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## Social Networking Sites : A New Recruitment Tool for Human Resource

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### **Abstract:**

*In the world of educated, young and tech-savvy people who are keen to join company are highly active on social media such as such as Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, blogs etc. Companies are infusing social into everything they do, from how they decide what product to build, to how sell and market them, so why the area of human resource lag behind. The question of recruiting is now being answered by human resource department by employing social media methods. Researchers have even called the year 2013 as the year of social. Social media tools are and are still transforming the way human resource works. Social media websites have basically changed the way companies recruit and have given them a way to identify and connect with submissive job seekers who they never had an access to before. Facebook the world's largest social media platform has approximately 1 billion accounts, with that huge number it creates a universe of candidates to choose from. Thus it is very important for human personnel to understand what these tools are used for and assess the risks and opportunities they may present to an organization so as to critically employ these methods to their advantage. Social media does not stop being useful once you have hired someone it goes beyond that. Social media is redefining how companies innovate by connecting people and ideas in ways that have previously not been explored. Companies are paying attention to learn to channelize it creatively. One big reason for companies to go for social media as an effective communication tool is the entry of digital natives. Also, the appeal of lower costs for companies makes social media a desirable recruiting method. This paper would review how the Companies are now exploring these networking sites as effective tool of recruitment within the legal guidelines.*

**Key words:** social website, human resource, recruitment, legal guidelines

### **1. Introduction**

Communication methods have been revolutionized through social media tools and social networking sites. Communication through social media involves the use of an online platform or website that enables people to communicate, usually for a social purpose, through a variety of services that offer opportunities for people to interact over the internet e.g. via e-mail and instant messaging. Social networking sites can be defined as a platform to build social networks or social relations by online groups of people who use website or other technologies to communicate with each other and share information, backgrounds, activities etc. Recruitment procedures have been dramatically transformed with the emergence of social media sites such as LinkedIn, facebook, twitter etc. Reputed organizations not only cast a wide net through these sites but also narrow down their search to what they want exactly with great ease. Companies build strategies in place to make the best use of the social media in their hiring process. Social media in recruitment usage continues to be popular recruiting tool as people are spending relatively more time on these sites so it is altogether better way for savvy organization to utilize these sites to find suitable candidates.

Using social media as a recruitment tool provides various opportunities and challenges for employers. No doubt social media has taken the arena of recruitment by storm. Since most generations are social media savvy. For People are now spending more time on social networking sites than searching information otherwise so organizations looking for recruits need to go to where the candidates are. Organization particularly is trying to recruit candidates such as recent college graduates, most of them can be found easily on these kinds of sites.

Social media websites provide speed, efficiency and ability to find and attract potential candidates in the recruitment process. It can also provide some additional useful information on potential job candidates at the personal as well as the professional level. A CareerBuilder survey, released in August 2013, surveyed more than 2500 employers and indicated that 35 % of respondents use social media to promote their companies. Of those employers, around 21% are using it for recruiting and searching potential employees, and 18% are using it to strengthen their employment brands.

Social media also helps the candidates by offering multiple source of information about the employer and the ability to contact the existing employees have a more realistic job preview. Besides these opportunities, there are a number of issues that need to be considered. Some research indicates that employers today are under pressure to accept this trend so as to stay up to date in their

recruitment practices. For example, Smith and Rupp (2004) suggest that: “The internet has drastically changed the face of recruitment. Employers must now actively market themselves by instituting a well-implemented e-recruitment program to find better quality candidates and improve hiring decisions all in less time and at lower-cost”.

Companies might be at a risk of losing quality candidates to their rivals, by not embracing social media as a recruitment tool. Socialization through Social Media Websites has become the new trend. Sharing ideas and thoughts, expressing views on issues of common interest, supporting others views, befriending someone who is sitting in another part of the world with the help of the internet, have become the new order among tech-savvy people. Leveraging on the SMW (Social Media Websites) to strike potential talent is known as Social Media Recruitment. SMR is all about interacting with internet users via social media, blogging to source & recruit most talented, qualified, and largest applicant pool. Some of the popular Social Media Websites among internet users are Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, StumbleUpon, Reddit, Digg, Delicious, etc. with more than 500 million users on Facebook, 100 million registered users on Twitter, 75 million users on LinkedIn, companies have started realizing their importance and pitfalls of using such mediums- especially for recruitment purposes. The kind of traffic these website experience is tremendous and statistics are mind-blowing: over two-thirds of internet population visit SMW. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn together have about 535 million users. Among the above, Facebook is the winner with around 7,00,000 users per day and is the most popular in the students category. Twitter & LinkedIn are mostly used for professional blogging. In this era of blogging, social media as a source of recruitment and retention seems to be an ideal tool. Infact, most of the fortunate 500 companies have already started following it.

