vested interest in implementing recruitment strategies to attract the best and brightest talent. Moreover, to advance organizational performance, A&D leaders may prescribe contrasting models and theories to their recruitment strategies.

**Customer-based brand equity model.** Keller (1993) developed consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) model to explore the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer behavior in relation to the marketing of a brand. Positive customer-based brand equity is measured based on favorable reaction to product, price, promotion, or distribution of the brand as opposed to another fictitious brand with the same marketing mix (Keller, 1993). CBBE was derived from the brand equity model (Aaker, 1991). Two tenets of brand equity are brand strength and brand value (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995). Brand equity is developed from a brand that is sustainable, recognizable, and reputable with a favorable image for enhanced competitive advantage (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Companies seeking to have a successful brand may want to apply CBBE to their business model (Di Benedetto & Kim, 2016). Aerospace and defense leaders who

incorporate CBBE into their recruitment strategy may experience enhanced employer image that could strengthen their competitive advantage.

**Signaling theory.** Spence (1973) introduced signaling theory noting the goal of signaling theory is to reduce the communication asymmetry between two parties in the job market. A signal is a cue that aids an individual in deciding if they are uncertain and do not have all the information to make an immediate choice, they will connect to any data available to take a position on a matter (Spence, 2002). Lack of knowledge can impact an individual's ability to decide (Connelly et al., 2011). When an individual is unfamiliar with a brand, signaling theory is commonly used to transform that brand to being commonly known (Kim, Chang, Vaidyanathan, & Stoel, 2018). Gregory, Meade, and Thompson (2013) explained, variables such as mission statements, websites, social media, and company benefits are unrelated to a job, but serve as signals for attributes of the organization. When applied to marketing and recruiting, signaling theory states without employer information, the potential applicant is left to draw on inferences from observable characteristics (Casper, Wayne, & Manegold, 2013). Chang and Chin (2018) postulated signaling theory is a tool that human resources leaders can use to determine the effects of information flow. Therefore, A&D leaders that add signaling theory to their recruitment strategy could improve their employer knowledge and familiarity.

**Resource-based view.** Developed in 1986 and 1991 by Birger Wernerfelt, C. K. Prahalad, Gary Hamel, and Jay Barney, the resource-based view (RBV) model identifies resources as the answer to a competitive advantage. According to RBV, an organization must be valuable, rare, and inimitable to sustain competitive advantage (Barney, 1986).

Barney (1991) stated the key resources of RBV are tangible and intangible. He explained tangible resources are assets that are physical, can be purchased by competitors, and ultimately exhibit little advantage, such as land, buildings, equipment, and human capital. Barney also identified intangible resources as anything related to the company with a non-physical presence, such as intellectual property, trademarks, and brand reputation, these sources are the main contributors to a company's competitive advantage. According to Hoskisson, Gambeta, Green, and Li (2018) the RBV model proves sustained competitive advantage is achieved by investments in resources that are unique to the company, such as company reputation. RBV depicts reputation as an intangible resource that directly impacts a firm's ability to differentiate from their competitors (Höflinger et al., 2018). Moreover, aerospace leaders that use RBV in their recruitment strategy may focus on enhancing employer reputation to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

### **Leadership**

An essential leadership characteristic is a commitment to the goals and objectives of the organization (Pidgeon, 2017). Leaders are responsible for producing an effective strategy for the vision and direction of an organization, which contributes to the competitive advantage of the firm (Greer, Lusch, & Hitt, 2017). To successfully execute the organization's competitiveness leaders must use human capital (Davenport, 2015). Human capital drives innovation and economic growth (Reiner, Meyer, & Sardadvar, 2016). Moreover, Muscalu, and Ciocan (2016) emphasized business leader's focus for the 21st century is to attract talented people and improve performance.

As the shortage of talent increases in organizations due to an aging work population, and globalization, firms are motivated to identify innovative solutions for attracting new talent (Boitmane & Blumberga, 2016). Greige Frangieh and Khayr Yaacoub (2017) argued best practices of responsible leaders include a human resource responsible function. The highest concern of an organizational leader is attracting talented employees with the core competencies of the organization (Magbool, Amran, Nejati, & Jayaraman, 2016).

**Human resource leaders.** Anselmsson, Bondesson, and Melin (2016) proposed there is a direct connection between profitability and human resource management. Human resource leaders identify current and future needs for talent in an organization (Hussain, 2016). In high demand industries, the most pressing issue is new talent attraction (Boitmane & Blumberga, 2016). Human resources provided the necessary tools, knowledge, and systems for an organization to recruit, select and develop employees (Greer & Stevens, 2015). Human resources play an integral role in building leaders to endorse a talent management strategy (Erasmus, Naidoo, & Joubert, 2017). Moreover, the purpose of human resources is to attract and retain the talented workforce (Magbool, Amran, Nejati, & Jayaraman, 2016; Mngomezulu et al., 2015).

**Talent management.** Stone and Deadrick (2015) interpreted talent management as the anticipation and development of a plan to meet the human resource needs of the organization. A systematic attraction of high potential talent who can impact the business now or in a future state is the definition of talent management (Mngomezulu et al., 2015). Good talent management can exponentially improve strategy execution and operational

excellence (Erasmus et al., 2017). Talent Management is the driving force that affects competitive advantage for an organization (Mngomezulu et al., 2015). STEM is set to be a leader in the workforce and currently there are organizations that attract STEM workers well and those that do not (Eichinger, 2018).

Due to sources such as shifts in the economy and globalization, talent management has become a motivator for change within human resources (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Unique fields such as A&D organizations are seeing a shortage of engineering talent and an increase in competition for talented workers in the industry (Stone & Deadrick, 2015). Effective talent management is profitable to an organization (Mngomezulu et al., 2015). Talent management is a key discriminator for competitive advantage and success of an organization (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). Organizations in STEM related fields have a challenge attracting top talent (Eichinger, 2018). Specifically, in engineering environments human resources must remain creative with their strategies to attract talent and sustain success within an organization (Stone & Deadrick, 2015).

**Marketing leaders.** Companies have discovered that marketing leaders play a pivotal role in sustaining business performance (O’Keeffe, Ozuem, & Lancaster, 2016). Marketing leaders focus on developing a company’s exterior perception of the organization also known as external marketing. Meanwhile, internal marketing focuses on the culture and identity within the organization (O’Keeffe et al., 2016). Reiner et al., (2016) postulated when an organizational brand is considered high profile, they can attract talent based on the brand's reputation. O’Keeffe et al. stated a company’s leadership shapes the view of the organization to external employee prospects.



Business leaders view marketing leaders as a significant contributor to increasing organizational growth and recruitment (Akbari, Seyyed Amiri, Imani, Rezaeei, & Foroudi, 2017). The applicant attraction strategy can benefit from marketing concepts when it comes to recruiting potential employees (Cable & Turban, 2001). Boddy and Croft (2016) commented that the role of a marketing leader is to influence the reputation of the corporation's competence to their customers. Similarly, Cable and Turban emphasized organizations can apply a marketing strategy for customers to the recruitment concept for gaining employee attraction in a competitive environment. Sahay (2015) wrote acquiring talent is the same as acquiring and retaining customers.

Sahay (2015) believes recruiting should no longer reside with human resources it should also be a part of the marketing organizations mission. Marketing is parallel to recruiting in which they both vie to attract a limited set of individuals (Cable & Turban, 2001). Recruiting success is primarily driven by an organization's brand, public image, and attractiveness (Sahay, 2015). When addressing the war for talent, there is a correlation between employee attractiveness and the adoration of an organization (Sommer, Heidenreich, & Handrich, 2017).

### **Talent Acquisition**

The talent acquisitions' process is an interaction between potential job seekers and the organization that is seeking to employ the job seeker (Phillips-Wren, Doran, & Merrill, 2016). According to Morris (2017), the right-fit methodology is when talent acquisition ensures the right candidates align to an organization at the right time. Talent acquisition activities include attracting talented people to new positions at the best

organization and the best opportunities (Ramakrishna Pillai, & Kukunuru, 2017).

Potential employees are drawn to organizations that are identified as a good brand (Rana & Sharma, 2018).

Employer brand and talent acquisition are crucial to organizational success (Gilani & Cunningham, 2017). Employer branding involves the synergies between human resources management and marketing (Theurer, Tumasjan, Welp, & Lievens, 2018). Gilani and Cunningham described employer branding as the integration of human resources and marketing which provided an inclusive view of attracting and retaining suitable talent. A company's success is hinged on talent acquisition's capability to attract talented employees (Gilani & Cunningham, 2017). Talent acquisition leaders' responsibilities include attracting talent through the means of employer branding (Obedgiu, 2017). Recruiters can learn from marketing peers, manage their employer brand and connect their hiring activities to the organization's company strategy (Gretczko & Cleary, 2016).

Innovation in talent acquisition can give an organization a sustainable competitive advantage (Sahay, 2015). Sahay postulated, increasing innovation when recruiting talent has a visible impact on the firm's bottom line. The foundation of resource-based theory (RBT) is the idea that a firm's human capital is the source of sustained competitive advantage (Davis, 2017). For a competitive advantage, firms should not only recruit but also attract talent that is the right kind of talent for their organization (Davis & Simpson, 2017). To solve the shortage of talent, organizations have considered linking human resources and marketing (Boitmane & Blumberga, 2016).

**War for talent.** Sommer et al. (2017) defined war for talent as the difficulties that companies face to recruit high potentials in a limited labor market. The war for talent involves a global competition to attract and retain the best highly skilled talent for the workforce (Li & Lowe, 2016). Magbool et al. (2016) wrote the war for talent is detrimental to the competitiveness of organizations. The war for talent may impact A&D leaders that struggle with attracting employees.

To mitigate the war for talent companies must be attractive to potential employees (Sommer et al., 2017). Branding and imaging are an integral part of attracting new talent (Magbool et al., 2016). Jepsen, Knox-Haly, and Townsend (2015) commented, a company that sustains their competitive advantage through branding is a strategy used for addressing the war for talent. Moreover, A&D leaders branding strategies could position their organizations to win the war for talent.

Creating an attractive employer brand is a value proposition that assists business leaders with conquering the war for talent (Gupta & Bhaskar, 2016). Held and Bader (2018) discovered organizations have to be attractive to future talent to compete in the war for talent successfully. The war for talent can be addressed with employer branding campaigns to attract potential employees (Sommer et al., 2017). Implementation of an employer branding campaign may serve as a vital component to A&D leaders winning the war for talent.

**Employer branding.** Employer branding is a concept that originates from marketing (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) defined employer branding as a collection of efforts by a company to communicate to existing

and potential employees that the organization is a desirable place to work. Every employer is competing for the status of best employer making attracting human capital a priority care-about for an organization (Hadi & Amhad, 2018). In addition, Hadi and Amhad (2018) stated firms are using employer branding as a strategy for attracting job seekers.

The most significant determinant for successful talent acquisition is employer branding (Sahay, 2015). Employer branding is essential for attracting new talent in the workplace (Saurombe, Barkhuizen, & Schutte, 2017). Moreover, Theurer et al. (2018) added employer branding is the best solution to recruitment issues. Employer branding is the summation of communications from an organization that demonstrate they are the greatest place to work (Reis & Braga, 2016). Employer branding drives the firm's goal of creating a strong corporate image to attract new talent and present a desirable workplace (Ahmad & Salina, 2016).

### **Corporate Image Branding**

Mróz-Gorgoń (2016) defined branding as a product, service, person or place's characteristics or attributes that distinguish them from their competitor. Keller (1998) stated a brand is a collection of mental associations of a product or service held by the consumer. A strong brand can attract new customers and retain current customers (Fournier & Srinivasan, 2018). A corporate brand's image is not only essential to investors but it is key to potential employees' association with the image (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). King (1991) proposed that it is critical for firms to position themselves as brands to sustain a competitive advantage. Cable and Turban (2001) postulated a

consumer is analogous to a potential job seeker in the context of attractiveness to an organization. An A&D business leader may attract new employees by creating a strong brand.

