

Paul: This is Paul Nixon, and today we're focusing on careers. And I'm with Max Heywood, who is an independent consultant, guru in all things employer-brand. And that's going to be the focus of our conversation around whether it's employer-brand, the best way to express that in careers sites, and the latest stuff that's going on in those careers sites. So Max, do you want to give us a bit about your background and your thinking?

Max: Okay, thanks, Paul. So, yes. Max Heywood is my name. I'm formerly Global Head of Employer Brand at Credit Suisse, and I've spent the last 10 years running talent attraction programmes for investment banks – for JP Morgan, HSBC, Nomura, so I've been active in this space for quite a while now.

In terms of where we are now, and what's going on, and what I see, for the trends and the future, I do think that social media and social networking technologies are in the middle of – perhaps at the beginning of – changing massively how organisations connect with everybody; with their customers, and with candidates – with jobseekers. And I think the reason that this change is happening is that there's been a massive explosion in the number of channels that people can access.

Paul: Well, it's essentially where people are, isn't it?

Max: Yes, exactly.

Paul: It's where the graduates are; it's how they want to be interacted with.

Max: Yes, exactly, and I think you always have to think about – if you're an organisation and you're trying to reach the users, the candidates - you have to think about the environment that they live in, and what

they do. And these days, what university student isn't using social media, and using online an awful lot, using mobile an awful lot? And what that means is they have a massive choice of channels, which means that they don't necessarily – they don't trust employer communication quite so much as they perhaps used to in the past.

Paul: And not so subservient anymore.

Max: Yes, exactly, and they're quite happy to, and comfortable with, and able to, go and do their own research. You know, in the past they might... which is essentially what they have always done in the past. They will have always talked to their peers; talked to their friends and family; talked to their university professors. They would have done all this kind of research then. What's different now, I guess, is that a lot of that is published online, so they can go and surf various websites, and there's a lot of websites these days – a lot of online channels - where people are actually posting their experiences, like this thing called [Glass Door](#). There's lots of them; [Rate My Placement](#) – there's a huge kind of surge at the moment of channels, online channels, where people are talking about their work experience.

And that's something that organisations have to deal with, basically. The world has changed from one where corporate communications could – arguably, they never were able to, but they certainly thought they could - control the brand; control the message. Nowadays, there's just too much noise going on, so all they can do these days is really engage, participate, and influence. So I think that we're seeing a big change.

Paul: So if you were a large company – and there are still quite a few of them who don't engage in social media on their website, how would you start off?

Max: Well, I think the first thing to do is really to listen. That's the most important thing, to start off. Which is –

Paul: Monitoring tools?

Max: Yes, exactly. Monitoring. What conversations are going on out there, you know. Where are our customers? Again, it's not so different from the way that you perhaps should have gone about this in the past, in that a good communication strategy is always understanding your audience. Understand your audience; where are they? What channels are they using? And then adapt your messaging to fit that. So it's not changed that much. Again, I guess the main thing that's changed is just that there's more of it. There's more channels; there's much more information. So yes, I'd start out with listening.

There are tons of tools out there. I mean, for a big corporation – there's things like [Radian6](#), which is the big kind of enterprise platform for doing all this kind of stuff. But there are tons and tons of other tools. I mean, you could even do stuff for free. You can just go and search Twitter for stuff about your brand, or search Facebook, or search through blogs. I mean, just go and have a listen – go and have a look – and see where people are. Understand them and where they are, then go and have a look at those channels, see what they're saying, and – that's the first step.

Paul: And then?

Max: And then – the next thing to do really is to engage them; to open up the communication and be there, participate –

Paul: On a multi-channel approach, or, you know –

Max: Yes, I think so. Especially if you're talking about university students and young people – one of the things that they like a lot is the idea of kind of openness and transparency, so I think – yes, being available – I would say it comes back to who your audience is, and which channels they're on. I mean, there's no point being on Twitter and using Twitter if the students you're trying to reach don't go there. And the reality is that, at the moment, a lot of students don't even know what Twitter is. I mean, actually, that's not true. Everybody knows what Twitter is, because it's quoted in the newspapers every day, and on TV.

