A study on the impact Social Networking as a source of Recruitment

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Introduction

For a long time recruitment relied solely on print publications especially newspapers and magazines to post vacant positions and attract people to apply for jobs. Hence the reach was limited and talent could not be tapped easily. Over the years networking and references have helped in recruitment and later on company websites and job portals have also contributed to the same but the world of social networking has opened up this space to a different level whereby vacancies at different locations can be seen by millions of people at one time. Social networking has made recruitment more efficient and effective if used in the right way.

Social networking also has a focused reach so that the most suitable of candidates can see the job vacancies. Vacancies are shared amongst like-minded people which increases the possibility of finding the right candidate. Employers are also screening candidates through their social networking pages and they look out for online content about the candidate.

HR magazine reported in October 2012 that 'Integrating social networking sites into the traditional recruitment process is key not only to reaching potential candidates, but to building relationships and communities that will enhance the candidate experience and provide a window into your company's culture.'75% of all internet using adults use at least one social media site. (Source: Pew Research Center, 2015) and a third of the total time spent online is devoted to social networks and messaging apps which totals to nearly 2 hours a day. (Source: Global Web Index, Q2 2016) 2014 marked the official year that mobile devices surpassed desktops for consuming digital media, and 89% of the total time users spend on their smartphone is spent on mobile apps. (Source: ComScore, 2014, as reported by SocialMediaToday, 2015). Hence this is one source that recruiters cannot ignore.
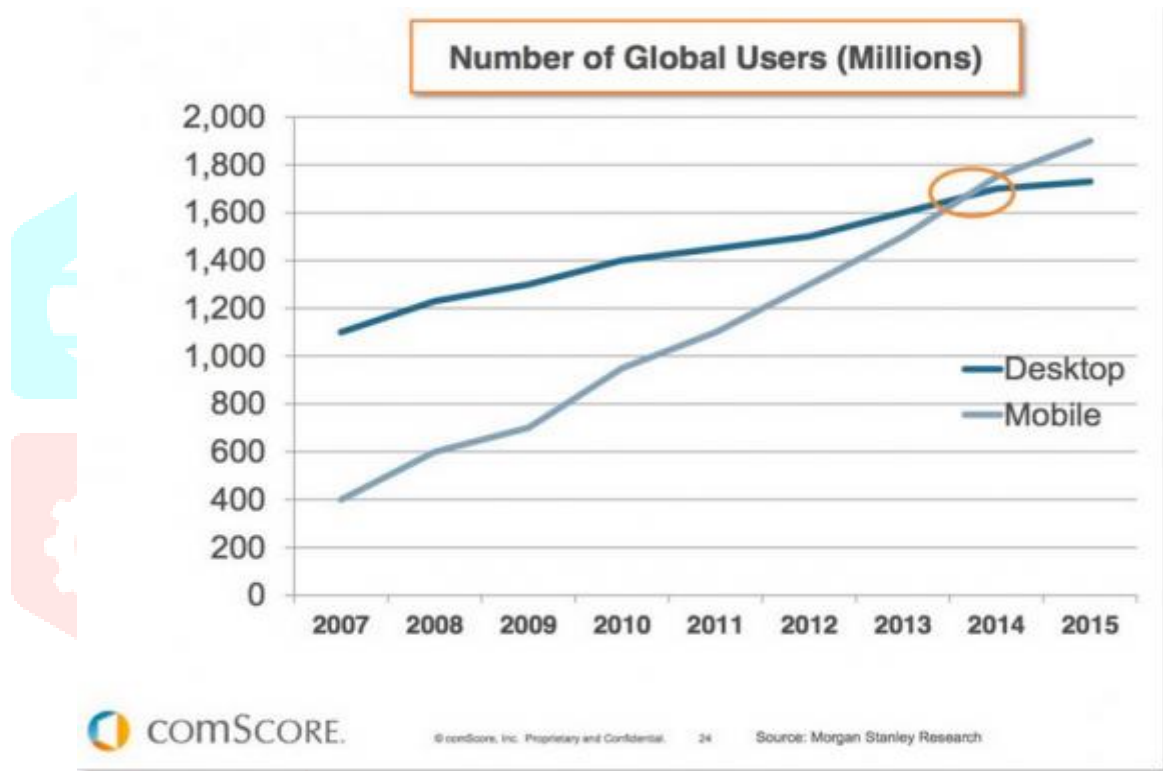
Review of literature

Nigel Wright in his study on 'the-impact-of-social-media-on-recruitment' discussed the popularity of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in terms of usage. He also discussed the pros and cons of recruitment through

social networking but concluded that though it is becoming popular it will take a while to replace the personal touch, relationship building and robust assessment methods of traditional recruitment and selection process.

Wendi Weirner, in her article 'The influence of social media on job seekers in the digital age,' published in the Career Planning and Adult Development Journal spoke about the pre smartphone and post smartphone era of recruitment. She discusses the power or LinkedIn for job seekers. A lot of people in top positions are on LinkedIn and the facility to vet for candidates has made this platform very successful and much sought after.

