“A must-read for recruiters, entrepreneurs, leaders and managers. Why? Because it helps them overcome the fear and doubts they have regarding using social media for recruitment and is a great, veracious guide to successfully doing that.”

René Bolier, Co-Founder, OnRecruit

“Andy’s blog has been a must-read for me over the last several years. His clear writing style helps recruiters sharpen their social media skills. With this book I hope recruiters, who are still not social media savvy, will build their skills and be relevant in a changing business world.”

Gautam Ghosh, Director, Talent Branding, Flipkart.com

“With social recruiting, there is no one silver bullet or strategy. Social Media Recruitment is one of the most comprehensive sources for all things social media recruiting to date.”

Jessica Miller-Merrell, Founder of Blogging4Jobs

“Andy is the social media and recruitment expert that the experts in the industry seek out to read and listen to. For years I’ve made Andy’s blog a weekly must-read. His book surpasses his blog, with detailed case studies and examples of how to use social media properly to recruit.”

Kelly Dingee, Director, Strategic Recruiting at Staffing Advisors

In order to attract the right people into your organization despite a global shortfall of talented candidates, new methods are now needed to reach future talent. Social media needs to become a vital part of any recruitment strategy. Social Media Recruitment combines practical guidance with case studies from around the world and insights from industry thought leaders to provide a full understanding of what social media means for HR and recruitment, and how to successfully integrate it into your day-to-day activities. It covers the essentials from the beginning to the end of the process, ensuring that your social media recruitment strategy really works for your organization and is aligned with your recruitment objectives.

Andy Headworth is the founder of Sirona Consulting, a specialist consultancy that helps companies understand and integrate social media into their recruitment strategies. As the author of a multi-award-winning recruitment blog and a regular international speaker, he enjoys sharing his extensive industry knowledge, expertise and insights.
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Social media in the workplace can be scary and confusing for many people within human resources (HR) and recruitment, mainly due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of how it works. As you will see in this book, social media has now become mainstream in our everyday life, with thousands of social networks available to everyone across the world. Now, in 2015, it is at the point where there is probably a social network for every facet of our lives. We check them the moment we wake up, via our mobile devices, and we are never far away from all the messages, updates and tweets until we go to bed – we have all become slaves to the digital world around us.

This ‘always on’ aspect of technology has huge implications for everyone involved in recruitment, including job seekers. Recruitment video technology allows candidates to take interviews when it suits them, mobile technology provides freedom of location and flexibility, and social media gives everyone a voice whenever and wherever they choose to use it. I don’t think effective talent acquisition or talent management has ever been harder.

For the last seven years I have been helping companies to understand social media and how best to integrate it into their recruitment strategies and processes. There has been one consistent thread on this journey, and that is that no two companies are the same when it comes to social media. Every single one is different, primarily because social media is people-based and, of course, no two people are alike. Add to that the seemingly unlimited advice, tips, guidelines, success stories, case studies and, of course, horror stories that are prevalent across the internet and it is therefore not surprising when people don’t know where to start when deciding to use social media in recruitment.

This book is aimed at small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) globally who have social media firmly on their agenda, but as yet have not given it the attention it needs from a recruitment and employer branding perspective. The HR, recruitment and talent leaders of these companies recognize they need to adapt to this ever-changing digital world, but either haven’t had the resources available or the knowledge to know where to start. This book has been written in an easy to follow and practical style to deal with this exact problem – to help people in companies who are responsible for hiring talent to better understand social media and how it can be integrated successfully into their day-to-day recruitment activities.

Included in this book are many examples from around the world, showing how companies are using social media in different ways to attract, engage
and hire talent. From Twitter competitions in India to augmented reality in New Zealand through to attracting candidates with personalized music playlists in Europe, there are some great innovative recruitment examples to inspire you to get started using social media for your recruitment. I have also reached out to some of the world’s best people sourcers, who have kindly shared their extensive knowledge in a chapter wholly dedicated to identifying and sourcing candidates across all the main social networks (Chapter 6).

With talent attraction and retention at the top of the agenda for global business leaders, there is the danger that social media is seen as the magic answer for companies experiencing talent challenges. It isn’t. But it is a great addition to existing recruitment processes, methods and technologies.

