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Integration of Online Social Networking Technology Web 2.0 and HR Function: A critical review

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Abstract: The article gives insight into the integration of social media networking technology Web 2.0 with various HR functions like talent acquisition, recruitment and selection, performance management, employee engagement, and deliberates various risks accompanied with it. Non statistical, exploratory research design is adopted; with help of established literature and researcher interpretation benefits and challenges associated with social networking and HR explored. The paper tries to establish the point that the social networking services have made a really positive and far reachable effect on HR business practices by making them transparent, fast, appropriate, and cost effective with a promise to change the new era of HR in times to come. This article is useful for all recruiters, corporate leaders, HR managers and businesses on one hand looking social networking services as new ways to implement policies and practices and optimise return on HR investment and on other hand maintain excellent work life balance.

Keywords: Social Media Networking Service, Web 2.0 Applications, HR Functions

I. INTRODUCTION

The burst of the social networking site (SNS) is permitting us to connect with people in a in entirely new way which could not be imagined earlier. It gives us ability to share information and disseminate ideas which is actually revolutionizing. The way we feel, think act and behave is all changed after the evolution of SNS. JR Johnson in the article [1] “post social media can change the world through common ground” shares that the power to interact with others after invent of the social media have been awakening. Our interactions through the web, is helping create new business to the most progressive and leading companies and also the individuals around existing framework with new social models through the improved process of network and communication mode possibly by Web 2.0 technology. New modes of communication like internet calling service of Skype, Gmail or Yahoo have turn a computer, a web cam and headset into a video phone. Blogs have become a common way to communication to broad audience and to hear back from them. These ‘social and sociable’ media technologies are known as Web 2.0. Tim O’Reilly [2] in the year 2004 had coined and popularised this term. The term was commonly after that by many authors [3], [4], [5], [6].

The new interactive online system named Web 2.0 applications is the most recent advancement that in the internet [7]. The technology focuses on the common applications such as podcasting, feeds, blogs, videos, pictures, chats and social networking – a more socially connected Web where consumption by people is equal to their contribution. LinkedIn, MySpace, Skype, Twitter, blogger and Facebook are the most used social networking sites in today's time [8]. Online resources sharing such as videos, pictures and docs with an option to tag and comment makes this technology most leading and user friendly [9]. Today people can't imagine their life without the use of social media as it has become the life blood which not only responsible for physical wellbeing but also mental. It's not just to be in touch and informed but has become a way to keep Emotional connection and relations.

2. ADVANT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE BASED ON WEB 2.0

The Information technology has been the most important requisite for survival and success of organisations today, as the fundamental nature of workplace has changed after including voice messaging, tele-video conferencing, artificial intelligence, online transaction processing, electronic mail and virtual offices. So the idea of benefitting the businesses by bringing people online together and interacting is not entirely new. It has numerous list of benefits for every kind of organization.

The advent of social media networking based on web 2.0 technology, commonly named as social media uses advanced internet technology and has simplified information sharing in a way of interactive dialogue, sharing of pictures and video. Communication process through World Wide Web have been revolutionised. Through medley of tools such as web bases communities, wikis, folksonomies, blogs, videos it enhances information sharing, creativity and collaboration [10]. Collaborating and communicating with each other (formal or informal) is an integral social practice. In order to interact with others Web 2.0 site permits its users to connect with other users and change website's content in contrast to non-interactive website. Here users have been limited to passive viewing of content that is made available to them and not of the one which is not available. It enables users to potentially cross graphical and political boundaries in order to communicate in mutual interest or goals. Social medial opens new avenues form other than previous computer based communication system [11]. The alignment of web 2.0 is termed as HR 2.0 regime which leads to success of business and its sustainability. Judicious use of web 2.0 can benefit organisations across different sectors and industries in relation with their HR function [12].

The studies by [13] concludes that the use of Web 2.0 in organisations has greatest effect on knowledge work, cooperation and innovation processes. These benefits will be due to improvement and speeding up of processes as a result of adoption of Web 2.0 technology. Companies look for better integrating and cooperation not just with external clients, suppliers and distributors but also with internal employee's coz they the pivot point of all communications. Web 2.0 makes that communication convenient, speedy, interactive and affordable. Company's which don't keep pace with the expectations of inside and outside stakeholders will fail[14].

