DIGITALIZATION OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND WORKING ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE INFLUENCE OF WORLD PANDEMIC OF COVID-19

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Abstract: *The efficiency of the company is in the direct dependency within the employees who are working for that specific company. The question of the recruitment of the right employee for the given position in the company is one of the aspect of successful operations of the company. Nowadays, the world pandemic of the COVID-19 brought some visible changes in the process of the recruitment of employees and their working operations. The pandemic restrictions accelerated the process of digitalization of the recruitment process and replacing common procedures to online basis. The research is based on information of the digitalization of recruitment process and working activities of organizations globally and in Latvia. Therewith, certain recommendations for simplifying the process of recruitment digitalization during the pandemic restrictions are represented in the research.*

Keywords: recruitment process, recruiter, digitalization, pandemic, human resource management, post-pandemic work.

Introduction

The process of the recruitment is the main initial step on the way to the company's success in business industry. The recruitment process is the process in the company that consists of different activities with the final result of hiring a new employee. For the implementation of the recruitment process, the company could use Human Resource Department inside the company or third- parties as recruitment agencies and individual recruiters.

As any process in the company, the recruitment process must be well planned and organized. An employee, who is leading the recruitment process, must not make urgent decisions in a hurry. According to the recruiting industry trainer and speaker Scott Wintrip: "Haste has no place in hiring… Rushed decisions often lead to poor choices. These mistakes result from an ineffective approach that wasn't built to deliver fast and accurate hires." However, the timeframe in the recruitment process is very important and has its own impact on the process as well.

Starting from the beginning of the epidemics of COVID-19 worldwide in 2019, there are some significant changes in the operations of companies globally. The world pandemic brought the

restrictions related to the work of different enterprises: starting from the recruitment process and finishing with the organization of internal work activities. For now, it is important for companies to get used to that changes and try to save the efficiency during the pandemic period.

The **main aim** of the research is to analyze the level of the digitalization in recruitment process in Latvia influenced by the world pandemic of COVID-19.

Objectives of the research are:

1. To define the meaning of recruitment as the process and digitalization;
2. To find out the digitalization level of recruitment process and working activities globally;
3. To provide the real examples of digitalization of the recruitment process and working activities in Latvian companies;
4. To conclude the overall research and give some recommendations from the author's side for simplifying the process of digitalization.

Methodology: to get the necessary information and data for research complement, the author used independent internet resources and knowledge gained by the interview with the managers of two Latvian companies. The recommendations are made based on the personal evaluation of the digitalization of recruitment process in Latvia by the author of research.

1. Theoretical information and statistical data

It is obvious that the recruitment process in every organization could vary from each other depending on many factors (location, organization style, size of the company, the position and requirements for it). Nevertheless, there is a usual recruitment model that could be used as the example for any companies:

- Finding the hiring need;

- Planning the recruitment process;

- Searching for candidates/ advertise the position;

- Identifying candidates for the position;

- Shortcut the list of the most suitable candidates;

- Interviews process (2-4 meetings, depends on the company);

- Offering a position/ hiring a new employee;

- Candidate adaptation in the company.

The digitalization is the process of using the digital technologies to provide new value opportunities to the company, implement new business model to move to the digital business. Most of the time, the digitalization is used by companies that already have customers' acknowledgement and good reputation. The digitalization is the process of adoption of new digital technologies in social and human activities of the company.

Due to the fact that the digitalization has straight depending on the innovations in technological sphere, the company that implements digitalization has unstoppable challenge of permanent development changes.

The world pandemic of the COVID-19 has increased the development of digitalization in many countries globally. According to the pandemic restriction, many of the companies stopped its operations on in-life basis and moved to the online. To become successful, the business must not stop its development, as well as keep going with the reality and real world situation. The spread of pandemic represented to the world that not every business was ready for digitalization.

In 2020, many of the employees across the world were offered to continue working from home places to have safe working conditions and minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus. Apparently, the remote works also helps to save the time for transportation to the work office, makes it simpler to complete work tasks and prevent the individual conflicts situations in office based on the human factor. According to the research of video conferencing technology firm OWL Labs, 83 percent of participants of the survey states that the remote work would make them happier.

