

# **ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIAS AND HUMAN CAPITAL RECRUITING**

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**Abstract**

The objective of this paper is to explore what is online social networking along with the employers recruiting human capital from them. There are four sites of social networking that are described in how they inform the employer in using the site to recruit human capital. The new trend to recruit through online social networks is demonstrated with particular studies to show how successful it had been for firms. The recruitment on these social networking sites is in the infancy stages and no known case studies have been come to light but companies may have to reword their policies and procedures to accommodate particular behaviors from the employees. It is the trend for now and only time will give the answer of how the positive and negative outcomes that will arise from this type of recruiting human capital wherein future studies will shine light upon it.

## **Introduction**

Social networking which is known to be done in person has become reinvented as online social networking wherein this new trend has an upswing due to the Internet and web sites developed for individuals to meet people (new and old friends) who have similar backgrounds of interests, to reacquaint with others, and search people for employment opportunities as well as employers are posting open positions via their online social networking group. The online social networking involves various web sites to induct online community groups wherein four of them are to be explored and scrutinize how they vary. These social networking sites have succumbed to be a recruiting tool for both the applicant and the employer. The general employment sites are in competition with these free sites that can obtain untraditional information from an individual. The online social networking does have positive and negative aspects in recruiting and applicant searching to be examined. However, if one is not in-tuned with this new trend for possible employees and employers, it may be easier than filling out online applications.

This new trend of online recruiting and selecting human capital is the new wave of recruiting and it is free for now. These sites enables anyone to search a company and who works there to see if the company is hiring, to connect for future open positions, and to scrutinize the individuals who have or is working at the company. The online sites is in its infancy age and within time these individuals may induct an evasion of privacy, discrimination, and litigations that may arise from this type of recruiting and selecting for human capital. There are positive and negative aspects in choosing this new trend of online social networking recruiting for human capital and how it benefits all parties involved.

## **Online Social Networking**

### *What is Online Social Networking?*

The trend of online social networking sprouted from social networking however it has literally gone global due to the usage of the Internet. Social networking is the opportunity to meet in groups that have common interest in a various subject matters to exchange experiences and learn from others of theirs. The activity is usually done in person at locations that have a common ground to meet and to develop friendships, professional alliances, and a form of entertainment fro this group. (Social Networking, 2010, para 1)

Online social networking, however, is the usage of the Internet in surfing web sites that have been developed to post information of an individual and their activities to share common interests with individuals they know or to meet new people who have the similar interests mirroring the in-person social networking. Nevertheless, one still has to gain access to an individual that one does not know and the person requests permission from the individual to be a new contact to them. The contacts can reflect similar professions, professional organizations, sports, hobbies, political or other social groups, needless to say, there is similarity between the individuals for the contact to be connected to. Online social networking has evolved to assist those who are seeking employment from those people who are working at particular organizations, from the employers who are seeking candidates, and from organizations reviewing other employees at organizations. This method of contact and connecting has evolved tremendously in the past year to assist one in their employment search or the employers are posting positions and searching people who have the experience the organization is looking for.

### *Four Popular Online Social Networking Sites*

#### *Linkedin.com*

The popular business professional online social networking site of linkedin.com “is the world largest professional network that has over 60 million members and growing rapidly. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals”. (What is LinkedIn?, 2010, para 1) In addition, LinkedIn has been developed to accomplish goals in checking your networks that have connections to make connections to be more productive with people networks in receiving solid feedback for information you need, to sum it up, LinkedIn is people, knowledge and opportunities. (What is LinkedIn?, 2010, video play) LinkedIn lets the user to establish a professional profile, stay in touch with

colleagues, find experts and ideas, and explore opportunities. In recruiting human capital, the area of exploring opportunities would be the area for organizations to scrutinize for employees. LinkedIn (What is LinkedIN?, 2010, para 4) claims whether you're looking for a career opportunity, winning new clients or building your professional reputation, LinkedIn connects you to jobs, sales leads and ideal business partners. With our powerful search engine, company research tools and a jobs board that shows who you know at listed companies.