While there are no rules for using social media in recruitment, there are many examples of companies large and small using social media in innovative ways to reach out to and engage with sought-after talent. There are many examples within this book to help encourage you to think laterally about how your company can use social media in different ways within your recruitment.

Navigating the chapters

The following section gives you a quick walkthrough of the book:

Chapter 1: The fast-changing recruitment landscape looks at the global demand for talent and how it is driving change across companies and specifically within HR and recruitment departments. It covers the business drivers, demographic differences, changing financial climates and the implications for the future growth plans of companies who do not address their future talent needs now.

Chapter 2: Recruitment using social media shows how social media can be used for recruiting to meet the demand for talent. It looks at the scale, reach and depth of social media use around the world, and how this can be tapped into for recruiting purposes. It includes examples of how companies have successfully integrated social media into their recruitment strategies.

Chapter 3: Selecting your social networks examines which social media networks you should consider using for your recruitment and why. It looks at the main social networks and provides best practice guidelines in setting up the networks correctly for use within your recruitment strategy.

Chapter 4: Social media tools covers an extensive number of tools that can be used in all aspects of social media recruitment. They cover social media management, productivity, content creation, monitoring, collaboration and hashtag management.
Chapter 5: Social media recruitment strategy explains what a social media recruitment strategy looks like and how to implement one from the beginning. It breaks down the various aspects of a strategy and provides practical advice on how to manage each of the stages for implementing one at your company.

Chapter 6: Candidate sourcing with social media shows you how to identify and source candidates across all the social networks. It includes detailed advice from some of the world’s best sourcers, and provides a wealth of tips, tricks and techniques to discover hard-to-find talent.

Chapter 7: Building your employer brand helps you to understand how to build and develop your employment brand using social media and recruitment content marketing. It will cover identifying your target audience, created and curated content, marketing automation for time efficiencies and multichannel content strategy.

Chapter 8: Social media big data looks at the use of huge volumes of data within recruiting and social media, and how you can use it to make the correct hiring decisions. ‘Big data’ is a global buzzword and can confuse people, but if you use it correctly it can make the recruiter’s job much easier.

Chapter 9: Establishing ROI examines how it is possible to accurately establish a return on investment (ROI) using social media in recruitment. Technology plays a large part in measuring ROI, and I take you through the step-by-step process to establish a tangible ROI using social media for recruiting.

Chapter 10: Social media guidelines offers recommendations of different policies and procedures you should be using when social media is involved in recruiting. It covers employee usage policy, and provides proven examples that you can utilize within your company.

Chapter 11: Building a business case for social media recruitment takes you through the process of how to build a business case for using social media within your recruitment strategy.

Chapter 12: Future recruitment looks at where social media and recruitment may end up and some of the changes that are happening now. Change in HR and recruitment is never as fast as it seems, and it covers technologies including mobile and video interviewing, which your company should already be using as part of its recruitment procedure.

My objective is that when you have finished reading this book you will have learnt that social media is something that can be embraced for recruiting, as opposed to being feared or perceived as a threat. There will be many ways that you will be able to use social media within recruitment at your company, and throughout the book there is practical advice including suggested tools, platforms, hints and tips. The world of social media is huge, and
I make no attempt to cover every area of this vast subject. I have focused on the areas of social media that I believe have a direct impact on recruitment.

What I love about social media in recruitment is that some people are literally just starting off at the beginning while others are at various stages of user maturity. The reality is that with the speed of change within the world of social media, we are all learning new things every day.

Enjoy your journey, and I hope the book helps you to integrate social media successfully into your company’s future recruitment.
The fast-changing recruitment landscape

In the last five years we have seen technology improve significantly, economies recover from the financial calamities triggered in 2007, the demographic balance of the workforce change, the proliferation of ‘big data’ and, of course, we are now very much a social media and mobile world. This has all resulted in the recruiting landscape fundamentally changing for both companies and job seekers.

The last few years have seen global economies move from recessionary to retrenchment and, finally, to investment and growth, which is where we are now in 2015. In this relatively short period of time, the workforce available to sustain this economic growth looks considerably different than it did five years ago.

