

# **Social Media in Belgian Recruitment Companies**

## **JULY 2010**

**Are Belgian recruitment companies making social media part of their strategy? How visible are they? How professional do the recruiters look in social media?**



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## **Social media usage in recruitment Survey results and conclusions**

### **1. Management summary**

Social media and networking are considered to be one of most sought out solutions for recruitment. There are obviously 2 directions that need to be considered when looking at the use of social media:

- Candidates that are looking a recruitment companies and individuals
- Recruiters looking for candidates

A good starting point is to take a look at the mindsets of the two different groups. The recruiter assumes that connecting to social media platforms will give him/her easy access to a large pool of candidates (different pools to fish in). Candidates on the other hand join social media to strengthen their offline relationships and build social capital to be used when the time is ready. Neither group is really investing time and effort into building relationships that will generate/fill future job opportunities.

That is why today social media, LinkedIn pre-dominantly, is being use to check out a person's background before considering and/or interviewing candidates rather than building relationships towards the future employment situations.

The survey and conclusions included in this report will take a look to what extend social media is being used by recruitment companies as well as provide a view on the profile of a recruiter in the Belgian market place.

The overall of this report is create an insight and inventory of the current state of affairs and identify which steps can be taken to improve the success and efficiency ratios for all parties involved.

What this research will not address is the effectiveness and/or success rate of the presence of recruitment companies or professionals.

#### **About Vanguard Leadership**

Vanguard Leader is a Social Media Policy Consultancy company that focuses on helping companies and individuals protect their reputation in social media by providing awareness about social media, creating and implementing social media policies, providing customized trainings and workshops and doing social media monitoring in an outsourced model.

Vanguard Leadership also provides specific training and monitoring solutions for recruitment companies taking them "from a professional profile to an efficient recruitment strategy.

## 2. Research method

The companies that are included are part of the Belgian recruitment trade organization completed with some other known companies. The research was done based on 2 levels:

Company level:

- 180 recruitment companies were analyzed using a number of different tools including the search engines provided by the social media platforms.
- The website of all 180 companies was visited and check visually for links to social media applications.
- The next step consisted of seeing making an inventory if the companies are present in: LinkedIn (considered business), Facebook (considered private), Twitter, blogging (from newsletters to actual blogs), Multimedia (video and photo) and finally geo location (foursquare type applications).

Recruiter level (LinkedIn being the driving platform)

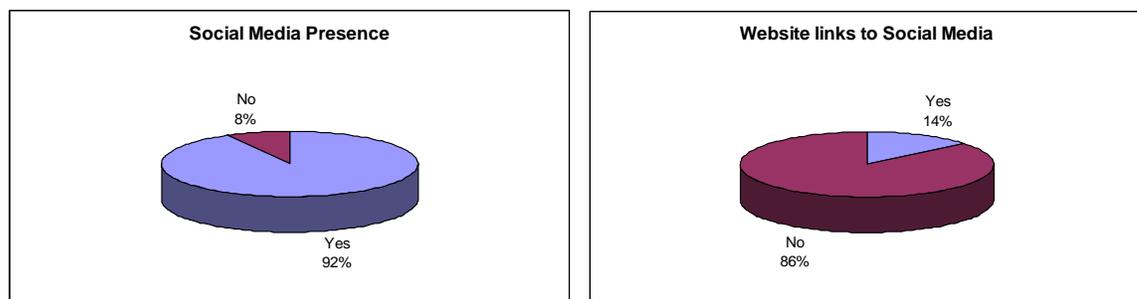
- Over 850+ personal profiles were analyzed through the use of LinkedIn.
- Profiles examined came from both large and small companies with no significant difference.
- The goal was to check the level of professionalism and completeness of the profiles of the Belgian recruitment professional.

## 3. Company level results and conclusions

### 3.1.Social media links on website

The break through of social media is relatively young and has not really found its way to the websites of companies in general. The same trends is true for recruitment companies.

14% of all recruitment companies have links on their website to social media. They vary in order of decreasing occurrence: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Youtube.



