THE STUDY OF STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: LINKEDIN

NATTAMON RATTANANAKIN

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………………………………..………
Miss Nattamon Rattananakin
Candidate

………………………………..………
Dr. Poomporn Thamsatitdej,
D.B.A.
Advisor

………………………………..………
Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

………………………………..…………
Assoc. Prof. Annop Tanlamai,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

……………………………………….
Asst. Prof. Randall Shannon,
Ph.D.
Committee member

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THE STUDY OF STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: LINKEDIN

NATTAMON RATTANANAKIN   5649101

M.M. (LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: DR. POOMPORN THAMSATITDEJ, D.B.A., ASSOC. PROF. VICHITA RACHTHAM, Ph.D., ASST. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research is to identify possible ways to maximize LinkedIn for strategic recruitment by examining how companies are using LinkedIn, the benefits gained from LinkedIn, as well as identifying critical success factors for using LinkedIn. The qualitative approach; semi-structured interview with open-ended questions, is applied as a research method. Seven Corporate recruiters from different industries in Thailand were interviewed and the interview results were analyzed in this research.

The research has found three main points. Firstly, the common activities of recruiters on LinkedIn are search and view profiles, send messages to approach candidates, and post job advertisements as well as gather application. Secondly, the critical success factors which enhance recruitment on LinkedIn are leader's buy-in, empowering and collaborative organization culture, recruiter's skills in social media, sales, and English, as well as sufficient manpower and time. If implemented effectively, LinkedIn can yield strategic benefits to recruitment which are reduced dependence and cost of recruitment agencies; it can be used as a research tool and a talent pipelining tool. These benefits for recruitment strategy would enhance Human Resources management strategy, and eventually support business goals.

KEY WORDS: Recruitment/ Social Media Recruitment/ LinkedIn

48 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

Human Resources (HR) plays an important role in the performance of every organization. Caliskan (2010) pointed out that while traditional sources of success such as product and process technology, protected markets, economies of scale can still provide competitive leverage; modern studies suggest that human resources are more vital for organizations' sustainability.

Organization leaders today are facing various HR challenges. Society for Human Resource Management (2012) reported the biggest challenges in HR management over the next ten years. The top five challenges includes retaining and rewarding the best employees, developing the next generation of corporate leaders, creating a corporate culture that attracts the best employees, remaining competitiveness in the talent market place, and finding employee with the increasingly specialized skills. Among the five challenges, the last two topics associate with the recruitment function.

Recruitment is one of the activities that impact most critically on the performance of an organization. Poor recruitment and selection can result in negative effects specifically cost- related effects such as wasted hiring cost, compensation cost, severance cost, and costs related to mistakes, failures, and missed business opportunities (Sundberg, n.d.). At worst, the organization can fail to achieve its objectives causing the loss of its competitive edge. Therefore, recruiting strategically is important for every organization's performance.

Recruitment has been changing throughout the years. One of the biggest forces that influence the way organizations recruit is technological change. From posters to newspaper to job portal sites, choices of companies' recruitment channels have been adjusted according to the advancement of technology. Therefore, it is

undeniable that human resources department have to incorporate technology in their works.

Nowadays, social media platforms are the most influential websites on the internet. As of December, 2014, Social Media sites are among the most visited sites on the internet (Afrodigit, 2014) (Alexa, n.d.) (Ebizmba, n.d.). Among 2.95 Billion internet users worldwide, 2.03 billion of them are active social media users (Kemp, 2014). The big number of users indicates that organizations can no longer afford to neglect social media. Deloitte University Press (2014) reported "leveraging people data from the outside in" as one of the global human capital trend in 2015. It discussed that the explosion of people on social networks, recruiting networks, and talent networks has created a new world of employee data outside the enterprise. It is now urgent and valuable for companies to learn to view, manage, and take advantage of this data for better recruiting, hiring, retention, and leadership development.

Among many social media platforms, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the Internet. LinkedIn currently has more than 347 million members in over 200 countries. LinkedIn leverages its rich data by building "LinkedIn Talent Solutions" -   a large and fast-growing business selling data and application services to recruiters.

"LinkedIn Talent Solutions" is a LinkedIn's service created to benefit recruiters. It offers different features which allow recruiters to find and attract prospect employees on LinkedIn's platform such as a profile search tool to find people with desired qualifications, a messaging system to directly contact prospect candidates, a job posting page to promote the opening roles, and a career pages to showcase company's cultures and employer brands. Talent Solutions is an important business unit of LinkedIn. According to its official page, 57% of LinkedIn's revenues in quarter four of 2014 come from Talent Solutions (LinkedIn. n.d.- a)

In Thailand, the number of LinkedIn users is expanding. Currently, it has over one million Thai members working in over 24,400 organizations worldwide. LinkedIn was available in Thai since 2013, launched as the second local language that LinkedIn has launched in Asia Pacific, followed the launch of Tagalog Philippines, Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Malaysia. (Rosenberg, 2013) Currently, over 40 Thai

companies are using LinkedIn products for recruitment. (Zhao J., personal communication, February 4, 2015)

With strong interest in the social media especially LinkedIn on strategic recruitment, this research aims to examine how LinkedIn can be used for recruitment, what benefits that the tool delivers, and the critical success factors of LinkedIn Recruitment in order to eventually understand how can companies maximize social media- LinkedIn for strategic recruitment.

1.2 Research Question

How can companies maximize social media- LinkedIn - for strategic recruitment?

1.3 Research Purpose

- To examine recruiters' activities on LinkedIn
- To identify the benefits that LinkedIn have for strategic recruitment
- To learn about critical success factors of using LinkedIn as a recruitment tool

1.4 Research Scope and Framework

This research is on the Thailand context. Seven corporate recruiters from different industries are to be interviewed and the interview results are to be analyzed in this research by applying practitioners' guidelines including LinkedIn's manuals and subject- matter - experts' instructions. With the main purpose of identifying possible ways to maximize LinkedIn, this research will learn how companies are using the tool, the benefits gained from the tool, as well as identifying critical success factors of using them.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a critical review of relevant concepts. First of all, overviews of strategic human resources management will be given. Then, social media and its impact on business will be provided. Next, the use of social media for recruitment will be discussed. Moreover, the background of LinkedIn as a recruitment tool will be described. In addition, benefits of LinkedIn for recruitment will be reviewed. Last of all, the critical success factors of recruiting on LinkedIn will be analyzed.

2.1 Strategic Human Resources Management

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2015) provided definition of strategic human resource management as an approach to managing human resources that supports long-term business goals and outcomes with a strategic framework by focusing on longer-term people issues, matching resources to future needs, and macro-concerns about structure, quality, culture, values and commitment.

Strategic human resource management concerns human resource management as a key factor of firm performance. Organizations are becoming aware that successful human resource management can increase performance in different areas such as productivity, quality and financial performance which eventually leads firm to gain competitive advantage. A Resource-based view, asserts that the basis for a competitive advantage of a firm lies primarily in the application of the bundle of valuable resources at the firm's disposal (Wernerfelt, 1984). Lado and Wilson (1994) discussed that human resource systems can contribute to sustained competitive advantage through facilitating the development of competencies that are firm specific.

According to Brewster et al. (2000), benefit of strategic HRM includes contributing to the goal accomplishment and the survival of the company, creating and maintaining a competitive advantage for the company, increasing the number of feasible strategic options available to the company, participating in strategic planning and influencing the strategic direction of the company as an equally entitled member of top management and improving cooperation between the HRM department and line managers.

2.2 Social Media and the World of Work

Social Media is broadly defined as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Showing explosive growth in just four to five years since their birth, social media are establishing themselves as the media of choice across the whole world (Dong-Hun, 2010).

Since the social networking platforms have emerged, it transformed the way companies conduct their businesses. Attracted by the large number of users and its unique feature of "User Generated Content", companies have been increasingly adopting social media in their communication strategy. Given to the potential uses, brands around the globe are racing to include fan pages in their marketing mix. For example, Facebook reported over four million business pages in December 2014 (Facebook, 2015). According to Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015), on social media, users can post and share content related to companies, brands, products, and all activities related to them, making companies no longer the primary source of communication which results in customer's perception that social media is a more trustworthy sources of information than the traditional marketing communications channels. Hutter et al. (2013) analyzed the influence of brands' social media activities and participants' social media involvement on the purchase decision process of consumers. They found that engagement with a Facebook fan page has positive effects on consumers' brand awareness, Word- Of- Mouth activities and purchase intention.

