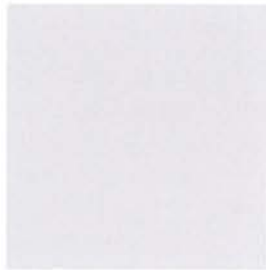
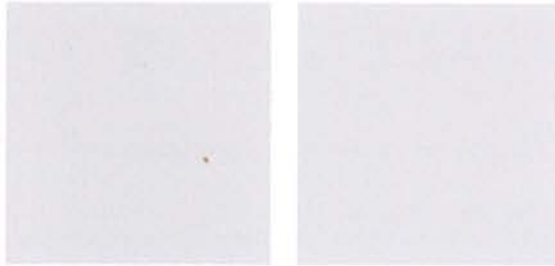


Universum Quarterly

The world's leading Employer Branding journal

Presented by Universum

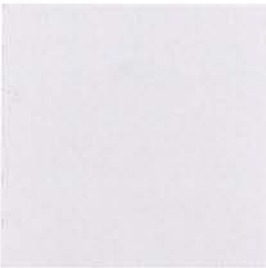
Issue 3 2009



In with the new

...but don't throw away the old

Learn how to team the right messages with the right communication channels to get the most out of both, for your employer brand > page 12



To be or not to be...on Facebook that is

Your kids use it. Your potential recruits use it. Should you? Read this how-to-guide to the online social networking world > page 16

Substance over style

Read how students in the US have changed their priorities – and what they will not sacrifice, no matter what > page 8



'Keeping up with the Joneses'

Consultant and frequent media guest Jonathan Pontell introduces us to "Generation Jones" > page 22