Through a combination of demographic changes beginning to take effect, advancements in mobile, social and technologies happening quicker than anyone could imagine, educational shortfalls in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and the global shift to everything digital, there is now a significant skills shortage across many sectors and industries throughout the world.¹

A company’s ability to find, attract and ultimately recruit skilled talent is going to determine how successful they are in meeting their business growth objectives. Talent acquisition and retention is now firmly on the agenda of chief executive officers (CEOs) and business owners across the world.²

So considering the changes we have seen over the past five years, how will you be doing recruiting in the next five years? Many of you will not have even considered this, but the success or failure of your companies could well depend on the strategic recruiting decisions you make in the near future.

Considering the next five years, how are you going to deal with some of the well-documented industry trends that are affecting your recruitment world? Are you even considering them yet? These are a number of the current
trends that will need to be addressed within the recruitment functions within 
companies, if not immediately, then very soon:

- The growing mismatch between the skills that companies need and 
  the talent available: 36 per cent of employers globally reported talent 
  shortages in 2014 according to ManpowerGroup’s annual Talent 
  Shortage Survey.
- The shortfall of digital talent: 750,000 additional digitally skilled 
  workers are required in the UK by 2017 in order to capitalize on a 
  £12 billion economic opportunity, according to a report from O2 
  titled ‘The Future Digital Skills Needs of the UK Economy’.
- The changing demographics of multigenerational workforces.
- Recruitment talent within organizations.
- Knowledge gaps as more people with critical skills and knowledge 
  are reaching retirement age, combined with a shortfall of these skills 
  to replace them.
- Fast-changing candidate expectations – behaviours, in-demand and 
  they know it, vocal.
- The extinction of the desktop PC – the move to mobile and tablet.
- Social media recruiting – speed, transparency everywhere.
- Data-based recruiting decision making.

These are not things that you can opt out of, as many of these are impacting 
talent availability and recruiting right now. While you may not think that 
these will affect your business, because you have a strong and stable workforce, 
then think again.

If your employees are that good, they will simply become targets of your 
competitors who will succeed in attracting them to their company at some 
stage. With the demand for top talent, there will always be companies looking 
to offer more to poach good people. Existing employee complacency is as 
bad as poor recruitment strategy.

How will the current trends in our industry impact your recruitment?

The growing mismatch between the skills 
companies need and the talent available

This is not a new trend, as there has always been a supply-and-demand 
rationale behind recruitment. However, the fast-changing technological 
world of social, mobile, digital and cloud has brought with it requirements 
for new skills, knowledge and experiences.

This is a global problem and one that can be seen in the data collected 
by ManpowerGroup in their ninth annual Talent Shortage Survey in 2014 
(see Figure 1.1).
The global average for talent shortages is 36 per cent, with over half of the countries suffering worse than that. As shown in Figure 1.1 many South American countries are having talent issues. At the other end of the scale, two of the countries that were hit the hardest in the global recession, Spain and Ireland, not unsurprisingly have the lowest talent shortages. How does your country fare, and is your recruitment reflective of this?

If you then combine these talent shortages with the projected gross domestic product (GDP) growth across the world, then you can see in Figure 1.2 that many of the countries face significant challenges in recruiting talent in the foreseeable future.

It is worth noting the types of jobs that global employers are having difficulty filling, because these will impact any recruitment you are planning in the next couple of years. The top 10 jobs causing employers most problems according to ManpowerGroup’s survey are:

1. Skilled trade workers.
2. Engineers.
3. Technicians.
4. Sales executives.
5. Accounting and finance staff.
It is surprising that IT is so far down the list, as it is one of the skill sets that is talked about continuously as having skill shortages. Obviously this would fluctuate depending on the location in the world and the industries involved. For example, companies living in the tech bubble on the West Coast of America might disagree with the results of this survey.

One statistic that drives home the effect of these shortages is that 54 per cent of employers in this survey say that talent shortages had a medium to high impact on their ability to do business with their clients. This is when companies really take notice and look more closely at the talent within their business and thus more focus is directed at the recruitment function.

When looked at on a global basis, as in the talent heat map in Figure 1.3 from Oxford Economics, with the dark areas predicted to have recruitment problems, it would seem that the next five years will present problems for many companies, especially in the northern hemisphere and Australia.
The gap between the growth in demand and the growth in supply of talent, 2011 to 2021

[ indicators a trend deficit,
[ a trend surplus, ] a broad balance. Numbers show trend growth as annual percentages.)

