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HR 2.0: A SOCIAL MEDIA BASED FRAMEWORK FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to explore the different uses of Web 2.0 social media applications in human resource management and specifically in employee engagement. The objective is to present a conceptual framework that delineates variety of meanings the engagement construct comprehends and the research works that support those meanings. The paper highlights and organizes the variety of literature relevant to employee engagement in connection to Web 2.0 as a facilitating medium for the same. This paper establishes a conceptual framework that identifies opportunities for future research in the domain of social media and employee engagement. The proposed framework, thus suggests that the basic advantage of leveraging social media for employee engagement, from an organizational perspective, would be to promote and facilitate a culture of knowledge management for a sustainable competitive advantage.

KEYWORDS

Employee engagement, HR 2.0, Social media, Web 2.0.

INTRODUCTION

This paper progresses by discussing the concept of Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and its significance in context of employee engagement and as a social collaboration tool. The advent of Internet or Web 1.0 reshaped the organizational strategies and introduced new terms and their applications in several functions of the organization. The Internet has overwhelmingly changed the human experience. The Internet was primarily used to find information, buy and sell products, watch television shows, seek mates, search for entertainment, and participate in political and religious spheres (Gil de Zúñiga, Puig, & Rojas, 2009; Gil de Zúñiga, Veenstra, Vraga, & Shah, 2010). Internet was quickly realized as a technological enabler for different functions and divisions of an organization and was having a strong influence on organization value chain and its primary and secondary value creating activities (Yang & Messon, 1998). The human resource department leveraged Internet for recruitment, selection and training and as a Web based interface to interact with current and potential employees (Florkowski & Olivias-Lujan, 2006). The Internet was used as content delivery system and the role of Internet was limited to E-mail and voice/video-mail for engagement and interaction at work.

In 2004, Tim O'Reilly defined Web 2.0 as second generation of Internet-based services that facilitate interactive information sharing, social networking, collaboration and end user participation (O' Reilly, 2005). As Web 2.0 has become a popular communication channel, organizations are redefining their strategies to leverage Web 2.0 popularity. Web 2.0 represents a radical shift in how individuals communicate, collaborate and share information with others (Martin et al., 2009). While many of these technologies have been used for public communication, content sharing and social interactions (e.g., Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, Flickr etc.), organizations are just beginning to explore their use in day-to-day operations. Due to relatively recent introduction and public popularity, Web 2.0 has led to a resurgent focus on how organizations can once again leverage modern technology within the organization for virtual and mass collaboration. Table 1 provides a description of some of the most well-known Web 2.0 tools. Web 2.0 refers generally to web tools that, rather than serve as a forum for authorities to impart information to a passive, receptive audience, actually invite site visitors to comment, collaborate, and edit information, creating a more distributed form of authority in which the boundaries between site creator and visitor are blurred.

Tools which are generally acknowledged to belong to Web 2.0 are: Blogs, Wikis, podcasting, Social networking or peer-to-peer networking, Really Simple Syndication (RSS feeds) and other mash-ups or aggregations of content from multiple sources, file sharing, message boards and chat rooms, instant messenger and other web services for online coordination. What these tools have all in common is that they are community driven and gaining influence rapidly.

TABLE 1: WEB 2.0 TOOLS

Tool	Description
Blogs – diaries or personal journals and filters	Diaries: “web pages that contain newsgroup-like articles in a chronological order with the newest article first” and “owners write down information important to them on a regular basis” (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006) Filters: “collections of links to external web-sites that are supplemented with abstracts or brief comments on the contents of the corresponding page (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006)
Wikis	“... self-organising web-sites, where anyone on the Internet can edit existing pages and add new documents any time they wish” (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006)
Podcasts	“audio content that can be listened to on demand” ...“system that provides content resembling radio programmes” (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006)
File sharing tools	Web based systems where files can be shared with other users with the opportunity to organize the information (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006).
Social networks	Community of like-minded individuals. (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006). Based on the “six degrees of separation” and a “genuine” social network of about 150 people (Kolbitsch and Maurer, 2006) “making new connections, the underlying assumption is that having a mutual acquaintance or being connected via a chain of acquaintances provides context for connecting” (Bonhard et al., 2007)
RSS feeds	“Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary (RSS) is a lightweight XML format designed for sharing headlines and other web content. It provides a simple way to quickly view rapidly changing content such as news headlines, blog entries or podcast” (Martin et al., 2009)