Balmer (1995) introduced the term corporate brand as the vehicle used to communicate values of an organization, a discriminator from competitors and emotional connection to stakeholders. A corporate brand has a different purpose than a product brand, as opposed to focusing on the reputation of the product; corporate branding is about the values, culture, and ethos of the organization (Mohan, Voss, Jimenez, & Gammoh, 2018). Corporate brands are a strategic resource that guides the organization to identify a purpose and culture (Stuart, 2018). Mohan et al. (2018) remarked a corporate brand influences a consumer's reaction toward the company. Keller (1993) stated, branding that drives a favorable consumer response drives higher profits for a company. A strong employer brand increases the company's ability to attract the best talent (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). A positive corporate brand could formulate an identity for an A&D corporation and ultimately enhance revenue.

A corporate image is a reputation or the public's cumulative perception of an organization over time (Vahabzadeh et al., 2017). Kuranovic (2018) wrote corporate image is a sum of perceptions and affirmations of an organization's culture, nature, and structure held by customers. Keller (1993) described the corporate image as the uniqueness, strengths, and favorability associations that set a brand apart and held in a consumer's memory. In addition, a corporate image is intentionally formed to personify the company in the minds of the major stakeholders (Mokina, 2014).

**Employer attractiveness.** Employer attractiveness is described as a positive attitude toward a company that is desirable enough to initiate a relationship (Reis & Braga, 2016). Companies are competing amongst each other for top talent one discriminating factor is the attractiveness of that company to the potential employee (Amelia & Nasution, 2016). Employer attractiveness is a companies' continuous process of improvement to be viewed as the best place to work by potential employees (Reis & Braga, 2016). For positive outcomes, the attractiveness of an employer is a factor that companies must address (Held & Bader, 2018).

Attracting and retaining the best talent requires having an attractive employer image, being an employer of choice (Deepa & Baral, 2017). An employer image affects job seekers attractiveness to a firm (Cable & Turban, 2001). Reis and Braga (2016) observed that employer attractiveness positively impacts the recruitment process when a job seeker envisages about the benefits of working with a specific organization because the idea of employment at that company appears desirable. A&D leaders who implement an attractive employer image may drive their organization to be an employer of choice and gain the best talent.

**Employer of choice.** In a talent, scarce workforce corporate concerns include attracting talent and obtaining an employer brand that is attractive to a potential employee (Leekha Chhabra, & Sharma, 2014). To win the war for talent, an organization will have to have the discriminator of an employer of choice (Victoria, Irini, & John, 2015). An effective employer brand position of a company has a distinct image to potential employees and is categorized as a great place to work (Saini, Rai, & Chaudhary, 2014).

In addition, Saini et al. discovered there is an increasing desire for companies to participate in best employer surveys to identify as an employer of choice and consequently attract top talent.

An organization that couples human resources and marketing and has a classification as an employer of choice produces a positive financial performance (Susanna & Signe, 2015). Recognition as a desirable place to work will exponentially impact financial performance for a company (Park, Song, Kim & Lim, 2015). Employer branding is an urging factor in a firm becoming desirable in the eyes of a prospective employee and identifying as a great place to work (Reis & Braga, 2016). Some companies do a better job at being more attractive than others (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). A&D companies need to work on being more appealing to job seekers (Westphal, 2015). A&D leaders who subscribe to corporate image branding techniques that drive a great place to work designation could increase profitability.

### **Aerospace and Defense Industry**

A&D is a highly technical industry that consists of manufacturing civil, military, aerospace and defense equipment for space exploration and national security (Wang, Nguyen, Le, & Hsueh, 2018). A&D is one of the most globalized industries in the world (Mocenco, 2015). Due to terrorism, there has been an increase in demand for the manufacturing of A&D equipment in the United States and other nations (Wang, et al., 2018). The global A&D industry has reported upward of \$729 billion in revenue and continuing to grow exponentially due to the increasing need for domestic and global security (Wang et al., 2018).

The A&D industry is one of the most competitive industries amongst the high-tech industries that require knowledge-intensive and highly skilled employees (Satta, Esposito De Falco, Penco, & Parola, 2015). Rapid advancements in technology have created competition amongst A&D companies, especially for resources (Satta et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018). Westphal (2015) postulated there is a human capital crisis in the A&D industry that impacts innovation and global security. The workforce of an organization creates innovation (Landivar, 2013; Varma, 2018). Innovation in the aerospace industry is at the leading edge of global technology (Satta et al., 2015). The ability to remain innovative is at the forefront of A&D staying competitive (Satta, et al., 2015). Like many other industries, the A&D industry must identify discriminators to set them apart from their competitors (Westphal, 2015).

Being the most attractive within an industry involves having an employer branding campaign that improves the image of a company in the eyes of the potential labor market (Theurer et al., 2018). Companies that attract talent successfully have deliberate and strategic initiatives that focus on being great work environments (Dabirian, Kietzmann, & Diba, 2017). A&D companies have to work on their corporate image to appear more attractive to potential employees (Westphal, 2015). The more attractive an organization is to job seekers the more likely they are willing to work for the firm (Bellou, Stylos, & Rahimi, 2018). Unfortunately, the A&D industry lacks the attractiveness to recruit talented workers continuously (Tellier, 2017).

Job seekers are not solely drawn to a company because of tangible traits such as working conditions, benefits, and salary, but potential employees connect with intangible



attributes such as reputation, prestige and public perception (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Cable and Turban (2001) placed employer familiarity, employer reputation and employer image under an umbrella they named employer knowledge and deemed these tenets as critical in attracting a potential employee. Lievens and Slaughter (2016) added employer familiarity is a precursor to employer image and employer reputation because a job seeker needs to know the company before they can make any interest-based decisions. A&D companies once had a glamorous reputation and that corporate image has tarnished over the years (Westphal, 2015). Moreover, A&D companies must reinvent what potential employees believe to be right about the industry to positively impact their image and reputation enough to successfully attract new talent again (Westphal, 2015).

Top technical talent has become less attracted to the A&D industry (Wang et al., 2018; Westphal, 2015). A&D lacks the employees needed to remain competitive and keep up with rapid growth and expansion in the industry (Thian, 2015). Highly skilled technical talents are more inclined to work for Google, Apple and Twitter than the A&D industry (Tellier, 2017; Westphal, 2015). The United States must take on the challenge of continuously feeding the science, technology, engineering, and math pipeline to remain as international leaders and technically competitive globally (Walker & Harris, 2018).

### **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Workforce**

Understanding the gaps in attracting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) talent in the A&D industry could be the catalyst for stimulating employee attraction. Westphal (2015) emphasized the A&D industry is collectively facing a considerable deficit in attracting talent. Over the next 10 years, the U.S.

government predicts a shortage of 1,000,000 STEM workers (Iammartino, Bischoff, Willy, & Shapiro, 2016). There are grave concerns with the ability to maintain national security, productivity, and innovation due to the declining STEM workforce (Landivar, 2013). Engineers are seeking jobs at cutting-edge tech firms such as Google and Apple instead of aerospace and defense companies (Westphal, 2015).

An organization's competitiveness is in jeopardy when they lack a valuable resource such as highly skilled talent (Arik & Geho, 2017). Kane, Palmer, Phillips, and Kiron (2017) summarized, identifying attractive talent is crucial to effective competition amongst businesses. To attract the most talented and brightest talent, A&D companies must transform into a sexier industry to work for (Westphal, 2015). High-tech companies are disrupting the advanced technology market and attracting quality human capital, leaving the A&D industry at a competitive disadvantage for talent attraction (Tellier, 2017). A&D leaders may gain a competitive advantage by transforming their image to a more attractive place to work for the STEM workforce.

**Workforce gaps.** Industrial leaders, academic scholars, and government officials are overly concerned about the United States ability to remain competitive in science and engineering (Varma, 2018). In addition, Varma (2018) summarized, The United States has not been able to grow the science and engineering labor force needed to increase innovation and economic growth, women and minorities are critical factors to addressing this concern. Diverse teams are consistently better at solving problems than homogenous groups, they produce greater productive and innovative outcomes (Smith-Doerr, Alegria, & Sacco, 2017). There is a current demand for talent to join the STEM workforce,

research and resources have been dedicated to mending the gender and racial disparities gap in STEM (Ireland et al., 2018).

Gephardt, Grassi, McCormick, and Shelton (2016) stated companies that are more diverse outperform in innovation and profitability, which is essential to global competitiveness. The most diverse workforces are the most productive, creative, and have increased the ability to solve problems (Smith-Doerr, Alegria, & Sacco, 2017). Organizational cultures that embrace diverse work environments have a lead on talent acquisition (Gephardt et al., 2016). Smith-Doerr et al. research showed the most diverse organizations are highly attractive as well as the most productive, resulting in a competitive advantage. Business leaders in A&D could target underrepresented markets such as women and minorities to diversify their workforce and address the human capital gaps in the A&D industry.

**Women.** Due to the United States' inability to sustain a qualified workforce in STEM, talented women opting out of the STEM field exacerbates a less competitive position globally (Diekman, Weisgram, & Belanger, 2015). Gender-based differences in STEM have been a longtime concern (Rattan et al., 2018). Men dominate the STEM discipline, resulting in the culture of STEM as being viewed as masculine (Baird, 2018; Danbold & Huo, 2017). Holland (2018) stated the low rate women are advancing in STEM careers is a waste of education and untapped talent that is continuously escaping the industry.

The STEM workforce is expected to grow faster than any other field, and STEM careers are one of the highest paid (Diekman et al., 2015). Women represent 50% of the

general population, 25% of the STEM workforce, and only 14% of engineering jobs (Ellis, Fosdick, & Rasmussen, 2016). A workplace culture, structure, and practices can cause women to feel a sense of isolation and marginalization in STEM, however having a more inclusive experience could attract women to a STEM outfit (Xu, 2017). To improve women representation in STEM, employers can create a workplace where women feel they can successfully manage home and career (Yonghong, 2015). Moreover, organizations that incorporate policies to support work-life-balance are essential to recruiting more women in STEM (Amon, 2017). The inclusion of women in the engineering workforce requires visible leadership that is initiated by a company's board and CEO (Kanga, 2017).

The images and stereotypes of engineers also play a pivotal role in women or girls attraction to STEM (Diekman et al., 2015). Women and minorities lack a sense of belonging in STEM fields (Rattan et al., 2018). Creating an empowering culture drives attraction and retention of women to STEM organizations (Schaefer, 2015). A job seeker is attracted to an organization when they can envision themselves working at that company, ingrained in the culture (Reis & Braga, 2016). Aish, Asare, and Miskioglu, (2018) reported that underrepresented minorities are challenged with a limited pool of role models. A&D leaders may consider implementing corporate image branding practices to attract women and close the gap.

**Minorities.** The U.S. Census Bureau defines minorities as every racial or biracial group except the Caucasian race. Minorities comprise only 12.7% of the STEM workforce (Aish et al., 2018). Policymakers suggest diversifying human capital within

engineering firms to maintain the United States global competitiveness (Illumoka, Milanovic, & Grant, 2017). Our national security and economic stability are hinged on the incorporation and attraction of minorities in STEM (Rattan et al., 2018).

Job seekers are most attracted to organizations where they can envision themselves being part of the culture (Reis & Braga, 2016). Attracting minorities to the engineering workforce require an internal cultural change that broadens the practice of inclusion (Varma, 2018). Rattan et al. (2018) emphasized minorities and women have typically felt as though they do not belong in STEM, which contributes to the industry's challenging career pipeline. Not creating an inclusive work environment reduces innovation and puts companies at risk of losing an untapped talented worker (Pietri, Johnson, & Ozgumus, 2018).

Academic preparedness is a deciding factor for minorities entering STEM fields (Ireland et al., 2018). Illumoka et al. (2017) proposed the technical industry must act earlier than college graduation to attract minorities. It is recommended to engage interventions for STEM interest from Grades K-12 if not recruitment decreases by 9% for women and 4 % for minorities (Illumoka et al., 2017). Engineering classrooms drive an underrepresented student's comfort level in remaining in the engineering field (Scheidt & Godwin, 2017). Having a mentor with a similar background in STEM mitigates the risk of minority students leaving the field (Cruz, Hasbun, Adams, Banks-Hunt, & Barabino, 2016). To attract minorities in to engineering, the technical industry has a huge responsibility to get engaged early and mentor future engineers (Illumoka et al., 2017).

