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SOCIAL RECRUITING – THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE RECRUITING PROCESS

If content is king, then conversion is queen.

John Munsell, CEO of Bizzuka

Introduction

At the times of highly dynamic changes inside an organisation as well as in its surroundings, it is necessary to have the right human resources policy in place. Through candidate selection, staff development, motivation and provision of support to employees to help them enhance such skills as creativity, open-mindedness and flexibility, an organisation is able to work effectively and achieve its objectives.

Nowadays the traditional method of recruitment has been revolutionised by the influence of the Internet. A fast-growing number of users, convenience offered by social networking services and an increasing awareness of advantages that may be gained by using social media tools contribute to an abrupt growth of companies which communicate via such services on a regular basis. This also concerns their staff recruitment processes. Social networking, including sites like Facebook, MySpace, Twitter etc., is beginning to transform candidate recruiting. It is opening new doors for employers and job seekers to connect in a way not possible before.

A social recruiting strategy needs to be part of the company's overall goals and objectives to deliver a true return on investment (ROI). It must complement its other recruiting programs. The main focus of the article is to present and analyse the possibilities offered by social media to support the recruiting process. The research is based on LinkedIn.

Essence of the Recruitment Process

The basic tool which is expected to lead to the target vision of human resources in an organisation is a human resources strategy. This is a model, long-term concept outlining the types and methods of staff-related activities to be carried out. The activities undertaken within the HR function affect the way in which a company sources its staff, develops and motivates them and, ultimately, terminates employment. The staff management structure is presented in Figure 1.

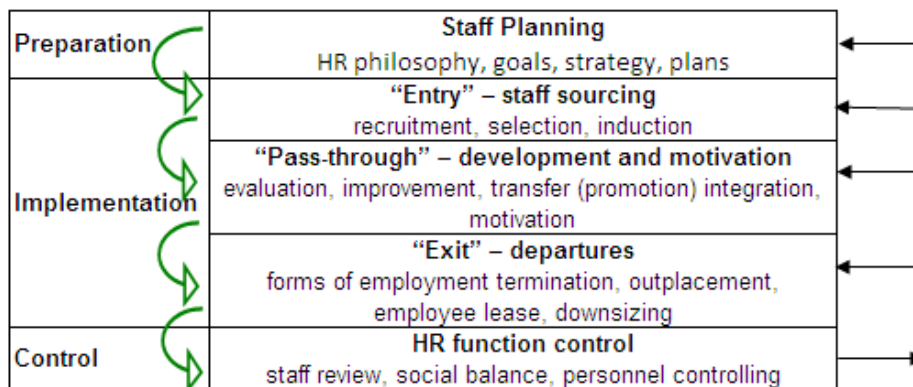


Fig. 1. Human Resources Management – stages and components

Source: [LiKo00].

The process of ensuring staff for an organisation and placing them on appropriate positions is called staff sourcing. The aim of staff sourcing is to hire the right number of people with required qualifications and at the right time so that the organisation can operate continuously and effectively. Successful sourcing is determined by endogenous factors (needs identification, job descriptions, qualification standards, job profiles) and exogenous factors (market opportunities to meet the needs) [Bien06].

Staff sourcing comprises three key stages: recruitment, selection and induction. Figure 2 presents the stages and the flow of a staff sourcing process.

The aim of recruitment is to collect a pool of candidates from whom selection can be made and with whom vacancies can be filled. Two issues are important here – sources and forms of recruitment. Sources of candidates may be external (in particular, a labour market) and internal ones. Recruitment involves finding prospective employees by placing job advertisements in media, e.g. in the press,

