

# TALENT ACQUISITION VIA SOCIAL MEDIA SITES: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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**ABSTRACT-** The social media practice has opened up new signs of commitment and revolutionized the exchange of information. It brings together supply and demand in recruitment and selection. The purpose of this exploratory investigation is to assess how employers can create best use of social media as part of the talent acquisition. It observes which platforms are best suited for job search information, which can help accomplish recruitment goals and how they are used by employers and applicants. Particularly, this paper examines recognized differences between social media websites and their impact on the recruitment development and how social media is used as part of talent acquisition and on which sites applicants apply and where they anticipate to be approached.

**Keywords:** social media, talent acquisition process, websites.

## INTRODUCTION

The practice of using social networking sites for pre-employment screening and selection has become more and more popular. Last year alone, 73 percent of candidates were successfully hired through the use of social media, with 29 percent citing it as their primary tool for job searches (Vincent Michelino, 2017). This might not seem as a very conventional in a world where every one in four people already have a Facebook account (Statista, 2015). But social media is truly a practical way of screening and selecting new employees. Social media may be a potentially promising source of applicant's information, but it is also filled with potential risks, legal as well as ethical. The later is also the reason why there are conflicting views about using social media in recruitment among employers and employees as well as legal systems (Suder, 2014). In terms of the use of social media for jobseeking, Nigel Wright Recruitment (2011) found that more than half of all UK jobseekers use social media sites in their search for employment, including 18 per cent who use Facebook and 31 per cent who use LinkedIn. 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 apposite candidates in the recruitment process. It can provide a useful additional source of information on potential job candidates, especially since some data (at the personal as well as the professional level) may not be generated for the purpose of recruitment, and therefore may provide straight supplementary information on the applicant. For candidates it potentially offers multiple sources of information about the employer and the possibility of contact with existing employees to gain a more realistic job preview. However, there are a number of issues that require to be considered.

Firstly, there are ethical questions of seclusion and the extent to which it is appropriate and relevant for employers to seek information about workers' private lives. A US survey found that the most common reasons for not short listing and rejecting candidates were based on 'lifestyle' rather than employment-related information. For example, 35 per cent of those surveyed said that they found material on SNSs that caused them not to hire a job candidate; social media postings that included offensive or inappropriate' photographs or information were cited by 53 per cent of HR managers as a reason to turn down an employee (careerBuilder.co.uk 2010).

Recruitment can be defined as 'a vital function of human resource management, which can be defined as the process of searching the right talent and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization. It is the process of discovering the sources of personnel to meet the requirements of the staffing agenda and attracting the adequate number of employees, as to be able to make the effective selection among the applicants'. Social media can be defined as, 'refers to the Websites, which enable people to exchange and work together on digital content in virtual communities' (networks). Some of the most popular include the Facebook, Blogger, Twitter, WordPress, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, MySpace and Wikipedia'. (Sinha & Thaly, 2013). A survey carried out by Potentialpark in 2011 of over 30,000 graduates, students and early career professionals worldwide found that in Europe, almost 100 per cent of survey participants would like to interact with employers online. The preference was for LinkedIn (48 per cent), with Facebook scoring 25 per cent (Potentialpark, 2011).

In spite of the financial-and economic crisis, the war of talent is still an imperative topic, and companies are confronted with the problem finding the right employees. Companies need people to survive, talented people are a prime source for a company's competitive advantage, and talented people are scanty. The search for the best and the brightest people is a constant battle between companies, and they have to develop strategies in order to find the paramount employees. For that reason, the strategic question of finding, attracting and recruiting the best people has become a significant issue for companies. Furthermore, the Internet has changed the way people communicate and work. Through the entering of Social Networking Sites into business landscape and the fast growing amount of these sites, a need of strategy for finding a way through this jungle of sites is required. Companies tend to be confused about which applications are the best for their recruitment process. Social Networking Sites and its impact on recruitment is a very recent field which is fast moving and therefore difficult to monitor up to date. The main objective of this study is to identify to what extent the usage of Social Networking Sites leads to effective recruitment. A supplementary goal is to find out which Social Networking Sites companies apply and gain insights about their experiences with different sites.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruitment and selection is an important and continuing event in most companies. "Recruitment is the process of attracting and encouraging potential employees to apply for a position, while selection is the process of making fair and relevant assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of applicants with the purpose to hire them" (Sutherland and Wöcke, 2011, p. 23). Traditionally, recruitment has been paper-based, for example the advertisement of job vacancies in newspapers (Holm, 2012, p.243). However, in recent years, since the preamble of social media, the recruitment process for many companies has been transformed. "Social media can be a powerful tool a company can use to its advantage" (Russell, and Stutz, 2014, p. 3). Companies are now utilizing social media as a recruitment tool which allows them to advertise job vacancies and look for desired staff. This not only gives companies a greater opportunity to emphasize their existence, but it also allows them to access a greater pool of potential candidates, thus ensuring a competitive advantage. However, "the choice of recruitment method is often indomitable by the nature of the position being advertised and whether the skills required for the job are in short supply or otherwise" (Gunnigle et al, 2011, p. 120). Therefore, it can be argued that some companies may just use social media to recruit if the necessary competencies or skills are difficult to acquire nearby. The use of social media to recruit allows a job advertisement to be viewed by people much further a field or in a different country from where the company advertising is based, whereas a newspaper advertisement is typically viewed just by those in the local region or country.

