

2020 OUTLOOK:
THE FUTURE
OF EMPLOYER
BRANDING

PART FOUR OF
A FOUR-PART
SERIES

Using Social Media for Talent Attraction

MANY COMPANIES SHOW A SURPRISING LACK OF COMPETENCE IN THE SOCIAL REALM. WILL GREATER INVESTMENT DELIVER RESULTS?



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In early 2014, plenty of digital thought leaders declared that social media expertise

WAS A DEAD ART.

It seemed foolish, claimed pundits, that a social media consultant or expert would be required to teach companies how to navigate popular sites like Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. Talent professionals and brand advocates should naturally know how to use these channels because they use them extensively in their personal lives. That prediction simply isn't panning out.



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Companies still struggle mightily to make their social media investments deliver on the promise of higher customer engagement, greater brand awareness and stronger brand affinity.



Universeum tracks the social media activity of the 400 largest companies in the US, logging *every single social media post over the last four years*. (European companies will join this group in Spring 2015.) Our analysis looks specifically at how well these companies activate their employer value propositions (EVPs) through social media.

The research shows there's tremendous disparity in how well companies leverage social media. In a typical month, high flyers (i.e. successful social media teams) post content that is between 10,000 and 100,000 times more engaging than the average. For those organizations not constantly practising and iterating, it will be difficult to catch up to those that are more mature users of social media channels.

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Social media the top channel for promoting employer brand

35%

CITE SOCIAL MEDIA AS THE MOST
IMPORTANT CHANNEL FOR
PROMOTING EMPLOYER BRAND.

Clearly social media is valued above all other channels, but is it highly valued? When surveying senior executives, more than a third of respondents cite social media as most important (the highest-scoring channel across digital, print and personal events). The employer website comes in second place, with 29 percent saying it is important. The top print channel is brochures (16 percent) and the top personal channel is career fairs (17 percent).

FIGURE 1

Yes, social media is deemed the top channel, but is 35 percent a vote of confidence? Let's look more closely at how different professionals ranked social media as a top channel. [FIGURE 2](#)

Notice that social media is *not listed* by the majority of respondents in each job category (in other words, 65 percent did not choose it.)



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Why does it score so low?

Putting these figures in context, it's clear large companies are using social media to attract talent; study after study shows that usage is well over 90 percent. A recent survey by Jobvite of more than 1800 recruiting and HR professionals found 93 percent of recruiters use or plan to use social media to bolster their recruiting efforts, and we suspect this number is significantly higher in the largest companies.

Yet according to Jobvite's survey, 82 percent of recruiters report their social recruiting skills are *proficient or less*. Meaning social media for recruiting is at an all-time high, but the vast majority of professionals don't feel competent. Is it possible that while most companies are using social media extensively, the

general lack of proficiency means executives still feel lukewarm about its potential?

To be fair, low proficiency scores are hardly surprising. Imagine the breadth of subject matter expertise HR and recruiting must master in order to leverage social channels – everything from sophisticated targeting of passive candidates and vetting them by scanning their digital 'footprints', to showcasing the employer brand online, posting job openings and generating employee referrals. What's more, best-in-class social media recruiters know each social channel requires different tactics; the type of content that engages on Facebook is far different from that which will gain attention on LinkedIn... to say nothing of the dozens of niche channels.

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FIGURE 1
WHICH DIGITAL CHANNELS DO YOU SEE AS MOST IMPORTANT?

