
Re-looking Recruitment Strategies: Use of Social Media

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Abstract:

The Internet has brought in changes the way people communicate and network. It has also forced organizations to re-look at their hiring strategies with the use of different sites. The increased usage of Social media has led to a change in the recruitment landscape. Companies are focusing on leveraging on Social Media in order to attract and retain the employees in the organization. The objective of this paper is to analyze the changes in the recruitment practices of the companies. It also aims to ascertain the role of Social Media as a tool to acquire talent in the company. It is concluded that Social Media is being used as a preferred source of acquiring talent in the present context. It has also been found that companies are using this tool to increase the talent pool and to reach out to candidates who are generally not available in the labour market. It has changed the communication and branding strategy of the companies by making its presence on social networking sites.

Keywords: *Social Media, Recruitment, Sources, E-recruitment*

Introduction:

Technology has brought in a lot of changes in the business processes across the globe. The advent of Social Media transformed the functions in the organizations too. It started with the web based service which allowed the users to create their profile and network with people. It leads to a change in the way the organizations acquired talent. Social recruiting is one of the most discussed topics in the industry. Recruiters are widely using the technology to “make connections” and “attract people” to the organization. According to the Statistica Report, it is estimated that in 2018 there will be around 283 million social network users in India, up from close to 216.5 million in 2016. The major user of the Social Media is the millennials, which is driving organisations to change their social media strategy. 86 percent of working people who are in the first decade of employment will use social media to look for jobs and research employers (Rohampton. 2017). It focuses on the integral role of Social Media in the recruitment strategy of the company. Corporates are leveraging social media in order to brand their organizations as people tend to apply first to companies that makes its presence felt in the job market.

Review of Literature:

According to Barber (1998), recruitment can be defined as “those organizational activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” He divided the recruitment process into three stages namely generating applicants, maintaining applicant interest and influencing job choice acceptance decisions. The generation of application focuses on targeting population from which the employees can be chosen. The second stage is the most critical one, where the focus is on maintaining the interest of the applicant. It is ensured by maintaining some interpersonal contact with the applicant so that they are interested in the recruitment process. In the third step the employers persuade the selected candidates to accept the job offer and become the members of the organization.

The recruitment process generally involves five procedures such as:

1. Workforce planning and forecasting
2. Recruiting internal or external candidates
3. Selecting recruitment channels
4. Screening and selection of candidates
5. Interview rounds of the selected candidates

Recruitment forms a vital function of Human Resource Management as it helps in getting the human capital into the organization. Research has shown that recruitment constitutes the second most important priority for Human Resource Managers (Parry& Tyson.2008). The growth of an organization is highly dependent on the workforce it has. Hence, the companies strive hard to get the talented workforce in the organization. Successful recruitment and selection can improve organization performance (Robert. 2005). In particular, the ability to attract and retain superior employees can lead to a sustained competitive advantage for organizations (Turban,Forret, & Hendrickson. 1998). The emphasis for HR professionals is on attracting competent talent that have specialist skills (Jones, Brasher, & Huff. 2002).

Traditional forms of Recruitment:

In order to understand the current recruitment landscape, it's important to understand the traditional forms of recruitment. Though they have been termed as the traditional forms they are still used while acquiring the talent. The companies have been recruiting through traditional methods like through newspaper advertisements, employee referrals, recruitment agencies and consultants, job fair and campus recruitment. Breaugh (1981) found that scientists recruited through college placement were rated lower on work quality and dependability than direct applicants and respondents to professional journal advertisements. Those recruited through newspapers were also rated lower than the other two sources, but only on dependability. It has been found as a cost effective method leading to a huge pool of applicants. Research also suggests that it doesn't help the organization build its brand itself and may not help in reducing the time cycle.

There employee referral is a source which was used for hiring talent and it has been considered as an effective method of hiring. Research found out that compared to the employees recruited through formal sources like newspaper advertisements and walk-ins, employees recruited through referrals were found to have longer tenure (Breaugh.1981); (Kirnan, Farley, &Geisinger. 1989), better performance (Kirnan et al.1989), higher levels of job satisfaction (Breaugh.1992), and more pre-hire knowledge (Williams, Labig& Stone. 1993) which may facilitate socialization. The practice of organizations encouraging their employees to refer friends and relatives to apply for open positions has become quite common, most likely because of employee referrals. It had gradually lead to the use of EmployeeReferral Schemes in the companies.

The Recruitment Agencies are another source of recruitment which has been utilized since a long time. It started with specific needs from a particular industry and sector and later moved on to serve a wide variety of Industries or Organizations. In executive recruitment, large sum of money is expended on consultant or search firms to determine the suitability of the candidates to a given vacancy (Ryan &Sackett. 1987).