3. INTEGRATION OF SNS AND HR FUNCTIONS IN 21ST CENTURY

Online communication has always been important, [15] Social Media provides newer avenues for interaction and is different from other systems [16]. Web 2.0 applications has emerged as new interactive system [17]. Distinctiveness of messages, transparent and trusted sources [18], [19], its access to communication channels and information for all the users like current and prospective candidates of all levels [20] [21], provides manageable and unrestricted two-way communication platforms helps in discussion and building consensus [22].

Recruiters use social networking sites to look for prospective candidates. HR personal are provided with in-depth view of candidate's activities, hobbies, opinions, ideologies and capabilities [23]. Universities, colleges and B Schools are advising their students to set network connections via social media [24], [25].

Social Media is widely used by potential, current and former employees in a way that is unimaginable; in all HR functions from Attraction & Selection, Job Design, Training & Development, Reward, off boarding, Alumni interaction. All the members of the same network can access the profile page of the social networking site (subject of privacy and security setting by the user) where they are registered suppose that if it's LinkedIn where HR is registered than he can view the global profile of his current and prospective employees easily. Now a days it is been used as a platform not just to connect with professional but a wonderful source of recruitment.

Recruiting and creating brand of the organisation for prospective employees is biggest use of social media currently. Most of the reputed organizations are widely recruiting through social media such as LinkedIn Facebook, and Twitter [26]. Since SNS are a most effective tool for information dissemination, social media have become an important tools for HR professionals. HR uses SNS for recruitment, employee engagement, increasing retention, evaluation and monitoring, team building [27]. On the lines of marketing people HR professionals are attracting and targeting prospective employees. With strategic and wide use of technology HR departments can benefits widely [28]

Employee engagement has emerged as the most important HR function. It is said that the employee's performance is directly linked with their engagement with the organisation. Engaged employees are 2.6 times better performers than non-engaged [29]. Social media make this connection between employee and his company stronger as they are more involved and connected. Social network helps to create groups