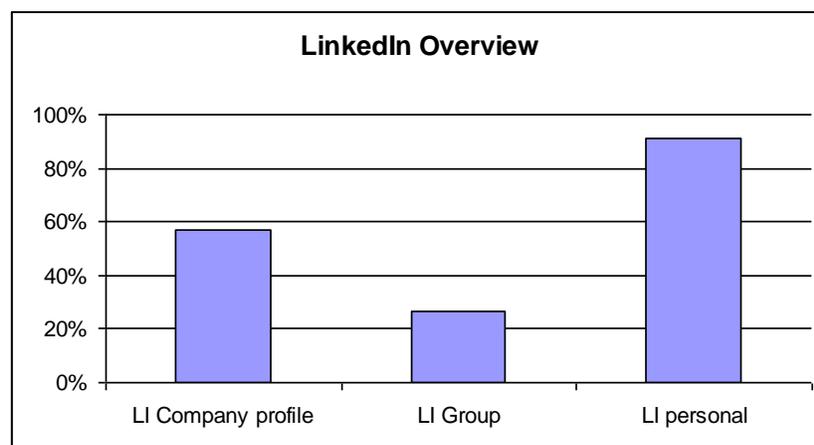
### 3.2. Business Networking

All the literature and experience point to LinkedIn as the prime tool for business networking. LinkedIn has over 70 million members worldwide of which about 700.000 are in Belgium. On a monthly basis, about 10.000 new people join LinkedIn.

Over the course of the last years, LinkedIn has done a lot of efforts to create features for HR and recruitment professionals.

LinkedIn indicates there are 113 companies in the *Staffing and Recruitment* category, but some companies prefer to use *Human Resources* (251) as their identifying business category. There are respective 6000+ and 24.500+ profiles in the above category.

The research has yielded the following results within LinkedIn:



- 57% of the recruitment companies have a company profile. These numbers include both Belgian based and international based company profiles.
- 27% have a specific *LinkedIn Group*. Interesting to note is that most of the groups cater to employees, ex-employees and alumni. It is true that there are some general trade groups, but that part will be covered during the recruiter profile section.
- 91% of the recruitment companies have at least ONE employee as a member of LinkedIn. This might seem a very good number, but keep in mind that **9%** or **17 out the 180** companies is not represented!
- Another observation is that very few recruitment companies use the *Job* function to post opening. At the production of this report, only 2 companies published jobs openings.

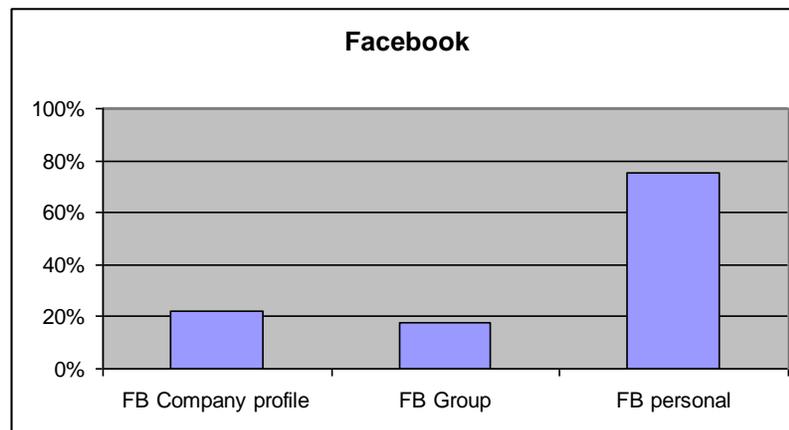
### 3.3. Personal Networking (Facebook)

This seems to be a very touchy subject. It is however clear that we can not ignore this social media platform. With close to 500 million members worldwide and around 4 million in Belgium, it must be said that it holds potential to create relationships that lead to employment opportunities or to find the way to recruitment companies.

One of the key reasons to profile a recruitment company on Facebook (or Netlog) is to attract young people who have not yet joined the active business network sites.

