

*Web 2.0 Technologies as Tools in Business: Focus on  
the Use of Social Media in the Recruitment Sector in  
Ireland.*

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## Abstract

This study aimed to ascertain attitudes towards the use of social media in recruitment in Ireland. To this end, we surveyed 194 people across four different groups including in-house HR and recruitment professionals, agency recruitment professionals, jobseekers and non-HR professionals. The largest group surveyed was the HR professionals group with 107 people completing the survey.

Across all group the majority of respondents indicated that they had a positive attitude to the use of social media in recruitment with 78.9% of all respondents indicating such. In the human resourcers groups, which combined both in-house and agency professionals, 98.1% of respondents reported they used LinkedIn, with 86.6% of these using it at least once a week. 71.4% of jobseekers indicated they had a LinkedIn account, with 57.1% utilising LinkedIn in their job seeking strategy.

The results of the study indicate that the use of social media in recruitment is becoming mainstream with both employers and jobseekers exploring new technologies in their respective strategies including LinkedIn, Facebook and to a lesser extent Twitter. These technologies have not replaced traditional strategies, but have definitely added value to the process, securing their future place in the recruitment space.

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**Chapter 1 – Introduction**

## 1.1 Overview

Since late 2007, the term Web 2.0 has pervasively invaded strategic direction in marketing, information systems, recruitment and customer services in the business world. It is heralded as a powerful medium which will make the online experience for many richer, more interactive, more productive and more appealing. It is set to change the way businesses and consumers think, about themselves, about each other and about how they are portrayed in the online world. The rise of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, social media sites, search engine enhancements, online collaboration resources and online video has resulted in an revolution where traditional business models and marketing strategies have been challenged and in some instances overtaken by innovative companies who were quick to adopt the new medium of Web 2.0 and incorporate it into their business model.

This paper will focus on the attitudes surrounding and the use of Web 2.0 and social media in the recruitment sector in Ireland as it seems to have been an early adopter of these technologies, more out of necessity rather than choice. As jobs became scarce during the global economic crisis toward the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the traditional recruitment agency business model became untenable and a number of established recruitment agencies fell victim to the recession. Many employers opted for resourcing candidates directly because of the ease of attraction of talent and as part of cost-cutting measures. These difficulties forced recruitment agencies to look at alternative business models, and Web 2.0 and social media offered a low-cost marketing and resourcing strategy. Since 2007 there has been a rising emergence and integration of Web 2.0 technologies into mainstream

recruitment practices in Ireland to create a new breed of innovative, adaptive and flexible recruitment business model.

In the research element of this project market research will be presented, gathered in the form of a questionnaire aimed at ascertaining the usage of and attitudes towards the use of social media resources in the recruitment sector in Ireland. The target market for the questionnaire will be key stakeholders in the recruitment process – (a) HR and recruitment professionals and (b) job-seekers. The ultimate goal is to ascertain and map the changes that have taken place within the recruitment sector in Ireland between 2007 and 2010.

Chapter 1 will be broken down into four main sections. In the first part the recruitment sector in Ireland will be discussed, explaining the differences between in-house and agency recruitment, followed by a review of the current resourcing strategies used in this area. In the second part, Web 2.0 and Social Media will be discussed and the potential of the next generation of applications, Web 3.0, will be alluded to. In the third part of the chapter, current trends in the use of Web 2.0 in business will be discussed, including properties, advantages for businesses, challenges and where Web 2.0 has been adopted across the business. In the final part of the chapter the use of social media in recruitment in Ireland will be discussed, and we outline hypotheses to be tested by research.

## **1.2 The Recruitment Sector in Ireland**

Recruitment of staff is a critical business process for employers, enabling growth, competitive advantage and profitability. As such, companies invest significant resources, whether human or financial, into the recruitment of staff using either internal or external resources. Internal (In-House) resources generally consists of a dedicated recruitment team forming part of the Human Resources (HR) department. External resources can include the engagement of third party recruitment agencies under the management of the HR department to assist in the sourcing of staff or a company can opt for the complete outsourcing of its recruitment function to a third party. The choice of recruitment strategy can depend on a number of factors including the location of the company, internal resources at hand, recruitment budget, economic conditions and the importance of the current recruitment drive for the company's success.

### *1.21 In-House Recruitment*

In unfavourable economic conditions, many companies opt to recruit staff using in-house resources due to cost-cutting measures and a lack of a recruitment budget. External recruitment strategies can be expensive and in times of economic stress, unemployment is generally high, so the available candidate pool is also high, making internal resourcing of staff generally easier and more effective. Conversely, in buoyant economic conditions, employment is generally lower; hence the available human talent is also low, making the resourcing of staff generally more difficult. In these conditions, employers will usually opt to resource staff externally as it is more cost effective and efficient. Furthermore, in buoyant economics conditions companies

are generally in a growth phase, so talent attraction can be critical to the company's success.

The in-house recruitment function generally comprises an internal recruitment specialist, forming part of the HR team, whose function is to source and screen potential employees and to organise and interview these potential employees in conjunction with other members of the HR team. They utilise a number of resourcing strategies to facilitate this process, including online job boards, the company website, recruitment fairs, internal networking and referral strategies, offline advertising and graduate recruitment programs in conjunction with local third level institutions.

It is common for companies to use a hybrid model utilising both internal and external recruitment strategies. In this instance, the internal recruitment specialist will also manage the external recruitment agencies. The recruitment specialist will often aim to setup a Preferred Supplier List (PSL) which details the preferred and agreed agencies which the company has engaged as suppliers, usually less than five. This model allows for the efficient management of external suppliers; the external recruitment sector is extremely competitive with in excess of 400 competing agencies in Ireland at present. The competitive nature of the market can lead to situations where non-preferred suppliers will often try to present suitable candidates for open positions, leading to difficulties with terms and conditions and PSL agreements if the candidate presented is very suitable for the position. In a practical sense, the internal recruitment specialist is primarily concerned with attracting the right calibre of talent

for open positions within the company, so they will generally engage with the non-preferred supplier on an *ad-hoc* basis if the candidate is suitable for interview.

### 1.22 Agency Recruitment

Recruitment agencies in Ireland are regulated by government legislation, namely the Employment Agency Act 1971 which makes provisions governing the activities of employment agencies aimed mainly at protecting the rights of contracted and temporary workers (Irish Statute Book, 2010). The recruitment agency sector also has a self regulating non-statutory body, the National Recruitment Federation (NRF), which sets out a code of ethics which members voluntarily abide by. Founded in 1971, the NRF aims at promoting ethics and professional competence within the industry.

There are a number of business models within the recruitment agency sector in Ireland ranging from the provision of temporary and contract staff, the resourcing and selection of permanent employees to the Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) model. These different models and services will now be described to give a deeper understanding of the activities of recruitment agencies in Ireland.

#### (a) Temporary / Contract Recruitment

From time to time, companies suffer unexpected staff loss through illness or death, need to expand rapidly on foot of new business commitments or are required to fulfil unusual high periods of activity. In these instances, it may be unfeasible to hire permanent employees due to the costs involved, the time

needed and the uncertainty of the current period of increased activity. Companies often opt for the services of an employment agency to meet these needs, who will supply the correctly trained and qualified staff to the company for a professional fee. These staff are employees of the employment agency, not the company, so all administrative duties are removed from the employer. The professional fee in these instances is usually a percentage of the employee's hourly rate, usually between 15% and 35%, depending on the skill-set, volume required and availability of the staff required.

(b) Permanent Recruitment

Permanent recruitment describes the activities of sourcing, screening and presentation of potential employees to companies for permanent positions by recruitment agencies. Companies who do not have sufficient resources, in terms of time and expertise to source potential employees will often opt to engage a recruitment agency to source candidates on their behalf. This model has a number of different sub-models, including contingency recruitment and retained assignment. The contingency model is the most commonly encountered in Ireland, whereby the employer will engage the agency on a contingent basis. Contingency means no professional fee will be charged unless the agency successfully sources an employee for the company, and the employee subsequently takes up employment with the company. This is similar to the 'no win, no fee' model in the legal sector. This model is a low-risk strategy for employers, in terms of investment, hence its popularity.

Another less popular model in Ireland is the retained assignment model, where companies engage a recruitment agency on a retained basis to source staff for a particular role. The difference between this model and the contingent model is that companies pay an upfront percentage of the professional fee on engagement, usually 33%, and the remainder on completion of the assignment. This model has some advantages to employers in terms of time-to-hire and success rate (as the recruitment agency will push significant resources into the successful completion of the assignment), however it is higher risk as an up-front investment is required. This model is more commonly utilised for senior or executive assignments, where candidates are rarer and the position is generally critical to the company.

(c) Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO)

Recruitment Process Outsourcing is where a company outsources all or some of its recruitment processes to an external third party. In essence, the employer outsources its recruitment function to a specialist agency, who manages the entire recruiting, hiring and onboarding activities for all or some of its jobs. This model is gaining in popularity in Ireland among multinationals as it is proven to increase a company's time to hire, reduce costs associated with employee engagement and improve the quality of the staff pool. It is less popular with Small to Medium Enterprises (SME's) who generally like to keep control over their growth strategy, culture and employee engagement.

### **1.23 Traditional Resourcing Strategies**

A critical success factor in the recruitment process is the attraction and sourcing of suitable talent, hence companies and agencies will invest significant resources in resourcing strategy. Resourcing strategy is usually multi-layered, employing a multitude of different techniques which act in concert to attract talent to the business.

#### **(a) Online Job Boards**

Resourcing through online job boards is a very popular method in Ireland, with major established players in the space including IrishJobs.ie, RecruitIreland.com, LoadzaJobs.ie and Monster.com. The model adopted is a simple pay-per-advertising model, with companies purchasing single or bulk advertisement slots or an annual advertising account. There has been increasing competition in this space in Ireland over the last 3 years, with players such as careerbuilder.com and worky.com attacking the market to try and win some market share from the major players.

#### **(b) Company Website**

The vast majority of employers will have a career section on their company webpage, which they utilise to promote current vacancies within the company. The careers section is also a useful place to promote details of the working environment, culture and mission of the company and any other information the HR department deem fit to attract talent to the business. Many employers are now accepting speculative applications – even though there are no current vacancies; this allows jobseekers to post their interest for future vacancies in

the company, a very good way of building a good talent pool for when the next recruitment drive is engaged.

(c) Recruitment Fairs

Recruitment fairs seems to have decreased in popularity over the past number of years, mainly due to the scarcity of open positions on the market, however many companies see them as a very useful medium for attracting talent the business. Meeting potential candidates in person allows the HR department to perform initial pre-screens and identify high potential subjects for interview. This saves a significant amount of time and organisation which is normally required to schedule and complete screening interviews. As the jobs market improves, we are likely to see a resurgence of this resourcing medium.

(d) Networking and Referral Strategies

Many companies have realised the value of internal networking and referral strategies as a valuable tool in their resourcing strategy. Many companies offer monetary rewards, in the region of €1,000 to current employees for every successful hire which has being referred to the HR department via that employee. Companies actively encourage referrals as it is evident that niche networks exist around current employees – college peers, local networks and professional associations. This strategy works as the new hire is essentially recommended by a trusted current employee, decreasing the time to hire as a de-facto reference exists from the current employee.

(e) Offline Advertising

Offline advertising seems to be a resource in decline, this evident from the lack of job supplements and adverts seen in the national newspapers. Offline advertising encompasses national newspapers, local newspapers, radio, TV and other print media. The costs associated with offline advertising have decreased dramatically over the past 3 years, due to a rapid shift by advertisers towards online strategies; so many companies now see value with offline media as the costs are lower. However, these media often result in a high volume of applications, the majority of which are not meeting requirements set out, resulting in increased administration for the company.

(f) Graduate Recruitment Programs

Graduate recruitment programs have being a staple strategy for many large enterprises over the past two decades, with companies engaging with universities and third-level institutions to attract the best graduate talent on the market prior to graduation. This strategy is now less common due to the shortage of graduate positions on the market. Companies can demand higher qualifications and experience for similar salary rates and grades, hence positions which were previously filled with graduates are now being filled with postgraduates with up to 2 years experience; hence closing out opportunities for graduates. As the unemployment rate decreases and more competition develops in the market for talent, this strategy will again become popular.

### **1.3 Web 2.0 and Social Media**

Web 2.0, first coined in 1999 by DiNucci (1999) and later popularised by Tim O'Reilly in his Web 2.0 media conference of 2004 (O'Reilly, 2005) describes a set of technologies which facilitate interactive information sharing on the World Wide Web (WWW). The term Web 2.0 may suggest to some readers a newer version of the WWW, however this is misleading as what it is meant to represent is a cumulative change in the mindset of internet users and developers, moving towards a more interactive, interoperable and collaborative experience online.

Web 2.0 encompasses technologies such as social networking sites, blogs, wiki's, cloud computing, rich internet applications and online video. Web 2.0 represents a migration from desktop built applications, restrained by hardware and operating system specifications to an integrated universal standards-based platform where applications are built and deployed on the WWW and as such are universally accessible to anyone with an internet connection and a browser. This paradigm shift has heralded an era of user generated content, universal accessibility, information sharing and user-centric design which has fundamentally changed the online world.

#### *1.31 Web 2.0 Technologies*

##### (a) Search Engines

Google Inc. encapsulates the philosophy and application of Web 2.0 with its comprehensive range of applications and services. Google's search engine has dominated the online search environment utilising an innovative algorithm to grade

search results, the formula of which is a closely guarded secret. The algorithm uses a system called PageRank, amongst other metrics, to assign a ranking to each website. This ranking is calculated by assessing the quality and quantity of inbound hyperlinks from other websites to determine the popularity of the website in question, a form of user generated content. The more popular the referring site, the more PageRank is assigned. The fewer the hyperlinks originating from the referring site, the higher the PageRank assigned to the destination site. This voting system, utilising hyperlinks as 'votes' has resulted in a quasi user-generated search index, which has secured Google's position as the leading search provider on the WWW.

#### (b) Online Collaboration Tools

Apart from its flagship search engine, Google also offers a range of Web 2.0 applications that facilitate online collaboration and information sharing, available freely to consumers and businesses. Google Docs is an excellent example of an online collaboration platform, where users can generate and share documents, spreadsheets and presentations online without having to own proprietary software to create them.

#### (c) Video Sharing

YouTube.com, owned by Google, is another excellent example of the application of Web 2.0 in the form of the sharing of video online. YouTube is now one of the most popular sites on the WWW, ranked #3 in the world according to the three-month Alexa traffic rankings, second only to Google.com and Facebook.com (Alexa.com,

2010a). YouTube allows users to upload and publicly (or privately) share videos, and it rapidly gained popularity as it is a free resources, funded by affiliate advertising.

(d) Blogs

Another popular Web 2.0 technology is the blog. A blog is the term describing a collection of user-generated material published online in the form of a website, termed a blog. It is synonymous with an online diary, made publicly available. The phenomenon of the blog was first observed when Jorn Barger coined the term “weblog” on Dec 17<sup>th</sup>, 1997 to describe his collection of links logged from the internet. This was further cropped to the term “blog” and since the first blog was published, the blog phenomenon has mutated from a geek niche to a world-dominating online publishing medium (Wortham, 2007). Some one hundred and thirty three million (133,000,000) blogs have been indexed by Technorati since 2002 (McLean, 2009), however there is uncertainty regarding the actual number of real active blogs online; how many of these are maintained regularly and how many were just sporadic flights of fancy for the online hobbyist. The blog has further mutated in recent years from a personal diary type medium to a force in the business world, allowing companies to publish materials online with ease, receive customer feedback and effectively market products.

(e) Wikis

A wiki is a website which allows the creation, editing and moderation of user generated content across multiple interlinked web pages using a web browser. Typically a wiki will allow this content to be edited using a basic markup language or

with a WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) editor for ease of use. The most notable wiki is Wikipedia.org which is an online user-generated and user-moderated encyclopaedia. Users can create pages within the site about specific topic, usually within their area of expertise and this is then reviewed by the community which assesses the validity and accuracy of the content. Wikipedia.org demonstrates with beauty the difference between a Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 technology, with The Encyclopaedia Britannica being an example of the latter; the content written by experts and not updated dynamically by the general community.

#### (f) Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is Internet-based computing, where shared resources, such as memory, processor time and software are provided to client computers and other devices on demand through the internet, sometimes called the cloud. It can be likened to an electricity grid, where users are supplied with electricity on demand. It represents a paradigm shift in computing and is expected to revolutionise business and personal computing. Cloud computing represents the universal interoperability and accessibility that Web 2.0 aims to achieve. Users will only require an internet connection to connect to the cloud to access their desktop and perform functions. It is likely that cloud computing will significantly challenge the operating system market as it is expected that users won't even require an operating system to connect to the cloud. For business, cloud computing opens the way for smaller companies with fewer resources and infrastructure to compete with larger companies with these resources in house.

### (g) Social Media

Social Media encompasses websites which function as online communities allowing users to setup personal profiles and to share commentary, images and video with other users in the community. It has by far being the most successful application of Web 2.0 to date, demonstrated by the rise of social networking sites such as Facebook.com, Myspace.com and Bebo.com. Social media plays on a number of intrinsic human factors which add to the success, growth and retention of users on the site. Humans are a social species, hence have a tendency to form natural groups. Humans are emotional, hence they tend to experience loss, guilt and fear and these emotions can be transferred to the online world. Social networking sites are cleverly designed to play on all of these factors – new users joining are actively encouraged to invite people from their own personal network to the site and once this network is established, a user will feel guilt, loss and fear (of what others might think) if they attempt to leave. Hence once a social network is established it is very difficult to break that network apart. Users tend to form niche sub-groups on social networking sites based on factors such as geography, beliefs, culture, age, social status, education and profession. Gaining access to these niche networks is a utopian situation for marketers where their message can be highly specific and targeted.

#### *1.32 Web 3.0 and Beyond*

Web 1.0 saw the web as an information portal, Web 2.0 sees the web as a platform, so what will Web 3.0 be seen as? Web 3.0 will herald the era of the 'semantic web'. Semantics refer to the meaning and understanding of information and the 'semantic

web' or Web 3.0, describes technologies which not only collate, organise and rank information on the web, but actually understand the meaning of that information and order it in context. This contextual information processing will greatly improve online searching, heralding the era of artificial intelligence. The potential applications of these technologies are immense, in terms of information processing and knowledge management.

Another Web 3.0 technology is the era of personalisation of the web. This has already started to happen; the lines are blurred between Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 in this instance, however personalisation has the potential to revolutionise the way we use the web. These technologies will allow the monitoring of patterns of usage on the web of users, tailoring content based on user preferences. This also has significant applications for the field of marketing as it will allow for targeted marketing messages.

Behavioural advertising is also a technology under development which will form part of the Web 3.0 revolution. The current model used in online advertising is contextual – advertisements are presented based on what you search for or what content you are viewing at that particular time. Behavioural advertising represents a shift away from this model to a more long term targeted view. For example, if a user is searching online for their next car purchase, the advertising network will returned targeted advertisements based on car dealerships in the area. You cannot buy a car online, so the user must be deciding and researching which car to purchase over the next 3-4 weeks. In behavioural advertising the advertising network will display advertisements based on this assumption over a defined time period, irrespective of the contextual

searches the users undertakes, in an attempt to influence their decision making process.

#### **1.4 Web 2.0 Technologies as Tools in Business**

Web 2.0 technologies have emerged as a powerful force in the business world in 2010. Companies are recognising the value of the medium and are adapting their business processes to incorporate new technologies and marketing channels. According to a recent Forrester Research study, 71% of companies have slashed their advertising budgets since the recession began. The main reductions have been seen in traditional media such as TV/Radio (61%) and Direct Mail (52%), however only 7% planned to cut Social Media spend. Furthermore nearly half of all respondents said they would be increasing spend on Social Media (Bradner, 2009). Recent trends points to the main uses of Web 2.0 being adopted by the business community include areas such as marketing, sales, advertising, information systems, customer service and support, intra-company communications and corporate responsibility as well as recruitment.

