

An employer's perspective on the use of ePortfolio – The Randstad Case

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Digital tools and environments can create new benefits for the workplaces and also help them with their human resources management. Digital portfolios or ePortfolios can be considered as digital spaces for collecting, sharing and storing the evidence of competences (Kunnari & Laurikainen 2017). In this way, they can work as a flexible tool for future employees to interact with the workplaces. In our previous studies, in Empowering eportfolio process (EEP) project, together with five European countries namely Portugal, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium and Finland, we have recognised that not all the students are aware of the benefits of digital portfolios (Kunnari, Laurikainen, Pires, & Rodrigues 2017). There is a need for motivating students to create them during their studies (Rodrigues, Pires, & Pessoa 2017). For strengthening the use of ePortfolio, it was also crucial to study how employers see them and what benefits they can recognise.

For this article, we have chosen Carla Nieto's contribution to illustrate the perspective of one employer, Randstad, which is the third largest private employer in Portugal. Carla Nieto (see figure 1) works as a recruiter at Randstad and she has a degree in Human Resources Management from the ESCE (Escola Superior de Ciências Empresariais, IPS).



Context

According to Randstad (n.d.), the organization is a multinational human resources company presented in 39 countries covering 90 percent of the Human Resources (HR) market. The company offers services globally in the HR sector including recruitment and selection, outsourcing, human consulting, outplacement and career counselling. Randstad's mission states that it wants to shape the world of work by bringing supply and demand closer to the market, developing new Human Resources solutions and providing value to society as a whole.

Randstad tag line “human forward” highlights the fact that people are in the centre of the equation, empowered by technology, delivering a service even more human, using the latest HR technology. This is part of the Tech and Touch strategy of the company that also has an investment fund to invest in startups that can accelerate the transformation of the HR market. In Portugal, Randstad is ranked number one with 45 branches, contact centres and inhouse locations, having 30,000 workers in their clients in a monthly basis.

Job recruitment setting – interests of the employer

According to Nieto (2017), the first phase of choosing a candidate is the analysis of the submitted application, which can be followed by one or more interviews. The main objective of the interviews is to understand if the content of the curriculum corresponds to the job offer and to discover the aspects not included in the CV: the motivation of the candidates for the company, as well as their personal and relational characteristics.

The application usually consists of a CV and a letter of motivation, which are subject to prior analysis. When the interview starts, the interviewer already has some information about the candidate's professional profile but sometimes the way the CV is built leads to surprises during the interview. This is due to a CV only including specific information about a candidate instead of a full understanding of a person and therefore “tell me about yourself” is usually the first question asked in an interview.

When finding the right person to fill a position, it should be equally important to find out whether the organization meets the expectations of the candidate. “The candidate's expectations should play a central role in the recruitment process. Even if we realize that the candidate is perfectly suited to our needs, we do not forget to acknowledge his/her expectations. The candidate may not be prepared or may not know the organization sufficiently.” (Nieto 2017).

Job recruitment setting on the basis of an ePortfolio – transparency for the world of work

The digital portfolio can be useful in a first evaluation of the candidate. It can have a fixed element, be a presentation video of the person's motivation, “just to get a first impression of who we are talking about” (Nieto 2017). The employer suggests that it could be a way of assessing some general skills that can replace the photograph, the motivational letter, constituting the candidate presentation.

According to Nieto (2017), Randstad recognises that with the digital portfolio, the author can make his history available and give the option to access details through links, for example. However, simplicity can be a great challenge because the portfolio has to be simple and objective. It is also very important for the applicant to gather information about the company to which he submits his application to, to see if he is genuinely interested in working in that context and to organise his portfolio accordingly.

Conclusions

The company has no experience in the use of digital portfolios for its recruitment process, but nevertheless acknowledges that they can add value to the recognition of the candidate's general competences as well as to highlight the skills that best fit the position. This perspective is

reinforced by Leahy & Filiatrault (2017), stating that although the use of ePortfolios are relatively new in recruitment process, employers have a positive impression of the use of ePortfolios. There seem to be many benefits with ePortfolios from the employers' perspectives. That is why, for students, it is good to recognise how important it is to start building them early enough. Global and digital companies appreciate modern ways of demonstrating employees' competences.

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