Watching through the recruitment process, it is visible that some of the steps of the process could be easily digitalized. The shift of particular off line activities to the online would only facilitate the whole process. The main step of the recruitment process that is changed to the online basis is the Interviews part. Depending on the internal organization of every company, while recruiting a new employee, the candidate is going through the interview part (2-4 interviews until getting a job). In the environment of the world pandemic, the Interviews are usual held through different applications and video-meeting platforms. According to the statistics, the most popular video platform for the interview meetings is Zoom application (*Picture 1*). In addition, video platforms by the huge international companies as Google and Microsoft are providing their users the service for their online meetings free of the charge, Skype and CiscoWebEx applications are also in the top of most popular platforms.
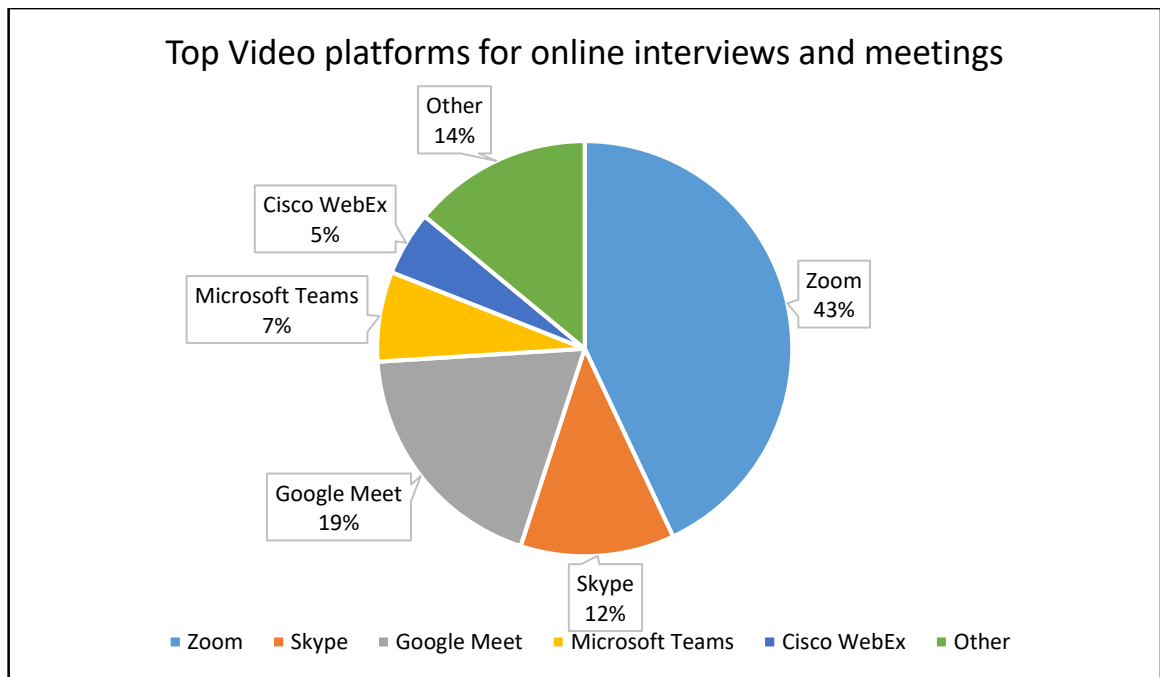
Picture 1: Rating of the most commonly used video platforms for online interview in percentage, 2021 (*A Resume Go Survey*).

