

# Seamless Recruitment:

## How Companies use Mobile Media to Build Brand and Attract Talent

### **Abstract**

Recruiters must not only understand how job design and incentive programs contribute to talent attraction, they must also comprehend how target job seekers make employment decisions and how they, as recruiters, can influence those decisions through more effective recruitment marketing communications (also called Employer Branding). An important part of recruitment marketing communications planning is media selection. By choosing the right media and the right combination of media channels, recruiter can optimize message delivery and information processing. One particularly important media channel for the future of recruitment marketing and is mobile media.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze *why* recruiters use mobile media for recruitment marketing communications, as well as *how* they plan to use mobile media for more effective recruitment marketing communications. To fulfill this purpose, a qualitative research study was designed, and interviews were conducted with three senior level recruitment managers at three different firms.

The main conclusion of the thesis is that mobile media is an ideal tool for Employer Branding and recruitment. Moreover, due to its compatibility with other channels, mobile media fits perfectly within an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) program. By collecting candidate data via mobile recruitment activities such as smartphone apps, mobile career websites and SMS, the firms in this study were capable of segmenting talent and personalizing messages – efforts which help make communications more engaging. However, the three case firms also acknowledged that their efforts to collect and use mobile data had not gone far enough and would need further investment to be truly effective. The findings suggest that, while mobile media is a unique recruitment marketing tool, without proper database management, hiring firms will not be able to take full advantage of the interactive, two-way and personalized nature of mobile media. Therefore, the conclusion is that until investments can be made in candidate database management and data integration, mobile media will continue to be used primarily as an Employer Branding tool, rather than as a tool for recruitment (i.e. the collection of job applications).

**Keywords:** recruitment, branding, communications, mobile, media, marketing

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Human resources management (HRM) in general, and recruitment specifically, has long been criticized for its insufficient coordination with business strategy. Many industry professionals and academics argue that human resources managers need to take a more proactive approach to human capital planning in order to gain more strategic level importance (Fombrun, Tichy, & Devanna, 1984; Rynes and Boudreau, 1986). By understanding and supporting long-term business planning, human resource managers can significantly contribute to company profits and growth (Rynes and Barber, 1990).

In the context of strategic human capital planning, the recruitment function plays a particularly important role. With an understanding of company growth plans and long-term success scenarios, a recruitment manager can establish a framework for future talent acquisition, and in doing so, they can ensure that the right level of human capital is available for hire when business plans oblige. Recruitment marketing is used by managers to facilitate the hiring process in order to maximize human capital returns by filling jobs with the greatest possible number of highly qualified applicants (Maurer et al. 1992; Doeringer & Piore, 1971). To acquire and retain the desired level of human capital, recruiters must not only understand how job design and incentive programs contribute to talent attraction, they must also comprehend how target job seekers make employment decisions and how they, as recruiters, can influence those decisions through more effective recruitment marketing communications. By creating and shaping sources of employment information, recruitment marketing communications (also called Employer Branding) can (1) influence job seeker decision making, (2) contribute to talent attraction and (3) improve the efficiency of employment markets (Maurer et al., 1992; Taylor & Snizek, 1984).

An important part of recruitment marketing communications planning is media selection. By choosing the right media and the right combination of media channels, recruitment marketers can optimize message delivery and information processing. However, due to the proliferation of new Information and Communication Technologies and increased media fragmentation, the media selection process is becoming increasingly complicated. Marketing experts argue that impersonal mass-media communications has been rendered inadequate and inefficient, whereas targeted one-to-one marketing communications via interactive media have become increasingly effective (Leppäniemi and Karjaluoto, 2008). As a result, more and more recruiters are using interactive media in combination with traditional media as a means of strengthening the impact of their recruitment marketing communications (Potentialpark Communications, OTaC Study 2012). Unfortunately, as these firms adopt richer but more fragmented media tools to reach their diverse audiences, they risk creating an inconsistent and vague image of their employer brand. To avoid this, recruitment managers are giving marketing communications planning more careful consideration – exploring the potential synergies between different marketing techniques and media channels (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). Of particular

interest is how mobile media fits within this new plan.

The mobile device is arguably one of the most important communication mediums available today, and is perhaps the most important communication channel for the future of talent attraction. Thanks to the increased functionality, cloud computing capabilities and information storage, mobile users now greatly depend on their device to manage their personal and professional lives. In several studies, users declared that they simply could not manage without their mobiles (Ellwood-Clayton 2003; Lasen 2005; Vincent 2005, 2006; Intel Oxygen Report 2007). In 2011, there were over 4 billion mobile phones in use - 1.08 billion of them smartphones (Microsoft Tag, 2011), and in 2013 it's expected that the total number of smartphone subscribers will reach 1.28 billion (Morgan Stanley Report, 2009). Moreover, not only is mobile internet adoption outpacing desktop internet adoption, the mobile internet infrastructure is increasingly prevalent (i.e. users are surrounded by clouds of data: bluetooth personal, Wifi local, 3G regional, and GPS everywhere) (Morgan Stanley, 2009). In 2011, over 85% of mobile devices will be web-enabled and nearly 20% (approximately 940 million) will have 3G internet or better (Gartner, 2010 – mobithinking.com). These trends have major implications for the way employers reach and communicate with target candidates, and the way job seekers organize their job search process.

According to Simply Hired, mobile will be one of the defining features of next generation job search. In 2010, they stated that the future of job search would be:

- *Comprehensive*: Job seekers will have access to every available position, including hourly or local jobs rarely found online
- *Transparent*: Job seekers will have nearly perfect information—everything from office culture to industry trends—to decide on a job opportunity
- *Social*: Referral hiring will be streamlined as online social and professional networks converge with job listings
- *Personal*: Listings will be filtered by an individual's job and lifestyle criteria, producing highly-personalized results
- *Mobile*: Mobile services will provide users with employment information anytime anywhere, and based on the context of their surroundings
- *Efficient*: Traditionally manual processes, such as filling out application forms, will become automated and integrated

The use of the mobile channel in marketing is thriving due to several reasons: (1) technological advances which give rise to new media, (2) the decline in mass-media marketing effectiveness, (3) greater adoption of Relationship Marketing techniques, and (4) increased mobile device penetration (Karjalainen, 2007). In many ways, the proliferation of new media channels – especially mobile media – signal the end of mass-media marketing; audiences are now free to opt-in or out of marketing messages and advertising anywhere and anytime they want (Ranchhod, 2007).

## 1.2 Problem Discussion

In the ‘war for talent’, successful recruitment of target talent requires proactive planning and a long-term commitment. By developing recruitment activities that engender engagement and interaction throughout the recruitment process, and help build bonds between an employer and identified talent, recruitment marketing efforts are expected to become more effective and efficient (Maurer et al. 1992). The logic being that, the more the two parties interact and learn about each other, the more engaging and productive their exchanges become (Wunderman, 1994).

However, due to the proliferation of new media channels and communication devices, it can be difficult to know how best to communicate with identified talent and market available job positions. With so many media channels available and so many communications devices in use on a daily basis, which to use and how to use them can be quite a daunting task. Consequently, the great challenge facing recruiters is to develop recruitment marketing strategies that maximize the coordinated impact of multiple communication channels, messages and marketing tactics (Peltier et al. 2003). Of particular interest to recruiters is how mobile media fits within this strategy.

Today’s most prominent mobile device, the smartphone, is dramatically changing the way people access the internet. Prior to the smartphone, users would confine their internet activities – and consequently their job searching activities – to periods of the day when they could sit in front of the computer (i.e. at home, school or work). With smartphones, accessing the internet has become more of an impulse activity, people no longer need to have a reason. Furthermore, unlike the previous usage situations of work, home and school, users are accessing the internet quite evenly throughout the day - with peaks in the morning, at lunch, early evening and late evening (Ericsson ConsumerLab Report, 2011). And with constant connectivity, users intend to do much more on their mobile device than ever before, such as work, shopping, managing finances, job searching and learning ([intentindex.com/mobile/](http://intentindex.com/mobile/)). With smartphone penetration levels above a billion (Microsoft Tag, 2011), and mobile internet usage set to surpass desktop internet usage within five years (Mary Meeker, State of the Internet Report, Morgan Stanley, 2010), it is not a surprise that recruitment marketers, like consumer marketers, are looking for ways to use mobile media as an employment marketing communications tool. However, unlike consumer marketing, some issues regarding the purpose and practical implications of using mobile media for recruitment marketing are being called into question – specifically, *why* should it be used and *how* can it be used for effective talent attraction.

Despite its increasing relevance for consumer marketing, most companies are slow to utilize the mobile medium as a recruitment marketing tool. The technical challenges of creating effective and measurable mobile recruitment marketing activities have prevented many companies from using it. Moreover, the difficulties surrounding the use of mobile media for the creation and submission of job applications is making it even harder for recruiters to justify the investment (i.e. if the job seeker can not submit a job application through the mobile device, is it worth the investment?). Ultimately, the technical issues and purpose ambiguity have resulted in a general lag in implementation.



Moreover, although mobile marketing can be an effective Relationship Marketing tool – due to the interactivity and personalization of mobile communications – simply replicating marketing tactics created for other media channels does not automatically ensure mobile recruitment success. Managers must try to understand the unique characteristics of mobile communications and develop activities accordingly, as well as try to understand who their mobile audience is. Mobile media is a distinctly interactive channel, but without an understanding of the audience, true interaction is difficult to achieve. Essentially, in order to take advantage of the interactivity provided by mobile communications, an organization's marketing strategy must be data driven (i.e. interactive communication requires a certain level of personalization and customization, otherwise there is little reason to interact).

Unfortunately, the process of collecting mobile user data and converting it from information to interaction is a challenging. Firstly, building and integrating various candidate databases takes time, and for firms looking for immediate solutions (i.e. fill vacancies quickly and cheaply), the time and monetary investment required may not seem worth it. Moreover, many recruiters who claim to use database information usually place the highest priority on demographic and behavioral data, at the exclusion of psychographic data (Webster, 1998; Leppäniemi et al., 2006). Furthermore, the costs associated with relationship management are often steep; recruiters accustomed to a certain cost per applicant/hire may not be able to acclimate themselves to a doubling or tripling of that cost, no matter how much more effective it is (Percy 2008).

Although obstacles abound, the slow implementation of mobile recruitment on behalf of employers has little to do with a lack of interest on the part of job seekers. According to a recent study by Potentialpark Communications, job seekers are more than ready to embrace the benefits of mobile recruitment. In their 2012 study, 19% of job seekers worldwide said they 'currently use' their mobile device for career-related activities, and 41% responded 'apply for jobs' when asked what career-related activities they would like to do on their mobile. It would seem that the idea of mobile recruiting faces little resistance from job seekers. Not only are job seekers ready and willing to get started with mobile recruitment, they are also quite clear about why they like it and what they expect to do with it. According to Potentialpark's 2011 study, 58% of respondents highlight location independence as a key advantage of mobile recruiting, whilst 57% and 51% of respondents regard customizable job search and job alerts, respectively, as the most appealing mobile recruiting activities.<sup>1</sup>

Some companies (mostly in the US and UK) have managed to push forward and take advantage of the benefits of mobile recruitment. In February 2011, Potentialpark did an audit of 350 top employers and found that 7% had a mobile career website and 3% had a mobile job app. Moreover, in a separate survey of 150 top employers, 75% stated they were planning to have either a job app or mobile career website by September 2012. It is these employers that will lead

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Potentialpark Communications, Mobile Recruitment Study, 2011, 2012

the industry to mainstream adoption, and educate job seekers on how their mobile device can be a useful tool for job search.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, despite successful executions of mobile recruitment marketing, and that fact that job seekers are clearly signaling demand, the majority of hiring firms continue to act more prudently. They are not only skeptical whether this new communication channel will live up to such high expectations, they question its relevance as a recruitment tool. Consequently, it may be another 2-5 years before mobile recruitment marketing reaches mainstream adoption and the stage of demonstrated productivity.

### 1.3 Purpose

Through a study of *why* recruiting managers use mobile media for recruitment marketing communications, as well as *how* they plan to use mobile media for recruitment marketing communications, this paper seeks to answer many of the questions left unanswered regarding the use of mobile media in recruitment marketing. Using Human Resource Management theories and consumer marketing theories this thesis aims to study *how* and *why* mobile media is used within recruitment marketing and develop a theoretical model for analyzing the phenomenon by integrating two previously separate research fields – Recruitment and Marketing. Specifically, Integrated Marketing Communications theory is used to answer *how* questions, Relationship Marketing and HRM concepts are used to explain *why*, and Mobile Marketing theory is used to explain both *how* and *why*.

In the end, this paper will try to answer the following questions:

1. *Why* is mobile media an important recruitment marketing tool?
  - What are the drivers for using mobile media in recruitment marketing?
2. *How* is mobile media used in recruitment marketing communications?
  - What HRM and marketing issues should be considered when developing a mobile recruitment marketing strategy?

These questions will be answered through an analysis of empirical data and the development of a theoretical model. Essentially, HRM theories will explain why recruitment is increasingly about marketing communications and candidate retention. Relationship Marketing concepts will explain why interactive media and database management are

important for contemporary recruitment marketing communications. IMC theory will help explain the concept and process of developing recruitment marketing communications in the context of mobile media, and Mobile Marketing theory will explain how and why mobile media can be used within the IMC plan for improved candidate engagement and interaction. This analysis will culminate in a theoretical model which can be used to help explain this emerging phenomenon.

## 1.4 Delimitations

Before presenting the structure of this paper, it is important to outline the intended scope of the research. Firstly, the intention of this research is to investigate the use of mobile media in recruitment marketing communication from the organizational perspective, rather than the job seeker's. The organization in this sense is a commercial or non-profit enterprise; this does not include recruitment agencies, HRM consultancies or head hunters. Moreover, the focus is not on *what* mobile media tools are used by the hiring firm, but rather *why* mobile media is used and *how* it is used. Therefore, little attention is given to the different types of mobile media activities available, except for when describing *how* the case study firm developed its mobile recruitment marketing plan.

Secondly, although mobile marketing can be useful in recruiting executive level employees, the focus of this thesis remains on *how* and *why* hiring firms use mobile media in the recruitment of entry-level to mid-level employees. As these lower level positions represent the bulk of employees hired, they typically require a larger talent pool from which to source. Therefore, mobile marketing is presumed to be used for the recruitment and retention of a large number of target candidates.

Thirdly, the focus of this paper will be on applicant attraction – a distinct recruitment activity from screening and selection. Although attraction and selection are inherently interconnected in the process of filling vacancies, the emphasis in this discussion is on activities designed either to increase the number or to change the characteristics of people willing to consider applying for or accepting a job (Rynes and Barber, 1990).

Fourthly, recruitment marketing is regarded as a means of attracting applicants. Therefore, recruitment marketing communications is only one method of improving applicant attraction, but so are decisions to modify employment incentives and job design, and place of employment (Rynes and Barber, 1990). Where as job design, place of employment and structure of incentives contribute to talent attraction (i.e. it would very difficult to attract candidates to jobs that provide inadequate benefits, a hazardous working environment, and nearly impossible tasks), the focus of this thesis will remain within the boundaries of recruitment marketing communications. For simplicity, the terms recruitment marketing and recruitment marketing communications are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

## 1.5 Definitions

### The mobile medium

The mobile device is one that runs on an operating system; has Internet and email access; provides a standardized interface and platform for application developers; supports advanced digital functions like music, video, gaming, pictures, browsing, messaging, and GPS navigation. Today, this would include smartphones, tablets, notebooks, and PDAs; and exclude laptops, desktops and most e-readers. This definition also includes mobile devices that have yet to be conceived.

Moreover, mobile devices are regarded as *personal* (typically used by a single user), *powerful*, and *fast* (CPU 600Mhz+); have a *large memory* (8GB+); are *always connected* (WiFi or 3G), and *location-aware* (GPS); and provide for *easy payment and/or authentication*. (Source: Morgan Stanley - Knowledge Networks, marketingcharts.com, Apple). Typically, mobile devices are very personal to the user, and carried on the person; aspects of the context of the user, such as time and place, can be measured and interpreted; services can be provided at the point of need; and applications can be highly interactive, portable and engaging (Barnes, 2002).

**Mobile Marketing:** *“Mobile marketing is a set of practices that enables an organization to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile device or network”* (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008).

**Candidate Engagement:** a recruitment marketing strategy that directly engages candidates and invites and encourages them to participate in the evolution of an employer brand. Rather than looking at job seekers as passive receivers of messages, engagement marketers believe that candidates should be actively involved in the production and co-creation of marketing programs, developing a relationship with the employer and employer brand.

**Candidate Relationship Management/Candidate Retention:** built on the concept of Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Candidate Relationship Management is about how to attract target talent and how to retain talent the company has already formed a relationship with (i.e. either as employees of the firm or potential hires). The premise is that to attract the best candidates, firms have to start building positive, long-term relationships with those candidates, using many of the same principles learned from building customer relationships. As with CRM, the goal is to reduce costs and increase returns through better candidate retention.

**Job Application System:** the job application system, also called an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), is a software application that enables the electronic handling of recruitment needs. An ATS is very similar to customer relationship management systems, but is designed for recruitment tracking purposes. The principal function of an ATS is to provide a central location and database for a company's recruitment efforts. Data is either collected from internal applications via the ATS front-end, located on the company website or is extracted from applicants on job boards. ATS applications in the recruitment industry also include the ability to automate the recruitment process via a defined workflow.

**Mobile job app.:** A mobile job applications consist of software that runs on a mobile device and performs certain functions such as, Communications (email, social networks), Games, Multimedia (audio/video players), Productivity (calculators, word processors), Travel (city guides, GPS, weather), and Utilities (address book, call manager) (Mobile Marketing Association, 2009).

In the context of recruitment, mobile job applications are software that can perform all of the functions above but that emphasize communication between job seekers and hiring firms.

**Mobile career website:** is a internet browser-based career website accessible from a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet computer, connected to a wireless network. The content (text, images, video, music and audio) on a mobile career website is related to employment and is adapted for the mobile user interface, ultimately enabling a better user experience.

## 1.6 Disposition

The first chapter in this paper introduces the research topic: the use mobile media as recruitment marketing communication tool. The research problem is identified as the lack of understanding of *why* and *how* mobile media is used in recruitment marketing communications. Lastly, this chapter defines key terminology, presents delimitations and outlines the structure for the rest of the paper.

The second chapter describes the pre-study, which was key to delimiting the research focus to areas of interest and relevance to the recruitment industry. Moreover, the pre-study provided valuable insight into the validity of applying certain consumer marketing theories to recruitment – namely, IMC and Relationship Marketing. Finally, the pre-study helped expand the research area to include *why* questions as well as *how*.

In chapter three, the theoretical framework is presented. The framework is subdivided into two main sections: Human Resource Management Theories, and Consumer Marketing Theories. Each of these sections is further sub-divided into its component parts. Following a review of the literature is the author's interpretation of the main theoretical concepts; a model is presented to help the reader understand how consumer marketing theories can be applied to the recruitment context. The last section of the this chapter is a restatement of the purpose of the study and an explanation of the main research model - The MRec Research Model. The MRec Research Model serves as the framework for analyzing the results of the main study.

Chapter four describes the research methods used to complete the study, detailing the research process and specific activities deployed in carrying out the study of *why* and *how* firms use mobile media for recruitment marketing communication. Lastly, a rationale for the choice of research methods is provided, as is a reflection on the limitations and quality of the research.

Chapter five presents the empirical findings from the three case studies. The findings are organized according to the four-part MRec Research Model: (1) emphasis on candidate retention, (2) use of relationship marketing techniques, (3) approach to mobile media, (4) interactive IMC planning.

Chapter six is the analysis of the empirical results, structured according to the MRec Research Model. Chapter seven integrates and reframes the case study analysis done in chapter six as answers to the two research questions posed at the beginning of this paper. Chapter seven will serve as a conclusion to this thesis.

Finally, chapter eight presents the theoretical and managerial implications, and some final thoughts and suggestions for further research.

## 2 Pre-Study

### 2.1 Motivation for Pre-Study

The motivation to conduct a pre-study was quite straightforward. Since mobile marketing in general, and mobile recruitment specifically, are rather new concepts, it was necessary to gain a general and practical understanding of the dominant issues regarding the use of mobile media in recruitment. Through interviews with a range of industry experts, the pre-study aimed to identify those issues. Moreover, the pre-study was designed to help delimit the scope of research within Human Resource Management and Marketing.

A major initial motivation for the pre-study was to gauge if Integrate Marketing Communications was a reasonable theory on which to base the main analysis. Using IMC theory to explain the process by which firms develop a recruitment marketing communications strategy in the context of mobile media seemed like a reasonable idea since the purpose of marketing communications in the attraction of talent is basically the same as it is in the attraction of customers. The pre-study findings confirmed the idea to use IMC as a theoretical base; virtually every pre-study respondent described how mobile media was best used in coordination with other media channels, particularly the main career website and social media.

The pre-study not only solidified the decision to use IMC as a theoretical base, it also led to the idea of using Relationship Marketing theory to help explain *why* mobile media would play such a unique role in the development of an IMC strategy. The pre-study findings which suggest using mobile media as an employer branding rather than as an employment transaction tool, as well as the findings discussing how mobile media is ideal for generating engagement and interaction, all relate to concepts found in Relationship Marketing literature.

The decision to use Mobile Marketing theories to answer the main research questions was unchanged by the results of the pre-study. However, the pre-study findings did highlight the need to put greater emphasis on the interactive nature

of mobile communications.

Finally, the results of the pre-study also helped shape the main research questions. Initially, the research questions focused on the process of developing a mobile recruitment strategy – hence the use of IMC – but after the pre-study, the questions were adapted so that the discussion would also address *why* questions. Basically, a discussion of *how* firms use mobile media in recruitment marketing would be incomplete without a discussion of *why* they believe mobile media is an important recruitment marketing communications tool.

## 2.2 Pre-Study Design, Method and Process

Since the aim of the pre-study was exploratory, the most direct and efficient way to do it was through unstructured qualitative interviews. Particularly since unstructured qualitative interviews are recommended to be suitable preliminary techniques when ‘casting around’ for something, especially when “*the researcher does not know what is there, and cannot determine what needs to be known, or found out*” (Gillham, 2005, p.45).

Identifying and gaining access to interviewees was done largely through personal contacts and industry references. As the aim of the pre-study was to gain as large a range of perspectives as possible, interviews were conducted with a rather diverse set of industry experts. These experts were helpful in identifying key challenges and opportunities faced by recruitment marketers as well as important industry trends. Considering some of the technological challenges inherent in implementing an effective mobile marketing strategy, it would have been helpful to interview someone who is tasked with creating such programs. Although I was not able to interview someone with this background, I was able to interview experts with relevant knowledge of the topic. Their experience with planning and executing a mobile recruitment strategy was more than sufficient to provide an overview of the technological issues commonly faced throughout the process.

Over the span of one month, a total of five interviews were conducted either over the phone or in person. All interviews were conducted in English and lasted an average of one hour each. Since the interviews were meant to be unstructured and guided by the interviewee, a pre-planned interview guide was not employed. However, in line with the objectives of the pre-study, the two main topics of discussion in each interview were: (1) the use of mobile technology in recruitment marketing and (2) their opinions on the future of recruitment marketing.

At each interview extensive notes were taken, which were later analyzed to identify potential research areas. Subsequently, a literature review on Recruitment, Employer Branding, Integrated Marketing Communications, Relationship Marketing and Mobile Marketing was performed. This literature review in combination with the pre-study provided the eventual research questions for the main study. The findings from the pre-study are presented in the following section.

**Table 1: Interviews Conducted for Pre-Study**

Date	Name	Company/Position
September 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2011	Michael Marlatt	Microsoft/Mobile Recruitment Consultant
November 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Charles Purdy	Content Manager and Expert Editor, Monster.com
November 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Michelle Rea	Consultant and Founder of SocialCruiter.com
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## 2.3 Pre-Study Findings

After reviewing the interview notes and recordings from the pre-study, three main themes emerged in the findings. These themes pertain to strategic issues facing recruitment marketing managers in the context of mobile media, as well as concepts found in Recruitment, Employer Branding, Relationship Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communications and Mobile Marketing literature.

### 2.3.1 The use of mobile media for talent engagement and interaction

Effective strategic recruitment involves building talent communities and strong candidate relationships (Ziesing, 2011). Therefore, one of the most prominent themes found throughout the pre-study discussions was regarding how recruiting firms make use of new media for talent engagement and interaction – factors which help build strong candidate relationships. All interviewees acknowledged that the mobile medium offers a uniquely interactive means of communicating with target talent – much like what the internet offered recruiters in the late 90s. The driving force behind the exploitation of mobile media in recruitment is the fact that mobile internet penetration levels and smartphone adoption rates are rising at a significant pace (Marlatt, 2011). Furthermore, the technology behind mobile communications is becoming increasingly sophisticated. Whereas voice dominated mobile communications for the last two decades, data, mobile internet and other upcoming mobile technologies will dominate the next few decades to come (Marlatt, 2011; Purdy, 2011).