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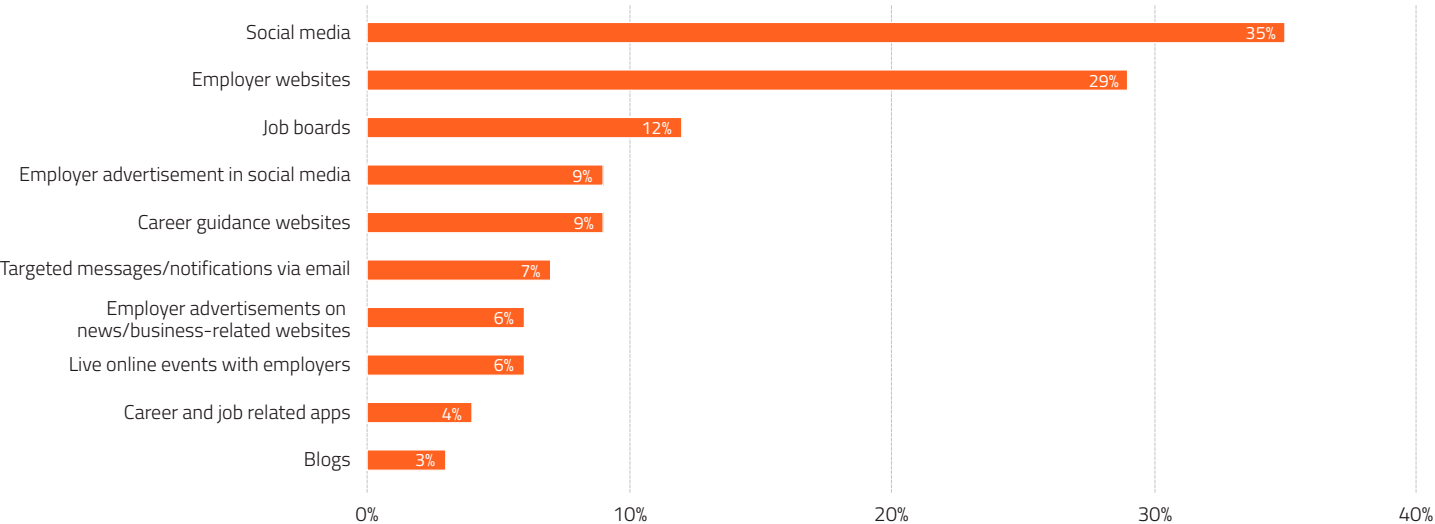


FIGURE 2
WHICH DIGITAL CHANNELS DO YOU SEE AS MOST IMPORTANT?

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Social media spending

Most organizations report that spending will increase in the next five years. Sixty-five percent say they are likely to increase spend on social media generally, and 63 percent will increase spend on social media ads.

But spending increases vary significantly by industry. The management consulting industry is investing heavily in social in the years ahead (84 percent say spend is likely to increase) while engineering and manufacturing are less likely to report increased spending (65 percent).

[FIGURE 3](#) / [FIGURE 4](#)



65%

SAY THEY WILL INCREASE
SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN
THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

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FIGURE 3
HOW DO YOU EXPECT YOUR COMPANY’S SPEND ON THESE CHANNELS (RELATED TO EMPLOYER BRANDING) TO CHANGE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

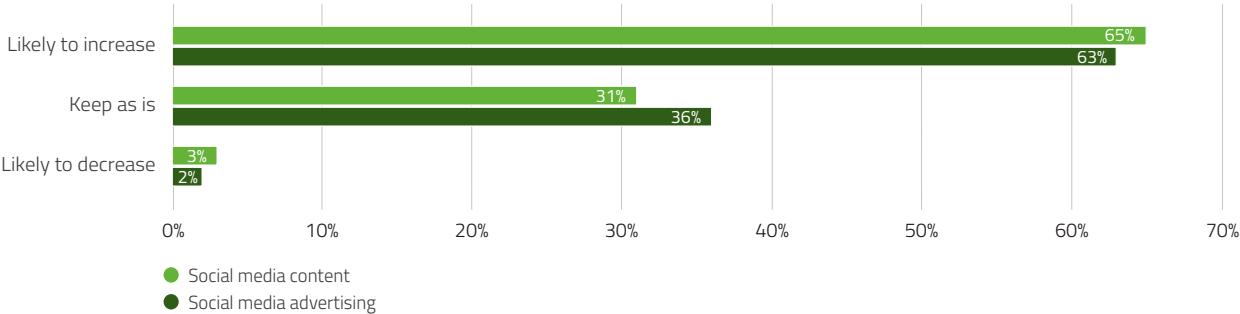
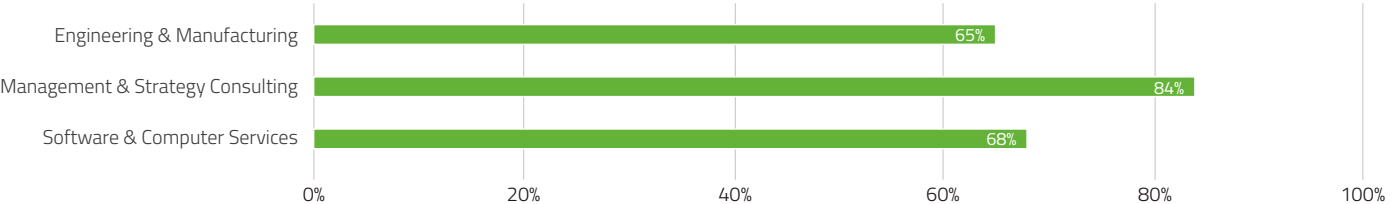