##### *1.41 Web 2.0 Features and Advantages*

Web 2.0 is a feature-rich platform which has many intrinsic qualities which lend well to straightforward integration into business processes and has resulted in a widespread adoption into mainstream business practices such as marketing and recruitment. Web 2.0 requires few resources, however a lot of determination, to setup and maintain; companies can launch a Web 2.0 strategy with as little as a company blog and a Facebook page. This major advantage in terms of minimal financial investment meant

that many companies seized the opportunity to avail of cost-effective marketing online.

I would also argue that Web 2.0 is intuitive; humans are conditioned to build social networks by default and this conditioning naturally converts into the business world. Web 2.0 utilises technology to mimic human nature – social networks, collective intelligence and knowledge sharing all for the benefit of the group. Furthermore, Web 2.0 technologies are based upon universal standards and are platform independent – whether a user has a Mac, a PC, an iPhone or a Blackberry they can still access and publish on Facebook and blogs, irrespective of the operating system or device they use. This universal accessibility means that companies do not need to change legacy systems to implement a social media strategy.

#### *1.42 Web 2.0 Applications in Business*

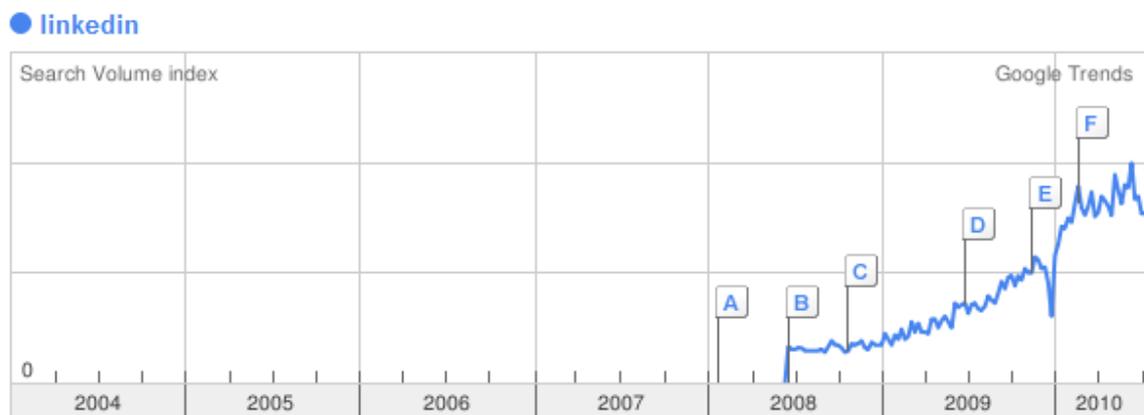
Web 2.0 as a technology currently does not have business-wide applications; however it is very useful and suited to certain business units such as marketing, recruitment and customer service. Many companies have implemented or are in the process of implementing a social media strategy as they see it as a medium which has the potential to decrease marketing and advertising costs significantly and improve internal and external relationships.

##### *(a) Sales and Marketing*

One of the more obvious business units to adopt a Web 2.0 strategy is the sales and marketing sector, with marketing and advertising being the main applications.

Companies have recognised the significant advantages that niche groups can offer within the Web 2.0 environment – social media being the most important example. LinkedIn.com, a social media sites aimed at professionals has been widely adopted by sales and marketing teams as a useful tool for networking, generating leads and promoting products to potential customers. LinkedIn has shown high growth here in Ireland since mid-2008 as shown in Figure 1 (Google Trends, 2010a).

**Figure 1 – LinkedIn Search Volume Growth - Ireland**

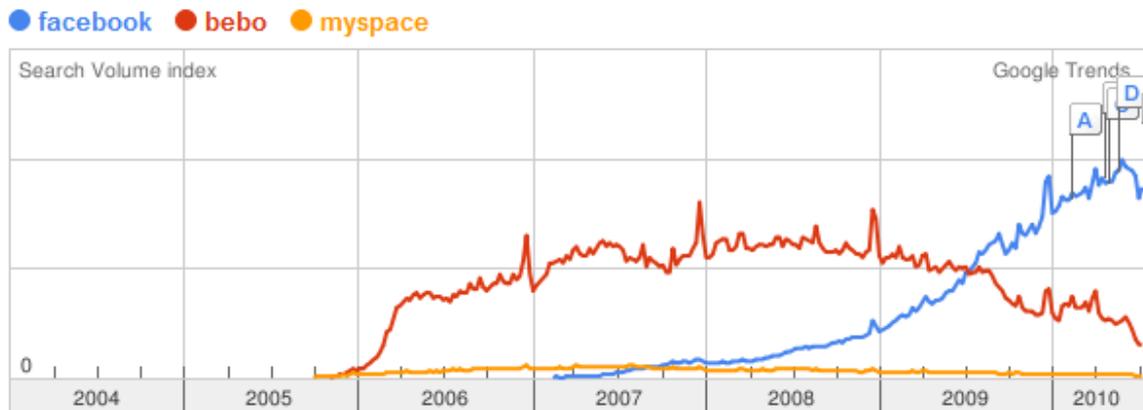


LinkedIn.com cleverly uses the concept of connections and groups in its strategy. Connections can be 1<sup>st</sup> degree, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree – where 1<sup>st</sup> degree is a direct connection, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree is a connection of a connection and so on. New users are actively encouraged to make connections with peers, colleagues, friends, acquaintances and potential new business partners. When a user signs up, they fill out a public profile of themselves, detailing their areas of expertise, employment history and educational background – a sort of online curriculum vitae. LinkedIn's software will then suggest new connections and can even connect with the user's desktop email client and suggest new connections based upon email addresses

within the email history. This way, users start to build up a network of connections – in itself a niche network which can be publicly shared or made private. LinkedIn also has a referral and introduction engine where users can ask a 1<sup>st</sup> degree connection to pass on a message to a user who is not in the requesting user's network, if they are a 1<sup>st</sup> degree connection of that user. This is very clever from a psychological sense the message is introduced to the end-user from a 1<sup>st</sup> degree connection, hence an element of trust which is very important in both the online and offline business worlds.

Similarly LinkedIn encourages users to create or join groups based upon common interests and activities. Groups are self moderated and the owner can assign managers and moderators to the group. This is another powerful example of a niche network which is user-generated. Sales and marketing professionals, by joining the appropriate groups and connecting to the right individuals have access to multiple niche networks where they can generate leads and markets products in a very cost-effective and efficient manner and this has completely changed marketing strategy, not to mention recruitment which will be discussed later.

Facebook has also revolutionised the way sales and marketing units use online resources. There has been a steady migration since the start of 2009 towards Facebook from other social networking sites, such as Bebo and MySpace in Ireland (Google Trends, 2010b). Figure 2 shows the migration beginning at the end of 2008 and by end 2009 in the region of half of Bebo users had migrated to Facebook. This pattern has continued and now Facebook commands an unprecedented market share in the social networking space.

**Figure 2 – Relative Search Volumes for Facebook, MySpace and Bebo**

Facebook also plays on human nature and our tendency to form groups sharing similar interests and activities; whether it is familial, geographical, cultural, demographic, social, educational, professional or preferential. Access to these niche groups by sales and marketing professionals opens up new high value channels for marketing products in a very cost effective manner. Marketers are constantly striving to improve marketing Return on Investment (ROI), and these niche networks have the potential to do so.

#### (b) Customer Service

Web 2.0 has also shown high potential to be utilised in the area of customer service. Many companies have launched a company blog in an effort to bridge the gap between company employees and customers in a more informal and interactive manner. Blogs allow customers easy access to information regarding company products and due to their inherent interactivity they allow users to give feedback regarding products and/or services. Twitter is one application which has shown

significant promise in the area of customer service, with companies adopting a monitoring policy to catch problems and incidents in real time. As consumers get more connected and engage in the Web 2.0 revolution they often will air their gripes with companies on Twitter, Facebook and in the blogosphere. Twitter has functionality to allow the account holder to monitor tweets and be informed if they have being mentioned in a tweet by another user. Companies monitoring Twitter can see in real time if a customer has fallen through the customer service net and is unhappy with the service and they can act immediately in an attempt to resolve the issue, by sending a tweet to the affected user asking if they can help. Furthermore they can respond to any negative blog post with explanations and apologies.

#### (d) Intra-company Communications

Another major application of Web 2.0 in the business world is intra-company communications. Many multinationals with offices throughout the world strive for ways to enhance communication between peers and colleagues thousands of miles apart. LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook have the functionality to form groups and to allow communication and collaboration between members of the same community in a professional, social and educational sense. Furthermore Google's suite of productivity applications, including Google Docs has made sharing of information and online collaboration very easy to achieve and integrate into current business practices. It has allowed collaboration platforms to be developed online without the need to purchase proprietary software and implemented globally – all the user needs is a Google account, which is free and secure. LinkedIn has allowed expertise sharing among

peers in the same company across multiple geographies without the need for face to face or telephone communications.

(e) Recruitment

In the author's opinion, recruitment is the area with the highest potential to benefit from the application of Web 2.0 in business and will be the focus of a more in-depth discussion in section 1.5 and in the research element of this paper.

The use of Web 2.0 in recruitment seems intuitive; recruitment involves the resourcing of people and Web 2.0 is a global knowledge-rich and accessible community without boundaries. Therefore it is only natural that the recruitment industry has been an early adopter of Web 2.0 technologies in their business models. Resources such as LinkedIn, Xing and Plaxo have been widely used by resources over the past two years as these technologies allow resourcers to search and identify potential hires. LinkedIn encourages users to create a profile which details employment history, educational background, availability and current areas of expertise; exactly what resourcers are looking for when identifying potential hires.

Facebook and Twitter have also been widely adopted by the recruitment industry as a method of advertising vacant positions and as a means of access to niche networks. Companies are now starting to develop bespoke Facebook pages, using FBML, where their current vacancies are listed along with company information. Companies recognise that users spend considerable time on Facebook and have started to build niche networks around their company pages to make it as easy as possible for users to find jobs and them. Twitter allows for real time dissemination of

information regarding live jobs and in a market where there is a surplus of jobseekers and a shortage of jobs, positions get filled quickly, so having access to the information first can be advantageous for jobseekers.

Blogs have also being adopted as a means of resourcing by companies in recent times. Users can spend considerable time online researching potential job opportunities and information gathering and blog posts detailing information about their particular niche can lead users indirectly to job advertisements. Companies looking for staff in a particular niche can develop and publish content to that effect on their blog and lead users to their site via this pathway where they are exposed to the company's job opportunities. Blogs about interviewing skills, curriculum vitae best practice and other topics related to recruitment can have a similar effect.

#### *1.43 Challenges Faced by Web 2.0 in the Business World*

Web 2.0's apparent seamless integration into business processes is not a clear cut as many believe. Challenges that need to be overcome do exist; businesses need to adapt to the way consumers use Web 2.0 to effectively maximise the benefits of the medium. Considerable planning and time resources are required to be consistent in content publishing and updating, furthermore, businesses need to create new communication methods which are still professional in an ever more informal and interactive Web 2.0 world. Awareness of potential legal issues in online publishing also needs to be understood.

End-users of Web 2.0 use the medium on a daily basis in a very consistent manner – checking their Facebook when they get home from work, tweeting during lunchtime at

work or watching YouTube in the evenings and so on. Businesses have a defined time period where they interact, in most developed countries this is between 9am and 5pm. Businesses will need to adapt to the way users use Web 2.0 in a manner that bridges the time disparity that exists in usage patterns, for example, blogs published and updated at the end of the day, tweets sent out at lunchtime etc. Businesses will also need to plan resource allocation if they are to follow a Web 2.0 strategy – one of the biggest failures for companies is inconsistency in publishing and updating of information through Web 2.0 resources. Many companies set up blogs with great ideas, publish once or twice and then they lapse into the realm of dormancy – which in contrast to the initial intention portrays a negative image of the company. Consumers noticing that the last blog post was six months previously might wonder if the company is still in business or if they did interact would they get a reply. The expectation among consumers is consistent timely publishing of content by companies using Web 2.0.

Businesses also are faced with a significant challenge with their communication methods to consumers in the Web 2.0 sphere. Web 2.0 is informal; twitter and Facebook only allows for only short messages and updates, and users receiving formal communication through these methods may find it unsettling as they are conditioned to use these resources in their personal life, as a method of informal, social communication. Businesses need to create a hybrid form of communication which appears informal and social, but which keeps an element of professionalism. Legal challenges also exist in the Web 2.0 sphere for companies; copyright and defamation being the most notable. Can companies trust employees enough to

publish content which is not plagiarised from elsewhere or is not defamatory to other companies or natural persons. The nature of Web 2.0 communication is brief and real-time, so many companies are fearful of such publishing without the consent of their legal and marketing departments. These issues are bound to become more important as the use of Web 2.0 becomes widespread in the business community over the next few years.

### **1.5 Social Media and Recruitment in Ireland**

Since the start of the global economic downturn in 2007 there has been a rising emergence of Web 2.0 technologies in recruitment practices in Ireland. Web 2.0 was initially viewed with scepticism by many, but a few early adopters gained significant competitive advantage by pushing resources into Web 2.0 strategies. Now there is a significant migration towards a 'social' recruitment model by many companies. According to the recruitment commentator Paul Jacobs, "social technologies enable recruiters to reach and engage with active and passive jobseekers, tap directly into niche talent communities and their wider connections, and reach a broader geographical audience" (Jacobs, 2010). There is a significant advantage associated with the attraction of latent candidates, the attraction of candidates from previously unobtainable geographies and the sourcing from within niche talent communities.

The age profile of those using social media resources is changing also, and is heading towards a much more favourable demographic for the resourcing professional. Recent research has shown that the percentage of 15 to 24 year-olds who have a profile on a social networking site has dropped for the first time, from 55%

at the start of 2008 to 50% in 2009. By contrast, 46% of 25 to 34 year-olds now regularly use sites such as Facebook, up from 40% in 2008 (Jakes, 2009). These figures indicate that a paradigm shift away from the perception that social media is just a medium for teenagers towards a useful social and business tool.

In Ireland, the recruitment industry suffered greatly from the global economic downturn of 2007 to 2010. As unemployment soared and companies announced redundancies and cost cutting measures, the requirement for both internal and external resourcing of staff diminished. Recruitment agencies suffered the most, with many falling victim to insolvency or takeover, the most notable being Hunter Marshal which was liquidated in 2009 (InsolvencyJournal.ie, 2009a), and ServiSource which was taken over by CPL Resources Ltd in early 2010 (InsolvencyJournal.ie, 2009b).

The global economic downturn may have being devastating to some in the recruitment industry; however it also afforded opportunities to others. Smaller companies utilised the downturn to take market share from larger companies by availing of competitive advantage due to lower operating costs and the rapid adaption of their resourcing strategies to utilise Web 2.0 technologies. Once such company, Life Science Recruitment will be discussed in the following case study as it demonstrates the application of multiple web 2.0 technologies into a recruitment business model to great effect.

### **1.51 Case Study – Life Science Recruitment**

Life Science Recruitment is a specialist scientific and healthcare recruitment company based in Dublin, founded in late 2007 at the start of the economic downturn. The company's strategy was heavily focussed on the integration of Web 2.0 technologies into mainstream recruitment practices and the founders recognised that significant competitive advantage could be gained by adopting this standpoint. The company was an early adopter of a range of social media and web 2.0 resources and was recognised as an innovator in this field in the national press (Sunday Business Post, 2009). The company utilised technologies such as niche industry websites, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Blogs to create a Web 2.0 sphere surrounding the company which acted to attract both jobseekers and new business, in addition to its traditional resources. This hybrid business model acted as a competitive differentiator.

#### **(i) Web 2.0 Periodic Table**

The company's business focus is in the recruitment of staff in the Life Sciences which includes the pharmaceutical, medical device, biotechnology, diagnostics and clinical research sectors. The company came up with a novel Web 2.0 strategy for attracting candidates in Ireland by developing a number of niche industry websites, specifically targeted to jobseekers in specific areas. The sites were information-rich and contained content specific to the specific niche area as well as career advice and resources. This represented a paradigm shift in recruitment resourcing in Ireland from a single site to a multi-site strategy.

The main sites in the multisite strategy for Life Science Recruitment included:

- (a) LifeScience.ie – the parent site
- (b) Pharmaceutical.ie – for the pharmaceutical sector
- (c) MedicalDevice.ie – for the medical device sector
- (d) ClinicalResearch.ie – for the clinical research sector
- (e) AlliedHealth.ie – for the allied healthcare sector
- (f) Diagnostics.ie – for the diagnostics sector
- (g) BioPharmaceutical.ie – for the biopharma sector
- (h) RegulatoryAffairs.ie – for the regulatory affairs sector

The multisite strategy had a number of advantages – users entering their niche site were brought straight to the information they required quickly – jobseekers in the pharmaceutical sector would land on pharmaceutical.ie, a site specifically designed to cater for their needs. This end-user-centric approach resulted in a much higher application rate and a high number of return visitors. In addition, end users were more likely to interact as they felt that the site's authors were subject matter experts in the field.

The company needed a device to bring the strategy together and the concept of the Web 2.0 Periodic Table was conceived. The periodic table is synonymous in science and is instantly recognisable. As the target segment for the company was primarily scientists, the company displayed their portfolio of niche industry websites in the form

of a periodic table and allowed users to specify their area of interest by hovering over the elements on the table. Clicking on an element would bring the user to their chosen industry site where they could access specific information to their niche and view current open positions advertised.

Figure 3 – The Life Science Recruitment Web 2.0 Periodic Table



(ii) Company Facebook Page

Life Science Recruitment recognised early the potential of Facebook and integrated it into its strategy at an early stage. The potential for creating a niche network of jobseekers in the scientific field became apparent and the company grew its fan base

to over 1,000 users over a 12 month period. Because of the way Facebook works, updates posted to fan's profile pages would be visible to the fan's individual network also, and this acted as a sort of referral network. Facebook allowed the company to publish open vacancies, articles and other interesting media in a very cost effective manner.

**Figure 4 – LifeScience Facebook Page (facebook.com/sciencejobs)**

**facebook** applications@lifescience.ie

Keep me logged in Forgot your

**Sign Up** Life Science Recruitment is on Facebook  
Sign up for Facebook to connect with Life Science Recruitment.

**Life Science Recruitment** Like

Wall Info Welcome Blog Contact Us Notes >>

Life Science Recruitment + Others Life Science Recruitment Just Others

**Life Science Recruitment** new role: Snr Reg Affairs Exec - Dublin. #sciencejobs  
<http://bit.ly/8YTURC>  
Thursday at 3:34am via Selective Tweets · Comment · Like

**Life Science Recruitment** New job - Clinical Trials Administrator (Dublin) -  
<http://bit.ly/cAJsIr> #sciencejobs  
July 15 at 6:10am via Selective Tweets · Comment · Like

Cisca Kimbembe and Fungai Valda Monalisa Mushakwe like this.

**Life Science Recruitment** New on the LSR blog - Explain Yourself!  
<http://lifescience.ie/blog/index.php/2010/07/explain-yourself/>

**Life Science Blog | Explain Yourself!**  
lifescience.ie  
-NEVER address an email to Sir / Madam or "To Whom it Concerns". This is lazy. Go onto LinkedIn, find the name of the person you need. If you can't find it here, contact the company directly and simply ask for the contacts name / email. This will make your application stand out. -When composing your...  
July 14 at 4:17am · Comment · Like

Kevin Kenendy, Ani Király and Faiza Asif like this.

