



Finding Talent on Social Media

ABSTRACT

This case study describes the story of an SME located in the Liberec region, Czech Republic and its human resource management challenges. It is a company with a 20-year tradition in the recycling of refrigerators and other electrical and electronic waste. Right now, the SME is facing a lack of new, young talented people. Thus, the challenge is to start engaging young people, especially generation Z. To that end, this case study is trying to provide a short guide on how to start using social media for communicating with this generation, in particular Instagram, which the SME currently is not using. A practical tool is provided in the appendix: a step-by-step guide for how to start using Instagram. *These days, the question is not whether companies do social media. The question is how well they do it. If you want to use social media well and keep up with the times, read this case study and learn how to succeed in the modern world.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORGANISATION AND INDUSTRY

The chosen company is a family-owned business based in in the Liberec region, Czech Republic. It is an SME with a 20-year tradition in the recycling of refrigerators and other electrical and electronic devices and composite waste. The SME was established in 1994. In 2004, it achieved Investors in People certification in the field of development of human resources and began cooperating with the nearby prison.

The company's goal is the maximum usage of recovered materials and waste. Its values include team cooperation, quality and flexibility, reliability, enthusiasm, helpfulness, and ethics. The company's motto is "together for better planet."



Figure 1: The company's motto

Source: internal sources

Organisation structure. The SME has 89 employees. There are five departments: financial, business, production, technical and HR. Each department has its own manager. The company also employs prisoners from a nearby prison.

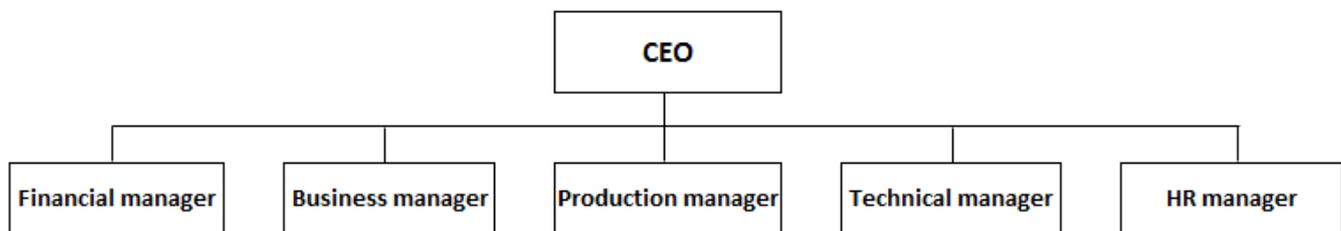


Figure 2: Organisational structure

Source: internal sources, own elaboration

Services offered

- **Electrical waste recycling**

The SME focuses on processing and disposal of refrigerators, cooling and freezing units, large appliances such as washing machines, stoves, dishwashers, and microwaves, as well as small appliances such as vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, electric kettles, etc.



- **Plastic recycling**

Thanks to their unique plastic sorting **technological process**, they are able to process **multi-component plastic waste such as** bumpers, instrument panels, interior plastics from cars and dashboard components, while achieving a level of quality that is fully comparable to the original raw materials. The raw materials obtained through this process are returned to their producers or sold to other parties.

Production. The company extracts these products from the waste it collects:

- Iron – iron shred from electronic appliance processing,
- cables – copper cables with ends,
- electrical motors from washing machines – electrical motors with aluminium body,
- Al granulate – aluminium granules,
- mixture of non-ferrous metals under 3 mm,
- mixture of non-ferrous metals 3-10 mm.

Quality. In order to maintain their reputation with their customers, the SME pays a great deal of attention to quality of service. All of their processes are managed in accordance with the internationally accepted **ISO 9001** and **ISO 14001** certificates in terms of quality and environmental protection. They guarantee the quality of the final materials through laboratory testing.

Evolution. With more than 20 years of experience on the market, they have processed more than 155,000 tonnes of waste and have been able to create innovative know-how thanks to the processing and further utilisation of various products.

They strive to offer cost-effective and adequate solutions to all customers while focusing on high quality and timely fulfilment. They are able to achieve this thanks to their modern equipment, comprising twelve recycling technologies; their research and development department; their own certified laboratory and their comprehensive market knowledge gained by attending international conferences that host other waste processing companies and TIER 1 manufacturers.



HR processes in the company

The HR department in this SME consists of two officers – an HR manager and her colleague. Both of them work part-time and their main HRM responsibilities are described below.