FIGURE 4
INDUSTRIES “LIKELY TO INCREASE” SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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Social media use

38%

OF EXECUTIVES SAY THEY WILL INCREASE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMPLOYER BRANDING BY A LOT.

Most executives say they will increase use of social media for employer branding. Thirty-eight percent say they will increase by a lot, and another 31 percent say they will increase a little. Very few plan to decrease use (8 percent). [FIGURE 5](#)

Dedication to social media varies by function. Those in HR and recruiting are most likely to see the value of investing in social, whereas only about a quarter of CEOs say the same. [FIGURE 6](#)

We also wondered about the degree of activity – after all, a recruiting team can have a social account but post very infrequently. Just 32 percent say they oversee an active presence on a dedicated career account (regardless of social channel). Another 42 percent claim a moderate presence, and

19 percent describe their social recruiting efforts as fairly inactive. Eleven percent report no activity at all. Given the importance of social recruiting to attracting Millennial candidates, we find these statistics to be fairly disheartening. [FIGURE 7](#)

We also asked whether organizations employed a dedicated social media employee for career opportunities. Only 20 percent say they do. While the statistic on its own is not evident of a lack of enthusiasm or investment in social media (it's possible that companies employ social media managers to handle more than one task), in combination with our other findings it suggests that most organizations are under-investing in social recruiting and social employer branding.

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FIGURE 5
IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WILL YOU INCREASE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMPLOYER BRANDING?

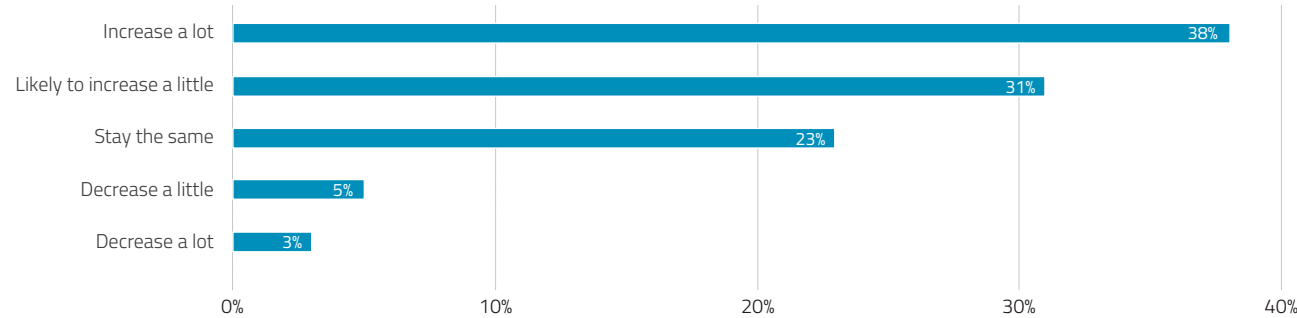


FIGURE 6
WE WILL INCREASE SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE A LOT