STEM education is, in fact, a national security concern (Mercier, 2018). As globalization increases, STEM jobs are expected to drive economic development and national security (Wuhib & Dotger, 2014). Even though innovation is the heartbeat of America's competitiveness, quality of life and national security, a limiting amount of underrepresented groups pursue careers in science and engineering (Dennehy & Dasgupta, 2017). The lack of minorities significantly impacts national defense, economic security and social equality in STEM (Rattan et al., 2018).

**Minority women.** In engineering fields African American women are dually disproportioned educationally and professionally (Ireland et al., 2018). African American women make up only 2% of the STEM workforce (Pietri, Johnson, & Ozgumus, 2018). Ireland et al. (2018) stated African American women comprise of approximately .99% of engineering degrees. Engineering is known for having one of the lowest quantities of women than any of the other sciences (Dennehy & Dasgupta, 2017). By STEM companies not investing and creating a culture that is inclusive of African American women, they will lose talented workers and limit their innovative capabilities (Pietri et al., 2018).

The most industrialized countries want to promote more diversity within the field because STEM careers drive innovation and the growth of a global economy (Wuhib & Dotger, 2014). The lack of diversity in the STEM workforce has a negative impact on creativity, scientific innovation and social relevance (Hernandez et al., 2017). The United States' ability to diversify the STEM workforce is crucial to the prosperity and security of

the nation (Briggs, 2016). Intentional inclusion promotes collaboration that fosters creativity (Spillane, Lynch, & Ford, 2016).

African American women do not feel included within the engineering workforce, an understanding of intersectionality could improve their experiences in STEM (Ireland et al., 2018; Pietri et al., 2018). African American women experience double marginalization in engineering (Dortch & Patel, 2017). Compounding an African American woman's disadvantages in STEM, they are in two underrepresented social categories, race and gender, also known as intersectionality (Ireland et al., 2018). Intersectionality is defined as multiple experiences of exclusion and oppression that occurs with individual experiences, such as gender and race for an African American woman (Crenshaw, 1989). In addition, Scheidt and Godwin (2017) described the concept of intersectionality as the overwhelming experience minority women have while navigating through engineering, a field in which they feel excluded.

The A&D industry lacks an inclusive and empowering environment (Westphal, 2015). If a potential employer feels included and empowered in the culture of a company they can envision themselves working there, culminating in the organization being more attractive to the job seeker (Reis & Braga, 2016). In the growing global talent shortage organizations are now focused on talent attraction strategies to obtain qualified personnel (Gonera, & Olszak-Dyk, 2016; Theurer et al., 2018). The perception of an organization's brand determines their level of attractiveness (Priyadarshini, et al., 2017). Employer branding is building and managing an organization's image perceived as a unique and desirable place to work internally and externally (Maheshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos, &

Konstantopoulou, 2017). In competitive markets attracting high-quality talent is a competitive advantage (Priyadarshini et al., 2017). A&D leaders may increase their talent attraction and competitive advantage by building a more inclusive corporate image.

The marginalization of women and minorities in engineering negatively impacts the industry's brand (Delaine, Williams, Sigamoney, & Tull, 2016). Widger (2016) stated brand value is hinged on diversity and inclusion as a crucial tenet. The leaders of companies that intentionally work on their diversity and inclusion practices are recognized by Diversity Inc, Human Rights Campaign, Catalyst, Glassdoor's Employee's Choice Award, and other accolades that can positively affect the organization's brand (Gephardt et al., 2016). Increasing diversity is an opportunity for organizations to build on the brand positively and attract valuable talent (Urbancová, Čermáková, & Vostrovská, 2016).

Lee and Kramer, (2016) added fostering a competitive advantage involves intentional diversity and inclusion efforts by organizational leadership. An organization that has a more diverse workforce can provide better customer service and are better innovators; diverse firms have proven to be an incubator for innovation (Gephardt et al., 2016). Firms that enable solutions to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups in STEM prove to be more competent and are essential to the field of engineering (Peixoto et al., 2018). Providing a solution to the diversity gaps in an engineering workforce is critical to the competitive success of our nation; attracting diverse talent is a priority (Gephardt et al., 2016).



### Summary of Literature Review

Human resources are critical to recruitment strategies (Erasmus et al., 2017).

Within human resources is talent acquisition, an entity used to manage the attraction of job seekers to an employer (Phillips-Wren, Doran, & Merrill, 2016). In addition, marketing leaders play a major role in recruiting (Akbari et al., 2017). Cable and Turban (2001) conceptualized a marketing strategy for attracting consumers for a product or service is the same concept that can be applied to attract talent for an employer.

STEM fields and the A&D industry, in particular, are struggling to attract talent (Westphal, 2015). Landivar (2013) argued the lack of employer attraction by STEM fields would be detrimental to innovation and national security in the United States. Ireland et al. (2018) postulated attracting women and minorities would assist in mending the gaps in employer attraction for engineering. Furthermore, STEM companies must be creative when addressing their talent attraction concerns, not attracting untapped talents such as women and minorities negatively impacts competitive advantage (Varma, 2018). Moreover, having a diverse workforce will add to the brand equity and competitiveness of an organization (Widger, 2016). Engineering companies have to create corporate images that are inclusive and familiar to women and minorities to attract this marginalized group of job seekers (Diekman et al., 2015). Lievens and Slaughter (2016) confirmed favorable corporate images produce better recruitment outcomes and greater financial performance. When a company has a strong brand, a job seeker is attracted to the image of that employer the same way a merchant attracts new customers (Fournier & Srinivasan, 2018). Employer attraction is a discriminating factor amongst employers for

competitive advantage; the best and brightest talent is attracted to companies with a great employer image or strong brand (Deepa & Baral, 2017; Held & Bader, 2018). A job seeker appeals to a company that they are familiar with, has a positive image and a good reputation, these characteristics collectively produce a strong branding strategy (Cable & Turban, 2001).

REM components, employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image serve as a verification of quality or legitimacy check for a brand (Cable & Turban, 2001). Cable and Turban postulated when a potential applicant is unfamiliar with a firm they question the firm's legitimacy. Without employer familiarity, a job seeker does not possess the knowledge to make decisions about an employer's image or reputation (Cable & Turban, 2001). Employer attractiveness is more natural to achieve with a firm that has a positive employer reputation (Khan, 2017). Organizational attractiveness is directly influenced by the image an employer portrays (Theurer et al., 2018). There is a bi-directional relationship between employer image and employer reputation; one contributes to the other (Cable & Turban, 2001). The components of REM can be used to increase employer attractiveness and improve job seeker outcomes (Theurer et al., 2018).

### **Transition**

In Section 1, I introduced the foundation of my study, which consists of the (a) background of the problem; (b) problem statement; (c) purpose statement; (d) nature of study; (e) research question; (f) interview questions; (g) conceptual framework; (h) operational terms; (i) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; (j) significance of the study; and (k) review of the literature. In the literature review, I compared and contrasted

the related literature to provide a deeper understanding of (a) REM, (b) employer knowledge, (c) employer familiarity, (d) employer reputation, and (e) employer image.

In Section 2, I will provide my purpose statement for my research, an overview of the role of a researcher, how I will identify study participants, research method and design. In addition, I will discuss population and sampling, considerations for ethical research, techniques for data collection, and reliability and validity. In Section 3, I will provide the summation of my findings to include results of the data collected, presentation of findings, application to professional practice, implication for social change, recommendation for further research, a reflection, and conclusion.

## Section 2: The Project

The objective of this study was to assist A&D talent acquisition and marketing leaders in identifying corporate image branding strategies for increased engineering talent attraction to improve competitive advantage. Section 2 includes the purpose statement, a discussion of my role as the researcher, identification of the study's participants, and an overview of the research method and design. I also discuss the population and sampling, ethical research considerations, data collection and analysis techniques, and reliability and validity.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to explore corporate image branding strategies A&D talent acquisition and marketing leaders use to increase a competitive advantage in attracting engineering. The targeted population consisted of five marketing and five talent acquisition leaders with at least 5 years of successful engineering talent attraction experience using branding strategies to increase a competitive advantage in attracting engineering talent. The population came from one company in the A&D industry in the eastern region of the United States. The engineering workforce is essential to innovation and economic growth, and innovation is a critical factor for society's economic development (Calabrese, Campisi, Costa, & Di Pillo, 2013; Landivar, 2013). The corporate image branding strategies of A&D recruiting and marketing leaders may be critical to attracting talent that might increase product development and innovation as well as contribute to national security.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the investigator of this study, I served as the primary instrument of data collection. Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) concluded that investigators are the main instrument used for data collection in qualitative studies. As an engineering manager at an A&D company, I have expertise in hiring engineering talent. Expertise of the subject area adds to credibility with the participants (Berger, 2015). I had no personal or professional relationship with the participants of this study.

To protect human subjects, researchers use the ethical protocol and guidelines known as the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). I also completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research's training for Protecting Human Research Participants (Certification #1850145). While conducting research, there is a possibility of ethical challenges to occur; the NIH training prepares the researcher to handle such challenges (Resnik, Miller, Kwok, Engel, & Sandler, 2015). I used the ethical protocol as a guide to protect participants' while collecting data for my study.

Yin (2018) stated that the use of interview protocols ensures reliability, consistency, and viability of the data collected. Moreover, researchers use an interview protocol during the data collection process to increase the credibility and mitigate bias of the study by establishing consistency with each participant (Kallio, Pietilä, & Johnson, 2016). Researchers must remove any bias from their role during data collection (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walker, 2016). With each participant, I used an interview

protocol (Appendix A) as a guide for the direction and consistency of questioning to mitigate bias and avoid viewing data through a personal lens.

### **Participants**

The inclusion criteria for this study were professional talent acquisition and marketing managers with full-time employment status in the A&D industry for at least 5 years. Selection of participants in this study came from professional networks; I used the Aerospace Industries Association LinkedIn public database to solicit participants for this study. Horan et al. (2015) stated that establishing participants' eligibility criteria for a study verifies that the correct population has been selected to address the overarching research question. The participants contributing to this study consisted of at least five marketing and five talent acquisition leaders with a minimum of 5 years of successful organizational engineering talent attraction experience in the eastern region of the United States.

Workforce participants must obtain organizational approval to engage in interviews for a research study (Koskiniemi & Perttula, 2013). After Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I e-mailed the organizational consent letter to the organization's authorized representative. After access was granted, I requested the authorized representative e-mail the invitational participant letter to marketing and talent acquisition leaders who met the study criteria. The authorized representative requested participants who met the study criteria to contact me directly via e-mail if they were interested in participating in the study.

Chilisa and Tsheko (2014) suggested building relationships is critical to collecting data from participants in a study. The researcher must invest time in establishing a working relationship with participants, which results in credibility, validity, and added legitimacy to the researcher's position (Katigbak, Foley, Robert, & Hutchinson, 2016). Furthermore, researchers should share their academic and professional history to establish trust and develop an affinity with research participants (MacKenzie, 2016; Opsal et al., 2016). To build rapport, I provided the participants with an introductory letter with my background as a researcher and my interest and connection to the research topic.

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

I used a qualitative method for this study, which is an exploratory method of research (Yin, 2018). An investigator uses a qualitative method when exploring social context and the participants' experiences are captured through independent worldviews (Osezua & Agbalajobi, 2016). Yin (2018) explained qualitative researchers explore the what, how, and why. Moreover, for business, management, and organizational studies, researchers use qualitative research to obtain an in-depth view of an organizational phenomenon (van Rijnsoever, 2017). Researchers use qualitative methods to discover, understand, and produce credible evidence using nonstatistical analysis methods (Kozleski, 2017). Based on my research question, the qualitative method was the most appropriate because I explored what strategies A&D leaders use to promote corporate image branding, how these efforts lead to an increased competitive advantage, and why

corporate image branding is relevant for improved business practices at aerospace and defense companies.

Quantitative researchers use statistical measurements to validate data results (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). The statistical data in quantitative research are used to test a hypothesis (Birkinshaw et al., 2011). When conducting quantitative research, the researcher uses the analysis of the numerical outcome to explain study results (Lunde, Heggen, & Strand, 2013). Hence, a quantitative research method was not appropriate, because I was not going to use any numerical data to test a hypothesis.

