



# Optimising Employer Branding Strategies for Oceanário de Lisboa: A Comprehensive Consulting Project

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Dissertation written under the supervision of Professor Rute Xavier, with the collaboration of Oceanário de Lisboa's Human Resources Director, Inês Pinto Coelho.

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## **Abstract**

Employer branding is a topic that companies need to consider during the unpredictable quotidian of reshaping their brand. In today's highly competitive corporate landscape, companies invest heavily to attract and retain top high-skilled talent. Hence, to remain attractive, it is essential to review and modernize current employer branding strategies.

This Master Thesis is inserted in a Consulting Project atmosphere and was conducted at Oceanário de Lisboa. Therefore, alongside investigating the theoretical aspects of Employer Branding and the Employee Value Proposition framework, this research has a strong component of enriching the employer branding efficiencies of the client. The main scope of the project is to assess the market's perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer in the Life Sciences industry.

To achieve this goal, the research used qualitative individual interviews and a quantitative survey to increase the effectiveness of the results. Those methodologies were used to evaluate the perception of Life Sciences professionals and graduates about the client's employer branding strategies. The research then diagnosed what Oceanário de Lisboa was offering in terms of benefits and perks to understand if there was a match with the expectations of Life Sciences employees and students.

Based on the data analysis, recommendations were provided to ensure that the best practices Oceanário was employing would be highlighted. Following a strong connection to the data collected, key points of improvement were identified, and advice was provided on certain aspects that could improve the industry's perception of the client.

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## Resumo

*Employer branding* é um tópico que qualquer empresa deve considerar durante o indefinido quotidiano de renovação da marca. Atualmente, perante um cenário corporativo de elevada competitividade, as empresas investem severamente para atrair e reter talento de excelente qualidade. Para que se mantenham atrativas, é essencial que revejam e modernizem estratégias de *employer branding*.

Esta Tese de Mestrado está inserida no Seminário de Projeto de Consultoria levada a cabo no Oceanário de Lisboa. Assim sendo, além de discorrer teoricamente sobre conceitos como *employer branding* e *employee value proposition*, esta dissertação tem uma forte componente prática, procurando aumentar a eficiência das estratégias de *employer branding* do cliente. O principal objetivo do projeto é avaliar a perceção de profissionais e graduados em áreas de Ciências da Vida do Oceanário de Lisboa enquanto empregador.

Para atingir o objetivo, esta tese recorre a entrevistas individuais qualitativas e a um questionário quantitativo para aumentar eficácia dos resultados. Estas metodologias foram utilizadas para avaliar a perceção de profissionais e estudantes nas áreas de Ciências da Vida das estratégias de *employer branding* do cliente. De seguida, o estudo diagnostica se o pacote de benefícios oferecido pelo Oceanário de Lisboa corresponde às expectativas de perfis que se moldem a potenciais candidatos ao mesmo.

Segundo a análise de dados, foram feitas sugestões para assegurar que as melhores práticas do Oceanário de Lisboa fossem enaltecidas. Além disso, de acordo com os dados recolhidos, foram identificados pontos de melhoria e elaboraram-se recomendações que estimulassem a reputação do cliente no mercado de trabalho.

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## 1. Introduction

Established in 1998, Oceanário de Lisboa has emerged as the second-largest aquarium in Iberia. It has been recognized as the world's best aquarium by Trip Advisor in both 2015 and 2017. Though initially overseen by a state-run organisation, Sociedade Francisco Manuel dos Santos took ownership of the aquarium in 2015 owing to financial constraints. After two years marked by a shrinking in the client's books due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Oceanário's financial situation improved significantly after a better 2022. By providing essentially B2C services, Oceanário de Lisboa offers an exclusive marine experience to visitors, showcasing a wide range of sea species. Ticket office sales accounted for 86% of total revenues, totalling around 19 million euros in 2022, which represented a 158 percentage points increase when compared with the previous year's ticket sales.

Oceanário de Lisboa is known as a public aquarium, having its reputation exhaustively connected to the showcase of species, its awareness campaigns to protect and preserve the oceans such as its Manta Conservation Experience in Azores (Oceanário de Lisboa, 2021), and its commitment to universities, to promote advances in marine sciences topics, through academic research. Hence, while this is a crucial and inherent aspect of its mission and activity, it can sometimes overshadow the fact that Oceanário de Lisboa is also an employer, resulting in greater challenges when trying to attract high-skilled talent and being perceived as an employer of choice. To address this, Oceanário de Lisboa wants to assess the perception of both Life Sciences and Management professionals and graduates to determine whether they should invest in their employer branding, and what steps should be followed to increase its attractiveness in a fast-paced and competitive job market. According to (Ambler & Barrow, 1996), employer branding is the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment. From a broader perspective, the employer brand topic is mainly defined by a benefit package often composed of three types: (1) developmental and/or useful activities (functional); (2) material or monetary rewards (economic); and (3) feelings such as belonging, direction, and purpose (psychological).

Considering these three benefits, both a qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey will be used to assess if the client's benefit package – and, consequently, their employer branding strategy - is aligned with a prospective candidate that meets the minimum requirements to work for Oceanário de Lisboa, for instance, a graduate with a Life Science degree or a professional working in that field. By doing so, the client will have a clear view of whether their employer's

branding strategy is aligned with the minimum expectations of potential applicants. By following this process, a more informed recommendations plan will be designed, regarding the suitability of their benefits package in attracting top talent and reinforcing their brand image.

Amid intense competition amongst companies to recruit and keep top talent, traditional organizations often struggle with deciding whether to invest in their employer branding and how to go about it. Unlike newer, fast-growing companies, established firms cannot rely solely on their trendy industry or innovative approach to attract employees. Instead, they need a solid employer branding strategy to effectively recruit new talent and retain the current workforce. By effectively managing its reputation, the client will change the public's perception of its image, since firms with strong positive reputations attract better people (Eccles, Newquist, & Schatz, 2007).

The research aims to provide recommendations based on both qualitative and quantitative data that will measure the perception of professionals and graduates in the Management and Life Sciences disciplines, based on qualitative interviews with like-minded individuals in both areas and, subsequently, on a quantitative survey to assess the differences between expectations and offerings. Following a thorough analysis, an evaluation of Oceanário's promotional efforts will be conducted to determine if they align with candidate expectations, specifically in the Life Sciences discipline. Based on the results of these perception analyses, recommendations will be provided on whether the client should pursue employer branding initiatives, and if so, what approach would be most effective. It is imperative to note that this research will focus exclusively on the Life Sciences discipline perspective<sup>1</sup>. Finally, the Oceanário de Lisboa Employer Branding Project is inserted and elaborated under the guidelines of the course "Consulting Project Seminar", conducted by Professor Rute Xavier, PhD.

To accomplish this, the following three research questions were developed: (1) Perception, what is the overall perception of Life Sciences graduates and professionals of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer? (2) Diagnosis, what is the *status quo* in what concerns Oceanário's efforts to attract new and highly skilled talent to the company, specifically to the Life Science

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<sup>1</sup> This project is shared with a colleague from Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Enikő Ecséri, who will account for the Management part of the project, studying the client's employer branding issues related to Management and Business professionals and graduates.

departments? (3) Recommendations, should Oceanário invest in employer branding to change the perception of its reputation, and if so, what strategies should be employed?

Regarding the structure, this research will contain a profound literature review, that aims to achieve two primary goals: a) to provide a summary of what has been written and studied about employer branding and employee value proposition; and b) to explore what has not been studied within both topics, offering key contributions that will allow me to accurately address the research questions. After a comprehensive literature review, the research will expose the methodologies used to achieve significant results. Regarding methodologies, this research will both explain how qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted since the company's qualitative interviews will be conducted to assess the perception of Life Science graduates about Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer. After gathering all the necessary data, the research will culminate in conducting data analysis. Based on the insights gained from these methods, recommendations will be provided to guide the client on how best to tackle its business issues.

## **2. Literature Review**

From a problem-solving perspective, barriers seem tougher when the problem-solver fails to acknowledge that is not the first one trying to address an issue, especially when one does not recognize the strategies entailed in solving a similar problem, thus, before approaching the business problem *per se*, it is crucial to create the necessary conditions to respond to the business issue affecting Oceanário de Lisboa. This literature review will both serve to increase the academic worth of this research and to improve the effectiveness of the strategy employed, by taking into consideration two main goals: firstly, to introduce key concepts addressed in this research, that have been studied and tested in other scientific backgrounds, such as employer branding, employee value proposition (EVP) and reputation management. Secondly, to go beyond what has been studied and to add value to both the academic world and to companies that may be struggling with a similar issue.

### **2.1. Employer Branding: Conceptualization and Employee Benefits Priorities in the Modern Workforce**

Throughout history, work has always involved a trade-off. People work, so they can meet their basic needs, at the same time their living conditions and quality of life depend largely on the benefits package they receive. While corporate and social needs have become more complex, education has evolved to accompany a fast-paced job market development, which ultimately led companies to fight harder for top talent. Consequently, employer branding went from unknown to superstar within companies that, to accomplish their objectives, want to attract and retain the best talent worldwide.

The concept of *employer branding* refers to the strategies and behaviours entailed to reach the best perception about a company, from the current and prospective employees' perspective. According to (Edwards, 2009), employer branding is an activity where principles of Marketing are applied to Human Resources activities concerning present and potential employees who are the branding targets. Simultaneously, according to Professor Martin R. Edwards, employer branding holds a similar significance to employees as product branding does to products. So, while product branding activities adopt better ways to present a product to customers, employer branding strategies have the ultimate objective of creating a unique and particular employment experience, as well as spreading to potential employees, customers, the industry, vendors, and partners – the brand's audience - what is the brand's purpose (Edwards, 2009). In addition,

(Ambler & Barrow, 1996) defined *employer brand* as the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company.

It is easily observable that both conceptualizations contain a clear component of benefits, however, the type of perks hunted by employees throughout the years have been changing. Several years ago, business leaders might have pointed to pinball machines in the office game room or catered lunches as examples of employer branding (Adams, 2022), however, concerning the types of preferences sought, a new paradigm has been implemented since the workforce is searching for other varieties of tangible, and curiously, intangible benefits.

According to the Chief Economists of *Glassdoor* and *Indeed*, compensation remains king for job seekers among employed US workers between the ages of 25 and 54 as “higher pay” was the most often selected reason they searched for a new job<sup>2</sup>, nevertheless, according to the same report, “benefits can set employers apart” and ultimately differentiate hiring strategies (Gudell & Terrazas, 2022). Despite being traditionally the most relevant slice of a benefits package, benefits other than salary have been gaining relevance on the overall benefits package ranking, whilst there is a growing consideration for other non-financial benefits that go along with the idea that a brand must transmit not only tangible, but intangible experiences, benefits, and factors to its employees.

