



## **SOCIAL MEDIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BOTH STRONG AND WEAK TIES AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR RECRUITING**

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Technological development allows for the creation of new concepts and generates new opportunities for the recruiting process. The future of the recruiting process will be heavily influenced by social media and the social capital theory. The social capital theory provides the scientific background to explain social media and the value for the recruiting process. This is therefore a new perspective to present social media, social capital and the recruiting process together in one paper according to the concept of Granovetter. The three elements, social media, social capital and the recruiting process combine in a new and exciting way to promise valuable results for companies and communities.

The well known advocate for the weak and strong tie theory is Mark S. Granovetter who explored the subject in his article. This article is an important source for all other articles on the topic weak or strong ties. The ties describe the connection between individuals. Granovetter explains the social capital theory by use of “the weak and strong ties” concept. He mentions that the ties between individuals influence the power and value of the social capital.

This paper explains the theory and develops a model of weak, strong and absent ties in social media as far as the recruiting process is concerned. The paper creates a new tie as a reaction to the technical changes and opportunities. This is the virtual inactive tie. The virtual inactive tie exists in social networks platforms in the internet and in social media. The quality of the weak, strong and absent ties changes with social media and new technologies. That is positive for the recruiting process because ties are important to attract and identify potential candidates for open positions. With social media it is easier to build up new ties as well as to maintain existing ties.

Granovetter's article creates the theoretical base from which to explore social media and the recruiting process concerning strong and weak ties. His ideas are expanded and adapted to the new circumstances and the recruiting process. The new ties and changes examine the value for recruiting influenced by social media. A special focus is the recruiting process and how recruiters can use their ties to be more successful. Social media has both advantages and disadvantages for the recruiting process. There exist favorable circumstances and many opportunities for the future.

**Keywords:** Social capital, Social media, Recruiting, Networks.

### **Introduction**

The best known advocate for the weak and strong tie theory is Mark S. Granovetter who discussed strong and weak ties in his paper. This article is an important source for all other papers on the topic of weak or strong ties. The ties describe the connection between individuals and Granovetter combined this ties theory with the social capital theory. This paper explains the theory and develops the model of weak and strong ties in social media. One particular aspect is recruiting and how recruiters can use their ties to be more successful. This paper is concentrates on the type of different connections. Another paper will discuss the main topic, that being the value of social capital. This paper concentrates on the social capital

definition as an infrastructure for ties between individuals. The content of social relations as social capital is mentioned in different papers (cf Woolcock 1998, Lin 2001, Granovetter 1973).

### Kind of Ties

There are three kinds of ties identified by Granovetter:

- Strong ties
- Weak ties
- Absent ties

A fourth tie regarding social media is the virtual inactive tie. This tie is a very interesting tie for the recruiter who needs opportunities to get in touch with interesting potential candidates. This kind of tie is not mentioned by Granovetter in this form. The different kind of ties are described below in detail. To define the strength of ties Granovetter makes the following comment:

“... the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the ties” (Granovetter 1973 p. 1361)

Other authors mention the quality of the ties. The quality of the tie influences the strength. The aspect of quality means that individuals have experience with ties. The experience can be negative or positive. In addition the quality of a tie represents the power of influence that the tie has over other individuals. Another aspect is the tensility and the degree of openness of the tie which gives hints about the strength. Different types of ties have different types of effects. This means that there are many ties with different characteristics and values. An important factor is the age of the tie, how long individuals know each other. A long relationship between individuals often provides for a deeper stronger relationship than a short relationship. Smith mentions in his article that there are explicit ties and implicit ties. Explicit ties are direct ties with direct personal contact and implicit ties are ties via another person. These kind of ties represent another consideration influencing the social capital (cf Adler, Kwon 2002, Dutton, Heaphy 2003, Burt 2002, Smith 2008).

This paper mentions a further aspect and that is the regional distance between individuals. Lin mentions in his article that the density or closure is an important aspect for social capital (Lin 2001 p. 34). This is a new point. The technical changes make it easier and increase the possibility that individuals build up strong ties with individuals who are living or working far away. The opportunities to stay in touch are extended. This helps to retain a strong tie to anyone worldwide. In the past it was difficult to have strong ties with individuals from another place because the theory states that individuals have to stay in touch to have a strong tie. Historically this was not so easy. The lack of technical equipment and knowledge made it impossible to stay in touch. Today it is possible to stay in touch without any restrictions or difficulties. The playing field has changed and the world is more globalized giving social capital a new perspective and developing the environment for social capital (cf Ellison, Steinfield, Lampe 2007).

