

BALANCED BRANDING OF THE EMPLOYER CREATED BY MEANS OF SOCIAL MEDIA – A FACTOR OF SUCCESS IN PERSONAL MARKETING

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Social media may be an efficient tool for creating and effective building of the image of an organization as a trustworthy employer both outside and inside the company.

Introduction – What do you know about the social media?

I asked the participants of the European forum titled „Marketing of Research and Scientific Institutions“ a few questions checking how often and in what way they use social media in marketing practice.

Questions:

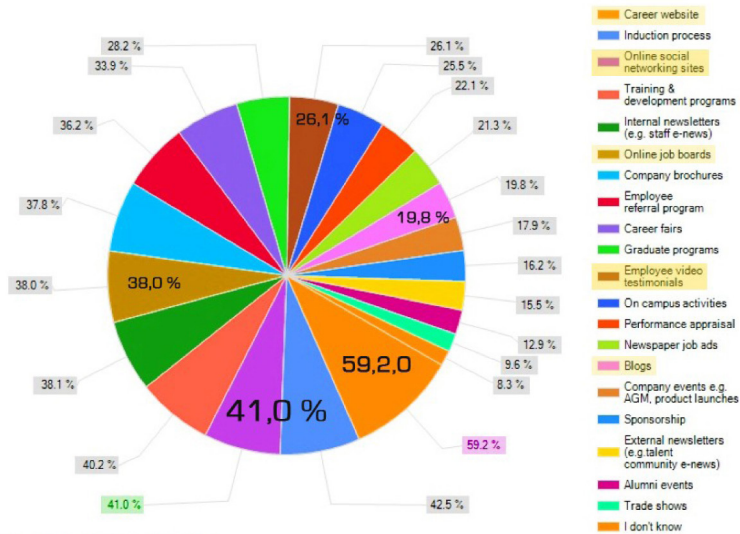
- Do you take up the challenge of using social media as a tool in cross-marketing?
- Do you have experience in creating the brand of the employer by means of social media?
- Do you know what and on what channels your employees and „ambassadors“ post about you and your company?

Most of the answers were „no“. This shows us that social media are a tool used from time to time or never.

What marketing channels are used by companies for employer's branding?

The following statistics show that in order to raise the attractiveness of a company as an employer and in recruiting employees, HR departments use various online channels.

On the one hand almost 60% of organizations prefer attaching their pages concerning opportunities for career and employment to their company website. On the other hand, we can see that social websites on the Internet are becoming more and more important and are more and more often used as marketing tools. 41% of companies in Germany already use social websites, whereas 38% use job fairs, 26% use videos and 20% use blogs.



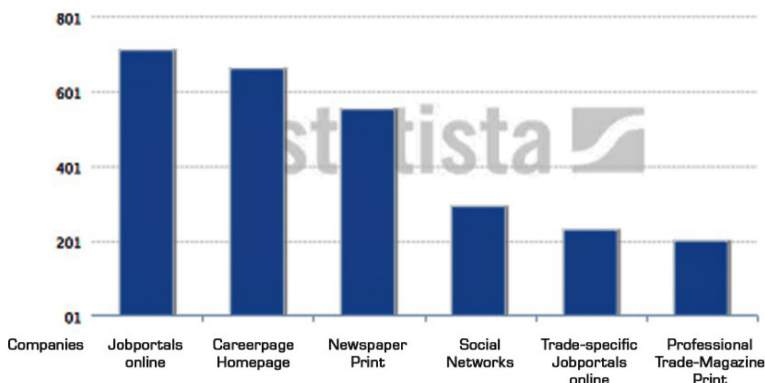
Source: © Employer Brand International

Obviously, the pioneering role is assumed by companies, even medium-size companies, which function in the area of online marketing, IT, sales and those who find social websites very significant.