Swystun (2007) defined *brand* as a mixture of attributes, tangible, and intangible, symbolized in a trademark, which if managed properly, creates value and influence. The benefits offered by a company are not only important to attract new graduates and professionals, but also to increase the employee commitment toward the company (brand), which ultimately will increase the retention rate of current employees. Employee commitment is a psychological association between an organisation and its employees that makes employees less likely to leave (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

By looking into tangible benefits, it is also part of their employer branding strategy that employers do not offer the same benefits to employees with different interests and needs. According to (Ottemann & Martin, 2015, cited in Fulmer & Li, 2022), organizations may tailor their overall pay and benefits to reflect particular recruitment and retention objectives such as satisfying generational differences in preferences among different worker groups. In line with

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<sup>2</sup> Source: *Indeed* Hiring Lab job Search Survey performed between July 2021 and February 2022.

this perspective, some companies are offering, for instance, further support by developing student loan repayment assistance, for new graduates who have incurred massive education-related debts (Fulmer & Li, 2022). Another strategy to differentiate the benefits package is to vary by the type of career, so, pay and benefits packages should be tailored to specific jobs and industries (Fulmer & Li, 2022). Hence, it might be relevant to consider that the same benefit will not be appreciated equally by employees in different roles or industries. As a result, that should be considered in the employee value proposition planning, forward in this research.

Oceanário's organization contains two main areas of expertise, which are in the organic domain: the Life Sciences and Management part. This can be seen as an advantage since the firm should be able to provide an expanded range of benefits depending on the role of each individual. Life Sciences professionals might not require the same benefits that Business candidates or employees do. As a result, this research will be responsible for exploring the preferred benefits from Life Sciences areas, to understand what should be the company benefits package offering.

In addition, as mentioned previously, there has been a shift in focus from the tangible to the intangible perks of the compensation and benefits plan. Unmaterial aspects such as the culture of the company, the leadership style, the work-life balance, and the feedback culture are being more and more considered by employees when changing their workplace choices. Amongst severe competition to find the best talent, top brands understand the return on investment (ROI) of a valuable employer branding strategy. According to (Universum, 2023), most companies named World Most Attractive Employers (WMAE)<sup>3</sup> say employer branding is a top priority (78%). Although preferred benefits by current employees have changed over time, according to a McKinsey report developed by (Dewhurst, Pettigrew, Srinivasan, & Choudhary, 2012), in any market, the basic ingredients of a strong employer brand will be competitive compensation; attractive working conditions; managers who develop, engage, and support their staff; and good communication.

Also, *Universum* observes that differentiation is a key attractiveness factor from 2024 onwards to retain and catch the best workforce (2023). Nowadays, employees expect other types of intangible benefits, such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) policies, which reflect

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<sup>3</sup> In 2023, *Universum* promoted a survey with 1,718 respondents from 75 countries, identifying the best employer branding strategies that the World's Most Attractive Employers (WMAE) are employing. To be named a WMAE, companies need to rank among the top employers in at least 5 of these 10 economies: Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Russia, the UK, and the US.

immensely the company's culture, as well as more flexible ways of working, essentially due to the hybrid and remote working internal policies implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic; extended paternity leave options; or the possibility to work from other countries, as the list goes on. Above all, employees are searching for better conditions at the same time they prefer to work in a healthy work environment, where they can access other benefits that do not include a higher payroll.

Though the concept of *brand* presented was discussed more than a decade and a half ago, it remains accurate that a brand must possess intangible features to be attractive to high-skilled talent. Providing valuable benefits can boost workplace morale, engagement, and productivity (Laboria, 2021), so, at the same time the corporate landscape continues to evolve at a rapid pace, and employers need to remain adaptable to meet the changing needs of their workforce. What might have been considered a life-changing perk a few years ago is now often viewed as an expected standard, particularly when it comes to flexible work arrangements like remote or hybrid models. Employees are seeking out workplaces that can keep up with their evolving needs, and it is up to employers to stay ahead of the curve to attract and retain top talent. Employer branding is more than just benefits, it is the image transmitted from the company to the world, and it is key to a company's success.

## **2.2. Employee Value Proposition: Implementation, Cases, and Insights**

Certainly, *employer branding* is a crucial topic for this research, however, to effectively address the business issue, it is key to describe how should Oceanário proceed to reshape its brand through a successful Employee Value Proposition (EVP). A company's EVP clearly articulates the "give and get" that defines an employer-employee relationship (Adams, 2022). It both establishes the expectations from co-workers and sets the benefits stipulated when collaborators comply with those expectations. Essentially, it is the real-world aspect of employer branding activities. According to (Adams, 2022), when assessing a role, job seekers ask themselves "Is this work worth the effort?". When the answer to that question is yes, it probably means that the company has a well-functioning EVP, as it reinforces the employer brand.

Other definitions of the EVP concept have also been proposed. According to (Stahl, et al., 2012), a powerful employee value proposition includes tangible and intangible elements, such as an inspiring mission, an appealing culture in which talent flourishes, exciting challenges, a high degree of freedom and autonomy, career advancement and growth opportunities, and a great boss or mentor. Moreover, the authors argue that plenty of evidence demonstrates that c-

suite level executives, who have the power to decide, place excessive faith in extrinsic rewards when it comes to attracting, motivating, and retaining talent, (Stahl, et al., 2012).

In addition, (Watson Wyatt, 2004 quoted by Stahl, et al., 2012, p. 17-18), organized a survey of 1,700 high-potential employees indicating that these top performers rate factors such as “being appreciated”, “interesting assignments”, and “desire to maintain reputation” as more important motivators than “financial rewards.” Amid times when discussions on how to attract and retain the best talent were heavily bearing in mind materialistic aspects of the compensation package, companies started struggling to differentiate themselves from their competitors due to the similar economic power they have. Regarding that issue, (Stahl, et al., 2012, p. 17) state that the advice given by some consulting firms to “pay whatever it takes” to attract and retain the brightest people conflicts with the EVP approach. So, it turns out that, at the end of the day, if companies set ground of discussion in which materialistic aspects are way too considered, they end up being equal to their competitors, resulting in a loss of talent to the firm that pays the extra euro. The consequences are clear: companies that do not have a solid EVP lose bargaining power to job seekers, therefore, ultimately, not being able to hire elite talent.

Mixing a competitive job market scenario with a social phenomenon called Great Resignation, described by the elevated rate of workers that resigned from their jobs starting in the spring of 2021, amid strong labour demand and low unemployment (Fontinelle, 2022), the hiring environment becomes more complex, reinforcing the importance of delivering a clear EVP strategy. Also, by defining a successful EVP tactic, the focus of leaders and workers toward momentane and short-term advantages will switch to a long-term perspective of what they need to build to provide a thriving and sustainable future for the organizations and, evidently, for themselves. According to both Harvard and INSEAD researchers and professors (Mortensen & Edmondson, 2023), the EVP approach must be seen as a matrix with 4 (four) interrelated factors:

1. **Material offerings** such as compensation, physical office space, location, commuting subsidies, computer equipment, flexibility, schedules, perks, and other tangible benefits.
2. **Opportunities to develop and grow** include all the opportunities provided to the employees to acquire new skills and ultimately become more valuable in the labour market.

3. **Connection and community** relate mainly to the sense of belonging to a larger group. It concerns the social relationships during workdays, the feeling of camaraderie felt by co-workers and, finally, the intangible connections to the brand and the firm.
4. **Meaning and purpose** regard to the organization's aspirational reasons for existing. Ideally, the purpose should align with the collaborators' desire to improve a specific industry or a wish to refine local and global society. They are the answer to the core question of why employees do the work they do (Mortensen & Edmondson, 2023).

Reflecting on the EVP approach, it is evident that the matrix is composed of 4 factors that vary in proportion to employees' experience according to 2 (two) elements: time, whether the factor is felt in the short or the long run; and, whether the factor is experienced individually or collectively, which determines how the experience is perceived. C-suite executives who have the power to decide and delineate strategies must not commit the mistake of letting one of the factors undermine the other three. We have seen that material offerings are no longer an exclusive warranty that firms are hiring the best talent, as such, an effective and enduring EVP requires treating the four factors as interdependent parts of an integrated system (Mortensen & Edmondson, 2023).

The Harvard Business Review (HBR) article (2023) provides some examples where organizations focused profoundly on one factor, leading to tragic consequences, such as the UNICEF case. The international association employs a meaningful "purpose and meaning" factor, which is "protecting the world's children". This purpose led the organization to attract and retain high amounts of workforce, however, it also stimulated a culture of "results at all costs" proportioning a toxic culture within the association. Senior UNICEF officials identified the promotion of an isolated factor – the purpose - as the cause for the departure of many members. As a result, they launched many initiatives to balance purpose with "employee development" and "connection and community" factors.

In addition, (Mortensen & Edmondson, 2023) contribute with another example, in which the company *Best Buy* presented an effective EVP leading to a turnaround in the firm's results since 2012. With the new CEO Hubert Joly in charge, the *purpose* was put in the first place of the priorities list, establishing the slogan "enriching customers' lives through technology". Also, during those times, Joly gave his workers new perks and invested in training, enriching the *material offerings* and *development opportunities*' factors, while enhancing *purpose and meaning*. Consequently, the feeling of community and belonging grew within the multinational

and led to very positive results in the following years. A similar example happened at WD-40, the American multinational company, based on (Rethink Your Employee Value Proposition, 2023). Moreover, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) “improved brand attraction” by investing in its “philanthropic activities” (Stahl, et al., 2012, p. 24). The pharmaceutical giant offers discount prices for the poor, capitalizing on its employer brand and reputation and ultimately stimulating the purpose of co-workers within the company. In an interview given by GSK’s CEO, Jean-Pierre Garnier stated that “GSK is big in philanthropic undertakings.... our scientists, who are often very idealistic, follow this like an adventure. It can make the difference when they have to choose companies - they might pick us because of the effort we make to provide drugs to the greatest number of people regardless of their economic status” (Garnier, 2006 quoted by Stahl, et al., 2012, p. 25).

Finally, it is vital that Oceanário de Lisboa, the object of this research, considers profoundly these 4 (four) factors to implement an efficient EVP that enables them to respond to their hiring needs and to change the general perception of public opinion. Taking that into consideration, each one of these 4 (four) factors presented will be targeted in this research’s methodologies and analysis to understand what the perception of Life Sciences graduates and professionals about the client is, and what should be the pillars of Oceanário’s employer branding strategy.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The kick-off meeting and the project updates we had with Oceanário de Lisboa between September and November 2023 were very relevant to understanding the efforts undertaken by the client to keep its high reputation amongst customers, partners, investors, and employees. Oceanário de Lisboa has built a branding strategy around its elevated standards concerning environmental and marine awareness actions. In addition, Oceanário has resorted to far-reaching marketing campaigns targeting younger audiences, offering discounts and happy hours to increase the number of visits and, ultimately, ticket sales. Consequently, those actions led the public to consider Oceanário de Lisboa as a top visiting place, being recognized with several distinctions.

Reflecting widely on the areas where Oceanário is developing its activities, it is acknowledged by the client that there are still opportunities to explore regarding their employer branding strategy. Nevertheless, to evaluate the effectiveness of Oceanário's employer branding strategy, it is key to hear the public, specifically, Life Sciences professionals and graduates that correspond to what the company considers as good profiles. Specifically, this part of the research will establish a ground point in which, afterwards, the public's perception will be analysed, to finally understand the market's perception of Oceanário as an employer.