Social networking websites act as effective recruitment tools to search for qualified talent and talent with specific skills sets. Generally LinkedIn is preferred for sourcing mid and senior level candidates, while Facebook and Twitter for entry level openings. With the large number of groups across multiple networks, employers can now exercise their circumspection and can filter their search to a specific type of skills or qualification.

Now companies are recognizing the potential for social recruiting methods, but a social recruiting strategy should be carefully integrated with a company’s overall goals and objectives to give true return on investment (ROI). This type of recruitment tool can deliver successful results if it is properly developed and implemented.

## 2. Three Most Popular Social Networking Sites Used For Recruitment

- **LINKEDIN** - LinkedIn was founded in December 2002 and launched on May 5, 2003, it is for professional networking and this website is mostly used for people in professional occupations. It has over 85 million members in more than 200 countries, including executives from every fortunate 500 companies.
- **FACEBOOK**- Facebook was founded on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg .Facebook is a very popular social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, send messages, upload videos and photos, and keep in touch with family , colleagues and friends .
- **TWITTER**- Twitter was created in March 2006. It is a popular microblogging and social networking site that enables users to send and read text messages limited to 140 characters which are called 'tweets' to friends or followers. Only registered users can post and read tweets, others unregistered user can read them only.

According to Forbes report (2012) ,Of the jobs posted on social networking sites, 77% are on LinkedIn, 54% are posted on Twitter, and only 25% are on Facebook.

## 3. Advantages of Recruitment Through Social Networking Sites

- Companies can reach candidates faster and at a lower cost because these sites are free of cost, as opposed to advertisement through agencies, job boards or referrals.
- Social networking sites allow employers to engage with their target audience and easily identify whether the candidates are a good cultural fit for the company or not.
- These sites will spread the information about a company making more people aware of its job opportunities and getting employers in front of candidates whom they may never find through traditional hiring methods.
- Employer's response rate will become higher and better when using social networks to communicate with potential candidates as there is less spam.
- Social media can be used for referrals check.
- Since there is cut throat competition passive candidates or hard to find candidates can be reached easily through social media might be the only way to reach and engage with them as they rarely visit job boards.
- Social media platforms potential employees can be specifically targeted and chosen from followers, connections or supporters of the brand.
- There is no doubt that people are the greatest asset. Social recruiting puts your organization in the mix with candidates that you would otherwise not be able to reach like it creates international talent pool. Employer need to leverage these new tools and make best out of this to your efforts to enhance and improve your results.
- Sharing and posting job openings through Facebook or LinkedIn is more likely to deliver results than just a job advertisements, it increases ROI as potential value exceeds the costs.
- A positive message is sent to potential candidates if the company has online presence .candidates perceives company is connected and understands how to communicate with them. It spread the message of the organization brand across social networks.

- One of the major advantages for using social media is to target candidates with specialised qualification and specific skill sets. It can be through websites of professional or trade associations or by networking through certain social media sites.
- Information discovery can be tremendously increased due to open communication
- It helps the employees to get familiar with the company by asking questions, sharing links, posting news, discussing ideas which they have in their minds.
- It gives an immense opportunity to broaden business contacts.

#### 4. Possible Disadvantages

Recruitment through social networking sites offers lots of advantages but it has been seen critically as well. The possible disadvantages are outlined below:

- Social media can create a negative image of organisations from sourcing point of view. Management of brand outposts is not easy, actually it is very tricky. No matter how hard a company tries but negative content will slip down through the net and if it is not taken care of, it can hamper the brand image completely.
- There is possibility for hackers to commit fraud or launch spam and virus attacks. This results in increasing the risk of people becoming victims of online scams that seem genuine, resulting in data or identity theft. Hence recruiting through SMW is certainly very risky.
- Though SMWs help to get lot of information, it is not reliable. There is no guarantee of any about the information that is available online. People can upload any kind of information about themselves and there is no surety of it being accurate. It is the candidate who decides what they want others to see and the employer can view what they want to see.
- Another drawback of SMWs as recruitment tool is discrimination. Employers get to know the personal details of the prospective employees which can influence their decision. Some of the factors that might influence the decisions of employers are race, age, ethnicity, and religious views.
- Development of know-how and time invested in active recruitment is another biggest challenge for companies. These financial and personnel factors must not be overlooked while going for online recruitment policy.