Technology advances such as downloadable applications, cloud services, QR codes and customizable, alerts are creating more engaging and innovative ways of interacting with talent (Purdy, 2011). And due to the personal nature of the mobile device, response rates for such activities are significantly higher than for other direct communication methods, such as email (Purdy, 2011). Mobile technology essentially offers the job seeker more control over the recruitment communication process (i.e. candidates can decide when, where and how they receive messages), which in



turn promotes greater levels of engagement (Ziesing, 2011; Castro, 2011). Moreover, the variety of features offered by the mobile medium (e.g. apps, SMS, MMS, QR code readers, etc.) allows recruiters to develop communication campaigns that cater to job seekers at different stages in the recruitment process. Going beyond simple job search, recruiters can maintain engagement levels throughout the recruitment process by offering job seekers additional relevant information and opportunities to interact, in a format that is more conveniently accessible (Purdy, 2011).

The ability of mobile marketing to provide additional relevant information and opportunities for interaction are what led to the second pre-study theme – whether there is more value created by using mobile media as a branding and data collection tool than there is in using it as job application tool.

### **2.3.2 The use of mobile media as a branding and/or employment transaction tool**

One of the greatest challenges facing recruiters today is whether or not to use the mobile device for collecting job applications (Marlatt, 2011; Ziesing, 2011; Rea, 2011). As the ultimate goal of any recruiting organization is to turn a prospective candidate into an eventual hire, many companies would like to simplify the application process for the mobile device (Marlatt, 2011; Rea, 2011). However, because the mobile medium is by nature convenient and hand-held, and the job application process is inherently time-consuming and text-heavy, it is generally not the ideal medium for submitting job applications. Furthermore, the candidate database systems used to collect and track job applications (i.e. The Applicant Tracking System) are not set up to integrate application data received via the mobile device with that received via the regular career website. (Marlatt, 2011). As a result, most firms have not established an effective way of converting job seekers into job applicants solely through the mobile medium (Marlatt, 2011; Purdy, 2011; Rea, 2011).

Furthermore, due to the mobile medium's unique characteristics (e.g. personal, interactive, social, etc.), all interviewees agreed that it is a much more valuable medium for employer branding than it is for the completion and submission of job applications. Although, some interviewees also argued that with mobile internet usage set to surpass that for laptop and desktop computers sometime in the next few years, it may become necessary to develop a simple system for submitting job applications, or some portion of the application, via the mobile device (Ziesing, 2011; Castro, 2011). This is especially critical if a growing percentage of the population buy tablet computers and increasingly sophisticated smartphones instead of laptop and desktop computers (Marlatt, 2011; Ziesing, 2011; Castro, 2011). However, until the job application process is simplified for the mobile device, all respondents point out that providing a seamless and favorable employer brand experience on the mobile device is the top priority. This is because a firm's mobile recruiting activities exist whether they like it or not (i.e. mobile users can always access the regular career website via mobile internet – which typically does not provide a very good user experience as the website is not optimize for the mobile screen).

*“Job seekers are using their mobile devices for job search whether employers like it or not. Much like the employer brand, refusing to create a mobile recruiting strategy doesn't stop employers from having one. It simply becomes one they don't control.” - Ziesing, 2011*

Therefore, having a well implemented mobile recruiting strategy can greatly improve the overall candidate experience - giving the job seeker a convenient and location-independent approach to job search - and not having any mobile recruiting strategy can erode the employer brand and limit the number of quality applicants received overall (Ziesing, 2011).

### **2.3.3 The use of mobile media as an integrated recruitment marketing communications tool**

Leveraging the mobile channel as an integrated content delivery and direct-response vehicle within a cross-media marketing communications program is one of the greatest challenges posed by mobile marketing, but it also one of the greatest opportunities. Mobile is rarely used as a stand alone vehicle. In fact, many recruiting firms are motivated to include it within a larger integrated communications campaign due to its compatibility with other channels (Rea, 2011; Purdy, 2011). Due to mobile media's ability to engage and interact with talent in a convenient, personal and on-going manner, it has become an increasingly important channel within the integrated recruitment marketing communications plan (Ziesing, 2011).

One of its primary strengths is the way it complements social media. Social media recruiting is also a rather new phenomenon within recruitment but has had more time to prove its value as a direct-response and interactive recruitment marketing media (Rea, 2011). Recent statistics show that social networking on popular social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter is occurring more and more frequently via the mobile device (Rea, 2011, Ziesing, 2011). As result, many firms who have embraced social media recruiting are now taking the step to leverage their social media activities with mobile media (Rea, 2011). Where social media offers the interpersonal component of interactive communication, mobile media offers the convenience, ubiquitous and contextual components.

Finally, mobile media also integrates well with traditional media. Mobile technology such as Augmented Reality and QR codes can help integrate print media like newspapers, posters and billboards with digital platforms such as the career website, Facebook page or Twitter feed (Rea, 2011). Mobile media is regarded a multi-dimensional interactive media that has the potential to not only augment overall campaign effectiveness, but to also deliver the employer brand message in a completely new and interactive way (Ziesing, 2011; Castro, 2011; Rea, 2011).

## **2.4 Summary of Pre-Study Findings**

The pre-study findings indicate that the mobile medium is indeed a valuable addition to the recruitment marketing communications plan. It is valuable not only because of its rising penetration levels, but also because of its increasingly sophisticated technology. Recruiting firms are now able to establish seamless and on-going interaction with job seekers throughout the recruitment process via a more conveniently accessible medium. Moreover, because the mobile medium gives job seekers more control over the communication process, messages received can be personalized and contextualized – factors which help greatly improve candidate interaction and engagement.

Finally, although the mobile medium has the potential to act as a job application tool, its unique characteristics are

better suited for employer branding and simple data collection. Moreover, when it is used within an integrated cross-media marketing communications program its impact is even greater, particularly as it relates to social media.

Simply stated, the pre-study findings can be summarized as:

1. Mobile media allows for greater candidate engagement and interaction throughout the recruitment process – helping to establish stronger candidate relationships.
2. Mobile media's primary contributions are to employer branding, simple data collection, and the creation of positive candidate experiences. However, if mobile adoption rates and mobile internet penetration levels continue to meet growth expectations, some experts suspect either the entire job application process, or some portion of it, will have to be simplified for the mobile medium.
3. Mobile media fits perfectly within an integrated cross-media marketing communications program. Its compatibility with other valuable recruitment communication media, such as social media and print media, as well as its ability to generate seamless interaction, are what make it such an important channel for effective recruitment marketing communications.

### 3 Theoretical Framework

#### Part I: Human Resource Management Theories

##### 3.1 Recruitment

Human Resources Management (HRM) is defined as “*a set of distinct but interrelated activities, functions and processes that are directed at attracting, developing, and maintaining a firm's human resources*” (Lado & Wilson, 1994, p. 701). HRM includes the following areas: recruitment and selection, education and training, compensation and benefits, performance management, talent management, administration and payroll (Fisher et al., 2005).

The Resource-Based-View of management strategy asserts that a firm's human resource management practices, as well as the talent and knowledge residing in the workforce, are a main source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1986; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Yet, due to certain labor market conditions (e.g. low unemployment rate and the lack of qualified applicants for many positions), recruiting the ‘best and the brightest’ in order to strengthen a firm's competitive position has become a full-on ‘war for talent’ (Cable & Turban, 2001). Since recruitment represents the beginning of the employment relationship, and therefore affects the success of subsequent human resource management practices such as socialization, development and training, many firms are fighting the ‘war’ by increasing their recruitment budgets (Leonard, 1999).

Recruitment is defined as: *“those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees”* (Barber, 1998, p. 5). Typically this involves what organizations can do to generate applicants, maintain applicant status, and influence job choice (Cable & Turban, 2001). However, contemporary models of organizational recruitment define recruiting as an interaction between the job search/selection activities of job seekers and the applicant attraction efforts of employers (Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987; Wanous, 1992). Underlying these conceptualizations of recruitment is the argument that employers and applicants are engaged in a complex labor market exchange through which each must satisfy specific employment-related needs (Maurer et al., 1992).

Finally, while majority of recruitment researchers use the organization as the focal point of analysis, some researchers use the job seeker as a starting point - building on the assumption that how a person responds to a given employer depends entirely on what that person knows, or thinks that she/he knows, about the organization. Therefore, in order to determine how, why, or when recruitment practices influence candidates, it is essential to first understand what a person knows about an employer, and how that knowledge is converted into behaviors (Cable & Turban, 2001).

## 3.2 Recruitment Marketing

Recruitment is a complex labor market exchange. Therefore, the recruitment marketing goal is to facilitate the exchange process in order to maximize human capital returns (e.g. skills, abilities, experiences) (Maurer et al., 1992; Petfy & Cacioppo, 1986). Defining employment as a market exchange forces recruitment marketers to consider job seekers as employment consumers who are free to choose another supplier of employment – just as a consumer may choose another product/brand. For successful recruitment of target talent, employing companies are required to recognize prospective employees as customers of the organization, rather than simply assets to be owned (Price, 1996). In this context, the transaction is the job application, the product is the job offer, the price of the product is the salary and benefits offered, and the place is the place of employment. Promotion is the communication that the organization has with its prospective applicants. Adopting this perspective, recruitment marketing implies a desire to understand job seeker needs and to work towards meeting those needs by adapting and shaping the marketing mix (Ryan et al., 2000).

### 3.2.1 Recruitment Marketing Communications & Employer Branding

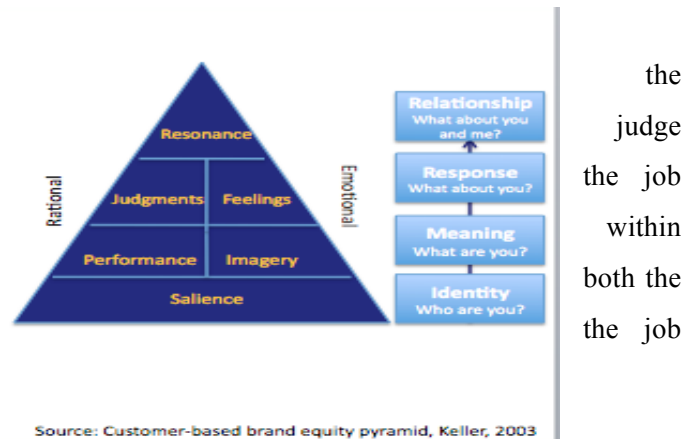
It is generally agreed upon that people's beliefs determine their behaviors. In the context of recruitment, what a job seeker knows or doesn't know about an employer determines whether they are aware of a job opening, apply for a job, attend an information session, or accept a position. Thus, a job seeker's employer knowledge is a primary source of a hiring firm's recruitment success or failure (Cable & Turban, 2001).

People hold different types of knowledge about potential employers, and their beliefs affect how they respond to the organizations. Therefore, in order to decide what types of recruitment activities and investments will return the greatest value, employers must first try to understand the beliefs that underpin those knowledge types. Cable and Turban (2001) define employer knowledge as a job seeker's memories and associations regarding an organization as a potential employer. In this way, employer knowledge provides applicants with a template to categorize, store, and recall employer-related information.

Consistent with the notions of brand image and brand equity in consumer marketing (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993), Cable and Turban (2001) propose three dimensions of employer knowledge that affect what a job seeker believes about a potential employer, and consequently, how they respond to recruitment activities: (1) employer familiarity, (2) employer image, and (2) employer reputation (Lievens et al., 2005). Similarly, Han and Collins (2002) define employer brand equity as *“the outcome of applicants decision opportunities attributable to job seekers' beliefs about the company as an employer”*.

To build employer-based brand equity it is useful to consider the brand equity pyramid (Keller, 2003). Just like a consumer brand, to be part of the job seekers' consideration set the employer brand should stand out (salience). The employer's performance - salary, benefits, reputation, training, etc. - should be obvious and valid. The imagery

conveyed should deal with the perceived fit between the employer and the potential employee. Finally, based upon perceived performance and imagery, the job seeker will see the company as an employer, which is the rational side of the job seeker's response. The feelings that the company elicits from the job seeker are part of the emotional response. When judgments and feelings are positive, the chance exists that the job seeker will want to start a relationship with the employer.



Ultimately, the employer brand is a set of attributes and qualities, often intangible, that makes an organization distinctive, promises a particular kind of employment experience, and appeals to those people who will thrive and perform to their best in its culture (CIPD, 2007). It is also the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company (Ambler, 1996), as well as the image created in the minds of the potential labor market (Berthon et al., 2005). Above all else, the employer brand is about *attraction, retention and engagement* of those individuals who will thrive and commit to the organization over the long term.

### The Employer Brand Effect

As mentioned earlier, there is innumerable evidence to suggest that the dimensions of employer-brand equity will affect job seekers behaviors. For example, Turban and Greening (1997) found that familiar firms were viewed more favorable as employers than were unfamiliar firms. Further, several recruitment studies suggested that perceived attitudes and attributes toward a job opportunity will influence job seekers' early reactions to potential employers (e.g. Tom, 1971; Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al. 1993; Turban & Greening, 1997; Highhouse, et al., 1999). Thus, it is expected that job seekers' intentions to pursue job opportunities with an organization will be positively affected by brand awareness (sallience), associations (performance and imagery), and perceived quality (judgments and feelings). Ultimately, the knowledge that a job seekers possess about an employer affects: (1) how he/she responds to future information about the organization, (2) how attracted he/she is to the organization, (3) how actively he/she pursues a job within the organization, and (4) whether or not he/she forms a relationship with the organization (Cable and Turban, 2001).

In this context, the employer's task is to 'market' jobs in a marketplace of competing opportunities, where each job is a "product" differentiated from others by an interrelated set of employer attributes, associations, images, judgments, and knowledge types (i.e. the employer brand). In this marketplace, it is the employer's responsibility to: (1) build awareness of employment opportunities, (2) emphasize strong, favorable and unique associations, and (3) leverage positive attributes - all of which are needed to attract and retain talent with the desired level of human capital (i.e. skills, abilities, experience) (Maurer et al., 1992).

## Part II: Consumer Marketing Theories

### 3.3 Relationship Marketing

The globalization of business, the increasing importance of customer retention, the maturing of Service and Industrial Marketing, and advances in Information and Communications Technology, among other trends, are reinforcing changes in mainstream marketing. Today, the traditional four 4Ps of marketing are considered oversimplified, only relevant to certain types of firms and markets, and too focused on short-term economic transactions and customer acquisition (Coriello et al., 1997). According to many, customer acquisition should only be an intermediate step in the marketing process; solidifying the relationship, transforming indifferent customer into loyal ones, and serving customers as clients should also be considered marketing. The justification being that, a longer-term strategy, in conjunction with placing significant emphasis on customer retention, will yield higher dividends (Berry, 1995; Grönroos, 1990).

Although Relationship Marketing is said to be a “new-old concept” (i.e. the idea of business earning customer loyalty by satisfying their needs and wants is not new), the precise meaning of this concept is not always clear in literature (Coriello et al., 1997). At the broadest level, Relationship Marketing may incorporate everything from personalized service to loyalty programs, Internal Marketing, personal/social relationships, and strategic alliances (Coriello et al., 1997). At the tactical level, Relationship Marketing has been represented as a manifestation of Database Marketing and Pyramid-Selling. It has also been used to describe the use of electronic media to actively interact with customers and other stakeholders (Coriello et al., 1997).

In one of the first academic articles written on the subject of Relationship Marketing the author, L. Berry (1983), outlined five strategic elements for practicing Relationship Marketing of services: (1) developing a core service around which to build a customer relationship, (2) customizing the relationship to the individual customer, (3) augmenting the core service with extra benefits, (4) pricing services to encourage customer loyalty, (5) and marketing to employees so that they, in turn, will deliver additional value to customers. Whereas Berry’s 1983 definition of Relationship Marketing uses the dyadic exchange between customer and firm as the focal point of analysis, Grönroos (1990)’s definition emphasizes non-customer relationships as well. In his definition of Relationship Marketing, “*marketing is to establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objective of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises*” (Grönroos, 1990). Given the complexities of relationships themselves, it’s not surprising to find multiple interpretations and uses of the term Relationship Marketing. Unfortunately, defined as such, the term becomes more of a ‘catch-all’ phrase that loosely includes concepts of relationships, interactions, and networks (Gummesson, 1994).

One the trends driving mainstream adoption of Relationship Marketing, as well as its broadening definition, is the maturing of Service Marketing. Even before Berry wrote his 1983 article outlining his five strategic elements for practicing Relationship Marketing of services, researchers in the field of Service Marketing have long argued for the

need to formally market to existing customers, and for improving the performance of service personnel as a key to retaining customers (George, 1977; Grönroos, 1981; Berry, 1980, 1995). The latter idea, known as Internal Marketing, is an emerging perspective that has received great attention due to its linkages to Relationship Marketing and the building of relationships with multiple stakeholder groups. Internal Marketing urges firms to improve the performance of service personnel by focusing greater attention and resource on “*attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs*” (Berry, 1995; Berry and Parasuramn, 1991). In this way, Relationship Marketing is cast in a ‘means-end’ context; firms must establish relationships with non-customer groups (the means) to successfully establish relationships with customers (the end) (Berry, 1995).

In an effort to reconcile the numerous views of marketing and Relationship Marketing found in literature, Coviello et al. (1996) developed a classification scheme based on a synthesis of the various schools of thought in marketing - across the service, interaction, channels and network streams of research. The classification scheme was divided into two themes: *relational exchange*, and *management activities and processes*.

- *Relational Exchange*: recent perspectives on marketing argue that the ‘economic exchange’ traditionally seen as the core of marketing should not be the fundamental unit of analysis (Grönroos, 1995). Researchers suggest that parties to an exchange may or may not seek an economic exchange, but rather seek to attain mutual benefit through shared activities. Essentially, each party to an exchange both gives and receives ‘value’; this value can be economic and/or a shared experience. The exchange might also be social in nature, and involve a personal, interaction-based process of social bonding, based on mutual goals, adaptation, trust and commitment (Ford 1984; Coviello et al., 1996).
- *Management Activities and Processes*: to understand the marketing process, the focus should be on “...how managers use their time, energies, and enthusiasms, as well as the available financial resources.” (Ambler, 1994).

Following identification of the above dimensions, Coviello et al. (1996) then re-analyzed the source literature in an effort to define the classification scheme in the context of marketing practice. From this, two general marketing perspectives were identified, encompassing four types of marketing. (1) Transaction Marketing (Transaction Marketing), (2) Relationship Marketing (Database Marketing, Interactive Marketing, Network Marketing).

### **3.3.1 Database Marketing**

Increasing competition and accelerating market fragmentation, coupled with lower information systems costs, have spurred many organizations into developing marketing strategies which capitalize on the opportunities presented by powerful databases (Lewington et al., 1996). Database Marketing is a form of Relationship Marketing where marketers use an information technology tool to retain customers over time. The focus is on the economic market transaction, but also involves the exchange of information. Relationships are not close and typically do not involve on-going



interpersonal communication and interaction between individuals (Coviello et al., 1997). This type of marketing has also been defined as "one-to-one" marketing, and implies the use of advanced information technology to develop relationships with individual customers (Peppers and Rogers, 1995). Although the exchange is still controlled by the marketer (i.e. marketing is still "to" the customer, rather than "with" the customer), the intention is to facilitate and maintain long-term customer relationships (Coviello et al., 1997). This is achieved by (1) identifying and building a database of customers, (2) delivering differentiated messages based on consumer characteristics and preferences, and (3) tracking each relationship to monitor the cost of acquiring the consumer and the life-time value of his/her purchases (Copulsky and Wolf, 1990).

Despite criticism regarding its asymmetrical distribution of power, many firms can derive a competitive advantage from the use of Database Marketing. The most commonly claimed competitive advantage from effective use of Database Marketing is its ability to segment customers into homogenous groups. Designing marketing programs for specific segments can project an image of personal service - an integral part of the customer relationship building process. Another means of gaining competitive advantage is the creation of customer databases for market research and experimentation. Market tests can be used to reveal actual consumer responses to alternative marketing mix variables - yielding more reliable insights into customer behavior than surveys or qualitative research (Lewington et al., 1996).

Finally, by using Database Marketing together with electronic media, firms can create marketing communication programs that generate interaction - referred to as Interactive Marketing (Glazer, 1999; Preston, 2000). Whereas Database Marketing involves a personalized yet 'arms-length' relationship, Interactive Marketing implies interaction within relationships (Coviello et al., 1997). Ultimately, by gaining a better understanding of customers and segmenting them accordingly, marketers are better positioned to take full advantage of the interactive, two-way and personalized nature of electronic media.

### **3.3.2 Interactive Marketing**

Interactivity in a marketing context has been defined in a number of ways. Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998) defined interactivity as "*the immediately iterative process by which customer needs and desires are uncovered, met, modified, and satisfied by the providing firm.*" According to this definition, interactivity iterates between the company and the customer, extracting information from both parties, and attempting to align interests (Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998). The iterations are ongoing, allowing the firm time to build databases of customer information in order to facilitate subsequent interaction opportunities. Similarly, Haeckel (1998) viewed interactive marketing as "*an approach that uses customer data captured via person-to-person or person-to technology contacts to create individualized exchanges designed to effect a change in knowledge or behavior of at least one person*" (Peltier et al., 2003). Finally, Johanson and Mattsson (1987), characterize the interaction-based relationship as "(1) having a mutual orientation, and (2) arising through exchange processes and social exchange, with an adaptation process." (Coviello et al. 1997)

Although Interactive Marketing is an evolving area, certain *content* and *structural* themes are common to most definitions of Interactive Marketing (Iacobucci, 1998). Firstly, although interactivity can occur via both mediated and non-mediated environments, Interactive Marketing is partly defined by the presence of technology. However, the presence of technology does not negate the importance of interpersonal communication, it is simply another means of interacting. The resultant interactions can be person-to-person, person-to-technology, or technology-to-technology. Secondly, Interactive Marketing techniques should only be engaging to some segments of the audience (i.e. should be targeted); therefore, interactive Marketing will elicit greater emotional appeal than traditional broadcast marketing vehicles because of the heightened level of segment-specific engagement. Thirdly, interactive systems have the potential to garner extensive amounts of customer data; not only data the customer inputs themselves, but also process data such as the path used and time spent in navigation. The forth *content* quality of Interactive Marketing is that it can occur in real-time (i.e. is quicker and more relevant). Similar to Service Marketing, the real-time aspect is related to the experiential and personalization components of interactivity (Iacobucci, 1998). However, while contact can occur in real-time, the time frame is implied to be long term. A long-term perspective allows firms to retain and engage customers, then learn more about them, and finally relate back to them in a customized manner (Parsons et al., 1998; Coviello et al., 2001).

In the advent of new electronic media, the *structural* qualities of Interactive Marketing are extended and given new meaning. At its base, Interactive Marketing should be two-way in nature, customized to address a customer's needs, and able to create communication networks (i.e. many-to-many interactivity) (Iacobucci, 1998). When taking into account the capabilities of new electronic media, Interactive Marketing extends to include structural qualities such as response control and the use of database technology (Iacobucci, 1998; Peltier et al., 2004). In the end, there are four main structural elements of mediated Interactive Marketing: (1) the two-way nature of the communication system (Liu and Shrum, 2002; Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002), (2) the level of response control each party has in the communication process (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu and Shrum, 2002; Liu 2003), (3) the personalization of the communication relationships (Wu, 2006), and (4) the use and involvement of database technology (Peltier et al., 2003). This type of mediated Interactive Marketing has been proposed as a distinct type of Interactive Marketing and is often referred to as e-Marketing (Coviello et al., 2001).

### **3.3.3 Summary of Relationship Marketing Theories**

The four marketing types (Transaction Marketing, Database Marketing, Interactive Marketing and Network Marketing) are not to be regarded as mutually exclusive disciplines. In fact, in many cases all four marketing types will be used by the same firm at the same time, depending on the type of market, industry and customer segment. The overlap between the four marketing types is especially apparent when defined according to Coviello et al. (2001) marketing classification scheme. According to Coviello et al. (2001), all marketing types have distinct yet overlapping *relational exchange* dimensions and *managerial activity* dimensions. However, due to the use of sophisticated Information and

Communications Technology, the dimensions become increasingly complex and dynamic – involving more people, assets and investment.

The table below is an adaptation of Coviello et al.'s 2001 marketing classification scheme. For simplicity and congruency with the descriptions provided earlier, the concepts of e-Marketing and Interactive Marketing were merged. Whereas Coviello et al. describe Interactive Marketing as face-to-face interaction and e-Marketing as mediated interaction, the classification below assumes Interactive Marketing can occur both ways, although is primarily defined by the presence of technology.