Internet reach

Pros and Cons of using social media for recruitment

The advantages largely lie on the easy accessibility, time, cost and the ability of the company to project their brand name. Since people of all ages are now exposed to social media and the easy availability of internet, social media is a strong and reliable space. It is also fasterto put up and a much cheaper option compared to the traditional methods like print advertisement, job portals etc. The company can also attract candidates by using the space to present the benefits of working in their company and reach out to the potential candidates by talking about their policies, work culture and work environment.

Another advantage is the linking of social media and referrals. Once the job is posted friends already working in the companies refer their friends and these friends try their level best to fit as they do not want to let down the friends who referred them. This is seen a lot especially at the entry level where most companies have referral options for recruitment. Sites like LinkedIn provide an option for recruiters to 'vet' the candidate and this saves a lot of time.

One of the major disadvantages is the transparency factor where one needs to put a question on the reliability of the information put online by the candidates. Candidates may also not disclose all the required information and present only what they want you to see. As we all know a virtual identity is possible to create with a lot of false information as digital fraud is also very rampant nowadays. Apart from that it is also time consuming to go through candidate profiles. There is also the possibility of negative content coming on the company's social media page as anyone and everyone can leave comments and ratings and an employer's brand can determine whether an individual considers applying for, accepting, and keeping a job.

Analysis of the major social media platforms:

Facebook

Statistics show that the leading countries ranked according to their number of Facebook users as of July 2017 during the measured period is India with 241 million users, ahead of second-ranked United States with 240 million Facebook users. Facebook is the most popular social network worldwide, with a global usage penetration of 22.9 percent. Though there are a lot of mixed reviews about Facebook, the fact remains that it has over 2 billion users and hence it is an important platform.

Recruiters can use Facebook to publicise a job fair or recruitment season and get potential candidates to register. This can further be shared a number of times by tapping on the contacts that the employees have. Creative videos about the work culture in the company can help attract candidates to apply.

'Put me in touch' Facebook pages have been started for various cities for example,'Put me in touch with Bangalore' where not only companies but freelance opportunities and job requirements by start- up firms as well as part time opportunities and work from home options are put up and the posts generate a reasonable amount of interest and response.

What does not work well for Facebook is that more than 50% the average user is below 25 years of age. Hence it is not really able to attract potential talent at the middle and higher level. However, Facebook launched 'Work for Us', an app which allows companies to post jobs and receive applications via Facebook.

Twitter

Adam Heagy , Vice-President of Synerfac Technical Staffing, is one of the most vocal advocates of using Twitter as a recruiting tool quoted that "Experienced recruiters want to use traditional methods because they think Twitter is only for young people and they are looking for seasoned individuals but it is the exact opposite. Twitter has been a great source for more candidates with progressive skill sets."

The micro-blogging, social networking website can be a powerful way for small companies and recruiters to expand their list of potential job candidates. If they use it right, that is. "Are you going to log in to Twitter and instantly have a pool of candidates?" asks Heagy. "It doesn't happen like that. You have to be consistent and it will pay great dividends."

If your company has a Twitter account but not a lot of followers, there are tricks for expanding your network and building relationships with clients and job candidates. Run a quick search on Twitter (search.twitter.com) for anybody discussing a specific keyword and you can get hundreds of contacts. You can search for people you know, by location, by industry or interest, by hash tag, by popularity, by time and more

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network and has allowed easy access for employers to connect with potential candidates. LinkedIn is more focused on working professionals with college degrees and experience and is not focused towards the general workforce and entry level candidates. It therefore has a niche-focus for middle level and higher level jobs.

One of the prominent features of this source is passive to active member ratio. It may also be noted that the quality of its can be verified.LinkedIn can help to identify when someone is about to begin looking. The network has forever changed the way organizations connect with talent, giving them unprecedented access to both active and passive candidates. Today, most companies, including all of the Fortune 500, have transitioned the recruitment function in-house, with the belief that it is much cheaper and more efficient to hire an army of recruiters and have them scour LinkedIn to find the best candidates. It also helps tostay in touch with former, valued, trusted colleagues for potential future employment relationship.

Conclusion

Social networking as a means of recruitment has come to stay. This option has reduced the duration between thetime that the jobs are posted to the time when interviews are being scheduled. Easy and quick reference checks through the candidate's online profile helps the recruiters to make quick decisions.

Social media recruiting helps an employer get to know a potential job candidate. Is this a highly skilled, well-rounded individual that will fit with your team? As with any job opening, using social media recruiting

requires time and effort but it's an investment in longer-term benefits for your company. Using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter takes recruiting back to its grass roots of networking but for a digital age.

However, this is only one stage of the recruitment and selection process. A personal interview and other testing would ensure that the right candidate is selected. The traditional method would still be relevant at this level. Though social sites provide a huge pool of potential candidates, the possibility of the information not being true is always there. The traditional methods involving various types of assessments will still play an important part in the recruitment process.

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