



Plan of Approach
Sandy van de Velde
IBL4

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1. Preliminary research

1.1: Company and product analysis

According to LinkedIn, *“Europe language Jobs is situated in the human resources sector in which they consult and recruit multilingual employees all over Europe. They currently employ 11 to 50 permanent employees in their headquarters in Barcelona. The company was founded in 2012 and has been growing ever since”* (Europe Language Jobs, 2019).

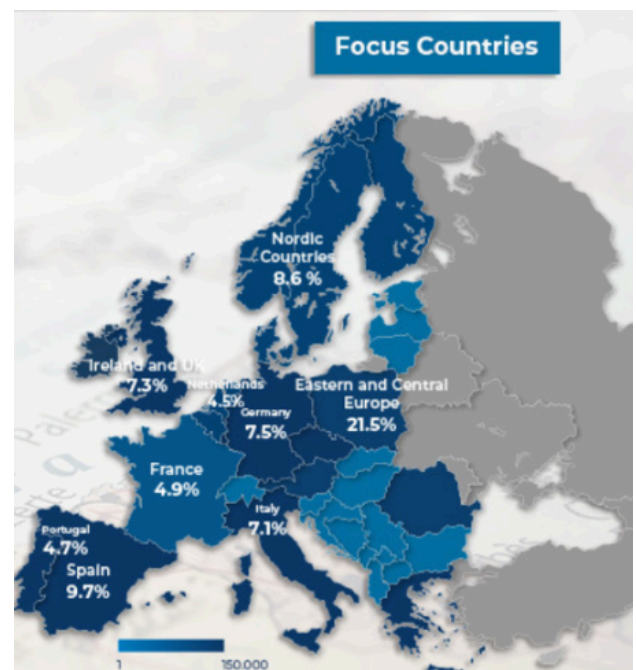
The director of Europe Language Jobs, Carlos Valcárcel, stated that Europe Language Jobs is an online job board that specializes in multilingual jobs and internships across the European employment sector.

It is not a recruitment website but their service can be seen as a meeting point between candidates and companies located in Europe, offering opportunities in over 49 countries, 180 cities and 57 languages.

Candidates can search for Jobs by country, language and sector. According to the Europe Language Jobs brochure, the main sectors that they are focusing on are Customer Service, Sales, Marketing, Translation, Finance and Gaming (Brochure , 2019). The majority of the applicants of Europe Language Jobs are between 20 and 35 years old and are looking for Junior and Mid-level positions. Currently there is a huge demand for German, Dutch and Nordic speaking candidates, which makes it harder for companies to find suitable candidates for these language posts.

As reported by Neill, *“Europe Language Jobs enables applicants to edit and manage their CV’s by means of a private account”* (Neill, sd). Applicants can search and apply for jobs directly through Europe Language Jobs and track the status of their application. Companies are able to publish job vacancies and manage applicants by means of an internal dashboard account. Moreover, every market has a different account manager which companies can contact in their preferred language. After the initial contact has been made between applicant and company, Europe Language jobs is not a part of the recruitment process anymore.

The applicants that are active on the webpage of Europe Language Jobs are divided all over Europe, and even outside of Europe. As the company was founded in Barcelona, most of the candidates that are looking for a job on its website are Spanish. As is shown in the figure on the right, Europe Language Jobs has had the most Spanish applicants through its website. The Nordic Countries, Germany, Ireland & UK and Italy are the second to fifth biggest focus countries for Europe Language Jobs.



The annual report of Europe Language Jobs of 2019 mentioned there was an annual growth of 42% in comparison to 2018 (Annual Review 2019, 2020). It also indicates that Europe Language Jobs had 570.000 candidate applications and they received 240.000 new multilingual candidates in 2019. Moreover, there were 25.000 offers posted in 2019 by the companies that make use of Europe Language Jobs its services and on top of this, they had 3.000.000 website visitors over the year. Each year Europe Language Jobs is aiming to grow even more, and they work hard to achieve this.