**Table 2: Summary of Relationship Marketing Classification Scheme (Coviello et al., 2001)**

<b>Marketing Types/Relational Dimensions/Managerial Dimensions</b>	<b>Transaction Marketing</b>	<b>Database Marketing</b>	<b>Interactive Marketing</b>	<b>Network Marketing</b>
<b>Purpose of Exchange</b>	Economic transaction	Information exchange and economic transaction	Information-generating and interpersonal relationships between seller and many buyers	Connected relationships between firms and individuals
<b>Nature of communication</b>	Firm “to” mass market	Firm “to” targeted segment or individual	Firms communicate “with” and “among” many individuals (usually through technology)	Firms “with” firms and individuals
<b>Type of Contact</b>	Arms-length, impersonal	Personalized (yet distant)	Mediated or face-to-face interactivity	Impersonal to interpersonal (close to distant)
<b>Duration of Exchange</b>	Discrete (yet can be over time)	Discrete and over time (occasional yet personalized)	Continuous (can occur in real-time)	Continuous (stable yet dynamic; short or long term)
<b>Formality of Exchange</b>	Formal	Formal (yet personalized via technology)	Formal (yet customized/personalized via technology) and informal	Formal and informal
<b>Managerial Intent</b>	Customer attraction	Customer retention	Creation of dialogue and interaction (establish mutually beneficial relationship)	Co-ordination (interaction among firms and stakeholders for mutual benefit)
<b>Managerial focus</b>	Product or brand	Product/brand and customers (in a targeted market)	Managing relationships between firm and many individuals	Connect relationships among firms and stakeholders (in a network)
<b>Managerial Investment</b>	Internal marketing assets (4 Ps)	Internal marketing assets (focus on IT and databases)	Internal operational assets (e.g. IT, website) and external market assets (customer relationship)	External market assets (focus on developing firms position within network)
<b>Managerial Level</b>	Functional marketers (e.g. sales manager, product manager)	Specialist marketers (e.g. customer service manager, loyalty manager)	Marketing specialists with technology specialists, senior managers, employees, service personnel	Senior managers

### 3.4 Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Prior to the internet and mainstream adoption of certain information technologies, marketing communications managers typically focused their attention on outbound, one-way mass-media communication techniques - little attention was given to the customer response to marketing messages. In this setting, the marketer was generally in control of the communication system. The advent of new ICT technologies changed all this. These technologies forced marketers to accept that a drastic paradigm shift had occurred - consumers were no long passive recipients of marketing messages, they could now exude some control over the communication process. Not only that, these new

technologies facilitated the capture and measurement of customer data – a practice which is now referred to as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) or Database Marketing. As the technologies evolved and prices were lowered, consumers began to use them in the same way as marketers – *“to identify, evaluate and build relationships with the suppliers they have identified as being the most relevant and practical for their needs”* (Schultz and Patti, 2009). As a consequence of this paradigm shift, marketing became increasingly mediated. However, this new information-rich marketplace required firms to consider all forms of communication, all message delivery channels, customers and prospects, and all brand contact points when planning marketing communications strategies – an endeavor which was not easy for firms accustomed to traditional mass-media marketing (Peltier et al., 2003).

In the early 1990's, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) was proposed as a solution to the complexities of contemporary marketing communications. Broadly defined, IMC is both a concept and process of marketing communication planning that recognizes the added value of using a comprehensive plan to evaluate the strategic roles of a variety of marketing disciplines (e.g. PR, Word of Mouth, Direct Marketing, Advertising, Events, Sponsorship, etc.) and communication channels (e.g. print, mobile, social, broadcast, online, etc.), and combines these disciplines and channels to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact (Schultz et al.1993). Proponents of IMC argue that it offers synergy amongst the different marketing techniques and communication channels, with the end result being enhanced efficiency, productivity and performance (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). At its core, IMC is about planning, and what it takes to deliver a consistent and effective message.

According to Kotler, IMC is a way of looking at the whole marketing process from the viewpoint of the customer. Therefore, the starting point for IMC planning starts with an analysis of the overall situation of the company/brand (e.g. competitors, consumers, markets and products). This analysis provides a foundation for determining the target audience for marketing communications. Once the target audience is defined, marketers should specify the objectives of the marketing communications campaigns (i.e. what the target audience is to *think, feel, and do* after they are exposed to marketing messages) (Percy, 2008). Setting the right communication objectives is extremely important for successful IMC planning; this is because the appropriateness of messages, media, and marketing tools chosen in the next step of planning will be a function of the communication objectives set earlier, as well as current market conditions. Communication objectives will vary depending on the target audience and market conditions, but in general are the outcomes of four communication effects (1) category need, (2) brand awareness, (3) brand attitude, (4) brand purchase intention (Percy, 2008).

Clearly identifying the target audience and desired communication objectives are critical steps in the IMC process, but not the only steps. Marketing managers must then decide what it will take to accomplish those objectives - what type of marketing disciplines and communication channels will do the best job. Then they must explore the relative strengths and weaknesses of each discipline and channel, as well as how they can be integrated and aligned in order to maximize communication impact (Percy, 2008). This assessment and decision making process requires strategic level planning and, according to Percy (2008), will typically proceed through six steps:

1. Review of the marketing plan
2. Identify and select the appropriate target audience
3. Determine target audience decision making process
4. Messaging development
5. Matching media options
6. Measurement

### **3.5 Mobile Marketing**

Proponents of Relationship Marketing argue that, in order to establish and maintain long-term customer relationships, marketers must not only create more personalized and targeted marketing communications through the use of database technologies, they must also make greater use of new electronic media as a means of interacting with customers. As described earlier, interactive media changes marketing communications from a one-way process to a two-way process with the interaction between consumer and marketer at the core (Stewart & Pavlou 2002). Consequently, interactivity has become the hallmark of the paradigm shift in both marketing and communications, and mobile media is playing a leading role in this transition (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998).

Widespread use of mobile devices, technological convergence, unbroken connectivity and real-time interaction has encouraged many people and businesses to embrace the mobile medium as an interactive marketing communications medium (Kolsaker, 2009). For most, the key benefits of the mobile medium are its constant, immediate and intimate accessibility, as well as its time-sensitiveness, personalization and location-awareness (Karjaluoto et al. 2007). Furthermore, because the devices have become functionally sophisticated (i.e. many devices now serve as personal organizers - holding directory information, photographs, text and video messages), ubiquitous and socially embedded, users now consider them intensely personal and completely indispensable (Kolsaker, 2009). Moreover, because of the increased functionality, cloud computing capabilities and information storage, users now greatly depend on their devices to manage their personal and professional lives. In several studies, users declared that they simply could not manage without their mobiles (Ellwood-Clayton 2003; Lasen 2005; Vincent 2005, 2006; Mintel Oxygen Report 2007).

#### **3.5.1 Mobile Marketing Communications**

As consumer adoption of mobile technology continues, more and more companies will develop marketing strategies to exploit this new medium. According to Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg (1997), mobile technology is likely to have the greatest impact on marketing communications (Coviello et al., 2003). Due to the unique characteristics of mobile communications (e.g. personal, interactive, context aware, ubiquitous, mobile, etc.), mobile marketing offers brands a completely different approach to market than traditional marketing; mobile marketing campaigns can be executed specific to a consumer's location or particular consumption context. In other words, brand-consumer communications can take place at more personal, contextual and location-based levels. This results in more

meaningful and relevant advertising messages being delivered to the consumer in a setting where they may be more receptive to receiving such communications (Sultan and Rohm, 2005). Furthermore, mobile marketing enables firms to achieve three crucial objectives: (1) to build brand awareness and the formation of attitudes, (2) to increase brand-consumer engagement and interaction, and (3) to directly influence consumer actions and behaviors (Sultan and Rohm, 2005).

While evidence of mobile marketing effectiveness is still limited, marketers worldwide are spending increasing amounts of money on marketing activities in mobile media. This increase in spending is partly due to the fact that firms are seeking ways to get better value from their marketing investments. For most firms, media fragmentation has rendered impersonal mass-media communication inadequate and inefficient, whereas targeted one-to-one marketing communications via interactive media have become increasingly effective (Leppäniemi and Karjaluoto, 2008). According to research by Kolsaker, the resulting increase in effectiveness of mobile marketing is due to the personal relationship people have with their mobile device. As a result of this relationship, Kolsaker suggests that mobile device users are actually more welcoming to receiving marketing messages via this medium. Additionally, the mobile device is said to engage with a captive audience (Farley, 2011), which Malthouse & Calder (2010) claim enhances consumer responses to advertising.

In academic research, mobile marketing is still developing. Despite some efforts to study whether or not consumer are willing to receive marketing communications to their mobile device, most of the research offering optimistic predictions about the future of mobile marketing rely on indirect measurements, such as increasing global penetration levels of mobile devices and technological advances that enable the convergence of mobile and internet (Leppäniemi, 2009). However, as the research field moves forward, there is a growing consensus as to the most appropriate way in which mobile marketing should be defined. In 2005, The Mobile Marketing Association described mobile media as *“the only personal channel enabling spontaneous, direct, interactive and/or targeted communications, any time, any place,”* and in 2008 defined Mobile Marketing as *“a set of practices that enables an organization to communicate and engage with their audience in an interactive and relevant manner through any mobile device or network.”* (Mobile Marketing Association, 2008). Moreover, according to The Mobile Marketing Association (2005), mobile media is best used as an *“...integrated content delivery and direct-response vehicle within a cross-media marketing communications program.”* This means that mobile communications should never be a stand-alone channel or an aggressive promotional tactic; it should be used to extend the presence of a company or product into an additional channel (Steinbock 2005). In most cases, a traditional advertising medium like television, press or flyers is needed in order to broadcast the invitation to participate in a mobile marketing campaign (Kavassalis et al., 2003).

Thanks to the changes mobile technology has brought to the communication process, one of the biggest challenges facing mobile marketers is how to directly influence consumer actions and behaviors via mobile communications. According to Sultan and Rohm (2005), in order to trigger the desired response and manage it effectively, mobile marketing communications should be personalized and interactive. However, to create personalized and interactive

communications there needs to be an investment in database technology and database management. In other words, without a system for collecting, integrating and analyzing customer data, marketers will have trouble personalizing their interactions with customers and therefore have a limited ability to take full advantage of the mobile platform (Sultan and Rohm, 2005).

Ultimately, the level of personalization and interactivity will be predicated on the role and position mobile marketing is given within the firms broader marketing communications plan. In other words, the mobile platform will be positioned as either a *mechanism for branding*, or a *tool for information and/or economic transactions* (Sultan and Rohm, 2005). If mobile media is positioned primarily as a branding tool, then investment in and utilization of database technology will be significantly less than if it were positioned as a both a *branding* and *transaction* tool. Basically, the provision, processing and tracking of individual customer *transactions* requires greater use of database technology than *branding* activities.



### 3.6 Summary: Integrated Theoretical Analysis

Within the last 20 years, advances in ICT and new media have dramatically altered the marketing function in general, and marketing communications specifically. Where it was once controlled and dominated by the firm itself, marketing communications is now an increasingly two-way process. The proliferation of new communications technologies and interactive media channels has transformed the consumer from a passive message recipient to an active message co-creator.

In response to the complexities of contemporary marketing communications, many firms – knowingly or not – have implemented an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) strategy. Simply put, IMC creates greater synergy amongst the different marketing techniques and communication channels selected, resulting in enhanced efficiency, productivity and performance (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). If implemented effectively, the ultimate consequence of this process is greater brand equity and more profitable long-term customer relationships (Percy, 2008).

From a Relationship Marketing perspective, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) not only defines and assigns the integrated role of diverse communication channels, it also addresses how the combination of different channels enhances the overall effectiveness of a firm's customer relationships (Zahay et al. 2004; Leppäniemi, 2008). Extending IMC into the domain of Relationship Marketing – particularly Interactive Marketing – has added value because it brings together multiple customer touch points, media and messages (Peltier et al. 2003). Furthermore, it presents an opportunity to delve deeper into how interactive media - in this case mobile media - has dramatically altered Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) (Hoffman & Novak 1996; Bezjian-Avery et al. 1998). Put simply, Relationship Marketing tactics and interactive media can be used to develop what Peltier et al. (2003) refer to as Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications.

The capacity which interactive media have for creating 'conversations' with customers helps firms transition along the Transaction Marketing-Relationship Marketing continuum (Schultz, 2000; Grönroos, 1991). In comparison with Transaction Marketing, the purpose of exchange in Relationship Marketing involves establishing a dialogue that provides individual customers access to information. In turn, the use of interactive media allows these customers to provide information to the business. The intent of managers in advanced stages of Relationship Marketing is to create a real-time dialogue that is enabled and mediated by Information and Communications Technology (Coviello et al., 1997). In this way, Relationship Marketing – particularly Interactive Marketing - can facilitate message processing, increase the probability of achieving desired IMC objectives, and create the previously elusive opportunity for firms to engage in long-term customer relationship management (Peltier et al., 2003). Moreover, interactivity has shown to be associated with positive attitudinal and cognitive responses – aspects which contribute to the development of a strong brand (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Qin Gao et al., 2009).

According to Peltier et al.(2003), there are four areas where Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications and

traditional mass-media marketing communications differ:

1. Communication issues: Interactive IMC chooses media based on where the customers already are, communications are targeted and focused on creating ongoing dialogue, and overall messages are augmented with segment-specific messages.
2. Relationship dynamics: Interactive IMC emphasizes relationships where both the marketer and customer create value, and the degree of interaction and information exchange is two-way and mutual.
3. Metrics: An Interactive IMC strategy measures value instead of output, customer retention instead of acquisition, and effectiveness instead of efficiency.
4. Role of databases: In addition to demographic data, marketers collect behavioral insights and psychographic data through traditional surveys as well as interactive media. The databases help with setting communication objectives, segmentation and message design, and personalization.

The collection of customer data is especially critical to the effectiveness of Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications. This is because interactive relationships cannot be build or maintained without the use of ongoing database management (Peltier & Schibrowsky1997). Interactive IMC should therefore attempt to: (1) create real-time ‘conversations’ with customers, and (2) collect additional data about them. With Interactive IMC, customer input is central to customizing future messages (Peltier et al., 2003).

Finally, according to the Relationship Marketing perspective, Interactive Marketing is the dominant part of the marketing function (Grönroos, 1994). Therefore, in order to be effective relationship marketers, firms must continuously find ways to interact with customers. Due to the level of interactivity offered by mobile communications, it is an ideal tool for Relationship Marketing and the development of Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications. By leveraging the unique communication characteristics of the mobile medium (e.g. interactive, ubiquitous, social, personal, contextual, mobile, convenient, etc.) mobile marketing can strengthen the IMC plan (Leppäniemi, 2006). An IMC plan using mobile media would not only consider the specific set of activities needed to perform a mobile marketing campaign, but also how to integrate mobile media within a combination of communication channels so as to enhance the overall impact of brand messages as well as the quality of firm relationships (Kitchen et al., 2004; Leppäniemi, 2006; Zahay et al. 2004).

### 3.7 Related Theoretical Frameworks

#### **Peltier et al. (2003): The Relationship Between Database Management and Interactive IMC**

Peltier et al. (2003)’s model of the relationship between database management and Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications is a clear illustration of how these two concepts fit together. By collecting, analyzing and using customer data firms are able to create specific customer profiles and segments. From there, IMC strategy decides the

media channels and marketing disciplines needed to achieve segment-specific and overall communication objectives (i.e. desired audience response). The response obtained in each communication campaign is filtered back into the customer database and used to customize future messages.

The use of interactive media is of particular importance to the model. Without the use of interactive media, the customer would not be able to input a response and that response would have no effect on future messages. The customer's input and its effect are what distinguish Interactive IMC from Non-Interactive IMC (Naimark, 1990).

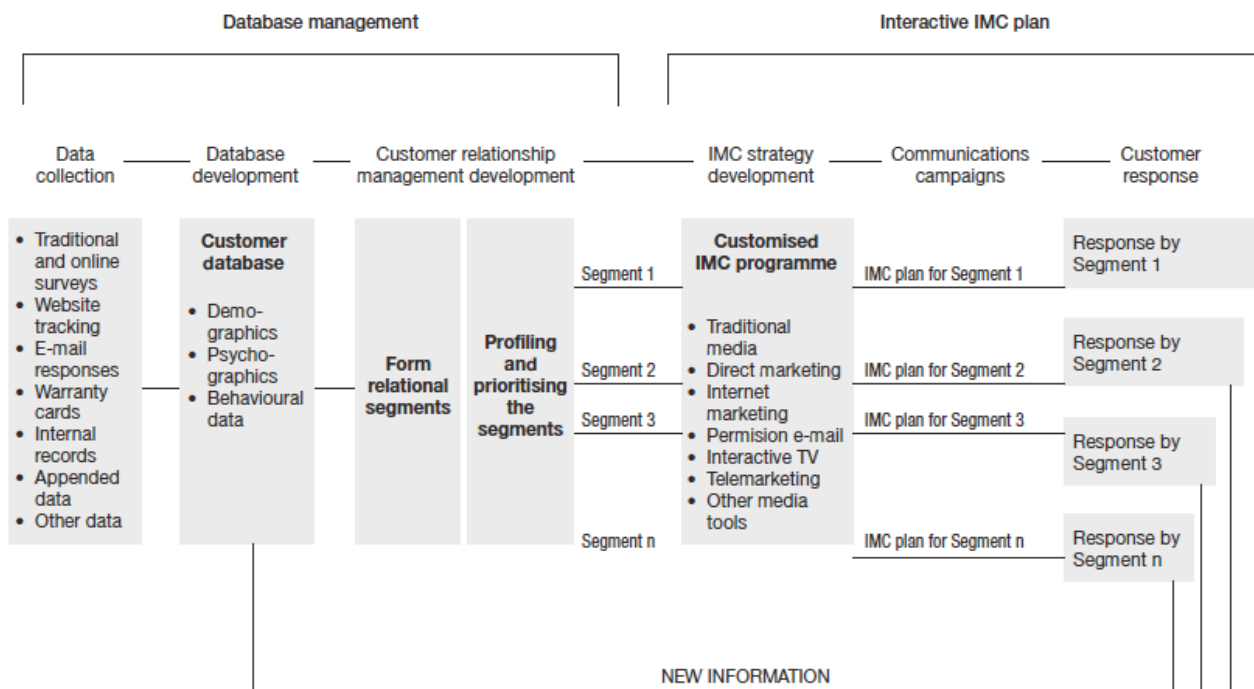


Figure 2: A conceptual model of the relationship between database management and interactive IMC(Peltier et al., 2003)

**Leppäniemi et al. (2006): The Relationship Between Mobile Media, Database Management and Interactive IMC**  
 Leppäniemi et al. (2006) made a similar connection between mobile media, database management and Interactive IMC as that made by Peltier et al. (2003). According to their model, relationship management strategies that are driven by databases provide organizations a mechanism to create and distribute personalized and Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications. Building on Peltier et al. (2003)'s definition of interactive media (i.e. it is two way in nature, each party to the communication process can exude control over the content and form of communications, the communication exchanges can be personalized, and database technology can be included to help measure and track user response), Leppäniemi et al. (2006) conceptualized a model that links the use of mobile marketing database information and mobile media to the development of Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications.

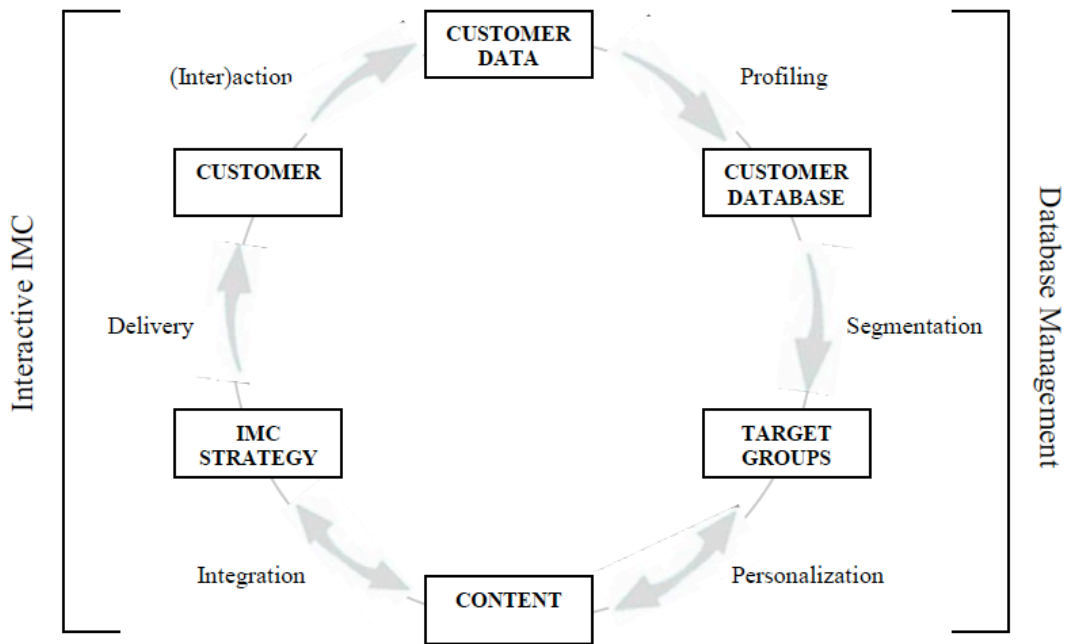


Figure 3: A conceptual model of the relationship between Interactive IMC and database management in the mobile context (Leppäniemi et al., 2006)

According to their model, in order to take full advantage the interactivity provided by mobile media, a company's marketing strategy should be data-driven. Firstly, marketers must understand the needs, wants, and demands of their *customers*. Then, once marketing communications are seen, heard or read, customers will have some sort of response – *action*. Depending on the type of response sought, *inter-action* might occur. Secondly, *customer data*, collected via various means (e.g. surveys, SMS, website tracking and analytics), is *profiled* and classified into *customer databases*. Thirdly, *segmentation* techniques based on information found in *customer databases* are used to divide customers into specific *target groups*. This is done in order to more easily satisfy individual customer needs, wants and demands. Fourthly, *personalization* involves using Information and Communications Technology, such as mobile media, to better serve customers – creating more convenient and mutually beneficial interactions. Fifthly, depending on the desired customer response, marketers must decide what to say (message *content*) and how to say it (message *structure* and *format*). In the mobile context, *content* may be a downloadable application, SMS, MMS, QR code or mobile website. Finally, *integration* calls for careful integration and coordination of all company communication channels and tools so as to *deliver* a clear, compelling and consistent message about the company and its products and services. The *IMC strategy* will therefore involve identifying the target audience and shaping a well-coordinated communication program to elicit the desired audience response.

### Part III: Research Model

This section concludes the theoretical framework by presenting the author's interpretation of the theories put forward earlier in this chapter. The illustration in Figure X is intended to help clarify how the consumer marketing theories and

HRM theories presented earlier in this chapter fit together on a general level. Part III will conclude with the author's preposed theoretical model – entitled the MRec model.

#### **Figure 4: Integrated Theoretical Framework**

### **3.7.1 The Role of Recruitment Marketing Communications**

Job seekers must obtain information about organizations in order to develop the dimensions of employer brand equity discussed earlier. Recruitment marketing communications, also called Employer Branding, is therefore designed to manage aspects of job seekers' employer knowledge. From the company's perspective, recruitment marketing communications aims to (1) influence job seeker decision making, (2) contribute to talent attraction and (3) improve the efficiency of employment markets. Ultimately, recruitment marketing communications should support business growth by creating and shaping sources of employment information so that human capital returns exceed recruitment marketing expenditure.

#### **1. Influence Job Seeker Decision Making**

In order for recruitment marketing communication to contribute to talent attraction, communication plans should seek to understand how target job seekers make employment decisions. According to Behling (1968), individuals use three bases to decide which organization they would like to work for: (a) objective, (b) critical contact, and (c) subjective (Ryan et al, 2000).

- a. *Objective factor theory*: people will choose employers according to a basic set of objective and measurable attributes (functional aspects), such as salary, benefits, career development prospects, and the nature of the work.
- b. *Critical contact theory*: individuals can not make meaningful or objective decisions, nor differentiate between employers/job offers, because their employer knowledge is too limited. Therefore, job seekers will base their decisions on the brief time spent interacting with the organization and its representatives.
- c. *Subjective theory*: the choice of employer is extremely personal and

emotional. Job seekers base their decisions on links between their own personality and the employer/corporate brand image of hiring firms. Tom (1971) suggests that the candidate's employer choice is determined by the degree to which their own self-image (self-concept) matches that of the employer. Therefore, the content and form of recruitment communications may provide signals which determine the personality (i.e. employer brand) of the organization (Ryan et al. 2000).

As information is often limited during the early stages of recruitment, it is of critical importance that employers use recruitment marketing communication to influence and contribute to the three bases used by job seekers to make employment decisions. This means providing the right balance of objective information, opportunities for interaction, and consistent employer brand messages.

## **2. Contribute to Talent Attraction**

Due to limited information, it can be difficult for job seekers to differentiate between employers offering similar opportunities. Consequently, job seekers' will base many decisions on the information obtained in recruitment communications (Collins and Stevens, 2002). Using various communication tools, such as traditional advertising, PR, promotion, word of mouth, sponsorship, events, and direct marketing, as well as careful media and message planning, hiring firms can influence employment decisions by building and strengthening employer brand equity (i.e. awareness, associations, perceived quality, reputation).

