

THE IMPACT OF
SOCIAL MEDIA
ON RECRUITMENT.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper looks at the impact social media is having on the recruitment industry. It focuses on how companies and recruitment professionals are taking advantage of the social media landscape to promote brands effectively and solve talent issues. In particular, it considers the role sites such as LinkedIn, Viadeo, Xing and others are playing within this context.

The growth in the use of social media sites is phenomenal. Companies and recruiters, therefore, need to be where candidates are in order to engage them in the recruitment process. This involves engaging with talent across a wide range of social networking platforms. To do so effectively, they need to work together.

Social media can be fast, efficient and cost effective when used as a recruitment tool. It does, however, have its limitations. We discuss in detail, issues concerning:

- Diversity and adoption trends of social media – although candidates can be sourced effectively via social networking sites, the risk is, if this strategy is not complemented with other traditional search methods, then talent will be missed.
- Transparency - online profiles don't necessarily paint an accurate picture of the individual.

- Discrimination hiring - assessing someone's potential employability based solely on an online profile leaves the door wide open for unethical practices.
- Self promotion and the wider issue of confidentiality – if your employees are online, are they vulnerable to poaching? What company information are you happy for them to share?
- Employer branding – getting the message right online is crucial as candidates have become more conscious about making the right move every time they put themselves in the job market.

Overall, social media has improved the recruitment process by making it more open and democratic. Using this method alone however, takes the 'personal touch' out of relationship building and candidate identification. It is therefore unlikely to completely replace the traditional recruitment methods in the near future.

Statistics referenced within this paper are correct as of January 2011.

For a detailed list of references please download the bibliography for this report at:

www.nigelwright.com/_downloads/SM_Bibliography.pdf



Introduction



We're all familiar with the pronouncements of commentators, world wide, hailing the 'social network' as the new panacea of communication and engagement. What started as a trend among college students in the USA is now ubiquitous – an integral part of people's lives across the world. Tech analysts are keen to emphasise that 2011 will once again be a big year for social media and decision makers in companies big and small will have to start paying real attention.

Today, networking within online social fora isn't just about swapping pictures and music, or discussing the trivial details of a night out, a TV show or a sporting event. Social media is increasingly becoming the space where professional life happens. The recent decision by Facebook to update user profile pages to offer a 'LinkedIn style' professional view, suggests that social media, on the whole, is becoming a medium for work as well as play.

The global phenomenon of social media is having a significant impact on the world of work and on job markets. Social media is no longer a trend to simply 'keep an eye on'. Instead it will inform strategies and policies across organisations – from internet usage policies to sales and marketing, recruitment and retention, motivation and conflict resolution – the list is endless.

In this paper, we will look at the impact social media has had on recruitment. Specifically, we will consider what tools and strategies companies and recruiters are using and also what the trends are in our key markets.

Social media now plays a key role in the evaluation of individuals. Because social media sites are proliferating and changing rapidly, we will also discuss how recruiters and companies will have to work more closely; in order to take full advantage of the hiring solutions it can offer.

"SOCIAL MEDIA, ON THE WHOLE, IS BECOMING A MEDIUM FOR WORK AS WELL AS PLAY"



Changing nature of recruitment



In the past, to recruit employees, organisations would simply advertise opportunities in the local press; engage a recruitment consultant or, more recently, post jobs online via the company website or on popular job boards. This 'passive approach', many claim, is on the way out. In 2009, for example, it was reported that Monster.com saw a 31% drop in revenue.¹ This was greater than the overall decline in the recruitment industry worldwide.

Today, with the advent of social media, hiring managers and recruiters find that they need to be more proactive in their approach, by engaging with talent across a wide range of social networking platforms. Essentially, companies and recruiters need to be where their candidates are in order to engage them in the recruitment process.

There was an 82% increase in the time spent on social media sites from December 2008 to December 2009. (The Nielson Company, 2010).