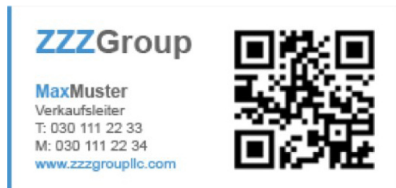
Statistics and surveys show that companies don't always follow the latest trends. The development of digitalization has been changing the process of recruiting employees for many years. Many companies place application forms on their websites allowing people to apply for work online.

In my opinion, the forms are often too extensive. Job applicants have to spend too much time filling them out – especially that usually it is necessary to attach further documents: cover letter, curriculum vitae, certificates of education, references... Looking for candidates over traditional websites devoted to professional career and job fairs, on the company's website or by publishing advertisements in the press (newspapers), may not be innovative anymore, but is still extremely popular.

Search for candidates by recruiting channels in 2011



I recommend combining printed media with electronic media. An example for such successful combination are QR codes (Quick Response Codes: invented in 1994 by the Japanese Denso Wave company for the purpose of automation at Toyota). Certainly, such tools as QR codes and AR applications will become standard tools in personal marketing within a few years, because such technical innovations present companies to the outside world as modern and show that they are open to innovation.



How can companies efficiently draw the interest of students and university graduates?

We asked students and graduates of universities how companies should try to arouse their interest. The following statistics show that the key to reaching this group is cross-marketing using various media. Students and graduates are active every day online, on various channels. That's why this is where companies should present themselves both *on-* and *offpage*.

In what way should companies try to arouse your interest?

(*on-/off-page*, printed media, events/fairs)

- 80% by means of lectures, workshops held at universities,
- 57% at job fairs,
- 51% by means of recruitment events,
- 47% information points at universities,
- 31% by means of leaflets/ advertisements/ brochures,
- 27% on profiles and platforms such as XING,
- 23% advertising in social media,
- 13% by e-mail,
- 6% in other ways,
- 4% by means of pop-ups, banners on websites.

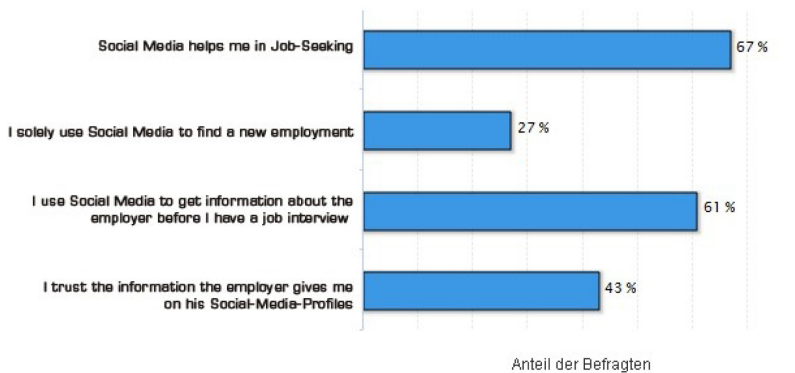
(it was possible to choose more than one answer).

96% of students, graduates and other people looking for employment, search for work browsing advertisements published on the Internet, 89% visit websites devoted to professional career and 70% study websites devoted to the labour market.

The following statistics show that in many respects social media are of major importance for the target group of Digital Natives – employees above the age of 18.

These people use the social media for various purposes: when looking for work, in order to obtain information about a company and the process of recruitment and to gain trust for a company.

Importance of Social Media when Job-Seeking in Germany



i Deutschland; ab 18 Jahre; Beschäftigte, die mindestens 24 Stunden pro Woche bezahlter Arbeit nachgehen und nicht selbstständig sind; 827

Source: Randstad

When we compare these figures with the expectations of students towards companies, it doesn't come as a surprise that companies often fail to attract the most desirable candidates.

Which channels do companies use to publish their job offers?

(percentage varies depending on the branch)

- 8-12% use XING
- 48-61% use websites devoted to job-seeking
- 85% use pages devoted to career on their company websites

Which channels do companies use to search for candidates?