Another differentiation between the ties are in respect of the following points that influence the social capital between two individuals:

- manipulable and unswayable
- strength of exchange of social capital

Manipulable ties are ties that can be influenced by the individual. Individuals are free to get in touch with another individual and to build up a tie. This kind of tie is valid mainly in the context of friends or volunteer groups. The individual has the power to decide if the tie exists or not. This can influence the exchange of social capital and influence the strength of the ties too. The manipulable reasons can be represented as positive ties with positive attitudes. Individuals are looking for networks that help and support them. They want to get an advantage with the network. This is the reason why they take part in the group and give their social capital to the group. (cf Van Der Gaag, Snijders 2005).

The other kind of ties is the unswayable tie. This tie is between colleagues or family members for example. The individual is not free to make a choice whether to have a tie or not. The tie exists without any decision from the individual. The individual cannot influence the tie and has to have this tie for organizational, for structural or for kin reasons. The organizational reason exists mainly in companies where individuals have colleagues and they have to have a tie with their colleagues to do their work. The structural reason refers to individuals living next to each other and who do not have a choice to select the neighborhood accordingly within the neighborhood they have unswayable ties. The last point is the kin reason. These influence the ethical, educational and cultural background. These ties cannot be influenced but the tie influences the relationships between the individuals in the group and other individuals. The unswayable ties can be negative because individuals do not have sympathy for each other but they have to cooperate. The negative aspect is that they may be discriminated against because they are member of a cultural group. This influences the tie and the social capital.

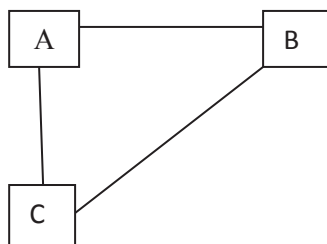
Another influence of the ties is the exchange of social capital. There are ties with social capital for only one individual of the relationship in some situations. A typical situation in recruiting is the recommendation of candidates by employees. The employees do not get any social capital if they recommend a candidate. The candidate benefits from the reputation of the employee as well as the information from the employee. Both help the candidate to benefit from the social capital from an employee where the hiring company is concerned. The advantage for the employee is not given in the first moment. The reciprocity is an influence on the level that ties have (cf Woolcock 1998).

The reality is that individuals have a mix between strong ties, weak ties, absent ties and virtual ties. Everyone is a member of one networks or another and uses social capital. The difference is the value of the social capital therefore individuals with a large network and many ties have an advantage over individuals with only a few ties. Of course the quality of the ties is another important point which influences that value of the social capital. This means that individuals need different types of ties in their network to be successful. This differs from individual to individual and depends on their interests and situation. The individual has to manage the different networks and has to be active in different networks. (cf Adler, Kwon 2002, Oh, Labianca, Chung 2006).

To keep the ties working and to keep the network up to date it is important to refresh the ties. Social networks make relationships stronger and keep the relationship alive (cf Steinfield, DiMicco, Ellison, Lampe 2009). This is one important point which influences the value of social capital. There may be regular meetings, interactions or exchanges between the individuals to keep the ties fresh and valuable. Social media has difficulties to maintenance the network because the personnel contact is not given. The new generations are still learning to live with impersonal online networks and to maintain relationships online. There is a big difference between social capital and financial capital. That is that social capital needs regularly investments to conserve the value of social capital (cf Adler, Kwon 2002).

