



## Social media a game changer for recruiters

More and more connections made online through sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

BY DAVE MACDONALD

**W**hen the Internet first came online and was adopted by the masses, the most powerful tool for connecting individuals was email.

Email combined the utility of postage with the speed of the telephone by allowing people to send direct correspondence to one, or many, individuals at the click of a button. By 2006, social networking sites were beginning to offer new ways for people to connect and share information while weblogs, or blogs, continued to grow in both popularity and accessibility.

More recently, one billion Internet users have enjoyed accessibility to the online world through cell phones and other mobile devices such as tablets and iPads.

This shift to a space where more and more users contribute content has been dubbed web 2.0 or the “social web.”

The tools and platforms making up the social web are “social media” such as blogs, **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **LinkedIn**. Social media is revolutionizing how people and companies engage one another.

These new tools of engagement offer job seekers of all kinds a new avenue to connect with both employers and recruitment firms that pair up workers with opportunities.

Using social media in this fashion is the primary force behind “social recruitment,” and one only need look as far as Vancouver-based recruitment firm **McNeill Nakamoto** (“McNak”) as a model of success.

“Social media is not going away,” explained McNak production manager **Jessica Rozitis**. “We embraced it back in 2008 because it matched our company’s communicative personality. It was a natural progression for us to take what we already do offline and bring it online.”

McNak is committed to maintaining a comprehensive social media presence. In addition to a blog featuring fresh content weekly, McNak has an interactive Twitter account; a Facebook page with updates and ongoing discussions; and a LinkedIn presence that is key in maintaining relationships with professionals.

When asked about success generated from its social media presence, Rozitis spoke broadly.

“Off the top of my head, I know we’ve made two placements from people who have connected with us on Twitter. That’s some real return on investment, but we’ve also received feedback about our website’s functionality through Twitter much faster than we would have otherwise. We also found out that a blogger from the U.K. that we didn’t know had seen a **YouTube** video we made about our culture and he wrote about it. One of the comments on that blog came from Australia so without a directed effort, the international community knows who we are. So in addition to social media complementing our culture, we’re seeing benefits to our brand and even our operations.”

As McNak has learned, social media is a channel that allows companies the opportunity to reach broad, international audiences as well as niche groups and individuals simultaneously. The criterion for effectively using social media is that communication needs to be genuine.

The social web is based on engagement and trust, so if interactions lack authenticity they actually lack meaning. In September, **Steve Sakamoto**, recruitment consultant with Burnaby-based **West Pacific Consulting Group**, attended the social recruiting summit in Seattle, where the value of authentic engagement was a key topic.

Sakamoto said, “Perception and market reputation are taking on a greater role for employers, recruitment firms and candidates.

“In fact, when contacting candidates via job sites a few years ago, the recruiter held virtually all the cards. Now, thanks to information being more accessible for all parties, everyone has useful information to contribute to the end goal of getting the right candidates into the right opportunities.”

Whether a job seeker, a recruiter or an employer, the need for maintaining a sound, if not exceptional, reputation is second to none. Job seekers rely on their reputations to secure new opportunities and it is a certainty that anyone invested in engaging them will check their social media presence. But this is a two-way street.

Job seekers learn about organizations they consider working with online. Organizations lacking a social media presence or simply not engaged in online conversations about brands are giving up a significant advantage to companies encouraging job seekers to pursue opportunities with them through social media.

Social media is not going away. The more information collected each passing day makes it that much more powerful. Sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and blogs allow anyone with an Internet connection to learn about who you are and what you do. Social media will continue to change the rules and outcomes for all sides of the employment market.

It is becoming clearer that those who adopt the tools and adapt to their use hold a distinct advantage over those who do not.

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– Jessica Rozitis,  
production manager  
McNeill Nakamoto