2.3 Social Media and Recruitment

With the growth and popularity of social media, it is inevitable for companies to embrace social media in a part of their talent acquisition strategy.

Recruitment, as old as the beginning of organizations, includes those practices and activities carried out by the organizations with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). Recruitment is considered an important part of human resource (HR) management as it performs the essential function of drawing an important resource - human capital - into the organization.

According to Sundheim (2010), the birth of the modern recruiting industry did not take place until the 1940′s as a result of the Second World War when employment agencies began to advertise for workers who were not obligated to military service in an effort to fill the voids in the workplace left by those who were called to duty. Wiley (1992) stated that from then until before internet era, recruitment relied heavily on bulletin boards, which slowly led to advertisements in newspapers, word-of-mouth, and walk- in application. Recruitment agencies, campus career fairs as well as employee referral scheme, the methods which continue to today, have also emerged then, even before the adoption of online recruitment.

When the internet emerged as a recruiting tool in the mid-1990s, various job boards made their apparition on the web. Back then, online recruitment was basically the exact same announcements than in the newspapers, except that they were accessible on the web (Lamri, 2013). Organizations then put their recruitment efforts onto the internet through posting their job openings either on links to their corporate homepages on the web or through commercial online services (Allen, 1995). Application can then be made through either the submission of an electronic version of the applicant's resume or the completion of an electronic application for the company (Wyld, 1997).

Since 2010, more companies are using social media to recruit as well as apply for jobs (Karssing, 2013). It was then that the terms "social media recruitment" and "social recruiting" has emerged. Alder (2011) defined the terms as concept and set of ideas loosely based on using the social parts of the web for talent attraction and recruitment which includes finding quality hires by targeting talent, engaging

candidates, evaluating applicants, or direct head- hunt. The terms was also defined as the use of social networks to post job advertisement, communicate with candidates, participating as well as engaging with targeted groups and communities, with a long-term view towards building candidate engagement and employer brand (LinkedIn, 2014).

The importance of social media and HR was discussed by Ulrich et al. (2012) that one of the roles of HR professionals is to keep people connected. Therefore, HR professionals should use the emerging technology trend- specifically social media-to build relationships. HR professionals who understand technology will create improved organizational identity outside the company and improve social relationships inside the company. Doherty (2010) also mentioned that using social media for recruitment can be a signal to the public that the company is staying relevant and embracing change as technology which could result in attracting and retaining the new generation of young, enthusiastic workers.

Zanella and Pais (2014) took a survey on social recruiting participated by 17,000 job seekers and over 1,500 companies worldwide. The study reveals that 73% of recruiters use at least one social networking site for professional purposes and 55% of job seekers use social media for job search.

LinkedIn (2015- b) reported that social professional networks will rise to become a top source for quality hires in 2015 with an increase of 73% from the previous year. It also revealed that in the United States, companies are less reliant on staffing firms. A similar research conducted in South East Asia countries revealed a different result. It appears that even though many Southeast Asian companies are using social professional networks for recruitment, they are not as heavily reliant on social recruiting comparing to the western countries. Southeast Asian companies' top three sourcing channels remain job boards, employee referral program, and social professional networks. (LinkedIn, 2015- c)

When it comes to social media platforms that companies use for recruitment, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter are ranked in the top 3 social media of choice (Zanella and Pais, 2014) (Jobvite, 2014). It is further indicated that the common activities companies do for recruiting on social networks are search for candidates, contact candidates, keep tabs on potential candidates, post jobs, generate employee

referrals, and showcase employer brand (Jobvite, 2014). This research focuses on LinkedIn and its Talent Solutions products as a recruiting tool.

2.4 LinkedIn

In this topic, two points will be discussed. Firstly, literature of LinkedIn as the professional social media of choice will be given. Secondly, facts of LinkedIn Talent Solutions products will be provided.

2.4.1 LinkedIn as the Professional Social Media of Choice

LinkedIn is a social media site used almost exclusively for building professional relations. It has become a widely recognized tool since its launch in 2003 (Zide et al., 2014). It was founded in 2003 by Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly and Jean-Luc Vaillant. It is the world's largest professional network, with more than 347 million members, and operates in over 200 countries which currently available in twenty three languages (LinkedIn. n.d.- a).

LinkedIn's core offering to every member is an online professional profile which is accessible to all members on the network and includes user-generated information including current job title and employer, education, career history, domain expertise, accomplishments, skills and additional professional information such as honors, awards, association memberships, patents, publications, certifications and languages spoken. Members then can view profiles of other member, connected with other members, send and receive personal messages, and apply for jobs posted on LinkedIn. Members can also further maximize LinkedIn by updating status, sharing content on their homepage, and joining groups according to their interest to stay up to date with news and stay connected to people in the groups.

According to Venkatraman (2014), With LinkedIn's main offering of an online professional profile as well as its growth and popularity, it can pull more and more members into the platform. LinkedIn, therefore, leverages its rich data by offering "LinkedIn Talent Solutions" - a large and fast-growing business selling data and application services to recruiters. It is reported that as of December, 2014; more

than 30,000 companies worldwide are using LinkedIn products for recruitment. (Zhao J., personal communication, February 4, 2015)

2.4.2 LinkedIn Talent Solutions

LinkedIn Talent Solutions is a set of LinkedIn service which offers recruitment solution to enterprises recruiters. The products include LinkedIn Recruiter, Job Slot, Career Page, and Work With Us Banner.

2.4.2.1 LinkedIn Recruiter

LinkedIn (2015- a) reported that LinkedIn Recruiter is the flagship Talent Solutions product enables enterprises to find and contact LinkedIn members. Recruiter provides premium functionality including:

- <u>Advanced Searches</u> Ability to search and view every profile on the network With the Boolean search string, advanced searches can be conducted using keywords found anywhere in a member's profile, such as schools attended and languages spoken, or by data derived from profiles, such as type of experience and seniority. The search technology combines structured and free-form content to allow users to search across numerous parameters. It is powered by rich dataset based on facets and keywords and is fundamentally personalized as all search requests use a member's network to affect relevance and ranking.

- <u>Project Management</u> As enterprises and professional organizations find relevant profiles, they are able to organize them into project folders, add notes, and add reminders for follow-up.

- <u>InMail</u> Enterprises and professional organizations can send messages directly to candidates to tell them more about their organization or the specific opportunity, subject to the member's discretion.

- <u>Collaboration</u> Recruiters in the same enterprise or professional organization can see which profiles their colleagues have viewed, saved, or annotated.

- <u>LinkedIn Talent Pipeline</u> Enterprises and professional organizations can manage all of their talent leads in one place. LinkedIn Talent Pipeline is available as a standalone solution or as part of Recruiter.

2.4.2.2 Job Slots

A Job Slot enables an enterprise or professional organization to post a job on the LinkedIn platform typically for one year. The job that is posted can be changed, updated or modified at any time over the life of the contract (LinkedIn. n.d.- c).

2.4.2.3 LinkedIn Career Pages

Enterprises and professional organizations are able to customize the career section of Company Profiles and content on Career Pages to allow potential candidates to learn more about what it is like to work at the enterprise or professional organization, whom to contact if they are interested in a position and what relevant opportunities are available (LinkedIn. n.d.- b).

2.4.2.4 Work With Us

Enterprises and professional organizations can elect to display the "Jobs You May be Interested In" module as an add-on to each of their employee's profiles, allowing them to leverage their employee base to attract relevant candidates (LinkedIn. n.d.- d).

2.5 Benefits of LinkedIn to Strategic Recruitment

It can be found from different sources that there are two major benefits of LinkedIn recruitment products which are ability to reach passive talent and promoting employer brand on the social media platform.

2.5.1 Ability to Reach Passive Talent

One of the benefits of LinkedIn that has been discussed the most is the fact that it provides accessibility to passive talent. According to Doherty (2010), passive talent the person who is currently employed, not actively looking to change position, and do not have an updated formal CV. LinkedIn itself identifies two types of users on its site: active candidates and passive candidates. 79 % of LinkedIn users are passive candidates, meaning they are not looking for a job, while the remainders are active job seekers (LinkedIn. n.d.- e). LinkedIn, therefore, provides their corporate customers

with access to LinkedIn member's profiles which enable recruiters to view profiles and start conversation with the members regarding possible career opportunities.