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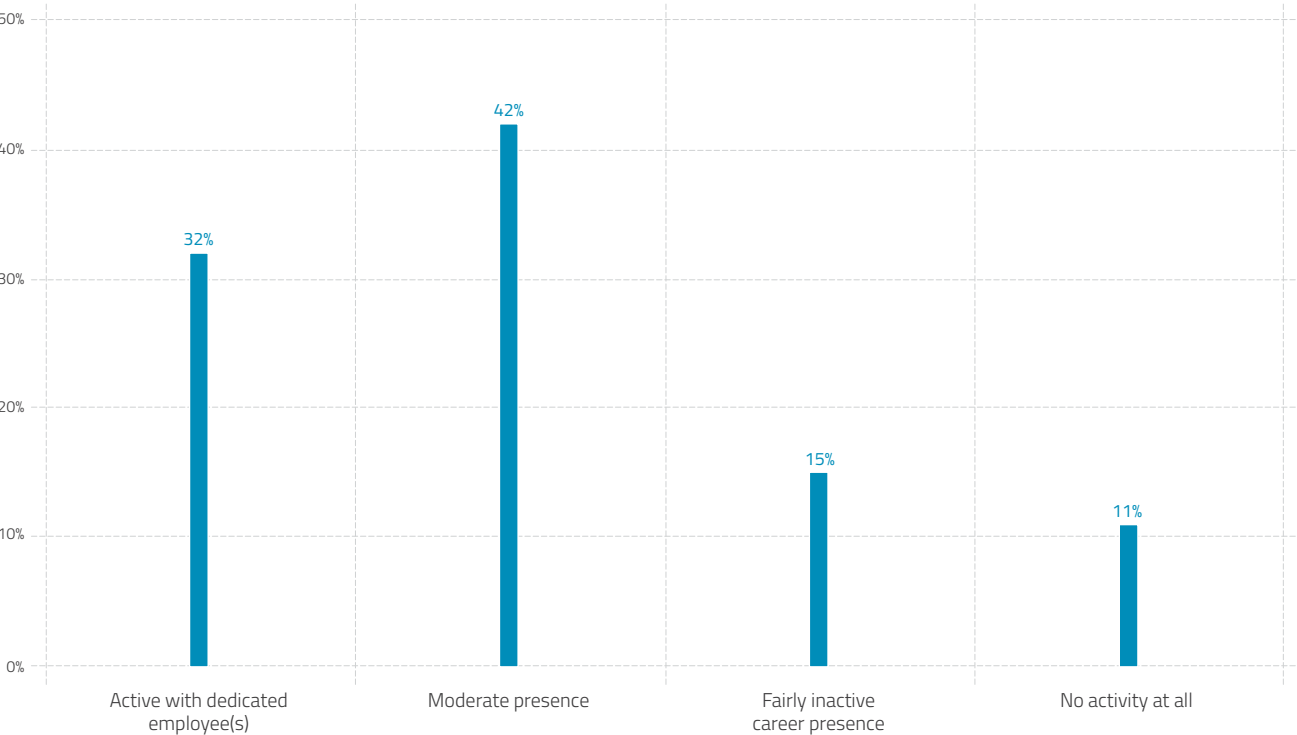
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FIGURE 7
DO YOU HAVE A DEDICATED CAREERS PRESENCE ON ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM THAT YOU ACTIVELY USE TO SPREAD INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

