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SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACTS ON PERSONNEL COMPETENCE AND CAPABILITY BUILDING SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

The widespread use of social media has evaded all aspects of employees' life, including their work life. This article explores the impact of social websites on organizations' Human Resource Management activities. This theoretic discourse outlines the opportunities accorded by social media for the enhancement of capability building systems in companies, with respect to internal branding, collaboration, communication, recruitment and talent management.

INTRODUCTION

We tend to visualize social media from personal viewpoint rather than a business perspective. However, the fact is that social media has fully established itself in business organizations. Apart from marketing, data analysis and other operational processes, social media is evolving as a major tool for human resource management in organizations. Regardless of the type, life cycle and functional area of an organization, social media plays a significant role in managing the human capital. The impact of social media in HR activities is generally seen in the following four areas: internal branding, collaboration and communication, recruitment, and talent management

INTERNAL BRANDING

Social media can strengthen the brand image of an organization to current and potential customers. However, seldom is it realized that social media can also be used to reinforce the brand image of the organization to the most important audience segment, the ones that actually bring life to the brand: own employees. It has been seen that employees are more productive, motivated and loyal to the organization when they involved with the brand image of the organization. Thus, internal branding can be achieved efficiently by using the power social media.

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Social media is embedded with the daily activities of the employees to communicate the organization’s goals and values, thus the direction of the company. It is also used to observe the progress made and praise the achievement of any milestones achieved. A Facebook page or a Twitter handle of the company is the best example of this kind. Additionally, social media is used to publicly identify and strengthen the behavioral aspect of the company’s goals and objectives. Tools like Facebook or the intra-company social internet channel can have information regarding the employee service levels or news about the changes taking place within the company. Frequently, these channels also highlight the achievements of the employees like “the best presentation made for the month” award, to garner mass celebrations along with criticism so as to encourage everyone to strive harder.

A relatively new concept of crowd-sourcing is gathering momentum in HR activities that include social media. The employees are invited to collaborate on an open forum and discuss or pitch their ideas and thoughts. Twitter handles are gaining popularity in this context as the employees can not only tweet their ideas and instantly be heard across the company but also get feedback in real time. This impact of social media has been useful to many companies to improve the bonding between the employees and giving them a free stage to express themselves, where they know they can be heard. In many companies, HR departments have an e-book which highlights and decorates the company’s history along with the blogs that give information about the past and current company heroes. The main purpose of such a tool in social media is to reinforce the work done by every employee. Furthermore, social media is used to notify certain strategic changes before the formal announcement to get a hint of the prevailing sentiment and morale in the company.

The most important impact of social media has been the dissolution of time and geographical distance barriers. Instant messaging and video calling tools have refashioned the work systems by linking the various teams and divisions that work across time zones.

Lastly, all HR activities lie on the foundation of superior relationships with the employees and management. Thus, the most effective way of strengthening any relation is to be grateful. As such, saying thank you to the employees forms an integral part of employee management. Publicly crediting the employees on an open online portal with e-cards and e-certificates proves an efficient way to boost the employee-management relationship.

Thus, the objective of internal branding is to connect the company and employees emotionally. In such a scenario, social media not only aids the cause but also proves to be the best medium to achieve it.