There are different reasons that some companies find passive talent to be appealing. The crucial one is that there has been an increasing discussion that "post and prey" recruitment - the recruiting that relies on posting job advertisement as a way to find good applicants- are not as effective as reaching out to passive candidates with desired qualifications. A study reports only 35 percent of the typical applicant pool meets even the most basic job requirements, cause recruiters to waste time filtering through low-quality resumes when their businesses need to focus on higher value-adding activities. This is where technology, like LinkedIn, has increased its significant in recruitment (Weiss, 2012)

2.5.2 Promote Employer Brand

One of LinkedIn Talent Solutions' products is career pages where companies can showcase employer brand messages or information that allow potential candidates to learn more about the work environment at the organization to attract the right candidates.

The term "employer brand" was defined as the sum of a company's efforts to communicate to existing and prospective staff that it is a desirable place to work (Edwards, 2010). According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), employer brand suggests the differentiation of a firm's characteristics as an employer from those of its competitors. The employment brand highlights the unique aspects of the firm's employment offerings or environment. It involves promoting, both within and outside the firm, a clear view of what makes a firm different and desirable as an employer.

A research conducted by Sivertzen et al. (2013) supports the researcher's statement. They tested the use of social media as employer branding campaigns and the use of social media as a recruiting tool. They found that use of social media in employer branding campaigns can be helpful in building a good reputation. As such, the combined results point to social media as an effective tool for employer branding and recruiting.

2.6 Critical Success Factors of Recruiting on LinkedIn

2.6.1 Leader's Buy-In

The first step to launch an improvement strategy is to make sure the company executives are on board and leading the effort (Dyer, 2015). As the leaders are the approvers of budgets, it is impossible to invest without their consent. Therefore, gaining leader's buy-in is the first step of implementing LinkedIn in talent strategy.

According to Fitsimmons (2009), Gaining approval for a program or project is most effectively done by showing how it accomplishes an organizational goal, since keeping work done within an organization focused on its goals is the primary function of those with the power of approval.

2.6.2 Recruiter's Skills

2.6.2.1 Technology Proponent

As technology exponents, HR professionals have to access, advocate, analyze and align technology for information, efficiency and relationships." (Harrington, 2011).

Ulrich et al. (2012) conducted a research to identify HR competencies necessary for becoming a good business partner. Among the competencies, "technology proponent" has become one of the compulsory HR capabilities. In this point, Ulrich focused on using social media technology as a tool for relationship building as well as a platform to showcase organizational identity outside the company thus, improving social relationships inside the company.

2.6.2.2 Sales Skill

Adler (2006) stated that "Recruitment is a complex form of solution-selling made more difficult by the fact that both buyers and sellers have to be sold." He also discussed that recruiting process corresponds to the major phases of most complex sales cycles- planning, prospecting, qualifying, evaluating, negotiating and closing. Therefore, recruiters must be thoroughly versed on the opportunity and be able to articulate its' value; plan how to attack their territory; leverage multiple lead

generation sources; prospect relentlessly for viable candidates; quickly qualify candidates in or out; engage and thoroughly assess the candidates suitability while managing and coordinating the interview process; negotiate the terms of employment and close the candidate. Dinnen (2014) mentioned that recruitment is where HR does marketing as recruiters have to understand the value of the products- the company and the job opportunity-, understand the target audience, use the right communication channels, ensuring the delivery of consistent message.

With LinkedIn Recruiter, one of the Talent Solutions products, corporate recruiters can access to members' profile and contact them directly. Therefore, their ability to sell the opportunity to the candidates is important for the success of recruiting on LinkedIn.

2.6.2.3 English Skills

When recruiting a recruiter, English skills are as important as recruiting for other professions. In Thailand where there is a quite limited number of people with full professional proficiency in English, there has always been a challenge for companies to find such talent. The Nation (2013) reported that Jobstreet.com ran an English Language Assessment with 1,540,785 people working in Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Thai workers, picked from all levels of employment scored the lowest in English skills among counterparts in ASEAN (55 percent). Meanwhile, Singaporean workers scored highest at 81 percent.

LinkedIn Advance Search, one of LinkedIn Recruiter's features, is programmed to be done in English. When searching for specific qualifications or experiences, using of accurate keywords help to identify talent on the platform faster. In addition, with the expansion of businesses, recruiters may have to contact Non-Thai candidates which they have to use English for communication. Therefore, English skill is important for recruiters who use LinkedIn as a tool for recruitment.

2.6.3 Empowering and Collaborative Organization Culture

According to Klein (2003), an appropriate alignment of strategy and culture can help firms create value and generate revenues. It can also lead to motivated and committed employees and high-performance work teams.

Empowering and Collaborative Organization Culture is one of the critical success factors if companies are going to use LinkedIn or other social media platforms to promote employer brand. To be successful in social recruiting, creating strong social media presence is important. One of the components that strengthen it is the collaboration from employees in engaging, posting, and sharing their positive experiences of the company. To facilitate that, the company must have the culture or environment that supports such behavior. In other words, to be successful in social recruiting, companies should empower and encourage their employees to share experiences.

With, the focus is on the external environment and external customers. However, the internal customers or employees play a vital role in the success of social recruiting. All the social media in the world will have little impact in an organization where openness, trust and respect are not evident. Collaboration must prevail over power and control ("How to Increase Employee Engagement", 2014).

LinkedIn (2014) discussed that the success of social media strategy is much likelier to happen when employees are highly engaged. When individuals demonstrate a positive attitude to the organization and what it stands for. The emotional connection they experience positively impacts on their attentiveness, focus and degree of effort expended to new initiatives. Therefore, having a collaborated employees and leaders in engaging and actively using social media can yield positive result to social recruiting strategy.

2.7 Conceptual Framework
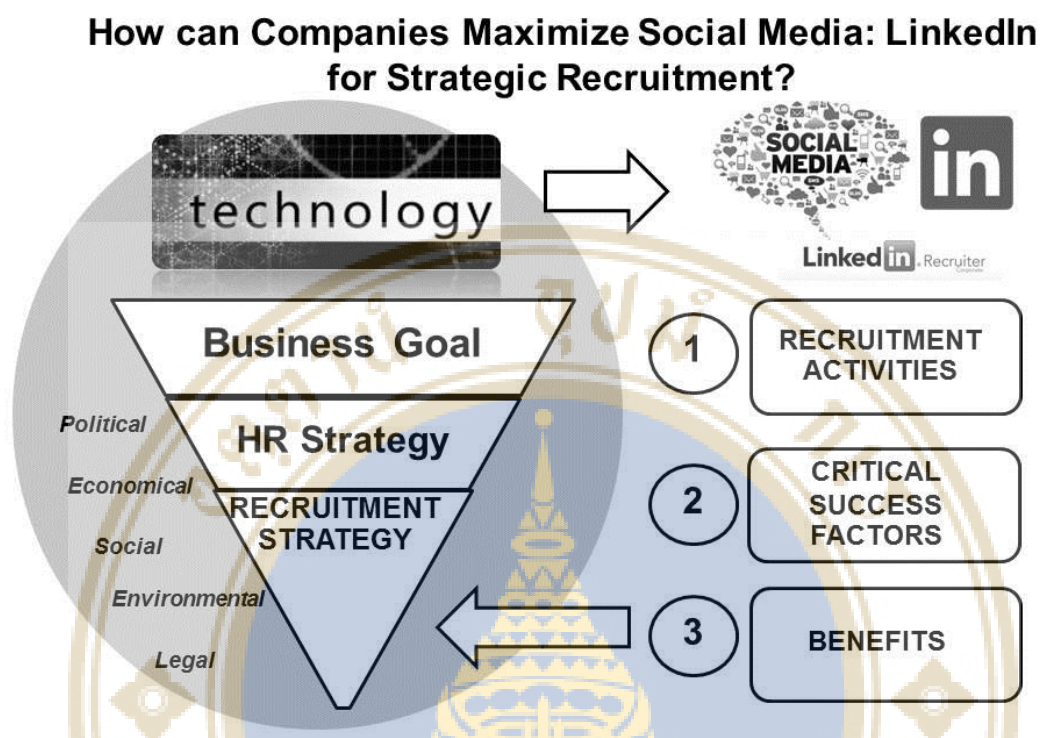
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

From various factors of business' external environment, technology - social media platforms- has a significant influence to HR management especially recruitment- the HR function that deals mostly with the people outside the organization.

LinkedIn is the professional social media of choice and has been using primarily for professional purpose. LinkedIn Corporation, therefore, leverage its big data - members' professional profile- by building "LinkedIn Talent Solutions" - a large and fast-growing business selling data and application services to recruiters.