**Life Science Recruitment** currently looking to speak to Clinical Research professionals for an exciting office-based position in Dublin. Contact Brian - +353 (0)1 6854747 for more information.  
July 9 at 3:41am · Comment · Like

**Life Science Recruitment** Clinical Operations Specialist - Spec here:  
<http://lifescience.ie/Clinical-Operations-Specialist-Dublin-Scientific-Regulatory-Affairs-Manager-jobs-40677.html>  
July 9 at 8:02am · Flag

**Life Science Recruitment** Reg Affairs Officer - Dublin #sciencejobs #dublinjobs

Specialist Web 2.0 Scientific and Healthcare Recruitment Consultancy based in Dublin, Ireland. Please feel free to contact us on +353 16 85 45 45 or visit <http://lifescience.ie/> to discuss your career search. Visit our blog: <http://lifescience.ie/blog>

**Information**

Location:  
4th Floor, Newmarket House,  
Newmarket Square  
Dublin, Ireland, Dublin 8

Phone:  
+353 16 85 45 45

Mon - Fri:  
8:30 am - 6:00 pm

**1,027 People Like This**

Gary Vitagliano Shane McGourty Shamol Hossain

(iii) Company Twitter Page

The company also adopted Twitter early and started to disseminate information and jobs via the twitter engine. The company utilised special Web 2.0 applications which linked their Facebook page, Twitter page and their blog, so information was synchronously posted to each resource via one portal; a job posted on Twitter would also be simultaneously posted to Facebook.

Figure 5 – LifeScience Twitter Page (twitter.com/sciencejobs)



(iv) Company Blogs

The company also integrated blogs into their strategy early with the launch of ScienceBlog.ie, followed by the Life Science Blog (lifescience.ie/blog). The blog as a medium afforded the company an ability to attract latent candidates by publishing content which was more industry focussed, rather than recruitment focussed. Latent candidates searching online for topical industry-specific information would happen

upon ScienceBlog.ie or the Life Science Blog and be subliminally exposed to recruitment advertising. The blogs were also a depository of information for jobseekers, where many questions regarding the recruitment process and career strategy were detailed in numerous blog posts.

**Figure 6 – Life Science Blog (lifescience.ie/blog)**

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Life Science Recruitment blog. At the top left is the logo, which consists of a green DNA double helix and the text 'Life Science Recruitment'. To the right of the logo is a search bar with the word 'SEARCH' above it and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar are social media icons for About, Facebook, Twitter, and Technorati. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a 'LATEST POST' titled 'Explain Yourself!' with a text snippet: 'We see a LOT of CVs on a daily basis (I even see CVs in my sleep on weekends – OK maybe not!). Some points that occurred to me recently that are very important: -NEVER address an email to Sir / Madam or "To Whom it Concerns". This is lazy. Go onto LinkedIn, find the name of [...]' and a 'Continue Reading' button. Below this is a 'LATEST POST' titled 'We're growing!' with a text snippet: 'We're delighted to welcome James Cassidy onto the Life Science team. Coming from a strong Scientific / Business and Recruitment background, James fits into the Life Science mould perfectly. As James says: "I'm delighted to join the team in Life Science as principal medical device consultant. Having worked for the last 2 ½ in the life science [...]' and a 'Continue Reading' button. On the right side, there is a 'RECENT POSTS' section with five entries: 'We're growing!' (July 1, 2010), 'What's Hot - June' (June 30, 2010), 'What's Hot - May' (May 27, 2010), 'What's Hot - April' (April 30, 2010), and 'Using Social Media to Recruit' (March 16, 2010). Below this is a 'TWITTER STATUS' section with two tweets: 'excellent interview with Rich Meelia (Chairman & CEO of Covidien), in the IT Business section. Or here! http://bit.ly/9nBXwr 2 days ago' and 'new role: Snr Reg Affairs Exec - Dublin. #sciencesjobs #fb http://bit.ly/8YTURC 3 days ago'. At the bottom right, there is a 'PARTNERS' section featuring a logo for LifeScience.ie.

#### (iv) LinkedIn

The company was also an early adopter of LinkedIn in its business model. Recruitment consultants were actively trained and encouraged to use LinkedIn, joining and creating niche groups, building network connections with key opinion leaders and potential candidates and actively resourcing potential new hires using the medium.

Overall the combined strategy has created a Web 2.0 sphere surrounding the company which has proved a significant competitive advantage with the company growing from 2 to 10 staff over the period 2008 – 2010 and securing a number of high value clients.

**Chapter 2 – Methods**

## **2.1 Research Objectives**

In the research element of the project, attitudes towards and usage patterns of social media resources by multiple target segments within the recruitment industry were assessed using a multi-layered questionnaire. The study sample was subdivided as follows, with each main segment answering their own set of questions:

Group A: HR Professionals (Employer)

Group B: Recruitment Professionals (Agency)

Group C: Jobseekers

Group D: Other Respondents

The groups were subdivided as such to capture the attitudes to and usage of social media resources in recruitment by different segments of the market to see if differences exist between employers, agencies, jobseekers and non-recruitment professionals. Each group was assessed with a core set of questions with some differences particular to each group including knowledge of social media resources, industry sector, organisation size, current resource usage, attitudes towards usefulness for resourcing, other online resource usage, reasons as to lack of usage for non-users and perceived usefulness in other areas of business.

The results of this study will define the attitudes and usage of social media resources among different professional resourcers in the recruitment industry. It will be interesting to see if there is any difference in opinion and usage among the different

professional resourcing groups and also if there is any correlation between usage patterns and attitudes between jobseekers and the resourcers.

## **2.2 Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire was designed with the end user in mind and consisted of eight pages of multiple choice questions where logic filtering was applied after each page. The maximum number of pages a user had to complete was three pages which in total contained ten multiple choice questions in total and could be completed by the average user in less than three minutes. The timeliness and brevity of the survey, in my opinion, was an important success factor in ensuring completion by a sufficient cohort of subjects to ensure statistical power in any results drawn.

### Page 1 – Respondent Filtering

Page 1 was designed to filter respondents into each group for further specific questioning. It contained a brief explanation of the survey's objective and again reiterated the brevity and minor time commitment required to ensure compliance. Users were also given the choice at the end of the survey to submit their email address and receive the results once the results were compiled and published. Users selecting their group were next brought directly to the specific page designed for that segment. The survey is outlined below.

*Thank you for taking the time to take part in this short research survey. We are investigating the current and future trends in the use of social media resources in Recruitment. This survey is part of a postgraduate research project being undertaken by Eamonn O'Raghallaigh at the National College of Ireland School of Computing. Once the project has being submitted and graded the results will be made publicly available for all to read on the Irish Recruiters LinkedIn group. We will try to keep the survey as short as possible without compromising accuracy. The survey is designed using logic filtering, so you will only have to answer a maximum of 10 multiple choice questions. Your participation is very much appreciated.*

**I fall into the following category... (please select only one)**

- HR / Recruitment Professional (Employer)
- Recruitment Professional (Agency)
- Jobseeker
- None of the above

Page 2 - HR / Recruitment Professional (Employer)

Users selecting the HR/Recruitment Professional (Employer) option on page 1 were filtered to this page.

**My opinion of the use of social media in recruitment is...**

- I don't know much about it
- I don't think it has any use
- I think it's a very useful tool
- It may have some limited uses
- It is becoming more and more important

**My organisation falls into the following category...**

- Professional Services
- Pharmaceutical & Healthcare
- Manufacturing & Engineering
- Non-Profit & Governmental
- Tourism & Hospitality
- Information Technology
- Other (Please Specify)

**My organisation has the following number of staff**

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-50
- 51-250
- over 250

**In a professional capacity, my organisation uses the following social media resources... (Tick all that apply)**

- LinkedIn Company Profile
- Twitter Page
- Facebook Company Page
- Company Blog
- None of the above

Page 3 – Recruitment Professionals (Agency)

Users selecting the Recruitment Professional (Agency) option on page 1 were filtered to this page.

**My opinion of the use of social media in recruitment is...**

- I don't know much about it
- I don't think it has any use
- I think it's a very useful tool

- It may have some limited uses
- It is becoming more and more important

**My specialist area of recruitment is...**

- Information Technology
- Finance, Accountancy or Legal
- Human Resources
- Manufacturing, Supply Chain or Engineering
- Sales & Marketing
- Science, Pharmaceutical or Healthcare
- Other (Please Specify)

**My organisation has the following number of staff**

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-50
- 51-250
- over 250

**In a professional capacity, my organisation uses the following social media resources... (Tick all that apply)**

- LinkedIn Company Profile
- Twitter Page
- Facebook Company Page
- Company Blog
- None of the above

**Page 4 – Jobseekers**

Users selecting the Jobseekers option on page 1 were filtered to this page.

**My opinion of the use of social media in recruitment is...**

- I don't know much about it
- I don't think it has any use
- I think it's a very useful tool

- It may have some limited uses
- It is becoming more and more important

**With regards to my current employment situation, I fall into the following category...**

- Unemployed, not looking for new job
- Self-employed
- Employed, considering options
- Employed, not actively looking
- Unemployed, actively looking

**My educational / professional background is...**

- IT
- Arts
- Business
- Engineering
- Finance
- Marketing
- Science
- Healthcare

**I have the following profiles / accounts (Tick all that apply)**

- MySpace
- Personal Blog
- Twitter
- Bebo
- Facebook
- Google
- LinkedIn

Page 5 – Jobseekers Cont.

Users who completed questions on page 4 continued to answer questions on page 5.

**I use the following resources/tactics when actively job seeking (Tick all that apply)**

- Twitter
- FAS
- Facebook
- Worky.com
- LinkedIn.com
- Loadzajobs.ie
- Approaching employers directly
- Recruitment Agencies
- RecruitIreland.com
- IrishJobs.ie
- Monster.com
- Jobs.ie
- Networking through friends

**In my opinion, the best social media resource for finding jobs is... (Rank 1 - 4, with 1 being the best)**

	1 (Best)	2	3	4 (Worst)
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LinkedIn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company Blogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**In my opinion the most useful online job resources are (Rank 1 - 6 in order of usefulness)**

	1 (Best)	2	3	4	5	6 (Worst)
Monster.com	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Jobs.ie	<input type="checkbox"/>					
IrishJobs.ie	<input type="checkbox"/>					
LoadzaJobs.ie	<input type="checkbox"/>					
RecruitIreland.com	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Worky.com	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Page 6 – Other Respondents

Users who selected the ‘none of the above’ on page 1 were filtered to this page.

**I fall into the following category...**

- Finance
- Science / Engineering
- Administrative
- Senior Management
- Healthcare
- Marketing
- IT
- Self-Employed / Entrepreneur
- Sales
- Other (Please Specify)

**My organisation has the following number of staff**

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-50
- 51-250
- over 250

**My opinion of the use of social media in recruitment is...**

- I don't know much about it
- I don't think it has any use
- I think it's a very useful tool
- It may have some limited uses
- It is becoming more and more important

**In a professional capacity, my organisation uses the following social media resources... (Tick all that apply)**

- LinkedIn Company Profile
- Twitter Page
- Facebook Company Page
- Company Blog
- None of the above

## Page 7 – Social Media Users

Users answering questions on pages 2, 3 and 6 and who indicated they used at least one social media resource were filtered to this page.

***My organisation has successfully used the following social media tactics in a recruitment campaign... (Tick all that apply)***

- Active resourcing through LinkedIn
- LinkedIn job advertisements
- Posting job ads on Twitter
- Posting job ads to company Facebook page
- Paid advertising on Facebook
- Paid advertising on Google
- None of the above

***If you use LinkedIn, how often would you log on?***

- Hourly
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- I haven't used it in a long time
- I don't use LinkedIn

***If your organisation uses Twitter, how often does your organisation Tweet?***

- Hourly
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- It was set up but isn't updated much anymore
- My organisation does not use Twitter

***If your organisation uses Facebook, how often does your organisation post updates to Facebook?***

- Hourly
- Daily

- 
- Weekly
  - Monthly
  - It was setup, but isn't updated that much anymore
  - My organisation does not use Facebook

***If your organisation uses a company blog, how often would the company post a new blog?***

- Daily
- Weekly
- Every 2 weeks
- Monthly
- It was setup, but we haven't posted a blog in a while
- My organisation does not have a company blog

***In my opinion, the most useful social media resource for recruitment is... (Rank 1 - 4, where 1 is the best)***

	1 (Best)	2	3	4 (Worst)
LinkedIn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company Blogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Page 8 – Social Media Non-Users**

Users answering questions on pages 2, 3 and 6 and who indicated they used no social media resources were filtered to this page.

**My organisation does not use social media resources because...**

- We do not have the current expertise to setup these resources
- Our reputation might appear degraded in the eyes of customers and/or clients
- There is too high a risk of legal implications by unmonitored publishing of content
- It is something we are now giving serious thought to implementing
- We see no use for them in our business
- We do not have the time/resources to maintain them adequately
- Social media for business is a fad, people will soon tire of it
- We are currently planning and/or implementing a social media strategy

- Other (Please Specify)

**When our organisation is recruiting, we use the following resources and tactics... (Tick all that apply)**

- IrishJobs.ie  
 RecruitIreland.com  
 LoadzaJobs.ie  
 Monster.com  
 Jobs.ie  
 National newspaper ads  
 Local newspaper ads  
 Radio / TV Ads  
 Recruitment agencies  
 Company website  
 Internal networking / employee referrals  
 Other (Please Specify)

**In my opinion, where social media for business could be best utilized is... (Grade 1 - 5 in order of importance)**

	1 (Best)	2	3	4	5 (Least)
Recruitment of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Inter-company networking	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Customer feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Information gathering	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marketing company products	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### 2.3 Data Collection

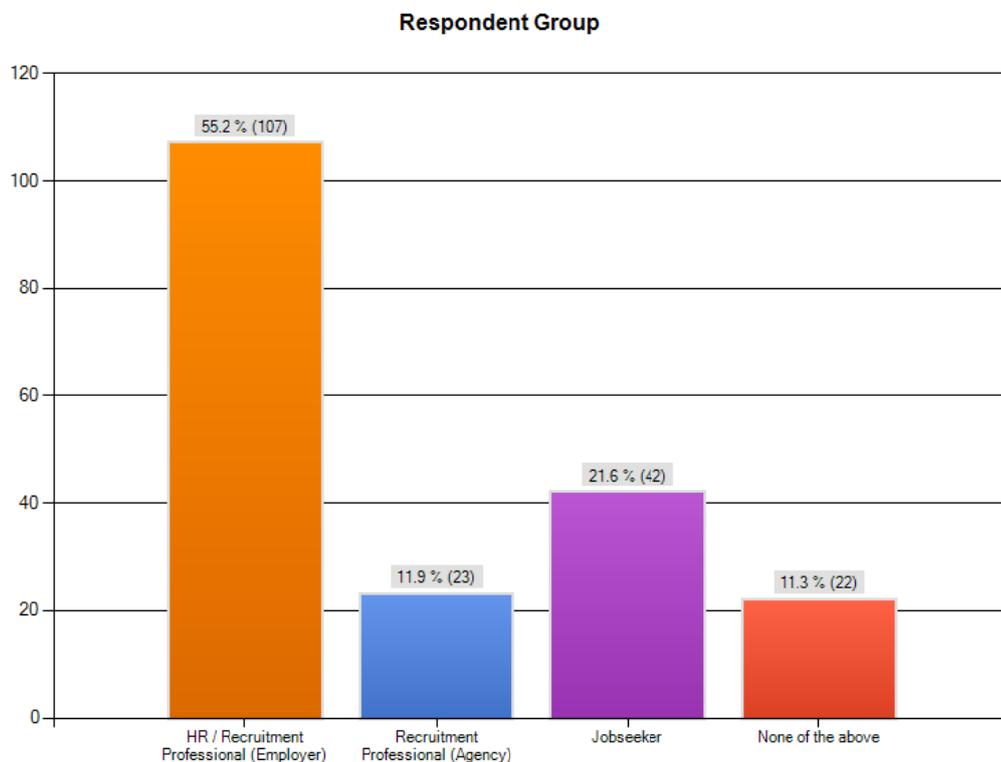
Data was collected using the above questionnaire hosted on the surveymonkey.com platform between 6/6/2010 and 15/7/2010 for a total of 40 days. Users were recruited using multiple personal and professional networks, including LinkedIn, Facebook, CIPD, Irish Recruiters, Jobseeker groups and via direct banner advertising on a number of different websites.

**Chapter 3 – Results**

### 3.1 Respondent Groups

A total of 224 people started the survey with 194 completing the survey, an 86.6% completion rate. Respondents who did not complete the survey were excluded from the analysis. Figure 7 shows the number of respondents in each group who completed the survey. 107 (55.2%) of respondents indicated they were in Group A, currently working as In-House recruiters or HR professionals for an employer; 23 (11.9%) of respondents indicated they were in Group B, currently working as recruiters for an agency; 42 (21.6%) of respondents indicated that they were in Group C, jobseekers while 22 (11.3%) of respondents indicated they were in Group D, none of the above.

**Figure 7**

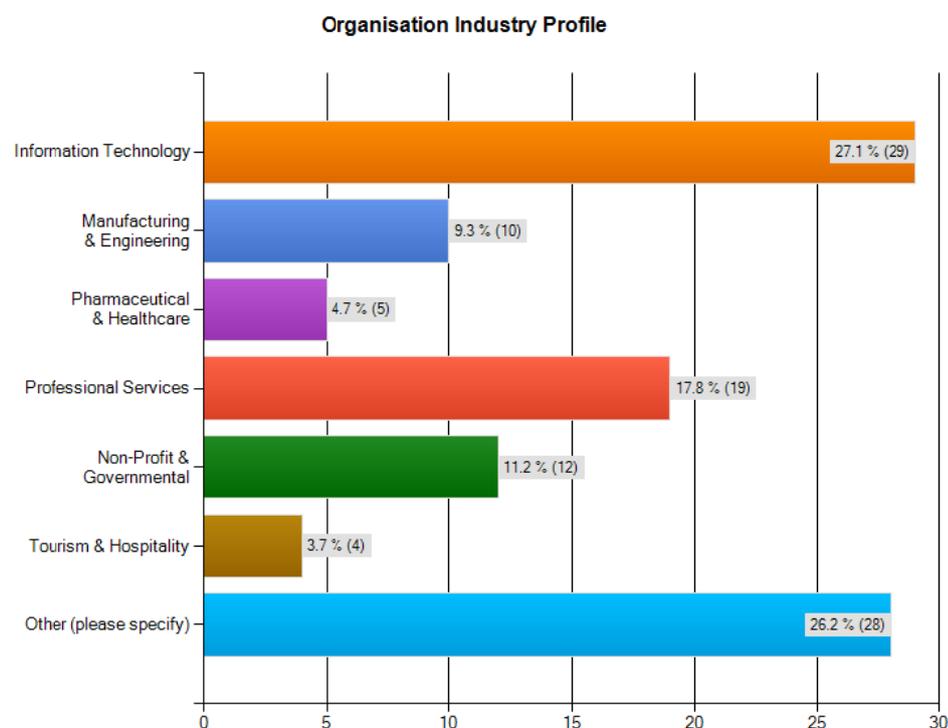


## 3.2 Group A - HR Professionals (Employer)

### 3.21 Organisation Profile

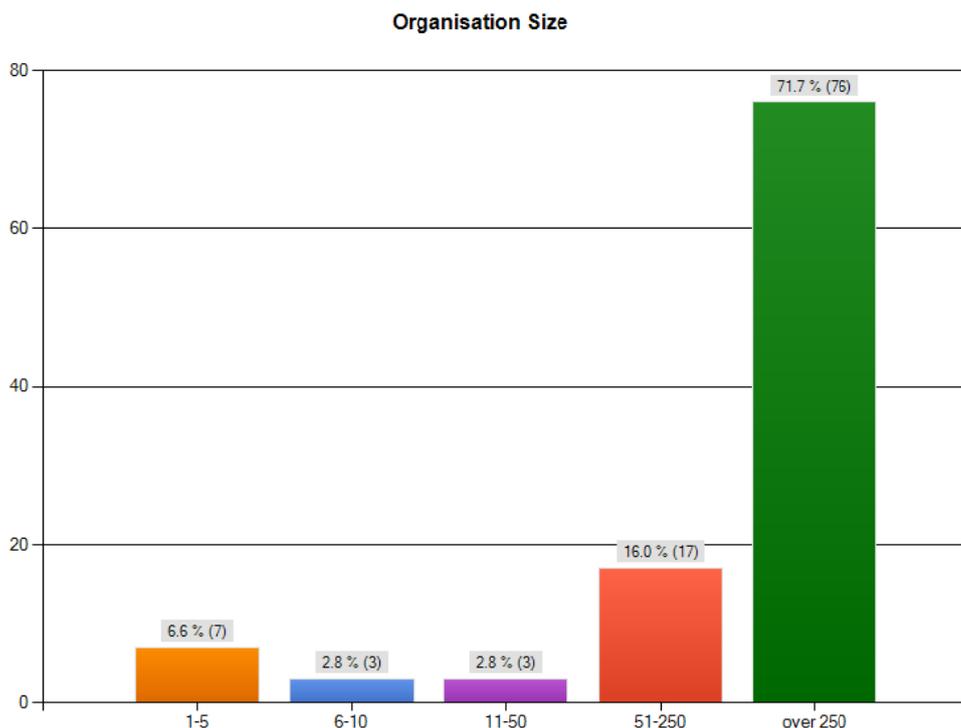
A total of 107 (55.2% of total) respondents completed the survey from this group. Respondents were asked to indicate their industry sector and organisation size. Shown in Figure 8, 29 (27.1%) of respondents indicated they were from the information technology sector; 19 (17.8%) indicated they were from the professional services sector while 12 (11.2%) of respondents indicated they were from the non-profit and governmental sector. 28 (26.2%) of respondents indicated they did not fall into the categories listed and specified sectors such as finance, real estate, construction and semi-state bodies.