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Measurement and oversight

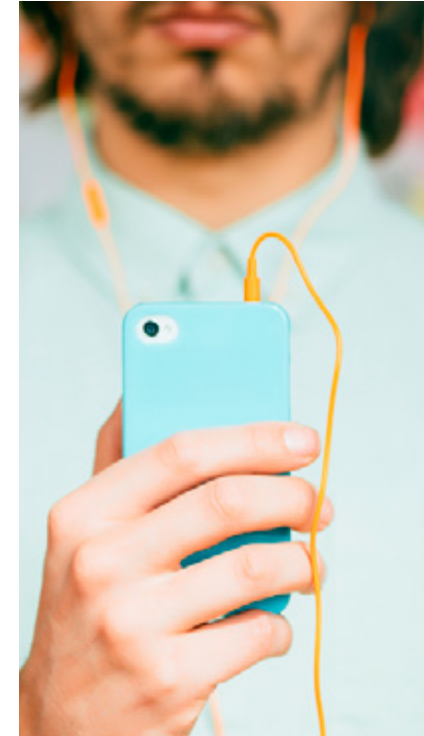
Most surprising in this study are the low numbers of organizations measuring social media effectiveness. Currently only half (52 percent) say they measure their social media activities; 69 percent plan to do so over the next five years.

The statistics are troubling given social media requires constant testing and optimization to ensure messages engage the audience. Unlike traditional campaigns that are measured over months, social media success requires a vigilant eye, day-by-day. Without measurement, these organizations

are driving blind in a medium that requires constant navigational inputs and sudden course corrections. [FIGURE 8](#)

More than half of the organizations in the study report that they have a social media policy or guidelines for their employees (54 percent). In our experience, a social media policy is not only an important risk management tool for organizations, but also indicates a company is either preparing to or has already scaled their social media tactics beyond a small team of social practitioners – a good sign.

[FIGURE 9](#)



54%

SAY THEY HAVE A SOCIAL MEDIA
POLICY OR GUIDELINES.

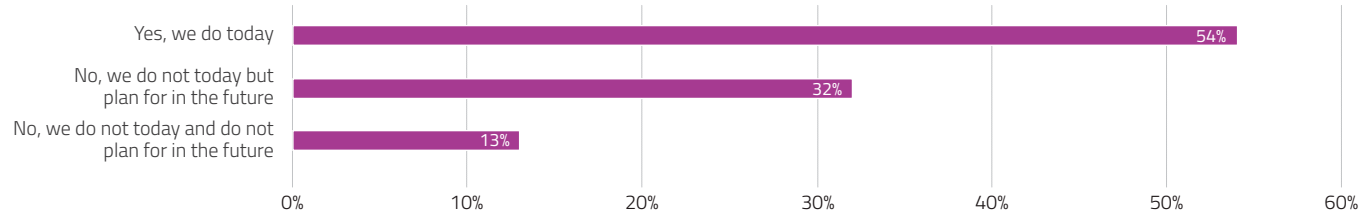
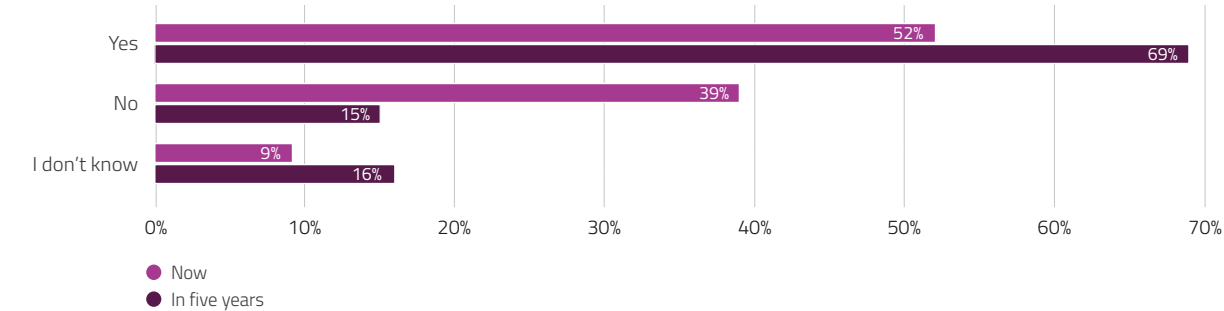
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FIGURE 8
ARE YOU CURRENTLY MEASURING (OR PLANNING TO MEASURE) YOUR COMPANY'S RESPONSIVENESS/ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS?

