

Social Recruiting: Trends, Opportunity and Challenges in India

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Abstract

With the advent of internet, social media has provided new avenues for recruiters. Social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus, ApnaCircle etc. provide huge pool of potential employees to organizations. Most of the users of these sites are youth and professionals in early stage of their career that can be tapped by the organizations for employment. Along with recruitment these sites provide good platform to organizations to build a good image among the prospective employees. Companies have started tapping these sources for their human resource needs. The focus of companies has shifted from offline hiring to internet job search sites and now it is inclining towards social networking sites.

This article explores the potential of social networking sites as channels for recruitment. Also this article focuses on benefits and probable challenges in hiring through these sites.

Keywords:

Social Media, Social Recruiting, Workforce, Recruitment Strategy.

Introduction

In today's digitalized world, internet is affecting all the aspects of the business. Particularly, social media have opened new opportunities for organizations to connect with their stakeholders.

The user demography of these sites provides an ample opportunity to the companies not only to come closer to the customers but also to the prospective employees. Social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, GooglePlus, Twitter etc. provide a pool of talent to the organizations to recruit from. Most of the users of these sites are young and professionals in early stage of their career. According to IAMAI and IMRB's Social media in India Report-2012, 84% of all the urban social media users are in the age group of 21-35 years. Among all the users of social media in India, 82% are college going students. Reputed organizations have started leveraging these resources for their workforce requirements. For example HCL has a recruitment strategy to hire mid and senior level candidates through LinkedIn and entry level candidates are hired through Facebook and Twitter. As social

media is coming into masses such practices are to be mainstream in coming time.

Social Media

Social media involve the internet based applications that allow users to generate and share their content without much technical knowledge. These applications allow users to connect and engage with each other. Merriam-webster dictionary defines social media as “forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal message and other content.

Other words that are used interchangeably with social media are user generated content and web 2.0.

Social media include social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Googleplus etc., blogging sites like Blogger.com , wikis like Wikipedia, content sharing sites like Youtube, Instagram etc.,online gaming sites like Ibibo, and virtual life sites like Second life etc.

Social networking sites allow people to connect and interact with each other and have become quite popular with the proliferation of the internet. Facebook alone has 1.14 billion users globally, just behind the population of India. Twitter, a microblogging site has more than 500 million users.

In India, as internet is coming into the masses these sites are becoming mainstream as evident from the table -1.

Table-1

Social networking site	Users in India	Source
Facebook	88 million	http://in.socialtimes.me
Twitter	33 million	Digital India May,2013 Report
GooglePlus	2.2 million	http://socialmediaslant.com
LinkedIn	23 million	Digital India May,2013 Report
ApnaCircle	3.6 million	techcircle.in

Globally, India has second most users of Facebook while in terms of twitter users it stands at sixth spot.

Social networking sites have high penetration among the Indian netizens, 75% of whom are under the age of 35 years. This pool of young users makes these platforms a green pasture for the organizations to meet their employment need.

Social recruiting

Social recruiting involves recruiting from the social media

sites (fig.1). Allison Dayle, job search guide at About.com defines social recruiting as, “social recruiting is when companies and recruiters use Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter and other social media sites to source and recruit candidates for employment (About.com).

Recruitment through social media applications is central idea of social recruiting. Other terms that are used for social recruiting involve social hire, social recruitment, and social media recruitment. In recent time social recruiting has got momentum as internet has become a way of life.

Figure 1 Social Recruiting



According to LinkedIn global recruitment trend, 2013 survey, 41% of recruiters find social professional networks as a place to look for quality hires over internet resume database (27%) and internal hires (23%). Similarly, Jobvite 2012 social recruiting survey indicates that social recruiting not only increases the number of hiring but also the quality

of the candidates. According to survey, 92% of surveyed recruiters use or plan to use social media for recruiting while 73% of recruiters have already hired a candidate through social networks.43 % companies that have hired through social media have experienced a hike in quality of candidates along with 44% experiencing a surge in quantity

of the candidates. 20% of social recruiters reports that it took less time to hire through social media than the traditional sources.

Social recruiting can be a game-changer for the companies in today's technology-oriented business world, where human capital is playing the central role in success of the enterprise. Social recruiting can ensure the increased quantity of candidates with high level of quality while saving the both time and cost to the organization.

Social Recruiting scenario in India

India with the third largest base of internet users globally and with a substantial share of its GDP coming from service sector, is witnessing a drastic change in recruitment processes adopted by the companies. At the forefront of the change are the information technology and information-technology enabled service companies like HCL, Microsoft India, CMC, American Express India etc. The activities these companies are performing through social media do not include only direct recruitment but also employer branding, checking social profile of new hires, relationship building with potential employees etc. More than two-thirds of Indian employers run background check of new hires through internet. 90% of the key hires and 25% of overall hiring for HCL is through social recruiting (Joshi, 2012). Currently, the adoption of the social recruiting in India is in gestation period as only 6% of companies are using social networks for hiring against the figure of around 30% in developed countries. But future prospects of social recruiting seem to be positive in India as LinkedIn annual survey points out that almost 41% of all the surveyed Indian employers prefer to use social networks to source top talent.