**Strong Ties**

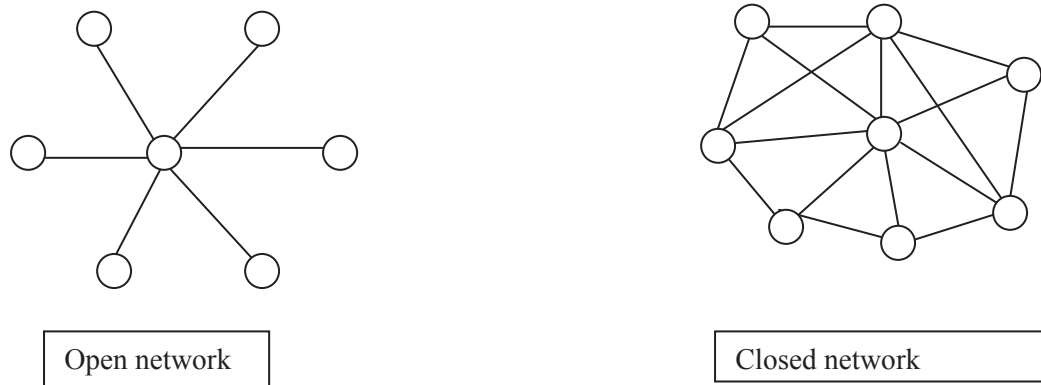
The strength of the ties influences from the structure of the relationship. The strong ties have following construct of relationship.



**Figure 1.** Strong ties (Granovetter 1973 p. 1362).

This means that A is connected with B and C. In addition B and C are connected too. So all three individuals know each other and are in contact. That means that they all have the same social capital. (cf Lazega and Pattison 2001).

Strong ties are found mainly with small groups such as classmates or work colleagues. The size of the groups with strong ties is small or it is a subgroup of a network. The advantage is that members of a network with strong ties get information faster because they meet each other more often and spend more time to contact with each other. The members know each other better and trust each other more. This influences the emotional cohesion. Groups with strong ties make resources available more quickly and social capital is more liquid. Strong ties increase the social capital for the individual. Strong ties are very often in closed networks with a defined membership structure. Furthermore is the power of networks with strong ties grows because the members have the same achievement and support each other more intensively. The collective in these groups is stronger and the members of the group protect each other better against other individuals. Strong ties often show their strength later and these ties continue to exist for a longer period (cf Hinds, Carley, Krackhardt, Wholey 2000). Sometimes strong ties are so strong that the ties become a barrier for the network member when building new ties or networks (cf Oh, Labianca, Chung 2006, Woolcock 1998, Adler, Kwon 2002). The strong ties are create a positive feeling for members. The relationships are multiplex and there is a strong cohesion between the group members (cf Oh, Labianca, Chung, 2006).



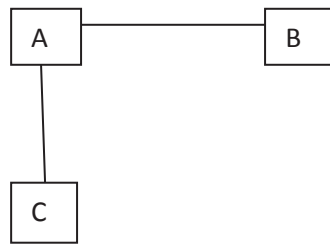
**Figure 2.** Open and closed networks (cf Borgati, Mahra, Brass, Labianca 2009 p.894).

Closed networks exclude individuals from resources and make the resource exclusive. This increases the social capital value and is an advantage for the members of the network (cf Adler, Kwon 2002, Portes 1998). Closed networks may have an advantage if they take on board new group members to get further information and new perspectives. The new members bring their resources which reinforce the group. Groups with strong ties are mainly structured along hierarchical official or unofficial lines. These structures are changed by new technology like the internet and social media platforms (cf Oh, Labianca, Chung 2006, Inkpen, Tsang 2005).

Negative ties can also result. Sometimes networks with strong ties have a negative influence on their members or prejudices develop. This kind of social capital is mentioned below in this paper for the recruiting chapter.

### Weak Ties

The weak tie is a connection between A and B and C and A. This means B and C do not have a contact. This means that B and C do not have a direct social capital exchange. A has an advantage because A profits from B and Cs network. Burk defines this situation as a structural hole which is filled by the broker A (cf Burt 2001, Burt 2002, Burt 2008a).



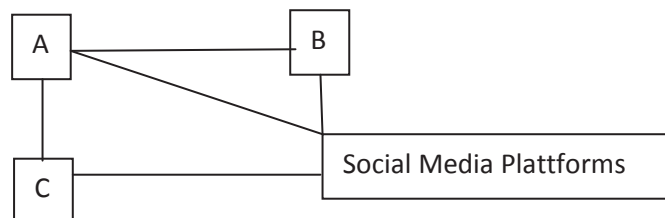
**Figure 3.** Weak ties (cf Granovetter 1973 S. 1363) .

This means that A gets more information and knowledge than B and C. This construct makes weak ties strong and interesting for the recruiter because they can get more information about potential candidates with weak ties and spread their information easier. Some authors explain weak ties as external ties because there is a contact to another external network. These ties build a bridge between two networks and this makes the ties so valuable (cf Granovetter 1973 p. 1366, Adler, Kwon 2002, Burt 2001, Kadushin 2004).

