SOCIAL NETWORKS – A TOOL FOR RECRUITMENT FACILITATION

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ABSTRACT

Organizations that strive to be competitive must be able to attract and retain talented employees. In population are not many of them, recruiters must use for finding suitable candidates effective tools eg. social networks. Companies advertise, offer products, communicate with clients and recently even seek employees through social media. Job boards (eg. Jobs.cz in the Czech Republic) now have a significant competitor in the recruitment field - the social networks.

In the USA, the selection of employees through social networks is a common practice because social networks in many cases provide easily and quickly accessible information about the individuals. Online HR programs are already in use which research candidate's social network background and provide recruiters a comprehensive overview about the person. For example, recruiter can input the name or email address into this type of program and after a few seconds have the summary of candidate activity on social media. According to the criteria, recruiters can also find passive candidates via social networks. In the Czech Republic, this is a relatively new channel.

The paper is focused on social networks and their influence on the recruitment process. The aim is to determine whether social networks can be a suitable tool for recruitment in the Czech Republic, as it is the case abroad. The analysis of the occurrence of keywords on Facebook and Twitter was used for the findings. The survey of publicly available information on Facebook profiles was further used.

Research showed that using social networks is appropriate for the recruitment process in the Czech Republic. Although this tool is still in its early stages, the potential is already evident.

KEY WORDS

HR, social networks, recruitment, Facebook, Twitter.

PREFACE

Earlier processes in the interpersonal communication and in the business sector are being complemented by modern tools, recently for example by the social networks. Originally, social networks were the space for interpersonal communication and a place for making new contacts. Today, there is an increased interest in social networking sites by the business sector. Companies advertise themselves via social networks, offer their products, keep in touch with clients and recently also search for new employees. Social networks are becoming an important alternative to the online recruitment through job boards (eg jobs.cz in the Czech Republic).

Social networks are beginning to be used for other purposes than those for which they were originally created. This is typical for Facebook and Twitter. According to Qualman (2011): „Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter changed the way consumers behave, conecting millions of people with the instant communication tool."

For employers, the hiring of excellent employees is becoming a great challenge. In this respect, there are two important factors - economic and innovative. Due to the economic savings, the global crisis and the pursuit of efficiency, companies are trying to recruit their employees by the most inexpensive method. An important alternative to traditional recruitment (such as the job boards) is to find potential employees by using social networks. The important goal is to save money and time in the selection of employees, but on the other hand, the great interest is, that these savings should not affect the quality of potential employees. Related to that, a cost-effectiveness analysis could be used by the companies to decide if the traditional way of recruitment is still the most efficient, or if there is space for new approaches as are social media.

LinkedIn (2015) has issued global trends forecast for 2015 in recruitment. Among other things, there is the assumption that social networks are more used than ever before, and even the assumption that they will become a key resource. Social media will provide a sufficient number of potential candidates who will also be talented.

The number of people in the labor market is quite large. The current unemployment rate in the Czech Republic is around 5.2% (ČSÚ, 2014), which theoretically means hundreds of thousands of available workers. Unfortunately, the people who possess sufficient training are in short supply. Companies understand that talented employees can be recruited from the ranks of passive candidates[1].

Facebook is the largest social network, with over a billion users, making it world's largest database. In the Czech Republic there are more than 4,1 million users of Facebook. (Allin1social, 2015) Twitter has already surpassed 300,000 users in the Czech Republic in 2015. (Jobspin, 2015)

RESEARCH

Two quantitative research surveys were conducted, with the aim of finding out whether social networks are a suitable tool for recruitment in the Czech Republic.

In the first phase of research, we went through 1400 Facebook profiles of users from different Facebook groups. We were focused on information which is public for other Facebook users (not friends of friends). The data were collected by students engaged in courses focused on New Media and PhD student at KSA Ing. Ludmila Malinova.

They collected publicly available information (age, education, residence, employment, as well as whether they have public photos, posts on the wall, friends list, liked pages/ groups) and stored them in a structured Excel file. The term "publicly" means that the data is available to all Facebook users.

Subsequent research was conducted by collecting data through a web application, which sought chosen keywords that users on social networks used in the search and offering of employment. The automatic collection of keywords by the web application lasted for three months, from March to June. The application was programmed by a student at KSA. The research was conducted only for Facebook and Twitter. Unfortunately, for technical reasons, LinkedIn could not be included. Data collection was anonymous, so we do not possess a more detailed demographic data (age, sex, education, etc.). Study focused only on the Czech Republic, because the keywords were chosen only in the Czech language. Keywords were sought in all cases and persons.

Keywords were divided into three groups. The first group contained only words „work" and „employment". The second group of keywords was focused on finding work. The last group consisted of words related to job offers.

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[1] Candidates who do not actively search for a new job. If, however, they got a better job offer, they would probably accept it.