- 9,1% use Facebook, StudiVZ, Mein VZ
- 18-23% out of world's biggest companies use the XING platform in order to gain information about candidates
- 21% look for further information by means of online channels during the process of recruitment, till the process of eliminating candidates

What can companies do in order to attract the best candidates?

The picture „In 60 seconds” shows us the enormous scale of the flood of interaction and communication on the Internet and the intensity of exchange of information by means of various social media taking place in just one minute.

What can organizations do in order to attract the appropriate candidates through social media just in time?



1. Organizations have to be better informed about the members of their target groups and have to possess latest information about their daily activities on the Internet. This information can be provided to companies by employees from the HR and marketing departments (from inside and outside the company) who can find their way around the social media, who know what information they can find and know where to look for it, who know how to communicate with members of a particular target group.

2. Companies should have profiles, blogs, message boards and groups in the social media appropriate for a particular target group, combine them with their employees' profiles in order to achieve targets assumed in employer-branding-strategy. It is important that the dialogue with members of the target group complies with the existing Corporate Communication and Code of Conduct of an organization.

3. Companies should combine activity in printed media and on the Internet with modern marketing channels, eg. a combination of advertisements on displays and billboards with QR codes and mobile applications.

4. Organizations attract the best candidates, talented people and specialists by means of texts about a company, which evoke their emotions. The subjects of posts may be: recruitment events, work asses-

sment criteria, economic achievements, trainings, involvement in the social media, corporate health policy, supporting innovation, distribution of work, professional education and development, social involvement and community life...

What aspects of planning the strategy of creating the image of a company as an employer by means of social media are most important?

1. Simplify administrative actions, as for example forms, means of contact, setting up and attaching the candidate's profile and his data, looking for candidates on the web.

2. Improve your company's website devoted to career. Its important elements which influence the functionality, topicality, content as well as the interest of the target group should be investigated. These are the following elements: landing page, newsroom, applications – also for mobile phones, linkbuilding, backlinks, monitoring and integration of posts (valuation), interactive tools, access buttons.

3. Build your own editorial team and charge your employees or external partners with tasks, for example: strategic planning and regular updates (writing texts, reacting to latest events, monitoring, control) of your strategy of building the employer's brand, creating editorial schedule and plot (texts with valuable content), choosing co-workers who can be trustworthy and credible „ambassadors“ of the organization, getting fans and potential candidates involved in propagating the website...

4. Combine existing and planned channels with marketing actions: homepage, microblog services, networks, electronic mailing, video channels, applications, advertisements.

5. Define your corporate identity (CI), corporate design (CD), and your CSR policy (Corporate Social Responsibility), Code of Conduct, appropriate channels in the social media and tools for positioning of your strategy of establishing the employer brand in social media. There are many various channels that can be used to reach the recipients: Google +, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, SlideShare, local services (Foursquare), applications, AR applications (Augmented-Reality-Apps), QR codes, advertising campaigns, message boards concerning assessment (eg. assessment of the employer – Austrian www.kununu.com).

Looking at viral marketing action of the Allianz concern, one of the leading providers of financial services in the insurance branch, which took place in Germany, we can see how social media can be used effectively in the strategy of employer brand building.

Dialog@mp **Social-Media-Channels used for EB-Strategy by Allianz**

Allianz

Career-pages at homepage
<https://perspektiven.allianz.de/>
<http://www.spannende-jobs.de>

Career-pages at XING
<https://www.xing.com/companies/allianzdeutschland/articles>

Career-pages at Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/AllianzKarriere?sk=app_169512533098876

Career-pages at Twitter
http://twitter.com/allianz_de
<http://twitter.com/allianzkarriere>
http://twitter.com/allianz_wissen

Career-pages at LinkedIn
<http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Allianz-Careers-3869083>

