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SOCIAL MEDIA – THE CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS IN HRM AREA

Summary: During over the last few years, the world of communication has been changing rapidly. The Internet and modern information technologies have led to the increasing popularity and using social media in different areas: in communication, new markets, new businesses, advertising and promotion companies.

The main purpose of this article is to show the possibility of using social media in recruitment process and to present the impact of social media on Human Resource Management. Over 150 respondents, who participated in the research, help us explore the risks and benefits of using social media by employees for the organization's reputation, and deliver suggestions for Human Resource Management policy.

Keywords: social media, HRM, recruitment process.

Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technologies has changed functioning of the enterprises, banks, government, and ordinary people. Companies and organizations are aware of the power of social media and increasingly implement this new tool into their marketing strategies. At the same time, the social networking system provides some space for marketing activities in a very sophisticated and effective way. The company profiles on social net-

works provide a space for users in which they discuss their favourite brands and also create an effective platform – an online communication channel for the implementation of marketing communication [Štefko et al., 2014].

The social media are defined as series of technological innovations in terms of both hardware and software that facilitate inexpensive content creation, interaction, and interoperability by online users [Berthon et al., 2012]. Social media can be described as “*a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.*” [Andreas, Kaplan, 2010].

A typical classification of social media includes collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs, user-generated content communities (e.g. Flickr; YouTube), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook; Twitter), virtual game worlds (e.g. EverQuest), and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life) [Andreas, Kaplan, 2010].

This paper presents the growing influence of social media in recruitment process. The own study allows to describe the advantages and disadvantages of using social media by employees for the organization’s reputation, and to provide suggestions for Human Resource Management policy.

1. The impact of social media on Human Resource Management

Social media have become a bigger part of our private and professional life. They create making new possibilities in our different activities. The popularity of the social media sites is phenomenal in recent years. The using of the social media by companies for marketing, promotion and image is described very well in the literature [Agresta, Bonin, 2011; Goodman, Hirsch, 2010; Fed Ex & Ketchum, 2012; Okazaki, Taylor, 2013]. However, the growing popularity of social media enforced changing not only in business environment, strategies and advertising but also in government administration [Bonsóna et al., 2012], banking industry [Bonsóna, Flores, 2011], tourism [Yazdanifard, Lim Tzen Yee, 2014] and Human Resource Management [Sander van Lingen, 2012].

Over the past few years, we have kept tracking the impact of social media on the HRM, especially in the recruiting area. Currently, traditional methods of recruitment have been revolutionized by the tools offered by social media and by the Internet. The recruitment is a process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. The Internet in e-recruiting is used 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 searching engine marketing [Palonka, Porębska-Miąc, 2014].

Today, many businesses decide to implement the recruitment process with their help. Such decisions are motivated by the following reasons [Palonka, Porębska-Miąc, 2014]:

- convenience of using social networking services,
- greater awareness of the benefits which may be gained through social media tools,
- a possibility to update job offers depending on vacancies available
- access to potential employees – Internet users have their own profiles in at least one social networking 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.

The development of social media encourages HRM department to take a different look at the methods and practical way of searching new candidates for job. Traditional CVs sent by mail, faxed or attached to emails are now giving ground to social media recruiting. Social networks offer great opportunities for recruiters who want to get qualified candidates. Instead of using simply searching for candidates they use search engine, blogs, RSS, tagging, social networking, community interaction and multimedia. It is very important especially because for growing employees of Generation Y¹ on the labor market. They are the first generation which has spent entire life in the digital environment; information technology profoundly shows how they live and work [Bennett, et al., 2008].

Interesting information about the perception of the role and the impact of social networks in the recruitment process delivers a report from *Jobvite Social Recruiting Survey 2014*².

¹ The categorization of generations, using the following birth dates: the Silent Generation (1925-1945), the Baby Boomers (1946-1960), Generation X (1961-1981) and Generation Y (1981-1999). (Ruth et. al., 2013).

² The online survey was conducted in August 2014. The survey was completed by 1,855 recruiting and human resources professionals spanning across industries.