#### **3.1. Qualitative Methodologies: Individual Interviews**

Since the first day it was established between the client and the project team that no internal approach would be conducted. As a result, we decided that to enrich and effectively address the subject of the research, both qualitative and quantitative methods would be followed: firstly, with qualitative interviews; and afterwards, with a quantitative survey spread across 146 Life Sciences' respondents. The plan was to utilize the answers provided by the qualitative methods to serve as a base to build propositions to feed the quantitative survey, and that was successfully attained.

Regarding the qualitative part, after aligning the qualitative interview questions with Oceanário de Lisboa, it was imperative that the sample would be representative of the Life Sciences graduates and professionals, so, a meticulous process of finding Life Sciences profiles started, searching for interviewees with different ages and genres, with unlike experiences but with similar backgrounds, so we could assess what the perception of prospective candidates was and what they thought about Oceanário de Lisboa. The profiles of the interviewees ranged from

Environmental Engineering students finishing their Master's degree, to Biology and Marine Biology bachelor's degree students, as well as profiles that although initially had a Biology background, already had other professional experiences which enriched the quality of the data collected.

In total, 4 individual interviews were organized so a ground could be set to build the quantitative survey properly. The interviews were conducted in November and the interview script is attached to the appendices section.

### **3.2. Quantitative Methodologies: Survey**

The survey was built upon the qualitative interviews' prepositions developed in November 2023. At the end of the same month, the survey was published, being developed through the Qualtrics software. The survey was aimed at individuals with an academic background in any field of Life Sciences that aligned with the requirements for a potential candidate to be hired at Oceanário de Lisboa. With this approach, the investigation was able to carry out statistical analyses on a group that shares comparable attributes to that of a potential candidate.

The survey was built in both Portuguese and English because it was expected that most participants would be Portuguese. The number of participants was 146 graduates or professionals from Life Sciences areas and the survey aimed to gather a diverse range of responses from various age groups, thereby ensuring the broadest possible coverage. While most respondents were under 25 years old, the survey targeted all age groups to increase the richness and quality of the data. The inclusion of insights and responses from individuals with different professional backgrounds enriches the dataset and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Finally, the data analysis for this research was entirely based on SPSS and Think-Cell (software convenient from Excel and PowerPoint to perform data visualization), which included a multifaceted approach integrating different statistical techniques. Depending on the nature of the variables and the responses to the survey, the analysis employed Descriptive Statistics to classify the sample's demographics through measures such as mean, median, mode and standard deviation. Also, to compare different variables, Cross-Tabulation inferences were performed to identify associations and patterns that allow reflections on the market's perception of Oceanário de Lisboa. Moreover, Qualitative Analysis was used for open-ended questions,

specifically to identify common ideas or recurrent themes or keywords between different participants that allow statistical outputs about a particular topic.

To facilitate a clearer representation of the data, Graphical Representations such as pie charts, doughnuts, histograms, stacked columns and other visualizations were used to better explain the outcomes of the survey. Finally, a rigorous application of Linear Regression to specific topics such as benefits expectations and perceptions or branding identity prospects and possible correlation with other variables was made to effectively assess the impact of different variables on the overall perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer.

The results acquired from this methodology will serve as a ground for the final recommendations provided to Oceanário de Lisboa, stimulating the client to improve the effectiveness of their employer branding strategy to attract new high-skilled talent.

### **3.2.1. Structure of the Survey**

After collecting all the insights from the qualitative interviews, the next step was to build the survey, which is attached to the appendices section. The process flow of the survey was built following this structure:

#### **a. Introduction**

To begin the survey, pieces of information regarding the project and the goal of the survey are provided, so that respondents have a clear understanding of the “what” and “why” their insights are needed. Also, in this part, the survey asks if participants consent to participate in this research methodology.

#### **b. Demographics**

In this stage, questions about age, genre, academic background, and professional experiences are asked, so that the heterogeneity of the sample is guaranteed to have a satisfactory level of diversity and variability in the analysed data. In this part, the survey asks if the respondent comes from a Life Sciences background; if the participant does not validate that question the survey ends immediately so that all data collected comes from people with the desired background.

#### **c. Benefits and Branding Expectations for Life Sciences Graduates and Professionals**

This section tries to evaluate the expectations of professionals and graduates in the Life Sciences field in what concerns their preferred benefits and branding styles so that afterwards, matchings about whether what is being offered by Oceanário corresponds to what the majority of prospective candidates require.

#### **d. Brand Perception of Oceanário de Lisboa**

Alongside benefits, it is important to understand how participants perceive Oceanário de Lisboa as a brand. In this part, participants are asked if they recognized Oceanário de Lisboa's brand due to any specific initiative for instance and general perspectives over the topic brand are referred.

#### **e. Benefits Perception of Oceanário de Lisboa**

Finally, to successfully match the offered benefits with the candidates' expectations, questions about benefits were asked and the survey was the most specific possible, to ensure that this research was getting the desired answers. Throughout this topic, participants had the chance to say what they think about their general perception of what the client currently offers in both tangible and intangible benefits.

## **4. Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **4.1. Preamble: Qualitative Interviews Takeaways**

Before performing meaningful data analysis, it is crucial to present a detailed summary of the key takeaways from the qualitative interviews. These interviews were conducted to gather insightful information to support the development of the survey. The qualitative interviews were conducted with 4 individuals from a Life Sciences background, chosen based on their expertise and experience in the relevant field. The interviews were conducted in a structured manner, with open-ended questions that allowed the participants to share their thoughts and opinions in detail.

To answer the first research question accurately regarding perceptions, it was crucial to understanding the general expectations of branding and benefits among Life Sciences professionals and graduates. To gain this understanding, qualitative interviews were conducted where interviewees were asked about their preferred branding styles and benefits, including both tangible and intangible benefits. Interestingly, for instance, most interviewees preferred intangible benefits. Not only to confirm if this trend extended to the survey sample but also to evaluate other matters related to this topic, a section was dedicated to the Benefits and Branding expectations of the sample. This section was crucial in evaluating the sample's perception of the perks offered in the Life Sciences industry.

It was evident from the qualitative interviews that Oceanário de Lisboa was primarily seen as a high-end brand by the participants. To determine whether this perception arose from Oceanário's aquarium quality or any company initiatives, it would be necessary to investigate this through the survey. In addition, one of the interviewees emphasized that Oceanário's marine initiatives and advertising campaigns “were crucial” in their overall evaluation of Oceanário de Lisboa as a potential employer. This preposition was important because led the survey to evaluate if these initiatives influence the client’s image as a company, focusing on the Brand Perception topic and deepening the analysis within this category. Specifically, one of the interviewees referred to an initiative promoted by Oceanário de Lisboa to name two otters Eusébio and Amália, who were both famous Portuguese figures in football and fado. There was a sense that these initiatives attached the public to the brand, and if so, this topic would need serious attention during the survey.

Lastly, participants were asked to share their thoughts about the benefits and perks they expected from the company, focusing on Oceanário de Lisboa’s Benefits Perception topic. However, most of the interviewees were unsure about the offerings provided by Oceanário. Therefore, the survey was specifically designed in a way to stimulate statistically significant responses from the participants, preventing itself from having unimportant answers and reduced effectiveness.

## 4.2. Survey Analysis

The first part of the survey was dedicated to gathering demographic information about the participants. This helps to ensure a diverse range of responses and enriches the data collected. It's important to note that the survey automatically excludes individuals who are under 18 years of age or do not have a background in Life Sciences. This is because the research focuses on evaluating the perception of Oceanário de Lisboa within these specific fields.

### 4.2.1. Demographics Analysis

Following the chronological order of the survey, regarding Demographics, the survey has collected 146 responses whereas 121 were valid and statistically significant answers. From those 121 answers, 53% had a Biology background, being the most common profile, followed by Environmental Engineering and Marine Biology with 8% each, Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Engineering with 7% each, and other profiles, such as Animal Sciences, Zoology, Medicine, Bioengineering, and others related.

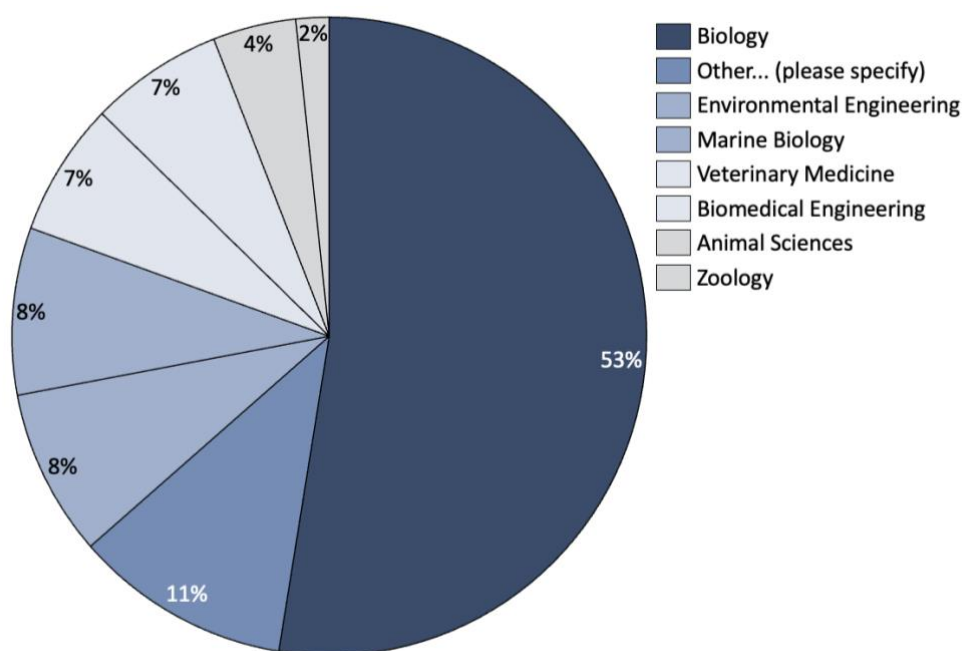
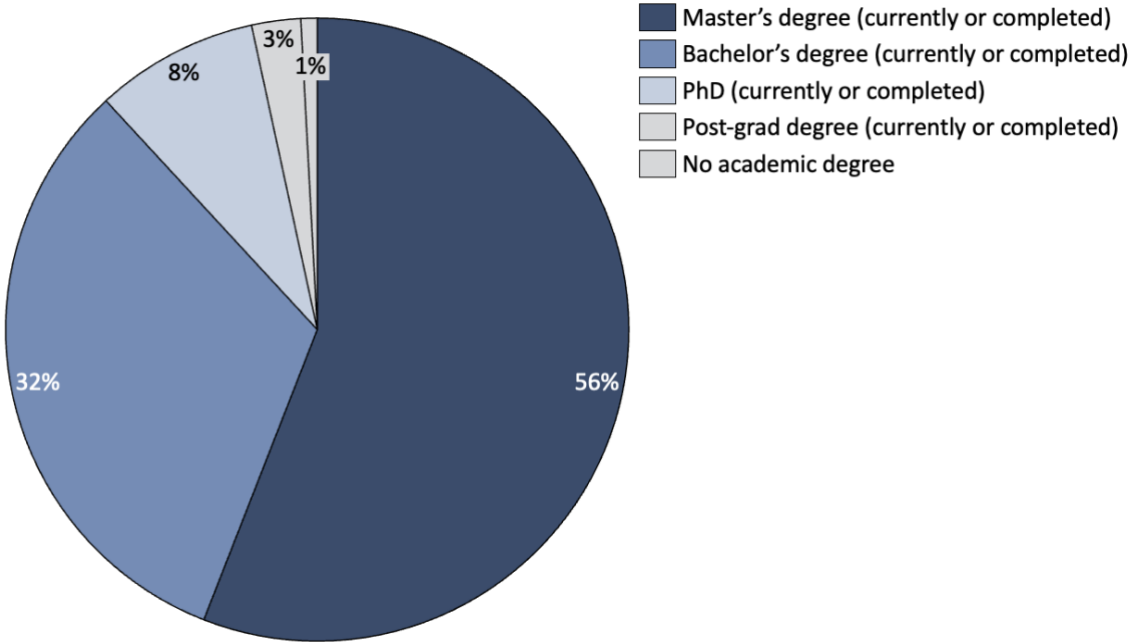


Figure 1 – Sample’s Academic Background Outlook

When focusing on the level of education, most participants (56%) were frequenting or had completed a Master’s degree. At the same time, 33% of respondents were frequenting or had a Bachelor’s degree. Some participants were taking or had completed a PhD (8%) and only 1% had no academic degree. By looking quickly into the data provided so far, it is observable that the vast majority of profiles are highly graduated talent, corresponding to what Oceanário is looking for in terms of potential candidates.