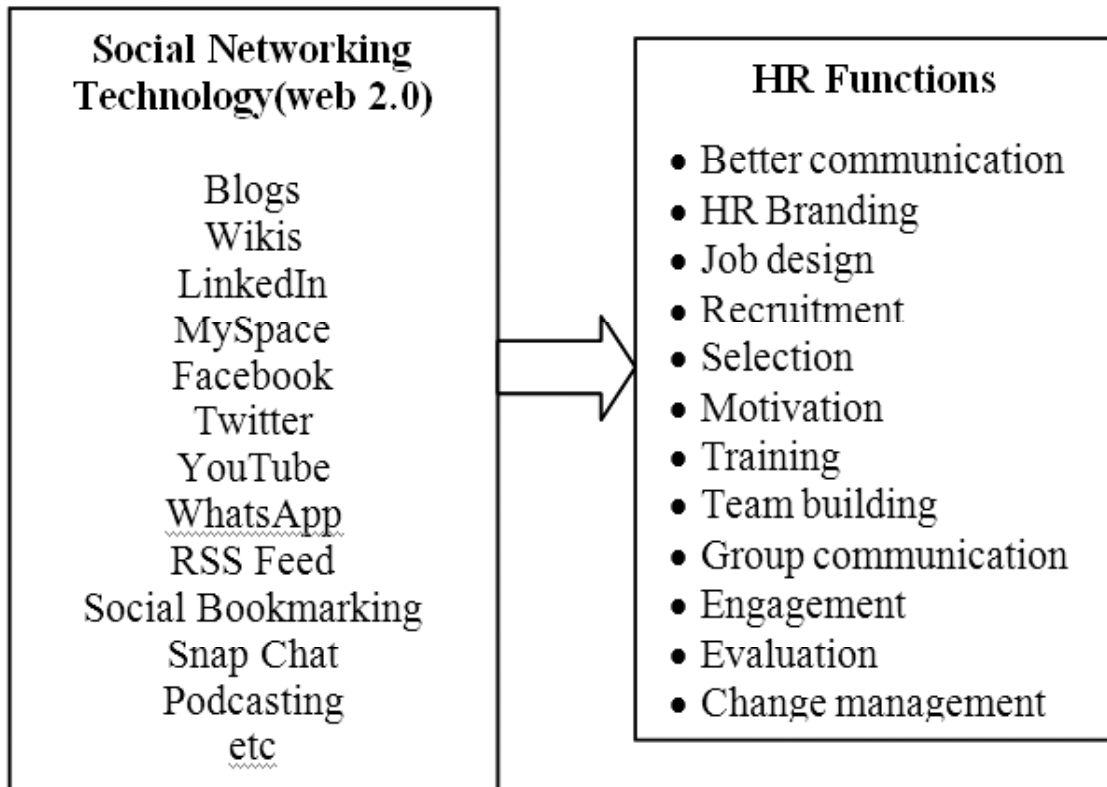


Figure 1: Linkage of web 2.0 and HR Functions

and builds them into teams. Organisation uses this social group information to know their patterns of interactions, behaviour patterns, compatibility with each other and expertise [30]. Such informal communication helps build consensus through dialogic [31] employees are encouraged to solve problems and make better decisions [32], [33].

Job design, recruitment, selection, training and development are all web based in the new era of HR. Figure:1 Above gives consolidated view as to which all social networking sites make HR functions easy and smoother. It was [34] instituted that the Web 2.0 makes impact on managing knowledge, fostering collaboration, enhancing company culture, boosting team spirit, engaging and training employees and internal recruiting. Social Media tools permits for bi-directional communication and to broadcast information it is found to be the best tool. It give the impression that LinkedIn is actively used by both organizations to collect and broadcast data from and to the Alumni or the employees who are off boarding. “Public SM tools appear to be predominantly used for engagement with external groups of employees (future or former employees) and this type of engagement also seems to acquire a greater level of attention from policy and strategy makers within the organizations” [35].

4. IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS SITES IN HR FUNCTIONS

Highly popular web 2.0 based application among HR professionals are Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace and Skype. They have huge potentials for changing people’s interaction patterns at work, thus providing new opportunities to HR for catering to their strategic and operational goals. Like all technologies there are also unanswered issues, risks, confusions, and challenges with each stage of development process at the end of individuals and commercials. HR functions takes the most advantage of it other than any managerial functions. Unlike other technologies it is not problem free, looking form different prospective socio-cultural, technological, legal and economic it has several complications and criticalities. The problems are both from the point of view of employees and employers.

4.1. Breach of Confidentiality

Users of such social media networking sites carelessly use the sites information intentionally or not, could be as breach of employee’s confidentiality. The confidential information is disclosed to the third party that may be a trade secret or insider information. Knowing higher security risks and not having sufficient ability to control over the content over the web top management have always been doubtful about it [36]. Accessibility of profile page by other is bases to connect with people but on the other hand problem on the privacy of them. Every user of social media shall thus be extremely cautious as it is not merely misuse of information but treated as breach of Data Protection act 1998. The term policy of use to Facebook forbids to use it for commercial purposes and using such sites as a source of recruitment is thus offence by limiting the candidature based on special qualification of being user of such sites. Such profile set up for the use of recruitments can be removed off by the SNS owners.

4.2. War for acquisition of talent

This term “War for talent” was used by Elizabeth Chambers [37] and colleagues in their article, which indicates the cut throat competition in attracting the talent. This competition have changed the way the jobs had been posted earlier, and now use of social media posting is top in the list. The social networking sites provide information far more than what is requisite for the job application which is freely available to everyone as it is in the public domain. However information such as Race, Cast, Class, Religion, Disability, Family status, marital status and dependents information can’t be legally asked or can provide bases for discrimination which is unethical and illegal. Therefore recruitment decision shall be purely based on the

qualification and abilities related to the job and not on the information posted on SNS which may be correct or just a boost about his self.

4.3. Personal Conflict

Social networking technology gives greatest advantage of ease of communication and its known that communication is the root cause of all conflicts. It promotes open communication with stakeholders such environment of openness is valuable in this age of mistrust era and intense scrutiny [38]. The identity of the user of these sites have always been in question as they may pretend to be someone else and post wrong information about that person to spoil their image. The profiles of big personalities are commonly hacked by the professionals to misguide others and tampered their image. Such situation may lead to personal conflicts between people.