**SOURCE:** Courtesy of Oxford Economics Global Talent 2021
As you will see further in this book, social media can be used as a tool in all aspects of the recruitment process, including helping companies to make informed business decisions via the use of talent information.

A good example of this is Telefónica Digital in South America. They were looking to expand their pre-sales and business development of digital products into potentially lucrative territories in Latin America – Columbia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. A highly diverse region, with relatively low unemployment levels for a developing region, existing talent pools for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Media were in high demand.

How did they plan for this? The resourcing model to support this expansion needed to be holistic. Everyone is a recruiter! Use of existing teams to attract other people and be engaged in the process included:

- LinkedIn profiles of business and influential employees were updated.
- Social media that the existing teams used were leveraged – at the time @m2mteléfono had 1,065 followers; Telefónica’s #m2m official Twitter @tefdigital had 5,189 followers; Telefónica Digital LinkedIn page had 2,379 followers.
- More broadly, additional resources were used to target specific interest groups including LinkedIn mHealth group – a networking group for LinkedIn members interested in the opportunity for using mobile to improve health.
- Lastly, use of the Telefónica Digital Hub (TefD), which at the time was receiving over 22,000 visitors per month – an audience comprised of tech industry experts, bloggers, media and analysts, academics, stakeholders, TefD partners, TefD employees and their networks, digerati and opinion formers.

So, in this instance, the talent data derived from social media not only helped Telefónica Digital to make a business decision to expand into new territories, it also then provided the means to enable them to recruit the necessary people to action it.

The shortfall of digital talent

As the world moves from analogue to digital, nearly every function within business is being impacted by the global use of mobile and social media, and the subsequent demand for so-called ‘big data’ analytics. Even IT departments are struggling with the new skills required to affect these changes, due to the speed of change of technologies and development languages required by their own businesses.

While in 2015 social media has been operationally used within organizations for over five years, the uptake to recruit digitally skilled workers has
The Fast-Changing Recruitment Landscape

been unusually slow. The methods of recruiting digital talent has equally been strange, in that many companies are still using traditional recruitment methods to attract digital skills to their companies – poor career sites, job boards, advertising and recruitment agencies. The problem is that the digital audience that companies are trying hard to engage with are not there. Unsurprisingly they use the same digital tools and sites – that is, social media and mobile – to engage with each other as they do in their work.

According to the Forrester’s Q1 2014 Digital Experience Delivery Online Survey, 58 per cent of companies are having difficulty attracting and recruiting digital talent. The types of skills that are currently in most demand in the digital space, and therefore carry a salary premium to them, are shown in the word cloud in Figure 1.4.

FIGURE 1.4 Digital skills in most demand

Depending on where you are in the world will of course dictate the different digital skills needed due to technology infrastructures and adoption of technologies. As a recruiter you should not be ignoring these different global talent pools of digital skill. For example, companies in the West looking for developers and designers in mobile e-commerce should look to parts of Asia, where there is a mature and proven market in mobile shopping. Of course, there will be the issue of visas and physically relocating people around the world, but with video communication and collaboration becoming more common, we will see more companies adopting international recruitment strategies for specific hard-to-find and business-critical skills.
The changing demographics of multigenerational workforces

How many generations do you have working for your company? It is very possible it could be as many as four or five generations if you take into account five different age demographics:

- the seniors (born before 1945);
- baby boomers (born 1945–60);
- generation X (born 1961–80);
- generation Y (born 1981–95) aka millennials;
- generation Z (born after 1995).

Any time now the generation Y workers will become the majority population of the global workforce. Much has been written about the various traits of generation Y workers, including low boredom threshold, impatience, the desire to multitask, a ‘work to live not live to work’ attitude, constant questioning and high expectations in the workplace. When you consider that many generation Y have grown up in the digital age, it is not surprising that they will have different expectations of a recruitment process.

The effects of the recession triggered in 2007 have been to push forward retirement ages out of financial necessity. This has meant that both baby boomers and seniors are still in the workforce. At the other end of the demographic scale we are now starting to see generation Z workers appear for the first time at companies. So, as you can see, it is very easy to have five generations in the same workplace.