2. Influence of the world pandemic of COVID-19 on the digitalization of recruitment process and work activities globally

The world pandemic of the COVID-19 brought many valid changes in the business sphere in many countries worldwide. The prohibitions of the epidemics period are varied from country to country, depending on many factors. Mainly, all the countries agreed that the possibility of switching office work to the online basis (complete the digitalization of the working activity) is efficient way of preventing the further spread of the virus inside the country. It is understandable that not every job is possible to be implemented during the online work. However, even small changes in the whole process would bring the positive result in the total fight against the virus spreading.
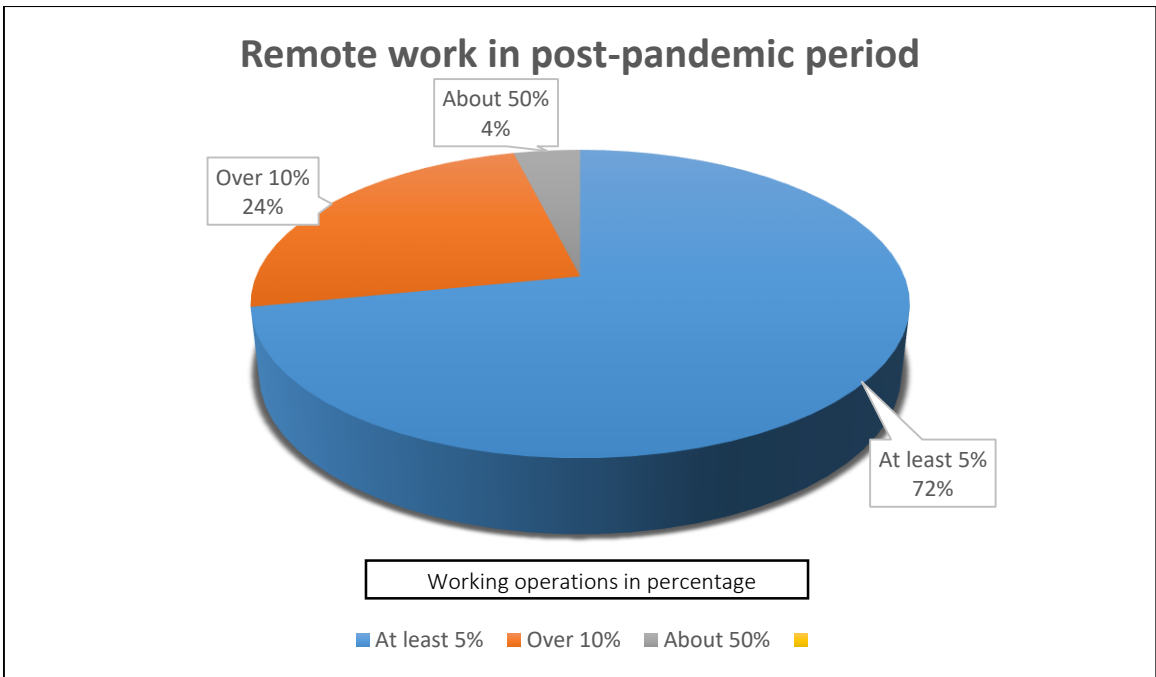
