

The Impact of Social Media on Recruitment

Tal Ariana Emanuela

West University of Timișoara, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
talariana7@gmail.com

Abstract:

Social media has revolutionized the world and impacts both individuals and businesses. The current changes require clear understanding of the social media power when it comes to employ valuable assets in the company.

The literature reviews on this topic are to be updated on a permanent basis, due to the constant evolution of recruiting websites.

The goal of my paper is to present how social media impacts recruitment starting from a summary of what social media stands for, as well as benefits and challenges that companies face when recruiting via social media, plus a general conclusion.

Key words: social media, human resources, recruitment, business development

J.E.L. classification: F66, M10

1. Introduction

Interaction between people has changed a lot due to the latest social software platforms. The Internet has drastically changed the face of recruitment. Recruitment and news are the contemporary vehicles for participation in a market seemingly moving at lightning speed (Qualman, 2009) because social media has become a powerful megaphone. (Bennington, n.d.).

Our universe is limitless, and with the marriage of technology and social media, so too is our ability now to connect with people from all around the globe, for all kinds of reasons.

And while this budding relationship has gone forth and multiplied, filling our universe with millions of personal and professional connections, it has given birth to several tightly knit, singularly focused communities as well (Finzel, 2013).

2. Theoretical background: Social media revolution

Social media is, in its most basic sense, a shift in how people discover, read, and share news and information and content. It's a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming monologue (one-to-many) into dialogue (many-to-many). Aceto (2010) mentioned that social media is nothing new; it is a *dialogue* and a form of *engagement*.

Lehtimäki et al., (2009) divided social media in 5 categories: *Blogs and podcasts, social networks, communities, content aggregators, and virtual worlds*.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) define social networking sites as „ *applications that enable users to connect, by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other*”. In Table no.1, there are a few benefits and drawbacks as stated by Lehtimaki et al. (2009).

Table no. 1. Summary of benefits and drawbacks of social networks.

+ Networking possibilities, getting new business connections.	- Bad news spread fast
+ Targeted banner advertising for different groups.	- Difficulty in generating interesting content to lure users to the group or spread the word about the group.
+ Easy way to create an own community (group) in there and hence leverage conversation with customers.	

Source: Lehtimaki et al., 2009

The use of technology at the workplace has impacted all areas of employment, with technology providing significant and advantageous ways to enhance organizational recruitment practices (Gregory et al., 2013). Social media can also be used in human resource management, for recruitment and selection too (Tufts, Jacobson, & Stevens, 2014; Wolf, Sims, & Yang, 2014). The adoption of technology in recruitment is becoming a necessity for employers wishing to have a competitive advantage in the labor market, and attract scarce critical talent (Deloitte Consulting LLP, 2014).

The use of social media in employee recruitment, often referred to as 'social recruiting', includes different practices and provides several advantages. Recruiters use platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to post job ads, attract and recruit job applicants, and pre-screen applicants (El Ouiridi et. al, 2016). Nowadays, the HR department must act like marketing according to Schaefer (2016): "*Compete for talent the way companies compete for customers. Today there is intense competition for the very best talent. When a high-potential employee checks out a company, the first place they go is increasingly social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn, or perhaps review sites like Glassdoor*". But what is effective recruitment?

According to Fletcher (2011), "*the ability to effectively recruit and select good quality people stems from an organizational effort to hire the best people*". The use of social media as a recruitment tool throws up some opportunities and challenges for employers. Social media potentially offers speed, efficiency and the ability to target and attract specific, particularly suitable candidates in the recruitment process. It can provide a useful additional source of information on potential job candidates, especially since some data (at personal and professional level) may not be generated for the purpose of recruitment, and therefore may provide candid supplementary information on the applicant. For candidates, it potentially offers multiple sources of information about the employer and the possibility to get in contact with existing employees, to gain a more realistic job preview.

There are many specialist sites keeping applicants abreast of potential vacancies across a wide range of organizations. Some recruiters use the leading social media channels simply to search and advertise, while others build longer-term strategies, such as investing in permanent, interactive online talent pools (Clements, 2012).

3. Social media impact on recruitment

After a quick look at the social media landscape, you may find below a few areas that social media impacts in recruitment:

Cost: Sourcing for candidates via social media platforms is very cost-effective compared to traditional methods of recruitment. As a matter of fact, creating a social media account is free. Traditional recruitment methods require a firm to be paid a premium to advertise through traditional media channels (TV, billboard, newspaper or magazine) and hope that a large number of candidates will see the job advert (Massplanner, 2015). Blogs, wikis and forums are low-cost advertising and communication platforms that offer recruitment strategists additional tools to reach candidates (Miller & Lammas 2010). The Internet has created opportunities for online recruitment practices to emerge for a number of years, and organizations have been utilizing web 1.0 technology by posting vacancies on websites and job boards. As a consequence, advertising external vacancies has become more cost-effective, more rapid and it enables organizations to reach a wider audience (Anderson, 2003; Brady et al., 2003; Hull, 2011).