**Figure 8**



With regards to organisation size, shown in Figure 9, 76 (71.7%) of respondents indicated that their organisation had more than 250 staff, while 17 (16%) of respondents said their organisation had between 51 and 250 staff. Only 13 (12.3%) of respondents indicated that their organisation had less than 50 employees.

**Figure 9**

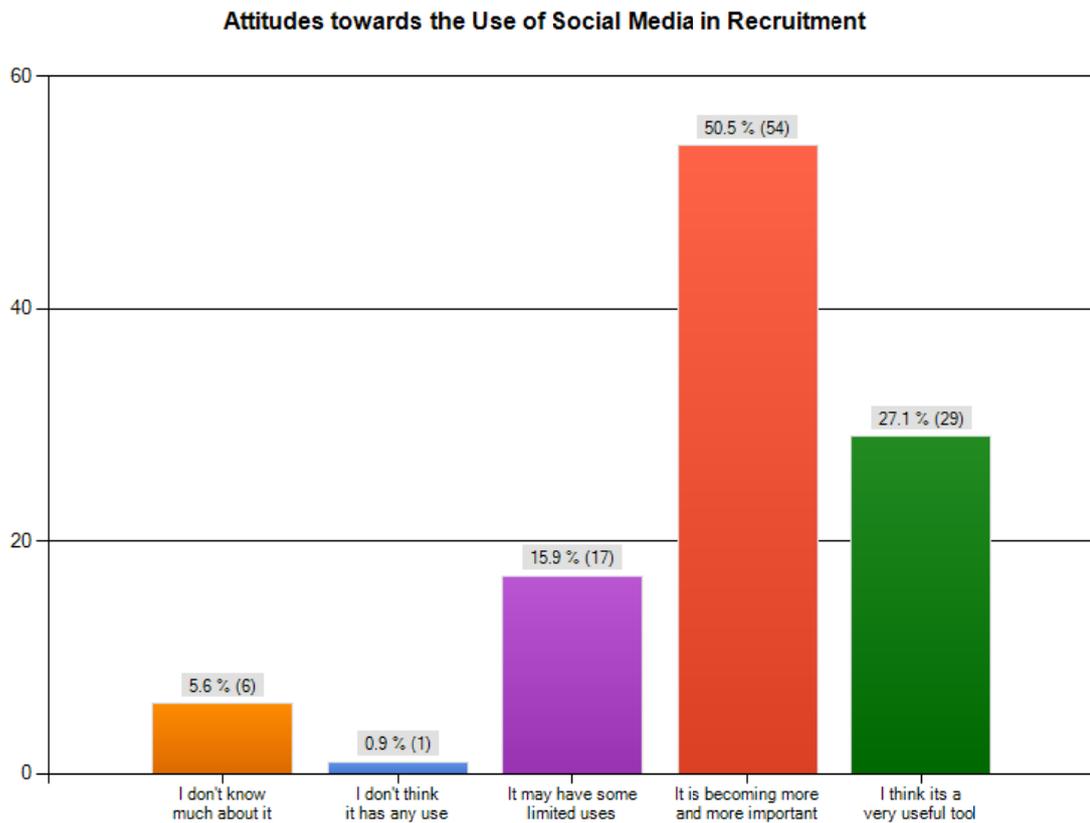


### 3.22 Attitudes to the Use of Social Media in Recruitment

In Figure 10, respondents were asked their opinion and attitude towards the use of social media in recruitment. 6 (5.6%) of respondents indicated they did not know much about it, 1 (0.9%) indicated that it didn't have any use, 17 (15.9%) indicated that it may have some limited uses, 54 (50.5%) indicated that it is becoming more and more important while 29 (27.1%) of respondents indicated that it is a very useful tool.

83 (77.6%) of respondents viewed the use of social media in recruitment in a positive light, indicating that it was a very useful tool or is becoming more and more important.

**Figure 10**

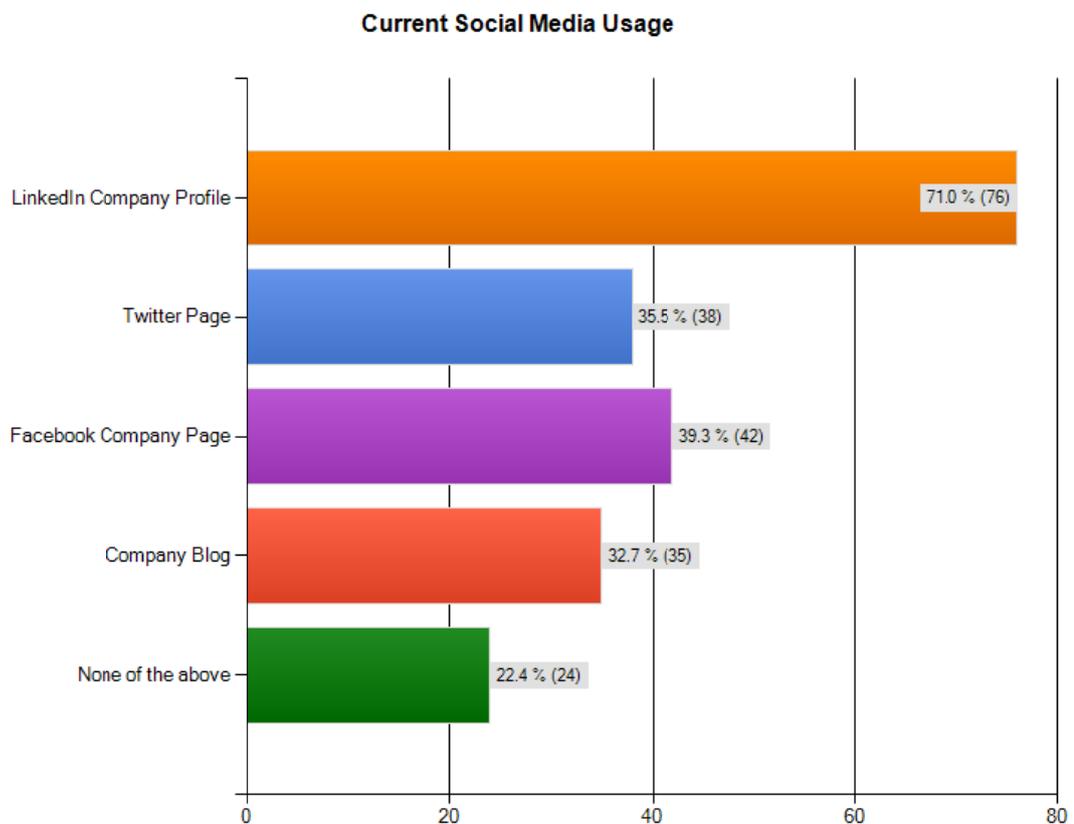


### 3.23 Current Social Media Usage

In Figure 11, respondents were asked to indicate their company's usage of four selected social media resources, which the author believed to be the most important and popular in the recruitment sector in Ireland currently. Use of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Company Blogs were assessed (although the blog is not strictly a social media resource, as it's a Web 2.0 resource the author felt it important to include it in the study).

76 (71.0%) of respondents indicated that they had a LinkedIn company profile, 42 (39.3%) indicated they had a Facebook company page, 28 (35.5%) indicated that they had a Twitter page while 35 (32.7%) indicated that they had a company blog. 24 (22.4%) of respondents indicated that their company had none of the listed social media resources.

**Figure 11**

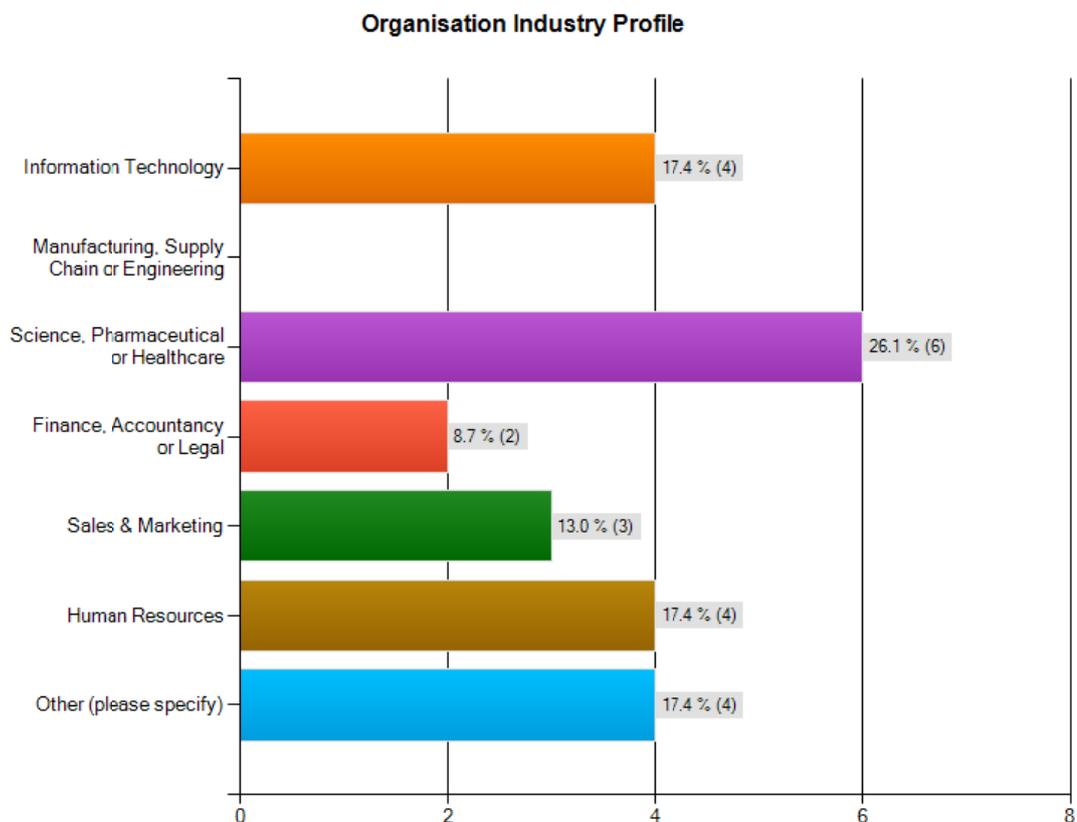


### 3.3 Group B - Recruitment Professionals (Agency)

#### 3.31 Organisation Profile

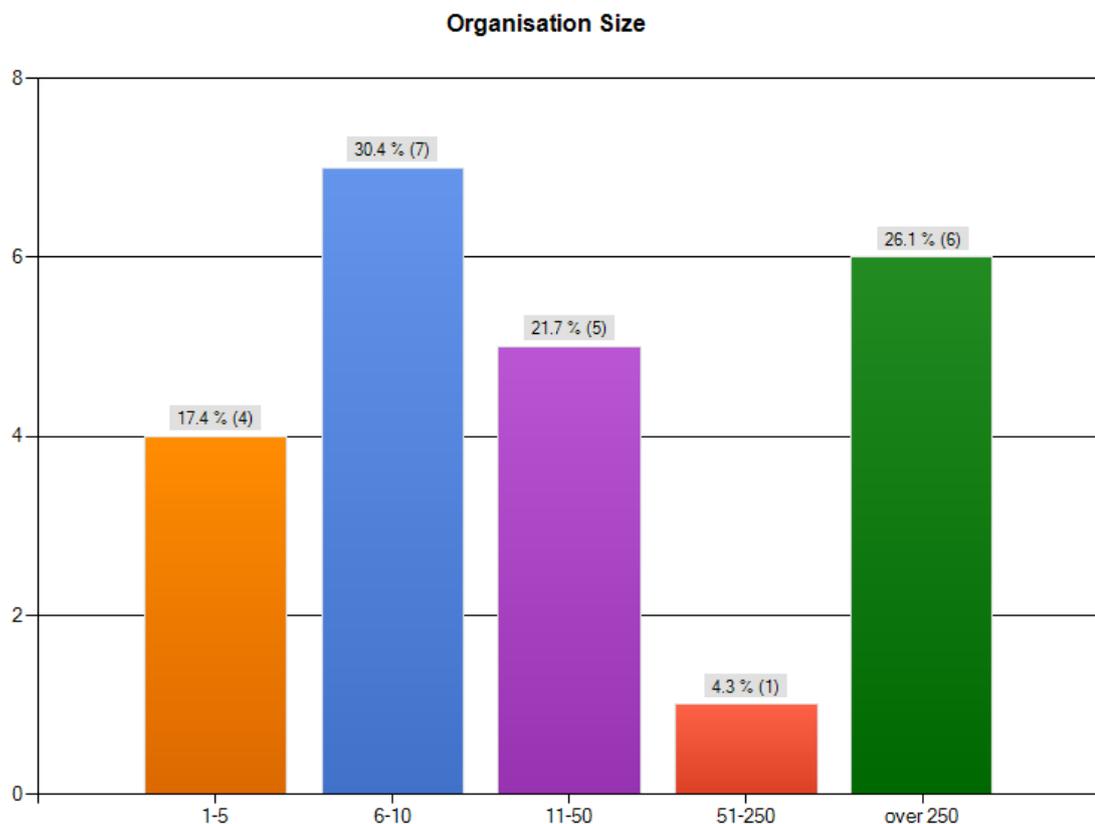
A total of 23 (11.9% of total) respondents completed the survey from this group. Respondents were asked to indicate their industry specialism and organisation size. Shown in Figure 12, respondents were asked to indicate their industry specialism. 6 (27.1%) of respondents indicated that their specialist area was science, pharmaceutical & healthcare, 4 (17.4%) indicated information technology, 4 (17.4%) indicated humans resources and 3 (13%) indicated sales and marketing. 4 (17.4%) indicated other areas and in the majority was multidisciplinary across multiple sectors.

**Figure 12**



Shown in Figure 13, respondents were asked to indicate their organisation's size. 7 (30.4%) of respondents indicated that their organisation had between 6 and 10 staff; 6 (26.1%) of respondents said their organisation had between more than 250 staff, 5 (21.7%) indicated that their organisation had between 11 and 50 employees while 4 (17.4%) of respondents indicated that their organisation had less than 5 employees. 16 (69.5%) of respondents came from agencies with less than 50 staff.

**Figure 13**

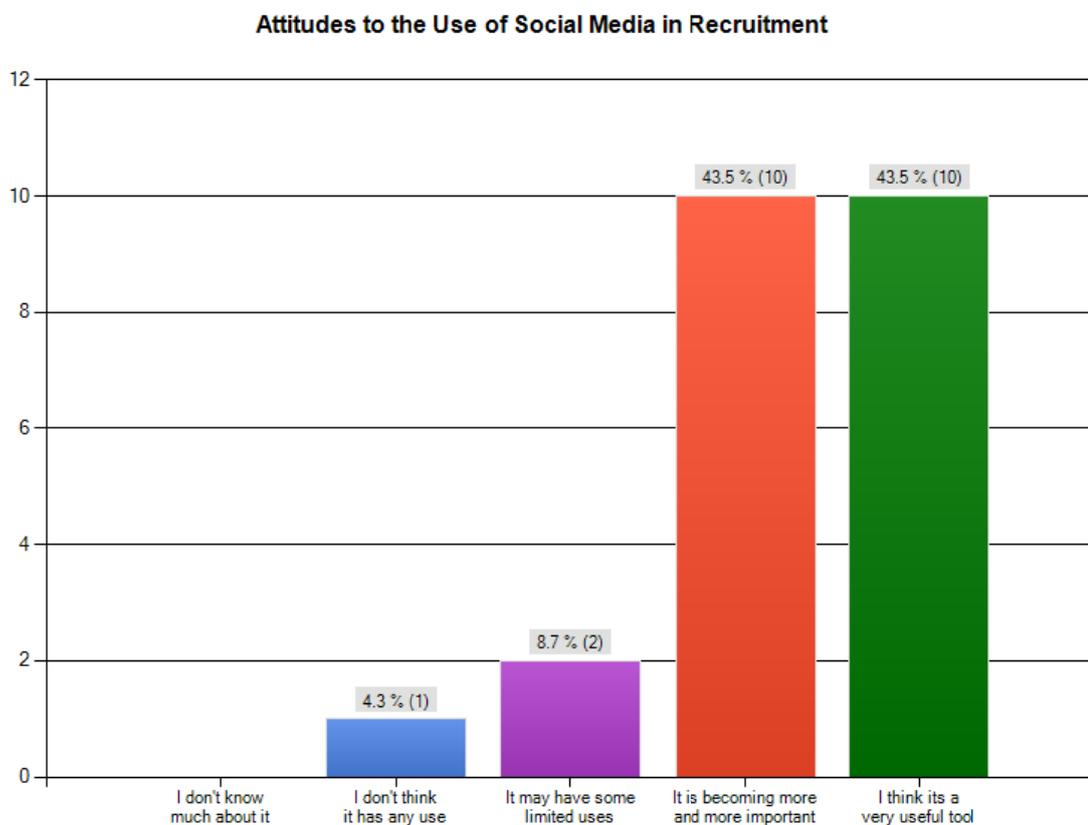


### 3.32 Attitudes to the Use of Social Media in Recruitment

As shown in Figure 14, respondents were asked their opinion and attitude towards the use of social media in recruitment. No respondents indicated they did not know

much about it, 1 (4.3%) indicated that it didn't have any use, 2 (8.7%) indicated that it may have some limited uses, 10 (43.5%) indicated that it is becoming more and more important while 10 (43.5%) of respondents indicated that it is a very useful tool. 20 (87.0%) of respondents viewed the use of social media in recruitment in a positive light, indicating that it was a very useful tool or is becoming more and more important.