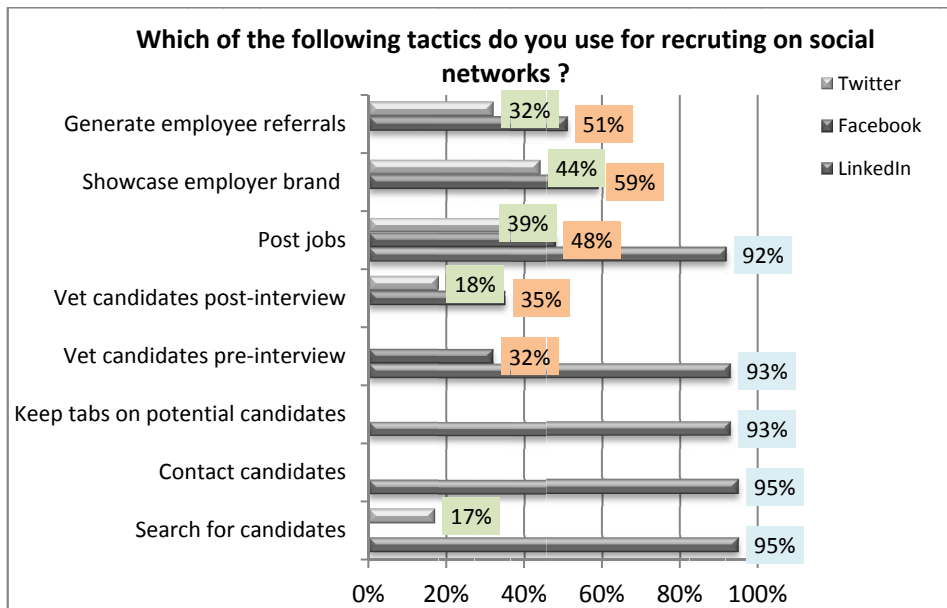


Fig. 1. Different types of tactics in HRM department

Source: [www1].

The report is a summary of research conducted every year in the USA. According to the survey 93% of recruiters used or planned to use social media to support their recruiting efforts which is an increase of 13% compared to 2010. HRM department exploited different tactics for recruiting of social networks (Fig. 1), like: post job (92% on LinkedIn, 48% on Facebook, 39% on Twitter), vet candidates pre-interview (93% on LinkedIn, 32% on Facebook) or post-interview (35% on Facebook, 18% on Twitter).

More than 70% of recruiters planned to grow their investment in social recruiting in the future. HRM department takes social media profiles seriously when candidates are evaluated. Recruiters are now reviewing social profiles to uncover mutual connections and evaluate written or design work. 55% of recruiters reconsidered a candidate based on their social profile (13% up on 2013). 73% of recruiters hired a candidate through social media. The LinkedIn is the most popular social network which companies hire workers (79%), and then Facebook (26%), Twitter (16%). The study also carried out that 93% of recruiters will review a candidate’s social profile before making a hiring decision. Mostly they looked for professional experience, length of professional tenure or specific hard skills (Fig. 2).

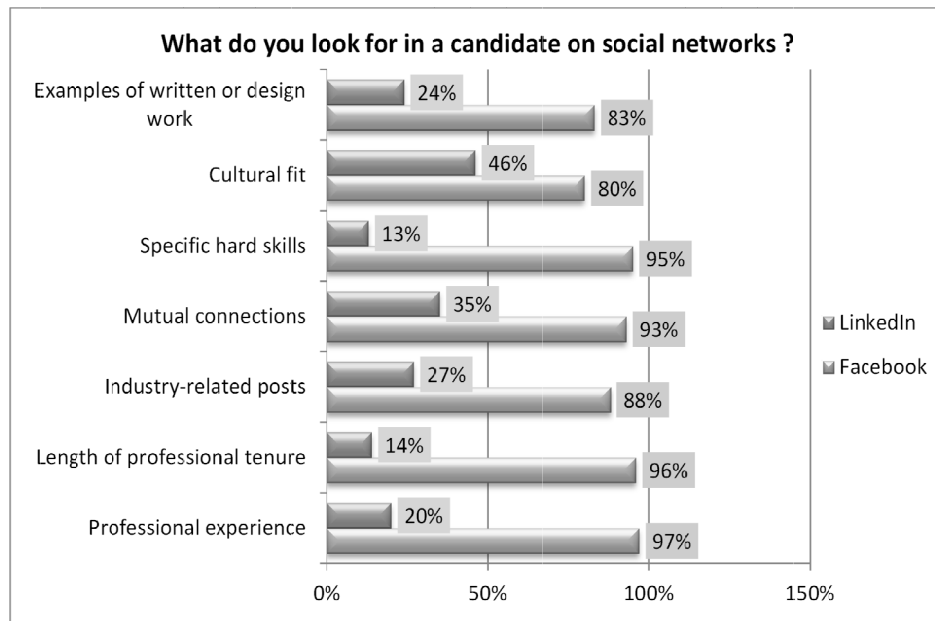


Fig. 2. What employers are looking for in candidate on social networks

Source: [www1].

