PUBLIC SOCIAL NETWORK SITES AND SOCIAL RECRUITING

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to El Paso, Texas, the city that gave me strength and inspiration.
PUBLIC SOCIAL NETWORK SITES AND SOCIAL RECRUITING

by

ABBY PETERS, MBA

DISSENTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Marketing & Management
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
August 2014
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my dissertation committee members and the Business Administration faculty who instructed and mentored me during my time at UTEP.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my friends and family for loving me hard and supporting me endlessly.
ABSTRACT

Social network sites (SNSs) are an increasingly popular form of social media used by individuals and organizations. As these platforms continue to transform the way people communicate with one another, they are simultaneously revolutionizing the way individuals interact with organizations. Part of this dramatic change is apparent in the processes by which organizations are recruiting employees and job seekers are pursuing employment. To investigate these phenomena, I employed the diffusion of innovations theory in a SNS context to examine the relationship between organizations’ use of their corporate career website and their use of SNSs as recruiting sources. Subsequently, I used employer brand equity theory to test the relationship between job seekers’ exposure to organizations’ e-recruiting sources and their subsequent employer knowledge. I also paired employer brand equity theory with signaling theory to test for relationships among job seekers’ organizational attitudes, application intentions, and job search behaviors, including the likelihood that individuals would make a connection to organizations on SNSs. Theoretical and practical implications from this study were drawn from testing how organizational use of SNSs fits into e-recruiting practices and influences job seekers, and how a shift to social recruiting may affect the recruiting function and the way individuals search for work.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Social Media Today

In approximately a decade, social media and social network sites like Facebook and Twitter in particular have had far-reaching impact. From facilitating revolutions in the Arab Spring to decreasing the degrees of separation between any two people, social media is leaving its mark on the world. With seemingly no end to the growth of social media in sight, organizations are following the lead of individuals and utilizing the innovation for commercial use.

Social network studies have long established that there are six degrees of separation between any two people. The concept of six degrees of separation was famously researched and popularized by psychologist Stanley Milgram (1967). More recently, and because of the extreme popularity of social media, the number of degrees has been severely challenged. According to the professional community organization Social Media Today, an experiment conducted in May 2011 by Facebook data curator, Lars Backstrom, on the social network site’s then 721 million active users indicated the average degrees of separation between any two people in the sample was 3.74 (Peters, 2011).

In addition to improving connectivity among individuals, social media has been credited with giving a voice to previously unheard and unrecognized groups, and providing ways to come together in both virtual and physical space. Purposeful riots and protests, as well as innocent events that unintentionally and rapidly grow beyond capacity, have commonly resulted from organizing via social media. Most notably, politically oppressed citizens and activists have
successfully used social media to organize protests, while entertainers have utilized it as a means of gathering crowds for impromptu events (Wasik, 2012).

While skeptics wonder if social media is a fad and whether it may be forming the basis for another tech bubble (Henn, 2012), membership in social media platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook continues to grow (Kanalley, 2011); membership of LinkedIn is 300 million\(^1\) and Facebook users now number more than 1.3 billion.\(^2\) Growth in the membership of these social network sites has simultaneously led to an increase in their value. As the first notable social media company to go public, LinkedIn is currently valued at over $10 billion and its stock price nearly tripled in its first year on the market (Henn, 2012). LinkedIn has recently been joined on the market by Facebook, a company that raised $16 billion in its initial public offering (IPO) and earned rank as the second largest IPO in U.S. history, surpassing all but Visa for the amount of capital raised in an IPO. Facebook was valued at $104.2 billion as of its May 2012 IPO (Spears & Frier, 2012).

**Organizations’ Use of Social Media**

While small and entrepreneurial organizations first adopted social network sites (SNSs) for commercial purposes (Giles, 2010a, 2010b), large businesses have since joined the ranks of commercial users. Now, like the pioneering small businesses, large organizations are both promoting their presence on SNSs and using these platforms to broaden and improve communication with their stakeholders (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010; Peters, Abdelfattah, Parra, & Seck, 2012). For example, prominent companies like Coca-Cola and Hewlett-Packard have used SNSs for organizational purposes like branding and customer service (Culnan et al., 2010).

\(^1\) http://press.linkedin.com/about
\(^2\) https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/
Naturally, the popularity of SNSs among individuals has prompted organizations to adopt and implement SNSs for a variety of purposes; however, to the extent that people are seeking benefits from connecting to organizations in new ways, the commercial use of SNSs may also be encouraging individuals to adopt and use SNSs more than they would otherwise. For example, organizational implementation of SNSs for recruiting may legitimately inspire job seekers to use them as job sources, especially because networking capabilities are built directly into these platforms. The use of SNSs as recruiting sources is also a way that organizations might influence the adoption of SNSs by other commercial entities that have previously not considered using SNSs for recruitment purposes, and that have otherwise deemed the innovation irrelevant to their business.

Recruiting is an organization’s effort to maintain communication with a subset of its stakeholders—those who seek employment and are attracted to the organization for this purpose. E-recruiting was an addition to this effort that began in the mid-1990s and continues to evolve (see Table 1). Presently, social media represents one of the newest ways that employers and

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3 A top-level domains organize the internet at the highest level within its hierarchical Domain Name System; http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1591
workers can communicate. In addition, SNSs are Web 2.0 applications that are inherently interactive, making them platforms that operate as a general extension of organizations’ traditional (Web 1.0) company website, in addition to being an extension of e-recruitment.

Progressing alongside e-recruiting has been individuals’ use of SNSs, which grew 18 percent globally in 2013, according to *Social Media Today*, a company that compiles and distributes information on social media trends. In the United States, social media now represents the most popular internet activity: Americans spend more time on social media than on any other online activity, an average of 37 minutes a day (Adler, 2014). Worldwide, 85 percent of the global population has internet access and nearly 1 in 4 people connected to the internet use SNSs (Ahmad, 2013). With over 1 billion individual account holders now collectively on social media (Carranza, 2013), it is not unusual that organizations have been increasingly drawn to social media as a source of communication with stakeholders. Perhaps most notable is companies’ effort to use SNSs as marketing outlets. With one estimate of the positive impact of consumers joining a company’s SNS brand community put at $25 per consumer (Goh, Heng, & Lin, 2013), it is not surprising that 80 percent of American companies already maintain a presence on the world’s most popular SNS—Facebook.4

Although the general organizational adoption of social media platforms like Facebook is apparent, the visibility of their particular uses—for recruiting, for example—can be less obvious. Even so, evidence suggests that the use of SNSs as part of employers’ recruitment activities continues to grow. Based on results from an annual survey of human resource and recruiting professionals conducted by *Jobvite*, a recruiting software company that tracks social recruiting trends, 94 percent of companies from a global sample were using SNSs to support their

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4 http://www.insites-consulting.com/press/eight-out-of-ten-american-companies-are-present-on-facebook/
recruiting efforts in 2013, up from 89 percent in 2011. Of those companies using social recruiting, 78 percent have successfully hired a candidate who was introduced or identified through social media, which represents a 34 percent increase since 2010. Also according to the study, SNSs are being used throughout the recruitment process to post jobs, search and contact employee candidates, showcase employer brands, and vet candidates, both before and after employment interviews are conducted (Jobvite, 2013).

**Purpose of the Study and Theoretical Arguments**

The first purpose of this research was to advance an understanding of the organizational use of SNSs in *social recruiting*, defined as using social media to search for, attract, and/or identify employee candidates. I took a broad approach to accomplish this purpose, particularly because there remains generally little theoretical and empirical research published on organizational adoption, implementation, and use of SNSs. Although the explicit interest of this research was organization’s implementation of SNSs for recruiting and influencing job seekers, a comprehensive approach considers this within the context of implementing SNSs for other business functions as well. This is necessary because the design of SNSs makes social recruiting difficult to study in isolation from the range of purposes for which organizations use SNSs.

The second purpose of this research was to understand how individuals react to the use of SNSs as a source of employer information. This information was central to identifying the relevance of social recruiting to both active and passive job seekers and to exploring how the organizational use of SNSs for recruiting and other purposes may ultimately influence individuals’ attitudes (e.g., organizational attraction), as well as their job search intentions and behavior toward the organization.
I pursued this exploration in my research first by utilizing the *diffusion of innovations theory*, a multi-level theory that provides a framework for understanding the process of diffusion of innovations that occurs over time and the variables that contribute to the rates of diffusion across any population—individuals, groups, organizations, industries, and society. Rogers (2003) defines an *innovation* as “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (13). This definition is consistent with those used in management and that primarily characterize innovations as either outcomes or processes (Sarros, Cooper, & Santora, 2008). SNSs are new products that have been introduced to organizations and, as such, could be categorized as an outcome, while the *use* of SNSs for particular purposes, like recruiting, can be categorized as a practice. Process innovations, as defined in management literature, are similar to the entire process of innovation diffusion outlined by Rogers’ (2003) diffusion of innovations theory, which simultaneously addresses the characteristics of innovations (as products) and the process (including adoption and use) by which they are accepted across populations of adopters. The relationship between the innovation definition used in management literature, as explained by Sarros et al. (2008), and that presented by Rogers (2003) is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Innovation Definition Cross-reference**

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<td>Idea, practice or object</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process innovation</td>
<td>&lt;-----------&gt;</td>
<td>Diffusion of innovation</td>
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For several reasons, the diffusion of innovations theory is particularly useful for investigating how SNSs are incorporated into e-recruitment and how social recruiting may affect the attitudes and intentions of job seekers. The first reason is that the diffusion of innovations theory incorporates the concept of re-invention, or “the degree to which an innovation is changed or modified by a user in the process of its adoption and implementation” (Rogers, 2003: 17). Because SNSs were not specifically designed for the purpose of e-recruitment, or even for organizational use, their implementation for the purpose of recruiting employee candidates represents a case of re-invention. Studying the use of SNSs as an e-recruiting source compared to their use for other purposes contributes to an understanding of the extent to which organizations have re-invented SNSs to meet their recruiting needs.

The second reason the diffusion of innovations theory is effective for studying social recruiting is because diffusion of innovations is partially dependent on the observability of the innovation (Rogers, 2003), both the visibility of the innovation itself and the tangibility of its results (Moore & Benbasat, 1991). In relation to observability, SNSs are unique in that the purpose(s) for which they are used can alter their observability as seen by individuals and other organizations that may be potential adopters. This variation in observability means that organizations and individuals may be persuaded to adopt SNSs as an innovation for general or specific purposes. Relevant examples of specific purposes in the adoption and use of SNSs are recruiting for organizations and job searching for individuals. Thus, adoption and implementation of SNSs for either general or specific purposes are likely influenced by how SNSs are presently being utilized. This phenomenon forces the broadening of the diffusion of innovations theory in relation to its observability dimension because SNSs represent a case
where observability is not solely a characteristic of the innovation itself, but is also a function of how organizations actually implement the innovation.

Finally, the diffusion of innovations theory is important because, even though social recruiting has exhibited significant adoption, this is the first attempt to integrate the diffusion of innovations theory into theory development in recruitment. Beginning the investigation of how social recruiting is adopted and implemented across organizations is paramount to provoking the theoretical and empirical investigations that can answer how, when, and why organizations are using SNSs as an alternative/complementary medium of recruitment and how social recruiting is influencing job seekers. Since the use of SNSs for recruiting represents a re-invention of SNSs, employing the diffusion of innovations theory to study social recruiting is also important to understanding re-invention in a recruiting context.

I subsequently used signaling theory to investigate and predict the behavior of job seekers toward organizations who use SNSs. Signaling theory is appropriate to achieving this end because it is designed to explain how parties use behavior to communicate information, particularly in situations where their familiarity with one another is low (Braddy, Meade, & Kroustalis, 2008). Such behavior is important to understanding whether or not re-invention of SNSs to meet organizational needs is having an impact on important outcomes like organizational attraction, job search intentions, and job seeker behavior. To develop and test an appropriate model of social recruiting, signaling theory is used in combination with the employer brand equity theory, which provides a framework for how employer brands influence the attitudes and intentions related to individuals’ behavior toward organizations. This framework is critical to recruitment outcomes and I employ it in the present research to predict how
organizations’ use of social network sites influences a novel job seeker outcome—connecting to organizations on SNSs.

**E-recruiting 2.0**

Since SNSs are Web 2.0 applications, the present study responds to a call to test empirically how business is being impacted by Web 2.0 (inclusive of SNSs; Kim, Yue, Hall, & Gates, 2009). Public SNSs are a particularly valuable social recruiting outlet to study because these sites provide a unique opportunity to observe objectively how multiple organizations are using SNSs over time and in retrospection.

While SNSs have more recently emerged as recruiting sources, Lee (2007) clearly defined six e-recruiting sources; they include general purpose job boards, niche job boards, e-recruiting application service providers, hybrid recruiting service providers, e-recruiting consortiums, and corporate career websites. In general, these six e-recruiting sources are traditionally characterized by relatively static webpages and low levels of interactivity. Furthermore, while the e-recruiting sources are housed online, they are typically a function of proprietary software. Considering internet evolution, the current classification system of e-recruiting sources (Lee, 2007) has not been broadened to include Web 2.0 applications, such as SNSs, which have become increasingly popular among individual job seekers and organizations alike.

*Web 2.0 applications* are part of an entire Web 2.0 paradigm proposed by Kim et al. (2009), where the applications represent dynamic functions that implement interactive principles using enabling technologies (such as programming languages). One way Web 2.0 and its applications are distinct from earlier Web applications (i.e., those of Web 1.0) is in their participatory nature. Kim et al. (2009) state that Web 2.0:
can be described by several key features of an expanded Web that is more interactive; allows easy social interactions through participation and collaboration from a variety of human sectors; responds more immediately to users’ queries and needs; is easier to search; and provides a faster, smoother, realistic and engaging user search capability, often with automatic updates to users. (657)

Examples of some of the interactive principles embodied by Web 2.0 include: participation, collaboration, open technology, collective intelligence, peer production, crowd sourcing, and social networking. Modern technologies are leveraged to create applications that incorporate these Web 2.0 principles. SNSs (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), Sharing (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), Blogs (e.g., huffingtonpost.com), Syndication (e.g., Digg.com), Podcasts (e.g., npr.org), Mashups (e.g., Google Maps), Tagging and bookmarking (e.g., del.icio.us), and Collaborating (e.g., Wikipedia) are all examples of Web 2.0 applications.

The present study utilized the Web 2.0 application SNSs as sample applications, investigated the extent to which organizations are using SNSs as an e-recruiting source, and evaluated individuals’ reactions to organizations’ use of SNSs in social recruiting. From the plethora of available Web 2.0 applications, SNSs were chosen as the sample application for several reasons. From a practical point of view, SNSs have already been established as a source of e-recruitment both in the literature (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Laumer, Eckhardt, & Weitzel, 2010; Miller, Parsons, & Lifer, 2010) and in Human Resource (HR) practice (Jovbite, 2013; Society for Human Resource Management, 2007), but understanding how organizations and job seekers use them is limited. The second reason SNSs were chosen as the sample application is because they are a good representation of a number of Web 2.0 applications. For example, picture/video sharing, blogs, tagging, and bookmarking are themselves characterized under Web 2.0 (Kim et al., 2009) and are also prominent features of SNSs. When seen from this perspective, SNSs can simultaneously represent both a single Web 2.0 application and a package
of Web 2.0 applications, which should ultimately improve the generalizability of research conclusions to a range of innovations.

**Distinguishing Social Recruiting and Traditional E-recruiting**

Social network sites have several technical characteristics and advantages that distinguish them from other e-recruiting sources, including direct, bi-directional, and constant information sharing with job applicants, unprecedented access to passive job applicants, and cost-savings potential. Organizations must establish a brand profile to take full advantage of these benefits. Donath (2007) defined *brand profiles* as space designed for or utilized by a commercial entity on SNSs. Since the most popular public SNSs do not charge organizations to register accounts, creating these brand profiles on SNSs can result in recruitment cost savings. These savings come in the form of unlimited no-cost internet job postings on systems with incredible traffic and no charge access to detailed reports of the brand profile activity (e.g., how many users view particular content).

Despite the cost savings potential, it may be the communication benefits that primarily draw organizations. First, communication on SNSs is unique to many e-recruiting sources because it is bi-directional. Unlike traditional sources where employers (or agents of employers) simply post information for job seekers to view and search, SNSs allow job seekers to submit their own questions and comments to organizations by posting them on the brand profiles of these entities (as well as privately via private message applications).

Second, and related to the bi-directional communication, SNS communication solicits direct and public responses from the intended target audience. An example of this is organizations publishing content that encourages immediate response, like comments in response to a post. This is unique because, while traditional e-recruiting sources certainly solicit some
type of feedback (an application, resume, or some other communication with the organization), most do not invite direct responses, and certainly few do so with the intent of making the feedback public. This leads to a third distinctive characteristic of SNSs in relation to e-recruiting.

Communication on SNSs not only allows the target audience to view the responses to companies the others submit, but the communication strategies inherent in SNSs also provide potential job candidates with a lasting connection to organizations by which they can constantly gain new information about these entities. This is possible because, when individuals choose to connect to organizations on SNSs, information posted to the organizations’ brand profile automatically appears in the individuals’ network feed as often as organizations decide to publish it. Altogether, organizations collect information from job seekers at the same time job seekers learn more about the organizations as employers.

In what has become part of a daily routine for many people (boyd [sic] & Ellison, 2008), SNSs have been integrated into the regular practice of many users, and by extension, job search behavior. Job seekers can use SNSs to conduct active searches for jobs or may simply add organizations to their network in order to monitor employment opportunities more passively through the updates that the organizations post. In addition to being able to learn about employment opportunities actively or passively, individuals can benefit from the information that organizations share that lends insight into the type of employer they might be. Studying the connections made between organizations and individuals on SNSs is an important step to understanding whether organizational attraction is the primary driver for individuals associating with organizations on SNSs. Therefore, this study is also important for a general understanding of whether SNSs are worth the investment as a recruitment source.
The current research was designed to investigate the relationships between organizations’ use of corporate career websites and implementation of SNSs for general or specific/recruiting purposes, and how these organizational practices stand to influence individuals’ organizational attraction, job search intentions, and the likelihood of connecting to organizations on SNSs. The remainder of this document is organized as follows. First, a background and review of the relevant e-recruiting and social network site literature is presented. Second, related theoretical backgrounds for organizational and individual perspectives are explained. Last, the methods and results are outlined, followed by the discussion.
CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining E-recruitment

Barber (1998) has defined recruitment as “those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (5). In the most recent published review of the recruiting literature, Breauugh (2008) identified several emerging themes, one of which is e-recruitment, and made it apparent that the once popular subjects of recruitment are slowly being replaced by new matters of interest. As examples: studies on the use of realistic job previews are being traded for those that investigate the timing of recruitment action; research on recruiter characteristics has been replaced by that which focuses on recruiter site visits; and traditional recruitment methods are now being studied in comparison to recruiting via the internet.

The sources by which recruiters carry out recruitment practices and activities can vary widely and may include the use of the internet, otherwise known as e-recruiting. E-recruiting (also labeled online recruiting or internet recruiting), defined as “the formal sourcing of job information online” (Galanaki, 2002: 243), is part of the recruiting function where the internet is the medium used to identify and reach targeted populations of potential applicants. E-recruiting is also considered a component of electronic human resource management (e-HRM), which is specified as “the [planning, implementation, and] application of information technology for both networking and supporting at least two individual or collective actors in their shared performing of HR activities” (Strohmeier, 2007: 20). In relation to recruiting, the supporting role of e-HRM provides organizations with a number of efficiencies over recruitment that does not utilize the internet, advantages that can vary based on the e-recruitment source.
**E-recruitment sources.** In 2007, Lee proposed a comprehensive classification system of e-recruiting sources that made a clear distinction among e-recruitment sources. These sources—inclusive of general purpose job boards, niche job boards, e-recruiting application service providers, hybrid recruiting service providers, e-recruiting consortiums, and corporate career websites—are each defined below.

*General purpose job boards* are websites that a) advertise job openings for employers from a large range of industries, and b) allow job seekers to submit a profile of their qualifications and/or their resumes for recruiters to search and review. In addition to matching job openings with job seekers through searchable content on several criteria, general purpose job boards use personalized job agents to match advertised positions that are posted by employers with qualified job candidates (based on searchable resumes that candidates submit). In some cases, general purpose job boards have expanded to offer comprehensive services such as customized employment placement, employee candidate assessment, and employee candidate relationship management. Popular examples of general purpose job boards are Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com. *Niche job boards* are similar to general purpose job boards except that they serve particular job markets. Such specialized job boards may target a particular industry, profession, education, geographic area, or any combination of these criteria. Examples of niche job boards are HigherEdJobs.com and TexasJobs.com.

*E-recruiting application service providers* (ASPs) offer a range and combination of specialized services to recruiters and job boards. Such services include recruitment software; recruiting process management; and related education, training, and expertise. Some examples of ASPs are RecruitUSA and PeopleClick.
Hybrid recruiting service providers are traditional recruiting or media firms that offer e-recruiting service(s) to both employers/recruiters and job seekers. Many local newspapers act as examples of hybrid recruiting service providers, where the e-recruiting service (e.g., an online classified job post) is paired with a concurrent posting in the hardcopy of a newspaper. An example of a hybrid recruiting service provider is the Wall Street Journal, which provides e-recruiting services through the associated CareerJournal.com website.

E-recruiting consortiums are employer-owned cooperatives that provide e-recruiting services to their members and act as a less expensive alternative to job boards. The main purpose of e-recruiting consortiums is to drive traffic to member companies’ career websites. Examples of e-recruiting consortiums are DirectEmployers.com, formed by the non-profit organization DirectEmployers Association, and NACElink, formed by National Association of Colleges and Employers in alliance with DirectEmployers Association.

A corporate career website is merely an extension of a company website; it serves as an organization-specific internet space within the company’s web domain where the company can post additional job openings and information about the organization for a cost considerably lower than that required when purchasing equivalent posts on job boards. In the past, corporate career websites have been the most widely used recruiting source by Fortune 500 companies. Of Fortune 500 companies, 81 percent use a corporate career website; among Fortune 100 companies, the usage reaches 94 percent (Lee, 2007). Companies may develop their career website internally or use an e-recruiting ASP to assist in their development.

Corporate career websites are an e-recruiting source that has received much attention because organizations can significantly manipulate them and thus they play a considerable role in employer branding (Braddy, Meade, & Kroustalis, 2006, 2008), the attraction of applicants
(Cober, Brown, & Levy, 2004; Dineen & Noe, 2009; Tong, Duffy, Cross, Tsung, & Yen, 2005), and return on recruiting investment (Lee, 2005a). In fact, in his economic modeling of e-recruiting investment and its return, Lee (2005a) concluded that manipulation of corporate career websites is key and can only represent a competitive advantage when their design and functionality, as well as the information they provide, are properly managed. The popularity of corporate career websites (Cober et al., 2004; Lee, 2005b) and the control organizations exercise over them have significant implications for the use of public social network sites as recruiting sources because these systems are highly standardized and third-party owned and operated, yet allow for significant distinctions based on the information that SNS users post to them. Table 3 provides an overview of the relevant empirical literature in e-recruiting, organized by the e-recruiting source(s) studied. Given the relative infancy of SNS use in recruiting, the few social recruiting studies are included in the “Other” category in Table 3.

In general, three separate disciplines have significantly contributed to the e-recruiting literature stream: information systems (IS), human resource management (HRM), and marketing. Researchers from each of these disciplines naturally focus on different components of e-recruitment. Those in HRM typically examine recruiting strategy and job seeker online search behavior (e.g., Feldman & Klaas, 2002; Tso, Yau, & Cheung, 2010), while marketing scholars investigate organizational signaling behavior and employer branding (e.g., Braddy et al., 2006, 2008; Dineen & Noe, 2009; Lee, 2005), and IS researchers study the design and functionality of e-recruitment systems (e.g., websites; Cober et al., 2004; Münstermann, Eckhardt, & Weitzel, 2010; Tong et al., 2005). Yet, despite the varied ways that researchers approach e-recruitment, the common pursuits are generally to improve recruiting function by increasing efficiency and effectiveness and/or decreasing costs.
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<tr>
<th>E-recruiting Source</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General Purpose Job Boards</strong></td>
<td>Borstoff, Marker, &amp; Bennett (2007); Dineen &amp; Noe (2009); Feldman &amp; Klaas (2002); Gravilil (2003); Hausdorf &amp; Duncan (2004); Henkens, Remery, &amp; Schippers (2005); Koong, Liu, &amp; Williams (2002); Münstermann, Eckhardt, &amp; Weitzel (2010); Pearce &amp; Tuten (2001); Terzis &amp; Economides (2005); Tso, Yau, &amp; Cheung (2010)</td>
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<td><strong>Niche Job Boards</strong></td>
<td>Borstoff, Marker, &amp; Bennett (2007); Feldman &amp; Klaas (2002); Henkens, Remery, &amp; Schippers (2005); Santiago (2010); Sanusi &amp; Mohammed (2011); Selden &amp; Orenstein (2011); Terzis &amp; Economides (2005)</td>
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<td><strong>Corporate Career Websites</strong></td>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Adams (2010); Borstoff, Marker, &amp; Bennett (2007); Braddy, Meade, &amp; Kroustalis (2006, 2008); Chapman &amp; Webster (2003); Chen, Lin, &amp; Chen (2011); Cober, Brown, &amp; Levy (2004); Cober et al. (2000); Feldman &amp; Klaas (2002); Hausdorf &amp; Duncan, (2004); Henkens, Remery, &amp; Schippers (2005); Ehrrhart, Mayer, &amp; Ziegert (2011); Lee (2005b); Millar (2010); Pearce &amp; Tuten (2001); Tso, Yau, &amp; Cheung (2010); Van Hoye &amp; Lievens (2007); Walker, Feild, Giles, Armenakis, &amp; Bernerth (2009); Walker, Feild, Giles, Bernerth, &amp; Short (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other (Including Social Network Sites)</strong></td>
<td>Borstoff, Marker, &amp; Bennett (2007); Chapman &amp; Webster (2003); Gravilil (2003); Kluemper &amp; Rosen (2009); Lee (2005a, 2011); Miller, Parsons, &amp; Lifer (2010); Münstermann, Eckhardt, &amp; Weitzel (2010); Sulaiman &amp; Burke (2009); Tong et al. (2005)</td>
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In one of the earliest research studies on e-recruiting, Galanaki (2002) identified a number of positive and negative attributes persistently associated with e-recruitment in the literature and practice, and compared those attributes to the perceptions and experiences of recruiters and HR managers of information technology (IT) firms. Given the centrality of technology to the IT industry, and the competitive recruiting practices that have resulted from a shortage of IT talent, IT firms have often been a starting point for evaluating e-recruitment practices (Galanaki, 2002; Laumer et al., 2010). The attributes that provide relative advantage to organizations that use e-recruitment compared to those associated with traditional, non-electronic forms of recruitment that Galanaki (2002) established and that are consistently cited in the literature, are the following: cost effectiveness; a shortened recruitment cycle; a wide and international reach of applicants; recruitment of high-quality applicants; the ability to target a specific niche; the ability to reach passive candidates; and the potential for employer branding. The relative disadvantages of e-recruitment include: an overload of responses; the requirement of extra effort and time; a lack of corporate resources; the internet not being the first option of job seekers; effectiveness primarily for well-known companies; and suitability primarily for IT professionals and young graduates. Another disadvantage cited by several researchers is the lack of personal attention or the “human touch” in the e-recruiting process (Lin & Stasinskaya, 2002; Santiago, 2010; Selden & Orenstein, 2011; Terzis & Economides, 2005).

Because of the proliferation of internet access and use, the negative attributes that were relevant in the early years of e-recruiting (e.g., the internet not being the first option of job seekers) are less applicable now. The introduction of Web 2.0 applications like social media into recruitment stands to mitigate the criticisms of e-recruiting even further while also amplifying its

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5 http://data.worldbank.org/indicator
benefits. For example, because Web 2.0 applications like SNSs rely on two-way communication, social recruiting may render obsolete the problem of e-recruiting as hopelessly impersonal.