With interested in LinkedIn as a social recruiting platform, this research aims to analyze how companies can maximize LinkedIn for the benefit of strategic recruitment. The areas that will be examined in order to develop the result cover recruiters' activities on LinkedIn, critical success factors of using LinkedIn for recruitment, and benefits that LinkedIn has for strategic recruitment. The researcher

aims to use the finding to indicate how LinkedIn can be maximized to compliment firms' recruitment strategy- a part of HR management strategy- which will eventually serve the business's goal.

CHAPTER III
RESEACH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative Research Interview

The purpose of this research is to study how companies can maximize LinkedIn for strategic recruitment. Insight experience from current LinkedIn recruitment products users is necessary for analysis. Therefore, qualitative research interview is selected. Fox (2006) reveals that "The person-to-person interview is best for obtaining in-depth opinions." Face-to-face interviewing creates the situation which leads the interviewee to be honest and frank when asked about their opinions within the structured context.

Aiming to provide flexibility and flow of conversation during the interviews, a semi-structured approach is applied. Semi-structured interviews center on a mixed framework of general themes and pre-established questions. It allows adaptation in the context of individual sessions. Therefore, the interviewers have flexibility to leave certain questions out, mix the order of questions, or ask certain standard questions in different ways depending on context (Better Evalution, 2014). Interview has its basis in human conversation. The semi-structured interview will allow the interviewer to modify style and order of questions in order to extract the fullest responses from the interviewees.

3.2 Sample Selection

The selected samples are recruiters from Thai companies who are responsible for their company's social recruiting on LinkedIn There are seven interviewees representing different industries. The table below demonstrates the background information of each participant.

Table 3.1 Interviewees Profile

Interviewee	Gender	Industry	Year of Experience in HR	Year of using LinkedIn	LinkedIn Talent Solution Products
Interviewee 1	Male	Law Practice	8.7	0.2	Recruiter, Job Slot
Interviewee 2	Female	Banking	6.5	2	Recruiter, Job Slot, Career Page, Work with Us
Interviewee 3	Male	Industrial Automation	18.5	0.8	Recruiter, Job Slot, Career Page, Work with Us
Interviewee 4	Female	Automotive	7.1	3.5	Recruiter, Job Slot, Career Page, Work with Us
Interviewee 5	Male	Oil& Energy	5.4	2	Recruiter
Interviewee 6	Male	Market Research	5.3	2	Recruiter, Job Slot, Career Page, Work with Us
Interviewee 7	Female	Food Production	10.2	2	Recruiter, Job Slot, Career Page, Work with Us

3.3 Interview Questions Framework

According to the literature review in chapter 2, the framework of this research covers recruiters' activities on LinkedIn, critical success factors of LinkedIn recruitment, and benefits the tool has for strategic recruitment to eventually identify how companies can maximize LinkedIn for the benefit of strategic recruitment. Begin with introduction questions, a sequence of interview questions is set based on the 3 topics. However, as the semi-structured approach is applied with open discussion, free

flow of conversation and probing technique is to be used in the interview rather than framing interviewees' mind with a set of fixed questions. This will allow interviewees to share the insights of their direct experiences. The question guideline is set according to each topic as follows.

3.3.1 Introduction

- When have your company started using LinkedIn Recruitment products?
- What are the rational that lead your company to invest in LinkedIn?

3.3.2 Recruitment Activities on LinkedIn

- What are the features that you are using on LinkedIn? How do you use them?
  - Search and Profile View
  - Send "InMail" Message
  - Post Job Advertisement& Gather Applications
  - Showcase Employer Brand on Career Page
  - Others

3.3.3 Benefits of LinkedIn to Strategic Recruitment

- What are the benefits of LinkedIn to your recruitment strategy?
- Does LinkedIn benefits your company in hiring passive candidates? Please describe.
- Does LinkedIn benefits your company in promoting employer brand? Please describe.

3.3.4 Critical Success Factors of Recruiting on LinkedIn

- From your experience, what are the critical success factors of recruiting on LinkedIn?

- Do you agree that having leader's buy-in is an important factor for LinkedIn recruitment. Please describe.

- Do you agree that recruiter's skill (technology proponent, sales skills, and English skills) is an important factor for LinkedIn recruitment. Please describe.

- Do you agree that empowering and collaboration culture is an important factor for LinkedIn recruitment.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the concepts which frame for analysis of this research, the inputs of experience sharing and findings from the recruiters are to be discussed in this chapter.

4.1 LinkedIn- The Social Media of Choice

First of all, the interviewees were asked to share the reasons for selecting LinkedIn to be the social recruiting platform. There are two main reasons behind the investment decision. Firstly, the LinkedIn platform itself is a rich data pool as a result of its growth and popularity as a professional network. Secondly, LinkedIn Talent Solutions products offer attractive advantages for strategic recruitment.

4.1.1 LinkedIn Growth and Popularity as a Professional Network

"LinkedIn is simply a big database but it is a significant one as more and more people are joining its platform." (Interviewee 2)

"LinkedIn is a professional networking site and I believe that people become members of the platform for professional purpose." (Interviewee 4)

"There have been discussions in my team about which social media we should use for recruitment. We end up choosing LinkedIn because it is where professionals see and be seen online. I think there will not be 'cyber bullies' on LinkedIn like other social media sites." (Interviewee1)

All interviewed recruiters consider LinkedIn as the professional social media of choice. LinkedIn is trusted for its wide and variety pool of candidates. With the quality of being a "professional network", the interviewees are convinced that the quality of connections and communications will be based on professional intentions no matter professional networking, job search, or recruitment itself. Interviewee 1

mentioned that his company decided to have recruitment online presence on LinkedIn rather than Facebook because it is regarded that Facebook users in Thailand have more tendency to be 'cyber bullies' and will post stories ask non- professional- related questions about the company. Interviewee 4 discussed the same point that LinkedIn are selected not only for its big volume of users but also for its quality as a professional networking site. Interviewee 1, 5, 6 and 7 mentioned that it is a trend for companies who want to present themselves as a modern organization to have professional identity on LinkedIn to attract highly- qualified Thai members on LinkedIn. Interestingly, Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 4 saw that Thai members on LinkedIn are quite highly- educated as well as good in English which they believe that it is LinkedIn's positioning and functions as a professional network that draw professionals into the platform. In short, LinkedIn is the social media of choice for recruitment because it is a big data tool with its members exist for professional purpose.

4.1.2 LinkedIn Talent Solution Products - a Recruiting Tool

"There are over hundred million members in there mainly for professional purpose. My company saw the need to gain access and contact to those people." *(Interviewee 5)*

"With LinkedIn products, corporate recruiters can now act like head-hunters as they have direct channel to the candidate pool" *(Interviewee 6)*

LinkedIn provides 'Advance Search' features that allow recruiters to search for specific requirements such as position titles, years of experiences, education, tasks, companies etc. Also, LinkedIn offers 'Inmail', a messaging system that enables recruiters to send messages to its members directly. Interviewee 6 said that "With this tool, corporate recruiters can now act like head- hunters." Besides searching and sending messages, recruiters also can save profiles of their prospect candidates for future use. Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 6 finds that profiles on LinkedIn are quite updated, or like an 'online business card' allowing recruiters to review members' updated profile.

Among the seven interviewees, five of them find that the search, save, and send messages really provide convenience for recruitment as the tool are user-

friendly. Interviewee 3 shared that he used LinkedIn for recruitment even before purchasing a recruiter license seat. He approached his candidates by sending connection request to them, waited to be accepted, and send them messages. However, with this product, he can send messages as soon as he can identify his prospect candidates without having to wait for connect acceptance. Also, the five interviewees are satisfied with service from the LinkedIn team such as classroom- trainings, online trainings, and support from LinkedIn consultant.

On the contrary, two interviewees complaint about the features are difficult to use and support from LinkedIn team is not good. However, they mentioned that they have not spent much time practicing by themselves.

4.2 Recruitment Activities on LinkedIn

This topic provides finding related to recruiters' activities on LinkedIn, covering search and profile view, send Inmail messages, post job advertisement and gather applications, and showcase employer brand on career page.