More than half of UK job seekers use social media sites in their job search, including Facebook (18%) and LinkedIn (31%). (Simply Hired, 2010).

One issue for recruiters in particular is that often the best candidates, who advertise themselves online via social media sites, tend to want to be found rather than having to actually apply for jobs. It is the role of recruiters, therefore, to become experts in using social networking technology to ensure that they are effective in finding the right candidates; while at the same time staying ahead of competitors, who are trying to do the same.

The problem which arises is this – if all of these candidates are online waiting to be approached, why do companies need to engage a recruitment consultant to find them? The candidate database in effect becomes public, and some would argue, the recruiter becomes obsolete. The situation, however, is more complex.

You only see what you see



Although some commentators claim that social networking will increasingly replace the CV, candidates and employees are constantly being advised to be selective in what they put online. Online profiles don't necessarily paint an accurate picture of the individual. Both candidates and employers are cautious about the content of online profiles.

Some candidates in the marketplace are concerned about the security issues (identity theft etc.) associated with having personal information online. Others are wary of being victims of discrimination by providing employers with demographic information (such as age, race) that could potentially exclude them from the recruitment process.

Employers can essentially filter out candidates based on numerous 'subjective' factors such as 'university attended' or 'previous company worked for'. Basically, assessing someone's potential employability based solely on an online profile leaves the door wide open for unethical practices. Candidates therefore feel more secure if they are being represented by a recruiter, and are willing to share relevant information openly in a confidential transaction.

There are cases of potential candidates 'locking-down' or deleting online profiles after receiving numerous job approaches. LinkedIn,

for example, has a function for private access where in order to link to and/or view a profile; a user will be asked to verify that they know the individual first, by providing that user's personal email address as identification.

The employer's perspective is different. Not all employees are actively looking for a new role and these individuals are also usually the most sought after candidates. Employers are aware of this and therefore, in some cases, are urging employees not to promote themselves too effectively online, as they can essentially become vulnerable to poaching.

The wider issue of confidentiality also comes into this. Most employers don't want certain information about the company published online. For example: key clients they are working with, or sales targets achieved (e.g. Candidate Y won business from client X and increased brand market share from S to Z in six months). These details are often essential in the assessment of an individual but they won't necessarily be available online. Recruiters, however, have relationships with active and non-active candidates in the marketplace and either intimately know, or quickly become aware of, someone's achievements, after a detailed assessment process.

¹ www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_27/b4138043180664.htm



Diversity and adoption trends >

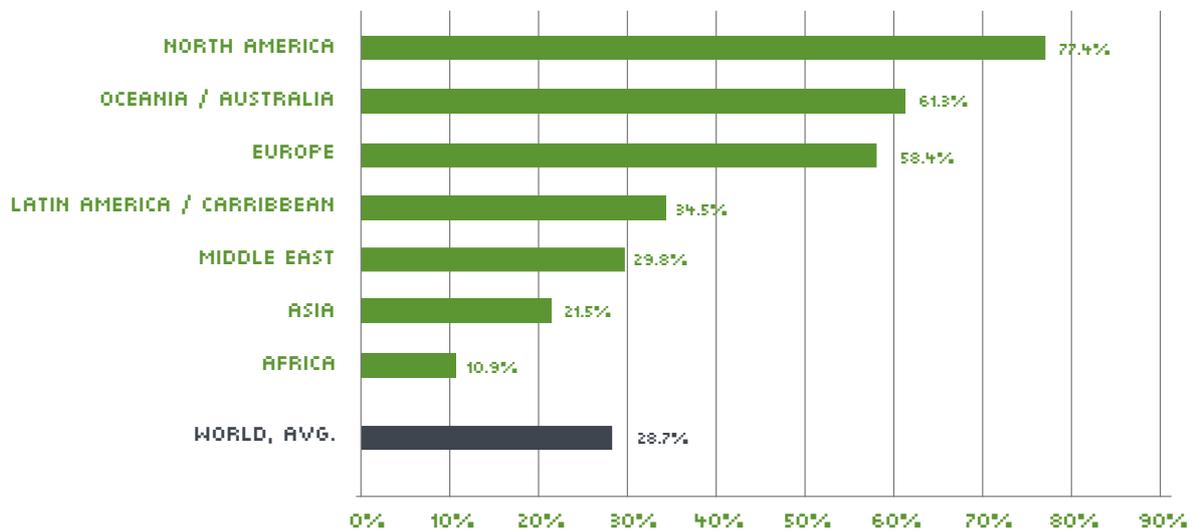
There are a lot of statistics available that point towards a lack of diversity on social media sites. Although candidates can be sourced effectively via social networking sites, the risk is, if this strategy is not complemented with other traditional search methods, then talent will be missed.