Mixed-method researchers combine methodologies, mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzle, 2004). Venkatesh et al. (2013) described the mixed method as a combination of statistical inference results and detailed analysis of explanatory results. Maxwell (2016) postulated mixed-method studies integrate qualitative and quantitative methods and the researcher interprets the data by building on the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Furthermore, there is an expectation mixed-method researchers have expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methods to produce a quality study (Griensven, Moore, & Hall, 2014). Being a novice researcher, I did not have the skills to appropriately interpret both qualitative and quantitative results; therefore, I exclusively used contextualized insight from qualitative inquiry during this study. Moreover, mixed method was not appropriate for this study.

### **Research Design**

The most common designs for qualitative researchers are phenomenology, ethnography, and case study (Bevan, 2014). Yin (2018) suggested using a case study



design when answering a phenomenon and asking the what, how, and why questions relevant to the research topic. In a case study, the researcher explores a current phenomenon in-depth within the context of a real-world environment, using interviews and archival data (Yin, 2018). Vohra (2014) stated case study researchers couple a variety of data sources, including interviews, documents, and archives, to address the research question. I used a case study design for this research due to the use of multiple data sources to capture an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

In a phenomenological study, participants share their stories through in-depth interviews which provide a descriptive narrative to explore their lived experiences (Bevan, 2014). Lien, Pauleen, Kuo, and Wang (2014) reported phenomenological researchers investigate the interviewees' lived experiences to address the phenomenon. Robertson and Thomson (2014) concluded phenomenological researchers explore the complexity of the lived experience of a study's participants. A phenomenological design was not suitable for my study because I was exploring the participants' corporate image branding strategies as opposed to their lived experiences.

Ethnographic researchers immerse themselves in the culture of the participants and describes how those under study ordinarily behave in a particular environment (Wolcott, 2008). Immersion into a culture for prolonged periods of time allows ethnographic researchers an opportunity to identify the needs and desires of the society under study (Butlewki, 2014). Mannay and Morgan (2015) stated ethnographic research offers a sense of social exploration that involves a firsthand investigation of the research

settings. Because I did not immerse myself in a culture for data collection purposes, an ethnography design was not appropriate for my study.

To ensure data saturation during the data collection process, I interviewed 10 participants until repetitive responses were received and no new themes emerged. Achieving effective data saturation entails the participants' criteria must include a diverse representation across a field (Lamb, Backhouse, & Adderley, 2016). Furthermore, data saturation occurs when the same information is received and no new themes are discovered (Shuttleworth, 2014). In efforts to reach data saturation, a researcher should continue collecting data and interviewing until no new information materializes (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). To ensure data saturation in this qualitative case study, I interviewed participants until no new data emerged.

### **Population and Sampling**

Purposeful sampling is used for identification and selection of the most knowledgeable and experienced groups of participants relevant to the phenomenon of interest (Daniel, 2012; Koch, Niesz, & McCarthy, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposeful sampling is the selection of data and study participants based on the information richness and relevance of the research question (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015; Yin, 2018). Olsen, Orr, Bell, and Stuart (2013) reported purposeful sampling is useful when identifying consistent behavioral patterns from a specific research population relevant to the study. I employed purposeful sampling to recruit talent acquisition and marketing leaders in the aerospace industry to gain a deeper insight into my research topic.

I had a sample size of at least 10 participants. Hanson, Balmer, and Giardino (2011) stated a sample size of at least 10 participants is adequate to meet data saturation in qualitative research. A researcher can gain insightful data from a sample size of 10 participants (Boddy, 2016). Furthermore, Hart and Warren (2015) noted a sample of 10 participants can provide valuable perceptiveness to a research topic. I interviewed five talent acquisition leaders and five marketing leaders in the A&D industry in the United States.

There is a correlation between data saturation and sample size; data are collected from a sample of participants until data saturation occurs (Clearly, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Van Rijnsoever (2017) noted the minimum number of a sample size to reach saturation is difficult to estimate; rather, the goal is to reach a point in the research where no new themes evolve. Therefore, to achieve data saturation I interviewed participants until no new information emerged.

The participants' criteria were professional talent acquisition and marketing managers with full-time employment status in the A&D industry for at least 5 years. There is a holistic connection between talent acquisition and marketing (Gretczko, 2016). A positive experience with talent acquisition during the hiring process can set the tone for a candidate's relationship with a company (Gretczko, 2016). A company that is consistent with their employer brand will not only be a top employer of choice but will also harness the attention of top talent (Sahay, 2015). Interviewing talent acquisition leaders and employees who impact recruiting may contribute to understanding strategies needed by

the A&D industry to promote corporate image branding for increased competitive advantage.

I conducted interviews in a private area that the participants chose. Interview locations are important to validate data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), and an interview site should be one that protects the privacy of the participant (Johnson & Esterling, 2015). Ecker (2017) posited that the interview location is influential to data collection and participants being in an environment they feel comfortable to enhance the interview experience. Moreover, the privacy of the interview location assists with the level of honesty the participant is willing to provide during the interview (Herring, 2013). Elwood and Martin (2000) noted that face-to-face interviews where a participant feels relaxed provide an in-depth viewpoint from the interviewee's perspective. McElhinney, Cheater, and Kidd (2014) suggested that conducting interviews at an offsite location would make participants more comfortable, which encourages a deeper conversation on the research topic. Moreover, McDermid, Peters, Jackson, and Daly (2014) observed that an offsite location enhances the collection of study data from the participant, allowing interviewees to be relaxed. Face-to-face interviews offer the researcher an opportunity to collect additional data, such as body language, inflections, and tones displayed by the participant (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). I conducted face-to-face interviews at an offsite location chosen by the participants, allowing them to feel more comfortable and relaxed so that I could obtain in-depth responses to interview questions.

### **Ethical Research**

Before research was conducted for my study, I emailed the study participants an informed consent (IC) form. The IC form confirms the participant's decision to be a part of the study. Schrems (2014) postulated a researcher must solidify permission from a participant to engage in a research project via informed consent. All research participants have the autonomous right to authorize participation in a specific procedure or intervention (Thomas & Pettitt, 2017). Bromwich and Rid (2015) stated that an investigator's responsibility is to provide each participant with an opportunity to make an informed enrollment in study decision, regardless of the risk level. To participate in the study, each participant sent in concurrence via email stating the phrase "I Consent."

Hadidi, Lindquist, Treat-Jacobson, and Swanson (2013) maintained that an ethically sound study contains the right for a participant to withdrawal. I followed the ethical guidelines of the Walden University's IRB to assure all participants were free from hurt, harm, danger, and exploitation during the research process. As a responsible researcher, I will continue to protect the rights of the participants and follow an ethical protocol. I did not offer incentives to participants for study involvement. Incentives can negatively alter the accuracy of the results (Nosek, Spies, & Motyl, 2012). The participants were given the option to withdrawal from the study up until the conclusion of the member checking process. Further, the participants were informed to contact me via email to withdraw from the study before the member checking process was completed.

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of research with human participants and researchers are the gatekeepers of their participant's rights (Ummel & Achille, 2016). In

this study, the participant's confidentiality is protected by the use of unique identifiers to differentiate the participant's identity. In conjunction with letters and sequential numbers, I identified marketing leader participants as M1, M2, M3, M4, M5 and Talent acquisition leader participants as H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5. Identity coding can be used to protect the confidentiality of the participants yet identify the participant to the researcher (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). Moreover, for confidentiality purposes, the location and name of the organization has not been mentioned.

Ethical research drives the quality and validity of a research study (Sandelowski, 2014). Per ethical research, I have not falsified data or allowed exposure of confidential information of the organization or participants. All documentation and audio evidence captured while conducting research is protected and stored securely on a hard drive in a fire-proof safe for 5 years. If desired, I will provide each participant with a copy of the findings of my study. The Walden IRB approval number is 02-28-19-0456237.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I was the primary data collection instrument in this study. In qualitative research, the study begins with the researcher (Stewart, 2016). Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) posited that when collecting data, the researcher is the primary instrument. As the researcher is the initial recipient to interpret the data collected, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2014)

Qualitative researchers commonly use interviews; interviewing is un-bias and more of an original format than other data collection methods (Brinkmann, 2016). For qualitative researchers, interviews are a powerful data collection tool to capture the

voices and experience of the participants (Rabionet, 2011). Semistructured interviews reduce the use of opinion posing and suggestive prompts during the interview (Benia, Hauck-Filho, Dillenburg, & Stein, 2015). Using a semistructured interview format allows participants to express individualistic points of view during the interview (Robinson, Ford & Goodman, 2018). In addition, semistructured interviews consist of a series of open-ended standardized questions relevant to the key topics (Elo et al., 2014; Shalhoub, Marshall, Ippolito, 2017). O'Grady (2016) postulated that open-ended questions create room for researchers to further investigate should an interviewee's response provide an inquiry worthy response. Furthermore, open-ended questions produce a more productive dialogue (Rodriguez & Bonner, 2018). After providing the informed consent to the participants, I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews with each participant in their preferred off-site location.

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) during the data collection process. Researchers use an interview protocol to prove rigor, credibility, and comprehensiveness during the study (Koch et al., 2014). Interview protocols are used to validate that researchers are using consistent, dependable methods to collect data (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Moreover, Kallio, Pietilä, and Johnson (2016) reported that during data collection, researchers use an interview protocol to enhance the creditability of a study. The use of an interview protocol (see Appendix A) helped maintain consistency and validity during the data collection process. A variety of data sources, including interviews and documentation are used to address a research question (Vohra, 2014). Case study researchers use archival documentation such as reports, and administrative documents to

triangulate evidence from other sources (Yin, 2018). I used an archival document related to the research question during the data collection process to have a richer understanding of the organization under study. Yin (2018) stated archival documentation is used by a case study researcher to explore a current phenomenon extensively within the context of a real-world environment.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection process, I conducted member checking to ensure an accurate reflection of the data collected. Andraski, Chandler, Powell, Humes, and Wakefield (2014) stated member checking enhances the validity of the findings. Member checking is also beneficial to validate data was captured correctly and themes identified by the researcher resonate with the participants (Andraski et al., 2014). Member checking is essential to reduce a case study researcher's bias and increase the study's richness in validity and reliability (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). Andraski et al. defined member checking as a researcher's interpretation of a participant's responses, which is given back to the participant to validate the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the participant's responses. To confirm accuracy, I conducted member checking by providing participants with a summarized interpretation of their interview.

### **Data Collection Technique**

After Walden University's IRB approval, I began data collection for my study. I emailed the organizational informed consent letter to the organization's authorized representative. I gained approval and access to the organization through the authorized representative. After the authorized representative identified participants who met the criteria, the authorized representative requested the willing participants contact me



directly. In addition, I emailed an informed consent form for the participant's review. Upon receipt of consent from the participant via email, I scheduled a convenient time for the participant to be interviewed.

Using interviews as a data collection method allows the researcher to retrieve in-depth information from the participants in their own words (Dehghan-Nayeri, Khakbazan, & Ghafooro, 2017). Interviews are used by researchers to collect nonverbal communication data (Onwuegbuzle, Leech, & Collins, 2010). Brinkmann (2016) stated interviews are the least bias and the participant's experience is documented as a more natural phenomenon.

I asked open-ended questions during my semistructured interviews with the study participants. Open-ended questions are used to elaborate on a particular phenomenon during data collection (Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). The benefit of using open-ended questions is, the participant renders a more genuine and thoughtful response (Züll, 2016). Attali, Laitusis, and Stone (2016) stated an open-ended questioning format encourages more mindful engagement by the interviewee. With the use of open-ended questions, the participants in this study may provide more in-depth responses to the research topic.

Audio recordings can be used for the researcher to ensure accuracy and capture commonalities amongst participants (Spear, Shedlin, Gilberti, Fiellin, McNeely, 2016). Qualitative researchers can use audio recordings as a tool to analyze data (Moloczij et al., 2017). Audio recordings are useful for determining participants' contribution to the

research topic and are used as a data repository (Stone-MacDonald & Stone, 2013). I received permission to record the interview from the participant.

