

ONLINE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES IN MID SIZE FAMILY COMPANIES

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***Abstract:** This paper presents current development of the Internet as recruitment in family companies in Sri Lankan context. The methodology of the study was conducted on family companies in different industries by collecting data through questionnaires and follow up interviews. Results indicate that usage level of internet for recruitment process is comparatively lower. However it indicates that there will be an increase usage of internet for recruitment in the future with the expected advancements in the IT infrastructure availability and affordability.*

***Keywords:** e-Recruitment, Human Resource Management, Internet*

1. Introduction to the Study

At present Human Resource Management [HRM] has to face no of new challenges that come from internal and external environment. The strategic role of Human Resource [HR] function and Information revolution has originated as a solution for it helps to matching employee resources with business needs very significantly. As per Anderson [1997]) Strategic HR change the HR professional time allocation for his activities. Another important solution to face these internal and external challenges is the development of Information Technology [IT]. Technology comes to the rescue in reducing the pressure of modern HR function, especially between the roles of strategic and administrative [ELLIG, 1997].

This electronic application can have an impact on every area of Human Resource Management (HRM) as describe bellow.

- (1) HR planning;
- (2) Recruitment and Selection
- (3) HR evaluation [performance appraisal]
- (4) Communication;
- (5) Rewarding HR [performance appraisal, compensation and benefits]
- (6) Developing HR [training and development, career management].

The practice of online recruitment is one of the most widely discussed functions of online HR. Online recruitment refers to posting vacancies on the corporate web site or on an online recruitment vendor's website, and allowing applicants to send their resumes electronically via e-mail or in some electronic format [GALANAKI, 2002]. It also includes the active search of the internet and the location of resumes. Online recruitment brings substantial benefits in terms of cost, time, candidate pool and quality of response. Resume overload, low reputation and effectiveness of various web sites and databases can be identified as limitations of this method [ENSHER ET AL., 2002]. In addition to that IT can be used for advance applications like sorting and contacting of candidates, conduct remote interviews and assessments such as psychometric and aptitude tests online and using banner advertisement online. The internet can

ease the selection of employees, especially where long distances are involved. Video conferencing and online tests, for example, have been extensively used at the early stages of the selection process and can achieve spectacular cost and time savings [Panayotopoulou, et al 2005].

2. Statement of Research Problem

The process of recruitment accounts for a larger portion of burden of the Human Resource Management [HRM] function. This would consume the management time which could be otherwise engaged in more effective work like training and development, appraisal, etc. And today all the companies are seeking for the best skilled employees since the survival of the company lies in the hands of their labour force. Also it has become a major problem to compete for and attract potential applicants in the present highly competitive environment. Would HR professional practice online recruiting to increase the functional efficiency and compete with rivals? To what extent they have engaged in online recruiting activities? What are the major barriers and concerns in implementing effective online recruitment in family own companies?

3. Objectives of the Study

The research was carried out with the expectation of accomplishing following objectives.

1. To identify family business owners attitudes towards online recruitment
2. To determine the level and the extent of using internet of employee recruitment in family companies
3. To identify the problems and barriers in using online recruitment effectively in family companies in Sri Lanka.

4. Significance of the Study

This study is aimed to assist to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in HR function in family own business in Sri Lanka in relation to recruiting and selection. A major advantage in adopting a rapid & successful online recruiting mechanism includes information reach & richness, cost saving & efficiency for both job seekers & recruiters. And also online recruiting allows instant & inexpensive dissemination of hiring information to a vast number of people without time & geographical constraints. Therefore this study would be helpful in identifying the current trend, concerns and problems in online recruiting and to improve the recruitment function in HRM.

In addition this study would be definitely helpful to move the HR functions of family business in align with global trends. Even Sri Lanka is in developing stage we have to move on with the global trends because the whole world is competing as a one market.

