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**Recruitment and social media in an international environment: How
social media have impacted international recruitment?**

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ABSTRACT:

The study examines what impact social medias have on international recruitment and how professionals from recruiting agency and corporate human resource management adapted to those new tools. The empirical part of this study was conducted using qualitative research method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among 12 interviewees, among them were 5 managers or directors and 7 senior employees of four companies, two recruiting agencies and two corporate companies, the company are all Europe based. In the study deductive approach was used and the data was analysed to better understand how social media impacted the international recruitment.

The study reveals that social media have impacted recruitment in many ways, especially in the research and selection process of potential candidates. An interesting finding shows that current HR professionals did not really notice the change of recruitment over time. They all agree on the fact that social media made their job easier but did not notice the change. Additionally, social media brought new challenges to recruitment such as the difference of language between a recruiter and a candidate.

This study covers the gap between recruitment and social media literature by providing concrete data that show how social media and recruitment can impact each other. This study adds value to the existing literature by providing data from companies and professionals directly impacted by social media in their daily recruitment activities. Future research can rely on these data to broaden their understanding of how recruiters are using social media in recruitment.

KEY WORDS: Recruitment, International recruitment, Social media, Candidate sourcing, Human resource management, International

I. Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the topic of the study. The chapter will start with the presentation of the study background before moving on to the justification of the research. Then the research question and the objectives of the study will be presented. Finally, this chapter will talk about the delimitation of the study and introduce the literature review and the research design.

1.1 Study background

In the last fifteen years, recruitment has changed. The development of new tools and the expansion of the internet in people's life made it easier to connect to each other. Therefore, companies started to adapt to this new reality and found new ways to attract candidates and connect with them. Social networks are one of those new tools used by recruitment teams nowadays but that didn't exist twenty years ago.

When Anderson (International Journal of Selection and Assessment Vol.11(2-3), pp.121-136, 2003) talked about the new tools available for recruiters to select and interview candidates, he put his finger on a very important point: to what point is it relevant in recruitment to use the available technology? In the past decade or so, the world has seen the emergence of social media, at first personal social network, it is now used on professional purpose with tools like LinkedIn, Viadeo or different data base full of CVs.

Those new social networks changed the way recruiters recruit, select the candidates and it created new biases even before the candidate is met in person by the recruiter. (Ralf Caers and Vanessa Castelyns, 2011). But they also brought new opportunities to companies. Recruitment agency would have access even more easily to candidates and corporate firms would be able to create a strong link directly with their customers via those platforms, and therefore attract new talents.

With the development of social media and new communication means, the companies had to adapt and find efficient ways to use those new available tools. Those media can be seen as an opportunity to amplify the role of HR professionals allowing better employer branding strategy, development of skills or even make managers more involved within the sourcing process. (Aurélie Girard, Bernard Fallery, Florence Rodhain, 2014). The use of those social networks is not the same if it is viewed from a corporate recruiting perspective or from a recruiting agency perspective. A company which is not specialized into recruitment will be more likely to use social media to strengthen their employer branding to attract new talents. Employer branding in the context of recruitment is “the package of psychological, economic, and functional benefits that potential employees associate with employment with a particular company.” (Wilden, Ralf ; Gudergan, Siegfried ; Lings, Ian, 2010). On the contrary, recruiting agencies are more likely to use those social media to search and find exactly the different talent they need among the millions of profiles available online.

The studies that have been conducted so far cover how social media are used and influence our life, but no study truly focus on how social media are used by company to recruit. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse and understand the power of social media in a society always more and more connected.

Most of the studies conducted only focus on how a brand could or should use social media to strengthen their position on the market but few of them concentrate on how those same tools have changed the way we recruit in an always more international and global context. The apparition of social network gave a new dimension to the way companies are working and organizing themselves to compete in an international context. Everything goes faster and further thanks to the high connectivity available today. This has changed the way businesses are run and social media is now even taught in business college. The study of (McHaney, Warkentin, Sachs, Pope, Ormond, 2015) shows the importance of understanding social media to succeed in business.

Lewin and Volberda (2003) argue that a very few firms had developed an efficient way to recruit people (sourcing and managing human resources globally). Nowadays, 65% of adult are using social network (Andrew Perrin, 2015) and firms have adapted to use it in

efficient way to manage businesses. Indeed, the use of social media today is so common that users have ‘to compete for attention and influence by relying on other people to spread their message.’ (Romero, Galuba, Sitaram Asur, Bernardo A. Huberman, 2011).

When it comes to international recruitment, social media are used to attract the best candidates concepts such as employer branding, reputation or image and employment brand, that will be discussed later in this thesis, play an important role and are often linked to the image of the employer (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenshlager, 1993). Though, due to the fact international recruitment is a new concept, only a few studies talk about employer branding in an international context (Lundby, Wayne & Macey, 2012). Indeed, most of those studies focus on a population of job seekers mainly composed of student or focus on comparing category of job seekers to see what aspects of the employer branding are valued the most by the different categories (Franca & Pahor 2012). However, the population of international job seeker is not appearing a lot in the different studies of employer branding and its impact on international recruitment. Studies related to employer branding focus mainly on the perception employees have about their employer and how a strong employer brand helps to retain the most valuable employees. (Franca & Pahor, 2012).

Studies on recruitment companies show that their role is different than the employer’s role. Indeed, those companies see their responsibilities changing depending on their mission. Their role can be to focus on recruiting an employee for a final employer or have a more important role with helping this employee to relocate or provide them with housing solution. When those recruitment companies are hiring for themselves in order to lease those employees to other companies, they are called staffing agencies. Nevertheless, both, staffing and recruiting companies, are usually the first contact the candidates have. Hiring someone from the country the company is operating and hiring someone from a different country implies different process. International recruitment involves a multi-dimensional and more complex organization than national recruitment. Therefore, it is interesting to study how recruiting agency and corporate companies are operating to attract and hire those international profile with the help of social media.

1.2 Research question and objectives

This research will address the research gaps mentioned before and focuses on establishing a better understanding of how social media are used by companies to help them attract and retain the best possible candidate in an international context. The main focus will be on what differences exist between corporate employer and recruitment agency in their use of social media to engage with candidates. The focus will be on how social media became more and more important for companies in the last decade and how those companies made their process evolve to best use those new technology. Also, the focus will be on the differences of use between corporate employer and recruiting agency.

The fact that social media have spread so much over the past decade raise the interrogation of how much and in which way those same communication systems are influencing the way recruitment work.

In this research, the main approach would be to compare how recruitment agency and corporate recruitment of multinational companies are using social media in their R&S strategy and what are their expectation.

The purpose of this research is to establish in what extent social media have influenced or are still influencing the way companies think about international recruitment today. The fact that social networks open the possibility to access data from people from anywhere in the world instantly is a very powerful tool for recruiters. Recruitment agencies have always been sourcing and approaching candidate in a direct way to offer them a position while most corporate companies were establishing well define recruitment process from the application they were receiving directly.

Today, it appears that most of those companies are using employer branding on social media to attract new applicants. The interesting part is that most companies said they “had to” start working and be active on social media if they wanted to survive and get the most talented people for their firms.

In that extent, the purpose of this study is to show how social medias have impacted the recruitment, whether it is from recruiting agency or corporate companies.

To narrow this study, the research will be articulated around the research question:

- *How social medias have influenced international recruitment?*

The theoretical part will allow to compare and confront different point on view on different aspect of recruitment. In a first place, it is important to have a precise understanding of what are the difference of recruitment between corporate firms and recruiting agency. The corporate recruitment is directly link to all the recruitment handled internally by companies without asking any external help. Recruiting agencies are specialised agency that help corporate business with their difficult recruitment or the ones that a company doesn't want to deal with.

With that in mind, it is interesting to study the difference between the recruitment process of those two types of firm and then compare them and ask to professional of the sector if social medias have changed something in that process.

Asking professional from HR/recruitment department will help to complete the theory and have a deeper understanding of how social medias are used and how much they have impacted the recruitment. Therefore, it is important to interview senior manager in recruitment who were active before 2005 and the creation of most social media, then their analyse will bring a real value to this study.

1.3 Limitations of the study

This study focuses on recruitment and selection; therefore, all aspect of Human Resource management will not be studied and any change in the Human Resources Management system of a company due to social media will be left out of the study (except if those changes are also implemented in other companies and is impacting recruitment process a lot). The data collected will come from different sources. First the theoretical part is based

on sources coming from different period of time, preferably after 1990 to keep relatively up to date data.

Data for this study also come from interviews conducted with Recruitment professional who were active in the field before 2005 so a before/after social media comparison can be made. The fact that those interviews might be difficult to obtain is a limitation itself since the amount of interview conducted may not be representative of the entire recruitment industry.

To complete this source of information, secondary data can be used to have a better understanding of what social media represent in term of numbers. This will help to support the fact that nowadays, it is highly difficult to not say impossible to avoid those social networks.

II. Literature review

The literature studied in this research focuses on the changes observed in recruitment in the past decade. The choice of focusing on those changes allows to analyse and understand if those changes can be imputed to social media or not. The theory that needs to be confirmed is that social media have impacted recruitment to the point that it changed the different processes and way of doing recruitment in the past decade.

2. Recruitment and selection

Every organisation needs people to exist. Those people will determine the success or the failure of a company depending on their capacity to develop the business and use their competencies towards the success of the firm.

This chapter discusses recruitment and selection as the thesis focuses on recruitment in international context. First the process of recruitment and selection is defined and discussed before introducing outsourced recruitment.

2.1 Recruitment process and selection

Edwin Flippo describes recruitment as “the process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization.” According to Flippo, it is by stimulating candidates to apply that a company might be able to find the right person with the right skill.

In their definition, DeCenzo and Robbins say that “Recruitment is the process of discovering potential candidates for actual or anticipated organizational vacancies. Or from another perspective, it is a linking activity—bringing together those with jobs to fill and those seeking jobs.” This includes the perspective of anticipation, therefore a company is not only looking for stimulating potential employees to apply but anticipating what kinds of position will be available to get more time and attract the right candidate.

But this aspect of finding the right person with the right skills is best defined by Plumbley and his view of recruitment as “a matching process [where] the capacities and inclinations of the candidates have to be matched against the demand and rewards inherent in each job or career pattern.”

Recruitment is a multi-stage process used by companies to target candidates (Barber, 1998). Barber’s definition (1998) states that “recruitment includes those practices, and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees. In agreement with the other definitions, Barber (1998) argues that recruitment activities serve the purpose of finding and persuading candidates to seek and obtain employment within an organization.

Barber continues by defining recruitment as an organizational function that relies on its capability to connect and convince potential candidates. In Barber’s definition, the two main players in recruitment are the organization looking to recruit a new employee and the candidate. In between those two main players are different individuals, belonging or not to the company, that are in charge or the recruitment by assuming different functions within the process.

If Flippo describes recruitment as “the process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization.”, Barber (1998) highlight how attracting process serves both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Indeed, it is

important for the organization to make sure that applying candidates are in a sufficient amount, neither too many or too few and with the right skills.

The simple fact of attracting talent is not enough to make sure they are the right one. Therefore, within the recruitment process, there is a complete part dedicated to selecting the right candidates.

This process is called selection and is defined by Yoder as “the process by which candidates for employment are divided into two classes those who will be offered employment and those who will not”.

As mentioned before, for dividing those candidates into two different categories, the company hiring someone must go through establishing a “system of functions and devices adopted for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not candidate possess the qualifications called for [this] specific job”. (Jucious).

For Decenzo & Robbins, the selection process “follow a standard pattern, beginning with an initial screening interview and concluding with final employment decision.”

Beardwell and Claydon (2007) stated that the terms recruitment and selection are linked and simultaneous as well as those terms are interchangeable for Barber (1998).

For Beardwell and Claydon (2007), the difference between recruitment and selection is that recruitment can be defined as a positive process aiming to create a group of potentially suitable candidates when selection is a negative process narrowing this same group by applying the different criteria helping the company to choose the applicants matching their expectations. Therefore, according to Beardwell and Claydon (2007), recruitment is meant to attract applicant and selection is meant to identify the best ones among them.

The complete process of recruitment is divided into different stages leading to finding the new employee for the company. On this point, Beardwell and Claydon (2007) have a slightly different definition than Barber (1998). Indeed, for the first ones, the process of recruitment is divided into four important phases that are the definition of the vacancy, the attraction of potential candidates, the assessment of those candidate and making the final decision. For Barber (1998), the recruitment process is a bit different as it is first to generate application from potential candidates before trying to maintain those applicants

interested in the vacancy and finally trying to convince the selected one to accept the job offer.