Beyond interviewing, the case study researcher collects additional data from various sources, such as documentation and reports (Koch et al., 2014). The benefit of documentation as an instrument in the data collection process is that documents provide an extensive historical and organizational view of the researched question (Brown, Mawson, & Mason, 2017; Kaczynski et al., 2014). To validate findings qualitative researchers use documentary resources to triangulate data collected during research (Pedersen, Hack, McClement, & Taylor-Brown, 2014). Some argue the disadvantage to documentation is they are not used by the organization and therefore not considered useful. I gained access to an organizational document during an interview to review as an additional technique for data collection and to enhance my research findings.

Some argue the disadvantage of semistructured interviews is the subjection to bias of the interviewer's preferred qualities (Azarpazhooh, Ryding Leake, Azarpazhooh, Ryding, & Leake, 2008). I mitigated this bias by implementing member checking in the data collection process. Harvey (2015) characterized member checking as a process used to validate the accuracy of the research by providing a summation of the participant's perspective of the study's phenomenon to the interviewee. Member checking is described as the technique used for the participant's validation for accuracy and confirming the result's credibility (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking includes the review of the researcher's final interpretation of data and a crosscheck done by the respondent (Harvey, 2015). Furthermore, Caretta (2016) conveyed the advantages of member checking is the

opportunity to countercheck the initial data, ensure validity, and often times capture more data from the participant. I used member checking to validate the reliability of my study by providing the participants with my interpretations of their responses, the participant then validated the accuracy of my interpretations.

### **Data Organization Technique**

For organization of the data collected, I identified participants by assigning the letter “H” to represent all the human resource leaders and the letter “M” to represent all the marketing leaders. I assigned an alphanumeric title based on the interviewing sequence for each participant (i.e., H1, H2) for human resource leaders, and marketing leaders (i.e., M1, M2). Sandelowski (2014) suggested that the process of coding alphanumerically ensures participant confidentiality in a study. A unique anonymous identifier is used to maintain the confidentiality of the participants (Kovshoff, 2016). Boote, Newsome, Reddington, Cole, and Dimairo (2017) characterized unique identifiers as a method to maintain the anonymity of the participants in a study. Furthermore, the coding mechanism of participants and all data will be safely secured for five years in a locked fire proof safe.

To organize and record my thoughts and notes, I used a reflective journal. A reflective journal is used to document the participants’ experiences and deduce a better comprehension of the study topic (Akkoyunlu, Telli, Çetin, & Dağhan, 2016). Using reflective journals increases critical awareness and new perspectives (Woronchak & Comeau, 2016). Al-Rawahi and Al-Balushi (2015) argued reflective journals are used to improve the investigator’s knowledge of the study topic. A reflective journal and review

post-interview notes were used to better understand my study topic based on participant's feedback during the interview.

All data will be password protected and removed in a data wiping process. Linnemørken et al. (2018) recommended using a fire-proof safe to assist with confidentiality and the protection of research participant's identity. I will safeguard the raw data captured during research and preserve the identity of the participants in a fire-proof safe with access limited to myself, the researcher, for 5 years.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis for a qualitative researcher includes an in-depth understanding of the personal experience of the interviewee (Quartiroli, Knight, Etzel, & Monaghan, 2017). Watkins (2017) emphasized that qualitative data analysis is a rigorous process due to the review of all the data collected from the various data collection methods. Using multiple data sources enhances validity and increases the depth of the study (Hyett, Kenny, Dickson-Swift, 2014). Qualitative data analysis involves analyzing responses and documentation from the participant that emphasizes the view of the social reality and the context of a phenomenon (Mayer, 2015).

I applied methodological triangulation to analyze multiple data points and provide a more comprehensive understanding of this study. Joslin (2016) stated a benefit of using methodological triangulation as a practice during research is to understand a complex phenomenon. Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple sources in a study of the same phenomenon to improve the research design (Park, Chun, & Lee, 2016). The purpose of using methodological triangulation is to achieve robust reliability

and validation through data collection methods, such as interviews and institutional materials (Ubeda, Santos, & Nagano, 2017). I applied methodological triangulation using data from interviews and physical materials from the participant's organization to further understand the study phenomenon.

NVivo is used for the handling and management of data analysis and the storage of collected data (Houghton et al., 2017). Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo is used to analyze data gathered during interviews, identified in documents, and collected during semistructured interviews (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2016). In addition, Woods et al. (2016) posited the analysis done by NVivo is used to generate matrices to assist the researcher in identifying themes and patterns. I transcribed the interviews into a Microsoft Word document and then uploaded the data to NVivo 12 to identify themes and patterns in the data. Using tools such as NVivo enhances the trustworthiness of the study by providing a transparent auditable trail (Paulus, Wood, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015).

### **Coding and Themes**

I explored interview responses and physical documentation using the coding process during the data analysis segment of my study. In qualitative research, coding is used to symbolize a research-generated pattern in data that is used later for analysis (Saldaña, 2015). Coding involves the organization of schemes into sub-categories and categories (Mikkonen, Kyngäs, & Kääriäinen, 2015). I used coding for robustness and to identify consistencies in the study. Coding is also defined as another form of data management during the research process (Woods et al., 2016).

I used computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo, to transfer data from Microsoft Word for coding purposes. Coding with NVivo allows for indexing of data categorizing called nodes (Woods et al., 2016). Woods et al. (2016) explained that NVivo software allows researchers to run a report that identifies co-occurrences in the data and provides an output in a table format. NVivo can be used to manage large amounts of data analysis of qualitative data; however, the analytical skills are still needed by the researcher (Houghton et al., 2017). Researchers use electronic data management software to code and identify themes that assist in data analysis (Baškarada, 2015).

Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, and Snelgrove (2016) noted themes are organized topics that exhibit repeated ideas to assist the researcher when addressing the study question. Themes are formed from organized codes distinguished from the raw data (Dwarswaard, Bakker, Staa, & Boeije, 2016). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2016) postulated themes are constructed from codes that unify unrelated data but capture the same meaning throughout the dataset. I used the latest NVivo software for data management and analysis to code and identify thematic patterns for this study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Recruitment strategies should include REM to influence organizational attractiveness (Yu & Davis, 2017). Within the context of REM, a job seekers knowledge and familiarity with an organization can positively impact the attractiveness and preference to work for that organization (Alshathry et al., 2017). Researchers who use the concepts of REM may discover a link from marketing to human resource management

impacts organizational profitability (Anselmsson, Bondesson, & Melin, 2016). The conceptual framework I used in this study is REM.

While conducting qualitative research key themes emerge when using a conceptual framework during the data collection and analysis process (Cameron, Naglie, Silver, & Gignac, 2013). The rigor of the literature review will result in the development of themes (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). Joo, McLean, and Lane (2013) maintained an integrative literature review adds validity to a conceptual framework. In addition, I conducted an in-depth literature review that validated the alignment of the conceptual framework REM to my study.

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

Reliability of a study enhances the credibility of the findings (MacPhail, Khoza, Abler, & Ranganathan, 2016). Consistency across research instruments, and data collection techniques provide reliability for qualitative researchers (Tsai et al., 2016). Arino, LeBaron, and Milliken (2016) stated research data from various methods for data collection increases the reliability of qualitative data. Morse (2015) contended that reliability assures the accuracy and value of the data gathered by the researcher. Reliability is achieved by using an interview protocol and member checking (Baškarada, 2015). Tong and Dew (2016) concluded that member checking ensures the research findings are reliable. To achieve reliability in my study, I followed up with the participants of the study to clarify my interpretation of their response were accurately captured to demonstrate accuracy and reliability.

Dependability. Kaivo-oja (2017) postulated reliability is parallel to dependability. Dependability refers to the consistency of findings across various researchers and time (Hays, Wood, Dahl, Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Congruity between the research question and research objectives contributes to the dependability of the research findings (McCaffrey, Bradley, Ratcliffe, & Currow, 2016). The quality criterion of qualitative research includes dependability (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Member checking is when the researcher presents the collection of data captured based on their interpretation of the participant's responses and seeks the interviewee's concurrence or corrections (Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Reese, 2017). Member checking involves the participant's review of the summation of data captured by the researcher to ensure the interviewer has collected the range and depth of responses during the interview (Tong & Dew, 2016). Moreover, Marshall and Rossman (2016) designated member checking as the transfer of the investigator's summation of responses to the participant for verification. To ensure I have accurately captured the participants' responses, and as a measure of dependability, I provided the participants my interpretation of their responses and asked participants to verify the accuracy of my interpretation of participants' responses.

### **Validity**

Hays et al. (2016) divulged the research quality known as validity, is the believability of a study based on the research process. The investigator enforces validity to ensure the accuracy of the data collected from the participant's during research (Miller, Chikritzhs, Droste, Pennay, & Tomsen, 2017). The researcher provides material and the



trustworthiness of that research defines validity (Hays et al., 2016). Yazan (2015) stated member checking and triangulation are used to confirm validity in case study research. Member checking is a process that the investigator uses to increase the validity of a research study with every participant in the study (Grossoehme, 2014). In addition, Baškarada (2015) postulated researchers who implement methodological triangulation achieve maximum validity. I addressed validity in this study, by incorporating methodological triangulation through interviews of talent acquisition and marketing leaders at the organization under study, exercising member checking and a review of physical documents.

Creditability. In qualitative research, creditability is described as the comprehensiveness and trustworthiness of the study based on the data provided (Tong & Dew, 2016). Credibility is associated with the believability, accuracy, and objectivity of the data (Appelman & Sundar, 2016). Hays et al. (2016) stated credibility refers to the extent the research findings are accurate based on the research process. Member checking and triangulation are used to ensure the data analysis represents the depth of the research; these strategies are used to maximize credibility in qualitative research (Tong & Dew, 2016). Triangulation is the combination of multiple methods to enhance the credibility of the research (Park, Chun, Lee, & 2016) and strengthen the credibility of the data (Chiu, Chung, Lee-Wen, & Chang, 2016). Moreover, credibility manifest when various data sets align with the same proposition (Cope, 2014). In an effort to show creditability, I provided a detailed portraiture of the data collection process and methodology I used while conducting my research.

Transferability. Transferability is the degree to which the research process used is relevant to other settings (Tong & Dew, 2016). Transferability involves the ability to use findings from an independent study to support findings in a similar phenomenon (Kaivo-oja, 2017). Hays et al. (2016) noted that transferability occurs when research findings have generalizability of participants, settings, and time frame that is comparable in any setting. Transferability is useful for future researchers who desire to replicate study results (Burchett, Umoquit, & Dobrow, 2011). Transferability occurs by identifying the ability to transmit data into a different setting for a new research study (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011). Koch et al. (2014) posited that to show transferability researchers should provide details about their sampling strategies and techniques used for data collection. I addressed transferability by providing specifics regarding my approach for sampling and data collection techniques used during my research process.

Confirmability. Marshall and Rossman (2014) described confirmability as a process of ensuring the investigator is objective while presenting the research findings. To achieve confirmability, the researcher must provide enough detail in the methodological description to verify that the results are aligned with the conclusion and can be replicated in future studies (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher who provides detailed documentation of the steps they took during the research process for duplication of the study has achieved confirmability (Allahdadian, Irajpour, Kazemi, & Kheirabadi, 2016).

For validity the participant confirms their viewpoint was accurately captured by the researcher, this technique is also known as member checking (Ramezani,

Gholamzadeh, Torabizadeh, Sharif, & Ahmadzadeh, 2017). Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, and Rees (2016) noted member checking gives the participant the opportunity to correct any misrepresentation and confirm researchers' interpretations and meanings of the content documented during the interview. The member checking process allows the participants the opportunity to confirm or disconfirm the data captured by the investigator during the interview (Simpson & Quigley, 2016). As a way of member checking and to accomplish data confirmability, I gave the participant's a copy of my documented interpretation and confirmed whether my interpretation was accurate in relation to responses.