The website of study.com found that, *“shared values are organizational values that are usually developed by the organization's leadership and then adopted by the other members of the organization”* (Shared Values in an Organisation: Definition and Explanation, 2019). As part of its organizational culture, Europe Language Jobs also has some shared values which drive its employees. Since I have started working at Europe Language Jobs, I have learnt that they give priority to the service for its customers. Every market has an account manager that is constantly working on fulfilling the needs and wants of the customers to keep them happy. Moreover, to stimulate teamwork within the sales department, a monthly goal of €100,000 is set and when reached, all employees will receive a bonus. This improves the collaboration between colleagues within the sales department.

1.2: Problem analysis

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Europe Language Jobs is active within 49 countries in Europe, including the Netherlands. Previous sales manager of Europe Language Jobs, Mirjam Maarleveld, has pointed out that the Dutch market is a difficult market for them to do business with and be successful. The focus of Europe Language Jobs is currently not on the Dutch market. According to the statistics of Europe Language Jobs, only 3,96% of the total applicants on its website are Dutch.

Since the beginning, Europe Language Jobs has had difficulties to penetrate the Dutch market and to increase the number of Dutch applicants on its website. The Dutch account managers at Europe Language Jobs have been trying hard to acquire more Dutch companies by analyzing the market and contacting international companies that might be interested in starting a partnership with Europe Language Jobs but even though its number of applicants and companies is growing each year, not a satisfying number of this growth derives from the Dutch market. Europe Language Jobs would like to change this and become more active on the Dutch market as it can be a very interesting and profitable market.

The problem that Europe Language Jobs has been dealing with is the fact that they have not been using a well-functioning strategy to approach the Dutch market. Moreover, because the account managers for the Netherlands have been interns for the past 2 years, they changed account managers every 6 months which made them lose sight of their Dutch companies. Having a new account manager every 6 months does not make it possible for the Dutch account managers to build a strong relationship with their companies and eventually the companies would lose interest in a collaboration. Europe Language Jobs is currently changing their management system and they have hired more permanent workers who are able to build and maintain a steady relationship with their customers. However, the remaining problem is the use of a defective strategy for the Dutch market.

“Due to globalization, multilingualism has spread and increased significantly in value, and this value keeps growing as the world is becoming more connected” (Multilingualism and globalization, 2019). As Europe Language Jobs is a job board which specializes in facilitating the recruitment process of international companies to search and find the perfect multilingual candidates for their open job positions, the demand for multilingual candidates is growing because of globalization. This offers Europe Language Jobs great opportunities to grow with this market.

An important opportunity for Europe Language Jobs is the increasing demand of customer service in the native language of the customer. According to Scamman, *“Research has shown that people prefer to do business in their native language”* (Scamman, 2018). By adapting to the changing market and offering multilingual customer service, companies obtain a significant competitive advantage compared to companies that only offer customer service in English.

As stated by the website of Europe Language Jobs, *“a lack of demand for a particular line of work in workers’ own countries, or a high demand for it elsewhere, is one of the more long-established reasons for migration”* (Dan, 2017). Another opportunity for Europe Language Jobs is the high demand for multilingual candidates in Europe within the biggest focus sectors of Europe Language Jobs; Customer Service, Information Technology and Sales & Marketing. As reported by Ema on the website of Europe Language Jobs, these 3 sectors account for 76% of all jobs demanded within Europe (Ema, 2018).

In order to respond to Dutch multilingual companies and become a bigger player on the Dutch market in the future, Europe Language Jobs should respond to the increasing demand of native customer relationship service and the high demand for multilingual employees in Europe within its focus sectors. Europe Language Jobs will not be able to expand its business to the Dutch market and increase its yearly growth if they do not make use of these opportunities. Developing a well-functioning strategy to penetrate the Dutch market and responding to the opportunities has been a big challenge for Europe Language Jobs.

While Europe Language Job’s current sales strategy might be working for other markets, it is not delivering the desired results on its activities on the Dutch market. Europe Language Jobs needs to form a special strategy to respond to the needs and wants of the multilingual companies on the Dutch market.

1.3: Information gaps

As a means to understand how and to what extent Europe Language Jobs needs to adapt its marketing strategy regarding the Dutch market, different information gaps have been identified which should be answered during the research.