5. Literature Review

Family Business Organizations

Family Own Businesses (FOB) are a traditional way of conducting business within the private sector and it represent the majority of all type businesses in countries everywhere in the world (ASTRAKHAN AND SHANKER 2003; IFERA 2003). They occupy an important economic position within most of these nations as they provide broad contributions to worldwide economic production, employment and wealth creation (LA PORTA, LOPEZ-DE-SILANES, AND SHLEIFER 1999; IFERA 2003).

As per the overview of Family Business Relevant Issues Contract No. 30-CE-0164021/00-51 Final Report conduct by Austrian Institute for SME Research (2009) across Europe about 70 % - 80 % of enterprises are in this category. It is not far different from other countries all over the world. Not only that, it is contributed 40-50% of employment in Sri Lanka. On the one hand, a great amount of small and medium scale business (SME) is representing by the family business and it is common all over the world. The most of the large organizations incorporated as family companies at the beginning. Some large companies are in the world also representing this sector. So this family business has become influencing sector in any economy in the world.

E- Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of attracting the quantity and quality of personnel needed for the organization to fill the 'gap' between current personnel and forecasted personnel need. The main aims of recruitment can be defined as;

- To obtain a pool of suitable candidates for vacant posts
- To use a fair process in recruiting
- To ensure that all recruitment activities contribute to company goals and a desirable company image
- To conduct recruitment activities in an efficient and cost effective manner

The term of Online Recruitment [OR] e-recruiting, cyber-recruiting or internet recruiting imply the formal sourcing. It is fairly new practice. Its first reference goes to the mid 1980s [GENTNER, 1984, CASPER 1985]. But systematic reference comes from mid nineties. IT companies and Universities begins to use internet for recruiting extensively and from that point OR starts has been started to developing rapidly throughout the world, especially in the European countries [TAYLER, 2001]. As an example most of the large companies of the world are practicing internet for recruitment process. 95% of the fortune companies have career sites. 88.3% provide detailed information of the company. Employee benefits information was found in 82% of the sites examined and 78% include descriptions of the company's work culture or environment [YOUNG, FOOT, 2005].

The meaning of "online" in general is a device associated with a larger system under the direct control of the system. It is available for immediate use by the system, on demand, without human intervention, but may not be operated independently of the system. Online recruitment is a process where the whole recruitment process is done through use of web base applications and it may do with very little human intervention. With the development of IT the use of internet to recruit employees has become more popular throughout the world. Lievens, and Harris, [2003] identified several ways of using Internet for recruitment like company websites, job boards, e-recruiting, relationship recruiting and surreptitious approaches.

Due to the novelty of this term of online recruiting, different authors have given different interpretation on it. But this paper is aligned wit the definition given by the Chartered Institute

of Personnel and development [CIPD, 1999] with some inclusions by considering local developments. CIPD explains the common ways to utilize internet for recruiting such as

To add recruitment pages to company existing web site. This is the very common method use by especially Western countries, because minimal cost associated with developing a page with the corporate site [GALANAKI, 2002]. As per Seheyer and MCCater [1998] this is the smartest way to recruit on the internet.

To use web site specialist in recruiting employees. “Job Portals”, “Job Boards”, “online job agencies” can be categorized under this method. These sites work as an intermediaries between employer and job seekers. They collect resumes from job seekers and sort according to the employer requirement and forwarded to the employers to fulfill their prior informed requirements [RUDISH 2000, TAYLOR 2001].

In addition to that this study has included advertising on printed media/ electronic media and collected resumes through email by considering level of the development of IT Applications in Sri Lankan context. Some companies take online assistance to some other activities of the recruitment process such as conduct remote interviews and assessments such as psychometric and aptitude tests online and using banner advertisement online. those have identified as advance use of internet application.