Recruitment and selection. The SME hires potential employees from external sources as well as from internal. They use mainly these tools in the recruitment process:

- job internet portals
- career profile on their website
- municipality
- supporting current employees for internal recruitment
- references from existing employees
- noticeboard inside the company's building

The selection process generally consists of personal interviews, supplemented by testing.

The induction process. Every new employee receives a handbook which consists of the most useful and important information about the workplace. Depending on their position, the employee also gets inducted by a colleague or a supervisor.

Retention planning. To be an attractive employer, the company provides a wide range of benefits:

- shorter working hours (7.5 per day)
- training and development opportunities for employees
- free lunches
- sick days
- team-building (annual meetings, “summer break”)
- department-wide events (twice a year)
- regular pay raises
- performance assessment (bonuses)



Every employee of the SME also has an opportunity to make suggestions to support innovations. Thanks to this, employees can improve their workplace through their own vision.

OBJECTIVE OF CASE STUDY

The objective of this case study is to develop an HR tool that will help the chosen SME with recruitment of young employees. This will be done through a short analysis of the chosen SME. From this analysis, the HR challenges of the company will be identified, and an HR tool developed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will shortly introduce the basic theoretical concepts this case study is based on.

Employer brand

The employee value proposition can be expressed as an employer brand – the image is presented by an organisation as a good employer. An employer brand was defined by Walker (2007) as “a set of attributes and qualities that make an organisation distinctive and promise a particular kind of employment experience that appeal to people who will thrive and perform their best in its culture”. Employer branding is the creation of a brand image for the organisation for prospective employees. (Armstrong, 2014)

Social media in recruitment

Social media is a broad category, encompassing various practices such as podcasting, blogging, text messaging, internet videos, and HR e-mail marketing, which are just some of the more widespread applications used in recruitment (Joos, 2008).

What makes social media unique is that it allows the users to make a public profile and make their social network visible to others. Communication primarily takes place with people who are already a part of their extended social network. This allows for the social network to expand, which can help active job seekers find a job and help employers find job seekers.

However, there are some limitations to the use of social media in the recruitment process. It is easy to destroy an organisation’s reputation through social media and there is also some uncertainty related to social media and the number of qualified applicants for any particular position. There is also some speculation that the use of social media leads to a higher number of unqualified applicants.



Nevertheless, if social media is capable of destroying an organisation's reputation, it should also be capable of helping to build good reputations for companies (Sivertzen, 2013). Social media advantages for organisations include free, unlimited use and shorter response times. Social media can also be useful for attracting potential employees and because of the evolving use of social media in recruiting and employer branding campaigns, it is important to assess whether this way of using social media actually works (Sivertzen, 2013).

Generation Z

Youths born between 1995 and the present are members of the newest net generation, defined as Generation Z. These youths were born into a totally different technological world than their predecessors, Generation Y. It is the first generation to be born into a digital world. (Geck, 2007)

What differentiates these adolescents from those of every other generation is that they are the most electronically connected generation in history. One key difference from Generation Y is that most members of Gen Z do not remember there being a time before social media. As a result, they tend to live much more online and via their smartphones.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methods used in this case study. Firstly, data collection took place. The HR officer from the chosen SME filled in a questionnaire in order to provide a clearer understanding of the company's HR processes. Building on that, the HR officer was interviewed and shadowed several times. During the first interview, the HR challenges were identified and a literature review, on the specific problem faced by the SME, was conducted. The literature and the data were then analysed and a practical tool to help the company was proposed.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following table shows the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities of, and threats to, the company's HR processes.

The SME has a good employee base and relatively low turnover. As a part of its corporate social responsibility, it also employs prisoners from the nearby prison and the company offers its employees a wide range of benefits. Last but not least, the company's big advantage in the area of HR is the certificate Investors in People. Conversely, its weakness is the fact that it does not



use social media which is now the main priority for it to address. Also, the SME often has a problem with feedback from employees who are not willing to fill in their feedback questionnaires.

Looking at opportunities, the main one seems to be the expected growth of the recycling sector and progress in automation. From the opposite point of view, the company faces a lot of pressure on its workforce from the un-availability of qualified and even non-qualified employees in the labour market. Another threat arises from the fact that the employment of prisoners can be unexpectedly influenced by legislative changes (e.g. there was a mass amnesty a few years ago which resulted in insufficient prisoners being available to work).

Table 1: SWOT analysis of HR activities in the company

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Good employee base | No social media |
| Employment of prisoners | Problem with feedback from employees |
| Benefits | |
| Certificate Investors in People | |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| Growth of recycling sector | The lack of workers in the labour market |
| Automation | Changes in the employment of prisoners |

Source: own elaboration

HR challenges

The interview with the HR manager revealed awareness of the following HR challenges:

- the improvement of employer brand,
- the use social media in recruitment,
- the cooperation with high school students.