Barber's definition, as it focuses on attracting and persuading the candidates, endorse a communication aspect that is more relevant for this thesis purpose. Indeed, generating and maintaining candidates interested in the job offer is truly interesting to the purpose of this research as it is related to communication with applicants.

From a companies' point of view, recruitment is the entire process of filling a job opportunity by attracting and choosing from the company or from outside, the most suitable person for the current position or for the future positions. But recruitment is not only one sided, if the company or organization can decide whether a candidate is suitable or not, the same candidate can choose if the company would be right for his career or personal life.

Rynes (1991) proposed that a candidate, at the beginning of the recruitment process, have only a very few information regarding the position they are applying for and therefore are more likely to base their choice to apply or not, on general impressions of organizational attractiveness.

According to Barber (1998), at this early stage of the process, attracting candidates, both parties, the company and the potential applicants, possess little information about each other and are trying to widen their possibility by attracting more candidates when it comes to the company and applying to more companies when it comes to the applicants. On a company perspective, if attracting candidates is a key feature of the first stage of recruitment, Barber also highlights the importance for those potential candidates not to be too many as it would increase the workload of the company and potentially reduce the quality with which those applications are processed by the company. Therefore, to be efficient, recruitment must attract the right number of qualified applicants who match the expectation of the organization.

In the second phase, Barber states that both parties are looking for more information about each other and are establishing interpersonal between employees of the company and the applicants. As mentioned before, the goal of the second phase is, for the company to

maintain candidates' interest and, for the applicant to narrow their list of potential employers (Barber, 1998).

For Barber, this second phase is represented by significant interactions between recruiters and applicants. Those interactions can take place in different forms such as initial face-to-face interview or longer interview within the company building. According to Barber, the first face-to-face contact with the applicants is important for the company in the process of attraction as the first impressions from the candidates about the employees of the company might be difficult to change later in the process.

Another study shows that at an early stage of job choice decision, the image of the brand perceived by the candidate, plays a major role. (Shanley 1990). Therefore, more than the position itself, a candidate will decide to apply or not depending on his perception of the company. It means that with two equal job positions in two different companies, a candidate can decide to apply only for one if he doesn't have a good perception of the other organization.

In this section, the most important information to retain is that on the first two stages of recruitment, the communication between the candidates and the company evolves from a cold, distant and impersonal communication to a more personalized and face to face interviews. In the next section, the focus is mainly on the recruitment process outsourcing used by companies to externalize the recruitment activities. This process of outsourcing recruitment will be reduced to recruiting agency in this thesis.

2.2 Recruitment Process Outsourcing

Outsourcing is defined as “the act of obtaining semi-finished products, finished products or services from an outside company if these activities were traditionally performed internally” (Dolgui and Proth, 2013).

2.2.1 Reasons for Outsourcing

Recruitment finds itself among the most outsourced service from human resources in different countries. There are several reasons for that. In her research, Mary P. Hampton (2011) is listing four different reasons to use outsourcing recruitment.

Among them is the fact that a company wants to conduct a confidential search. Indeed, the external provider can source and interview candidates without quoting the name of the company that is hiring.

The second reason is that the company must fill a complicated role. Outsourcing this kind of position allows to widen the database and rely on experience that might be lacking in the recruiting company. Indeed, the external provider usually hires experts in different field to ensure finding the best possible candidates.

The third reason is to face sudden and temporary needs in recruiting volume. In their study, Siew-Chen and S. and Vinayan, G (2016) showed that when a company faces a new challenge in recruitment, they can decide to outsource a part or the complete recruitment process. To illustrate their statement, they took the case of a company operation in the energy sector in Malaysia.

The company was facing a strong need for additional skilled workers and decided to outsource the sourcing part of the recruitment. To successfully implement this solution, the company analysed their need and chose the outsourcing solution for different reasons such as the fact that a mass hiring would increase on a significant manner the amount of work of the human resource team. This would lead to extra cost for the company since the human resource team can be focused on recruitment only instead of other tasks. Therefore, the decision to outsource would allow the human resource team to continue their normal task and benefit from the external provider experience to identify and select the best candidates quicker than if the process was handled internally.

The fourth reason is when a firm considers increasing their staff. According to Hampton (2011), this happens when a company wants to increase the size of the recruitment team but needs to analyse if the work load justifies this hiring.

2.2.2 Different way to outsource?

The different needs for outsourcing the recruitment implies that a firm will not always use the same external provider to fill a role. The expertise required for a confidential search is certainly different from the skills needed to handle a mass recruitment.

Mary P. Hampton (2011) listed three different type of recruiting agencies: retained search firms; contingency firms and contract recruiters. Each of these specializations has their benefit and drawbacks. The author listed different advantages and disadvantages. According to her, it is possible to associate a kind of agencies with a kind of recruitment.

Then, retained agencies are more likely to fit recruitment situations in which it is hard to fill role or for non-disclosure agreement search as they offer more individualized services. They target more specifically as their database is more likely to be oriented in a specific field. Though they are performing better in targeted recruitment and therefore offers a good quality service for specific role or executive level positions.

When it comes to contingency firms, their existing and wide database allows quick recruitment when the skills needed are common.

Finally, the contract recruiters are recruiters from an external provider coming on site to work for the hiring company. It is a good way for the company to see if the workload on specific tasks is worth hiring a new employee.

According to Siew-Chen and Vinayan, G. (2016), a truly important part of outsourcing the recruitment process is to plan and define carefully how the execution of the process will take place. From the case of the firm in Malaysia, one can understand the importance of planning and getting involved in the recruitment process to keep control and insure the targets set previously are reached. Indeed, a well-defined process is easier to monitor.

2.2.3 The advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing recruitment

As stated before, outsourcing recruitment allows the human resource team to benefit from the external provider's expertise. It also implies that the companies outsourcing their process will gain access to a larger talent pool (the one from the external provider) and therefore increase the chance to find the right candidate. Moreover, the company that outsources its recruitment will see its employees able to focus on their key responsibilities instead of using valuable time in screening hundreds of candidates.

A big advantage of outsourcing recruitment is the fact to be able to choose what kind of agencies will handle the search. Moreover, the fact that the recruitment process itself can be split is a true benefit for the human resource team that can handle only the operational part of the recruitment.

According to Mary P. Hampton (2011), outsourcing recruitment can have important drawbacks when it comes to the cost of the external provider (between 20 and 50% of the candidate's first-year salary). Also, some more specific disadvantages can appear depending on the type of agencies. For example, a contingency firm can be less regarding on sending the very best candidates as they get paid when the position is filled. So, a contingency agency can send more CV to increase the chances to fill the role, and by doing so increase the workload of the human resource team in charge of sorting the profile sent by the external provider.

This section shows how outsourcing recruitment can help companies to be more efficient by saving time to their teams and counting on the support of experts in the field they want to recruit. Though, outsourcing recruitment can also have an impact, positive or negative on how a candidate will perceive a company. Therefore, the next section will focus on brand image and how important it is for recruitment.

3. Brand image and recruitment

How a customer perceives a brand is an important part of the buying decision. According to Keller (1993) and Aaker (1996), a brand with a strong image is more likely to see its products or services purchased than a company with a less strong brand image.

Brand image can be defined as the different associations a customer has towards a brand (Keller, 1993), on two levels: material and emotional associations (Zembik, 2015). Those associations take different forms and can relate to thoughts, perceptions, feelings and beliefs a customer gets towards a specific brand. Those associations are linked to the past the customer had with the brand as well as what he knows about the brand itself and form the bases of what brand image this customer will get. (Keller, 1993)

When it comes to recruitment, the employer image is as important as the brand image for marketing. It is called employer branding.

3.1 Employer branding

Ambler and Barrow (1996) define “the employer brand [as] the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company.” The Conference Board (2001) gave a similar definition: “the employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s value system, policies and behaviours toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”

Employer branding can be described as what makes a firm or organization different from its competitors as an employer. What unique benefits or career perspective an employee get by working for this or this brand. When it comes to attracting the best candidates for a position, the strongest the employer image, the better because a strong employer brand allows the brand to vehiculate an image of great place to work (Edwards, 2010)

The employer, by developing its brand, wants to build a positive image and distinguish itself from its competitors by offering a unique value proposition that potential candidates can see as attractive and valuable (Ambler and Barrow, 1996).

Building a strong employer branding starts with developing the “value proposition” that is demonstrated within and by the brand through the firm’s culture, style of management or what are the specific values offered by the company to its employees (Sullivan, 2002). Once this value proposition is well defined, the company needs to vehiculate it to attract the targeted candidate. It is truly important that the employer brand is reflecting and concurring with all the other branding campaign and effort made by the brand. (Sullivan, 1999). Once the value proposition is well marketed outside the firm, the company should make sure this value proposition becomes part the its culture (Frook, 2001). Therefore, the company can develop a workforce devoted and willing to spread and share the values set by the firm.

A good example of how a company tries to develop a strong employer brand is McDonald France and its TV advertising campaign to promote how the company value its employees by giving them a lot of career evolution perspective. For example, a person hired to work in the kitchen can become a manager and then director of a restaurant within a decade and then get a degree recognized by the French government to be equivalent to a university degree.

McDonald France ends the advertisement (2008) by saying “McDonald does not conceive to hire someone and not train him; therefore, each employee gets a proper training that gives him career perspective at McDonald’s or in other companies”. By saying so, the

company vehiculate a positive employer branding and does not impact negatively its brand image and its motto “come as you are”.

3.2 Employer branding and recruitment

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), define in their study, employer branding as “the “process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity, and the employer brand as a concept of the firm that differentiates it from its competitors”. They compare the brand equity based on customer and the employer brand equity. The first one is related to the impact a brand knowledge has on a customer’s purchase intentions of a product if he has a choice with an unbranded one. The second is related to the effect the name of the brand has on the employees or potential employees.

They state that employer branding is divided into three distinct steps. In the first stage, the company must develop a value proposition showing and selling the benefits offered by the firm. The second step is to share this proposition to the potential employees. Finally, the firm should fulfil this value proposition by implementing the right process internally. Their thoughts are complementing the ones of Sullivan (1999) and Froom (2001) cited before.

Moreover, having well defined and clear recruitment activities is more likely to attract more and better candidates (Han and Collins, 2004). Their study about how a company’s recruitment strategy influences the employer brand equity and therefore the intentions of the candidate to apply, shows that brand awareness is an important factor when it comes to influence a job decision.

As a matter of fact, to consider applying for a company, a candidate should know that this company exists as an employer (Collins and Stevens 2002). In their study, Collins and Stevens highlighted that activities related to recruitment advertising such as sponsorship, advertisement or word of mouth have a positive impact over the applicant or job seeker’s attitude towards the firm.

Moreover, knowing a company is a prerequisite for an individual to form an opinion towards it (Lemmink, Schuifjff and Streukens 2003). Their research showed that being familiar with an organization influence on a positive manner the intention of a candidate to apply.

In their research, Gatewood, Gowan and Lautenschlager (1993) examined if the potential candidates for a job had a recruitment image from the company and if yes, what would be the dimensions of this image. They define the recruitment image as being a function of information vehiculated through the recruitment campaign. Indeed, being exposed to information is an important part of someone's perception of image. Their findings show that the more the message is exposed to information, the better the image is enhanced and therefore has positive outcomes on the future employment. This means how strongly the choice of a job is correlated to the image of the firm.

A good brand image has some advantages for an organization and its recruitment. Some of the advantage are the possibilities to attract better and more candidates for a job position (Fombrun and Shanley 1990). This was also discussed in the research from Turban and Cable (2003) who argue that a positive image of a company would help increasing the attractivity of this firm and therefore result in a bigger amount of applicants in the talent pool.

Widen (2010) examined the nature and outcomes of employer branding. The results show that a company that invests more in the development and the maintenance of vehiculating image of being an employer that cares about employee development, or actively manage it presence on the different website or business magazine as well as being part of different alumni network and offer internships to students is likely to create the perception that this company is a great place to work because it cares about its employees.