2. Disadvantages of using social media

The importance of social media, as a source of knowledge about the candidates in the recruitment process, is rapidly increasing. The Internet users' awareness of the importance of the content given on the social networking sites or any other "traces" left by them on the web should grow at a similar rate [Palonka, Porębska-Miąc, 2014]. Candidates applying for a job should take care of their image on the Internet, paying particular attention to the content they place there as it may be seen by potential employers. These contents may both help to find a job and prevent from it. For example, a single mum was fired from her new job at a daycare center after she posted on Facebook that she "hated" it. The woman was told by her boss, who read the post, not to turn up for her first shift just hours before she was due to start [Ridley, 2015]. Not only future employees should be careful about what information they leave on social networks but also potential employers need to control the information posted on their websites companies. Internet users, while preparing to interviews, are looking for a precious knowledge about potential employers' in their services (fan pages, microblogs, and topic related forums). Moreover, information found online helps them to create their own image of organizations, business culture, etc.

The consequences of the using of social media by companies can also bring some disadvantages. Social media can have a negative influence on workers' productivity. Employees may waste valuable time using social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. They can also use social media to attack the company's reputation. Rude, unwelcome and negative comments made by a company's employees can really generate a negative image for the company and their brand. In the worst case scenario, an employee's social networking actions could actually have long-lasting and devastating effects on the company's brand and image. Therefore, companies should establish some rules for using social media in workplace.

3. Rules of using social media in workplace

The scientists and practitioners are aware of the importance of employees' social media use for the reputation management process. There are many suggestions on how organizations should manage risks and benefits of their employees' participation in social media in order to protect their reputation, but they often focus on tactical measures, rather than on strategic management [Dreher, 2014].

Employers have the right to simply ban on all computers activities that are not work-related, but this approach may not yield optimal results. If employees are allowed to access to social networking platforms, then a comprehensive and well-defined policy should be established to prevent abuse. Without framework for determining what is proper for use of the social media in the workplace, companies have to rely on a trial-and-error approach to social media etiquette. All employees should sign policies related to the use of the Internet at work, access to social networking sites and what they are allowed to say or do during of-office hours. Monitoring of all Web activities is important, and employees should be aware that their actions are being recorded and that failure to adhere to company policy can result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

Some companies may face challenges striking the right balance between conducting a successful recruitment exercise on social media and protecting the brand image. For example, when a firm posts a job opening on social media, it may receive numerous applications and choose to contact one or two prospective candidates. Applicants who are not contacted could react angrily and post damaging information about the firm on numerous social networks. Talented job seekers may also ignore job openings posted by companies with poor social media profiles. Such firms can, however, hire reputation management specialists to help build a positive image.

4. Methodology

In order to explore the impact of social media on Human Resource Management policy in Polish organizations – as well as the awareness of it – an online survey was conducted among both employees and employers in May 2015. The questionnaire consisted of 7 closed questions which responses were measured on a nominal scale. The queries were dedicated particularly to employees. We inquired about ways of finding a job, including – among others – the one associated with social network. We investigated also if they took into an account that employers could visit their profiles. We wanted to know whether they are aware that the included information could affect their career. We asked also if employers forbade them to put some information on their private profiles, if they required them to apply the special principles or if they should block at work the employee's access to some websites, especially to social networks. The questionnaire included also the question about sociodemographic data.

The invitation to the survey was distributed by e-mail. The population of this study was chosen from mid-level entrepreneurs of Upper Silesia region and university staff who regularly use social media. It was aimed considerable diversity of sample surveys (purposive sampling).

5. Research results

On line questionnaire was completed by 152 participants (72 women and 80 men). Every second of the participants was over 31 years old, over 86% of them were not older than 45 and 6% were over 55. 26% completed secondary education, 74% had higher education – of which 16% with Ph.D. Almost 20% of respondents were not employed, 30% had been working up to 5 years, 7% – from 5 to 10 years, 20% – from 10 to 15 years, 8% – from 15 to 20 years, 5% – from 20 to 25 years, and 10% – over 25 years.