4.2.1 Search and View Profile

"I search for LinkedIn member who could be a good fit for the opening positions to add more choices for the line managers." (Interviewee 5)

"Three years ago, my company planned to make an acquisition in Europe and they need to have a talent pool in hand. I searched on LinkedIn to identify the possible candidates to be ready when recruitment process started." (Interviewee 4)

"LinkedIn sells us data and I use that data as a research tool. If you are patient enough, you can identify the structure of any companies by viewing its employees' profile on LinkedIn." (Interviewee 2)

Among the seven interviewees, three interviewees (Interviewee 4, 5, 6) revealed that the number one activity they do on LinkedIn is searching and profile viewing. It was found from the interviews that there are three main objectives in searching: searching for vacant positions, searching for "talent pipelining", and searching for research purpose.

Firstly, recruiters use the search feature to search for qualified persons to fill their vacancies in addition to the existing applicants to have more choices apart from their existing pool of active candidates in order to yield more candidate choices to their hiring managers. On the other hand, a recruiter who is not spending much time searching for passive candidates said that he thinks it is a waste of time trying to engage with passive candidates when he already has many applicants (active candidates) on hand.

Secondly, recruiters use LinkedIn to search and store passive candidates' profile for pipelining talent. Mainly, the positions they search for are executives, frequently recruited positions (high turn-over), positions in big departments. Interviewee 4 shared that she search and store candidates profiles when she was informed about new business plans or expansion in order to have candidates on hand when the new business started recruiting.

Thirdly, recruiters are using LinkedIn strategically as a research tool. Two recruiters shared that they search and view profiles of people working with their competitors to identify department structure and incumbents of different positions as well as their backgrounds, etc. Interviewee 1 revealed that he once searched for persons from competitors and when he can identify a person that he wish to steal, he then assigned a head hunter agency to approach that person on his behalf. The same recruiter also shared that he used to view different items on candidate' profile such as skill endorsements and recommendations in order to use the information as an input for interview questions. He believes that it will impress the candidates as the interviewers show interest in them by having questions about items that are not on the CVs.

Interviewee 1 also added an interesting objective of profile view. He shared that he sometime views profile of passive candidates 'for the sake of viewing' so that it appears on the candidates' profile that he viewed their profiles. "If they are interested in my company, they will approach me by themselves." However, he added that this tactic will work for only companies with good reputation.

4.2.2 Send Inmail Message

"LinkedIn members are mostly passive candidates. To turn them into an active candidate, communication is very important." (Interviewee 2)

Among all seven interviewees, three interviewees (Interviewee 1, 2, 3) spend their time sending and answering Inmail messages the most. For interviewee 2 and 3, this activity leads other activities as the recruiters have been searching and storing profiles for quite a while, so they have prospect candidates on hand to engage with. The two recruiters shared that they spend a great amount of time contacting passive candidates especially those of senior positions by building trust, providing information, as well as selling them opportunities within their organizations. Interviewee 1, on the contrary, is often approached by people who are interested to join his company. He revealed that his industry is quite small and there are not many big firms. Coupled with his company being recognized as an employer of choice in his industry, it is natural to have many people interested in his company.

4.2.3 Post Job Advertisement and Gather Applications

"My company has 2 job slots which I reserve them for senior positions only" (Interviewee 3)

"I think posting job advertisement on LinkedIn works for positions that open for international candidates. If we are looking for local Thai, we can post it on other job websites." (Interviewee 6)

The number of job slots that a company can post on LinkedIn depends on the company to purchase. The interviewees' companies have job slots in the range of 0-10. A company did not buy it as they decide to use LinkedIn only for searching and contacting passive candidates. It can be observed that there is strategic implication in the decision making for the number of job slots to buy. Interviewee 1 purchased one job slot as he wanted the first year of using LinkedIn as a trial so that his company does not have to invest too much for the tool. Interviewee 4 shared that her company is a global company which HR is centered in Bangkok office. She is assigned to post job vacancies and collect applications for recruitment team in other countries.

Out of seven recruiters, three recruiters use this function consistently. They choose to post advertisement for executive position, positions open for international

candidates, and vacancies overseas. If there are job slots left, they will post for positions open for Thai candidates only. Some recruiters shared that they sometimes post job advertisement even though the there is no vacancies in order to collect CVs of interested candidates.

4.2.4 Showcase Employer Brand on Career Page

Among the seven companies, five interviewees said that their companies have employer brand in place, another two interviewees (Interviewee 4and 5) said that their companies have not got employer brand yet. Interviewee 4 discussed that her company have not started working on a proper employer brand as there is no policy from senior management. Interviewee 5 shared an interesting point that his HR team just want to keep low profile because the overall communication strategy is focusing on corporate social responsibility (CSR), given that the company is in Oil & Energy sector. Instead, HR chooses building relationship with engineering schools as a way to enhance their attractiveness as an employer to their targets.

Despite using career page to promote employer brand is an activity highly recommended by LinkedIn as employer branding is a global trend for talent and acquisition, the interviewees are not currently using LinkedIn as a platform to promote employer brand. The recruiters said that showcasing employer brand is not the main reason for investing in LinkedIn products from the first place. However, they are aware of the benefits they could gain if employer brands are promoted on LinkedIn. Among the five companies answering that they have an employer brand, three interviewees are not focusing on promoting employer brand on their LinkedIn career pages. Two interviewees answered that their companies are showcasing employer brand message on LinkedIn however, Company 6's career page is not controlled by the interviewee, but by a marketing team in the head office abroad.

"When it comes to promoting employer brand with the Thais on social media, my company uses Facebook because Thai people are using Facebook more than LinkedIn." (Interviewee 2)

"Promoting employer brand on social media is not a one-time thing; it requires constant sharing interesting content and engaging with the page followers

online. I will not start doing it until I have more people in my team to manage it."
(Interviewee 7)

From interviewing the three recruiters who are not using LinkedIn as a platform for employer brand, it is founded that there are two issues involve. Firstly, company 1 and 2 are focusing on other channels when it comes to promoting employer brand. Interviewee 1 shared that his company prefers official channels like printed media, company brochure, and company website in order to avoid direct communication with people on social media. Interviewee 2 shared that her company focus on mass media when it comes to promoting employer brand in order to reach a mass audience. When it comes to a social media to promote employer brand, Facebook is a better one as there are more Thai people on Facebook. However, it is in the plan to include LinkedIn as a part of their integrated employer brand communication in the near future. Secondly, manpower constraint is the main reason that Interviewee 7 does not put employer brand content on LinkedIn. She shared that promoting employer brand on social media is not a onetime thing; it requires constant sharing content and engaging with the page followers online therefore she will not start doing it until she has enough manpower in her team to manage it.

Interviewee 3- the only recruiter showcasing employer brand on LinkedIn career page- shared that he does not see the need to wait until everything is ready. He does it little by little such as posting company news written by the marketing team, sharing fun stories and photographs about working in the company, etc.

Even though the companies are not actively using LinkedIn as an employer brand platform, they shared that they will initiate it in the near future as they see that LinkedIn is pulling more and more Thais to the platform. Moreover, it has become more necessary for the companies to create awareness internationally especially in ASEAN countries as Thai companies are expanding to ASEAN countries and they will have to compete for talent in those countries.

4.2.5 Pitfalls of LinkedIn Recruitment Activities

The interviews in the topic of recruitment activities enabled the researcher to discover the following common pitfalls of recruitment activities on LinkedIn.

4.2.5.1 Credibility of Profile

"Sometimes people make their profiles better than the truth. It has always been a recruiter's risk. We have to recheck candidate profiles no matter what source they come from." (Interviewee 4)

Even though all interviewees found many good profiles on LinkedIn, there is no guarantee that the information there is entirely accurate. It is possible that some LinkedIn members make up their profiles with big titles, unreal job descriptions, overly- endorsed skills, and write too- good- to- be- true recommendations. According to Interviewee 4, it is recruiters' responsibility to check the credential of candidates no matter what source they are from.

4.2.5.2 Inmail Response

"Some LinkedIn members are not using LinkedIn often. By the time I get their respond for my messages, the vacancy has already been filled." (Interviewee 4)

"Thai people don't answer 'No'. They won't reply that they are not interested. Their way of saying it is not responding the message." (Interviewee 5)

"I get only a few Inmail responses. Maybe it is because I use one message to send to everyone and it is not personalized enough to gain their attentions."(Interviewee 6)

Inmail Response from passive candidates is an issue for some interviewees. Interviewee 4 shared that she finds the Inmail responses are quite slow especially with people of senior executive positions. Sometimes it takes up to one month for her to get responses. By that time, the positions have been filled with other candidates. Interviewee 1 faced the same issue. He, therefore, communicate with passive candidates by e-mail if the e-mail addresses are available on LinkedIn. He finds that the response from using e-mail is faster than from LinkedIn Inmail.

