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## **e-Recruitment: from transaction-based practices to relationship-based approaches.**

(draft)

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**Abstract.** Internet has already impacted the recruitment process. The development of Web 2.0 offers new perspectives to recruiters. Are Web 2.0 practices revealing new e-recruitment strategies? We first connect the RBV (Resource-Based View) and the SNT (Social Network Theory) respectively with Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. Then, we present the results from an exploratory study conducted among recruiters in software and computing services companies. It appears that the use of Web 1.0 is generalized but insufficient. Web 2.0 is used by firms to develop employer branding, reputation and to create new relationships with potential applicants. In conclusion, we adapt Ruël *et al.*'s e-HRM model to obtain a global view of e-recruitment issues.

### **1 Introduction**

“Every sector, every job, every function, was, is or will be disrupted by Internet” stated Kalika in 2000 [29].

The HR sector is undergoing a transformation. In January 2009, *Monster* had over 80 million resume on their entire database. *LinkedIn*'s social network had over 44 million members around the world in August 2009. According to a recent *CareerBuilder.com* survey [9], forty-five percent of employers use social networking sites to search applicants (more than 2,600 U.S hiring managers participated in the survey).

According to Lepak and Snell (1998) [33], the HR Function must confront four seemingly contradictory pressures. HR departments are required to be simultaneously strategic, flexible, efficient, and customer-oriented. Certain authors have suggested that the use of technology may enable them to achieve these goals [32, 33, 52]. It is important to distinguish between HRIS and e-HRM. HRIS focus on the HR department itself in order to improve the processes within the function, whereas e-HRM also focuses on the employees and management [52]. e-HRM can be defined as “*a way of implementing HR strategies, policies, and practices in organizations through a conscious and directed support of and/or with the full use of web-technology-based channels*” (Ruël *et al.*, 2004, p.365-366 [52]).

In the words of Ruël *et al.* (2004) [52], this can be both an innovation and an irritation. It can be an irritation when the project or the goals are unclear or unrealistic, when the type of e-HRM does not satisfy users' needs, when everything is determined by the technology. Yet it can be an innovation because it makes the decentralization of management possible, by giving more responsibilities to local managers and employees. It gives the HR function the

possibility of focusing on value-creating activities, right through to the automation and outsourcing of low-value activities. It can thus become a real strategic partner of the organization by developing the intangible capital of the company.

Little research focuses on the role played by a specific HR process.

An organization's ability to attract and retain employees, however, is crucial. Recruitment, which is the point of entry into an organization for employees, plays a critical role in enhancing organizational survival and success [44]. Candidates, or future employees, are a veritable source of performance.

The recruitment process has been profoundly affected by major changes: the retirement of the "baby boomers", an increasing need for flexibility and responsiveness, and complex modes of communication. The development of new "social and sociable" media technology [38] called "Web 2.0" offers companies and recruiters new perspectives. Despite the growing importance of e-recruitment, research in this area remains very limited and applicant-oriented [7, 34]. The opportunities offered by Web 2.0 have been studied little, as the use of these tools is relatively recent.

Our main research issue is: Are web 2.0 practices revealing new e-recruitment strategies?

In the first part of this paper we link the Resource Based View with Web 1.0 and the Social Network Theory with Web 2.0. In the second part, we expose the results of an exploratory study on the recruitment practices of Software and Computing Services Companies (SCSC). Both parts give us the possibility to develop an e-recruitment model based on Ruël *et al.*'s (2004) [52] e-HRM model in a third part.

## **2. Theoretical basis for e-Recruitment: Competencies and Social Networks**

### **2.1 Resource-Based View, a theoretical basis for e-Recruitment 1.0**

The recruitment process is in harmony with a comprehensive approach to competence management. We can effectively distinguish three main aspects within competence management [14]: acquire, promote and regulate individual and collective skills. Competence management has evolved over time. Today, competence management is considered to be strategic and a source of competitive advantage [17]. Here we see the emergence of a new model for organizing and managing the workforce, at odds with that of qualification.

