

2012 International Crisis, and Risk Communication Conference

**The Business Ethics of Online Social Networking in Human
Resource Management Practices: recruiting and retaining
employees in Australia**

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Major Themes

▪Online Social Networking – defined as “applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to their profiles, and sending emails and instant messages between each other”

(Kent et al, 2003).

▪Human Resource Management Practices – “managing people within the employer-employee relationship”

(Stone, 2008)

▪Recruitment – refers to the “process of seeking and attracting a pool of qualified applicants from which candidates for job vacancies can be selected”

(Stone, 2008).

Major Themes

- Business Ethics –is “how we conduct our business affairs; it is about individuals and the institutions with which they deal; it is about expectations and requirements, including the social and economic requirements of society”

(Fraser and Gibson, 2007)

- Corporate Social Responsibility – involves the “obligation of an organisation’s management towards the welfare and interests of the society which provides it the environment and resources to survive and flourish, and which is affected by the organisation’s actions and policies”

(Businessdictionary.com, 2011)

Current State of Knowledge

- Currently, we know there are 500 million active users
(Facebook, 2010).
- Hiring managers are “looking to hire the people with personal brand as well as the right person to fit the job position
(Kibbe, 2009).
- Social Networks are serving as an inexpensive and quick source of background information on job applicants and current employees for employers
(Clarks and Roberts, 2010).
- 2, 600 respondents – “45% reported using social networking sites to research job candidates’ backgrounds for information that verified – or – supplemented the information in their resumes”
(Careerbuilder.com, 2009).

Justification of the Research

There are four primary sources of justification for this thesis research project, including:

- The underlying impact of online social networking in human resource management recruitment practices is yet to be wholly determined;
- There is an increase in employee monitoring within the workplace;
- There is a recognised need for enforcement and education of policy and procedures in Australian organisation's regarding social media use in the workplace; and
- Provides and insight into the business ethics, specifically information ethics and an organisation's responsibility to their employees, specifically with respect to privacy and legal issues surrounding this emerging technology.

Hiring Process

Application Submitted. Applicants are screened using OSN and background checks conducted.

If successful in screening process employee hired. If OSN search results do not match needs of the firm, application rejected.



During Employment

Employee required to sign policies relating to OSN use, privacy, and acceptable internet use. Monitoring of use begins.

If any breaches of policy occur, depending on level of breach, consequences apply. If no breaches occur, monitoring continues.



Termination

If first offence, employee may be retained and counselled, with continued monitoring.

If repeat offence or potential criminal investigation, employee terminated.

Human Resource Management Practices Process

Figure 1. HRM Process – Recruitment, During Employment and Termination

The Relationship between Business Ethics, Human Resource Management and Online Social Networking – Conceptual Framework