Lee[2005] in suggests that the optimal investment cost in e-recruiting increases rapidly near the minimum number of employees to be recruited, but the growth of optimal investment cost slows down as the total number of employees becomes greater than the minimum number of employees to be recruited. He emphasized, achieving a strategic advantage from e-recruiting systems does not lie in the investment in technologies, but in the superior management of e-recruiting technologies and processors. According to Lee [2005] companies are in various stages of e-recruiting system development.

6. Methodology

6.1. Definition of Variables

• Use of Internet for recruiting

Online recruitment is the process of an organization building a career section in their own website, advertising the job vacancies on the web and collecting Curriculum Vitae's [CV's] via own web. This may further lead to online filtering, eligibility test, online interviews and final selection through Internet. The organization's position in online recruiting would vary depending on the extent of Internet usage for recruiting activities.

• Barriers and Problems in using Internet for recruiting

Barriers are constraints to reach the expected target. Organizations may face lot of issues in reaching towards online recruiting. Therefore these barriers may discourage organizations ability or concerns in moving towards an online recruiting system. The barriers on online recruitment are hurdle points, which organizations must evaluate in applying online recruitment activities effectively within an organization.

7. Population and Sample

The study population is medium size FOBs who have registered with National Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka and mainly operating in Colombo District. To recognize the population of the research it has been used following criteria's. The employed definition to differentiate family business form other business was the definition given by D. Olson a et al., [2003]. That is `` it as business that was owned and managed by one or more members of a household of two or more people related by blood, marriage or adoption.`` To categorized family business in to micro, small, medium and large has been used Austrian institute of SME Research classification. Thus this research has been taken in to consideration only medium size companies who has employees in between 50 to 249.

These companies are operating in wide area of business activities and widespread in both manufacturing and services sectors. Especially those can be identified with the field of tourism, agricultural, education and training, healthcare, information technology and food processing, finance, retail and wholesale, transport, garment, footwear Textiles & Apparel and etc. The total no of registered medium side family companies with this chamber just exceed 1750 (CMSL, 2008).

The population was divided into two groups as manufacturing and service sector and again these sub-sectors are divided into clusters according to the business they are involving. Thus out of the available sampling techniques, cluster sampling method was followed by dividing the total population in to a number of sub divisions and then by selecting a simple random sample of these sub divisions

The sample size acceptable is 5% of the population (COOPER AND SCHIDLER, 2008). The study estimated total population is 1750. Thus, the sample size is about 90 FOBs.

8. Data Collection

Basically two main methods used to collect data. As the primary technique, a questionnaire was prepared and given to owners of the company who is the head of the function in each company requesting the feedback. The questionnaire was distributed mainly through e mails and surface mails [for who don't have e mail facilities]. In addition few selected companies were being visited to have a discussion with the HR professionals.

9. Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed in following areas.

- The level of usage of the internet for Recruitment

The level of Internet Usage is measured by giving scores for each way of using internet for recruitment. Based on the fact that how advance it is, different scores [weightings) are assigned for each usage level. The weightings used for each usage is shown in table 1.

Tab 1 : Online Recruiting Weighing Measures

Usage	Weighting
No use of internet for recruiting and selection process	0%
Have a carrier section in own web site	7%
Advertise/ Post vacancies in the own web site	8%
Advertise vacancies on common job boards	9%
Collect CV via Email	9%
Collect CV's of the candidates online via job boards	9%
Collects CV's of the candidates online via own website	11%
Online filtering and eligibility test	12%
Advance use of internet (online interviews)	13%
Any other innovative ways	7%
% of CV's collected via e-channels	10%
Advertising method of vacancies	5%
Total	100%

- The score for item no. 1 to 10 is calculated as follows.

$$\text{Score} = U \times \text{weight}$$

Where $U = 1$, if the company is using the respective method

$U = 0$, if the company is not using the respective method

- The score for item no. 11 is calculated as

$$\text{Score} = V \times \text{weight}$$

Where $V = \frac{\text{no of CVs collected via e-channels}}{\text{Total no of CVs collected}}$

- The score for item no. 12 is calculated as

$$\text{Score} = W \times \text{weight}$$

Where $W = 1$, if only internet related channels used for advertising

$W = 0.5$, if both internet and other channels used for advertising

$W = 0$, if only other channels used for advertising

- Common problems and concerns in implementing effective online recruitment system.