Thus, according to the Resource-Based View [3], companies should not be seen only in terms of their business portfolio, but should be defined as a unique set of tangible and intangible resources, a portfolio of core competencies and distinct resources [48]. Employees also play a real role in the success of organizations.

The nature of work in the 21st century presents many challenges for recruitment [47]: knowledge-based work places greater demands on employee competencies; demographic, societal, and cultural changes are widespread and are creating an increasing global shortfall in the number of qualified applicants; the workforce is also increasingly diverse [47]. Chambers *et al.* [10] use the term "the war for talents". Talent management consists in identifying the critical positions, knowledge and skills required for these positions and then attracting and retaining individuals corresponding to the established profile [22].

Recruitment is thus the first stage in a comprehensive approach to competence and talent management. Peretti (2004) [46] divides the recruitment activity into four stages: preparation,

research, selection and integration. With the Internet, recruitment methods are evolving and diversifying. Companies are adopting a dual approach [44], using both high and low technical approaches, but the Internet has taken on increasing importance in the recruitment process. According to a recent survey conducted by APEC [1], the French association for executive employment, the job market is becoming more and more transparent: 63% of recruitment operations result in job advertisements. E-recruitment can be defined as “the use of any technology to attract, select or manage the recruitment process” [45] (p. 5).

In this perspective we can distinguish three main aspects of web 1.0:

**Career websites:** These websites have several objectives: improving the visitor’s knowledge of a company, promoting an attractive image of an employer and of course generating applications. Recent research has focused on the attraction potential of employers’ websites [11, 39]. Cober *et al.* (2004) [11], by means of content analyses, demonstrated that esthetics, content and function have an impact on applicants’ decision whether or not to maintain their application.

**Job boards:** These platforms give companies the possibility of communicating their job offers to a large public, at little cost, and with access to a large number of CV databases. Job boards can be generalist, like *Monster.com*, or specialized, either by region (such as *Regionsjob.com*), or by sector, such as *Lesjeudis.com* in information technology. Specialized job boards provide more targeted information, the research systems are more adapted, and the CVs are in general more qualified [21].

**Recruitment systems:** According to the case studies conducted by Parry and Tyson (2008) [45], the use of both career websites and recruitment systems has several benefits: cost reduction, efficiency gains, improved service to clients and improved strategic orientation. Lee (2005) [31] developed a five-stage evolution model for the corporate e-recruiting system, classified by the distinct technology features and management practices of the corporate career web sites. His analysis of the Fortune 100 companies showed that most companies have yet to reach Stage 4.

The development of these different tools gives companies the possibility to access to important data bases of competencies. Web 1.0 applications allow them to communicate on a large scale. They can target and manage the future core competencies of the company to obtain a competitive advantage in line with the RBV.

## 2.2 Social Network Theory, a theoretical basis for e-Recruitment 2.0

Social Network Theory and Social Capital Theory make it possible to explain the network’s contribution to recruitment practices.

Bourdieu (1986) [6] defined social capital as “the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of more or mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p.248). Social Network and Social Capital are two closely linked notions that can be assessed in terms of three dimensions: the strength of the ties, the network’s structure and the nature of the contact attributes.

Granovetter (1973) [24] has regularly used the job market to illustrate his work on social networks. Since 1973, he has put emphasis on “the strength of weak ties” characterized by

infrequent contact over time, a low level of emotional intensity, a low level of intimacy, and a low amount of reciprocal services. Contrary to networks with strong ties, networks of weak ties make it possible to get in touch with a large number of people and groups and to access new information and opportunities.

Burt (1992) [8] links up with Granovetter by qualifying the absence of bridges between groups as “structural holes” and highlights the competitive advantage it represents with respect to informational benefits. According to him, the structure of the network is important. A network composed of low redundant contacts makes it possible to obtain original information. Coleman (1988) [12] and Putnam (1995) [49] do not share this point of view. They highlight the importance of trust in the development of social capital. These two visions are conflicting yet complementary. Evolving in a closed and dense network, characterized by a high level of trust and a normative framework, can encourage collaboration. On the contrary, being in touch with different cliques makes it possible to acquire more diverse and innovative information.