Research suggests that the advantage of this source of recruitment is it helps in getting the appropriate candidate by understanding the needs of a particular industry. But it is not a cost effective method and a diversity of applicant pool is a rare possibility through this method. It is not a suitable method when organization is looking at hiring at huge numbers because of the limited source of pool (Ryan &Sackett. 1987).

The Recruitment agencies are more suited for a private sector than a public sector undertaking. The public sector undertaking makes less use of these agencies (Industrial Relations Services Report. 1991).

Job Fairs have a similar function as that of trade fairs. They continue to be an effective method among employers competing for college candidates (Roehling& Cavanaugh. 2000). They provide both personal and impersonal communication. Their suitability is for entry levels jobs and is not able to attract talent at different levels with multiple skills. There should be relatively less attention to be given to college campuses and to the initial recruitment process (Barber. 1998). The researchers should also explore the influence of recruiters at the job fair or during site visits. Turban, Camion &Eyring (1995) have presented evidence that the host of a

site visit can influence job applicant perceptions of job attractiveness and their likelihood of accepting a job offer.

E- Recruitment:

The technology lead to a lot of changes in the field of Recruitment. The digital world brought a new facet to the world of recruitment. The World Wide Web, or Web 1.0, shortened the search time, costs and offered method of information for candidates (Salmen.2012). In the early 2000, companies only had their career websites as their main source of communication about organization news, job openings, and other such details. The design of Web 1.0 imposed a one-way communication style where the web surfers could absorb information from the site. Two-way communication rarely occurred as it was an uncommon strategy in talent acquisition (Salmen. 2012). The online method worked well for many companies as it allowed the employer to access a pool of applicants.

There were a lot of advantages of hiring people through the new mode of Electronic Recruitment. The most often reported benefits of electronic recruitment include wider applicant outreach (Kay, A. S. 2000), faster information exchange between potential employees and employers (Singh, P., & Finn, D. 2003), lower costs of advertising (Zall, M. 2000), data accessibility and availability (Sylva, H., & Mol, S. T. 2009), reduced costs of communications (Lin, B., & Stasinskaya, V. S. 2002), and improved organizational attraction (Ployhart, R. E., Schneider, B., & Schmitt, N. 2006). It helps the employers to generate a large pool of data which can be used for the future positions too.

The drawbacks of e-recruitment are associated mainly with résumé overload (Dessler, G. 2006), increased diversity in quality of candidates (Bartram, D. 2000), lack of personalized response to applicants (Burton, R., DeSanctis, G., & Obel, B. 2006), and issue-related candidate confidentiality (Braddy, P. W., Meade, A. W., Michael, J. J., & Fleenor, J. W., 2009). Nevertheless, an online hiring process is regarded as being more cost efficient, and the fastest route to finding the right candidates, than traditional paper-based recruitment (Lin, B., & Stasinskaya, V. S. 2002).

Galanaki (2002) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on the use of the Internet by employers. Lower cost, shorter recruitment cycle, reach to a wider range of applicants, better quality of applicants, opportunity to address specific market niches, and attraction of passive job-seekers are described as the strong sides of the Internet recruitment. The review also mentioned that Internet recruiting might not be the method for certain types and levels of jobs. The paper concludes that online recruiting is just a channel and that the success of its implementation depends on thorough planning and the use of established HR practices.

The E-recruitment and the advantages were studied in the conceptual paper by Smith, A.D., and Rupp, W.T., (2004), where the authors reported that e-recruitment as a general process is job specific and offers computer-assisted screening interviews and it aids in reducing recruiting costs, time-to-hire and employee turnover.

Linda Barber (2006) examined the benefits and challenges of Internet recruiting. She mentioned the reduced cost of hiring, faster process of resumes, ease of posting jobs as the major advantages of Internet recruiting. The article continues that access to a wider pool of applicants and promotion of a company's reputation and brand are strengths of the system. The article also mentions that a large number of unqualified applicants top the list. Barber also mentions the screening of CVs as a very resource intensive process, and it lacks personal touch.

Social Media:

According to Breugh (2008), since the mid-1990s, Internet has entered the recruitment landscape and is changing the ways of hiring people. It has led to a change in the functioning of the Human Resource department and also the way the job seekers search and apply for a job. The transaction between the two had undergone a lot of change. Many companies have adopted this new evolutionary technology to overcome the challenges arising in the traditional recruitment method in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Web 2.0 was a new wave in the technology front and it led to the evolution of the Social Media. It made it possible for the users generated content onto the social media, within a particular website. “Social media is 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” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social Networking Sites

Initially, though millions of users were there on the social networking sites, many few companies used these sites for recruitment strategy as offline methods were considered better for influencing the potential candidates. But now the trend has reversed as now these sites and their effects seem more promising. Companies are focusing more and more on these social networking sites to share their job-offers. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Xing and LinkedIn are the various social networking sites, out of which the latter two are considered as the niche sites as they help in connecting professionals from various different industries across the globe. These platforms allow the companies to figure out what kind of skills and background the job seeker is having, for whom they are working currently etc. Facebook is also one of the most famous social networking sites as it allows the companies to reach to a larger group of audience. Initially it was intended to connect friends and family but now the whole model of Facebook has been expanded to involve organizations and businesses rather than just individuals. Human Resource professionals can find referrals and do a bit research on the candidate’s profile and behavior.