One of the hottest subjects of Facebook is whether to choose a *Page* or a *Group*. The difference between these 2 type has not always been understood by the person who created these pages thus leading to some confusion and mistakes. Pages are used for companies while Groups should be used for discussions.

The survey results can be summarized as follows:



- 22% of the companies have a PAGE profile
- 18% have a group profile
- 76% of all companies have at least ONE employee on Facebook
- 90% of the employees of recruitment companies who are on Facebook do not have any ties (NO company link) to their company. They consider Facebook completely separate from their business profile

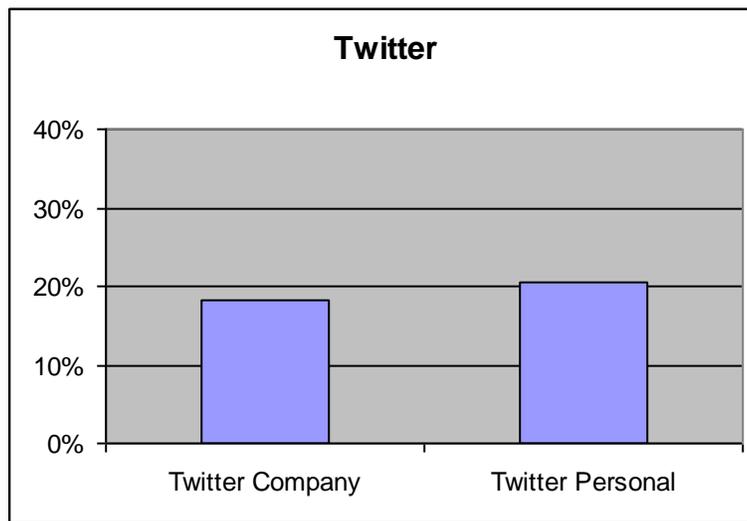
### 3.4. Microblogging (aka Twitter)

In the course of the last 18 months, Twitter has boomed. The number of users has increase with over 1300%! It must be said that a lot people are struggling with how to use Twitter in a business concept.

The best ways to use Twitter can be summarized as follows:

- Short Job postings (max. 140 characters)
- Direct people to the job posting websites
- Campus recruitment (direct young people to your booth)

In terms of research, 2 views were taken into account: company Twitter and personal Twitter handles. The research yealded the following results:



- 18% of companies have a Company Twitter handle (=name)
- 21% of all companies have at least ONE person sending out tweets. Here is hard to see whether Twitter is being used professionally or personally.

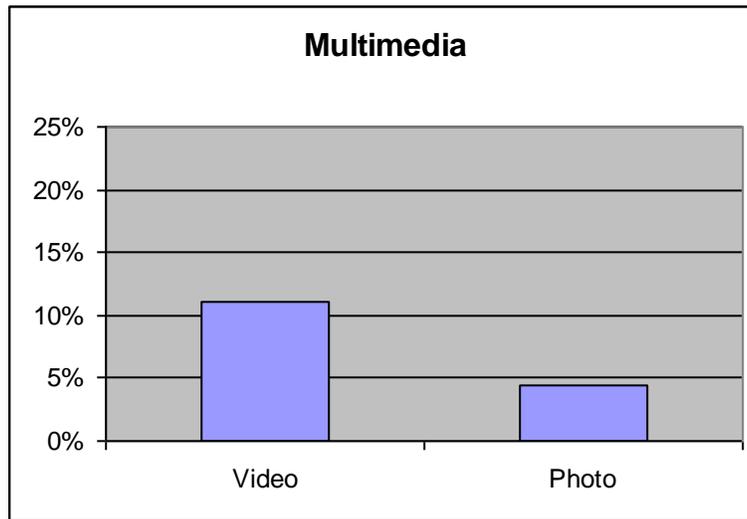
### 3.5. Blogging

This category of items has been expanded to include items such as newsletters, RSS feeds, advice columns and real blogs as they do provide both candidate and client with some type on information on a regular basis.

It must be said that over 55% of recruitment companies offer some kind of information channel to their different audiences.