**Figure 14**



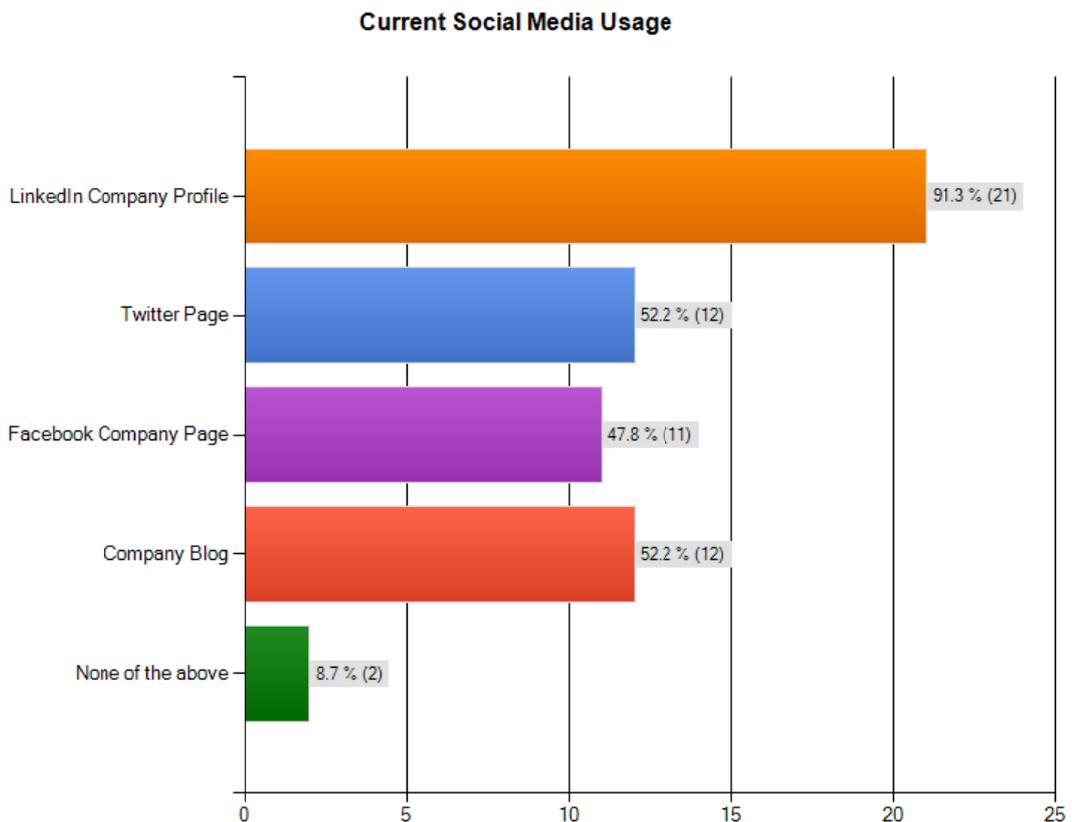
### 3.33 Current Social Media Usage

Respondents were asked to indicate their company's usage of four selected social media resources, which the author believed to be the most important and popular in

the recruitment sector in Ireland currently. Use of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Company Blogs was assessed.

As shown in Figure 15, 21 (91.3%) of respondents indicated that they had a LinkedIn company profile, 11 (47.8%) indicated they had a Facebook company page, 12 (52.2%) indicated that they had a Twitter page while 12 (52.2%) indicated that they had a company blog. 2 (8.7%) of respondents indicated that their company had none of the listed social media resources.

**Figure 15**

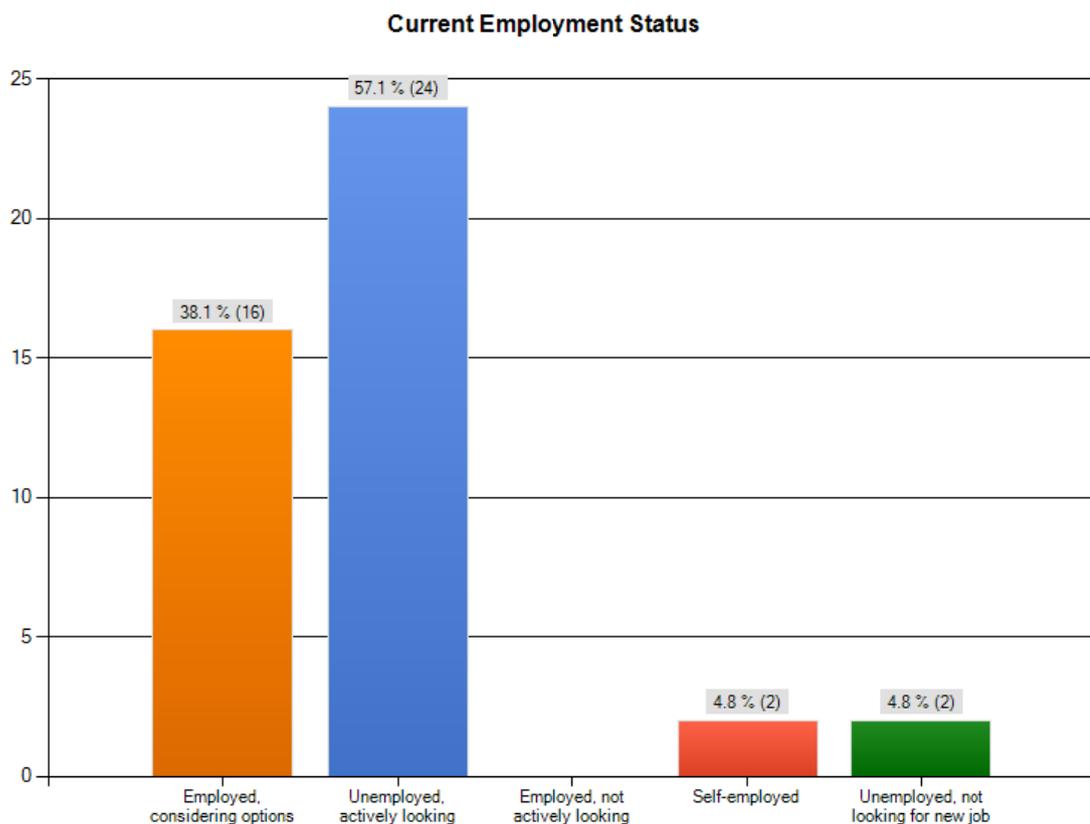


### 3.4 Group C - Jobseekers

#### 3.41 Jobseeker Profile

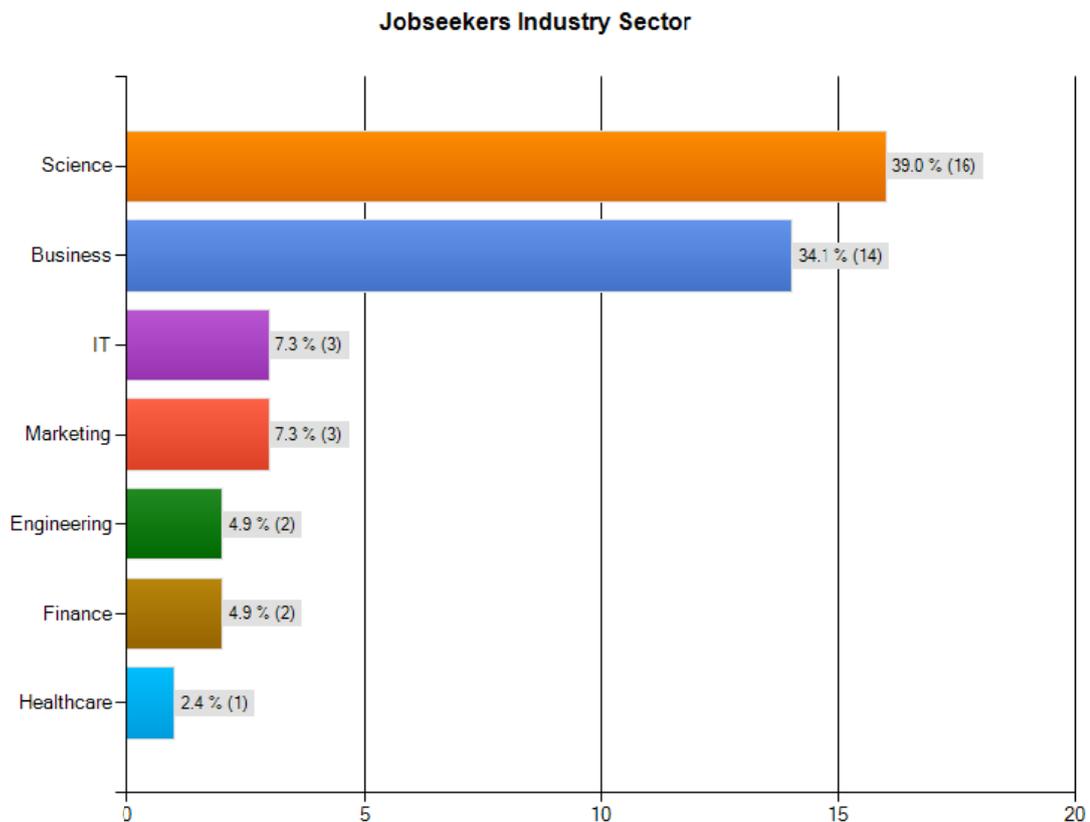
A total of 42 (21.6% of total) respondents completed the survey from this group. Respondents were asked to indicate their employment status and industry sector. As shown in Figure 16, 24 (57.1%) of respondents indicated that they were unemployed and actively looking, 16 (38.1%) indicated that they were employed and considering options, 2 (4.8%) indicated that they were self-employed while 2 (4.8%) of respondents indicated they were unemployed and not actively looking.

**Figure 16**



With regards to industry sector as shown in Figure 17, 16 (39.0%) of jobseekers indicated they were from the science sector, 14 (34.1%) were from the business sector, 3 (7.3%) indicated IT, 3 (7.3%) indicated marketing, 2 (4.9%) indicated engineering, 2 (4.9%) indicated finance while 1 (2.4%) indicated healthcare.

**Figure 17**

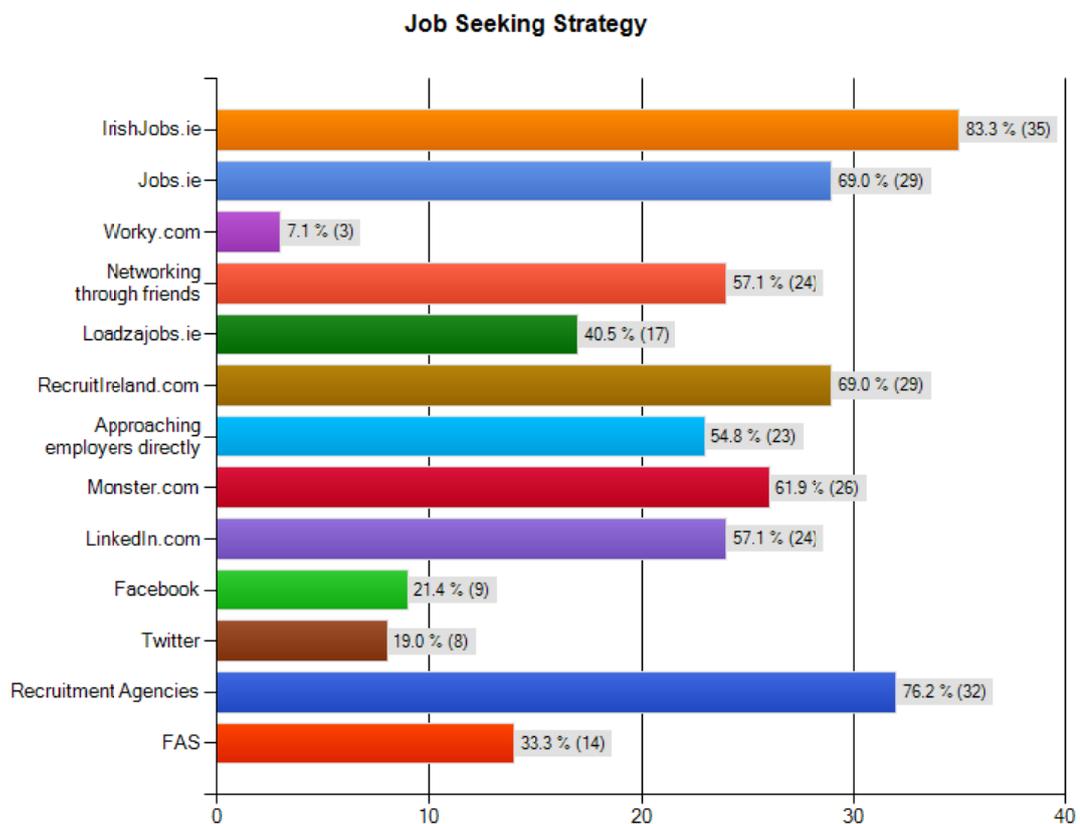


### 3.42 Job Seeking Strategies

Respondents were asked to indicate their current usage of different job seeking strategies. As shown in Figure 18, 35 (83.3%) of respondents indicated that they used IrishJobs.ie, 32 (76.2%) indicated they used recruitment agencies, 29 (69.0%) indicated they used Jobs.ie, 29 (69.0%) indicated they used RecruitIreland.com, 26

(61.9%) indicated they used Monster.com while 24 (57.1%) indicated they used LinkedIn. Interestingly only 24 (57.1%) of respondents indicated they networked through friends to search for jobs and 23 (54.8%) approached employers directly. Furthermore, only 9 (21.4%) of respondents used Facebook to search for jobs and 8 (19%) used Twitter.

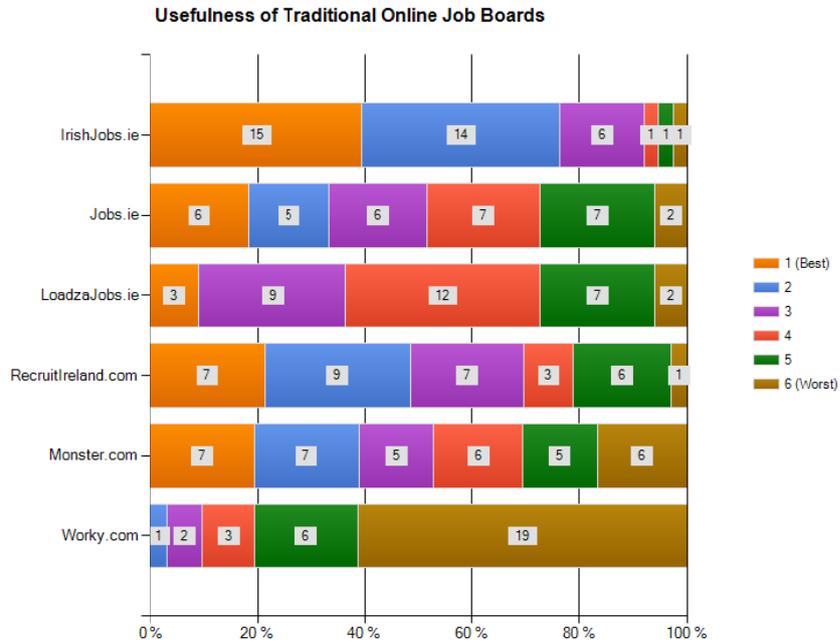
**Figure 18**



Respondents were also asked to rank six of the leading online job resources in Ireland one to six in order of perceived usefulness for job seeking, with one being the most and six being the least useful. Figure 19 shows the breakdown of scores with 15 (39.5%) of respondents ranking IrishJobs.ie 1<sup>st</sup>, while 14 (36.8%) ranking it second, making it by far the perceived most useful traditional job board used by job seekers.

19 (61.3%) of respondents ranked Worky.com 6<sup>th</sup>, while 6 (19.4%) ranked it 5<sup>th</sup>, making it the perceived least useful.

**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**

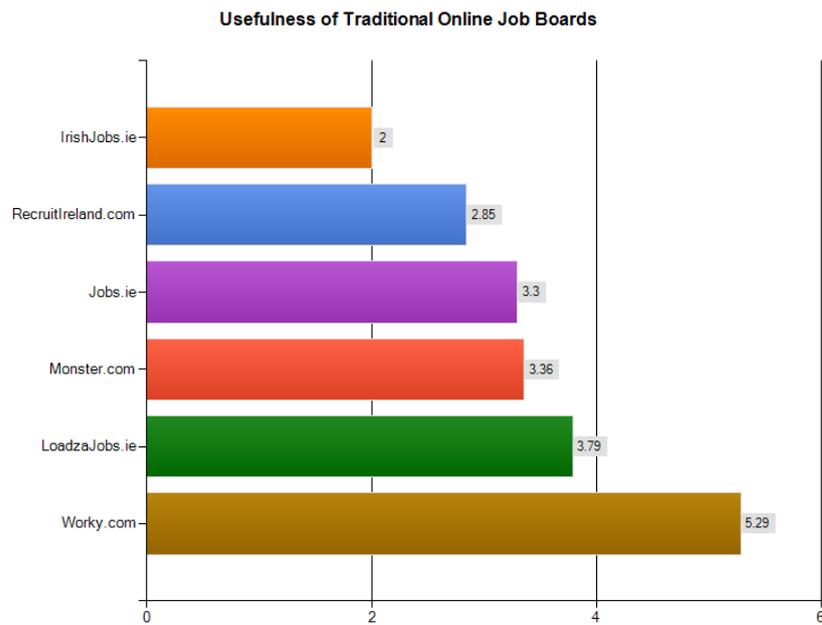
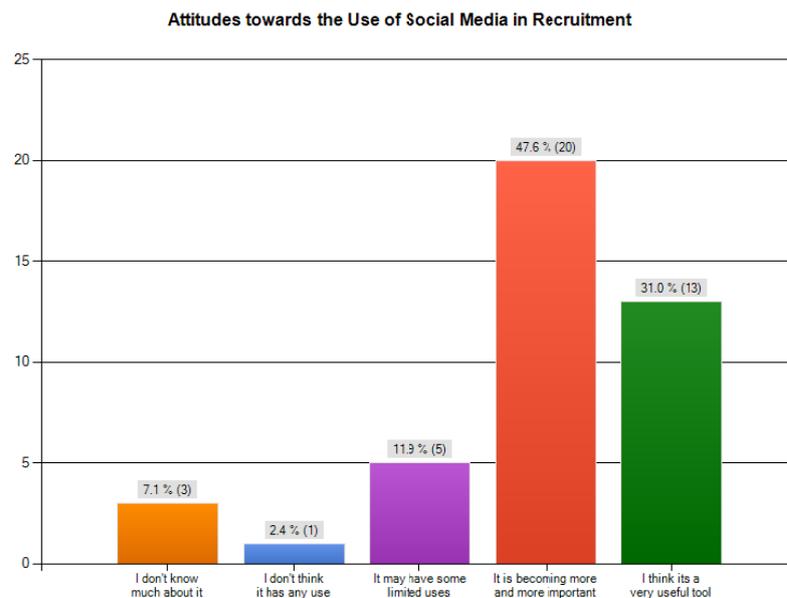


Figure 20 (above) shows the average scores for each on the traditional job boards survey. IrishJobs.ie scored an overall average score of 2.0, making it the most useful, followed by RecruitIreland.com with a score of 2.85 and Jobs.ie third with a score of 3.3.

### 3.43 Attitudes Towards and Use of Social Media in Recruitment

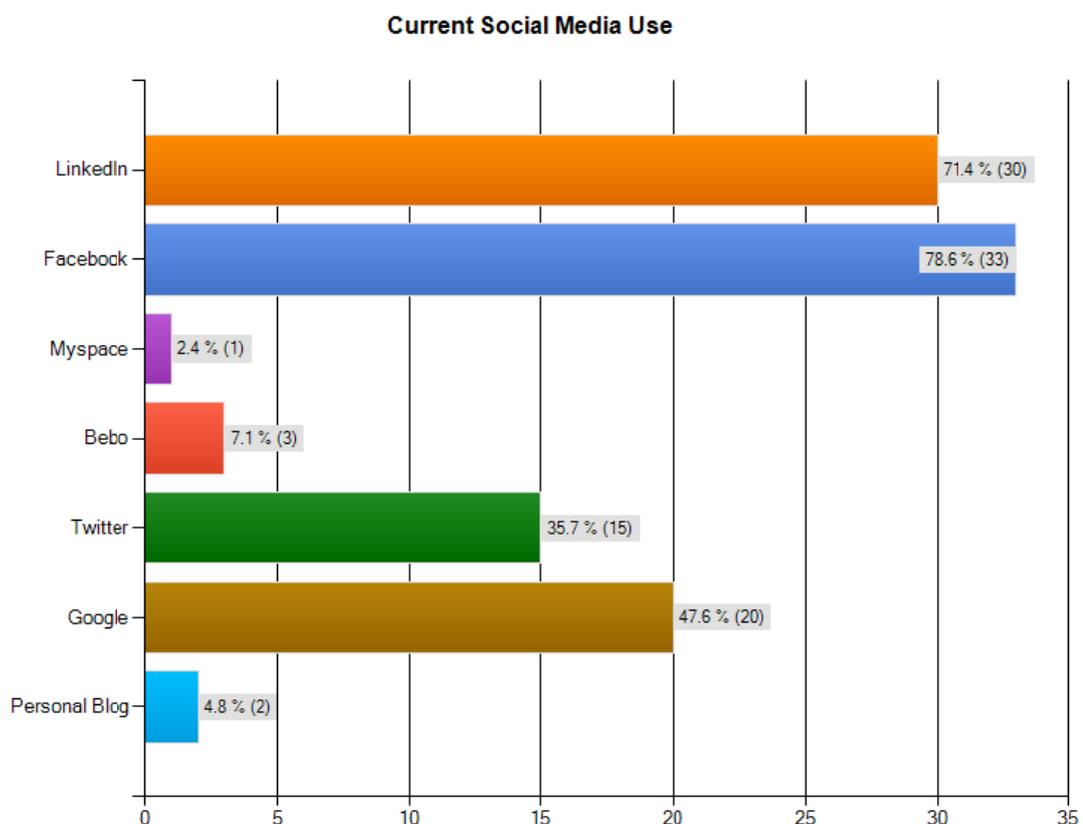
Respondents were asked their attitudes towards the use of social media in recruitment. As shown in Figure 21, 3 (7.1%) of respondents indicated they did not know much about it, 1 (2.4%) indicated that it didn't have any use, 5 (11.9%) indicated that it may have some limited uses, 20 (47.6%) indicated that it is becoming more and more important while 13 (31.0%) of respondents indicated that it is a very useful tool. 33 (78.6%) of respondents viewed the use of social media in recruitment in a positive light, indicating that it was a very useful tool or is becoming more and more important.