Granovetter gives an interesting example of how a company can get an advantage if they hire a new employee. This employee has ties to former colleagues, business partners and so on. These ties can be an advantage for the new employer. Different authors describe this phenomenon in their paper saying that the power increases if members move to another group (cf Granovetter 1973, Oh, Labianca, Chang 2006). This means that the weak tie can be used to link groups with each other. Large networks are mainly linked via weak ties. They have different subgroups and the subgroups are linked with weak ties.

Large networks with more members have more ties and subgroups than small networks. The result is that there are more weak ties in large groups with lots of members and subgroups. These groups have an advantage on account of their size because they get more information and power. The individual in large networks has more weak ties. Their network is wider than those individuals who are members of small networks. The new situation with online networks and new technical opportunities enables individuals to create large networks more quickly and easily. These networks get more and more power e.g. customer groups that share information about an international company reputation (cf Teorell 2003, Burt 2008b).

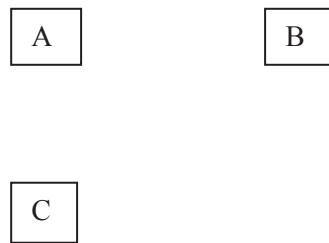
Social Media platforms reduce and substitute the weak ties. That is one reason to create virtual ties. The virtual inactive ties are described below. The figure four illustrates the new situation in social media platforms. Member A has a tie with member B. Both have a direct tie with each other. The social media platform makes the tie between A and C strong. A, C and the social media platform share social capital. The new player in the strong and weak tie theory is the social media platform with its capabilities. The ties are virtual ties because the ties are between individuals and social media. Some of the changes and results are described in this paper regarding recruiting. This type of tie requires a scientific discussion and research to determine how the changes influence the theory of weak and strong ties and in addition to describe the changes with virtual ties in the society.



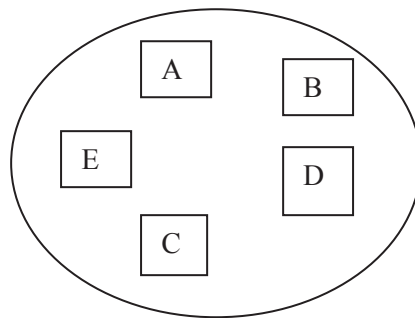
**Figure 4.** Weak ties changing to strong ties with social media platforms.

### Absent Ties

Absent ties are ties which do not exist. This means the individuals do not have a connection and they do not have any contact. Both negative and positive social capital can exist between individuals without a tie. Negative social capital is e.g. prejudices against social or cultural groups and discrimination. Immigrants for example are victims of negative social capital. The individuals do not have a tie but they are discriminated against and that is the negative social capital in this situation. The opportunity to share social capital without a tie is possible. Positive social capital can be a positive prejudice or this network is well known for a special skill or for positive behavior (cf Smith 2005, Woolcock 1998 p. 174, Portes 1998, Oh, Labianca, Chung 2006, Woolcock, Narayan 2000).



**Figure 5.** absent ties .



**Figure 6.** e.g. a Group of immigrants. Their band is e.g. their culture, origin or tradition.

Granovetter defines absent ties as:

“...”absent” are both the lack of any relationship and ties without substantial significance such as a “nodding” relationship between people living on the same street....That two people “know” each other by name need not move their relation out of this category if their interaction is negligible.” (Granovetter 1973 p. 1361)

This definition for absent ties is disproved with the examples from Woolcock and other authors. Social capital can exist without any connections between the individuals. Being part of a group creates positive or negative social capital on its own. The social capital with absent ties is mainly that of reputation and prestige. This is of interest for recruiter (cf Woolcock 1998, Smith 2005). The individuals have a connection between them without any ties so that they share social capital. For example an alumni group of IT students is very interesting for recruiters. There the connection is education and they share mainly the same human capital and same educational background. The social capital they have is the

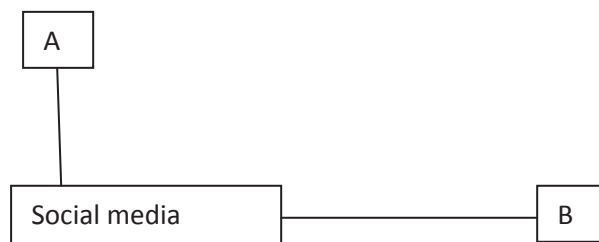
reputation of the group e.g. graduate students from university xy. The university may have the best reputation in a special subject. The students from this university get this positive prejudgment only because they are members of a network. Some authors declare negative social capital with the difficulties which e.g. immigrants have in their life e.g. in their efforts to find work (cf Smith 2005).