But you know, all the research I've seen says that students aren't really active at all in Twitter, so that wouldn't be a sensible thing to try to use that channel. So really, you understand your audience, understand the channels you're using, listen to them, and then try to engage them through that channel. And I have to say that I think, if you're talking about university students, then really Facebook has got to be one of the primary platforms, because, gosh, 650 million people and more worldwide, and all university students, pretty much, using it. So it's a great platform, really.

Paul: And do you assume that, as Mr Corporate HR person, that you can then just set up your Facebook page and it will act as a lightning rod for attracting people who are interested in your industry or company, or how much do you advocate people going out and being a lot more interactive and active across those that use Facebook, and how?

Max: Yes, I would advocate being very involved and participating quite fully, because I think there's a great opportunity, at the moment, to demonstrate your brand that way. So I think if you look at – I mean, I come from the world of banking, so if you look at the world of

banking, not many banks are active in the social space, and if you think particularly about Facebook, of the top ten, maybe a third or a half of them actually have a Facebook presence. And actually, most of them have a Facebook presence that is kind of counter-intuitive to the whole medium, which is that they use it as a broadcast channel. So it's like –

Paul: Yes, or around their sponsorship, so Barclays with Premier League, and...

Max: Yes, yes. So it's like, "We've got all this messaging we've created for our graduate campaign; we'll push it out through our website. We'll push it out through our printed material; we'll push it out on our campus events. And ooh, Twitter – and Facebook! Here's another route for us to push this information out." And you see a lot of them lock their pages down so that students and candidates can't engage; can't reply, or can't comment, or can't send stuff in. So that's actually a big turn-off, and I think massively limits the power of the medium. So I think that's – and I understand, having sat on that side, you know, planning those activities, I know full well what the concerns are, which are manifold. I mean, the big challenge, the biggest challenge, is the legal folks.

They consider these platforms at best a distraction – an unwelcome distraction for their staff – and at worst, a fast-track to litigation and PR nightmares. So that's the main thing. But then even beyond that, if you think about recruitment, and recruiting teams, they just don't want to open themselves up to the kind of communication there. If you're working, and if you're recruiting, you're working in a bank dealing with tens, sometimes hundreds of thousands of applications, if you think about a season – recruiters are so busy with their day-jobs, they just don't see that they have the time to

engage with all these conversations. Which is, you know, understandable. It's understandable.

But the reality of it, I think, is quite different, because if you look at, say, Ernst and Young, who were one of the kind of early pioneers of the whole Facebook platform, and they have 60,000 fans – 60,000 Facebook fans. And they have put a team – they've had to put a team in place to deal with that. But if you look at the communication – the conversations happening on that page. First of all, it's not a great volume. It's not a huge volume. So that fear about the amount of conversation – it's largely unfounded.

And then the other thing is that the majority of the comments are actually pretty banal, and benign, really. So, in what I've seen, 90% of the comments and posts you get on Facebook are mostly about the application process. "Where's my application? I made an application – where am I in the process? Am I going to get called for interviews?" Because there's this whole résumé black-hole thing, you know. They make these applications, and they never hear anything. So that's mostly what it's about.

And then you get, of the remaining 10% of people that comment, you maybe get 5% which is positive stuff, and that's terrific, because you can share that with the audience. Your audience sees that, and that's terrific. It's somebody else saying, "You're good." So that's terrific. And then the other 5%, which is the negative stuff. I actually see that as being a big opportunity as well, because if there's somebody who's got a problem, and who posts that on your page, first of all, it's a good thing because you know about it. Otherwise you don't know about it, and who knows who they're telling, and you just don't know. So at least you know about it. Secondly, there's an opportunity to fix it. And if you fix a problem,

you can turn that person into a massive advocate for you. So I think there's a real, big opportunity there.

And of course, you do have a very, very small minority of crazy people. And that's one of the concerns. But you know what, there always are crazy people; there always will be. You can't change that. And actually, what you see now, as well, is that in communities where you do get people – they tend to kind of self-regulate. Once they get to a certain size, they tend to self-regulate. So if you do get people posting very negative stuff, often you get people from that community coming to your defence, and saying, "Wait a minute, I had a good experience." Or, you know, "Have you done this?" or, "Have you done that?"