3.3 Employer branding and outsourcing

A strong employer branding, as seen before, can create a positive attitude and feelings from the candidate toward the company. Therefore, a candidate is more likely to apply and be positive about the recruitment process of an organization with strong employer

image than one with a weaker brand image. (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). This works for companies that are hiring for themselves, but nowadays, most of the companies are outsourcing their recruitment process for some positions. In their research, Wehner, Giardini and Rüdiger Kabst (2014) show that both, company image and the service provider image can improve (or reduce) the attractiveness of the hiring company as well as the satisfaction of the applicants. They also suggest that an applicant is more likely to see a well-known service provider with more experience and professionalism than a less known one. Therefore, a company cooperating with a well know service provider will improve the perception candidate have about the quality of the recruitment process.

Outsourcing the complete recruitment process also have negative impact for the company's image on the applicant. In their research, Wehner and colleagues (2014) also suggest that companies that only outsource some parts of the process, like advertising and preselection, can still influence in a positive way the evaluation of the different applicants. Companies with strong brand image that cooperate with well-known service provider can soften, if not override the negative effect of outsourcing their recruitment process in a certain extent. Indeed, according to the same study, the applicants will answer negatively to an employer that would not take part in the interviews process (telephone or face to face).

This highlights the importance of choosing the agency that will oversee the recruitment process. But the most important is how well the relationship with the third-party recruiter will be handled. To better succeed in managing this relationship, there are few steps that can help such as finding flexible agencies, customizing the agreement signed with those agencies, setting clear and well defined expectations and defining the way the agency will source and select the candidates (so the firm don't pay double if a candidate is found via a source for which the company is already paying). (Hampton (2011)).

4. Social media

As stated before, in the recent years employer branding became an important part in a brand strategy to keep competitive advantages on other brands from the same market. To attract the best candidates but also the young talented ones from all over the world, a brand needs to focus its effort on the communication to communicate through the different interface those young talents use nowadays: recruitment website and social media (Eger, L., Mičák, M., & Řehoř, (2018)).

4.1 What is social media?

Social media is a term that can relate to many different subjects, but the most basic definition is given by Osborne-Gowey (2011) who defines social media on its most basic level as “a collection of websites and applications designed to build and enhance online communities for networking and sharing information”.

In their study, the authors state that “Social media is composed of easily accessible web tools through which people converse, participate, create, recommend, valorify information and respond online to everything that happens around them”. They describe social media as a complex term split in two distinct words. First, “social” which refers to the different interactions that can happen within a group or community. Second, media, which is used to describe everything that leads to the diffusion or transmission of information through different channels/platforms. Therefore, the term social media is used to describe “communication platforms generated and sustained by interpersonal interaction of people, using specific methods or procedures” (Onete, Cristian Bogdan; Dina, Razvan; Negoii, Remus, 2011).

Moreover, according to the same study, social medias are characterized by different criteria. The participation is one of them as everyone interested in the topic is invited to discuss and share his/her opinion about it. The second aspect is the openness. Indeed, since the opinion of anyone is welcome, it is important that everyone can access the same data and information to exchange about it.

Unlike traditional media, social media is about conversation and therefore based on a two-way conversation with the participants where traditional medias are based on one-way communication (diffusing a content to an audience without asking them to participate). This new way of displaying information is based on the ability of social media to generate and grow rapidly different communities that can communicate and share opinions or information effectively. Those communications among communities are made easier by the fact that social media are interconnected and allow the audience to include links to other website to sustain their thoughts.

There are hundreds of thousands of so called social media on the internet and trying to make a general statement is vain. Though, when it comes to recruitment, it is possible to focus on the websites allowing communication directly with the targeted audience in a professional/personal way. To better understand what social media is and how it can be used by company, analysing the most famous ones seems to be the logical thing to do.

If you ask basically anyone about social media, it is most likely you will get an answer containing the word “Facebook” and that is because the platform launched in 2004 is one of the best example of what is social media. On this platform, someone who set up a Facebook profile can accept or delete a friend. Every time a friend is accepted into the user's network, he can see all the photo, videos and posts of this person. Andrews (2012). Andrews pushes the definition of social media a bit further and gives a more social perspective by saying that people can belong to virtual communities where they can talk and share points of view based on common interest such as hobbies, education or news event.

In 2018, Facebook has over 2.20 billion monthly active users (Facebook MAUs) and 13 percent increase year after year. (Source: Facebook 04/25/18). This means people are connecting over the world and exchanging information at an incredible rate but also that social medias are too big to ignore.

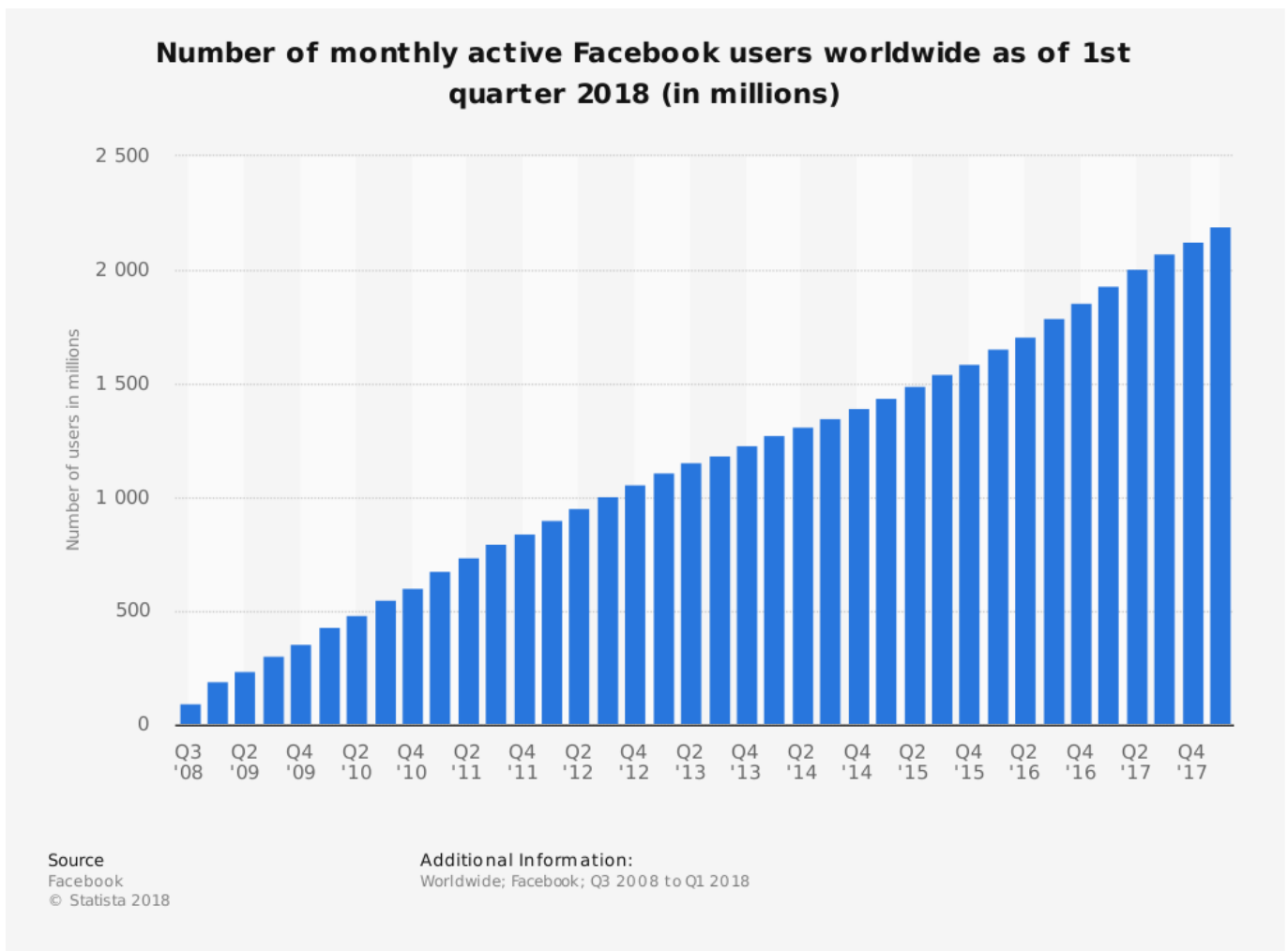


TABLE 1 “Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide” (2018)

4.2 Importance of social media in recruitment and international recruitment

As the statistics showed previously, social media are too big to be ignored and therefore occupy an important place in nowadays generation. According to Lipscomb, in 2010, 60% of the generation Y, including all the people born between 1977 and 1997, have joined a social media. According to the same author and based on the declaration of Nielsen Global group, in 2010, Forrester Research interviewed 1217 business decision makers around the world and stated that 95% of them were using social network on some levels.

Lipscomb (2010) goes further by saying that the new generations are using the internet as an exclusive source of information and are fleeing from the other traditional ones such as radio, newspaper and television. Not only people are able to engage conversation with anyone about subject that are interesting for both parties but also those people are more willing to engage in a conversation as their “do not disturb shields are lowered.

When it comes to the importance of social media in the business world, Ciprian Pavel (2015) said that the right question is not if a business should use social media but how they should use it to better serve their purpose. In other words, social media plays a very important part in today’s business industry, especially in marketing and communication. Moreover, social medias opened new ways for companies to interact with their customers. (Kumar et.al, 2016).

As seen with Facebook, the number of users on social media is gigantic and it makes total sense that companies are using them to attract or bound with their customers to increase their loyalty. In a report (2010), Regus showed that on all the companies using social network worldwide, 40% of them use it to attract new business. Communicating with contact or communicating with customers is the main goal for 51% while 58% enjoy social media to gather information helping in business intelligence.

Another study conducted by InSites Consulting (2011) about European users of social networks showed that 50% of them are connected to brands. But more interesting is the fact that users are more than just connected as some are commenting on a brand page (36%) and even more are communicating with the brand on a dialogue form (42%). Also, this study reveals that 53% users react to comment from the brand and 51% are just consulting information.

When it comes to recruitment and international recruitment, traditional methods can become quickly an expensive investment. Indeed, method like organizing recruiting fairs in other countries can be costly and limit the opportunities to keeping contact with potential candidates after the event. If a firm starts to use social media to reach international candidates, they save money on the direct cost that can represent travel and registration fee, but also indirect cost caused by the fact that an employee present at the

event won't be available at the office on that day. (Madia, 2011:20; Gibbs et al., 2015:172) Even if social media implies cost related to time and skills, the cost related to use them is low. (Ford et al. 2011).

Moreover, the global presence of social media like Facebook or LinkedIn (Statista 2018) make them ideal tools to customize messages and targeted communication towards different nationalities as the language preferences can be set in different language.

Some research show how recruitment through social media is used in the recruitment process. In 2011, the SHRM survey highlighted that 95% of HR professionals declared using LinkedIn, 58% Facebook and 42% twitter for recruitment purpose. This survey indicates that recruitment through social media is involved in all kind of position, from non-management position to management. Moreover, 30% of the HR professionals using social media in recruitment, declare using the information they find about the candidate to reject their application. On a brand perspective, having so many people on social media means that users are more likely to react to their content than trying to start a conversation. But it also means that everything happening on social media is measurable and that habits can be identified quickly and efficiently based on precise criteria. The next subchapter will focus on the importance of brand image on social media.

4.3 Social media and brand image

In 2016, the number of worldwide social media users was 2.34 billion and is believed to keep raising (Statista, 2017). As seen previously, social media are too big to be ignored and brands need to get involved on them. But they also must carefully manage the way they communicate on social media (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016) as through those new means of communication give the consumers power over a brand's success. (Zembik, 2015).

An important aspect of social media and recruiting through them is that the content is highly visible. It is then truly important for companies to make sure their image revealed on social media match with their recruitment strategy. At the same time, potential

candidates and current employees must manage their online image and their relations with their employment status. (Ladkin and Buhalis, 2016:335).

Brecht et al., (2011) determined that companies must be very careful when choose on which social media they want to use. They suggested that the choice must be done to best target the group they want to address. They continue by stating that a company targeting young people (students and graduates), should develop its activity on private social network site like Facebook as most young people are active users of private social network site.

The main features of social media are the openness, the participation and the sharing of information. As seen before, social medias are online environment where users can express, exchange and share their opinions or experiences. This ability to reach customers directly and interact with them made many organizations change the way they communicate. Indeed, giving personal advice is an effective way of getting the attention of customers meanwhile trying to influence their attitude towards the firm. (Park, Rodgers and Stemmié, 2011).

The different social medias a brand can use to communicate are countless, though few names are more famous than others. In that extent, social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram have the favour of many companies when it comes to share their content. Those different platforms enhance the bound and the communication between the companies and their customers (Kim & Ko, 2012; Killian & McManus, 2015).