In order to improve its sales strategy, it should become clear what the expectations are from the Dutch potential clients and what the current obstacles are. To gain more insight on the Dutch market and its needs and wants, five information gaps need to be answered:

(1) The biggest competitors of Europe Language Jobs within the Dutch market and their market share, (2) The current Dutch target market and positioning towards this market of Europe Language Jobs, (3) Current return and investment of the targeted Dutch market, (4) The expectations of potential Dutch clients regarding communication, service, and results of

a partnership with a job platform like Europe Language Jobs, (5) The communicational and cultural obstacles for Dutch companies or Dutch applicants that has caused them not to join Europe Language Jobs yet.

1.4: Project aim

The project aim of this research is to show Europe Language Jobs how it can increase its activity on the Dutch market in the most effective way.

Firstly, the research that will fill the information gaps will give an insight what Europe Language Jobs can improve when approaching the Dutch market. Obstacles should be identified which the company thereafter can look at and try to eliminate to create more positive awareness for Europe Language Jobs on the Dutch market. Europe Language Jobs should be able to remove the biggest obstacles with an improved strategic plan as well as being able to improve its strategic plan for the Dutch market by using the information gathered to answer the information gaps.

The research will be based on literature / online desk research and field research performing interviews with the employees within the firm on the current strategy and possible improvements. The analysis and results of this research will help identify information gaps given under the previous heading. More specifically, the needs and wants of the Dutch multilingual market will become clear from the field research with the potential clients of Europe Language Jobs within the Dutch market.

In the end of the research, all this knowledge will be used to improve its strategic plan presenting ways to eliminate the current obstacles between Europe Language Jobs and the Dutch multilingual companies which will help close the information gaps. This strategy will be tested, analysed and if necessary improved. Finally, this improved strategic plan will enable Europe Language Jobs to approach the potential Dutch clients more effectively with the aim to increase its activity on the Dutch market. The solution will lead to the creation of a professional product in the form of a strategic plan.

2. Research Approach

2.1 Design

A research design has been made (figure 1) as a tool to carry out the research in an adequate way and fill the information gaps. In the first 4 weeks, a problem analysis will be done, and information will be gathered to create the plan of approach and identify the information gaps of the research. In this stage the eventual professional product will also be specified. After these 4 weeks, literature research will be done for 2 weeks to answer information gap 1. The preparation of the interviews will start, after which the interviews will be conducted over a period of 4 weeks and evaluated for another week. After the interviews, the solution will be crafted in the form of a research justification and a professional product in the form of a strategic plan. The research justification will be presented after week 18, and the professional product after week 20 after which the end presentation of the internship will be held at the HZ.