For Lin *et al.* (1981) [35], what is important it is not the strength of the ties maintained with an individual, but the resources accessible through the latter: the higher the contact status used, the higher the occupational status obtained.

From an applicant’s point of view, mobilizing a social network makes it possible to obtain more information about the company and the job [35, 50, 26]. This method may also enable applicants to acquire better wages [25, 26]).

From an employer’s perspective, according to Rees (1966) [50], making use of one’s own network or that of the staff should limit the number of applications whilst simultaneously ensuring their quality and also reduce absenteeism and turnover. This method is both less expensive and more effective because of the confidence there is in the applications [26]. Companies no longer think twice about seeking out their employees’ networks. Some have formalized this method and put in place an effective cooptation policy. A survey conducted by DARES shows that over 50% of recruiters mobilize their networks during the recruitment process [23].

ICT has generated new opportunities for interpersonal exchanges. In recent years, the term social network has been widely used in the Internet context. It is often associated with the term Web 2.0 [42]. Web 1.0 fitted into a scheme of "author to readers" while the Web 2.0 tends to reduce hierarchies by allowing readers to become real actors and be at the center of exchanges. It is user-centered and it enhances information sharing. This term is still much criticized, and "Web 2.0" can be seen as a purely marketing concept. However, it represents real evolution in the Web and its uses.

According to Martin *et al.* (2008) [38], Web 2.0 tools: give companies the opportunity to encourage greater collaboration; give customers, employees and potential employees greater voice; help them to learn about each other and share their knowledge and experiences.

Moreover, the Net Generation (also called Generation Y or Virtual Generation, born from the late 1970s to mid 1990s), is now entering the workplace and companies cannot ignore this phenomenon. In line with Tapscott (2008) [53], this generation has had a unique set of formative experiences (AIDS, expanding democracies, 9/11) and technologies (Internet, mobile phones, music downloading, multi-user video games). Net generation is multi-task, pursuing reactivity by being less passive and more active thanks to the interaction with technology [13]. The independence, the choice and the mobility will be considered as a goal to reach [53].

Attracting, retaining and engaging these employees in an increasingly competitive environment will demand that companies understand the Net Generation and the individuals who will emerge as its leaders [53].

In line with Leader-Chivee *et al.* (2008) [30] social network sites can help talent planners track employees through various career stages, from the time of entering a prospective talent pool within a corporate community, through hire, promotion, alumni status, boomerang hiring, career development, retirement and beyond.

In the recruitment framework, the most representative Web 2.0 tools are:

**Blogs:** Blogs are personal editorial spaces that allow individuals to publish and distribute content easily. A great number of the blogs that can be seen are created by applicants and recruiters. They use these spaces to broadcast their job offers and create their own “job blog”. For instance, Microsoft is developing blogs, such as *Microsoftjobsblog.com*, for recruiting purpose [28]. Several researchers are studying employee and corporate blogs [36, 27, 19]. New forms of blogs are emerging, called « micro-blogs ». Micro-blog differs from a traditional blog because posts (*tweets*) are limited to 140 characters. The most famous example of a micro-blogging tool is *Twitter.com*. Tweets are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to subscribers who are known as *followers*. Recruiters can use it to display job offers and source applicants [40]. Job search engines for Twitter have even been created (like *TwitterJobSearch.com*).

**Online Social Networks:** These relationship platforms can be generalist such as *Facebook.com* and *Myspace.com* or specialized like *Linkedin.com* or *Viadeo.com* (the two main professional platforms). Such sites make it possible to stay in touch with former friends and colleagues but also to find customers, suppliers, partners and future employees. Recruiters can do head hunting and contact “passive applicants” [15] (we tend to prefer the term “proactive”). A recommendation system makes it possible to put one's profile to advantage with the comments of former employers.