**Figure 21**



In Figure 22, respondents were asked to indicate their current social media resource usage. 33 (78.6%) of respondents indicated that they used Facebook, 30 (71.4%) indicated they used LinkedIn, 20 (47.6%) indicated they had a Google account, 15 (35.7%) indicated that they used Twitter, while only 2 (4.8%) indicated they had a personal blog.

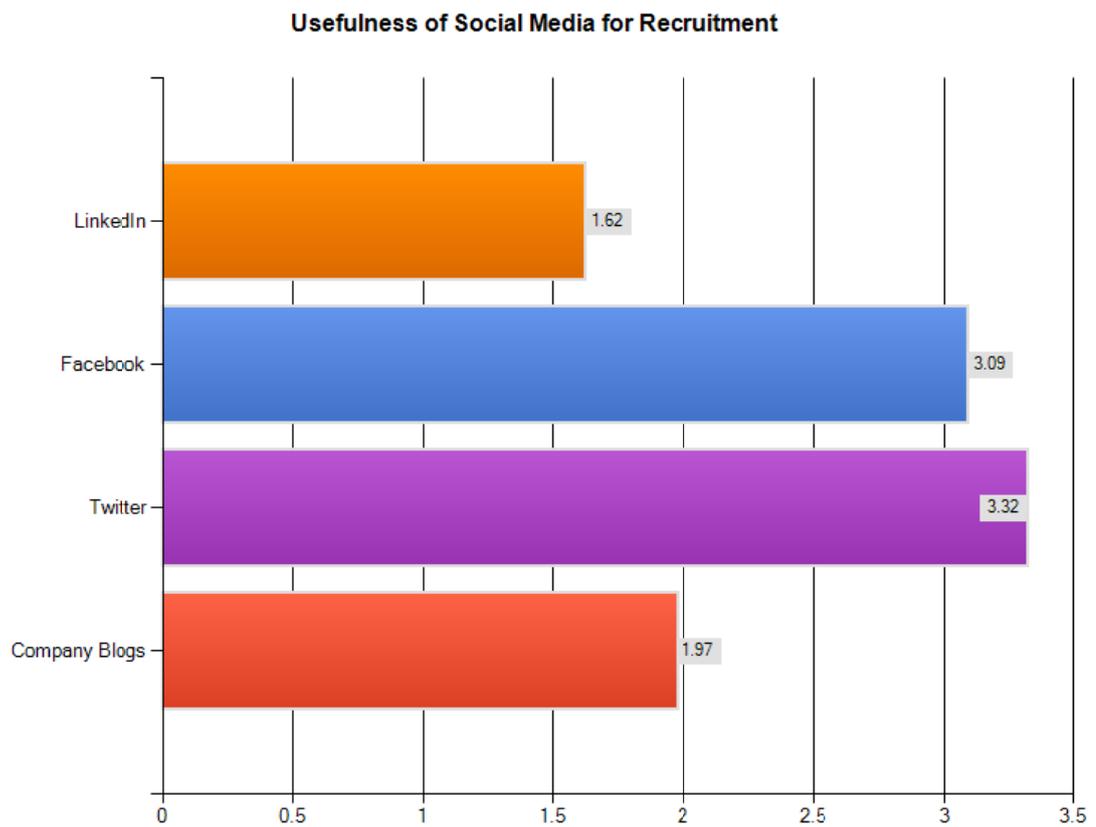
**Figure 22**



In Figure 23, respondents were asked to rank four of the leading social media resources in Ireland one to four in order of perceived usefulness for job seeking, with one being the most and four being the least useful. Respondents ranked LinkedIn as the best resource, with an average score of 1.62, with company blogs next best with

an average score of 1.97, while they ranked Facebook 3<sup>rd</sup> with an average score of 3.09 and Twitter as the worst with an average score of 3.32.

**Figure 23**

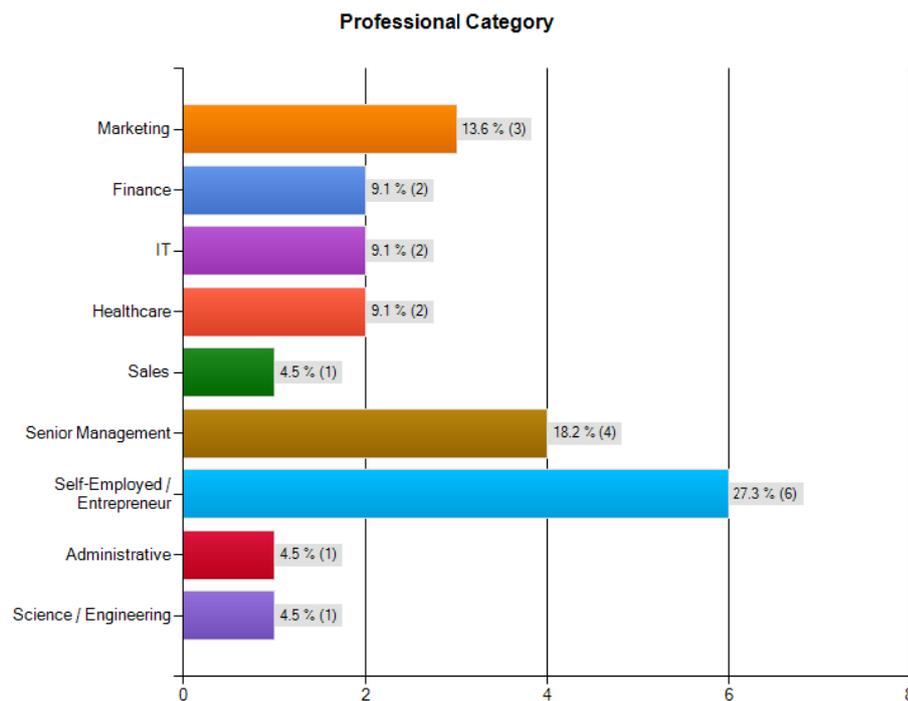


### 3.5 Group D - Other Respondents

#### 3.51 Respondent Profile

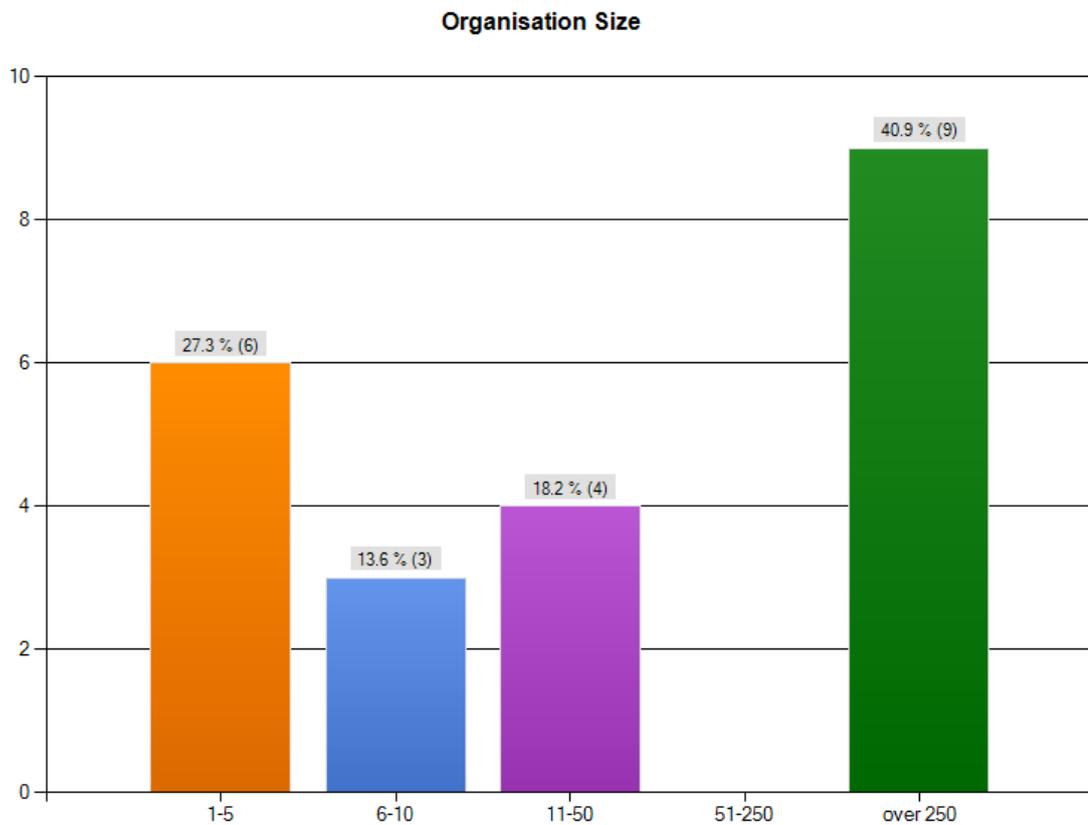
A total of 22 (11.3% of total) respondents completed the survey from this group. In Figure 24, respondents were asked to indicate their professional category and organisation size. 6 (27.3%) of respondents indicated they were entrepreneurs, 4 (18.2%) indicated they were senior management and 3 (13.6%) indicated they were in marketing. The rest of the sample was made up of lesser number of respondents in IT, finance, healthcare and administration.

Figure 24



With regards to organisation size show in Figure 25, 9 (40.9%) of respondents indicated their organisation had more than 250 employees, 6 (27.3 %) of respondents indicated their organisation had less than 5 staff.

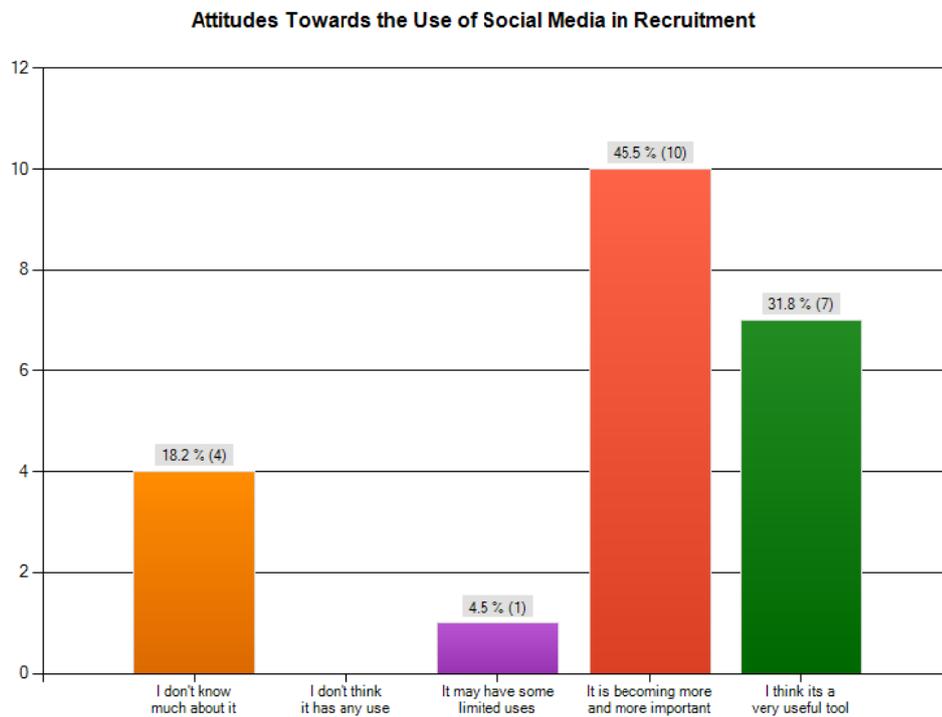
Figure 25



### 3.52 Attitudes towards the Use of Social Media in Recruitment

In Figure 26, respondents were asked their opinion and attitude towards the use of social media in recruitment. 4 (18.2%) of respondents indicated they did not know much about it, no respondents indicated that it didn't have any use, 1 (4.5%) indicated that it may have some limited uses, 10 (45.5%) indicated that it is becoming more and more important while 7 (31.8%) of respondents indicated that it is a very useful tool. 17 (77.3%) of respondents viewed the use of social media in recruitment in a positive light, indicating that it was a very useful tool or is becoming more and more important.

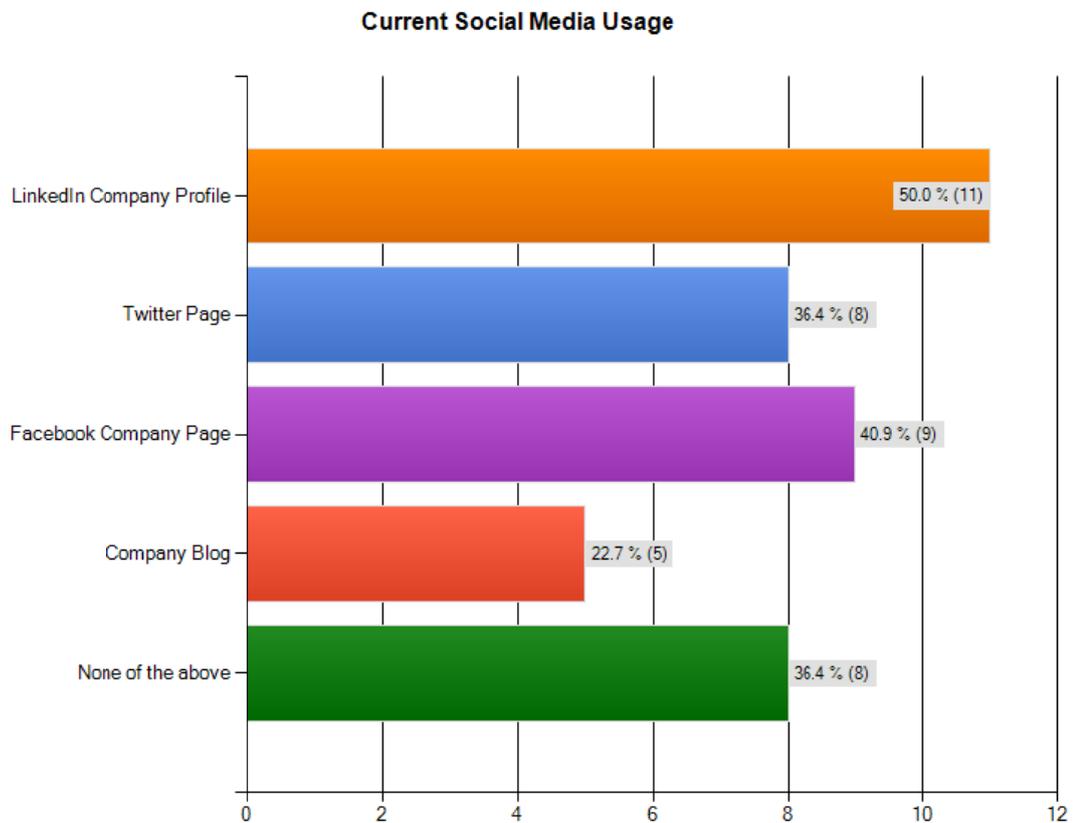
**Figure 26**



### 3.53 Current Social Media Usage

In Figure 27, respondents were asked to indicate their company's usage of four selected social media resources, which the author believed to be the most important and popular in the recruitment sector in Ireland currently. Use of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Company Blogs was assessed. 11 (50.0%) of respondents indicated that they had a LinkedIn company profile, 9 (40.9%) indicated they had a Facebook company page, 8 (36.4%) indicated that they had a Twitter page while 5 (22.7%) indicated that they had a company blog. 8 (36.4%) of respondents indicated that their company had none of the listed social media resources.

Figure 27



### 3.6 Group E – Human Resourcers using Social Media

A total of 130 respondents from Group A (HR Professionals/Employers) and Group B (Recruitment Professionals/Agencies) who completed the survey were combined in a new sample, which was viewed as the professional human resourcers cohort.

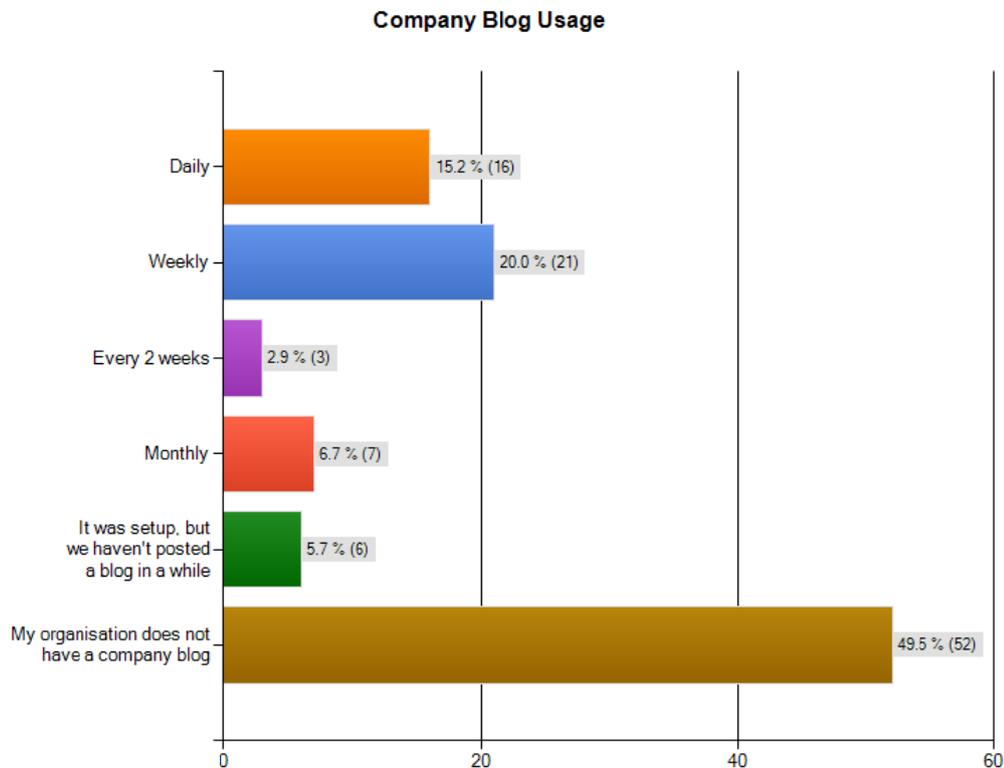
107 (82.3% of the human resourcers cohort) indicated that they used at least one social media resource professionally. Respondents from Group E who indicated that they used at least one social media resource were asked to indicate their pattern of usage of four selected social media resources in a professional sense. Respondents

were assessed with regards to professional usage of company blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook as resourcing tools.

