



**EUROPEAN
RENTAL
ASSOCIATION**



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON RECRUITMENT AND HR



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1. INTRODUCTION

The ever-increasing digitalisation of human resources (HR) departments means that companies are now able to reach more potential job applicants than ever. Recruiting the best candidates is critical to any company's success today and many exciting tools have been created to help attract and source the best talent. The implementation of new online recruitment platforms can provide opportunities for both content provision and active candidate sourcing, delivering high quality results using less resources than it takes to hire costly headhunting agencies and external recruitment consultants. However, this use of new online tools and technologies comes at a cost - the market for the best applicants is now extremely competitive and companies need to maximise their digital efforts in order to attract the best talent. More traditional approaches that may have been successful in the past such as printing job adverts in local publications and holding job fairs are no longer the best options for finding the most capable and proficient specialists. Digital HR management can now spread information about a company, making more people aware of its job opportunities and getting employers in front of candidates whom they may never have found through traditional hiring methods. The younger generation are now spending more of their time online than ever before, so it's crucial to tap into these resources to secure the right employees who will ultimately determine a company's future. The war for talent will indeed be decided online, and companies therefore need to establish a presence in which they demonstrate their professional culture and employment opportunities simultaneously. A company's online presence can be represented across several different platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Snapchat, various local professional networks and of course their own corporate websites.

Additional resources and best practice you can find here: era.meetdanielwalzer.com

2. OVERVIEW



Overview Website

A visit to a company's website is often the first interaction a potential job applicant will have with a company if they are already aware of its presence in the marketplace. The best quality talent will be attracted to corporate websites that showcase the brand clearly, with sophisticated and intuitive design. Consider also that 60% of web traffic now comes from mobile devices, so the importance of mobile responsiveness and optimisation for company websites simply cannot be understated. That being said, we're not saying goodbye to desktop sites any time soon—most online job applications are still completed on desktop devices and a study conducted in 2017 showing that, on average, desktop visitors spend 1.9 times longer on websites than those using mobile devices.



Overview LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the largest online professional social network and is mainly used by employers to post their job opportunities and for candidates to post their resumes in order to attract employers' attention. According to a study conducted by Jobvite, **73% of recruiters have hired candidates via social media networks, with 79% of those candidates coming from LinkedIn**—an overwhelming majority. As of April 2017, LinkedIn had 500 million members in 200 countries, of which more than 100 million were active users. It serves as a good initial touchpoint for companies to meet with prospective applicants that they may not otherwise be able to reach, with the network allowing members to create profiles and 'connections' with each other online.

LinkedIn is the most popular tool for head-hunters and internal recruiters as a tool for active sourcing, meaning that they can access instant information on potential candidates, complete with references and the ability to review their experience, and contact them directly via private messaging. This is particularly useful in the case of sourcing candidates with rare or specialised skills, especially if these people may be passive candidates i.e. not necessarily seeking new job opportunities. However, as is the case with all social networks, one of the drawbacks of corporate use is the difficulty in controlling the spread of information and opinion—both employees and applicants are able to negatively impact a company's reputation from even the smallest post or comment online.

2. OVERVIEW



Overview Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social media network with 2.2 billion monthly active users as of 2017. It is a platform in which every user can register and create a profile for free, supplying Facebook with basic information such as their name, age and location. The user can then establish connections with other profiles by befriending them, and then go on to share personal content such as text, images, music and videos. For a long time, Facebook was used primarily for the sharing of private content and HR managers were reluctant to use it for recruitment purposes. However, the popularity of Facebook and indeed other social platforms and the opportunities they offer to support and save time in the hiring and selection process have made them a vital component of modern HR. Facebook now knows as much about some of their users as would a close friend, meaning that the data it holds is hugely advantageous to recruiting teams around the globe, allowing them to engage with specific target groups of potential candidates.



Overview Snapchat

Snapchat is a social networking app released initially in 2011 in which users can post pictures and messages that are only available for a 24-hour period. **Snapchat is used mainly by the younger generation and millennials, and is only increasing in popularity and usage as time goes on.** As of February 2018, Snapchat has 187 million daily active users. HR managers around the world have taken notice and many companies are now using Snapchat's platform to reach potential candidates—millennials in particular. The app allows for geo-targeting, meaning that users who have been to specific locations can be targeted exclusively. Indeed, Snapchat itself used its own app as part of its recruitment strategy in the Bay Area. It sent out a filter that said "This place driving you mad?" with a graphic that depicted cars driving through a map shaped like the Snapchat logo. This filter could be used by anyone in that geolocation, which at the very least sparked conversation and potentially recruiting leads. Running recruitment campaigns on any social media platform can be costly, but if executed in the correct way can give a company's HR strategy the boost it needs to attract the top millennial talent.