**Virtual worlds:** These are 3-D platforms, like *SecondLife.com*, where user create a character (“avatar”) and evolve in a world of virtual reality. It is a real place of expression that encourages the creation of communities. Virtual worlds offer a broad range of research opportunity [41]. There are many issues: marketing, IT, legal, psychological, social and of course HR issues. In June 2007, the first French recruitment forum on *Second Life*, called “Neo-JobMeeting”, was organized. Alstom, Areva, Capgemini, L'Oréal and Unilog (now Logica CMG) joined the event, which recorded 1,500 participants.

**Cooptation websites:** These websites, which are based on a network of people who are motivated (financially speaking) to find potential applicants within their entourage, are also a way of attracting new talents (the two French leaders are *Jobmeeters.com* and *Cooptin.com*). These platforms are showing greater confidence.

**Identity management websites:** These websites, such as *Ziki.com*, make it possible to improve your visibility on the internet by, for example, centralizing and synchronizing on one page: your blog, your social profiles... and by promoting your page through a Google commercial link.

**RSS feeds (Real Simple Syndication):** This is a web feed format used to publish content. It makes it possible to follow in real-time different kinds of information contained on several web sites, for instance blogs. Updated information is automatically posted to your navigator,

on a search engine of job offers (*Moovement.fr* for example), or on other Internet sites such as aggregators (like *Netvibes.com* and *iGoogle.com*). Applicants can select several RSS feeds and be informed about new job opportunities as they become available.

**Video platforms:** These platforms, such as *Youtube.com* or *Youjob.com*, give companies the opportunity to present their work and job offers, and applicants the possibility of introducing their CV. Another use of video is to allow interviews by means of web cams during a meeting or an online specialized event.

These tools can be used simultaneously. For instance, Sun Microsystems uses blogs, Facebook fan pages, several islands on *SecondLife.com* and broadcasts videos on *YouTube.com*. Employees learn to use these tools to “boost innovation, connect with executives and each other - and spread the good word about Sun” [2] (p.6).

However, many job applicants can place themselves in defenseless positions by posting unattractive, inappropriate, unprofessional materials on publicly accessible social networks sites [20]. Indeed, the line between social and business networking is becoming increasingly blurred [18]. Job seekers should to be careful of the information they display online, and companies too. According to Deloitte LLP Ethics and Workplace survey [16], 74% of employees surveyed say it is easy to damage a company’s reputation on social media. There have been a number of cases where an employee’s misuse of social media has lead to their dismissal [43, 54].

Web 2.0 gives companies the possibility to increase their social capital. Employees and applicants can have access to a wider network, maintain and develop new relationships. Recruiters can directly contact people with interesting profiles which did not apply before. According to the SNT, developing, mobilizing a social network represents several advantages for both applicants and employers.

### **3. Results of an exploratory study**

The aim of this study is to determine if Web 2.0 tools are really used by companies, how they use it and for what purpose. In the present case, we have chosen to study software and computing service companies (SCSC). They have considerable recruitment activity and they use Internet widely.

The exploratory study was carried out from May to June 2008. It was based on semi-directive interviews, with either face to face or telephone interviews. This method of data collection is justified by the exploratory nature of the study and the type of data collected: current recruitment practices, the practices that are considered, reasons, opinions. The sample was chosen for convenience. Although the size of the sample may seem small, if we consider the size of the companies interviewed and their recruitment dynamism, this sample nevertheless provides a global view of the phenomenon. Data saturation was achieved after eleven interviews; those interviews have been recorded and transcribed.

