"A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE HR PRACTICES VIA SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS"

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ABSTRACT

Social Media has become an integral part of communication; through which people stay in touch, keep themselves aware of new developments and connect with the world around them. Human Resource professionals observed this pattern of behaviour in regards to the usage of social media tools among employees & crafted innovativeness in the HR practices & process. As a result social media got introduced into the world of human capital management. Such practices of social media applications were captured and categorized them under various HR functions performed in IT industry

Now these practices were brought to the notice of employees to know their preferences towards such practices. This research paper aims to understand the employee's perception towards the social media application practices that were identified. This was performed to conduct a reality check between the expectation from the HR fraternity and the employees for whom these applications are targeted in order to bring the overall fulfilment of organizational goals.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Perception, HR Practices, IT Industry

INTRODUCTION

With the growing influence of Gen Y on organizations it has been observed that organizations which have social media presence are viewed by them as more conducive to open information sharing than others. The presence of social media may differ from company to company, industry to industry, but its presence cannot be ignored by organizations and by HR professionals in particular. Hence this research aims to capture various practices of social media application in the human resource function by conducting by an extensive secondary research followed by primary interactions with senior HR professionals. Not only this, the perception of the employees towards the effort improvised by the HR fraternity via social media applications is also targeted to be captured.

Objective of the Study

To study the employees' perception in regards to the benefits derived from these social media practices implemented by the human resource function in the IT industry.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

An exploratory research design was followed for this study, with an objective to find out the employee's perception towards the initiative taken by the human resource function IT industry through social media applications. The exploratory research was chosen due to its nature of collecting information in an unstructured and informal manner. This involved interviewing employees from IT industry considering general views in regards to the objective of the research. A Questionnaire was developed with disguised and close ended questions which were presented to the employees

across all level of experience in IT industry.

The primary data was collected through a survey. Semi-structured interview was conducted from the IT employees. The survey was conducted via telephone and face to face by interviewing the IT employees across all the hierarchy in IT organisations. The secondary data was gathered from various research papers, company websites, and articles from business newspapers such as Business Line & Economic Times. An exploratory research was chosen due to its nature of collecting information in an unstructured and informal manner and gain background information about the general nature of the research problem. The second part of the research i.e studying the employee's perception was quantitative in nature.

Target Respondents: This involved interviewing various HR professionals across leading IT organizations and IT employees to understand their perception the employers' effort towards the social media sites.

Research Approach: Secondary data analysis & interviews from the HR Professionals at mid – senior Level and finally ending with survey across Employees using social media tools in their organizations.

A sample size of 50 HR professionals and 100 employees across the IT industry were considered as respondents. 2 set of Questionnaires was developed. The first questionnaire was unstructured, disguised and had open & close ended questions for HR Professionals and the second questionnaire was close ended targeting the employee. The secondary data was gathered from various research papers, company websites, and articles from business newspapers such as Business Line & Economic Times. The primary data was collected through a survey. Semi-structured interview from HR professionals across leading IT organizations was conducted. In fact data was collected from few respondents via mail as well as by telephonic medium.

Plan of Analysis: For the purpose of the study, respondents were asked to rate on 5 Point Likert Scale. Using the following scale the perception of employees towards social media application in organisations was measured.

Part A – The usage of social media tools in the area of human resource function

Part B - Employees' perception in regards to the benefits derived from these media

RESULTS
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS
Part A – The Usage of Social Media Tools in the Area of Human Resource Function
Recruitment

- Post Jobs in social networking sites

- Head hunt candidates: Eg Head hunt in Linked-in for potential employees by past or current employer who may have employed people with the skills and experience that is required for the company

- Conduct a back-ground verification

- Know more about the candidate from the social network interaction (indecent comments, pictures or posts, falsification of qualification or job history details, use of drugs or substance-abuse, racial comments or abuse by candidates)

- Creating an alumni base with social network to allow connecting with ex-employees. Accenture Alumni (28% Jobs get filled via alumni network)

- Work for Us - (Facebook application): a) Candidates can submit resumes through the app or be redirected to a company's career website b) Recruiters can also create custom Facebook ad campaigns to target specific segments of candidates based on attributes like education, interests, and location.

- Facebook referral Schemes: The 'Like' and 'Comment' functionality in Facebook allows users to become brand and product advocates (Facebook becomes a natural extension of an internal employee referral scheme).

- Application tab "Jobs" (Org Facebook Page)- When a company adds, removes, or edits the jobs on their company's website, their Facebook page is automatically updated without any additional work from the employer.