Here are some of the relevant highlights:

- Just over 80% of LinkedIn users are Caucasian and only 30% are at Director or Manager level (Quantcast, 2010)
- Only a small percentage of social media users have postgraduate degrees (Google Ad Planner Data, 2010)
- High earners (£100k+) are a minority (Google Ad Planner Data, 2010)

World internet penetration rates from June 2010 highlight that 42% of Europeans are still not online.

WORLD INTERNET PENETRATION RATES BY GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS - 2010



Source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

Penetration Rates are based on a world population of 6,845,609,960 and 1,966,514,816 estimated Internet users on June 30, 2010.

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Employer branding / reputation management >

There is a double edged nature to hiring via online channels. To attract candidates companies have to be wary of how the 'employer brand' is perceived online. Following on from our own employer branding research project two years ago it has become clear that the balance of attraction has shifted, as candidates have become more conscious about making the right move every time they put themselves in the job market.

Hiring managers, therefore, have to work closely with marketers to get the messages right – highlighting the company culture, values and vision in a positive light online via social networking sites, corporate videos, blogs etc. It is difficult, however, to control all of the content or 'chatter' about the company that is out there; managing 'brand outposts' is becoming a critical factor in the process. Companies such as Microsoft and Dominoes have struggled to defend themselves after making PR blunders on social media sites. Forums such as the 'Social Media Business Council' are now available for decision makers, where 'best practices' on communicating via social media can be shared.

Furthermore, the recruitment process doesn't end when a candidate has been hired. Success is also measured by how long new recruits remain at the company. Gone are the days when loyalty is guaranteed simply by presenting the new hire with the company handbook. The internet and social media have allowed employees to scrutinise their employers more than ever before. Ensuring employee retention is therefore an important part of any recruitment strategy and it's another area where an intimate understanding of the role of social media is crucial.

Organisations are creating their own profile pages on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter; and recruiters are tapping their own private Facebook and LinkedIn networks to reach out to prospective candidates. LinkedIn recently announced its new enhanced Company Pages function that allows users to 'recommend' the company to their followers. This is of course very similar to Facebook's 'like' button, and it highlights how the social media sites are now beginning to compete for 'employer branding' space.





'Relationships Matter' >

The familiar tag-line used by professional social networking site LinkedIn sums up the recruitment industry – it's all about building relationships. The 'broker' relationships shared between consultants and senior executives are, however, no longer exclusive to those two parties. With the arrival of social media, professional relationships have been democratised. Recruitment firms, many argue, will have to add real value in order to survive.

Recruitment experts agree that it's now much easier for employers to gather data about potential candidates through social media sites. Checking a candidate's credentials through his or her profile on social media sites is a global trend, and one which is shared by SMEs and multinational companies and across all levels of employees. This, as some experts suggest, creates a more diverse applicant pool in a very cost-effective way.