They get to help each other. So I'm a great believer in doing that. And with the Ernst and Young example, you know, universum rankings, which are the standard for figuring out how you're doing on campus, and where is the brand going. And in the year that Ernst and Young began its Facebook activity, they had a massive jump up the universum rankings. I mean, I think they got to the top, or very close to the top. And their Facebook activity was largely attributed to that, so –

Paul: Do you know how they built – they went about building those 60,000 fans? Was it through doing interesting activities on there, or just by saying, "We're here."

Max: "We're here!" Exactly.

Paul: "Give us a call."

Max: I mean, it's one of those things. You may as well – if you're going to do this, then you may as well – I'm a great believer in integrated communication campaigns, when you think about the graduate

audience. So you tell people you're there; you put links to it on your careers website; put it in your printed materials that you give out; talk about it when you go on campus. Let people know it's there, and then – the beauty, of course, of the whole social thing, is that as people 'like' your page, then their network sees that they like that page, so there's this kind of viral effect that's possible. It's not a guaranteed thing, by any stretch. But you can get a lot of visibility that way.

Paul: Yes.

Max: So I'm a great advocate of that. And even – I'd go further than that, because the other thing is, and this ties into the real world, as well, which is, many times I've been out on university campuses here in the UK, and in other parts of the world, as well, and talked to students, and –

Paul: Talked to them?

Max: Yes, exactly! (Laughter) What you find is that they – first of all, the majority of them are not really that – the whole world of work is a bit baffling to them, you know. They don't really understand it, because they've not worked, right? So they don't really understand it, a lot of them. And then – so they go and attend these kind of Milkround presentations, careers fairs, and so on, and many times, students have said to me, "The banks..." (This is particularly true of banking, but I'm sure it's true of other sectors) "...the banks all look the same; they're all blue – they all use blue. They all say the same things; they look the same." And by the time they've seen three or four presentations, they can't remember who's who, or what's what! And what they fall back on, and this is why face-to-face continues to be arguably the most important channel, is: they fall back on – "Did I like the people?"

Because ultimately, most big corporations in the sector are pretty similar, and mostly it comes down to the culture of the organisation. And how do you get to understand the culture – is that through reading a brochure, or something on a website? Not really. You can't really get a good sense of culture. I mean, you could say what the culture is, but again, people don't trust it.

So campus presentations – they say that they don't understand the culture. The best way to understand culture is face-to-face. So they fall back on, "The people I met. Did I like them? What were they like?" And I think that's terrific. Now, I think, and I've seen examples of, social really helping with that. Because if you get your employees, especially your... if you think about your graduate recruitment programmes.

If you get some of your new hires into the programme, often they're very enthusiastic about your firm. They're big advocates.

Paul: Some of your best advocates, yes.

Max: Exactly. If you get them to talk about you, and the firm, and to share their experience, that can be a tremendously powerful thing. If you think that most university students want to connect with somebody to find out about an employer, mostly who they want to connect with is people doing the job.

Paul: Yes – someone like me, doing that, in a year's time.

Max: Exactly. I mean, connect with the recruiter, great. But what they really want to do – connect with an MD, fine, fabulous. But actually, I want to connect with somebody who's doing that job. And social media affords that opportunity to have people share their experiences, talk about their jobs, and that can be tremendously powerful, for your employer brand, actually. And I've seen some

really good examples of that. There's some people doing that very well.

Unilever run a page, and what I like about that is that it's by students, for students. You know. I was talking to folks at [Grant Thornton](#) – the accountancy firm. They talked about how they don't – again, they do By Students, For Students - and they don't sign off anything; they don't improve anything. They just let these people communicate, which is very brave, but also very progressive. And it's been very powerful for them, because the reality is, if you empower an employee to speak on your behalf about – I mean, they're not going to say negative things. They're going to be positive, right?

Paul: You just have to set the boundaries.

Max: Yes, exactly.

Paul: Say what's okay, what's not. I mean, the Nestlé example, with their intern running – they got an intern responding on their – I think the Facebook page, or whatever. And then the aggressive people from outside started throwing in barbs, and he responded very aggressively. And then it just went out of control.

Max: Yes. I think that... you know, stuff happens. Negative stuff happens. You can't stop that from happening. But actually, I think that, even in opening yourself up for it, making it possible for that to happen is a very positive thing for your brand, because being big enough to accept criticism and to take some criticism and some negative stuff – I think today that's a very positive thing. If you think about – if you think about big employers, and the majority of them that don't do that, I mean, how powerful is it to say, "Well, actually, we are open

– we will have transparent conversations, and we’ll – come talk with us!” I think that’s terrifically powerful.

