

Strategic Sourcing Outlook: Emerging Techniques and Media

Social Media – The Future of Strategic Sourcing?

It's often tempting to stick with the "tried and true" and focus simply on traditional and proven ways of sourcing talent. However, many of the best candidates already in employment – not to mention that the number of workers retiring is expected to exceed the amount of workers entering the labour force by 2021 – implementing an integrated and strategic sourcing strategy that takes both traditional and emerging techniques and media into consideration is key to attracting interest from both active and passive talent, which has never been more important to maintain the supply of available labour.¹

Why Companies are Investing in Social Media

Social media – primarily created to facilitate information sharing, networking and socialising amongst friends – is becoming an increasingly popular channel utilised by businesses around the world to source the talent they require to meet current demand and growth objectives.

While baby boomers begin to embrace social media (47% maintain a profile on at least one social network)², with roughly 66% of the world's population aged under 40-years-old³, there is no question that online social networks will continue to play a fundamental role in the way businesses engage with, and attract, new talent to their workforce.

And it appears students are of the same view – while some employers are yet to discover the value of social media in finding and attracting talent, 79% of students say social networking sites are key to employers engaging with candidates.⁵

According to our recent poll which asked 634 job seekers whether they currently use social media when looking for jobs, 43% responded yes, 24% indicated that they might consider using it in the future, and 25% responded no. 8% were unclear on what social media was, indicating that further education may increase engagement. Overall, the results highlight the enormous potential of social media as a strategic sourcing tool, now, and into the future.

Whether social media is used as a means of recruiting talent, to address customer-care issues and increase brand loyalty, or to comment on current affairs, a quick look at facebook, Linkedin and Twitter activity demonstrates the sheer power of social media as a platform to spread messages on a national, and global scale - quickly!

The Power of Social Media

- The 2011 Royal Wedding saw more than 300 tweets per second, 74 facebook status updates per second, and more youtube views than the entire population of the UK.⁶
- Within 24 hours of the 2011 Queensland flood disaster in Australia, the Queensland Police Service facebook page received a record 39 million story views (the equivalent of 450 hits per second). Furthermore, their facebook followers rose from 23,000 to 165,000.⁷
- Following the death of Osama Bin Laden in 2011, Twitter announced that it recorded a peak of 5,106 tweets sent per second. While it's an impressive figure, it falls short of the 5,530 tweets per second recorded during the Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami, and the 6,939 tweets per second recorded on New Year's Eve.⁸
- In 2010, LinkedIn recorded nearly two billion "people searches", demonstrating the number of networking opportunities actively sought.⁹

Maximising the Benefits, whilst Managing the Risks

When used correctly, and responsibly, there is no question that social media can offer brands a wealth of benefits, including the capacity to cost-effectively educate customers and media about company-related issues, support product/service sales and events, address customer care issues, and as such build closer relationships with customers to develop brand loyalty – or in the case of facebook, “like”ability.

We all intuitively know what likeability means. But what does it mean for a brand to be “liked” or “followed” by “fans” on facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter? Research indicates that 90% of people are influenced by the recommendations of their friends, family and associates more so than any other form of advertising and marketing.⁴ So, now more than ever brands must demonstrate core values of responsiveness, transparency and “like”ability across social media in order to maximise word of mouth advocacy. And this is also true for employer brands looking to source talent through social media.

There are a number of benefits that can be achieved by HR professionals who invest in social media to complement the recruitment process:

CHANDLER MACLEOD'S TOP 5 REASONS WHY HR PROFESSIONALS SHOULD BE INVESTING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

1. **Targeting:** To maximise the opportunities (B2B and B2C) that social media provides to target key demographics to meet campaign-specific objectives.
2. **Engagement:** To establish a dialogue that informs and attracts talent, whilst monitoring brand sentiment in real time to build closer relationships, and ultimately generate word of mouth advocacy. Social media can also be used to encourage current employees to be more actively engaged with candidates.
3. **Cost Effective:** Utilising the various forms of social media to run a recruitment campaign is a cost-effective solution, when compared to other (particularly print) forms of media. It is also a cost-effective value add, to complement other mediums utilised in a campaign.
4. **Flexible:** The implementation of social media recruitment campaigns is flexible – you can identify weaknesses and shift focus easily.
5. **Measurement:** Digital initiatives can be measured against spend to provide accurate return on investment.