A preliminary question was about the best way of looking for the job. Participants were asked to give no more than 3 suggestions. 75% agreed that the best way would be to browse online advertisements on portals such as: *praca.pl*, *infopraca.pl*, *pracuj.pl*, but also 68% indicated on asking among acquaintances. Only 14% was decided to search for announcements in the newspapers (Fig. 3).

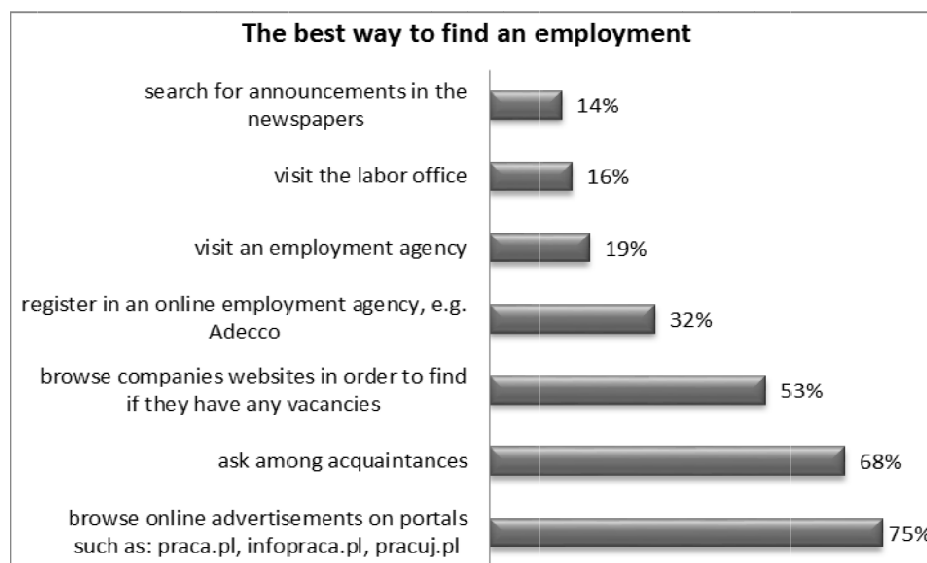


Fig. 3. Indicated answers about ways to find an employment

Source: Own research.

Then the respondents were also asked if they knew any social network specializing in professional business contacts. 41% admitted they did. The most popular website was LinkedIn, secondly: GoldenLine (Fig. 4). The basic questions of the survey were focused on a dilemma if employees (or future employees) were aware of the impact of social media both on recruitment process in contemporary organizations as well as their career itself.



Fig. 4. The most popular social networks specializing in professional business contacts

Source: Own research.

Secondly the participants answered the question if – in their opinion – employers browsed the profiles employees' on social networks. 68% of respondents confirmed this suggestion, 11% disagreed and 21% didn't know which answer to choose. The conviction of such behavior was significantly dependent on the age (Fig. 5). The younger respondents more often confirmed the suggestion and the older more often were hesitating.

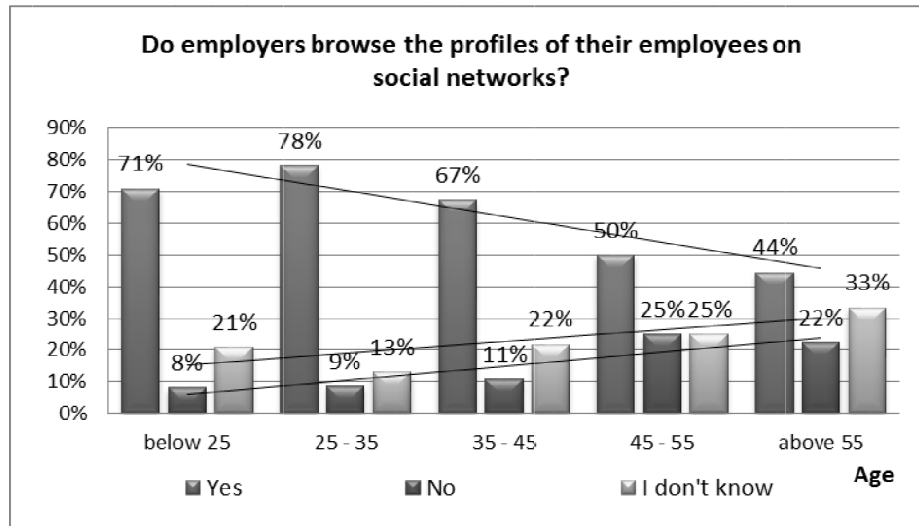


Fig. 5. The awareness of respondents of being visited by employers on their social network profiles

Source: Own research.