80% of companies use social media for recruiting and 95% of those companies are using LinkedIn for that purpose (research conducted by lewishowes.com)

In 2010, 83% of employers were using or planning to use social networks for hiring, 46% planned to spend more on social recruiting and 36% spent less on job boards (Jobvite, 2010)

This method alone, however, takes the 'personal touch' out of relationship building and candidate identification. Furthermore, it doesn't factor the importance of 'candidate referrals' into the recruitment process (although there are now online tools that offer 'referring' services, discussed in more detail later). There is also a hidden cost in the time you have to invest to get results. Basically, recruiting via social media has its limitations.

The recruiter therefore has a key role to play. Value can be added by becoming an expert in using social media to source the right candidates. This can be achieved by going beyond a simple database search and developing search strategies across many different interactive platforms (blogs, webinars, and social networking sites) and engage appropriately with the desired individuals.

In 2011 it is likely that traditional recruitment methods will continue to be complemented by 'tech-savvy' recruitment methods. Ultimately, however, success will be measured by the quality of the shortlist. This is only achieved after a robust identification, interview and evaluation process.

Pros and cons of using social media for recruitment >

PROS

Cost effective – social media hiring is low cost and often free.

Fast – there are many examples of employers using sites such as LinkedIn to make 'quick' hires.

Employer branding and retention – there is a plethora of social media tools online for companies to promote the employer brand effectively to prospective hires and current employees.

CONS

Lacks diversity – 83% of LinkedIn users are Caucasian (Quantcast, 2010).

Time consuming – too much information for companies who want to conduct a detailed and robust search. This is where recruiters can help.

Lack of control – managing brand outposts is tricky and inevitably negative content will slip through the net.

Transparency – how reliable is candidate information online?

Discrimination – personal information could lead to employers being influenced by factors like race, religious views and age.

Limited – ultimately the candidate can decide what information they are willing to share. You only see what you see.



SOCIAL MEDIA
TOOLS AND SITES
FOR RECRUITERS...



As social media technology continues to evolve and become more widespread, it presents an exciting opportunity for the recruitment industry over the next decade. Recent research (by Jobvite 2010) highlights that LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are the most popular sites used by hiring professionals. Others include Xing and Viadeo. These sites can generally be used in three ways – to search for candidates, to post jobs and for employer branding.

35% of job seekers in Sweden log onto social networking sites every day (Personified, 2010).

Recruiters are also paying companies like Jobvite to mine social networks, to gather holistic data on potential candidates across multiple social media platforms as well as match jobs to talent on the web. Other online social networks such as Select Minds, Refario and Appirio are geared towards a more traditional recruitment technique – referral hiring. Online recruitment tools are now available to hiring professionals which allow them to gather 'automated' referrals for candidates from employees within their social networks. Again, the same issues arise such as the lack of a personal touch, a lack of diversity and security.

In 2011 we will also see the wider adoption of Smartphones.

- The number of smartphones in use globally is expected to hit 1.7 billion by 2013 (Initiative, 2010)
- Web-enabled smartphones now make up 20% of the three billion mobile devices worldwide (Analysys Mason, 2010)

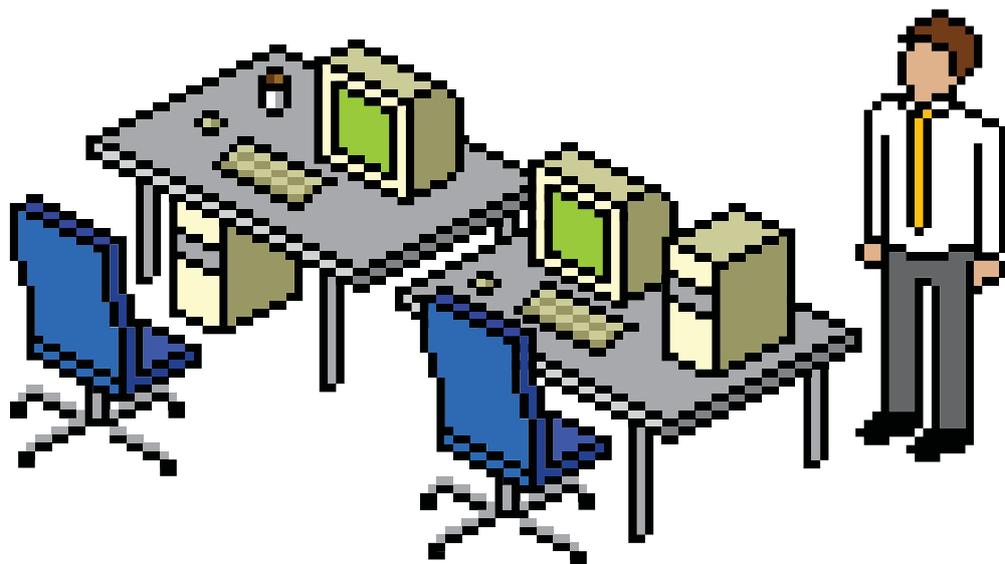
- 37% of UK smartphone users have a social networking app on their phones which they use at least once a week (ComScore, 2010)