Moreover researchers describe that individuals that are living in the same area have social capital too. For example the neighborhood is made up of children of all of the neighbors. Individuals who do not behave as expected will be punished e.g. if the neighbors hear loud music without any respect then there are sanctions. Another situation is that individuals know each other but they are not interested in each other (cf Burt 2001a p. 37, Burt 2001b).

Granovetter’s explanation about absent ties has to be developed regarding the changes and technical developments. That is the reason why this paper creates and mentions the virtual inactive tie.

**Virtual inactive Tie**

The newest tie is the virtual inactive tie. It is possible to be a member of a social network platform and to have millions of inactive ties with unknown individuals. Social media makes it possible to get in touch wirelessly with other individuals. The opportunity is created where individuals can search for other individuals without any contact to those individuals or their personnel network. Conversely individuals can give information to all individuals on the social media platform. The communication with each other or within a network is enabled by social media. That means that individuals can be more quickly and more easily research information about individuals e.g. someone has the status on the social media profile “looking for work”. The only provided frame of reference is the social media platform in the internet. This opportunity is social capital because it can be used to give an advantage to another individual or to get an advantage from another individual. Both, the individual who gives the advantage and the individual who receives the advantage are on the same social media platform. They do not have a separate tie, the only frame of reference they have is the same social media platform. This social media platform is their network which they use for their advantage.



**Figure 7.** Virtual ties on social media.

The picture shows two different individuals who take part in a social media platform e.g. YouTube or LinkedIn. There is the individual A who has interesting information for B and it is possible that A and B will get in touch and share their information. They activate an inactive virtual tie to a strong or weak tie. The framework and support of the social media makes the exchange and getting in contact possible. This is typical of the social capital which can build up in social media platforms. The value is that it is swift and easy and offers unlimited possibilities.

This new kind of tie is only possible because there are new social media platforms in the internet. The first special thing is, that virtual inactive ties are not based on a personal meeting. Individuals are meeting on the social platform and do not know each other personally. The members of social platforms do not know how accurate the level of the information provided by the group members is. This makes it difficult to build up social capital like trust, reciprocity and to exchange intimate information. The question concerning the value of social capital in social media is an important topic for further research.

The size of some social media platforms as a network makes them very powerful which is one indicator for social capital. In addition both strong ties and weak ties are possible on the social media platforms. Again this makes social media interesting for recruiter because there are lots of opportunities. The social media is a medium that makes it easier to find specialists because the social media content gives further information about individuals. The inactive ties in social media are more active than they are in the internet. Some social media platforms show the level of the relationship. This also shows the different connections between the individuals and who else is in contact with the individual. This correspondingly gives further information about the individual and the reputation of the individual.

In general it is possible to say that the internet has billions of virtual inactive ties. There are many opportunities to search for specialists via search engines. The specialists are unknown but with the internet there is a tie and the search engine creates the opportunity to find this individual. This is the construct that makes it so interesting for the recruiter when using social media. It means an excellent opportunity to identify the best candidate. The anticipated achievement for the future is to make inactive virtual ties more valuable for the social capital. This social capital helps the individual and the employer because the employer profits from the social capital of the employee.

The virtual network gives the opportunity to send passive messages and active messages. Passive messages are messages which are not addressed to a single individual. Such a message is addressed to the whole network and everyone can see this message. An active message is a proactive act of sending a message to another person. This message needs a strong tie between the sender and the receiver. The message is directed to the person and only intended for that person. The sender expects an action from the receiver. The active message has a tie between the members but the passive message does not need a tie. Twitter is a good example for a passive message. The result of the messages and expectations of the individual who sent the message is different. Historically it was difficult to spread information through a network with passive ties. The social media enables passive messages to a network (cf Aral, Walker 2009).