Interviewee 6 and 7 shared that they rarely receive response from passive candidates. Interviewee 6 thought that his messages are not personalize enough as he uses one template to send to almost 100 passive candidates. Interviewee 7 sent messages to a few people and received no responses at all. She is still uncertain about the reason behind it.

Interviewee 5 shared an interesting point of view. With Thai people, no answer is the answer. He believes that most Thai people are not comfortable rejecting others therefore, if they are not interested, they will not reply. Unlike candidates from the Western part of the world, they will reply messages no matter that are interested or not interested. It can be learned that culture plays an important role on how people react no matter online or offline.

4.2.5.3 Irrelevance Application

"What annoys me so much with the applications is that there are so many irrelevance ones. I wish LinkedIn has a system to filter the unrelated profiles from the applicant list." (Interviewee 4)

"Like other online job board, some applicants are qualified, some are not. Recruiters have to carefully screen them."(Interviewee 3)

Some recruiters shared their obstacle with job applicants from LinkedIn that they received many unrelated applications for the vacant positions. Interviewee 4 mentioned that she understands if it happens with other recruitment websites. However, with LinkedIn, she expected that the tool should provide convenience to users by filtering the unrelated profiles from the applicant list, given that companies are spending big amount of money for the tool. Interviewee 7 mentioned that her company invested in LinkedIn products, expecting the tool to work for them. Instead, their works are increased as they have to screen more applications.

4.3 Benefits of LinkedIn to Strategic Recruitment

4.3.1 Reduce Dependence and Cost of Recruitment Agencies

Before LinkedIn, corporate recruiters have been depending on recruitment agencies to find hard- to- find candidates. With LinkedIn, they can assume the role of head hunter and approach candidates by themselves. According to the interviews, the recruiters found success in finding hard- to- find candidates, therefore, reducing their dependence and expenses of recruitment agencies.

4.3.1.1 Executives

"I have already filled more than 10 managerial positions since I started using the tool 6 months ago, saving over a million Baht for my company." *(Interviewee 3)*

"Why LinkedIn is used to find people in management position? Well, this type of people tends to be 'passive candidates'. Most of them are not looking for a new job but their profiles are there on LinkedIn where recruiters can approach them." (Interviewee 6)

Executive recruitment cost can be very expensive for a company. The fee charged by recruitment agencies can be during 100,000- 300,000 Baht per person. Recruiters are being pressured to reduce executive recruitment costs.

With LinkedIn, the interviewees shared that their first priority is executive recruitment which most of them find success. Interviewee 3 shared that he has already recruited over ten people in managerial positions for his company, saved over a million Baht. Interviewee 2 shared that using LinkedIn for executive recruitment can reduce more than half of the expenses for recruitment agencies comparing to before. Interviewee 4 mentioned that she filled over fifteen managerial vacancies with international candidates during the past 3 years that she used LinkedIn and rarely depends on recruitment agencies ever since. Interviewee 6 shared an interesting point of view. When asked 'Why recruiters go to LinkedIn when finding managers?', he replied that this type of people are basically 'passive candidates'. Most of them are not looking for a new job but their profiles are there on LinkedIn where recruiters can approach them.

4.3.1.2 Expatriates and Oversea Locals

"My company is expanding in ASEAN and I have to find people to work in those countries both Thais and foreigners. I found some of them on LinkedIn." (Interviewee 5)

"I got a Kenyan to work in South Sudan, an Australian to work in Laos, a Thai to work in Myanmar; all from LinkedIn." (Interviewee 4)

Due to the plan to accelerate ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, the companies (Company 1, 2, 5, 7) are expanding their businesses overseas especially in neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and

Vietnam. Company4 has already expanded overseas many years ago. Before LinkedIn, the interviewees depended on service from recruitment agencies which are expensive; or their own connections which are limited. With LinkedIn, they can search for candidates to fill overseas positions.Interviewee2 from Banking industry can find Thai people to join ASEAN branches. Interviewee 4 can find people of different nationalities to work in different locations. Interviewee 5 mentioned that he can find local nationals to work in his company expanded overseas. To summarize, the recruiters are able to reach people of different nationalities to work in different locations using LinkedIn as it provide them a database to reach these hard-to-find people by themselves.

4.3.1.3 Candidates with Rare Skills and Experiences

"I can find the 'Sustainable Development Manager' on LinkedIn after looking into many different sources." (Interviewee 7)

"My company is doing unique businesses, requiring me to find people with unique experiences which I manage to find on LinkedIn" (Interviewee 3)

Among the seven interviewees, Interviewee 3, 6, 7 shared that they resort to LinkedIn for finding talent with very specific skills that are difficult to find in local job portal database or applicants from job advertisement. Therefore, recruiters enter LinkedIn to search for these specific skills and some of them succeed. Interviewee 7 shared that she was successful in recruiting a 'Sustainable Development Manager' from LinkedIn after sourcing from many different sources. Interviewee 3 discussed about a time when her company invested in a new business in Germany. The business required people with experience in modified automotive background. She succeeded in filling these positions because she used LinkedIn for pipelining talent. Interviewee 6 mentioned that LinkedIn enables him to find the hard-to-find talent from the marketing research industry better than the job advertisement websites.

4.3.2 LinkedIn as a Research Tool

"LinkedIn sells us data. It depends on the users to be tactical enough to get the most out of it." (Interviewee 2)

The second benefit of LinkedIn to strategic recruitment is that it is a research tool. As mentioned earlier that recruiters are using LinkedIn not only for

finding candidates, but also for researching their competitors - identifying department structures, incumbents of different positions as well as their backgrounds; finding candidates they'd like to steal from competitors; and studying candidate' profiles to be an input for setting interview questions.

According to the latest article of LinkedIn, it summarizes the different ways that recruiters can use their big data to enhance their recruitment by getting to know the market in terms of the size, dimensions and dynamic. For example, LinkedIn data can show the number of talent supply such as numbers of professionals fit the criteria for this role, filtered by key facets (location, years of experience, company, experience in specific industries, etc.) Also, the data can be used to set expectations with hiring managers as recruiters can bring numbers when providing consultant to line managers in order to create realistic expectation together. (Browne, 2013)

4.3.3 LinkedIn as a Talent Pipelining Tool

"For me, the number one benefit I gain from LinkedIn is that it can help me manage the talent pool." (Interviewee 6)

"I think LinkedIn has good functions that allow us to manage the candidate profiles such as saving them into folders, taking notes on their profiles, and setting statuses. If we give it a time, it is a very useful tool." (Interviewee 3)

"When I come back from campus job fairs, I took the time to find the students I talked to in the fair from LinkedIn, storing them in one files and set reminders for myself to view those profiles in a year later in case they are good matches for the vacancies in the future. (Interviewee 5)

LinkedIn products can benefit strategic recruitment in terms of talent pipelining as LinkedIn allow recruiters to manage candidate profiles on the tool. Interviewee 6 shared that he find this is the number one benefit he gains as the tool provides different functions that are useful for candidate pool management such as storing profiles into folders to keep similar profiles in one place, setting reminders when candidates in the pool update their profiles as it is a signal that they may be looking for a new job, adding notes about the person on their profiles to remind himself and his teams what were the action took with this candidates, etc. Interviewee 3 mentioned the similar point that the tool will benefit greatly to talent pipelining if

recruiters spend time with it. Interviewee 5 shared that after getting back from job fairs, he searches for the students he talked to in the fair from LinkedIn, storing them in one files and set reminders for himself to view those profiles in a year later to see if they are good matches for vacancies. It can be concluded from these three interviewees that LinkedIn can benefit strategic recruitment in talent pipelining and these companies have their own strategies when it comes to managing their talent pools.

4.4 Critical Success Factors of Recruiting on LinkedIn

It is found from the interviews that there are four critical success factors for recruiting on LinkedIn. The first two can be categorized as organization- level factors which are Leader's Buy-In and Empowering and Collaborative Organization Culture. The other two can be categorized as department- level factors which are recruiters' skills and manpower and time. Manpower and Time is the factor discovered from the interviews in addition of the literature review.