Recruiters are beginning to look at ways in which to extend their services to the mobile device through the development of apps, or taking advantage of popular location based tools such as Four Square as another recruitment channel: posting jobs and seeking referrals through a specific location network.

It is worth noting that innovations such as these are generally being used to recruit within the sectors that gave birth to the technology in the first place – namely the digital media and creative sectors - although some recent reports have highlighted its use within the professional service industries too. Text messaging, for example, in some studies is shown to have a response rate to job postings eight to 12 times higher than email.²

These innovative recruiting trends however do tend to focus on recruitment at the junior, entry level and specialist end. An example would be electronics retailer 'Best Buy's' recent recruitment campaign to find an online marketing expert. Online channels were used and one of the job pre-requisites was that the individual must have at least 250 followers on Twitter.

Professional social networking in Europe tends to take place on LinkedIn, Viadeo, and Xing. Here we look at those sites as well as some of the other popular social media resources for recruiters looking to engage online.



² www.recruitingtrends.com/texting-to-find-your-next-great-candidate



LinkedIn



The latest statistics indicate that there are over 20 million professionals on LinkedIn across Europe and the network has over 85 million members worldwide. Between June and December 2010, one million people signed up within the UK taking the country total to five million users overall.³

Site demographics reveal that 38% earn more than £50,000 per year and 31% earn between £30,000 and £50,000 per year (Quantcast, 2010). 25% of FTSE 100 companies hire through LinkedIn and there are around 700,000 LinkedIn networking groups. IT, financial services and media, are the main sectors recruiting through LinkedIn. Only between 10% and 20% of LinkedIn members are actively looking for work.⁴

The countries in the list to the right are responsible for the highest percentage of site traffic.⁵ (June 2010). Obviously population size is a factor here and the Netherlands (with a population of 16.5 million people) has the highest adoption rate per capita outside the USA. This corresponds with our own experience of developing business within the Benelux region, being that networking and relationship building are a key part of business transactions. LinkedIn also features in the top 20 most visited websites in The Netherlands, UK, Ireland and Denmark.

LinkedIn is very open about its ambition to continue to support, rather than replace, the recruitment industry. Its latest product

Highest % of site traffic by country

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. United States | 42.8% |
| 2. India | 13.7% |
| 3. United Kingdom | 6.7% |
| 4. Netherlands | 3.7% |
| 5. Canada | 2.8% |
| 6. Italy | 2.3% |
| 7. Germany | 2.3% |
| 8. Spain | 2.0% |
| 9. Australia | 1.9% |
| 10. South Africa | 1.4% |

'Talent Advantage' is designed for recruiters who seek to get the most out of LinkedIn's functionality, providing subscribers with a personal dashboard and improved search capability. It has also recently announced a new CV template service and releases relevant job seeking data such as 'most popular CV buzz words' used by LinkedIn users.