The web site has a reputation for professionals in landing jobs and closing the deals through their network connections. It also assists an organization to post and distribute job postings in searching and selecting the best talent for the organization. In the profile of one's page a category is just for Jobs, wherein, this is the area for organizations to promote a job, find high-quality candidates, and receive applications.

### *Facebook.com*

The popular social online networking web site of facebook.com has "over 90 million active users and has created a no-frills profile page for the user". (An Introduction to Facebook, 2010, para 5) It was originally created for Ivy League students and the primary usage is still used by students, however, applications are being implanted by third party developers. On this site individuals can post a picture of themselves on their profile, contact information and an *About You* section, The Wall wherein their connections/friends can publicly post messages from the user, status update is for the user to write about their activities, news feed displays updated information of ones friends wherein regularly updated information about your friends, and an area for uploading photos to create albums. (An Introduction to Facebook, 2010, para 8)

The online social networking on Facebook is evolving to network for individuals who are seeking employment and employers are searching this site to scrutinize a potential applicant or current employee. Chris Russell has created four recruiting tips on Facebook in which he is impressed on how this site is a gold mine for a recruiting tool for employers. (An Introduction to Facebook, 2010, para 3)

Tip #1: Create a group on Facebook. Post your apply info, list your latest jobs, build the group into a marketing tool. Use the same kind of content and consider adding unique content for the Facebook audience (internship opportunities, video, etc.)

Tip #2: Target boomerangs or ex-employees by courting them with a Facebook group. The group section of the popular social networking site is filled with groups of former company alumni. Promote the group among your current employees and encourage them to tell former employees that they are still in touch with. The group will slowly start to populate itself.

Tip #3: Assign your recruiters to the specific regional networks you are hiring in. If you have offices in Birmingham, Bangor and Eugene, then have one of your recruiters join those networks. Once joined, you can take advantage of network features like the marketplace and events calendar to promote your jobs and hiring efforts.

Tip #4: Advertise. Ads com in two flavors: Social Ads and Facebook pages. You can advertise an external URL like your career site or an internal Facebook page which keeps users on the Facebook site. Advertisers can list ads for as little as \$5 on a CPC or CPM basis. What's great about Facebook ads are that you can target certain keywords, demographics and even other workplaces. Imagine being able to display ads in front of your competitors' employees. (An Introduction to Facebook, 2010, para 4-7)

The main agenda to using Facebook as a recruiting tool in recruiting human capital is to communicate and connect to the users the organization is seeking and to build, establish and maintain a relationship and become an employer of choice for the future. (An Introduction to Facebook, 2010, para 8)

#### *Koda.us*

The newest of job sites Koda.us has a “different twist on social recruiting. It's like a hybrid of social Facebook and professional LinkedIn. Like Facebook, user profiles have photos. After you sign up, you can add video and descriptive information about yourself, along with basic resume information” (Koda-Koda.us Social Recruiting, 2010, para 1). Their tag line demonstrates Koda.us is the “opportunity community for one to connect with employers and launch ones career. This site allows one to create a profile to highlight their skills, background, and personality, however, it allows one to upload videos, images, and web sites” (Koda-Koda.us Social Recruiting, 2010, para 2). For the organizations to recruit potential candidates this site enables them to post positions, company information in written format, videos, or images, also the information of the hiring process for applicants. Information of this site portrays this site is for “young job candidates who have created profiles that allow employers to learn about their unique attributes - the characteristics that typically aren't revealed until the interview process begins” (Koda-Koda.us Social Recruiting, 2010, para 4). For the job seeker this site has over 450 organizations to review as well as their open positions. For the employer, they are able to review the profiles of the users, watch their *resume videos*, and see their experience and background.

#### *Twitter*

Meher (2010) stated there are over 3,300,000 registered users and counting, Twitter is a great tool to network, engage and market yourself and your company to a large audience of people that actually want to hear from you. For staffing and recruiting

professionals, Twitter is a quick, easy, and direct way to tap into both active and passive candidate pools plus network with employers who may be interested in your services somewhere down the road (if not today).

Twitter has a list of twelve items that can be useful for ones organization to assist in recruiting in marketing the company to connecting to potential candidates.