**Table 1.** Sample characteristics

<b>Number of people / number of companies</b>	11 recruiters including 2 from the same company (1 located in a country city and the other in the Head Office).
<b>Affiliated organization size</b>	1 company has less than 100 employees, 3 between 2,500 and 4,999, 4 between 5,000 and 10,000, 2 more than 10,000.
<b>Location and local agency size</b>	5 people were at the Head Office, 6 at local agencies: 1 agency has less than 100 employees, 5 between 100 and 500.
<b>Recruitment plan for 2008</b>	1 company does not have specific objectives, 2 are planning between 500 and 1,000 recruitments, 7 between 1,500 and 2,500.

After transcription, a content analysis was performed by coding themes and defining a reading grid. A second phase of coding consisted in comparing each interview, from which five main results emerged. Pragmatic validity was estimated by sending results to participants and analyzing their comments.

### **3.1 The competence profile is becoming more important than position profile.**

5 companies declared to think exclusively in terms of competence profile and not in terms of position profile. The 5 others adopt both types of recruitment, but think more in terms of competence. Each company mentioned that this practice enables them to anticipate their needs. Internships are a starting point for young graduates to integrate the organization. Applicants are mainly hired on an open-ended work contract. These results are in line with the strategic evolution of competence management [17].

### **3.2 Web 1.0 is essential for recruitment transactions but is becoming insufficient**

Job boards, career websites and recruitment systems are used by all companies. Most recruiters admit that it is difficult for them to evaluate the changes brought about by the first-generation Web because they have never worked without an Internet connection. However, they think that the first-generation Web enabled them to advertise job offers easily and cheaply, whilst appealing to a larger public and making better application management possible. This result is in line with the study carried out by Parry and Tyson (2008) [45].

However, considering the highly competitive environment in which SCSC operate, the classic Web or Web 1.0 is becoming insufficient for recruitment purposes.

*“The classic Web still remains a support that cannot be ignored [...] but it is not sufficient anymore.”*

*“We must cope with a shortage of computer engineers. [...] Service companies have approximately the same needs and tend to contact the same profiles available on classic job boards, which tend to increase wage demands, expectations, and applicants’ demands in general.”*



**Table 2.** Classic tools (Web 1.0) used by SCSC for recruiting.

Means	SCSC									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Job boards</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Career websites</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Software</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Internships</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Cooptation policy</b>	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	
<b>Recruitment agencies</b>	x	x		x			x	x		x
<b>Events planning</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

### 3.3 Web 2.0 is used to develop an employer’s branding and reputation

SCSC use Web 2.0 as a complement to “real” events (forums, student events, speed-recruiting sessions...). Web 2.0 is considered to be a means of communication and differentiation.

*Second Life* is the most representative example. Of the 10 companies contacted, 3 have already launched a recruitment session on *Second Life* in 2007. It was a one-off communication operation above all. Few applicants were hired (about 1 to 3 recruitments for each company) but it allowed the companies involved to convey an innovative image of themselves.

However, no further recruitment sessions are planned. The others companies do not intend to invest in *Second Life* for the moment. This is no longer considered to be as interesting in terms of communication as it used to be, because other companies have already invested in this virtual world and only a few people were hired.

**Table 3.** Web 2.0 tools used by SCSC for recruiting.

<b>Web 2.0</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
<b>SecondLife</b>	x			x					x	
<b>Viadeo</b>	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	
<b>Facebook</b>									x	
<b>Video</b>	x	x	x			x			x	
<b>Blogs</b>						x				

### 3.4 Web 2.0 makes it possible to manage new relationships with applicants

Web 2.0 gives SCSC the opportunity to increase their social capital by creating new relationships and reaching out to potential applicants. Members of social networks are not always in-between jobs but they stay open to job opportunities. These proactive applicants are interesting for SCSC that are constantly searching for new profiles.

*“This technology [Web 2.0] makes it possible for us to approach applicants differently, nowadays we recruit differently”.*

Innovative practices appear and tend to develop. 7 companies use *Viadeo*’s social network (since 2008). *Facebook* is used by one company through an application that allows employees (not only recruiters) to display open positions on their profiles. Another company is developing its own application. 5 companies have participated in recruitment sessions through video conferences via *YouJob* or *Waliitech* and/or have used video to hold an interview and

promote the company (for example *Enlignepourlemploi*). One company has created blogs about different parts of its activities in order to demonstrate its expertise, develop communities, promote the company and get acknowledgment. It uses the *Netvibes* aggregator to create a unique information space. These practices are recent; we do not have the required distance regarding the outcomes of Web 2.0.