This becomes a challenge for recruitment on a number of levels, with a huge variety of skill levels, wide-range of technological awareness and personal and professional expectations to be managed. There are of course advantages to having different generations in the workforce, especially when it comes to new technologies. One of the large global banks recently changed from Blackberry mobile devices to Apple iPhones. They chose not to take the expensive support and training package that such a big change might normally require. Instead they used the generational differences in their workforce and paired their baby boomer employees with their younger generation Y and Z employees. The feedback I received from the bank was that the project was a great success, and that they are now looking at other areas where the different generations in their workforce can add value to each other.

Recruitment talent within organizations

A company’s ability to find, attract and access highly skilled people is critical to its success. Yet the attention and respect given to internal recruiting of
professionals and the technology they need to use can often be described as shocking. I am not exaggerating, as I base this statement on many years of consulting with organizations about their recruitment teams and technologies.

Depending on the type of company, recruitment either sits within HR as a subsection of their busy workload, or it might be lucky enough to be a stand-alone talent operation reporting directly to the board. Post-recession there has been a distinct change in recruitment strategy for many companies, as they have moved to direct recruiting models. This has been predominantly driven on cost reduction rather than quality.

In simple terms, to achieve good direct recruitment you need buy-in from the company leaders (and line managers), good processes and systems and, above all, a good recruitment team. This does not have to be complicated, and for SMEs with only one or two people doing recruitment it can be as basic as a simple low-cost online recruitment system sitting behind some well-designed career pages on their website. Add to that some content marketing automation, social media-curated content and response mechanisms set-up, and very quickly the recruitment proposition looks a lot more rounded, even on a smallish budget.

Recruitment professionals now need to wear many hats to be effective in the new recruiting landscape. It is no longer acceptable to be glorified administrators, sitting between line managers and the job boards. To add value to a company they need to offer additional skills. In my opinion they now need a mix of skills not previously associated with recruiters. They need to be:

- great communicators;
- better listeners;
- relationship builders;
- sales people;
- marketers;
- copywriters;
- socially media savvy;
- curious;
- project managers;
- resourcers;
- researchers;
- negotiators;
- bold;
- professional.

You may look at this list and think it is impossible to find recruiters with all those skills. You may even think it is completely unnecessary, but I want you to think about the truly great recruiters that you have met in your career so far. I guarantee they had all if not most of the traits listed here, and that is
why you were talking to them, either as a client or candidate. Wouldn’t it be
great to have recruiters like that working in your team?

It doesn’t matter which side of the recruitment fence you sit on, whether
it is in-house corporate recruiting or in a recruitment agency – great recruiters
consistently attract and hire great talent. Admittedly they may well be a little
more costly than your current budget allows, but if you want the best quality
you have to pay for it.

There is a snag, however, and that is the shortfall of really good recruiters
globally. However, this should not stop you from striving to find the best
recruiters available to you when you are building your teams. Good recruiters
can be developed and trained as long as they show enough of the character
traits listed above. There are many great training resources available to develop
the skills of your recruiters covering all of the skills above. There is no excuse
any more in having purely administrative recruiters.

Knowledge gaps

This is a real problem for companies as their senior employees reach retirement
age, combined with a shortfall of services skills and knowledge to replace
them. The knowledge and information that these employees hold is often
irreplaceable – especially in critical industries such as engineering, oil and
gas and energy. It is impossible to replace the knowledge and experience
held by these valuable employees, even with highly qualified graduates.

I am sure that you can relate to this in your company, maybe on a small
scale. What happens when an entire industry is struck by the same challenge?
What do companies do then?

When I was in Norway recently talking with companies about their
recruitment strategies, this particular subject was very high on their agenda.
Norway’s largest industry and biggest GDP contributor is oil and gas
exploration. The problem they have is that 27.6 per cent of the 5.1 million
population of Norway is aged 45 to 66 (http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/
nokkeital). The engineering and technically skilled workers that have largely
been responsible for Norway’s success in this industry are now starting to
retire.

Some of the companies I talked to about this had addressed this problem
in a very thorough way. It is critical for them to retain as much of the skills and
knowledge as possible, so they embark on a knowledge transfer programme.

Two years before retirement these technically skilled workers are tasked
with sharing their knowledge with younger workers. This is a formal pro-
gramme consisting of off-site classroom knowledge sharing as well as practical
on-site experience. From the feedback I received, it is working well with the
pending retirees proving to be excellent trainers and knowledge sharers.