1. Build your network and connect with colleagues,
2. Market your products or services,
3. Answer and ask questions,
4. Announce contests or giveaways,
5. Ask or provide feedback,
6. Provide customer service and support,
7. Share resources, tips, tricks, and thought leadership,
8. Post news and events from your company or industry,
9. Post interesting resources,
10. Post company blogs or link up to blogs,
11. Inform of new job openings,
12. And much more to be creative. (Meher, 2010)

In addition to this free site, they have created Tweetmark to either post classifieds for companies or sell items through a tweet. The employer is able to send out jobs to friends of the open position as well as tweets that can be like a domino effect as the power of 10 - one person tells ten individuals and so on.

## General Job Sites

### *Monster.com*

The site of Monster.com is described by Hamel (2010) as in how it operates is similar to any other job search and networking website--it provides a place for those seeking work to browse listings of jobs from potential employers based on a wide variety of search parameters such as location, experience level and industry. Job search sites also allow applicants to apply for positions directly through the job search site.

However, the employer has tools to recruit human capital in the means of posting a position and reviewing resumes through a search for a fee. In the pages for employers, there is a section has employment search by company and every company that has a position posted is listed. As for the job seeker the tools include “the search database, which lists jobs from hundreds of employers that can be used to find specific positions that the seeker is interested in” (Hamel, 2010, para 2) as well as applying for the position immediately, especially if the job seeker uses the second tool Monster.com offers. This tool enables the job seeker to upload a resume to the posted position and hit submit, in addition, the job seeker can create a profile where an employer can go into there profile to review their experience. This site is well known for both employers and candidates; however, with web sites of Social Medias that are free; this site as well as the other paid job search sites maybe losing revenues.

### *Careerbuilder.com*

Careerbuilder.com is considered to be the largest job search engine site “the global leader in human capital solutions, we help organizations target and attract their most important asset- people. We use world-class technology, data-analysis, comprehensive partner network and superior customer service to match the right people with the right job” (Careerbuilder.com, 2010, para 1). Within their employment section it allows an employer to search resumes, post positions, and best advice and best practices. This job search site also has a fee for employers to post open positions and to search for resumes. Careerbuuilder.com also has stiff competition from the Online Social Medias that are popular wherein an individual can do more than just search for a job.

## **Pros and Cons of Online Social Networking**

### *Pros*

A few of the pros are the ability to stay connected with business colleagues, friends, and family in addition to meet new people and conduct business. Leader-Chivée, Hamilton, & Cowan (2008) state while many employers view social networking as a threat to productivity and block access to popular sites, some visionary employers have figured out how to leverage powerful social media tools and online communities for efficiencies and competitive advantage. Companies may prepare talent pools -- networks of interested candidates in persistent dialog with the recruiting organization. Beyond building and leveraging talent networks that coordinate with recruitment marketing campaigns, companies also may address top considerations of young professionals through the introduction of online communities. (p. 40)

### *Cons*

The cons are unexpected dilemmas of online social networking wherein they affect the individual as in “social depression, loneliness and depression, and social isolation” (Online Social Networks, 2010) However, the bigger picture that also affects a participant is identity theft, harassment, and stalking. The term stalking could affect both the employer and job seeker as in the employer can continually receive messages from an applicant of their progress in the applicant processing. The job seeker could be stalked by individuals they know or not, that is where the privacy settings could come into play. Additional cons for the job seeker is the exposure of their personal life style, wherein everything they post on their page the employer can review, make objective decisions or make a discovery against the individual if it is evidentiary and not unlawful discrimination against a protected class of individuals of their behavior.

## **How to Get Started on Online Social Networking Sites**

The process is similar for each site where an individual creates a profile, gives information of oneself, post a picture profile, join groups of interest, and communicate with one another. However, ehow.com has a few instructions of how to get started with online social networking and begins with one should have basic knowledge of computer skills and web browser skills.