4.4.1 Leader's Buy-In

"Make sure the managers are on the same page with you, educate them on how it works, that is the very first step." (Interviewee 1)

"It was difficult for my team to gain executives' approval when we proposed for the budget for LinkedIn products. My company was one of the first companies in Thailand to use this tool over 4 years ago. So, it took time to gain buy-in from the senior managers." (Interviewee 4)

"For my company, it was the managers that want HR to invest in LinkedIn, so the first- year investment was granted easily. I think it will get more difficult for the second year when I have to show them the success of the investment." (Interviewee 3)

"Lucky me that the executive team is not concerning too much about money, they saw that leaving key positions vacant cost much more than the recruitment fees." (Interviewee 5)

Most of interviewees' first answer was 'getting leader's buy-in' when asked 'What do you think are the critical success factors of recruiting on LinkedIn?'

Basically, budgets will not be granted if senior managers are not convinced that it is good for the company. Among the seven recruiters, only one recruiter (Interviewee 4) found it hard to get executives' buy-in. She mentioned that her company was one of the first companies in Thailand that invest in this tool and it was a first big investment for HR department. Therefore it was rather difficult to get buy-in from the management. The other six interviewees shared that it was not difficult for them to get approval to purchase LinkedIn recruitment products as the executives are quite aware of how powerful the tool can be if used effectively. Interviewee 1 and 2 shared that investing in LinkedIn served company's objective as it boost HR' ability in being strategic partners to the business. Interviewee 3 discussed that he gained executives buy-in easily as he would use budget set for recruitment agency for LinkedIn and promised the managers that it would deliver better results. Interviewee 6 shared that it was easy for him to get budget for LinkedIn as the head quarter has it and all regional offices are using it too.

4.4.2 Empowering and Collaborative Organization Culture

"If a company wants to harness the power social media, it has to allow or encourage its staff to use social media. Some companies prohibit their staff to have a LinkedIn profile as it is perceived that LinkedIn is a job search tool." (Interviewee 4)

"My company does not encourage the staff to share or create content related to the company on social media as they will not have the control over the content." The communication has to be official and lead by marketing communication team only. (Interviewee 1)

"I sent an e-mail to all employees that we are now having an official company page on LinkedIn and that they are encouraged to follow and share the posts to their personal pages." (Interviewee 3)

"Internal Collaboration between HR and Marketing Communications team is important if a company wants to showcase its employer brand on social media. HR controls the content and the Marketing team works with us to design the visuals." (Interviewee 2)

Empowering and collaborative organization culture is a critical success factor when it comes to promoting employer brand on social media. Even though most

interviewees are not actively using LinkedIn as an employer brand platform, they provided their views regarding this subject that corporate culture is an important factor as effort from HR alone is not enough to strengthen employer brand message on social media.

The interviewees see that empowering culture is vital because one of the elements showcased on social media that could enhance a company as a great place to work is its employees' engagement with the company's page such as posting, and sharing their positive experiences of the company. Therefore, it is important for companies to allow, support, and encourage their staff to do so. Interviewee 3 is the only one interviewee who has done accordingly. He said that he sent an e-mail to all employees to inform about the company's official page on LinkedIn and encouraged them to follow and share the posts to their personal pages. Interviewee 2 mentioned that she believes that the executive team would appreciate if the staff shares good stories about the company on social media. However, there has not been a formal communication regarding the matter. Other interviewees, on the contrary, answered that they neither not communicated about the company's social media strategy nor encouraged to engage with the official pages on social media. However, all interviewees agreed that empowering culture is vital for the success of enhancing employer brand.

The term collaborative organization culture was discussed by the interviewees as collaboration with other teams especially the marketing or corporate communication team. It is important as HR's effort alone is not enough to strengthen employer brand message online. The interviewees mentioned that it is a standard for most companies that the corporate communication team controls overall messages and visuals in all company's communication efforts and employer branding is no exception. Therefore, it is crucial for HR to work collaboratively with them to boost employer brand communications. Interviewee 2, 3, 4, and 6 mentioned that HR should have a control over the content and work with the Marketing team for visual designs. Interviewee 1 said that his company does not have many cross functional teams and it could be an inconvenience for him to initiate one.

4.4.3 Recruiter's Skills

Most of the interviewees shared that they think recruiter's skill is the most important success factor for LinkedIn recruitment. Even though most of the skills mentioned by interviewees are necessary for all recruiters regardless of the tools they are using such as business acumen and resume or profiles screening, there are some skills that are particularly important if recruiters are to find success on LinkedIn.

4.4.3.1 Social Media Literate

"I think that recruiters who will be comfortable with LinkedIn are 'tech savvy' recruiters; should be the one who can help themselves with new technology as the product is constantly updated." (Interviewee 5)

" For me, it is pretty much a serve yourself tool as LinkedIn agents are not providing detailed guidelines on how to make the most of the tool. The recruiters need to keep up with the technology by themselves." (Interviewee 1)

To find success in recruiting with LinkedIn, it is important for users to be social media literate. According to interviewee 1, he finds that LinkedIn agents are not providing detailed guidelines on how to make the most of the tool such as searching or approaching passive candidates. Recruiters, therefore, need to keep up with the technology by themselves. Interviewee 5 used the term 'tech savvy' when describing an ideal user. As LinkedIn keeps updating the product, users must be able to keep up with it. Interviewee 7 admitted that she is quite new with social media and she is much more comfortable using more traditional recruiting tool such as job portals and other offline channels. She thought it might be the reason that she does not find as much success as expected.

4.4.3.2 Head- Hunting and Sales Skills

"Some corporate recruiters are not used to head- hunting approach. They tend to consider applications that come through or using recruitment agencies to do the hard work for them. However, if they want to get passive candidates from LinkedIn, they have to act as head hunters on behalf of their companies." (Interviewee 5)

"The tool enables a corporate recruiter to act as a head hunter, they need head hunter's skill to approach passive candidates." (Interviewee 6)

"I think sales skill is very important for recruiters. We have to know how to approach people. It includes perseverance, interpersonal skill, and knowing when to stop." (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 2, 5, and 6 who were former head hunters shared that sales skills are very important for recruiting passive candidates as LinkedIn provides users nothing but data and direct channel to contact its members. Successful LinkedIn recruiters must have a certain degree of head- hunting and sales skills so that they can approach candidates appropriately, determining their motivations in order to pick the right points to sell them the opportunities. According to Interviewee 2, the skills can be trained and they can be improved as recruiters grow into the job. Another characteristic of head- hunters, according to Interviewee 6, is network- building ability. In LinkedIn, it means constantly build connections and nurture passive candidates. He shared that no one is born with it; it the matter of willingness and diligent.

4.4.3.3 English Skills

"LinkedIn language is English; member profiles are in English; keywords for profile search are in English, LinkedIn recruiters - therefore - have to be good in English to succeed with the tool" (Interviewee 3)

"It is mandatory for recruiters in my company to be competent in English as we are operating in many countries. Especially when we have LinkedIn as a recruiting tool, all communications on the platform are in English." (Interviewee 4)

One of the most important skills for recruiters using LinkedIn for recruitment is English skills. Even though it is the fact that English is crucial for recruiters no matter what recruiting tools they are using, the interviewees shared that English is particularly important when using LinkedIn as a recruiting tool. Interviewee 3, holding a managerial position, mentioned that if he has to assign one of his subordinates to manage LinkedIn instead of him, he will choose the one who has good English skills as LinkedIn profiles are in English and keywords used for profile search are also in English. Interviewee 4 shared that English is even more important for LinkedIn as the language used for Inmail sending is English no matter she is recruiting Thais or foreigners. She mentioned that she uses English even with the Thais to test

candidates' English writing skill as well as to represent her organization as an international company. To summarize, from the view of the interviewees, it is crucial for recruiters using LinkedIn to competent in English because they would be able to communicate with candidates effectively and be able to make the most of the tool.

4.4.4 Manpower and Time

"Engaging passive candidates is a time- consuming task. It is difficult for companies with small recruitment team to do it effectively." (Interviewee 7)

"I think the reason that I am successful in recruiting passive candidates is that I am assigned to work on LinkedIn full time while other team members are dealing with other channels depending on target groups." (Interviewee 2)

"I have to say that I have not found much success on LinkedIn so far. Part of it is that I have no time to work on it. I am the only one working on recruitment for my company and I have to deal with the task at hand first, no time for other extra works." (Interviewee 1)

Manpower and time is the factor discovered in the interviews, in addition of the literature review. Among the seven interviewees, two interviewees shared that they have not found success on LinkedIn as they do not have enough time to work on it. When probed further about the reason behind that, they revealed that there are limited people in their teams and they already have so many tasks on hands. Therefore, their priorities are daily routine tasks such as screening applicants, conducting screening interviews, organizing interviews, handling paper works, not the more strategic tasks such as nurturing passive candidates or talent pipelining. On the other hand, recruiters who are successful with LinkedIn shared that they have enough people in their teams to manage different aspects of recruitment. Interviewee 2 told that that her main task is strategic recruitment- related such as management trainee projects and social recruiting. With the amount of time she works on LinkedIn, it is not surprised that she can recruit quite a number of executives for her company. To summarize, resources in recruitment team such as manpower and recruiters' time is an important success factor for recruiting on LinkedIn.