## **3. Improve Employment Market Efficiency**

As defined earlier, the employment relationship is analogous to a market exchange. Therefore, all actors party to the exchange will attempt to maximize their utility (i.e. extract the greatest value from the least expenditure). In the labor-market, hiring firms will attempt to attract and employ the highest quantity and quality talent for the lowest expenditure of time, money, and effort possible. In a similar fashion, job seekers attempt to obtain the greatest amount of monetary and non-monetary value possible for their respective level of human capital (e.g. skills, abilities and experience) (Maurer, 2002).

From the employers perspective, recruitment marketing communication activities should help maximize utility by minimizing cost-per-applicant/hire, increasing acceptance-to-offer ratios, and rendering the time elapsed between attraction stages more efficient (Ryan et al, 2000). Effective recruitment marketing communication should also indirectly help to improve employee satisfaction levels, retention rates, attrition rates, and employee turnover; the argument being that, with better information, job seekers will only accept employment with organizations capable of meeting their employment needs.

Moreover, according to Service Marketing theories, the attraction and retention of qualified personnel is key to retaining customers as well (also called Internal Marketing). This is because the service product is a performance product and the performers are employees (Berry, 1995). Recent literature labels this as 'the cycle of failure'

(Schlesinger and Heskett, 1991): high employee turnover – indirectly affected by poor recruitment marketing communications - discourages management from investing much in hiring, training, and other commitment-building activities; which in turn leads to ineffective performance and employee turnover. High employee turnover negatively affects service quality and customer retention, thus hurting profitability, and further reducing resources available to invest in recruitment and retention (Berry, 1995).

Finally, building on the idea of utility maximization in employment relationships, it is proposed that the effectiveness, efficiency, and subsequent ROI of recruitment marketing communication activities are improved if the activities are executed as an integrated whole, rather than a sum of parts. By looking at recruitment marketing communications the way job seekers see it - as a flow of information from indistinguishable sources - employers can influence the behavior of target job seekers through careful strategic planning and coordination of all communication vehicles (Percy, 2008). Simply put, when executed as an integrated whole, recruitment marketing communication expenditures can be minimized and returns maximized.

### **3.7.2 Casting Recruitment as Employment Marketing**

If the employment exchange is akin to a high-involvement purchase and the goal of recruitment marketing is to facilitate the employment market exchange, then it should be quite natural to use consumer marketing theories to analyze the process and function of recruitment. Researchers such as Han and Collins (2002), and Cable and Turban (2001) have long used branding concepts found in consumer marketing literature to explain how hiring firms build employer brand equity to attract qualified talent. Branding theories, including Keller's customer-based brand equity pyramid, apply easily to the recruitment context, and researchers in the area of employer branding have already paved the way for an interdisciplinary approach to recruitment research.

According to Maurer et al (1992), casting corporate recruitment as employment marketing offers at least three advantages: (1) creates conceptual parallels that are useful for recruitment research (e.g. the parallels between job search and employment decision-making, and that of consumer behavior in high-involvement purchase situations), (2) invites the use of the marketing literature as a basis for review and design of recruiting research, ultimately providing a more interdisciplinary perspective, and (3) provides marketing management literature as a conceptual framework, facilitating a strategic approach to the study of human resource management (Maurer et al., 1992).

### **3.7.3 The Unique Characteristics of Mobile Communications**

Prior to a discussion of how mobile media is, and should be, used in recruitment marketing communications, it is important to fully grasp what makes the mobile medium so unique. In the context of marketing, there are seven important characteristics of mobile communications that deserve further explanation: (1) mobile (2) context aware, (3)

ubiquitous, (4) personal, (5) convenient (6) social, and (7) interactive. Many of these characteristics are what distinguish the mobile device from any other Information and Communications Technology (e.g. desktop or laptop).

### **1. Mobile**

Mobility is the capability of being moved readily (The American Heritage Dictionary). Although personal computers offer greater mobility than desktop computers, it can be argued that due to the weight, size, value and nature of its packaging, there is a limit to where and when a user will transport a laptop device. From a communications perspective, mobility means being able to move freely while staying connected (i.e. connected to the internet). From this definition, an even greater distinction can be made. While most personal computing devices offer wireless internet connectivity, not all offer freedom of movement while staying connected.

### **2. Context aware:**

One of the most significant features of the mobile device is context sensitivity (e.g. location, time, temperature, device capability, user interest and activity). Using GPS, WiFi, 3G, Bluetooth, Near Field Communication, etc., mobile users can personalize their experiences based on their immediate context. Whether it's directions, weather alerts, traffic reports, information on nearby products/services and events, or the location and happenings of friends and family, location and time specificity are the defining mobile features – allowing users to pull desired relevant information, rather than be pushed unwanted messages. It also provides users with an unprecedented level of control over when and what they see, read, and hear.

### **3. Ubiquitous**

Ubiquity implies the existence or apparent existence everywhere at the same time. While ubiquitous computing means one person and many computers, personal computing means one computer and one person. Although both mobile computing and personal computing can happen anytime anywhere, only ubiquitous mobile computing provides a continuous on-the-move operation; this is a device that is aware of its immediate environment and acts accordingly in real-time.

### **4. Personal**

The mobile device is rarely shared. As discussed earlier, one's mobile device is extremely personal and intimate. It contains private data, contacts, schedules, pictures and other information most users would feel lost without, or vulnerable if left in someone else's hands. Although most personal computers are inherently personal and private in nature, like the desktop, they are often shared with others. In contrast, the mobile device is almost never shared with others.

### **5. Convenient**

There is no argument that the mobile device provides more convenience than the PC or desktop. The added ubiquity, mobility and personalization, not to mention the convenient size and user interface, offered by the mobile device are



the reasons 91% of US cell phone users keep their phones within arms reach 24/7 (Mary Meeker - Web2 Summit, November '08). Furthermore, the ability to connect to the “cloud” on all mobile devices adds an additional layer of convenience - as most mobile users can seamlessly and effortlessly move from mobile device to desktop or PC without losing pace with any cloud computational activities.

## 6. Social

Most media enthusiasts argue that social media and mobile media go hand-in-hand. Many of the most popular social networking platforms available today make exemplary use of the mobile medium's unique features, such as: interactivity, ubiquitous connectivity and context awareness (e.g. Foursquare, Facebook, Twitter). Regardless of which came first, the social or the mobile, the combination of constant real-time communication with friends and family anywhere anytime has propelled millions of users around the world to connect to social networks via their mobile device. According to Microsoft Tag, on average, Americans spend 2.7 hours per day socializing on their mobile device and 91% of mobile internet access is to socialize – compared to 79% for desktop. Over one third of Facebook's 750 million users access Facebook via a mobile device, 40% of Twitter users use Twitter mobile, and 200 million Youtube views occur on mobile devices per day (Microsoft Tag, 2011).

## 7. Interactive

Interactivity, defined as “*the extent to which a person perceives he or she controls over the interaction process, and his or her communication counterpart (a person, a mass-mediated environment, or a computer-mediated environment) personalizes and responds to his or her communicative behavior*” (Wu, 2000), is one of the most salient characteristics of mobile communications (Barnes, 2002). Peltier et al. (2003) regard the mobile medium as interactive because it meets all requirements of their definition of interactive media:

1. It is two way in nature
2. Each party to the communication process can exert control over the content and form of communications
3. The communication exchanges can be personalized
4. Database technology can be used to track response and segment audiences

Moreover, Lee (2005) points out that the *ubiquitous connectivity* (i.e. mobility, ubiquity) and *contextual offer* (i.e. localization and personal identity) of the mobile device make it a distinctly interactive medium. Mobile interactivity, as opposed to internet interactivity, not only allows users to continue their interaction irrespective of their location and movement, it also takes advantage of the strong relationship between a user and his/her mobile device – leading to more personalized, timely and location-specific interaction. These unique features, along with the six characteristics of mobile communications described above, make the mobile medium ideal for fluid or seamless interaction (Lee, 2005).

### 3.7.4 Applying Consumer Marketing Theories to Recruitment

In light of the theoretical parallels that can be made between recruitment and consumer marketing, it is no surprise that many of the trends shaping the practice of consumer marketing today are also apparent in the recruitment context. As mentioned earlier, media fragmentation has rendered impersonal mass-media communication inadequate and inefficient, whereas targeted one-to-one marketing communications via interactive media have become increasingly effective (Leppäniemi and Karjaluoto, 2008). As such, employment marketers, like consumer marketers, are shifting from Transaction Marketing to Relationship Marketing techniques through the use of databases technologies and interactive media. Moreover, in effort to get better value from their recruitment marketing investments, hiring firms are making greater use of strategic marketing communications planning – particularly as it relates to the integration of new interactive media channels. Like consumer marketing, one new media channel that is beginning to have a profound affect on recruitment marketing communications planning is mobile media.

### **Relationship Marketing in the Recruitment Context**

As described earlier, *resonance* is the highest level of brand equity achieved. To resonate with target talent an employer must build a meaningful and enduring relationship. Only when an enduring relationship is sustained will the candidate and employer experience maximized returns (see section 3.3.2). It is for this reason that recruiters have been prompted to question the role of Relationship Marketing – particularly Interactive Marketing - in the practice and theory of recruitment.

Many argue that the traditional focus on the 4Ps of marketing (product, place, price, and promotion) is a potential roadblock to understanding how Relationship Marketing techniques can be used to build and strengthen market relationships, such as the relationship between firm and potential employee (Webster, 1998). Instead of focusing solely on the employment transaction (i.e. apply/accept job), recruiters adhering to a Relationship Marketing logic are encouraged to use new media to interact with candidates, gather new information about them and try to retain them in the recruitment process. The argument being that, the more the employer and candidate interact and learn about each other, the more engaging and productive their exchanges become (Wunderman, 1994). Therefore, the ultimate goal of marketing communications should be to create relevant conversations that build from simple market exchanges to enduring relationships. In the context of employer branding, this implies moving along the continuum from *salience* to *resonance* by using Relationship Marketing techniques to foster engagement and interaction.

Furthermore, since relationships are the objective of such marketing communications, impersonal mass-media communications must be supplemented by personalized communications that by definition are interactive (Duncan and Moriarty 1998). The unique ability of new media to create interactive communication programs makes it a superior method for developing this new type of employer-candidate relationship. Moreover, by using database technology together with interactive media, employment marketers are able to personalize interactions with candidates – thus making it more engaging. To accomplish this, the hiring firm must have the capacity to collect data, and then to synthesize the data into information that can be used to develop personalized interactive communications (Preston 2000; Peppers et al. 1999). Essentially, an employer must use database information to understand and nurture these new employer-candidate relationships, and new media to facilitate the interaction.

## IMC in the Recruitment Context

IMC planning can be applied in the recruitment context as efficiently and effectively as it is applied in the consumer context. This is because the IMC process is arguably the most logical and practical way of building brand equity. In recruitment marketing, the six step strategic IMC process can be applied in more or less the same way as it is in consumer marketing.

1. *Review the marketing plan:* understand the market in general, and where the employer brand fits in relative to competitors. The company must answer the following questions: What is being marketed? (e.g. specific career, ambition, idea, culture, or image); What is known about the competitive market? (e.g. what is the labor supply for specific types of positions, are there changes in the industry that will effect labor demands in the future, etc.); What is known about competitors? (e.g. who does the company compete with for talent, how do they compete, what are the recruitment budgets like, etc.); What are the marketing objectives? (e.g. if the IMC plan is successful what will happen - monetary goals, labor turnover goals, attrition rate, cost-per-hire, etc.); How is the IMC plan expected to contribute to the marketing objectives? (Percy, 2008)
2. *Identify and select the appropriate target audience:* this step relates to the segments that should be addressed with marketing communications. Looking beyond simple demographic criteria, the recruitment marketing manager must think ahead and attempt to understand what type of candidate would be important for business success in the future (Percy, 2008)
3. *Determine how target audience makes employment decisions:* in order for IMC to positively affect application intentions, it is essential to understand how job seekers make employment decisions. As described earlier, according to Behling (1968), individuals use three bases to decide which organization they would like to work for: (1) objective, (2) critical contract, and (3) subjective (Ryan et al, 2000). Recruitment marketing communication is used to influence the three bases used by job seekers to make employment decisions.

Furthermore, adapting Rossiter and Percy (1997)'s 'Behavioral Sequence Model' for the recruitment process, it is possible to breakdown the stages job seekers go through in making employment decisions, as well as what considerations are made at each stage. It is the role of recruitment marketing communications to help move the job-seeker along the recruitment process, from need arousal to offer acceptance.

**Table 3 – 'Behavior Sequence Model' or Recruitment Process for entry-level candidate (Rossiter & Percy, 1997)**

### Decision Stages

Consideration at each stage	Need arousal	Employer brand consideration	Application Process
<b>Whom is involved? What role do they play (e.g. initiator, influencer, decider, applicant)?</b>	Family, friends, and university career services, act as initiators. Company representative at career fair can also be initiator of need identification.	Family, friends, mentor, recruiter, head hunter, social network and trusted advisor act as influencers. Job seeker decides which employer brands to shortlist	Job seeker applies to companies he believes best fits his needs. Recruiter and/or company representatives continue to influence job seeker 'employer knowledge'
<b>Where does the stage occur?</b>	At home, at school, at work. During company presentations, career fair, while commuting.	During career fair, while talking with friends/advisors. During company visits or presentations. While commuting, at work or at home	At home or at school. Or at the companies' offices
<b>What is the timing</b>	End of the semester, graduation period, summer holiday	Immediately following need arousal and for next 3-6 months	Shortly after need arousal and while conducting information search
<b>How is it likely to occur?</b>	Word-of-mouth, while completing school projects, or researching companies	Visiting company websites, meeting company employees or people experienced in field, exposed to company recruitment information via social or <b>mobile media</b>	Through online application system on company career website, email, in person, <b>mobile website, mobile job app</b>

4. *Message Development:* at this stage, recruitment marketers must decide how specific marketing communication messages can best contribute to the employer's overall marketing objectives. Therefore, establishing how the employer brand will be positioned within the recruitment marketing communication, and what particular benefits will be put forward to support that position, is of utmost importance. It is at this stage where the dimensions of 'employer knowledge' held by target candidates are of primary concern (i.e. brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality and brand reputation) (Percy, 2008).

The message development stage is also when communication objectives are set (i.e. communication objectives are the desired audience response and the intended outcomes of communication effects). Recruitment marketers will decide what communication effects (employer brand awareness, employer brand attitude, and application intention) they are looking for, and attempt to formulate IMC plans that will optimize those effects (Percy, 2008).

5. *Matching media options:* at this stage it is important to identify appropriate media options and ensure consistency with the communication objectives. The goal being to optimize message delivery and message processing. The IMC media strategy should go beyond finding media that reach the target audience, or that satisfy particular frequency goals (although this is still important). At this stage, the recruitment marketer is concerned with choosing media that facilitates the type of message processing necessary to achieve communication effects. Therefore, the employer must attempt to answer the following questions: does the media reflect trends in the marketplace? Are competitors using it? Is it used by the general public? Is the media popular amongst the target audience? Does the media fit in the decision making process of target talent? Can the media communicate messages relevant to employment decision

bases? Can the media help achieve communication effects (i.e. awareness, attitude, intention)

6. *Measurement:* measurement of the effectiveness of recruitment marketing communications involves the evaluation of the communication effect (i.e. employer brand awareness and attitude, and application intention). Measurement also takes a short, medium and long-term perspective; including formative (i.e. employment market dynamics, marketing and media mix strengths), process (i.e. media evaluation and audience perception), outcome (i.e. effect on target audience behavior, attitude and intentions) and summary evaluations (i.e. long-term impacts of candidate relationships on applicant pool quality, cost-per-hire, candidate attrition, employee turnover and job satisfaction) (Dahlén et al.2010).

### **Mobile Marketing in the Recruitment Context**

As described earlier, Relationship Marketing via interactive media is a superior method for developing and strengthening employer-candidate relationships. Essentially, interactive media changes recruitment marketing communications from a one-way process to a two-way process, with the interaction between job seekers and employer at the core. One of the most promising media channels helping to establish this new type of employer-candidate relationship is mobile media.

Similar to consumer markets, the proliferation of mobile devices and advances in mobile technology are driving recruiters to exploit its potential within recruitment markets (i.e. mobile is for everyone, job seeking is for everyone). While evidence of its effectiveness in the recruitment context is limited, many employers are making use of this new channel for the purpose of building employer brand awareness, increasing candidate engagement and interaction, and influencing candidate actions. The reason mobile media is so effective at fulfilling this purpose is because of its unique communication characteristics; the interactive, mobile, ubiquitous, social, personal and contextual elements of mobile communications have the potential to enhance the impact of employer branding efforts as well as the quality of the firm's candidate relationships.

Finally, how recruitment marketers create mobile marketing campaigns is expected to be quite similar to how consumer marketing managers do it. Of particular importance, however, is how the mobile channel is integrated within the recruitment marketing communications strategy. Although issues of integration are important for consumer marketing, it is particularly important for recruitment marketing. This is because mobile media does not easily allow for the completion of the employment transaction (i.e. job seekers can not easy apply for jobs via their mobile device). This means that mobile recruiting is almost always used in combination with, or in complement to, some other recruitment communication channel (e.g. website, social media, print, career fair), and therefore can not be used as a stand-alone recruitment marketing tool.

### 3.7.5 Key theories and purpose restatement

The purpose of this thesis is to examine *why* and *how* hiring firms use mobile media as a recruitment marketing communications tool and establish an interdisciplinary research model which can help explain this emerging phenomenon. Using Human Resource Management (HRM) theories such as Recruitment and Employer Branding, and consumer marketing theories such as Integrated Marketing Communications, Relationship Marketing and Mobile Marketing, this thesis aims to answer the following questions:

1. *Why* is mobile media an important recruitment marketing tool?
  - What are the drivers for using mobile media in recruitment marketing?
2. *How* is mobile media used in recruitment marketing communications?
  - What HRM and marketing issues should be considered when developing a mobile recruitment marketing plan?

Although all the aforementioned research fields and sub-fields are important, most of the theoretical information is presented to help frame the discussion and provide the reader with a basic understanding of the topic prior to analysis. The key research concepts are those that have the greatest relevance to the pre-study findings and upcoming empirical analysis. Therefore, the following is a brief description of the most important concepts and how they relate the main research questions. This description then culminates in a four-part MRec Research Model (Mrec = mobile recruitment) which will serve as the framework for analyzing the results of the main study.

***Why is mobile media an important recruitment marketing tool? What are the drivers for using mobile media in recruitment marketing?***

HRM theory would suggest that because a company's human resources are regarded as a key competitive advantage, proactive recruitment planning is becoming increasingly important for business success. Attracting talent and ensuring that a sufficient pool of qualified candidates is available for hire when business plans oblige is an important part of the recruitment planning process – often referred to as recruitment marketing. One important aspect of recruitment marketing is communication, also called Employer Branding. Essentially, by creating and shaping sources of employment information, recruitment marketing can influence job seeker decision making, contributes to talent attraction and improves the efficiency of employment markets. Moreover, as employment markets become increasingly competitive, candidate retention is beginning to take precedence over talent acquisition efforts. Therefore, marketing activities are increasingly focused on building relationships with talent over time; this is partly achieved by

creating communication activities that facilitate *engagement* and *interaction* throughout the recruitment process.

Relationship Marketing theory suggests the use of new media as a means of facilitating engagement and interaction. This is because a 'relational exchange' facilitated by new media is characterized by a two-way, iterative, interactive, and personalized communication process. Therefore, Relationship Marketing in the recruitment context requires two key ingredients to be effective: (1) interactive media, and (2) a database of candidate information. Essentially, an employer must use database information to understand and nurture the employer-candidate relationship, and new media to facilitate the interaction.

Mobile communications technology is a driving force behind many of these changes. Mobile media is not only prolific, it is mobile, ubiquitous, context sensitive, personal, convenient, social and - most importantly - interactive. The use of mobile media for recruitment marketing is becoming increasingly important because, (1) it helps build brand awareness and the formation of attitudes, (2) increases engagement and interaction, and (3) directly influences candidate actions and behaviors (Sultan and Rohm, 2005).

Therefore, to understand *why* mobile media is an important recruitment marketing tool, researchers should do an initial examination of the firm's recruitment marketing objectives; they should try to evaluate whether or not the company is investing time and money to build candidate relationships. The next step is to evaluate whether or not the firm uses any Relationship Marketing techniques to improve those relationships. Researchers should attempt to determine if the firm actively seeks to interact with candidates, as well as improve those interactions through database management.

***How is mobile media used in recruitment marketing communications? What HRM and marketing issues should be considered when developing a mobile recruitment marketing plan?***

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is proposed as a solution to the complexities of contemporary marketing communications; it recognizes the added value of using a comprehensive plan to evaluate the strategic roles of a variety of marketing disciplines and communication channels. By looking at the whole marketing communication process from the viewpoint of the audience, IMC helps firms select the appropriate target audience, specify communication objectives (i.e. desired audience response), and choose the right combination of marketing tactics, messages and media to achieve those objectives.

By utilizing mobile media as an integrated content delivery and direct-response vehicle within a cross-media IMC program, many firms hope to strengthen the impact of their employer brand and the quality of their candidate relationships. Moreover, due to its compatibility with other communication channels (e.g. social media, print) and interactive nature, many recruiters are motivated to include it in their IMC plans. As a result, mobile communications is never used as a stand-alone channel or an aggressive promotional tactic; it is used to extend the presence of the

employer brand into an additional channel and increase IMC effectiveness with added interactivity.

The process of creating a recruitment marketing communications plan in the context of mobile media is explained by IMC theory. The steps include: (1) reviewing the marketing plan, (2) identifying and selecting the appropriate target audience, (3) determine how target audience makes employment decisions (4) message development, (5) matching media options, and (6) measurement. Whereas all IMC plans will proceed through this six step process - regardless of whether or not mobile media is included in the plan – the significance of mobile media brings new attention to the decisions made in step 5 (i.e. matching media options). Mobile media is given great consideration at this stage of the IMC process not only because of its unique communication characteristics, but because it significantly contributes to the development of Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications. Basically, mobile media is used to leverage the four areas where Interactive IMC and mass-media marketing communications differ (see section 3.8): (1) communication issue, (2) relationship dynamics, (3) metrics, (4) role of databases (Perltier et al., 2003).

Therefore, to understand *how* mobile media is used in recruitment marketing communications and what HRM and marketing issues should be considered when developing a mobile recruitment marketing plan, researchers should first analyze how the firm approaches mobile media; they should evaluate the ways the company uses it in general, and the ways the company believes it is useful as a recruitment marketing communications tool. Once there is a clear understanding of how the firm approaches mobile media, then researchers can examine how the firm integrates mobile media within the IMC plan – particularly as it relates to making communications more interactive.

The interpretation of the research model is that the employer's desire to emphasize candidate retention will drive them to use increasing advanced Relationship Marketing techniques. How the firm uses mobile media as Relationship Marketing tool is revealed by first analyzing the firm's approach to mobile media as a recruitment marketing tool, and then evaluating what efforts the firm makes to integrate mobile media within the recruitment marketing communications plan. The expectation is that as the firm advances in its approach and its integration, the more effective mobile recruitment marketing is at helping to improve candidate retention.

**Figure 5: MRec Research Model**



## 4 Method

### 4.1 Research Design

This study seeks to examine *how* and *why* the mobile medium is used in recruitment marketing. By using HRM concepts and theories found in consumer marketing literature, this thesis attempts to uncover the drivers for using mobile media in recruitment marketing as well as what HRM and marketing issues should be considered when developing a mobile recruitment strategy, and develop an interdisciplinary research model that can be used to explain the emerging phenomenon. Accordingly, this implies the aspiration to gain insight into the company or hiring firm perspective, and places less emphasis on the job seeker perspective. Since the aim of the research entails the attempt to “appreciate inherent patterns” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.407) in the data rather than to test theories or “impose preconceived ideas” on them (ibid, p.407), the research orientation for the paper is inductive. Furthermore, as this study seeks to take the point of view of those being studied as the point of orientation - allowing for theories and concepts to emerge out of data collection - a qualitative research orientation was deemed most appropriate (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.62).

In terms of research strategy, a case study approach was selected because case studies are the preferred research technique when “ ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are posed regarding a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control” (Yin, 2003, p.9). Moreover, a case study approach is particularly helpful when in-depth knowledge is needed about management processes such as marketing and relationship management. Information about these phenomena is often latent and confidential, and the researcher must have access to an organization to be able to identify them (Yin 1994). Case research is also welcome in new situations where only a little is known about the phenomenon and in situations where current theories seem inadequate (Eisenhardt, 1989). Finally, most of the research questions in the interviews conducted with practitioners were ‘how-questions,’ which are typical for a case study research. ‘Why-questions’ were also presented as part of the ‘how-questions,’ as cases that address why-questions are most appropriate when the purpose of the study is to explore a new phenomenon (Yin, 2003, pp. 5–9).

