
Paul Maxin SRCONF Speaker Interview

Bas van Haterd of RecTec.nl interviews Paul Maxin, Global Resourcing Director at Unilever.

Paul will be presenting a keynote on Unilever's Social Recruiting Strategy at SRCONF 2011. Come learn more by attending. The original interview is in English and Dutch. Please read below.

RecTec is a proud media partner of the Social Recruiting Conference in London, June 30th. In the weeks going to this conference we post short interviews with different speakers. Last week we spoke with Matthew Jeffery, Head of talent acquisition EMEA at Autodesk. Today, Paul Maxim, Global Resourcing Director @ Unilever.

An interview about the worldwide strategy of Unilever on graduate recruitment and the position of social media in it.

At Unilever you are responsible for several things, among others a global outsourcing deal with Accenture and a global programme for graduate recruitment. This seems to be contrary to the Unilever brand strategy of a local, global company, but with local brands responding to local needs and habits. Can you comment on that?

The need to acquire great talent is universal. Our proposition for management trainees through our "future leaders programme" is a globally aligned, world class proposition to graduates that enables us to win by recruiting and developing the best future leaders in order to match our growth and sustainable living ambitions. We have a globally common approach to attracting, selecting, developing and managing our trainees which we then activate at a local level – based on what's appropriate for each individual market.

The contract that we have with our partners at Accenture is a business process outsourcing one of which recruitment is only one part. In the 23 markets where we outsource recruitment we still remain in full control of our talent acquisition strategy.

You are accountable for the employer brand and therefore the social recruiting strategy at Unilever. Can you tell us, in short, what that looks like? What is Unilever's employer brand and how do you use social media to get this across?

The key to a successful employer brand is that it needs to be differentiating and generate a high degree of awareness. Most importantly though, it needs to be authentic. That's why our approach to using social media, particularly in attracting management trainees is to have their voice represented. So whether it's Facebook, Twitter or Youtube, it's run by "grads for grads" and its main purpose is obviously to build engagement with potential new recruits.

It seems to me the world is more different than ever between the regions when it comes to graduate recruitment. In the west graduates can choose anything because more people retire than graduate. In the east there is an explosion of talent, but they are the first "educated" generation. Can you tell us about your experiences with worldwide graduate recruitment?

The research shows that graduates in the west are more discerning than you give them credit for. Nevertheless clearly one of the most important changes in recent years and one that impacts our future prospects is the rapid development in developing and emerging markets – such as China and India – which will account for around 70 per cent of our future growth. Unilever is uniquely positioned to take advantage of this with regard to talent because of our deep heritage in these markets.

Can you tell us something, just a hint, about your keynote on the Social Recruiting Conference? What's your main point going to be you would like to get across?

Don't fall into the trap of using social media just because others are. You need to know what outcomes you want, and then develop and deploy a strategy to reflect that which is applicable to the platforms you want to use.

One final question: In your bio it states you have an unhealthy encyclopaedic knowledge of Bob Dylan's music. Do you ever meet graduates who actually know who that is?

Well graduates of my generation do! I wasn't expecting the delegates at the social media conference to all be new graduates. Having said that, if they like Adele they'll know that her biggest hit was written by his Bobness