WordPress Blog
<http://en.search.wordpress.com/?q=Allianz+Versicherung>

YouTube
 Azubfilm: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xe7p96WHww>
 Sommerakademie: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1rMoNoQ88A>

Blog
 Younect Blog: <http://blog.younect.de/arbeitgeber/der-allianz-kai-macht-karriere/>
<http://www.personalmarketingblog.de/?p=3263>

Presse
<https://www.allianz.com/de/presse/news/index.html>
<http://www.allianzdeutschland.de/presse/news/index.html>

Slideshare
<http://www.slideshare.net/guest45b5303/markus-walter-allianz-allianzde>

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How efficient are career pages on Facebook in the process of employer brand building?

Statistics from March 2011 from Germany concerning the popularity of career pages on Facebook confirm their efficiency.

Over 16,215,380 users born after 1980, at the age of 18-34, visit Facebook pages concerning career. In comparison to the year 2010 the number doubled.

On Facebook there are 100 pages of German companies devoted to career. The number of fans of these pages is almost four times higher than in 2010.

The following companies have the best pages concerning career, according to rankings: Bayer, BMW, Deutsche Telekom, Bertelsmann, ABB, Accenture. These organizations also have scientific and research units within their structures.

Why is it that these companies are successful in the social media? - Best-Practice


They have noticed the advantages of social websites and take advantage of them in order to raise their attractiveness as employers.


They know the "rules of the game" of social websites:

- It is necessary to maintain direct contact with the target group and maintain dialogue on the level of its members.
- It is necessary to take targeted actions in order to arouse interest in a "viral" way and gain thousands of fans.
- Create your own editorial team consisting of employees of the company and people from the outside who prepare and update social media strategy in order to present the company as open, modern

and authentic.

- It is necessary to collect as much information as possible (concerning the external image of an organization and reputation in the society, positive and negative comments) about users/readers, about the company, employees and products. The collected data should be filtered, evaluated and later used in marketing actions carried out by HR departments.
- Conduct active dialogues with the involvement of employees as “ambassadors” of an organization, who report on daily work and the situation in the company and thus gain trust of readers and fans.
- It is necessary to integrate websites devoted to work with a particular target group (pupils, students, graduates, specialists).
- It is necessary to maintain presence on social websites by regular activity and adjusting profiles to the latest technical changes on these platforms.

Dialog  Career-pages at Facebook – Best Practice



BMW, Siemens, MC-Kinsey, Deutsche Bank, BCG, BASF, EN BW, Vattenfall, Commerzbank, in-tech-GmbH, Bertelsmann, eismann, TÜV Rheinland

<http://www.facebook.com>
http://www.slideshare.net/basf/basf-social-media-2011?from=ss_embed

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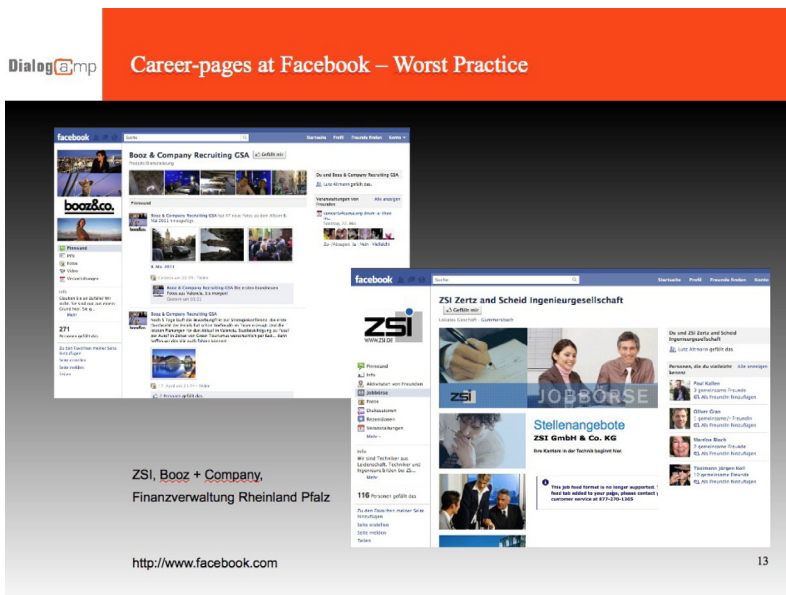
Why is it that some companies' Facebook pages devoted to career do not enjoy high popularity?