The content posted on social media by a brand is called firm generated content and is a complete part of the marketing strategy of the firm on social medias. (Kumar et.al, 2016). This firm generated content is playing an important part on what image and what perception a customer gets from a brand (Kim and Ko, 2012).

The content posted by brand is also evolving, Waters & Jones (2011) found that videos posted on YouTube by companies to inform and educate are used as much as the one posted to entertain. They showed that unlike the text based conversations that are an efficient way to develop and build a brand reputation, combining a visual element with words can enhance the brand's identity in a significant manner. The fact that the video, and therefore the link on which the video is hosted, can be shared and tracked on the

different social media bring to the company many ways of developing and shaping its key message. Social medias also allow brands to reach targets they couldn't reach before and surpassed in that extent the traditional medias (Keller, 2009).

When a company decides to take part on a social media, it should engage the dialogue with the different people following it. By engaging the conversation, the company will be able to understand the behaviour, way of thinking and feelings of its customers. Social networks make conversations easier and even encourage them. If used properly the online community can bond together but also bond with the brand itself. (Szmigin, Carrigan, and Reppel, 2005).

It is important for a company to increase the interactions with its applicants since it would benefit both the company and the candidates. The candidates are able to get in touch with the company, present themselves before applying and get involved in the application process. For the company, it allows to get more applications and get a first impression of the potential employees (Brecht, Koroleva and Guenther; 2011).

Social media are also used by users to form an opinion over a company. Some social networks or ratings portals offer to applicants a possibility to get more information on a potential employer's working practice and culture. Therefore, relying only on its website or career brochure is not sufficient enough anymore as new generations of candidates are looking for more personal reviews, be it from former or current employees from this company (Laick and Dean, 2010).

Bondarouk, Ruel and Weekout (2012) examined the role played by websites on the relationships between the attractiveness of a company and employer branding. They investigated if it makes a difference for a company to use their websites and social media (LinkedIn) to strengthen their employer branding. The findings suggest a direct relation between a company's attractiveness and employer branding. They also found that the relationship is strengthened by exposure through corporate websites. Though, corporate website and social network sites are not significantly different. One explanation for that is that the research focuses on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is more about connecting business together and not to interact directly with candidate on the employer branding. If the study had focused on a social media like Facebook, it could have maybe changed the results as

the purpose of this social network is to connect and share information. However, the effect of social media remains unrevealed.

To sum up, it is important to say that to use social media on an effective manner, recruiters must implement specific recruitment strategies proper to each social network (Hunt, 2010), but also clearly define their audience (current employees or future employees).

4.4 Social media and recruitment

The internet makes the hiring process a lot easier for job seekers and for the hiring company (Borstorff et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2011). Indeed, the internet opened new ways of communicating, especially in the fields of sharing information and advertisement, and social medias play a big part in it.

Due to those new channels, the companies started to think differently on how to attract new talent. Traditional way of recruiting, such as advertising in newspapers, co-optation and the internet are still used, it is also common to see advertisement of job opening on the internet, for the companies, this lower the cost of candidate selection (Cappelli, 2001).

Using social media for recruitment presents several positive aspects. The first advantage of using social media for recruitment would be the incredible ability to reach instantly millions of people for a relatively low cost. The fact that everything happens online allows companies to save a lot of money on prints or personal mailing. Moreover, social media are used as a personal resource for many users, which means a company can reach the users (potential candidates) anywhere and anytime even during holiday period or outside business hours. (Andrews, 2012).

This means for recruiters that they can contact a potential candidate privately without picking up a phone. And this means for the potential candidate that he or she will have time to answer when the time suits him/her best. Therefore, social media can be a good way to generate referrals (Smith and Kidder, 2010)

But it also means that with the push of a button, a job description can be published on several social media and is available to hundreds of candidates within minutes. In that extent, social medias possess a considerable advantage over traditional printed medias as they allow to develop the recruitment strategy at the same time as marketing, communication, customer relation and internal communications (Madia, 2011:20)

Another positive aspect of social medias is the fact they are seen as a reliable source of information by recruiters and candidates and offer accessibility and convenience to the users (Andrews, 2012). Indeed, social media are accessible as the only condition is to have an internet connection. Most of those social media are also available through application one can have on his phone, tablet or laptop. Moreover, those applications allow the users to download easily a lot of data about themselves. This accessibility of social media makes it easier to recruit on a global scale rather than a local or national one.

In recruitment, a social media like LinkedIn enables the users to download all the information concerning their professional life, from their university path to their professional career. LinkedIn is a social media launched in 2003 that counts around 467 million users worldwide and is available in 24 languages. (Statista, 2018). As the other social media, LinkedIn has seen its community growing over the years at a fast pace as shown on this graphic.

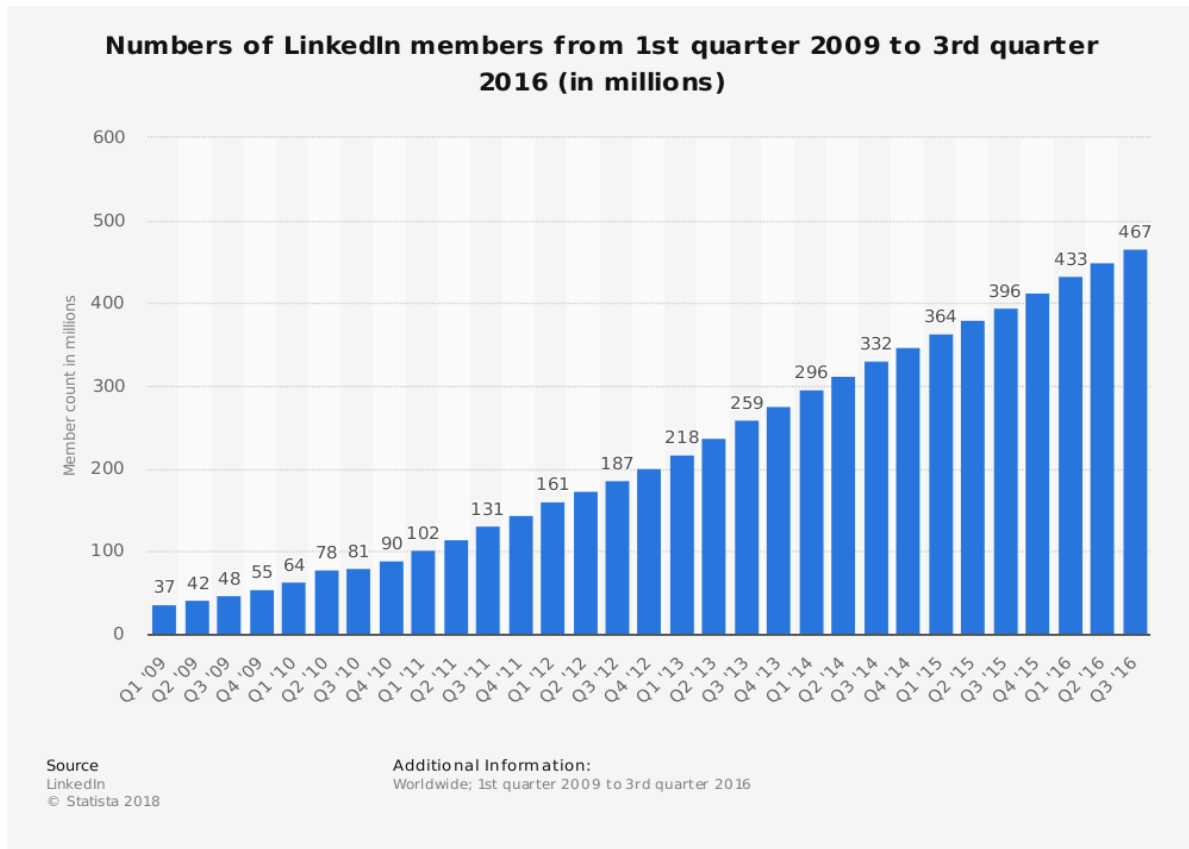


TABLE 2: Number of LinkedIn users (2018)

Another interesting statistic about LinkedIn is that the number of users using the application on their mobile is increasing as well to reach 62 million in 2016 (as shown on the TABLE 3).

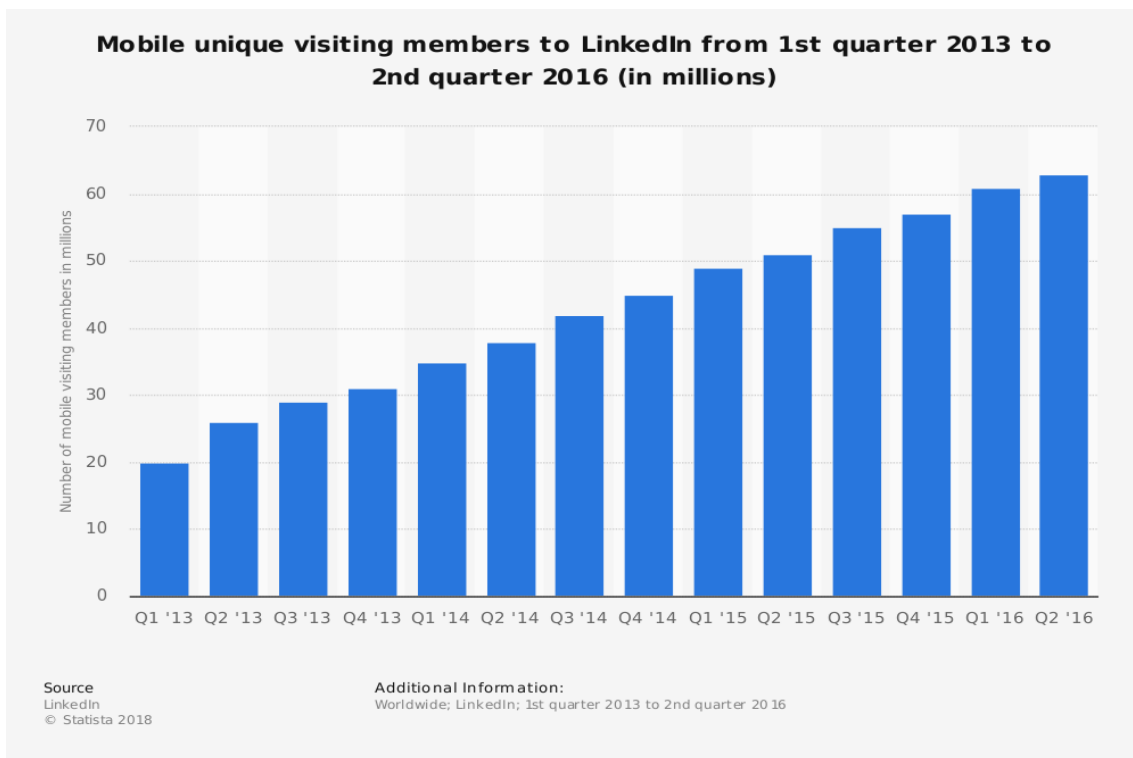


TABLE 3: Mobile unique visiting members to LinkedIn (2018)

Those data confirm that users of social media tend to use it from anywhere and through personal object such as their own phone.

Another important point of social media according to Ms Andrews, is the interactivity. Indeed, as stated before, social media are based on a conversation mode and brands should engage the dialogue with their customers. When it comes to recruitment, this allows the recruiter to interact directly with the potential candidates and answer their question in a fast and efficient way. A job description becomes a way to start a conversation for the candidate rather than an obstacle to his application because of some points he didn't understand.

Backhaus (2004) analysed the description of the companies appearing on monster.com (a job portal) and found that in most cases most companies fail to differentiate themselves from one another and therefore implies that the strategy to promote a good employer branding has not been successful.

Companies are not the only ones finding advantages of using social media as a recruitment tool. Studies show that candidates prefer interactive and engaging method

from companies to receive information (Barron, 2008). Furthermore, the opportunity given to candidates to market themselves and advertise their resume globally for no cost is a clear advantage of social media (Ladkin and Buhalis, 2016). The ability given to the candidate to create an online presence with all the needed information for a recruiter to assess if he can be or not a good applicant is a perk for candidates but can be a point of vigilance for companies as some studies revealed that applicants tend to fake or falsify their data on applications (Levashina, 2009).