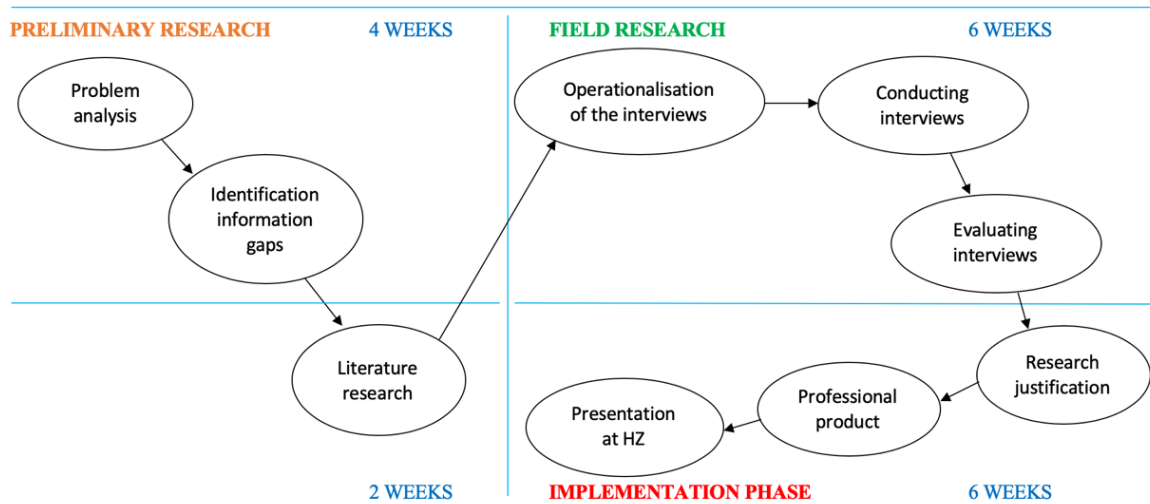


Figure 1: Research design

2.2 Approach per information gap

The five information gaps mentioned earlier will all be answered by performing literature research (information gap 1) and field research (information gaps 2-5) in the form of semi-structured interviews. The literature research will give an insight on the micro-environment in which Europe Language Jobs is located, and more specifically the competition of Europe Language Jobs within the Dutch market (IG 1). The first part of the semi-structured interviews held within Europe Language Jobs will then reveal details on the current Dutch target market and positioning towards that market of Europe Language Jobs (IG 2). These interviews will also disclose the current return and investment of the targeted Dutch market (IG3). The second part of the semi-structured interviews will be held with the potential Dutch clients of Europe Language Jobs and will, together with some additional desk research, give the researcher a better insight that may lead to a strategic approach of the Dutch market (IG 4). Finally, the last semi-structured interviews among potential Dutch clients for ELJ will uncover the communicational and cultural obstacles for Dutch companies or Dutch applicants that has caused them not to join Europe Language Jobs yet (IG 5).

“A semi-structured interview allows one to divert from the questions and bring up new ideas during the interview because of the use of open-ended questions by the interviewer” (Doyle, 2019). Such interview usually revolves around a framework of themes to be explored and are widely used in qualitative research. *“Qualitative research could refer to definitions, characteristics and description of things and not to their counts or measures”* (Qualitative research, 2018). This method will provide the researcher with a more detailed view on the matter and the standpoint of the interviewee. As information gaps 2 to 5 should be answered in detail in the form of a description or characteristic and not statistics, this is the best research method to answer the given information gaps.

2.3 Data collection

The population of the field research can be divided into two categories: (1) Internal sales employees of Europe Language Jobs and (2) Biggest potential clients of Europe Language Jobs.

The first category, internal sales employees of Europe Language Jobs, will be interviewed to gain insights on information gaps 2 and 3. This population will include the team lead of the sales department of Europe Language Jobs which will play a big role in these interviews among other employees of the sales department. A part of the interviews will be held with the team lead, and additional interviews will be held with other staff of the sales department, depending on the amount of information still needed after the first interview with the sales manager.

The second category includes all potential clients of Europe Language Jobs within the Dutch market. As the potential customers within the Dutch market is a relatively big group of multilingual companies, the interviews to gain insight on information gaps 4 and 5 will be held within a sample group of the total potential customers, which will include the biggest and most important potential customers of Europe Language Jobs.

The data gathered from the interviews with these two categories will be recorded by audio recording and note-taking to ensure the best results of the conducted interviews.

2.4 Data analysis

To analyze all the data gathered by conducting the semi-structured interviews, it is needed to transcribe the audio recordings of all important interviews. Transcribing means *“to record something written, spoken, or played by writing it down”* (Transcribe, sd). Firstly, as transcribing all interviews will take up a lot of time, the interviews will be evaluated by importance and the interviews of which information will be subtracted for the research will be transcribed. The audio recordings of these important interviews conducted with the population will be written down word for word to enable the researcher to analyze the answers and to indicate the important parts. Afterwards, the interviews will be coded based on inductive coding. According to Erika Yi, *“Coding the qualitative data makes the messy scripts quantifiable.”* Moreover, *“Coding the qualitative data creates structure”* (Yi, 2018). It enables researchers to structure the interview by separating different areas of the problem and organizing them in a logical way. This way, it is not needed to read over all the answers of the interview again, but by using codes they will find what they need more effectively. As stated by S. Hall, *“Inductive content analysis is a qualitative method of content analysis that researchers use to develop theory and identify themes by studying documents, recordings and other printed and verbal material”* (Hall, sd). This method can be used without previous studies and it enables researchers to identify the key themes of an interview by filtering out the important and useful information and putting this in different categories. This inductive coding method is suited for the evaluation of the interviews as there has not yet been a concrete study on the subject. Unlike deductive coding, there is no codebook that will be made in advance. Deborah Gabriel has found that *“deductive coding concerns the testing of a theory, while inductive coding is concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from the data”* (Gabriel, 2013). This is why this method is more suited for the evaluation of the interviews of this research.