### 3.61 Company Blog Usage

Figure 28 shows patterns of use of company blogs by respondents in a professional setting. 52 (49.5%) of respondents indicated that they did not use a company blog, 16 (15.2%) said they use them daily, 21 (20.0%) indicated that they used them weekly, while the remaining 16 (15.3%) of respondents indicated they used company blogs less than once a week.

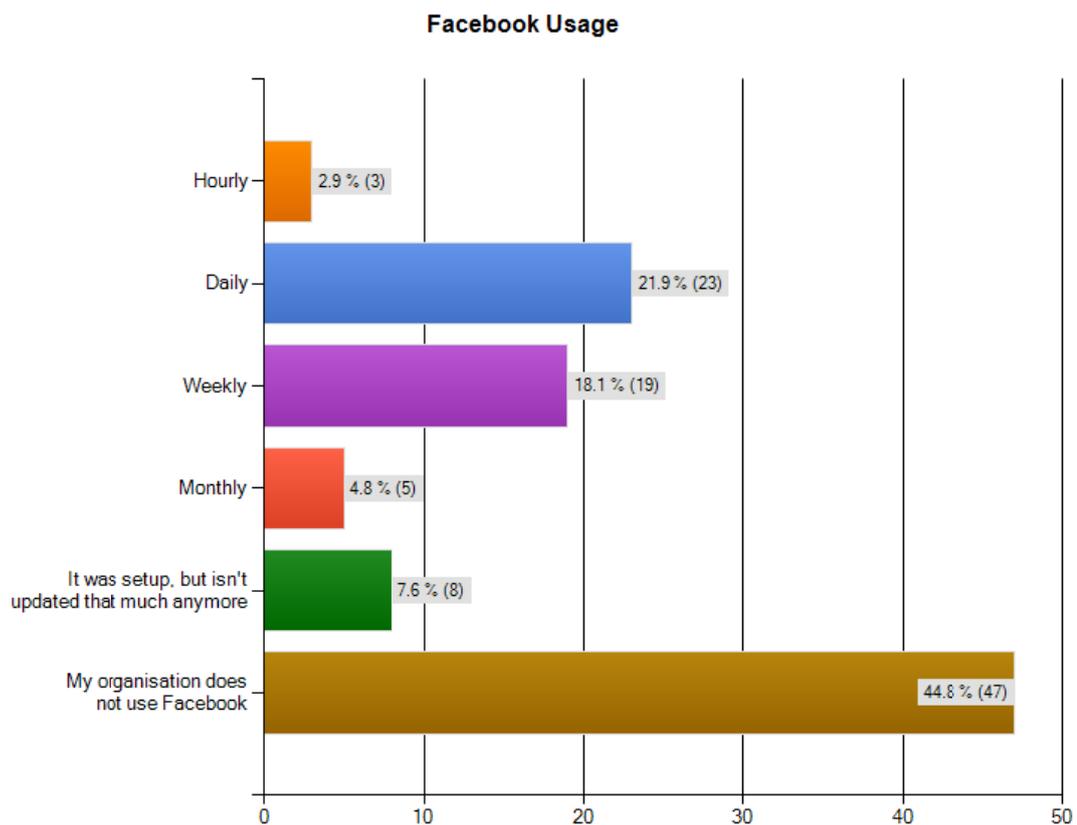
Figure 28



### 3.62 Facebook Usage

Figure 29 shows patterns of use of Facebook by respondents in a professional setting. 47 (44.8%) of respondents indicated that they did not use Facebook, 23 (21.9%) said they used it daily, 19 (18.1%) indicated that they used it weekly, 3 (2.9%) indicated they used it hourly, while the remaining 13 (12.4%) of respondents indicated they used Facebook less than once a week.

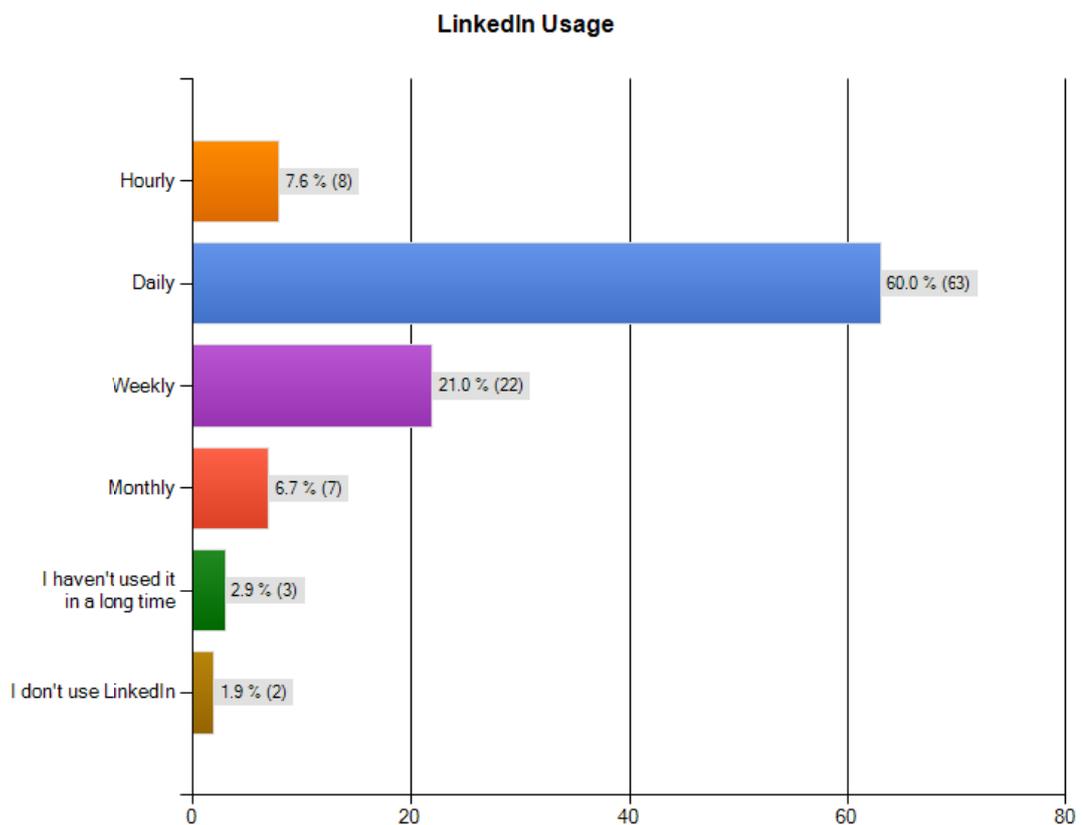
**Figure 29**



### 3.63 LinkedIn Usage

Figure 30 shows patterns of use of LinkedIn by respondents in a professional setting. 2 (1.9%) of respondents indicated that they did not use linkedIn, 63 (60.0%) said they used it daily, 22 (21.0%) indicated that they used it weekly, 8 (7.6%) indicated they used it hourly, while the remaining 10 (9.6%) of respondents indicated they used LinkedIn less than once a week.

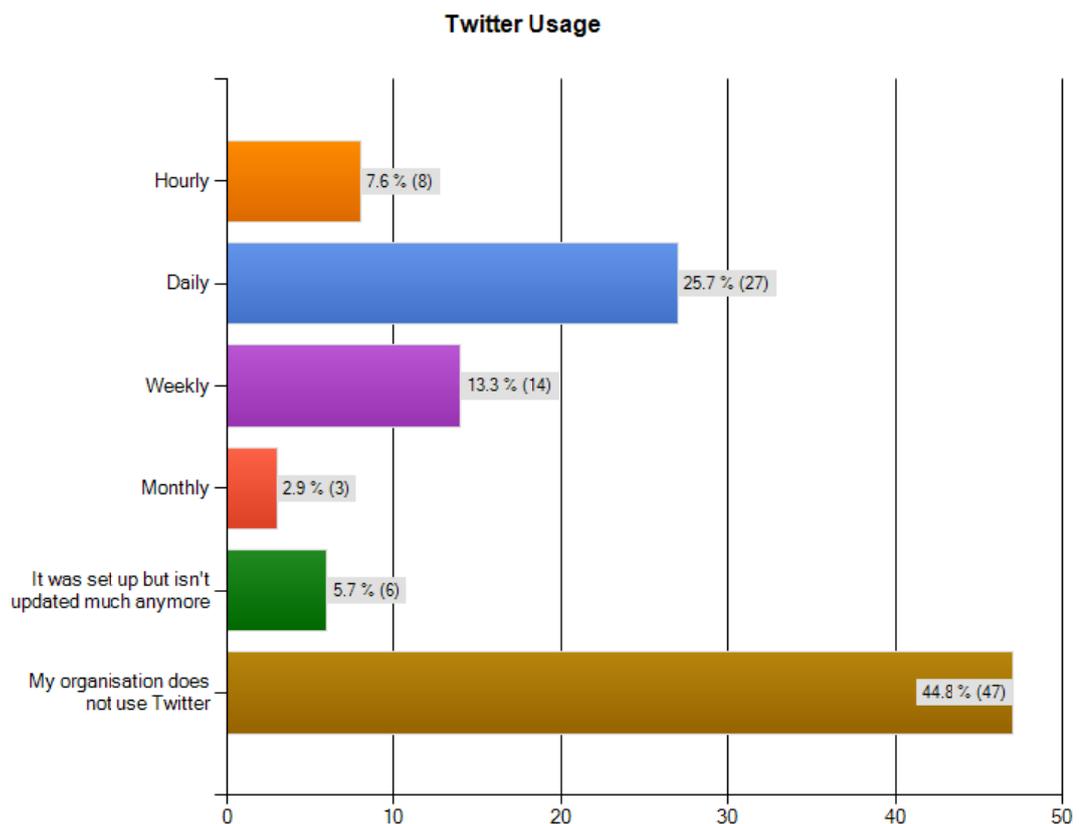
**Figure 30**



### 3.64 Twitter Usage

Figure 31 shows patterns of use of Twitter by respondents in a professional setting. 47 (44.8%) of respondents indicated that they did not use Twitter, 27 (25.7%) said they used it daily, 14 (13.3%) indicated that they used it weekly, 8 (7.6%) indicated they used it hourly, while the remaining 9 (8.6%) of respondents indicated they used Twitter less than once a week.

**Figure 31**



### 3.65 Perceived Usefulness of Social Media in Recruitment

In Figure 32, respondents from Group E were asked to rank four of the leading social media resources one to four in order of perceived usefulness for resourcing, with one being the most and four being the least useful. Figure 26 shows the breakdown of scores with 84 (85.7%) of respondents ranking LinkedIn 1<sup>st</sup>, while 11 (11.2%) ranking it second, making it by far the perceived most useful social media resource in recruitment. 36 (43.4%) of respondents ranked Twitter 4<sup>th</sup>, while 29 (34.9%) ranked it 3<sup>rd</sup>, making it the perceived least useful.

**Figure 32**

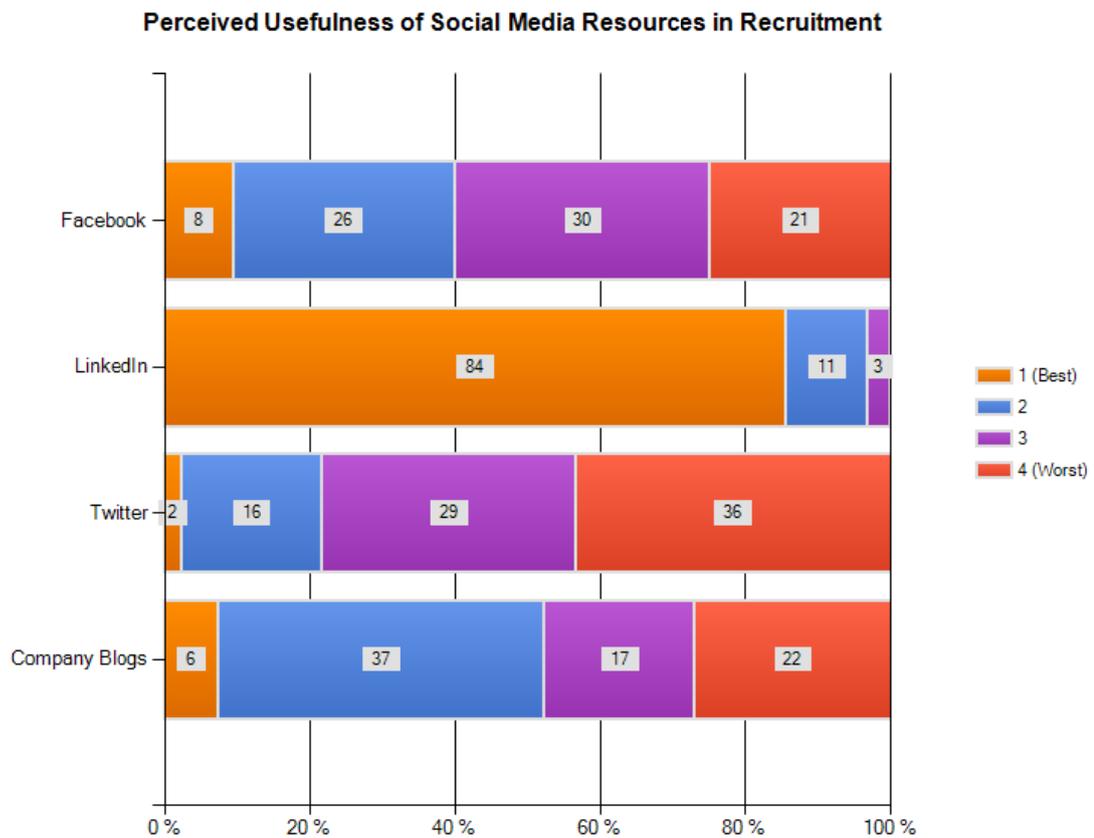
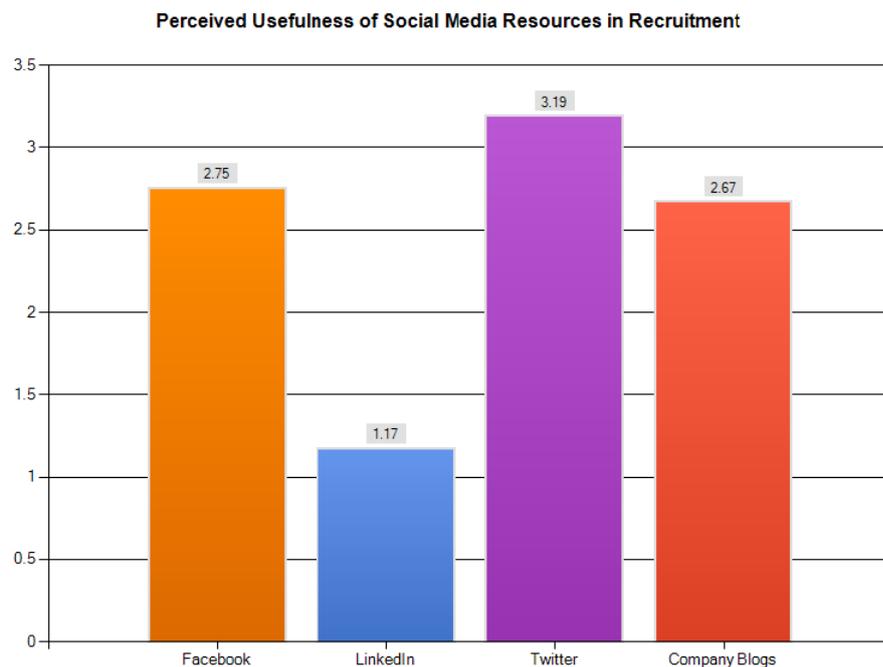


Figure 33 presents the average scores for each of the social media resources tested in this question and LinkedIn scored an average of 1.17 making it by far the leading resource, while Twitter scored an average of 3.19 making it the least useful.

**Figure 33**

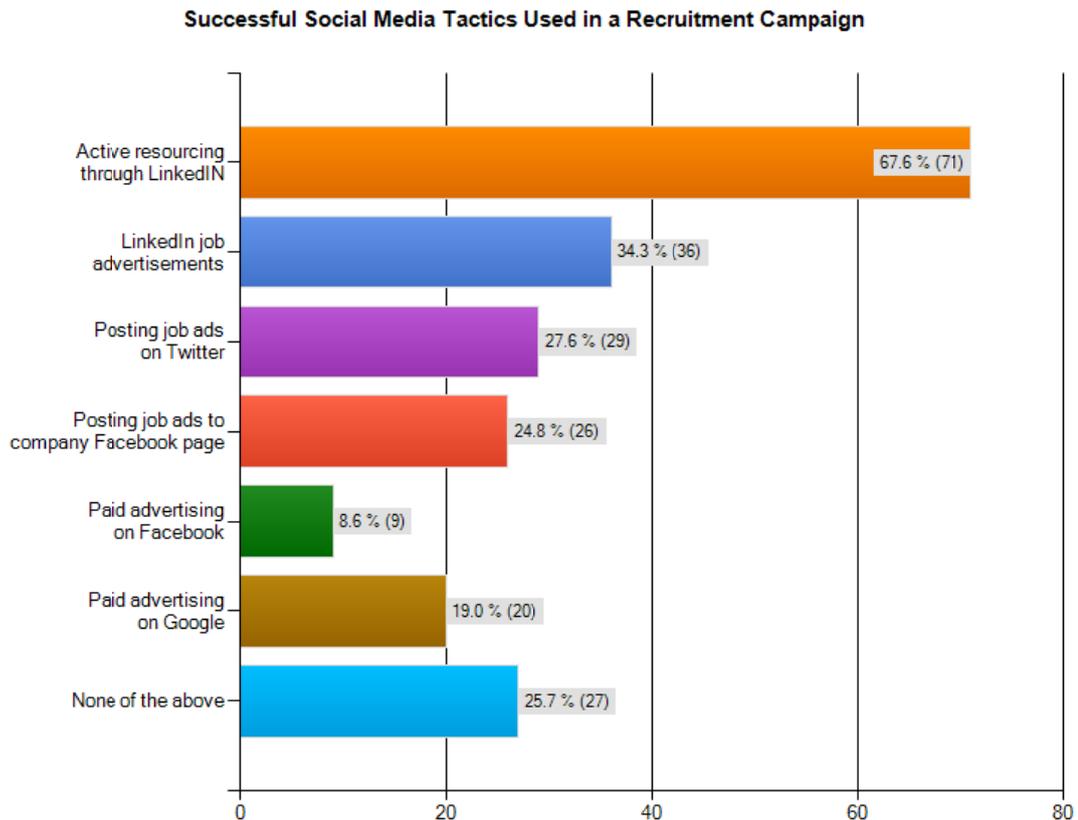


### *3.66 Successful Social Media Tactics Used in Recruitment Campaigns*

In Figure 34, respondents from Group E were also asked what social media resources they had used successfully in a recruitment campaign. 71 (67.6%) indicated that they had successfully used active resourcing on LinkedIn in a recruitment campaign, 36 (34.3%) indicated they had successfully used LinkedIn job advertisements, 29 (27.6%) indicated they had successfully used Twitter, 26 (24.8%) indicated they had successfully used Facebook while only 9 (8.6%) said they had used paid advertising on Facebook and 20 (19.0%) indicated they had used paid

advertising on Google successfully in a recruitment campaign. 27 (25.7%) of respondents indicated they had used none of the tactics listed successfully in a recruitment campaign.