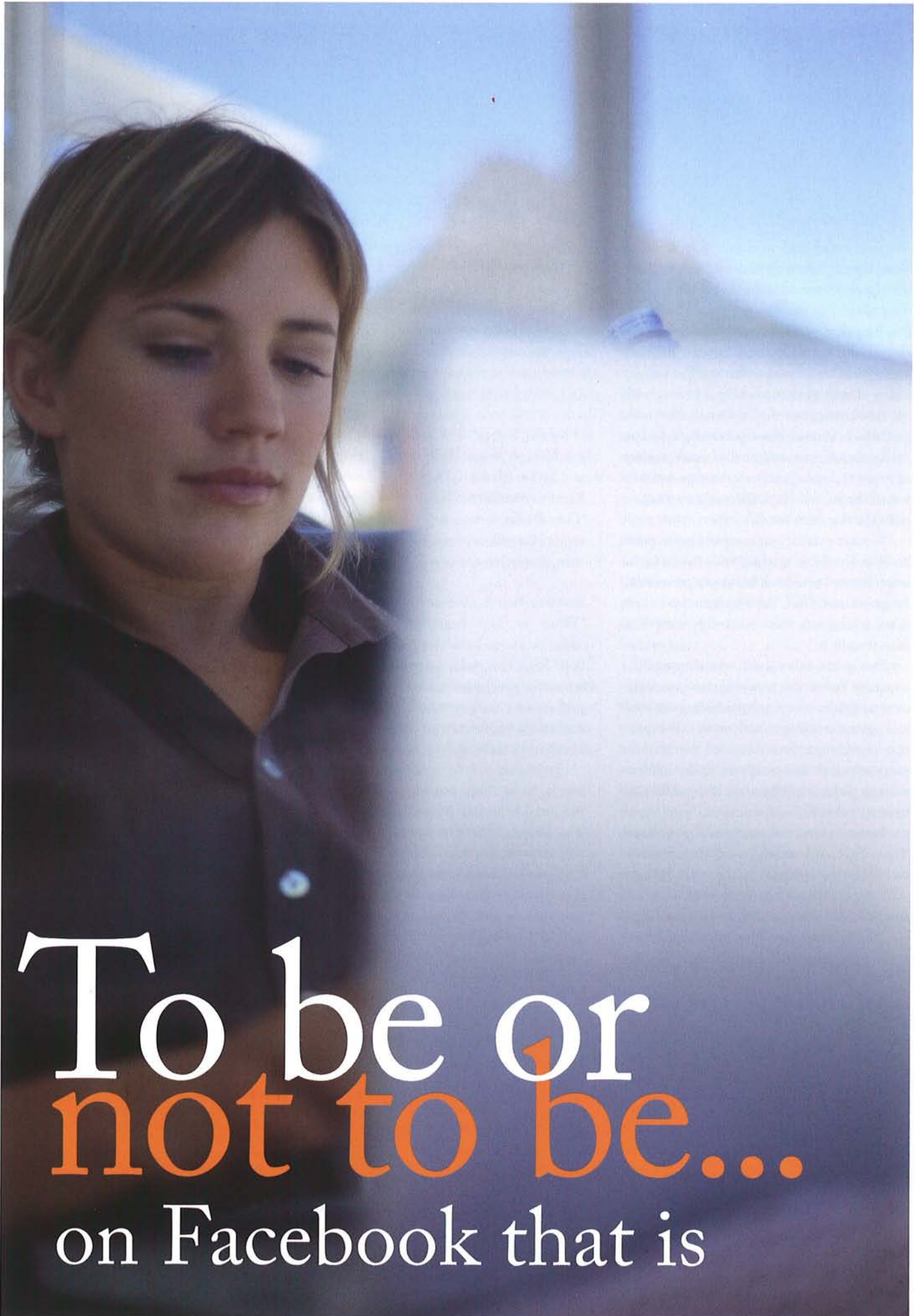
The state of EB today

Updates from Universum's EB Insights report > page 19

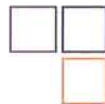


UNIVERSUM
Building Brands to Capture Talent





To be or
not to be...
on Facebook that is



On September 26th 2006, facebook.com opened its pages to anyone over the age of 13 with a valid email address. Three years later, almost everyone you know has an account and employers of all sizes are wondering if they are missing a trick.

The social network has continued to evolve offering employer branding opportunities and is a talking point for employers due to the sheer number of students they could connect with. According to the Universum Student Survey, 94 per cent of UK and Norwegian students use it and even 93 per cent in Singapore. It is a global communication platform; employers have never before been faced with such potential for employer branding success – or disaster, all depending on which side of the fence you sit on.

By Michelle Boyde

Importantly, 89 per cent of Singapore students are positive or neutral about being approached on social networking sites. This is the same for 80 per cent of German students, 75 per cent of UK students and 64 per cent of US students.

These numbers will surely encourage many employers to dabble in Facebook. Many already have: big names such as Ernst & Young, Deloitte and Unilever all use the platform successfully. JP Morgan has also found Facebook advantageous: they partly attribute their achievement of reaching number one in the Universum 2009 UK Student Ranking to their presence on the site.

What not to do

For employers who are keen to create a presence on Facebook or a national equivalent, they want to ensure they will not generate undue damage to their employer brands.

“The biggest mistake an employer can make is to install a corporate account and push corporate information,” said Corné Wielemaker, creative director online media at Maximum. “This will actually give you a disadvantage.”

Based in the Netherlands and China, Maximum is an innovative employment marketing and communication agency. Wielemaker works with clients to build and strengthen their employer brand online through platforms such as Hyves, the Dutch version of Facebook.

“Users should have low key conversations, you should offer social information, not business information,” Wielemaker continued. “Do not just recreate the corporate Web site.”

Integral to this is acting like a person on behalf of an organisation: “If I meet you in the street I would not say ‘Hi, my name’s Maximum, nice to meet you’, I would say ‘Hi my name is Corné, nice to meet you’,” Wielemaker explained. “Then I may go on to tell you that I work for Maximum,” Wielemaker said.

This is the approach required for Facebook and other social networks: an individual account, on behalf of the employer.

Low key conversations

Utilising low key conversations to provide information to potential talent is the difference between using social media tools and the corporate Web site. Two way communication is one of the benefits.

Maximum currently work with the Royal Dutch Army and their presence on Hyves. Wielemaker described how an employer can create an effective low key conversation in this environment: “The Royal Dutch Army can begin a conversation, for example, with a candidate by asking ‘Are you worried about the [physical] test?’. This will likely get answers such as ‘Yes a little bit, what does it entail?’. The Royal Dutch Army is then able to provide more information.”