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FIGURE 9
DOES YOUR COMPANY HAVE FORMAL POLICIES OR GUIDELINES FOR ITS EMPLOYEES ON HOW TO ACT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

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Activating social media for recruiting and employer branding

JUST

32%

OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVE AN ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE WITH DEDICATED EMPLOYEES.

In this last eBook in our *Outlook 2020* series, we must come full circle and revisit an issue that arose in the first edition: Who owns employer branding? Our research found dissension on the issue, with each functional area claiming a higher degree of ownership – and all signalling clearly that employer branding is not a well-defined activity with clear lines of accountability. Just 34 percent of

those answering claim HR owns it – hardly a vote of confidence.

Dissension like this is a sign that talent attraction strategies have a long way to go – even in large, well-funded organizations. [FIGURE 10](#)

Those weaknesses are seen in social media recruiting as well. As recorded earlier, just 32 percent of organizations have an active social

media presence with dedicated employees – a surprisingly low ratio given how critically important social media is to reach Millennials. Ironically, marketing departments have the expertise that talent attraction professionals require to build effective social media programs, but little collaboration exists between HR and marketing to help facilitate learning. What we have found works well is to develop

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a ‘Social Media Center of Excellence’. This is a training and development program that educates *all teams* in how to use social media effectively, regardless of whether it’s being used by marketing, HR or even regional offices. This type of cross-functional program helps to spread the expertise within marketing across the organization.

For HR and recruiting, the coming year must focus intently on *quality* over *quantity* in social media. In an impulse to engage more, some industries have become downright noisy. Professional services firms in particular have succumbed to this; the largest global services firms score highly on *activity* but fail to engage their audience. Some firms, however, have broken the code. One top accounting firm in our study posted 60 percent less content than its competitors, but scored the

highest engagement scores among its competitive set.

Our research also shows the need to adopt a ‘fail fast approach’. What engages candidates one quarter will likely change in a future quarter. Social media messages must be constantly tested, tuned and updated to ensure they are tracking closely to the topics and formats your audience cares about most.

Finally, it’s time for organizations to move beyond social recruiting as an ‘experiment’ and instead make it a core competency. With competition for talent heating up and with Millennials making up a greater share of the workforce, social recruiting and employer branding expertise will become a strategic asset for best-in-class organizations.