According to the Gartner research platform, the percentage of employees, who are working remotely, has been increased after the COVID-19 pandemic in the world (*Picture 2*). The research shows that the number of remote-working employees is enlarged by 18 percent during the world pandemic. This change is influenced by the epidemics restrictions and prohibitions. Moreover, the number of employees, who have never implement remote work, has been decreased from 70 percent to 52 percent. The total fall of 22 percent could be explained by the fact that there are still jobs that could never be implemented remotely (doctors, surgeries, firefighters etc.).
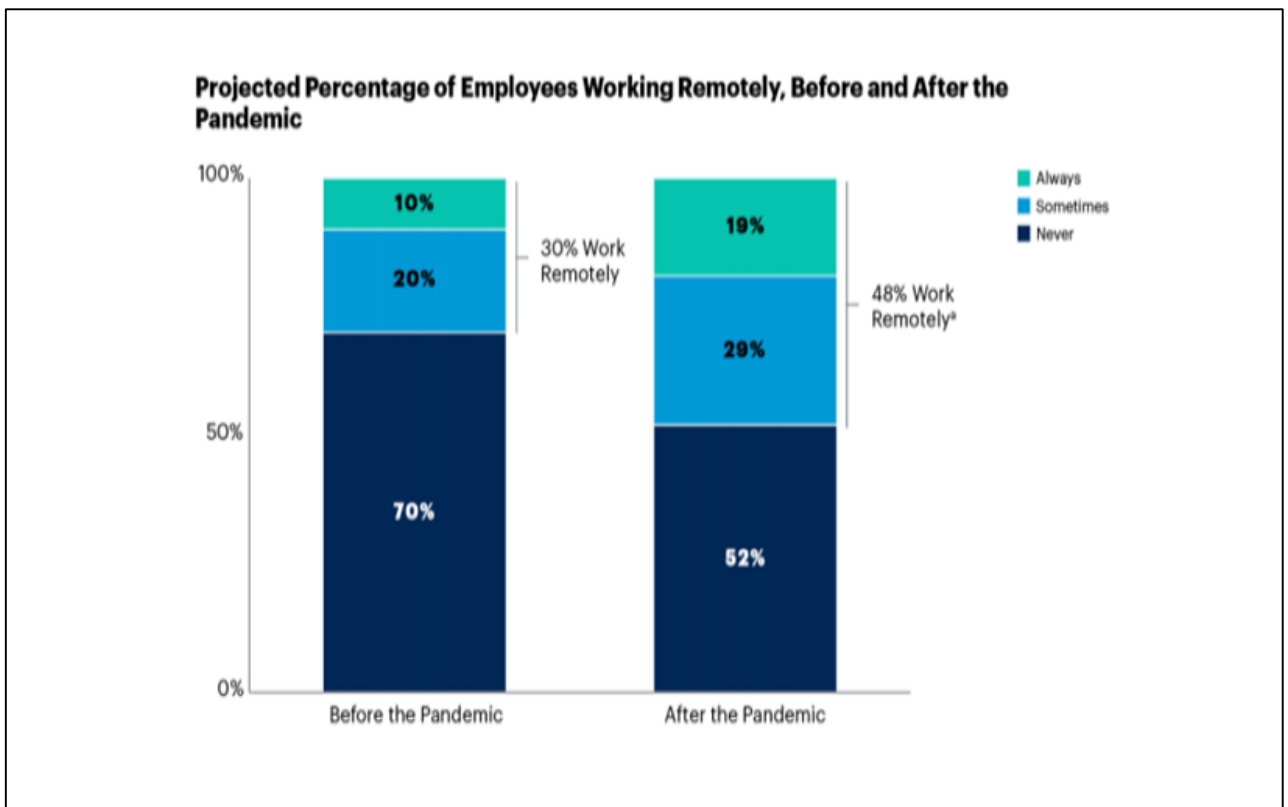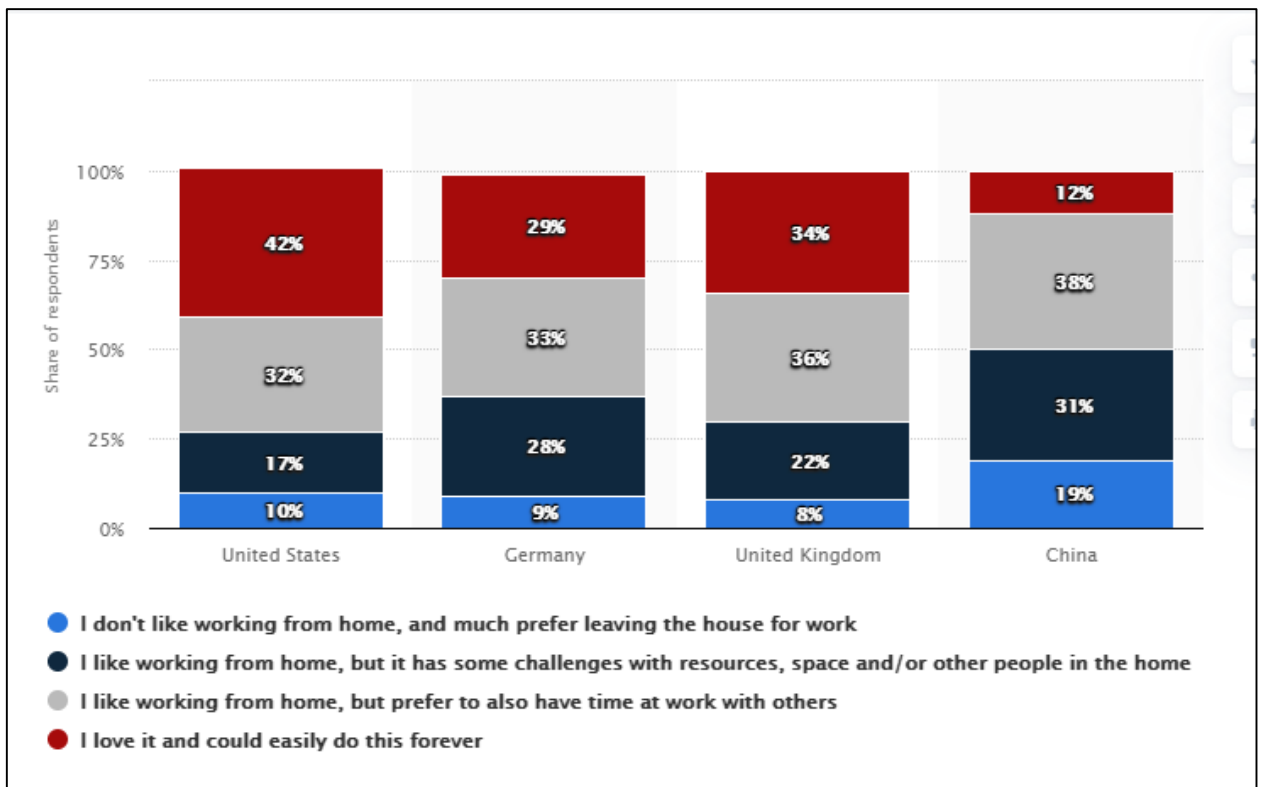
Picture 2: The Amount of the employees working remotely before and after the pandemic of COVID-19 in percentage, 2021 (*Gartner*).