Social media platforms can be defined as "information technologies which support interpersonal communication and collaboration using Internet-based platforms" (Kane et al, 2014, p. 275). While a large variety of social media platforms exist, for this research Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are the social media platforms being focused on. Kane et al further state that the three previously mentioned social media sites are used by hundreds of millions of people daily (Kane et al, 2014, p. 275). Facebook is a platform "used mainly to connect, interact and stay in touch with contacts that the user knows personally, such as friends, family and colleagues" (Johnson et al, 2013, p. 201). Companies may post job vacancies on their Facebook profile pages, but this is normally done in an informal manner. While Facebook is not popularly known as a recruitment platform, it may be used in aiding the recruitment process by gaining information about a potential candidate from their profile. This is an unintended purpose of Facebook.

Twitter "is a micro-blogging platform that allows users to share their thoughts, information and links in real time, and to communicate openly, privately or publicly with other Twitter users. Users can tweet about any topic within a 140-character limit" (Johnson et al, 2013, p. 202). Like Facebook, job vacancies can be posted on Twitter through a company's profile page for their followers to see, by adding #Jobs to the end of the Tweet. This makes the post available to both those who follow the company's Twitter page and to twitter users who search for a variety of job related posts. Searching for "jobs or #jobs" for example, will bring up any Tweets with this featured and relay the available jobs advertised on Twitter. Twitter typically plays a greater role than Facebook in the advertisement of jobs, but in comparison to LinkedIn its role is limited. Like Facebook, the use of Twitter for recruitment is an unintended purpose and not what it was created for.

LinkedIn "is used to manage interactions and relationships of a business nature" (Claybaugh and Haseman, 2013, p. 94). "In spite of the growing popularity of Twitter and Facebook, LinkedIn is the leading social network for recruiters, not least because it was specifically developed for professional purposes" (ChamorroPremuzic & Steinmetz, 2013, p.1). LinkedIn specifically focuses on building a professional social network and facilitating the recruitment process and therefore, recruitment is its intended purpose. LinkedIn users can display their current occupation, level of education, previous employment history, and skills or talents that they may possess. Similarly, companies can create a LinkedIn profile where they can publicize their existence, strategies, goals or achievements. Companies can also place job vacancies on LinkedIn, or search for members whose profiles feature a certain occupation or skill/talent. "Recruiters and head-hunters can now find ideal candidates in minutes by searching key terms on LinkedIn, which hosts a repository of potential candidate pools" (Blacksmith and Poeppelman, 2013, p. 70). LinkedIn has a participant base of more than 175 million experienced professionals from around the world, with membership from over 200 countries" (Claubaugh and Haseman, 2013, p. 94) and therefore, can provide companies with a larger talent pool of diverse candidates from which to choose. Finally, it is also important to acknowledge the existence of websites specifically created to advertise job vacancies on, such as Monster.ie. I would argue that these websites follow the same process as traditional recruitment as they allow companies to post job vacancies online, where they can be viewed by others and applied for by submitting a C.V. through the website. Unlike social media, these websites are much less interactive and do not allow communication between profile users. Therefore, they are not being focused on in this research.

Eisele (2006) focuses on the potential of e-recruitments are reduction of costs, speed (time to hire), increasing number and quality of applicants and matching quality (target group-oriented). A. Holm (2010) Faster explains the benefits of e-recruitment are information exchange, lower costs of advertising, data accessibility and availability, cost reduction of communications and improved organizational attraction.