If the use of social media in recruitment can be a clear advantage, studies also show some potential drawbacks to this method. As stated before, some candidates tend to falsify their information on social media, and this can lead to legal or ethical issues regarding the relevance and reliability of data collected from social media (Slovensky and Ross, 2011; Smith and Kidder, 2010; Taleo Business Edition, 2010).

When someone creates a social media profile, it is usually for personal reasons and for interacting with his or her friends. This means that some information uncovered by recruiters might be personal and not related to work at all and affect recruiters. This can be seen as a negative aspect by the profile owner as it can be a violation of privacy from the recruiter (Slovensky and Ross, 2011).

Companies relying importantly on social media to get information and to recruit their future employee might take the risk of not reaching every group of applicants (groups based on demographic criteria) and therefore make the chance for those people to get hired, uneven (Taleo Business Edition, 2010).

As seen in this section, social media have advantages and disadvantages when it comes to recruitment. The impact of social media on recruitment is more and more important as more people start using them. Some studies suggest that recruitment process is more and more affected by social media and that recruiters should take it into considerations for recruiting. (Petre, Stegerean, Gavrea, 2017).

III. Method

In this section, the subject and the strategy of the research will be discussed. A part will be granted to the explanation of the method with which data have been collected and on what sample. At last, reliability and validity if the research will be presented.

Research purpose and strategy

Conducting a study, writing a dissertation or doing a research implies to use the most appropriate methods and approaches to develop and explain the different objectives of the study.

There are commonly three different ways to conduct a research: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory.

- Exploratory approach aims to explain a phenomenon and its process with answering the question: "what is happening?". Using this method will allow to better understand a problem. To conduct an exploratory research, one can choose among several options: reviewing literature, interviewing experts on the subject people involved one way or another in the subject researched.
- Descriptive research aims to describe a situation. Describing the case makes it possible to establish a clear picture of the situation.
- Explanatory approach aims to go through the problem with establishing connections, analysing links or cause-to-effect situation.

A combination of all the method described above is possible (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009).

In the case of this research, the method chosen is exploratory and a bit explanatory. Exploratory because the study aims to explain the behaviour of HR professionals related to social media, but also because the goal of this thesis is to explain the impact social media had on recruitment by interviewing different actors of HR.

Furthermore, this research seeks to explain the link between social media and recruitment focusing on how social media influence recruiters, or the impact of recruiting tools on the relationship between recruiters and candidates, but also variables and factors in favour of a long-term relationship with a candidate, which gives to this study an explanatory approach.

To clarify the research approach, it aims to explain how the theoretical framework is used in academic study. There are different approaches, two to be exact: the inductive approach and the deductive approach.

An inductive approach is mainly used in qualitative research due to its flexibility. This approach helps to better understand the nature, formation and meaning of the object of the study.

A deductive approach is less flexible, with a better structure and is more likely to be used for quantitative study. Results obtained through a deductive approach can be generalized.

Moreover, a deductive approach based its thinking on already existing literature to explain the theory and formulate hypothesis. Once the results are obtained, they will confirm or not the pre-established theories.

When it comes to an inductive approach, the data are first obtained, and then the theory is explained and analysed.

Most of studies are not only one or the other. It is indeed very rare for a study to be completely inductive or deductive and most studies are both.

The deductive approach will be used in this study because models to explain the attitude and behaviour of HR professional towards social media do not exist yet. Therefore, data will first be collected from HR professionals and then analysed to understand how social media influenced the way they're doing recruitment.

When it comes to data, there are two types of research data, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data are data based on a numerical system. Therefore, after collection of those data, the analysis and the exploitation consist into describing, comparing and explaining those data and explain what factors is most relevant regarding which other factor.

Quantitative approach is more appropriate when the data are easily measurable and when tools like measurement scales can be used. Those data can easily be compared between each other thanks to those tools (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Often, after comparing the data, it is common to use graphs and statistics to help with the analysis (Saunders et al.).

A qualitative approach is an approach that is not based on numbers but rather on words and declarations. Therefore, data are collected thanks to questionnaires that help conducting open-ended questions or in-depth interviews.

This paper is using a qualitative approach. This is justified by the fact that HR professional must explain the way they work with social media in order to better apprehend the methods and correlation that exist between the development of social media and their use in recruitment. Those data would be hard to transcribe into numbers and therefore the use of a qualitative approach seems more appropriate. Indeed, there is a need to observe if there is a correlation between the fast growth of social media and their use in recruitment by HR professionals.

To have a clear understanding of how social media are used in companies as different as recruiting agency and corporate companies, the research will be based on a case study. The case study approach allows to collect precise data from a well define sample that matches the phenomenon debated in the study. Through this small sample, it is then possible to study the different chosen vectors throughout the groups studied and obtain an in depth understanding of the situation.

Using a case study in this research is appropriate because the case studies groups of individuals who are all using social media in a different way. Therefore, thanks to the case study, it will be possible to compare and highlight the similitude and differences between individuals but also between companies. The possibility to emphasis a feeling of an individual or a more general impression among the groups is a great asset to understand how HR professionals react to social media and how they've been influence by those in their work.

Data collection

As stated before, this research is based on a qualitative approach. The need to interact with HR professional implies to collect data through conducting interviews. There are three different types of interviews (Saunders et al., 2009). The first type is called structured interviews, the second is semi-structured and the last one is unstructured. The interview conducted in this research will follow a semi structured interview as it allows the interviewee to express himself freely. Indeed, in this kind of interview, the interviewer follows a list of questions related to topics he wants to talk about and the interviewee can answer them freely.

The questions and sub questions are helping the interviewer to cover the topic in its globality and adapt according to the answers of the interviewee. This method minimizes the biases since it allows to really analyse and understand the meaning of the answers.

According to Daniels and Canice (2004), collecting data through interviews is the most appropriate way when it comes to international business research.

Their research showed that a small number of respondents allows rich and detailed data, particularly when the scale of the study is limited. Furthermore, the way the interview is conducted leads the interviewee and the interviewer to experience a better connection than a simple questionnaire that would be sent anonymously. This deeper connection can lead the interviewer to get sincerer and more accurate answer from the interviewees as a relation of trust can be insured during the interview.

In this research, the main criteria to select the interviewees were that they had been working in recruitment for at least 7 years, so they could explain how their use of social media evolved since their beginning as recruiters. To be able to compare recruitment agency and corporate companies, a second criterion is that respondents come evenly from both types of companies.

This study is using a non-probabilistic sampling technique. It means that the person conducting the study chose a specific panel according to his personal judgement and how easily he can get access to it. In this case, the researcher has experience in the recruitment field and decided to contact previous colleagues to answer the different questions.

Data sample and overview of the case company

As stated before, the data are collected through interviews conducted with HR professionals with at least 7 years of experience and coming from different companies. The respondents are coming from four different companies operating in an international environment. Two companies are recruiting agency when two others are corporate companies, one operating in web solution for companies and the other one is a leading company on the retailing market.

To get a wider understanding of how social media are used and can influence recruitment, the respondents are working in different sectors and the industry in which the companies are operating are also different. Therefore, respondents' answers were truly interesting as their use from social media varies even if they are all working in recruitment. Furthermore, all the respondent already operated in international recruitment. International recruitment in that case is defined as the fact a company is recruiting from country A to fill a position in country B, the candidates can therefore come from any country, even from the country in which the company is filling the position as long as the recruiter is based in country A.

As mentioned, all the respondents were specialized in different sectors. Thus, their feelings and feedbacks on how they are using social media are very interesting. All the professionals who answered the questions already had worked in an international environment and could tell about the efficiency and pertinence of using social media in an international context.

The study focused on different aspect of recruitment and how social media are used in each of them and the answers to the questions are based on the perceptions of the different professionals who use social media, therefore, their perception is important to see if social media are used because it's useful or because it's "mandatory". Though, other aspects are more factual and objective, such as what tools are used and for what reason are they used. As it can be expected, the answers regarding those objectives criteria are more alike. For instance, if a company is using specific social media, the employees of this company should give the same answer concerning those social media when it comes to why they use it.

In this research, a total of 12 interviews have been conducted, 3 interviews per company. The interviewees are recruiters or members of the recruitment team from corporate companies.

For confidential reasons, companies will be named as company A, B, C and D. All the professionals interviewed have at least 7 years of experience and working in recruitment for at least 5 years, some recruitment consultants worked in corporate company before and can use those previous experience to compare their use of social media.

Sample/ title	Company	Company type	Position	Nationality	Country
Person 1	Company A	Agency	Senior Consultant	German	France
Person 2	Company A	Agency	Practice Manager	French	France
Person 3	Company A	Agency	Recruitment assistant	French	France
Person 4	Company B	Agency	Senior Consultant	Hungarian	Hungary
Person 5	Company B	Agency	Senior Consultant	Polish	Hungary
Person 6	Company B	Agency	Executive director	American	Hungary
Person 7	Company C	Corporate	Head of HR	Dutch	France
Person 8	Company C	Corporate	Talent acquisition officer	French	France
Person 9	Company C	Corporate	Recruitment assistant	French	France
Person 10	Company D	Corporate	Head of HR	British	England
Person 11	Company D	Corporate	HR assistant	British	England
Person 12	Company D	Corporate	HR assistant	British	England

Summary of the data sample

Company A: Recruitment agency based in Paris, France

Company A is a recruitment agency specialised in executive search. It is part of a bigger group offering different services such as outplacement, talent consulting, transition management. The company A is offering head hunting solution to find the best talent. They are proud to use technology to find candidates faster and cheaper than other recruitment agencies. The consultants are recruiting in sectors such as finance, marketing, human resources and IT. Company A is not specialised in specific industry, therefore, consultants are recruiting in their sectors regardless of the industry. That means a recruitment consultant in finance can recruit financial director for a retail company or a multinational automotive constructor as long as the job concerned is in the financial area.

Company A has been created about five years ago and chose a fast-growing pace development, managing to buy a big actor of recruiting agency in Europe in 2017. Consultants in recruitment working in company A all have at least 7 years of experience as the business model of the group is to hire senior consultant to offer the best possible advice to their clients thanks to a strong knowledge of the field recruiters are working in.

Company B: Recruitment agency based in Budapest, Hungary

Company B is a recruitment agency focusing on legal market and working exclusively with international law firms. The company B offers recruitment solutions to their clients on different functions such as international lawyers, head of legal or lawyers specialized in different sectors. This company was created 15 years ago by a former international recruiter specialized in Legal. Since then, all the recruiters hired in company B have a strong legal background and participate to increase the network. This particularity is the differentiation of company B compare to its competitors, they advertise that their knowledge of the market and the power of their network is an important advantage on the legal market.

For this study, the research will focus on the Budapest office that is also the headquarter of the company. A team of 15 people is working there. Out of those 15 people, 8 have more than seven years of experience, 2 have over 20 years and the 5 others are interns staying in the company for a time between 3 and 6 months.

Company C: Company specialised in fast moving consumer goods based in Lyon, France

Company C is a French international company specialised in fast moving consumer goods. The company is operating in 12 countries and counts over a thousand employees. The turnover of the company is 1.2 billion euros and is expected to reach 2 billion by 2020. This target put the company into a faster dynamic and forced the management board to think about a different strategy to support the growth.

This context is a real challenge for the recruitment team. They have a target of 150 new employees to hire in 5 different countries. The split is as follow:

- 75 people to join the teams in France in 3 different offices (Paris, Lyon and Marseille). Most of them are business developers, the other are managers to serve as the link between management and business developers.
- 25 people to join the Italian team to develop the market in the south of Italy
- 20 people to join the factory in Poland
- 15 people to join the south American market, they will be based in Rio de Janeiro and operating from there to expand the market.
- 10 people to join the Asian market.
- 5 people to join the headquarters in strategic position (Head of Sales Europe; Head of sales America; International business manager; and two area managers for Asia and Europe)

The human resources team is composed of 15 people, 5 of which are specialized in recruitment, as the goal of the company is to avoid recruitment agency to externalize their recruitment.

For the data collection, the research will focus on the office located in Lyon where the recruitment team is based.

Company D: Company specialized in web development and website creation.

Company D is an England based company, located 1h30 south east London. The company specialised in creating and maintaining website for other companies. Company D owns two different offices, one in south east London where the development and support teams are located. The other office is located in central London and hosts the financial teams that are in charge of trading on the stock market for the company.