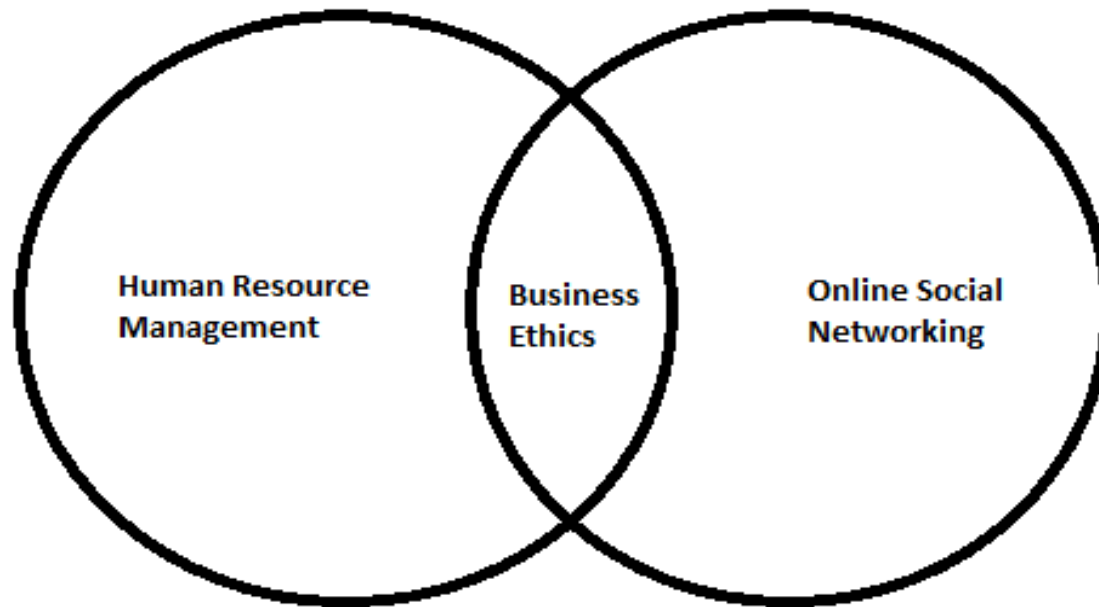


Figure 2 - The relationship between Business Ethics, OSN and HRM

Links to Earlier Findings

Primary Method of Research - Interviews



Figure 3 – Interview stakeholders.

Analysing the Findings

Trust of OSN in HRM

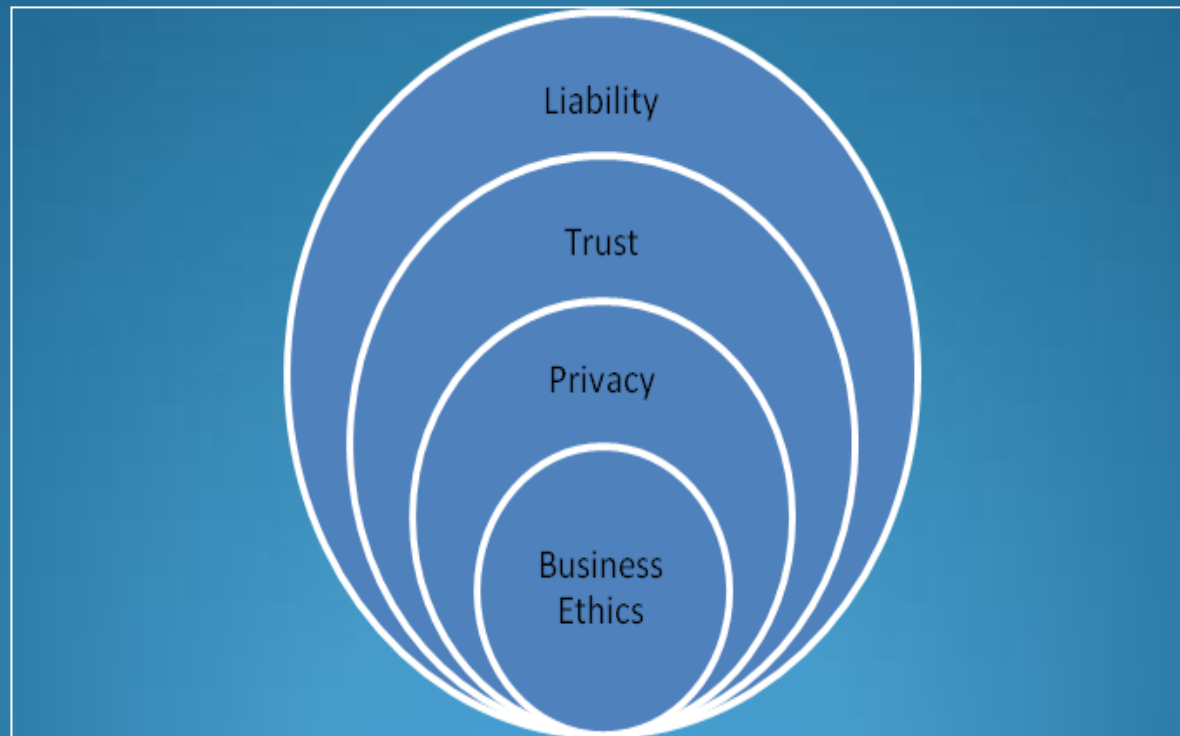


Figure 4– Stakeholder Issues of concern Pertaining to Recruitment.