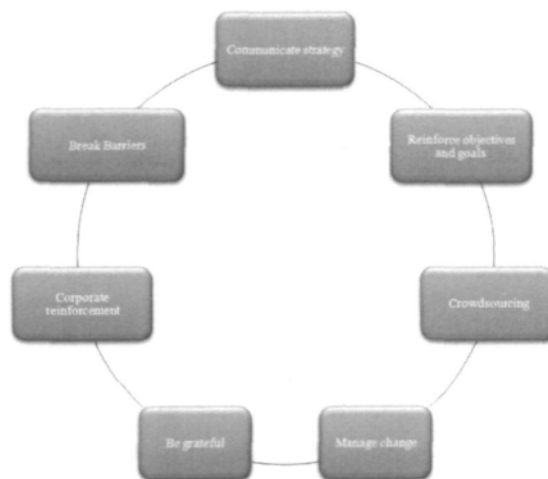


Fig 1: Steps to Achieve Internal Branding

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Today, firms wish to have an environment where information is not just pushed to employees but is transformed into an experience. They strive to connect, engage and take advantage of Generation Y employees. To bring about such generational cohesion, social media tools are great enablers. These help facilitate discussions across the organization to promote insight and drive greater productivity. It also helps improve the speed and quality of decision making process, capturing real time information and data shared by people. Through effective collaboration, the firms can remain relevant in today's employee psyche and get data, insights and information through experiences irrespective of geographical boundaries. As today's workforce finds it more meaningful to engage in discussions, ripping apart ideas, building insights and executing projects with help from their peers, it has become increasingly important to have an engaging platform. Social media offers the platform to collaborate and communicate with larger audience regardless of geographical boundaries. A challenge before HR is to fulfill the needs of the Generation Y. For instance, since they are always connected and like to be on the network, the firms need to decide to what extent this should be enabled. Further, there should be seamless transition across devices and multiple channels should be provided as today's workforce wants to read books on Kindle, access mails on phone and transact through laptops, etc. Firms need to understand how important social media is in their employees' lives and cater to their technology requirements appropriately.

Social media as a platform for collaboration and communication can also pose several threats. Posts on social networking sites can inadvertently leak out the firm's confidential information or give away inappropriate information to competitors. Also, it may reduce the employees' productivity as they are likely to spend hours in unproductive chatting with colleagues or friends outside the organization. Because of this, it has now become important that firms protect their intellectual property and other assets while also informing employees to be alert always while using social media. This can be achieved by awareness training programmes. Also, there can be certain limits in usage of Social media pages in the office work duration. Social internal communication tools can also be provided to facilitate interaction of employees with peers with large organizations. With increasing globalization, the success of organization depends on how well the global workforce interacts and communicates. Social media tools must be used to create a platform for employees to collaborate rather than compete. Social media can be leveraged to engage the most important stakeholders of the organization – employees while also having in place a risk management program.

RECRUITMENT

As recruiters are now turning up to social media to find the right candidate for their firms, these “purely social” media have now become a “business tool” to recruit and scrutinize employee candidates. Surpassing 100 million users on Facebook, India is the second largest nation on the social media site, after the US. Likewise, there are more than 20 million LinkedIn users in India. An important reason behind the trend of recruitment via social media is generation Ys' comfort and adaptability with social media. Indians are ardent consumers of social media. This makes it essential for companies to get their online strategy right, particularly in terms of hiring. Sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, Glassdoor offer new points of contact for companies to locate and target top talent. These have hence become a powerful recruitment tool (Exhibit 1). The availability of information about people in terms of 'profiles' on websites helps employers to know more about the prospective candidate before an interaction. LinkedIn has a good volume of potential candidates; however smart companies also look to more niche sites in order to find professionals with valuable skill sets. According to analysts, hiring through social media was expected to grow by more than 50% in 2014 from 2013.

Another important aspect of recruitment and social media is the need for maintaining a good company presence. In order to attract the right candidates through these channels on social media, Indian firms are now managing their online presence so that they present themselves as desirable places of employment. Companies and jobseekers now have to be aware of their image online as impressions are made quickly and hence they are required to keep their pages updated. For the recruiters, it has become important to find out top Google searches on candidate's name, number of Twitter followers, and size and quality of LinkedIn recommendations. Companies and jobseekers both have to develop an online presence that aligns with their professional objectives. While Social media gives companies a great opportunity to reach out to potential employees for their organization, they must identify the right platform that is most used by their target audience — LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Google+ or all four.

While social media plays a role in searching phase of recruitment process, it has less to do in assessment phase. Social media provides recruiters the advantage of reaching to a large number of candidates as compared to the traditional ways of hiring through resume applications, screening and interview processes (Exhibit 3). It also makes the process quicker and more interactive by enabling real times conversations. Job portals are also playing a significant role in recruitment. At the same time, middle-level and senior-level professionals do not prefer projecting themselves as resources that are too easily available. Yet, application through these modes and social media sites like LinkedIn is more preferred. The impact of social media on hiring is more visible in Fortune 500 and global firms, with companies now posting vacancies on websites and building company-specific pages online. HR personnel are now looking for applicants' Facebook posts, people they are associated with, organizations they have "liked" and worked for, events they plan to attend, books they read, places they have been, etc. Employers are finding such information useful in making decisions related to hiring the appropriate candidate and finding the right fit.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent management has become high point of focus in almost all the businesses. Social media can be leveraged to enhance the communication, collaboration and engagement between employees and organization. Talent management includes following stages and social platforms are very effective for managing the human talent at every stage.