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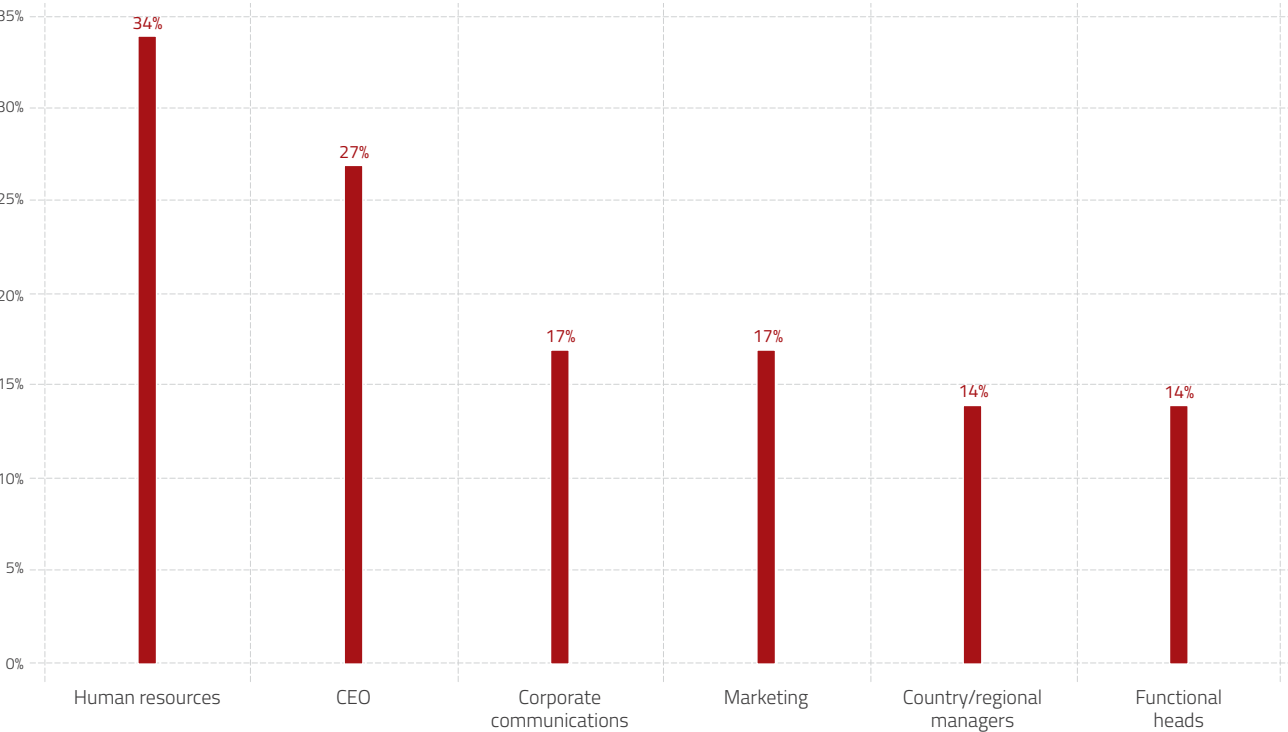
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FIGURE 10
TO WHAT DEGREE ARE THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS ACCOUNTABLE FOR EMPLOYER BRANDING ACTIVITIES?

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“The timing of Universum’s Employer Brand Social Analytics couldn’t be more perfect. As we ramp up our presence for talent acquisition on social and in particular the Facebook platform, the ability to track content from both a competitor landscape as well as consumption within our target talent has helped support our strategic direction as well as influence our tactics.

Insightful data like this has also facilitated collaboration with our digital teams in the business to better understand the value of integrating our talent and consumer brand messages across our social real estate.”

- HELEN DAVIES,
DIRECTOR & GLOBAL PROGRAM LEAD,
TALENT ACQUISITION MARKETING &
SOURCING, MANULIFE

“Targeting social media for an employer brand isn’t just art; there is real science around messaging and impact. Using Universum’s Employer Brand Social Analytics adds confidence that it’s being done in a strategic, measurable way.

Universum’s Employer Brand Social Analytics shows content from the perspective of the target audience and illustrates actionable data about publishing information that resonates.”

- JENNIFER TERRY-THARP,
DIRECTOR OF TALENT ACQUISITION, AT&T

Want more information about auditing your own brand, taking steps to improve accountability within your organization, or even resources that point to where you can start?

For more information about Universum’s upcoming social media products and services, [please contact us here](#)

Check out our Employer Attractiveness Rankings

For more information about Universum’s research services, [click here](#)

For more information about Universum’s consulting services, [click here](#)

Who’s in charge of Employer Branding at your organization?

Get in touch with Universum today and let us help you build a better employer brand

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The 2020 Outlook survey is based on 2338 interviews conducted online between mid-October and mid-December 2014 across 18 countries. Respondents are representing a variety of industries and job functions. More than 50 percent were working within HR and 16 percent were CEOs of their respective organization, while 23 percent were working for organizations with more than 1000 employees in the country. The following industries are covered by the research: Banks, Chemicals, Construction, Consumer Electronics and Household Appliances, Educational and Scientific Institutions, Engineering and Manufacturing, Fast Moving Consumer Goods, Technology Hardware & Equipment, Legal Services, Management and Strategy Consulting, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)/Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), Energy (Oil & Gas, Renewable Energy, Nuclear Energy), Real Estate, Retail, Software and Computer Services. Please note that industry breakdowns are only shown for industries with more than 100 survey respondents.

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