Privacy and Legal Issues in Recruitment

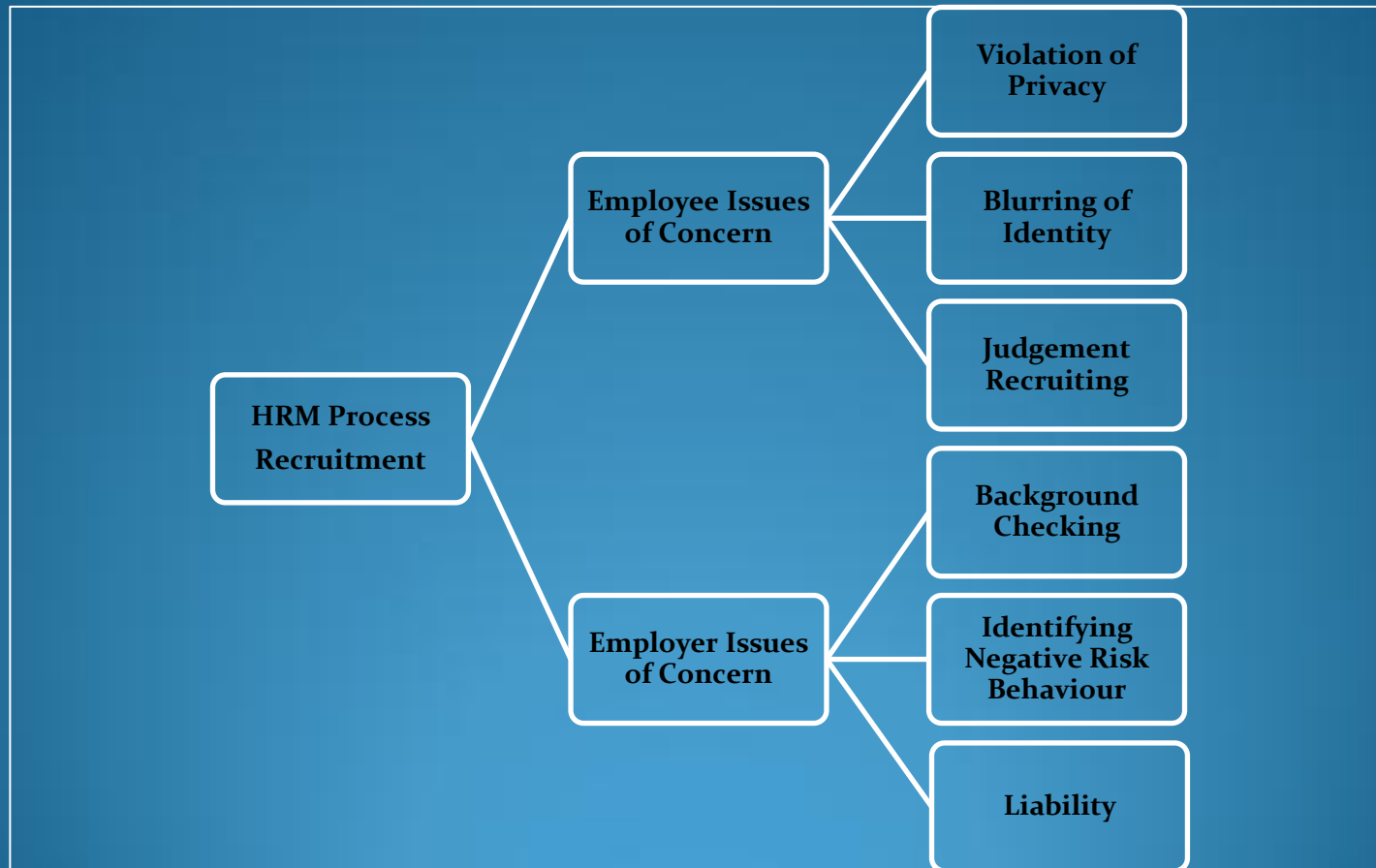


Figure 5– Stakeholder Issues of concern Pertaining to Recruitment.