The positive e-recruiting attributes are similarly relevant to social recruiting. First, some evidence indicates that social recruiting can shorten the recruitment cycle and increase applicant quality (Jobvite, 2013). Second, as a consequence of the global nature of social media, social recruiting can also widen the reach of applicants (Jobvite, 2012), particularly to include those in international labor markets. Finally, social recruiting provides an opportunity for employer branding (Culnan et al., 2010), targeting niches (Elliot, 2012) in the labor market, and reaching passive job seekers (Jobvite, 2012). Moreover, although it is has not yet been associated with cost effectiveness, social recruiting may offer this distinct advantage for implementing firms, particularly if it reliably leads to decreased recruitment cycle time and increased quality of applicants.

Without evidence to the contrary, some of the negative attributes of e-recruitment may persist with social recruiting as well. An overload of responses, the requirement of extra effort and time, and the lack of corporate resources are attributes that could similarly characterize social recruiting. Overall, and despite the potential drawbacks of recruiting via social network sites, the general popularity of social media may usher in a form of recruiting that render obsolete a) the sustainability of e-recruiting primarily for IT professionals and recent graduates, b) the perception and reality of the internet not being the first option of job seekers, c) the effectiveness of e-recruiting chiefly for well-known companies, and d) the absence of the personal/human element.
Researchers in the areas of information systems, human resource management, and marketing regularly study e-recruitment; together, these areas of research provide a picture of e-recruiting from many perspectives, including those of job seeker, recruiter, organization, and community. Most studies have investigated one of these perspectives, but studies integrating two or more are far less common. Table 4 presents the relevant empirical e-recruiting literature organized by research perspective. For research that addresses multiple perspectives, the citations appear in all related categories. Fortunately, the nature of social media represents the opportunity to study several viewpoints together more regularly.

Table 4. Perspectives in E-recruitment Empirical Literature

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research Perspective</th>
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<td>Job Seeker</td>
<td>Borstoff, Marker, &amp; Bennett (2007); Braddy, Meade, &amp; Kroustalis (2006, 2008); Chen, Lin, &amp; Chen (2011); Dineen &amp; Noe (2009); Feldman &amp; Klaas (2002); Gravilil (2003); Ehrhart, Mayer, &amp; Ziegert (2011); Koong, Liu, &amp; Williams (2002); Miller, Parsons, &amp; Lifer (2010); Santiago (2010); Sanusi &amp; Mohammed (2011); Sulaiman &amp; Burke (2009); Terzis &amp; Economides (2005); Tong et al. (2005); Tso, Yau, &amp; Cheung (2010); Van Hoye &amp; Lievens (2007); Walker, Feild, Giles, Armenakis, &amp; Bernerth (2009); Walker, Feild, Giles, Bernerth, &amp; Short (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter</td>
<td>Koong, Liu, &amp; Williams (2002); Pearce &amp; Tuten (2001); Terzis &amp; Economides (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Ahmed &amp; Adams (2010); Borstoff, Marker, &amp; Bennett (2007); Chapman &amp; Webster (2003); Cober, Brown, &amp; Levy (2004); Cober et al. (2000); Collins &amp; Stevens (2002); Gravilil (2003); Hausdorf &amp; Duncan (2004); Henkens, Remery, &amp; Schippers (2005); Kluemper &amp; Rosen (2009); Lee (2005a, 2005b, 2011); Liu &amp; Chen (2009); Millar (2010); Münstermann, Eckhardt, &amp; Weitzel (2010); Santiago (2010); Sanusi &amp; Mohammed (2011); Selden &amp; Orenstein (2011); Sulaiman &amp; Burke (2009); Tong et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Sanusi &amp; Mohammed (2011)</td>
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Social Network Sites

Among the most popular forms of social media are social network sites (SNSs) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). SNSs and online social networks are not identical. While SNSs are online social networks, not all online social networks are SNSs. Online social networks are a broader category than SNSs and are defined as communities of users connected through the internet. Given this, well-known public SNSs like Facebook and Twitter qualify as online social networks, but so too do email groups, internet auction communities, and a blogging crowd. The categorization of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter can more specifically be categorized as social network sites, the definition for which has been established by boyd and Ellison (2008) as:

web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. (11)

To illustrate, Facebook is a web-based service with over 1.3 billion users. Individual people (or commercial entities) can sign up to use the web-based service; signing up for an account allows users to create a public or semi-public profile that takes the form of a personalized webpage within the Facebook system (see Appendix A). Once an individual creates a profile, she/he is prompted to identify and include in her/his network other users of Facebook with whom she/he has a relationship or connection. Once these users are selected, they are added to the individual’s “Friends” list. The individual is then able to view and explore her/his list of Friends and the profiles of users that are a part of this list. In addition, the individual can view and traverse the list of connections made by others within the Facebook system.

Along with Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Xing, YouTube, and Google Plus are some of the most popular SNSs among individuals and organizations. Of these, LinkedIn,
MySpace, and Xing (formerly Open BC) have been in existence the longest, all since 2003. These sites were followed by the establishment of YouTube and Facebook in 2005, Twitter in 2006 (boyd & Ellison, 2008), and Google Plus in 2011.\(^6\) Not always do SNSs begin as such. For example, YouTube was developed as a video sharing site and later added SNS features, thus transforming it into a SNS (boyd & Ellison, 2008).

SNS firms support the use of their service by commercial entities in the form of *brand profiles*, or web space designed for or utilized by a commercial entity within an SNS system (Donath, 2007). A variety of commercial entities have come to adopt brand profiles on SNSs (Culnan et al., 2010). Company, product, and celebrity brand profiles are all typically found on SNSs.

Social network site brand profiles can be established for a number of purposes, one of which is recruiting employee candidates. Recent research on business adoption and use of SNSs by 144 large companies revealed that 67 percent of the sample firms were actively promoting their use of SNSs on their company website, which represents a 250 percent increase over the 18-month period from January 2010 to May 2011. Altogether, companies in the same sample were actively using nine SNSs, including Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, FriendFeed, LinkedIn, Xing, YouTube, Google Plus, Vimeo, and SlideShare (Peters et al., 2012). Of these SNSs, Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Xing, YouTube, and Google Plus were actively being promoted on the employment website of almost 46 percent of the companies by the end of May 2011. (See Appendix B for an explanation of the SNSs that make up the subset of those promoted on employment websites.) This information provides evidence that the organizational use of SNSs to recruit employee candidates is certainly an area of growing interest.

\(^6\) [http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2011/06/introducing-google-project-real-life.html](http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2011/06/introducing-google-project-real-life.html)
Organizational Use of Social Network Sites

The use of SNSs by organizations has been generally addressed by Turban, Bolloju, and Liang (2011), who identified and termed major social networking activities by organizations—among which are the uses of corporate social networks and public SNSs—as enterprise social networking. Public SNSs are those that do not restrict membership, while corporate social networks are equivalent to private social network sites that require specific credentials to join (e.g., employment with a particular organization). Organizations have more readily adopted corporate social networks because they limit concerns over privacy and control that accompany the use of public SNSs for commercial purposes (Andriole, 2010; Leader-Chivee, Hamilton, & Cowan, 2008).

Since his publication of the holistic e-recruiting system in 2007, Lee has recognized the use of SNSs as part of an e-recruiting strategy in his more recent paper on the benefits of e-recruiting process integration (Lee, 2011). However, research on the use of SNSs by organizations remains limited, particularly in the area of e-recruitment. The published research on the commercial use of SNSs is thus far concentrated in the areas of marketing, predominately branding, promotion, and consumer participation (Culnan et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2012), followed by organizational behavior specific to collaboration (Andriole, 2010; Leader-Chivee et al., 2008); information and volunteer management in the disaster-response industry (Majchrzak & More, 2011; Underwood, 2010); data mining of SNSs by music industry firms (Bhagwan, Grandison, & Gruhl, 2009); and outreach and relationship building in politics (Utz, 2009).

Specifically related to the field of recruitment, Kluemper and Rosen (2009) empirically investigated the feasibility of using applicants’ personal information from SNSs to improve employment selection decisions. The researchers found that across independent raters,
individuals were consistently categorized as low or high academic performers based on decisions made solely from viewing their profiles on a social network site (i.e., Facebook). Although the validity of using social profiles to screen candidates is an important area of research, SNSs need to be further investigated if they are to be validated as a job source. To treat SNSs only as a screening tool is to limit their potential as a recruitment source. In fact, to address current social media usage trends, Laumer et al. (2010) suggested using social media to attract talent initially.

Miller et al. (2010) also empirically addressed the use of SNSs as tools for screening employee candidates. The research team found that, although students were aware that potential employers viewed employee candidates’ SNS profiles in the screening process and what they posted could potentially hurt their employment prospects, they were not motivated to alter their posting behavior.

Indicative of the actual and anticipated changes in recruiting practices brought about by social media, the use of SNSs as an e-recruiting source has been suggested as an area of future research in the recruitment literature (e.g., Laumer et al., 2010; Lee, 2011). Published academic research on social recruiting, however, remains extremely limited, particularly studies of a theoretical and empirical nature. Lee’s (2011) research is an anomaly in its specific mention of social recruiting as important to a broader e-recruiting process. Rather, the majority of support for and evidence of social recruiting has been published in industry reports and practitioner-type journals.

A Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) e-recruiting report (2007) indicated that scanning SNSs was one of the three most popular ways to engage passive job candidates. The SHRM report also found that up to 29 percent of firms reviewed online information posted by job candidates and it is not uncommon for job candidates to be eliminated
based on the information discovered about them on their social profiles. The SHRM report appears to be limited to the idea that recruiters use SNSs as a one-sided tool, to search deliberately for passive yet qualified candidates and to screen potential employee candidates and applicants. This result was not unexpected as the 2007 research predated organizations’ more comprehensive use of SNSs for recruiting.

Recent and comprehensive reports published by Jobvite have provided evidence that SNSs are now a major source of recruitment across industries, and organizations are not simply using one SNS to recruit but often utilize several SNS platforms for this purpose. In 2011, 64 percent of the sampled companies were using two or more SNSs for recruiting and 40 percent were using three or more SNSs (Jobvite, 2011). In 2013, 94 percent of Jobvite survey respondents were using LinkedIn, 65 percent were using Facebook, 55 percent were using Twitter, and 18 percent were using Google Plus. It is unlikely that such social recruiting trends will slow down, as 73 percent of respondents surveyed by Jobvite in 2013 indicated that they planned to increase their investment in recruiting efforts that utilize SNSs, compared to their investment in the prior year. The anticipated investment increase for recruiting through SNSs was greater than that reported for recruiting through any other recruitment source, including companies’ corporate career website. Jobvite survey results from 2013 also indicated that 48 percent of those currently using social media in recruiting will always search social profiles of candidates, up from 32 percent in 2010. The same report also provided evidence that both the quantity and quality of applicants are increasing while time to hire is decreasing as a result of social recruiting. Since their implementation of social recruiting, 43 percent of surveyed employers experienced an increase in the quantity of candidates and 49 percent reported an
increase in the quality of candidates. Thirty-three percent of these employers also experienced a decrease in time to hire employees since implementing social recruiting (Jobvite, 2013).

If social recruiting is to be used as a legitimate method of recruitment, academic research should be undertaken to validate the practice. In order to establish how the present study can contribute to this goal and how the research fits into the broader body of recruitment literature, I next define the scope of this work before establishing its theoretical background.

**Scope of the Research**

The definition of SNSs served as the boundary condition for the e-recruiting innovation that is the focus of this study. In other words, only the organizational use of Web 2.0 applications that fit boyd and Ellison’s (2008) definition of SNSs was investigated. Further, only the organizational use of *public* SNSs was examined—that is, the use of those SNSs that do not restrict membership and exist outside of corporate firewalls. Finally, only the several SNSs with an established record of use by organizations—Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus—were considered in the research.

Organizations and recruiters may establish separate strategies for internal and external recruiting. *Internal recruitment* is the practices and activities used to identify qualified employees for open positions and attract them to the job opportunities, while *external recruitment* is the practices and activities used to identify and attract potential candidates who do not already work for the organization (Barber, 1998). Since the use of SNSs inherently accommodates the simultaneous management of both internal and external recruitment, the scope of the present research was inclusive of both types. SNSs are typically equipped with the ability to organize into subgroups those to which one is connected in the system. This allows organizations, for example, to assign employees who have connected to them on a SNS to an
“Employees” group so they can internally communicate employment opportunities to these people.

Barber (1998) defined five key dimensions of recruitment—Players, Activities, Outcomes, Context, and Phases—which can be used to define the scope of the research further. The focus of the present social recruiting research was broad, thus answering a recurring call for recruitment studies to encompass more extensive coverage of the recruitment dimensions (Barber, 1998). I studied the use of SNSs as an e-recruiting source from the perspective of two players: organizations and job seekers. Players are simply defined as those individuals or organizations that play a role in the recruitment process (Barber, 1998). To focus the research, I excluded the study of recruiters and outsiders to the recruitment process.

Players in recruitment engage in recruitment activities, defined as “the specific tasks, procedures, and action undertaken for purposes of recruitment” (Barber, 1998: 9). These activities commonly include: defining the target population, choosing the recruitment medium/source, delivering the recruitment message, convincing applicants to accept employment offers, and conducting various administrative processes. In the present research, organizational activities that are engaged in to identify and attract employee candidates were primarily focused on organizations’ use of SNSs as e-recruitment sources.

Recruitment outcomes result directly from recruitment activities and generally include measures of attraction, post-hire results, and organizational performance. To properly understand the impact of recruitment activities, one should measure outcomes in both quantitative and qualitative terms, especially because recruitment is undertaken not only to attract a certain number of potential applicants but also to attract those who have specific attributes that the organization defines as necessary to be employed (Barber, 1998). In the
present research, I investigated individuals’ attitudes, job search intentions, and behaviors toward organizations as outcomes of organizations using SNSs as recruiting sources.

The context of recruitment encompasses both the internal and external factors that influence recruitment activities that organizations undertake and the responses of (potential) applicants’ to those activities (Barber, 1998). Externally, because the economy is still recovering from the recession of recent years, the economic context of the present research was certainly one of relatively high rates of unemployment. Internally, organizational characteristics that typically influence innovation adoption were considered to be contextual factors because they stood to impact significantly the organizations’ use of SNSs as e-recruiting sources. In addition, the focus on several organizations provides context variety for understanding how SNSs generally fit into the broader function of recruitment and into e-recruitment in particular.

Because recruitment happens in stages, Barber (1998) has defined three phases of the recruitment process. In Phase 1, applicants are generated through outreach to an applicant population, or those from which an organization can recruit given its recruitment activity decisions (e.g., which recruitment sources to use). This first phase involves persuading a portion of the target population to apply for a job and thus become actual applicants. In Phase 2, applicant status must be maintained by holding the interest of the applicants long enough that they pursue the job opportunity until the point at which the organization decides on selectees (those offered employment). Once employment is offered, recruitment enters Phase 3, that of job choice. In this final stage, selectees are persuaded to become new hires by accepting the job offer. In the present research, I studied social recruiting more or less across the first two phases because the practices of attracting and holding the interest of candidates are not clearly separable when the recruiting medium is SNSs.
While information on social recruiting is becoming increasingly available through industry sources, the academic research on social recruiting remains inadequate. Without systematic and theory-driven research, the definitive advantages of social recruiting over more traditional recruiting methods are difficult to determine. This deficiency provides a tremendous opportunity for research. I undertook the need for research in the area of social recruiting by first investigating from a theoretical perspective the degree of adoption and implementation of SNSs as recruiting sources, across a number of SNS platforms, and in relation to organizations’ use of their corporate career website. Second, I examined from a theoretical perspective how the varied use of SNSs as recruiting sources influences the attitudes, job search intentions, and behavior of job seekers who are active on SNSs.
CHAPTER 3

AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL RECRUITING

Organizations that engage in social recruiting use social media like social network sites (SNSs) to attract and communicate with potential employee candidates. In this chapter, I apply the diffusion of innovations theory to study the primary variable of interest, organizational implementation of SNSs as recruitment sources, especially its correlation with organizations’ more established and varied use of corporate career websites. Also, and specific to the diffusion of innovations, SNSs as organizations use them are presented as a re-invention of the media because they have been modified in their implementation for recruiting (and other purposes) to meet organizational needs. This re-invention is the focus of this study because, to the extent that organizational implementation of SNSs for recruiting is visible, it can serve as a source of influence over the continued adoption of SNSs and the sustained use of these platforms as a recruitment (and job search) source. The importance of the growing adoption of SNSs and social recruiting lies in the ability of SNSs to connect employers and job seekers in unique and efficient ways that cannot be accomplished through traditional recruitment sources. The related contribution to theory presented in this chapter is an extension of the diffusion of innovations theory to incorporate the idea that the visibility of an innovation is not simply an inherent characteristic of the innovation itself; rather, an innovation’s visibility varies based on the implementation of the innovation. The framework of innovativeness presented by Bigoness and Perreault (1981) is used to support this broadening of the diffusion of innovations theory.

Theoretical Background: Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The present study applied Rogers’ (2003) diffusion of innovations theory to evaluate the practices of organizations regarding the use of SNSs. First, SNS use was investigated in relation
to organizations’ implementation of SNSs as e-recruiting sources compared to their implementation for alternative purposes. Simultaneously, this study presented organizations’ use of their corporate career websites as a predictor of whether and how they use SNSs.

Rogers introduced the diffusion of innovations theory in 1962 and defined *diffusion* in 2003 as “a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (5). Specific to diffusion, the communication that takes place within a social system is concerned with the spread of new ideas, both planned and spontaneous. A spontaneous spread of new ideas is equivalent to social change, compared to a planned spread of new ideas that results from change imposed by government regulation, for example. Since the diffusion of innovations theory is appropriate for multiple levels of analysis (i.e., individual, group, organizational, industry, and society levels), according to Rogers (2003), I utilized it in the present study to analyze organizations’ patterns of implementation of SNSs to recruit employee candidates across organizations. To achieve this end, I studied the broader implementation stage of innovation defined by Rogers (2003) to determine if and to what extent SNSs are being used by organizations as e-recruiting sources. *Implementation* refers to all actions, events, and decisions involved in making use of the innovation; therefore, use is encompassed by implementation (Rogers, 2003). In this chapter, I study the implementation of SNSs for recruiting from the organizational perspective, while in Chapter 4, I address job seekers’ reactions to organizations’ use of SNSs compared to their use of traditional recruiting sources.

Based on Rogers’ (2003) definition of diffusion, and central to the diffusion of innovations, are four main elements—the innovation, communication channels, time, and a social system. An *innovation* is an object, practice, or idea that is new as perceived by an
individual or other adoption unit (e.g., organization). SNSs are the innovation addressed in the present study, even though they can be grouped into the greater technology clusters of computer-mediated communication, social media, or Web 2.0 applications. Innovations typically have hardware and software components, where *hardware* is a physical or material object that embodies the innovation and *software* is the information base for that object. Innovations that only have a software component are ideas. The diffusion of ideas is more difficult to evaluate than the diffusion of innovations that are embodied by some novel hardware (Rogers, 2003). SNSs are software products and, as such, are categorized as an idea or a software innovation.

Even though SNSs function on the internet through networked personal computers and mobile devices, the fact that the hardware components through which they operate have previously been widely adopted means the adoption and use of SNSs cannot be assumed merely from the presence of these devices (because these devices can be adopted and used for entirely different purposes). This makes the observation of SNS diffusion more difficult than the observation of individuals using personal computers or mobile devices on which SNSs operate.

When an innovation is changed or modified at some point in the implementation process, *re-invention* occurs (Rogers, 2003). Rogers (2003) emphasized the importance of re-invention and dictated that deviation from the mainstream conception of an innovation does not negate its adoption. Organizations’ use of public SNSs provides a clear example of re-invention because the majority of SNSs being used by commercial entities were initially designed for individual use.

Predicting the diffusion of an innovation, whether re-invented or not, relies on several characteristics of the innovation: observability, trialability, compatibility, relative advantage, and complexity (Rogers, 2003). First, innovations vary in the degree to which they are visible
and their results are tangible to others, also known as their *observability* (Moore & Benbasat, 1991; Rogers, 2003). Second, when an innovation can be used on an experimental basis, it is said to have *trialability*. Third, *compatibility* is the degree of perceived consistency of the innovation with the existing values, experiences, and needs of potential adopters. Fourth, when an innovation is perceived to be superior to an idea it supersedes, it has *relative advantage*. Finally, the degree of perceived effort required to understand or use an innovation is its *complexity*. Innovations that are most readily adopted are those that are perceived to have less complexity and greater compatibility, trialability, observability, and relative advantage (Rogers, 2003).

Public SNSs generally have high observability and trialability because they are hosted on the internet and accounts on these systems can be created at no charge. The perceived complexity of SNSs will vary depending on the actual functionality of each site and the users’ prior experience with similar innovations. Compatibility and relative advantage of SNSs will certainly be different for users based on their current values, practices, and perceived need for adopting SNSs.

The diffusion of an innovation is also reliant on the transfer of ideas and, as such, relies on the *communication channels* by which information is exchanged from a unit(s) of adoption that has experience with, or knowledge of, the innovation to a unit that does not have experience with the innovation. Mass media and interpersonal channels of communication are commonly used to exchange information about innovations and thus influence their diffusion. *Mass media channels* are those that use a medium capable of reaching large audiences. Examples of mass media are television, radio, periodicals, and the internet. In contrast to mass media, *interpersonal channels* are categorized by a less public exchange—one that takes place between
two or more individuals, often face-to-face. Communication occurs most frequently between those who are homophilous, or similar in attributes; therefore, heterophily (dissimilarity) in a group makes the diffusion of an innovation more challenging (Rogers, 2003). The role of communication channels on diffusion of innovations is particularly important to the diffusion of SNSs because mass media and interpersonal communication are both playing a prominent part in the wide adoption of SNSs by organizations. Since SNSs were originally designed for individuals (boyd & Ellison, 2008), their popularity remains rooted in their use for interpersonal communication.

In addition to the diffusion of an innovation being dependent on communication channels, it is also reliant on the transfer of ideas over time. Time is relevant to diffusion in three separate ways, the first being the relative earliness/lateness of adoption by an adoption unit when compared to other members of the system. Another time element related to diffusion is the rate of adoption of an innovation, or the number of adopters in a system over an established time period. A third element of time important to diffusion, and the one heavily addressed in the present research, is the innovation-decision process that runs from first knowledge of an innovation to the adoption (or rejection) decision, followed by implementation of the innovation. Adoption represents a single decision that separates the information gathering and processing related to the innovation from the implementation of the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

Time can also be relevant to diffusion in relation to the implementation period. According to the diffusion of innovations theory, implementation is a somewhat more complex process for organizations than for individuals because it involves three stages: redefining/restructuring, clarifying, and routinizing. Redefining involves the re-invention of innovations to accommodate organizational needs, while restructuring is the modification of the
organizational configuration to align with the innovation. Clarifying occurs when use of the innovation becomes widespread within the organization and the meaning of the innovation becomes clearer to organizational members. Finally, as an innovation is incorporated into an organization’s regular activity, it is said to be routinizing, which marks the completion of the innovation process (Rogers, 2003). While an innovation like e-mail is likely routinized in many organizations, SNSs do not appear to have reached this final stage.

Organizational adoption of SNSs has distinctly followed that of individuals, making time obviously relevant to diffusion; however, the differences in the diffusion process between individuals and organizations can also be attributed to their distinct dynamics as separate social systems. A social system is defined as “a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem-solving to accomplish a common goal,” through which innovations necessarily diffuse (Rogers, 2003: 23). Units in a social system must be distinguishable from others within the system. Individuals, groups, organizations, and sub-systems are all examples of social systems’ members and potential adoption units (Rogers, 2003). Studying the diffusion of SNSs across organizations (the social system) assumes that organizations’ choice to adopt and use SNSs is an optional innovation-decision, meaning it is a choice made by individual organizations (the social system units) independent of decisions by other entities. Optional innovation-decisions contrast with collective innovation-decisions that are made by consensus among members of a social system, and authority innovation-decisions that are made by relatively few members of a social system who possess status, power, or relative technical expertise. It is important to distinguish the diffusion of SNSs as an option innovation-decision because it establishes the independence of observations across organizations and allows for the assumption that organizations are acting autonomously (of government or industry regulations, for example).
Scholars have made a number of distinctions regarding innovations that act as boundaries by which to guide the study of innovations that may differ in form or function. These distinctions are important for understanding the theoretical scope of research and were taken into consideration in the present study to establish the use of SNSs as e-recruiting sources in the context of management innovations. One distinction is that between competitive innovations and institutional innovations. Competitive innovations are those associated with an organization’s product or service offering. In contrast, institutional innovations are those that support the organization’s purpose, either directly or indirectly (Rogers, 2003). An example of an institutional innovation is software that helps the organization to operate. Social network sites represent a competitive innovation from the perspective of companies like Facebook and Google that offer them as a service; however, SNSs can be classified as an institutional innovation to the extent that organizations implement them as an e-recruitment tool.

**Diffusion of Innovations in Management and E-recruiting**

Institutional innovations regularly concern management because their rate of diffusion can depend on managers’ influence on employees’ willingness to accept the innovations (Bigonness & Perreault, 1981; Fry & Slocum, 1984; Harrison & Laberge, 2002; Leonard-Barton & Deschamps, 1988). Institutional innovations can be distinguished by their purpose of supporting an organization’s work activities directly or indirectly so that the relevance of some innovations to an organization’s purpose is more obvious than others. Damanpour and Evan (1984) defined innovations that occur in an organization’s procedural system and support its primary work activity directly as *technical innovations*, and those innovations that support an organization indirectly and occur in an organization’s social system as *administrative innovations*. Gaertner, Gaertner, and Akinnusi (1984) similarly distinguished technical
innovations—those that relate to work processes—from administrative innovations, which are those that relate to the management of work processes.

Understanding the technical or administrative nature of innovations is important for appreciating differences in the rate of their diffusion within organizations. In their study of the diffusion of innovations in public libraries, Damanpour and Evan (1984) found evidence of different adoption rates for administrative and technical innovations, providing support for the idea that proper recognition of innovations as either technical or administrative is critical for understanding and anticipating their adoption and use. Daft (1978) also found support for variation in the degree of organizational innovativeness that was dependent on the differences in technical and administrative innovations from his analysis of the adoption of innovations across Illinois school districts.

Whether SNSs represent a technical or administrative innovation depends on the purpose of an organization as well as its specific use of SNSs. Some innovations can be categorized as either a technical or an administrative innovation, depending on their organizational context. For example, a company like Monster.com using SNSs to advertise jobs represents SNSs as a technical innovation because advertising jobs is a central activity of the company’s business. Conversely, the use of SNSs as a source of e-recruiting by an organization outside of the staffing industry represents an innovation that is administrative because staffing is merely a function that operates to support the primary activities of an organization.

Management research provides evidence that supports the diffusion process suggested by the diffusion of innovations theory for both administrative and technical innovations in a variety of organizational contexts. An assortment of administrative innovations that have been empirically studied in organizational contexts include: administrative expansion in public
schools (Rowan, 1982), implementation of administrative change in the U.S. federal government (Gaertner et al., 1984), prevalence of management innovations across industries (Carson, Lanier, Carson, & Guidry, 2000; O’Mahoney, 2007), adoption of human resource policies in the private sector (Fennell, 1984), benchmarking practices in the banking industry (Still & Strang, 2009), use of electronic data processing in hospitals (Kimberly & Evanisko, 1981), and pervasiveness of industry work practices across countries (Cole, 1985). Examples of the diffusion of technical innovations from the management literature are: the likelihood of adoption (versus non-adoption) of various technical innovations in public schools and school districts (Baldridge & Burnham, 1975), computer-aided production management (CAPM) in manufacturing firms (Robertson, Swan, & Newell, 1996), electronic banking innovations among credit unions (Weigelt & Sarkar, 2009), outsourcing of research and development (Pisano, 1990), and health care innovation implementation in patient treatment (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Wood, & Hawkins, 2005).