Under barriers and problems of using online recruitment the most common barriers in current Sri Lankan context will be identified in the analysis. A percentage analysis will be done for the above areas and in addition correlation between the points will be analyzed. In each case segmental results will be presented for different industries and size of the company.

10. Data Analysis and Presentation

10.1. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis No 1

Null hypothesis: Top management of the medium size family business has positive attitudes towards e-recruitment application. ($H_0: \mu_1 \geq 3$)

Alternative hypothesis: Top management of the medium size family business has not positive attitudes towards e-recruitment application ($H_1: \mu_1 < 3$)

Under this hypothesis no 1, the study wanted to find out, whether top management of the mid size family business has positive attitude towards e- recruitment or not. The expected mean for accepting hypothesis is 3.

Tab 2: Statistical findings : Top Management attitudes towards –e-recruitment

One-Sample Statistics		
N	90	
Mean	3.08	
Std. Deviation	.78	
Std. Error Mean	.0819	
One – Sample Test (Test value =3)		
T	1.009	
Df	89	
Sig(2-tailed)	.316	
Mean Difference	.08	
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	.0801
	Upper	.2455

Source: Survey data 2009

Above table no 2 shows an N of 90, mean of 3.08 and SD of .78. The t. test output has a (2 tailed) / P value of 0.316. That means that the probability of a randomly drawing a sample of 90 from a population with a mean of 3 and getting a sample mean as low as 3.08 purely by chance is 31.6%. Since P value is more than .05 (Chosen significance level of the study), thus the null hypothesis can be accepted. Therefore the research can be concluded top management attitudes towards e- recruitment is positive.

Hypothesis No 2

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between 1st generation management and 2nd generation management about e- recruitment applications

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant difference between 1st generations Management and 2nd generation management about –e- recruitment applications

$$H1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Tab 3: Statistical findings: Generations attitudes towards –e- recruitment

Group Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1st Generation	55	2.85	.66	.088
2nd Generation	35	3.44	.82	.139
Independent Samples Test				
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed	
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	1.422		
t-test for Equality of Means	Sig.	0.236		
	t	-3.784		-3.6
	df	88		60.85
	Sig (2 tailed)	0		.001
	Mean Difference	-.059		-.59
	Std. Error Difference	.16		.16
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	Lower	-0.90466		-0.28162
	Upper	-0.92266		-0.26362

Source: Survey data 2009

Mean of the 1st generation owners is 2.85 and SD is .66, but with the 2nd generations it is respectively, mean 3.45 and SD 82. As per the results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, P value is .000, thus it is less than .05 the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. In other words, conclusion of the second hypothesis is two generations attitudes are significantly different each other

Number of organizations that follows each level of Internet for recruitment activities

Sample represents feedback of 90 family business companies in Sri Lanka. It encloses 55% of the organizations from service sector 45% of the organizations from manufacturing sector.

The table 1 represents the total number of organizations that follows each level of Internet for recruitment activities.

As shown in table 4, 21.8% of the organizations do not use Internet recruitment and related work and only 79.2% of the organizations use internet for recruitment According to the table 2, 93.5% of the companies in service sector use Internet for recruitment activities for some extend. However 59.5% of the organizations in manufacturing sector do not use Internet for recruiting and related work.

Based on the above analysis mostly widely used usage method of Internet for recruitment activities is collection of CVs via e-mail. From the total sample 81.75% of the organizations follow this approach. About 50.12% of the organizations have a carrier section in their own web site. But the high end use of online recruitment such as online filtering, online interviews and other innovative ways of usage are very low. Only a total of about 6.86% of the organizations use Internet for online filtering and other advance usages. Of which 8.35% of the organizations follow innovative ways under online recruitment such as advertising job vacancies in popular and commonly used web sites for example www.cricinfo.com, www.jobads.com, www.job-hunt.org/classified.shtml.

