2014 Global Sourcing Survey Results
Introduction & background

The role of a Sourcer has fragmented from that of a talent acquisition specialist, and in recent years we have seen further fragmentation with various specialisms existing within sourcing itself.

Arguably, one of the most critical roles within talent acquisition is that of the Sourcer whose job it is to find suitable, qualified and interested talent and bring them to the table.

Sourcers have to be able to find and attract potential candidates (both active job seekers and passive candidates) from an ever-increasing number of online sources and do so in a way that is quicker and smarter than their peers in other companies.

Social Talent and Alexander Mann Solutions partnered to survey 328 Sourcers to see just how well they understand and use online tools, particularly social media. Our participants included Sourcers that work in-house, those that work for third party providers and agencies, those who are new to the job and those who have been doing it for years.

Not only were we interested in the global view, we also wanted to see if there were statistically valid differences between regions such as the Americas, typically seen as the pioneers in recruiting, and Asia Pacific, often seen as the new kids on the block who have a lot to learn.

The results were surprising, to say the least!
Management summary

Using online sourcing tools is not enough, it’s how you use the tool that counts - that’s why we sought to test the competency of global Sourcers by posing some skills and knowledge questions, particularly around how they search using different tools. We asked respondents six multiple choice questions relating to their technical search knowledge of tools such as LinkedIn and Google. The results showed that Sourcers who were based in the Asia Pacific market (including those in China, India, Australia and beyond) scored considerably higher than their contemporaries in EMEA or the Americas. Put simply, Sourcers in Asia Pacific beat those in the Americas hands-down! Of further interest was the relatively high scores of Sourcers with 2-4 years experience, beating those more junior and senior.

It would appear that Sourcers who joined the sector post recession (after 2010), when social recruiting had really taken hold, have a natural advantage. Similarly, those that surround themselves with tech candidates all day long also rose to the top of our test scores.

LinkedIn is being used, unsurprisingly, by 96% of Sourcers around the world. However, our research shows that many of them are still not maximising the potential of the world’s largest professional network, with the vast majority getting by using a free account, particularly those in Asia Pacific. They rely on a strong network (on average between 501 and 2,000 Connections), contribute jobs and articles to free groups and message potential job seekers via connection requests. Interestingly, Sourcers using paid LinkedIn accounts scored 26% higher in our competency tests than those without one.
Management summary continued

Whether using a paid-for account or not, sourcing is a personal business and the tiny minority that find someone on LinkedIn and pick up the phone to instigate the first conversation are reaping the greatest rewards with response rates far higher than those using InMails, Connection Requests or emails. It would appear that a combination of old school techniques and modern sources works best!

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Facebook is not LinkedIn’s main competitor when it comes to how Sourcers attract and identify talent. They are more likely to be using micro-blogging tools like Twitter and video sharing sites like YouTube to engage with and get the attention of potential talent. However, usage of such tools still pales in comparison to LinkedIn which dominates the industry. It would appear that many Sourcers are still not trusted to use social media sites with 31% reporting restrictions in their place of work. A resourceful group of professionals by their nature, 41% of these restricted Sourcers circumvent such rules by accessing social sites via their personal devices - further evidence, if it was needed, that such restrictions are futile and potentially damaging to productivity. Many Sourcers are not provided access to their employers’ social media pages, forcing them to use their personal accounts, which many are uncomfortable with doing. It is high time that employers wake up to the fact that everyone benefits by properly training Sourcers in how to use such tools to the benefit of everyone concerned.

Finally, it appears that the choice of tools is speeding up and continuing to change with a surge of interest in instant messaging tools to attract talent in Asia Pacific. The rest of the world is yet to really embrace such tools yet but as our survey shows, Asia Pacific might be the market from which other global Sourcers start to take their lead!
Where are the most savvy online Sourcers?

Although sourcing, as a career, started in the Americas and is a relatively new concept in Asia Pacific, **Sourcers in Asia Pacific came out on top**, scoring 7% above the global average.