To achieve stronger and more robust findings on the topic, and to paint a richer and broader picture of the phenomenon at hand, multiple case studies were selected in favor of a single case (see e.g. Yin, 2003 or Merriam, 2009 on multiple case studies).

### 4.2 Case Selection

From the beginning, it was the intention of this study to take the hiring firm’s perspective regarding the use of mobile media in recruitment communication. Moreover, since the aim of the study is to analyze “how” and “why” firms use

the mobile device within their recruitment marketing communications, selection of cases was predicated on whether or not the firm actually made use of mobile communications for the purpose of recruitment marketing. Therefore, only firms with established mobile recruitment communication strategies were considered for analysis. Selection of hiring firms as case subjects was carried out using a snowball method. However, since this is a rather new phenomenon, the list of firms with an established mobile recruitment marketing strategy was rather limited. Therefore, the cases selected were from leads provided in the pre-study.

As Yin (2003) would suggest, for the purpose of multiple-case study design, the case selection process followed the replication logic as opposed to the sampling logic. Specifically, the underlying basis for replication logic is to select cases that resemble “multiple experiments” rather than “multiple subjects in an experiment” (ibid, p.47). As such, each case in the multiple-case study design was carefully selected to serve “a specific purpose within the overall scope of inquiry” (Yin, 2003, p.47). In other words, by treating each case as unique in its own right (Bryman & Bell, 2007), each case in the multiple-case study design is perceived as a “whole study” (Yin, 2003, p.50), rather than a contributing statistical component of the aggregate ‘sample’.

The table below is a list of the firms used as case subjects in the study. For reasons of confidentiality all company and participant names have been changed.

**Table 4: Case study firms**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Location</b>
A	USA
B	USA
C	Europe

### **4.3 Assigning Recruitment Managers as case representatives**

The selection of case subject representatives was a rather important part of the case selection process. Since the use of mobile media in the recruitment context is a rather new phenomenon, it is usually pursued due to the insight, innovation and experience of an individual recruitment manager. In all three cases, the representative is in fact the individual who initiated the idea of using mobile media as part of the recruitment communication strategy. Therefore, these individuals have the greatest direct influence on the creation and execution of their mobile recruitment marketing campaigns as well as how these campaigns fit within their broader recruitment communication plan.

Although technical and marketing communication experts are usually involved in the process, they rarely have the holistic perspective that the recruitment managers have regarding the entire communication strategy and how mobile

media fits within this strategy. Therefore, rather than interview several different individuals involved in the process, it was deemed more insightful to pursue an in-depth analysis of “how” and “why” the recruitment manager used mobile media as part of the recruitment communication plan – as they could provide more strategic level insights.

## **4.4 Data Collection Process**

### **4.4.1 In-depth interviews**

In order to collect the necessary data for analysis a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with case representatives. This allowed for latitude to “vary the sequence of the questions ... [and to] ask further questions in response to ...significant replies” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 213). Furthermore, because interviews are inherently more flexible than questionnaires, respondents were given the opportunity to take control over the interview situation – providing information they believed to be important (Gillham, 2005). The advantages of using interviews included allowing questioning to be guided as the interviewer wanted it and providing opportunities for clarification (Frey and Oishi 1995:03). Although there was always the possibility of respondents lying during interviews, typically respondents provided very elaborate answers in an attempt to figure out the purpose of the study (Wimmer and Dominick 1997:162). All of which influence the validity and reliability of the interview data.

As the nature of this study necessitated personal communication with recruitment managers and a thorough understanding of the contextual dynamics underlying their decisions regarding “how” and “why” to use mobile media within their recruitment marketing strategy, in-depth interviews comprised the main method of data collection for this study.

A total of five interviews were conducted with the three case representatives. As the interviews were semi-structured, an interview guide was used, and a generic version sent to interviewees in advance of the meeting (refer to the Appendix). The questions in these interviewees were developed following the issues raised during the pre-study as well as from the literature review, and pertained to topics of Mobile Marketing, Relationship Marketing and Integrated Marketing Communication. Interview guides were updated for the second round of interviews based on the input received in the first round.

The interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes long and were conducted in English. Four of the five interviews were conducted over the phone via Skype and one was conducted in person during an industry conference. To ensure that all information from the interviews would be possible to re-assess again and again, recordings were made of four of the interviews - which were transcribed - and intensive notes were made of the one interview which occurred in-person.

The table below is a list the interviews that were conducted for the main study. Once again, for reasons of confidentiality, company and representative names have been changed.

**Table 5: Case study interview schedule**

Date	Company	Duration
2011-11-18	Company A	1 hour
2012-01-27	Company A	30 min
2011-11-18	Company B	1 hour
2012-03-08	Company B	30 min
2011-10-30	Company C	30 min
2011-11-25	Company C	1 hour

#### **4.4.2 Live implementations**

Due to the nature of this thesis, multiple sources of data were used. This is an advantage of the case-study method which allows the researcher to triangulate data sources (Yin 2003; Bryman and Bell, 2007). For this particular study, the in-depth interviews were complemented with live implementations in the form of mobile job apps and mobile career websites. As mentioned earlier, since all case subjects were required to have an established mobile recruitment strategy in order to be considered for analysis, their respective activities or implementations were used as complementary data sources.

Although using the actual activities as a source of complementary data was helpful, the degree of insight obtained was limited. This is because the purpose of the study is to determine the “how” and the “why”, rather than the “what” of mobile recruitment marketing. Nonetheless, all three cases had mobile job apps and mobile career websites which provided practical implications for analysis.

### **4.5 Data Analysis**

To build a broad theoretical background for data analysis, both books and academic articles were reviewed and referenced. Then, in-line with the inductive research orientation of this thesis, a grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data. Reviewing all sources of data - including interview notes, interview transcriptions and the live implementation - key concepts and apparent trends within the data were grouped into major themes. Although this method may exclude some important issues, it is based on the assumption that case respondents will spend relatively more time discussing the issues that are more important to them than issues which are of little significance (Ballantine et al., 2010, p.645). Therefore, the identification of trends or overlap between important issues is of primary

importance.

Subsequently, to link data to theory in the inductive approach, the emergent themes were lined up according to the three elements in the research model: IMC, Mobile Media and Relationship Marketing. In this sense, not only is the theory presented in the theoretical framework, “an immense aid in defining the appropriate research design and data collection... it also becomes the main vehicle for generalizing the results of the case study” (Yin, 2003, p.33). Finally, conclusions regarding *how* and *why* hiring firms use mobile media within the recruitment marketing communications strategy were drawn from the analysis of each case and the aggregate of data provided in all three cases.

## 4.6 Limitations

Over the course of this study, several limitations were highlighted. As this is a qualitative study, it is common to receive heavy criticism regarding the reliability and validity of results, mainly because of the unstructured, fluid and non-generalizable nature of qualitative research.

From the onset, there are some limits to generalization that can be identified. Methodology researchers indicate that the characteristically small sample sizes in qualitative and case study research poses an inevitable challenge and limitation to achieving generalization in these types of studies; by definition, case studies can make no claims to be typical. A possible limitation to generalization in this paper pertains to the case selection process. There is no way of knowing, empirically, to what extent the three hiring firms analyzed are representative of all hiring firms. Furthermore, because the sample is small and idiosyncratic, and data is predominantly non-numerical, there is no way to establish the probability that data is representative of some larger population. For many researchers, this renders any case study findings as of little value. However, Yin (2003) points out that the focus of case study research is seldom to generalize the research findings to a larger population, but more to highlight the unique feature of the case or cases. Thus, rather than statistical generalization, the multiple-case study research approach in this thesis aims more for analytical or theoretical generalization - which is more concerned with generalizing to theory, than to a population (Yin, 2003).

Another potential limitation to case-study research is related to the researcher themselves. Researcher expertise, knowledge and intuition is a vital part of the case study approach. They have to choose what questions to ask, and how to ask them, what to observe and what to record. They have to draw out issues of interest from the data, and construct stories about those issues. For these reasons, a key determinant of the quality of a piece of case study research is the quality of the insights and thinking held by the particular researcher. Since the researcher for this thesis had some prior experience and knowledge regarding the use of mobile media in the function and process of recruitment communication, the case-study design and structure was build upon this understanding. However, no matter how rigorous the researcher strives to be, the research is not, and cannot be, completely objective, nor can the research easily make transparent *all* the judgments made. Despite the best attempts to present adequate evidence, from the data, to support conclusions, the reader must put a certain amount of trust in the researcher (Hodkinson and Hodkinson,

2001).

Finally, due to time and access constraints, this thesis does suffer from breadth and depth limitations with regards to the cases studied. Namely, a greater number of cases could have been studied in order to provide a more reliable analytical generalization, and a greater number of interviews could have been conducted with each case in order to provide more validity. Although extending the breadth and depth of the multi-case study would have provided more robust findings, there was a need to limit the scope due to the amount of time and attention required to analyze each case. Furthermore, as can be seen from the dates of the interviews, the pre-study and study process spanned over several months. This was primarily due to two reasons: (1) the extended data collection phase is related to the iterative process whereby research design, theoretical review, data collection, and analysis occurred simultaneously at times - hence drawing out the process of data collection, (2) the issue of access to case representatives – not only was there a six hour time difference between the researcher and two of the case representatives, company C's representative was very busy and not able to provide a needed third interview, limiting the quality of the case-study findings.

#### 4.7 Research Quality

Reliability and validity are important criteria for establishing and assessing the quality of research – particularly that of the quantitative researcher. For the qualitative researcher, there has been some discussion concerning their relevance. Many writers take the position that the meanings of the terms reliability and validity need to be altered in the context of qualitative research. Some even assert that qualitative studies should be judged according to a different criteria from those used by quantitative researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985), critical of the view that there are absolute truths about the social world, proposed an alternative set of assessment criteria for qualitative research. They propose that qualitative research should be judged based on the notions of trustworthiness and authenticity, or more specifically the dimensions of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Credibility** is similar to the conventional research quality construct of internal validity, and is concerned with presenting a “confidence in the “truth” of the findings” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.218). The main premise is that, if there can be several possible accounts of an aspect of social reality, it is the credibility of the account that a research arrives at that is going to determine its acceptability to others (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). In order to establish credibility, findings must be submitted to the members of the social world who were studied for confirmation that the researcher correctly understood that social world. To establish credibility in this study, interviews with recruitment managers were recorded and transcribed verbatim, such that the entire textual content of the interview was kept intact. In doing so, respondents can validate whether the intended meaning of their input was correctly interpreted.

Another tool used to ensure credibility was data source Triangulation – or the using of more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena. Triangulation was originally conceptualized by Webb et al. (1966) as an approach to the development of measures of concepts, whereby more than one method would be employed, resulting in

greater confidence in findings (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). In this multi-case thesis, triangulation created multiple data points through which distinct ways of looking at the same phenomenon were illuminated. As a result, the multiple-case study design contributed to the credibility of the study findings.

**Transferability**, or the degree to which the findings can be transferred or applicable in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), is comparable to the idea of external validity. In this setting, qualitative researchers are encouraged to produce “thick description”, or rich accounts of the details of a culture (Geertz, 1973). The rich accounts of the details provides others with a database for making judgments about the possible transferability of findings to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In this research, a detailed report of case-study findings is provided as well as an account of the process and methods used in arriving at the research findings. Such careful documentation helps facilitate judgments regarding transferability of findings.

**Dependability** is concerned with whether or not the findings would be consistent if the study were repeated or replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and thus corresponds to the criterion of reliability in the traditional research quality benchmark. To ensure dependability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that researchers keep complete records of all phases of the research process, problem formulation, selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, and so on – in an accessible manner. If done correctly, peers would be able to ensure proper procedures were followed.

In this study, detailed documentation of the research process and interviews resulted in a ‘thick description’ of research findings. Moreover, in the process of data collection through interviews, the use of an interview guide in the semi-structured interviews also contributes to dependability, since such a guide allows the researcher to ensure that similar conversations are held with each interviewee.

**Confirmability** is concerned with ensuring some level of objectivity – although this can be difficult to achieve in business research. This implies showing that researcher acted in good faith, or did not overtly allow personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway the conduct of the research and findings derived from it.

In this study, both objectivity and confirmability were improved through the thick description of the data collection and data analysis stages of the research. Moreover, where the use of a single respondent to represent an organization raises issues of subjectivity (Bryman & Bell, 2007), this was countered through triangulation of data sources, namely the use of multiple cases and live implementations of case subject mobile recruiting activities.

Upon reviewing this thesis in terms of the four dimensions of trustworthiness, this study can be graded as moderate to high. A moderate grade can be given because greater research process documentation could have been done, and prior knowledge of the topic may have influenced the researcher’s objective assessment of research findings.

## 5 Empirical Findings

### 5.1 Introduction to the cases in this study

The case subjects in this thesis would like to remain anonymous. Therefore, only general and relevant information about each company will be provided. It is important to note that all three case companies are large global employers, and were chosen based on the fact that each had an established mobile recruiting strategy.

Company A began using mobile media for recruitment marketing in 2009, even before the corporate marketing department decided to use it for client communications. The recruitment department was given free reign over the decision making process and the initial financial investments were small. Company A's suppliers used them as test case for entering the mobile job app market, therefore, they received nearly all services for free.

Company B's process was slightly more structured than company A's. Prior to the decision to use mobile media as a recruitment communications tool, company B had just begun implementing a large employer branding initiative. Their employer branding strategy, which had begun in 2006/2007, dictated what media should be used. As a result of this strategy company B began using mobile media in 2009, starting with a streamlined mobile version of their company career website.

Company C is a major player in the European telecommunications industry. In 2007, the employer branding department decided that mobile media should be included in the recruitment marketing communications strategy. The motivation behind this decision was to improve recruitment communications and candidate engagement, as well as to indirectly promote the company's commercial services.

Over the past three years, all three companies have experimented with various mobile communications activities, including SMS, mobile websites, job apps, QR codes, etc. However, the mobile career website and mobile job app are the two activities that are common to all three firms. It is primarily these two activities that were referred to during case interviews and will be used to discuss case findings.

### 5.2 Case study findings

#### 5.2.1 Company A

##### **Emphasis on candidate retention**

Company A's proactive and strategic level planning is indicative of its desire to improve candidate retention. They make an effort to build a "*talent community*" by minimizing "*drop-offs*" (i.e. points in the process where the most candidates are lost) and improving the "*candidate experience*" of recruitment communications. Moreover, they strive to build relationships at every "*touch-point*" along the recruitment process by using a variety of communication tools; tools that are easily accessible to target talent and that are able to provide a "*quick response to candidate*" inquiries.



Finally, Company A expressed that many of its recruitment marketing activities are meant to build candidate engagement and employer brand equity – as opposed to only recruiting for available positions. In response to a question about recruitment marketing objectives, company A stated: *“We got into this more from an engagement and brand perspective. It wasn’t really a recruiting thing. It was more about engagement.”*

### **Use of Relationship Marketing techniques**

In an effort to improve candidate retention, it is rather clear that company A uses some aspects of Relationship Marketing. Not only do they have an elaborate and interactive company career website which is regularly updated to appeal to the changing interests of their target groups, they have a variety of niche websites, are active in all forms of social media, are a pioneer in the use of mobile media, and regularly attend live and online recruiting events. Moreover, company A plans to use interactive media to facilitate the employee referral process. They stated that, *“we would like to utilize our own employees more for some of our recruiting efforts. And a lot of that is going to be by putting the tools in all of their hands...”*

Furthermore, in the future, company A hopes to use even more sophisticated interactive marketing techniques as a means of collecting candidate data and simplifying the increasingly distributed recruitment process (i.e. distributed over time and across different media). They stated that, *“going forward I think we are going to look more at using more mainstream e-commerce or e-marketing tactics [...] we can collect little bits of information about our candidates spread out over a period of time and target communication better.”*

### **Approach to mobile media**

Company A’s initial approach to mobile media stemmed from insightful observations made by the recruitment manager. While commuting to work everyday, company A’s recruitment manager observed that train passengers - including himself - were *“not reading newspapers as much, they were kind of just looking at what was on their mobile device.”* He also noted that mobile media was *“already being used quite a bit for texting and sending messages back and forth”* between company A recruiters. Moreover, he stated an appreciation for the instantaneous and quick nature of mobile communications, highlighting that *“I think that’s what so great about the mobile device, it’s so easy. Everybody has it on them all the time. It makes it easy for people to correspond back to us and us back to them [...] And it [mobile media] allows us to speed up the process and connect with our candidate quicker.”* As a result, many of company A’s efforts to use mobile media for recruitment marketing are built on the unique characteristics of mobile communications – ubiquitous, social, personal and convenient.

Approaching mobile media in this way, company A investigated the affect it was also having on the candidate experience of their recruitment communications. Without a mobile optimized corporate career website, company A described the candidate experience on a mobile device as *“really awful”*. Therefore, the first step to using mobile media as a recruitment marketing tool was to simplify content found on the career website. They hoped this effort would improve information processing and the overall candidate experience.

In order to build on the social aspect of mobile communications, company A was eager to integrate its social media activities, stating that *“we try to make sure our social media activities are very visible on all our websites.”* The motivation for doing so was related to the fact that an increasing amount of social media traffic was coming through the mobile device, and because mobile media lends itself well to synchronizing social media interaction. Company A expressed these benefits by stating, *“their [candidates] obviously able to get very specific and targeted information in a quick way through these different channels. So, whereas someone would have made a phone call or sent an email before, its happening much quicker through these channels.”* In later stages, company A hopes to use social media to help personalize the mobile recruitment process; allowing candidates the opportunity to login using their social media credentials and parse profile information found in their social media accounts. *“If you think about it, candidates are much more likely to keep they Facebook or LinkedIn work profiles up to date. Rather than have to go to each individual employer and have to re-put in all that information all over again.”*

### **Interactive IMC planning**

One of company A’s primary recruitment marketing objectives is to build a strong *“talent community”* around its employer brand. Mobile media is regarded as an important tool for achieving this objective. Company A points out that its *“talent community needs to be where the community is anyway[...][and] not only [that], [the company] needs to utilize the tools that people use to access those communities everyday as well.”* According to company A, mobile technology is not only prolific amongst its target audience, it is an increasingly important source of traffic to its talent communities on sites like Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, in order to build and maintain a strong talent community, company A suggests that *“you have to have all your tools in the same place”*. In other words, all communication tools used should integrate and direct talent to the same community spaces.

Company A integrated mobile media within their broader recruitment marketing plan in a rather structure manner. First, efforts were made *“to put some analytics around it”*, tracking traffic to the mobile career website. The next step revolved around giving more control to candidates over the content and form of communications. This involved not only building the mobile job search tool, which allowed users to specify job search criteria - *“now they [candidates] can see what the career site is, and they can search for jobs,”* it also included using social media integration to create more targeted and timely interaction – *“because a lot of companies are focused on making these public communications positive, people are able to get response they would have never gotten before.”* The latest stage of development involved using mobile media as an advanced two-way communications tool between the company and candidates. Candidates using the mobile channel are encouraged to input small amounts of personal profile information, where *“they [job seekers] can very quickly say ‘here is who I am, here is my contact information and here is the type of positions that I am interested in’ and that’s it. So we have it within our database.”* This distributed data collection process is expected to help improve candidate engagement and the candidate experience; *“the more we can collect little bits of information about our candidates spread out over a period of time and target communication better, is obviously going to make for a better mobile experience as well.”*

In the future, company A is hoping to simplify the job application process for the mobile device by using integrated social media information (e.g. apply for a job using LinkedIn profile information). At the moment, the job application process is not set up for the mobile channel and, if left that way, may have a negative impact on the overall candidate experience. According to company A, *“we will eventually let people apply on a mobile device. Its going to have to be very simple and not for higher level jobs”*.

Finally, in an effort to improve candidate retention, company A makes a concerted effort to continuously segment audiences, target messages, and minimize drop off points throughout the recruitment process. They state that, *“we always try to track what’s happening as we go along the process. We are tracking what happens when they come on to the site, where are they clicking, where are they spending most of their time. Where are they dropping off. We try to solve the drop offs. [...] And then we try to figure out, who are the people that are accessing these channels the most [...] So that we can make sure we are targeting the communication in the right way.”* And, although company A acknowledges that their mobile media data collection and customization process is far from perfect, they are gathering information on a regular basis and do *“tweak messages [...] based on what that data has been telling”* them. For example, when they put together their first mobile career website, the content was virtually the same as that found on their main career website. As data was collected and input was received, they noticed user behaviors which were unique to their mobile site, stating that: *“what we ended up seeing was that people starting to look at video, they wanted to see how to connect with us through the different social networks, and they wanted to search for jobs.”*

## **5.2.2 Company B**

### **Emphasis on candidate retention**

In 2006/2007, company B began to put together a strategy to improve its employer brand. Due to the nature of their business, recruitment managers noticed that *“it was very difficult to recruit because we were not recognized as an employer.”* Moreover, company B had difficulty recruiting specialties that its employer brand was not associated with; *“we recruit for all different type of positions. So even though our website won’t show up for a search for IT or accounting jobs compared to the big IT or accounting firms, we recruit a lot of these positions.”*

As a result of these difficulties, company B decided to focus on building candidate engagement throughout the recruitment process; *“we started by revamping our career website [...] We also tried to extend the reach of our site in many different ways. One way was to create some discipline specific micro-sites [...] At the same time we also started using social media. We launched the blog, Facebook page, LinkedIn, later on Twitter, YouTube, Flickr. We launched a host of sites that were all interlinked. So no matter where you started engaging with us you could always make your way pretty quickly to our career website.”*

### **Use of Relationship Marketing techniques**

In an effort to build employer brand equity, Company B has made extensive use of Relationship Marketing tactics. As

mentioned above, the firm uses a variety of interactive media, such as a corporate a career website, social media, mobile media, online events/fair, other e-communications, etc.

Moreover, the company has made some efforts to use candidate database management to improve segmentation and personalization of communications. Although, due to system limitations, it is difficult for the firm to track and integrate data collected from various media sources. Going forward, the company will continue to collect information from candidates via the company career website, mobile job app, and social media. According to management, *“based on their [candidates] profile information and preferences our recruiters can search that database and reach out to individual candidates.”* In addition, Company B is working on building an extensive mobile phone number database for SMS communication. The objective of such an initiative was highlighted during the interview; *“we can basically run an entire CRM process through this text-messaging based marketing.”*

### **Approach to mobile media**

Company B’s approach to mobile media was as a means of extending the reach of the recently revamped company career website. This was particularly important because of the dramatic rise in mobile internet traffic. Company B highlighted the significance of making their company career website mobile friendly, stating *“so three years ago we started seeing that data that told us we needed to start getting involved in mobile because our career site – which we were very proud of and had just launched – was not mobile friendly.”*

Moreover, as efforts to build brand equity increased, so did company B’s use of mobile media. Their more advanced approach to mobile media included using it as an additional *“opt-in”* channel for connecting with the company’s *“talent community”*, and as a convenient way to search available job opportunities. These changes gave greater control to job seekers over what, when, where and how they received company recruitment information. Moreover, mobile media was used more as an integrated marketing channel – particularly as it related to social media. According to company B: *“what is important to understand is that once you have the mobile site, you can tailor your other communications around the mobile site too. [...] So all the integration we had with our career site – with our e-communication and social media – we also wanted to do for our mobile site.”*

### **Interactive IMC planning**

The global rise in mobile internet traffic was one of the main drivers behind company B’s decision to make a mobile version of the company career website. However, the changes in user behavior that resulted from this initial investment further encouraged company B to use mobile media as a recruitment communications tool. According to company B, mobile traffic used to make up 8% of page views of the career website, now its closer to 18%. Moreover, company B stated, *“what we also see is that with the mobile site, people tend to stay on the site longer [...] It shows users are spending more time interacting with the mobile site then the PC.”* Mobile technology is therefore not only popular amongst company B’s target talent, it is also considered a differentiated communication channel – offering candidates a unique way of connecting with the company and its *“talent community.”*

With the recent addition of a mobile job app, company B explains users are now able to *“interact with us in an integrated way”*- meaning that candidates will now have several ways of connecting to the company (e.g. career website, mobile career website, social media, mobile job app, etc.) and that all those channels will be inter-linked. The mobile job app also gives candidates greater control over the communication process and allows for a more personalized two-way information exchange; *“first the system asks you who you are because we have segmented job data in our system [...] the app will allow candidates to search and apply for jobs if they already have an existing account in the system.”*

Finally, company B plans to collect user mobile analytics and candidate data to improve segmenting and targeting of communications, stating: *“so we have tailored our social media. We haven’t done it for mobile but we plan to see this trend in mobile as well [...] The analytics we get from the mobile site and from other research we gather is rather extensive.”* An example of how company B hopes to collect and use candidate data over the long-term is expressed in the following quote: *“when you join the talent community online or through the app, there is a little box to check to say you want to receive SMS communication. We ask for cell phone number and opt-in preference. So we are creating this database. We won’t use it in the short-term, but once we are ready to use it we will have a pretty extensive database.”*

### 5.2.3 Company C

#### **Emphasis on candidate retention**

Company C’s recruitment marketing activities are proactive and organized in a structured manner. All communications objectives are set prior to execution and are guided by either the recruitment team and/or employer branding team, depending on the objective.