Although the diffusion of innovations theory has been applied to explain a number of management innovations, the diffusion of e-recruiting innovations has not been studied as a phenomenon that can be explained by the diffusion of innovations theory, nor have the differential organizational uses of SNSs been investigated from this theoretical perspective. In this study, I proposed the diffusion of innovations theory as appropriate and effective for simultaneously studying the adoption and use of e-recruiting sources and the commercial use of SNSs. This research also suggests that the compatibility, trialability, relative advantage, and observability dimensions of the diffusion of innovations theory may be useful for explaining the adoption and implementation of SNSs across organizations. The observability dimension was
given special attention because SNS diffusion may be incited by the observability of SNS re-invention to fit a variety of organizational needs.

Innovations are necessarily dependent on influential members of a social system who act as catalysts of diffusion within networks (Rogers, 2003). Network influences on innovativeness have been a persistent theme of diffusion and, in relation to management and organizational innovativeness, scholars have investigated the function of networks in the innovativeness of individual organizations as well as in groups of organizations. Examples include the exploration of interorganizational diffusion of computer-mediated production management (CMPM) and its application in the design of firm-specific solutions (Robertson et al., 1996); the function of organizational prestige in the diffusion of innovations across entities (Still & Strang, 2009); and the use of networks to explain interorganizational diffusion of corporate governance practices (Shipilov, Greve, & Rowley, 2010). Although the application of the diffusion of innovations theory has not yet extended to social recruiting, the use of this theory to explain the popularity among organizations of SNSs that are largely dependent on offline social networks is certainly consistent with published research indicating that networks play a role in diffusion among organizations.

The role of networks in diffusion means that a social construction of innovations plays a prominent role in their adoption and use, particularly following re-invention. From this perspective, and when applying the diffusion of innovations theory to the study of the organizational use of SNSs, a limitation is perceptible. The constraint is that the observability dimension of the diffusion of innovations theory is traditionally conceived as a feature inherent in an innovation, not as a characteristic that can vary for a single innovation based on its adopters’ implementation. This limitation is important to address generally because how an
innovation is used may drive adoption as much as, if not more than, the characteristics of the innovation itself. Further, and more specifically, this distinction has implications for how new recruiting technologies are diffused across organizations but, additionally, for how individuals’ perceptions of job sources may form. The shortcoming in the observability dimension of the diffusion of innovations theory is addressed in the next sections by integrating Bigoness and Perreault’s (1981) framework to broaden the conceptualization of an innovation’s observability.

Theory Development and Hypotheses

Management scholars have conceived of frameworks to study innovations that further the agenda of understanding diffusion of innovations across and within organizations. Bigoness and Perreault (1981) suggested a paradigm for the study of innovations that can be used to broaden the conceptualization of innovation observability. The framework is parsimonious; it encompasses three domains—innovativeness, content, and reference. The first domain, innovativeness, is the degree to which an entity accepts new ideas when compared to how its counterparts accept it. Innovativeness is inherently related to the other two dimensions because innovativeness must be specified in relation to the content of an innovation as well as some comparison group or reference. The content domain is specific to the definition of the innovation itself, where innovations can be classified as general or specific based on being more or less applicable across a broad spectrum of functions. The reference domain is relative to the social system defined for the purpose of comparing an organization’s innovativeness. The reference domain can be macro, or external to the organization, in which case an organization’s innovativeness is compared to that of other organizations. Alternatively, the reference domain can be micro, or internal; in this case, the organization’s innovativeness is compared to its own innovativeness in a prior time period.
Bigoness and Perreault’s (1981) framework can be integrated into the elements of the diffusion of innovations theory to understand the use of SNSs for recruiting. In relation to the content domain, the observability of SNSs being used by organizations, rather than the SNSs themselves, can be scored on a spectrum from general to specific, with particular attention paid to their use in recruiting. The reference domain for the current study was macro; organizations’ level of innovativeness was compared across organizations and specifically took the form of their implementation of SNSs for e-recruitment for general versus recruiting (specific) purposes.

Even when the observability of an innovation is high, it will not be adopted or used continuously unless it is compatible with the organizations’ values and experiences (Rogers, 2003). With the exception of select SNSs (e.g., LinkedIn), many SNSs currently being used for recruitment were not designed with recruiting in mind; therefore, a corporate career website remains essential to the compatibility of SNSs implemented as an e-recruiting source. For example, organizations using public SNSs to recruit employees continue to need an outlet to which applicants can be directed in order to submit applications electronically because SNSs provide a platform for organizations to post job openings and communicate with job seekers, but do not typically provide technology designed specifically to accepting applications from job candidates. An e-recruiting source that can serve this purpose is the corporate career website. These sites are an organization-specific internet space within the company’s web domain where the company can not only accept applications and resumes, but also post additional job openings and information about the organization (Lee, 2007). Corporate career websites can act as a mediating e-recruitment source between SNSs and job applicants who first gain information about organizations as job seekers using SNSs.
Organizations that make extensive use of a corporate career website may utilize this site for functionality, like electronically accepting applications and resumes from job candidates. Given that public SNSs have application/resume submission limitations, and consistent with the compatibility dimension of the diffusion of innovations theory, the adoption of SNSs for recruiting will be more compatible with the practices of organizations that currently utilize and rely on a corporate career website for recruiting. This should be the case because organizations that currently post job openings and accept applications from job seekers on corporate career websites can continue to drive job seeker traffic there from SNSs in order to collect applications and resumes from job seekers who are using a system with which the organization has experience. Similarly, organizations can proceed to communicate their values and promote their employer brand to those directed from SNSs on the corporate career website platform with which they have familiarity. Taken together, and consistent with the compatibility characteristic of innovations, SNSs are expected to be highly compatible with the use of corporate career websites, reasoning that leads to the first hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1:** Organizations that make extensive use of a corporate career website will be more likely to implement social network sites as recruiting sources than organizations that do not make extensive use of a corporate career website.

Social network sites may be used as a complement or substitute for other e-recruiting sources such as corporate career websites, but either way, they stand to impact the mix of e-recruiting sources that organizations use. Supported by the diffusion of innovations theory, organizations will likely implement SNSs as a complement to established e-recruiting sources because organizations choose sources of e-recruiting based on their proven efficiency in finding qualified employee candidates (SHRM, 2007) and the use of SNS for e-recruiting is still in its infancy. The novelty of SNSs as an e-recruiting source has limited the ability of organizations and
researchers to draw comprehensive conclusions about the quality of candidates resulting from this recruiting source; this may be preventing organizations from adopting SNSs as a stand-alone (substitute) e-recruiting source.

For organizations to adopt SNSs as e-recruiting sources, they must perceive that they have a relative advantage over the existing recruiting sources they use. Although SNSs represent an additional source of e-recruiting, they may operate as a complement to other types of e-recruiting and traditional recruitment sources. This idea was supported by Pearce and Tuten (2001) who found more generally that the internet was used as an *additional* recruitment source, but not as a substitute for traditional recruiting techniques (e.g., personal referrals, recruiting agencies, and newspaper advertisements). Given their unique features and the advantages they provide to organizations and their recruiters, SNSs may in some cases be adopted as substitutes for other forms of e-recruitment, particularly as time passes.

As organizations experiment with the use of SNSs, the implementation of one SNS (e.g., Twitter) can be an antecedent to the use of more SNSs (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn) for two reasons. First, because SNSs by design encompass many similar features, the trialability of subsequent SNSs should be similar to the trialability of the first SNS (although perhaps with a shorter learning curve), given the prior experience of organizations. Second, once organizations have established themselves on one SNS, adopting and using other SNSs are compatible with their prior experience. For example, optional software downloads make it possible to publish the same post to profiles on multiple SNSs simultaneously. Also, assuming the adoption of multiple SNSs, organizations have more platforms on which to trial specific uses. Consequently, the trialability and compatibility characteristics of SNSs should predict that when organizations use multiple SNSs, they will use them for more rather than fewer purposes, including that of
e-recruitment. An increase in the number of purposes for which SNSs are used, resulting from an increase in the number of SNS platforms adopted by the organization, may also be driven by perceptions of the relative advantage of one SNS over another for achieving a particular organizational goal(s). For example, an organization may not use SNSs like Facebook or Twitter for recruiting, but may begin social recruiting after registering a LinkedIn account. Therefore, based on trialability, compatibility, and relative advantage characteristics of SNSs, the second hypothesis is stated:

**Hypothesis 2**: The number of social network site platforms adopted by organizations will be positively associated with organizations’ likelihood to implement social network sites as recruiting sources.

Innovations can vary in the degree to which they are visible to others and in the tangibility of their results (Moore & Benbasat, 1991; Rogers, 2003); this is the innovation’s observability. The observability of SNSs can fluctuate along these two dimensions and may vary even more depending on their implementation and (promotion of their) use by organizations. Given the public nature of the SNSs under study, the observability of these sites is high. For example, individuals can observe the activity of organizations on SNSs (e.g., job posts) and the subsequent online reactions to that activity, both in number and content. Other results, like the quantity and quality of applicants attracted through SNSs, are not observable to potential adopters. Results of recruiting through SNSs are still more observable than those for other sources of e-recruiting (e.g., job boards) because the quantity and quality of applicants attracted through traditional e-recruiting sources are also not publicly visible nor are individual reactions to organizational activities typically associated with these sources.

When the concept of observability is related to the implementation of an innovation rather than to characteristics of the innovation itself, it can also be associated with the
innovativeness of organizations. This idea is borrowed from Bigoness and Perreault (1981), who categorized organizations based on their adoption of innovations, the purpose of which can range from general to specific. This classification, when applied to innovation implementation rather than to the nature of innovations adopted, results in organizational innovativeness based on the use of a single innovation for purposes that can range from general to specific. As these ideas are applied to SNSs, the initial realization is that the original purpose of SNSs is use by individuals so that the organizational use of SNSs first and foremost represents a re-invention of the innovation. Furthermore, organizations can choose to use SNSs generally across functions or only for very specific purposes, like e-recruiting. Here, the importance attributed to the implementation stage of diffusion (Tornatzky & Klein, 1982; Wolfe, 1994) can be taken into account by studying the observability of an innovation that has been re-invented. Altogether, organizational SNS innovativeness is a function of a) the implementation of the innovation after re-invention, b) its use for purposes either general or specific, and c) the observability of these varied uses. In the present research, I measured innovativeness by the observability of the organizations’ implementation of SNSs for general versus specific recruiting purposes.

Indeed, SNSs provide a particular case where the general observability of organizations’ implementation of SNSs is high, but the observability of organizations’ differential uses of SNSs, specifically their use for recruiting employee candidates, may be lower. For example, in a single day, an organization may make several posts to one or more SNSs; however, of those posts, perhaps only a small percentage will be related to the recruitment function. This exemplifies a case where the observability of the use of SNSs in general is higher than the use of SNSs for recruiting purposes. In other cases, organizations may use SNSs solely for recruiting, in which the general observability of SNS use is the same as the observability of SNS use for the
particular purpose of recruitment. In addition, the observability of an organization who has implemented SNSs as sources of e-recruiting (i.e., a specific purpose) will likely diminish as the number of other uses for SNSs (i.e., general purposes) increases because e-recruiting would represent only one of a growing number of applications for SNSs.

How the general observability of SNS use will be greater than the observability of SNS use for a specific purpose can be clarified by example. An organization may advertise its use of a SNS at the end of a television commercial, at which point one may assume that the organization is using the SNS as an advertising tool; however, the organization may also have implemented the SNS as a source of recruiting. One would have to visit the organization’s SNS brand profile to observe exactly how the organization is using the site. In doing so, observing that the organization has implemented the SNS for recruiting by viewing an organization’s brand profile may still take significant time and effort if the organization is also using the SNS for several other distinct purposes. If the recruiting content on SNSs is not obvious, the observability of the SNS being used for recruiting would be deemed low.

Given that visibility of innovations drives their adoption and use (Rogers, 2003), the observability dimension of the diffusion of innovations theory is critical to the organizational adoption of SNSs and their subsequent implementation as a source of recruitment. Because SNSs can serve a number of purposes for organizations, it is expected that the general observability of SNS use is not equal to the specific observability of their use as a source of recruitment. In other words, SNSs will not, on average, be exclusively used for the purpose of recruiting. Thus, an assumption about the diffusion of innovations theory as applied to this research was that the observability of SNSs for general use will be higher than the observability of SNSs for the specific use of recruiting.
For SNSs to be effective tools of recruitment, posts made to brand profiles must be visible to job seekers, and competition for visibility of information posted to SNSs will naturally grow as an organization employs these outlets for an increasing number of purposes. Given this proposed competition, it was expected that the observability of recruiting related posts compared to that of posts for other purposes will decrease as the number of different organizational uses of SNSs increases. The observability dimension of diffusion of innovations theory, therefore, leads to the third hypothesis:

_Hypothesis 3: The number of social network site uses by organizations will be negatively associated with the observability of social network sites as recruiting sources._
CHAPTER 4

AN INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL RECRUITING

Employer brand equity and signaling theories were used in this chapter to investigate the likelihood of job seekers connecting to organizations on social network sites, particularly for reasons related to job search and in reaction to their exposure to an organization’s social network site brand profiles, company website, and corporate career website. Exploring the use of social network sites (SNSs) from an individual-level, job seeker perspective addresses the issue in the recruitment literature of SNSs as a largely ignored source of employer information and a means by which organizations can manage employer knowledge. The connections job seekers make to organizations on SNSs (for reasons related to job search) was the dependent variable in this study because it was indicative of how individuals are using SNSs. Given that SNSs were not initially designed for recruitment or job search, a comprehensive understanding of job seekers’ SNS connections to organizations on these platforms was necessary, particularly because the success of social recruiting is dependent on its alignment with the way individuals use SNSs to relate to organizations.

The practice of connecting to employers on SNSs should matter to job seekers because organizations not only use these platforms to post job openings, but also utilize them for broader recruitment activities, such as relating organizational culture information. A review of this information can help job seekers make decisions about whether or not to opt into an applicant pool. In addition, the continuously changing nature of the information visible on SNSs allows job seekers to form and alter their perceptions of personal fit with organizations over time.

For employers, job seeker connections to their organizations on SNSs are important because these connections can a) function as a recruitment outcome that gauges the effectiveness
of recruiting practices, and b) operate as an indicator of candidate interest in the organization. Moreover, if job seekers are indeed connecting to organizations on SNSs as part of job search activity, employers can operate from this insight and invest time in posting organizational information that serves the applicants’ interests, such as those related to learning more about the employer, preparing for an interview, and continuing to evaluate their fit with the organization.

**Theoretical Background—Employer Brand Equity Theory**

Beginning with the seminal work of Cable and Turban (2001), I have attempted to develop employer brand equity theory and the concept of employer knowledge to address broadly the effectiveness of recruitment practices from the perspective of individual job seekers, and to explain specifically the psychological roots of job seekers’ organizational attraction. Building from marketing theory, Cable and Turban (2001) likened employer brands to consumer brands. Drawing from consumer brand concepts, the authors defined *employer knowledge*, or the beliefs job seekers hold about an organization that is a potential employer, as the concept that is central to employer branding. “The value of job seekers’ employer knowledge,” Cable and Turban stated, “is derived from job seekers’ responses to recruiting organizations during and after the recruitment process” (121). The value captured by individuals’ employer knowledge is termed *recruitment equity*. By proposing the consumer-based brand equity approach to employers, Cable and Turban (2001) determined that, related to each employer brand, job seekers, like consumers, use information and feelings to make decisions. This approach likens jobs to consumer products and job search outcomes, such as applying for a job, to consumer outcomes, such as purchasing decisions. Brand knowledge, whether consumer or employer, is psychologically tied to outcomes and thus explains how individuals react to (consumer/employer) brands. Therefore, job search outcomes can be explained by job seekers’
employer knowledge, defined as “what individuals believe about potential employers” (Cable & Turban, 2001: 117) or “job seeker’s memories and associations regarding an organization” (123).

In their theoretical conception of employer brands, Cable and Turban (2001) established employer knowledge as a multidimensional construct comprised of three primary dimensions—employer familiarity, employer image, and employer reputation—all of which may be influenced by recruitment and non-recruitment sources, and which theoretically have bearing on job seeker outcomes, for example, how employers are pursued and employment-related decisions are made. Each element of employer knowledge is described next.

The first element of employer knowledge is employer familiarity, defined as “the level of awareness that a job seeker has of an organization” (Cable & Turban, 2001: 124). According to Cable and Turban (2001), employer familiarity can be defined by three levels—unawareness, recognition, and recall—where at least an awareness of the employer is required for other associations to be attached. In other words, employer familiarity is a necessary antecedent of the remaining two dimensions of employer knowledge—employer image and employer reputation.

A second element of employer knowledge is employer image, defined as “the set of beliefs that a job seeker holds about an organization” (Cable & Turban, 2001: 125). According to Cable and Turban (2001), an organization’s employer image is similar to its corporate brand image that includes attitudes associated with the brand as well as perceived attributes or beliefs related to the brand name. The beliefs encompassed by employer image include job seekers’ perceptions of organizational attributes. These attributes can be categorized as employer information that is descriptive of the organization, job information that refers to particular characteristics of a specific job, or people information that is related to potential coworkers and/or the type of employees that make up an organization.
Separate from but associated with employer image is the third element of employer knowledge—employer reputation, which is defined as “a job seeker’s beliefs about the public’s affective evaluation of the organization” (Cable & Turban, 2001: 126). This construct is especially distinct from employer image because it is other-focused rather than self-focused. Other-focused constructs, like reputation, reflect fully or partially the beliefs of outsiders and contrast with self-focused constructs that are based entirely on one’s own perceptions. Employer reputation fits Bitektine’s (2011) definition of social judgments, which are “an evaluator’s decision or opinion about the social properties of an organization” (152).

The dimensions of employer knowledge have received empirical support, both separately and in various combinations, according to researchers’ expectations of how they will be altered in job seekers when they are exposed to information from organizations and, consequently, how they are associated with job seekers’ application intentions and decisions. For example, Collins and Stevens (2002) investigated how employer reputation and application decisions of new labor-market entrants are influenced by early recruitment practices. Also in studying the early recruitment practices of organizations, Collins and Han (2004) investigated how firm reputation and applicant pool quantity and quality are affected by low-involvement versus high-involvement recruiting practices. In a 2007 study of the interactive effects of product awareness and recruitment practices on job seekers’ employer knowledge and application behavior, Collins simultaneously tested and validated the three separate dimensions of employer knowledge—employer familiarity, reputation, and image—that were identified by Cable and Turban (2001).

For multiple reasons, employer brand equity theory is appropriate as a theoretical foundation for studying the use of social network sites in recruitment and job search and for advancing knowledge of social recruiting. To begin with, employer brand equity theory has been
established as a theory that can explain job seeker behavior and recruitment outcomes (e.g., Cable & Turban, 2001, 2003; Cable & Yu, 2006; Collins, 2007; Collins & Han, 2004; Collins & Stevens, 2002). For example, Cable and Turban (2006) used the employer brand equity approach to explain why employer reputation matters to job seekers and to expand the outcome variables that employers can use to gauge recruitment success to include the minimum salary job seekers require to accept a job with a particular firm. Building on this research, I proposed that job seekers making a connection to organizations on SNSs may be a valid way to gauge recruitment success, including that from recruitment activity that takes place directly on SNSs (e.g., on organizations’ SNS brand profiles) and elsewhere (e.g., via traditional media outlets like company websites).

Other research that uses the employer brand equity theory in ways that are relevant to the conception of the present study includes Collins (2007) and Collins and Stevens (2002). First, Collins and Stevens (2002) empirically tested how recruitment-related activities affected application decisions of new labor-market entrants during the early recruitment phase. The authors found that while publicity, word-of-mouth endorsements, and advertising had positive and direct effects on employer image and organizational attraction, they may have had the greatest impact when utilized together. This research is relevant to the present study because SNSs are sources with the capability to combine all three of these recruitment-related activities, implying that they have the potential to be a powerful recruitment source when compared to traditional e-recruitment sources.

Collins (2007) also used the employer brand equity approach to test empirically how job seekers’ awareness of companies’ consumer products interacts with the companies’ recruitment practices to influence employer knowledge and, ultimately, application intentions and
submission. Results of this research indicated that low-information (or low-involvement) recruitment practices had a greater influence on employer knowledge for job seekers with low product awareness, whereas high-information (or high-involvement) recruitment practices had a greater influence on job seekers with high product awareness. *Low-information/involvement recruitment practices* are defined as those that require little search and processing effort from job seekers (e.g., general recruitment advertisements and sponsorship), compared to *high-information/involvement recruitment practices* that are defined as those that require more cognitive effort because of their presentation of detailed information or arguments (e.g., detailed recruitment advertisements and employee endorsements; Collins, 2007; Collins & Han, 2004).

Collins (2007) proposed that job seekers’ awareness of a company’s consumer products and low-information recruitment practices may act as substitutes for one another. The idea of product awareness and recruitment practices interacting to influence job seekers has broad implications for the use of SNSs in recruiting and, more broadly, social recruiting. The primary consequence of the product awareness and recruitment practice interaction effect is that it presents a challenge to employers using SNSs for recruiting because SNSs act as both recruitment and non-recruitment (e.g., consumer) sources of information, as the industry group Lab42 (2012) discovered. Therefore, employers using SNSs to recruit must determine the reason(s) why job seekers make connections to organizations on SNSs, as well as their level of consumer product awareness, in order to use the most appropriate recruiting practices (low- or high-involvement) on these platforms. The present research addresses this issue of the propensity of job seekers to have varying and multiple reasons for making a connection to organizations on SNSs.

A final reason employer brand equity theory is appropriate for studying the use of SNSs for recruiting is because social network site companies typically assign institutional users of
SNSs distinct *brand* pages or profiles (rather than organizational profiles, and in contrast with the personal profiles assigned to individual persons; boyd & Ellison, 2008), thus making the concepts of brand equity theory particularly resonant with the use of SNS platforms. In addition, and further related to the concept of resonance which Gerring (2001) deemed important to concept formation, employer brand equity theory is relevant because of the substantial focus, both practically and academically, on the importance of organizations developing and maintaining their brands on SNS platforms (e.g., Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2012; Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012), which should certainly encompass their employer brand. Because an organization’s consumer and employer brands are virtually inseparable on SNSs, recruiting theory that is born from consumer theory is a natural foundation for studying social recruiting.

To explain more thoroughly how job seekers interact with organizations on SNSs, signaling theory (Spence, 1973a, 1973b; Zahavi, 1975) can be integrated with employer brand equity theory. Beginning with the research of Spence (1973a), the primary focus in recruitment has been on the signaling behavior of employers undertaken as part of recruiting activities; however, Spence recognized that the other side of the equation is the signaling which job seekers engage in as part of job search. In addition, even before the advent of social recruiting, Breaugh (2008) suggested that continued research on the signaling process that occurs between organizations and job applicants is important. With this in mind, I integrated signaling theory with employer brand equity theory for the advantage that brand equity theory is useful in predicting job seekers’ intentions to apply for jobs and their subsequent application behavior, but it is not necessarily useful in predicting other intermediary recruitment outcomes. The present research introduced one such intermediary recruitment outcome—making connections to
organizations on SNSs for reasons related to job search—that I argue is a job seeker behavior with value as a gauge of recruitment practices.

Signaling theory supports the contention that, while job seekers connecting to organizations on SNSs may appear as a behavior carried out as a means to access information from organizations, this connecting may also be undertaken as a way job seekers signal to employers their personal characteristics and interest in the organization. Therefore, for the purpose of the present research, making a connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search encompasses doing so in order to a) gain access to organizational information or b) signal personal characteristics or interest in the organization. The signaling intent of this behavior cannot be explained by employer brand equity theory alone; therefore, I addressed this issue by incorporating signaling theory into the present research. After the following review of signaling theory and its use in recruitment research, I address the integration of signaling and employer brand equity theories to explain its relevance to social recruiting.

Theoretical Background—Signaling Theory

Originating in economics and biology, signaling theory focuses on indirect communication that is dependent on indicators (i.e., signals) of qualities that take different forms and vary along degrees of reliability (Spence, 1973a, 1973b; Zahavi, 1975). A signal is reliable when it is an accurate indicator of a quality. Signals may be less reliable when the benefit of producing deceptive signals outweighs the cost of their production. An example is creating a deceptive signal of wealth by driving an expensive car that is rented rather than purchased. There is little downside to faking this wealth signal, and it may bring about all the benefits of the more reliable sign of wealth, actually owning the expensive car.
According to signaling theory, there are primarily two types of signals—assessment and conventional. Assessment signals are those where the quality and signal are inseparable, which means that producing the signal requires possession of the quality. Physical strength, for example, is an assessment signal because one cannot exhibit strength without actually possessing it. In contrast, conventional signals are those where the signal is separable from the quality it represents and thus its honesty is managed only by laws, social context, and the cost of fabricating the signal. For example, ownership of an expensive car is often assumed to be a symbol of success, even though only wealth, not necessarily success, is required to own such a car (Maynard Smith, Harper, & Brookfield, 1988).

The reliability of both assessment and conventional signals varies, based on their intended meaning. In general, assessment signals are more reliable because they are necessarily based in resource-holding power (i.e., they exhibit what they represent) and therefore cannot be fabricated (Maynard Smith et al., 1988). While an assessment signal may also be used to indicate a quality that is not directly embodied by the display of the resource-holding power, it is only a reliable signal of the qualities directly represented by the signal (Maynard Smith et al., 1988). For example, physical strength is a reliable signal of strength itself, but a less reliable signal of regular exercise because strength can be a natural characteristic and not one developed by time spent exercising. Any signal that necessarily involves time to exhibit is difficult to counterfeit because the value of the signal lies in the cost of time itself (Spence, 1973b). For example, exercising as a signal of health consciousness is difficult to fake because it requires that time be spent exercising; the value of the exercise is inseparable from its time cost.

Spence (1973a) initially introduced signaling theory to recruiting research and argued that, as a consequence of potential employees and employers not knowing everyone in the
market, the parties rely on signals during job search and recruiting activities to understand the opposite party. Signaling theory continues to be used in the realm of e-recruitment (e.g., Maurer & Cook, 2011) and has been introduced as a theory appropriate for understanding how individuals behave on SNSs (Donath, 2007).

Prior to the proliferation of SNSs or e-recruiting, Cable and Judge (1994, 1996) studied how organizational signals impact job seekers. In their 1994 study, Cable and Judge found that compensation systems act as a signal to individuals of organizational attributes that are less visible, such as organizational culture and values. In their 1996 study of job seekers’ organizational culture preferences, Cable and Judge tested the idea that job seekers’ perceived fit with organizations, i.e., person-organization fit, is influenced by signals of relational demography and organizational values sent by recruiters. The results of this study indicated that subjective person-organization fit derived from perceptions of organizational culture is a reliable indicator of organizational attraction, but demographic similarity between job seekers and recruiters (i.e., interviewers) is not.

Since the internet was introduced to recruiting, the concept of signaling has been extended to cover e-recruitment. One example of how signaling theory has been applied to e-recruitment is studying how the design of corporate career websites can signal to applicants the qualities of an organization, such as corporate culture. Braddy et al. (2006, 2008) and Allen et al. (2007) have investigated this phenomenon in their research on the relationship between corporate career websites and the viewers’ impressions of, and intentions toward, organizations. On one hand, Allen et al. (2007) randomly directed participants to review the company website for one of several companies before collecting information from them on their attitudes and intentions toward the company; they found support for signaling processes operating as part of
recruitment via company websites. On the other hand, Braddy et al. (2008) did not find support for the signaling process between organizations and individuals in their research that used a pre-/posttest experimental design to evaluate the impact of features of corporate career websites on individuals who are more or less familiar with the organization.