### 3.6. Multimedia

Multimedia can consist of a number of categories, but they focus on video and photo sites. The main players in this area are Youtube, and Flickr.



- 11% are present in YouTube or use video on their site
- 4% are present of the photosite Flickr. The most popular pictures are those taken at events such as tradeshows, conference and events.

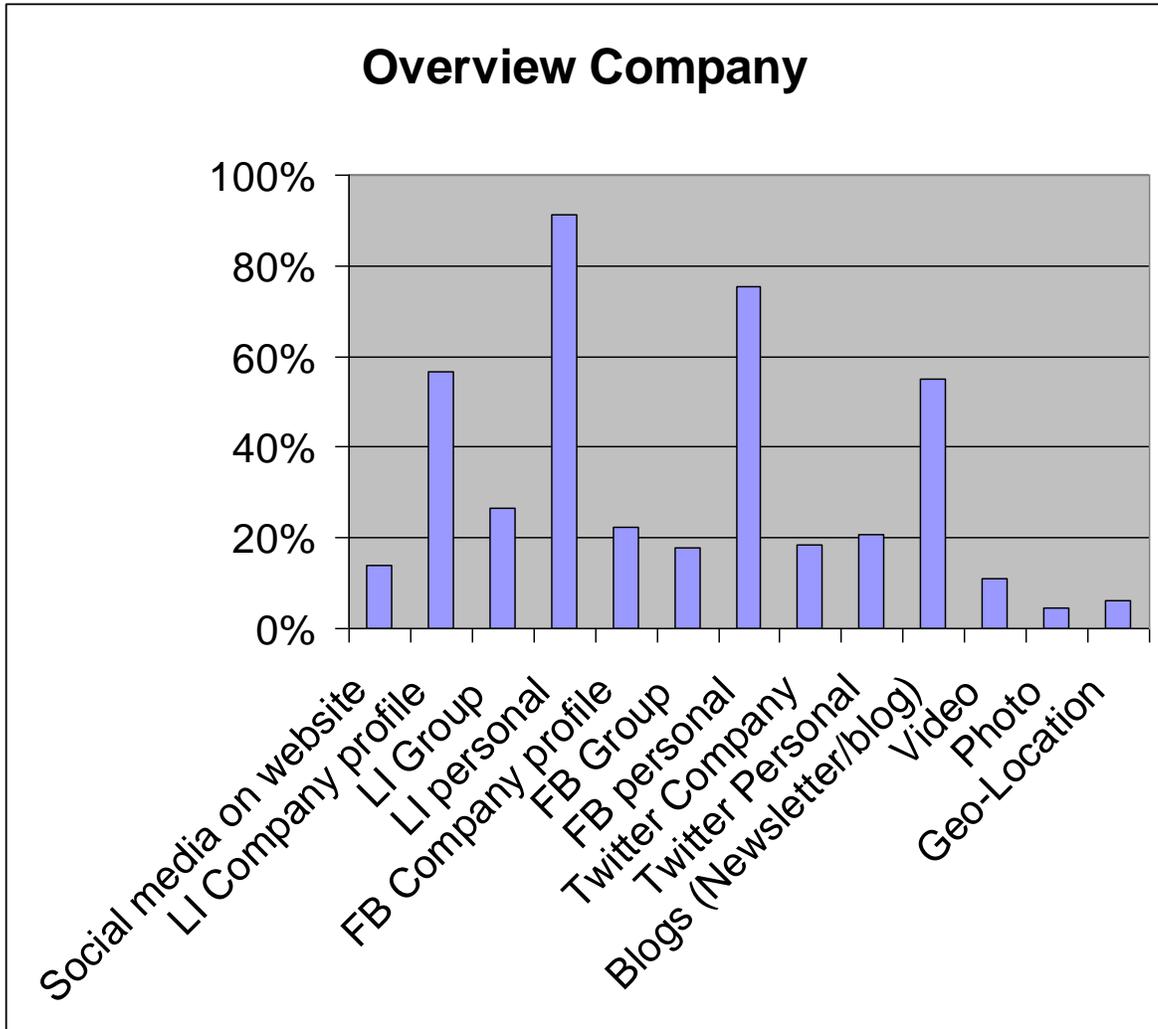
### 3.7. Geo-Location

The last category covered in this research is *Geo-location*, the booming social media application. This application answers the question: “Where are you?” and is mostly tied into Twitter or Facebook. The biggest name in the field today is an application called Foursquare closely followed by Gowalla.