Moreover, in an effort to build a stronger brand image and more positive brand associations, company C strives to improve interaction between company representatives and candidates. They stated that, *“we want to change the image of our employer brand. A lot of people don’t really connect with us or feel that we have an approachable employer brand, like Google or some small start-ups. We want to change this by allowing our candidates more interaction with our staff and recruiters.”*

Lastly, company C stated that certain cultural issues inhibit communication; not only are majority of job seekers introverts, they are also accustomed to formal communication methods (e.g. e-mail, phone) and strict data protection. As result, it can be a challenge to engage job seekers and personalize communication. Company C tackles these difficulties by using a variety of marketing disciplines and communication channels, encouraging job seekers to form a formal and informal bond with the company and join its *“talent community.”*

#### **Use of Relationship Marketing techniques**

Company C uses a variety of Relationship Marketing techniques. Firstly, company C uses numerous interactive

communication channels to reach its target talent, including mobile media, social media, career fairs and websites.

Secondly, Company C uses several channels to collect candidate data and receive direct feedback. As mentioned earlier, the collection of candidate data is restricted, therefore, to customize and personalize communication the firm must take a more direct approach to understanding their candidates. For example, when attempting to improve their mobile job app company C sought direct feedback through two interactive channels; *“we use different feedback channels. We look at the comments in the app store [...] We received 200-300 feedback messages on our app in the first four or five months of its launch [...] We also use our Facebook community to collect feedback. We asked our Facebook friends about what they would like to do on the app. We did get sophisticated answers from our social media friends.”*

Finally, company C uses interactive media to facilitate communication and help recruiters collect basic candidate information at career fairs. They stated that, *“so it started off for career fairs, for this purpose. We called it a job wall. 12-14 iPads were integrated into this wall at the career fair and job seekers could use it to look for jobs and find information about our careers. And the recruiters were equipped with iPads too.”*

### **Approach to mobile media**

Thanks to the nature of its business, company C takes a relatively advanced approach to mobile media. What this means is that they try to utilize all of mobile media's unique communication characteristics, and attempt to leverage the synergy between mobile media and other communication channels.

Interactivity, convenience and context-awareness were some of the main characteristics highlighted by company C. They stated that, *“one of the biggest advantages of mobile is that they [job seekers] can interact with recruiters on the spot or immediately [...] Mobile offers more intimacy. Even if you want to stay anonymous you can communicate through social media. This is a good way to interact as well.”* Company C also stated that, in comparison to traditional media channels, mobile media is more effective due to its time sustainability and exposures frequency; *“right now we have an image campaign in magazines. For some of those ads it would be even better to just build an app. It would be much more sustainable. You would be able to reach your target candidates for 1 or 2 years. The ads in the magazine are gone after a week.”* Moreover, they explained that in the future they would like to use *“location-based services”* to contextualize communications.

Finally, according to company C, *“mobile media works well with all the channels.”* Whether its print media, websites, career fairs or social media, company C believes mobile media is best *“used in combination with other media.”* As a result, company C uses a *“cross-media approach”* when designing its recruitment marketing communications.

### **Interactive IMC planning**

Mobile media plays an important role in shaping company C's recruitment marketing communications. Not only is it prolific amongst target talent, it is also related to company C's main business service. Therefore, in addition to trying to *“reach target talent where and how they like to be contacted”*, the firm is also interested in promoting its own

business services. Furthermore, because the firm operates within the telecommunications industry, it is also keen on attracting talent that are advanced users of mobile technology – *“when we recruit people who are specialist in the mobile and IT then it makes sense to use mobile to recruit them. Because people in this field are very active in mobile media.”*

Company C also used mobile media to collect candidate information and personalize communications. When they first launched their mobile job app, it was assumed that the primary users would be young job seekers. However, when the job application (i.e. apply process) functionality was implemented into the job app, they were able to learn more about the users and adapt the content; *“through those applications we collect a lot of data about the applicant – age, function interest, goals. This was a big surprise for us - 80% of our mobile applicants had between 6-20 years of professional experience.”*

Finally, mobile media is used to facilitate two-way communication between the firm and its candidates. The integration of social media was a top priority for the mobile job app; *“This was one of the most important first features. We thought this was a good idea because a person who doesn’t want to interact with us on Twitter or Facebook, which is common amongst older professionals, they can still follow this information through the social media integration on the app.”*

### 5.3 Summary of case study findings

**Table 6: Summary of case study findings**

Case Company	Emphasis on Candidate Retention	Use of Relationship Marketing Techniques	Approach to Mobile Media	Interactive IMC Planning
<b>Company A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- effort to build a “talent community”</li> <li>- minimizing “drop-offs”</li> <li>- improving “candidate experience”</li> <li>- build relationships at every “touch-point”</li> <li>- provide a “quick response to candidate” inquiries</li> <li>- “It wasn’t really a recruiting thing. It was more about engagement.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use of various interactive media</li> <li>- use interactive media to facilitate the employee referral process.</li> <li>- collecting candidate data</li> <li>- “using more mainstream e-commerce or e-marketing tactics to target communication better”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appreciation for the instantaneous and quick nature of mobile</li> <li>- “everybody has it on them all the time”</li> <li>- “easy for people to correspond back to us and us back to them”</li> <li>- affect on “candidate experience”</li> <li>- integration with social media</li> <li>- synchronizing interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “utilize the tools that people use”</li> <li>- “have to have all your tools in the same place”</li> <li>- “put some analytics around it”</li> <li>- giving more control to candidates</li> <li>- using social media integration to create more targeted and timely interaction</li> <li>- advanced two-way communications tool</li> <li>- distributed data collection process</li> <li>- segment audiences, target messages, and minimize drop-off points</li> <li>- “tweak messages based on what that data has been telling us”</li> </ul>
<b>Company B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “...were not recognized as an employer”</li> <li>- focus on building candidate engagement throughout the recruitment process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- uses a variety of interactive media</li> <li>- working on building an extensive mobile phone number database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- means of extending the reach of the recently revamped company career website.</li> <li>- an additional “opt-in” channel for connecting with the company’s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “shows users are spending more time interacting with the mobile site than the PC”</li> <li>- users are now able to “interact with us in an integrated way”</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “extend the reach of our site in many different ways”</li> </ul>		<p>“talent community”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- convenient way to search available job opportunities</li> <li>- “can tailor your other communications around the mobile site”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gives candidates greater control over the communication process</li> <li>- allows for a more personalized two-way information exchange</li> <li>- “The analytics we get from the mobile site and from other research we gather is rather extensive.”</li> </ul>
<b>Company C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- objectives guided by either the recruitment team and/or employer branding team</li> <li>- goal to improve employer brand image</li> <li>- “allowing our candidates more interaction with our staff and recruiters”</li> <li>- cultural issues inhibit candidate engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- uses numerous interactive communication channels</li> <li>- collect direct feedback through interactive channels</li> <li>- uses interactive media to help recruiters collect basic candidate information at career fairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “[job seekers] can interact with recruiters on the spot or immediately</li> <li>- “Mobile offers more intimacy”</li> <li>- “location-based services” to contextualize communications.</li> <li>- “It would be much more sustainable”</li> <li>- “mobile media works well with all the channels.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “reach target talent where and how they like to be contacted”</li> <li>- attracting talent that are advanced users of mobile technology</li> <li>- able to learn more about the users and adapt the content</li> <li>- facilitate two-way communication through social media integration</li> </ul>

## 6 Analysis

### 6.1 Emphasis on candidate retention

All three firms in this study consider recruitment marketing a strategic human resource function. Although none of the case representatives mentioned the term ‘candidate retention’ explicitly during interviews, all of them described initiatives characteristic of a proactive long-term candidate attraction and retention strategy – as opposed to a short-term ad-hoc candidate acquisition plan. The efforts the three firms made to better understand their candidates and design communication activities that facilitate interaction and engagement are indicative of a candidate retention focus.

Company A and B described their recruitment marketing communication activities as a means of building a “*talent community*.” Since the ‘community’ is the desired outcome of what candidates believe and know about the company, it can be considered synonymous with the term ‘employer brand equity’. As explained in section three, people hold different types of knowledge about potential employers, and their beliefs affect how they respond to the organizations (Cable and Turban (2001). Therefore, in order to decide what types of recruitment marketing activities and investments will return the greatest value, a firm should try to understand what candidates believe and know about the organization. The three case firms attempt to do this by collecting candidate data and direct candidate feedback throughout the recruitment process. Ultimately, the beliefs and knowledge that a job seeker possesses about a firm will affect: (1) how he/she responds to future information about the organization, (2) how attracted he/she is to the organization, (3) how actively he/she pursues a job within the organization, and (4) whether or not he/she forms a relationship with the organization (i.e. joins the “*talent community*”) (Cable and Turban, 2001). A hiring firm concerned with candidate retention will try to shape candidate beliefs and knowledge by influencing the three bases all job seekers use to make employment decisions (i.e. objective factor, critical contact, subjective – see section 3.3.2). The case study firms try to influence those decision bases by facilitating “*interaction between recruiters and candidates*,” “*improving brand image*” and “*answering candidate inquiries quickly*.”

Moreover, companies A, B and C mentioned a desire to improve the “*candidate experience*” of the recruitment process. The emphasis on recruitment as a ‘process’ and the process as an ‘experience’ is also indicative of a desire to retain candidates over the long-term. A firm that is solely looking to fill available vacancies quickly and cheaply would not consider talent attraction as an extensive ‘process’, nor would they be that concerned with improving the “*candidate experience*” of that process.

Finally, all three firms highlighted the need to “*build candidate engagement*” throughout the recruitment process. By building awareness of the employer brand as well as creating positive brand associations, all three firms attempt to resonate better with their target talent and engage them in the evolution of the employer brand. To resonate with candidates implies that both the judgments and feelings candidates holds about an employer are positive and that the candidates seeks to form a relationship with that employer – either by immediately becoming an employee of the firm and/or by becoming a member of the firm’s “*talent community*” (Keller, 2003). The three case companies acknowledged that by “*extending the reach*” of their employer brand through new communication channels and by learning more about their candidates they would have a better chance of resonating with them and engaging them in the employer branding process.

Building engagement and brand equity amongst identified talent takes time and money, but if done effectively it should - over the long-term - maximize human capital returns (i.e. attract and retain the highest quantity and quality talent for the lowest expenditure of time, money, and effort possible). Ultimately, only firms with a focus on candidate retention will be willing to invest the required time and money.

## 6.2 Use of Relationship Marketing techniques

According to Relationship Marketing theory, a long-term customer retention strategy will yield higher returns than a customer acquisition strategy. The administrative, marketing and sales costs associated with acquiring new customers are much higher than those needed to retain existing customers. Therefore, it is always more profitable to retain customers than it is to acquire new ones (Berry, 1995; Grönroos, 1990). This logic can also be applied to other important company relationships, including those with suppliers, employees, buyers and network partners. In this way, marketing's role is to establish, maintain and enhance relationships so that the objective of the parties involved are met. The parties to the relationship may or may not seek an economic objective, but rather to attain mutual benefit through shared activities (Ford 1984; Coviello et al., 1996; Hunt and Morgan, 1994 ). The employment relationship between a hiring firm and its potential employees is an example of creating mutual benefit through shared activities – recruitment marketing activities. Firms use recruitment marketing to build employer brand equity and learn more about target talent; candidates use recruitment activities to gain the information about the firm and build their decision bases (i.e. critical contact, subjective and objective). Moreover, according to the Service Marketing field, the application of Relationship Marketing to the recruitment context is particularly necessary because the service product is a performance product and the performers are employees (Berry, 1995). Therefore, to improve the performance of service personnel it is necessary to focus greater attention and resource on *“attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs”* (Berry, 1995; Berry and Parasuramn, 1991).

In an effort to build a strong *“talent community”* and relationships with identified talent, all three case firms used some degree of Relationship Marketing. One tactic the three companies use is Interactive Marketing. This tactic helps fulfill many of the objectives of the employment market exchange; it helps facilitate message processing and the creation of positive attitudinal and cognitive responses - aspects which contribute to the development of a strong employer brand (Ford 1984; Coviello et al., 1996). In utilizing various interactive media, including mobile media, social media, and websites, the case companies hope to influence candidate behavior by building engagement throughout the recruitment process.

The second Relationship Marketing tactic that all three firms use is Database Marketing. However, each firm uses this tactic to a different degree. Although all three companies make some effort to collect candidate data, none take a really strategic approach to database management. In general, company A seems to have the most proactive Database Marketing strategy. From the beginning, company A described a recruitment marketing strategy that was guided by data; not only did they segment the candidates into homogenous groups (e.g. IT, Accounting specialists), they distributed their data collection across different media and stages in the recruitment process. The analysis of data from different sources and stages allowed them to customize communications at every *“touch-point”* and improve the *“drop-off”* rate during recruitment. Company A plans to go even further with Database Marketing in the future by building a database of employee referrals.

Companies B and C also use some form of Database Marketing, but any changes made to communications as a result of data collected seem to be more reactive than proactive. Company B's use of Database Marketing currently includes segmented job data accessible via the centralized ATS and some targeted communications. In the future they will build a database for targeted SMS campaigns and will allow candidates to create and submit their job applications (i.e. the employment transaction) via several different electronic devices (e.g. desktop, laptop, mobile device, etc.) Company C's use of Database Marketing is more moderate, but they do use it in a way the other companies do not - they offer candidates the opportunity to complete the entire employment transaction via a mobile device (e.g. job applications can be created and submitted via the mobile job app). Whereas the other two firms focus on the 'employment information exchange' when communicating via mobile media, company C also uses Database Marketing to facilitate the 'employment transaction' – which is, in fact, Database Marketing's primary purpose of exchange (Coviello et al.'s 2001) (see section 3.4.1).

In order for Relationship Marketing to be effective, it is important that interactive media and database management be used together. The basic principle being that, in order to take advantage of the interactivity provided by new media, an organizations marketing strategy must be data driven (Peltier et al., 2003). By gaining a better understanding of their candidates and segmenting them accordingly, the three case firms are better positioned to take full advantage of the interactive, two-way and personalized nature of electronic media.

### 6.3 Approach to mobile media

Prior to any analysis of *how* a company integrates mobile media into their IMC plans, it is necessary to understand what approach they take to mobile media as a marketing communications tool. It is expected that as this approach evolves, so will the company's use of mobile media within IMC. In this study, mobile media is described using seven unique communication characteristics: (1) mobile, (2) context-aware, (3) ubiquitous, (4) personal, (5) convenient, (6) social, and (7) interactive. In an analysis of the cases findings, it is clear that all three case companies approached mobile media as a unique communications channel. Nearly all seven communication characteristics were mentioned by case representatives, particularly for how they influenced the "*candidate experience*." Evidence of an advanced approach to mobile media for the purpose of recruitment marketing was to be expected since the three case subjects were chosen for their established mobile recruiting strategies. From an analysis of the case findings, the *convenient*, *social*, *personal* and *interactive* characteristics of mobile communications were highlighted as the most useful for the purpose of recruitment marketing.

The connection between social and mobile was regarded as one of the most important factors for successful mobile recruitment. All three firms showed an appreciation for the combination of constant real-time communication anywhere anytime. Companies A and C explicitly stated that mobile media coupled with social media offered them greater interpersonal interaction than any other medium.

Interactivity was also seen as an important characteristic. Although, only the two-way nature of interactivity was explicitly described. For example, company A stated, mobile media makes it "*easy for people to correspond back to us and us back to them*." According to Peltier et al. (2003), interactivity can also be defined by user-control, personalization and database management. These other factors were somewhat implicit in the case companies' descriptions of their mobile recruiting activities.

Company C was the only one to mention the context-awareness characteristic of mobile communications. The case representative stated that the company hoped to use "*location-based services*" for more targeted mobile recruitment marketing. While the ubiquity of the mobile device may cause concern for many of company C's candidates (i.e. mobile users in company C's markets are concerned over the privacy and security of ubiquitous connectivity), sending and receiving context-sensitive information does make communication more relevant and can have a greater impact on candidate behavior.

Finally, according to Ranchhod (2007) mobile marketing campaigns need connections to traditional as well as other digital media in order to succeed. As a result, mobile communications is never used as a stand-alone channel or an aggressive promotional tactic, it is used to extend the presence of the employer brand into an additional channel. This approach to mobile media was also found in the case findings; all three firms used mobile media as an integrated content delivery tool. In nearly all instances, mobile media was used as a complement to other communication

channels, such as social media, print and websites. For example, company B explained that mobile media was a tool for extending the reach of the recently revamped company career website and an additional “*opt-in*” channel for connecting with the company’s “*talent community*,” company C stated “*mobile media works well with all the other channels,*” and company B said users are now able to “*interact with us in an integrated way.*”

#### 6.4 Interactive IMC planning

In sections 6.1 and 6.2, an explanation was provided for *why* the three case firms chose to integrate mobile media into their recruitment marketing plans. This section will present *how* they integrated mobile media into their plans.

The proliferation of new communication devices and media fragmentation has had the same impact on recruitment marketing communications planning as it’s had on consumer marketing communications planning. Job seekers are no longer passive recipients of recruitment messages, they are better informed and more engaged in the recruitment process than ever before. Consequently, the companies that experience the most success in reaching their target candidates are those that take a strategic approach to recruitment marketing - leveraging the synergy between different marketing techniques and communications channels (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). A strategic approach to recruitment marketing involves designing communications that influence job seekers at every stages in the recruitment process. In earlier stages, communication objectives are typically to build employer brand awareness and the formation of attitudes and to increase brand-candidate engagement and interaction (Sultan and Rohm, 2005). In later stages, the objective is to directly influence candidate actions and behaviors (i.e. to submit a job application and/or accept an offer to become an employee of the firm). By using a variety of marketing techniques and communication channels and coordinating them effectively, recruiters can help ensure that messages are communicated and processed at the optimal point in the recruitment process – influencing candidates at the right time and in the right way (i.e. influencing the three bases job seekers use to make employment decisions- objective, subjective, critical contact).

Upon analyzing the case study findings, there is little doubt that the three case companies have developed a rather strategic approach to recruitment marketing communications; labor market conditions seemed well understood, target candidates were identified and communication objectives set. Moreover, all decisions regarding the use of mobile media for recruitment marketing were deliberate, planned and measured. This is evidenced by the fact that each case representative was able to explain their decisions in a step by step manner, provide precise information regarding measurement of progress, and give details of desired outcomes.

The subjects in this study integrated mobile media into their marketing plans in very similar ways. The three firms started by confirming that the mobile channel was prolific and relevant to their target groups; this was indicated by statements such as, “*we can reach target talent where and how they like to be contacted*” and “*utilize the tools that people use.*” Next, each firm made a concerted effort to leverage mobile media’s unique communications characteristics within the integrated recruitment marketing communications program. For example, all three companies acknowledged the importance of leveraging the social and personal aspects of mobile communication. By integrating

mobile and social media, they were able to provide more interactive, targeted, convenient and timely communication. Moreover, all three cases used mobile media to offer greater user-control over the communication process. By creating mobile activities such as, downloadable apps with customizable alerts and opt-in SMS campaigns, the case firms hoped the additional user-control would help improve the “*candidate experience*” of recruitment communications.

Moreover, personalization and the use of databases are also important elements of interactive IMC (Peltier et al., 2003). As stated earlier, the level of personalization and interactivity will be predicated on the role and position mobile media is given within the firms broader marketing communications plan. In other words, the mobile platform will be positioned as either a *mechanism for branding*, or a *tool for information and/or employment transactions* (Sultan and Rohm, 2005). If mobile media is positioned primarily as a branding tool, then investment in and utilization of database technology will be significantly less than if it were positioned as both a *branding* and *transaction* tool. Essentially, without proper database management, firms will have trouble personalizing their interactions with candidates and therefore have a limited ability to take full advantage of the mobile platform (Sultan and Rohm, 2005).

Company C is the only company that uses mobile media as both an employer branding channel and a tool for completing the employment transaction. Therefore, it is expected that company C made greater investments in database management and data integration than either of the other two companies. It is important to point out, however, that company C may have been prompted to use mobile media in a more sophisticated way because it is a player in the Telecommunications industry. Companies A and B also collect some candidate information via mobile media (i.e. company A allows candidates to put in small pieces of profile information and company B allows candidates to submit job applications via mobile only after they have filled in their profile on the regular career website) and use it to personalize communications, but neither firm positions mobile media as an employment transaction tool to the same degree as company C. Instead, they have primarily positioned mobile media as an employer branding tool; company A even stated that mobile recruitment “*wasn’t really a recruiting thing. It was more about engagement.*” However, both company A and B mentioned that they expect this to change as candidate database management system technology (i.e. the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) becomes better at integrating data from multiple sources, and as candidates become more accustomed to the mobile job application process.

## 7 Conclusion

After analyzing the findings of the pre-study and main study, it is quite clear that HRM, Relationship Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communications and Mobile Marketing theories can be used to analyze and discuss *why* and *how* mobile media is used in recruitment marketing communications. The following section will reframe the case study analysis as answers to the main research questions. This section will serve as a conclusion to this thesis.

### 7.1 Research Questions 1

***Why is mobile media an important recruitment marketing tool? What are the drivers for using mobile media in***

## **recruitment marketing?**

Employers with a proactive long-term candidate attraction and retention strategy will invest in improving recruitment by building employer brand equity and developing stronger relationships with target candidates. Over time, the impact of such efforts will increase because candidates will have become more aware of the firm, have developed more positive employer brand associations, will have had more time to interact with the firm and its representatives, and will ideally have been more engaged in the recruitment process. Relationship Marketing tactics, such as interactive marketing via mobile media and database marketing, are helpful in achieving these objectives because they facilitate candidate engagement and interaction throughout the recruitment process. As mentioned earlier, greater interaction and engagement can facilitate message processing, increase the probability of achieving desired communication objectives, and help firms build stronger candidate relationships.

The firms in this study improve candidate retention by building a community of qualified talent. The case representatives noted that, because mobile media is prolific, convenient, social, personal and interactive, it helps extend the reach and impact of the employer brand, and is therefore effective at persuading target job seekers to join their talent communities. The goal of each firm in this study is to use mobile media as a tool for enhancing candidate engagement and interaction throughout the recruitment process.

Moreover, in accordance with Relationship Marketing theory, mobile media marketing is not only interactive, it also involves database management. By collecting some mobile candidate data, the firms in this study were capable of segmenting talent and personalizing messages – efforts which help make communications more relevant and engaging. However, the three firms also said that their efforts to collect and use mobile data had not gone far enough and would need further investment to be truly effective. The findings suggest that, while mobile media is a unique recruitment marketing tool, without proper database management hiring firms will not be able to take full advantage of the interactive, two-way and personalized nature of mobile media.

Finally, mobile media fits perfectly within an integrated cross-media marketing communications program (i.e. IMC). Its compatibility with other valuable recruitment communication media, such as social media and print media, as well as its unique communication characteristics are what make it such an important recruitment marketing communications tool.

## **7.2 Research Questions 2**

***How is mobile media used in recruitment marketing communications? What HRM and marketing issues should be considered when developing a mobile recruitment marketing plan?***

Integrated Marketing Communications theory suggests that companies proceed through a series of steps in order to select the appropriate target audience, specify communication objectives (i.e. desired audience response) and choose the right combination of marketing tactics, messages and media to achieve those objectives. An IMC approach in the



recruitment context is expected to help deliver more efficient and effective marketing communications because the planning process will have identified the best possible combination of marketing disciplines and communication channels. During the ‘media selection’ phase of IMC planning, a hiring firm will try to select media that not only reaches the target audience or that satisfies a particular frequency objective, but that also facilitates the type of message processing required to deliver communication effects (i.e. employer brand awareness and attitude, and application intention).

Mobile media was considered and ultimately selected for the IMC plans of the firms in this study because it helped them move away from traditional mass-media marketing communications and towards Interactive Integrated Marketing Communications. The three case firms developed their IMC plans in the context of mobile media by assessing whether or not their proposed mobile recruitment marketing activities could help them develop more interactive and engaging marketing communications (see section 3.8). The process included ensuring that mobile media was (1) prolific amongst the target audience, (2) allowed for personalization and a two-way information exchange (3) provided effective and efficient metrics, and (4) allowed for the collection of candidate data.

Creating more interactive recruitment marketing activities throughout the recruitment process was a goal for the three firms in this study. They each identified interactivity as a key component of successful candidate relationship building. As a result, all three case firms used mobile recruitment primarily as a means of building brand equity, rather than as a tool for acquiring new applicants. The communication objectives of their mobile recruitment activities were therefore focused on building employer brand awareness and the formation of attitudes, and increasing brand-candidate engagement and interaction. In only one case was mobile media positioned secondarily as a tool for acquiring new applicants.