1. Talent Acquisition

Social media is a common platform for advertising the job openings and vacancies. Another aspect of social media is that various companies usually go through the profiles of the candidates on various social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn before recruiting them.

2. On-boarding

After on-boarding, many informal groups of new joiners are formed and buddies are assigned to each new joiner. It provides a nice platform to interact with new recruitments and mentor them to navigate through initial experiences in the organization.

3. Learning

Learning is a major offering of social media. Social media provide various platforms for learning at own pace. In addition to offering training to the employees, organizations formed social communities for sharing the learnings and experiences of the employees. These informal platforms are proving very effective for innovations and increasing the competencies of

employees. Social platform provides easy ways of finding the desired individuals from the network which have common area of interests.

4. Performance Management

Performance of the employees can be measured and evaluated through the feedbacks of customers on social media. Many organizations which are involved in customer services provide options to rate their employees on their performance and provide suggestions for improvements. This component of social media rating has significant weight age in the final evaluation an employee performance.

5. Career Development

Social platform allows employees to make their organizational profiles which help them to develop themselves as professional and guide their career in desired direction. With more accurate database of competencies and skills, organizations find themselves in a better position to assess the skills of an employee and offer him/her desired opportunities to shape their career.

6. Identifying workplace problems

Many social media platforms can trace the present mindset of employees and can be used as early warning tools for HR. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Glassdoor are being used for the same. This helps in resolving the issues or problems before they start to take off and expand.

7. Competitive intelligence

Platforms like LinkedIn provide the ability to track the current status of old employees for the organizations. This helps in introspection and identifying the reasons for why people are leaving the company, where they are going, etc.

Finally, it can be concluded that social media is transforming the approach of talent management and changing the dynamics of the business. However, to enhance the use of social media for talent management, organizations should also address the issues related to digital literacy and competencies of employees and be aware of the risks of social media and find ways to address them (Exhibit 2).

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Impact of integrating Data Analytics tools with Social media on HR Management:

The major breakthrough in this domain in the nearer future is anticipated to be the successful leveraging of social media data with the help of sophisticated statistical tools and mathematical models - BigData.

Research shows the potential of radical change from the traditional methodology. An approach different from those used formerly can be taken. Data on social media and such websites can address the widely accepted limitations of a CV that it does not present a holistic professional overview of the candidate. The resume or CV, or even a LinkedIn profile is currently just providing us primarily the information they want to share.

Not only this, Big data also help employees identify their skills and upgrade it time to time. According to PwC's global CEO Study, 66 percent of CEOs say that the absence of necessary skills is their biggest talent challenge. 83% percent say they're working to change their recruiting strategies to address that fact.

But Big Data will improve first-pass assessment of a candidate pool. It can also throw up new ways to discover latent talent. The data from different web footprints of the candidate is analyzed to generate a much more informative overview of the candidate which can be tested against the job requirements with greater ease. Over and above what a resume offers, these tools can provide additional insight through reputation in an online community, examples of previous work performed, and personality profiles for team compatibility.

It is noteworthy that majority of the physical process that goes behind a hiring activity will remain the same. The hiring staff would like to do things they have traditionally done – interviewing a potential candidate, introducing her to the team, call up her references, and cross-check her recommendations. But the new tools will aid and ease these processes. They can, for example, review fewer candidates and draw up a stronger pool of candidates to begin with.

The amount of improvement that could be brought to this most crucial initial phase of the hiring process will indeed be radical. At the same time, there exists skepticism about these new methods. These are expected to make fundamentally disruptive changes to the way talent is recognized. The real nature of these changes and their impact, though, cannot be ascertained at present.

The data mining tools are also being used for improving the information extraction and inferences from the data available on social media. Many algorithms, tools, and services are expected to emerge to help things along. But the recruiting industry is a behemoth that, in the past, has been slow to adapt to new technology. There is an uncertainty regarding the time it will take to change the HRM paradigms and processes on a large scale after incorporating this. It can be a couple of years, if not more.