Tab No 4: Percentage analysis of level of Internet usage for recruitment

Level of Usage	Usage (%)		
	Service Sector (%)	Manufacturing Sector (%)	Total (%)
No use of internet for recruiting and selection process	6.5	40.5	21.8
Have a carrier section in own web site	62.5	35	50.13
Advertise/ Post vacancies in the own web site	64.3	15	42.12
Advertise vacancies on common job boards, Job portals, on line job agencies	28.2	18	23.61
Collect CV via Email	88.1	74	81.76
Collect CV's of the candidates online via job boards	37.2	48	42.06
Collects CV's of the candidates online via own web sits	19.8	33.2	25.83
Online filtering and eligibility test	8.3	5.1	6.86
Advance use of internet (online interviews)	7.9	5.6	6.87
Any other innovative ways	9.1	7.4	8.34
% of CV's collected via e-channels	3	2.1	2.56
Advertising method of vacancies	77.6	39.5	60.46

Source: Survey data 2009

The extent of service sector Internet usage for recruitment activities. Out of the available organizations in service sector 88.1% of organizations collect their CVs via e-mail. 64.3% of the service organizations have their own web site as well as they post job vacancies in their own website. It's almost 59.26% contribution to the total extent of Internet usage in online recruitment.

The total average score for use of Internet for recruitment is 30.88. Average usage level in manufacturing sector is 33.15 and in service sector it leads to 24.64.

Healthcare organizations have the highest average usage of amounting to 46.19. Secondly Information Technology industry gets ranked by obtaining 45.41. Telecommunication industry and Distributors and servicing industry come under a similar range of average score. The lowest average score of 5.63 has in Consultancy, Research and Educational industry.

Tab 5. Industrial average use of internet for recruitment and Selection

Represent Industries	Average use of internet (%)
Finance and Insurance	38.15%
Consultancy research , Education and training	05.63%
Retail and wholesale	41.15%
Information Technology	45.41%
Tourism	20.00%
Healthcare	46.19%
Transportation	19.85%
Communication	43.13%
Food and beverages (food processing)	35.15%
Footwear	18.00%
Textiles and Apparel (Garments)	39.45%

Source: Survey data 2009

- **Comparison of total applications collected via e-channels**

The analysis was done by considering the total number of applications that organizations have received from different sources during last six months. Some of the identified sources are internet, job agencies and surface mail, head hunting and etc. 55% of the applications were received from other sources such as surface mail. Then 37% of the applications were received via e-mail and only 8% of the applications were received via web. Therefore more than 50% of the applications were collected from other sources such as postal and by hand.

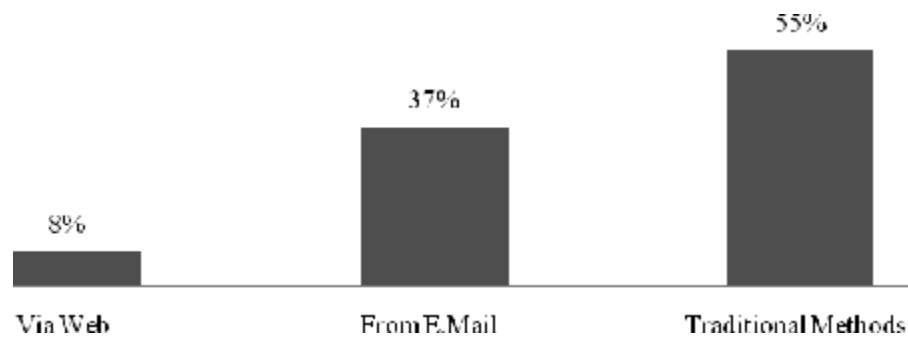


Fig 1: Different source in collection of applications

Source: Survey data 2009



Fig 2: Methods use in advertising the job vacancies

Source: Survey Data 2009

- **Methods used in advertising the job vacancies**

Analysis was done by considering five main methods of job advertising. The most popular advertising method is both news papers and internet. It explains that 48% of the sample follows this method. Only 3% of the organizations use Internet only to advertise job vacancies. Where as 23% of the organizations use only news papers to advertise the vacancies. The 20% of other methods represent the advertising through professional institutes, job boards and by word of mouth.

