Transforming Exchange-based Job Boards

into Lasting Career Communities

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Problem Analysis

Large numbers of e-recruiting platforms fail

- job crawler

- matching

- up-to date profiles

- responsiveness

- speed

- clicks, relevant applications

- push services

Research Question

How to achieve active + long-term user
participation in e-reruiting platforms?

Theory

- Incorporate sense of community in e-recruiting
  - shared identity
  - shared interests
  - commonality
  - sense of belonging
  - social presence fosters pre-existing ties

However…

- Many seemingly successful niche approaches arranged around communities also failed to get users participate in the long run

Long-term sustainability…

- Online features:
  - Information Quality
  - System Quality
  - Service Quality

- Offline features:
  - How offline communication can be complemented by online communication →lock-in users

Data Collection

- Austrian engineer career platform
- Ethnography and in-depth interviewing
- Interviewed 60 users
- Visited 7 school career fairs
- 2 graduate students' projects

Interview Questions

- Identify what services an e-recruiting platform needs to offer so that users actively re-use the service in the long run?

- Users shared needs and interests?

Analysis

- Listened to all 60 interviews

- Compiled narratives of interviews

- Compared field notes, narratives and digital communications

- Coded data according to Riding & Gefen's (2004) typology for reasons of engaging in online communitites

Results

- 56 of 60 engineers noted they would re/-use an online career service if specifically targeted at engineers' needs.

- Classical Job-boards:
  - seen as exchange-based services.
  - no value or interest to maintain long-term participation.
  - no interest to frequently update profiles.
  - prefer to fill out resume pages of corporate websites to job boards or personal agencies.

Results

- Users intend to use e-recruiting services throughout their life if those services are:

  - complemented by social network/ community applications
  - aimed at specific user niches sharing a similar social identity and offling ties
  - possibility to communicate online with offline fellow-known engineers or FoF
  - Engineers are not keen on developing or maintaining a strong netwok with fully unknown registered engineers

Results

„It would be neat to see who of my friends have friends who work at BMW; you get a much more realistic picture of the company when getting advice from fellow-colleagues than trying to find out everything yourself."

Results

„When I want to apply for a job in a different location n Austria, then it would be great to have some online search option to find out if some of my schools' graduates already work in the same area or company."

Results

- System designers are challenged to create private (for friends) and public (for recruiters) spaces:

  - „How can you make sure that my boss will not find my profile in the database?

  - „Sure I want my profile for friends to look different than my applicant profile".

Shared interests

- Information Exchange
  - Career info page on how to find jobs, prepare application docs, interview tips, training programs, links to companies, sector info page, salary calculator etc.)

- Friendship
  - Personal page with contact info, sharing pictures, differnt groups for hobbies, cities, army service, civil service groups etc.)

Shared interests

- Social support:
  - Sharing experiences, problems, reports, exams, music, games etc.)

- Recreation:
  - Work-climate index in different companies, events and activities, sports info etc.)

Community differentiation

- Application documents: pay attention to….
- Job Interviews: exchange your experiences with fellows
- My first steps as engineer…
- Trainee programs: Small talk about my career start
- Inside Bosch, Inside Siemens etc.
- My internship: exchange experiences with fellows
- Work-climate: That's how I have experienced it there….
- Engineering fields of study: search….
- Branch information
- Company A (Audi), B (BMW): connect with other engineers
- My job abroad
- The best links for engineering careers
- Developmental opportunities: That's how I was supported by BMW etc.

Conclusions

- A mere niche e-recruiting approach is not enough to maintain an active userbase.

- Niche providers need to stay in close touch with their users to sense shifting needs of their most wanted and most innovative users (lead users).

- Educational ties seem to offer the foundation for continued online interaction in the engineering career portal.

- Future belongs to those providers that best understand users shared social identity and succeed in providing semantic technologies so as to enhance users' online experiences.