Web 2.0 used as complementary information about an applicant that has already been identified has divided opinions. Three recruiters think that this practice enables them to see the applicant from a different perspective. The others were more critical, for several reasons, including lack of time, lack of efficiency and lack of ethics. Information is often dispersed on the Internet, and certain web sites, like *Facebook*, mix private life and professional life. If applicants managed their web reputation better, and made use of privacy settings to limit access to private information, this practice could perhaps be easier.

### **3.5 Two possible evolutions: decentralization of recruitment responsibilities or development of outsourcing**

Of the 9 companies with local agencies, 8 have decentralized recruitment management. Each agency carries out its own research and interviews and has access to CV databases. The software makes it possible to share information better and encourages decentralization of recruitment responsibilities into the regions.

In addition, the development of online social networks could generate a decentralization of recruitment responsibilities to employees. 9 out of 10 companies have implemented a genuine cooptation policy. Companies declare that applications are generally of better quality. Web 2.0 could facilitate this policy. 2 companies encourage their teams to co-opt through these networks and develop their social capital. This decentralization phenomenon is in line with Ruël *et al.* (2004) [52].

Conversely, Web 2.0 practices could be externalized toward recruitment agencies specialized in this area. The lack of time and resources underlined by some companies could be resolved in this way. Companies have already solicited recruitment agencies to recruit for specific positions, either highly qualified profiles or those with technical skills that are difficult to find. This possibility runs counter to the externalization conditions defined by Lepak and Snell (1998) [33], according to which the core HR activities are capable of being supported internally as a means of achieving competitive advantage. Recruitment agencies can, however, provide expertise and offer confidentiality.

Evolutions observed in the literature and in the exploratory study are presented in the table below. Obviously, e-Recruitment 1.0 and e-Recruitment 2.0 are not in opposition to one another; they may even be complementary.