### **Recruiting influenced by Ties**

As described above different kinds of ties exist between individuals. All ties have advantages and disadvantages for recruiters in their daily business. This paper will explain how recruiters can use social media platforms for recruiting exploiting the ties between individuals. One point which influenced all kinds of sourcing candidates with ties is the willingness and ability on the part of the employee, potential candidate and the company. The employees and company have to use their social capital to identify a candidate. The candidate has to react positively in respect of their efforts to get a positive result. To be successful to find new employees the employee and company needs social capital. That social capital has to be enabled to identify the best candidates. The second point is that social capital is a personal value. That capital is owned by an individual. The company needs the agreement and support by the individual to use the social capital for recruiting. The company has to be aware that the use of social capital of their employees costs the company money. Recruiters are using their working time to use social media to find candidates and to communicate with potential candidates. The use of social media to identify suitable candidates is time consuming. Access to social media platforms is required and the question of which social media is useful to find candidates has to be explored.

As mentioned previously there are manipulable and unswayable ties. Both influence use of ties for the recruiting process. Whether will be manipulable or unswayable ties are positive or negative is governed the tie and the relationship between the two individuals and the implications for the recruiting process will be different. For example it can be that a manipulable tie presents fewer difficulties for the discussion of a new position than an unswayable one e.g. normally colleagues will not recommend to each other new position at another company. There are different levels of exchange of social capital between the individuals too. The exchange of social capital is important to transfer information about job opportunities to interested individuals. That is one more thing which influences the recruiting process.

The technical changes influence the discussion about ties too. Formerly it was only possible to have a strong or weak tie with individuals who mainly knew each other personally. Rarely did individuals know each other via phone, rather they only wrote letters to each other. Staying in touch on such basis is very time consuming and needs a lot of effort. Getting in touch with each other was only possible if individuals met e.g. at a conference or meeting. Today the new circumstances have changed. Individuals do not know each other personally; they know each other via a social media platform. They do not have to wait until they are introduced to each other, they can use the social media platform to get in touch without wasting time. Speed is very important for the recruiting process and with the new technical opportunities it is possible to build up new ties more quickly when compared with the traditional ways of keeping in contact.

### **Strong Ties in the Recruiting Process**

Strong ties influence the recruiting positively and negatively. The positive indicator is that the information about a job opportunity shared between individuals with strong ties very swiftly. They try to support each other and are happy if they can secure a position in their company for a friend. The candidate gets information about the company and already seeks as if he / she knows the company. A further advantage is the emotional relationship between the candidate and the employee who recommend him or her. The employer has the advantage that the candidate is recommended and gets a good reference. As it is a strong tie there is also the chance that the recommended candidate has more friends in the company giving the recruiter the opportunity to get more information about the candidate. On social media platforms the selection of candidates who are in contact with employees can give a hint that the potential candidate is in contact with this employee. Strong ties can help to influence the candidate positively and persuade the candidate to take an offer for an open position or to make the candidate aware that the company has job openings. Strong ties make it possible that employees contact potential candidates actively because there do not exist barriers between the candidate and employee.

The closeness can be a disadvantage because individuals do not see the negative side of their friends. Another point is reciprocity which can one of the reasons that the employee recommends a friend. Another consideration is that the individual who recommends the candidate expects reciprocity from the employer and candidate. This can influence further working relations negatively. The recruiter can get trouble from other employees who represent their friends if the recruiter is not critical and deals with candidate selection evenly. In some cases there is a kind of corruption that candidates pay money to the employee, that will have a bad influence on the ethical standards and morals in the company (cf Adler, Kwon 2002, Woolcock, Narayan 2000).

The advantages and disadvantages show clearly that a recruiter needs to be careful with recommended candidates. There are traps and opportunities. Closeness between candidates and employees in a company can have negative results. Today recommended candidates are a useful way to recruit employees and companies have started to pay a bonus for recommended candidates.