Recently I was discussing this same topic with a US financial services
company that hadn’t realized they had a knowledge gap issue coming at
them in the next three to five years. They were focusing totally on the need
to recruit new talent without considering how many of their employees they had scheduled to soon retire. Have you started to consider this issue at your company and, if so, have you put a strategy in place to best retain the valuable knowledge the retirees have about your company, your clients and the industry?

Fast-changing candidate expectations

Have you noticed over the last two years the differences in attitudes and behaviours from candidates in the recruitment process? With the changing workforce demographics, ever-changing new technologies and the expansion of mobile and social media, talent attraction and recruitment have certainly become more challenging. With the exposure to information provided by sites such as LinkedIn, combined with the speed and access of social media sites and the ‘always on’ nature of mobile, the behaviours and subsequent expectations of jobseekers has changed for ever.

For example, recently my (generation Y) daughter found a job online that she wanted to apply for while searching on her iPhone. A link from Google took her to the job advertised on a career page. The career site was non-mobile responsive so she went to her laptop to make the application, where she discovered she couldn’t apply because she was using the Safari web browser. Not fazed by this she then went to LinkedIn and found the name of a recruiter at the company. She saw he had a Twitter address and she tweeted him. He replied, telling her to download the Chrome browser, as they were having browser compatibility issues. She did and subsequently applied for the role.

To my daughter, the use of Twitter was normal. Interestingly, she ‘expected’ an answer from the company, whereas my response when she told me was, ‘Good luck, you might be lucky if they reply!’

What would have happened if that had been your company? First, do you even use Twitter? How quickly would one of your team have responded in the same situation?

If this had been in the United States, then no doubt my daughter would have first checked with Glassdoor.com (a review site where employees anonymously provide reviews on the pros and cons of their companies and managers) before applying in order to check on what others are saying about the company – both employees and jobseekers.4

This also raises an important behavioural change we have seen with jobseekers that has been accelerated by social media and mobile phones – how referrals, reputation, reviews and recommendations have become powerful in everything we all do. When was the last time you made a conscious purchase before first checking out reviews online or asking your Facebook friends for an opinion – holidays (TripAdvisor), restaurants (Yelp) or any other products (Amazon)? Personally, I check reviews nowadays before I make nearly every purchase.
Garnering reviews, referrals and recommendations are now part of our everyday life. So why wouldn’t you do the same before applying for a job or accepting an interview for a role? In the United States, where Glassdoor has been in use for a number of years, and has over 6 million reviews, it has become normal practice to check on an employer before applying or interviewing for jobs. Employers are also using it now to monitor employee happiness and engagement, as well as encouraging their employees to add reviews to the site. After all, what is more powerful than someone looking at your company on a site like Glassdoor, and seeing many reviews from current and past employees on what it is like to work there?

The question, then, is are you more likely to accept these reviews, or the ‘what is it like to work here’ videos selected for a company career site?

I know what I would consider first!

If you haven’t heard of Glassdoor before, go and see what people are saying about your company.

Referrals and recommendations are great recruitment tools, and with talent sourcing becoming harder and harder they are something you need to be looking to embrace right now, if you don’t already do so.

The extinction of the desktop PC – mobile and tablet

Do I really need to tell you that the world of recruitment is mobile? I mean, when was the last time you rang a candidate or applicant on a fixed landline? When you are engaging with talent, whether that be via e-mail, messaging, SMS or social media, what device do you think they are using to receive your communication? Most of the time it will, of course, be a mobile device, and as you can see in Figure 1.5 there is a real mix of activities performed by people when using them. Therefore, you need to consider every possible interaction you have with candidates and applicants, and ensure they are mobile friendly. For example, if people interested in working for your company have signed up for job alerts via e-mail, you need to make sure all the links within those e-mails link to website pages that are mobile compatible, otherwise they will be a complete waste of time.

Currently one of the biggest challenges companies are having is around their career sites and the underlying recruitment technology – the applicant tracking system (ATS). Very few of the main vendors have a candidate application process that is easy to do on either a mobile or a tablet. If you are one of the companies using these vendors, you could well be losing good applicants for your jobs, as they are being put off by this poor candidate experience.