The experts of the research group claim that the trend for the remote work will stay even after the world pandemic. The explanation for that statement is that that remote work of some operations of the company shows its effectiveness and sustainability. By the research of the Gartner group, it is expected that 72 percent of the companies globally are planning to move some operations on remotely mode permanently in post-pandemic period (*Picture 3*). Moreover, shifting some operations to the remote work mode could be a good cost management strategy for some companies.

Additionally, the research of the Statista research group shows the feelings of people about working remotely in 4 countries with great developed economies: United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom and China (*Picture 4*). Based on the research, people from all these countries like working from home, but also would like to spend some time in office with colleagues. The comparably close percentage 32-38 of this group of people represents that the real time communication is still playing an important role in the social life of human beings. The USA has the highest percentage of people, who would like to work remotely permanently- 42. While China has the lowest percentage- only 12. Both of the European countries Germany and UK are at relatively close percentage level- 29 and 34 respectively.

Remote work in post-pandemic period

About 50%
4%

Over 10%
24%

At least 5%
72%

Working operations in percentage

■ At least 5%   ■ Over 10%   ■ About 50%   ■

Picture 3: Expected amount of moving work activities to the remote mode in post-pandemic period in percentage, 2021 (*Gartner*).

○ I don't like working from home, and much prefer leaving the house for work
● I like working from home, but it has some challenges with resources, space and/or other people in the home
○ I like working from home, but prefer to also have time at work with others
● I love it and could easily do this forever

Picture 4: Opinion of people about working from home in percentage, 2021 (*Statista*).

3. Influence of the world pandemic of COVID-19 on the digitalization of recruitment process and work activities in Latvia

By being part of the European Union, Latvia accepts many of the EU restrictions in the fight against the world pandemic of COVID-19. One of the main restrictions is the digitalization of working activity. Starting from the March 16, employees of the governmental and private sector are forced to work remotely[1]. This prohibition of working in the office is distributed on the employees, who have ability of implementing their work online (not necessarily from the office). According to the amendments, the employer is obliged to identify those employees who can perform work on site in order to ensure its continuity, and transfer the rest to remote work. If it is impossible for an employee to work remotely, then the employer must ensure compliance with epidemiological standards in the workplace.