Social media platforms have the advantage that some of them allow the opportunity to see who the candidate is in contact with. This information can be used to ask employees about the candidate. Social media provide the added opportunity to search for new candidates in the environment. Recruiters use employee's networks to find candidates with skills and abilities which are similar with those already existing in the company. This means that the company has to know their employees and their networks very well. The networks where the candidates have strong ties can be of interest. Whether a company has a R&D department for a special product for example. All the members of the developer team are members in the same online social media platform network e.g. a car race group on a social media platform. Then they have strong ties to the network and know each other very well in the network. The recruiter can use this knowledge to identify candidates with similar skills in that group. Perhaps the employees from the R&D team already know somebody who is looking for a challenging new position. Individuals who are connected with strong ties and members in a specialized group have mainly the same

interests and it is not unreasonable to expect that they have similar skills and abilities. LinkedIn has groups in their network for example. The groups are meeting points for specialists for a special topic. The employees who are active in the group have access to individuals with the same interest. They have ties to all the individuals in the group. If there are more employees from the same company or department in this group the structure for a strong tie is expected. As the group is of interest for the employee, the employee builds up a strong relationship with other members of the group and shares information. Recruiters have to know the employees very well and know their interests. This information gives recruiter the opportunity to use social media. A good recruiter has a lot of ties in his own company (cf Burt 2008).

With strong ties, the message exchange is more an active message. The active message expects a reaction from the candidate. The contacted candidate is better known. The result is that the candidate environments expect an answer. The candidate has pressure from the group to react to the request. This makes it easier to get feedback and gives the recruiter the chance to get a feedback. This feedback helps the recruiting process to progress and the recruiter knows that the candidate will be active. Active messages for the recruiting process are only possible if there is a strong tie between candidate and employee and if the recruiter has identified the right candidate for the open position. This makes it important that the recruiter has done a good job of matching. Good matching is only possible if the recruiter is in receipt of a lot of information about the candidate and that is much easier if a strong tie exists. The matching process is time intensive and needs a lot of effort but the result that is identifying the best candidate makes the effort worthwhile.

### **Weak Ties in the Recruiting Process**

Weak ties close structural holes and are useful to spread information. Using these type of ties make it possible to reach many individuals. Another advantage is that potential candidates that are members in other networks get the information. These potential candidates have another network and more social capital. The new social capital can be used by the company and can be an advantage for the company. The company can extend their potential candidate pool by using weak ties. This makes it easier to find the right candidate. The disadvantages of structural wholes mentioned above are less critical for the recruiting process.

The weak ties work mainly with passive messages. The message reaches a lot of different individuals and hitting the target group is more difficult. The recruiter does not expect to get feedback from all potential candidates. There is a percentage of mismatching between skills and some candidates.

Another good reason to use weak ties for recruiting in social media is the introduction opportunity on social platforms. This means individuals introduce suitable friends from other networks to the recruiter. The advantage for the company is that the candidate is recommended by a well known individual. One more advantage is that the recruiter is in contact with the potential candidate and can use this tie for further requests requiring similar tasks and skills. New candidates are potential weak ties for the future. This is useful for the recruiter if the candidate is not interested then the recruiter can try to use the candidate's social capital e.g. the recruiter asks for other potential candidates in the uninterested candidate network. This can increase the chance to identify additional suitable candidates.

The disadvantages of the weak ties are the advantages of strong ties. Sometimes it is difficult to explain to the employee the value to of recommending a potential candidate or of spreading information to a weak tie. There are more barriers and concerns to give information to a third party. In addition the control and flow of information is an important consideration. Some companies are not keen to give e.g. competitors the information that the company is looking for new candidates or specialists. Another reason to control information about job openings is that the company can expect too many mismatching applications if the company uses the weak ties of employees and other networks. The resulting receipt of too many applications is time consuming and cost ineffective. The result is that the recruiter has a lot of work with the high number of applications and with mismatched applications. This makes the recruiting process expensive.

### **Absent ties in the Recruiting Process**

Individuals without any relationship cannot exchange information. The recruiting and sourcing process need the exchange of information between two individuals. There is only one small possibility to use absent ties for recruiting. That is to post information and to make this information visible for other individuals. Advertising an open position at the company gate for example or in the area where the company has their factory. The individuals do not have a direct tie with the company but the regional cohesion enables individuals to see the information about the open position, to react to the advertisement and possibly to get a job.

Another possible situation is that the company needs somebody with a special cultural background. A company needs somebody with a special native language skill for example. Then absent ties present an opportunity for recruiting. They will use areas or places where individuals with the required skills meet each other or inform each other e.g. a job advertisement in immigrant networks. Activating absent ties is difficult because there are no direct connections between the individuals. The positive aspect is that having the knowledge of these groups helps to support to identify the best network to find a candidate. Recruiters have to get to know the candidate market to know at which places recruiting is successful.