#### 5. Different Websites Have Their Own Set of Problems Such As

##### 5.1. LinkedIn

- It consumes lot of time in building relationship with the potential candidates as it does not allow you to send messages to users you are not in connection with.
- It is less beneficial for international recruitment.
- It can make communication difficult with job seeker as only limited number of internal emails can be sent to other contacts.

##### 5.2. Facebook

- People mostly use Facebook to stay in touch with their friends and family so in that case they will be less willing to connect with companies for a job there.
- Privacy setting of this site makes it difficult to communicate with potential candidate.
- Recruiter looking for qualified candidates may encounter difficulties as fake accounts can create problems for him. Discovered candidates may not turn out to be genuine.

##### 5.3. Twitter

- The shelf life of the update is low so the information posted will be no longer visible after some time.
- This site limits the character you can write (140 characters) which can result in incomplete information therefore it will be difficult to effectively advertise jobs.

#### 6. Legal Consideration before Using Social Media Websites As a Recruitment Tool

Though the use of social media in the recruitment and hiring process has become need of the hour, HR professionals need to be aware of any potential legal consequences from the use of social networking for recruiting. There may be cases where the practice of using social networks has an unmeant and unjustified adverse effect on members of a protected class. Also, the failure to observe the rules and regulations provided for the use of social networks can lead to disqualifications from government contracts. According to the experts legal risks depend on whether or not the use of social networks is motivated by intent to discriminate or whether the practice has an unintentional and unjustified adverse impact on members. Moreover, the use of social networks can also lead to disqualification from government contracts due to non compliance with regulations issued by regulating board of a particular country.

Following are the legal considerations and potential legal risks with social recruiting are outlined here below-

- **Screening of Candidates:** Companies using social networks to screen potential candidates can expose themselves to potential legal risks. Information posted by candidates on facebook or twitter such as their religious beliefs, lifestyle, family situation, etc can be used while selecting the suitable candidates. The minimal impression of discrimination based on such criteria could be problematic for a company. Personal information Such as social activities, religious views, sexual preference in Twitter etc can be used against them during screening process. Discrimination based on these

criteria can create problems. Company should ensure their potential candidate that the hiring decision is based on proper tests, skills etc

- **Company Law Board Compliances:** Board likes National Labor Relations Board or National company Law board (india) is actively shaping and updating the legal framework used by employees and employers. Failure to comply with regulations set up by the respective country's law board while using social networks can lead to disqualification from government contracts. To ensure compliance, synchronicity of an application tracking system and social media is needed.
- **Disparate Impact:** Although the use of social media websites as a source is the ideal recruitment tool in this era of blogging but relying too heavily on social networking sites leaves your company open to possible lawsuits for being biased towards a particular age group or class. Employment practices may be considered discriminatory and illegal if they have an adverse effect on members of a minority group.
- **Managing Compliance Issues-** :- As it is evident from number of studies that youngsters are more active on social networking sites, relying only on these sites for recruiting people would not ensure that all people regardless of gender, race, age, disability, or get the opportunity for employment with your organization. An organization needs to ensure that it employ all sourcing programs including all types of people should be given equal opportunity for employment within the company.

## 7. Conclusion

Recruiting the best candidates is critical to any company's success today and many exciting tools have been created to help them find and source the key talent social networking sites are among them. Social networking sites can be a powerful tool for recruiters to reach potential qualified candidates that they might not otherwise be able to locate. As candidates spend more time on the world's most popular *social networking site*, it makes sense to take advantage of these sites. Leveraging on these sites can indicate positive signals about the organization to the potential candidate creating a goodwill that company wants to connect with them. Social recruiting method should be used in complement other recruiting programs. It helps in understanding and knowing what your candidates want just as much as what company. The most important thing to keep in mind while relying on social networking sites is their potential legal risks, and should be considered while establishing overall recruiting strategies. Thus, building the social media network involves hardwork but once established it yields unparalleled success in recruitment.

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