A related challenge in using mobile for recruiting is what is called ‘mobile apply’. This is as the name suggests: the ability to apply for a job simply using your mobile device. This can currently be set up with ‘Apply with LinkedIn’ as well as linking to CVs stored in cloud storage sites such as
Dropbox and Google Drive as well as using pre-stored CVs on sites such as Indeed and Monster. In my opinion this is definitely the future, but we are still seeing limited examples that are accepted by the applicants themselves. UPS have a full mobile apply process in place (see Chapter 12), but they are one of the few that are doing it well.

**Figure 1.5** Activities performed by smartphone users at least once a month

**SOURCE:** Nielsen (Feb 2013)
Social media recruiting – speed, transparency everywhere

There can be no denying that social media is mainstream. It has been fully integrated into business and social lives, and has been widely adopted as a default communication ‘news platform’ by the world’s media. In fact, the latest news is often broken on Twitter before it can even reach the major news networks on TV. It is no surprise in the correlation of the ubiquity of mobile phones and tablets, and the fast growth of all the social networking sites. According to Pew Research, 74 per cent of online adults now use social networking sites.6

There are now thousands of social networks of all sizes across the world, large and small and covering nearly every subject you could imagine. The social networks with the largest number of users, as of June 2014, are shown in Figure 1.6.7

The social network that is most commonly associated with recruiting is the world’s largest professional network, LinkedIn. I find it interesting that many recruiters just focus on LinkedIn and still do not consider Facebook as a social network to recruit from, even though it is three times the size of LinkedIn. As you read through this book you will find many examples of companies successfully using Facebook as part of their recruitment strategy.

While social media may well be mainstream it is still not universally used within the workplace. It is interesting that companies will use different social networks within the marketing and sales departments, and yet when it comes to recruitment, HR departments are still resisting them. This creates

**FIGURE 1.6** Active users (in millions) by social network as of June 2014

![Graph showing active users by social network as of June 2014](image)

SOURCE: Most recent data in company press releases, correct as at June 2014
The Fast-Changing Recruitment Landscape

an interesting problem. The marketing department may be using social media to help build and develop the brand and to communicate and engage with their customers. The HR department will, of course, benefit from this brand development, hopefully attracting future employees to the business. However, it may not be embracing social media in the same way, thus causing frustration at many levels.

Just like mobile, social media is now omnipresent. You can no longer choose to ignore it, in any part your company, especially in HR and recruitment, where engagement and communication is so important.

Given the talent shortages that companies now face, social media allows you to dramatically increase the pool of people from which to recruit; the variety and sheer scale of many of the social networks really is mind-boggling. If you then factor into the equation clever searching technologies that have the ability to find all the people linked to them, companies now have access to literally millions of candidates across the world. There will be skills to learn, methods to understand and frustrations with all the unstructured data, yet social media offers companies solutions to the talent shortages they will have now and in the future.

Data-based recruiting

You have very likely heard of the phrase ‘big data’. Maybe some of you might even fully understand it, but I doubt it. It is not a new subject, but it is one that is overused and hugely overhyped by (ironically) social media, itself a contributor to that vast amount of people data online.

I will not go into too much detail with regards to this subject, as I am certainly not a data scientist. However, understanding what it is with relevance to social media and recruitment is important.

Big data is defined by Wikipedia as:

An all-encompassing term for any collection of data sets so large and complex that it becomes difficult to process using on-hand data management tools or traditional data processing applications.

The challenges include capture, curation, storage, search, sharing, transfer, analysis and visualization. The trend to larger data sets is due to the additional information derivable from analysis of a single large set of related data, as compared to separate smaller sets with the same total amount of data, allowing correlations to be found to spot business trends.9

It is vital to explain why this is important to recruitment and social media. The world’s largest recruitment site used by thousands of recruiters every single day is LinkedIn. Now with a membership of 340+ million people, it has become a huge data hub for its users to mine every day. We are currently all making recruitment business decisions based on the data we extract from LinkedIn. The site itself uses the huge amount of data about companies, industry trends, people, universities, employee movements, networks and of
course insights to try to continually improve the user experience of its members. This is the reality of recruitment big data at a level we can all understand.