- Worst practice

Factors which have a negative influence:

- Finding the organizations' websites devoted to career is hard or even impossible.
- Companies attract only few fans and need too much time to start „conversation” and to have their websites recommended to other Internet users.
- People responsible for websites devoted to career conduct active dialogues rarely or hardly ever.
- The website devoted to career includes few tools enabling interaction and granting access or there are no such tools at all.
- Editors/company publish posts not regularly enough.

- Organization doesn't know and doesn't use the language or the way of communication of the target group.
- Published texts don't evoke emotions, few people find them interesting.
- Texts/posts either don't provide information or are not authentic.
- The website devoted to career is neither easy to use nor visually attractive



Do institutions and organizations use career fan pages on Facebook?

When I was searching for institutions "and organizations" Facebook pages devoted to career, I realized that few of them have established fan pages.

Most of those I found were weak, some were better, but only few were good enough to follow the „rules of the game“ on social websites.

On all websites one important detail was missing. I can show it as an example: job service integrated with the website depending on the target group.

In my opinion the best websites were those of UNESCO and Scientific Research Centre Radix. These organizations present various contents depending on the target group. They have built separate areas for various target groups (forum, partners)

This way they satisfied the expectations with regard to content, photographs, films, the target groups have on career websites in social networks.

Organizations can also make their websites devoted to career more attractive by optimizing them technically for such devices as: iPhone, iPad, notebooks, tablets PC.



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Conclusions – In what way can companies boost their attractiveness as employers thanks to social media?

1. Constantly strengthening the company's employer brand through social media is a result of research of a group of people visiting these media and strategic marketing planning of the strategy of employer brand building.

2. Identify and satisfy natural, emotional needs of the target group taking into consideration all important legal issues, also those concerning the protection of personal data. It is possible to prepare an analysis of answers sorted depending on target groups, from the point of view of a particular organization (pupils, students, graduates, experienced professionals) highlighting social media channels specific for particular target groups and tools (fan pages, blogs, job fairs, Twitter accounts)

3. The efficiency of a strategy can be assessed by answering the following questions: Does the editorial team gain popularity among users? Does the content/storyline comply with corporate communication and values of an organization? Is the website easy to use? Have key words been optimized? Are you taking care of monitoring and control? For sure?! Thus, you have created perfect conditions for efficient utilization of the advantages of employer brand building by means of social media.

4. Attract interest, „virally“ through authentic, professional posts and texts evoking emotions. Stimulate imagination and emotions, which will inspire your target group and attract fans, who will become your „ambassadors“ and messengers.

5. Take advantage of the social media like Facebook, Twitter, Google +, LinkedIn, Xing, in combination with various supporting Internet tools: applications, AR applications, announcements, QR codes, in order to raise the attractiveness of an organization as an employer in the fight for the employee.

6. Use channels appropriate for the chosen target groups (fan pages devoted to career, newsroom, blogs, message boards, groups,...). Find out what channels the members of your target group (pupils, students, graduates,...) use, so that your messages reach the recipients

7. For monitoring, control, measurement and successful development of your marketing strategy involving the use of social media, apply tools adapted to your organization and editorial team eg.: Hootsuite, Brandwatch, Google, Analytics, Twittercounter, Twazzup, Facebook-Insight, Fanpagegenerator. I recommend taking advantage of consulting services offered by professionals from the area of social media, because the choice of tools is very big and not every one of these tools is suitable for your organization.