2. OVERVIEW



Overview localised professional networks

Alongside these major social networking platforms, there are other more localised professional networks which allow members to build relationships with new contacts and create new business and recruitment opportunities. **Viadeo is one such network headquartered in Paris with currently over 55 million professional business owners, entrepreneurs and managers—a figure growing by more than one million per month.** Viadeo's membership base is predominantly in France, but the company is branded as ApnaCircle on the Indian sub-continent and Tianji in China, where it is the country's largest professional network with over 17 million members. **For companies in the DACH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland), the professional network Xing should be utilised to boost both business and recruitment opportunities.** It is currently used by more than 13 million members, with over half of those in German-speaking countries, to find potential employees and employers, and to share expertise in over 50,000 specialist groups. Xing differentiates itself from other online networks by running an Ambassador program in each of its global regions with substantial constituency that holds local events promoting the use of social networking as a business tool and enabling local members to interact on a personal level. Furthermore, Xing also uniquely displays how each member is connected to any other member, and thereby visualises the small-world phenomenon.

This report will concentrate mainly on the rental industry's use of the largest online networks, with a particular focus on LinkedIn as the world's largest professional digital network. However, it is important to note that companies will of course want to be most active online where their potential candidates are most receptive, which is often determined by where they are physically located. Social media has not entirely taken over the recruitment process but, if used in the right way, can enable HR managers to save time and get a better understanding of their candidates to simplify the hiring process and make better recruitment decisions. Companies can now use these online tools in more sophisticated ways when recruiting new employees and therefore should not be afraid to use them to an even greater extent moving forwards.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RENTAL INDUSTRY



Websites from a HR perspective

A visit to a company's website is often the first interaction a potential candidate will have with a brand if they are already aware of its presence in the marketplace. **A crucial factor in determining ease of application is the number of clicks a prospective applicant needs to work through in order to submit their application.** In most cases, less clicks signifies a simpler and quicker job application and is therefore advantageous to the recruitment process. Of the ERA members analysed, the number of clicks required to submit a job application ranged from 2 to 9, with an average of 3.5.

The most common method of job application amongst the industry is email, often via a separate email address used solely for recruitment purposes e.g. recruiting@rentalxy.com. This provides a simple and easy way to apply for candidates, granting them considerable freedom over the appearance of their application in order to distinguish themselves from others. Email applications work particularly well with a relatively small volume of applications as they can then be handled on an individual basis with ease. The financial costs associated with email applications are also minimal, indicating another reason for its popularity. However, there are drawbacks to using email as a job application channel. The open format of an email application means that not all applicants are initially sending all of the required information, meaning that additional efforts are often necessary in order to collect all of the desired data. Further, email is not an efficient way of dealing with a large volume of applications as would be the case in large rental companies. Something else to consider is that Generation Z (those born after 1997) are using email much less than previous generations, with 15% of Gen Z respondents to a recent survey acknowledging that they don't check their email even once a month. Engaging with the younger generation is vital in determining a company's future, so it's crucial that HR strategies take into consideration these emerging online trends and behaviours.

In May 2018, changes to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) resulted in stricter guidelines for companies accessing and storing data on potential candidates. It is worth noting that it is the responsibility of the company to ensure their own compliance with the new terms of the GDPR.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RENTAL INDUSTRY

The second most used application method in the industry is a dedicated online platform in which candidates can create a profile and submit their information and responses through a guided process. This has benefits over email application for both the company and the applicant: the need for the company to follow up and request further information is drastically reduced, and the applicant is able to save parts of their profile and use it to apply for different jobs in the future. Further advantages of this application method include pre-screening of applicants via various online tests and automatisisation of the management processes in the HR department. Given that the applicant accepts the terms of the GDPR, all documents can also be uploaded and viewed on a secure channel provided by the platform, facilitating easy sharing of data between recruiter and applicant. Disadvantages of an online application platform include higher drop-out rates due to candidates losing interest and failing to provide responses in all the necessary fields (this is exacerbated by an overly long and complex application process). A pre-formatted online platform also restricts an applicant's ability to be creative and distinguish themselves from others. Financially, an application platform costs more to build and implement than using email alone. In terms of data protection, companies are again responsible for ensuring their own compliance and should pay careful attention to the new guidelines around storing and sharing data provided to them by applicants online.