For example, there are over 175 million LinkedIn members located in the United States and Europe, and by mining the skills and location data in their profiles and overlaying the information on Google Maps, they were able to create two interactive maps that highlight the skills that define almost every major city in each region.9

Consider Facebook, Twitter and Google+ as people data hubs in their own right. You as the recruitment person will be doing your searching and analysis of these huge networks of data (unstructured people data) to find potential talent. You can use search strings and individual tools to help you to do this in order to be effective on a small scale. However, to be able to perform wide-ranging and deep searches across all the social networks at the same time, you need to be using one of the new breeds of recruitment tools – social media sourcing aggregators. Some examples of these include: Dice OpenWeb, Entelo, Gild and TalentBin (recently acquired by Monster).

If you don’t have the time to construct and manage your own Boolean string direct-sourcing library, then these are tools you will need in order to tap into the social media (people) big data for recruiting purposes.

So far, we have seen extraordinary growth with social media and mobile adoption driving many of the trends outlined in this chapter. There has to come a time over the next few years where a plateau is reached, although the reality is that for the large technology vendors they are probably still going to play catch up to a certain degree.

One thing is certain – we are going to see more innovation, diversification and much more fragmentation into smaller and niche networks and communities. From a recruitment perspective this can only be good news, and sites such as StackOverflow and Github in the IT space have proved that industry-led communities populated by like-minded individuals are incredibly powerful.

Throughout this chapter you have seen that there is a real need for companies to embrace social media and mobile technologies within their recruitment. In Chapter 2 you will see some different examples of organizations across the world that have successfully embedded social media into their recruitment strategies to great effect.

**Summary**

Social media and mobile needs to become an integral part of your recruiting strategy in order to help you to present a strong employer brand, engage candidates and make the recruitment process more efficient, effective and measurable.

The global skills shortages for the in-demand skills such as technology, data, engineering and construction are going to worsen globally, certainly in
The next few years. Companies will have to be more creative in how they identify, source and engage their prospective new employees.

Social media and mobile are now omnipresent. It is no longer an option for companies to sit back and ‘observe’ – they need to be integrating both social media and mobile into their recruiting strategies and company culture.

Candidate behaviours are changing fast, from the way they communicate with people to the platforms on which they engage with them. Companies need to understand this and make changes in their technologies and processes in order to ensure that they are able to converse effectively with their future candidates.

Notes

3 The Forrester Wave™: Digital Experience Delivery Platforms, Q3 2014.
4 Note: Glassdoor was still relatively young in the UK at the time of writing this book.
5 Forrester Research World Smartphone Adoption Forecast, 2012 to 2017 (Global) and Forrester.
6 http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/.
“A must-read for recruiters, entrepreneurs, leaders and managers. Why? Because it helps them overcome the fear and doubts they have regarding using social media for recruitment and is a great, veracious guide to successfully doing that.”
René Bolier, Co-Founder, OnRecruit

“Andy’s blog has been a must-read for me over the last several years. His clear writing style helps recruiters sharpen their social media skills. With this book I hope recruiters, who are still not social media savvy, will build their skills and be relevant in a changing business world.”
Gautam Ghosh, Director, Talent Branding, Flipkart.com

“With social recruiting, there is no one silver bullet or strategy. Social Media Recruitment is one of the most comprehensive sources for all things social media recruiting to date.”
Jessica Miller-Merrell, Founder of Blogging4Jobs

“Andy is the social media and recruitment expert that the experts in the industry seek out to read and listen to. For years I’ve made Andy’s blog a weekly must-read. His book surpasses his blog, with detailed case studies and examples of how to use social media properly to recruit.”
Kelly Dingee, Director, Strategic Recruiting at Staffing Advisors

In order to attract the right people into your organization despite a global shortfall of talented candidates, new methods are now needed to reach future talent. Social media needs to become a vital part of any recruitment strategy. Social Media Recruitment combines practical guidance with case studies from around the world and insights from industry thought leaders to provide a full understanding of what social media means for HR and recruitment, and how to successfully integrate it into your day-to-day activities. It covers the essentials from the beginning to the end of the process, ensuring that your social media recruitment strategy really works for your organization and is aligned with your recruitment objectives.

Andy Headworth is the founder of Sirona Consulting, a specialist consultancy that helps companies understand and integrate social media into their recruitment strategies. As the author of a multi-award-winning recruitment blog and a regular international speaker, he enjoys sharing his extensive industry knowledge, expertise and insights.