**American Sourcers, however, performed the worst**, scoring 6% below the global average. Could it be that American Sourcers take LinkedIn for granted and hence aren’t as up to date as their international peers?

Sourcers in **EMEA performed well**, scoring 3% above average.
Which social networks are Sourcers using?

Whilst it is no surprise that nearly every Sourcer is using LinkedIn, nearly half are missing out on Twitter’s 271 million active profiles, only a third are leveraging the 1.32 billion people using Facebook and 77% are completely ignoring the 1 billion profiles on Google+.

Is it simply a lack of knowledge on how to use these tools properly?
Are Sourcers using paid or free LinkedIn accounts?

Most Sourcers around the world access LinkedIn via a free (Basic) account, but Sourcers in Asia Pacific are almost 50% more likely to use a free account than those in the Americas.

Usage of LinkedIn’s top-tier Recruiter product is pretty consistent around the world but in Asia Pacific, only a fraction of Sourcers are using the mid-tier products.
How many **LinkedIn Connections** does the average Sourcer have?

Considering the importance of having a strong network, it’s surprising that **20% of Sourcers have less than 500 Connections** on LinkedIn.

Most Sourcers (53%) have between 501 and 2,000 LinkedIn Connections, but **Sourcers in EMEA are twice as likely to have in excess of the illusive 500+ Connections** than their Asia Pacific counterparts and are well ahead of even American Sourcers.

However, **American Sourcers are 33% more likely to be super-connectors (>2,000 Connections)** than their EMEA counterparts.
How are Sourcers engaging with passive candidates?

Most Sourcers either send an InMail or add a passive candidate as a connection in order to first engage with them. 21% find an email address, while only 6% pick up the phone to try and reach them. This is stunning considering how important personal communication is in engaging potential talent.

In Asia Pacific, where Sourcers are much more likely to be using a free LinkedIn account, with no InMails, it’s much more likely that they will add someone as a connection as a first point of contact.
What is a Sourcer’s average **response rate** from talent they find on LinkedIn?

The **majority of Sourcers** only hear back from between 20% and 40% of the passive candidates that they reach out to. 16% of Sourcers report such poor response rates that they would have to reach out to 40 people to get four replies!

Regionally, **Sourcers in EMEA report the best response rates** with Sourcers in Asia Pacific reporting the lowest.
What are the average response rates by medium for candidates you find on LinkedIn?

When we analysed the data on how Sourcers primarily engaged with passive candidates we found striking differences in their average response rates.

While sending an InMail was definitely better than adding someone as a connection, sending an email performed even better. However, the majority of Sourcers who pick up the phone to first engage with passive talent, report response rates more than double than that of any other medium.

This reinforces the need for Sourcers to have traditional phone skills to complement their online search skills.
How are Sourcers using LinkedIn Groups?

Most Sourcers either **post jobs in LinkedIn Groups** or **participate in Group Discussions**.

Interestingly, the majority of LinkedIn users cite **Group Discussions** and **Job Discussions** as being their largest source of spam. So how should Sourcers make the most out of Groups without annoying their target audience?

- **38%** who **own or manage LinkedIn Groups**
- **38%** who **post jobs to Job Discussions**
- **12%** who **don't use LinkedIn Groups**
- **12%** who **participate in General Discussions**
How useful are job boards?

The vast majority of Sourcers are using paid job boards to attract candidates but only a small minority of them are filling more than half of their jobs using these applicants.

Is this because job boards don’t work as well as they used to, or is it because 32% of Sourcers admit to making no effort to optimise their jobs to be found by job seekers?
Are Sourcers being restricted from using social sites in the office?

On average, **31%** of Sourcers are restricted from using social media in the office.

Sourcers in **China report the world’s highest restrictions on social media usage (68%)** with Ireland reporting the lowest (4%).

However, **41%** of Sourcers admit to accessing these sites via their mobile device instead.