Viadeo



Viadeo is often labeled as LinkedIn's rival in professional social networking, however it is important to note that the site is relatively unheard of in the USA; where LinkedIn dominates the market. To extend its presence on the Asian Pacific continent, Viadeo opened a new office in San Francisco in July 2010.⁶

Viadeo is also only about a third of the size of LinkedIn. In December 2010 it announced that it had passed the 35 million member mark, an increase of over five million within six months and over 25 million in 18 months. The site is currently recording more than 300,000 new subscribers every day, with three million profiles being viewed and around 1500 new connections made between professionals. (Viadeo, 2010)

The growth of this French site, launched in 2004, is largely due to its commitment to providing a 'bespoke' local offering for each country, which factors in language and cultural factors. The site is currently accessible in six languages (French, English, German, Portuguese, and Italian) and its members can create their profiles in different languages, unlike its competitors. Viadeo's corporate value to "Think Global, Act

Local" has been particularly useful in growing its user base in China and Latin America.

Table of users by country and region:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Latin America | 11.3 million |
| Europe | 8.1 million |
| China | 5.5 million |
| France | 4.5 million |
| USA | 5 million |
| India | 3 million |
| Other countries | 2.1 million |
| Spain | 1 million |
| Italy | 1 million |
| UK | 500,000 |
| Other EU countries | 110,000 |

³ www.news-browse.com/12/09/linkedin-membership-booms-amongst-uk-professionals/

⁴ www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2010/06/14/241559/Will-LinkedIn-reshape-the-recruitment-sector.htm

⁵ www.globalrecruitingroundtable.com/2010/05/05/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-linkedin-statistics-and-trends-2010/

⁶ www.reuters.com/article/2010/05/18/us-summit-viadeo-idUSTRE64H2IA20100518



Its emerging market strategy, like that of Xing, has also involved growing through acquisition. It started in 2007 with Tiajini.com, a leading social network in China, and in 2008 it acquired the Spanish community website ICTnet.⁷ In 2009 it acquired ApnaCircle, an Indian social media site.⁸ The site now operates in 226 countries (as of December 2010) covering 322 industry sectors. 75% of its members are middle or senior managers.

Most popular functions:

| | | | |
|------------------------|-----|------------|-----|
| Contractors/Directors | 22% | Operations | 15% |
| Information Technology | 17% | Commercial | 14% |

The main sectors represented are Consulting and Services (25%), Consumer Goods (17%) and High Tech (16%).

Users would argue that Viadeo offers more 'collaborative' opportunities than other professional networking sites. More than 5,000 communities are available for professionals. Applications such as 'Poll Daddy', 'Google Presentation' and Lotus Notes from IBM, allow members to share documents and poll their followers.

In the main, Viadeo is used for business development through creating a network and managing and developing professional contacts. Around 54% of its members use the site to identify new career opportunities while 15% use it to find talent. Interestingly, around 95% of members claim not to be looking for a new role.

A key statistic however is that around 10% of its users actually subscribe to the site's paid-for services. This is compared to 1% of LinkedIn users.

All Viadeo statistics taken from:
corporate.viadeo.com/images/stories/pdf/Doc-telecharger/viadeo_presskit%20derniere35m%20vf.pdf

Facilitating employer branding

Since the end of January 2010, Viadeo and APEC (a leading French jobsite for executives) have created a gateway which allows executives to view information, contained in Viadeo, via the APEC website such as new jobs. Viadeo users can, for example, find out which companies are currently recruiting on APEC. APEC has created a corporate hub to give advice to executives in terms of career management. By July 2010, 73,000 professionals had used this service, including 2000 recruiters.

Corporate hubs on Viadeo are tools used by companies wishing to develop employer branding strategies. It helps companies to attract and target profiles. IBM, for example, launched a corporate hub in May 2010 that has so far attracted 1105 professionals on Viadeo.