DISCUSSION

From the previous research, which followed up public profiles on Facebook, it was found that the 62% of users have visible information on their profiles . These people have mainly public information about their education (91.5%), photos (62.5%) and liked pages/groups (61.3%). The least shared information is relationship (29.1%). HR departments are primarily interested in photos and liked pages/groups, from which they can get useful information for the recruitment process. Alternatively, they can make a decision whether to invite the candidate for an interview. Of the total sample, 47% of users from the research publicly show the number of Facebook friends . On average, each user has 399 friends. The standard deviation is 324.4 and median is 327. It presents a normal distribution, as shown in the friend histogram below o. The peak of the normal distribution is between 200 and 400 friends, see Figure 1.
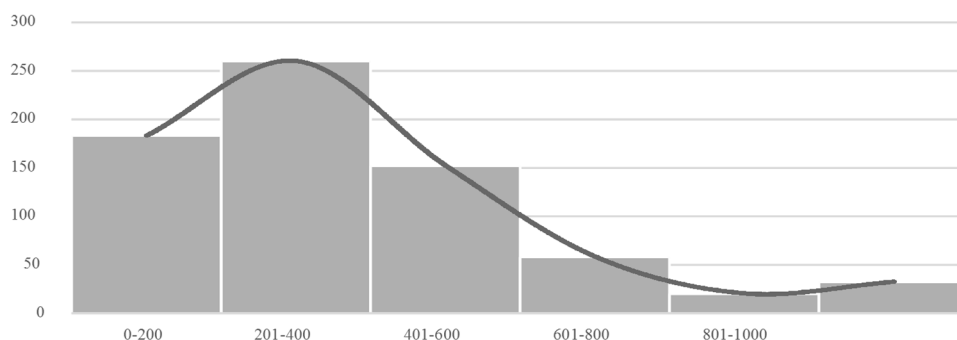

Figure 1: Histogram of the Number of Facebook friends with normal distribution (Bohmova, Malinova, 2013)

Figure 1 shows that HR specialists can see the social surroundings of approximately every second candidate. It is very probable that within the number of "friends" there will be someone from the candidates' current or previous job. HR specialists can use them as a reference for the candidate.

The results of the analysis of keywords are shown in Table 1. Average daily occurrence of keywords from the first group (labor, employment, etc.) on the social networks is 1213 times (Facebook 950 times and Twitter 262 times). On average, in one day job seekers used keyword phrases in search of work 116 times on both social networks. On the other hand, the phrases about job offers from persons and companies looking for new employees occured 68 times on average per day. This means that labor demand is prevailing over labor supply. If we focus on a specific period in which keywords were mostly used, the predominate day is Thursday, followed by the weekend (Saturday and Sunday). From Table 1, it is evident that statistics occurrence words have a slightly increasing trend. The reason may be the approaching end of the school year and thus a growing demand for labor.

Labor supply and labor demand is beginning to shift to social networks, such as in abroad, especially in the USA. In the use of social networks for recruitment Facebook dominates over Twitter. The reason may be a wide variety of users (young/ old, primary/ university education etc.) and a higher number of users.

It follows that it is important for recruiters to shift their attention to social media and to advertise job offers there. Recruiters could get a resume from job seekers through apps, for example in Facebook, where users can directly insert their CV.

	Twitter	total	Facebook	total
Employment	3576	23613	5160	85582
Job	20037		80422	
Looking for a employment	1725	4037	2829	6477
Looking for a job	2312		3648	
We offer employment	904	2517	990	3563
We offer job	1613		2303	

Table 1: Incidence of keywords on Facebook and Twitter (Authors, 2015)

An analysis of Effectix shows that the number of users of Facebook and Twitter in the Czech Republic is constantly growing. While Facebook presented a sharp increase in early 2010, t was followed by a slowdown, which is becoming increasingly apparent. In comparison with these values Twitter is growing faster. In March 2013 Facebook had 3.8 million monthly active users, of which about 1.8 million users were really active. Twitter had 157,481 users at the beginning of 2013. (E15, 2013)

Social media is a space with great potential for HR. Czech recruiters are beginning to emerge in recent times. This is proven by the results of the study, which was conducted by LMC on a sample of 234 Czech recruiters. According to the study, social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn are used for business purposes by 24% of the respondents, and by 27% of them only for personal purposes. 44% of the respondents do not use social networks for HR purpose, because they think it is a waste of time. The remaining 11% of respondents are considering the use of social networks in the future. (Jobs.cz, 2010)

CONCLUSION

Social networks don´t serve only for entertainment purposes, they are also used for commercial purposes. This does not only apply for advertising, but also for obtaining information and HR utilization , especially for recruitment.

HR professionals use social networks as a complementary recruitment tool. They are seeking various details of professional and private information of candidates, especially references and work experience.

Social networks registered this trend and skillfully adapted. The largest social networks(Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) have developed new tools for effective connection with the labor market. Facebook is primarily used by HR professionals who want to know more personal information about the candidates, more than from LinkedIn, cover letter or a resume.

Social networks are used as a common resource for finding employees abroad, although it is obvious that in this way it is difficult to search for all types of professions. LinkedIn (2015) has issued global trends forecast for 2015 in recruitment with the assumption that social networks will be more used than ever before, and even will become a key source of information. In the Czech Republic, the usage of social networks for hiring process is at the beginning stages, but their great potential is already evident.

Based on the research and the secondary data obtained, is evident that the increase in the importance of social networks is indisputable. Facebook users carelessly publish a lot of personal information. More than 60% show their photos and around 50% of them have their „walls" open for all Facebook users. A similar percentage of users show the list of their friends publicly. Words related to the supply and demand for employment are very often used on Facebook and Twitter. On average, the words such as labor, job, etc. occured 1213 times per day in our sample. In conclusion, social media are a suitable supplemental tool for recruitment in the Czech Republic.

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