The human resource team is based in the office outside London, the team is composed of 6 people organised as follow:

- One head of human resources
- Two human resource assistant
- One payroll manager
- One safety manager
- One office manager

The data collection will be based on the interview of the head of HR and the two human resources assistants as they are in charge of the recruitment. The team focuses on two different missions, the first one is recruit web developers to join their own team. The second task is to recruit developers to join specific project at their clients' offices. Therefore, the approach for those two missions might be different and it will be interesting to see how social media impact both of them.

Structure of the interviews

As stated before, a total of twelve semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted with four companies. Three interviews per company. Those interviews were conducted between July and September 2018, six of them were conducted face to face, three were conducted by Skype and the three last one were conducted over the phone. To increase the understanding and the correct transcript of the data collected, notes were taken by the interviewer and used afterwards to develop the key ideas gathered during those interviews.

All the interviews started with a short presentation of the context, the interviewer presented himself and explained the purpose of the study in a clear and short introduction. The interviewer also explained that the interviewee was more than welcome to ask for clarification for any information that would appear unclear to them. After this short introduction, the interviewer invites the interviewee to present himself and his role within the organization he is working in. Precise details were asked about their specific tasks and daily activities.

Afterward, the research topics were discussed to get more information about the way the interviewee is using social media in recruitment activity. The goal is to understand how social media are impacting the daily activity of recruitment and better understand if those support are used as a complement or because there is no way to avoid working with them anymore. To do so, different aspects were addressed, such as the definition of social media for the interviewee, the percentage of use of social media for recruitment purpose, the percentage of other support involved in the recruitment process but also the former experience of the recruiter. Indeed, some recruiters interviewed were working before social media even existed and it is interesting to understand how they feel about the impact of those media on their activity. Another important point raised during the interviews is the difference between local and international recruitment and how social media are used in each case.

At the end of the interview, the interviewer thanks the interviewee for his time and information discussed during the exchange. The different questions asked during the interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

The list of questions was used as a guideline for the researcher to lead the interview in an efficient manner. To make the interview smoother, the interviewer was not forced to ask the question one by one or in a strict order, instead, the interviewer used the information given by the interviewee to carry on other point. As the interview goes on, some new aspects could emerge and bring new valuable data to the researcher that can be used afterwards for the analyses. Therefore, as the semi-structured interview method suggest (Saunders et al. 2009: 321), the interviews were not conducted in the exact same way nor followed the exact same structure. A difference that can be noticed is the order in which questions have been asked or totally new questions that were not in the interview process in the first place, as mentioned earlier.

Moreover, all the interviews were conducted in English to match the international context of the research and because some of the interviewees were not speaking French, which is the native language of the researcher. English language was chosen to make sure the interviews were conducted in the same language and avoid a bias in translation. Though, as English is not the native language of most respondents, a bias can be observed in the answers. The choice to not address French interviewees in French was only to avoid translation bias and put every answerer on the same base. Though, if a question was unclear or if more information needed to be added and the language was a problem, the interviewee could express himself in French and once the interview was completed, the researcher paid a lot of attention to translate properly what have been said.

This method insures the interviewer to ask the same questions to all interviewees without any bias in the framing. Though, regarding the responses, only the native English speakers' answers can insure a perfect comprehension, the others will necessarily have a filter due to language adaptation. Therefore, when the researcher collects the data, he must pay a careful attention to the sense of what the interviewee wants to say.

Data analysis

When it comes to qualitative research and due to the high amount of data involved and collected, the researcher must synthesize and sort them before structuring it. (Saunders et al. 2009). Once the data are sorted and organized, they need to be analyzed so they help with reaching conclusions on the researched topic. (Saunders et al. 2009).

Qualitative research is explained as followed by Boeiji: “Analysis is a breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. [...]. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensive fashion” (Boeije, 2010: 76). Once the data are collected and organized, the researcher must categorize and structure them.

Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are used to assess the quality and credibility of the research (Saunders et al. 2009 : 156-157). If those criteria are widely used for quantitative research, researchers disagree and truly divided on whether it is truly possible to evaluate and measure the validity and reliability of this type of research.

To better assess the reliability and validity of a qualitative research, some academics decided to introduce different criteria such as credibility, reliability and transferability, and conformability (Guba & Lincoln 1985). This study is conducted in Europe where most researchers and academics kept using the traditional evaluation criteria regardless of the kind of study conducted (Morse et al. 2002: 14).

The term reliability refers to how consistent are the different methods and techniques used for collecting data and analysing them (Silverman, David 2006). So, if two researchers are studying the same theme in a similar context, similar methods to collect and analyse data, it should appear that the results of those two studies are the same.

The reliability of a study refers to the transparency of the process followed by the researcher but also the conclusions issued from the theoretical basis. (Saunders et al. 2009). In this research, different parts of the interviews will be used, either the researcher will transcribe word for word what the respondent said to get the complete meaning of the answer, or the researcher will rephrase to link answers from different respondents that would have a similar meaning.

In qualitative study, it is important to describe in detail the process of the research so the reliability can be improved (Daymon and Halloway 2011: 79). That is what has been done previously with the description why study this topic, how data were collected, which approach had been chosen and why this choice of companies. Moreover, the description of the companies and respondent will also help improving the reliability.

To improve the reliability, all the respondents of this research received a copy of the different questions, so they could prepare and reformulate them to be sure they understood properly. As the researcher knew personally most of the respondents, it was easy to exchange with them prior to the interview and prepare in the best possible way to get the most accurate answers. Despite all this preparation, some questions had to be rephrased during the interview to make sure the respondents understand it and answer properly.

When it comes to validity, the term refers to the result of the research. To be valid, the data collected, the different interviews and the results coming out from their analyses must make it possible to answer the research question. If it is not the case and the results are not matching what the researcher expected, they cannot be used to answer the research question.

There are usually two different types of validity:

- The internal validity. This kind of validity refers to how well the research method and analysis of the data answer the question
- The external validity. This kind of validity refers to the generalization of the results to the targeted population (Saunders et al. 2009).

In this study, the interviews were prepared and structured with the help of a senior consultant in recruitment who has been using the social media from the very beginning.

Moreover, the different studies and research made on the subject also helped to create the question and therefore increase the internal validity of the research (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). Another important point for validity is that the researcher only used and analysed the exact quotes and transcript of the interviews, therefore, the validity is strengthened by using those primary data. Though, as already mentioned, the fact that English is not the native language of most respondent can be a sensitive part for validity.

Another sensitive part is the level of experience of the researcher in conducting scientific research. Indeed, the researcher has no experience in this field and is more likely to formulate the questions poorly or not relevant to answer the problematic. It can also happen that some important aspects relative to that field have not been covered.

To generalize the results of this study can be difficult. Indeed, extending the results to a broader environment is a difficult task when working with qualitative research because of the small and sometimes not representative sample of respondent (Bryman 2012, Saunders et al. 2009). The use of case study in this research follows the fact that researchers often use it as an instrument to highlight different behaviour and processes in specific and well identified scenarios or cases. Therefore, generalizing the findings is not recommended when a study is based on a case study. For example, in this specific research, only senior managers or consultants from multinational or international companies were interviewed. It is then complicated to generalize the result to all international or multinational companies as only a small and specific population of the work force has been studied here.

Though, the main objective of the study is clear, and the framework is also well determined. The goal of this study is to determine how social media impacted recruitment in an international context and how the different professionals are using it nowadays. The research is focused on recruitment in an international context. Only two different kinds of companies are studied, recruitment agency and international companies. It is then complicated to extend the result to all the industries as here only retail and web services are involved but it is also hard to generalize to other companies from the same sectors as the organization will be different from one recruitment agency to another or from one multinational to another. On another side, this study gives a good start for future

research as it answers the research question and gives some insight about the different use of social media depending on the type of company.

Ethics of the research

Ethical concerns must be taken into consideration by the researcher when conducting the study. It is especially true in qualitative research because of the different interviews conducted face to face with the respondents. It means that the researcher is responsible for the way he explains the different choices that led him to this specific approach, structure and process of interviews. He is also responsible for the data collected during those interviews and must treat them with integrity, honesty and objectivity as well as with precision.

It is important for the researcher to explain his different choices and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each of them. With the explanation, one must be able to understand what led the researcher to follow this path rather than an alternative one. It is also important for the researcher to behave correctly with the different people involved in the research. To do so, the respondents should not feel embarrassed, prejudiced or any other prejudicial means that could damage the honour, reputation or integrity of the person involved (Saunders et al. 2009; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005).

Furthermore, Saunder et al (2009) stated that in qualitative research and interviews, the researcher is confronted to having some power over the respondents by being able to guide them and direct their answers, intentionally or not. This happened with the way the different questions are being asked and formulated. The way and tone the questions are being asked can influence the answers and therefore affect the reliability of the research.

There is a way to limit those problems, in this research, the questionnaire was first prepared with a senior consultant and once the questions were well phrased, a test interview had been conducted to ensure the researcher was at ease with the way to ask questions et was not influencing the answers of the different respondents. This same questionnaire was also sent in advance to all the interviewees, so they could read it prior to the interview and therefore be less influenced by the tone or the way to ask questions of the researcher. During the interview, the researcher informed the interviewees with the purpose and topics addressed in the research. Respondents were also informed that they

could decide to not answer a question if they didn't feel like they could answer or found the question inconsistent.

As Saunder et al (2009) pointed out, respondents might ask for anonymity at any time of the process. This part was discussed with the candidates, most of them required to be anonymous and one company strictly forbid any sign that could lead someone to recognize it. To ensure there would be no problem with the release of the paper, the researcher took the decision to make all the companies anonymous in this research, as well as all the respondents personal details as it could lead to recognize a company.

IV. Findings

Recruitment process

When it comes to the recruitment process, there are many similarities among the interviewees' answers. According to all interviewees, the recruitment process is divided into different part:

- Define and write the job description
- Advertise the position on the internet
- Select the best possible applicant or find potential candidate on the different data base/social media
- Call the candidates for a first short interview
- Invite the most suitable candidate for a longer face to face interview
- Make a job proposal to the most suitable applicant
- Take care of all the paperwork related to hiring this candidate.

Though, there were some differences between the recruiting agency and the corporate companies. Those differences are best summed up in this quote from a professional who had been working in a recruitment agency before joining company C. He explained the differences as follow: "When I was working in a recruitment agency, I had to work with confidentiality on most of my research, therefore, the position advertised on the internet had no company name and was written in a way it was not possible to identify my client. But the main difference is that in a recruitment agency, we add one more step as we meet all the candidates a first-time face to face before organizing an interview with our client. The second big difference is about paperwork, a recruiting agency is only sending an invoice to the client and doesn't need to take care of writing the contract and everything related to the integration of the candidate into the company. That was a big difference in term of legal aspect for me when I joined a corporate company as I had to learn how to write a contract". (Talent acquisition officer, company C)

All in all, the recruitment process described by the interviewees follows the steps described in the different literature.

There were more disparities in the answers when the interviewees have been asked if the recruitment process is different now than it was before. While all twelve interviewees agree to say the process is now different than earlier, their answers show that they understand the differences in a different way. There are three main changes that were evoked in their answers.

For some answerers, the recruitment process is different now because of legal aspects and discrimination criteria. For example, an employee from company D stated: “When you advertise a job position now, you must pay attention to every little detail if you don’t want your company to be sued for discrimination, sexism or racism”(HR assistant, company D)

An employee of company B, in a same way, declared: “I used to have clients calling me and asking to hire only a man or a woman for a position, ten years ago I was complying without trying to change my client’s mind. Today I’m entitled by law to justify why I only presented man or woman on a position and therefore I always explain to my client who is asking for a specific profile, that I will only present candidates regarding their skills and no other criteria”. (Senior consultant, company B)

Therefore, for those five employees, the legal frame of recruitment evolved and made the recruitment process evolved with it to a point it changed many parts in the recruitment and selection process.

For 3 interviewees, the recruitment process evolved from a questionnaire-based interview to a discussion-based interview. This is best explained by a person employed by company A: “When I started my career in recruitment 12 years ago, the recruitment process was based on testing candidates about their knowledge about the job they would be doing, little importance was paid to their “soft skills”. Today, apart on very technical jobs such as web developer or engineer, recruiters are looking for profiles that would fit into their company’s mindset. Therefore, as a recruiter I try to discuss with the candidate to understand who he is as a person and not try to push him with always harder questions until he breaks down.” (Practice manager, Company A)

This statement is in line with literature on the fact that companies are paying a lot of attention to how they are perceived by the public, and that they want to set up a company's mindset, a brand image, that would help anyone to project themselves into the values of this company.