Twitter



Between December 2009 and December 2010 Twitter has added 100 million people, doubling its user base. It claims that more than 95 million tweets are now sent every day. Its European market grew 106% between June

2009 and June 2010 and has an overall global market penetration of 7.4% of all internet users (Twitter blog, 2010). The Netherlands, UK and Ireland feature in the top 20 countries for adoption of internet users (ComScore, 2010). Europe and the USA have the most Twitter users accessing the site via Smartphones. Mobile users increased by 62% between 2008 and 2009 and 16% of all new users to Twitter now start on mobile (Twitter blog, 2010).

Twitter is also gaining traction as a job search and hiring tool. Studies highlight that many employers, large and small, value Twitter as a source of information about candidates. Spin-off sites such as twitjobsearch.com and search tools such as 'Tweet Deck' assist employers and recruiters trying to tap into the twittersphere to source candidates or plug into the conversations people are having about their organisations and industries. Similar to text messages, hiring managers have had some success in 'tweeting' jobs and getting an immediate response.

In the last 18 months however, some reports have highlighted the limitations of Twitter. A Canadian based analytics company scanned 1.2 billion messages that were sent in August and September 2009.

They discovered that 71% of tweets are essentially 'ignored' as they don't get any kind of reaction (Sysomos, 2010). Similarly, another report highlighted the fact that 90% of the content on Twitter is created by the same 10% of users. (Harvard, 2009)

That aside, twitter users are becoming increasingly more connected and more professional; in the way in which they interact with the site. The average user is following more people, is being followed by more people and has posted more updates. Users appear more willing to share information about themselves including personal bios, locations and web addresses.⁹

Consumer brand initiatives

In the main it is IT and professional service companies that are using Twitter for recruitment. Big names include Accenture, Microsoft and E&Y. There are, however, a handful of major retail and consumer brands also setting up Twitter career portals. For example Burger King, PepsiCo and Primark use the site to advertise jobs. It is worth noting however those roles tend to be at the graduate and service level up to middle management. They also tend to be roles that would be of interest to most Twitter users – namely marketing and niche IT opportunities.

⁷ fr.techcrunch.com/2008/07/12/fr-viadeo-acquiert-le-reseau-social-professionnel-espagnol-ictnet/

⁸ www.vccircle.com/500/news/french-business-networking-site-viadeo-acquires-apnacircle

⁹ www.hubspot.com/Portals/53/docs/01.10.sot.report.pdf



Facebook



Facebook has more than 500 million users, of which 50% log into the site everyday. Around 33% of all internet users visit Facebook at least once per month. The UK, Italy, France and Germany are the highest represented European countries on Facebook. (Socialbakers, 2010)

Open networks such as Twitter and LinkedIn, it is assumed, are the most useful tools for professional networking and recruitment rather than closed networks such as Facebook. Although companies are engaging with Facebook for hiring purposes, they do it significantly less than via the other popular social media channels. The reality is that if Facebook could persuade more people to use the site in a professional way, it could start to compete with sites such as LinkedIn for professional demographic.

Although Facebook has over 400 million more users than LinkedIn, recent statistics (based on age) show that Facebook and LinkedIn have roughly the same number of professional members. Within the last 12 months the site has begun to evolve into a place in which to conduct business and establish professional connections. Large organisations, including many major consumer brands, are using 'fan pages' to

market products and services to consumers, as well as to drive traffic to the careers pages on traditional websites. The new 'resume' style profile (discussed earlier) also allows potential candidates to promote their experience and skills within these forums.

Earlier this year Facebook also launched 'Work for Us', an app which allows companies to post jobs and receive applications via Facebook.

Case Study

In 2010 Reckitt Benckiser launched its Facebook recruitment app. PoweRBrands enables users to test their business skills in a fast-moving consumer goods corporate environment. It is aimed at 18-30 year olds looking to train as FMCG marketing executives. Players progress through the game by completing a number of individual and teamwork tasks. They can climb the corporate ladder to eventually become global President.