### **Data Saturation**

Researchers reach data saturation when new information produces homogeneous themes during the data analysis and data collection process (Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). Elo et al. (2014) noted data saturation ensures reliability and validity for qualitative researchers. Qualitative researchers reach data saturation when the datum gathered from the participants become repetitive (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017). Data saturation occurred after I identified redundancy in responses from the interview questions and no new themes were formed during the data collection and analysis process.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2 of this study, I addressed the purpose of study, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling method, research ethics, data collection techniques, data organization, data analysis, and reliability and

validity. In Section 3, I will provide a presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and conclusion of study.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to explore corporate image branding strategies that A&D talent acquisition and marketing leaders use to increase competitive advantage for attracting engineering talent. Five leaders of talent acquisition and five communications leaders who successfully attract engineering talent using branding strategies participated in this study. I used interview responses and an organizational announcement (archival document) for methodological triangulation to address the research question. The findings derived from a review of qualitative research data included a focus on the need for corporate image branding to achieve a competitive advantage in the A&D industry. A reoccurring subject in the data was the use of social media to increase the brand awareness, innovation and mission of the A&D industry. Frequently, talent acquisition and communication leaders stated that employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image were key influencers to securing top engineering talent. A&D leaders acknowledged direct benefits of job seeker employer knowledge when considering an A&D organization as an attractive place to work. Organizational leaders' ability to obtain the recognition of being an employer of choice for their firm is essential to winning the war for talent (Victoria, Irini, & John, 2015). Furthermore, A&D leaders identified areas where improvement is needed to attract talent in untapped markets.

## **Presentation of the Findings**

The central research question for this study was: What corporate image branding strategies do A&D talent acquisition and marketing leaders use to maintain a competitive advantage for engineering talent attraction? I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and the cooperating A&D company's organizational announcement as an archival document to collect data for this study. I reached data saturation at the seventh participant; however, I continued to interview 10 participants to ensure saturation. I uploaded the data into NVivo 12, identified themes and patterns and conducted methodological triangulation using the interviews and archival document. Four themes emerged: (a) having an attractive place to work, (b) using social media to attract talent, (c) ensuring the mission is the basis for attracting talent, and (d) attracting untapped talent to the aerospace and defense industry.

### **Theme 1: Having an Attractive Place to Work**

Sommer, Heidenreich, and Handrich (2017) purported that attracting the best and brightest in a tough labor market impacts an organization's competitive advantage. Ten (100%) participants highlighted attracting engineers as a top priority for the A&D industry. M3 stated that the competition among defense companies is stringent, but the inclusion of the high-tech industry increases the competition exponentially for attracting top engineering talent. To increase attractiveness, employers are now investing large amounts of resources in employer branding campaigns (Sommer, Heidenreich, & Handrich, 2017). All (100%) of the marketing participants agreed that the A&D industry as a whole has shifted in the past few years to invest in branding campaigns that focus on

recruitment. Conquering the war on talent is achieved by creating an attractive employer brand (Gupta & Bhaskar, 2016). H3 stated that the A&D industry is new to having a recruitment marketing team, where someone from marketing is imbedded into the talent acquisition organization. In alignment with the Cable and Turban's (2001) REM, H3 concluded, "Recruitment marketing focuses on using talent acquisition as a product and building marketing plans all around that product." The findings of this study suggest that marketing an employer as a product is an effective way to attract talent.

Firfiray and Mayo (2017) suggested that a firm's reputation being among companies identified on Forbes list of "100 best companies to work for" is most attractive and has expanded work-life balance benefits. All (100%) of the marketing participants shared that being on a "best place to work" list contributes to the attractiveness of their organization. Capitalizing on industry acknowledged awards, such as "best place to work" or a Catalyst award, is a way that an A&D company can differentiate from the competition, as mentioned by M1. Germane to REM, a firm's reputation is critical to employment branding efforts that increase the knowledge people have about a firm to attract talent (Dineen & Allen, 2016). Five (50%) of the marketing participants added that the messaging of a "best place to work" certification or articles announcing a contract win contribute to an organization successfully being seen as an attractive place to work. In addition, signaling is a strategy that organizational leaders use to influence the outcome of information (Chang & Chin, 2018). Organizations that align with sending the best signals in a competitive marketplace of being attractive convey a favorable value proposition to job seekers (Dineen & Allen, 2016). M1 stated that multiple forms of

messaging celebrating successes reinforce who a company is, what it does, and the customers it serves. The findings of this study suggest that A&D companies that message their accomplishments experience success with attracting talent.

An employer's image of being a place where a potential employee can manage their work life and life outside of work, known as *work-life balance*, strengthens potential employees' desire to be affiliated with that company (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). Consequently, job seekers' employment decisions are impacted by a firm's reputation regarding how well it supports work-life balance (Fiifiray & Mayo, 2017). Eight (80%) participants agreed that highlighting the benefits of working in A&D is a competitive advantage in attracting talent. Corporate cultures that emphasize work-life balance self-promote their employer brand and make themselves attractive to potential employees (Dineen & Allen, 2016). H4 stated a company has to be ahead of the curve with offering better benefits that improve employee morale. H6 highlighted that the company under study was recognized for being one of the best places to work in the United States for work-life balance; those messages help with the corporate brand image and attracting engineers. My findings reflect the need for leaders to highlight the advantages of working at their firm as a part of their brand.

Sommer, Heidenreich, and Handrich (2017) suggested including an organization's innovativeness in the employer branding messaging to attract innovative employees. Ten (100%) participants confirmed during the data collection process that innovation is a key driver to attracting talent. M1 stated,



What sets us apart is what we do for our customers, the technology we create, the innovation that drives it, and therefore, the people who make us successful. Those are all critical elements in the makeup of our brand. So it's not only the name of the company but it's the sum of all of those parts.

Furthermore, eight (80%) interviewees noted innovation as a discriminator for being attractive from an engineering job seeker's perspective. H1 reiterated,

The pretty cool and kind of sexy ads that I think engineers look at and say, 'Yeah that looks like the type of stuff that I would want to work on and design.' Which is more cutting-edge type stuff. So we promote those cutting-edge technologies in a large marketing campaign.

Organizations must appear attractive to job seekers to secure a future in innovation and competitiveness (Sommer, Heidenreich, & Handrich, 2017). Table 1 shows the frequency of participants' responses regarding an attractive place to work across Questions 1 through 6. There were 27 references about the need for an attractive place to work.

Table 1

*Having an Attractive Place to Work (Frequency)*

Participant	Interview question	Total number of references
H1	1, 3, 4	7
H3	6	1
H5	2, 3, 6	4
M1	1, 2, 5	4
M2	3, 4	2
M3	6	1
M4	1, 2, 4	4
M5	1, 2, 3, 4	4

Human capital is identified as a key resource to development and growth of an organization; however, attracting talent can be a challenge (Sommer, Heidenreich, & Handrich, 2017). The archival document, *Transforming How We Attract, Develop, and Retain Talent*, addressed the need for a change in behaviors, stating “[The] bottom line is that we can’t approach our workforce the same way we have for the last decade. If we do, we will lack the talent and expertise to remain globally competitive in the future.” The archival document also highlighted progress the organization has made to better attract talent using employer knowledge and leveraging the tenets of REM: “We are preparing to launch an external branding campaign” that will target specific candidate groups with messaging on why they should join the organization.

### **Theme 2: Using Social Media to Attract Talent**

Social media is being used by 92% of U.S. companies for hiring purposes (Alexander, Mader, & Mader, 2019). All 10 (100%) participants emphasized the importance of reaching out to candidates using new types of media, such as social media channels. H1 noted, “The traditional media, newspapers, which are a dinosaur now, and even, I think even that television media is something that’s not as useful as it was before.” M4 divulged that, “Technology and the internet as a whole, the social dynamics in the 21st century have radically changed how we go after talent. It’s changed how everybody is going after talent.” Six (60%) participants called out social media as a tool their company is using to attract talent. The use of social media for recruiting is like using a megaphone to attract the best and brightest (Emanuela, 2018). H2 confirmed, “Today we use social media to get information out to job seekers.”

Concurrently, all 10 (100%) participants stressed that technology and social media aids their company in brand messaging. H1 stated, “We use social media to expand our employer brand, whether it be with LinkedIn, Facebook, or YouTube videos.” H3 added that employment marketing teams focus on employer branding, and the company worked with any kind of agency, used branding videos or identified ways to increase exposure through LinkedIn social media and Twitter. H3 confirmed that talent acquisition was used as a product, and the company built marketing plans around that product.

Employer branding helps what is known about a firm to be positioned in a job seeker’s memory as an attractive company or employer of choice (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019). Employer branding is critical to recruitment (Cable & Turban, 2001). Employer branding is the culmination of perceptions a job seeker has about the desirable attributes of an organization (Kashive & Khanna, 2017; Theurer et al., 2018). Tanwar and Kumar (2019) also noted that social media is the most popular channel for employer brand promotion and is a powerful tool used to attract potential employees. Additionally, M3 declared that tapping into markets with a physical presence is one way to promote a brand, “but tapping into different channels like digital and social media, for example, are certainly ways that we’ve been able to try and get our opportunities in front of the best and brightest people that are looking for work.”

Employer image is used to differentiate an organization from its competitors (Slaughter et al., 2015). Companies that use social media to recruit have seen an increase in candidate attraction to their firm (Alexander, Mader, & Mader, 2019; Priyadarshini et al., 2017). Additionally, Priyadarshini et al. (2017) postulated that 87% of job seekers use

social media to determine a firm's image and work culture. All 10 (100%) interviewees mentioned social media as a means to promote the company's image for job seekers. H4 confirmed that this A&D company "uses social media to share the company's culture and put their name and brand out there." Concurring, H1 noted, "We'll post videos or blogs ... maybe from our leaders or some cool videos or something that our engineers look at them they say, 'Yeah, that looks like the type of stuff that I would want to work on and design.' Which is more cutting-edge type stuff." M4 concluded, "This whole recruiting communications is still evolving rapidly as far as what's the best practice and what works, what doesn't. It's all very fluid." Table 2 shows the frequency of participants' responses discussing the impact and use of social media to attract talent to the A&D industry as portrayed across Questions 1 through 6. There were 18 references to leveraging social media while recruiting talent.

Table 2

*Social Media Used for Talent Attraction (Frequency)*

Participant	Interview question	Total number of references
H1	1, 2, 5, 6	5
H2	1	1
H3	1, 6	2
H4	2, 3	2
H5	5	1
M1	1	3
M2	5	1
M3	1	1
M4	6	1
M5	1	1

The archival document did not specifically have a statement about social media, but it stated, "preparing a[n] external branding campaign that will microtarget passive

and active candidates groups with specific content about why they want to start a career...” with the firm under study. H1 described how the company uses the post and pray recruiting strategies on social media tools such as LinkedIn,

So a post and pray means basically you take a job, you post it and then you hope that well qualified people apply ... and in the past, again, our reputation, especially in this [region].... You never had to go out there and have sources and other people do other things. But that has shifted ... I think the market is so tight that has shifted so we have people that do sourcing now, that go out there and actually hunt people down and reach out to them through social media and say, ‘Hey, I noticed your profile,’ or, ‘Hey, I spotted your resume that may be two years old. We’d love to talk to you about your background if you’re thinking about making a move.’ So I think there’s definitely been a shift in the way we’ve started to do business from that post and pray to now, a lot more marketing, branding ourselves more to those engineers, branding [ourselves] more to the job seekers and maybe not even the job seekers, just to kind of get people interested in knowing that our company is out here and we’re hiring.

In support of the archival document, H1 also mentioned,

Even if someone wasn’t necessarily looking for a job, they see it on social media and they see it on other kinds of forms of media to pique their interest or when they do decide to make a move then they put us as one of the ones they’re looking for.

Social media helps job seekers become familiar with a firm (Priyadarshini et al., 2017).

The archival document mentioned microtargeting passive and active job seekers. H1 included,

Maybe getting some of that talent that is what we call 'passive talent.' So people that are not exactly looking but maybe spark their interest in us. Like I said in the past, in this region, I didn't really need to do that. There were always good people applying; we have a strong reputation with the market [being] so tight. That's definitely been a shift [in the way] we've hired.

Using social media as an employer branding strategy and recruitment tool has a positive correlation with a company's reputation (Pirić, Masmontet, & Martinović, 2018).

### **Theme 3: Ensuring the Mission Is the Basis for Attracting Talent**

Job seekers often compare their needs and values with an organization's values and mission before committing to long-term employment (Hauswald, Hack, Kellermanns, & Patzelt, 2016). All 10 (100%) of the study's participants mentioned mission as a draw to the A&D industry. H4 posited,

In the last year or two, we're having a huge talent focus right now. And some of the ways we identify great talent are the ways we identify as a company.