**Table 4.** e-Recruitment 1.0 *versus* e-Recruitment 2.0.

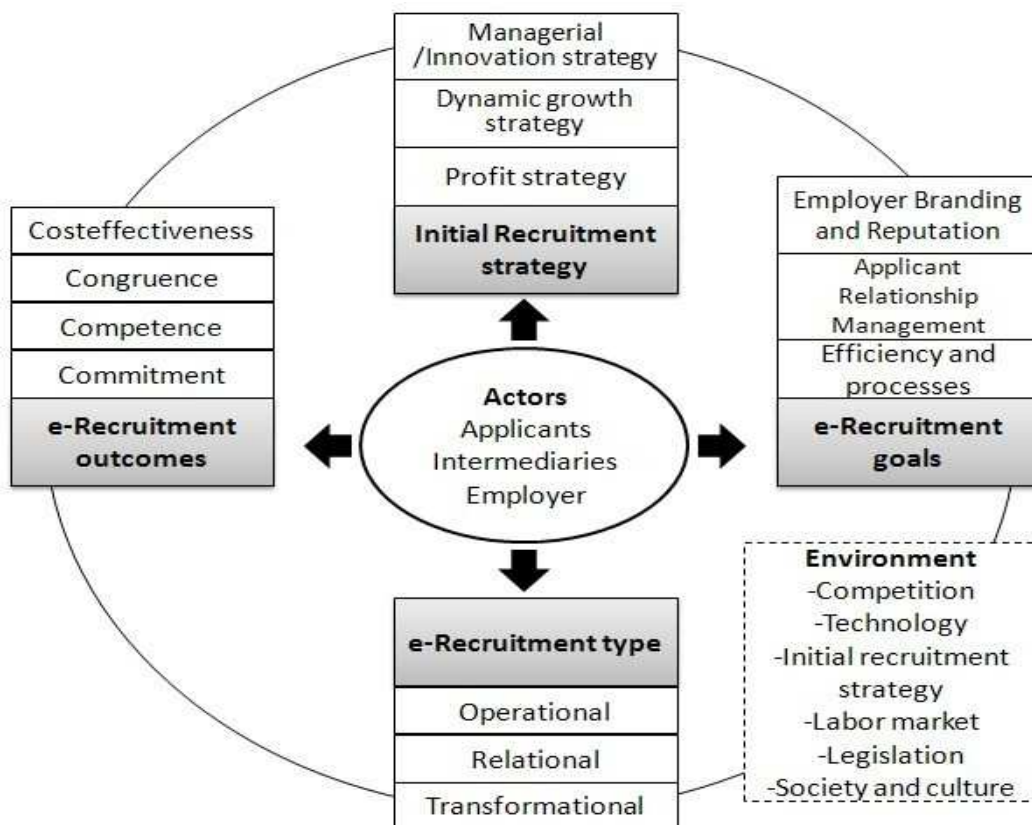
e-Recruitment 1.0	e-Recruitment 2.0
from <i>transactional</i> recruitment (one-shot, short term) ...	... to <i>relational</i> recruitment (applicant relationship management, long term, strategic role)
Large job boards	Development of new services, social networks
Subscription to CV databases	Almost free CV and profiles (especially on blogs)
E-mail alerts ("push mail" service)	RSS feeds, real-time information
Basic job advertisement (text)	Rich media advertisement (audio, video, animation)
Active recruiters (job advertising) or even passive recruiters (CV selection)	Proactive recruiters (social networks, blogs...)
Active applicants (CV posting, reply to advertisement )	Proactive applicants (open to market opportunities)
Jobs forum	Virtual jobs forum, online events
Classic communication (advertisement)	Development of employer's reputation and branding
Centralization of recruitment management	Decentralization of recruitment responsibilities (easy cooptation through social networks) and/or Externalization toward recruitment agencies.

The literature review and exploratory study give a better understanding of recruitment issues. Internet is essential; the interviewed recruiters cannot imagine to work without Internet. Web 1.0 brought tools giving access to important data bases of competencies. Web 2.0 reveals the shift from exchange-based recruitment practices to relationship-based approaches. Recruiters can increase their social capital by creating new relationships and reaching out to potential applicants. They can also develop employer branding and reputation and play a more strategic role within the company.

#### **4. Discussion and conclusion**

Based on the literature review and exploratory study we can extend our research by developing an e-recruitment model adapted from Ruel *et al.*'s e-HRM model, following the same division: strategy, goals, type and outcomes (see Fig. 1).

**Fig. 1.** E-Recruitment model, adapted from Ruël *et al.* (2004) [52].



**Initial recruitment strategy**, in line with Beyssere des Horts (1987) [5].

**Profit strategy.** Used in organizations with mature activities, high cost reduction and sales objectives and a lot of rules and control procedures. The recruitment process is very standardized. Career perspectives are limited. Organizations only look for people that are strictly needed. Positions are explicitly described and concern narrow range of skills. We can refer to this as recruitment by profile.

**Dynamic growth strategy.** Used in organizations where activities are growing quickly. Organizations have to make difficult choices between diverse priorities. There is a permanent dilemma between actual and future activities. The recruitment process is not really formalized. Recruitment is vital as it is needed to attract the best talent to facilitate the rapid development of the company. The recruitment concerns applicants with high potential and good career perspectives. Applicants are quickly operational and flexible. We can refer to this as recruitment by competence or talent, thus favoring experienced profiles.

**Managerial (innovation) strategy.** Used in organizations which are starting their activity or developing new ones (*e.g.* start-ups). Expertise and competency are the organizational value. The recruitment process is open and not really formalized. Recruitment concerns mainly young applicants with potential in key activities. There are very real career perspectives. We can refer to this as recruitment by competence or talent, but favoring young potential.