Organizations are exploring that Web 2.0 social engagement tools can facilitate external and internal interactions (e.g., with customers, within workgroups, prospective hires etc.). The perceived differences of Web 2.0 technologies in term of ease of use and accessibility from traditional organizational communication and collaboration technologies and platforms are the driving force for integrating Web 2.0 into existing organizational infrastructures (Millen et al., 2008).

Some researcher associate the term Web 2.0 mainly with online user participatory applications and the term Social Media with the social interaction aspects of Web 2.0 applications like participation, openness, conversation, community, connectedness (Spanner, 2007).

The interactive capabilities of Web 2.0 applications can be used to attract, create, build and strengthen relationships with stakeholders, internally with employees and externally with customers, partners, investors or prospective employees and customers (Caron, 2009). Web 1.0 sites enabled only one-way

passive communication rather than the multi-directional communication necessary to build meaningful relationships. The Marketing department of several organizations became early adopters of web 2.0 and recognized the huge potential for attracting prospects and deepening relationships with customers by reaching a mass audience, targeting niche markets, personalizing messages and creating great customer experiences in a cost-effective way. The term Marketing 2.0 describes the whole marketing processes redefined by used of Web 2.0. As the popularity of Web 2.0 based social interaction application is increasing exponentially, the literature proposes that Human Resource (HR) departments can also leverage social networks to attract and engage potential job candidates, strengthen relationships with employees and encourage alumnus to keep in touch (McKinsey, 2007). The Web 2.0 tools are proposed to be used internally to foster collaboration, interact with senior management, as well as to develop and retain talent. The literature suggest HR 2.0 as a new term for the collective human resource management processes enabled and facilitated by Web 2.0 based applications (McAdams, 2008).

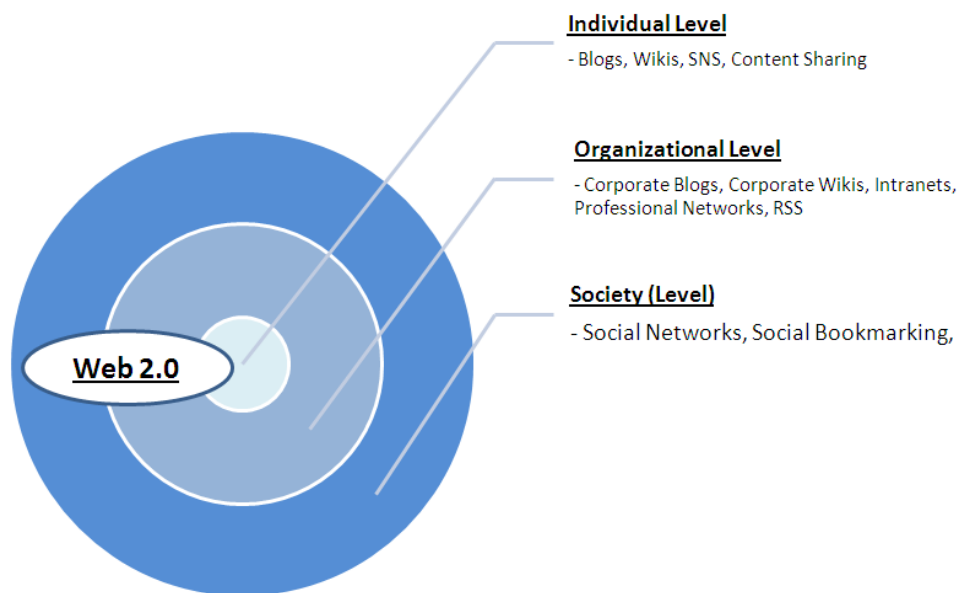
The idea of employee engagement is relatively a novel one. It is defined as a heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization that influences him or her to exert greater discretionary effort to his or her work (Soldati, 2007).