Consistently, the respondents were asked if in their opinion posted information on social network profiles of employees could affect their career. 86% agreed that it could have both, positive (better understanding of the employee and his potential) or negative (e.g. dismissal) impact. Only 6% claimed that it had no influence.

On a question if they have faced a situation that an employer forbade his employees to post on their social network profiles any content that would negatively affect the image of their organization, 25% of respondents answered they had. Two out of three denied having heard about such situation and the rest was not sure. Subsequently, the participants were asked to refer to the situation, when an employer would make some restrictions for employees in terms of their activity in social networking sites (e.g. what sort of opinions about the company should/shouldn't be published). The answers were divided almost into equal two halves: 47% claimed that it would be reasonable and the employer had the right to do it. However, 7% emphasized, that it should be dependent (e.g. on a type of organization or data published) or after all it is unethical. Also 47% claimed that it would be ridiculous and the employer had no right to do so (Fig. 6).

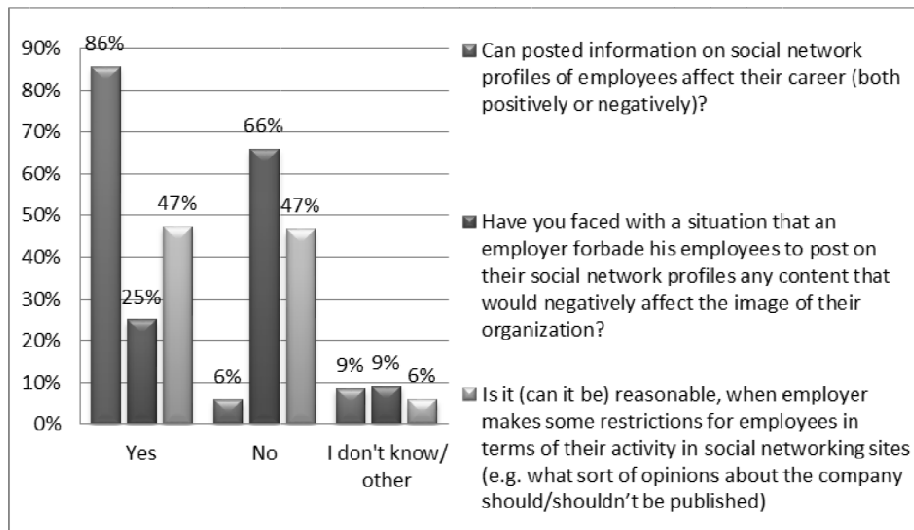


Fig. 6. The social media profile of employees vice an organization image and employers claims
Source: Own research.

On the question if an employer should block employee’s access to certain websites 39% of respondents stated definitely no. Other was asked to select possible qualifications (Fig. 7). 51% of respondents agreed that sites allowed only for adults (e.g. erotica, gambling) should be banned, and 37% approved restricted access to social networks.

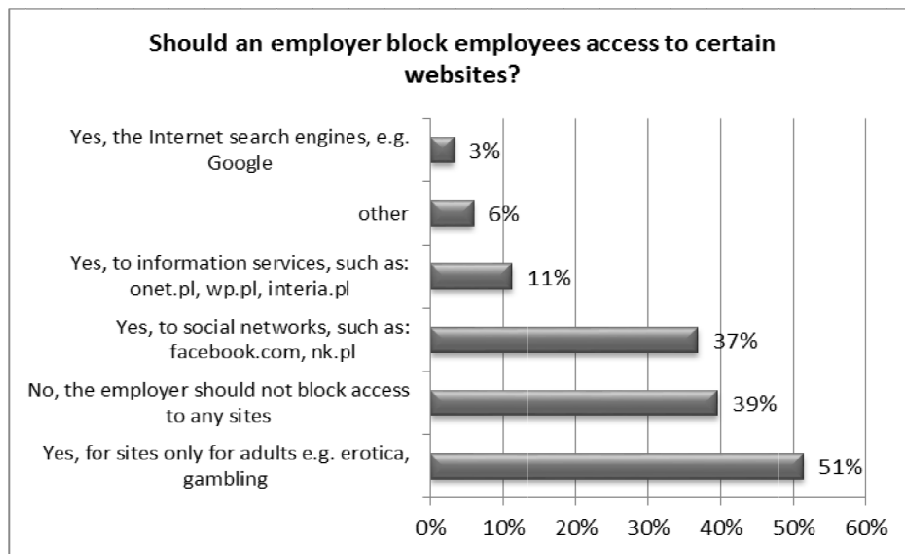


Fig. 7. Which kind of websites should be blocked by employers?
Source: Own research.