In a recent review, Maurer and Cook (2011) appraised e-recruiting literature that utilized signaling theory (among other recurrent theories) to summarize the organizations’ ability to recruit online high-quality job applicants using techniques that promote applicants’ self-selection. Based on their review, the authors presented an e-recruiting model in which job search behavior is directly preceded by attitudes toward the organization that develop out of attitudes toward the e-recruiting website. In a separate yet parallel stream of research, Donath (2007) reviewed the relevance of signaling theory to the behavior of individuals on SNSs. The authors suggested using the theory as a framework on which to build hypotheses and investigate the communicative function of behavior on SNSs, particularly because individuals’ communication on SNSs (including the connections they make on SNSs) primarily takes the form of conventional signals.

The classification of communication on SNSs as mainly conventional signaling (Donath, 2007) is especially appropriate for the signals individuals send when they connect with organizations or brands on SNSs because the reasons individuals connect to these entities on SNSs is not obvious. This ambiguity of association can be better understood with the example of British Petroleum (BP). When BP experienced its oil spill crisis, it adopted and began using SNSs to communicate with its stakeholders (Gaines-Ross, 2010), resulting, no doubt, in individuals who did not typically identify with the brand connecting to the organization on SNSs in order to track BP’s Gulf cleanup effort.
The use of signaling theory has so far been applied separately to SNS and e-recruitment streams of literature. The present research is the first study that applies signaling theory to investigate the predictors of job seekers’ connections to organizations on SNSs. Since signaling theory has already been used to explain the effectiveness of e-recruitment (Braddy et al., 2006, 2008; Maurer & Cook, 2011) and functions of SNSs (Donath, 2007), it seems an appropriate starting point from which to study job seekers’ use of SNSs to signal employers. Furthermore, empirical testing on job seekers’ signaling behavior on SNSs may provide validation for the use of signaling theory to understand their reactions to how organizations use social recruiting.

Theoretical Model

How applicants view certain organizational practices is a topic that several studies have undertaken within the context of e-recruiting, a number of which employed signaling theory to explain how organizational activity influences job seekers’ organizational attraction, job search intentions, and individual job choice (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Braddy et al., 2006, 2008; Thompson et al., 2008). Of the many antecedents to these outcomes, those that have received broad support in the literature included job and organization characteristics, person-organization fit, recruiter behavior, and candidates’ perceptions of the recruitment process (see Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). This last antecedent has become the subject of much e-recruitment literature, particularly in relation to how information and the functionality and aesthetics of corporate career websites and job boards influence and signal job seekers (for an overview, see Maurer & Cook, 2011).

Like the information included on traditional e-recruitment sources, the information posted to an organization’s SNS brand profiles can send signals that make the organization appear more or less attractive to job seekers and contribute to whether or not job seekers connect
to the organization on SNSs. I proposed that similar to the way individuals assess the desirability of potential friends and the benefits of connecting to them on SNSs by observing their profiles (Donath, 2007), job seekers assess the desirability of employers on these sites and decide whether or not to make a connection to them by reviewing the organizations’ SNS brand profiles. Since signaling theory has been used to explain the reliance of employers and workers in search of a match on signals from one another (Spence, 1973a), and has been set forth as appropriate for predicting and explaining the behavior of SNS users (Donath, 2007), I used it here to support the claim that job seekers will engage in signaling behavior on SNSs that is directed at employers. More specifically, I expected that job seekers would make connections to an organization on SNSs to signal to the employer their interest in the organization and/or to signal as well their personal characteristics, such as social media proficiency.

In concert with signaling theory, employer brand equity theory is utilized to understand more fully how job seekers’ connections to organizations on SNSs operate within the context of social recruiting. While signaling theory dictates that job seekers are likely to make connections to an organization on SNSs to signal personal characteristics and interest in the employer, brand equity theory dictates that job seekers will make these connections to gain access to organizational information.

The theoretical model supported by signaling and brand equity theories is illustrated in Figure 1. The proposed model was grounded in the framework provided by Cable and Turban’s (2001) development of employer brand equity theory and employer knowledge combined with signaling theory. Following the common practice in recruiting research of having participants review printed or electronic recruiting materials for one or more organizations and subsequently recording their impressions about those organizations, the proposed model was based on job
Figure 1. Proposed Model of Job Seekers’ Connection to an Organization on Social Network Sites for Reasons Related to Job Search
seekers’ exposure to three potential electronic sources of organizational information—the company website, the corporate career website, and an organization’s SNS brand profiles. These outlets were chosen because they represented three different information source types, the first two of which were taken from employer brand theory. By their nature, an organization’s corporate career website is a recruitment source of information, its company website is a non-recruitment source, and its SNS brand profiles are a source of recruitment and/or non-recruitment information, depending on how the organization decides to use them.

According to employer brand equity theory (Cable & Turban, 2001), differences in information sources should contribute to varying degrees of employer knowledge, which is comprised of job seekers’ employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image. The employer familiarity of job seekers should be associated with how job seekers perceive an employer’s image and reputation, and a favorable employer image and favorable employer reputation should be positively associated with organizational attitudes, such as organizational attraction. Organizational attraction should be positively associated with application intentions and with job seekers making a connection to the organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search—a job search behavior introduced in the model. Organizational attraction is proposed to be a mediator between the dimensions of employer knowledge and job seekers’ connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search, including searches job seekers make to access employer information and/or to signal personal characteristics or interest in the organization. While organizational attraction is predicted to be directly and positively associated with job seekers making a connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search, it is predicted to be positively but indirectly associated with application submission to the organization, as mediated by application intentions with the organization. Application intentions
are also predicted to have a positive and direct association with job seekers making a connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search. In addition, application submission to the organization is expected to be positively associated with job seekers making a connection to the organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search. Finally, job seekers’ preparatory job search behavior is expected to interact with organizational attitudes and application intentions, and their active job search behavior is expected to interact with application submission, to determine whether they make a connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search.

Two distinctions related to the theoretical model are warranted. First, because the present research was guided by employer brand equity theory, it focused on organizations that have an external employment function (in contrast to a family business, for example, that is dependent solely on family members as employees) and, therefore, have a reason to develop their employer brand. Second, no person was excluded from those considered to consume employer brand information from an organization because everyone was considered a job seeker, whether passive or active.

The theoretical model was designed to addresses some weaknesses of employer brand equity theory that are highlighted within the context of social recruiting, namely, that the theory a) defines/categorizes organizational information sources too narrowly, and b) cannot necessarily predict all behavior related to job search, i.e., making connections to an organization on SNSs. The proposed model and the following hypotheses addressed these two issues by redefining organizational information sources and incorporating signaling theory to explain why job seekers are likely to make a connection to organizations on SNSs for reasons related to job search.
Hypotheses Development

Because job seekers’ employer knowledge can be influenced as a function of organizational information source type (Cable & Turban, 2001), it is important to understand how SNSs compare to recruitment and non-recruitment sources of information. As Cable and Turban (2001) outlined, employer brand equity theory categorizes organizational information sources as either related to recruitment practices or non-recruitment practices (e.g., consumer product advertising). Web 2.0 applications such as SNSs do not fit properly into the dichotomy of being a recruitment or non-recruitment information source because they have been re-invented by organizations to represent simultaneously both recruitment and non-recruitment sources of information. Therefore, the organizational information (source) construct from Cable and Turban’s (2001) theoretical model requires revision because Web 2.0 applications generally, and SNSs in particular, cannot be definitively categorized as either a recruitment source or a non-recruitment source. To accommodate Web 2.0 applications in the model requires that the categorization of organizational information sources be made along a continuum that ranges from recruitment-related to non-recruitment-related outlets. Ultimately, the degree to which SNSs are considered a recruitment source will vary objectively based on how organizations have re-invented these platforms to meet recruiting needs, and subjectively based on job seekers perceive them, where the observability of SNSs used for recruiting versus other purposes will contribute to the degree to which job seekers consider them a recruitment source.

The challenge to a dichotomous categorization of recruitment sources is important because, according to employer brand theory, the classification of information sources is directly related to their credibility, or trustworthiness—specifically the expertise dimension of credibility. In this context, expertise refers to the degree to which the source relates information about the
organization as an employer (Cable & Turban, 2001). By this definition, the expertise of information sources is defined as inherent, and recruitment sources of information are deemed to have higher expertise than non-recruitment sources. The claim that information sources should not be categorized as either a recruitment source or a non-recruitment source is counter to the way employer brand equity theory classifies information sources; it is also related to the idea that, rather than defining them in absolute terms, innovations should be defined by how they are utilized (especially when re-invented) to meet users’ needs. Given this logic, the expertise of SNSs would depend on how much the organizations use their SNS brand profiles for recruitment activity compared to non-recruitment activity.

The classification of an information source as recruitment or non-recruitment related to source also has implications for the second of the two credibility dimensions—its trustworthiness, defined as “the extent to which an information source provides information that accurately, or truthfully, describes what it would be like to be an employee of an organization” (Cable & Turban, 2001: 135). This trustworthiness dimension of an information source’s credibility varies partly on whether the information is generated internally (from within the organization; e.g., from a recruiter) or externally (from outside the organization; e.g., from the media). Like expertise, however, the trustworthiness of an information source is not necessarily inherent to the source but depends on how the source is actually utilized.

Employer brand equity theory outlines how sources of organizational information can be categorized along an experiential-informational continuum, which is separate from employers’ credibility. The experiential-informational dimension represents “the degree to which a job seeker obtains organizational information by personally experiencing some aspect of an organization” (Cable & Turban, 2001: 137). Experiential sources are those that afford job
seekers a direct and personal experience with the employer (e.g., information sessions, interviews, internships). The value of experiential sources comes in their ability to allow job seekers the opportunity to evaluate how working for the employer might be. In contrast, *informational* sources lack the personal experience element and present job seekers with organizational material that is indirect and, therefore, pre-processed and interpreted by someone other than the job seekers (e.g., news articles, annual reports). Traditionally, internet sources such as webpages have been categorized as informational. This categorization is appropriate only for internet sources supported by Web 1.0 technology because they are not interactive. SNS brand profiles, however, are not equivalent to traditional internet sources because they are part of SNSs, which are interactive by definition because they are built on Web 2.0 technology.

Organizations have re-invented SNSs in a way that their use by these entities, and by SNS users who interact with the organizations on these platforms, combines to create an unpredictable mix of internally- and externally-generated content that can vary dramatically as proportions of recruitment-related content. Therefore, unlike classifying traditional recruitment and non-recruitment information sources based on their credibility that can be reliably determined, the credibility of SNS platforms—and thus their classification as a recruitment or non-recruitment source—depends on the combination of internal and external information posted to these platforms; this can vary significantly over time and across organizations.

Differences in the content and form of information sources are important because, based on employer brand equity theory, job seekers are more likely to process information centrally when it comes from sources perceived to have high expertise and high trustworthiness (i.e., credibility) and is experiential (Cable & Turban, 2001). Central processing of information requires a significant expenditure of resources to review and consider the worth of information,
while peripheral processing is accomplished through informational cues that are embedded in the message (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). In the context of consumer advertising, centrally processed information has been found to be more valuable to influencing consumer intentions (rather than consumer attitudes; Petty et al., 1983), while in the recruiting context, information that is processed centrally results in longer-lasting knowledge than knowledge gained via a peripheral route (Cable, 2007). People are motivated to process information centrally when the benefits of doing so are greater than the costs (Petty et al., 1983). Job seekers are expected to process employer information centrally because such information is highly relevant to them and because the costs of doing so are lower than the anticipated benefits related to their opportunities to obtain employment (Cable & Turban, 2001).

Given that the SNS brand profiles of organizations can be a source of employer information, they should be perceived as having employer expertise. This perceived expertise means that job seekers should process content centrally from the organizations’ SNS brand profiles, which subsequently influences employer knowledge. In addition, organizational outsiders who can contribute content to the organizations’ SNS brand profiles add to the trustworthiness of the organizations’ SNS brand profiles, and should further incline job seekers to process information centrally from them. Furthermore, because the form of the organizations’ SNS brand profiles is extremely standardized compared to the format of company website homepages and corporate career websites, I argue that this feature should make their information more convenient to process than information from the other, non-standardized, websites. Thus, this should result in reducing the costs associated with centrally processing organizational information from SNSs. This convenience argument is consistent with Donath’s (2007) parallel claim that SNSs have facilitated the maintenance of social ties among individuals.
The importance for job seekers of the information provided on organizations’ SNS brand profiles—combined with their credibility (expertise and trustworthiness), experiential nature, and cost reduction associated with processing information from platforms that present information in standardized ways—results in the expectation that job seekers’ exposure to an organization’s SNS brand profiles will lead to a positive association with the dimensions of employer knowledge (Cable & Turban, 2001). The three dimensions of employer knowledge—employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image—are all expected to vary significantly, depending on whether job seekers are exposed to an organization’s SNS brand profiles or an organization’s company website or corporate career website. This prediction was made because a) theoretically, various recruitment practices (and sources) present different information in different ways which affect the dimensions of employer knowledge and job seekers’ subsequent decisions differently (Cable & Turban, 2001), and b) the differential effect of various recruitment practices and sources has also been supported empirically in other contexts (e.g., Collins, 2007; Collins & Han, 2004; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998).

When compared to the information expertise of company websites and corporate career websites, that of SNS brand profiles falls somewhere between the two. This placement is determined because corporate career websites are devoted to organizational recruitment information (Lee, 2007; Young & Foot, 2005), company websites are a source of general (non-recruitment) organizational information (Young & Foot, 2005), and SNS brand profiles operate as a source of both recruitment and non-recruitment information. Organizational sources of information, such as corporate career websites that are entirely maintained by an employer, should be viewed as less trustworthy than information sources presenting a more balanced view. However, according to employer brand equity theory, sources of organizational information that
display greater expertise will influence employer familiarity more than sources that are trustworthy but present information that does not communicate employer expertise (Cable & Turban, 2001). Therefore, while corporate career websites have the shortcoming of low trustworthiness, this weakness is partially countered by the recruiting expertise of these sites.

SNS brand profiles are likely to be viewed as more trustworthy sources of information than company websites or corporate career websites primarily because people outside of organizations can directly contribute to their content. This contrasts with Web 1.0 sources, such as company websites or corporate career websites, because an organization entirely maintains the content on these platforms. Therefore, if SNS brand profiles are perceived to be trustworthy, job seekers who view them should be more likely to hold a favorable impression of the employer than job seekers who are exposed to an organization’s company website or corporate career website, because SNS brand profiles are most likely to present a balanced view of the employer.

Overall, employer knowledge is expected to vary based on whether job seekers are exposed to SNS brand profiles versus company websites or corporate career websites. Variation in job seekers’ employer knowledge from exposure to these three information sources is expected for several reasons, which are primarily based on fundamental differences in the information sources’ levels of credibility (inclusive of expertise and trustworthiness) and experimentation.

First, while organizations do use SNSs as recruiting sources, they do not typically use them exclusively for recruiting (Lab42, 2012); therefore, the recruiting expertise of SNS brand profiles varies. Given this variation in expertise, exposure to an organization’s SNS brand profiles is expected to be less strongly associated with employer familiarity and employer image than exposure to the organization’s corporate career website because corporate career websites
are dedicated to recruitment information and thus have greater recruitment expertise than SNS brand profiles. Conversely, however, it is expected that employer familiarity will be more strongly associated with exposure to an organization’s SNS brand profiles than it will be to exposure to its company website, which is traditionally a source of general information.

Second, the information from external sources that is present on an organization’s SNS brand profiles but does not appear on the company website or corporate career website should increase the trustworthiness of SNS brand profiles. This trustworthiness should be positively associated with employer reputation when job seekers are exposed to SNS brand profiles. Exposure to an organization’s SNS brand profiles is expected to make a strong impression on employer reputation, which is a construct reliant on job seekers’ perceptions of what others think about an organization as an employer; content that is relevant to the formation of such perceptions can be readily discovered via SNSs because it can be directly posted by others to employers’ brand profiles on these platforms. The expectation of a positive, rather than negative, influence on employer reputation assumes that, despite SNS brand profiles presenting a more balanced view due to the content that outsiders contribute to the organization, employers can still maintain these profiles in a way that manages the organization’s appearance, by deleting negative content from outsiders, for example (although addressing negative content is recommended over deleting it; Billingsley, 2012), and thus managing their image and reputation.

Third, SNSs are built on Web 2.0 technology and are therefore interactive. Based on the interactive capabilities of SNSs, SNS brand profiles are a more experiential source than company websites or corporate career websites. This suggests that information from an organization’s SNS brand profiles should be processed more centrally than that from Web 1.0 sources. The experiential nature of SNS brand profiles, in conjunction with their higher trustworthiness than
traditional web sources of recruitment information, should incite central processing of information and greater influence on job seekers’ employer reputation. Therefore, the fourth hypotheses (4a and 4b) were primarily based on the credibility (expertise and trustworthiness) and experiential dimensions of organizational information sources that are central to employer brand equity theory (Cable & Turban, 2001).

\textit{Hypothesis 4a:} Employer familiarity and employer image for job seekers exposed to an organization’s social network site brand profiles will be higher than that of those exposed to the organization’s company website but lower than that of those exposed to the organization’s corporate career website.

\textit{Hypothesis 4b:} Employer reputation will be more positive for job seekers’ exposed to an organization's social network site brand profiles than for those exposed to the organization’s company website and those exposed to the organization’s corporate career website.

Organizational attraction should be positively associated with job seekers making a connection to the organization on SNSs for job search-related reasons. The reason for this, I argue, is because job seekers interested in an organization as a potential employer are likely to make connections to the organization on SNSs to access its information and/or signal to the employer their interest. This association is supported both by signaling theory and the idea that job seekers connecting to an organization on SNSs is a recruitment/job search outcome, for which, like other job search outcomes, organizational attitudes (e.g., organizational attraction) are an antecedent (Cable & Turban, 2001; Maurer & Cook, 2011).

While the literature (see Chapman et al., 2005) has established the association between various job search intentions and the behavioral manifestation of those intentions (e.g., active job search activity, like application submission), job seekers’ connections to organizations on SNSs have neither been suggested nor empirically tested as a job search behavior, active or preparatory. Since communication on SNSs has been classified as conventional signaling
behavior (Donath, 2007), the expectation is that job seekers will make connections on SNSs to organizations which have attracted them in order to advance their job search in some way (albeit not uniformly across job seekers), and as such should be considered a job search behavior. Given that SNS connections are conventional signals, it is likely that the act of job seekers making connections to an organization for job search reasons has more than one meaning and is a behavior occurring both with and without application intentions. More specifically, connections to an organization on SNSs is likely to precede application intentions when undertaken to access information, and is likely to follow application intentions when undertaken as signaling behavior. Brand equity theory supports the former because job seekers with higher organizational attraction should be more likely to make connections to organizations on SNSs whether or not they have application intentions with the organization because SNSs can allow them to acquire highly important information, such as information about the organization and its job openings, for example. This reasoning led to the fifth hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5:** Job seekers’ organizational attraction is positively associated with a connection to the organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search).

Job seekers who are already familiar with and attracted to the organization may have no need to connect to it on SNSs to learn anything more about the potential employer. Nevertheless, when job seekers are planning to submit an application to an organization, a connection to the organization on SNSs can not only serve to improve access to organizational information, but also to act as a conventional signal of their interest in the organization and skills that communicate their match with the organization and their desire for employment. Signaling theory can explain this latter point. Therefore, signaling theory is necessarily integrated with
employer brand theory to explain job seekers’ connections to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search.

Signaling theory supports the idea of job seekers using connections to an organization on SNSs following application intentions to signal potential employers. According to the theory, and consistent with how it has been applied to recruitment (Spence, 1973) and individuals’ social media behavior (Donath, 2007), job seekers and employers should engage in behavior on SNSs that sends signals to each other about their character and/or intentions because they cannot know everything about one another. Accordingly, it is expected that job seekers with application intentions toward an organization will connect to that organization on SNSs with the hope of signaling to the employer their interest in the organization and their work-related characteristics, such as social media proficiency or conscientiousness (indicated, for example, by the individual’s effort to stay up to date with the organization). Job seekers’ propensity to make connections to an organization on SNSs is further predicted because it gives job seekers the opportunity to interact directly and publicly with employers, which is communication that can also signal the job seekers’ interest and characteristics to the organization.

Although SNSs are being used as recruiting sources, these platforms are generally designed to serve multiple purposes; therefore, it cannot be assumed that individuals’ connections to organizations on SNSs are exclusively driven by job search intentions. Even so, Spence (1973a, 1973b) suggested that job seekers who are interested in being employed by an organization should strive to send signals that communicate this ambition. I argue that because expanding a SNS network indefinitely is not feasible (Donath, 2007), the act of job seekers making a connection to an organization on SNSs can be an effective signal that directly communicates to the organization a desire for employment, and thus, should occur following
application intentions. Donath (2007) supports this contention, arguing that because of the time and cognitive energy required to maintain connections on SNS platforms, individuals must be selective about the individuals and organizations to whom they connect via SNSs. Applying this logic, application intentions with an organization are expected to be positively associated with job seekers’ connection to the organization on SNSs, as predicted by the sixth hypothesis:

_Hypothesis 6:_ Job seekers’ application intentions with an organization are positively associated with a connection to the organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search).

Employer brand equity and signaling theories together support the mediation of application intentions between the association of organizational attraction and job seekers making a connection to organizations on SNSs for job search reasons. First, employer brand equity theory supports the idea that the decision to gather more information about an employer and the decision to apply for a position with the organization (i.e., application intentions) are both job search outcomes that depend on job seekers’ organizational attitudes (Cable & Turban, 2001). Subsequently, job seekers with application intentions may make a connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search that include both improving access to information (Donath, 2007), and signaling their personal characteristics and interest in the organization—behaviors supported by signaling theory (Spence, 1973a, 1973b). Therefore, the seventh hypothesis is as follows:

_Hypothesis 7:_ The association of job seekers’ organizational attraction with connection to an organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search) is partially mediated by job seekers’ application intentions with that organization.

_Preparatory job search_ is the activity of job seekers meant to gather job information and generate job alternatives to consider (Blau, 1993, 1994). Preparatory job search differs from _active job search_ in that active job search includes behavior that communicates availability to
work and can actually lead to a job offer. Examples of active job search behavior include submitting applications or resumes and interviewing with employers (Blau, 1993). Job seekers who engage in either preparatory or active job searches contrast with passive job seekers who engage in neither preparatory nor active job search activity because they do not currently plan to change jobs (Tso et al., 2010). The distinction among job seekers is critical to understanding the stage of a job search at which individuals are likely to connect to organizations on SNSs.

Those who engage in little or no job search behavior (e.g., passive job seekers) may nonetheless connect to organizations on SNSs, but are less likely to do so for job search reasons because they should not be actively seeking employer or job information—nor would they have reason to signal their interest to potential employers. Alternatively, those engaged in preparatory job search are expected to connect to organizations on SNSs in order to gather information on employers and jobs, while those engaged in active job search are more likely to connect to organizations on SNSs to signal their interest, i.e., their availability. These ideas are supported empirically by Tso et al. (2010), who found that job seeker status (as measured by individuals’ intention to change jobs) influences individuals’ online job search behaviors in terms of intensity and the sources utilized in the process. Therefore, connecting to an organization on SNSs for job search reasons is predicted to be part of both preparatory and active job searches, albeit for different reasons.

Connecting to organizations on SNSs provides job seekers access to exclusive information (Donath, 2007) from organizations’ SNS brand profiles. Connecting to organizations on SNSs for reasons related to job search is consistent with other preparatory job search behaviors, such as talking to colleagues and reviewing classified job advertisements, which are done to gain employer and job information. Given that making a connection to
organizations on SNSs can be part of preparatory job search, other preparatory job search activity (such as searching for jobs) is expected to moderate the association of both job seekers’ organizational attraction and application intentions with their connection to organizations on SNSs. Therefore, the eighth and ninth hypotheses proposed that:

**Hypothesis 8:** Preparatory job search behavior will moderate the association of job seekers’ organizational attraction with a connection to the organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search), such that job seekers who are more engaged in preparatory job search behavior and who are high in organizational attraction are more likely to make a connection to the organization on social network sites than job seekers who are less engaged in preparatory job search behavior and who are low in organizational attraction.

**Hypothesis 9:** Preparatory job search behavior will moderate the association of job seekers’ application intentions with the organization with a connection to the organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search), such that job seekers who are more engaged in preparatory job search behavior and who are high in application intentions are more likely to make a connection to the organization on social network sites than job seekers who are less engaged in preparatory job search behavior and who are low in application intentions.

Application submission to an organization is also predicted to positively influence job seekers’ connection to the organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search. This association was hypothesized because making a connection to an organization can act as a signal of interest to an employer or a signal of job seeker characteristics. Given the potential signaling quality of making an SNS connection with an organization, job seekers may make the connection after rather than before applying for a job. Assuming that job seekers perceive SNSs as a recruitment source, those who have submitted an application to an organization are more likely than non-applicants to make a connection to the organization on SNSs for job search reasons. This prediction can be explained by signaling behavior because candidates should make an effort to display interest and qualifications to the organizations to which they apply (Spence, 1973a, 1973b). In addition, once job seekers have made the investment represented by submitting a job
application, they can use the connection to organizations on SNSs to review information their SNS brand profiles that may help them prepare for subsequent steps in the application process, such as interviewing.

A connection to an organization on SNSs for job search reasons is made as part of a preparatory job search when the purpose is to access employer information, but it may also be used to signal interest in the organization as part of an active job search. This is because signaling theory suggests that job seekers should make an effort to create a favorable impression and signal their interest in working for an employer (Spence, 1973a, 1973b). Because employers are able to view if job seekers have made connections to their organizations on SNSs, such connections may be interpreted as a signal of interest in the organization and contribute to the likely extension of job offers to those candidates who make these connections; according to Blau (1993, 1994), this is the purpose of (other) active job search behavior. Therefore, the moderating role of active job search was hypothesized because job seekers may use connections to organizations on SNSs as part of a broader active job search strategy that includes a deliberate intent to signal to employers their interest in the organization in order to be considered for a job over other candidates. Therefore, based on signaling theory (Spence, 1973a, 1973b; Zahavi, 1975) and empirical evidence on active job search (e.g., Blau, 1994; Tso et al., 2010), the expectation that job seekers will make a connection to an organization on SNSs after applying for a job, particularly as part of an active job search, is encompassed by the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 10:** Job seekers’ application submission to an organization is positively associated with a connection to the organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search).

**Hypothesis 11:** Active job search behavior will moderate the association of job seekers’ application submission to an organization with a connection to the
organization on social network sites (for reasons related to job search), such that job seekers who are more engaged in active job search behavior and who have submitted an application to an organization are more likely to make a connection to the organization on social network sites than job seekers who are less engaged in active job search behavior and who have not submitted an application to the organization.

Considering that individuals’ attitudes toward e-recruitment websites have been evidenced as antecedents of their organizational attraction in a number of e-recruitment studies (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Maurer & Cook, 2011), job seekers may have similar reactions to how organizations use SNSs that could ultimately influence recruitment and job search outcomes. To the extent that SNSs can be used to exchange a variety of messages between employers and potential applicants, these platforms can be purposefully used as recruitment sources and outlets for employer information, making both employer brand equity and signaling theories relevant to the exploration of social recruiting. Empirical research on e-recruiting sources (like corporate career websites) provides evidence that individuals’ job search intentions are influenced by the content, form, and function of websites (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Braddy et al., 2006, 2008; Thompson et al., 2008), a result that can be explained by signaling theory (e.g., Allen et al., 2007). Further, employer brand equity theory dictates that individuals’ job search outcomes (including application intentions and submission) are a result of their employer knowledge, which is influenced by the disparate nature and content of organizational information sources (Cable & Turban, 2001).