These figures show that not only have many HR departments failed to convince their businesses of the power of social recruiting, they are risking data privacy leaks, brand reputation problems and potentially damaging candidate experiences.
How are Sourcers using Facebook?

Of the minority who do use Facebook to source candidates, an alarming number (41%) still refuse to use their personal account to do so. Despite this fact, only 37% of Sourcers have access to their employers’ brand pages, forcing them to violate Facebook’s Ts & Cs and use a fake or duplicate account.

Perhaps the smartest way to source on Facebook is to simply ask Sourcers to share their employers’ vacancies on their personal account. 73% of Sourcers said that they would be happy to do this and 97% said they would do so without a monetary reward.
How are Sourcers using Twitter?
*(and other micro-blogging sites such as Sina Weibo)*

Whilst **almost 60% of Sourcers in EMEA and the Americas use micro-blogging sites to recruit**, usage is 10% lower in Asia Pacific.

Sourcers are more likely to use their own, personal account on Twitter than they are on Facebook (71% of Twitter users vs. 59% of Facebook users) but only 22% of Sourcers who use Twitter actually use it to search for candidates.

**Twitter is the second most popular sourcing tool behind LinkedIn** yet only 12% of all Sourcers actually say they use it to search for candidates. Not only are they not tapping into Twitter’s 270 million+ active members, they are almost totally ignoring Google+’s 1 billion members and Facebook’s 1.32 billion active members. Did someone say that they’re struggling to find candidates?
How are Sourcers using Google+?

Google+ has four times as many profiles as LinkedIn, yet it is being severely underutilised by Sourcers everywhere.

Employers are still holding their most curious Sourcers back by restricting their access to post on the company’s social pages. Similar to that of Facebook users, only one third of Sourcers have permission to post on their company’s G+ page.
Are Sourcers using instant messaging?

Instant messaging apps have exploded as a means of personal communication, particularly on mobile devices but their take-up in professional sourcing is still slow.

Sourcers in Asia Pacific report the highest usage rates, dominated by Chinese owned WeChat which allows employers to host company pages where candidates can apply for jobs and get status updates on their applications.

In the rest of the world iMessage (from Apple) and WhatsApp (from Facebook) are the strongest contenders for future use.

The most popular tools are:

1. WeChat (13%)
2. iMessage (8%)
3. WhatsApp (7%)
4. Viber (4%)
5. Line (4%)
Sourcers in EMEA

- Sourcers in EMEA are definitely savvy when it comes to online recruitment. Although not the highest scoring in the world, they are only one percentage point behind their Asia Pacific peers and considerably ahead of Sourcers in the Americas.

- LinkedIn is their preferred social network (94%) but amongst Sourcers, their usage of Twitter is joint highest in the world (59%). They are the biggest users of YouTube for employer branding (55%) but not huge fans of Facebook (only 39%) or Google+ (25%).

- When it comes to LinkedIn, they are big fans of free (Basic) accounts (42%) and seem to know how to network better on it too with only 13% reporting a network smaller than 500 Connections (vs the Global average of 20%). However, their networking has limitations as they are the least likely group to have a network over 2,000 Connections (21% vs the Global average of 27%).

- Despite this, Sourcers in EMEA appear to know how to make LinkedIn work best for them, with the highest passive response rates, by far, in the world. Whereas, on average, 16% of Sourcers report dismal response rates below 10%, only 5% of Sourcers in EMEA had such poor response rates. In fact, 29% enjoy response rates above 40%, the highest in the world!

- If you’re a Sourcer in EMEA, now is not the time to get carried away. Response rates, on average, are still very low compared to what they could be and overall usage of social sites like Twitter, Facebook and Google is still dismally low meaning that many continue to miss out on millions of great candidates! EMEA Sourcers may be top of the class on many scores but there is still much to learn!
When it comes to search skills and technical search proficiency, Sourcers in Asia Pacific are definitely number one! They scored 9% higher than the global average but whilst they would appear to excel in their knowledge of how to find candidates, they are not applying their search skills to as many other social sites and their response rates from the one they are using the most, LinkedIn, is way behind the rest of the world.