**Figure 34**



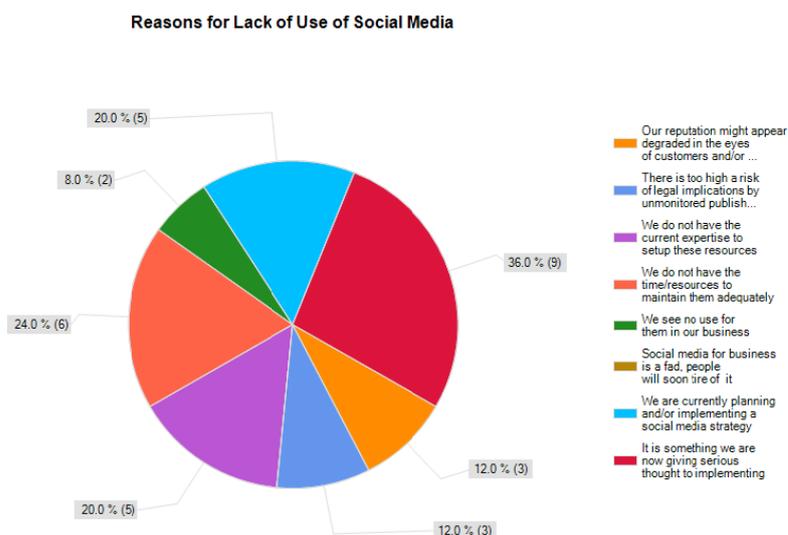
### 3.7 Group F - Human Resourcers not using Social Media

23 (17.7% of the human resourcers cohort) indicated that they did not use any social media resources professionally. Respondents from Group E who indicated that they did not use any social media resources were asked to indicate their reason for lack of use, their current resourcing strategies and their attitudes as to where social media could be best utilised in business.

### 3.71 Reasons for Not Using Social Media in Business

Respondents in Group F were asked to indicate their reasons for not using social media in recruitment. As shown in Figure 35, 5 (20%) of respondents indicated that they did not have the current expertise to setup these resources, 6 (24%) indicated that they do not have the time/resources to maintain them adequately, 3 (12%) indicated that they feared that their reputation might appear degraded in the eyes of customers and/or clients, 3 (12%) indicated that there is too high a risk of legal implications by unmonitored publishing of content, 2 (8%) saw no use for them in their business and no respondents indicated that social media for business was fad and that people will soon tire of it. Interestingly, 9 (36%) of respondents indicated that social media was something they are now giving serious thought to implementing and 5 (20%) indicated that they were currently planning and/or implementing a social media strategy.

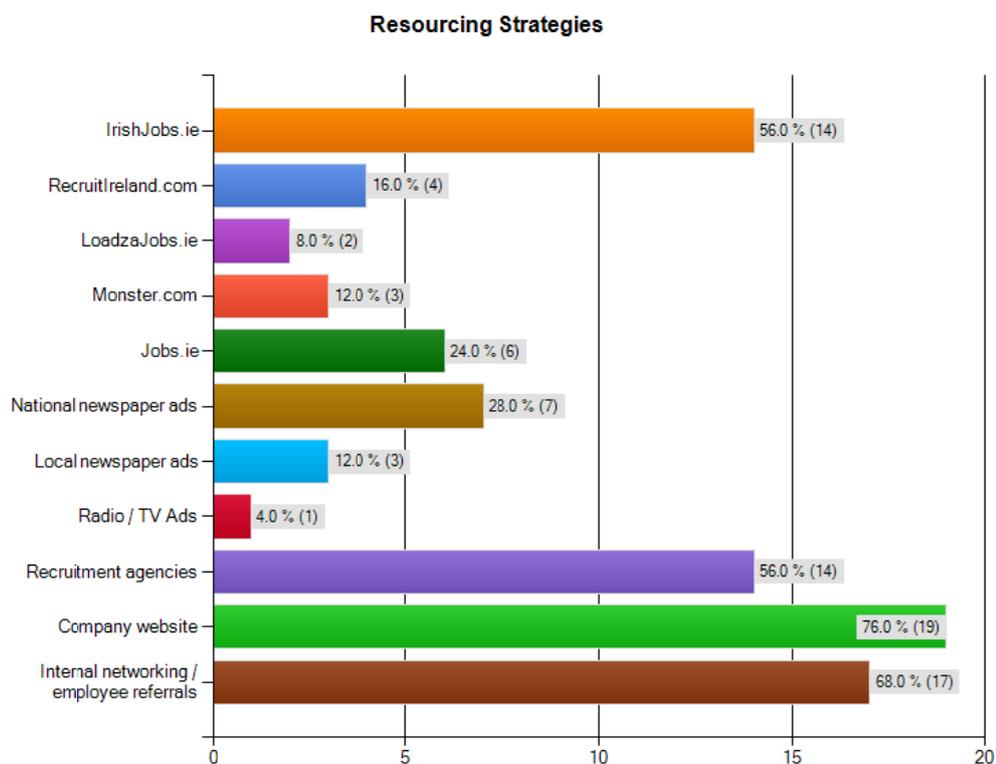
**Figure 35**



### 3.72 Resourcing Strategy for Resources Not Using Social Media

In Figure 36, respondents from Group F were asked what resourcing strategies they currently use. 19 (76%) of respondents indicated that they used their company website, 17 (68%) indicated that they use internal employee referral programs, 14 (56%) indicated that they used recruitment agencies, 14 (56%) indicated that they used IrishJobs.ie, 14 (56%) indicated that they used national newspaper advertisements, 7 (28%) indicated that they used Jobs.ie, 7 (28%) indicated that they used national newspaper advertisements, 6 (24%) indicated that they used Jobs.ie, 4 (16%) indicated that they used RecruitIreland.com, 3 (12%) used Monster.com, 3 (12%) used local newspaper advertisements, 2 (8%) used LoadzaJobs.ie, while only 1 (4%) used radio or TV advertisements.

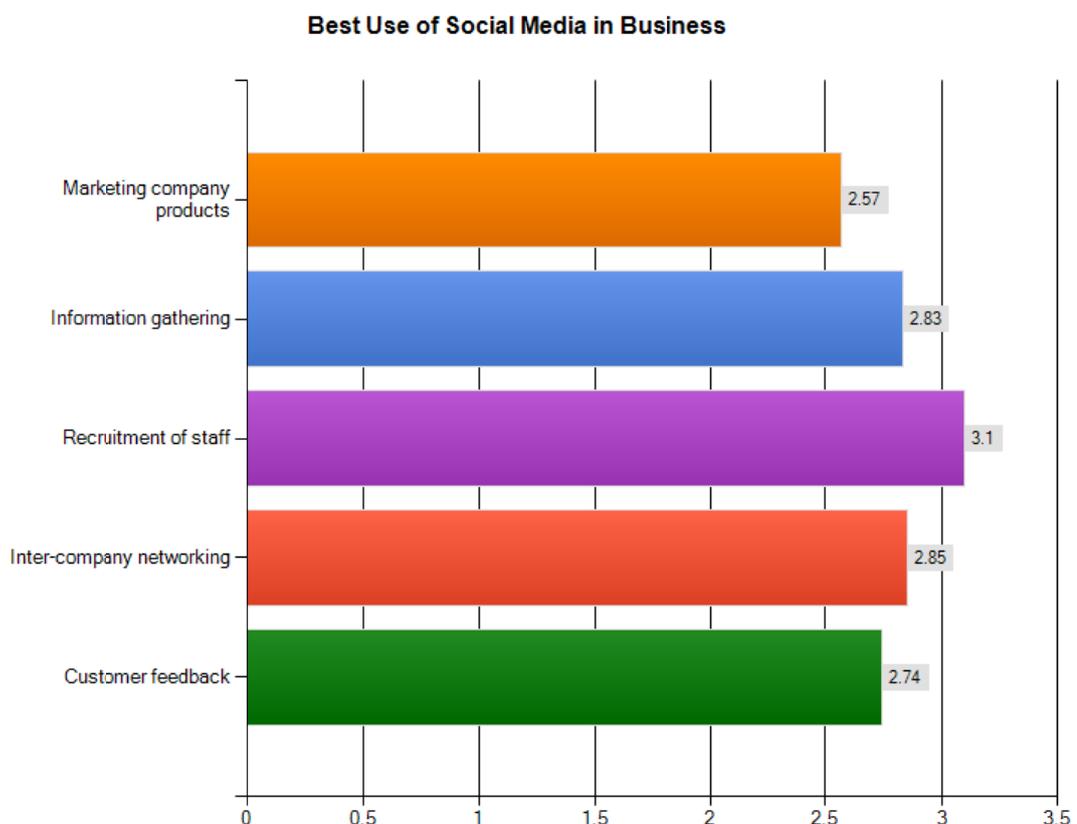
Figure 36



### 3.73 Attitudes towards the Best Use of Social Media

In Figure 37, respondents from Group F were asked to indicate their opinion on where social media could be best utilised in business. Respondents were asked to rank each of five of the main areas tested one to five in order of perceived usefulness of social media in that area, with one being the best and five being the least. Figure 31 shows average scores. Marketing company products (average 2.57) was where social media could be best utilised, followed by customer feedback (2.74), information gathering (2.83), intercompany networking (2.85) while recruitment of staff (3.1) was where respondents perceived to best the least useful application of social media. There was a small range noted across the results (0.53 between most and least).

**Figure 37**



**Chapter 4 – Discussion**

This study aimed to ascertain the attitudes towards the use of social media in recruitment by professional resourcers and by jobseekers. Furthermore, we aimed to shed light on the levels and patterns of use of social media resources by the aforementioned groups, as well as their use of other resources outside of social media. The results show a clear pattern of adoption of social media resources by both professional resourcers and jobseekers in the recruitment process.

### **Social Media Use**

Across the four groups surveyed we assessed social media use. HR Professionals (Employers), Recruitment Professionals (Agency) and Other Respondents were grouped together (which was termed the professional group) for one set of questions pertaining to their professional use of LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Company Blogs for resourcing, while jobseekers received a slightly different set of questions surrounding their personal social media use.

In the professional group, LinkedIn use was most prevalent among the Agency group with 91.3% having a LinkedIn company profile, followed by the Employers group (71%) and the Other Respondents group (50%). Facebook use was similarly popular amongst the Agency group; however less so than LinkedIn, with 47.8% having a Facebook company page, while Employers (39.3%) and Other Respondents (40.9%) had similar take-up. Twitter was more popular than Facebook amongst the Agency group (52.2%), however it was less popular than Facebook in the Employers (35.5%) or Other Respondents group (36.4%). Furthermore, company blog use was more prevalent amongst the Agency group, with 52.2% indicating that they had a company

blog, while less so in the Employers (32.7%) or Other Respondents (22.7%). Only 8.7% of the Agency group indicated that they used none of the resources listed, while 22.4% of the Employers group and 36.4% of the Other Respondents group indicated so. Taken together these results indicate that the Agency group is the most active in the social media space, with a higher usage of all four resources listed.

In the Jobseekers Group, 71.4% indicated they used LinkedIn, 78.6% of respondents indicated that they used Facebook, 35.7% indicated that they used Twitter while only 4.8% indicated they had a personal blog. There are similarities in the use LinkedIn and Twitter between the Jobseeker's and Professional Resourcer's groups; however there is a significant disparity in the use of Facebook; making it possibly an area of high-potential for future strategy.

### **Attitudes to the Use of Social Media in Recruitment**

Across the four groups investigated there were differences in awareness of the use of social media in recruitment. 5.6% of Employers, 18.2% of Other Respondents and 7.1% of Jobseekers indicated that they did not know much about it. Interestingly no respondents from the Agency group indicated they did not know much about it, making them the most aware group, while the Other Respondents group was the least aware. There was little difference in awareness between Jobseekers and Employers, 5.6% vs. 7.1%.

A small minority of respondents indicated their opinion that social media in recruitment didn't have any use. 0.9% of Employers, 4.3% of Agencies and 2.4% of

Jobseekers indicated such. Interestingly no respondents from the Other Respondents group indicated that they believed it had no use.

Differences existed between the groups with regards to respondents indicating that they believed that social media in recruitment may have some limited uses. 15.9% of Employers, 8.7% of Agencies and 11.9% of Jobseekers, while 4.5% of Other Respondents indicated that they believed that social media in recruitment may have some limited uses. Again, this represented a minority of the total cohort.

There was consensus amongst the groups tested with regards the opinion that the use of social media in recruitment is becoming more and more important. The majority of respondents from all groups indicated such, with 50.5% of Employers, 43.5% of Agencies, 47.6% of Jobseekers and 45.5% of Other Respondents indicating such. This result indicates that social media is now being taken seriously and has moved from being perceived as a teenage online pastime to a serious business tool. A significant number of respondents across all groups reported that they believed that social media in recruitment was a very useful tool. 27.1% of Employers, 43.5% of Agencies, 31.0% of Jobseekers and 31.8% of Other Respondents indicated such.

The majority of respondents across all groups (48.5%) indicated that they believed that the use of social media in recruitment was becoming more and more important while 30.4% of all respondents indicated that it was a very useful tool. Taken together, a significant majority of all respondents (78.9%) viewed the use of social media in recruitment in a positive light. Across all groups, 12.9% of respondents

indicated that the use of social media in recruitment may have some limited uses, 7.2% indicated they did not know much about it while only 1.5% of respondents indicated that social media had no use in recruitment. These results indicate that the overall attitude to the use of social media in recruitment across both professional resourcers and jobseekers is very positive and that we expect the area to become strategically important in recruitment and indeed in business in general over the next couple of years as more and more businesses develop strategies around the medium.

### **Human Resourcers using Social Media for Recruitment**

The HR Professionals (Employer) (A) and Agency (B) groups were combined to form the Human Resourcers group (E), and represented those respondents that were involved in recruitment professionally. Respondents from this cohort were asked a set of questions pertaining to their patterns of use and perceived usefulness of the four main social media resources as well as tactics that they have used successfully in a recruitment campaign. 82.3% of this group indicated that they used at least one social media resource professionally.

Respondents were asked to describe their use of the four main social media resources listed. 49.5% of respondents indicated that they did not use a company blog, 44.8% of respondents indicated that they did not use Facebook, 1.9% of respondents indicated that they did not use LinkedIn, 44.8% of respondents indicated that they did not use Twitter. By far, the most used social media resource amongst the human resourcers group was LinkedIn with 98.1% of respondents using the

resource. There were similar use levels of the other three resources across this group, with 55.2% using Twitter, 50.5% indicating that they used company blogs and 55.2% indicating that they used Facebook.

### *Patterns of Use*

With regards to patterns of use, LinkedIn was by far the most regularly used resource with 88.6% of respondents reporting that they used the resource at least once a week, followed by Twitter with 46.6% of respondents, Facebook with 42.9% of respondents and company blogs with 35.2% of respondents using the resource at least once a week.

### *Successful Tactics used in a Recruitment Campaign*

Respondents from the resourcers group were also asked what social media resources they had used successfully in a recruitment campaign. By far the most successful tactic used was active resourcing through LinkedIn with 67.6% of respondents reporting success. 27.6% reported they had successfully used Twitter and 24.8% reported they had successfully used Facebook. With regards to paid advertising, 34.3% indicated they had successfully used LinkedIn job advertisements, 19.0% indicated they had successfully used paid advertising on Google while 8.6% said they had successfully used paid advertising on Facebook. This is interesting as LinkedIn Paid Advertisement has a higher success rate than Google Adwords which was traditionally thought of as very successful in this area. 25.7% of respondents indicated they had used none of the tactics listed successfully in a recruitment campaign.

### *Perceived Usefulness of Each Resource in Recruitment*

Respondents from the resourcers group were asked to rank each of the four social media resources in order of perceived usefulness for resourcing. Taking the average scores, LinkedIn scored 1.17, making it by far the most useful, Company Blogs scored 2.67, Facebook scored 2.75 and Twitter scored 3.19 making it the least useful in the opinion of the respondents. The dominance of LinkedIn in the perceived usefulness scale is consistent with its overall usage, pattern of use and its success rate.

### **Human Resourcers not using Social Media for Recruitment**

17.7% of the human resourcer's cohort indicated that they did not use any social media resources professionally. Respondents from this sample were asked to indicate their reason for lack of use, their current resourcing strategies and their attitudes as to where social media could be best utilised in business.

#### *Reasons*

When respondents who indicated that they did not use social media were asked as to their reasoning for this situation, 36% of respondents indicated that social media was something they are now giving serious thought to implementing, 20% indicated that they were currently planning and/or implementing a social media strategy, 24% of respondents indicated that they do not have the time/resources to maintain them adequately, while 20% of respondents indicated that they did not have the current expertise to setup them up. The vast majority of respondents saw social media in a

positive light. Only 12% of respondents indicated that their reputation might be affected or that there was too high a risk of legal implications and 8% saw no use for them in their business.

Taken together, only 6.2% of respondents from the human resourcers group had concerns regarding the use of social media in recruitment, indicating that the medium is well regarded and that companies not using social media currently are aiming to implement a strategy soon.

### *Resourcing Strategies*

Respondents from this group were asked what resourcing strategies they currently used while resourcing. 76% used their company website, 68% used employee referral programs, 56% used recruitment agencies and 56% reported they used IrishJobs.ie. The above indicated that employers are still following a direct strategy, recruiting staff directly from their website or through employee referrals and is consistent with cost-cutting measures adopted by many companies during the recession. In terms of offline media, 28% of respondents from this group indicated that they used national newspaper advertisements, 12% used local newspaper advertisements while only 4% used radio or TV advertisements. This is consistent with the current shift observed from offline to online advertising media.

### *Best Use of Social Media*

When respondents in this group were asked to where social media could be best utilised in business, marketing company products, with an average score of 2.57 out

of 5 was perceived as the most useful application. Recruitment of staff scored lowest in this question, with an average score of 3.1 out of 5. There was little variance amongst the scores; marketing company products 2.57, customer feedback 2.74, information gathering 2.83, intra-company networking 2.85 and recruitment of staff 3.1, with a range of 0.53. This even distribution of scores indicates that respondents saw uses for social media across all areas described, with no one area standing out.

## **Jobseekers**

### *Job Seeking Strategy*

Respondents were asked to indicate their current usage of different job seeking strategies. The leading job seeking strategy was the use of the online job board, IrishJobs.ie, with 83.3% of users indicating they used it. The next most popular strategy was the use of recruitment agencies (76.2%), followed by Jobs.ie (69%), RecruitIreland (69%) and Monster (61.9%). 57.1% of respondents indicated they networked through friends to search for jobs and 54.8% indicated that they approached employers directly.

With regards to social media strategies, 57.1% indicated they used LinkedIn, 21.4% of respondents used Facebook and 19% used Twitter to search for jobs. LinkedIn was found to be the leading social media resource used in the job search. In the space of two years, LinkedIn has achieved a significant market share in this space in Ireland, being equal in importance to such traditionally popular strategies as approaching employers directly.

### *Traditional Jobs Board usefulness*

Jobseekers were also asked to rate six different online job boards in terms of usefulness for job seeking. The leading job resource was found to be IrishJobs.ie with an overall average score of 2.0. RecruitIreland.com was found to be the second most useful with a score of 2.85 and Jobs.ie third with a score of 3.3. This confirms IrishJobs.ie as the dominant force in the online job board market space, with both employers and jobseekers preferring it.

### *Usefulness of Social Media for Job Seeking*

Jobseekers were also asked to rank four of the leading social media resources in Ireland in order of perceived usefulness for job seeking. Respondents ranked LinkedIn as the best resource, with an average score of 1.62, with company blogs next best with an average score of 1.97, while they ranked Facebook 3<sup>rd</sup> with an average score of 3.09 and Twitter as the worst with an average score of 3.32. This correlates with the views of employers, with LinkedIn the perceived best resource amongst both jobseekers and employers

## **Conclusions**

It is evident from the results of this study that social media has become an important resource in the recruitment sector and will only gain in importance over the next couple of years. The majority of companies, both direct employers and agencies have recognised the potential of the use of social media use in recruitment and currently have or are developing strategies around how to best utilise the resource.

LinkedIn dominates the social media recruitment space with the vast majority of companies surveyed using it professionally. The author expects LinkedIn to continue to dominant in social media recruitment space and it is difficult to see how a competitor could challenge its position. LinkedIn has the potential to take significant market share from the traditional resources such as the job boards as its use becomes more and more widespread.

Resources such as Twitter and Facebook are gaining ground; however only Facebook looks like it has potential to become a significant resource in this space, based on scores of perceived usefulness. However, it is difficult to see how Facebook would challenge LinkedIn in this regards.

As companies become smarter and gain an awareness of the myriad of tools at their disposal, they will formulate rounded strategies which will incorporate not one, but a range of resources, both social and traditional to attract talent to the business. Based on the results of the study, the most successful future strategies will include a combination of LinkedIn, recruitment agencies and IrishJobs.ie.

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