Due to the confidential nature of candidate’s visits to recruitment, it is normal that few companies can be found in applications such as Foursquare. Today, 6% are listed in foursquare.

### 3.8. Conclusions and recommendations

Reviewing the above information on how companies are taking advantage of social media, it is fair to conclude that there is along way to go. Individual contributors are leading the way and jumping on the band wagon by becoming members of social networking platforms, companies will have to catch up.



In terms of recommendation, the priorities could be:

- First of all, a clear social media strategy is required to which all members of the company have to adhere. This strategy will define where and how the company wants to be seen using what tools and platforms. This will also provide guidelines for the professionals to adhere too in terms of how they present themselves on these platforms (see later)
- Secondly, there is certain a need to implement a social media policy that will provide advice to the recruitment professionals on how to behave on behalf of the company. This can help them streamline titles and presence in social media.
- Thirdly, companies need complete their profiles on both business and personal networking sites to create a professional image and expand their (brand) reach. Make it easier for people to follow them and so reach the latent job seeker.
- Fourthly, companies need to create Twitter accounts with their name or risk the name to be snatched from them by other (similar to url snatching in the 1990's). They also need to use Twitter to direct traffic to their job sites.
- Fifthly, to strengthen the ties with their audience, content needs to be created and distributed via blog/newsletter/etc. Trust will lead to better following and better/more candidates to fill openings.

## 4. Recruitment Professional Profile - results and conclusions

### 4.1. LinkedIn Profile overview

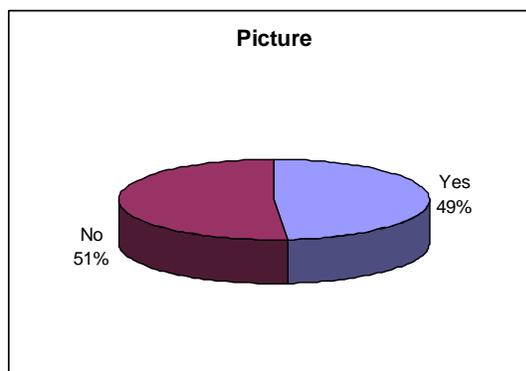
The main feature is your public profile, consisting of any work experience, education, specialties, or interests you'd like to share. One of the important components to start creating trusted relationships is to make sure that your profile is complete and professional.

The next step is to connect your profile with other people to start building relationships. And the final step is to join the conversation by joining groups, starting and answering discussions and connecting people.

When viewing the profiles of over 850 recruitment professionals, items such as completeness, professionalism, connections, groups and ties to the business were considered.

### 4.2. Professional look

One of the most way important ways to look professional is to have a professional picture. Only 49% of all profiles viewed have a picture! Just like recruiters want to see what the candidate looks like, so does the candidate want to see what the recruiter looks like.



One common mistake is to have the company logo as your picture. Not only does not demonstrate professionalism (unless you are the company) but it is against the *rules (aka Terms of service)* to which to agreed when you signed up).

Other common practices, and not allowed under the *Terms of Service*, are the use of your email address and/or phone number in your headline. Today, LinkedIn tolerates this behavior, but they have the right to kick you out.