Recommendations for the Future

Stakeholders	Human Resource Management Process – Recruitment
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Use LinkedIn when applying for jobs as it is a professional network recruiters regularly use and refer to in order to gain a better understanding of your corporate identity.*Be aware of who you befriend on online social networking sites such as Facebook as often enough, recruiters may use your interaction with fellow networkers as a means of trying to understand what your true character is like.
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Refrain from using only Facebook as a means of gathering data. Use information on their curriculum vitae and LinkedIn profiles to determine their corporate identity.
Policy and HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Never judge an applicant by their Facebook profile. An applicant's right to privacy is as important as an organisations' right to maintain corporate confidentiality.*Check references listed as these will provide a clearer understanding of an applicant's work ethic and their past real-world experiences.
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Understand the generation your pool of candidates comes from and the technologies available. Do not misuse these technologies to discriminate against an applicant due to their gender, race, disability or which network they are linked to.

Table 2 – Recommendations from Stakeholders to Stakeholders for Recruitment

Privacy and Legal Issues in Employee Monitoring

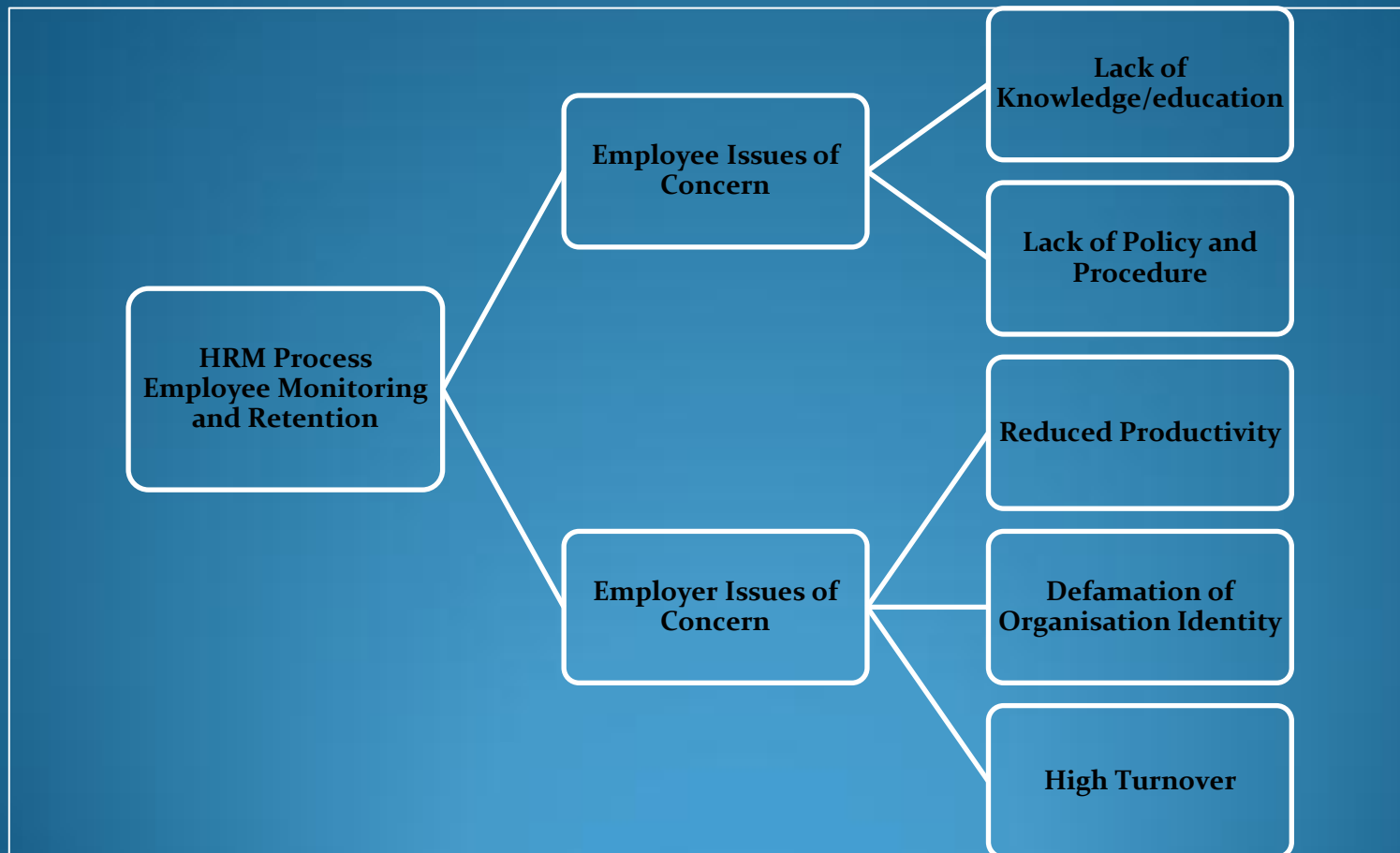


Figure 6 – Stakeholder Issues of concern Pertaining to Employee Monitoring and Retention

Recommendations for the Future

Stakeholders	Human Resource Management Process – Employee Monitoring and Retention
Employees	<p>*If using OSN sites is specifically prohibited and so stated in your workplace policy or procedure guidelines....DO NOT USE IT!</p> <p>*If online social networking is permitted within your organisation, use it in moderation. The amount of time you spend networking and socialising, spend double completing your tasks on time and meeting deadlines.</p>
Employers	<p>*Make employees stakeholders in the organisation so that they feel as though their work is what is making the organisation successful. Reward their progress in order to retain their energy.</p>
Policy and HR	<p>*Raise awareness and progress with technology. Using technologies as a positive tool to engage and motivate employees to ‘work hard and play harder’ ensures a better relationship between employers and employees.</p> <p>*Implement and create policies and procedures which outline specifically the ‘acceptable’ usage of the internet, not just OSN sites such as Facebook within their organisation.</p>
Legal	<p>*Monitor their use of the internet, however ensure that they are aware, and in doing so, promote productivity by allowing them to use online social networking sites rather than blocking the ideal of using Facebook wholly.</p>

Table 4 – Recommendations from Stakeholders to Stakeholders for Employee Monitoring and Retention