The case firms’ decision to use mobile media as a branding mechanism had a lot to do with mobile media’s compatibility and synergy with other communication mediums, not to mention its unique communication characteristics. Mobile media is regarded by case representatives as an effective means of improving the overall candidate experience of recruitment communications and of helping to extend the employer brand into an additional communication channel. As a result, mobile media is used in complement, not in isolation, to the case firms’ more established recruitment communication mediums, such as print media and the corporate career website. This way of using mobile media is somewhat unsurprising since experts have long argued that mobile media is best used as an “...*integrated content delivery and direct-response vehicle within a cross-media marketing communications program*” (Mobile Marketing Association, 2005).

Finally, although using mobile media as a branding mechanism is logical considering the candidate retention and relationship building objectives of the firms in this study, it was also acknowledged by the case representatives and the experts in the pre-study, that as mobile usage evolves and mobile internet penetration levels grow, mobile recruitment will eventually be used as both a *branding* and employment *transaction* tool. The only barrier for companies

attempting to use mobile media in both ways is the investment in database management. Essentially, the personalization and interaction level of an employment *transaction* requires significant collection, analysis, integration and protection of candidate data – an investment that is both costly and time consuming.

## 8 Discussion

### 8.1 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical point of view, this thesis offers many new insights. One important contribution is the integration of HRM and Marketing concepts. Prior to this study, there has never been any research done on the use of mobile media in recruitment marketing, nor has there been any direct application of Relationship Marketing concepts to the dyadic relationship between a firm and its potential employee.

Although Service Marketing and Internal Marketing, which are subsets of Relationship Marketing, urge firms to improve the performance of service personnel by focusing greater attention and resource on “*attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs*” (Berry, 1995; Berry and Parasuramn, 1991), none of the studies focus on the employer-candidate relationship. Despite casting Relationship Marketing in a “means-end” context - meaning firms must establish relationships with non-customer groups (the means) to successfully establish relationships with customers (the end) (Berry, 1995) - most of the studies suggest that in order to transfer brand values to the company’s customers, marketing communications should ensure *employees* develop a shared understanding of what the brand actually stands for (Ferdous, 2008; Chernatony, 2001). It can be argued, however, that internalization of brand values by employees begins during the recruitment process. It is during recruitment that employees form their initial attitudes and judgments regarding the firm as an employer, and it is those values employees take with them into the firm. Therefore, Relationship Marketing concepts should be just as useful for brand building amongst prospective employees as it is amongst current employees.

Finally, one the greatest insights uncovered in this study was the issue of how to position mobile media within the recruitment marketing communications plan. Nearly every respondent in the pre-study and main study brought up the issue of whether or not mobile media should be used as an employer *branding* tool and/or an employment *transaction* tool (i.e. creation and submission of a job application). In the consumer context, the idea of using a mobile device for the completion of commercial transactions is called m-commerce. Sultan and Rohm (2005) state that the level of personalization and interactivity needed to initiate a mobile commercial transaction will be predicated on the position mobile marketing is given within the firm’s broader marketing communications plan. In other words, the mobile platform will be positioned as either a *mechanism for branding*, or a *tool for information and/or economic transactions* (Sultan and Rohm, 2005). If mobile media is positioned primarily as a branding tool, then investment in and utilization of database technology will be significantly less than if it were positioned as a both a *branding* and *transaction* tool. Basically, the provision, processing and tracking of individual customer *transactions* requires greater use of database

technology than *branding* activities. In the recruitment context, the same idea can be applied. Although the transaction is not commercial in nature, Relationship Marketing theory would argue that it is still considered a market transaction. According to Relationship Marketing theory, the transaction is actually a 'relational exchange' since the parties involved seek to give and receive 'value' and to attain mutual benefit through shared activities (Ford 1984; Coviello et al., 1996). Although m-commerce has received significant attention in consumer marketing research and has been implemented successfully by many companies, there is still considerable uncertainty and misunderstanding of how to use mobile media as an employment transaction tool. The theoretical implications of this finding suggests that mobile media may have the same potential in m-recruitment as it does in m-commerce. However, without proper academic research, HR managers and recruiters may never receive the investment they need to develop their candidate database management and use mobile media as a an effective employment transaction tool.

## **8.2 Management Implications**

The MRec Research Model presented in this paper is relevant to business managers for a number of reasons. First of all, the research model can be used to help guide general decision making regarding media selection for the purpose of recruitment marketing. Specifically, it can help address concerns regarding the use of mobile media in recruitment communications. Managers can evaluate themselves using the model and hopefully advance in their usage of mobile media in recruitment marketing. They can start by outlining the objectives for their recruitment marketing and determine if Relationship Marketing would contribute to achieving those objectives. Depending on how relevant Relationship Marketing is to the recruitment marketing strategy, managers can decided what approach to mobile media and what level of integration of mobile media would be the most appropriate. The model essentially serves as a template for developing more advanced recruitment marketing communications through the use of mobile media.

Secondly, the findings in this study suggest that managers need to take a more sophisticated approach to candidate database management. Although the use of database technology for applicant tracking is rather common amongst large employers, including the firms in this study, the proliferation of communication devices and fragmentation of media habits indicates that managers need to intensify their candidate database management if they are to build and maintain strong candidate retention. Adequate data management and integration, such as the data collected via mobile media, would not only help managers understand their candidates better, it would also help them segment target groups and create more personalized segment-specific recruitment communications. Despite the obvious benefits of using more sophisticated candidate database management, managers need to evaluate whether or not the investment makes sense in the context of their recruitment marketing objectives. For example, if building broad employer brand awareness is the goal of recruitment marketing efforts, then database management beyond the Applicant Tracking System may not be necessary. However, if attracting and recruiting a very specific and hard to reach pool of candidates is the primary objective, then advanced database management could be used to help create recruitment communications with greater potential for candidate engagement and interaction. In the latter scenario, managers would not only need to find the budget for acquiring and/or developing the technology, they would need to consider the implications of recruiting

different specialties to the HR team, such as marketing analysts, data analysts and IT specialists.

Ultimately, whether or not a company wishes to create its employer brand is irrelevant; recruitment marketing communications, or lack thereof, always have an impact on employer brand equity and recruitment results. Therefore, the worst thing a company can do is nothing. Even with limited resources a firm can build brand awareness and positive brand association amongst its target group. The selection of which media to use to communicate employer brand message will depend on a number of factors, but a firm considering using mobile media would be advised to consult the MRec Research Model presented in this paper.

### 8.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The focus of this thesis was on the communications aspect of recruitment marketing. However, job design, place of employment and structure of incentives are also important for effective recruitment marketing and talent attraction (i.e. it would be very difficult to attract candidates to jobs that provide inadequate benefits, a hazardous working environment, and nearly impossible tasks). Therefore, a discussion of how job design, reward structures, and employment location effect talent attraction is suggested for further research.

Another possible area of research is to dig deeper into *what* employers do in mobile media; *what* mobile recruitment activities have worked best to achieve different communication objectives.

Moreover, as mobile recruiting continues to develop, it will be interesting to investigate the job seekers response to mobile recruitment marketing; will they continue to accept the mobile channel as a source of employment information and as a tool for submitting job application? Do they wish to have mobile recruitment activities that take advantage of other mobile communication characteristics, like context-awareness?

Going forward, it would be interesting to study the evolution of mobile media as a recruitment communications tool. Does it become more central to recruitment marketing? Is it used more for the employment transaction or employer branding? Is it ever used as a stand-alone marketing communications tool? Do mobile recruitment activities become increasingly personalized through the collection of mobile candidate data?

Finally, as mentioned under the theoretical implication section, a study of the use of database technology and database management in mobile recruitment would be very insightful as it would further the discussion regarding whether or not mobile media should be used for employer branding and/or employment transactions.

## 9 Appendix

### 9.1 Interview Guide 1

1. Please describe how your firm came to its decision to implement mobile recruiting?
  - a. what triggered the idea?
  - b. who was involved?
  - c. what steps did you take to move the project forward?
  - d. What initial decisions had the greatest impact on the final outcome?
2. What did you decide to do in mobile? And why (i.e. what did you hope to achieve?)
3. What was the approximate cost and time frame for developing and implementing your Mobile Recruiting activities?
4. How did you integrate your mobile recruiting activities into the larger recruitment communication plan?
  - a. how were the messages, content, branding, and communication objectives aligned?
  - b. How did the Mrec activities contribute to your overall talent attraction goals?
  - c. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the mobile medium – as opposed to the other communications channels used – in relation the overall communication plan?
5. What candidate data did you use to make the initial decisions about your Mrec activities? and how do you continue to collect and use candidate data to improve your Mrec activities?
6. How do you approach the idea of interactivity in the development of your Mrec activities? (i.e. how do you ensure there is a two-way communication process?)

### 9.2 Interview Guide 2

1. Why is mobile media important to your recruitment communication strategy?
  - How does it change or impact your strategy?
2. How does mobile communication contribute to building stronger relationships with your candidates?
3. How do you measure your success?
4. In what ways do your MREC activities allow candidates to input information (i.e. provide you feedback)
5. In what ways do your MREC activities give candidates control over the communication process and information

they receive? (i.e. what, when and how they receive information)

6. How will you continue to improve your MREC activities?  
- what in particular will help you improve?

### 9.3 Company A: Transcript of First Interview

**Vanessa:** Please describe how Company A came to its decision to implement mobile recruiting?

**Company A:**.... People are commuting in and out of the downtown area. And I was as well. So I noticed and I was doing it myself, as I was traveling on the train in to work everyday. I was spending a lot of time looking at my blackberry {which was the phone he had at the time}. I was looking around and realized people are not reading newspapers as much, they're kind of just looking at what's on their mobile device. And as a recruiting person, we were already using mobile devices quite a bit for texting and sending messages back and forth. And I was think this was interesting. Because when someone comes across our job or we are sending people information about a job and they click on these links and the experience they are going to get is really awful. Especially before a full mobile safari browser came around. So I sat there and thought that we really got to optimize this in a way so that these kind of simpler phones, the very simple phones that were WAP enabled as well as the blackberries are able to access our information. So that was really what triggered it. So I am kinda fortunate in this way, that although we are part of a large company, the recruitment group fully manages our web presence. So our career site, everything we do is completely managed by us. We will work with the marketing group obviously to make sure that there is a voice that is appropriate to Company A and to the brand. But we completely manage all aspects of it.

So I went to our web-designer and said "can we do this, is there a way to do it". And he hadn't even done it before. So we did some research on some different products that were out there and obviously found one that made sense and that would work well on most device. So this was kind of version one for a mobile presence for Company A.

**Vanessa:** So, the mobile optimization hadn't even been done from the corporate side yet

**Company A:** No. it hadn't been done. We hadn't been optimized for a mobile type experience. So I think because of that I didn't have a lot of, for a lack of a better word, red-tape or anything. We were able to just move forward and get something out there that would work. It was pretty simple in the beginning, it just had basic information about careers with the company. We still had a challenge with allowing people to actually search for jobs because that went through an applicant tracking system which was not mobile optimized. So if someone actually tried to really look for jobs it would actually kind of ruin that experience. At least in version one of what we were trying to do.

So we put it together and started to put some analytics around it. We saw that people were accessing the site through mobile devices. And we saw that continue to grow. Even today, I don't think there has ever been a month where the amount of visitors to the mobile site went down. There has always been a constant increase in the amount of visitors to the mobile version of our site.

We are on our third version, the first version that we came up with was about 2.5 years ago. We knew the main change that had to be made was that people had to be able to search for jobs and that be nicely optimized for that [mobile] as well. That was a little trickier because once again our applicant tracking system didn't have an application for that. So we went to another vendor that we utilized for search engine optimization... there are a lot of vendors offering this service now... we utilized, and still are today, a company called OPTIJOB which helps us optimize our jobs for search engines. I called them up and was like " hey, you guys already pull our jobs out of our ATS [Taleo], do you have a to take that information and optimize it for mobile. And they hadn't done it yet. And he said " that's really interesting, let's see if we can figure it out". And literally the next morning he called me back and said " I think we have something figured out, let me email you a link. It worked. So over night they had put it together and had figured it out.

**Vanessa:** Isn't it funny our the major ATS providers, like Taleo, with all their investments in R&D hadn't figured it out.

**Company A:** Yes, and I sit on the advisory board for that company [Taleo] and brought it up years ago. And even today they still don't have a truly optimized version yet.

So ya, that company put it together overnight and pretty much within a week were had it running and people were able to search through our jobs as well. So now we felt much better about the process. Now they [ job seekers] can see what the career site is, they can search for jobs. We still have an issue with how/if they can actually apply. So if they go to apply they are still driven back into the ATS. Which is still a bit of an issue for us. So in terms of applying on your device, that's still not a good experience. And just to be honest with you, I'm not sure we actually want to go there. When people click " apply now" a screen comes up that says " would you like us to email you this particular job so you can complete this on your laptop or desktop computer. I'm sure there are some people in some positions that it

might make sense to do it [apply] over a mobile device, but I still don't think most people will try to do that with their phone anyway. But that would probably be the next thing that we start looking at, because there are probably some positions where you aren't asking a lot of questions where that kind of thing might work.

**Vanessa:** If you were to do it, how would you do it? With a pre-saved profile in the ATS where they can login and just send that, or a cloud based application or a link to their linkedin profile. What's your instinct?

**Company A:** I think the first step for us will be just to collect their profile. So not actually applying for a job, but something where they can very quickly say "here is who I am, here is my contact information and here is the type of positions that I am interested in" and that's it. So we have within our database. So that they can start being notified about positions that they might be interested in. It would be great, and I know Taleo is close to this – their next version is supposed to have it - if a lot of that information could come in from an existing source, like LinkedIn or Facebook. So that you could login through Facebook or LinkedIn and have that information be pulled into the ATS so they don't have to re-fill it out. I think that would be the ideal circumstance. Through the parsing.

If you think about it, candidates are much more likely to keep their Facebook or LinkedIn work profiles up to date. Rather than have to go to each individual employer and have to re-put in all that information all over again. Plus that information gets out of date. So you could apply today, but a year from now that information is not going to be updated on my system, but on LinkedIn it probably will be updated.

So we did another kind of revision to our mobile career website early this year, and a lot of that was to optimize for a lot more of the more modern mobile devices. So iPads and Androids, iPhones. Designed more for mobile devices that are more fully featured. And we added more things too. So our video content is on that site, searching for jobs, the social media aspects are integrated into that site. And the other thing we did was we added apps. Actual apps also. So if anyone is actually interested in downloading an actual Company A app, in regards to careers, they could also do that.

**Vanessa:** When did the app come out?

**Company A:** App was about the end of last year. The same company that helped us with the search feature, Optijob, actually they ones who came to us and said "you know this mobile thing"... after they did it for us they started offering it to their other clients. And they saw the potential for this and said "we are going to start building apps for all our clients, do you want to be the first one that we do this with." So of course we did that, and that app again is for iOS, Blackberry and Android. So there is a version of the app for all three of those platforms.

I will tell you, I am an app fan, but I don't know if this really makes sense. To be completely honest with you. It's cool, it's nice to have, it's nice to say "we have this". We know there's about 5000 people who have the app installed on their device, my guess is that 90% of them are Company A employees.

I'm not sure, if you are looking for a job, you should be able to seek out all jobs that are in similar types of positions or companies, not just one. It just seems weird, if I'm out there looking for a job I'm not going to go out there and download everybody's individualize app and utilize that. I'm probably going to go to a job board aggregator like an Indeed or SimplyHired.

So like I said, this is where we're at. The next still will probably be to allow them to input a simple profile which we can input into our database. Do that at the beginning of next year, and that's about where we are with it.

**Vanessa:** What is the goal with collecting that information? How are you going to use it to develop your talent pool?

**Company A:** well that's kind of exactly what that does. That starts building the talent community and I think with most of our ATS these days, they are set up to automatically notify people about appropriate jobs. The ideal is to make it very easier for them to just give basic information without going through a full application process, being notified about jobs that fit their profile, and then hopefully when they see that job that they may be interested in that they go ahead and complete the application process.

**Vanessa:** how many people were involved in your recruitment team, and then how many people were involved in the mobile recruitment project?

**Company A:** we are a pretty decent sized company but there weren't that many people that were involved. So we had our web-designer that was helping us with our career website. We had Optijob building the search functionality, and then a couple of other people involved with the other conversations. Like "what content should be there, what should it look like", just from like a talking through the process. So not a lot of people. I would love to tell you that there was this great strategy involved, because there probably should have been. But I think for a lot of the things we've done, from like how we stepped into social media or mobile, we just kind of dipped our toe into it. And then tried to figure it out. We were like "let's look at it" and tried to do a little of our own research. Let's just start something and see what it does or how it works. And then once you started to get a feel for it, it was much easier to say, "ok, we know we need to do the following things".

I'll tell you today, we get about 17 000 visits on the mobile career website per month, which is about 12% of our total career site visit volume. Which is pretty decent. Interestingly enough, just the job search feature, the mobile search

feature, that gets hit more than the mobile career website. That's because we use it for a lot more things. Because if someone sees a job link on Monster or a job tweet we send off on Twitter, they land on that specific job. It gets even more traffic. That's upwards of 20 000 that are hitting those specific mobile optimized job numbers. And we see that continue to go up month by month.

**Company A:** when we first started with all of this, there were very few companies that had anything like this out there, especially on the recruitment side. So it wasn't like we had a lot to model off of. And none of these things were really extensive. It's not like I had to go out and say "this is going to cost this much money and here is the ROI". We did not spend very much money and at all to make this happen. To mobile optimize our career website, was about 5000\$, we were already working with Optijob and they didn't charge me anything. I think they saw this as another feature that they could sell to clients and gave up the idea. So there was no charge there. Usually you go through all those step by step piece because you got to show and prove that return on investment. In our case, it was so inexpensive that there was almost no downside. Let's get it out there and then let's see what actually happens.

Sometimes you just get lucky. Optijob typically charges for the apps. In fact the first time they asked me about it, they wanted to charge me. And I said "you know what, I'm having a hard time seeing the value of the apps", I just wasn't feeling that. And they came back to me a week later and said "well, you guys have so much brand out there, and you're doing so much with mobile already, we want to do it anyway. We need to be able to show people how this is going to be able to work" So they just gave that to us as well.

I think you can definitely spend a lot of money. But you don't have too. If I had gone through our marketing department, and our marketing departments design group, this probably would have been like a six figure thing.

**Vanessa:** So you didn't coordinate much with the marketing department in terms of the branding aspects?

**Company A:** We do on our main career site. So they give us some outlines with regards to color, voice, the words that should be used. We have guidelines with regards to that. Other than that, especially because they hadn't even done it yet, to say "it needs to match ours" they just kind of said "try to keep in within this type of look and feel" and just let us see it when its done.

**Vanessa:** Going forward, what are you hoping to achieve with your mobile activities, and what other activities will you be doing? Whether its SMS or QR codes.

**Company A:** Ya, we are using QR codes. We mainly use those for our campus recruiting. Although we laugh about this. It reminds me a bit about the apps. So we have these nice signs with these nice QR codes. I go to a lot of these job fairs and I have never seen anyone actually take out a phone and take a picture of these QR codes. In fact I've never seen anyone do it anywhere on any sign or marketing materials. I'm sure there is someone somewhere doing it.

I think its [QR] more of one of those "cool" factor things.

When I think about the next steps, I think we will eventually let people apply on a mobile device. Its gonna have to very simple and not for higher level jobs where we're going to have to get higher level positions. A lot of jobs we have assessment centers attached to them, there's a lot to it. Some of our simpler roles, especially since we're in the hotel business, we can probably do that with a smaller amount of questions. Again, if we can pull in candidate information from existing social media sites, I think that would be a huge plus, I think that's something we would like to do. So again imagine, your apply for a job and it's the first time your applying to Company A, click on that link, and the first thing it will ask is "would you like to use your Linkedin account to connect and start the application."

I think the other big thing, that will probably take a little while is video. Video is becoming such a big deal, from a recruitment perspective. Especially thinking about what we do. A lot of our jobs are related to checking someone into the hotel, someone that's serving food. We are not asking a lot of skill based questions. We are trying to figure out – how do you interact with the customer. So in a way, the old day of recruiting – where we would just call everyone in and meet with them face to face, was in some ways better than getting in 500 applications from people who we can't see or tell how they interact until we call everyone in. But I think in there might be an ability with mobile device, because they all have a camera, not only will the applicant give a little profile, they could also give a quick video through the mobile device as well. I think that could be really interesting.

We will look into some of these things next year, but I don't know how much or how far we will get with any of them. But I think the mobile world will just keep growing and that people will use it as their primary internet service.

**Vanessa:** How mobile activities contribute to your larger recruitment communication objectives? It seems that with these type of roles where you don't ask a lot of skill based questions, mobile is really there to reduce the initial application barriers and make it more convenient for them to enter into your applicant pool and interact and engage with your employer brand. Would you say that is where mobile plays its greatest role? For that particular group of applicants and job type and because it really gives convenience and removes that barrier to engaging with your employer brand?



**Company A:** Ya you hit it right on the head. Its related to how people talk about building talent communities. And how they always seem to want to try and build talent communities outside of where people usually spend their time. Or where these communities already exist. My view point. Your talent community needs to be where the community is anyway. So if you're a fan of our on Facebook, where people go on already two or three times a day. You will see our message, because that's where you already are everyday. So not only do the communities need to be where people are everyday, you need to utilize the tools that people use to access those communities everyday as well, whether its Twitter or Facebook or all of these, most people are probably connecting through their mobile device. You have to have all your tools in the same place.

**Vanessa:** using data to segment activities.

**Company A:** ya of course. Once again its about being where the people actually are. So we always try to track what's happening as we go along the process. We are tracking what happens when they come on to the site, where are they clicking, where are they spending most of their time. Where are they dropping off. We try to solve the drop offs. It's the same with all touch points. And then we try to figure out, who are the people that are accessing these channels the most. We know there are 18 000 people who are accessing the site, but of those 18 000, what percentage of them where looking for food and beverage related jobs. The same thing with our social media sites. On Facebook we have 28 000 fans, but whose coming in there? What are they doing on our page? What are they talking about? And where do their interests primarily lie. So that we can make sure we are targeting the communication in the right way.

**Vanessa:** You seem to have come much further than the other companies I've spoken to on the subject. In terms of collecting data and using it to get better and be more targeted.

**Company A:** Well we know, just because we were already doing it with our regular ATS and career website. We needed to know what was happening as people were coming in. Now I don't want to give you the idea that we have this down perfectly or we know were everything is going. But at least we are getting the information and we do start to tweak our messages and the different things we do based on what that data has been telling us.

**Vanessa:** Are you seeing results from your efforts to use the data to perfect and improve the targeting and messaging to specific audiences?

**Company A:** Yes. A perfect example is when we put together the mobile career site. We pretty much a all the same piece of content that we had on our full career website. So after having that up a while and seeing where people are going, we realized we didn't need some of the other sections and that having it there was just making the mobile site seem to big and too cumbersome. So we pulled stuff out. What we ended up seeing was that people starting to look at video. They wanted to see how to connect with us through the different social networks. They wanted to search for jobs. Our was a global site, so we made sure it could be translated. And then there's a little piece about Company A. But its very small compared to what we have on our other site. Like employee testimonials is actually something that's looked at quite a bit on our full site, but on a mobile site. It's not looked at all. I think on a mobile device people are just going to look at on Twitter to see what people are saying or Facebook.

We try to make sure our social media activities are very visible on our websites. Both from marketing and for recruiting perspective, the social media icons are usually very small and put at the bottom of the page. That's another thing about Company A. We got into this, more from an engagement and brand perspective. It wasn't really a recruiting thing. It was more about engagement.

The website automatically detects which site your on. Tablet page is the regular website as the experience is good.

## 9.4 Company A: Transcript of Second Interview

**Vanessa:** why was/is mobile important for your communications strategy?

**Company A:** everything I see, whether your standing in line for the elevator, or waiting in line for a concert or on a train, this is where everybody's spending their time. This is where everybody's going to get their information. Whether that's a webpage or going to twitter - which is where I think most people are using it. It's just very clear that if you're going to have kind of communication strategy around anything you do, you have to make sure that works well with a mobile device. So, that's why its important. If you want to get the message out there it has to be able to go out through these devices as well. This is very broad, but I think we would be missing out on a lot if we were doing what we are doing now.

**Vanessa:** how has mobile changed your strategy?

**Company A:** as a change its just that you always have to be thinking about it. It's another channel. Its obviously a

little different than other channels that are out there. No matter what your doing, you have to tailor it for the mobile channel. No matter what were thinking about, we are always thinking “well how can we utilize this device for communicating that particular piece of information”. How to make it easy. I think that’s what so great about the mobile device, it’s so easy. Everybody has it on them all the time. It makes it easy for people to correspond back to us and us back to them. To get additional information about the company. That’s how its changed for us. We started this four years ago. But prior to that, we didn’t have to think about it at all.

**Vanessa:** how else do you think its different from other channels?

**Company A:** I defiantly think convenience and easy, or targeted is what mobile brings to the table. The idea that I can think of something in one moment and get that information, versus trying to remember to look it up later when I get home.