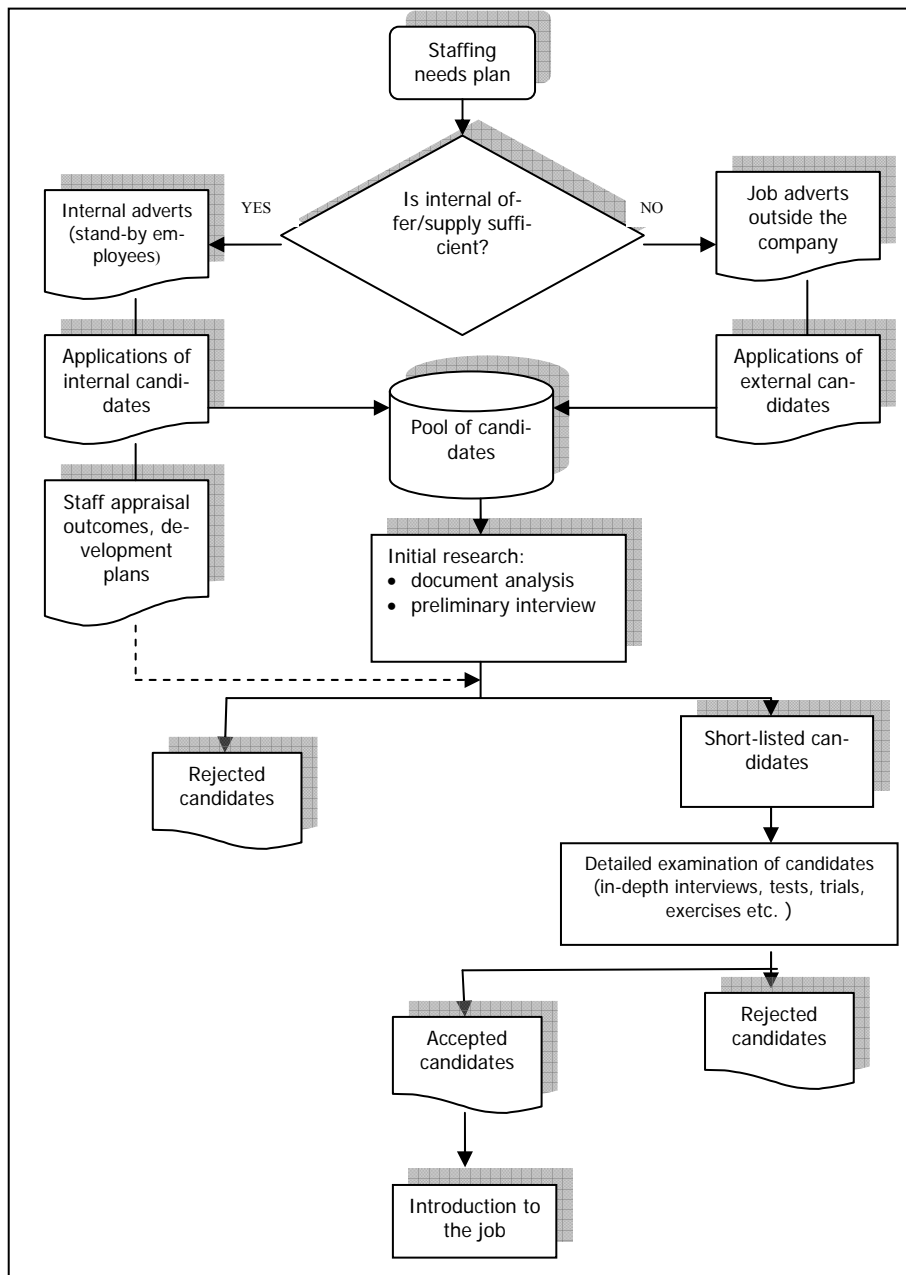


Fig. 2. Staff sourcing process
Source: [LiKo00].