The idea of social media is still a new, and perhaps daunting concept for some. In our view, the key to success is to listen to your candidates, deliver value, excitement and surprise. And most importantly, engage your candidates and help them spread the word.

Still unsure where to start? Well, here are the 5 universal laws to maximise employer brand “like”ability across social media:

1. Be strategic, not just experimental – have a goal and set some benchmarks!
2. Ask what your customers and candidates want, listen to what they say, and deliver.
3. Use relevant, up to date and useful content that benefits your candidates and drives conversation – share advice and ask questions.
4. Appreciate your “fans” and “followers”.
5. Establish a point of difference from your competitors.

***Twitter** has more than 200 million active users, 460,000 new sign ups per day, and 155 million “Tweets” per day.⁸*

***LinkedIn** has 100 million members in over 200 countries and territories, and more than 2 million companies have LinkedIn Company Pages.⁹*

***facebook** has more than 500 million active users, 70% of which are located outside the United States and 50% of which log on in any given day. Statistics revealed by facebook indicate that in total 700 billion minutes are spent on facebook per month.¹⁰*

Taking into consideration the capacity social media has to provide mass communication to audiences around the world, and the speed at which an individual message can be spread (or commented on), naturally there is scope for disaster. When social media is used incorrectly, the consequences can be detrimental to a brand, and a recruitment campaign.

Appointing a social media professional to manage these platforms is crucial to maintaining some level of control over what is being said about your brand, and your campaign – which of course is there for all to see!

To Jump in with Both Feet, or No Feet?

While it is necessary for HR professionals to research how their competitors are engaging with candidates through social media, it is equally important to strategically aim to achieve a point of difference.

In our view, there is no benefit to jumping in with both feet and simply following what your competitors are doing before having a clear picture as to where you are going, and how you are going to get there. Having a defined strategy in place which addresses the platforms that are going to add the most value to a brand, and any associated campaigns is crucial to successfully delivering on your recruitment objectives.

Take Away Tip #1:

- ✓ Engage a Digital Marketing expert to ensure your employer brand is represented positively online.



STRATEGY

When you have a focused plan to accomplish goals and objectives - from beginning to end.

Vs

TACTICS

The specific actions and schedules you use to fulfill your strategy, remembering that if you have more than one strategy a different set of tactics will be required to address each.

In developing a social media strategy, there a number of questions which must be answered:

What is your brand mission statement?

What is your social media mission statement?



MISSION

Define your goals, and objectives



STRATEGY

Which tools and social media platforms are going to offer you the most likelihood of achieving your strategy?



TACTICS

What type of content is best suited to your chosen social media platforms?



ACTIVATION

Take Away Tip #2:

- ✓ Follow what's right for your brand and campaign, not your competitors.



Finally, measure, report & adapt your strategy and tactics if they fail to meet business objectives, and of course, to proactively respond to external forces which may impact your success.

A One Size Fits All Solution?

One of the key challenges that HR professionals face is identifying which social media platform/s are going to offer the most benefit to their employer brand.

According to our recent poll which asked 314 job seekers which social media platform they use first when searching for career opportunities, 24% stated that their preference was Facebook, 16% preferred LinkedIn, and 1% preferred Twitter. While 59% of this sample stated that social media was not currently their first preference when searching for career opportunities, we must not forget the 67% of job hunters from our earlier poll who indicated they either currently use social media, or expressed interest in using social media to source jobs.

While the statistics provide an interesting insight into this particular sample of job seekers, it is important for employer brands to remember that there is no one size fits all solution. While Facebook may have been the preference amongst this sample, the online (and offline) behaviours of a different sample may lead to them preferring an alternate platform such as LinkedIn.

When identifying how to most effectively target your key audience, it is important to first research which platforms are available to you.



LINKEDIN

LinkedIn was established to facilitate networking between businesses and professionals. With over 100 million members across 200 countries and territories, LinkedIn represents a valuable professional demographic for HR Managers to connect with. It is one of the fastest growing social networks on the web, adding new users at the rate of one each second.