Social media and its impact on recruitment

Finally, 9 employees agreed that social media and the use of the internet changed the way recruitment is working. Before talking about the use of social media and how it impacted the recruitment process and selection of candidates, 7 interviewees discussed how the use of internet helped making the process faster. They all talked about how using e-mail made their recruiter's life easier as they could now just send an email and have an answer almost immediately and not wait for days due to post office delay. The use of e-mail also facilitated the international communication, an employee from company C explained: "I started my career in HR in 1991, back then most of the communication were covered over the phone. I was working with the Chinese market and when I've been promoted HR manager in 1995, I had to supervise the HR team based in China and help with the recruitment. It meant for me to be available at their working time, which often implied for me to be up at 4 in the morning discussing over the phone. Today, the team I supervise in Brazil just send me an e-mail with the profiles they want me to validate and I take care of it when I have time."(Head of HR, Company C)

All in all, all 12 interviewees agreed to say that social media did have an impact on recruitment, though, their answers regarding how it impacted recruitment and international recruitment is different.

When it was discussed about the use of social media in the recruitment process, all twelve answerers said they are using it. They also insisted on the fact that social media is a crucial tool in nowadays recruitment and especially in international recruitment. If all twelve interviewees agreed that social media is a necessity, they have different opinion on how to use them and the impact it had on recruitment in general.

The first main difference comes from the social media used by those professionals, and there is a clear difference between social media used in corporate companies and recruitment agencies. Indeed, all 6 professionals from recruiting agencies declared using

the following social media: linkedIn recruiter, Viadeo, Different Applicant Tracking System such as Taleo, AD-Men or Eolia. “I’m using, in addition to LinkedIn and Viadeo, a data base called Eolia, it is not perfect, but it does the job and allow good tracking of our recruiting activities” (Recruitment assistant, company A)

“The social media such as LinkedIn recruiter or Viadeo are great tools to find and contact candidates, but you need to be able to store those candidates’ profiles somewhere. That’s why we are using a cloud database called AD-Men, it allows our teams to track activities and build reports from it.” (Executive director, company B)

Among the 6 professionals working in corporate companies, only 2 were using LinkedIn and Viadeo, and they explained using it because they are in charge of contacting candidate directly. “In my daily activities, I am not 100% of the time focused on recruitment. Therefore, I do not need premium tools like LinkedIn recruiter, but I use LinkedIn from time to time when I must contact candidate directly” (Recruitment assistant, company C)

“I’m using LinkedIn on very specific positions we have. Mostly, I don’t need to contact candidates directly as most of our new talent applied for positions we advertise on Facebook or on our own website.” (HR assistant, company D)

On the other hand, all 6 professionals from corporate agency declared using the following social media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Different Customer Relationship Management system such as Salesforce.

“In company C, there is no policy regarding what tools a recruiter should use or not, for the good reason that we do not have a team member specialized in only doing recruitment. Though, when we need to recruit, our team is using linkedIn and our own data base and Salesforce, to track their activities, but also for the management to better manage the different projects” (Head of HR, company C)

“I think Facebook and LinkedIn are two powerful tools to contact candidates directly. We are using Facebook to advertise the different positions we have. We do advertise it on our own Facebook page and share it as much as possible on different support. LinkedIn is also a great social media and our team is using it to find candidate directly, without posting any advertisement” (HR assistant, company D)

If the social media used in corporate companies and recruiting agencies are different, the way professionals are using them is not so different. It appeared that some social media have a specific purpose regardless of the type of business. For example, LinkedIn is always quoted as the best tool to approach candidates directly. An employee from company B stated: “LinkedIn is a very powerful tool because it allows you to contact people regardless if they are open to opportunities or not, which means you can find anyone who has a profile on the platform” (Senior consultant, company B)

As for the two interviewees from corporate agencies who are using LinkedIn, they also made it clear that they are using it only to approach people directly for different opportunities they have in their company. Also, employee from company B are asked by the marketing department to use Facebook and Twitter to share the news from company B and generate traffic to attract candidates on their website and then apply to the different openings directly. The interviewer got the same answer from interviewees from company C and D who are using Facebook and Twitter for the same purpose.

On a more general matter, all twelve answerers insisted on the fact that social media did change the way they are doing recruitment. Surprisingly, when the interviewer asked how social media changed the way they are doing recruitment, strong similarities appeared in the answers and can be summed up by the answer of an employee of company C: “When I started my career in recruitment, it was very difficult to reach out to a candidate because not everyone had a mobile phone, and having his CV or profile online was not even something we thought possible! When social media started to grow, I’d say around 2008, we started to have millions of people adding their details online, and suddenly you could get phone number, mail address and professional details with one click of a button instead of hours of research and lots of hours spent calling different companies standard to get a name or personal detail of a person you thought could match your client expectations. This was a real relief as a head-hunter to find so many information without losing hours and hours. But it also changed the way recruitment is working as well. With the internet, you could reach the entire world and suddenly the job description you usually posted on the local newspaper, was posted on the internet and social media, and from maybe thousands of people reading the newspaper, and not necessarily for the job section, you could reach hundreds of thousands of people interested in reading only your job offer! And this was possible only because the internet allows you to look for specific criteria.

Now you asked about how social media changed the way I do recruitment today. I would say it changed the way I approach candidates, now I just reach out to them on social media with a simple message. It also changed the amount of details I can get from candidates before talking with them and therefore I don't lose time contacting profiles that are not matching the profile I have in mind for this or that job. This was difficult before social media because the only data you could get on someone were based on CV you already received or on what colleagues and other people could tell you on this person.” (Head of HR, company C).

All interviewees talked about gaining time in the process, having more details on the candidates and being able to talk with someone in a much easier way than when social media did not exist. Indeed, with social media, one can have a complete conversation privately with a potential candidate without involving anyone else to reach out to this person and therefore the confidentiality, which is truly important for candidates and employers, is strengthened.

Another interesting point was that all twelve answerers declared using online data base such as Indeed or Monster. They also added that those data base are linked with their internal system and that they can import directly a profile from the website to their internal data base, which is usually considered as an internal social media as every employee of the company can add and modify the different profiles on it. Though, website like Indeed or Monster are mostly used by corporate companies, recruiting agency are usually using those websites to post job offers and then receive the application directly into their internal data base. “I'm using monster as a complement to LinkedIn or Viadeo. The good thing about Monster is that you get directly the CV of the candidate and, therefore, his or her phone number so you can call directly” (Senior consultant, company A)

“The great perks of online data base is that you get contact details from the candidates. Plus, Indeed is linked directly with our data base and with one click of a button I can import all the data from the candidate” (Senior consultant, company B)

International recruitment and social media

The main interest of conducting interviews was to understand how social media is impacting recruitment and more specifically international recruitment. On this matter, the answers given by the respondents are particularly different and interesting. First of all, interviewees have been asked to express themselves on how international recruitment is different from local recruitment. All respondents talked about the need to be aware of the different market specificities, especially about the different work law and immigration system. An employee from company C declared: “I don’t think international recruitment is significantly different from local recruitment in term of process, or at least, not anymore. With social media, the process doesn’t change if you approach someone from France or from Germany, only the language and contract details are changing. In my opinion, as a recruiter, it is important to be aware of work permit and visa restriction, so I don’t waste time in contacting candidates who won’t be able to obtain a visa, but I will not focus on where a candidate is coming from as long as he has the skills I am looking for.” (Recruitment assistant, company C)

Another person from company A has a similar point of view, stating that: “In international recruitment, the problem is not finding people, not today thanks to all the technology we own. The difficulty stands in the fact that every country has its own regulation and you must adapt to them, be it on contract law, working law or immigration law, it is required from an international recruiter to know the market he is operating in or for.” (Senior consultant, company A)

As those two statements show, international recruitment is made easier thanks to technology, an employee from company B told the interviewer that before the internet and social media, international recruitment was limited to companies sending their worker to a subsidiary of the company or people getting in touch thanks to personal network. According to him, it was rare to look for people abroad, because it was truly inconvenient and difficult to communicate with them.

International recruitment seemed to have evolved fast thanks to new communication system such as social media. 9 out of the twelve respondents declared that international recruitment is now easy in term of finding candidates but complicated in term of

relocation and understanding the different market. One of the interviewee said: “I think the internet and new communication channel made it so easy to speak to someone that international recruitment is not more complicated than local recruitment. For me it is the same, you just need to do it in a different language and understand the specificity of the country you are recruiting for, but in Europe for example, there is, for me, no difference for recruiting in France, Germany or any other countries that’s are EU members” (Head of HR, company D)

Therefore, most interviewees agreed that social media made international recruitment easier and even erased the limit between local and international recruitment in term of approach. Though, they all agreed on the fact that international recruitment require specific knowledge about the market one is operating in.

When the interviewer asked about how international recruitment would evolve in the future. The answers given were truly different. Four interviewees think that international recruitment will become the norm because of the global mindset that is growing within the global population. “In my opinion, talking about international recruitment is a non-sense. I think international recruitment today is the same as recruitment. I mean, I wouldn’t look for candidates only in France, I am looking for skills and mindset, and that regardless where they are located.” (Practice manager, company A).

“For me, the difference between recruitment and international recruitment is disappearing at fast speed. We don’t see any company anymore that do not provide with international recruitment.” (Recruitment assistant, company C).

Two other respondents think that international recruitment will enjoy new technologies to facilitate even more the discussion between recruiters and candidates, when they’ve been asked about what kind of technologies, both answered that translation technologies will be the key. “I love to believe that one day I will be able to speak with candidates in their own language by using my own mother tongue. When you think about it, live translation provided by specific device is not a crazy thought anymore.” (Executive director, company B).

“To me, progress can be made regarding the language skills. Too many great candidates are ignored because we can not speak their language. I think the future would be to

develop devices to translate any language in real time. That would be a great development for recruitment.” (Senior consultant, company B)

Three answerers declared that international recruitment will continue as it is because there is no innovation that could make a big revolution as the one social media did for this field. “I don’t see any innovation breakthrough that could change recruitment as much as social media did. I think we will see some changes of course in the way we are using those tools, but nothing as big of a change as those last 10 years!” The three last answerers declared to have no idea what international recruitment will become, one even declared that it could go anywhere depending on what technology comes next. “If you asked me 20 years ago how would recruitment look like today, I probably would never have imagined all the social media thing! I honestly have no idea what might happen, I just know that we will adapt!” (Head of HR, company D)

V. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyse the impact of social media on international recruitment. This chapter will be organized to answer the research question: “how social media have influenced international recruitment?” To do so, the first discussion will be based on the place of social media in recruitment, this first chapter will have the aim to discuss how recruitment evolved and the place social media played in it. The second chapter will treat the same issue with international recruitment.

5.1 Social media has impacted recruitment in many ways.

As the findings of this study show, social media played a major role in facilitating the communication between recruiters and candidates. This confirms the theory of Kumar et.al (2016) saying that social media play a major role in business world and opened new ways of communication for companies. Findings include many different references about social media being a key tool in nowadays communication with candidates. In all the companies interviewed for this research, social media are used to enhance the communication and attract or find candidates. Moreover, it appears that the same social media serve the same purpose, regardless the company using it. Findings also show that professionals of recruitment agree on the fact that social media deeply changed the way recruitment is working and that this change appeared to be natural and not imposed by the company or the market. This is an interesting point as it means social media appeared to be of natural use for recruitment, even though they were not developed in that purpose in a first place.

Employees declared that social media made the communication easier between candidates and recruiters, though, and it’s a paradox, having so many information about a candidate also made it more difficult to find the right one as there is a need to treat all the applications, which takes a huge amount of time in a recruiter’s life. The findings also join Ralf Caers and Vanessa Castelyns finding from their study in 2011. Indeed, during the interview, most respondent declared that having too many information prior to interviewing a candidate can lead to build a wrong opinion about this candidate, some of

the respondents even declared to not want to see too much information so they can see the candidate without false opinion about them.

When it comes to corporate recruitment and social media, findings are in accordance with the research conducted on the field. Indeed, employees from company C and D declared using social media in order to communicate about the brand and attract candidates instead of looking directly for candidates through those social media. This is in accordance with the studies of Han and Collins (2004), Sullivan (1999) and Froom (2001) who all found that having a well define recruitment process and clear communication on social media is a great advantage in attracting the best candidates. Moreover, findings of this study found that attracting candidates through good communication is not limited to corporate company. Indeed, employees from recruiting agencies declared using social media to attract candidates with specific advertisement. Therefore, recruiting agencies are also using social media to have a better visibility and attract potential candidate when they post job offer from their clients.