1. Have a purpose, personal branding, market a personal business/service or connect with like-minded people?
2. Determine which information you want to share - who you are, your skills, interests and goals. This information will form the basis for creating your profile.
3. Passive or active presence determines which avenue of a site you interact on.
4. Use caution when mixing the personal and professional and the information you share for each.
5. Always keep the mindset that once something is posted to the web, it's likely to be public forever.
6. Keep your personal or professional email addresses private by creating a special email address.
7. Start Small. Join one site and make connections with friends and family. You can build on this knowledge to join other social networks later.
8. Determine up front how much time each week you are willing to spend on social networking.
9. Practice etiquette.
10. As you get more comfortable with using social networking sites, you can setup links on one site to display your updates. (How to Get Started with Social Networking, 2010)

## **Examples of Online Social Networking and Recruiting Human Capital**

### *Scenarios of Recruiting and Selecting of Human Capital*

The company of Robert Half, a staffing agency had interviews of their senior executives in the direction that the company would conduct their hiring with online social networking. Nearly two-thirds of the senior executives concluded that they would be using the new wave of recruiting that has exploded the Internet offered by the professional online web site such as LinkedIn.com. The company acknowledges that one-third of the recruiting will focus towards the Online Social Media networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace for their recruiting processes. (Anonymous, 2008)

A MIS Leadership class conducted research for Walmart in the way students were searching for jobs online. The research revealed how the students trust the social media networking more than the company's web site when searching for a job in the information systems arena. The sites have succumbed in posting job fairs and recruiting events in Facebook to attract workers in different job fields and career paths. (Elmore, 2009)

A CPA school is recruiting through the social networking online called CPA Island that resembles the social networking sites as Facebook and MySpace. The research introduces the Second Life via CPA Island and describes the emerging importance of Second Life to accountants, as it goes beyond recruiting and continuing professional education. The career path in accounting has also jumped on the wave of recruiting with a 3-D virtual world that demonstrates economic implications and opportunities in the accounting real world. This tool for CPA firms will be able to use this tool to conduct meetings, connecting, sharing, and collaborating with both new recruits into the CPA career path and individuals who made it their profession. (Johnson & Middleton, 2008)

## Methods

In today's market one is in need of the new survival skills in recruiting, business growth, enhancing market share, sustaining a competitive advantage, building organizational capability, and even developing a personal-organizational brand. Jue (2006) explains how to achieve greater personal and professional success by keeping abreast of emerging trends such as blogs (web logs), social networking websites, and relationship management software. Jue (2006) explains the intricacies of extant and avant-garde virtual communication methods, articulating how new online modalities present additional channels for expanding individual and organizational reach and influence. (p. 87)

An individual who is either in the job market by choice or by happenstance, the job search has changed dramatically from previous times. The job seeker needs to stand out from the crowd in their career choice and utilize and expand their face-to-face networking reach, and take advantage of social media sites for online networking. The impact of both job seekers and employers are expanding their searches on the Internet Social Media networking sites to increase exposure. Social networks also have become a key tool for HR professionals to identify leads in filling open positions in organizations. (Schuele, Madison, & Gournick, 2010)

A few studies have explored the direct influence of social networking websites (SNWs), wherein none have examined the indirect influence of SNWs on users and how that indirect influence leads to word-of-mouth related behaviors in SNWs. The review of the third party effect theory proposes that individuals tend to expect mass media to have a greater effect on others than on themselves. It examines how word of mouth communications behaviors links the third party via SNW's, wherein the results supports their hypothesis. The research shows individuals tend to expect how mass media has a greater effect on others than on themselves. The research was a student college sample which results and implications for this study should be restrained to college student SNW users. (Zhang & Daugherty, 2010)

### **Discrimination, Privacy, and Litigations**

The case studies that involve an array of litigations can be summarized from the Social Networks Friends or Foes (2010) information page from Cyberbullying, Friending and Professionalism, and Confidentiality Violations. In addition, for employers a policy may have been written to issue guidelines of using the online social networks in the way an employee should behave online. (Underwood Attorneys & Counselors, 2010) The firm asks: Why should an employer care about what their employees do online? Consider the following situations that could be occurring in your business right now: (Underwood Attorneys & Counselors, 2010)

- Employee's using these social media outlets while at work.
- Employee's posting confidential or proprietary company information online.
- Competitors keeping tabs on your employees' posts.
- Employee's making disparaging or harassing comments about co-workers or supervisors online.
- Employee's blogging about problems at work.
- Employee's posting inappropriate photographs online.