2.5 Operationalization

“Operationalization is the process of strictly defining variables into measurable factors” (Shuttleworth, sd). Within this research, the needs and wants of the Dutch multilingual companies are central. Moreover, the extent to which Europe Language Jobs corresponds to these needs and wants will be treated. Operationalization determines how the researchers are going to measure an emotion or concept, which suits this research well.

To measure the degree to which current customers are happy with the services of Europe Language Jobs, five variables have been set out. These variables include communication, customer service, recruitment process, effectiveness of the website and expected results of customers. These variables will be converted into measurable indicators, which will in turn lead to interview questions.

3. Planning and budget

Below a planning of the whole research period is given. This planning will begin the first day of the internship, 27th of January, and ends on the 22nd of June. It includes each step to answering the information gaps and eventually leads to the creation of the research justification and the professional product of the IBL professional. The total amount set out for this research is €0.

Week	Date	Task
Week 1	27/01	Beginning of internship (27 th of January) / Introduction/ gather information at ELJ
Week 2	03/02	Make: Plan of Approach
Week 3	10/02	Hand in: First draft of Plan of Approach
Week 4	17/02	Improve Plan of Approach based on feedback
Week 5	24/02	Hand in: Final Plan of Approach / literature research
Week 6	02/03	Receive feedback on Plan of Approach Literature research
Week 7	09/03	Prepare interviews
Week 8	16/03	Conduct interviews
Week 9	23/03	Conduct interviews
Week 10	30/03	Conduct interviews
Week 11	06/04	Conduct interviews
Week 12	13/04	Code/ evaluate interviews
Week 13	20/04	Start research justification
Week 14	27/04	Research justification
Week 15	04/05	Research justification
Week 16	11/05	Research justification/ Professional product
Week 17	18/05	Professional product
Week 18	25/05	Professional product
Week 19	01/06	Hand in: Research justification
Week 20	08/06	Finish professional product incl. recommendations/ validity/ reliability
Week 21	15/06	Hand in: Complete showcase incl. recommendations and professional product
Week 22	22/06	End of internship: Defense/ introduction of professional product of ELJ at HZ

Appendixes

Graduation Internship International Business '19/'20

Self-assessment Plan of Approach

Student name: Sandy van de Velde
Date of assessment: 14/02/2020

VERDICT: (PASS / NO PASS)

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

The criteria:

- The company and its product/service have been explored using a thorough company analysis;
- The business problem has been explored using a thorough problem analysis addressing at least the 6W questions;
- One or more possible solutions for the business problem have been addressed and linked to one or more Professional Product(s) to be delivered corresponding to one of the four Working and Management Tools (Marketing & Sales, Finance & Accounting, Operations & Supply Chain Management and Organisation & People);
- The possible solutions result in a SMART project aim;
- Knowledge that currently lacks to underpin the solution(s) for the business problem has been identified, stating the lack of knowledge in detailed information gaps;
- An adequate research design is chosen, described and justified, addressing -if applicable- per information gap the research approach, the units of analysis, the process of data collection & analysis, the operationalisation and reliability & validity.

Motivation for the assessment:

There is a clear company analysis added to the report and the business problem has been addressed keeping in mind the 6W questions. Possible solutions have been given and this is linked to the Marketing & Sales management tool in the form of a strategic plan. Information gaps have been identified providing information about the lacking information. Finally, a research design has been chosen and the research approach per information gap is given as well as the process of data collection and analysis, operationalisation and reliability & validity.

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