Due to the fact of the forcing to work remotely from government's side in Latvia, the recruitment process mostly moved to the online implementation. One of the examples of Interview part for Latvian company in gambling sphere is represented below (*Picture 5*). The author took part in the interview part for competing the research. The personal information of author and manager of the company is hidden due to the confidential issues.
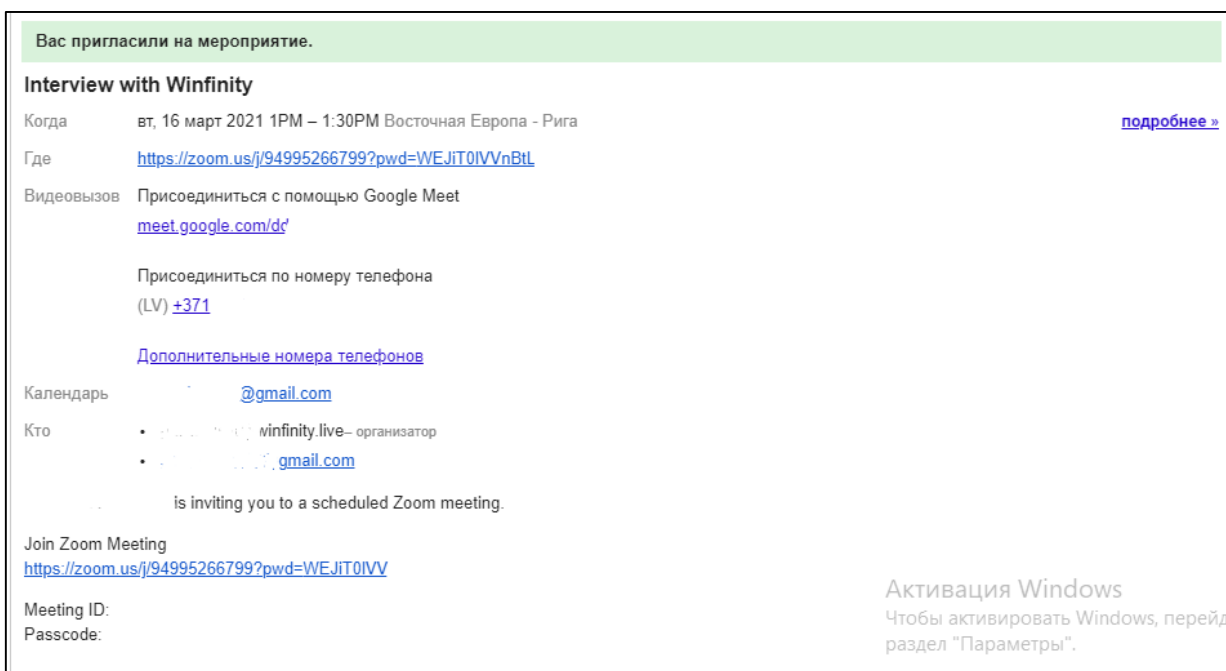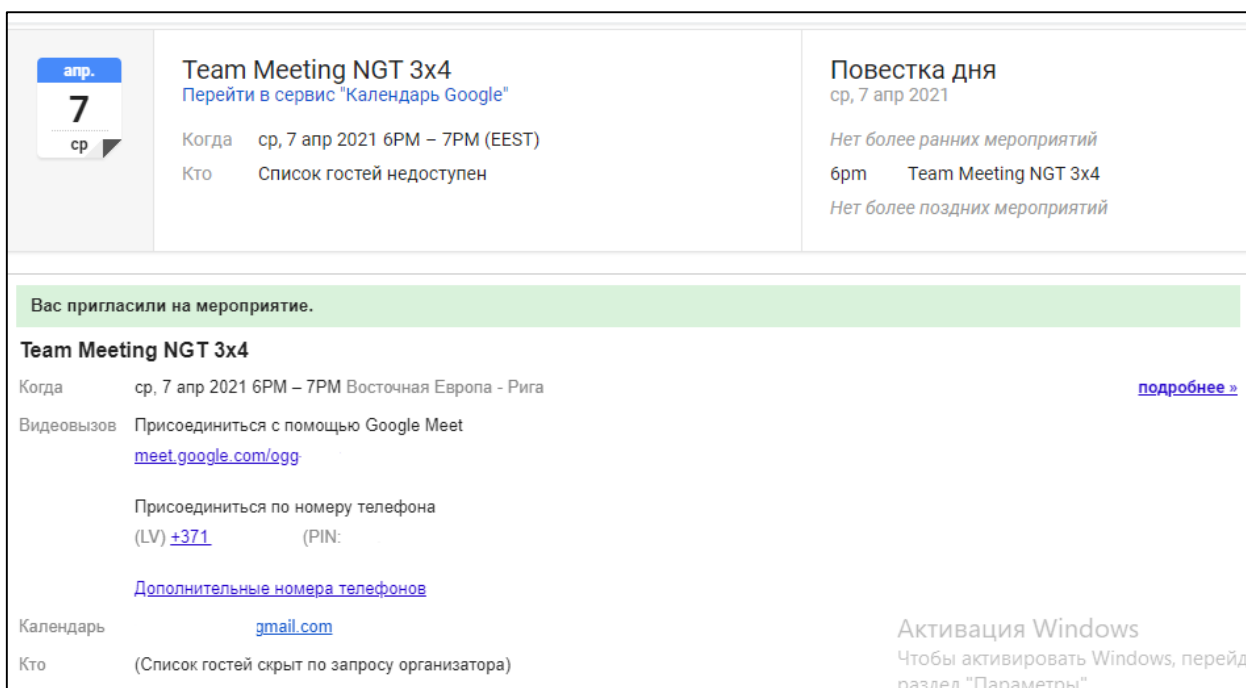

Picture 5: The invitation for the Interview in Latvian company- Winfinity, 2021.