Employer brand equity theory positions employer knowledge as the primary influence on organizational attitudes, which are antecedent to intentions to apply and to application submission (Cable & Turban, 2001). The basis of employer knowledge is employer familiarity, and certainly job seekers must be basically familiar with and aware of an employer in order to establish attitudes toward the organization. However, familiarity does not imply favorable
perceptions of or attitudes towards the employer because employer familiarity is theoretically and empirically a separate construct from employer image and organizational attitudes (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins, 2007). For this reason, employers must invest not only in increasing their familiarity among job seekers, but also in establishing and maintaining a favorable image and reputation with job seekers. This can be accomplished by influencing job seekers’ perceptions and attitudes through the use of various information sources (Cable & Turban, 2001, 2003; Collins, 2007; Collins & Han, 2004; Collins & Stevens, 2002). I argue that SNS brand profiles can serve as one such information source because organizations re-invented SNS as outlets through which to recruit employee candidates, and SNS brand profiles can operate as platforms for employers to post information about the organization, its jobs, and its people. Given the inherent design of SNSs, the information on a SNS brand profile is more accessible to people when they have made a connection to the organization on the SNS. For this reason, job seekers are expected to make connections to organizations on SNSs as part of their job search behavior.

Generally, job seekers are expected to connect to organizations on SNSs more often when they are exposed to an organization’s SNS brand profile, as compared to when they are exposed to either the organization’s company website or corporate career website. This outcome is proposed to occur when job seekers make connections to organizations on SNSs directly from their SNS brand profiles. This contrasts with job seekers making a connection indirectly, by navigating from the company website or corporate career website to its SNS brand profile in order to make the connection. Making this connection to an organization on SNSs can be considered a recruitment outcome, if even an intermediary one, because it provides the employer with a way to maintain (direct) communication with job seekers.
There are several reasons why job seekers are expected to make connections to organizations on SNSs, particularly after being exposed to their SNS brand profiles. First, using SNSs is part of many people’s daily routine (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Second, and beyond the routine use of SNSs, SNS connections make receiving and reviewing additional information more convenient than getting the information from other sources (Donath, 2007); this generalized convenience should extend specifically to gathering information on employers. Experimental research by Mickes et al. (2013) also supported the convenience rationale because the researchers indicated significant differences in the effort that individuals require to process information from social media (posts), compared to the effort required to process information from more formal sources (i.e., books). Mickes et al. believed that the small bits of information posted to social media simulate the way people naturally process information. In addition, because SNSs are highly standardized (e.g., in layout and post format), the presentation of information in SNS brand profiles should be familiar to more people than the unique presentation of information on company websites and corporate career websites. This standardization may improve the likelihood that job seekers will consult organizations’ SNS brand profiles to gather employer information, and actually find the information they seek with this effort.

Finally, there is some indication that job seekers may prefer to interact with employers on SNSs more than on other e-recruitment outlets. Research published in 2012 by Lab42 indicates that 50 percent of consumers find the brands’ Facebook page to be more useful than their company website. If job seekers’ preferences mirror those of consumers, they should be significantly interested in interacting with brands on social media; this, then, can lead to job seekers making a connection to organizations on SNSs for job search-related reasons. Individuals’ preference for SNSs and their willingness to interact with employers on platforms
they find useful is also consistent with the findings of Gatewood, Gowan, and Lautenschlager (1993), who determined that prolonged exposure to favorable organizational information positively influences job seekers’ intentions to pursue contact with the organization.

The ability to make a direct connection to organizations on SNSs, along with the efficiency with which information from SNS platforms can be processed (Donath, 2007; Mickes et al., 2013) and individuals’ preference for social network sites, should together incline job seekers to connect to organizations on SNSs for reasons related to job search, especially subsequent to their viewing of the organizations’ SNS brand profiles.

Ultimately, the credibility of SNSs as a recruitment source will depend on the quantity and content of posts contributed to the organization’s SNS brand profiles by the organization and other SNS users (especially the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the information contained therein). This mix of information on the SNS brand profiles of organizations depends heavily on who connects to an organization on SNSs and the subsequent activity occurring on these platforms. Furthermore, the activity of those who connect to organizations on SNSs forms a feedback loop by which the contribution of SNS can continuously influence the expertise and trustworthiness of the SNS as a source of employer information. This is proposed because, depending on the volume and nature of contributions to an organization’s SNS brand profiles from SNS users, the balance of recruitment and non-recruitment content, as well as the balance of internal and external information, can be constantly altered.
CHAPTER 5

METHODS

Study 1—Organizational Perspective

The intent of undertaking Study 1 was to evaluate the influence of potential predictors of organizational adoption and implementation of SNSs as an e-recruiting source. Since many of the most popular SNSs (e.g., Twitter and Facebook) do not recognize geographic boundaries, this study focused on SNSs’ adoption and implementation by large, mostly multinational companies because the recruiting of these companies is necessarily international.

Sample. I employed a stratified sampling technique to form the sample, in which the sampling frame was 413 potential business adopters of SNSs drawn from two published lists—the 100 Best Global Brands of 2009 (based on brand equity; BusinessWeek, 2009) and 2009 Fortune 1000 firms from business-to-consumer industries. The list of global brands was of primary interest because it is a strong indicator of the businesses’ degree of internationalization and their potential to be recognized by people from diverse backgrounds. The sample of Fortune 1000 companies was used to augment the sample of global brands in order to draw statistical comparisons to businesses of similar size and notoriety. The two lists from 2009 were utilized because they were the earliest data available when preliminary data collection on businesses’ adoption of SNSs began (in January of 2010).

I studied a sample of large companies to understand better the adoption and implementation of SNSs as an e-recruiting source by firms that have the resources to pursue traditional and more costly forms of recruiting. This resource base was captured by selecting the

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8 For a brand to be evaluated as one of the 100 Best Global Brands, it “must derive at least a third of its earnings from outside its home country, be recognizable beyond its base of customers, and have publicly available marketing and financial data” (BusinessWeek, 2009: 50).
sample from the lists of Global Brands and Fortune 1000 companies that recognize businesses by their substantial resources, either brand equity or revenue, respectively.

From the list of Fortune 1000 companies, only those firms that compete in business-to-consumer industries were included in the sampling frame. The reason for excluding business-to-business firms is that SNSs were initially developed as a means of individual communication (boyd & Ellison, 2008); therefore, communication using SNSs that does not involve individuals (e.g., that among firms) is less common. Companies on the Fortune 1000 list that appeared as one of 100 Best Global Brands (e.g., Visa; 24 companies appeared on both lists) were eliminated from the Fortune 1000 sampling frame to avoid company duplication in the sample.

The final sampling frame comprised of 413 companies is presented in Appendix C. Following sampling guidelines from Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001), 89 companies from the reduced subsample of 313 Fortune 1000 firms from business-to-consumer industries were initially chosen at random to be included in the sample. Similarly, 55 companies were chosen at random from the list of 100 Best Global Brands to be included in the sample. For final analyses, the combined sample of 144 firms was further reduced in order to test Hypotheses 1-3. Three companies were excluded because they did not have a corporate career website; 21 companies were eliminated because data for the control variable (number of employees) were not available; one company was dropped because the majority of its SNS posts were written in Spanish; and a final company was dropped because it had not adopted social media at all. Together, the reductions resulted in a final sample size of 118.

**Data collection.** Taking advantage of the internet, the entirety of data for Study 1 was collected from online archival sources. I first conducted a pilot study to define the SNS platforms that sample companies were most commonly registered on and utilized and, therefore,
would be most appropriate for evaluation as potential recruiting sources. I also used the pilot study to determine an appropriate time period for the main study over which to evaluate the SNS posts sample companies made that would be at once adequate and manageable. To achieve these primary purposes of the pilot study, I collected SNS data for a subsample of eleven companies (approximately 8 percent of the full sample) that were chosen based on their primary one-digit standard industry classification (SIC) code, with the goal of capturing industry variety. The eleven companies evaluated in the pilot study were: Accenture, Adobe, Allianz, American Express, British Petroleum, Coca-Cola, Gap, General Mills, Google, IBM, and Southwest Airlines.

I began pilot study data collection by searching SNS systems for accounts registered to the seven subsample companies. Subsequently, over three months in late 2012, I collected the posts made by these companies to their SNS accounts for several periods of time ranging from a single day to one-week intervals. After completing the pilot study data collection and its analysis, I determined that the SNS platforms appropriate for study were Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus, because these had a general or professional purpose and had been adopted by a critical mass of companies. I also determined that I would require one month’s worth of data to capture sufficient SNS posts for drawing conclusions about the nature of the companies’ SNS activity. The data collected during the pilot study revealed that several companies made few or no posts to SNS accounts during time periods short of four weeks. Therefore, I estimated that one month would be the length of time for which nearly all companies were expected to make at least one post to their SNS accounts.

The variables coded in the pilot study were SNS account registration by the sample companies, plus subject matter categorization of the posting activity of companies on their
registered SNS accounts. More specifically, using MAXQDA software, companies’ SNS posts were classified into one or more categories using a classification scheme that was developed following a qualitative approach established by Corbin and Strauss (2008). SNS posts were used as the unit of analysis and ranged from a single expression to entire paragraphs. Beginning with the analysis of SNS posts from the pilot study, I established a classification scheme which utilized the highest order categories to classify the SNS post content. The classification scheme I developed in the pilot study was used as a baseline for coding the subject matter of SNS posts in the main study, and was built upon while I coded SNS posts throughout the main study (i.e., I created new categories as content not fitting into existing categories was encountered). In some cases, I assigned more than one category to the content of SNS posts. The final coding scheme is presented in Appendix D. Starting points for this classification system have been the subject of published research on organizations’ use of SNSs (e.g., Laroche et al., 2012) and the components of corporate communication as defined by Argenti (1996).

Given the unexpected volume of SNS posts extracted over the month-long data collection period, I alone coded all SNS posts. To test for reliability, three independent raters (one doctoral student and two professors) were assigned a sample of 19 SNS posts from a single company to categorize using the coding scheme I developed in the qualitative research process. Reliability analyses were performed to test for inter-rater reliability, resulting in sufficient reliability: $\alpha = .93$ and kappa coefficients (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2002) that ranged from .50 ($p < .001$) to .70 ($p < .001$). These results provided confidence that my coding could be used for the entire sample, which was done in order to maintain consistency (Bansal, 2005; Berrone & Gomez-Mejía, 2009).
Data collection for the main study mimicked that of the pilot study, except a month’s worth of SNS posts for the full sample of companies was content analyzed and categorized by subject matter (see above). The period of evaluation for the main study lasted from January 1 to 31, 2013, resulting in a combined 23,120 posts from the companies’ SNS profiles. All SNS posts were categorized into one or more categories based on their content. The subject categories from the classification scheme that were generated over the entire content analysis process are listed in Appendix D.

**Dependent variables.** The dependent variables for Study 1 are the implementation of SNSs as recruiting sources and the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources. Organizational implementation of SNSs as recruiting sources was operationalized as the observation of at least one post related to recruiting by a company on its SNS account(s) during the one-month data collection time period. This variable was operationalized dichotomously and coded as 1 if at least one SNS post made by a company was related to recruiting and 0 if no posts were recruiting-specific. I accomplished this measurement by content analyzing the SNS posts and categorizing them as either recruiting-related or non-recruiting-related. The categorization of SNS posts built upon the classification system developed throughout the pilot study. The observability of SNSs as recruiting sources was operationalized as a function of the use of SNSs, so that I measured it as a ratio of the number of recruiting-related posts to total posts made by a company to its SNS account(s). To arrive at this ratio, I recorded the use of SNSs in the data collection phase as both the type and frequency of SNS posts.

**Independent variables.** The independent variables were the use of a corporate career website, the number of SNS platforms adopted by the organizations, and the number of SNS uses. I evaluated the features of the sample companies’ corporate career websites (for presence
or absence) to produce the variable *use of a corporate career website*. This variable was operationalized as the number of navigability and interactivity features included as part of the corporate career website, where companies were assigned a score in intervals of one for each relevant feature included as part of its corporate career website. The coding process began with 19 features of a corporate career website that Cober et al. (2004) and Selden and Orenstein (2011) found improved the online job seeker experience; however, I expanded the initial coding scheme during the data collection to accommodate a number of additional observed features deemed relevant to the modern functionality of corporate career websites. The expansion of the coding scheme resulted in a total of 33 observed features. (See Appendix E for a complete explanation of the data collection for this variable, including the coding scheme for the corporate career website features.) The presence of a feature was coded as 1 and the absence of a feature was coded as 0.

The *number of SNS platforms adopted by organizations* was calculated as the total number of registered SNS accounts under the company’s name on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus. I coded this variable as 0 if no accounts on the four specified SNS platforms were registered for the company. Alternatively, I assigned companies a score in intervals of one for each SNS account registered, ranging from 1 to 4.

The *number of SNSs uses* was operationalized as the number of purposes for which companies made posts. For this variable, companies were assigned a score in intervals of one for the number of different categories under which their SNS posts were classified, ranging from 1 to 8. Following the same technique as determining the organizational implementation of SNSs as recruiting sources, I categorized the SNS posts by purpose following and building on the classification system developed throughout the pilot study (see Appendix D).
Control variables. Organizational characteristics have been evidenced to influence the adoption and use of innovations in organizations, namely organizational size and structure (Frambach, 1993). Accordingly, organizational size was included as a control and operationalized as the number of employees (Kalleberg & Van Buren, 1996; organizational size was expected to be positively related to the adoption of SNSs and the use of SNSs as recruiting sources). Organizational structure was captured by domestic (United States) and foreign incorporation of the companies. Companies incorporated in the United States were coded as 0 and companies incorporated outside of the United States were coded as 1. I collected the number of employees and incorporation information for companies from Mergent Online (2014), a global company database.

Statistical analyses. I tested Hypotheses 1 and 2 with a logistic regression, where the dependent variable was organizational implementation of SNSs as recruiting sources and the independent variables were the number of social network sites adopted, the number of corporate career website features, and the standardized value of the number of company employees. Because a one-person change in the number of employees of large firms is unlikely to make much difference in the company size, I standardized the variable for the number of company employees to make the interpretation of company size more meaningful. I tested Hypothesis 3 using two ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression models, where the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, measured by the proportion of content related to recruiting from the company SNS brand profiles, was the dependent variable. The independent variables in the linear regression model were the number of SNS uses, the number of SNSs adopted, and the standardized value of the number of company employees. In the second regression model, I estimated the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources by replacing the number of SNSs
adopted with the actual SNSs—Twitter (twitter), Facebook (facebk), Google Plus (googlpl), and LinkedIn (linked).

**Pre-study—Individual Perspective**

The purpose of the pre-study was to generate a concise list of primary reasons why individuals connect to organizations on SNSs (organizational attraction or otherwise) or, alternatively, do *not* connect to organizations on SNSs. I gathered this information for use in Study 2 survey items. The purpose of the pre-study was achieved utilizing a semi-structured focus group format. Gathering this information from focus groups was an essential part of Study 2 because I asked survey participants for the main reasons why they have or have not connected to companies on SNSs. Failure to generate a list of options for participants to choose from would have required survey participants to answer open-ended questions, which I subsequently would need to analyze and code into categories. By generating the categories with focus group data ahead of time, I was able to ensure a higher response rate and make the survey data analysis for Study 2 more efficient.

The pre-study was comprised of three focus groups, each including five paid participants and lasting 90 minutes. To be part of the focus group, individuals were required to have registered accounts on at least one of the following SNS platforms: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus. I paid each participant $30 for the approximately 90 minutes spent in the focus groups. Focus groups were conducted until redundancy in participant input—the reasons they connected to organizations and brands on SNSs—was reached.

**Descriptive analysis.** I content analyzed information gathered from the focus groups to generate a comprehensive list of reasons why individuals connect or do not connect to organizations on SNSs. (See Appendix F for further explanation of the focus group process.) I
used these lists of reasons for connecting or not connecting to organizations on SNSs as answer choices in multiple Study 2 survey questions. Study 2 and its survey are described next.

**Study 2—Individual Perspective**

The empirical purpose of this study was to a) test how being exposed to an organization’s SNS brand profiles (compared to being exposed to a company website or corporate career website) influenced job seekers’ employer knowledge, employer image, and employer reputation; and b) to test the likelihood of making a connection to an organization on social networks sites based on organizational attraction and application intentions. Using survey methodology, I used a between-subject quasi-experimental design to test these relationships.

**Sample.** Using a snowball sampling technique that utilized social media, I recruited 415 job seekers to participate in the study. After eliminating duplicate and incomplete responses, I maintained 397 observations for further analysis. I offered all participants a $5 Starbucks card as an incentive to complete the survey that required approximately 15 minutes of their time.

**Time 1.** Each participant was randomly assigned to evaluate either the SNS brand profiles, company website, or corporate career website of a single company (a control group completed the survey without prior exposure to a company information source). Participants assigned to the three experimental conditions were told that the study required them to review company websites/webpages before answering questions about the company. Participants were directed by web links to one or more of the following: a company website, a corporate career website, or the SNS brand profiles—on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn—of a company. I chose the SNSs Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn because Study 1 had revealed that companies most commonly and consistently used these three SNS platforms. Following Allen et al. (2007), and to increase the realism of the study, I did not limit the amount of time in which participants
could review the websites/webpages. For the same reason, I did not provide any instruction on whether or not participants could return to the websites/webpages after beginning the survey (although technically they could because the websites were set to open in a separate internet browser from the survey).

With the exception of control group participants, participants began the survey after their exposure to the company website, corporate career website, or SNS brand profiles of one randomly assigned company. All survey participants were asked the same set of questions, beginning with questions about their employer knowledge, organizational attraction, and application intentions with the company, followed by whether they had ever submitted an application to the company. Participants were then asked about their preparatory and active job search behavior, including the dependent variable—whether or not they ever made a connection to the company on Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn, for reasons related to job search (among other reasons). The text for each condition and the survey is presented in Appendix G.

The single company to which participants were assigned was one from a group of five derived from the sample of companies used in Part I of the present research, including Adobe, American Express, Gap, Mercedes-Benz, and IBM. I chose these companies because they a) were actively using Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, b) represented different industries as categorized by the Standard Industrial Classification System (SIC; 1-digit codes), and c) varied as a group in their employer reputation as rated by Fortune’s 100 Best Companies To Work For (2012). I assigned participants to one of several companies, rather than to the same company, for two primary reasons. First, assigning participants to one of several companies served to minimize issues of idiosyncrasy and errors related to limited stimulus sampling (Wells &
Windschitl, 1999). Second, the external validity of the study was improved by exposing participants in aggregate to the websites/webpages of multiple companies.

**Time 2.** Following Collins (2007) and Collins and Stevens (2002), I sent participants an email approximately one month after they completed the Time 1 survey, requesting their participation. I designed the follow-up survey to lessen common-method variance by evaluating whether participants had connected to the company on SNSs (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) since the last survey and whether they had since submitted an application to the company. I used the email addresses collected to award the Time 1 incentive to participants in order to solicit a response in Time 2 (to those participants who agreed to such a solicitation in Time 1). As an incentive, those who participated in Time 2 were entered into a drawing to win one of two Dell Android tablets. Forty-two percent of the Time 1 participants completed the Time 2 survey (n = 167).

There was a significant difference in age, $t(396), p < .01$ -2.60, $p < .01$, between those who took the Time 2 survey and those who did not. The mean age of participants who completed the Time 2 survey was 30.25, compared to a mean of 27.60 years of age for non-respondents. There was also a significant difference in those whose highest level of education was having earned some college credit but no degree, $t(397) = 2.50, p < .01$, where the representation of those with this level of education was significantly higher for those who did not participate in Time 2 compared to those who did. There were no significant differences in the other levels of education [high school, $t(397) = .77, ns$; trade/vocational school, $t(397) = 1.50, ns$; associate’s degree, $t(397) = -.73, ns$; bachelor’s degree, $t(397) = -1.69, ns$; master’s degree, $t(397) = -1.58, ns$; doctorate degree, $t(397) = 1.50, ns$]; gender, $t(395) = .33, ns$; US citizenship,
\( t(397) = -0.428, ns; \) work experience, \( t(391) = -1.20, ns; \) employment status, \( t(397) = -1.13, ns; \) job seeker status, \( t(397) = 1.02, ns; \) or social network site experience, \( t(394) = -0.14, ns. \)

**Predictor Variables, Manipulation, and Measures**

The predictor variables measured were *exposure to e-recruiting sources* (the manipulation), *organizational attraction*, *application intentions*, *application submission*, *preparatory job search behavior*, and *active job search behavior*.

**Manipulation.** Following a between-subject quasi-experimental design (Fromkin & Streufert, 1976; Singleton & Straits, 2010), I randomly assigned participants to either a control group or an experimental condition. The experimental condition included instructions for participants to navigate to company information sources online—either a company’s website, a company’s corporate career website, or a company’s social network site brand profiles (on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn). Participants in the experimental conditions were asked to familiarize themselves with the company before proceeding to the survey to answer questions about that company (see instructions in the survey instrument, Appendix G). Participants were purposefully not told to only look at the assigned information source so that the experiment had a significant element of realism, allowing participants to navigate to other webpages or websites if they so desired.

**Organizational attraction.** I measured organizational attraction with five items adapted from Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003), for which participants rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*; \( \alpha = .74 \)). An example item was “This company is attractive to me as a place for employment.” I dropped two items from this scale after examining the corrected item-total correlation for each item and finding a significant amount of measurement redundancy with their inclusion. This modification had the effect of
reducing the scale reliability from $\alpha = .88$ to $\alpha = .74$. The item deletion also reduced the corrected item-total correlation for two of the remaining items so that they fell between the generally acceptable range of .30 and .70 (from $CITC = .84$ to $CITC = .70$ and from $CITC = .71$ to $CITC = .57$; Ferketich, 1991). I used aggregated scale scores for organizational attraction.

**Application intentions.** I measured application intentions with an organization with three items adapted from Collins (2007) and Collins and Stevens (2002), for which participants rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}$ to $5 = \text{strongly agree}; \alpha = .84$). The three items were: “If I saw a job opening for this company, I would apply for it,” “I intend to apply for a position with this company,” and “Applying to this company is not my first choice” (reverse coded). I dropped one item from this scale after examining the corrected item-total correlation for each item and finding a low correlation between the item and the scale ($CITC = .24$), which, falling short of the generally acceptable range of .30 and .70 (Ferketich, 1991), indicated that the item was not sufficiently related and did not contribute to measuring application intentions. I also modified the scale because the item in question was reverse-scored and, from close examination of the data, appeared to have been problematic for enough participants to raise significant doubt about its reliability. The Spearman-Brown coefficient for the scale was .84 and was reported as the reliability statistic because the scale was reduced to only two items (Eisinga, Grotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2013). Finally, I used the scores on the two items to form a $z$-score composite measure of application intentions.

**Application submission.** Participants were asked if they had ever applied for a job with the company using a single item. Using a scale where 0 = no and 1= yes, participants were asked, “Have you ever applied for a job at the company?” I substituted the actual name of the company participants were assigned to evaluate for the company in the above question.
**Employment status, job seeker status, and job search.** Participants were asked about their current employment status and recent job search behavior. The following acted as preliminary items to capture participants’ preparatory and active job search. First, participants were asked about their employment status, which was classified as either employed or unemployed. Employment status was determined with two of three items from the Current Population Survey (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009) and Tso et al. (2010). Participants dichotomously answered (0 = No, 1 = Yes) the question, “Do you currently have a job, either full or part time? (Include any job from which you may be temporarily absent.)” Those who answered “Yes” were then asked: “Do you plan to look for a new job, either full or part time, in the coming 12 months?” Participants who answered “No” to this question were classified as passive job seekers, and participants who answered “Yes” to the question were classified as active job seekers. Those who answered “No” to the initial question were asked, “Do you currently want a job, either full or part time?” Participants who answered “No” to this question were classified as passive job seekers, and participants who answered “Yes” to the question were classified as active job seekers. Subsequently, all participants who qualified as active job seekers were asked additional questions about their recent preparatory and active job search behavior.

Preparatory job search and active job search were both tested as moderator variables. Participants were asked how often they carried out specific behaviors over the last six months using eight items (four each for preparatory and active job search) adapted from Blau (1993, 1994) and 10 additional items meant to capture different aspects of an internet-based job search. Additional job search items were created for this study to capture more comprehensively the way people search for jobs online. Participants rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never (0 times); 2 = rarely (1 or 2 times); 3 = occasionally (3 to 5); 4 = frequently (6 to 9 times); and
5 = very frequently (at least 10 times); $\alpha = .80$ for preparatory job search and $\alpha = .83$ for active job search). Example items were: “Talked with friends or relatives about possible job leads” and “Applied for a job.” Preparatory and active job search were significantly correlated ($r = .90$, $p < .001$); therefore, due to potential issues of collinearity, I combined the items to form a single job search variable ($\alpha = .87$) and used aggregated scale scores to represent individuals’ job search. Job search scores ranged from 0 to 44 with a mean of 10.68. Because I used a single job search variable, I tested hypotheses based on the conceptual model in Figure 2.

Control Variables and Measures

Social network site experience. I measured social network site experience with a single item: “Approximately how many years of experience do you have using social network sites?” Participants answered in years and, given that the first social network site launched in 1997 (boyd & Ellison, 2008), the scale included less than one year plus a range from 1 to 17 years.

Outcome Variables and Measures

The first set of outcome variables were those encompassed by employer knowledge—employer familiarity, employer reputation, and employer image.

Employer familiarity. I measured employer familiarity with four items adapted from Collins (2007). Participants rated items for the employer familiarity measure using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = strongly disagree$ to $5 = strongly agree$; $\alpha = .78$). An example item was “I am very familiar with this company as an employer.” I used aggregated scale scores for employer familiarity.

Employer reputation. I measured employer reputation with four items adapted from Collins and Stevens (2002) and Collins (2007). Participants rated items for the employer reputation measure using a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = strongly disagree$ to $5 = strongly agree$;
Figure 2. Tested Model of Job Seekers’ Connection to an Organization on Social Network Sites
An example item was “Other people hold a favorable impression of this company as an employer.” I reduced this scale by one item after examining the corrected item-total correlation (CITC) for each item and finding redundancy among the items (three CITCs ranging from .73 to .81). By dropping a single item, I reduced the scale reliability from \( \alpha = .86 \) to \( \alpha = .82 \). This modification also reduced the corrected item-total correlation for two of the remaining items so that only one remained marginally high (CITC = .72; Ferketich, 1991). I used aggregated scale scores for employer reputation.

**Employer image.** I measured employer image with 10 employer-attribute items adapted from Collins and Stevens (2002). Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not very likely to 5 = extremely likely; \( \alpha = .88 \)), participants rated how likely it was that the company possessed each of the following attributes: above-average salaries/wages, above-average employee benefits, desirable location(s), interesting work, opportunities to learn new skills, availability of excellent training programs, advancement opportunities, job security, and good corporate culture (working environment). An example item is “This company offers above-average pay.” Aggregated scale scores were used for employer image.

**Connection to the organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search.** This outcome was determined by asking participants, “On which of the following social network sites are you connected to the company?” Answer choices were Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and participants were instructed to “Mark all that apply.” Participants were subsequently asked to indicate the reasons why they had connected (or not connected) to the company on the SNSs so I could determine if the reasons for making a connection included any related to job search. The reasons offered in the survey were those generated from a series of three focus groups conducted with potential job seekers who regularly used the SNSs included in the survey.
**Manipulation check.** I included a manipulation check in the survey to determine the company information sources that participants actually viewed, and I coded exposure to the sources according to their answer to the manipulation check. The manipulation check included a single item which asked participants to indicate all the online company information sources they visited before filling out the survey. Answer choices for the question “Which of the following websites/webpages did you view before answering the survey?” included the company website, the company’s jobs/employment/career website, and the company’s profile/page on SNSs (each of Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn). There were also the options of “None of the above” and “Other.” In many cases, participants viewed additional information sources to which they had been assigned. For example, if they had been assigned to view the company website, they sometimes viewed a company social network site brand profile as well. (See Table 5 for descriptive statistics related to how the manipulation performed.) In addition, some participants who had been assigned to an experimental condition did not view any company information source and simply proceeded to answer the survey.
Table 5. Manipulation Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel A</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website/Webpage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate website</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate career website</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network site brand profile(s)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel B</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social network site brand profile breakdown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>86.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationships Tested But Not Hypothesized

Employer brand equity theory posits that job seekers who are familiar with an organization and perceive it as having a favorable employer reputation and employer image are likely to have positive organizational attitudes (Cable & Turban, 2001). I neither hypothesized about nor tested this relationship in the present research. Another established association—that of job seekers’ organizational attraction being positively associated with application intentions with the organization (see Chapman et al., 2005)—was not directly hypothesized but was tested as part of the mediation hypothesis (H7) (see Figure 2).

