

‘BEST EMPLOYER’ SAYS SOMETHING BUT NOT EVERYTHING

Last week it was announced that WUR had come out as the best employer in the education sector in a national survey of employers by Effactory. But what does that label actually say?

Quality labels and prizes are important in an increasingly tight labour market. It helps to have an official-sounding designation in the fight for talent, as that increases the number of job applications. No wonder that consultancy firms

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see this as a good business opportunity. Does an organization want to be able to call itself a Top Employer? That starts by loosening the purse strings: employers have to first carry out a ‘certification programme’ with ‘interactive feedback sessions’ and ‘clear reports’ before they are even allowed through to the next stage of benchmarking. While it may not be stated explicitly, these programmes are not free either

(unsurprisingly given the intensive assessments of their HR policy).

COMPETITION

This is one advantage of the Effactory prize compared with other awards and labels: employers do not have to pay in order to take part. Any organization with 100 employees or more can compare itself with others free of charge. Of course it helps if you know who those ‘others’ are. Are we talking virtually all academic and applied universities in the Netherlands, or just a handful? The Effactory website is rather vague on this matter, with no mention of the figure of 13 participants in the Education category cited in the WUR announcement. Recruitment-manager Johan Kanis does not have a clear view of the competition either. ‘Effactory defined the categories. I understand it includes the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, the University of Groningen, the University of Humanistic Studies, IHE Delft Institute for Water Education and the Brabant secondary education association Ons Middelbaar Onderwijs. But we don’t have a complete list.’

SUBJECTIVE CRITERION

Then there is the methodology. As in the designation of the best university in the Guide to



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▲ At the start of March, Wageningen University & Research was labelled the best employer in education in a nationwide survey of employers by Effactory.

Higher Education, it is based on self-assessment. The criterion is the scores employers are given by their own employees. There is no objective assessment. The fact that WUR came out top in the Education category and Hanze University did not just means we are more positive about our employer than they are about theirs. Or to be more specific: we gave higher scores than they did. Perhaps the Hanze staff value their employer more but are simply not so generous in their scoring. **ME**