E-recruitment offers a lot of advantages for recruiters, but it has been seen vitally as well. Barber (2006) discussed the challenges of online recruitment and pointed out that the loss of personal touch is a danger. Pin et al. (2001) asked HR professionals about this in their study and 50% of the respondents agree with the statement that recruiters disregard the personal contact or the building up relationships with the candidates. Following Pin et al. (2001), the lack of human touch is also a pitfall of e-recruitment. As a outcome, qualified candidates can be eliminated by the procedure. In the study of Pin et al. (2001), 34% of HR professionals see a discrimination against people who do not surf the Internet. According to Maurer & Lui (2007), the type of job determines whether e-recruitment is suitable or not. They argue that low-skilled positions do not benefit from e-recruitment. Regarding Carlson et al. (2002), e-recruitment can generate a high quantity of applications which seems to outline an advantage

of e-recruitment, but can lead to an overwhelming and time consuming procedure as well. Therefore, companies have to take these disadvantages into consideration when they are planning e-recruitment practices.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND RECRUITMENT**

The executive workforce and managerial firepower are the pillars of any organization. Hiring skilled employees requires a lot of planning and contemplation. This is why more and more human resource managers are turning to social media for help. Gone are the days when ads and classifieds in the newspapers would be used to dictate the recruitment information. Social media has provided faster and efficient solutions with just a click of a button. A study conducted by the Society of Human Resource Management reveal how more than half of the global organizations are using social media to find new talent other than hiring skilled candidates, social media also comes in handy for effective communication, employee organization and knowing more about the competition. Social media is a practical tool for building connections and easy interaction. Social Media is cost efficient and time saving, social networking allows you to reach out to more people using minimum resources, create brand awareness and target the top candidates for your firm. It also allows current employees to make referrals, spreading the message around attracting more people. (SHRM, Sep 20, 2017)

Social Networking Sites have attracted millions of users all over the world and have attracted the attention of organizations that plan to use them for their daily business. Kaplan and Haenlein (2009, p.63) 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.” Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn are examples of Social Networking Sites which are used for different things like messaging, presenting, sharing photos and so forth the nature of these connections may vary from site to site. This study focuses on Social Networking Sites regarding recruitment. The following paragraph describes Social Networking Sites and their advantages and disadvantages for recruitment in detail. Social Networking Sites have become extremely popular in recent years. In January 2010, Martin Giles states that “It is a world of connections”, which put an emphasis on the fast growing phenomena of the Social Networking Sites in the last few years (Giles, 2010, p. 1). Social Networking Sites have implemented a variety of technical features and enable users to connect to their friends and share videos, photos and texts with them, twenty-four hours around-the-clock. The concept of Social Networking Sites is a topical subject and represents a revolutionary new trend in companies. Besides, they use it for branding or marketing research (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Boyd and Ellison (2007, p.2) define Social Networking Sites as “web-based services that a low individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bonded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. Numerous sites exist today and employers have begun to use these sites for hiring decisions (Kluemper & Rosen 2009). The sites become more important regarding companies and their Human Resource Management, especially in the communication with potential job applicants. LinkedIn and Facebook are the most important Social Networking Sites in world. The Social Networking Sites can be distinguished between business-oriented sites and social-oriented sites. Business-oriented networking sites allow applicants to interact with one another through business-oriented information, endorsements, testimonials and reputations. Social-oriented networking sites are built on personal information of members who participate in and contribute to the online network. These personal profiles contain information from relationship status to a member’s religion and sexual orientation, and are shared with their friends and the extended community online (O Morchu et al., 2004). The most important Business-Oriented networking site is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is world’s largest professional network, over 75 million members on it; it connects people to contact a broader network of professionals. LinkedIn build up a network of direct connections and the connections of each of their connections and can be used for finding jobs or businesses and used for establishing international contacts (LinkedIn, 2010). The most important Social-Oriented networking site is Facebook. Facebook founded in 2004 and has more than 2.20 billion monthly active Facebook users for Q1 2018 (Facebook MAUs) which is a 13 percent increase year over year. (Facebook, April 2018). Facebook dominant global Social Networking Site (Smith/Kidder, 2010). People can communicate with their friends, families and co-workers. It offers features that recruiters can find candidates who are matching their vacancies (Eldon, 2009).

### **COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL RECRUITING AND SOCIAL RECRUITING**

A number of reasons may be given to explicate why recruiters are eager to shift from traditional recruitment methods to social recruiting. These reasons include e.g.

1. An opportunity to get to know a candidate better – a traditional CV is usually limited to mere facts offered under specific headings. Recruiters, however, prefer to get to know a real person by watching videos, reading posts on blogs, following links and comments placed by the candidate.

2. More room for a candidate’s creativity – a traditional CV or a letter of application does not allow a candidate to fully present his or her creativity. A network offers such an opportunity. Applicants may, for example, build their own websites which may act as their business cards, record videos or create their CVs in Pinterest.

3. A three-dimensional picture of a candidate – in traditional recruitment a recruiter’s perception of a candidate, having read his or her CV, frequently fails to fit their real image. A big number of valuable candidates happen to be rejected due to e.g. poorly structured CVs, and people who are requested to attend job interviews should not have been invited. A CV may look appealing but in reality a candidate may be unable to talk about any previous professional experience or may have problems in social interactions. An opportunity to see the candidate’s actions online allows recruiters to see a complete picture of a candidate as a person and his or her way of communicating with others.