Conclusion and recommendations

In this article we concentrated on challenges and future directions giving by social media in recruitment process. In this context by means of an online survey we asked about the best way to find employment. Results showed that the ways affiliated with Internet were indicated as the best respondents. Percentage of people pointing out this way to find a job was the biggest. The second most indicated way was this which uses relationships with our acquaintances in real world. The most rarely ways pointed out in the survey were these related with announcement in newspapers and visiting labour office or employment agency. For a long time relationships with our acquaintances in real world were regarded as the best way to find a job. A such high percentage of answers indicating Internet as the best way of finding employment emphasized its high impact on our live also in the context of recruitment process.

The awareness of social network specializing in professional business contacts wasn't vast among respondents. Only 41% of them admitted knowledge in this area, and LinkedIn and Goldenline were the most often indicated examples of this kind of social networks. Despite a little awareness of social networking specializing in business contacts, the majority of respondents (almost 90%) designated a conviction that social media impacted the hiring process. The survey results indicated respondent's belief that employers could browse social profiles to find out more information about their employees. Looking for the future directions of social media in the context of their development in the area of hiring process, we can suppose that their impact will increase. Knowing that recruiters plan to intensify their activity in social media, we can expect the bigger awareness of social network specializing in professional business contacts. It is likely that private social profiles will evaluate towards more professional one.

As technology and the world continue to evolve, so businesses must also develop to meet the new challenges that arise. Many companies have recently begun to adopt policies which address the issues of social networking and the workplace. These policies are now beginning to become commonplace and are considered as an everyday aspect of management. This point of view was also indicated in our research. Almost 50% respondents consider that it is reasonable when employer makes some restrictions for employees in term of their activity in social networking sites.

The increasing impact of the modern technology and the Internet on organizations is indisputable. Nowadays it is hard to imagine a world without social media. Therefore, it seems natural that they can affect all areas of our lives – including professional life. Consciously or unconsciously we consume the pros

and cons of this. The study of literature and, as we hope, the results of our research can confirm it. The fact is that the rapid growth of social media presents a unique challenge for employees as well as employers:

- Traditional methods of recruitment are revolutionizing by the tools offered by social media. They enable recruiters to find quality hires by targeting competencies. They also permit to evaluate applicants by reviewing their social profiles.
- Candidates applying for a job should take care of their image in the Internet. They ought to pay particular attention to the content which they place there because it may both help to find a job, as well as prevent.
- Employees may waste valuable time using social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This way social media can have a negative influence on worker productivity.
- Social media can be used by employees to attack the company's reputation. Rude, unwelcome and negative comments can create a negative image for the company and their brand.
- It is important to know the rules of activity on social networks to make sure that it is safe for both sides including:
 - The specific time for social networking, for example, employees are allowed to participate in social networking during lunch or coffee breaks.
 - Encouraging employees to take part in the company's social networking activities.
 - Provide guidelines which determine appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for a company's social networking employees.
 - In the worst scenario, social networking should be banned completely in the workplace.

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**MEDIA SPOŁECZNOŚCIOWE – WYZWANIA I PRZYSZŁE KIERUNKI
PROCESU REKRUTACJI W OBSZARZE HRM**

Streszczenie: Szybko rozwijające się nowoczesne technologie informacyjne doprowadziły do coraz to większej popularności mediów społecznych w różnych dziedzinach życia: komunikacji, marketingu, tworzenia nowych rynków pracy, promocji i reklamy. Głównym celem artykułu jest pokazanie możliwości wykorzystania mediów społecznościowych w procesie rekrutacji. Przedstawiono wpływ mediów społecznościowych na zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Badanie ankietowe przeprowadzone na próbie 150 respondentów, pozwoliło na przedstawienie zagrożeń i korzyści wynikających z komunikowania się pracowników i pracodawców za pomocą mediów społecznościowych. Na koniec podano zasady bezpiecznego i świadomego korzystania z tej formy komunikacji oraz określono istotne wskazówki dla polityki zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi w organizacjach.

Słowa kluczowe: Media społecznościowe, HRM, proces rekrutacji.