A clear difference about how social media impacted recruitment in corporate companies and recruiting agencies is that recruiting agencies are using social media specialized in recruitment to find the best talent locally or internationally, sometimes paying consequent monthly fees, when corporate companies are using social media as a marketing tools to advertise their activities and influence the different people seeing it to apply to their company. Before social media, the findings of this study show that corporate companies and recruiting agencies were using the newspaper or personal network to attract candidates. Social media helped to increase the amount of people a company was able to reach with only one employee.

As seen here, social media impacted recruitment in different ways but mainly on the communication with candidate part. Let's see now how social media impacted international recruitment.

5.2 Impact of social media on international recruitment

In this study, international recruitment is defined as the fact a company is recruiting from country A to fill a position in country B. The candidates can therefore come from any country, even from the country in which the company is filling the position as long as the recruiter is based in country A. Findings of the study confirmed that traditional of recruitment like employment fairs or newspaper campaign are expensive and not truly efficient. Though, all respondent agreed on the fact that social media truly changed the way international recruitment works. The main issue fixed thanks to social media is the difficulty to reach candidates from other countries. Nowadays, as long as one speaks English, anyone on the internet able to speak English is a potential contact for a job position a company must fill.

This joins the literature part on how traditional way of doing recruitment can be expensive as the employee focused on recruiting event are not at the office and therefore not focus on their usual tasks. Nowadays, one employee can take care of several recruitment, even international ones, thanks to the power of internet and communication through different social media. Findings show that, employees from recruiting agencies who have been interviewed, take care of about 8 to 15 recruitments at the same time. They declared that having everything online makes it easy to organize and switch between their different missions. None of them told the interviewer that having an international recruitment was more difficult on a research and selection aspect.

Though, if approaching and selecting a candidate is not different from a local recruitment to an international one, it appears that an international recruitment is much more complex in term of paperwork and administrative formalities. Indeed, findings show that, when being asked what could improve their skills on international recruitment, all answerers declared that a training on the local market and different legislation of the country would help them a lot to perform better.

As it was suggested in the literature part, social media helped to reduce the cost of international recruitment but also helped the process to be a lot faster. Findings show that recruitment professionals are using social media to better communicate with their team

and organize themselves better to avoid losing time due to time differences and communication delay. The fact that a project can be saved online and accessed remotely from anywhere with a simple internet connexion made it easier for manager to share with their teams.

It seems like social media made international recruitment more accessible and therefore made it a bit more common. Something interesting for further studies would be to see if this banalization of international recruitment motivated some companies to specialize only in that field or if most of the companies are now doing international recruitment. As it has been seen in this research, most companies seem to undergo international recruitment process but not all of them have a team or an employee specialized in it. One can discuss if international recruitment requires specific skills or if speaking the language is enough. As it appears in this study, a specific training on regulation and market specificities seems to be mandatory to be successful.

5.3 What future for international recruitment?

Previous research did not really have a clear idea of what is expected for international recruitment in the future. This study suggests that progress can be made on different technologies and especially in the translation area. Indeed, some recruiters noted that language skills are often a problem when recruiting abroad. When someone does not speak English or the recruiter's language and that none of those languages are mandatory for the job, it forces the recruiter to call for a third party who could help with the translation. If technology improves and allow the recruiter to talk on a professional level with the candidate in its own language, companies could save a lot of money and contact even more candidates since the language issue won't be one anymore.

Another aspect found in this study and that joins what studies have been saying until now is that international recruitment will become more and more important in nowadays business activities. This is mainly due to the fact that companies are going global and that new professionals are born with technologies that helped them take down the usual geographical borders. Most universities today are requiring from their students to complete a semester to a year abroad, so they can experience global mindset and discover

new ways of thinking (Scott Andrew Schulz, Jenny J. Lee, Brendan J Cantwell, George McClellan & Doug Woodard, 2007).

In that context, one can imagine that international recruitment will become even more normal as young professionals could be tempted to start their professional life away from their home country. Therefore, companies will have to adapt and train their employees to deal with the specificities of international recruitment. As seen in the literature and the findings of this study, to be efficient in international recruitment, it is crucial to understand the market and the regulation of a country to avoid any problem relative to administration and regulation.

On a general matter, the findings are in accordance with the literature. Even though there is not a lot of literature on international recruitment and social media, the link between the two is not difficult to establish, especially that all professionals agree on that fact that social media helped international recruitment to exist since it makes it much easier to reach anyone who has an internet connexion.

VI. Conclusion

This last chapter will focus on the conclusions from the study. The theoretical contribution as well as the impact of social media on recruitment will be discussed. At the end of the chapter, limitations are reflected and suggestions for future research are debated.

6.1 Theoretical contribution

This study broadens our understanding of recruitment and social media in an international environment. This study provides an answer to the question “how social media have impacted international recruitment” by providing point of view from recruiting agencies and corporate companies and, therefore gives an interesting perspective on how recruitment and social media are used by HR professionals in those two-different approach of recruitment. Previous research focused mainly on recruitment or on social media but only a few discussed about the impact of social media on recruitment. Findings of this study are in accordance with the theoretical part and previous studies in the recruitment field. The different process and how companies are doing recruitment have been confirmed with this study.

An interesting point for the current recruitment literature is that social media appears to have impacted recruitment in many ways, and that, without recruitment professionals noticing they were becoming so dependent on this new technology. According to the findings, social media have impacted recruitment in many ways, especially on how recruiters are researching and selecting candidates. Social media helped to pass from a long and fastidious research and selection process to a quick and efficient one thanks to the different tools offered by social media and the ones especially made for recruitment. This study adds to current recruitment literature the findings of the importance of social media in recruitment process, be it in recruiting agency or corporate companies. Furthermore, this study confirms a previous research on how a positive image from a company can attract better candidate (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990). Indeed, findings of this study show that companies are using social media to promote their brand to potential

employee and influence them to apply to the different positions offered within the organization. This study also confirms the theories of Smith and Kidder (2010) and Andrews, C. (2012), stating that social media made it a lot easier to contact candidates and discuss with them regardless their geographical position on earth. Indeed, findings show how professionals rely on the efficiency of social media in term of communication. All of them answered to the question on how social media have impacted recruitment, that they are allowing a much faster and more efficient way of communicating with candidates.

6.2 International recruitment and social media

The goal of this study was to understand the impact of social media on international recruitment. To do so, recruitment professionals have answered different questions and stated various reasons and ways of how recruitment have been impacted by the different social media. Based on findings of this research, there are three major impacts of social media on international recruitment.

- 1) Social media provides recruiters with an enormous number of candidates all over the world. Indeed, as long as someone has an internet connection, he can set up a profile online and therefore be available to whoever would be looking for a profile similar to his.
- 2) Social media have considerably increased the efficiency in the communication between professionals and candidates. It is now as ease as one click of a button to contact someone at the opposite side of the world and discuss about a job position. Social media have made it possible to take down the geographical borders, and therefore allowed recruiters to find talent from other countries to join their team, and that, even if this candidate didn't have the idea to apply yet. It's because social media allow companies to advertise themselves and be attractive to candidates.
- 3) Social media, and mostly those specialized in recruitment, allow a better organization for professionals. They can create and save their project and work with other recruiters or with their team at the opposite side of the world, and that, no matter of the time difference as everyone on the project has access to the same data whenever they want.

Social media facilitated the way international recruitment works by providing a tool that takes down the difficulties linked with the specificities of working in different countries such as time difference, finding a profile but also in some extent, language, as it is possible to use a translator to send a message, which would have been difficult before the internet era.

6.3 Limitations

This study has various limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. The first limitation is the amount of answers analysed in this research. Indeed, twelve professionals from four companies were interviewed, and even if their answers seem to be coherent in how social media are used in different companies, it doesn't mean all companies are using it the same way. Therefore, generalizing the results must be done with caution. Another limitation is that this study focuses on corporate companies and recruiting agencies on specific sectors that are IT, FMCG and recruitment. It is then possible that in other sectors such as automotive or life sciences, the process and use of social media for recruitment is different.

Furthermore, the limitation of time and resources and the qualitative nature of the study, and, as stated above, the fact that the size of the studied sample is small have a strong impact on the generalizability, which is also strengthened by the limitation in the amount of industry concerned by this research. Generalizing the results of this study must be made carefully. However, it is important to emphasize that the goal of the research was to understand the vision of HR professionals on social media and not necessarily to generalize the results afterwards.

Another important fact is that all the interviews were conducted in English, which, as stated before, is not a native language for most of the interviewees nor the interviewer. Even if English is used by all of them on a professional matter, it is not excluded that some misunderstandings occurred with some questions. This can reduce the accuracy and validity of the research.

A last important point is the inexperience of the researcher in conducting research. Therefore, the qualitative data collection techniques might not have been the most adequate ones and might have caused missing out some valuable data.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

The limitations detailed in the previous section showed that the question of the impact of social media on recruitment could benefit from a research that would not focus only on specific sectors of recruitment. Moreover, it would be interesting to have the point of view of candidates on this matter. Indeed, this research focuses only on a recruiter's perspective and it would be relevant to know how candidate perceive being recruited through social media. For further research, it can be interesting to enlarge the sample of companies and people interviewed. This would allow to get a deeper and better understanding on how social media impacted recruitment in fields that are less attractive to candidates than the industries studied in this research.

As mentioned before, it would be interesting to get the point of view of candidates on certain matter of social media when applied to recruitment. Indeed, it would be pertinent to know how a candidate perceives to be contacted directly through a private message on social media and how is he reacting to a proposition to work abroad or from a recruiter who is not in the same country as him. This would help to understand how social media impacted recruitment on an applicant's perspective and therefore widen the understanding of how it impacted recruitment in its globality and not only on a recruiters' side.

An interesting approach would be to focus on how different actors of recruitment are using the different social media in their recruitment activities and compare them with how they were doing before social media existed, regardless if they are looking to hire someone or be recruited. This approach would allow to complete the findings of this study by adding the how social media are being used in recruitment and how it changes from how it was done before, it would help to estimate the efficiency of social media for recruiting activities and how different actors use them to their advantages.

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APPENDIX 1:

Interview question outline for the use of social media in recruitment

1. Please, tell me more about you and the company you are working in.
2. Can you explain how the recruitment process works?
 - a. What kind of recruitment are you doing?
 - b. Are there specificities in the process with some clients/missions?
 - c. Could you detail all the steps of the recruitment and selection process on a typical mission?
 - d. Is this process different today than when you started your career?
3. Are you using any social media in the recruitment process?
 - a. If yes, can you tell me what social media you're using?
 - b. If no, how are you finding/attracting the different candidates?
4. How social media changed the way you are doing recruitment now?
5. Do you think social media are a necessity in nowadays recruitment?
 - a. Have you always been using social media in your recruiter's career?
 - b. Do you think some social media are more suited than others to the research and selection process of candidates?
6. Are you using other means than social media in your recruitment process?
 - a. Do you use any data base specialized in resumes and CV (Indeed; monster ...)
 - b. Do you have an internal data base in your company?
7. Do you use social media to improve the brand image of the company?
 - a. In your opinion, does the image of a company influences how candidates will apply to this company?

- b. Are you using social media to improve the image of your company?
 - c. Would you say that having a great brand image on social media help attracting candidates?
8. Do you use social media specialized for recruitment (LinkedIn, Viadeo...)?
- a. How often do you use these tools?
 - b. In your opinion, what is the impact of these tools on recruitment and performance?
 - c. Do you think such tools are compatible with a performant and personalized approach of the candidate?
 - d. Do you use those tools to post job descriptions and job offers?
9. Is international recruitment significantly different than more local recruitment?
- a. In your opinion, does the influence of the culture difference between recruiters and candidates in international recruitment play a major role?
 - b. What are the most important skills for recruiters in international recruitment?
 - c. Compared to local recruitment, how the context of international recruitment changes the way you proceed?
 - d. Are the differences related to legislation, culture, institution or language a difficult part to cope with in international recruitment?
 - e. In your opinion, can social media facilitate research and selection process and increase the recruiter's performance in international recruitment?
10. Do you have an idea of how international recruitment will evolve in the future?
- a. Is your company or yourself getting ready for changes in the use of social media?
11. Is there anything else you see as important and would like to rise up when discussing how social media have been and is impacting on international recruitment?