I think it’s a big opportunity, and I think it’s a kind of thing where the train has left the station; this is happening. And I think big firms adopting it is a ‘when’, not an ‘if’. So I think there’s an opportunity for firms to steal a competitive advantage. If you think about the banking sector – I mean, I keep talking about the banking space; that’s where I’m from. But what will happen is that at some point, one of the banks will say, “Okay, we’re going to do this; we’re going to go at it.” And the moment they do, all the banks will start doing it as well, because they’re herd kind of animals. So that’s what I would say is a good thing to do.

Paul: And do you see – I mean, I hear a lot of more sophisticated uses on LinkedIn versus Facebook, and more targeted at experienced employees and creating networks around alumni, and so on.

Max: Yes.

Paul: Do you see that distinction? Would you agree with that distinction there?

Max: Yes, absolutely. I mean –

Paul: And what interesting things have you seen on either side?

Max: Yes. I think, again, this comes back to that first point about knowing your audience, and knowing the channels they’re on. In my experience, students – heavy users of Facebook, not really using Twitter, not really using LinkedIn. Actually, one of the things that – during my time at Credit Suisse – one of the interesting things that happened there is that we noticed that students were using LinkedIn, but they were using it for a very specific purpose, which

was, those students who were called for interview, they went and looked at LinkedIn to look at the person they were interviewing with. (Laughter) So they did some research.

So that's the way they'd use LinkedIn. But LinkedIn is not a very student-friendly platform, at the end of the day, because LinkedIn is all about your professional profile; your professional experience. And, of course, most students don't have any, so it's difficult for them to do anything. So, from what I've seen, LinkedIn is not a good platform to reach students. If you're talking about experienced professionals, fantastic. I mean, terrific platform to source talent through.

Accenture – I think they're hiring 40,000 or 50,000 this year, and I think they set a target of 75% of them through LinkedIn. So LinkedIn is a terrific tool for experienced professionals. There's lots of stuff you can do in there. But not for students, which comes back to – you've got to know your audience and know the channels in which they're active.

Paul: So let's pick up on – you started talking about employer-brand.

Max: Yes.

Paul: And we'll start off about how a company goes about expressing that online, and then draw it back into social media and how you do it there. So from your point of view, for those people who don't know much about employer-brand, do you want to just give a brief outline then to talk about how companies should express that?

Max: Yes. So employer-brand is an idea, or a concept, which I guess has actually been around for quite a long time. It was invented in the '80s, I think. I forget the guys – some guys in the UK. Simon Barrow, I think it was, and somebody else. Anyway, they came up

with this idea of employer-brand, and the idea of employer-brand is quite a simple one, really, which is that organisations have a brand, so, Google has a brand; Apple has a brand. Barclays' Bank has a brand.

And the idea of employer-brand is really how that brand is expressed as an employer, how do you present yourself, how do you tell your story, as an employer, to the audiences that you're trying to attract. So to university students, if you run graduate training programmes, and to experienced professionals. So it's been around for quite a long time. It's got increasingly popular. My view about employer-brand is that, actually, it's 90% corporate brand. I see very little distinction between your brand as an employer and your brand as an organisation. Because when you go and talk to candidates, they see the bigger picture. So I don't really see much of a distinction. But basically, employer-brand is how you tell your story as an employer.

Paul: I've heard some people discussing the kind of follow-through on employer-brand as – through looking at employee values, what – the reflection of why they work for you.

Max: Yes.

Paul: Why they – what keeps them there, what attracted them in the first place, and why they're prepared to work hard.

Max: Yes.

Paul: And if you can get them to express that, and kind of capture that as, "This is what our people value," and then reflect that back from the point of view of, "Well, if that group of people...if in recruiting that group of people they've made us successful, we want more of them, please."

Max: Yes.

Paul: And so, therefore, the things that they value are what we're going to fish for, if you like. People who like those sorts of things.