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn job listing for a 'Programista Java, J2EE' position at 'COMARCH'. The company name 'COMARCH' is displayed in a blue box. Below the title, the location is listed as 'Comarch - Kraków, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Warszawa, Wrocław, Glinice (Kraków, woj. małopolskie, Polska)'. A yellow button labeled 'Wyświetl pełną listę ofert pracy' is visible. The 'Opis stanowiska' section includes 'Możliwe lokalizacje: Kraków, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Warszawa, Wrocław, Glinice'. The 'Pożądane umiejętności i doświadczenie' section lists several requirements: higher IT education, Java programming skills, database knowledge (SQL, XML/XSL), Eclipse environment familiarity, and English proficiency. To the right, there are three promotional ads for LinkedIn members: 'e-Travel Forum v Prze!', 'Twój biznes w Office 365?', and 'Get European Sync/Storage'. Below these are 'Podobne oferty pracy' including 'Programista C/C++' and 'Konsultant/ Programista Salesforce'.

Fig. 3. A selected job offer description

Source: Based on own sources.

The screenshot shows an email notification from LinkedIn titled 'Aktualizacje sieci, 29 kwiet. - 6 maja'. It features the LinkedIn logo in the top right corner. The main content is under the heading 'Polecane aktualizacje' and includes a yellow button 'Wyświetl wszystkie aktualizacje'. Two job offers are listed: 'IT Analyst with German or Spanish or English in HCL Technologies w Krakow' and 'Webshop Specialist (English speaking) in VideoPlus Europe w Masovian District, Warsaw West County, Poland'. Each offer has a small profile picture and a link to 'Wyświetl ofertę pracy'.

Fig. 4. Information about current job offers received by e-mail

Source: Based on own sources.

on the Internet – creation of profiles by recruiters in social networking services, contacts with schools, recruitment agencies, participation in job fairs, use of HR consultancy and selection services, i.e. so-called head-hunters, etc. In such activities, it is vital to ensure that an employer's expectations and specific job conditions are communicated reliably (Figure 3). Such an approach may also be regarded as pre-selection (self-selection) of candidates for jobs.

At the times of e-commerce and an increasing role of social media, numerous companies decide to use recruiters to carry out staff sourcing for them. Such decisions are motivated by the following reasons:

- convenience of social networking services,
- increasing awareness of advantages which may be gained through social media tools,
- a possibility to update job offers depending on vacancies available (Figure 4),
- access to potential employees – the data shows that 75% of internet users have their own profiles in at least one social networking service which they regularly visit and update their personal information,
- job instability and related difficulties in predicting the need to look for new employment,
- easy tracking of attractive job offers, by following up on recruiters' profiles.

These reasons are also confirmed by the statistics. Figure 5, for instance, shows the selected statistics on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn has exceeded the barrier of 200 million users. The service is used by citizens of over 200 countries all over the world and it is available in 19 language versions. The biggest group of LinkedIn users are Americans (74 million). Currently, the popularity of this service is growing most rapidly in such countries as Turkey, Columbia and Indonesia. The fastest increase in the number of mobile users, however, has been reported in China, Brazil and Portugal. Every day almost 175,000 new users are added to the LinkedIn base, which makes over 5 million a month. The industry with the biggest representation there is broadly understood IT (4 million users). It is followed by financial services experts and scientific staff [www10].



Fig. 5. Information about LinkedIn members

Source: [www10].

E-Recruiting and Social Media Recruiting

Recruitment is a process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. E-recruiting is the use of internet technology to attract candidates and aid the recruitment process. This usually means using one's own company website, a third-party job site or job board, a CV database, social media or search engine marketing. Social Media recruiting (social recruiting) is the part of e-recruiting.

The growth of social media makes recruiters change their perceptions of methods and practical ways of looking for new candidates for jobs. Traditional CVs sent by snail mail, faxed or attached to emails are now giving ground to social media recruiting. Social networks offer a powerful tool for recruiters to reach a pool of qualified candidates that they might not otherwise be able to reach. Instead of merely searching for passive candidates via search engine, it uses blogs, RSS, tagging, social networking, multimedia and community interaction.