**Vanessa:** How do you think mobile helps when building stronger relationships?

**Company A:** I think the biggest piece of it is related to that convenience. It’s a lot more instant. Especially, for reaching the newer generation. Your able to get information immediately. For example, if I’m a recruiter and I’m trying to get a hold of a candidate, traditionally due to the way most of our systems are set up, I’m gonna send an email. But this is not how younger people communicate today. They check their email like once a month. A text will get them to respond back immediately. Although this is very simple, we see this with our candidates. If we send them information and want a response faster this is much better. It allows us to speed up the process and connect with our candidate quicker. We also make this a little more complicated. We ask all our candidates to connect with us through social media. We even communicate this to students when we present on campus. We tell them this is a benefit. We say “ if you post something on our facebook page or you tweet something out, there is probably a 95% chance, if it’s a decent company, your going to get a response back pretty quickly. If you call, or apply through the ATS, you may never hear back from someone. And because most of these communications are done on a mobile device, you get a response back pretty quickly. And because these communications are public, companies want to respond back quickly so that experience is positive.

**Vanessa:** how do you measure success?

**Company A:** now I don’t want to tell you that that’s really super clear yet. Some of the data is telling us we are on the right track. But a lot of the learning is by going through the process. So, the easiest things to measure are things like, how often does our mobile website pop-up, which is pretty easy. We use google analytics for that. We see every month that the percentage of people who access the mobile site increasing. We are up to about 15%of all our visits. We started at like 4-5%. No body would have even tried to look for a job on mobile if that hadn’t been available. Were we seeing some more analytics, and this is a little grayer is through social media. So much of the way we connect with people is through these channels. And we know that from all the overall statistics about social media, much of it is coming though mobile. So we can see that often those interactions happen through Twitter and Facebook, and we can track the analytics on these social media sites. We know how many interactions and how many followers we have. Those are all ways we can say, this seems to be working effectively or not.

**Vanessa:** how can candidates input information through mobile?

**Company A:** this is an area that still needs a lot more help. Like, on our mobile site, we haven’t made it so that you can actually apply on our mobile site. That’s not an option that we put up there yet. The main reason we don’t do it is because we think it’s going to be a terrible experience. No matter how we try to format it, its just too much. But we are looking at, and we will deploy shortly, is the ability to put in at least some basic information. You can say “im interested in the company, I’m interested in these sort of positions and in these locations”. At least we get you in the system, and we can communicate back to you with that information. Then you would have to apply via desktop. And again, there is a lot of information going back and forth through social media. And also texting back and forth between recruiters.

**Vanessa:** In what ways do the candidate have more control over the communication?

**Company A:** the only control I think they have is over when they send us information. A lot of the request we get are pretty surprising. Sometimes we get questions on our facebook page that could have easily been found had their searched our career website. I don’t know if this just cause people are lazy or what, but their obviously able to get very specific and targeted information in a quick way through these different channels. So, whereas someone would have made a phone call earlier or send an email before, its happening much quicker through these channels. And because a lot of companies are focused on making these public communications positive, people are able to get response they would have never gotten before. How often do you read about how people who apply and never get any response. Their application gets lost in a black hole and the candidate can’t even find a way to connect with the company. With all these channels out there now, its a lot clearer about how to go about that. I think this is how they get a bit more control over it.

**Vanessa:** Going forward, how are you going to improve?

**Company A:** going forward I think we are going to look more at using more mainstream e-commerce or e-marketing tactics. Especially on the recruiting side, we make the mistake of trying to collect all the information at one time about somebody, and they may not be willing to spend 30 minutes filling in this information. So the more we can collect little bits of information about our candidates spread out over a period of time and target communication better, is obviously gonna make for a better mobile experience as well. So for example, if I know someone is interested in sales, why can't I customize our site so that the next time the person comes to the website they see only sales related information. I think that's where it's going. We got to start to collect small bits of information.

The last side of this, is about how to utilize our own employees more for some of our recruiting efforts. And a lot of that is going to be by putting the tools in all of their hands through their mobile device. So if one of our employees meets a great person, how can they get that person's information into the ATS directly through the phone. Or if an employee has a great experience with our company, how can we let them upload a video of that experience to our employee testimonials section. This may not be a traditional recruiting effort, I think everyone knows employee referrals are the best way to find people. So we want to make this process mobile. We don't have all the answers of how to do this yet, but we think it's going to be something very simple. It has to be simple or else no one will do it. The employee can get an incentive for doing this. It just seems better than handing over a call. While basic sales training would tell you that it's better to get that person's information than to hand out your card and wait for them to call.

## 9.5 Company B: Transcript from First Interview

**Vanessa:** Please describe how Company B came to its decision to implement mobile recruiting?

**Company B:** story started back in 2006/2007. Where we identify the need to improve our employer brand. We had some brand recognition in France. We are one of the largest employers in the world, but also the largest employer that no one has ever heard of. We are a B2B organization. Even our marketing strategy has always been to fly below the radar. Even in our operations, our managers are behind the scenes. Even on site, you would typically would never see our logo or uniforms. This made it very difficult to recruit because we were not recognized as an employer.

We decided to go a different route than corporate end – which was B2B focused - and really work on making our employer brand known amongst the candidates. We started by revamping our career website, which was getting about 40,000 page views/month and only had about 10 pages. We revamped the site with additional content and audio visual content and now it's well over 100 pages and getting over 250,000 pages views/month.

We also tried to extend the reach of our site in many different ways. One way was to create some discipline specific micro-sites. The reason for that is because we recruit for all different type of positions. So even though our website won't show up for a search for IT or accounting jobs compared to the big IT or accounting firms, we recruit a lot of these positions. We are a 9 billion dollar business and have an IT department that is larger than most companies, but because we are not known as an IT company and the language on our main career site it not going to be very IT focused, we decided to do a few micro sites. All of these sites have really helped us in terms of Search Engine Optimization. And all those micro sites funnel back into the general career site.

At the same time we also started using social media. We launched the blog, facebook page, linkedin, later on Twitter, Youtube, Flickr. We launched a host of sites that were all interlinked. So no matter where you started engaging with us you could always make your way pretty quickly to our career website (Company B.jobs - network with us).

The reason it's important to understand some of the previous steps we took was because as we noticed the dramatic rise in mobile use in the US, the dramatic rise in mobile internet vs PC. When we started looking into mobile, the reports were saying that within the next three years more people will access the internet through their mobile device than through a PC. So three years ago we started seeing that data that told us we needed to start getting involved in mobile because our career site – which we were very proud of and had just launch – was not mobile friendly. It was very image heavy, had a lot of flash content, had video on it. It was not something you could do easily on a mobile device. So that was our first step. We needed to streamline our career website to be accessible on a mobile device.

**Vanessa:** When did you realize you needed to do this?

**Company B:** two years ago. 2009.

And the first step into mobile was to create our mobile career website. And basically what it was was a stripped down version of our career site. We picked the pages and content we thought was most important and relevant to have on a

mobile site. Some of the branding, images and video. We tried to create it so that it was still engaging. For example, we have a flash element on the career site that's called our "hiring process", and we knew we couldn't re-create that on mobile, but we still planned it out, still used the same information and images, we just made it more linear. Same for another flash object relating to our people profile called "meet our people". Same thing. We flattened it out and made it more mobile friendly. But we still wanted the content there, accessible on the mobile site.

So the thing that was important to us at the time was building our talent community. We were working really hard, through our social media and career site. There were various ways to "opt-in" and connect with us. So it was important for us to create the same experience on our mobile site. At the same time we wanted people to be able to search jobs. At the time however, our ATS was not mobile optimized. There was no way to feed mobile users into our ATS. So, with the help of our ad agency, we made it so the mobile site could pull the jobs from jobs aggregators like indeed.com. I believe its through the RSS feed but I'm not sure. So we basically scrapped jobs off of someone that had scrapped jobs from us. Indeed.com has a way to format the content for the mobile view. So when a user clicks a job on our mobile site they are actually on the jobs section of indeed.com. Then if you're interested in the job and click apply, it sends you an email so that you can apply via a PC. This was sort of generation one of mobile site: career website content, search jobs and send email to user to apply later via PC.

So, this was fine for a while. But as mobile became more and more popular, we really wanted to allow people to fully complete the process through the mobile site. And, what is important to understand is that once you have the mobile site, you can tailor your other communications around the mobile site too. We do it for our newsletter and other e-communications. We integrate it with the mobile site too. The e-communication has a link mobile version of the communication. So all the integration we had with our career site – with our e-communication and social media – we also wanted to do for our mobile site. Making all those different communications mobile compatible as well. But you still couldn't apply for a job on mobile. We did make mobile landing pages for all of our micro sites. So if we did a targeted mobile communication – like SMS - we could link it to the mobile landing page for that content.

We also do work with Jobs2Web. They have a mobile portal so that you can join our talent community via mobile. We also have a landing page for our niche sites on jobs2web portal as well.

So this is where it stands today. The next step involves two things. We first are going to go forward with our jobs app. Then pretty quickly after the app is to make it possible to apply for jobs via the mobile site. Actually, about 6-8 months ago, we started looking at working with our ATS provider. We said we wanted to make it possible to apply through the main ATS system. At about the same time, we were approached by a mobile app developer who said the best way to be visible was to build an app and be in the app store. With launch of the tablets, things were becoming very app centered. People are using more and more apps to connect to the mobile web. So we started juggling with these two things.

Which did we want to do first, the app or the site ATS. And for reasons I cannot explain, except that we felt it would offer a better ROI in the short-term, we decided to focus our attention on developing the app.

So that's the process we are in now. We should have the finished product by next week. It won't be launched yet. But the app is done for apple, android, blackberry, etc. And it will allow users to interact with us in an integrated way – with our social media, etc. – just like all of our other activities. It's all integrated with our social media. And there is also a job search. First the system asks you who you are because we have segmented job data in our system – internal, alumni and external. So, some jobs we post are meant only for internal candidates. We also have a portal exclusive for alumni. So, when you do the job search, your segmented. For internal and alumni, you have to login with your credentials. So this is where the app works just like we wanted for the mobile site. Because the app has to work with the ATS as it needs to feed job seekers into those specific portals which are operated by our ATS system. So, we worked with the ATS vendor, and the first generation of the app will allow candidates to search and APPLY for jobs if they already have an existing account in the system (i.e. which they created via the main career website). And that's very similar to mobile banking and other mobile services, that allow you to do certain transactions via mobile. Most of the time you have to have the account set up first on a PC. But once you have that access, you can access that information from anywhere on the mobile site. So that's version one of the app. The reason we did it like this is because everyone we spoke to said "no one is ready to apply via the mobile app or site". I don't agree with them. But everyone tells us that. And the second reason is most people don't have their resume available on a mobile device. So their not carrying it around on their phone. So, we didn't want to make people come back and finish the application process. So we could have said, "set up a profile now" and then were it said "upload a resume" they could send themselves an email to upload the resume later via PC. But we felt this was too much and too many steps. If we were going to make them do that then might as well send them to the PC and main career site first. So generation one for the app, that's the plan. If you have an existing profile you can search for jobs and apply via the app.

**Vanessa:** what about having people apply using their LinkedIn Profile?

**Company B:** great questions. We also looked into having them apply via their LinkedIn profile. But the ATS isn't ready for that. They can't properly integrate that data. LinkedIn is actually the most difficult to integrate. It doesn't

have a simply API that you can just plug into the app. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. is very easy. But LinkedIn is a bit more guarded about their data.

In the future, the ATS will be accessible from all the sites, whether its mobile, app or regular browser. So you will be able to create profile and apply for jobs.

So the next step is to find a way to allow people to create the profile on the mobile site and app. So some of the things we are investigating for the future is having people like store their information in a Google doc or some other cloud site and access it through there. This allows people to “upload resume” part. This may be a possibility. We are going to look into that.

So our goal in the next few months is to allow people to go through the whole application process on the mobile device.

**Vanessa:** so, on top of the application process goals, how did you handle working in the talent community and employer branding aspects.

**Company B:** we connect all our mobile activities to the community and the employer branding efforts are worked in as well.

Once we created the mobile site. What we see for Jobs2Web site and our general career website. We see that 6% of our traffic is coming from mobile users. So its not a huge percentage, but it's a large number considering the absolute numbers. And this is without the ability to apply and the app driving traffic. Once these things will increase the numbers. What we also see is that with the mobile site, people tend to stay on the site longer (pageviews per visit is 6, versus 2.5 for PC or desktop). I think this is because of the nature of what your doing when accessing the site via mobile. Usually its just that you have time to kill and browsing. You have the extra time to explore. It shows users are spending more time interacting with the mobile site then the PC.

**Vanessa:** what about using data and analytics to adapt the content? Making it more relevant to the audience whose coming through?

**Company B:** not yet, but its funny you say that. We are experiencing a shift with our social media activities. Were we expected a younger crowd, we noticed that people who were engaging with us on social media were typically 35+ and have 5 or more years of experience. So we have tailored are social media. We haven't done it for mobile but we plan to see this trend in mobile as well.

The analytics we get from the mobile site and from other research we gather is rather extensive.

Today, mobile is the #1 initiative we are working on right now. Maybe about 3 people working on our online presence. We have an ad agency that supports us as well.

## 9.6 Company B: Transcript of Second Interview

**Vanessa:** Why is mobile media important to your recruitment communication strategy?

**Company B:** due to the global growth in mobile. Just like with online, social media. As the general population moves in that direction so are your candidates. I think its important that you meet you candidates where they are. So I think that's why its important. Even a couple of years ago when we were initially launching our mobile site, we were looking at the growth of mobile access to the internet. And we saw then the trend showing us that we needed to have a site that was visible via mobile. Even then our company career site accessible via PC is a pretty complex career site. There is a lot of flash and animation. It's not an easy site to show on mobile. We thought it was important for us to do it back then. And now when you look at it, just in the last year, mobile access to the web has doubled. And we see that in the literature and we see that in our own sites as well. Last year our mobile site accounted for 8% of our page views, and this years its 18% of our page views. That is where we felt the trend was going and its projected now to continue along this trend. Double every single year. So we felt it was important to be there.

**Vanessa:** Is there anything unique about the way you communicate through mobile?

**Company B:** I think it's teaching us a lot about how to communicate on the web in general. So on mobile, you kind of scale everything down to the bare bones. But on the PC its very tempting to create big dramatic images and messages, paragraphs of content and try to explain yourself fully and try to cover every possible scenario. Where with mobile you can't do it. You're trying to put your message in a 3 inch by 4 inch space, you can't have a big dramatic picture there. You don't want the download time to take to long. So your page is very simple and your message really gets to the point. So I think these are the unique things about communicating on mobile, but my feeling is this is the way people are going to communicate online in general. And its already kind of this way. You realize that it works. I notice that when we create things now – our e-card campaigns and our advertizing campaigns – that even though we are creating



it for the PC, it's a lot more simple then it was probably a year and a half ago.

**Vanessa:** Do you think mobile helps contribute to build candidate relationships in a unique way?

**Company B:** I'm not sure of I thought of it that way. It certainly contributes to building that relationships but I'm not sure it does it in a particularly different way. It's just another way to communicate with people and be accessible to them. I'm not sure it's a special way to build stronger relationships but its certainly helps create the relationships that we are all trying to build.

**Vanessa:** How do you measure your success?

**Company B:** ya. Up until now our mobile presence has really been via the mobile website and our mobile e-communication. That's really the only way we can track it in terms of visits and clicks. So with the launch of our app and our new mobile site, people can now enter our ATS and actually apply for jobs. So we can look really specifically at candidate flow - applications, qualify applications, interviews and ultimately hires. So that's all wired up. It just started so we will be tracking this data.

Six months ago the conversation was about how people don't want to apply via mobile. Now, everyone wants to talk about it. It's moving very quickly.

**Vanessa:** Input information?

**Company B:** So now with the app they can submit a lot of information. We are one step short of them being able to fill in an entire application. So the process we have now is that you have to create a profile online through PC first and then you can submit this profile via mobile. Now you can do nearly everything that you can do via PC. I think this is becoming more similar to some of the other mobile services out there, like mobile banking. I have to set up my account first on PC and make sure that I have that access first before doing everything on the mobile. So now they can apply for jobs, see there job status, they can set up job alerts that they are interested in. All that information is valuable to us. Certainly the type of jobs that they are interested in. We were are now is that they can't upload a resume. And the reason for that is not because the technology does not exist, its that right now we don't think its very common place for people to have their resume on their phone. Now we are thinking that maybe there is way to do it through the cloud, like if someone has it in Google docs. Or any other kind of cloud storage. Or some kind of import from LinkedIn. All of which we know is possible but its just a matter of setting up the interface for the career site. That's are next step. To have the candidate complete the whole process on the mobile device.

**Vanessa:** in what ways can the candidate control the communication process?

**Company B:** I think one of the main ways is when they join our talent community. There are a whole host of ways to select communications that we send out to our entire community. We have a monthly newsletter, also blog updates mailing, we also send e-cards. So everyone that joins our talent community can pick and choose those. And then, as a mentioned, the alerts where they can specify what type of jobs they are interested. And based on their profile information and preferences our recruiters can search that database and reach out to individual candidates. This hasn't been really adapted for mobile so much, like in terms of SMS. We do have the push notifications on the app for the job alerts.

**Vanessa:** what are your next steps?

**Company B:** I would say there are four things that I can think of that are in the queue of what we want to do. The biggest thing is to have people be able to load up a resume. You can do the entire apply process through mobile. And then the other things are to improve the user interface of some of the features on our app. For example, the social media interactions, when you access it through the app it's a little more clonky then when you though the mobile web. So we are going to try to mirror the mobile web for a lot of those interactions. We are also trying to expand the number of platforms that its on. Right now its on iphone and android and will soon launch it for blackberry and are considering it for windows 7 because of Nokia. And then the last thing is the whole idea of text messages. We are working with an organization to help with this. They do coordinated text messaging campaigns. And they do all kinds of opt-in text messaging based marketing. So you can basically run an entire CRM process through this text-messaging based marketing. So we will replicate some of our e-mail based campaigns that we do on PC and do it through SMS. What we're doing now to build that database for SMS, when you join the talent community online or through the app, there is a little box to check to say you want to receive SMS communication. We ask for cell phone number and opt-in preference. So we are creating this database. We won't use it in the short-term, but once we are ready to use it we will have a pretty extensive database.

## 9.7 Company C: Notes from First Interview

- Created job app in 2007

- then created ipad app
- why?
  - Were looking for competencies in Mobile ICT due to nature of business
  - Wanted to integrate strongest product into HR function
- How?
  - Developed in-house during 3-4 months
  - 6 weeks to get internal sign-off (security, laws, policy, etc.)
  - no real strategy at the beginning → intuition and inspiration for AT&T and Vodafone
- Database collection
  - app user data collection discovered users were older and more experienced than expected
  - Collected data on app users and adapted messaging and marketing
- Objectives?
  - Goals was to make app easy to use and take advantage of mobile's unique functions
  - Taking advantage of unique functions didn't really happen → Why? ATS did not have capability for alert functionality and location specific data
  - Make interesting app that would be in top 40 in Economic apps in iTunes market → actually became #1
  - Give users convenient application process and simple connection to recruitment team → facilitate first step and induction to talent community (e.g now can submit application via link to Xing and LinkedIn or one click to call recruiters; challenges with entry-level and grad talent)
- Integration within Talent Attraction strategy?
  - Combine traditional advertising with mobile recruitment advertising (e.g. job ads at airport for competitor engineers returning home from work)
  - Feature and function differences between smartphone apps and tablet apps
  - Focus on integration with social media activities → to improve interaction level

## 9.8 Company C: Transcript from Second Interview

**Company C:** During career fairs back in 2010 we were showing career opportunities on the smartphone. This is much more convenient on the ipad than on a smartphone. So it started off for career fairs, for this purpose. We called it a job wall. 12-14 Ipads were integrated into this wall at the career fair and job seekers could use it to look for jobs and find information about our careers. And the recruiters were equipped with ipads.

The recruiters would use the ipad to collect candidate information during the career fair as well. This helped the job seekers find information without having to ask questions directly to the recruiter at the job fair – as they are often shy. This also created an opportunity for us to showcase our premium product. As we were the sole distributor of Apple products. It was two benefits for us at one time. It allowed our future customers to play around with our product and at the same time present our jobs.

**Company C:** it's the same app as the iphone app. The objective is a combined approach: to complement our live interactions and to facilitate job search for our candidates.

**Vanessa:** Next step?

**Company C:** concerning the apps. We would like to integrate location based services. This still depends on our ATS

upgrade, to see if it will work together. This would be the next step. This will hopefully be launched in our other markets also. We will also make the apps for Android.

**Vanessa:** did you investigate what your target group was using when you chose to pick apple as your first operating system on which to make an app?

**Company C:** The main driver for using Apple was for business reasons. We were the sole distributor for Apple in our market. We did a bit of research to see which operating system was on the market and most popular and we saw that Android was already really big, but Apple was an our business partner. And we found that the user experience on the apple OS was more fun and playful to use. We though it would give a better experience. It's much more sophisticated. It's more sexy than android.

**Vanessa:** who was the target group?

**Company C:** students, graduates and young professionals were the target group. It was just this year that we found out that this wasn't really who was downloading it. When you first put the app in the app store you only see that the app has been downloaded. You don't know anything about the person who is using it. How old? Location, profession, etc.

**Vanessa:** How did you find out?

**Company C:** We just assumed it was young people because it was the same group who bought our products. But then we started to looking at who was submitting job applications via mobile. And through those applications you collect a lot of data about the applicant – age, function interest, goals. This was a big surprise for us. 80% of our mobile applicants had between 6-20 years of professional experience.

**Vanessa:** Would you collect more information about the user?

**Company C:** X people are very careful about data protection. Therefore its very difficult to collect information right out. We want our products to be easy and simple to use as possible. We want to remove any barriers to usage.

**Vanessa:** How will you customize the app going forward?

**Company C:** We use different feedback channels. We look at the comments in the app store. At the first release of the app you couldn't apply via the app. But the first comments on our app in the app store was about not being able to apply. So we implemented this function based on this feedback. We received 200-300 feedback messages on our app in the first four or five months of its launch.

We also use our Facebook community to collect feedback. We asked our Facebook friends about what they would like to do on the app. We did get sophisticated answers from our social media friends. We assume the audience is the same for our mobile and for our social media.

**Vanessa:** Do you integrate social media into the app.

**Company C:** We integrate our Facebook and our Twitter into the app. This was one of the most important first features. We thought this was a good idea because a person who doesn't want to follow us on twitter or fan us on facebook, which is common amongst older professionals, they can still follow this information through the social media integration on the app. They can see the feed without actually following or fanning us on the social media sites. They can do it anonymously. That was an important features. A lot of people are afraid of the "like" button because they think Facebook is tracing you.

The laws are made to protect the older groups who are not as used to digital media. But the younger digital natives have completely different way of thinking about it and using it. But the laws are not made for them. Old people are deciding what is right or wrong for young people to do on the internet.

**Vanessa:** In terms of integration with other channels. How do you think mobile fits in?

**Company C:** Right now mobile recruiting is more of a niche product. But we us a cross-media approach. We try to reach our target group where they are and how they like to be contacted. When we recruit people who are specialist in the mobile and IT then it makes sense to use mobile to recruit them. Because people in this field are very active in mobile media.

You can also play a lot with the combination of mobile and other media. Like print and mobile and career fairs and mobile. I think its always used in combination. Our app is featured on the career website and on our posters and vice versa. It's a cross-media approach.

**Vanessa:** Do you find it complements live and print media best, or something else?

**Company C:** It works well with all the channels. Particularly, it is a rather cheap channel. You have a pretty high ROI. Right now we have an image campaign on TV and magazines. For some of those ads it would be even better to just build an app. It would be much more sustainable. You would be able to reach your target candidates for 1 or 2 years. The ads in the magazine are gone after a week.

We are hardly using LinkedIn because its so expensive to have a recruiter account there.

Print is mainly used for employer branding. Same with YouTube. Facebook is mainly used for employer branding but also recruitment. Xing and LinkedIn, and Twitter (a bit of both for twitter) and websites are mostly used for recruiting. Mobile is in between – we use it for both. Mobile is very 50-50. Some functionalities are very employer branding and



others are for recruiting.

We also use video at Cinemas for employer branding adverts.

We also use radio. We are looking for consultants and figure this would be a good way to reach them. As they tend to be in the car when they drive to their clients.

Social media, print, career website and career fairs as well as the digital screens at airports etc. work best with mobile media. They integrate well.

We used QR codes in the past. We are thinking about it again but are currently not using them.

**Company C:** one of the biggest advantages of mobile recruiting is that they can interact with recruiter on the spot or immediately. They can call the recruiter for example, right after they see the app. This is the most intensive interaction. Mobile offers a very intense interaction. It also takes away the formality of written communication, which is typical for us. Mobile offers more intimacy. Even if you want to stay anonymous you can communicate through social media. This is a good way to interact as well.

We want to change the image of our employer brand. A lot of people don't really connect with us or feel that we have a friendly approachable employer brand, like Google or a small start up. We want to change this by allowing our candidates more interaction with our staff and recruiters.

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