Employer brand equity theory makes a parallel between job seekers and consumers and likens jobs to consumer products so that, similar to consumer behavior, job seekers who hold favorable impressions of and attitudes towards an employer brand are expected to engage in a more extensive job search with that organization (Cable & Turban, 2001). Outcomes of an extensive job search are expected to reach beyond merely deciding to apply to an organization
(i.e., having application intentions), to include submitting an application (and accepting a job
offer; Cable & Turban, 2001). I did not hypothesize about this established association between
application intentions and application submission nor could I test it because of limitations in the
data collected (i.e., insufficient variance in the application submission variable because very
few—only six—participants had applied to the organizations). I also did not hypothesize about
the established role of application intentions as a mediator of organizational attitudes and
application submission nor could I test it because of the same limitations in the data.
CHAPTER 6
RESULTS

Study 1—Organizational Perspective

Descriptive statistics. The majority of companies studied were American firms, but there were also companies incorporated in Ireland, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, France, Korea, Netherlands, Finland, and Puerto Rico. A total of 18 companies were incorporated in countries other than the United States. The number of employees for the 118 companies ranged from 1,100 to 440,000, with a mean of 59,261. Of the sample companies, seven had adopted a single SNS, 13 had adopted two SNSs, 42 had adopted three SNSs, and 56 had adopted four SNSs. The mean number of SNSs adopted was 3.25. Measured by adoption, LinkedIn was the most popular SNS, with 115 of the companies having adopted it. See Panel B of Table 6 for the frequencies of adoption for all SNS platforms. The mean number of corporate career site features ranged from 3 to 20 (of 26 possible features), with a mean of 10.81.

The number of SNS uses ranged from 0 to 8, where 0 indicated that a company had adopted an SNS but was not actively using it during the month-long data collection period. The mean number of SNS uses was 4.94. Collectively, SNSs were being used for the following purposes: Marketing, Consumer Relations, Investor Relations, Government Affairs, Community Relations, Social Media-based Brand Community Relations, Organizational Information Sharing, and Recruitment. See Table 7 for the frequency of SNS uses across companies.

Across a total of 383 SNS brand profiles (the sum of all established brand profiles across sample companies), 26,046 codes were assigned in total to the content of social media posts for 118 companies (three companies did not post any content to their SNS brand profiles during the data collection period). The mean number of codes assigned to the content of companies’ SNS
Table 6. Frequencies of Social Network Site Adoption

**Panel A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Social Network Sites Adopted</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Panel B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter Adoption</th>
<th>Facebook Adoption</th>
<th>Google Plus Adoption</th>
<th>LinkedIn Adoption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Frequencies of Social Network Site Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network Site Uses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table represents the frequencies of the number of purposes, or uses (recruiting, marketing, etc.), for which organizations utilize their social network site brand profiles.
brand profile content was 210.09 and ranged from 0 to 1,518. The mean number of recruitment codes assigned to the content of companies’ SNS brand profile content was 54.54 and ranged from 0 to 450. Only 16 companies did not use their SNS profiles for recruiting in some way. Of the 102 companies that used their SNS brand profile(s) for recruiting, the proportion of content related to recruiting varied from 0 to 1, with the mean proportion approximately 31 percent. See Figures 3-7 for the breakdowns of recruitment content by subcodes for the overall sample and for each of the four SNSs.

To provide an example of the variation in the use of SNSs for recruiting and other purposes, select “document portraits” were produced with the MAXQDA software and are presented in Figure 8. These document portraits are visual representations of the variation in the use of Twitter by four automobile companies over the one-month data collection period, where different colors represent different uses (teal indicates marketing use, for example). The document portraits in Figure 8 illustrate how SNS use can vary across companies within the same industry. Alternatively, document portraits for the use of Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, and LinkedIn by a single company, Google, Inc., are presented in Figure 9 and illustrate how SNS use by one company can vary across SNS platforms (shades of purple indicate recruitment use, for example).

Statistical analyses and results. Logistic and OLS regression analyses were performed to test the hypotheses. Bivariate correlations for the variables used in the regression analyses are presented in Table 8.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested with a logistic regression models, where the dependent variable was organizational implementation of SNSs as recruiting sources (or social recruiting) and the independent variables were the number of social network sites adopted, the use of a
Figure 3. Recruitment Subcodes Breakdown Across Social Network Sites
Figure 4. Recruitment Subcodes Breakdown on Twitter
Social Recruiting on Facebook

Figure 5. Recruitment Subcodes Breakdown on Facebook
Figure 6. Recruitment Subcodes Breakdown on Google Plus
Figure 7. Recruitment Subcodes Breakdown on LinkedIn
Documents portraits that illustrate the one-month variation in social network site use by for each of four car companies, clockwise from top left: BMW, Honda, Toyota, and Hyundai. Document portraits descriptively illustrate the companies’ social network site uses by color. For example, teal represents use for marketing and pink represents use for social media based brand community relations.

Figure 8. Twitter Portraits for Automobile Companies
Documents portraits that illustrate the one-month variation in social network site use by Google across each of four social network site platforms, clockwise from top left: Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Document portraits descriptively illustrate the companies’ social network site uses by color. For example, shades of purple represent use for recruitment.

Figure 9. Social Media Portraits for Google, Inc.
Table 8. Organizational Perspective Bivariate Pearson Correlations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Social Recruiting</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Non-LinkedIn Social Recruiting</td>
<td></td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Recruiting Observability</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social Network Site Adoption</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Twitter</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>-0.52**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Facebook</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. LinkedIn</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Google Plus</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Corporate Career Website Use</td>
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<td>.22*</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Social Network Site Uses</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>-0.38**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Employees</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.25**</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. International Incorporation</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>.37**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** p < .01, * p < .05
N = 118
corporate career website as measured by corporate career site features, and the standardized value of the number of company employees.

A test of the first full logistic regression model was statistically significant against a constant-only model, indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate the likelihood of companies implementing SNSs as a recruitment source (see Table 9). The model produced a non-significant Chi-square statistic according to the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test $H(8) = 6.79, ns$. Although the full model did not improve the predictability of organizational implementation of SNSs for recruiting beyond that of the constant-only model, the model produced a significant Chi-square statistic, $\chi^2(4) = 9.42, p = .05$ from the likelihood ratio chi-square test. Regression coefficients, standard errors, Wald statistics, and fit statistics are shown with associated significance levels in Table 9. When estimated with the other variables, the number of SNSs adopted ($p = .05$) reliably predicts the implementation of SNSs for recruiting, but the use of a corporate career website (1.95, $ns$) does not. For each additional SNS that was adopted, companies were 1.77 times more likely to have implemented SNSs for recruiting. While the model and the coefficient for the number of SNSs adopted were significant, the model did not improve the predictability of the dependent variable, so this result should be interpreted with caution when considering support for Hypothesis 2, which stated that the number of SNS platforms adopted by organizations will be positively associated with organizations’ likelihood to implement SNSs as recruiting sources. The coefficient for the use of a corporate career website was not significant; therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Hypothesis 1 stated that organizations that make extensive use of a corporate career website will be more likely to implement SNSs as recruiting sources than organizations that do not make extensive use of a corporate career website.
Table 9. Logistic Regressions Predicting Organizational Implementation of Social Network Sites for Recruiting

| Variable                      | Model 1               | Model 2               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|                               | \( B \) | \( SE \) | Odds Ratio | Wald Statistic | Fit Statistic | \( B \) | \( SE \) | Odds Ratio | Wald Statistic | Fit Statistic |
| Constant                      | -1.17     | 1.27     | 0.31       | 0.85          | -1.07         | 0.70     | 0.34       | 2.33          |               |               |
| Social Network Site Adoption  | 0.57*     | 0.29     | 1.77       | 3.80          |               |          |           |               |               |               |
| Corporate Career Website Use  | 0.13      | 0.09     | 1.14       | 1.95          | 0.12*         | 0.06     | 1.13       | 3.79          |               |               |
| Employees                     | 0.38      | 0.52     | 1.47       | 0.55          | 0.28          | 0.24     | 1.33       | 1.33          |               |               |
| International Incorporation   | 0.47      | 1.16     | 1.60       | 0.17          | -0.06         | 0.60     | 0.94       | 0.01          |               |               |
| Likelihood Ratio \( \chi^2 \) |           |          |            |               | 9.42*         |          |           |               | 7.28          |               |
| Hosmer & Lemeshow \( \chi^2 \) |           |          |            |               | 84.25         |          |           |               | 12.19         |               |
| Cox & Snell \( R^2 \)        |           |          |            |               | 0.08          |          |           |               | 0.06          |               |
| Nagelkerke \( R^2 \)         |           |          |            |               | 0.14          |          |           |               | 0.08          |               |

Note: * \( p < .05 \), ** \( p < .01 \)

\( N = 118 \)
Because the number of companies that had not implemented SNSs as recruiting sources was less than 14 percent \( (n = 16) \) of the sample \( (n = 118) \), I used an additional logistic regression to further test Hypothesis 1, for which the dependent variable was organizational implementation of SNSs other than LinkedIn for recruiting and the independent variables were the use of a corporate career website and the standardized value of the number of company employees. I performed this analysis for two primary reasons. The first reason related to the nature of the SNSs, where LinkedIn has a professional networking purpose and the other three SNSs have a general purpose. Given LinkedIn’s professional networking purpose, its implementation for recruiting represents less of an innovation than the use of SNSs that have a general networking purpose. Separate but related was the second reason, which is the concern that the adoption of LinkedIn by companies could bias results because the frequency of companies that implemented SNSs for recruiting was only 65 when LinkedIn was excluded, compared to 102 when it was not excluded.

A test of the second full logistic regression model was statistically significant against a constant-only model, indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate the likelihood of companies implementing SNSs other than LinkedIn as recruiting sources (see Table 9). The model produced a marginally significant Chi-square statistic, \( \chi^2(3) = 7.28, p = .06 \) according to the likelihood ratio chi-square test, and a non-significant Chi-square statistic according to the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test \( H(8) = 12.19, ns \). Compared to a constant-only model, the full model improves the predictability of the organizational implementation of SNSs for recruiting by 2.5 percentage points, or 4.54 percent. Regression coefficients, standard errors, Wald statistics, and fit statistics are shown with associated significance levels in Table 8. The use of a corporate career website \( (p = .05) \) reliably predicts the implementation of SNSs for
recruiting on SNSs other than LinkedIn when estimated with the other variables. Each additional corporate career website feature used made it 1.13 times more likely that companies had implemented a SNS platform other than LinkedIn—Twitter, Facebook, or Google Plus—for recruiting. This result supports Hypothesis 1, which stated that organizations that make extensive use of a corporate career website will be more likely to implement SNSs as recruiting sources than organizations that do not make extensive use of a corporate career website.

Hypothesis 3, which stated that the number of SNS uses by organizations will be negatively associated with the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, was tested using two OLS regression models. The observability of SNSs as recruiting sources was the dependent variable and was measured by the proportion of recruitment-related codes assigned to company SNS brand profile content. In the first regression model, I entered the number of SNS uses along with the number of social network sites adopted, the use of a corporate career website, and the standardized value of the number of company employees. In the second regression model, I entered the adoption of the individual SNSs (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus) in place of the number of social network sites adopted.

In order to test hypotheses using a proportion as the dependent variable, I first used linear curve estimation regression models to check for linearity between the predictor variables—the number of social network sites adopted and the number of SNS uses—and the dependent variable—the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources. I took this step because, when the dependent variable is a proportion, it can challenge the assumption that the relationships are linear (Long, 1997). The tests were significant for the number of social network sites adopted ($p < .01$) and the number of SNS uses ($p < .01$), indicating that the assumption of linearity was not violated and, thus, linear regression was appropriate.
Using OLS regression, I first estimated the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, as measured by the proportion of content related to recruiting from company SNS brand profiles, using the number of organizational SNS uses, the number of SNSs adopted, use of a corporate career website as measured by corporate career site features, and the standardized value of the number of company employees. Second, I estimated the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources by replacing the number of SNSs adopted with the adoption of the individual SNSs—Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, and LinkedIn.

A test of the first full OLS regression model was statistically significant, \( F(5, 8.55) \), \( p < .001 \), indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources (see Table 10). Approximately 25 percent of the variance in the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources was explained by the independent variables, as indicated by the adjusted R square (.25). Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model statistics are shown with relevant significance levels in Table 10. The number of SNS uses (\( \beta = -0.06, \) Beta = -.35, \( p = .001 \)), the number of SNSs adopted (\( \beta = -.10, \) Beta = -.25, \( p < .001 \)), use of a corporate career website (\( \beta = .18, \) Beta = .18, \( p < .05 \)), and the number of employees (\( \beta = .07, \) \( p < .05 \)) were all significant predictors. Because the number of SNS uses was negatively and significantly associated with the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

A test of the second full regression model was statistically significant, \( F(8, 7.89) \), \( p < .001 \), indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources (see results in Table 10). Approximately 33 percent of the variance in the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources was explained by the independent variables, as indicated by the adjusted R square (.33). Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model
Table 10. Regressions Predicting the Observability of Social Network Sites for Recruiting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Fit Statistic</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>0.13</td>
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<td>0.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Network Site Adoption</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Corporate Career Website Use</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02**</td>
</tr>
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<td>Social Network Site Uses</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Incorporation</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Plus</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.89**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
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<td>0.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.28</td>
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<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01

N = 118
statistics are shown with relevant significance levels in Table 10. The number of SNS uses ($\beta = -.04, \text{Beta} = -.23, p < .05$), Twitter adoption ($\beta = -.347, p = .001$), LinkedIn adoption ($\beta = .419, p < .05$), and use of a corporate career website ($\beta = .02, \text{Beta} = .21, p = .01$) were all significant predictors of the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources. The types of SNSs adopted and utilized by companies also had an association with the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, where Twitter decreased the proportion of SNS content that was recruiting-related and LinkedIn increased the proportion of SNS content that was recruiting-related. Because the number of SNS uses was negatively and significantly associated with the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, Hypothesis 3 was also supported by this model.

**Study 2a—Individual Perspective**

*Descriptive statistics.* Sixty-four percent of survey participants were female, compared to 36 percent who were male. Students made up a large portion of the sample so that a third of participants had earned some college credit but had not completed their bachelor’s degree. The social network site experience of participants in years ranged from less than one to 17, with a mean of three years. The full-time work experience of participants ranged from less than one year to 40 years, with a mean of 6.48. More descriptive statistics for survey participants are presented in Table 11.

The factors that make up employer knowledge—familiarity, reputation, and image—were tested for discriminant validity using a series of confirmatory factor analyses. First, I tested a single-factor model. I used subsequent confirmatory factor analyses to test for the fit of two factors and three factors to the data. Based on a maximum likelihood solution, the three-
Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for Survey Participants in Time 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel A</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel B</th>
<th>Highest Level of Education Completed</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school/GED</td>
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<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/technical/ vocational training</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college credit, no degree</td>
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<td>33.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
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<td>Master’s degree</td>
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<td>Doctorate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel C</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>Not Employed</td>
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<td>Employed</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel D</th>
<th>Job Seeker Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>Job Seeker</td>
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<th>Panel E</th>
<th>Cultural/Ethnic Identity</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anglo American/ Caucasian</td>
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<td>Asian American</td>
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<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td>Native American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>
factor model ($\chi^2(116) = 403.97$, $p < .001$; $NFI = .94$; $CFI = .95$; $RMSEA = .08$; $SRMR = .06$) provided a better fit than the one-factor model ($\chi^2(119) = 1409.45$, $p < .001$; $NFI = .83$; $CFI = .85$; $RMSEA = .17$; $SRMR = .11$) and the two-factor model ($\chi^2(118) = 960.29$, $p < .001$; $NFI = .88$; $CFI = .89$; $RMSEA = .13$; $SRMR = .10$). The fit of a three-factor model offers support for discriminant validity among the theoretically-supported employer knowledge factors. Table 12 provides the measures and indicators for each variable in the standardized three-factor solution along with maximum likelihood parameter estimates. The associated latent variable correlation matrix is provided in Table 13.

**Statistical analyses and results.** Data were first examined for error outliers using the outlier labeling rule (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2013; Hoaglin & Iglewicz, 1987; Hoaglin, Iglewicz, & Tukey, 1986). I originally identified 14 outliers for the variable of employer reputation; however, upon individual examination of each case, I retained the observations as interesting outliers because they appeared to be part of valid responses. There was no significant difference in the time it took participants to complete the survey based on the experimental condition they were assigned, $F(2) = 1.10$, $ns$. After finalizing the sample, I performed ordinary least squares regression analyses to test Hypotheses 4a and 4b. Bivariate correlations for the variables used in the regression analyses are presented in Table 14.

Employer familiarity and employer image were the dependent variables for the two OLS regression models used to test Hypothesis 4a, where the independent variables were the company web sources, the company website, the corporate career website, and social network sites. The model that regressed employer image on these variables included employer familiarity as a control variable. Employer reputation was the dependent variable for the OLS regression model
Table 12. Factor Loadings for Employer Knowledge Measures, Standardized Solution

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<th>Measures and items</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<td>Employer Familiarity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>famil2</td>
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<tr>
<td>famil3</td>
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<tr>
<td>famil4</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Image</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>image1</td>
<td>0.52</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>image2</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>image5</td>
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<td>image6</td>
<td>0.53</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>image7</td>
<td>0.48</td>
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<td>image8</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>image9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>image10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Reputation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>rep1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>rep3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>rep4</td>
<td>0.71</td>
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</table>

Table 13. Employer Knowledge Factor Correlation Matrix

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employer Familiarity</th>
<th>Employer Image</th>
<th>Employer Reputation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Employer Familiarity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Image</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Reputation</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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Table 14. Individual Perspective (Part A) Bivariate Pearson Correlations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Employer Familiarity</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Employer Image</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>(.88)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Employer Reputation</td>
<td>-.62**</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
<td>(.82)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Company Website</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Corporate Career Website</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Social Network Site Brand Profiles</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01. Cronbach alphas appear on the diagonal in parentheses.
N = 397
used to test Hypothesis 4b, where the independent variables were the company web sources and employer familiarity was entered as a control variable.

A test of the first full OLS regression model, where employer familiarity was the dependent variable, was statistically significant, $F(3, 8.14), p < .01$, indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate employer familiarity (see Table 14). Approximately 5 percent of the variance in employer familiarity was explained by the independent variables, as indicated by the adjusted R square (.05). Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model statistics are shown with associated significance levels in Table 15. Exposure to the company website ($\beta = .85$, $p < .05$), the corporate career website ($\beta = 1.11$, $p < .01$), and social network sites ($\beta = 1.39$, $p = .001$) were all positive and significant predictors of employer familiarity. Employer familiarity was higher for those exposed to the corporate career website than those exposed to the company website, but was highest for those exposed to the company’s SNS brand profiles. Exposure to the company website increased employer familiarity by .85 points, followed by exposure to the corporate career website that increased familiarity by 1.11 points and exposure to the SNS brand profiles that increased familiarity by 1.29 points. These results partially support Hypothesis 4a that stated that employer familiarity for job seekers exposed to an organization’s social network site brand profiles will be higher than that of those exposed to the organization’s company website but lower than that of those exposed to the organization’s corporate career website.

A test of the second full OLS regression model, where employer image was the dependent variable, was statistically significant, $F(4, 18.98), p < .001$, indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate employer image (see Table 16). Approximately 16 percent of the variance in employer image was explained by the independent variables, as indicated by the adjusted R square (.16). Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model statistics are
Table 15. Regressions Predicting Employer Familiarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Fit Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>10.02**</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Website</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>0.85*</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Career Website</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>1.11**</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network Site</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>1.39**</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Profiles</td>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F$                                  | 8.14**  |
$R^2$                                | 0.06    |
Adjusted $R^2$                       | 0.05    |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

N = 397
### Table 16. Regressions Predicting Employer Image and Employer Reputation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1 (Employer image)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2 (Employer reputation)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Fit Statistic</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>29.64**</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>6.34**</td>
<td>33.4**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Website</td>
<td>1.14*</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Career Website</td>
<td>1.62*</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network Site Brand Profiles</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Familiarity</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>18.99**</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.81**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01
N = 397
shown with associated significance levels in Table 16. Exposure to the company website ($\beta = 1.14, \ p < .05$), exposure to the corporate career website ($\beta = 1.62, \ p < .05$), and employer familiarity ($\beta = .52, \ p < .05$) were all positive and significant predictors of employer image. As expected, exposure to the corporate career website significantly influenced employer image, increasing it by 1.62 points. Exposure to the company website also increased employer image, although by only 1.14 points. These results indicate that, while controlling for employer familiarity, exposure to the corporate career website had a greater impact on employer image than exposure to the company website. However, since social media was not a significant predictor of employer image, these results only partially support Hypothesis 4a, which stated that employer image for job seekers exposed to an organization’s social network site brand profiles will be higher than that of those exposed to the organization’s company website but lower than that of those exposed to the organization’s corporate career website.

A test of the third full OLS regression model, where employer reputation was the dependent variable, was statistically significant, $F(8, \ 30.50), \ p < .01$, indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate employer reputation (see Table 16). Approximately 26 percent of the variance in employer reputation was explained by the independent variables, as indicated by the adjusted $R^2$ (.26). Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model statistics are shown with associated significance levels in Table 16. The control variable, employer familiarity ($\beta = .33, \ p < .001$), was a positive and significant predictor of employer reputation. Given that exposure to the corporate career website, the company website, and social network sites were not significant, Hypothesis 4b was not supported because its prediction was that employer reputation would be more positive for job seekers exposed to an organization’s
social network site brand profiles than for those exposed to the organization’s company website and those exposed to the organization’s corporate career website.

**Study 2b—Individual Perspective**

*Statistical analyses and results.* The Time 2 sample (n = 167) was used in logistic and OLS regression analyses to test Hypotheses 5-11. Due to the insufficient variance in the hypothesized dependent variable, connection to an organization on SNSs for reasons related to job search (only eight Time 2 participants had made a connection to the organization for reasons related to job search), the broader variable, *connection to an organization on SNSs*, was regressed on the independent variables. Since people connect to organization on SNSs for a variety of reasons beyond job search (see related survey items in Appendix G), this broader variable was expected to be less correlated to the independent variables of interest and, therefore, contributes to very conservative tests of the hypotheses. It was still, however, expected to be related to the predictor variables because there was evidence of crossover between exposure to consumer marketing (for example) and recruitment activity (Collins, 2007).

The dependent variable was regressed on the following predictors: organizational attraction, application intentions, application submission, job search, and the interaction of job search with each of organizational attraction, application intentions, and application submission. (For the interactions, organizational attraction and job search variables were centered; the application intentions variable was already centered.) I also used a series of control variables in the model, including social network site experience, age, gender, education, and U.S. citizenship. Bivariate correlations for the variables used in the regression analyses are presented in Table 17.
Table 17. Individual Perspective (Part B) Bivariate Pearson Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Social Network Site Connection</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Organizational Attraction</td>
<td></td>
<td>.21** (.74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Application Intentions</td>
<td></td>
<td>.28** .66** (.84)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Application Submission</td>
<td></td>
<td>.19* 0.07 0.09 —</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Preparatory Job Search</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.02 0.09 0.13 0.07 (.80)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Active Job Search</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05 0.13 .20* 0.13 .90** (.83)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Social Network Site Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07 0.05 -0.03 0.05 0.05 0.06 —</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.1 0.05 -0.06 -0.02 -.16* -.19* -.21** —</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.13 -0.12 -0.12 0.08 0.01 0.03 0.06 -0.01 —</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Some College Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.06 0.04 0.1 0.03 0.11 0.11 0 -.23** 0.07 —</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Associate’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06 0.06 0.11 -0.07 0.07 0.13 -0.05 -.25** -0.12 -.21** —</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06 0.03 -0.03 0.03 0.02 -0.01 0.1 0.18 0.11 -.35** -.21** —</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.09 -0.1 -0.09 0.03 -.16* -.17* -.02 .27** -0.09 -.35** -.21** -.35** —</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Doctorate Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01 0.1 -0.07 -0.04 0.09 0.05 0.04 0.13 -0.05 -0.12 -0.07 -0.11 -0.11 —</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. U.S. Citizen</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.01 .16* 0.11 -0.08 0.05 0.07 0.04 -0.05 -0.14 -.15* -.03 -0.03 0.16 0.02 —</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01; N = 167. Cronbach alphas appear on the diagonal in parentheses.
Due to the use of a single job search variable rather than separate preparatory and active job search variables, the hypotheses were tested based on the conceptual model in Figure 2. A test of the full logistic regression model was statistically significant against a constant-only model, indicating that the predictors together reliably estimate a connection to an organization on SNSs (see Table 18). The model produced a significant Chi-square statistic, $\chi^2(16) = 31.61$, $p = .01$ according to the likelihood ratio Chi-square test, and a non-significant Chi-square statistic according to the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test $H(8) = 12.41$, $ns$. Compared to a constant-only model, the full model improves the predictability of job seekers’ connection to an organization on SNSs by 4.3 percentage points, or approximately 5 percent. Regression coefficients, standard errors, Wald statistics, and fit statistics are shown with associated significance levels in Table 18. Application intentions ($p < .01$) and having some college education but no degree ($p < .05$) reliably predict job seekers’ connection to organizations on SNSs when estimated with the other variables. An increase in application intentions by one standard deviation made job seekers 2.51 times more likely to have made a connection to the company on a SNS. Since the application intentions variable was positively and significantly related to a connection to an organization on SNSs, Hypothesis 6 is supported, which stated that job seekers’ application intentions with an organization are positively associated with a connection to the organization on social network sites. Hypothesis 5 was not supported because organizational attraction did not reliably predict job seekers’ connections to an organization on SNSs.

Hypotheses 8-11 were not supported because the interaction effects of job search with organizational attraction (H8) and application intentions (H9) did not predict a connection to organizations on SNSs. Application submission (H10) was also not a significant predictor of a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td><strong>SE</strong></td>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Attraction</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Intentions</td>
<td>.92**</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Submission</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Job Search * Application Intentions</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Job Search * Application Submission</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network Site Experience</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.86</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>-2.31*</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>-1.08</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>-1.57</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Citizen</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likelihood Ratio $\chi^2$: 31.61**  
Hosmer & Lemeshow $\chi^2$: 12.41  
Cox & Snell $R^2$: 0.17  
Nagelkerke $R^2$: 0.31  

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01; N = 167
connection to organizations on SNSs, nor was the interaction of job search with application submission (H11).

To test for the mediating relationship of application intentions hypothesized between organizational attraction and a connection to an organization on SNSs (H7), I performed a series of regression analyses following the mediating testing method outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). First, the application intentions variable was regressed on organizational attraction. This model was significant, $F(1, 126.54), p < .001$, indicating that organizational attraction ($\beta = .26, p < .001$) reliably estimates application intentions. Second, connection to an organization on SNSs was regressed on organizational attraction. This model was also significant, $\chi^2(1) = 7.88, p < .01$, indicating that organizational attraction ($\beta = .27, p < .01$) reliably predicts connection to an organization on SNSs. Third, connection to an organization on SNSs was regressed on application intentions. This model too was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 13.13, p < .001$, indicating that application intentions ($\beta = .83, p = .001$) reliably predict connection to an organization on SNSs. Finally, connection to an organization on SNSs was regressed on both organizational attraction and application intentions. This model was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 13.62, p = .001$; however, in this model, the application intentions variable was significant ($\beta = .71, p < .05$) but the organizational attraction variable was not significant. These results partially support Hypothesis 7 because they indicated that application intentions fully mediate, rather than partially mediate, the relationship between organizational attraction and a connection to an organization on SNSs.