- Facebook Fan Page - Post job openings on the fan page, just like posting any other message, when job openings occur in the company. For Eg. Starbucks has 30,151,634 fans, Redbull has 25,778,407, Mc Donalds has 135,19,467 fans

- In-mail option(Facebook) & Internal inbox (LinkedIn): For resume submission facility and automated filter options

- Live Chat feature on company careers page - If candidates have any questions on jobs or about the company they can contact recruiters, or the hiring manager directly.

- Instead of sending emails, writing blog posts, tagging them & referring employees to the key posts for information.

- SMS'ing Interview reminders to candidates so they don't forget - via Twitter.

- Starting a YouTube channel and allow anyone to post videos of their experience being recruited by the company.

Induction

- Have a blog setup for new employees before they arrive

- Invite new employees to post welcome messages on intranet, wiki, forum or blog

- Invite the new graduates to the company Facebook group before they join so they can begin engaging with people for eg in case of Campus Hiring

- Deliver induction/on boarding training via Facebook using the Udutu Teach Facebook application

- Act as a first-level support mechanism, enabling individuals to receive solutions for any issue, from the experts within the enterprise.

Training

- Developing micro-training programs for induction training using Udutu Teach Facebook application can be easier

- Peer learning facilitated by social technologies like micro sharing, video sharing, blogging within organizations.

- Senior Leaders can connect to mentees via social media network & can stay in touch with them more easily, understand their strengths and offer them more opportunities

- Senior Leaders can openly broadcast their ideas, knowledge and help mentees or anyone to consider by sharing their thoughts on micro-blog systems & they can receive feedback the same way

- The common portal can be the knowledge database which will have book reviews, case studies, even materials, FAQs, tutorials, downloadable software etc for every employee

- It can tap into the tacit knowledge of the individuals and use the collective wisdom of the crowds to find answers to any posted query or issue.

Compensation and Benefits

- An internal question and answer site such as Quora that helps users to resolve each others' queries on how to craft their own "cafeteria compensation" plan.

- A group voting site on likes & dislikes/ updates on the benefits received

- Candidates can surf through sites like Salary Scout which is a network of users seeking fairness in compensation and benefits.

- **Glassdoor:** Free career community where anyone can find and anonymously share an inside look at jobs and companies. The information comes from current and former employees, interview candidates, and even the companies themselves.

HR Processes

- By providing modules for personnel information management, employee self service, leave, time & attendance, benefits etc. E.g. - Oranagehrm

- Instant messaging System with peers & managers

- SMS as shift reminders to the employees in case of a retail, hospitality or ITES sector

- Task Management -by creating a group in Facebook/MySpace and let the employee post their task done for the day on that page. They can discuss and add the entire task on daily basis and report the tasks of the day so everyone in the company is aware of what the other person is doing

- Post views and suggestions on the company's intranet on issues ranging from careers to possible innovations and how to take the org forward

Talent Management

- Create a employee group on Facebook/MySpace to allow the employees to join together online, for communicating ideas and information

- Get people blogging internally about their current experiences

- Monitor sites like Glassdoor to see what people are saying about the HR practices

- Start a YouTube channel and allow anyone to post videos of their experience of working for the organization

- Employees can place complains issues or any other problem directly to HR via this.

- Can share knowledge, locate the best resources, and manage the project or program in real time

- Social Networking Sites helps to improve the involvement, commitment among the employees as they share their experience, views through Social Networking Sites

- Allows employees to connect, track each others' activities, share photos, and even schedule events

- Enable to comment on a senior manager's blog posts or chat with team leaders on the chat forum, engage with colleagues posted in other geographies and tell HR their views on policies, among other things

- Allow managers to share plans for specific business areas and get feedback from other managers across locations.

- Details of performance reviews/ achievements can be communicated through SNS/INS

- Use those to identify matters of concern, redesign practices and policies, and to create new business ventures

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- Enables employees to ask questions openly & encourages employees to share their ideas about a particular technology or a process

Part B - Employees' Perception in Regards to the Benefits Derived from These Media
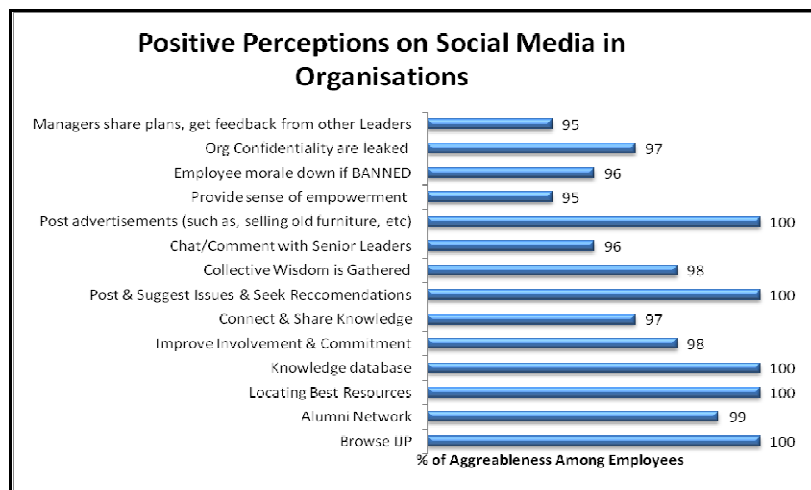