LinkedIn usage is high, but at 85% it is still behind the rest of the world. This is understandable as LinkedIn user penetration is not as high in most of Asia Pacific but we can expect this to increase in future years based on current LinkedIn growth rates in the region. Microblogging is the second most used tool to source and attract talent, dominated by Sina Weibo in China and Twitter in most other Asia Pacific markets. Whilst usage of sites like Twitter is a little lower than other regions, Sourcers in Asia Pacific use Facebook (28%) and Google+ (15%) much less than Sourcers elsewhere in the world. Could this be due largely to aggressive social media restrictions in countries like China where 68% of Sourcers report such restrictions in the workplace?
Sourcers in Asia Pacific continued

- Sourcers in Asia Pacific are almost 50% more likely to use a free LinkedIn account than their the Americas counterparts. Is this due to the fact that LinkedIn has a much larger sales presence in other markets or is it a result of the fact that LinkedIn have a global pricing policy for their products meaning that a Sourcer in India on a fraction of the wage of his or her counterpart in the Americas still has to pay the same amount for premium access?

- The most worrying statistic from Asia Pacific markets is that of passive candidate response rates. Sourcers elsewhere in the world are 50% more likely to be in the high response category (i.e. >40% response rates) whilst Sourcers in Asia Pacific are 400% more likely to be in the lowest response category (<10%) compared to their peers in EMEA.

- Around the world there is a definite correlation between the LinkedIn account you use and your response rate from passive candidates, so one would expect that a market so dominated by free usage would have lower overall response rates. However, this alone is not enough to account for such a large difference. The method you use to approach a candidate and the size of your network also play an important role. Sourcers in Asia Pacific are much more likely to have a small network of LinkedIn Connections (26% have less than 500 Connections vs only 13% reporting the same in EMEA). Perhaps more telling, Sourcers in Asia Pacific overwhelmingly prefer sending LinkedIn Connection requests as a method of first contact, bucking the global trend to send InMails. The most successful method around the world is to use the phone, which Sourcers in Asia Pacific are slightly less likely to do. They are, however, the world’s top user of the second most successful method of engagement, email (24% vs average of 21%), but they are not seeing the results one would expect. It would appear that what Sourcers in Asia Pacific need to spend more time on their “soft” skills such as crafting engaging emails and working on their verbal abilities and phone confidence.
The picture of American Sourcers is one of two sides. Overall, their technical search proficiency is not quite up to the level of other Sourcers, falling 6% below the global average. However, the granular differences show up less as an average, but more at the extremes. American Sourcers are more likely to be in the lowest categories for network size and response rates but also more likely to be in the highest categories! How can we explain this disparity?

Let’s look at the larger picture first. LinkedIn usage in the Americas is the highest in the world at 99%. They are also more likely to use Google+ (28% vs average of 23%), joint most likely to use Twitter (59%) but far and away their biggest difference is their relative love of Facebook! 46% of American Sourcers use Facebook to do their job versus a global average of 37%, and only 28% in Asia Pacific. Facebook is widely used by employers in the Americas as an employment branding tool but perhaps less so elsewhere in the world. Will Facebook’s recently penal tweak in their Edgerank algorithm for Brand Pages discourage the rest of the world’s employers from catching up?
Sourcers in the Americas continued

- The bipolar nature of sourcing in the Americas becomes apparent when we dig into the LinkedIn stats. Overall, Sourcers in the Americas are much more likely to pay for LinkedIn (61% vs 51% global average) which one would assume is the primary reason why so many of them (41%) prefer to engage passive talent with InMails above and beyond any other medium. However, American Sourcers are nearly joint last (20% vs last place Asia Pacific at 21%) when it comes to categorising those Sourcers who report the lowest response rates of <10%. Unlike their peers in Asia Pacific who seem to perform badly across all categories of response rates, the Americas are near joint leaders for high response rates (28% are in the highest response rate category, nipping at the heels of those in EMEA at 29%). When it comes to network size, 21% of American Sourcers are likely to have less than 500 Connections, meaning that they are far less connected than their peers in EMEA, only 13% of whom report such low network sizes. Again though, American Sourcers surprised us by showing that on the other scale, they are 33% more likely to be a “Super Connector” (more than 2,000 Connections) than Sourcers in EMEA.