Internet users are quick and eager to take advantage of social networking services because [www2]:

- media presence may help them to find jobs – in some professions a virtual dossier may turn out to be a prerequisite to prove their track record and skills,
- contacts given in social networking services may help them to acquire valuable knowledge (e.g. by sharing experiences), get the answers to their questions or assistance in looking for solutions to their problems,
- these services are a precious source of knowledge about potential employers when preparing to job interviews (fan pages, micro-blogs, topic-related forums),
- information found online helps them to create their own image of an organisation’s business culture, etc.

Figure 6 presents activities conducted by employees in social networking services.

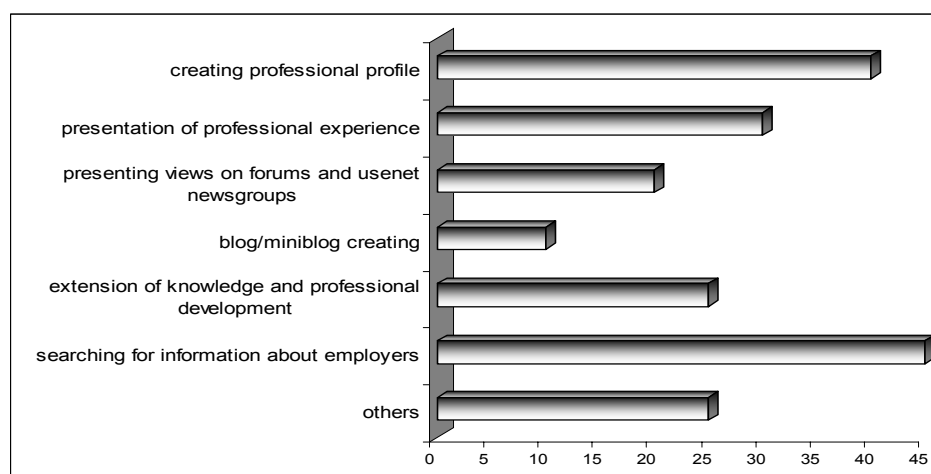


Fig. 6. Employees' activities in social networking

Source: [www3].

An interesting solution is the creation of groups which gather experts from various industries and countries, e.g. “Jobs in Poland –JOBS.PL”. This is a networking group for posting job vacancies moderated by JOBS.PL. It encourages networking between job seekers, employers and recruiters. Poles and expats interested in Polish career opportunities are invited. The Group features as an RSS feed in News, jobs posted on the www.jobs.pl job portal. Any person or group that abuses the JOBS.PL LinkedIn group may not be admitted and may be re-

moved. The language of the group is both English and Polish with a preference, if possible, for English so all can understand and follow discussions. The group is managed in strict accordance with the rules established by LinkedIn as well as additional Linked: Group rules for the benefit of the Members as a whole [www11].

Social recruiting focuses on creating and involving communities formed by people who are interested in specific employers and use networks for recruitment purposes [www5]. The examples of such activities may include dedicated corporate applications placed on various platforms or social career networking sites [www11], which offer multi-step tests, games and training in order to select the best candidates. The most common form, however, is having a career profile in selected social networking services, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Goldenline or Twitter.

Social media provide an attractive environment for employees, who have an opportunity to present themselves, and employers, who look for best candidates to recruit for specialist roles, revise and complete data on candidates who have submitted their CVs. The research findings show that 40% of employers check their potential candidates in social networking services [www2]. User profiles on business sites such as LinkedIn, GoldenLine or Profeo, may be treated as, better or worse, virtual resumes, the overriding aim of which is to draw a prospective employer's attention to a given person. In addition, SM help candidates to better prepare to job interviews they are going to attend. Corporate fan pages and micro-blogs run by companies' representatives help candidates to collect and review information about would-be employers.