4.4. Leaking of internal information

The dialogic conversational nature of Social Media with its free access allows for a discussion without top management control and thus consensus through discussion to be created among the employees outside organization's control. "While current HR literature suggests that a strong communication system requires a top-down approach, Social Media's properties suggest that strong communication system can to emerge bottom up" [39]. It is even used in the whistle blowing against the practices in the organisation. Recent events have been reported in Indian armed forces treatment of soldiers and quality of food supplied which was in news highlights.

4.5. Cost and benefit connotation

Though the greatest reason for popularity of this technology is its cost effectiveness but for small organisations and specially those located and catering to rural markets it is still not beneficial to adopt to this technology. Cost benefit results are blurred as it gives the clear picture of the cost of adoption of this technology but does not determine benefits financially [40]. Web 2.0 technology does not require any specialized hardware installation so no doubt it had more benefits in comparison to cost in urban and bigger organisations.

4.6. Global Competitive Advantage & Business Enlightenment

The success of developing economies around the world can be attributed to the global competitive advantages that they have been able to build over the years. Many companies, especially the ones in micro and small sector do not even bother to use the Social media as a part of the regular hiring process. This is so unfortunate, only in the comfort ground these sites can be leveraged. Likes to profile, blogs, forums, communities and articles can be asked for to showcase how they work. For corporate recruiters it

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Employee</i>	<i>Employer</i>
<i>Effects</i>		
Challenges	Privacy infringement Bound beyond office Individual conflict	Breach of confidentiality Whistle blowing Leaking information
Benefits	Work from home Open communication Rapport management	On time communication Interactive discussion Easy control & reporting Global reach

Figure 2: Effects of Web 2.0 from dual perspective

is indispensable now a days that without good profile presence in social media online to serve for talent management.

Through the critical review of available literature the above matrix (Figure 2) is proposed summarizing the effects of Web 2.0 technology from dual perspective of both employee and employer. It focuses not only on the advantage side but also pins down to challenges faced by them. The immense scope of interaction through the web 2.0 technologies has brought in a global sense of a shift of modern business techniques from the traditional. Wim Rampen has noticed a trend, as expressed in “connecting the dots”, referring Graham Hill’s post, “A Manifesto for social Business”, and Mitch Lieberman’s post “Social Just is.”, these posts recognises the network of customers, form the point of social business. The recent trends reforming the business indicated the basic change of use of social media in 21st century.

Technology Web 2.0 is evolution not just in the IT but for all the businesses to enlighten them on the path of success. It is a move to internet platform to appreciate the rules for success on the new platform most important rule the: “harnessing collective intelligence.” Application which can harness network that maximum people uses them.

CONCLUSION

New technologies can be transformational, but to gain Global sustainable competitive advantage today’s HR has to make sure how they will force and enable the leverages of technologies like SNS for branding themselves. The size of the organizations also makes impact to the low level of Social Media adoption, future research studies will elaborate on benefit of assessing Social Medial utilization in smaller organization, as well as the exact quantitative analysis so the present study is limited in that aspect.

Online Social network sites are assuming the role of effective futuristic tool to enhance corporate branding through the advanced web technologies. It is an invaluable tool for corporate branding as well as individual professionals. There are also arguments supporting that success is dependent on ability to encouragement social network to which he is connected to and construct social capital. HR of the organisation has to be vigilant to ensure that the staff is educated and within the disciplinary code of action they make use of social media to connect with the employees so that they remain to work. Policies for workstation use of social media can’t be restrictive but shall be constructive so that people keep up a good word about the workplace via posts, pokes and tags without effecting on leaking out of the confidential information on public platforms [41]. Also to raise complaints within the company to be resolved and appreciation for good HR practices in public for branding HR.

However, the recent surge of information flow through the internet has made it all the more necessary the need to proper knowledge management system. With the changing times, integration of HR through the even more advanced web 3.0 technologies may assume paramount relevance for a successful business strategy to be formulated in the competitive world.

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