Max: Well – I've done an awful lot of that kind of – values, and things. And I think there is value in doing that. I think there's value in trying to understand who you are, and trying to express that. But I also think that, particularly for the age we live in now, there's a real danger that it becomes very manufactured. I mean, so many times I've seen organisations trying to find out, "What are our values?" And everybody's got 'teamwork'... and there's a lot of commonality, really. And actually, it's very difficult, through that kind of exercise, to express any kind of difference. And ultimately, the difference is really about your culture. I mean, what are people interested in? They're interested in your kind of business performance, and they're interested in your culture, really, at the end of the day.

So I think the danger with that whole thing – it's a good exercise to go through, to understand who you are, because I do think it helps inform the story, certainly. But I think there's a big danger in it becoming kind of manufactured, and like this kind of machine-talk, and I think that's a big turn-off. I think it's an increasingly big turn-off to candidates who really are interested in authenticity. They're interested in authentic communication, and that kind of camber goes against that grain.

Paul: I agree with that, and I think the best, and I haven't – we nearly did it at one client, and hopefully they still will. But the best will then take that value statement. For a company like this particular example, where values are hugely important, I've never seen a company where it is so value-centric. And wanting them to then say – and to give you an example of how we live this value, and then go

and explain it. And I think you've then got to apply it to the culture – to stories. Stories about how the business works, and so on.

Max: But if you come up with five different values, and in your communication, you try to – I mean, employee profiles is a tool which every big employer uses. It's well-documented. It chimes with that whole idea of letting the employees talk about their experience. So an employer profile – if you start saying, "Okay, in this profile, we need to hit these five different messages," it becomes very difficult to do that, and it's like a straitjacket, basically, and again it just makes it seem very manufactured. And I think there was a time and place for that, and I think that time is over, or it's very soon to be over.

Paul: Unless, you know – like you say, if you do take the authentic line, and let the employees talk, and if those things are strong within your culture, then they should come through.

Max: Exactly; they're going to come through.

Paul: Rather than saying, "You have to talk about this."

Max: Exactly. Because a lot of organisations, when they do that whole thing, kind of go, "What do we want to be like? Oh yes, we'd like to be really collegiate, and teamwork-y, and we'd like to give people lots of early responsibility." They think about their employer-brand as the kind of things they'd *like* to be, and that's a really bad thing to do, if it's not true, because then people arrive and they're like, "Wait a minute! I thought I was going to get lots of early responsibility, but actually, that's not true at all." And people leave, and so that's a big failure in my view. So I think – again I come back to this idea — if you let employees talk about their experience authentically, and you're letting advocates [talk] anyway, those

things will shine through. Whatever they are, they'll shine through. And much better to have those things shine through in somebody's – in the way they speak, and just natural language – than to force a message into it, is what I think.

Paul: Yes. So how – since the start, it's moving from employer-brand to actually culture, and expressing culture, and how the company is, if you like, online. How, first of all, do you think the best ways of doing that are on the website, and how best to do it on social media, to express that essence?

Max: Well, I think there's an interesting trend, I see, which is – and I guess – I did a lot of research while I was at Credit Suisse, because I'm a big advocate of user-centred design, so I did – every year when we did the rework of the website, we ran loads of usability labs, and got real-life candidates in, and of sat them in front of the website, and talked to them. And one of the really surprising things that came out of that was – and I did this for both the university students, the graduate audience, but also the experienced professional audience.

And one of the really surprising things that came out of that was that university students pretty much didn't go to the website – the careers website. They didn't bother to read the information on the corporate careers website. So all that time and energy I'd spent crafting texts, and messages, and getting it all signed-off, was all for nothing, it seems. So they didn't come and visit the site. The only time – what they wanted to do, actually – they didn't read that information, but they did come and visit the site for one thing, and one thing only. And that's to make an application.

Their behaviour was – so they need to make applications to get onto the graduate training programme. And they're going to make

10 to 15 applications. People – students – make lots of applications, because they want to improve their chances. So in their first application, they'll spend a lot of time crafting it, but by the time they get to their fifth, sixth, seventh, they just want to cut and paste. They just want to go straight to the application, cut and paste my stuff, and hit send.

And they didn't spend any time at all looking at any of the other content. Employee profiles; you've got a little bit of traction on employee profiles. But largely it was – "I want to go to the website; I just want to apply." And then what was interesting is that they wouldn't come back at all unless they got some kind of positive response from us. So some kind of, "We're going to bring you in for an interview."

