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Companies using social network sites like Facebook, Twitter to hire potential candidates

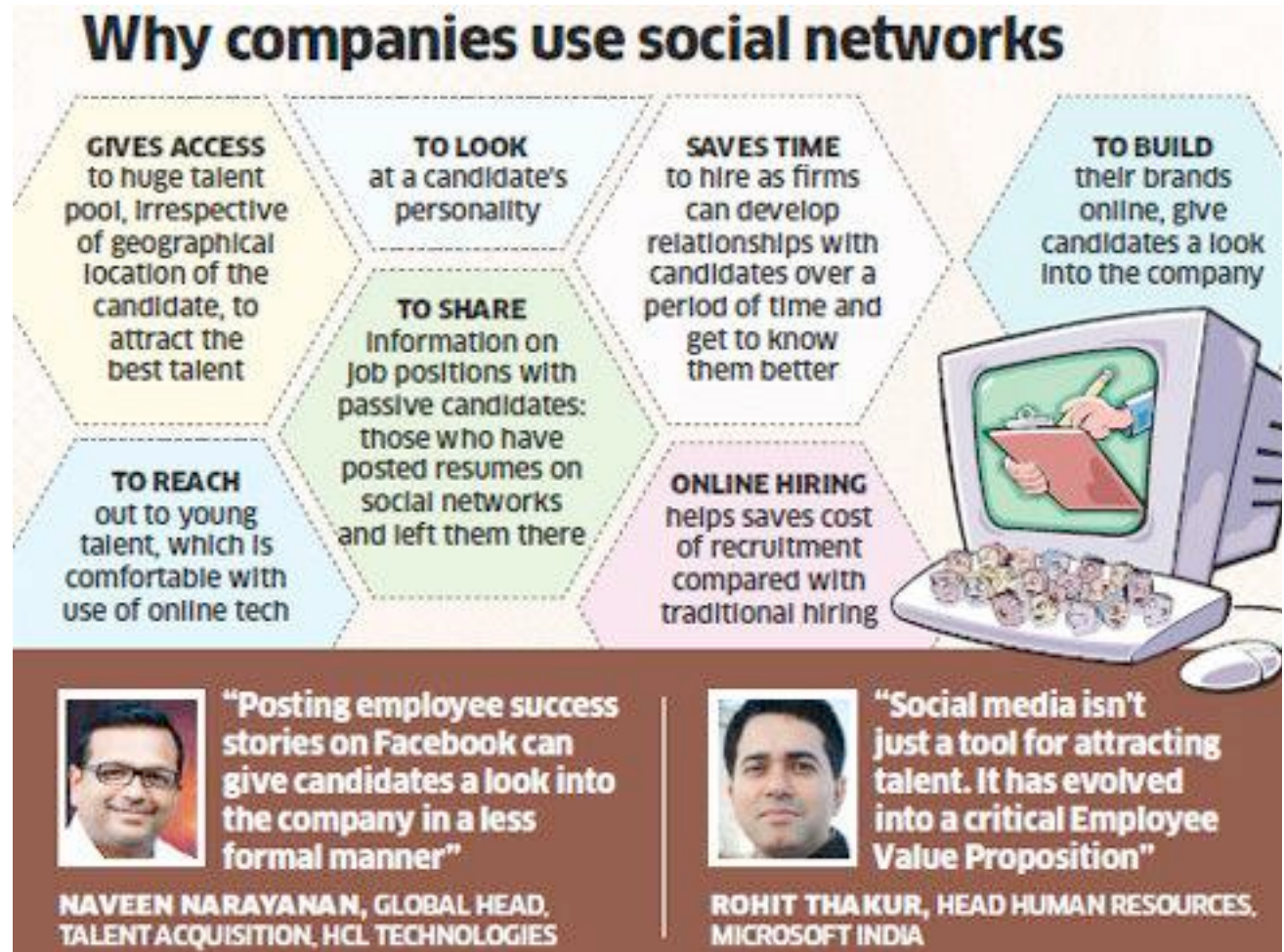
American Express India has found a way to connect eyeball-to-eyeball with young talent, in a medium that GenNext knows only too well: the company has started putting up video job descriptions on YouTube. Employees talk about their role and take potential hires through the company's work environment.

For IT companies like HCL Technologies, social network sites like Facebook are particularly useful for niche hiring in talent segments like SAP, Peoplesoft, Oracle, etc. Whereas Ingersoll Rand International uses social media to share information with passive candidates - those who have posted their resumes on social networks and left them there, so to speak - about new positions and give them insights into the company through posts of staff stories so that candidates are inspired to work with the company.

With millions of potential candidates connected to friends, colleagues and competitors through networking sites, companies in pursuit of this talent pool are now looking to have an edge over their competitors in the online jungle. They are coming up with innovative methods to leverage the digital medium to get a closer and more informal understanding of talent, besides selling their brands to Gen Y.

"Social media isn't just a tool or a vehicle for attracting talent. It has evolved into a critical employee value proposition. Organisations with a well-evolved social media policy and presence will have an advantage in capturing the interest of Gen Y," says Rohit Thakur, head human resources, Microsoft India. "We look at the pattern of the candidates' updates on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to understand their interests and thereby find the best fits for our company," adds Jayantika Dave, vice president - HR, Ingersoll Rand International.

From the organisation's perspective, hiring from social networking sites makes sense at various levels. LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter provide them with a huge engagement rate and cost effectiveness, and help them look beyond a candidate's business acumen to his or her personality and character. The added advantage with Facebook is that a company pays per click and cost is incurred only when someone shows interest in a job posting.



"The networks help firms understand candidates in terms of their career graph, areas of interest, educational qualifications and professional network," says Deepak Jain -- senior vice president and global head, workforce planning and development, Wipro. Social media networks also expedite the hiring process by helping companies develop relationships with potential candidates.

Simultaneously, recruiting through social media has become an important way for companies to build their employment brand and showcase job opportunities.

Social networks are playing a critical role for companies these days in luring talent by telling the stories about their brands, says Jyorden T Misra, managing director of executive search consulting firm Spearhead InterSearch. "Facebook and Twitter can be great for targeted advertising for candidates," says Naveen Narayanan, global head, talent acquisition at HCL Technologies. "We are extensively moving globally to digital and majority of the employer branding money we spend is harnessed on digital," he adds.

While tools like LinkedIn are used for candidate contact, many other tools like Facebook pages, blogs and career sites are used for enhancing the social media presence and to disseminate critical information about company, jobs, teams and leaders. This is very different from traditional tools since the new tools are dynamic, online, richer in content and can be customised to the candidate profile. For example, a software developer will be flashed information that is relevant for a developer and it

changes for a Software Tester. "This level of personalisation and customisation was not possible earlier," says Microsoft's Thakur.

A lot of the hiring strategies through social media networks are based on research that shows young talent's engagement with online media. For instance, a recent study by Cisco showed a majority of college students and young professionals value social media access, device freedom and a mobile work style as much or more than money. Two-thirds of college students ask about social media policies during job interviews, while 56% will either not accept a job from a company that bans social media, or they will circumvent the policy. The survey adds that 41% of employees say companies marketed a flexible device and social media policy to recruit them.

It may just be a matter of time before social media networks edge out traditional methods of recruitment.