Employees and candidates are the supply side of the labour market. According to the research, social media are mostly used by professionals (29%), the unemployed (27%) and line workers (22%) [www3]. They can easily follow what is going on in the labour market, by watching or 'liking' specific companies, getting access to current job openings, without the need to send any CVs. Such behavior tends to be perceived as a lack of loyalty towards their current employers. This is confirmed by the research findings, which show that as many as 62% of respondents continue to look for jobs although only part of them are not active on the labour market.

Planned participation in social media provides an opportunity to present one's competences. When creating a professional profile, a candidate should try to present all his or her professional experience gained so far and a list of responsibilities they have dealt with, so that it can catch the eye of an employer looking for a candidate to fill a specific vacant position. It is advisable to include

completed training sessions or currently performed projects. One may also place there scanned copies or descriptions of certificates which confirm the acquired competences and skills. Figure 7 shows a view of a LinkedIn profile.

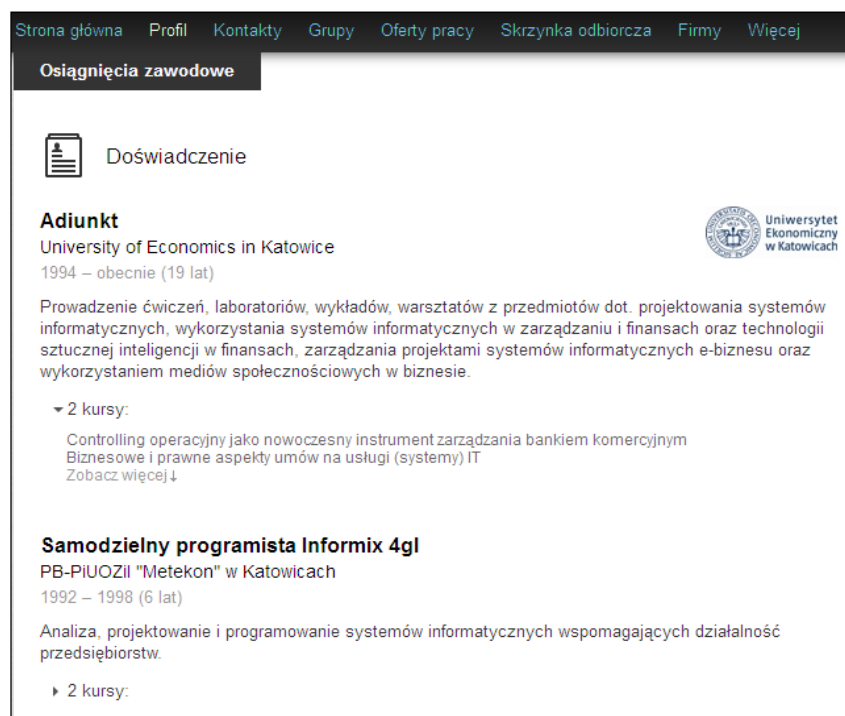
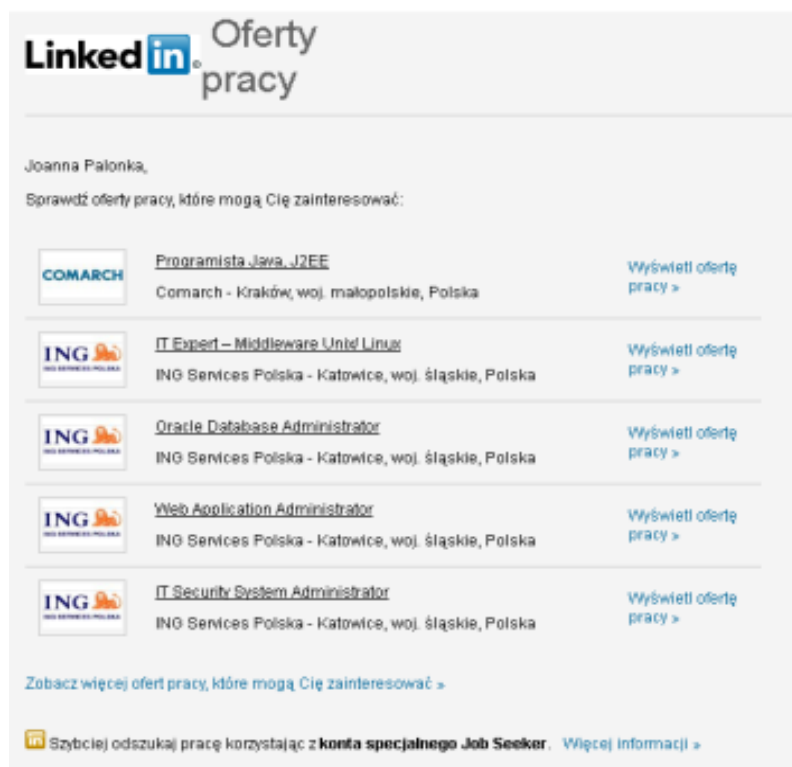