However, Wielemaker stressed: “Keep it light, such as ‘As long as you do exercise, such as going to the gym several times a week, I am sure you will be fine’.”

Tip of the iceberg

Social media beyond Facebook is also worth exploring. Twitter, for example, can be a great way to communicate with professionals and offer them a look inside an employer.

“It’s the first time in history that micro blogging is so simple.” Wielemaker explained. “You do not need advanced devices to join in, you can use a pretty old web enabled phone – everybody can connect.”

Twitter, if used successfully, can be a great channel for potential talent to follow the daily activities of employees, following in real time the type of day they could have if they join the employer. ▶

Students using Facebook (Figures from the Universum Students Surveys, local equivalent in brackets)

UK	94%
Norway	94%
Singapore	93%
Finland	91%
Denmark	89%
France	88%
Sweden	87%
Italy	86%
Switzerland	84%
Hong Kong	82%
US	73%
Spain	60%
The Netherlands	39% (Hyves 71%)
Germany	30% (StudiVZ 74%)
Poland	27% (goldenline.pl 29%)
China	11% (Xiaonei 95%)
Russia	11% (vkontakte.ru 79%)

Social (media) etiquette

- Never communicate via a corporate account – communication should be done by real people at the employer
- Do not recreate the corporate Web site on Facebook or similar sites
- Use relevant photos and other applications to share information
- Conversations should be low key – do not just push business information



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Blog: blog.cornewielemaker.com

Maximum is one of the world's most innovative employment marketing and communication agencies. Offices are in the Netherlands and Shanghai and our global network includes long-established partnerships with award-winning agencies in North America, Europe, India and Australia.

Headquarters: Capelle aan den IJssel, the Netherlands

Web site: www.maximum.nl/

Employees: 30 in the Netherlands and 15 in Shanghai



Pauline McGivern
Talent Specialist UK and Ireland,
Unilever, Leatherhead, UK

Unilever Plc is an Anglo-Dutch company with a presence in almost 100 countries. It is one of the leading suppliers of fast moving consumer goods in the world.

Their brand portfolio includes many famous names such as Dove, Lipton and Know. An estimated 150 million people per day use Unilever products

Headquarters: Rotterdam, Netherlands and London, UK

Employees: approximately 180,000

"Somebody from Deloitte twittering that they are attending a lunch meeting on a terrace in Amsterdam can be interesting to read," Wielemaker said, "it may be a demanding job, but also fun."

Lessons learnt

Unilever, the global fast-moving consumer goods company has been present on Facebook for two years and is now refining their approach.

"We have three different types of accounts," said Pauline McGivern, talent specialist UK and Ireland. "The corporate page, with a blurb about the company and list of questions; pages run by trainees from different functions and our campus managers have pages."

Unilever's experience mirrors the advice of Maximum's Wielemaker.

"The corporate pages do not work for us," McGivern said. "I get 20-30 messages a day, it is very time consuming and in graduate recruitment you just do not have time for this."

In addition, McGivern explained that it was hard to know if people actually had a genuine interest in working for Unilever or if they simply wanted to join the group.

"We have current employees who wish to join as well as people who may not necessarily be looking for a graduate job," McGivern continued.

However, the function specific groups and campus manager groups have proved successful.

"The trainees can answer more function specific questions than we can in HR and the IT team in particular are very proactive," McGivern said. "The campus manager pages have students linked to students and they have all the correct information to facilitate."

For the last year and a half Unilever have been working on a new global employer brand-

ing proposition, their Facebook proposition is also due to change.

"We will close the 20 or so Unilever pages and rebuild just one," McGivern continued. "A candidate provider will monitor the site and communication from trainees. We will also utilise the IT trainees more as they are so savvy and we could make better use of their skills."

"The biggest mistake an employer can make is to install a corporate account and push corporate information."

Corné Wielemaker, Maximum

To be or not to be

Facebook may not be for every employer and before creating a presence on Facebook, or one of the national equivalents, employers must evaluate whether it truly fits with their employer branding and communication strategy. However, Facebook does have reach and students using it are positive about employers presenting themselves in social arenas. Interacting with your target groups will continue to evolve and social media is simply another opportunity to strengthen the employer brand. ■