And then they would come back, but they wouldn't come back and look at the careers website. They'd come back and look at the corporate website. They'd come back and look at – say they were interviewing for the equities business. They'd read all about equities not on the careers website, but on the corporate website, because they perceived that information to be fresher, and often, it was.

Paul: And in more detail.

Max: Yes, exactly. So that was the kind of behaviour that we saw with university students. On the experienced professional side, they didn't care at all about the website; they just wanted – they wanted two or three clicks, send in my résumé, and that's it – or CV – and that's it. Because on the experienced professional side, mostly people know the firms that they're applying to. If they're working in the management consultancy industry already, then they know who the firms are. They don't need to read up about you, because they know somebody who works there, or they've read about you in the

press. That kind of stuff. So yes, so that's what I've seen. And what was your question? Sorry; I've forgotten what the question was!
(Laughter)

Paul: About expressing culture. Culture online.

Max: And the difference between corporate websites and social.

Paul: Yes.

Max: And I think the trend that I was starting to talk about here was how – you see now that with the rise of use of social, that you see – and I saw a really interesting kind of study recently was talking about the amount of time, the number of online minutes, people are spending with social is growing quite rapidly, and the amount of time people generally are spending on the rest of the web is actually shrinking. So the web is shrinking apart from social, which is great. And you see a trend now where you see big employers actually moving their careers site, almost lock, stock and barrel, into Facebook.

So there's a few firms where you look at the architecture of their fan pages, because now, with a Facebook fan page, you can actually build architecture and navigation within it. And so there's a trend to almost move your careers site through into Facebook, because if students are on Facebook, the best thing to do is to keep them there, because there's a number of studies that show that if you're two clicks away from Facebook, you lose half the people. So actually, having all that content within Facebook is a smart thing to do.

So if I was running an employer-brand programme right now, I would look at building my careers site within Facebook and

channelling people there. I still think you need to have some information on your careers website, because –

Paul: Well, still –

Max: If it doesn't exist, people will think that's strange, right?

Paul: Well, indeed. And also – I talk to a number of big companies, and in some cases, their highest traffic are jobseekers. So they're still coming; they're still coming and still looking.

Max: Exactly. A lot of research that I was involved in with Credit Suisse showed that careers was the second biggest area of the site that got hits, so they are getting a lot of traffic. Those people are coming through wanting to apply for positions, really. So I would build out the presence on Facebook. The other thing, these days, you can do is that you can get people to apply through Facebook as well. So there are a number of apps and tools where you can actually keep people within the Facebook environment, get them to hit 'apply'; send their details in. I think that's the direction in which we're moving. Quite how that connects back through into ATS is a tricky one. (Laughter) It's a tricky one.

Paul: So they're all architected [for websites, not for social media]

Max: Yes, exactly. I mean, one of the things I did at Credit Suisse was that I introduced a new global applicant tracking system that spanned both campus and experienced professionals, and so I know a lot about ATSs, and it was Oracle PeopleSoft ATS. It was horrible, actually. But the whole process made me open my eyes to just the massive complexity of it, basically. And so connecting some kind of front-end application piece through into ATS is not a straightforward thing. I think for any big organisation that has a big

HRMS, or HR information system, it's a complicated thing to do. But I think that's the future.

I think the future is that candidates who are surfing – university students who are surfing around Facebook anyway – you know, finding that information in Facebook is a good thing, because they don't have to leave Facebook; they can stay where they are. And if you can add the ability actually to send in your application, so much the better. So I think that's the one thing.

And then, I think, the second thing is the evolution of the employee profile. Lots of big firms have, for a long time, used employee profiles as a way of demonstrating their culture, to your point. And I think social affords the opportunity to take that to the next level, which is to get more authentic, more real-time content from people that are in that job; that are enthusiastic advocates.

Paul: I certainly see one of the key needs of wanting to connect to people – find people within the company that you might know; what people want is that recommendation – “Tell me the truth; tell me the answer. Should I join, or not?” And we see things like people having a LinkedIn function where you can click on the button and see, from your LinkedIn profile, from one or two removes, in terms of people you know, do you know anyone within this organisation?