LinkedIn counts executives from all 2010 Fortune 500 companies as members, and its hiring solutions were used by 73 of the Fortune 100 companies as of March 22, 2011.⁹



FACEBOOK

Facebook was established as a platform that allows people to communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and coworkers. With over 500 million active users, it is one of the most-trafficked sites in the world. Best geared towards candidates, it offers HR employers the opportunity to target key demographics by age, gender and location, as well as by their behavioural qualities, which takes into account their "likes" and "interests".¹⁰



TWITTER

Twitter has the capacity to connect HR Managers with candidates in real-time to quickly share information on their brand, or particular roles via what Twitter calls a "Tweet" (a 140 character dialogue which users have the chance to comment on). The platform offers HR Managers the chance to reach an engaged audience of "followers", gather real-time market intelligence and feedback, and build relationships with candidates.

Now that you have a deeper understanding of the platforms and their functional capabilities, it is important to consider your target audience's online (and offline) behaviours, and establish which platform is likely to most effectively lend itself to this candidate group, to ensure you will be achieving adequate reach.⁸

Take Away Tip #3:

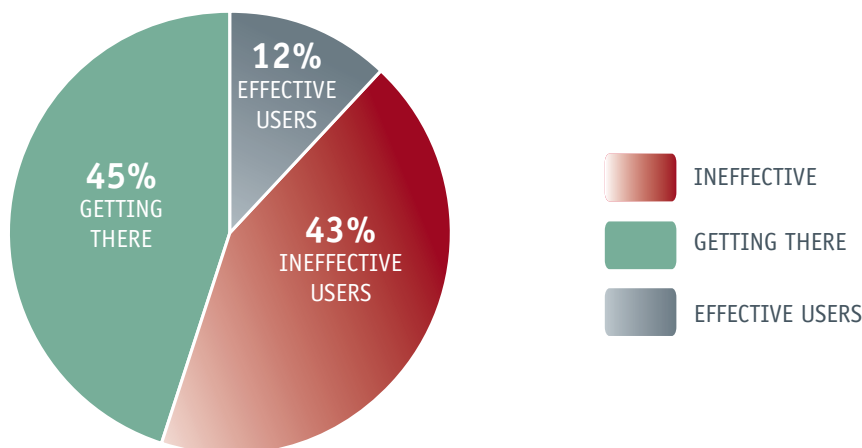
- ✓ The key to sourcing talent online: understand their offline behaviours.



Social Media Effectiveness – A White Elephant in your Business?

Research from the Harvard Business Review Analytics Services report “The New Conversation: Taking Social Media from Talk to Action”, which surveyed 2,100 companies, uncovered that 79% of companies are currently using, or planning to use social media.

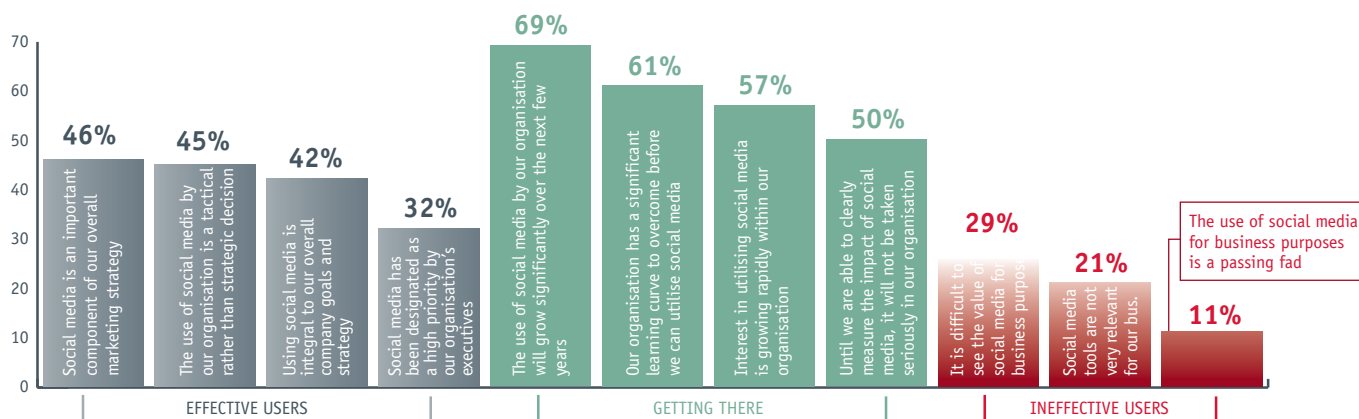
However a concerning 12% believe they are using the platforms effectively.