Gallup, Inc. (2010) defines employee engagement as an individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work.

Engagement, in literature has been referred to in various ways, as a psychological state (e.g., involvement, commitment, attachment, mood), as a performance construct (e.g., effort, prosocial behavior and organizational citizenship behavior [OCB]), as disposition (e.g., positive affect), or some combination of the above (Macey and Schneider, 2008).

Employee engagement has a conclusive and compelling relationship between engagement and profitability through higher productivity, sales, customer satisfaction, and employee retention (Hewitt Associates LLC, 2005, p. 1). Thus it clearly portrays that employee engagement drives the bottom-line results. Researchers view engagement as a concept that has evolved from prior research on work attitudes, which further implies that this newer concept adds interpretive value that extends beyond the boundaries of those traditions (Macey and Schneider, 2008).

FIGURE 1: IMPACT OF WEB 2.0 ON ENGAGEMENT AT THREE LEVELS



PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to explore the different uses of Web 2.0 social media applications in human resource management and specifically in employee engagement. The objective is to present a conceptual framework that delineates the variety of meanings the engagement construct comprehends and the research works that support those meanings. We believe that this paper contributes by providing a working model for the research literature on the topic. Furthermore, as we highlight and organize the variety of literatures relevant to engagement, we establish a research framework that identifies opportunities for future research in the domain of social media and employee engagement.

DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Social media allows employees to communicate, share knowledge about similar interests, discuss favourite topics, review and rate ideas and implementations, etc. Even though social media use as employee engagement is still in its infancy, it holds a potential success for human resource management division if it is carefully used and planned. The paper begins with a literature review to understand the Web 2.0 as a new phenomenon and discuss the impact of Web 2.0 social media on the employee engagement. Finally, the potential after-effects of leveraging Web 2.0 based social media in the whole human resource management processes are discussed.

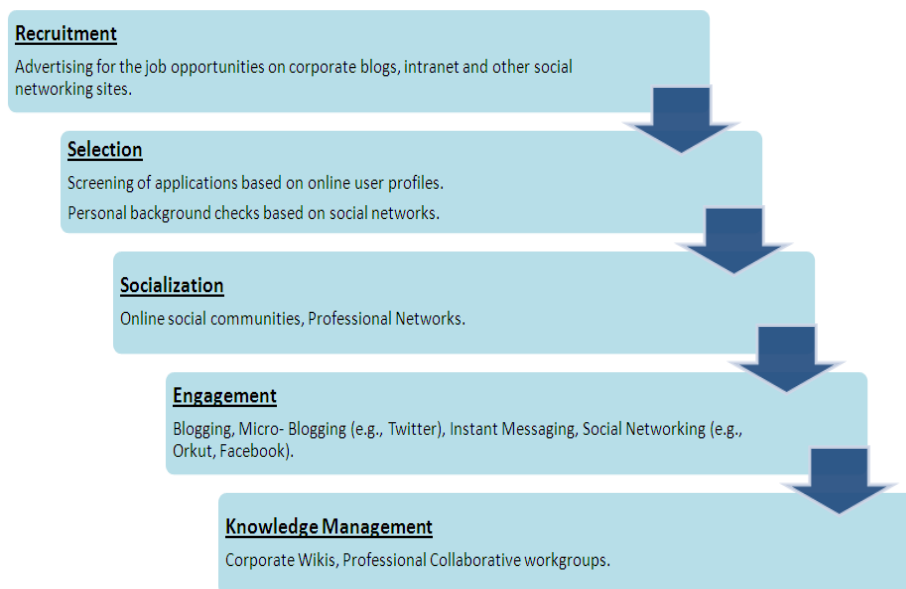
The proposed HR 2.0 Framework (Figure 2) shows the different processes of the human resource management that can be facilitated by using the Web 2.0 tools and how organizations can leverage the same for knowledge management.

RECRUITMENT

The Recruitment is the process of searching the candidate for employment and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organisation. Since the early authors (Bartram, 2000; Capelli, 2001) have published their work on the use of Internet in the recruitment and selection process, research in this area has grown. However, the research focuses mainly on the use of Web 1.0 rather than Web 2.0, while trends in e-recruitment may be influenced substantially by the second generation of Internet-based communities and services known as Web 2.0.