Fig. 7. View of a personalised profile in LinkedIn

Source: Based on own sources.

Social Recruiting may be conducted by means of [www5]:

- personalised job offers which act as advertisements displayed only to people who meet specific criteria (Figure 8),
- advanced candidate search engine,
- selective mailing,
- topic-based groups.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Oferty pracy' (Job Offers) page for a registered user named Joanna Palonka. The page displays a list of job offers from various companies, including COMARCH and ING Services Polska. Each offer includes the company logo, the job title, the location, and a link to view the offer. At the bottom, there are links to see more offers and to use a special Job Seeker account for faster searches.

Company	Job Title	Location	Action
COMARCH	Programista Java, J2EE	Comarch - Kraków, woj. małopolskie, Polska	Wyświetl ofertę pracy >
ING	IT Expert – Middleware Unix/ Linux	ING Services Polska - Katowice, woj. śląskie, Polska	Wyświetl ofertę pracy >
ING	Oracle Database Administrator	ING Services Polska - Katowice, woj. śląskie, Polska	Wyświetl ofertę pracy >
ING	Web Application Administrator	ING Services Polska - Katowice, woj. śląskie, Polska	Wyświetl ofertę pracy >
ING	IT Security System Administrator	ING Services Polska - Katowice, woj. śląskie, Polska	Wyświetl ofertę pracy >

[Zobacz więcej ofert pracy, które mogą Cię zainteresować >](#)


 Szybciej odszukaj pracę korzystając z **konta specjalnego Job Seeker**. [Więcej informacji >](#)

Fig. 8. Job offers for registered users

Source: Based on own sources.

An effective use of social websites in recruitment requires a coherent strategy to be devised and a set of success rate measurements to be identified. To that end, the following steps need to be taken [www8]:

1. Find out what a company wants to achieve by using social media. Does it want to raise awareness of the employer's brand, increase the number of potential candidates visiting its corporate career site or change the medium user's status from a candidate to a present employee?
2. Identify groups of potential candidates. What candidates would a company like to attract: professionals or students and graduates? Does it want to create a community of future candidates or just to find the people to appoint to specific positions as quickly as possible?
3. Direct potential candidates to one key source of information about a company. Employers tend to have career profiles on many sites which, on one hand, allows them to reach a bigger group of potential recipients but, on the other hand, may lead to confusion and a lower ROI. It is important to

have a special career website which could display information about the company, their business culture, currently available job offers and enable communication with candidates. Links to this websites should be placed in all the media and vice versa – it should be possible to go to the other tools immediately.

4. Involve people responsible for recruitment in social media. It would make their message more credible and a candidate could get an exact answer to his or her question.

The role of social media as a source of knowledge about candidates in the recruiting process is growing quickly. Also internet users' awareness of the importance of content given on social networking sites or any other 'traces' left by them on the web should grow at a similar rate. Job seekers need to take a good care of their online images, paying special attention to the content they place there as it may be seen by potential employers. This content may either help or prevent them from finding jobs.