**Figure 2 – Sample’s Academic Degree Outlook**

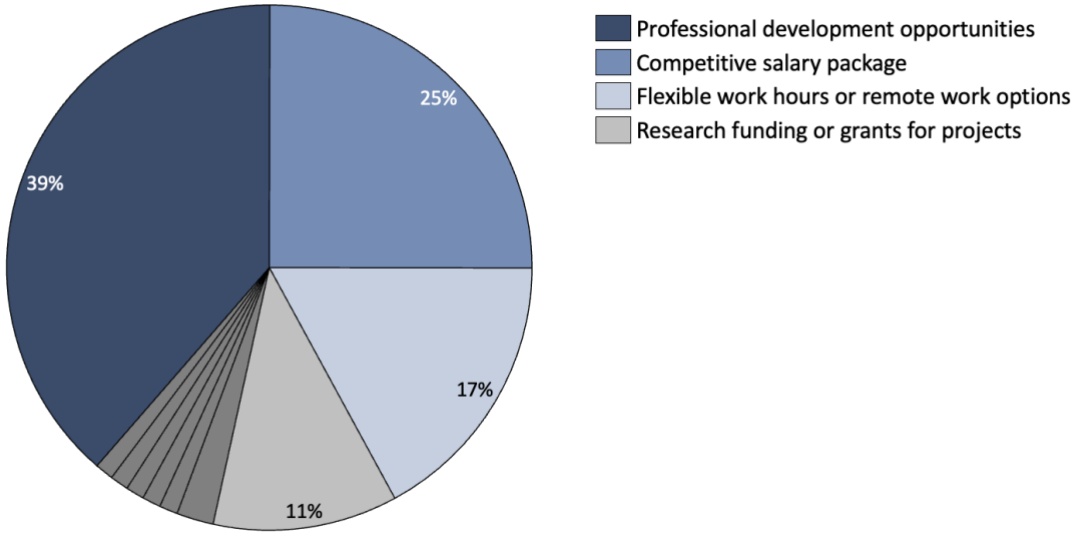
In terms of age groups, it is not surprising to see that many participants (59%) fall within the 18-24 year old range. The 25-34 year old age bracket accounts for 34% of respondents, while 6% are aged 35 and above. By looking into the breakdown by gender, a significant 76% identified as female, with 23% identifying as male and 1% choosing "Other".

Regarding the professional situation, it is noteworthy that 50% of the responses came from students. However, it is interesting to note that 31% of the respondents were employed individuals, which adds significant value to the research. As a result, one-third of the sample will be able to provide valuable insights based on their real-life experiences, which students may not have had yet. Lastly, it is notable that around 3% of respondents were PhD Fellows or Researchers, increasing the value of the sample’s insights.

**4.2.2. General Benefits and Branding Expectations**

After performing a thorough analysis of the survey’s demographics, analysing the market’s preferred characteristics of a workplace is crucial to reaching the final goal of tailoring and differentiating Oceanário’s needs to what prospective candidates are demanding. To remain competitive, it is key to offer the right amount and types of benefits, so, to start this part of the survey, the participants were asked to rank the benefits and perks that they considered more valuable as professionals that are within the conditions of building a career in the Life Sciences industry. In accordance with the script presented in **Appendix 2 – Employer Branding Survey** -, respondents were asked to rank 13 perks (tangible and intangible) from 1 to 13 based on their preference.

Aligned with this, Figure 1 illustrates the benefits that were considered most significant (TOP #1) by the surveyed individuals. Among the participants, 39% favoured "Professional development opportunities (e.g. workshops and certifications)" as the top benefit, with 25% choosing a "Competitive salary package" as the most valuable perk. Additionally, 17% selected "Flexible work hours or remote work options" as their preferred option, as depicted in the figure below. Highlights must be made to the fact that 11% of answers referred to “Research funding or grants for projects” as the top benefit to be offered by companies in the Life Sciences industry, revealing that academic proximity is something job seekers are considering in this industry.



**Figure 3 – Benefits ranked Top #1 – Life Sciences Industry**

Additionally, throughout the Literature Review phase, I became aware of numerous studies that highlighted changes in the preferences of benefits among the modern workforce. According to various authors, contemporary employees tend to prioritize intangible benefits over tangible

ones. Taking that into account, it is interesting to understand if those trends have stretched into the Life Sciences industry, therefore, participants were asked to classify on a scale from 1 to 5 how much they valued tangible and intangible benefits. After performing descriptive statistics, the mean for tangible benefits was 3.39 while for intangible benefits was 3.66, representing a preference for the second option. Although results for median and mode are similar – the median is 4 for both variables, and the mode is 5 for both variables -, differences can be seen in the mean measure and in the standard deviation which measures the dispersion degree of data points around the mean (average). It quantifies the amount of deviation to the mean; a higher standard of variation indicates higher dispersion and vice-versa. In this case, the standard deviation for Tangible Benefits was 1.524 and for Intangible Benefits was 1.401. Therefore, intangible benefits had a less dispersed result than tangible perks, indicating more homogeneity and similarity in the intangible responses than in the tangible ones. According to these statistical interpretations, although there is only a trivial difference, the trend of valuing more intangible than tangible benefits is present in this study.

Furthermore, to understand profoundly the types of intangible and tangible benefits preferred by potential candidates, the survey deepens the analysis, querying the participants to select the 3 preferred tangible and intangible benefits. Taking a closer look at **Figure 4**, amongst Tangible Benefits, 84% chose “Competitive Salary”, 71% indicated “Performance Bonuses”, and 41% picked “Health Insurance Coverage”.

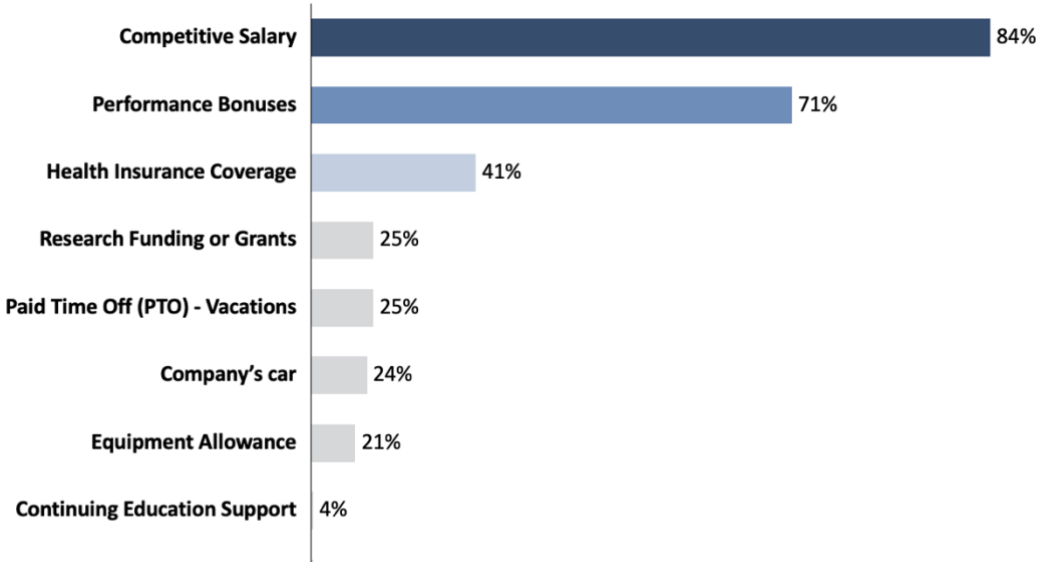
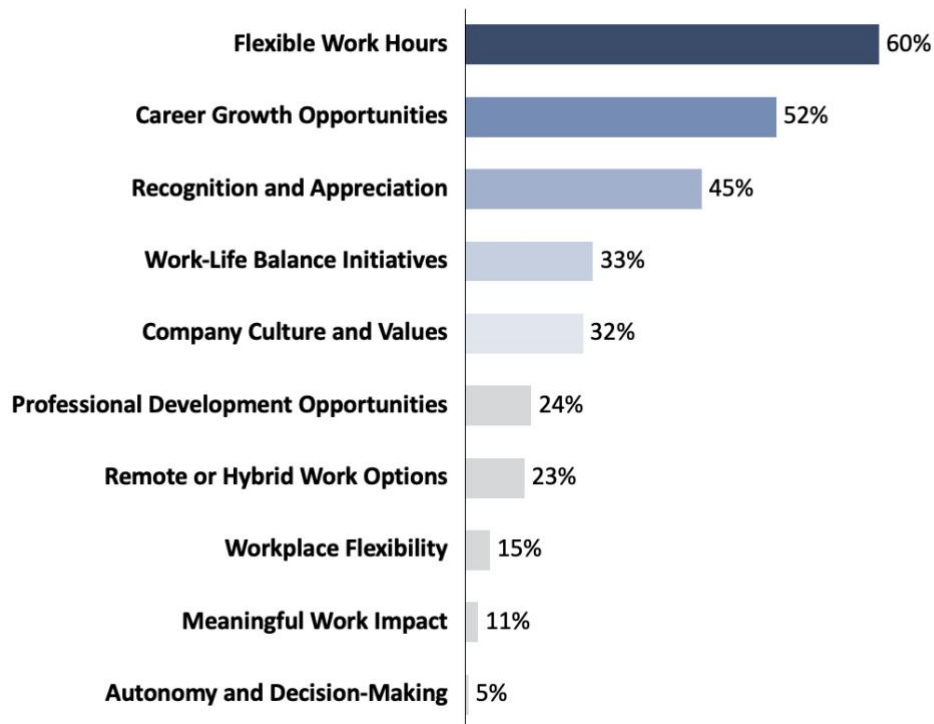


Figure 4 – Tangible Benefits – Top preferences for Tangible Benefits.