Source: Harvard Business Review Analytics report “The New Conversation: Taking Social Media from Talk to Action”

While 61% of the companies surveyed indicated that their organisation has a significant learning curve to overcome before they engage in social networks, 57% stated that the interest in utilising social media was growing rapidly within their organisation. Furthermore, 69% indicated that their use of social media will grow significantly over the next few years.¹¹

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the following statements:



Source: Harvard Business Review Analytics report “The New Conversation: Taking Social Media from Talk to Action”

The key challenges raised by the companies who participated in the survey included being able to understand the potential of social media to their business, and then linking social media activities to ROI.¹¹

What Does Success Look Like and how do you Measure it?

The advent of digital marketing and social media has introduced a new dynamic into a market that is scrambling to provide unique solutions to source talent and provide real value for their customers.

It's obvious that social media provides a cost effective platform to engage with potential employees, so it's understandable that numerous digital sourcing "experts" are jumping at the chance to represent your businesses in this dynamic new market.

As a highly discussed topic online, sorting through the clutter to realise the true value of social media to your employer brand is a major challenge for businesses, resulting in many becoming cynical, and perhaps losing sight of the fact that social media can have a positive impact on your recruitment efforts.

So how can you determine whether a social media strategy is proving beneficial to your employer brand?

Consider the following key measures:

Traffic

Has social media worked effectively as a platform to generate traffic back through to your website?

Candidate / Customer engagement

How many "fans", "likes", "mentions" and "followers" is your current social media strategy generating?

Is your conversation strategy generating quality feedback?

PR

Has your social media activity been recognised in a positive light by external sources?

Leads

How many leads does your current social media strategy generate?

Applications

How many job applications does your current social media strategy generate?

Quality of Candidates / Placement

Are you attracting a quality pool of talent through your social media strategy? How many of your applications are turning into placements?

Return

Are you delivering on your strategy and generating placements? Is social media proving to be a cost and time effective recruitment solution?

In our view, the real value associated with social media is not just the perceived "ROI", but the opportunity to adapt sourcing initiatives to incorporate the behaviours of potential employees. By identifying the digital behaviours of potential talent, we can target our messages and tighten spend.

How powerful could your "tweets", "likes" and "fans" be if you could leverage the behaviours of your target employees, online?

The fundamentals of demographic profiling that have been used and proven over many years still apply. But the dynamic nature of the digital world opens up new opportunities to employers in targeting and reinforcing their employer brand and talent sourcing (and even hiring and onboarding) strategies via non-traditional means.

In a recent campaign conducted by Chandler Macleod for a large Sydney-based manufacturing facility, applications resulting from a combination of social media, online microsite and job board advertising, outstripped applications from job board advertising alone, by 50% (481 applicants vs 200 applicants).

Take Away Tip #4:

✓ Measure, review, refine and adjust your strategy to ensure you are meeting business objectives.



CHANDLER MACLEOD'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO EMPLOYER BRANDS LOOKING TO UTILISE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILING AND DIGITAL MEDIA TO SOURCE AND ATTRACT TALENT

1. Know your business – understand what type of business you are trying to build and the behaviours required of key performers to support that
2. Know your target market – understand your key performers, identify opportunities to support their behaviours and retain their talent
3. Carry the approach and intelligence around employee online behaviours through your hiring, onboarding and management practices
4. Measure, review, refine and adjust – the great thing about the digital environment is its flexibility and cost effectiveness. Use this to your advantage to change your approach as the behaviours of those you seek evolve (and they will)
5. Engage the right subject matter experts – not all digital strategists or talent sourcing partners are equal.

About the Research

Chandler Macleod's research comprised a combination of primary and secondary research.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The Study was conducted online amongst two separate samples of active job seekers:

- 634 Chandler Macleod active job seekers.
- 314 Chandler Macleod active job seekers.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

- 1 Social Media Daily
- 2 US Census Bureau: International Data Base
- 3 Nielsen Wire
- 4 Target Jobs
- 5 The Telegraph, UK
- 6 Queensland Police Service
- 7 Twitter
- 8 LinkedIn
- 9 facebook
- 10 Harvard Business Review Analytics report "The New Conversation: Taking Social Media from Talk to Action"