### **e-Recruitment goals.**

Efficiency and processes: the recruitment function, like the HR function, should work efficiently and be aware of costs [33, 32, 52]. Parry and Tyson (2008) [45] demonstrated by means of a case study that the introduction of e-recruitment systems is motivated mainly by cost reduction and efficiency gains.

Applicant relationship management: Another increasing business need is to develop better candidate relationship management practices [51]. Technology could make it possible to ensure better management of applications during the entire recruitment process [45], as well as to develop close and long-term relationships with job seekers. E-Recruitment systems - like "Candidate Relationship Management software" [31, 51] - but also online social networks, have the potential to achieve these goals. According to our exploratory study, Web 2.0 offers new means for engaging relationships with applicants.

Employer branding and reputation: In order to acquire the best employees, organizations must be attractive. According to Martin and Hetrick (2006) [37], strategic HR practices and communications can shape the quality of employment relations and contribute significantly to corporate reputations and branding. Internet technology is both an opportunity and a challenge, especially for the recruitment sector. It is an opportunity, because it offers the possibility for two-way communication, interactivity, dynamism and better connectivity, particularly with new Web 2.0 media. It makes it possible to both improve the candidates' experience and develop an innovative and attractive image. But it is also a challenge, because public online postings about the organization are easily disseminated and accessible. Employers need to respect the power gained by applicants through their online connections.

**e-Recruitment type**, based on Lepak and Snell (1998) [33].

Operational e-Recruitment. This concerns basic e-Recruitment transactions characterized by short term applicant relationships, global messages and major automation.

Relational e-Recruitment. This type of e-Recruitment is characterized by the development of "real" applicant relationships (middle-long-term) through better feed-back, the personalization of applicant messages, and the use of Web 2.0 tools, such as social network sites.

Transformational e-Recruitment. This concerns strategic e-Recruitment. It is anchored in a global talent management strategy, consisting in identifying the critical positions, knowledge and skills required for these positions and then attracting and retaining individuals who correspond to the established profile [22]. Employer branding and reputation could be a solid support.

**e-Recruitment outcomes**, adapted from Beer *et al.*'s outcomes (1984) [4].

High commitment. The workforce is motivated and understanding, and they are willing to interact with the management about organizational changes. For the recruitment function itself, such outcomes can be characterized for example in terms of: job satisfaction, psychological contract, motivation, integration.

High competence. This points towards the ability employees have to learn new tasks and roles. It requires careful selection of employees from the beginning, identification of the skills and potential of future employees, for instance in terms of flexibility, learning capacity and responsibility. The development of their competencies and retaining them, will then also be critical.

Cost effectiveness. This refers to the competitiveness of pay levels and employee turnover rate, and to the acceptability of costs resulting from employee resistance such as strikes. Cost effectiveness can be attained by means of recruitment activities by accurately setting initial

pay levels, rigorous selection that improves initial job satisfaction and initial job performance, and thus reduces turnover rate.

Higher congruence concerns the internal organization, the reward system, and the 'input, throughput, and output' of personnel, which need to be structured in the interests of all stakeholders. Recruitment represents an 'input' of personnel, which is the basis for developing a coherent and satisfying workforce organization.

**As a conclusion**, new practices are emerging, as well as new issues. Nowadays, Internet seems essential for recruitment activity. Web 1.0 brought tools giving access to important data bases of competencies. Web 2.0 reveals the shift from exchange-based recruitment practices to relationship-based approaches.

The model makes it possible to obtain a global view of e-recruitment issues. It must now be validated by means of empirical research. Other sectors and other type of recruiters (for example headhunters) are worth considering in order to see the possible differences in e-recruitment practices. It would be interesting to adopt a dual approach, by studying the applicant's point of view to detect what changes Web 2.0 brings to their professional development. European comparison would make it possible to identify the differences in practices. It could be worth considering other issues especially reputation, privacy and security issues.

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