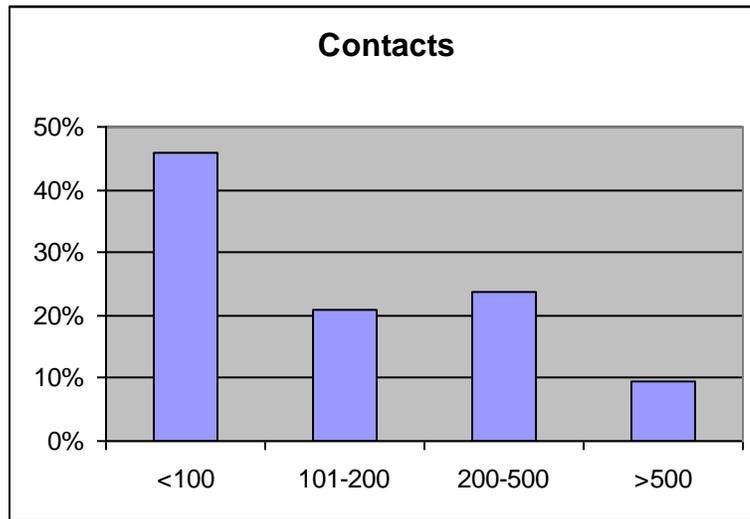
The final practice which should be remedied is to have multiple profiles (LinkedIn only allows you to have ONE). Today about 3% of the recruiters have multiple profiles. This is mostly due to the fact that the email address to which the profile is linked is no longer in use or forgotten.

Also important to note that about 9% have a slideshare presentation of their company on their profile. This seems a best practice in larger organizations.

Close to 100% of the recruitment professionals have personalized their LinkedIn url.

## 4.2. Contacts

One of the main features of LinkedIn is to connect with other people. The average “unofficial” number of connection is in the area of a 120.

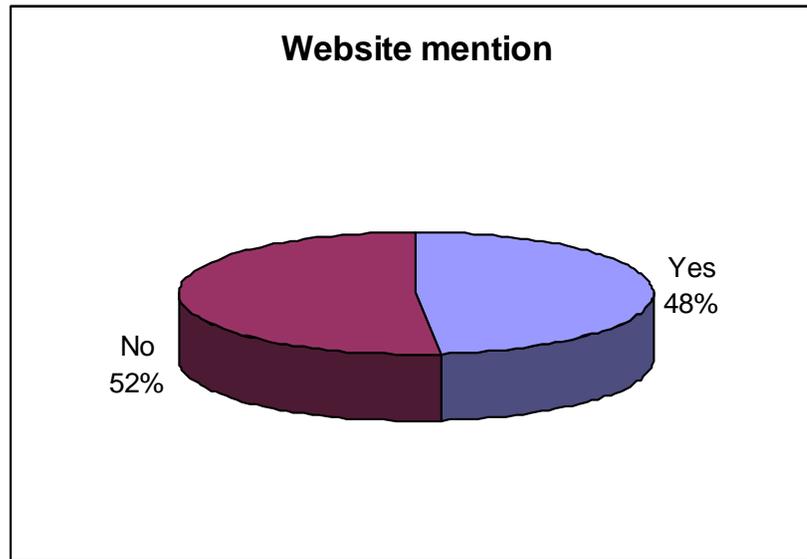


The research of the 850+ recruitment professionals delivered the following results:

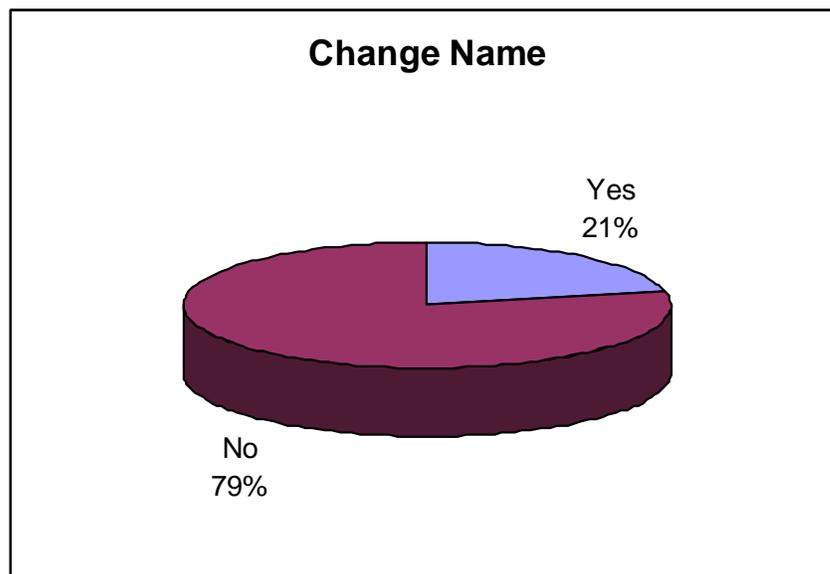
- 46% have less than 100 contacts. Expanding this number down further the 46% is made up of
  - 18% have less than 25 contacts
  - 11% have between 26 and 50 contacts
  - 17% have between 51 and 100 contacts
- 21% have between 101 and 200 contacts
- 24% have between 201 and 500 contacts
- 10% have more than 500 contacts