Privacy and Legal Issues in Termination

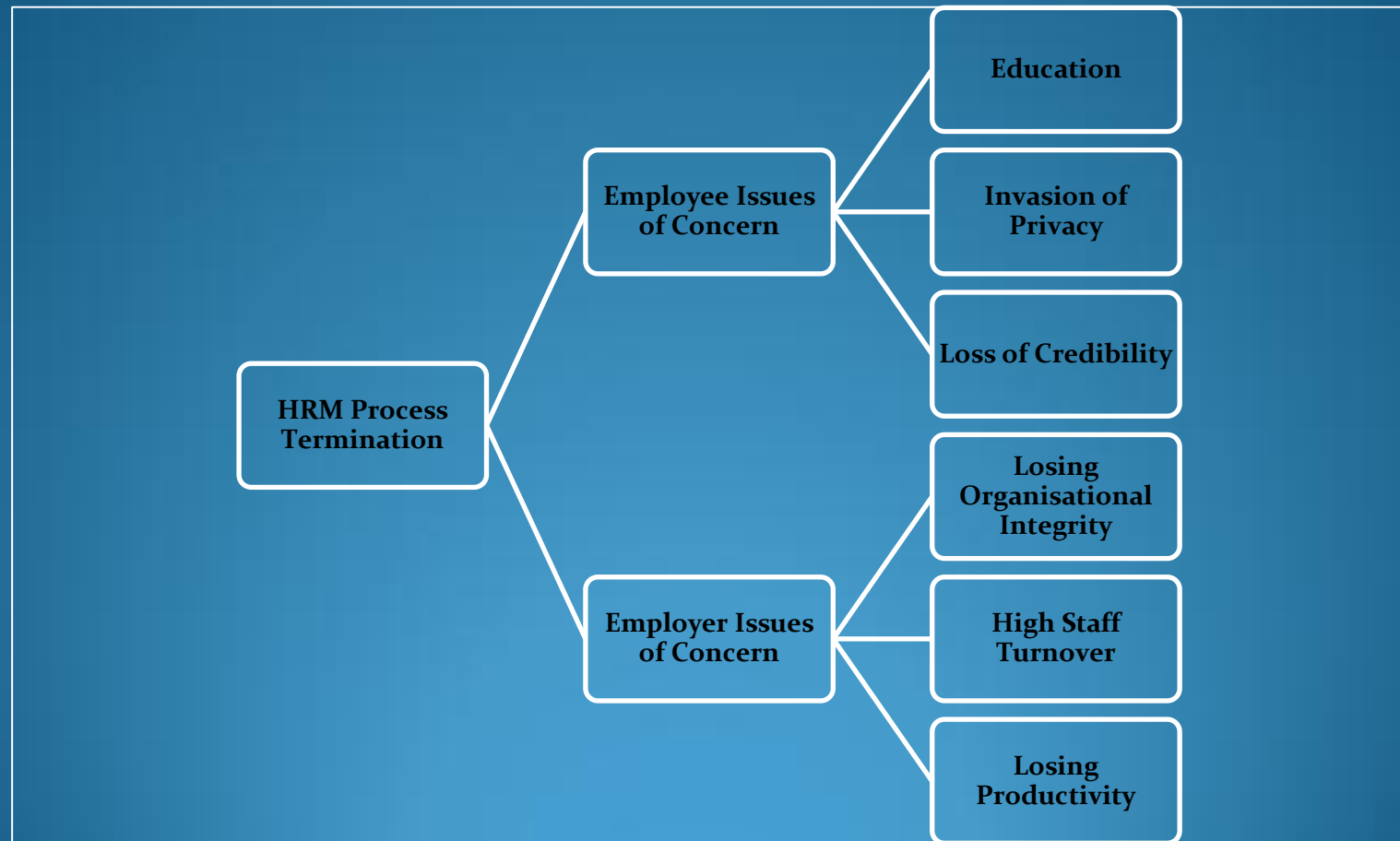


Figure 7 – Stakeholder Issues of concern Pertaining to Termination.

Recommendations for the Future

Stakeholders	Human Resource Management Process – Termination
Employees	<p>*If you have any issues with fellow employees or any ongoing miscommunications, refrain from putting them on public sites such as Facebook and Twitter, as these can be logged and used in a demeaning manner against you.</p> <p>*Do not ‘befriend’ your employer or fellow employees on Facebook if you feel that they may break the level of trust between you, by admitting to seeing something negative on your profile. This also has the capacity to affect their future employment with the organisation.</p>
Employers	<p>*Make employees stakeholders in the organisation so that they feel as though their work is what is making the organisation successful. Reward their progress in order to retain their energy.</p>
Policy and HR	<p>*Implement and create policies and procedures which outline specifically the ‘acceptable’ usage of the internet, not just Facebook within their organisation. This includes the use of Web 2.0 technologies such as email, marketing and blogging.</p>
Legal	<p>*In order to save cost, employers need to not terminate their employees at the first sign of misconduct regarding their use of social media, but educate and train their employees on the expected uses of OSN sites such as Facebook while employed by the relative organisation.</p>

Table 6 – Recommendations from Stakeholders to Stakeholders to avoid Termination

Significant Findings

Outcome 1 – Need for ‘Enforcement of Policies and Procedures’ specific to OSN

Outcome 2 – ‘Educate and Train’ Your Employees

Outcome 3 – Demarcating the Boundaries – ‘Personal’ v ‘Private’ Online Space

What's Next?!?!?