Web-based recruitment helps to identify and influence the potential candidates and then send them positive signals to tell them that they are fit for the job. A single job-offer message can influence more number of people and can reach to more potential candidates if the receiver forwards the message to his own online network. Nowadays, a number of checks the companies are conducting to ensure that the employee fits the job and is suitable for hiring. So, many employers are using vast amount of data available on social media sites for screening the candidates.

Social media also helps to evaluate cultural fit when it comes to finding talent with that perfect cultural fit. Sometimes the unprotected tweets can be proved as very damaging when recruiters evaluate the potential employees, so social media helps to weed out the applicants who might be a bad fit for the job. Filtering candidate’s profile through Facebook or Twitter feeds helps to identify that whether the applicant is fit for the organization’s culture or not. On LinkedIn, usually candidates who have got endorsements, those who belong to certain professional groups and follow relevant companies & profiles are more likely to be selected for screening. This shows how active and engaged they are in their current profile and such information can’t be determined from the resume.

Social Media and Recruitment:

The Web 2.0 technology has ensured that the companies can focus on attracting talented people to the organization. The employers would focus in generating a pool of applicants but it was difficult to reach to the talented workforce. With the changes in the workforce demographics, the talent acquisition strategy has also changed. The workforce is more technologically oriented and the presence on the Social Media platform is high. This led to the employer to rethink at the acquisition strategy. Social Media Recruitment has a few advantages also.

Costs: Social Media can make a remarkable contribution to the reduction of recruitment costs which includes costs for job advertisement and costs per hire. Gunnigle et al state that “web-based recruitment and early-stage pre-screening of applicants are now common across the world due to the fact online recruitment allows access to a wider range of candidates and is more convenient and considerably cheaper than traditional methods” (Gunnigle et al. 2011). Unlike traditional forms of recruitment, which typically come with a fee, companies can post job vacancies on Facebook and Twitter free of charge.

Time: Time-to-hire reduces with the use of Social Media. It can be defined as the process starting from detected vacancy to successful filling of these vacancies. There is faster posting of jobs, faster applicant

response and a faster processing of resumes. The study will also consider the time of the applicant administration and time for advertisement.

Quality of applicants: After reviewing the literature it can be assumed that Social Media has a positive effect on the number of qualified applicants/ applications as well. It will be operationalized by studying whether the number of qualified applicants has increased or not and the quality of incoming applications.

Diversity of applicants: Diversity is defined as “a wide range of abilities, experience, knowledge, and strengths due to its heterogeneity in age, background, ethnicity, physical abilities, political and religious beliefs, sex, and other attributes” (Business dictionary, 2010). The study would characterize diversity by different background, geographical location, sex and age. Social Media ensures that there is diversity at workplace.

Employer Brand: Social Media ensures building the employer brand and attracting a huge talent pool. The aspirants are attracted more to the companies which has established brand image. The organizations can share the best practices, culture of the organization and the career opportunities available to the employees through social networking sites. Many companies upload videos to highlight the culture of the organization thus creating a better employer brand.

Recruiting people with multiple skills at multiple levels: The review of literature shows that E-recruitment ensures recruiting people at multiple levels. The talent brings with them multiple skills which is difficult to obtain through the use of traditional methods of recruitment.

Conclusion:

Social media has changed the way the companies hire talent. The strategy used to attract talent and communication with the potential candidates have also undergone a change with the Social Media. It serves as a powerful tool for the employers to reach to a pool of candidates whom they would otherwise not reach. The employers work out a strategy to get the most from the new tool of hiring employees. This has led to getting connected to the passive job seekers and help attracting them to the company. The role of a recruiter has changed with more focus on the strategy and the optimum utilization of the Social Media so as to ensure that more qualified and apt candidates apply to the company. The transition in the Social Media from the traditional forms to Social Media has led to companies getting more creative and competitive in the job market. Companies are focusing on designing a Social Media strategy which aims at planning, establishing networks and making its presence felt in the job market. The legal and the privacy issues should be considered while designing the strategy. The HR professionals should be trained in using the Social Media and they should be aware of the security, legal and privacy issues associated with it. Social Media has transformed the recruiting landscape making it more challenging yet interesting way of acquiring talent in the organization.

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