4. Highly valued information of social media – nowadays an increasing number of career choices require online presence. Marketers, journalists, graphic designers, IT and HR specialists, because of their professions, have to know how to move

efficiently in the world of online communities. Recruiters assume that anyone capable of managing technology innovations should also be able to do well at work.

Social media should not be used as a replacement for traditional recruitment strategy, but rather as an addition and enhancement. A company has to recognize the potential for social recruiting.

### SOCIAL RECRUITING BENEFITS

Social media is becoming an important tool in recruitment of future human resources for companies. They offer an easy and simple access to suitable people at a low cost. Using social media recruiting requires time and effort, but it's an investment in long-term benefits for the company. The most important benefits are

1. Wider access and geographical spread – anyone from anywhere can apply for an advertised job; social media allow for immediate real-time interaction and 24x7 job search activity,
2. Increased job visibility – with hundreds of millions of people on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, using social networking platforms for recruiting will ensure that job offers will be seen and interpreted by a larger number of qualified candidates,
3. Better candidate quality – individuals who frequently use social media tend to be “early adopters” of innovations and also tend to be more tech-savvy; these kinds of candidates are more reliable fans that can become loyal employees,
4. Finding hard-to-reach candidates – social media offer the ability to reach out to passive or hard-to-find candidates that likely couldn't be reached using other sources,
5. Better ROI – posting and sharing job openings through social media is more likely to deliver results than a single description on a job board, So using social media in recruiting results in better ROI than that of traditional recruiting as the benefits far exceed its cost,
6. Competitive advantage – using social networks gives recruiters a competitive advantage over other talent competitors who aren't using social media recruiting.

### ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN RECRUITMENT

Table 1 Advantage and Limitations of Using Social Media in Recruitment

Advantage	Limitations
<b>For Employers</b>	
Can help them filter out relevant information for the recruitment process	Employers may look at information on social media the wrong way, this could eventually lead to lawsuits
Helps them easily access national and international applicants	Companies using social media in recruitment may be perceived as less fair
Broader effective search range applicants	Job pursuit intentions for companies are lower
Could possibly help to automate the recruitment process	Information on social media may vary considerably among jobseekers
Lighter workload employers	Information about applicants might be overly positive
It makes the recruitment process more responsive	Social media recruitment could lead to negligent hiring
Employers could save time	The employer might violate an applicant's privacy
Lower costs	
<b>For Jobseekers</b>	
It can help them filter out relevant information for the recruitment process	Information they post might be misunderstood
They can easily access a broader range of vacancies	Others might post negative information about them
It makes the recruitment process more responsive	Information can be false; e.g. identify theft
Can easily access information about the company and vacancy	Employers reject applicants based on what they find on social media
Lower costs	

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is advisable for organizations to have in place guidelines on employee conduct and social media.
2. If employers do access potential employees' SNSs, it should be borne in mind that the information there may not be accurate, so employers seek to verify information on applicants' SNSs through other means.
3. It is wise to adopt a fairly vigilant approach in terms of investment in social media tools.
4. SMEs should consider engaging with social media tools to some extent, given how cost-effective they can be— setting up a Facebook page and a LinkedIn profile is relatively easy and low-cost.
5. Using SNSs for recruitment purposes requires site maintenance, in order to ensure that queries are answered somewhat promptly and sites are updated regularly.
6. Employers are advised to provide relevant training and information for managers that are involved in SNSs for recruitment purposes.

## CONCLUSION

With more and more people shifting to the virtual platform, it is only rational that managers would have to change their recruiting strategies. A strong web presence is important for creating a powerful impression on the potential candidates. Social media is just one of many modern tools that successful companies leverage to attract and retain top talent. To win the talent war, companies need access to integrated solutions that provide the flexibility to interview, accept and on-board effortlessly. Today's most successful businesses are including social media in their recruitment strategy. According to SHRM survey 84% of companies used social media as a recruitment tool in 2016 and an additional 9% were planning to start. While the majority of these companies are not using social media as their only recruiting tool, it's clear that social media should be a part of any recruitment strategy. According to the job and recruiting site, Glassdoor, 79% of all job seekers, and 86% of those in the first decade of their career are likely to use social media in their job search. In addition to using social channels to promote job postings, employers can use it to establish and maintain their talent brand, and to screen potential hires. The popularity of online job boards like Monster.com is declining yearly as social media becomes a more valued channel for many employers. The use of LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other social media networks for this purpose increased by 10% last year while the use of job boards fell by 3%. LinkedIn is understandably the most popular social site for recruitment, due to its robust ability to connect potential employers with passive job seekers. Social media has made it easier than ever for brands and candidates to find each other and communicate, but this in itself has created challenges in sourcing the right people. However, effective permanent workforce solutions and the right technology can help overcome this.

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