Xing



Despite launching in 2003 (the same year as LinkedIn) Xing currently only has approximately ten million members with around 50% of its users located in German speaking countries. Its does have members across 200 countries however; Spain (1.5 million, approx) and Turkey (1 million, approx) as well as Germany are where the site has most market penetration. The site is available in 16 languages: English, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, Chinese, Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Korean, Italian, Japanese and Turkish.

Xing is not only popular for individuals (from junior to executive level), but also for companies in terms of employer branding. According to recent statistics, more companies are creating profiles on the Xing network. Whereas all industries are well represented, Media with 12% of its members, followed by Services 12% and IT 10% are the leading positions in the DACH countries.

Like its peers, Xing has experienced a positive 18 months with both membership numbers and profits growing. In the first three quarters of 2010 alone, Xing acquired 1.36 million new members corresponding to a year on year growth of 22%. Its expansion is based on acquisition and product diversification. In 2009 it bought Socialmedian, a news aggregation site and has recently acquired the e-ticketing site Amiamo, with the view to branch out into events hosting.

Having already previously established new sources of revenue such as e-Recruiting and Advertising, in 2010, Xing focused more on driving growth potential based on its core product and target group. In countries such as the Netherlands and the USA, more than 10% of the population is a member of at least one professional social network. In Germany this figure stands at just 5%. In order to redress the balance and tap into this potential, Xing is giving its users the opportunity to expand and use their contact network even more efficiently than ever

before. For example, in 2010 Xing launched an Outlook plug-in which essentially connects Outlook users directly to the site allowing them to interact with their Xing network.

Xing is also a valuable support for career planning. Members can find relevant job ads available only on Xing Jobs, which are filtered according to personal information in their member profile. They also see which jobs are currently on offer in their network and how they are connected to recruiters. In contrast to traditional job portals, members are not required to actively seek a new job, but rather can also be found by HR professionals if they choose. At present, over 75,000 recruiters in the German speaking market alone are active on Xing.

In a recent poll, Xing was voted the 'most relevant' social network for employee recruitment in Germany followed by LinkedIn and Facebook (Xing, 2010). Xing also seeks to attract users through its paid for or 'premium' services which have grown by over 700,000 in the last 18 months. This includes specialist tools for recruitment professionals.

All Xing statistics taken from: corporate.xing.com/english/investor-relations/basic-information/

Table of users

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| German speaking countries: | (APPROXIMATE) |
| Germany | 3.6 million |
| Austria | 360,000 |
| Switzerland | 330,000 |
| DACH region user statistics | (APPROXIMATE) |
| Executive | 22% |
| Managerial | 18% |



Conclusion



With the advent of social media, the world of work and jobs has changed forever. Social media is here to stay and employers can gain a significant advantage by adopting hiring methods that have a social media element.

Social media, however, isn't for everyone. As we have seen in this paper, there are a number of limitations associated with its use within a recruitment context. Although, as an employer, some quick gains can be achieved; using this method exclusively for recruitment, particularly at the executive level, misses out the relationship building and the robust selection and assessment of individuals, which, if overlooked, undermine the process overall.

No one is more aware and engaged in social media than a recruitment consultant – the advantages are obvious. Rather than recognising social media as a recruitment solution (where the recruiter becomes obsolete) employers are instead realising that they need to work more closely with the experts in order to get their hiring right first time – not making the mistake of investing a

significant amount of time and resource into social media and not getting a return on their investment.

The social media sites also recognise this, and new tools are becoming available all of the time that allow recruiters and employers to work together to take advantage of social media hiring.

There is no doubt that social media has improved the recruitment process by making it more open and democratic; increasing the visible talent pool from which to engage and recruit. Having an intimate knowledge of someone's capabilities or knowing who the best person for a role is, however, can only be gained through personal knowledge of an individual and of a particular industry sector. You can't simply rely on who may or may not have an online profile and also that the information contained on it is true.

It is unlikely therefore, that social media will replace the traditional recruitment methods in the near future.

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