Max: Yes. That's always been the best thing to do. If you're looking for a position, the very best thing you can do is actually find somebody in that organisation that you can talk to. And job-hunting, if you think about experienced professionals, and I think it's probably slightly less true of universities, but still, if they can do it, great – it's always been about networking. It's always been about networking; it's always been about, “Who can I find? What connections do I have to

that organisation?” So again, it’s not changed massively. What’s changed is that there’s this channel which makes it a bit easier.

Paul: Yes, and that people don’t necessarily want to go away from; they want to have everything – I mean, as the generations grow up, they’re more and more used to having everything centred round them, to getting to what they want as immediately what they want; minimal clicks away.

Max: Yes. The other thing that was – the sort of research that I’ve been doing recently which I’ve found really interesting is actually talking to students – is that they, and again, this is focused on the campus piece, but they were kind of quite hesitant, or tentative, about using Facebook to connect with employees, and employers, actually, because they didn’t want to reveal their profiles – their personal, private, profiles – to employers. They were very hesitant and suspicious of employees, even with the whole privacy thing; you can set your privacy controls so nobody can see it.

Paul: Which no-one ever does.

Max: They just don’t believe – they don’t believe that that’s – even if they did that, they don’t believe that employers don’t look. A lot of university students think that employers routinely look at their profiles, and some of the behaviours that you see now is that actually, university students, before they – and I’ve heard them; they’ve told me they do this – is actually that they go and tidy up their profile before they start making applications, so they’ll un-tag themselves from that particular picture –

Paul: For that party they went to. (Laughter)

Max: Remove that particular post, in case anybody comes looking. Now, from what I know, certainly in the UK, is that almost all recruiters

don't look at Facebook. They don't have the time, anyway, to do that kind of thing. But also, I think, in the UK, there's a sense that it's not right – there's an ethical –

Paul: I certainly hear of employers doing it, though, in the States.

Max: But in the States, yes. I mean, it's –

Paul: It's fair game, as far as they're concerned.

Max: Yes, exactly. So I think it's early days, really. It's early days, and I think that we haven't figured out exactly the best way to use these new channels. And I think what you have to do is experiment, and use trial and error, actually, which big organisations don't like.

Paul: Not in public. (Laughter)

Max: They like to do it right first time, you know. And actually, in the social world, that's quite difficult, because social is – a lot of it's about, "Let's test this out and see if it works, and then kind of adjust," because it's a two-way thing. It's – let's understand, let's communicate with our audience. And let's get them to say what they want a little bit. So – exciting times, really.

Paul: Indeed. And a final question. You know, if you were, once again, in charge of the careers area, and not just the careers area of the website, but the whole careers social space, and you had – you could buy one item; you had a chunk of change, and you had a choice about where you'd spend it. Where would you go?

Max: Well, I would put – well, hmm. (Laughter)

Paul: I was asked this question by a potential client.

Max: Well, it's tricky, because the world is multi-channel. But in all my experience, more than 10 years of working in the graduate

recruitment space, I think the single most powerful thing is campus events – is being on campus, is actually the face-to-face connections and communications. So that – I don't think that's going to change. I think that will remain the most important thing. So I would certainly put a big chunk of money there.

Paul: But you'd video it and stick it on Facebook as well.

Max: Exactly. And this is a massive opportunity, which is that the kind of content – this is an opportunity with social to really viralise your content and your messages. And the things that are shared most in social are photos and videos. So when you go on campus, and you're going to do a campus event, for goodness sake, take some pictures, post some pictures up, get people tagging themselves. Encourage candidates to do it. And, because the more authentic it is, the better: shoot some video. Get some vox pops saying, "What do you think?" You know.

Do that kind of stuff. It doesn't have to be high production values. In fact, these days, that actually makes people suspicious. So if it's a bit wobbly and the lighting's not great and the sound is a bit in-and-out – that gives it a sense that it's more trustworthy, because it's more authentic; more spontaneous. So yes, I would spend the lion's share of my money actually being on campus, having a big impact there, on the universities that I wanted to target. And then I would spend a bit of that money, which is cheating, I suppose, a little bit, in your task. But –

Paul: It's okay; I cheated, too, in my answer. (Laughter)

Max: I would put a lot of that content online in the social space and encourage people to share it.

Paul: Max Heywood, thank you very much.

Max:

You're most welcome. Thank you.