### 4.3. Website information

Another important component of looking professional and directing traffic to the company is the mentioning of your company's website. LinkedIn offers you a standard setting that says "My Company" or "My Website". Since most of the members in LinkedIn are not the owner of their company, it is wise to mention the actual name of the company and or website. However, practice today tells otherwise.



In terms of mentioning their website, 48% of the recruitment professionals have a link to their company or website. On 52% of the profiles you can not link through to their website.



Of those 48% not even "1 in 5" (under 20%) do the effort to change the standard setting to the actual name of their company and/or website.

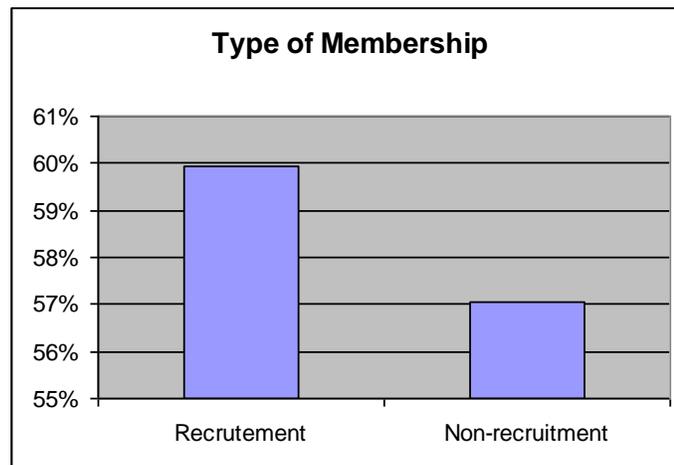
#### 4.4. Joining the conversation

Another way to create visibility is to join groups on LinkedIn. Daily practice sees that we can join 2 types of groups: same-kind group and other groups. In this case it would be recruitment groups and non-recruitment groups (general interest of client/candidate groups).



The research yielded that:

- 29% (or 1 in 3) recruitment professional does not belong to any group
- 37% belong to under 5 groups
- 22% belong to 6-10 groups
- 8% belong to 11-25 groups
- 1% belongs to more than 25 but less than 50 (limit) groups



Of those who belong to groups, 60% are members of recruitment related groups while 57% belong to non-recruitment groups. The most popular groups to join for recruiters are:HRM Blogs.com, HR Professionals (Benelux chapter), RH/HR Tribune, Executive Search Group, LinkedIn HR (and sub groups), Jump (women's network) Flanders Recruitment Network, European HR professionals, HRMinfo.net.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

As was the case with companies, there is still a long way to go and Rome was not conquered in a day. So a step by step approach is probably the best practice.

- Step1: Make the profile professional by adding a picture, adding and/or updating your company website and eliminating illegal elements such as email/phone number in your headline.
- Step 2: Get rid of the multiple profiles
- Step 3: Join groups including ones where you can actually find candidates (e.g. sales or marketing groups).
- Step 4: Join the conversation by contributing to the discussions (answering questions, posting questions, running polls, etc.)

#### **5. Contact information**

For more information on the market research or on the solutions contact:

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