Identifying as a company that wants to make the world a better place, a safer place for our citizens, but also our war fighters. So I think we identify and attract that talent by really driving that message.

H5 said, “When the values of a job seeker matches the perceived values of the recruiting firm, job seekers are more likely to be attracted to that organization (Hauswald et al., 2016). H5 continued,

I think our image is such that we do make the world a safer place. I think that where we can really leverage it is obviously with transitioning military. There’s close to 20% of our overall workforce of employees are former military. That’s definitely something that we leverage. Just being a Department of Defense contractor, we have the former military that are often led to us because of their familiarity with our products and the alignment of military; with that, we definitely can appeal to a mission. And even individuals that may have not served in the military. I didn’t necessarily serve in the military, but we’re proud to work at a company that works to make the world a safer place, as well as ensuring that we protect the war fighters and bring them home safely. So I think a lot of individuals, even if they haven’t served in the military, can get behind that mission. So we do try to appeal to a segment of the candidate population in regard to that.

The core of this research is what makes A&D companies attractive. Employer branding is said to be a firm’s reputation as a place to work and value proposition to potential employees (Dabirian, Paschen, & Kietzmann, 2019). Seven (70%) of the participants mentioned that the firm’s ability to communicate the mission through reputation, image, or familiarity is essential to attracting talent. Dabirian et al. (2019) expressed that companies can communicate their value proposition to employees through

external branding. M4 believes tying what their company does to something job seekers would be more familiar to is key:

Hey, our radars are what kept that rocket from hitting a school—then it becomes a little bit more real. You can tie it into something. It's actually a very timely discussion to be having because across the industry we're talking about, how do you train people to think about their own jobs differently so they can then sell it.

Stuart (2018) confirmed corporate brands are a strategic tool used to guide the organization to identify a reputation. A corporate brand's image is critical to a potential employees' association with that image (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). M3 stated,

Employer image goes back to our mission, so making the world a safer place. Delivering trusted innovative solutions. I think that our visions, beliefs and values, it's something that we all try and bring into our everyday work life. And especially when we're doing external marketing and communication towards potential employees, we lead with that.

M2 followed up with,

Our brand, in terms of being a part of a bigger mission, is to make the world a safer place. And the way that we do that is through technology and innovative solutions. That connecting that message and promoting that message to individuals that would be inspired by that message and would want to come here... Then we get kind of go deeper into the type of work... we're trying to associate the brand with a kind of higher purpose. The mission of protecting our war fighters because that's what we find, that's why people do come to work here,



and that's why they stay. As well as being able to work on cool technology that is critical to the security of our nation as well as our allies. That's how we sell our brand in general. And so, we're trying to connect that to, why would employees want to come here?

In Table 3, I illustrated the frequency of participants' responses regarding the effect the mission of an A&D company has on attracting talent to the industry as portrayed across questions 1 through 6. Table 3 shows that there were 16 references to the impact the mission of an A&D company has on attraction to the industry.

Table 3

*Ensuring the Mission is the Basis for Attracting Talent (Frequency)*

Participant	Interview question	Total number of references
H3	3, 4	3
H4	1, 2, 4	3
H5	2, 3	2
M1	1, 4	4
M2	1	2
M3	3	1
M4	2	1

The archival document did not explicitly elaborate on the mission of the A&D company. However, the Transforming How we Attract, Develop, and Retain Talent document referenced losing the talent and expertise needed to remain globally competitive in the future. The archival document mentions that the “most experienced and institutionalized employees are retiring; the early service employee who will replace them are harder to retain; and competition for skilled talent is unprecedented as our competitors contend with similar circumstances.” Thian (2015) postulated the A&D

industry is starting to lack the employees needed to remain competitive and keep up with rapid growth in technology and near peer threats to our defense systems. Furthermore, the United States must take immediate action on the STEM talent deficit to remain as competitive globally in national security (Walker & Harris, 2018).

#### **Theme 4: Attracting Untapped Talent**

Untapped talent continuously escaping STEM fields puts the United States at a competitive disadvantage (Diekman et al., 2015; Holland, 2018). Women and underrepresented minorities are untapped talent particularly in engineering fields, and the STEM industry has failed to produce sufficient numbers in this new market. All 10 (100%) participants addressed the need to build a reputation or image when entering a new market. M1 supported, stating identifying a new market, especially from a talent perspective the company will focus on increasing recognition and reputation in that market. Five (50%) of the interviewees discussed employer familiarity as being a key contributor to attracting talent. H5 stated,

We find that that technical presentation provides a deeper engagement with the student population and helps brand ourselves...beyond that we'll try to work with student clubs or student associations on campus, that are aligned with our business. So that might be working with the National Society of Black engineers...working with the Society of Women Engineers at the school to help brand ourselves with that demographic on campus.

Kanga (2017) commented that underrepresented groups require visibility on the leadership level of the engineering workforce to feel included. Images are key to

effectively attracting women to STEM (Diekman et al., 2015). An inclusive culture drives attraction and retention of women to STEM organizations (Schaefer, 2015). All of the talent acquisition (50%) participants mention an inclusive reputation or image as a contributing factor to attracting talent. Further, H5 mentioned female engineers should try to attract other female engineers and explain why they should take a look at an aerospace company, and how they got to where they are in their career path. M2 noted the use of videos of existing employees across the spectrum of jobs and demographics increases job seekers' knowledge about the organization; potential employees can get a better sense of, "if I come to work here this is what my experience would be like. So we spent a lot of effort in trying to highlight our existing employees that match the type of candidates we're looking for." In Table 4, I illustrated the frequency of participants' responses regarding attracting talent in an untapped market while answering questions 1 through 6. Table 4 shows that there were 12 references to attracting talent in a new market in the A&D industry.

Table 4

*Attracting Untapped Talent (Frequency)*

Participants	Interview question	Total number of references
H3	2	1
H4	2	1
H5	1, 2, 3, 5	6
M1	4	1
M2	4	1
M4	2	1
M5	2	1

The archival document references opening up the aperture for external talent and, evaluating all candidate requirements and removing any self-imposed ones that narrow the pool unnecessarily.” The document also addresses approaching attracting talent differently and calls for “every function, business, leader, and employee to rethink their relationship with talent and start adapting a new reality, not too far away, in which 80% of our colleagues have less than 20 years of experience.

Although not mentioned in the archival document, H1 mentioned the company under study is actively being intentionally inclusive while hiring and has a corporate mandate to have senior level job postings to include a representative slate when interviewing. In support of the archival document, H1 described the representative slate as including at least 1 woman and 1 person of color to be interviewed for positions at certain levels. The archival document outlined highlights of the progress they have made this far yet expressed the need for attracting talent and the need for transformation; “...if we approach the workforce the same way we have for the last decade....we will lack the talent and expertise to remain globally competitive in the future.”

### **Findings Aligned With the Recruitment Equity Model**

Employer branding is crucial to attracting talent and drives a competitive advantage (Cable & Turban, 2001; Theurer et al., 2018). What a job seeker knows about an organization drives their attraction to an organization (Alshathry et al., 2017). Likewise, employer familiarity motivates a job seekers decision to apply for a position (Kashive & Khanna, 2018). Khan (2017) stated potential candidates are more attracted to brands they are not only familiar with but also have a stellar reputation. A precursor to a

potential employee's organizational attractiveness is how the job seeker views the employer's image (Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018). To increase the attractiveness of an organization, business leaders use the tenets of REM (Yu & Davis, 2017).

Participant responses supported the conceptual framework for this study: REM. Five (100%) marketing leaders and five (100%) talent acquisition leaders acknowledge that employer knowledge leads to employer attractiveness. Employer knowledge includes employer familiarity, employer reputation and employer image (Cable & Turban, 2001). All participants (100%) stressed the reputation of their firm was important to being viewed as a great place to work. An employer's reputation differentiates them from their competitors (Höflinger et al., 2018). All (100%) participants concurred that their employer's positive image is what attracts talent to the organization. Employer image and organizational attractiveness are closely associated (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). All (100%) participants indicated REM tenets contribute to the brand and attractiveness of their A&D company.

Reis and Braga (2016) reported employer branding is the culmination of messages an organization disseminates to say they are a great place. The same way a product is promoted for consumers, an organization can be marketed for potential job seekers to be attracted to that brand (Cable & Turban, 2001). My findings discovered that all (100%) of the marketing participants indicated the image, reputation and familiarity of an organization is collectively the company's brand.

REM authors, Cable and Turban (2001), developed a model to address the value of the job seeker's employer knowledge in relation to the attractiveness of a recruiting

organization. All (100%) participants resonated that attractiveness increased for an organization when job seekers knew about the recruiting firm and the company had a strong employer brand to include a great image and reputation. Employer branding is an organizational strategy that makes a firm most desirable in a competitive job market (Theurer et al., 2018).

### **Findings Aligned With Existing Literature**

The greatest concern of any business leader is attracting talent (Magbool et al., 2016). The findings of this study might assist practitioners and address a gap in literature regarding the use of corporate image branding strategies to attract engineering talent for a competitive advantage in the A&D industry. Within the STEM workforce, there are industries that appear attractive to STEM job seekers and those that are not as attractive (Eichinger, 2018).

The need to make the A&D industry more attractive to engineering job seekers is a common focus of the study; limited researchers have explored corporate image branding strategies that make the A&D industry attractive enough to increase interest from engineering job seekers (Westphal, 2015; Dabirian et al., 2017; Theurer et al., 2018). Unlike Google, Amazon and Apple there is a gap in identifying strategies to grow and sustain the engineering labor force in the A&D industry (Iannotta, 2015; Varma, 2018). The findings of this study are consistent with the literature in regards to the challenges the A&D industry faces to be as attractive as other industries to engineering talent.

Business leaders in this study consider employer branding as crucial to the ability to attract talent. To be the most attractive within an industry, an employer branding strategy that promotes the image of a company to the job seeker is required (Theurer et al., 2018). Further, a strong corporate brand influences a job seekers employment interest to an organization (Mohan et al., 2018). Therefore, A&D business leaders may put more emphasis on employer brand and improve employer familiarity, reputation and image to best attract potential employees (Cable & Turban, 2001; Westphal, 2015; Maurya & Agarwal, 2018).

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The most significant contribution from the study findings may be the identification of the best practices to incorporate corporate image branding strategies into the talent acquisition process of employee attraction for A&D corporations. Identifying best practices A&D leaders need for attracting engineering talent is critical to competitive advantage in the industry (Westphal, 2015). A&D leaders may consider the findings from this qualitative case study for the selection of a suitable corporate image branding strategy and effective talent attraction.

Emerged themes from the study included information on the relevance of the application of social media, innovation, and promotion of the mission of A&D companies for employer familiarity, employee reputation, and employer image for talent attraction purposes. A&D leaders who capitalize on corporate image branding strategies may overcome talent acquisition challenges and achieve a competitive advantage. All (100%) participants expressed a confidence in increasing recruitment when social media is used

to improve employer familiarity. The coupling of technology and recruiting has become a competitive advantage in attracting talent, and the use of social media is compared to using a megaphone to gain access to top talent (Emanuela, 2018).

A&D leaders may also use the findings from this qualitative case study to identify the methods to capitalize on improved employer image. Business leaders may be able to develop an approach to using employer image as a key component in recruiting. From a general business perspective, employer image is a global impression of multiple messages from various sources about specific aspects about company (Lievens, 2017). Eight (80%) participants revealed A&D companies have a challenge in messaging their purpose due to the nature of business. Furthermore, the overall professional practice applications, based on the study findings, are to develop potential best practices to enhance messaging in the form of personal stories that focus on A&D companies protecting citizens globally as opposed to the negative image of harm.