Overview of available literature suggests that the use of Web 2.0 can be especially beneficial in reaching passive job seekers, branding, relationship building and during the selection process (Martin et al., 2009). Web 2.0 based tools and techniques like corporate Intranets, Blogs and Professional Networks can be used to create a talent pool of candidates to enable the selection of best candidates for the organisation, by attracting more and more employees to apply in the organisation. This is comparable to most of earlier findings on the use of Internet in recruitment. It has suggested that Web 2.0 offer far more innovative, targeted and creative ways of reaching active and passive jobseekers and it has stated that the web has "the ability to reach passive as well as active customers, people who may not have been aware of a job, or even looking for a move" (Furness, 2008). Fricko (2007) indicates that social online networks, such as LinkedIn, are increasingly used to recruit candidates in a cost-efficient manner.

FIGURE 2: THE PROPOSED HR 2.0 FRAMEWORK BASED ON SOCIAL MEDIA



SELECTION

Selection involves the series of steps by which the candidates are screened for choosing the most suitable persons for vacant posts. The basic purpose of selection process is to choose the right candidate to fill the various positions in the organisation. The Web 2.0 tools are now being used as reference checks by human resource (HR) personnel. Potential employers begin to search through them for information concerning job applicants. Searches on social networking websites allow employers to look into what is done "after hours," socially or privately, by the applicant. A résumé may be just a snapshot of a job applicant, while other personal information may be found online (Rodriquez, 2006).

Schramm (2007) indicates that Web 2.0 supports "the development of integrated technologies capable of culling multiple data sources and coming up with detailed supporting information on job candidates- information such as that posted on social networking sites or blogs and possibly not appearing on resumes and not requested on standard application".

Many companies that recruit on college campuses look up applicants on MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other sites. What they find on these sites presents a dilemma for the recruiters. Students and job applicants post comments that they may think are private but can be read by many. These posts can be provocative comments on any subject from drinking to recreational drugs to sexual exploits. Recruiters are warning universities' career resource centres that they are looking at social networking websites and that it would be best to work with students about how they are presenting themselves on these sites. The lifestyle the students are presenting online may not be what corporate recruiters or graduate school admission officers want in potential applicants (Finder, 2006).

Companies that have included searches on social networking websites such as LinkedIn as part of their job searches include Microsoft, Starbucks, Goldman Sachs, and Deloitte. LinkedIn has been particularly helpful for some of these companies in finding out additional information about job applicants (Roberts and Roach, 2009).

SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is defined as the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role. Organizational socialization is the process through which organizational culture is perpetuated; by which newcomers learn the appropriate roles and behaviours to become effective and participating members (Louis, 1990).

Web 2.0 based social communities websites have mechanisms that create and connect relationships between individuals to work collectively for common organizational goals. Critical among these mechanisms are those that result in sharing information and make the cognitive map of individuals, as employees, accessible for the greater value; thus creating collective knowledge. Organizations learn and create knowledge through dynamic interactions happens during socialization between employees (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

Web 2.0 tools that are categorized under communicative, collaborative publishing, generative and interactive, support socialization processes separately and in grouping (Boateng, Mbarika, & Thomas, 2010). They enable sharing and capturing of individual knowledge and create a space for interaction between the seekers and the keepers of knowledge. The Web 2.0 tools like Podcasting, Wikis, Blogs and Mashups can be used in the training of the new employees.

ENGAGEMENT

Employee Engagement is defined as "a heightened emotional connection that an employee feels for his or her organization, that influences him or her to exert greater discretionary effort to his or her work" (Soldati, 2007). Employees feel engaged when they find personal meaning and motivation in their work, receive positive interpersonal support, and operate in an efficient work environment (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 2003).

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical driver of business success in today's competitive marketplace. Further, employee engagement can be a deciding factor in organizational success. Not only does engagement have the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty, it is also a key link to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value. Thus, to gain a competitive edge, organizations are turning to HR to set the agenda for employee engagement and commitment (Lockwood, 2007).