The firm of Baker Hostetler LLP who represents employers in all employee related matters has on knowledgeable staff of individuals who have law experience in all avenues of employment law. Rexford H. Stephens "practice is focused in employment and labor matters, provides advice to employers and management on a variety of employment issues, including the evaluation of workplace policies and procedures to minimize litigation and defends employers in discrimination and harassment lawsuits" (Baker Hostetler, 2010). As for litigation and issues for Online Social Networking there has been no direct lawsuits within the firm towards an employer for an employment decision that was made from the employer using the Internet to determine if the employee was reprimanded in an adverse manner, however, this issue may be underlying in another claim as discrimination (R. Stephens, personal communication, March 18, 2010). The employer does not have to put into policy of how the employer is using online background checking, however, Rexford Stephens stated a policy would be implemented depending on the culture in the way of how structured or unstructured the company is (personal communication, March 18, 2010). Furthermore, if the employer provides an objective reason for what they have discovered which is evidence that is online, printed and displayed and not producing a disparate treatment and any unlawful decision of a protected class this may become a cause to make an employment decision for the applicant or employee (R. Stephens, personal communication, March 18, 2010). Rexford Stephens suggests the employer has a strong code of conduct that is clear and strategic

planning looking into the future for policies and procedures to include how they conduct background checking and informing the applicants and employees the usage of online displayed information in one's social networking media (personal communication, March 18, 2010). This may be a piece of circumstantial evidence of the complaint wherein the complaint is not being tracked in the courts due to arbitration, in addition, if the employer made a decision against a protected category and of this discovery the applicant made a complaint to EEOC, the employer has to give an explanation of this decision in providing an objective reason for what they have discovered and it has to be evidentiary (R. Stephens, personal communication, March 18, 2010). The scrutinizing of one's Online Social Medias can be a form of background checking on an applicant. However, the employer does have the applicant sign off for a background check procedure done by a third party of completion, nonetheless a background check using the Social Online Medias does not have to be in policy since it is not considered to be a third party authorization.

The Hollifield Legal Centre for Women was created to benefit and empower women facing difficulties with employers and in workplace settings. We are dedicated to protecting women from harassment, discrimination, and other inequalities in the workplace. With legal services you can trust, we also offer zealous representation designed to meet each client's individual needs (Hollifield Legal Centre for Women, 2010). The private practice of Travis Hollifield has not had any complaints from applicants or employees of employment decisions with the usage of Online Social Networking (E. Perez, personal communication, March 19, 2010).

## **Pros and Cons of Online Recruiting on Social Networking Medias**

### *Pros*

The pros for online recruiting for human capital are the searching for potential candidates for the organization which enlarges the candidate pool, search candidates around the world wherein a company becomes more diversified, using specific targeted searches, inexpensive with no or low costs, and review online resumes without cluttering the work space as well as storing them physically. In addition, a pool of candidates can be built through creating connections with the individuals within the online social networks.

### *Cons*

The cons for online recruiting is the interview process is online where there is no personal connection achieved, finding a potential candidate and they are not interested in the position being offered which produced wasting time in the search, and individuals posting resumes to fish for job offers and the current employer sees their resume.

## **Conclusion**

The new trend of online social networking to recruit human capital is in its infancy stages with an explosion for growth. The employer has a multitude of advantages and disadvantages in recruiting candidates this method. The candidates who are seeking position have the opportunity to search organizations through their networks of friends and their connections. The expectation of the online social networks is that this is the new tool to find candidates, post positions for low or no costs, and build a pool of candidates. The traditional job search sites are enduring this fierce competition of this new trend and may need to adhere there business plan accordingly to attract job seekers and employers to their sites again. The online social networking sites and the recruitment processes as well as other employment decisions from them may endure discrimination, disparate treatment, and unlawful decisions against a protected class. Therefore, case law will be established and companies may have to rewrite policies and guidelines as well as a code of conduct for these uprising issues of employees using the online social networking while on and off the job. However, it is the trend for now and only time will give the answer of how the positive and negative outcomes that will arise from this type of recruiting human capital.

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