A&D leaders compete with companies like Amazon, Google, Apple, and Twitter for top technical talent (Westphal, 2015). Four (40%) participants acknowledged that the A&D companies are not recognized in every market as some other tech companies. Khan (2017) stated employer reputation is critical to a job seekers attractiveness to a company. Based on the findings of this study, A&D companies are challenged with competing for highly skilled talent against companies such as Amazon, Google, and other high tech companies. Moreover, to aid in attracting talent in the A&D industry all (100%) participants stated a best practice of company engagement in the community and building strategic relationships, and making public announcements of successes such as contract



awards all help to build the reputation of a company. Five (50%) participants acknowledge best choice awards such as best place to work are awards that build the reputation of the company. A reputable company is more successful in the labor market and shapes the judgement of job seekers (Alshathry et al., 2017; Puncheva-Michelotti, Vocino, Michelotti, & Gahan, 2018 ). Finally, A&D leaders that participated in this study identify having a good reputation as a competitive advantage for employer attraction.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Satta, Esposito De Falco, Penco, and Parola (2015) identified the A&D industry as a company that thrives on innovation. The results of this study may assist A&D leaders in recognizing the value of corporate image branding led strategies to improve talent attraction for engineers to innovate in the industry. The study's findings show that engineering talent is the key to the nation's ability to innovate products that protect our war fighters. Ten (100%) participants stated innovation is also a contributing factor to competitive advantage. Participant M4 stated, "attracting the best and brightest to the A&D industry to be a part of a mission that prevents a school from being hit by a missile has a greater mission for our nation than creating a new app or the latest phone." The findings of this study imply the ability to attract human capital that will defeat the eminent threat of terror around the world is important to national security. Moreover, through corporate image branding initiatives, the mission of working with a firm that protects the United States may resonate with engineering talent and make the A&D industry more attractive.

Furthermore, innovation is at the core of creating new markets, rapid technological progress, and enhancement of economic growth (Saray, Patache, & Ceran, 2017). Tapping in to new markets via innovation for A&D may provide enhanced national security measures that protect the United States and allies. The findings of this study might provide the talent attraction needed to innovate new products in A&D that sustain our economy. This study's findings identify innovation as a driver to attracting talent and creating technology that protects the nation as near peer threats are rapidly becoming peer threats. Finally, identifying ways to attract bright engineers who innovate for the A&D industry could have a positive impact on the engineer's economic development personally and in their surrounding communities. Reiner, Meyer, & Sardadvar (2016) concluded that human capital is the driving force behind innovation and economic growth.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The research findings yielded data that may assist A&D leaders with the identification of corporate image branding strategies to use for competitive advantage. Furthermore, the results of this study might assist A&D leaders to effectively implement hiring practices that attract engineering talent for increased competitive advantage. I recommend the following actions based on the study findings:

- A&D leaders should develop a detailed corporate image branding strategy that couples employer image, employer reputation, and employer familiarity to improve employer attraction.

- A&D leaders should benefit from leveraging marketing principles integrated with talent acquisition best practices to pursue job seekers as marketers treat employment at their A&D firm as a product to sell to a job seeker.
- A&D leaders could benefit from using employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image to engage untapped markets of job seekers to work in the A&D industry through publicizing employee pride and engagement while promoting their affinity to the company through their personal networks.
- A&D leaders should revamp the corporate image of an A&D company to a more attractive brand to attract top talent through a diversified leadership, promote the A&D industry's unique work-life balance atmosphere and rebrand the organization's purpose.
- A&D leaders should allocate significant resources to attraction and branding efforts that focus on recruiting the type of talent they are seeking through creative employer branding campaigns to rebrand themselves as an exciting place to work.

Recommended actions for A&D leaders selecting corporate image branding strategies to achieve competitive advantage could be communicated and implemented using formal and informal modes of communication within the organization.

Communication from senior leaders regarding the importance of talent attraction is one potential channel for improved recruitment of engineers. Furthermore, a formal corporate image branding strategy plan is required, including estimated times and key performance indicators to solidify clear organizational planning and appropriate resource allocation are enforced. Study findings might apply broadly to the A&D industry using corporate image

branding strategies to increase talent attraction and assist government agencies with national security and innovation for national defense. I will seek to publicize my research findings through a variety of A&D industry and academic journals focused on attracting talent.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Study findings may contribute to existing and future research regarding corporate image branding strategies A&D leaders use to achieve a competitive advantage. Lievens and Slaughter (2016) posited companies that invest in corporate image for improved employer attraction, outperform other companies that do not. A limitation in this study is the small sample size as this qualitative case study included only a single A&D company in the United States. Further researchers may include multiple A&D companies or high-tech companies. Subsequent research might include an examination of the exposure students have to A&D while in early education, pre-college and post-secondary institutions to become familiar with what the industry offers. An interdisciplinary approach to this business problem is also a suggestion for further research. An additional limitation was the sole focus of corporate image branding strategies for competitive advantage. Future research could focus on leadership behaviors and styles to assess best practices needed in engineering firms for effective employee attraction.

Researchers could also focus on policies made available by government agencies to assist in employer attraction to the A&D industry. Using the findings from this study, I identified that government agencies should intervene in the challenges the A&D industry faces to attract talent and take an active role in securing talent that will directly impact

our national security. Further studies examining the specific impact untapped talent such as women and minorities has on competitive advantage in the A&D industry might decrease the talent attraction challenges. Moreover, additional research associated with overcoming the loss of talent to high-tech companies may drive a behavior change with the A&D industry and talent attracting leading to a competitive advantage.

### **Reflections**

Reflecting on my experience within the Doctorate of Business Administration Doctoral Study process, I discovered leaders evolve strategies pertaining to corporate image branding activities and the attractiveness of the A&D industry. For example, an aerospace leader's idea of branding may not resonate with the current job seeker. Intentional or unintentional biases when tapping in to untapped talent or new markets might negatively impact the ability to attract talent to the A&D industry. Furthermore, study participants did convey the desire for existing employees to tell their story about their experience with the company to better personally connect with potential job seekers. Additionally, participants perceived the mission of an A&D company was appealing from a social values perspective.

Using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions, I encouraged in-depth discussions with each participant getting substantial insight into their perspective regarding successful branding strategies to attract engineering talent. The study participant's indicated, without the availability of data and research of branding strategies A&D companies have a less likely competitive advantage. The participants of this study concluded the traditional ways of attracting talent are irrelevant and useless in this

competitive market; attracting talent has to be an innovative strategy to remain competitive, and talent acquisition, marketing, and even engineering departments must be better aligned. Information gained from the literature review and study participant interview responses denote a correlation exists between the success of talent attraction and a positive corporate image or brand.

### **Conclusion**

The objective of this qualitative single-case study was to explore the corporate image branding strategies A&D leaders use for competitive advantage. Using semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and an archival document, I collected and triangulated data to provide an answer to the research question. Four themes emerged from the methodological triangulation of 10 interviews and an archival document: (a) having an attractive place to work, (b) using social media to attract talent, (c) ensuring the mission is the basis for attracting talent, and (d) attracting untapped talent.

In relation to the branding strategies used to achieve competitive advantage, various input devised by the study participants was comparable to the information gathered from the archival document. Additionally, the themes identified in the study's findings were consistent with the information gathered from the literature review. For example, Reis and Braga (2016) cited employer branding as the summation of messages a firm uses to market they are an employer of choice. All (100%) participants stressed branding is a combination of employer familiarity, reputation and employer image. The

marketing leaders (50%) that participated in the study also conveyed being identified as a great place to work is a discriminator that job seekers find attractive.

Employer branding strategies are used to increase employer familiarity with job seekers to attract new talent to the workplace (Ahmad & Salina, 2016; Saurombe et al., 2017). All (100%) of the interviewees in this study acknowledged their firm's familiarity amongst A&D job seekers exponentially supports their ability to attract talent. Employer familiarity is the recollection of an organization's brand (Kashive & Khanna, 2017). Job seekers knowledge and familiarity about a company is a tenet of employer attraction (Theurer et al., 2018). M1 confirmed what potential employees know about your firm reinforces the company's ability to attract talent.

Capitalizing on an employer's reputation is a key contributor to increasing employer attractiveness (Khan, 2017). All participants (100%) in this study cited their employer's positive reputation as being a factor in whether engineering job seekers were attracted to their company. The marketing leaders (100%) of this study added, having a "best place to work" label on the company contributes to the reputation and overall attractiveness of the firm. M4 added, "we vigorously defend our reputation because of the secondary effects on recruitment...we make sure everything that we are putting out there about ourselves is up to the level of quality that we expect and telling the story that we expect." Kaur and Pingle (2018) postulated the image of an organization is impacted by a company's reputation.

Employer image is used as a competitive advantage and the use of social media propagates that image for job seekers (Slaughter et al., 2015; Priyadarshini et al., 2017).

H1 confirmed the literature and research reporting; the use of social media expands employer brand. All 10 (100%) participants acknowledged leveraging the use of social media to promote the image of their firm to attract talent. Cable and Turban (2001) described employer image as cognate to brands. Additionally, all of the marketing participants (100%) of this study confirmed the employer image is the brand.

Employee attraction is about focusing on the whole entity of an organization and not solely focusing on a single factor such as employer reputation (Alshathry et al., 2017). My findings illustrate the need for leaders to understand all factors that contribute to employer attraction to the A&D industry while using corporate image branding initiatives to collectively include employer knowledge, employer familiarity and employer image. According to Datta, Ailawadi and Van Heerde (2017), investing in employer branding strategies increases competitive advantage. To defeat the war for talent and remain competitive, business leaders must develop an attractive employer brand (Gupta & Bhaskar, 2016). A failure by leaders to identify a strategized corporate brand initiative may result in failed attempts to attract talent and therefore, directly impact the organization's ability to increase competitive advantage. The future of the A&D industry depends on the actions taken today, as addressed by H1. A&D leaders must create corporate image branding strategies aligned with the current literature and research. As suggested by H4, A&D business leaders need to make sure they are evolving as a business and understanding what they should invest in to draw great talent. Moreover, along with working on innovative technology, the mission of aerospace and



defense is to protect the war fighter. That is why people should want to come to work here and want to stay; that is the brand we need to sell to attract talent, as posited by M2.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Corporate Image Branding to attract Engineering talent	
What you will do	What you will say, script
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce the interview and set the stage <input type="checkbox"/> Give the applicant the opportunity to introduce themselves	<p>My name is A'Shawn Mitchell, and I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to participate in this research study project: "Corporate Image branding to attract Engineering talent."</p> <p>Corporate brand as the vehicle used to communicate values of an organization, a discriminator from competitors and emotional connection to stakeholders.</p> <p>Corporate brands are a strategic resource that guides the organization to identify a purpose and culture. A corporate image is a reputation or the publics' cumulative perception of an organization over time.</p> <p>I am researching corporate image branding strategies, for increased competitive advantage in aerospace companies like your firm. My central research question that will drive this study is: What corporate image branding strategies do A&amp;D talent acquisition and marketing leaders use to maintain a competitive advantage in engineering talent attraction?</p> <p>I will ask you six questions.</p> <p>I have been a student of Walden University for approximately 5 years. I have worked I have worked at an A&amp;D company for the past 13 years in various engineering roles as an individual contributor and leader.</p> <p>Just to reiterate, you have consented to become part of this research project by agreeing to be interviewed. Remember, your participation in this project is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time prior to data analysis stage. Do you have any questions about the informed consent form that I previously sent to you or the informed consent process? I will audio record this interview along with taking notes. Your participation along with this interview is a private matter, and I will keep these proceedings confidential. Do you have any questions or concerns about the confidentiality of your participation? Do you have any questions or concerns about anything that I have discussed with you thus far?</p> <p>For the purposes of this study corporate image is defined as the uniqueness, strengths, and favorability associations that set a brand apart and held in a jobseekers memory.</p> <p>Corporate image is a sum of perceptions and affirmations of an organization's culture, nature, and structure held by customers.</p>

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<input type="checkbox"/> Watch for non-verbal queues	Let's begin with the questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrase as needed	1. How does your firm attract engineering talent?
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth	2. What strategies does your company use to increase an engineering jobseeker's knowledge regarding your organization?
	3. How does your firm use employer image to attract engineering talent?
	4. How does your firm use employer reputation to attract engineering talent?
	5. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of the strategies for engineering talent attraction using corporate image branding?
	6. What other information can you share that may assist with the development of this study?
<input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up interview thanking participant	This concludes our interview session.
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule follow-up member checking interview	I will transcribe this interview and provide a summary of your responses to each of the questions and send them to you via email within three business days from today. The goal in your review the transcript is so that you can make certain that I have captured the essence of your responses to the questions. If there are inconsistencies in my transcription and the intended meaning of your responses, we will have a follow up interview so that you can provide clarification. Thank you for your time and I hope that you have a great rest of the day.

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