Given the few number of Time 2 participants who had submitted an application to the assigned company, I tested an alternative logistic regression model with the application submission variable removed. (The alternative conceptual model is presented in Figure 10.)

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Figure 10. Alternative Model of Job Seekers’ Connection to an Organization on Social Network Sites
This model was also statistically significant against a constant-only model, indicating that the predictors with application submission also together reliably estimate a connection to an organization on SNSs (see Table 18). The model produced a significant Chi-square statistic, $\chi^2(14) = 25.70, p = .05$, according to the likelihood ratio Chi-square test and non-significant Chi-square statistic according to the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test $H(8) = 10.10, ns$. Compared to a constant-only model, the full model improves the predictability of job seekers’ connection to an organization on SNSs by 2.5 percentage points, or approximately 3 percent. Regression coefficients, standard errors, Wald statistics, and fit statistics are shown with associated significance levels in Table 18. Application intentions ($p < .01$) and having some college education but no degree ($p < .05$) reliably predict job seekers’ connection to organizations on SNSs when estimated with the other variables. An increase in application intentions by one standard deviation made job seekers 2.32 times more likely to have made a connection to the company on a SNS. Because the application intentions variable was positively and significantly related to a connection to an organization on SNSs, Hypothesis 6 was supported. Organizational attraction did not reliably predict job seekers’ connections to an organization on SNSs, so Hypothesis 5 was not supported.
CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

The results of Part I of this research provided support for the idea that a) organizations have re-invented social network sites for use in recruiting employee candidates, b) the observability of social network sites as a recruitment source is significantly dependent on how they are used by organizations, and c) the degree to which SNSs are being used in recruitment varies widely across organizations and across SNS platforms. LinkedIn is clearly being used for recruitment more than the SNSs that have a general networking purpose (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, and Google Plus), which is likely due to the platform’s professional networking purpose. Given the professional orientation of LinkedIn, its use for recruiting represents a less dramatic re-invention of SNSs than does the use for recruiting of general purpose SNS platforms. My results supported the hypotheses that re-invention of SNSs for recruiting is dependent on the number of SNS platforms adopted by organizations and the extent to which the organizations use their corporate career websites. These finding are both intuitive and supported by the diffusion of innovations theory, particularly the compatibility dimension of the theory. First, as the number of SNS platforms that are adopted increases, organizations have a greater chance of settling on one or more of these platforms as valuable to their recruitment function. Second, the use of SNSs for recruiting is compatible with the use of a corporate career website because internet traffic can be directed between the two outlets and the corporate career website is required for the companies to accept applications from candidates.

The findings of Part I of this research also indicated that as organizations increase the number of uses of SNSs, the observability of them as recruiting sources decreases. This is important to the extent that social recruiting may be being overshadowed by other uses of SNSs,
mainly marketing. The observability of SNSs as recruiting sources also decreases as the number of SNSs adopted by organizations increases. This means that organizations are likely concentrating their social recruiting on a limited number of the SNSs they have adopted (especially LinkedIn). This finding has important implications for reaching candidates because the more social recruiting is concentrated to a single site, the more it will mimic a corporate career website and the less likely it will be to reach passive job seekers. The evidence that a) social recruiting becomes less visible as a function of an increasing number of SNS uses, and b) separating the use of SNS platforms by functions (e.g., LinkedIn for recruitment and Twitter for marketing) decreases the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources, has tremendous implications for organizations interested in evaluating the effectiveness and return on the investment of social recruiting.

Results of Part II of this research provided some evidence that SNSs occupy a space somewhere between recruitment and non-recruitment sources of organizational information. In relation to job seekers’ employer familiarity, those who viewed the company’s SNS brand profiles subsequently had higher employer familiarity than those who viewed the company website or those who viewed the corporate career website. In contrast, viewing a company’s SNS brand profiles did not significantly contribute to the employer image or employer reputation as reported by job seekers.

The result that viewing a company’s SNS brand profiles did not significantly contribute to job seekers’ employer image was consistent with the findings in Part I of this research, which indicated that the observability of SNSs as recruiting sources can be incredibly variable across companies and across SNS platforms. The indicators that form employer image are very specific (regarding pay, benefits, job advancement, etc.), so unless a company is using its SNS accounts
for a substantial amount for recruiting, it is not unusual that information which could contribute
to employer image may not necessarily be observable on the company’s SNSs brand profiles.

The same logic applies to employer reputation as to employer image, where unless an
organization is posting information about its reputation as an employer (or others are
contributing such content to the company’s brand profiles), it may not be apparent how others
view the employer. In addition, the employer reputation construct requires individuals to make a
judgment about how others view the employer, which may be problematic for people who are
not very familiar with the company because they might not understand the organizational culture
that the employer offers, for example, and therefore would have difficulty assessing employer
reputation accurately.

The final portion of this research provided evidence that application intentions
significantly contribute to whether or not job seekers make a connection to organizations on
SNSs regardless of the underlying purpose for making such a connection. This result is
interesting because it provides some evidence of an overlap in job seekers’ consumer preferences
and their application intentions with a company. This was consistent with the finding of Collins
(2007), who found a positive association between job seekers’ knowledge of company’s products
and/or services and their application intentions.

**Contributions of the Research**

The results of this research add to the literature on recruitment and job seeker behavior
theoretically, empirically, and practically. Overall, the contribution of this research is theoretical
and empirical support for the idea that social network sites operate in a fundamentally different
way than traditional e-recruiting sources.
Theoretical contributions. The present research aimed to contribute theoretically in a few ways. First, to investigate the adoption, implementation, and use of SNSs by organizations, I integrated the diffusion of innovations theory (Rogers, 2003) into the framework that Bigoness and Perreault (1981) developed to study innovators. I employed this joint perspective to determine how the observability of organizations re-inventing SNSs for use in recruiting may influence job seeker attitudes and behaviors.

Bigoness and Perreault’s (1981) framework was used to broaden the conceptualization of the observability dimension of the diffusion of innovations theory by defining it as a dimension that can vary based on the innovation’s implementation. With the broadened definition of observability, the present research further contributes to the understanding of the diffusion of innovations theory by examining the observability of innovation use following its re-invention. More specifically, this study delineated how the observability of an innovation can be determined not only as a characteristic of the innovation itself but also as a characteristic of its implementation for both general and/or specific recruiting purposes. This is an extension of the diffusion of innovations theory because it broadens Rogers’ (2003) explanation of observability as a one-dimensional characteristic of an innovation. This extension is important to the essence of the theory—to explain how innovations are adopted and implemented across populations—because the proliferation of re-invention for a specific purpose (such as the use of SNSs for recruiting) may subsequently impact the observability of that innovation, which can further drive its adoption and use. This extension to a dimension of the diffusion of innovations theory is a second contribution of this study and one that should be useful not only for the present research but also for further research on the diffusion of modern innovations.
Third, this research updated the organizational information (sources) construct of the employer brand equity theory, offering resolution to the issue that Web 2.0 applications do not fit neatly into the recruitment and non-recruitment dichotomous categorization of organization information sources, as originally presented by Cable and Turban (2001). To address the deficiency, I recommend a categorization of information sources along a non-recruitment/recruitment continuum that is dependent on the sources’ use. The proposed classification is especially appropriate for SNSs and other Web 2.0 applications because their purpose is not definitive but rather varies based on how the technology is used by the organizations that have adopted it.

Drawing on guidelines outlined by Whetten (1989), utilizing employer brand equity theory to explain the use of SNSs in recruiting and job search results is a value-added theoretical contribution because the theory is applied under qualitatively different conditions—those embodied by Web 2.0 technology. The dimensions of Web 2.0 applications, like social network sites, are fundamentally different from those of both traditional recruiting and established e-recruiting (Web 1.0) sources; therefore, extending the application of the employer brand equity theory to include Web 2.0 conditions qualitatively changes the boundaries of the theory. Under these expanded boundaries, I critiqued the theory, which resulted in an alteration to the information source construct of the employer brand equity theory. This critique improved the theory because of the proposed remedy, a change in the specification of the information source construct from a dichotomous category to a classification along a continuum.

A final theoretical contribution of this study was the integration of signaling theory into brand equity theory to explain the predictors of a new recruiting outcome variable—a connection to organizations on SNSs. Theoretically, the primary job search-related reasons that job seekers
were expected to connect to organizations on SNSs were to access organizational information and signal organizational interest and/or personal characteristics to the employer. Signaling theory is important in this case because, while brand equity theory can predict a job seeker’s connection to organizations on SNSs in order to access employer information, signaling theory is necessary to predict the connection to organizations on SNSs when undertaken to signal employers—behavior that is likely to happen both before and after application submission occurs.

**Empirical contributions.** This research also made several empirical contributions. First, evidence was provided that supports the idea that organizations have re-invented SNSs for use in recruiting employee candidates, and that such use varies widely and is associated with other recruiting practices (i.e., the use of a corporate career website) and alternative uses of SNSs. Second, exposure to SNSs positively influences job seekers’ employer familiarity, more than exposure to company websites and corporate career websites. Last, job seekers’ application intentions are positively associated with individuals making a connection to organizations on SNSs, regardless of the reason the connection was made, job search-related or not.

**Practical contributions.** The contribution of this research to practice is, first, an understanding of how large organizations are implementing SNSs, generally as an administrative innovation and particularly as a source of e-recruitment. Second, this study provided practitioners with a number of considerations that should be made by recruiters who currently use or plan to use SNSs as an e-recruiting source. For example, this study outlined how recruiting-related SNS posting behavior should change based on the number of uses of SNSs pursued by organizations. A final benefit to practice is specific to those companies in the business of SNSs. As research continues to reveal the diverse ways organizations use SNSs, it is
necessary that companies designing and maintaining these systems continually keep organizational users in mind.

The contribution of the research to society at large is the validation of the organizational use of SNSs as an e-recruiting source. If organizations use SNSs as a recruiting medium, job seekers may benefit by being able to connect better with employers and to search for job openings that may otherwise not be apparent to them. Confirmation that social recruiting is a valid source of employee recruitment would mean that information on job availability could be readily available to SNS users, and this would immediately translate into a substantial increase in the pool of potential applicants with access to this type of information.

**Theoretical and Practical Importance of Examining Social Recruiting and Connections to Organizations on SNSs**

Theoretically investigating social recruiting is a necessary step in establishing Web 2.0 applications as a legitimate recruiting source and providing an understanding of the difference in value that Web 2.0 applications, like SNSs, provide over traditional e-recruiting sources. I endeavored to do this in Part I of the present research by first proposing an expansion of Lee’s (2007) e-recruiting source classification system to include Web 2.0 applications. The addition of Web 2.0 applications as an e-recruiting source properly sets the stage for studying the difference in the observability of such applications as sources of recruitment within the context of their use for other purposes. The specification of innovations as partially a function of a dynamic observability based on their use is a novel way to look at innovations, especially e-recruiting sources.

Theoretically examining the use of SNSs as part of a job search, which I undertook in Part II of this research, is important because neither brand equity theory nor signaling theory
alone can predict whether or not job seekers will make a connection to organizations on SNSs. For example, when job seekers have significant knowledge about an employer, they may still connect to an organization on SNSs as a means of signaling their interest in the organization. The opposite may also be true: that job seekers indicate their interest in an employer by some other means (e.g., accepting an interview with the organization), but connect to the organization on SNSs to continue learning about the employer and evaluate their fit with the organization.

The research embodied by Part II is also important practically because there can be value for job seekers who make a connection to organizations on SNSs. Connections to organizations on SNSs may allow applicants a means by which to a) access information that increases their employer knowledge and allows them to prepare for subsequent steps in the application process and continuously evaluate their fit with organizations, and b) create a favorable impression with recruiters using their SNS connection as a signal of favorable personal characteristics (like social media proficiency) and interest in the employer. Both of these advantages are unique to social recruiting and cannot be accomplished efficiently (if at all) via conventional e-recruitment sources because such sources are built on Web 1.0 technology, which only allows one-way communication. Sources that rely on Web 1.0 technology only have the capability to allow employers to signal job seekers, but not vice versa.

Given the potential uses as part of a job search for job seekers making a connection to organizations on SNSs, this research proposed a connection to organizations on SNSs as a new recruitment outcome. A connection to organizations on SNSs is a particularly important behavior because it has valuable implications for job seekers and recruiters in the screening phase that follows recruitment, and because it is a behavior that has meaning whether carried out before or after an application is submitted. Because job seekers cannot feasibly expand their
SNS networks indefinitely (Donath, 2007), including an employer in their network by connecting to organizations on SNSs indicates a level of interest and, therefore, holds meaning that may be valuable in the screening and selection process.

Connections to organizations on SNSs are also valuable to job seekers because they create more job search efficiency than has been possible through traditional e-recruiting sources. Specifically, upon making SNS connections to organizations (whether before or after they apply for a job), job seekers can subsequently view, on a single platform and in a single information stream, the content posted by these hand-picked organizations. This is especially advantageous because these platforms are not simply used by organizations to post job openings, but are utilized for broad recruitment activities (as evidenced in Part I), such as relating organizational culture information. This extensive use of SNSs for recruitment can aid job seekers and applicants in the decision to opt in or out of an applicant pool through the relation of information that allows them to form and continuously alter their perceptions of personal fit with organizations. One caveat to the benefits of making SNS connections, however, is that because SNSs are used for multiple purposes by people, resources of time and cognitive demand are required of these individuals for each connection they make on SNSs (Donath, 2007). Therefore, job seekers should be, and likely are, deliberate in their decisions to connect to organizations on SNS platforms. The time and cognitive demands required of job seekers to maintain a connection with an organization on SNSs means that such a connection can operate as a relatively reliable signal of employer interest. In addition, employers recognizing the limits that job seekers experience on SNSs is important so they can work to use SNSs in a way that convinces job seekers that making (and maintaining) a connection with the organization on these platforms is worthwhile.
From the employer’s perspective, the ability to predict individuals’ connections to organizations on SNSs is important because SNS platforms can be used as a source for recruiting both active and passive job candidates, depending on the nature of these connections. The SNS connections themselves can be valuable because they can operate as an effective means through which to communicate employer information to individuals, thus affecting employer knowledge and ultimately driving their willingness to apply for jobs with the organization. The knowledge that job seekers are connecting to organizations on SNSs for reasons related to job search should encourage organizations to operate on these platforms in a way that makes their employer brand attractive.

**Implications**

This research has several implications, especially for organizational users of SNSs and social media. First, organizations need to align their use of SNSs (and social media, more broadly) with that of individuals. In order to attract individuals to make a connection to the organization on SNSs, the content that is posted to its SNS brand profiles must be attractive to individual users of the platforms. Different platforms may require different types of content, depending on the (intended) audience.

Second, since individual SNS users can be attracted to an organization and make a connection to it on SNSs for a variety of reasons, organizing what, when, and how content is posted to a company’s SNS brand profiles requires careful planning and strategy. To this end, substantial interdepartmental coordination is necessary when multiple groups are to use SNS accounts because the content posted by one department directly influences the presentation of content posted by another.
Third, while the use of SNSs for recruiting should be observable to job seekers, organizations also run the risk that social recruiting will become isolated from other uses of social media if and when they use these platforms exclusively for recruiting. This is problematic because, in this case, SNSs will lose their unique value as recruiting sources by simply simulating more traditional e-recruiting sources. For example, if a SNS such as LinkedIn is primarily used by an organization to post job openings, then it is acting more like a job board, and those who make and keep a connection to the organization on SNSs will likely only be active job seekers. This would limit one of the primary advantages of social recruiting—reaching passive job seekers.

Finally, particularly through the qualitative portions of this research process, it became abundantly clear that using social media requires constant involvement to understand its functionality and interact effectively with its users, for social recruiting and otherwise. Especially compared to Web 1.0 applications, social media poses unique challenges to institutional users because, not only do social media platforms operate differently from one another (and from Web 1.0), but they also undergo frequent changes—in their privacy settings, the features they offer, and their compatibility with other platforms and devices, to name a few. In addition, organizations must also decide whether or not to adopt new social media platforms as they are introduced. These decisions should be undertaken strategically to determine if the marginal benefits to adopting another social media platform are worth the resources required to manage additional social media brand profiles. In the same vein, organizations must also develop strategies to decide if and when to abandon a social media platform and how to manage severing the associated ties.
Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of Part I of this research was that other potential variables were not included in the models that could have explained the variance in social recruiting by organizations. Future research could certainly extend the boundary conditions of investigation to incorporate additional predictor and/or control variables into models designed to estimate the adoption and use of Web 2.0 platforms like SNSs. For example, additional organizational structure variables could be captured using proxies for diversity that may be useful in estimating social media behavior at the organizational level—for example, age and expertise of the top management team members, ratio of females to males in companies’ top management teams, and the gender ratio for the organization at large.

A shortcoming of Part II of this research became a lack of variance in the application submission variable because only 17 (of 397) Time 1 and six (of 167) Time 2 participants had ever applied to the assigned company. The lack of variance in the dependent variable was also a problem because it limited my ability to isolate job seekers’ connections to organization on SNSs as job search-related reasons from other reasons they made such connections. Looking forward, this portion of the research can be used as a pilot study for a subsequent, larger-scale data collection undertaken in partnership with one or more organizations that will ensure access to a substantial number of potential participants who have applied with a company.

The present research is unique because it incorporated multiple SNSs; however, it may not be generalizable to newer SNS platforms (e.g., Instagram, Pinterest). Future research will necessarily have to study other SNSs and Web 2.0 applications that become popular among businesses and job seekers.
Two major advantages to this research can be considered tradeoffs with some of its limitations. First, in Part I, I used the content of actual SNS posts to assess social recruiting rather than asking organizational representatives about the extent of their social recruiting. Second, in Part II, I used a quasi-experimental design to evaluate a causal relationship in a way that comported with reality and with the way people use the internet to evaluate organizations and employers (e.g., navigating to multiple webpages/website).

Future research can be undertaken to compare the content of social media posts to the claims that organizational representatives make about the content. In addition, it would also be interesting to understand the internal dynamics of companies’ social media management, especially how organizations balance the use of shared social media accounts across departments.

Another area for future research must be to study the congruence between organizations’ social recruiting intentions and job seekers’ perceptions and uses of SNSs generally and as part of their job search specifically. If organizations are especially interested in reaching passive job seekers through social recruiting, it may be more appropriate for them to use general purpose SNSs rather than professional SNSs, such as LinkedIn, because passive job seekers likely frequent general purpose SNSs more often than professional networking SNSs.

In relation to social media use by job seekers, one of the most pressing questions for future research seems to be: Do applicants assess the desirability of organizations on SNSs by reviewing their brand profiles? This question is important because its answer should have bearing on how SNSs are used by organizations in the future, and what level of human and financial capital is dedicated to these platforms.
Conclusion

Organizations are engaging in social recruiting, yet the observability of the practice varies significantly across companies, depending on the number and type of SNS platforms adopted. While the number of SNS platforms generally increases the likelihood that organizations will use SNSs for recruiting, it appears that companies are using these platforms differently. For example, companies are more likely to use LinkedIn for recruiting and Twitter for alternative purposes, such as marketing. This is an important finding because, in order for SNSs to be effective in recruiting, they need to be an obvious source of employer and job information, and at the same time allow these platforms to be simultaneously used for other organizational purposes. This concurrent use of SNSs for recruiting and other purposes is important because exposure to companies’ social network site brand profiles was positively related to employer familiarity, and application intentions were positively associated with making a connection to organization on SNSs, regardless of the reasons for the connection (e.g., entertainment, employer interest, and/or consumerism). These findings point to two important distinctions of social media use in recruiting, compared to traditional e-recruiting sources. First, because single social media brand profiles are utilized for multiple organizational purposes simultaneously, social media can easily attract passive job seekers. Second, social media allows companies to combine consumerism with recruiting so that their most loyal customers, who will often be passive job seekers, can become familiar with the company as an employer and be recruited to join the organization.
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APPENDIX A

Example of a User’s Social (Facebook) Profile
APPENDIX B

Social Network Site Information

Not initially designed for organizational use, social network sites (SNSs) mirror existing social structures and typically target either an audience interested in general social networks or those where a common interest is shared (boyd & Ellison, 2008). In addition to differences in target audience, SNSs vary in specificity of purpose. For example, Facebook has a very general purpose, that of broad social exchange; this contrasts to the more specific purpose of LinkedIn, which is professional networking, and that of YouTube, which is sharing video content.

Twitter
In a way, Twitter is a SNS of the simplest kind. Twitter’s social network agenda is general and the site does not distinguish individual and organizational users; all users sign up for equivalent accounts and can connect with others unilaterally (that is, without the approval of the person or brand with which they are connecting). Once a user has an account s/he can build and manage their network, which involves maintaining two separate lists—one list of those users which are *Followers* of the individual or organization and one list of users the individual or organization is *following*. Once individuals and organizations are connected with others in the Twitter system, they can then use the site’s platform to communicate with members of their network through *Tweets*, which is Twitter’s name for the information posted by its users. Tweets are publically visible and limited to 140 characters and are broadcast to users’ network of Followers; therefore individuals and organizations update their Followers, receive updates from those they are following, and can view tweets of those they do not follow through their Twitter account since all tweets are public. Twitter has nearly 646 million registered users and 115 million active users monthly.

Facebook
Facebook has an extensive history as a SNS; it launched as an exclusive SNS for Harvard students and has evolved into a general SNS. Between its run as a Harvard-based SNS and one open to any user, Facebook expanded first to those with educational institution email addresses and then to employees of select companies. Today Facebook can boast approximately 1.3 billion active users.9 Facebook is one SNS that provides separate account types for individuals and commercial entities. Facebook directs commercial users to “Create a Facebook Page to build a closer relationship with your audience and customers.” Facebook has more than 54 million of these pages, which are categorized by entity type.10 Facebook establishes reciprocal links between those who network. Between individuals, users are added to networks as *Friends*. When establishing a link with an organization, Facebook members add that entity to the list of users they *Like* and so become one of a number of *Likes* garnered by the organization.

A typical difference between individual and brand profiles in SNS systems like Facebook (and others) is in the functionality of the connections associated with the two. When an individual profile is connected to a brand profile the amount of information viewable and accessible on those associated individual profiles is automatically and severely limited to the brand profile

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10 https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/?ref_type=sitefooter
In other words, when connected, brand profile owners can only view limited information on individual profiles even while individual profile owners can view an incredible amount of information on brand profiles. This means that connections made between individual and brand profiles is reciprocal (the connection automatically appears as part of both parties’ network), but without equivalent access to information for the account holders/administrators. This is an important distinction because when individuals connect to an organization on Facebook and similar sites it means the organizational account administrator(s) can only view very basic information about those individuals via their profiles.

**YouTube**

Started in 2005 and purchased by Google in 2006, YouTube serves as a SNS that is centered on the specific activity of video sharing.11 With YouTube’s pre-SNS history of being a purely video sharing website, some organizations simply use the video sharing function of the site and do not actively use or promote their use of YouTube as a SNS (Peters et al., 2012). YouTube reports that each month more than 1 billion unique users visit the site.12 YouTube has thus far not distinguished between accounts set up for individuals and organizations.

**MySpace**

Though MySpace enjoyed early success among SNSs, leading in SNS popularity from mid-2006 to early 2008 (eventually being outdone by Facebook), the site has more recently suffered from decreasing membership.13 MySpace launched in 2003 as a SNS with a general purpose but quickly attracted large numbers of bands and music fans interested in a platform where they could communicate with one another (boyd & Ellison, 2008). In 2013, MySpace was re-invented to deliberately center around artists and their sharing of audio and video files with fans and followers. The site now boasts user access to a digital music library of “over 53 million tracks and videos.”14 Functionality across MySpace profiles is similar with the exception that users have the option of setting up accounts as artists, which provides them with additional functionality, like the ability to upload music.15 Since its re-invention, MySpace membership has begun to grow again, up to 36 million in late 2013, but still far from its nearly 76 million users at its peak in 2008.16,17

**LinkedIn and Xing**

LinkedIn and Xing are both SNSs with a specific focus that centers on business networking and professionalism. Although Xing launched as Open BC in the same year as LinkedIn, it has not enjoyed the same success as its counterpart. LinkedIn went public in May 2011 when the company’s initial public offering resulted in share sales at more than double their opening price in the first day of trading and a company valuation of $8.9 billion (Demos & Waters, 2011). Given their professional focus, both LinkedIn and Xing distinguish between accounts for individuals and organizations. These sites are also unlike other SNSs in that they offer premium

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11 http://www.youtube.com/t/about_youtube  
12 http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html  
13 http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/11_27/b4235053917570.htm  
14 https://myspace.com/pressroom  
16 http://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/myspace-releases-new-user-numbers/#!z7vM8  
17 http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/11_27/b4235053917570.htm
accounts with advanced features for a fee, such as greater access to recruiters and advanced search features. Additionally, these sites provide a platform for organizations to post job openings that is similar to that of internet job boards. There are 277 million registered users of LinkedIn, and “more than 3 million companies have LinkedIn Company Pages.”18 Xing has greater than 13 million users worldwide, approximately half of whom are from German-speaking countries.19

**Google Plus**

Google Plus is Google’s second attempt at success in the SNS industry, as Google’s first SNS—*Buzz*—was considered a failure.20 Google Plus was among the first SNSs to be designed with brand users, as well as individuals, in mind. The SNS distinguishes between individual and commercial users in name, but the functionality of Google Plus is the same for both types of users. With its general purpose, Google Plus has grown to 300 million monthly active users.21

18 http://press.linkedin.com/about
20 http://www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article29271.html
21 http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/google-plus-statistics/#.UyTmxvldViM
APPENDIX C