Proposed HR tools

Nowadays, companies are facing a lack of talented candidates. Consequently, the SME wants to start co-operating with high schools, to attract interns and apprentices who can become potential employees. But how can they attract these young people, known as Generation Z?

Unsurprisingly, young people use modern media more than any other age group. Generation Z uses the internet, smartphones and other clever gadgets all the time. So, if a company wants to work with young people in high schools, it should support its effort by using social media. In itself it will not do much, but can be effective together with other efforts, such as student visits to the company; presentations by company representatives at schools, showing students the company's values and culture; or organizing awards and competitions. Simply put, just be in touch with them, be connected.

One of the favourite social networks for Gen Z is undoubtedly Instagram. Together with YouTube and Snapchat, it is in the top three social media sites for Gen Z (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). As YouTube is rather demanding, because an SME would have to shoot regular videos and Snapchat seems an inappropriate tool for building an employer brand, this case study focuses on using Instagram (IG). The Step by Step Guide for IG is available in Appendix.

Using social media can have a positive impact on a company's growth. However, keep in mind there are also some drawbacks when it comes to using social media.

Instagram's pros and cons. A close look at using Instagram shows some advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include:

- a picture is worth a thousand words,
- Instagram is growing very quickly,
- the proportion of the young generation segment is growing every year,
- hashtags make it easy to connect with people,
- location tagging is available,
- responses happen in real time.

The disadvantages are:

- the constant need of visual content,
- many users are not business minded,



- the targeted demographics might not even have an Instagram account,
- sharing photos is only possible with mobile devices,
- there is not much room for additional content.

CONCLUSION

This case study deals with one of the HR issues of small and medium-sized companies – the use of social media for recruitment and employer brand building. At the beginning of the case study, the SME is introduced. After that the focus is on human resource management in the company, its strengths and weaknesses and the challenges it faces. From the analysis of the company and interviews with the manager, the need to address generation Z was identified. Instagram was chosen as the medium that the SME should try to utilise in order to attract the attention of Gen Z. The Step by Step Guide for using Instagram can be found in the Appendix and should help HR managers to use Instagram effectively.



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APPENDICES

Appendix No. 1 – Instagram guide



STEP-BY-STEP INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a social network for sharing photos. The basic principle is that people share photos or short videos of up to 60 seconds (mostly using interesting filters which can make it look more attractive). It is not possible to use IG without photos.

The basics of using IG include:

-  Create a profile
-  Keep the user name simple
-  Add a profile picture
-  Add a self-description
-  Share interesting photos/videos
-  Share often
-  Use hashtags
-  Demand feedback
-  Reply to comments
-  Be original
-  Stay on top of the latest IG trends



Users of IG create a profile and upload photos to it. Each photo can be supplied with a description and can include geo-location information.

Every user can follow other users and see the photos that these users have uploaded.

There are two basic options for photos on IG – you can “like” the photo by tapping on the heart and you can comment on it.

Last but not least, it is good to use hashtags (e.g. #IGforSMEs). A hashtag consists of a # sign followed by any string of characters one wants. Usually they appear similar to the example given. Any user can use hashtags with his or her photos. By clicking on the hashtag, you can then see all the photos that have been given this particular hashtag on IG. This allows for grouping of similar content and keywords. Have a look at some other brands to find inspiration.



Appendix No. 2 – Creation of Instagram profile



HOW TO CREATE AN IG PROFILE

1) Keep the user name simple

The username should be as simple and as easy to find as possible. Do not use symbols or the word “official” in the username. You can mention this in the description.

2) Fill in the whole name

People can find you by the whole name, so do not neglect to do this.

3) Add a simple profile picture

The most common corporate profile picture is the company’s logo.

4) Add a simple description

Again, the emphasis is on simplicity. This is where you can mention that this is your company’s official profile, but otherwise, let your pictures speak for your brand. Nobody cares that you have the best and cheapest products if your photos are terrible.

5) Create your own unique hashtag

It is good to have it and be original. This way, people can also use it with their photos.
(for example Nike - #justdoit)

6) Links to websites or other social media sites

It is important to put links to the company’s website or profiles on other social media.
But be sure that your website has a mobile version.

7) *CONTENT, CONTENT, CONTENT!*

Your profile might be the best, but it will be useless if you do not share quality content!

Tips: use interesting photos, share often, never stop sharing, and engage the community
(demand feedback and do not forget to reply to comments from your followers).