Social media offers the opportunity to advertise information in groups, forums or blogs. These kind of networks do not require that individuals have a tie. This is the one area where one can use absent ties for recruiting and sourcing. Information about the candidate is not available with absent ties.

It is difficult to use absent ties for the selection process of candidates. This is discriminatory and is not useful for companies. Companies need individuals with different cultural backgrounds to be successful in a globalized world. The reputation of companies will be damaged if they use absent ties as a prejudice for selection criteria.

### **Virtual Inactive Ties in the Recruiting Process**

These ties have the largest potential for recruiters today. The internet is the largest network in the world and social media platforms have million of members. There are potential and available candidates. Currently there may not exist a tie between the potential candidate and the company but with a search it is possible to find candidates. The task for the recruiter is to convert those virtual inactive ties to strong or weak ties in order to get in touch with potential candidates. There are different ways to identify the candidates with whom the recruiter has virtual inactive ties. The easiest way is to use a social media platform allowing the opportunity to search for individuals and their human capital. Of course it is important that this platform provides information about the human capital of their members; that there are contact details or opportunities to contact individuals.

Virtual inactive ties are manipulable. This helps individuals to be in touch on the basis of social media. As it is manipulable it is possible to create more positive attitudes for the relationship. The disadvantage is that the ties in social media are facile. That influences the exchange with information.

Another way is to activate the virtual inactive ties of the candidate. Then the recruiter advertises the position in a selected social Media and the candidate uses the information to apply for the position. Blogs about a special topic e.g. about IT administration are a good place to spread information about job openings for IT specialists. There the individuals have the opportunity to enrich their social capital and to activate the virtual inactive tie. This example provides big advantages in terms of social capital for the recruiter.

Then there is the question of information. As already mentioned above it is possible to find out more about the ties of candidates. This can help recruiters to get further information about the candidate e.g. references.

The disadvantage of the search in social media platforms can be the size of the social media members. If the size of a social media platform is large and generates too many candidates then the recruiter needs more resources to select the right candidate as already discussed. The virtual inactive tie

can help to identify the right candidate from the information in the social media and can reduce the efforts involved in identifying a new employee.

The communication and identification is faster, better and available of excellent promise on a lower cost basis. The virtual ties gives companies a candidate pool on social media platforms. The disadvantage is finding the candidate and organizing the number of potential candidates. A recruiter is interested in one candidate who matches the recruiter's requirement. That is the challenging task for the recruiter with virtual inactive ties.

The opportunity for candidates to get information about companies is greater. One example is that candidates get in touch with former employees who leave the company. The available information on social media platforms and the available information via virtual active ties can be a danger for companies. Candidates can identify a company's open position and companies via their networks. The virtual ties give them the opportunity to get in touch with individuals that do not have direct ties with them. That makes it more and more important for companies to protect their reputation. A good reputation and employer branding is important to get the best candidates. With the advent of social media and the opportunities presented by virtual inactive ties it is possible for anybody to confirm the information provided by a recruiter and to find out more about a company.

## Conclusion

The theory of weak and strong ties helps to create different recruiting concepts. Recruiters can use the ties for the recruiting in different ways. The question for the recruiter is how to match the open position with the best way of finding the most suitable candidate. A mix of the different ties in finding a candidate is useful. The choice of the right tie depends on the request.

The technological development enables new ways and creates new concepts for recruiting processes. The future of the recruiting process is heavily influenced by social media and the social capital theory. Granovetter provides with his strong and weak ties a theoretical background about the opportunities for networks. On this basis and allowing for future cultural and technological changes new ways of recruiting can be expected. This presents a great chance for recruiter. The target of the recruiter has to be to find the right tie to the right candidate. This can be a strong tie, weak tie or virtual inactive tie. An absent tie is only of limited use for recruiting. It is important to know the network very well in and around the company when using the different ties. With this background the recruiter have an advantage in finding the right candidate for the open position.

The theory about the absent tie is developed up on and the virtual inactive tie is created in this paper. Both forms of ties react to the prevalent social and technological changes. Social media and the internet influence Granovetter's theory especially heavily. This paper discusses the opportunities of finding potential candidates in new ways. The disadvantages mentioned in this paper for companies are related to the power of social media and the negative results regarding time consuming work for the recruiter and information that has to be provided by a company in social media or the internet to attract candidates for a position.

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