- **Barriers and Problems in using Internet for recruiting**

Out of the available organizations, 46% of the organizations has identified that it's difficult to use Internet for recruitment. Of which 52% of the organizations from service sector and 48% of the organizations from manufacturing sector facing lot of issues in implementing an effective online recruitment system.

The most common barrier among organizations is that confidence about other modes (specially with news papers). 13% of organizations has pointed out that through Internet usage it's difficult to identify the soft skills of the employees. Another major reason for the above is poor performance of the selected candidates through internet mode. The other barriers is that poor response in the past occasions. It has already mention by 23% of them.

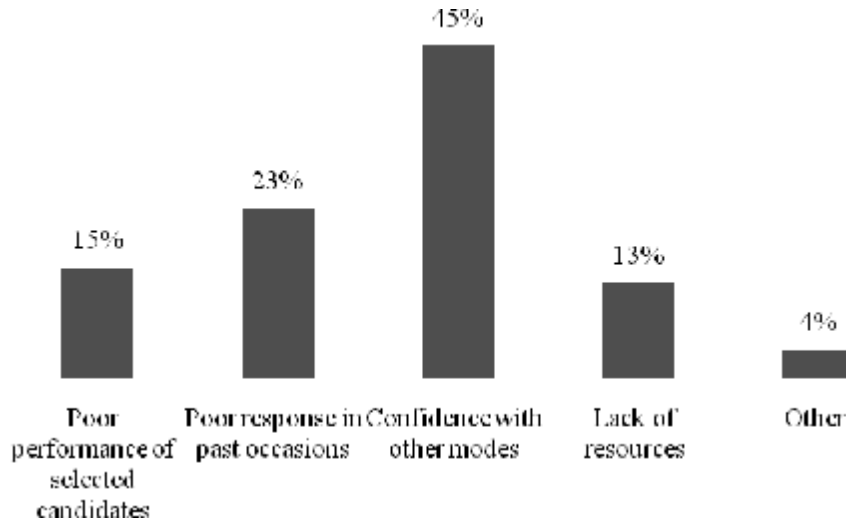


Fig 3 – Barriers and problems for internet recruiting

Source: Survey data 2009

11. Conclusion

In conclusion the extent of Internet usage for recruiting activities in FOBs in Sri Lanka is still in the developing stage. However since most of the companies have begun to advertise the job vacancies in newspapers as well as in Internet it gives an indication of an expected growth level of Internet usage for recruitments in the future.

Companies cannot move out from the traditional approach completely since the unavailability of required IT infrastructure for the whole population, there is an indication that companies are in the process of moving towards the online recruiting specially for white collar jobs.

Even most of the FOBs management has positive attitudes towards e* recruitment and they are willing to move towards online recruiting majority of them find it difficult to implement an effective online recruitment system. 40% of the companies have barriers in using online recruiting. Of which the most commonly identified problem is that it's not being produce sufficient results during past occasions. In conclusion usage level of internet for recruitment process is comparatively lower due to the above stated issues. However it indicates that there will be an increase usage of internet for recruitment in the future with the expected advancements in the IT infrastructure availability and affordability. Most of the organizations future expectation is to enhance the methods used for Internet based recruiting activities. The organizations further pointed out that there is a high need of education among organizations and people in Sri Lanka regarding the use of Internet for recruitment activities.

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