Some ERA members still require application via post or allow the applicant to choose a method by which to apply. Regardless of application method, the keys to success here are to closely monitor all channels that are open to applicants and to respond to applications in a timely manner. **Responses should clearly outline to candidates the expected timeframe in which application milestones will occur.** For example, a preliminary check that all necessary documents are in place within three working days and a response to the candidate as to whether they will be considered for interview within a week. The exact time scales here are not as important as ensuring the time frame set out is adhered to so that the candidate knows what to expect at each stage of the process.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RENTAL INDUSTRY

Some ERA members have a dedicated career section within their company website. The career site is designed with prospective employees in mind and can be considered as a virtual window front for an employer. The first page of the career section should clearly display all open positions for which the firm is currently hiring. Other key features that should appear on the career site include presentation of the company's values and mission statement, alongside the incentives and benefits of working there. These are enhanced by delivery of social proof i.e. testimonials and certificates from current employees. **It is also essential that the call to action to apply via the career site is prominent and clear, regardless of which application method is preferred.** Links to further company information can also be provided here, such as the company history, an introduction to the current leadership team and an overview of the job application process.

Some career sites also make use of video media, which can be extremely effective at portraying an authentic image of a company's culture and increasing the viewer's sense of familiarity with the brand. Testimonial videos provide superior social proof over written testimonials for both the company and the role, and can feature trustworthy current employees discussing their experiences. The key here is to ensure the videos are not over-polished—authenticity trumps professionalism in this case if relatability is the goal. Disadvantages experienced in the role shouldn't be a closed topic as these may be key in managing potential candidates' expectations and again increasing the believability of the testimonial. A suggestion here is to look at creating short, low-budget testimonial videos—adding a personal touch is often very effective at attracting more qualified applicants. Other types of effective video media include image videos, which can often be used to help strengthen the perception of the employer brand. These videos are often made by professionals, using animation alongside real footage to emphasise the selling points of the company and attract talented candidates.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RENTAL INDUSTRY



LinkedIn from a HR perspective

Recommendations for your linkedIn page

Metric	Description
Uses images/video	Rich media such as images and video help viewers understand the company's vision, purpose and values.
Optimised for search	Company pages should be very SEO-friendly with leading sentences containing powerful, keyword-rich sentences.
Showcase page	Showcase pages are free extensions of company pages, designed for spotlighting a brand or initiative.
Customised for global audiences	Targeting filters that use geography and language can define the audience for updates so people only see content made for them.
Posts daily company updates	Sharing company news, industry articles and thought leadership pieces is the most effective way to start a conversation, drive word of mouth and directly engage with your audience.
Sponsored Content	LinkedIn's premier advertising format 'Sponsored Content' lets companies set their own budget and choose from cost per click or cost per impression options.
Career Pages	LinkedIn's Career pages can turn a company's page into a recruitment portal that showcases the employer brand, attracting and engaging with quality candidates with targeted content and job recommendations.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RENTAL INDUSTRY



Facebook from a HR perspective

Facebook is the world's largest social media network with 2.2 billion monthly active users as of 2017. It is a platform in which every user can register and create a profile for free, supplying Facebook with basic information such as their name, age and location. The popularity of Facebook as a recruitment platform stems from the opportunities it offers to companies by way of in-depth data that helps save time and resources in the hiring and selection process. Further, Facebook provides companies a popular platform on which companies can build their online presence and share content quickly and effectively. **The key recommendation for maximising Facebook engagement is to first identify content that resonates best with the company's audience and then to tailor future content based on that previous performance**—a powerful way for a brand to boost their online presence.

Companies can also make use of Facebook's additional features which can improve the user experience on their page and potentially attract quality candidates. The platform allows business pages to create extended tabs, which essentially provide space for more content. The more engaging content a company shares, the greater the probability of piquing a candidate's interest and attracting them to the brand. If a company runs unique programs and initiatives, Facebook is a great platform on which to show them off. The audience perception of the employer brand is enhanced, while at the same time potential targets of the program or initiative i.e. a veteran's program or environmental initiatives can be reached. Some companies like Opentext and Shaw Industries post their job openings directly on their Facebook page, eliminating the need for redirection to the company's career site and thereby streamlining the recruitment process. A further suggested tab extension to a company's Facebook page is to create a page for recent graduate opportunities. This is the age group most likely to be using Facebook for recruitment purposes, and therefore a dedicated graduate tab serves an important purpose. A final key recommendation here is to create a section that links all of a company's social media pages on one page, as each platform appeals to different users in various ways and therefore serves a different role.



 **DANIELWALZER**

Daniel Walzer

Wachtelweg 6
88316 Isny

Tel +49 7562 6090420
Mobil +49 170 2036872
Mail daniel@danielwalzer.de

Internet danielwalzer.de
facebook facebook.com/drwalzer/
news blog.danielwalzer.de



European Rental Association

Avenue de Tervueren, 188A, 4th Floor, Postbox 4, 1150 Brussels

Tel + 32 2 761 16 04
eMail era@erarental.org
www.erarental.org