Among the social networking sites, LinkedIn is preferred medium for social recruitment. Over 87% of companies prefer LinkedIn while 55% prefer Facebook followed with Twitter (47%) (Sethi, 2012).

With internet coming into masses and social media applications becoming popular among the youth, the trend of social hiring is obvious to go high.

Benefits of social recruiting

- **Increased access:** Social media platforms provide companies access to the potential employees beyond the geographic boundaries. Social recruiting provides a bigger pool of potential employees to company than that is provided by the traditional methods of recruiting.
- **Scanning of candidate personality:** Traditional recruitment process provides information about employees what they offer. Social recruiting gives access to the information that is beyond the information

provided by traditional resume approach. Social networking sites may give information about the interests, likings and various facets of employees' personality. There have been various researches to predict the personality of the Facebook and Twitter users based on their activities on these sites e.g, Wang et al (2012), Ortigosa et al (in press), Correa et al (2010), Goldbeck et al (2011). Using these researches in social recruiting process can help the organizations in a big way. Ingersoll Rand International looks at the pattern of the updates on the Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to understand the interests of the individuals and then chooses the best fits for the organization.

- **Time and cost saving:** A proactive social recruiting policy may save both time and cost to the organization. If company keeps track of potential employees on social networking sites, it may provide company a quick hire in the case of vacancy. E.g. Biocon constantly stays in touch with the smart people on social networks that can be hired when a vacancy arises in company. Also social recruiting is cost effective than the hiring through employment agencies which charges anywhere between 20 to 30 percent of a successful candidate's first year salary. Hiring through social networking sites costs practically nothing.
- **Building employer brand:** Social recruiting strategy can help company in establishing the employer brand. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn can be used to advertise the company to the targeted groups of prospects. Strategies like telling success stories of the employees and posting their testimonials can help company to boost its image as a good employer. Use of social networking sites for brand building becomes even more important because almost 85% of employees in India use social networking sites to get information about the working culture in the organizations (Sethi, 2012).
- **Imparting information:** Social networking sites may play an important role in communicating with the potential candidates. Information related to recent jobs, changes in HR practices of organization; future human resource requirement of the organization, expected characteristics of employees can be imparted through social media at almost zero cost. Companies like American express India are putting video job descriptions on the social networking sites in which employees talk about their roles in company and thus give potential employees a glimpse of working environment of the company.

Opportunities

With the emergence of knowledge organizations and

increased role of information technology in the businesses, social recruiting may provide companies competitive advantage in employee hiring and brand building. As more and more people are going online, joining social media and the traditional recruitment methods becoming costlier, social recruiting is certainly a future boom. Social networking sites may provide valuable information about the skills, interests and other aspects of the candidate that can be used in making hiring decision. However social hiring may be beneficial for every industry, it is most suitable to human resource needs of the IT and ITES companies along with other service sector industries. In India where internet revolution has just begun, social networking sites are green pasture for the companies. Given the high presence of youth on social networking site and tech-savvy nature of the new generation, companies need to integrate social media in their recruitment mix. A field that companies may explore is conducting interviews and tests over the social networking sites. Feature like Google hanouts, Facebook messenger may bring drastic changes in the recruitment strategy of the companies.

Challenges in social recruiting

- **Inadequate information:** The biggest drawback of social recruiting is the inadequacy of the information that is available to the company. Restricted information may be available to the company due to the privacy settings of the individuals and thus company may not be in a position to make a decision only on the basis of the information provided on these sites.
- **Fake profiles:** Fake profiles on social networking sites are also problem for the companies. It is difficult to make sure that a profile is genuine or a fake one. This makes difficult to make decision on the basis of social networking profile of the candidate.

Conclusion

As world is becoming more and more digitalized and people are joining social media, companies are harnessing the power of new age communication media not only to acquire the talent but also for attracting potential employees, building employer brand, establishing relations with pool of talent present over these platforms. In India, currently companies especially IT and ITES companies are actively using social recruiting. As various surveys points out the trend of social recruiting is to flourish in the future with proliferation of the internet. The youth dominated social networking sites are becoming part of recruitment strategies of the Indian companies. However, there are some limitations and challenges in social recruitment; the advantages that are provided by it have an edge over the traditional recruitment. As we are entering the networked economy we may expect that social recruitment may take

over the traditional mode of recruitment in coming time.

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