Clear, consistent and honest communication is an important management tool for employee engagement. Human resource departments should promote thoughtful communication strategies that encourage employee engagement by keeping the workforce energized, focused and productive. Such strategies are critical to long-term organizational success. In addition, strategic and continuous communication lends credibility to the organization's leadership. On the other hand, lack of communication or poorly communicated information can lead to distrust, dissatisfaction, scepticism, cynicism and unwanted turnover (Kress, 2005).

Web 2.0 social media messages spread rapidly and feedback is nearly as fast, affective and altering personal perceptions. Blogs and tools like Twitter offer personal opinions and can help leadership deliver messages to employees and obtain instant feedback. Instant messaging, text messaging and social networks can spread news and perceptions quickly through an electronic grapevine that can help internal communicators. The Web 2.0 communicative tools like social networking, blogs, audio blogs, video blogs, instant messaging tools, podcasts and web-conferencing to share ideas, information, and creations.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The adoption of Web 2.0 tools in businesses is driven by their capacity to capture the way in which employees search and collect relevant information in their work contexts, and to make interaction patterns within organisations visible. Web 2.0-based enterprise platforms support dynamic knowledge exchange and the emergence of a corporate information structure, which represents the genuine interests and competence domains of employees.

Individuals exchange and combine their explicit knowledge through exchange platforms like social interaction processes and information storage mechanisms. Innovative tools of Web 2.0 facilitate integration of different bodies of explicit knowledge into one large accessible system; topping the list are Wikis, Blogs and Mashups. These applications allow better contextualization, organization and accessibility of knowledge.

Shimazo and Koike (2007) discuss the influence of Web 2.0 impact on KM and argue that the concept of collective intelligence has the biggest impact. Collective intelligence is defined as the set of all digital information stored in a company including blog data or information in social networks or wikis. Knowledge Management 2.0 is defined as "a model that places collective intelligence at its core and promotes its use by accelerating the distribution of information."

The goal to retrieve web pages for knowledge search is being replaced by the desire to discover communities of knowledge and acquire collective intelligence. This change of knowledge management from technology-centric to people-centric approach resulted in a new knowledge management approach called Knowledge Management-2.0 (KM -2.0) (Zetsu and Kiyoki, 2006).

McKinsey (2007) found that executives of companies use Web 2.0 tools to communicate with customers, partners and to collaborate inside their company. The new forecasted trends in KM has argued that with the transformation to Web 2.0 enterprises, social networks, blogs and wikis have become more and more important for knowledge management (McAfee, 2006).

DISCUSSION

This paper discuss that how Web 2.0 based social engagement tools can be used to support human resource management processes like recruitment, selection, training or socialization, engagement and knowledge management. These tools are cost effective and are a suitable candidate to become more prevalent in the employer communication toolkit (AON Consulting, 2009). Primarily, the paper focuses on how web and internet based level two services (Web 2.0) can be used efficiently in human resource process of socialization and employee engagement in an organization. Furthermore, "HR 2.0 Framework" is proposed in this paper (Figure 2), which shows that how the processes of recruitment, selection and training facilitate employee engagement in an organization, thus facilitating knowledge management in an organization. Though the concept of knowledge management has not been intensively talked of in this paper, but the framework suggests that the basic advantage of leveraging social media for employee engagement, from an organizational perspective, would be to promote and facilitate a culture of collaboration and knowledge management to maintain and create newer growth platforms in the competitive market.

ORIGINALITY VALUE

This paper links a discussion of Web 2.0 based social media applications to human resource management and the process of employee engagement. Particular attention is paid to employee work place interactions policies and organisational structures which pre-determine the successful application of Web 2.0 technologies for human resource management.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER SCOPE

The successful implementation of Web 2.0 based applications like corporate blogs, Wiki's and social networks need careful planning and several information security concerns are also involved with this. Further, once the applications are deployed, the motivation of employees to use these applications is also play a vital part for successful HR 2.0 process. Moreover, the use of Web 2.0 media is most effective if trust and credibility have been built with and among employees. Research results portray that social media is something that is used for consumers, and rarely for internal communications in an organizations. It is suggested that social media could be well leveraged as a tool for employee and organizational development.

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