

Labor market rules in the 2.0 era

Recruitment techniques have changed dramatically with the emergence of Web 2.0 and the popularization of social media networks.

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When a company wants to fill a senior vacancy or recruit a new general manager, it often relies on the trust, professionalism, discretion and exclusive network of contacts of a headhunter.

However, things are changing rapidly for the professionals engaged in the search and selection of executives.

Web 2.0 and the proliferation of profiles on professional and personal social media networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter have reached a tipping point in their way of adding value and meaning to recruitment activities.

Their impact is often downplayed on the basis that this trend does not apply to senior executive positions. While it may be true that not all senior executives are present on these networks, this owes more to generational factors than to the efficacy of Web 2.0 as a recruitment tool.

A [technical note](#) by Eduardo Rábago and IESE's [Guido Stein](#) describes the new relationship that now exists among firms, executives and the recruitment agencies or professionals specializing in putting them together.

They explain how Web 2.0 is changing the value that recruitment agents add during the various stages of the executive search, selection and hiring process.

The differential value of a headhunter

Traditionally, the headhunters' value was based on their select network of contacts in different business sectors, and particularly at the higher levels of the organizational chart.

However, with the emergence of Web 2.0 and the popularization of social media networks, this exclusive pool of contacts has largely become public and accessible to everyone.

In this new context, it is no longer sustainable for the differential value provided by headhunters to be based on their databases. They need to focus on other tasks and stages of the recruitment process, such as: providing advice to detect and identify organizational needs; evaluating candidates to assess personal competencies; taking up references; negotiating and closing contracts.

What changes for businesses?

From a company's point of view, Web 2.0 offers three major advantages: it provides a low-cost way of identifying potentially interesting candidates; it offers the possibility of tracking the company's image online; and it enables the company to present itself as a desirable employer online, in order to attract talent more easily.

As companies cannot prevent their executives and employees from posting their profiles on social media networks and expressing their opinions online, the question for companies is how they can optimize this presence.

Managing your brand: Tips for executives

Candidates cannot ignore the Web 2.0 phenomenon, either. Like it or not, they will end up leaving some kind of digital footprint. As such, the authors offer tips for building and generating a personal brand online.

- *Create your own image.* If not, others may create one for you, voluntarily or involuntarily, with information that may be erroneous or out of date.
- *Ensure some minimum standards.* The virtual image of an executive should be consistent with the real one, in terms of profile and capabilities. An incomplete or inaccurate profile may lower your standing, and a blog that is not updated regularly gives a negative impression.
- *Have an adequate online presence.* It should be neither nonexistent, which could be

interpreted as ignorance, nor excessive, which could be interpreted as having too much free time. It is also necessary to think long term, because it is easier to enter the online world than it is to leave it.

- *Look after your contacts.* Employers are interested in knowing the caliber and sector of your professional contacts, as well as the opinions of your personal contacts.
- *Choose the groups you belong to carefully.* Too many groups can give a scattered image and flood you with too much information. Make sure you keep them up to date and that they reflect your current interests.
- *Generate followers and positive recommendations.* Although recommendations have a relative value, it is always preferable to have them than not.
- *Be careful with contents.* Be sure to send constructive, positive messages. Only leaving a trail of negativity could be detrimental further down the road.

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