On the other hand, by observing **Figure 5**, when the same analysis is performed for intangible benefits, 61% chose “Flexible Work Hours”, 53% preferred “Career Growth Opportunities”, and 45% designated “Recognition and Appreciation” as their three preferred intangible perks. It is relevant to add that when comparing tangible and intangible benefits sample distribution, choices were more accurate in the Tangible than in the Intangible perks. “Work-Life Balance Initiatives” and “Company Culture and Values” with 33% and 32% respectively, were considered in the intangible benefits analysis.



**Figure 5 - Intangible Benefits – Top preferences for Intangible Benefits.**

Upon these graphical representations, some key takeaways can be discussed. Firstly, the fact that “Competitive Salary” keeps distancing the first place in what concerns candidates’ benefits package expectations, thus, Oceanário de Lisboa must keep an eye on the market’s salary variations, so they do not lose traction for compensation motivations. Despite not being proportionally distanced when compared to a competitive salary, a similar takeaway can be affirmed about “Flexible Work Hours”. For 3 in every 5 potential candidates, a flexible work schedule remains at the top of considerations which reflects a clear expectation for prospective candidates. These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are very important to classifying the market’s perception of Oceanário de Lisboa which ultimately are vital to attracting new talent since these metrics express clear preferences for specific benefits. If Oceanário is offering what potential candidates expect, the distance between the 2 parties in a recruitment process will be reduced severely, contributing to an easier negotiation process for the client side.

It is important to prioritize "Performance Bonuses" as a valuable perk since over two-thirds of respondents consider it to be so. Rewarding employees based on their specific and team goals is crucial to maintaining a high-quality work environment. This can increase motivation levels when rewards are attributed and should be an important consideration in the recommendations. Similarly, it is also important to analyse "Career Growth Opportunities" and "Recognition and Appreciation," which were selected by 52% and 45% of participants, respectively. Creating and implementing a career development strategy for a company's employees is highly sought after by those considering a career with Oceanário. This approach not only adds structure to the organization's internal progression system but also drives productivity and motivation by clarifying the objectives that must be met to advance within the company. By openly sharing a clear policy on career advancement, Oceanário can effectively address potential productivity and motivation challenges and substantially enhance its financial performance.

Alongside that, "Recognition and Appreciation" by leadership is an important topic especially for young talent. While starting their careers, less experienced employees value the learning opportunities they will have as well as the recognition and appreciation they will get when they surpass expectations while executing daily tasks.

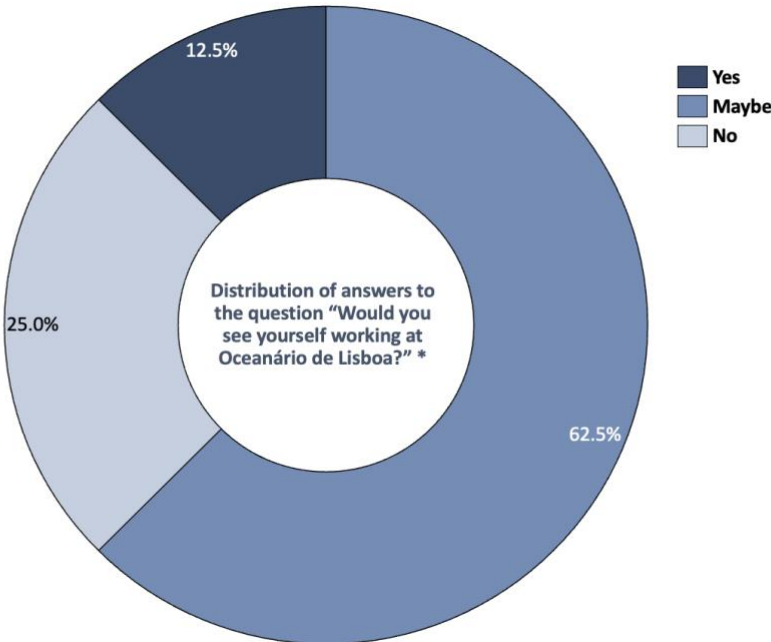
Lastly, a significant interest, (around 40% of participants), was put in the "Health Insurance Coverage" benefit which is in line with general market expectations, as well as in the "Company Culture and Values" and "Work-Life Balance Initiatives" (1 in every 3 respondents chose those options), which reflects the importance of having a strong employer branding trademark and to communicate effectively what the company is doing internally to promote a balance between the professional and personal side of its employees. It is important to promote the values that drive the company in job listings and on social media pages like LinkedIn and Instagram.

#### **4.2.3. Oceanário de Lisboa's Brand Perception**

To provide effective recommendations about the employer branding strategies followed by Oceanário de Lisboa and to respond to the first research question "Perception, what is the overall perception of Life Sciences graduates and professionals of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer?", it is key to assess how the market perceives its brand reputation. In line with that, most participants (96%) knew Oceanário and had already visited the aquariums.

In terms of brand identity, the survey evaluated what type of motto could be attached to Oceanário de Lisboa in terms of its general activity as an employer. Regarding that question,

57% of participants voted that Oceanário de Lisboa is “Environmentally Conscious”, while 31% selected “Community-oriented”. “Prestigious” and “Innovative” were also indicated by 26% and 24% of respondents respectively. This question might have the constraint of Oceanário being generally perceived as an aquarium and not as an employer, influencing the answers of participants, however, the results are positive and demonstrate that the client is positively perceived by the vast majority of the sample. It is relevant to note that 21% answered “No idea” to this question, so, 1 in every 5 participants could not attach Oceanário de Lisboa’s brand identity as an employer to any motto or slogan. After conducting an analysis to explore the relationship between the variable "Participants that do not associate Oceanário de Lisboa's branding with anything" and the variable "Would you see yourself working at Oceanário de Lisboa?," a Cross-Tabulation revealed that a mere 12.5% of individuals who do not connect the brand identity to anything expressed a desire to work at Oceanário de Lisboa. This was based on the fact that only this percentage responded affirmatively to the question "Would you see yourself working at Oceanário de Lisboa?". Assuming the sample is representative of the population studied, it can be supposed that a clear brand identity is a factor that heavily influences a potential candidate's desire to work at an organization. To better visualize this statistical inference, a pie chart was created through Think-Cell and it is represented in **Figure 6**.



\*Only for participants that voted “No idea” to the question “What is Oceanário de Lisboa’s brand identity as an employer?”

**Figure 6 – Cross-Tabulation between 2 variables** – Distribution of answers to the variable “Would you see yourself working at Oceanário de Lisboa?” amongst the participants that voted “No idea” to the variable “What is Oceanário de Lisboa’s brand identity as an employer?”

Continuing the brand reputation analysis, the survey evaluated the market's perception of Oceanário's brand strength as an employer and the results were eximious. Across the sample, 60% considered the brand as "Very strong" or "Strong", while 34% considered the brand strength as "Moderate". In addition, when asked what factors contributed the most to that perception, 69% elected "Personal experiences or interactions", 43% indicated "Corporate social responsibility initiatives", and 40% picked "Social Media presence". One of the important findings of this research is the emphasis placed on social media presence. It is crucial to note that the digital content created by Oceanário has a significant impact on the perception of the company. This highlights the importance of investing in communication and social media channels.

Considering the survey's structure, a straightforward question was designed to assess the participants' overall perception of Oceanário de Lisboa. Consequently, to the question "Rate your perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer" from 0 to 10 in which 0 is the most negative one could imagine and 10 is the most positive scenario. To this question, descriptive statistics were performed, and the question had an average answer of 6.46 which was a positive result, but a space for improvement was left.

In addition, an open-ended question was made regarding "What specific initiatives or campaigns come to mind when you think of Oceanário de Lisboa?" to understand the impact of these initiatives in their company's perception. To do this statistical analysis, a qualitative method called Thematic Analysis will be applied in an effort to explore recurring patterns and enhance relevant and statistically representative insights about that data. Considering the answers provided, one of the participants referred to the "dolphins in the Tagus River/ Marine Plasticology" as an important initiative. Moreover, several comments regarding "Happy Hours on tickets", "Discounts by age", "Discounts for children", "5€ tickets campaigns for people aged <25", "Promotional campaigns", "Free tickets for students", "Tickets discounts" were mentioned as important campaigns that leveraged the perception of Oceanário's brand. Also, "Sleeping with the sharks" was an initiative stated, as well as "Ocean cleaning initiatives", "Marine conservation lectures" provided to the public, and finally "People with "Mar" in the name have free tickets".

Furthermore, during the qualitative interviews, interviewees highlighted the significance of the names "Eusébio" and "Amália" given to two otters at Oceanário de Lisboa. According to them, this naming activity had a significant impact on the brand perception of Oceanário, as it

emotionally connected a considerable portion of the public to the client. To conclude, it is clear that marketing campaigns focused on ticket discounts and marine protection initiatives have a strong impact on potential candidates which is something to consider.

#### **4.2.4. Oceanário de Lisboa's Benefits Perceptions**

To evaluate what the expectations of participants regarding benefits are, the survey was designed to ask accordingly the EVP framework – material offerings, opportunities to develop and grow, connection and community, and purpose and meaning -, what were their preferences in terms of the categories of benefits offered. Unexpectedly, the most valued category was “Opportunities to develop and grow as a professional” with 60% of votes which can be explained by the fact that the main audience of the sample is students, and most participants are under 24 years old, so, prioritizing new learnings and opportunities is something those groups often spotlight.

Occupying the next place on the podium, is “Purpose (meaning of the brand), reputation and prestige” with 43% of respondents attributing the silver medal. Additionally, 32% elected “Connection and sense of community” as the third most important category, while in the fourth place, there is “Material offerings” with 47% ranking that category as the least favourite. By looking into this data, special attention should be paid to the fact that material offerings occupy the last place in the categories which was already a tendency of this sample since these individuals prefer intangible benefits. In this case, it is well-defined that professionals and graduates with a Life Sciences academic background value immensely the opportunities to develop and grow which should be observed as an opportunity to respond to this expectation. The biggest learning of this analysis is that to remain competitive, Oceanário de Lisboa should evaluate and understand what they are offering in terms of continued formation and internal training (both hard and soft skills) is enough because it is something valued by most potential candidates.

Regarding the benefits perception of Oceanário de Lisboa, when asked what their perception of the employer's benefits offering is, most participants (48%) picked “Average”, and 36% chose “Above Average”. 12% of answers were “Below Average” or “Terrible” and 5% indicated “Excellent”. However, this question required participants to justify why they thought Oceanário had that level of benefits offering, asking “Why?”. This might be considered as a limitation of the survey, however, 48% of inquiries that voted “Average”, answered to the open-ended question, “Don't know”, or “I chose this option because I have no idea”, and other similar. So,

to be precise, the fact is that there's a hole in the perception of potential candidates about whether Oceanário de Lisboa is competitive in terms of benefits. Some comments about “Low salary expectations” and “Low remuneration and low-quality onboarding” were made which is something to have in mind in the future.