As shown in the *Picture 5*, the interview was held in Zoom video platform. However, it was possible to join the interview straightly from the Google Meet service.

The second fact of the world pandemic influence on the work operations of the companies in Latvia is the Online Team Meetings (*Picture 6*). As shown in the picture below, the team meetings

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[1] Source- Informative agency Delphi.lv

of the Latvian company in SIA "LSK Studios" happens online to create safety epidemiological environment for employees of the company and prevent the spreading of the virus. The invitation is gained by the author of the research because of the status of employee in the company.

Picture 6: The invitation for the Team Meeting in Latvian company SIA "LSK Studios", 2021

These two examples are the evidence of the shift to the digitalization of the recruitment process and work activities in Latvia, influenced by the world pandemic and COVID-19 prohibitions.

4. Conclusion

To conclude the research, the author wants to summarize the total results of the research and evaluate the digitalization of recruitment process and working activities globally and in Latvia, influenced be the world pandemic of COVID-19.

To achieve the research goals, the author:

- Describes the meaning of recruitment process and digitalization;
- Explains the global and Latvian situations with the progress in the digitalization of recruitment process and working activities due to the world pandemic restrictions;
- Shows the statistics about the remote work worldwide because of the epidemiologic standards and expectations about the remote work in post-pandemic time.

Based on the research the conclusion could be drawn:

1) The world pandemic of COVID-19 brought some significant changes in the operations of the companies worldwide. These changes are related to the recruitment process in many companies and the organization of internal working operations as well. The interview part of the recruitment process is one of the most flexible to the movement to online implementation. The statistics shows that the most popular video platform for the online interviews and meetings is Zoom.

2) The situation worldly represents the growth by 18 percent the amount of the people, who implement work remotely. The main reason for those changes is the influence of the world pandemic and the governmental restrictions in many countries. Moreover, the trend of the digitalization of working activities will remain the same even in the post-pandemic period- 72 percent of the companies will move at least 5 percent of company's operations to the remote mode.

3) Latvian government is following some of the European Union restrictions due to the epidemiological standards and forced employers to move operations to the remote work, if it is possible in the specific cases. If the exchanging from off line to the online work is impossible, than the employers must provide safety-working conditions for their employees. By the given examples, it is visible that in reality the companies in Latvia already try to follow the governmental requirements and support the process of possible digitalization.

The results of the research open up the whole picture of digitalization of recruitment process and working activities globally and in Latvia. The digitalization process started even before the pandemic. However, the influence of the world pandemic of COVID-19 only speeds up this process in general.

5. Recommendations

The author is satisfied that all countries worldwide are paying their effort in common fight against the world pandemic of COVID-19. The way in which the governments of countries are trying to protect population from the spread of the virus is respectful. Furthermore, the responsibility of employers and employees globally is giving the expectation that the nearest future epidemics would be defeated.

The digitalization of the recruitment process and working activities of companies worldwide is an inevitable process to fight with the consequences of the epidemic. Nevertheless, to simplify this process the author would like to give some recommendations:

1) Employers and employees must understand that the digitalization is unavoidable and the faster the company manages the plan for its implementation, more efficient the company would become as the result. The understanding of the unchangeable situation will speed up the whole process of acceptance and execution.

2) The usage of new technologies such as different video platforms will simplify the internal communications in companies (team meetings) and the recruitment process (interview part). In addition, for huge organizations it is possible to allocate a budget for creating own programs / applications for corporate needs of these organizations only.

3) To decrease the spread of the virus and increase the movement to remote work, the government could support the companies with some business privileges. In this case, it would be the support from both sides and the efficiency of total result would worth all the efforts.

4) To simplify the recruitment process digitalization the potential candidates for the job position could record small introductory video about themselves, their knowledge and experience in the sphere. This video could be accompanying to the curriculum vitae of the candidate. With that supplement, the recruiter will understand whether the candidate is suitable for the position or not at the beginning of the recruitment process. With this solution, both of the sides (recruiter and candidate) will prevent the time waste

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