Figure 1: Positive Perception of Employees towards Social Media Applications

Interpretation: From the above graphical representation of the employees' perception towards the usage of social media applications organisations, the most preferable one is that they can post and suggest issues and seek recommendations, browse internal jobs available and create a knowledge database.
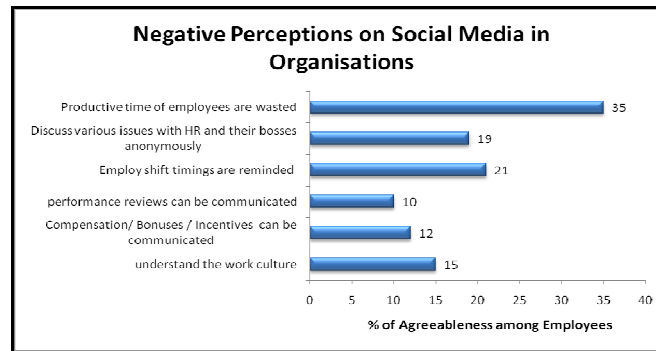
Negative Perceptions on Social Media in Organisations

Productive time of employees are wasted — 35
Discuss various issues with HR and their bosses anonymously — 19
Employ shift timings are reminded — 21
performance reviews can be communicated — 10
Compensation/ Bonuses / Incentives can be communicated — 12
understand the work culture — 15

% of Agreeableness among Employees

Figure 2: Negative Perception of Employees towards Social Media Applications

Interpretation: From the above graph it is clearly highlighted that 35 percent employees feel that productive time of the employees are wasted in the usage of the social media applications during official hours. Moreover certain confidential issues related to compensation can be leaked by social media.
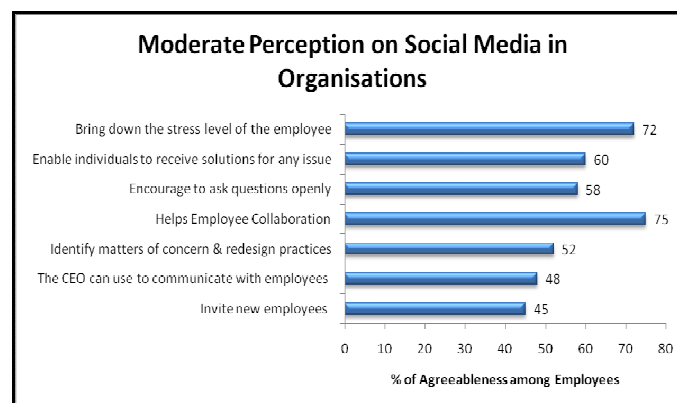
Moderate Perception on Social Media in Organisations

Bring down the stress level of the employee — 72
Enable individuals to receive solutions for any issue — 60
Encourage to ask questions openly — 58
Helps Employee Collaboration — 75
Identify matters of concern & redesign practices — 52
The CEO can use to communicate with employees — 48
Invite new employees — 45

% of Agreeableness among Employees

Figure 3: Moderate Perception of Employees towards Social Media Applications

Interpretation: On a moderate note, employees believe that implementation of social media applications helps in employee collaboration, bring down the stress level, enables employees to seek solutions for any issue. Not only this, 45 percent employees also feel that the CEO can communicate with employees via social media applications.

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the HR Professionals agree that social media is relevant in the area of HR therefore they use it in their organizations. However, they also agree that it has not been tapped to the maximum. Leadership in majority of the organizations has shown keen interest in usage of social media in the areas of Internal Branding, Collaboration & Communication, and Hiring too. Social Media applications are used in areas of Recruitment, Induction, Training, Engagement & compensation & benefits. Out of all the HR areas Recruitment, Talent Transformation & Talent Engagement were considered almost equally suited for use of social media, with Recruitment favoured the most. Induction & Compensation & Benefits were deemed least suited among these for using social media.

In regards to the employees perception towards the effort improvised by the HR fraternity via social media applications, talent management & talent transformation through knowledge sharing & creating a "power of one" culture is the most agreed ones. At the same time they also agree if a robust social media policy does not exist it might lead to wastage of productive time as well leakage of confidential organisation information too.

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