Regarding the perception of tangible and intangible benefits offerings, participants were asked to vote on a scale from 1 to 5 on what they thought of the level of competitiveness of Oceanário's offerings. Both tangible and intangible perks mode is 3, while the mean for tangible is 2.66 and the mean for intangible is 2.70, so, the trend of valuing more intangible benefits keeps happening. When compared to the Life Sciences industry benefits expectations of tangible and intangible perks, it is clear that participants are expecting less from Oceanário than what they would expect from other Life Sciences companies.

Regarding intangible benefits importance attribution by the sample, to understand the impact of the variable “Market's perception on Oceanário's Intangible Benefits Offerings” in the variable “General Perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer”, a Linear Regression was performed to understand if there is a statistical correlation between both variables.

Regarding the Linear Regression, the first thing to check is the model's significance. If the p-value is lower than the pre-defined significance level of 0.05 (5%) then the model is statistically significant. The p-value of the model was 0.047, so, under the pre-established value of 0.05, as a consequence, the statistical analysis shows that the model has significant results as represented in **Figure 7**.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.360 <sup>a</sup>	.130	.100	1.89918	.130	4.323	1	29	.047

a. Predictors: (Constant), Rank your perception about Oceanário's tangible and intangible benefits offerings. – Intangible Benefits

b. Dependent Variable: Based on your knowledge, rate your perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer. – Perception of Oceanário as an Employer

**Figure 7 – Linear Regression between Oceanário's Intangible Benefits Offerings and the Market's Perception of Oceanário as an Employer**

Then, going over the Coefficients, it is relevant to focus on the independent variables' coefficients. If the p-value is lower than the significance level of 5%, it means that the independent variable has a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable. That situation is also checked here since the p-value of the independent variable is 0.047, which is lower than 0.05, which means that there is a significant relationship between both variables. In addition, the signal of the coefficient is important to study. In this case, the coefficients are

positive, and the outputs indicate that for each unit increase in the independent variable, the dependent variable will increase by 0.360 increase *ceteris paribus*, **Figure 8**. This means that there's a correlation between both variables and that the intangible benefits preferences influence the general perception of Oceanário as an employer.

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	4.335	.942		4.602	<.001
	Rank your perception about Oceanário's tangible and intangible benefits offerings. – Intangible Benefits	.651	.313	.360	2.079	.047

a. Dependent Variable: Based on your knowledge, rate your perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer. – Perception of Oceanário as an Employer

**Figure 8 – Linear Regression - Coefficients Analysis**

Afterwards, participants were asked if a mismatch between what they expected in terms of benefits and the actual offerings would influence their decision to apply. Apposition at Oceanário de Lisboa. Taking that into account, 75% of participants answered “Yes, significantly” or “Yes, moderately”. Only 11% responded “No, it wouldn’t influence”, while 14% answered “Not sure”. When asked what would be the most critical benefit mismatch that would automatically exclude the participant from accepting a job offer at Oceanário de Lisboa, 68% answered “Salary expectations”, 36% responded “Work environment”, 20% picked “Word of mouth”, 14% elected “Model of work (hybrid, remote, in-person)”, and 9% answered “Office localization”.

Based on the survey results to the question - “What specific benefits or initiatives do you believe Oceanário de Lisboa could introduce or enhance to become more appealing as an employer in the Life Sciences industry?” -, it seems that the participants have highlighted some key areas that Oceanário de Lisboa could improve upon to become a more attractive employer in the Life Sciences industry. The most widely discussed topics were related to salary, compensation packages, and lack of communication strategy, such as the need to publish work and job listings more widely. Some of the comments made by the participants include suggestions like "Increasing salaries, creating videos featuring employee experiences, and providing opportunities for career growth", "Offering more internships and positions for those starting their career", and "Improving salaries". One participant pointed out that they were unaware of job opportunities despite being located close to Oceanário's field of work, suggesting that the company should focus on publishing job listings and improving communication, along with

developing a well-structured program for young talent that provides good conditions and training opportunities. Other suggestions made by participants included supporting more research and investigation projects, offering fair salaries that align with the Portuguese reality, and providing competitive career progression opportunities, performance bonuses, and company cars. One participant noted that they had participated in a recruitment process but did not hear back from the company, indicating that better communication and follow-up could be beneficial. Overall, the survey results indicate that improving salaries and career progression opportunities are key areas for improvement, while others suggested investing in academia and improving communication strategies.

The last question was “Would you see yourself working at Oceanário de Lisboa?”. 25% of the participants chose “Yes”, while 41% answered “Maybe”, and 34% answered “No”. The question required text to justify their answer.

## 5. Diagnosis and Final Recommendations

After a detailed analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, this part is dedicated to closing the diagnosis of Oceanário de Lisboa's employer branding strategies and presenting the final recommendations to Oceanário de Lisboa. Before diving into the advice, it is important to reinforce that this project had as its main goal understanding the market's perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer. Consequently, the employer branding practices and strategies entailed by the client to retain and attract new high-skilled talent had to be widely studied, compared, and put into perspective with well-sustained theoretical arguments and case studies.

Throughout the project, my colleague and I established constant communication with the client through online meetings and other means. We kept Oceanário informed of our progress and the steps we were taking, ensuring they were always aware of where we were in the process and what our next steps would be. I also made one physical visit to Oceanário's office to meet with the team who were providing us with all the necessary information to advance the project with new findings. Oceanário de Lisboa's Human Resources team was always pleasant and amusing while providing every information and detail so that the project could successfully move forward. It was a pleasure to work with this team.

In addition, it is relevant to disclaim that the first research question was widely answered during the data analysis and discussion chapter. The research question regarding the overall market's perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer was extensively discussed during that part, enhancing all crucial topics mentioned in the Literature Review regarding employer branding strategies and EVP, and also regarding benefits and branding perception of Oceanário de Lisboa.

Concerning the second research question, "Diagnosis, what is the *status quo* in what concerns Oceanário's efforts to attract new and highly skilled talent to the company, specifically to the Life Science departments?", that question has been in part answered by the Discussion, however, that topic will be also elucidated in this stage of the research. Additionally, the third research question "Recommendations, should Oceanário invest in employer branding to change the perception of its reputation, and if so, what strategies should be employed?", is a clear "Yes", and the strategies suggested will be explained in this chapter.

Starting with the Diagnosis, it is vital to elucidate that we had no access to any internal documents or reports. Since the beginning, the client established that no direct internal analysis should be made of employees, partners or others related. This research diagnosis was built upon various tools: Firstly, a document with some Questions and Answers delivered to the client at the beginning of the project interrogating about their recruiting practices, the offered benefits, organic information about the company, number of employees, internal organizations, internship opportunities, and others. With those answers, a first diagnosis could be delineated to understand generally if their *status quo* in terms of offerings was in good shape. Also, the diagnosis was based on our meetings, communications with the client, survey results, and analysis of their practices and strategies. After that, recommendations about employer branding strategies will be provided.

It is important to apply some structure to the Diagnosis and Recommendations research questions, which have already been answered in part during the Data Analysis and Discussion section but need further arrangement. Making use of the EVP framework to evaluate Oceanário de Lisboa's offerings as an employer was a way found by this research to keep the practical aspects of this thesis tightened to the theoretical part. Considering that, this chapter will be divided into four parts, presenting both the diagnosis of what the client is offering and the respective recommendations of what Oceanário should do to improve their employer branding strategies, based on the data collected. Afterwards, some recommendations will be provided that cannot be included in only one category since they are transversal to every aspect of the EVP strategy.

## **5.1. Diagnosis and Recommendations: Material Offerings and Benefits**

### **5.1.1. Competitive Salary**

In what concerns Material Offerings, Oceanário de Lisboa's efforts to compete with most companies are clear. According to information provided by the client, in terms of salary, Oceanário de Lisboa is offering "above 10%" when compared to the average salary for entry-level positions in Lisbon. The client's compensation package follows the structure of the multinational consultancy firm Korn Ferry's report, so, from a salary perspective, coverage has been ensured. Under the survey, 84% of participants consider a competitive salary the most important tangible benefit, so, it is important to keep in mind that the contemporary workforce keeps valuing their salary as part of the benefits package.

### **5.1.2. Performance Bonus**

In addition, according to the survey, professionals and graduates in the Life Sciences industry tend to value immensely Performance Bonuses. It is worth noting that the organization currently has a rewarding attribution policy based on teams' objectives. Maintaining this policy can be life-changing when attracting new talent, while also enhancing the satisfaction levels of current employees. This procedure also serves as a motivating factor for new hires to join the organization, and for existing employees to continue their period with the organization. Moreover, it certainly promotes a culture of collaboration, teamwork, and accountability, as employees are encouraged to work towards achieving common goals. Overall, this type of policy tends to stimulate performance and a results-driven culture which is a synonym for higher productivity levels and achieving better financial scores, resulting in a good investment for the company. The only possible recommendation is to keep this vital instrument.

### **5.1.3. Career Progression**

The next topic is Career Progression. According to the information given by the client, there is no specific career progression cycle or ladder. Some open-ended answers provided in the survey also supported this point. Often, not having a well-established career progression plan, shared internally with an organization's employees, leads to employee dissatisfaction since employees might feel uncertain regarding their future within the organization which leads to reduced motivation. Also, if one's career growth is stagnant within the company, employees might search for other job opportunities, leading to a talent retention issue and a lack of nurturing and identification of future leaders, impacting the company's succession. Additionally, it is always more expensive to attract and hire new talents than to motivate and keep the current workforce within the company, so, investment should be made to retain talent. Finally, as a company that wants to attract high-skilled top talent, Oceanário de Lisboa should develop a strong career plan to maintain its reputation and prestige as a top employer, since most skilful professionals seek opportunities to grow and develop within their firms.

### **5.1.4. Intangible Benefits: Work Schedule, Recognition, and Appreciation**

As mentioned before, Intangible Benefits occupy a crucial role in the contemporary participants' expectations, therefore, a Flexible Work Schedule was a perk strongly valued in the survey. Allowing employees to manage their time more freely adds a sense of responsibility to their daily tasks while at the same time, they can manage their personal-professional

relationship more effectively, ultimately leading to happier employees. However, due to the role specificities of professionals such as Aquarists, punctuality and schedule compliance should be inherent characteristics of candidates in those areas.

In addition, Recognition and Appreciation from leadership was a highly stated topic. At the beginning of their careers, young professionals value immensely recognition and appreciation by managers, so they can improve and execute their tasks more effectively. This topic is more related to the company's practices of having a culture that foments feedback giving and receiving, and it is widely searched by high-skilled top talents.

## **5.2. Diagnosis and Recommendations: Connection and Sense of Community**

Thoroughly discussed in the Literature Review, the importance of the role of the Sense of Community and Connection in the relationship employee-employer is evident. To reach the best outcomes, employees must feel compliant with the company's culture and values. Simultaneously, a healthy work environment promotes higher levels of productivity. In a rapidly changing world and competitive job market, companies may lose traction with employees who no longer value traditional perks like Friday pizza parties.

Although some notes from participants in the survey were recorded, Oceanário presents good levels of community and sense of connection perception from outside the company. There were results shared about that during the data analysis chapter, and positive conclusions can be taken from the client's current performance on providing a good work experience to their employees. Overall, there is a good perception of how Oceanário manages its employees' careers and employees' satisfaction, however, there are always opportunities to improve, and the recommendations given in this chapter will focus on increasing efficiencies in the general process of having a pleasant feeling of community within the company.