- It would appear that in the Americas you are much more likely to either be a super savvy Sourcer with a huge network and high response rates or a very un-savvy Sourcer with a small network and disproportionately low response rates. There are less “average” Sourcers in the middle than elsewhere. Regardless of which end of the spectrum you are at, it would appear that all American Sourcers have become too reliant on InMails and too few are properly leveraging other social channels. Rather than seeing this as a negative, we see this room for improvement and a massive opportunity for all Sourcers to increase their performance and the overall candidate experience.
What makes a great online Sourcer?

Sourcing is the art of searching for and identifying top talent from private and online databases including social sites.

We tested the technical search knowledge of 328 Sourcers from all over the world and here’s what we found out.

- Sourcers in the **IT sector** scored up to 12% higher than those in other sectors.
- Sourcers from the **Asia Pacific region** scored 7% higher than the global average.
- Sourcers with **2-4 years experience** performed most consistently.
- Sourcers using **paid LinkedIn accounts** scored 26% higher than those who don’t.
- On average, **third party Sourcers** scored 3% higher than those who work In-House.
Top takeaways

1. Expand your reach
There are billions of potential professionals on sites like Twitter, Facebook and Google+. Very few Sourcers are leveraging them, which represents a huge opportunity to find unique candidates and engage in a totally new way.

2. Invest in your network
Well connected Sourcers have better success rates. These relationships are key to leveraging referrals, researching the market and showing your credibility and authority. Quality of network is essential but it also needs to be deep. Be an open networker and find ways to keep your network engaged with quality content, help and advice.

3. Communication is key
No matter how good a technical search expert you are, none of it matters if you can’t engage a potential candidate. Knowing what medium to use and having the verbal and written skills to engage and communicate effectively with your audience is absolutely the best way to work smarter. Online Sourcing is more than just Search. Old-school sales techniques still matter.

4. Importance of engagement
More than at any other time in history, organisations have direct access to global talent. Candidate engagement can be a key differentiator. Ensure you select the right Sourcers to represent your organisation; really bringing the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to life.

5. Learn about successful CRM strategies from your Marketing team
Once you’ve located the right candidate, engagement doesn’t stop there it’s a long term game. Ensure your Sourcing process is underpinned by long-term strategic activity, continuously engaging with your Talent Pool via digital, online and offline means. Within recruiting, this is referred to as Candidate Relationship Management or recruitment CRM. But your Marketing colleagues have been doing this for years – leverage their expertise and tools for client/customer management before starting from scratch.
About Social Talent:

Social Talent, founded in Ireland in November 2010, are Europe’s leading provider of online and social media training specific to the Recruitment and Staffing Industry. To date we have trained thousands of Recruiters from corporate recruitment departments and agencies alike both offline in a classroom environment and online.

We like the truism “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him to fish and you feed him for life!” Through our training we pass on our extensive knowledge of the use of technology in recruitment and online marketing to show you and your teams where to fish for the best candidates, what bait to use and how to reel in the best talent in the market and not just the best talent on the market.

About Alexander Mann Solutions:

Alexander Mann Solutions is the world’s leading provider of talent acquisition and management services. We integrate our outsourcing capability and consulting expertise to enable organisations to attract, engage and retain top talent.

Every day, Alexander Mann Solutions and clients from a wide range of industries work together to create and execute people strategies that add value to the bottom line in over 80 countries around the world.

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