The cost-benefit analysis of BigData:-

The cost-benefit analysis of BigData brings forward the following three issues:

1. **Costs Involved:** As it is evident from the above analysis that BigData requires a lot of storage and analysis, which in turn demands a lot of skilled labor hours. The average cost of hiring a candidate can increase significantly from what it is now (calculating tool costs, labor hours, etc.).
2. **Review mechanism:** A further monitoring mechanism for the hires through this process will be required in order to assess the performance of BigData and improve upon it with the feedback. Another analysis would have to be performed on the 'Researched hires' to establish if the approach is actually delivering employees that perform better or more efficient than employees not hired through this process and is the difference, if at all is there, significant enough to justify the costs involved.
3. **Subjectivity:** Designing a measurement plan involving publicly available data will attract a lot of skepticism and raise the subjectivity over what metrics does a company agree on for a quality hire. Another oft-raised objection is whether this methodology is only helpful in getting rid of bad applicants, or does it also assist in grooming a pool of promising hires for a particular position. Data accessibility is another concern because legally we are bound to use the data made publicly available by the candidates on different web spaces.

Using BigData can be of great help but one will have to be as specific and clear as possible regarding the objective which is expected out of it and measure it; otherwise the investment will not be justified by the incremental benefits it will generate.

CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that social media is changing the face of human resource. It is providing unseen opportunities in various operations of Human resource but it also bringing associated risks. It is depending on the organizations now to define their social media policy and create a platform to holistically analyze people and not just filter out by some observations on social media.

Exhibits

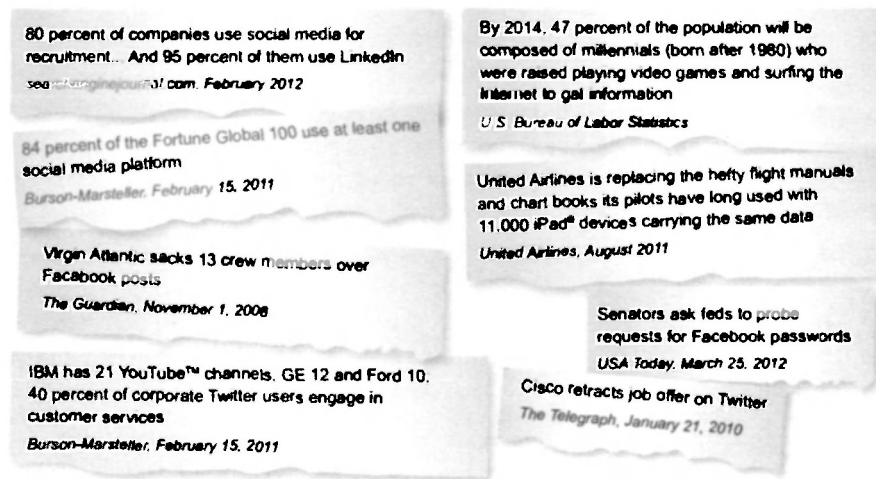


Exhibit1: Excerpts depicting importance of Social media and recruitment

Internal

- Employees inadvertently or deliberately leak privileged information that belongs to the organization
- The creation of public, and therefore “discoverable,” public record related to internal employment issues
- Ownership issues regarding public forums/networks where employees might engage with customers to discuss business issues
- Introduction of sensitive personal information into the workplace (politics, religion, sexual orientation, lifestyle issues)

External

- The potential for viral growth of negative sentiment either in response to organization communications or simply a market discussion on products or services
- Inappropriate or inaccurate commentary on organization financial performance
- Misrepresentation of organization's position on public issues
- Damage to company's reputation or desired brand image
- Data privacy breach related to lost personal identifiable information (PII)

Exhibit 2: Social media and its risks

Hiring tool	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Rank
Résumé/CV review/screen	95%	96%	94%	95%	94%	1
Structured interview guides	85%	84%	94%	91%	93%	2
Background checks ¹⁴	98%	92%	83%	81%	90%	3
Application forms	-	89%	84%	82%	85%	4
Prescreening questions (minimum qualifications questions)	93%	92%	84%	83%	84%	5
Reference checks	-	93%	90%	90%	83%	6
Phone screens (person to person or IVR)	88%	86%	77%	78%	81%	7
Social media searches – informal	-	69%	67%	71%	68%	8
Work samples/Assessment centers	59%	67%	71%	71%	67%	9
Unstructured interviews	44%	61%	50%	51%	60%	10
Social media searches – formal	-	54%	51%	58%	59%	11
Credit checks	-	53%	43%	41%	46%	12
Drug screens	-	62%	41%	34%	31%	13

Exhibit 3: Generally used hiring tools in US