### **5.2.1. Onboarding Process**

During the survey analysis, some notes about the organization of onboarding processes were recorded. It is crucial to understand that an onboarding process is seen as welcoming from the employee's perspective. If the welcoming is not up to the employee's expectations, it can negatively impact their confidence in their future within the company. To ensure that new employees feel welcomed and valued in the company, it is important to organize team events that tighten collaborators' relationships, also contributing to increased levels of satisfaction among new hires. Likewise, applying a recruitment calendar would be useful, as this would

help the HR team to prepare for new employees' arrival and ensure that they have a smooth onboarding experience. For instance, setting September and March as the months for welcoming new employees could provide an extra sense of structure and organization within the company. September and March because that would combine those months with the beginning of the academic year's semesters which would be wise for recruitment motivations.

### **5.2.2. Feedback Culture and Performance Reviews**

To reinforce, it is important to have a strong feedback culture, where performance reviews are well-established. If a person is not aware of their shortcomings and mistakes, they cannot make progress or improvements, so, it is the company's role to make sure that culture exists and is fomented. Also, students from top universities – new and qualified talent – are used to living in a culture of giving and receiving feedback, because it is key to success. A good way to foment this kind of culture would be to establish semester performance reviews and monthly 1:1s between leadership and the teams so that improvements are implemented in a quicker way and further efficiencies are achieved.

### **5.3. Diagnosis and Recommendations: Purpose and Meaning**

Many participants in the survey have acknowledged that Oceanário has enhanced its purpose, prestige, and reputation as a company that pays close attention to marine initiatives such as ocean conservation, dolphins in the Tagus River, and an extensive list of others. The company has a proactive role in identifying marine problems and creating solutions and campaigns to raise awareness about those topics. These initiatives have not only helped in attracting more talent but also provided employees with a sense of belonging and purpose that goes beyond monetary or career aspirations. Therefore, it is recommended that Oceanário should continue to work extensively towards raising awareness of these subjects. Overall, Oceanário is doing a great job in this category.

Furthermore, it is recommended that Oceanário communicates these initiatives massively, through their social media pages (e.g. Instagram, LinkedIn, and others...), and their website. The communication strategy can be intensified, resulting in higher audiences, and leading to higher brand exposition.

### **5.4. Diagnosis and Recommendations: Opportunities to Develop and Grow as a Professional**

Finally, the last EVP framework topic is the opportunities to develop and grow as a professional. Special attention should be paid to the fact that this was the most-voted benefit category amongst the survey's participants. Most likely due to the survey's demographics, this was chosen heavily by the inquiries, but also due to the importance given to the opportunities of learning within a company. Ideally, a job should provide opportunities for professional and personal growth, essentially in the initial phase of one's career.

Taking that into account, from the less experienced junior positions until the most senior positions with more years of experience, there should be a defined plan of what hard skills each level should have in which software (e.g. Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) so that continuing formation is ensured as well as to keep high levels of rigour within the teams' projects and tasks. Also, to keep a challenging environment, it is crucial to define and pre-establish specific and measurable objectives. The 1:1 idea presented in the Performance Review sub-chapter should be used to a) pre-establish collaborators' goals for a determined period; and b) evaluate and set a constructive conversation ground to understand if employees are following the right track to accomplish their objectives and the firm's goals.

## **5.5. Other Recommendations**

### **5.5.1. Interns and Trainees Programme**

During the meetings with the client, it was mentioned that the company had an open-cycle strategy for hiring interns throughout the year. It was revealed that the retention rate of these interns was 22%. To enhance the potential of interns in the long run, I suggest establishing an Oceanário de Lisboa Trainees Program, which has proven to yield a high return on investment for various reasons in other companies.

Firstly, Oceanário would gain greater exposure to the general public and especially to the university environment, making it easier to attract new talent. This university topic is very important since many inquiries attribute significant relevance to the connection between Oceanário and the academic environment. By developing a Trainees Programme, the company would attract a group of young, talented professionals who would have the opportunity to rotate between different roles and departments, gaining a broad understanding of Oceanário's activities.

Additionally, this programme would allow Oceanário to train people according to its culture and values, while also enriching the diversity of profiles within the company. Trainees bring

new ideas and innovation to companies, while simultaneously making them look younger, fresher, and more modern.

Moreover, developing a programme like this would be cost-effective compared to external hiring, while also increasing the retention rates of Oceanário if the company's financials allow it to make offers to the best trainees. Overall, a Trainees Programme would be a strategic move for Oceanário, not just in terms of attracting talent, but also in terms of enhancing its corporate culture and driving innovation.

### **5.5.2. Communications Strategy**

It is worth noting that effective communication is crucial for any organization, and how a company communicates can greatly impact its success. In the case of Oceanário de Lisboa, it may be beneficial to assess the current communication strategies and make improvements where necessary. It is important to focus on not only what is being communicated but also how it is being communicated. By improving communication strategies, Oceanário de Lisboa can enhance its brand image and attract potential employees who share the company's values and mission.

To achieve better outcomes, it would be beneficial for the company to facelift its website's user experience and interface (UX/UI). A simple way for users to access their personal profile, where they can view their information and preferences, as well as a section dedicated to job listings, should be included on the website. After all, the company's website is the client's first impression of the business. Also, job listings should be in English as well and should be more eye-appealing.

To maximize the reach of Oceanário's job listings, it may be beneficial to promote them on LinkedIn and utilize their Instagram page as another platform to attract potential candidates. By increasing the visibility of these postings to a wider audience, there is a greater chance of attracting highly skilled applicants. Additionally, relying on word-of-mouth using social media can help to expand the reach of these opportunities even further. Ultimately, increasing the visibility of job postings can lead to a higher volume of candidates and a greater likelihood of finding the best fit for the position.

### **5.5.3. Employee Referrals Programme**

Another interesting recommendation would be to develop an internal policy that rewards employees who refer colleagues and other professionals for job openings. This is a common practice in many multinational organizations where current employees receive financial compensation for referring someone to the recruitment process and that person is later hired.

No feedback from the survey was registered regarding this matter. However, based on my analysis during the literature review of what most companies offer in terms of benefits and internal programs, it is recommended that Oceanário implement an employee referral program. This program can alleviate the workload of the Human Resources department, as better-prepared candidates are more likely to apply for a role.

#### **5.5.4. Academic Environment Proximity**

It is suggested that Oceanário should take steps to engage with the academic environment, where the best talent is often found. One way to achieve this is by participating in Career and Job Fairs held at universities. This will provide an opportunity for the company to connect with students, showcase its brand and be closer to potential candidates. In addition, offering a grant to the best student in a particular area of study, such as Biology, could be another way to attract top talent. For example, the best student in the Biology Bachelor's degree program at the University of Lisbon could receive a prize of 2000€ or the opportunity to do an internship at the company (or a reserved place in the next Trainee Programme edition, for example). A last suggestion would be to open the possibility of developing projects in university research labs as it is important for the company's reputation and would enhance proximity to the academic atmosphere.

These pieces of advice came up when a survey participant stated that “Oceanário should invest in the research and studies continuity”. Also, one respondent alleged that “Oceanário could deepen its cooperation with universities”. Given that some researchers and PhD Fellows responded to the survey, it is interesting to note that the academic proximity is something to bear in mind.

## 6. Conclusion

Oceanário de Lisboa is a well-established company in the country. Predominantly known for its aquariums, (Oceanário de Lisboa, 2023) has been in existence for over 25 years and employs 79 people to provide entertaining experiences to its 28 million visitors since the beginning of its subsistence. Their efforts to contribute to a greener planet are fairly recognized by the public, essentially through marine and conservation of species initiatives.

Having a strong bias in consulting, constant contact was established with the client during the project. Also, there was no internal intervention during the project, so, every piece of evidence was either given by Oceanário during the meetings or found by us through research and data collection.

During this research, concepts such as employer branding and EVP were theoretically explored in the literature review and applied practically to have clear answers and strategies to the research questions. The research questions were answered completely during the thesis, managing to evaluate the perception of Life Sciences professionals and graduates, to perform a diagnosis regarding what Oceanário was offering in terms of benefits, and finally, to provide recommendations on what strategies should be followed to improve the client's employer branding strategy.

After that, qualitative interviews were prepared and accomplished to set the ground for the survey elaboration and the data was thoroughly analysed through descriptive statistics, statistical inferences and graphical visualization, where several charts and tables were included in the data analysis to facilitate the interpretation. Afterwards, the main findings were discussed in the discussion and recommendations part and although being perceived positively by most participants in the survey, some key points of improvement were identified.

The identification of the main areas of improvement was followed by a reflection period. During that period, my project colleague and I discussed together potential solutions to some of the inefficiencies recognized. Also, at this stage, an on-site meeting was held at Oceanário de Lisboa, which allowed me to get to know the offices and Inês Pinto Coelho, the person who worked with us from the beginning. This was a great opportunity to discuss points of view about the project, as well as to get some guidelines and feedback regarding the project's updates.

To avoid conflicts and ensure effective implementation of the suggested strategies, recommendations should be implemented gradually. This will help maintain Oceanário de Lisboa as a vital trademark in Portugal and worldwide.

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## **8. Appendices**

### **8.1. Appendix 1 – Qualitative Interview Script**

#### **Employer Branding and Reputation:**

1. When you think of an ideal employer, what qualities and characteristics come to mind?
2. What attributes or aspects of an employer's reputation would make it attractive to you?
3. What sources or platforms do you rely on to gather information about potential employers and their reputations?
4. How crucial is it for you that an employer's values and culture align with your personal values and professional aspirations?
- 5.. Can you provide examples of companies that you believe excel in this regard? Why?
6. When evaluating potential employers, what differentiates one from another in your eyes?

#### **Motivations for Work:**

1. What personal and professional motivations drive your choices in employment?
2. To what extent does an organization's workplace culture and environment impact your motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to your work?
3. Are there elements of a positive workplace culture that resonate with you?
4. Looking ahead, what factors do you believe would contribute to your long-term commitment to an employer or motivate you to recommend that employer to others?
5. Describe what's the impact of work-life balance as a mindset while working for a company.

#### **Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction:**

1. What specific elements of your job or workplace environment contribute the most to your overall job satisfaction?

2. How do these factors relate to your motivations for work and your sense of fulfilment?
3. In your opinion, are there areas where employers, in general, could make improvements to enhance job satisfaction and employee motivation?

**Benefits and Perks:**

1. Among the various benefits and perks that employers typically offer, which ones do you find most appealing or valuable?
2. What do you think it's the most important, tangible or intangible benefits while working for a company? (provide examples if needed)
3. How do these benefits influence your choice of employer or your satisfaction in your current job?
4. Can you provide examples of how certain benefits and perks have positively impacted your work-life balance, job satisfaction, or overall well-being?
5. What role do these benefits play in your motivation to work for a particular employer?

**Peer Influence and Reviews:**

1. How much weight do you give to recommendations and insights from peers and colleagues when considering potential employers?
2. Have you ever been influenced by the experiences and reviews of others in your career decisions?
3. Do online reviews, testimonials, or ratings about employers influence your perception of those organizations?
4. Can you share experiences where online information has affected your consideration of an employer?