Time: Employers have the ability to use SNS to filter out everyone who does not fit designated "*subjective*" factors, such as the school they attended or their past professional experience (Nigelwright 2011). Employers believe that using these sites for online background checks is an acceptable practice for making hiring decisions to get a quick character sketch of the applicant (Clark & Roberts, 2010).

Large pool of qualified candidates: Research shows that companies that recruit via social media have better and more productive employees than companies that use other recruiting programs. This may be due to the fact that candidates who frequently use social media are potentially more innovative and tech-savvy (Massplanner, 2015). Candidates want to work for

employers they can trust. Establishing a strong social presence for your employer brand is an essential part of building this trust (Parker, 2015). Social media recruiting can save time and money by targeting people who are more likely to qualify for studies. Less time a field service spends to try to fill a recruitment quota, more money it makes, and less money the client spends. Recruiters who use social media are also better positioned to accommodate clients' last-minute requests (Finzel, 2013).

New Generation Approach: Generation Y has grown up in the digital age, so is not surprising that they will have different expectations regarding the recruitment process. These changes are a challenge for recruitment on a number of levels, with a huge variety of skills level, wide-range of technological awareness and personal and professional expectations to be managed. Of course that are a lot of advantages having different generations in the workforce, especially when it comes to new technologies (Headworth, 2015, p.12). As a result of these rapid shifts in the market, the vast majority of companies engage in transformation initiatives to rethink their global strategies, business models and organizational approaches (Oxford Economics, 2012). The demand for workers is already more pronounced in emerging markets thanks to continued brisk growth in most of these economies, as shown in **Figure no.1**.

Figure no.1. The mismatch between supply and demand for talent in 2021



Source: Oxford Economics, 2012

Notes

1. The table ranks countries according to how their talent gaps are expected to evolve over the next decade.
2. Talent deficits are shown as red (negative numbers), talent surpluses as green (positive numbers), and broad balance as yellow.
3. Numbers report the average annual % change of the deficit/surplus.

Competitive Advantage: The internet and social networks have played critical roles in business functions and operations. Therefore, using social media to recruit candidates provides a company with a competitive advantage over other firms that do not use social media recruiting. Social media recruiting portrays a business as tech-savvy and dynamic to emerging trends (Massplanner, 2015). Hatter (n.d.) encourages companies to present themselves as a winning place to work by promoting the business in social media, encouraging current employees to network in order to promote the business and even connect with universities and other professional organizations to increase the company exposure and recruit high-quality individuals.

Ethical and security issues: The information available through SNSs brings about a series of unique legal issues and challenges. Social networking sites easily allow the potential for individual biases to affect hiring and screening decisions. Employers are not currently required to disclose what information on SNS was used in making screening decisions, which may allow managers to discriminate against candidates (Brown and Vaughn, 2011).

Employers have always been able to request background and reference information on job applicants but have been self-restrained in doing so because of the cost and legal requirements. This norm is now shifting, as employers routinely conduct informal online background checks without applicants' knowledge. Referring only to the mostly used social network, i.e. Facebook, Popescu & Georgescu (2013) mention possible dangers such as: *Creating fake profiles* – which might lead to identity theft; *Rummaging Facebook* posts to find out information such as phone number, email and other sensitive data and information; *Attacking on Facebook chat*; *Click jacking* – a type of attack conceived to make users click on links which lead to pages from where hackers are able to obtain confidential information or compromise privacy; *Unrequired posts* on the wall, sending messages in inbox or chat, invite users to join groups or community pages promising prizes or enter competitions.

Also, some messages created by spammers aim to take compassion on counterfeit medical or social cases, so that money would be sent to the fake victims; *games on Facebook* which might hide spyware applications behind an apparently legitimate interface.

4. Conclusions

Social media is not a panacea; it brings along big challenges but also great opportunities for recruitment, considering these platforms are no longer a mere collection of websites for fun but a channel whereby they can find valuable candidates and approach the new generation.

Businesses can make use of the advantages of social media in terms of time & cost reduction, and place their business in a favorable position; however it is necessary to pay attention to ethics and security issues.

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