CHAPTER V
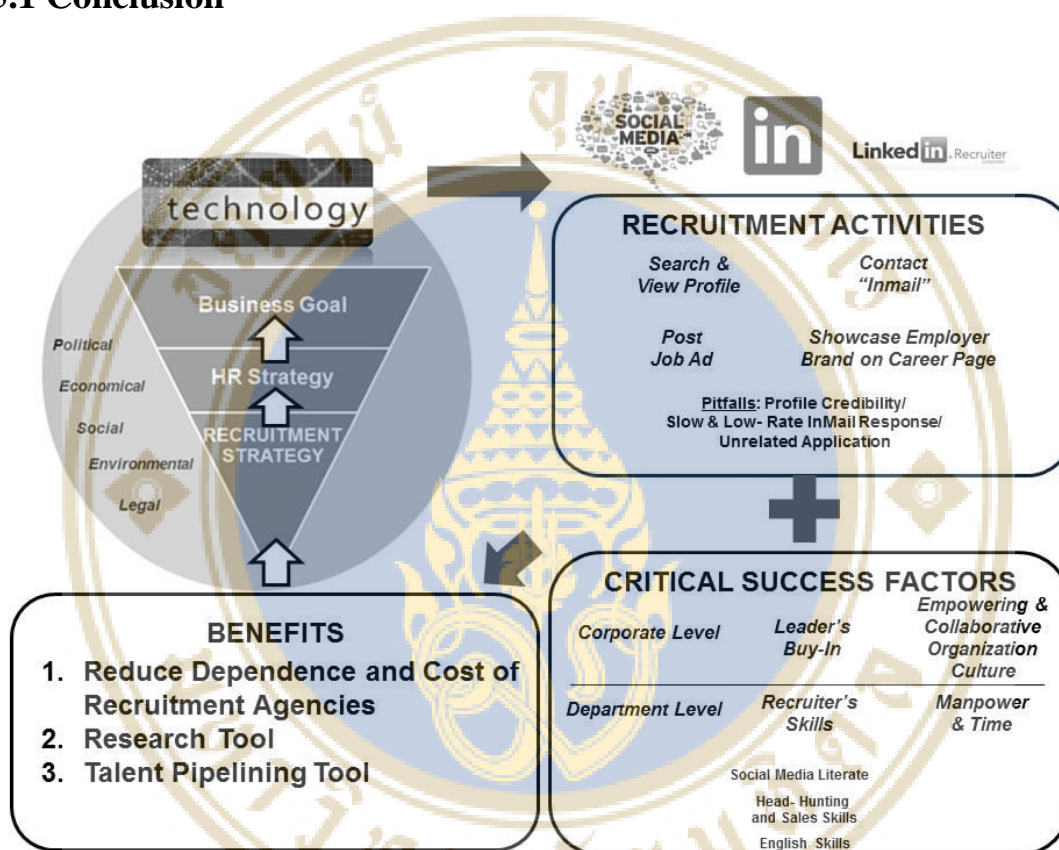# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Figure 5.1 LinkedIn Recruitment Framework

Today, it is important for HR to harness the people's data in social media for better attracting and recruiting. Among different social media platforms, LinkedIn is the professional social media of choice with over 300 million members worldwide. LinkedIn also leverages its data by developing recruitment products to service enterprise recruiters. Currently, there are over 40 Thai companies that use LinkedIn for recruitment.

This research aims to identify how companies can maximize LinkedIn for the benefit of strategic recruitment by exploring recruitment activities on LinkedIn, critical success factors of recruiting on LinkedIn, and benefits of LinkedIn to strategic recruitment.

For the first point, there are three main recruiting activities that recruiters are doing on LinkedIn. Firstly, they are using it to search for candidates with desired qualifications. There are three main objectives in searching which are searching for filling vacant positions, searching for pipelining talent, and search for conducting a research. Secondly, recruiters use LinkedIn messaging system or "Inmail" to approach any LinkedIn members. Thirdly, recruiters post job advertisement and receive applications on LinkedIn as an additional applicant pool. Another feature that companies purchase but not fully maximizing it is posting people stories on career page to promote employer brand. The reasons that the feature has not been fully utilized are the fact that the recruiters turn to other online channels to showcase their employer brands and manpower constraint. The interviewees revealed that the pitfalls of LinkedIn Recruiter implementation are profile credibility, slow or low number of Inmail responses, and unrelated applications responding to job advertisement from LinkedIn.

Critical success factors of recruiting on LinkedIn can also be identified from the interviews. Two type of factors can be categorized which are corporate- level factors and department-level factors. Leader's Buy-In is recruiters' first answer when it comes to social recruiting success factors as budgets will not be granted if senior managers are not convinced that it is beneficial for the company. To maximize LinkedIn, it is also crucial for companies to have empowering and collaboration culture and its leader's onboard with social recruiting initiatives. Department- Level (HR) factors are comprised of recruiters' skills and manpower and time. To success in LinkedIn recruitment, recruiters should possess head-hunting and sales skills and good English skills as well as being a social media literate. Last but not least, recruitment teams need to be certain that it has sufficient manpower with enough time to work on the tool.

It is discovered that there are three main benefits that LinkedIn has for strategic recruitment. Firstly companies can reduce dependence and cost of

recruitment agencies when it comes to recruiting executives, expatriates or international candidates, and people with rare or specific skills. Secondly, recruiters can use LinkedIn as a research tool to conduct any kind of information search as LinkedIn provides access to all members. Lastly, LinkedIn can be used for a tool for talent pipelining which recruiters can find, contact, and engage passive talent who could be their future employees.

All in all, this research finds that LinkedIn recruitment effectiveness derived from consistent usage of the tool coupled with the discovered critical success factors. Together, they will yield the desired benefits for recruitment strategy which would complement HR strategy, and eventually contribute to the overall business strategy.

5.2 Recommendations

From the research, there are two managerial implications for social recruiting strategy. Firstly, LinkedIn is one of many recruiting tools that are available these days. Even though it provides many advantages such as access to over 300 million members' profiles, advanced search tool, direct contact channel, and captivating career pages; there is no guarantee to recruitment success if recruiters are not doing their parts. From the interviews, it can be observed that the main difference between recruiters who find success on the tool and those who do not is the amount of time and effort that have been put on it. Successful social recruiters spend time working with the tool and put effort in engaging with their candidates. Unsuccessful social recruiters, on the other hand, rarely spend time working on the tool. After all, the critical success factors from this research are recommended for managers to take in to consideration.

Secondly, companies will increasingly use LinkedIn as an employer brand platform. Even though the interviewed recruiters said that they are not actively using LinkedIn as a main channel to showcase employer brand, they will initiate it in the near future as they see that LinkedIn is pulling more and more Thais to the platform. Also, as many companies are expanding due to ASEAN countries, it is crucial for them to use social media especially LinkedIn as a channel for promoting their

employer brands to attract locals to work with them. From the interviews, all interviewees mentioned that a critical success factor for promoting employer brand on social media is empowering and collaboration culture which means that employees should have a clear direction that they can play a part in sharing their stories or impressions about working in the company online as well as willing to collaborate with HR in employer brand projects such as participating in surveys, focus groups, or joining employee ambassador program, etc. It is important because employer branding project is not only HR project but it concerns everyone in the company and employees should be empowered to take parts and collaborate to make it happens.

5.3 Limitations

The research has some limitations. With time constraint in conducting this research, it has to limit the number of interviewees. The consequence is that when the number of interviewees is limited, the data received from interviews does not represent a wide range of perspectives from recruiters using LinkedIn in Thailand. Furthermore, some interviewees have been using LinkedIn for a few months therefore they have limited experience with the tool to fully share insights or techniques during the interviews.

Therefore, the findings on this research cannot be generalized. However, as a guideline for practitioners, it can contribute to HR practitioners especially corporate recruiters who are using or considering to use LinkedIn of how companies are using the tool, benefits to strategic recruitment, and critical success factors for implementation.

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