Traditional Recruiting vs. Social Recruiting

A number of reasons may be given to explain why recruiters are eager to shift from traditional recruitment methods to social recruiting. These reasons include, e.g. [www7]:

1. An opportunity to get to know a candidate better – a traditional CV is usually limited to mere facts presented 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 do not allow a candidate to fully present his or her creativity. A network offers such an opportunity. Applicants may, for instance, 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, often 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 interesting 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 knowledge 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 smoothly in the world of online communities. Recruiters assume that anyone capable of handling 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 extension and enhancement. A company has to recognize the potential for social recruiting.

Social Recruiting Benefits

Social media are becoming an important tool in recruitment of future employees for companies. They offer an easy and simple access to appropriate 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 [Orac12], [www6]:

- 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,
- 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 read by a larger number of qualified candidates,
- 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 loyal fans that can become loyal employees,
- 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,
- 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,

- competitive advantage – using social networks gives recruiters a competitive advantage over other talent competitors who aren't using social media recruiting.

Summary

E-recruiting offers recruiters powerful and cost-effective ways to recruit staff for an organisation. It is the use of internet technology to attract and source candidates and aid the recruitment process. Now many organisations are establishing a presence beyond their homepages and are utilising social networking sites to recruit talent.

Today social media are visited not just to look for information, entertainment or acquaintances but also to look for jobs. In 2011, 80% of employers used social media and social networking services for recruitment purposes. The most effective social networking site was LinkedIn (94.5%). In comparison, Facebook was used by 24.2% and Twitter by 15.9% of respondents [www4].

For example, LinkedIn helps to find and to engage the best passive talent. It is flat out the best sourcing/networking/recruiting tool period [www9]. LinkedIn Recruiter allows users to:

1. Expand reach – with the most powerful search available on LinkedIn, expand searches beyond personal connections to access the entire LinkedIn network. Master even the toughest searches with powerful filters that help zero in on ideal candidates immediately.
2. Contact anyone – contact candidates through InMail[®] – LinkedIn's trusted messaging environment. Work more efficiently with InMail message templates and one to many InMails. Get higher response rates than cold calling and email.
3. Manage own pipeline – build, track and manage talent which we want to hire now or in the future with folders, reminders and smart to do lists. Synchronize team activities with shared projects, searches, profiles, and candidate notes.

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SOCIAL RECRUITING – WYKORZYSTANIE MEDIÓW SPOŁECZNOŚCIOWYCH W PROCESIE REKRUTACJI PRACOWNIKÓW

Streszczenie

W warunkach dużej dynamiki zmian w otoczeniu i wewnątrz organizacji konieczne jest właściwe prowadzenie polityki personalnej. Dobór, rozwój kadr, motywowanie i wykształcenie w pracownikach takich cech, jak kreatywność, otwartość i elastyczność, pozwalają organizacji sprawnie funkcjonować i osiągać zamierzone cele.

Dynamicznie rosnąca liczba użytkowników, wygoda korzystania z portali społecznościowych i coraz większa świadomość korzyści, jakie firma może uzyskać, stosując narzędzia social media, przyczyniają się do poprawy regularnej komunikacji za ich pośrednictwem. Dotyczy to także działań w zakresie rekrutacji pracowników. Media społecznościowe, takie jak Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn itd., zmieniają dzisiaj sposób rekrutowania pracowników i otwierają przed rekruterami zupełnie nowe możliwości.

Strategia rekrutacji z wykorzystaniem mediów społecznościowych powinna być elementem ogólnej strategii firmy. Musi być także zgodna z innymi działaniami rekrutacyjnymi. Celem artykułu jest analiza możliwości wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych do wspomaganie procesu rekrutacji pracowników. Badania przeprowadzono na podstawie serwisu LinkedIn.