**Job Searching Methods**

1. What are the primary platforms or methods you use when searching for job opportunities?
2. To what extent do you use social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter for job searching and networking?
3. Have you attended job fairs, career events, or expos as part of your job search strategy? Do you find these events useful for discovering job opportunities?
4. What are the challenges or obstacles you encounter when searching for job opportunities? Are there specific aspects of the job search process that you find particularly daunting?

#### **Oceanário de Lisboa as a potential workplace:**

1. Have you heard of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer before this discussion?
2. If no...
  - a. Were you unaware that it is possible to work at Oceanário?
  - b. Is it because you are not familiar with the roles available at Oceanário?
  - c. Any other specific reason?
3. What do you think Oceanário would be like as an employer?
4. What were your initial perceptions or thoughts about Oceanário de Lisboa as a potential employer? What influenced these perceptions?
5. When considering a job or employer, what are the key factors that typically influence your decision? Are there specific aspects that you prioritize in your job search?
6. If so, how did you come across information about the organization's employment opportunities?
7. What, if any, challenges or concerns might deter you from considering Oceanário de Lisboa as a workplace? Are there any perceived obstacles that come to mind?
8. Can you describe what you know or have heard about Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer? How does its reputation, values, or culture impact your perception of the organization?
9. When evaluating a job opportunity, how important is the alignment between your skills, interests, and the specific responsibilities of the role? How does this relate to your consideration of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer?

10. How significant are opportunities for career growth and professional development when choosing an employer? Have you found information about Oceanário de Lisboa's commitment to employee development?

11. To what extent does the organization's location impact your decision to consider it as an employer? How do these factors relate to your perceptions of Oceanário de Lisboa?

12. Are there specific changes or improvements that you believe Oceanário de Lisboa could make to enhance its attractiveness as a potential workplace?"

## 8.2. Appendix II - Oceanário de Lisboa - Employer Branding Survey

### PART I - INTRODUCTION

Hello!

Thank you for your time in advance, I hope you're well.

This survey is an integral part of my Master's in Business Thesis research at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics and serves academic purposes. This survey has my entire ownership and must not be seen as an Oceanário de Lisboa work or partnership.

This study aims to **assess how professionals and graduates in Life Sciences perceive Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer**, focusing on the alignment between offered benefits and candidate expectations.

Targeting professionals in the **Life Sciences field**, such as Environmental Engineering, Biology, and Marine Biology, the survey seeks to understand what is the **market's perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer**, as well as **preferences regarding tangible and intangible benefits**.

Additionally, the research evaluates **Oceanário de Lisboa's brand perception** to uncover its influence on candidate considerations.

All responses will be treated **confidentially and anonymously** to ensure participants' privacy and encourage candid feedback.

Findings from this study aim to **provide valuable insights into Oceanário de Lisboa's Employer Branding efforts**, aiding in enhancing its appeal to potential talent within the Life Sciences industry.

Completing this survey will take you about **5 minutes**, so, please take your time.

If you have any questions or comments, please **feel free to contact me by e-mail**: s-fmquintela@ucp.pt

#### 1. Do you consent to participate in this study?

I do consent (1)

I do not consent (2)

## **PART II - DEMOGRAPHICS**

**1. Is your educational background related to a Life Sciences discipline (e.g. Biology, Marine Biology, Environmental Engineering, Animal Science, Zoology, Veterinary Medicine, Bioengineering, or others)?**

No (1)

Somewhat (2)

Yes (3)

**2. What is your Academic Background?**

Environmental Engineering (1)

Biology (2)

Marine Biology (3)

Animal Sciences (4)

Zoology (5)

Veterinary Medicine (6)

Other... (please specify) (7) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is your current level of education?**

No academic degree (1)

Bachelor's degree (currently or completed) (2)

Post-grad degree (currently or completed) (3)

Master's degree (currently or completed) (4)

PhD (currently or completed) (5)

**4. How old are you?**

18 (1)

25-34(2)

25-34 (3)

35-44 (4)

45-54 (5)

+55 (6)

**5. Gender:**

Male (1)

Female (2)

Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say (4)

**6. Professional Situation:**

Employed (1)

Unemployed (2)

Student (3)

Intern (4)

Other... (5) \_\_\_\_\_

**7. What's your work status?**

Full-time employee (1)

Part-time employee (2)

Self-employed (3)

**PART III - PREFERRED BENEFITS AND BRAND STYLES FOR LIFE SCIENCES PROFESSIONALS AND GRADUATES**

In this section, the survey will evaluate what are your preferred benefits to working at an organization, as well as the brand characteristics that you tend to prefer.

Please be mindful that this survey is completely confidential so, express freely your opinions and thoughts.

**1. Which benefits and perks do you consider most valuable as a professional in Life Sciences? (Rank the options according to your preferences)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Professional development opportunities (e.g., workshops, certifications) (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flexible work hours or remote work options (2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health insurance coverage (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Company's car (4)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research funding or grants for projects (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continuing education support (6)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Competitive salary package (7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gym allowance (8)
- \_\_\_\_\_ IT equipment allowance (9)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Performance bonus (10)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacations (Paid Time Off) (11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Retirement plans (12)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other... (Please specify) (13)

**2. When considering an organization to work, do you prefer Tangible Benefits (e.g., salary, health insurance); or Intangible Benefits (e.g., flexible hours, company culture) in your employment package within the Life Sciences industry? 1 - Does not play a role in my decision. 5 - Plays a huge role in my decision.**

Tangible benefits (1)	<input type="radio"/> 1 (1)	<input type="radio"/> 2 (2)	<input type="radio"/> 3 (3)	<input type="radio"/> 4 (4)	<input type="radio"/> 5 (5)
Intangible benefits (2)	<input type="radio"/> 1 (1)	<input type="radio"/> 2 (2)	<input type="radio"/> 3 (3)	<input type="radio"/> 4 (4)	<input type="radio"/> 5 (5)

**3. Choose your 3 preferred Tangible Benefits.**

Competitive Salary (1)

Health Insurance Coverage (2)

Research Funding or Grants (3)

Continuing Education Support (4)

Equipment Allowance (5)

Performance Bonuses (6)

Paid Time Off (PTO) - Vacations (7)

Retirement Plans (8)

Company's car (9)

**4. Choose your 3 preferred Intangible Benefits.**

Flexible Work Hours (1)

Remote or Hybrid Work Options (2)

Company Culture and Values (3)

Professional Development Opportunities (4)

Work-Life Balance Initiatives (5)

Recognition and Appreciation (6)

Career Growth Opportunities (7)

Workplace Flexibility (8)

Autonomy and Decision-Making (9)

Meaningful Work Impact (10)

## **PART IV - OCEANÁRIO DE LISBOA'S BRAND PERCEPTION**

In this stage, the study pretends to assess your familiarity with **Oceanário de Lisboa's brand as an employer**.

Some information about Oceanário de Lisboa: **Oceanário de Lisboa is one of the biggest aquariums in Iberia**, widely recognized for its species showcase and initiatives promoting environmental and marine sustainability.

Please **focus on your perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as a company/employer** and not on your own experience (if it exists) regarding their aquariums and initiatives.

### **1. Have you ever heard of Oceanário de Lisboa?**

Yes and I have been there. (1)

Yes, but I have never been there. (2)

No. (3)

### **2. What's Oceanário de Lisboa's brand identity as an employer? (Select all that apply)**

Innovative (1)

Environmentally conscious (2)

Prestigious (3)

Community-oriented (4)

Modern and progressive (5)

Other. Please specify (6) \_\_\_\_\_

No idea (7)

### **3. Do you believe Oceanário de Lisboa's brand image aligns with its reputation as an employer?**

Strongly agree (1)

Somewhat agree (2)

Neutral - Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (4)

Strongly disagree (5)

**4. Does Oceanário de Lisboa's brand influence your perception of it as a potential employer?**

Strongly agree (1)

Somewhat agree (2)

Neutral - Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (4)

Strongly disagree (5)

**5. How would you rate Oceanário de Lisboa's brand strength as an employer within the Life Sciences industry?**

Very strong (1)

Strong (2)

Moderate (3)

Weak (4)

Very weak (5)

**6. What factors contribute most to your perception of Oceanário de Lisboa's brand as an employer? (Select all that apply)**

Social media presence (1)

Corporate social responsibility initiatives (2)

Employee testimonials or reviews (3)

Industry awards and recognitions (4)

Personal experiences or interactions (5)

Other (Please specify) (6) \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Based on your knowledge, rate your perception of Oceanário de Lisboa as an employer.**

Perception of Oceanário as an Employer ()	
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**8. Does any specific initiative from Oceanário de Lisboa come to your mind when you think of this company?**


Yes (1)

Maybe (2)

No (3)

**9. Which initiative/campaign specifically?**

**10. What is the role of those initiatives and campaigns while considering Oceanário de Lisboa as a place to work?**

Impact of initiatives in your desire/consideration to work at Oceanário de Lisboa ()	
--	--

**11. Rank what would be your main motivations to work for Oceanário de Lisboa.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Material offerings (1)

\_\_\_\_\_ Purpose (meaning of the brand), reputation, and prestige (2)

\_\_\_\_\_ Opportunities to develop and grow as a professional (3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Connection and sense of community (4)



## PART V - OCEANÁRIO DE LISBOA'S BENEFITS PERCEPTION

**1. Based on your perception, do you think Oceanário de Lisboa offers competitive benefits for professionals in the Life Sciences field? Please choose the preferred option and then explain why.**

Excellent - Why? (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Above Average - Why? (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Average - Why? (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Below Average - Why? (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Terrible - Why? (5) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Rank your perception about Oceanário's tangible and intangible benefits offerings.**

Tangible Benefits (1)	<input type="radio"/> 1 (1)	<input type="radio"/> 2 (2)	<input type="radio"/> 3 (3)	<input type="radio"/> 4 (4)	<input type="radio"/> 5 (5)
Intangible Benefits (2)	<input type="radio"/> 1 (1)	<input type="radio"/> 2 (2)	<input type="radio"/> 3 (3)	<input type="radio"/> 4 (4)	<input type="radio"/> 5 (5)

**3. Would a mismatch between your perceived benefits at Oceanário de Lisboa and the actual offerings influence your decision to apply for a position there?**

Yes, significantly (1)

Yes, moderately (2)

No, it wouldn't influence (3)

Not sure (4)

**4. What would be the most critical benefit mismatch that would automatically exclude yourself to accept a job there? Please, be specific.**

Salary expectations (1)

Work environment (2)

Office localization (3)

Model of Work (hybrid, remote, in-person) (4)

Word of mouth (5)

Other, please specify (6)

**5. What specific benefits do you imagine Oceanário de Lisboa might offer for professionals in the Life Sciences field?**

**6. What specific benefits or initiatives do you believe Oceanário de Lisboa could introduce or enhance to become more appealing as an employer in the Life Sciences industry?**

**PART VI – FINAL ASSESSMENT**

**Would you see yourself working at Oceanário de Lisboa?**

Yes. Why? (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe. Why? (2) \_\_\_\_\_

No. Why? (3) \_\_\_\_\_