List of Companies That Make up the Sampling Frame

Abercrombie & Fitch
Accenture
Activision Blizzard
Adidas
Adobe
Advance Auto Parts
Aéropostale
Aetna
Affinia Group Intermediate Holdings
Aflac
Airtran Holdings
Alaska Air Group
Alliance Data Systems
Allianz
Amazon.Com
AMC Entertainment
American Axle & Manufacturing
American Eagle Outfitters
American Express
American National Insurance
Amerigroup
AMR
Anntaylor Stores
Apple
Armani
Arvinmeritor
Asbury Automotive Group
AT&T
Audi
Autoliv
Autonation
Autozone
Avis Budget Group
Avon Products
AXA
Bank of America Corp.
Bank of New York Mellon Corp.
Barnes & Noble
BB&T Corp.
Bed Bath & Beyond
Belk
Best Buy
Big Lots
Bj’s Wholesale Club
Black & Decker
Blackberry
Blackrock
Blockbuster
BMW
Bob Evans Farms
Bon-Ton Stores
Borders Group
Borgwarner
Boyd Gaming
BP
Brinker International
Broadridge Financial Solutions
Brown Shoe
Brown-Forman
Budweiser
Burberry
Burger King
Burger King Holdings
Burlington Coat Factory
Cabela’s
Cablevision Systems
Campbell Soup
Canon
Capital One Financial
Carlisle
Carmax
Cartier
Casey’s General Stores
Caterpillar
CBS
CC Media Holdings
Centene
Centurytel
Chanel
Charles Schwab
Charming Shoppes
Charter Communications
Children’s Place Retail Stores
Church & Dwight
Cigna
Cinemark Holdings
Circuit City Stores
Cisco
Cit Group
Citigroup
Clorox
CME Group
Coach
Coca-Cola
Coca-Cola Enterprises
Colgate-Palmolive
Collective Brands
Comcast
Comerica
Conagra Foods
Conseco
Constellation Brands
Continental Airlines
Cooper Tire & Rubber
Cooper-Standard Holdings
Costco Wholesale
Coventry Health Care
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store
Cuna Mutual Group
Dana Holding
Danone
Darden Restaurants
Dean Foods
Del Monte Foods
Dell
Delphi
Delta Air Lines
Dick’s Sporting Goods
Dillard’s
Directv Group
Discover Financial Services
Discovery Communications
Dish Network
Disney
Dole Food
Dollar General
Dollar Tree
Dr Pepper Snapple Group
DST Systems
Dun & Bradstreet
Duracell
E*Trade Financial
Ebay
Embarq
Energizer Holdings
Equifax
Estée Lauder
Exide Technologies
Expedia
Family Dollar Stores
Fastenal
Ferrari
Fidelity National Information Services
Fifth Third Bancorp
First Data
First Horizon National Corp.
Fiserv
Fleetwood Enterprises
Flowers Foods
Foot Locker
Ford Motor
Fortune Brands
Franklin Resources
Frontier Communications
Furniture Brands International
Gamestop
Gap
GE
General Mills
General Motors
Genworth Financial
Gillette
GMAC
Goldman Sachs Group
Goodyear Tire & Rubber
Google
Group 1 Automotive
Guardian Life Ins. Co. of America
Gucci
H&M
H.J. Heinz
Harley-Davidson
Harrah’s Entertainment
Hayes Lemmerz
Health Net
Healthspring
Herman Miller
Hermes
Hershey
Hertz Global Holdings
Hewlett-Packard
HNI
Home Depot
Honda
Hormel Foods
HSBC
HSN
Humana
Huntington Bancshares
Hyundai
IAC/InterActiveCorp
IBM
Icahn Enterprises
IDT
IKEA
Intel
Interactive Brokers Group
Interstate Bakeries
J.C. Penney
J.M. Smucker
J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.
Jack In The Box
Jarden
Jetblue Airways
Jo-Ann Stores
Johnson & Johnson
Johnson Controls
Jones Financial
Kellogg
Keycorp
KFC
Kimberly-Clark
Kleenex
Kohl’s
Kraft Foods
Lancome
Land O’Lakes
Las Vegas Sands
Leap Wireless International
Lear
Legg Mason
Leggett & Platt
Lender Processing Services
Level 3 Communications
Lexus
Liberty Global
Liberty Media
Limited Brands
Lincoln National
Lithia Motors
Live Nation
LKQ
L’Oreal
Louis Vuitton
Lowe’s
M&T Bank Corp.
Macy’s
Marlboro
Marriott International
Marshall & Ilsley Corp.
Masco
Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance
Mastercard
McCormick
McDonald’s
Medical Mutual of Ohio
Men’s Wearhouse
Mercedes-Benz
Merrill Lynch
Metlife
Metropcs Communications
MGM Mirage
Michael Foods
Michaels Stores
Microsoft
Modine Manufacturing
Moet & Chandon
Molina Healthcare
Molson Coors Brewing
Morgan Stanley
MTV
Mutual of America Life
Mutual of Omaha Insurance
Nasdaq Omx Group
National Life Group
Navistar International
NCR
Neiman Marcus
Nescafe
Nestle
New York Life Insurance
Newell Rubbermaid
News Corp.
Nii Holdings
Nike
Nintendo
Nivea
Nokia
Nordstrom
Northern Trust Corp.
Northwestern Mutual
Nyse Euronext
Office Depot
Officemax
Oracle
O’Reilly Automotive
Oshkosh
Paccar
Pacific Life
Panasonic
Pantry
PC Connection
Penn National Gaming
Penske Automotive Group
Pep Boys
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<th>Company Name</th>
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<td>Protective Life</td>
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<td>Prudential Financial</td>
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<td>Ralcorp Holdings</td>
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<td>Raymond James Financial</td>
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<td>Regal Entertainment Group</td>
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<td>Regions Financial</td>
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<td>Regis</td>
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<td>Rent A Center</td>
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<td>Southwest Airlines</td>
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<td>Spectrum Brands</td>
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<td>Sprint Nextel</td>
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<td>Stancorp Financial</td>
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<td>Stanley Works</td>
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<td>Staples</td>
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<td>Starwood Hotels &amp; Resorts</td>
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<td>State Street Corp.</td>
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<td>Steelcase</td>
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<td>Sun Microsystems</td>
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<td>Sungard Data Systems</td>
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<td>Suntrust Banks</td>
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<td>Susser Holdings</td>
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<td>Synovus Financial Corp.</td>
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<td>Systemax</td>
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<td>T. Rowe Price</td>
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<td>Target</td>
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<td>TD Ameritrade</td>
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<td>Telephone &amp; Data Systems</td>
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<td>Tenneco</td>
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<td>Thomson Reuters</td>
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<td>Thor Industries</td>
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<td>Thrivent Financial For Lutherans</td>
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<td>TIAA-CREF</td>
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<td>Tiffany &amp; Co</td>
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<td>TJX</td>
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<td>Torchmark</td>
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<td>Total System Services</td>
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<td>Toyota</td>
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<td>Toys “R” Us</td>
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<td>Tractor Supply.</td>
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Travelcenters Of America
TRW Automotive Holdings
Tupperware Brands
U.S. Bancorp
UAL
UBS
UnitedHealth Group
Universal American
Univision Communications
Unum Group
UPS
Urban Outfitters
US Airways Group
Verizon Communications
Viacom
Virgin Media
Visa
Visteon
Volkswagen
Wabco Holdings
Wal-Mart Stores
Warner Music Group
Wellcare Health Plans
Wellpoint
Wells Fargo
Wendy’s/Arby’s Group
Western & Southern Financial Group
Western Union
Williams-Sonoma
Windstream
Wrigley
Wyndham Worldwide
Wynn Resorts
Xerox
Yahoo!
Yum Brands
Zale
Zara
Zions Bancorp.
APPENDIX D

Qualitative Coding Classification Scheme

Coding for companies’ number of uses of social network sites was calculated using the highest order categories, of which there were eight. Since the use of social network sites for recruitment was the primary interest of the study, the subcategories of the recruitment category are also listed.

MARKETING

CONSUMER RELATIONS

INVESTOR RELATIONS

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED BRAND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION SHARING

RECRUITMENT

Employer Reputation

Jobs
  Job Post
  Job attributes

Recruitment Event

Student/Graduate Opportunity

Organizational Culture Information

Staffing News

General Job Search or Career Information
APPENDIX E

Evaluation of Corporate Career Website Features

Corresponding with Study 1’s main data collection, the corporate career website features of 141 companies (three companies did not have corporate career websites) were evaluated over a period of approximately two weeks. This data collection was accomplished with the help of another doctoral student who has expertise in information systems and social media.

In order to evaluate all features of the corporate career websites, including those of their online application system, all the steps in submitting an application were taken for each of the companies. In using the application systems, there were often several choices to make regarding the jobs to search and apply for. When given the choice, “working professional” jobs were chosen over jobs for students or “recent grads.” Additionally, corporate jobs were chosen over store/hourly jobs. Finally, jobs in the United States were searched if given the option alongside international locations. Finally, English was chosen on sites if there were multiple language options.

Companies’ corporate career websites were evaluated for their function features, or those that increase “the ability to interact and navigate a website and use it to achieve a goal” (Cober et al., 2004: 203). The websites usability consists of both navigability and interactivity. In this context, the navigability dimension is defined as “the job seeker’s ability to find information,” and the interactivity dimension is “the process by which elements of a recruitment website foster a relationship between the job seeker and the organization” (Cober et al., 2011: 215). In combination, 32 features were assessed (seven navigability features and 25 interactivity features), and are listed in bold type below, followed by a brief explanation of each. The first 19 features are a combination of those function features (including those that increase instrumentality, interactivity, and navigability) established by Cober et al. (2004) and the usability, interactivity, and innovation features defined by Selden and Orenstein (2011). The remaining 13 features are those that were discovered during the data collection and deemed relevant to the functionality of corporate career websites and that, therefore, were added and subsequently evaluated for the remaining sites as the data collection progressed. The usability dimensions of companies’ corporate career website are organized into navigability and interactivity dimensions, below.

Navigability:

Navigational Menu *
Primary links on the homepage (to the left, right, above, or the homepage text) that facilitate information search and direct traffic to main portions of the website

2nd-Level Navigation
Secondary links that facilitate information search

*Excluded from the aggregate calculation of corporate career website features to prevent redundancy in the variable.
**Permanent Links**
Navigation menu that is consistent a page deep from the homepage

**Company Links**
Links to corresponding companies (subsidiaries) within a single job post or on a page of job listings

**Multiple Language Option**
Site is accessible in more than one language

**Job Search Function**
At least one way to find/filter jobs (e.g., job type or location)

**Site Map**
List of pages on the website accessible to users

---

**INTERACTIVITY:**

**Apply Online***
Job seekers can apply directly to the company through an internet-based application system or via email

**Application Basket/Save Search**
Job seekers can save multiple job listings; often referred to as a *job cart, job basket, or favorites*

**Application Progress Indicator**
The online application system informs the user where they are in the application process and, often, what more needs to be completed before the application can be submitted.

**Application Management**
Ability to apply for more than one job with a single online application submission

**Resume Submission***
Ability to upload a resume to the system

**Resume Tool**
Online tools available to users for the creation or revision of a resume

**Application Tracking Review**
Website allows users to track their application throughout the review process

---

*Excluded from the aggregate calculation of corporate career website features to prevent redundancy in the variable.
Password-Protected Application Site
Applicants can (and are sometime required to) store their application information on the website by creating an account that is secured by a unique password.

Profile Creation*
Allows job seekers to store (personal) information that is unique to them for future use.

Interactive Fit Tool/Job Matching
Website returns relevant job opportunities based on a job seeker’s qualifications (as extracted from a resume, social media, or online questionnaire).

Online Social Network Functionality
Typically the ability to share job postings or corporate career site pages via email or social media; also the presence of blogs or a social media widget.

Virtual Events
Recruitment activities that take place online (e.g., virtual career fairs or online information sessions).

RSS Feed
Link to access frequently updated information from the company.

E-mail Subscription Service
Job seekers are able to sign up to receive email updates from the company (recruitment or non-recruitment related).

Job Alerts
Ability of job seekers to receive ongoing announcement about jobs (typically via email, but also through their profile on the e-recruitment system); sometimes call a Job Agent.

Online Application Expectations
Expectations provided at the time the application was submitted for the processing (e.g., timeline) of the user’s application submission; this information may also be found as part of companies’ Frequently Asked Questions.

Application Process Information
Information that describes at least one aspect of the company’s hiring process that may follow for a user who has submitted an application; usually provided at the time the application is submitted but may also be found as part of companies’ Frequently Asked Questions or a section describing the hiring process.

Feedback Capacity (Functionality)
Encourages the users to provide feedback on the usability and effectiveness of the website.

*Excluded from the aggregate calculation of corporate career website features to prevent redundancy in the variable.
Resume Tips
Advice designed to help applicants submit firm-oriented resumes

Interviewing Tips
Advice on preparing to interview with the company

Release of Information to be Searched by the Company
Ability of applicants to release their information so that it is searchable by the company

Linked Accounts
Ability to sign into the e-recruitment system with another user id and password from an established account (e.g., Taleo, Google); also the ability to populate fields of an application using information from another account (e.g., LinkedIn)

Social Media Links
Direct links to the company’s brand profile(s) on social media
APPENDIX F

Focus Groups: Students’ Interaction with Organizations/Brands on Social Network Sites

Focus group participants. Three 90-minute focus groups were held between July and October 2013. Each focus group included five participants. Of the 15 total participants, eight were female and 7 were male. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 37, and the average age was 25.27. One participant was a graduate student and the remaining 14 participants were undergraduate students. Altogether, students were studying in the areas of Accounting, Computer Information Systems, Finance, Management and Human Resource Management, Marketing, and Pre-nursing.

Focus group participants were offered $30 to participate in a 90-minute focus group and were recruited throughout the College of Business Administration, primarily with the use of fliers and scheduled visits to classes to solicit participation. Individuals who expressed interest in participating were emailed a consent form and information on the focus group procedure so they had an opportunity to review in advance exactly what was required for their participation. To qualify for participation, individuals were required to be at least 18 years old and had to be registered on at least one of the following social network sites: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus. On average, participants were registered on 2.33 of these sites. While participants’ account registration varied by number (from 1 to 4) and combination, all participants were at least registered on Facebook. Participants had an average of 6.73 years of experience using social network sites.

Focus group procedure. Focus group participants met two researchers (me and one of my doctoral colleagues) at a university computer lab where each person was assigned to a computer. After explaining to the participants how the focus group would proceed and obtaining written consent, participants were asked to navigate to their accounts on the social network sites (SNSs) of interest—Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and/or Google Plus—so they could answer questions about their connections to organizations and brands on these platforms.

First, participants were asked to complete a short survey that included questions about their SNS experience, including their registration on SNSs, the frequency of their activity on the SNSs they were registered on, and the number of organizations and brands they were connected to on each SNS. Limited demographic variables were also collected with the survey, including gender, age, student categorization (undergraduate or graduate), and university major or area of study.

Following their completion of the short survey, participants as a group were asked a series of questions in a semi-structured format. All questions were about the participants’ connection to, and interaction with, organizations and brands on SNSs. Throughout the discussion, participants were encouraged to share openly about why they connect to organizations and brands on SNSs. Participants were also given the opportunity to share in writing (and to submit with their survey at the end of the focus group) any additional information they deemed relevant to their making connections to organizations on SNSs.
As participants related the reasons why they make a connection and do not make (or maintain) a connection to organizations and brands on SNSs, the researchers recorded these responses on a white board, which served two purposes. First, it allowed any misconceptions about the participants’ responses to be clarified as the focus group progressed. Second, the participants individually and as a group were asked to rank order, based on their experience, the relevance of the reasons that had been recorded on the white board for connecting and not connecting to organizations and brands on SNSs. Participants first wrote down their own rankings, one list for the reasons why they make a connection to organizations and brands on SNSs, and a second list for reasons why they do not make (or maintain) a connection to organizations and brands on SNSs. Participants came up with the group rankings by discussing among themselves (without intervention from the researchers). Following collection of participants’ surveys and individual rankings, participants were each given the $30 earned for their participation.
APPENDIX G

Survey Instrument

SURVEY CONDITIONS

1. Please continue to the following questions related to the company Adobe.

2. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Adobe by navigating through its corporate website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Adobe.

Corporate website for Adobe

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Adobe.
NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click "Next"

3. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Adobe by navigating through its employment website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Adobe.

Employment website for Adobe

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Adobe.
NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click "Next"

4. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Adobe by navigating through its social media profiles/pages. You can access these profiles/pages from the links below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Adobe.

Adobe on Twitter
Adobe on Facebook
Adobe on LinkedIn

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Adobe.
NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”

5. Please continue to the following questions related to the company American Express.
6. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company *American Express* by navigating through its corporate website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to American Express.

**Corporate website for American Express**

*Click “Next” to begin answering questions about *American Express*. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”*

7. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company *American Express* by navigating through its employment website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to American Express.

**Employment website for American Express**

*Click “Next” to begin answering questions about *American Express*. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”*

8. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company *American Express* by navigating through its social media profiles/pages. You can access these profiles/pages from the links below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to American Express.

- *American Express on Twitter*
- *American Express on Facebook*
- *American Express on LinkedIn*

*Click “Next” to begin answering questions about *American Express*. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”*

9. Please continue to the following questions related to the company *Gap Inc.*

10. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company *Gap Inc.* by navigating through its corporate website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Gap Inc.

**Corporate website for Gap Inc.**
Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Gap Inc.
NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click "Next"

11. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Gap Inc. by navigating through its employment website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Gap Inc.

Employment website for Gap Inc.

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Gap Inc.
NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click "Next"

12. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Gap Inc. by navigating through its social media profiles/pages. You can access these profiles/pages from the links below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Gap Inc.

Gap on Twitter
Gap on Facebook
Gap on LinkedIn

Click “Next” to be in answering questions about Gap Inc.
NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.” Please continue to the following questions related to the company Mercedes-Benz.

13. Please continue to the following questions related to the company Mercedes-Benz.

14. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Mercedes-Benz by navigating through its corporate website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Mercedes-Benz.

Corporate website for Mercedes-Benz

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Mercedes-Benz. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”

15. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Mercedes-Benz by navigating through its employment website. You can access
this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Mercedes-Benz.

Employment website for Mercedes-Benz

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Mercedes-Benz. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”

16. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company Mercedes-Benz by navigating through its social media profiles/pages. You can access these profiles/pages from the links below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to Mercedes-Benz.

Mercedes-Benz on Twitter
Mercedes-Benz on Facebook
Mercedes-Benz on LinkedIn

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about Mercedes-Benz. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”

17. Please continue to the following questions related to the company IBM.

18. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company IBM by navigating through its corporate website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to IBM.

Corporate website for IBM

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about IBM. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”

19. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company IBM by navigating through its employment website. You can access this website from the link below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to IBM.

Employment website for IBM

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about IBM. NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”
20. Before answering the survey, please take sufficient time to familiarize yourself with the company **IBM** by navigating through its social media profiles/pages. You can access these profiles/pages from the links below. Once you have familiarized yourself with the company, continue to the survey to answer questions related to IBM.

- IBM on Twitter
- IBM on Facebook
- IBM on LinkedIn

Click “Next” to begin answering questions about IBM.
*NOTE: You will not be able to return to this page once you click “Next.”*

**SURVEY QUESTIONS**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about **Company X**.

*Company X is one of the first to come to mind when I think of employers.*
*I can recognize Company X among other employers.*
*I am aware of the types of jobs at Company X.*
*I am very familiar with Company X as an employer.*
*I believe that other people think highly of Company X.*
*My family/friends have high regard for Company X as an employer.*
*I believe that my family/friends hold a favorable impression of Company X as an employer.*
*Other people hold a favorable impression of Company X as an employer.*

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please indicate the likelihood of the following statements being accurate about **Company X**.

*Company X offers above-average pay.*
*Company X provides above-average employee benefits.*
*Company X is located in a desirable location(s).*
*Working at Company X would be interesting.*
*Company X has excellent training programs.*
*Company X opportunities to learn new skills.*
*Employees at Company X can maintain a good work-life balance.*
*Company X has good opportunities for career advancement.*
*Company X has a good working environment.*
*Job security at Company X is high.*
Extremely Unlikely
Unlikely
Undecided
Likely
Extremely Likely

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about Company X.

For me, Company X would be a good place to work.
I would not be interested in Company X except as a last resort.
Company X is attractive to me as a place for employment.
I am interested in learning more about Company X.
A job at Company X is very appealing to me.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about Company X.

If I saw a job opening for Company X, I would apply for it.
I intend to apply for a position with Company X.
Applying to Company X is not my first choice.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Have you ever applied for a job with Company X?

No
Yes, but I have not worked for Company X.
Yes, I currently work for Company X.
Yes, I used to work for Company X.
Do you currently have a job, either full or part time? (Include any job from which you may be temporarily absent.)

No
Yes, full-time job
Yes, part-time job
Yes, but temporarily absent

What is the main reason that you are absent from work?

On vacation
Sick/Illness
Experiencing child-care problems
Taking care of some other family or personal obligation
On maternity or paternity leave
Involved in an industrial dispute
Prevented from working by bad weather
Other, please specify

Do you currently want a job, either full or part time?

No
Yes

Do you plan to look for a new job, either full or part time, in the coming 12 months?

No
Yes, a new full-time job
Yes, a new part-time job

Did you look for any work at any time during the last 12 months?

No
Yes

In the last 6 months, how often have you done the following things to find work?

Searched for jobs on an internet job board (e.g., Monster.com, Careerbuilder.com, AllRetailJobs.com).
Searched for jobs through online classified ads (from local or national news outlets).
Searched for jobs on a social media site.
Checked union or professional registers for jobs.
Prepared/revised your resume.
Read an article or book about getting a job or changing jobs.
Talked with friends or relatives about possible job leads.
Spoke with previous employers, business acquaintances, or colleagues about their knowing of potential job leads.
Visited the jobs/employment/career website of a company.
Visited a company profile/page on a social media site.
Made a connection to a potential employer on a social media site.
Signed up to receive emails from a potential employer.
Sent your resume to a potential employer.
Contacted an employment agency, executive search firm, school/university employment center, or state employment service.
Posted to a social media site that you are looking for a job.
Posted/updated your resume on a social media site (e.g., LinkedIn).
Listed yourself online as a job applicant or posted your resume for employers to search (somewhere other than a social media site).
Updated or edited your profile on a social media site to appear more attractive to employers.
Applied for a job.
Emailed a prospective employer.
Telephoned a prospective employer.
Had a job interview with a prospective employer.
Engaged in some other means of job search. (Please specify)

Never: 0 times
Rarely: 1 or 2 times
Occasionally: 3 to 5 times
Frequently: 6 to 9 times
Very Frequently: At least 10 times

Which of the following social network sites are you currently registered on? (Mark all that apply)

Twitter
Facebook
LinkedIn
Other, please specify

Do you follow Company X on Twitter?

No
Yes
When did you start following *Company X* on Twitter?

Today
Before today

Do you “like” *Company X* on Facebook?

No
Yes

When did you “like” *Company X* on Facebook?

Today
Before today

Do you follow *Company X* on LinkedIn?

No
Yes

When did you start following *Company X* on LinkedIn?

Today
Before today

For what reason(s) do you follow *Company X* on Twitter? (Mark all that apply)

I want to stay up-to-date with Company X.
I want Company X to know I am interested in working there.
I want to keep up with news or events.
I want to show my interest in Company X.
Promotions, coupons, or sales from Company X.
I want to signal to Company X that I am a qualified employee.
I want to communicate with Company X (e.g., provide feedback).
Company X is consistent with my personal image/identity.
I’m interested in what Company X does or represents.
I want organizational or employment information from Company X.
Company X entertains me.
I am affiliated with Company X outside of Twitter Company X inspires or motivates me.
I like to support Company X.
Other, please specify
For what reason(s) do you not follow *Company X* on Twitter? (Mark all that apply)

I am not interested in Company X.
Company X does not fit the personal identity/image I want to portray.
Company X is offensive to me.
I do not want potential employers to see that I follow Company X.
I do not want to engage with Company X on Twitter.
Other, please specify

For what reason(s) do you “like” *Company X* on Facebook? (Mark all that apply)

I want to stay up-to-date with Company X.
I want Company X to know I am interested in working there.
I want to keep up with news or events.
I want to show my interest in Company X.
Promotions, coupons, or sales from Company X.
I want to signal to Company X that I am a qualified employee candidate.
I want to communicate with Company X (e.g., provide feedback).
Company X is consistent with my personal image/identity.
I’m interested in what Company X does or represents.
I am affiliated with Company X outside of Facebook.
Company X inspires or motivates me.
I like to support Company X.
Company X entertains me.
I want organizational or employment information from Company X.
Other, please specify

For what reason(s) do you not “like” *Company X* on Facebook? (Mark all that apply)

I am not interested in Company X.
Company X does not fit the personal identity/image I want to portray.
Company X is offensive to me.
I do not want potential employers to see that I follow Company X.
I do not want to engage with Company X on Facebook.
Other, please specify

For what reason(s) do you follow *Company X* on LinkedIn? (Mark all that apply)

I want to stay up-to-date with Company X.
I want Company X to know I am interested in working there.
I want to keep up with news or events.
I want to show my interest in Company X.
Promotions, coupons, or sales from Company X.
I want to signal to Company X that I am a qualified employee candidate.
I want to communicate with Company X (e.g., provide feedback).
Company X is consistent with my personal image/identity.
I’m interested in what Company X does or represents.
I am affiliated with Company X outside of LinkedIn.
Company X inspires or motivates me.
I like to support Company X.
Company X entertains me.
I want organizational or employment information from Company X.
Other, please specify

For what reason(s) do you not follow Company X on LinkedIn? (Mark all that apply)

I am not interested in Company X.
Company X does not fit the personal identity/image I want to portray.
Company X is offensive to me.
I do not want potential employers to see that I follow Company X.
I do not want to engage with Company X on LinkedIn.
Other, please specify

Are you connected to Company X on a social media site?

No
Yes, please specify which social media site(s)

Are you connected to Company X on any other social media site?

No
Yes, please specify which social media site(s)

For what reason(s) are you connected to Company X on this social media site? (Mark all that apply)

I want to stay up-to-date with Company X.
I want Company X to know I am interested in working there.
I want to keep up with news or events.
I want to show my interest in Company X.
Promotions, coupons, or sales from Company X.
I want to signal to Company X that I am a qualified employee candidate.
I want to communicate with Company X (e.g., provide feedback).
Company X is consistent with my personal image/identity.
I’m interested in what Company X does or represents.
I am affiliated with Company X outside of this social media site.
Company X inspires or motivates me.
I like to support Company X.
Company X entertains me.
I want organizational or employment information from Company X.
Other, please specify

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I like using:
» Twitter
» Facebook
» LinkedIn
» Other, please specify

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree Strongly
Agree

It is easy to use:
» Twitter
» Facebook
» LinkedIn
» Other, please specify

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree Strongly
Agree

It is easy to use:
» Twitter
» Facebook
» LinkedIn
» Other, please specify

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree Strongly
Agree

Approximately how often do you use:
» Twitter
» Facebook
» LinkedIn
» Other, please specify

Less than once a month
Once a month
Once a week
Several times a week
Daily, or almost daily

What is the first social network site you ever registered on?

Bebo
MySpace
Facebook
Pinterest
Flickr
Six Degrees.com
Friendster
Twitter
Google Plus
Vimeo
Hi5
Windows Live Spaces
Instagram
Xing
LinkedIn
Yahoo! 360
MyChurch
Other, please specify

Approximately how many years of experience do you have using social network sites?
Which of the following websites/webpages did you view before answering the survey? (Mark all that apply)

Company X’s corporate website  
Company X’s employment website  
Company X’s profile/page on Twitter  
Company X’s profile/page on Facebook  
Company X’s profile/page on LinkedIn  
None of the above  
Other, please specify

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

What is your average yearly income?

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

High school diploma or GED  
Some college credit, no degree  
Trade/technical/vocational training  
Associate’s degree  
Bachelor’s degree  
Master’s degree  
Doctorate degree

Approximately how many years of full-time work experience do you have?

Please select the industry of your current occupation (or last occupation if currently not working).  
Natural resources/Agriculture, forestry and fishing  
Mining  
Construction  
Manufacturing  
Transportation/Public utilities  
Wholesale trade  
Retail trade  
Information services  
Finance, insurance, and real estate  
Professional and business services  
Education and health services  
Leisure and hospitality  
Other services
Public administration
Other, please specify

What is your age?

What is your gender?
Female
Male

Do you identify with any of the following groups? (Mark all that apply)
African Americans
Anglo/Caucasian/European Americans
Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders
Hispanics/Latinos
Native Americans
Other, please specify

Are you a United States citizen?
No
Yes

What is your citizenship?
United States
Canadian
Mexican
Other, please specify

In what country were you born?
United States
Canada
Mexico
Other, please specify
In what country were your parents born?

Both my parents were born in the United States.
One parent was born in the United States, the other was born in ______ (Please specify)
Neither of my parents was born in the United States, they were both born in ______ (Please specify)
Neither of my parents was born in the United States, they were born in ______ (Please specify both countries)
VITA

Abby Peters earned her PhD in International Business with a concentration in Management from The University of Texas at El Paso after completing her Master of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Economics at UTEP. While pursuing her doctoral degree, Abby worked as an assistant instructor teaching undergraduate management courses, and contributed to academic scholarship with co-authored journal publications and international conference proceedings. In the fall of 2014, Dr. Peters will join the faculty of Nevada State College as an Assistant Professor of Business, where she will teach courses in management and economics and pursue research on topics of human resource management.

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This dissertation was typed by Abby Peters.