Enabling retention of organisational memory through social networking

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A research project submitted to the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

10 November 2010
ABSTRACT

This research highlights the retention of organisational memory when employees resign, as an issue that organisations battle with. Attempts to counter the impact of organisational memory loss has led to the use of various tools and methods which do not completely eliminate the knowledge gap caused, when employees leave. The purpose of the research is to determine if the use of social networks can enable retention of organisational memory.

The target population were defined as people employed or previously employed. A quantitative method was used for the research. Data was collected by completion of an online survey distributed as a link to the sample group.

The research findings suggest if social networking is to be used for retention of organisational memory; the employees’ ages are not a predictor of how they will use it. Keeping in contact with ex-employees and enabling a knowledge-sharing culture within organisations does not predict how ex-employees will engage in social networking, when attempting to exchange information to retain organisational memory. When employers do not enable access to social network sites at the work place, it is unlikely that employees will engage in work-related discussions in social network sites for the benefit of their employers.
KEYWORDS

Organisational memory

Social networking

Knowledge management
DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Busiwe Primrose Stamper

10 November 2010
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Nokuzola Ndlangisa, my friend, for being a second mother to Uyanga when the research was taking its toll.

Syndicate 11, from GIBS 2009/2010 class, for making the 2 year MBA program a joyful and exciting journey; our interaction has indeed extended beyond being classmates to being friends that I will cherish.

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# CONTENTS

**CHAPTER 1** ................................................................................................................................. 1

1. INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM................................................................................ 1

   1.1 RESEARCH TITLE.................................................................................................................. 1

   1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM.......................................................................................................... 1

   1.3 RESEARCH SCOPE............................................................................................................... 4

   1.4 RESEARCH AIM................................................................................................................... 5

   1.5 RESEARCH MOTIVATION...................................................................................................... 6

   1.6 CONCLUSION....................................................................................................................... 7

**CHAPTER 2** ...................................................................................................................................... 9

2 LITERATURE REVIEW..................................................................................................................... 9

   2.1 HOW LEARNING TAKES PLACE........................................................................................... 9

   2.2 ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE..................................................................................... 9

   2.3 ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY.............................................................................................. 11

   2.4 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT............................................................................................ 12

   2.5 ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY LOSS.................................................................................... 13

   2.6 THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY-LOSS....................................................... 14

   2.7 ATTEMPTS TO PRESERVE ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY................................................ 15

   2.8 SOCIAL NETWORKING........................................................................................................ 16

   2.9 WEB 2.0.............................................................................................................................. 18

   2.10 IS WEB 2.0 A FAD OR A TREND?..................................................................................... 19

   2.11 WHO IS LIKELY TO USE SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING?........... 20

   2.12 ADOPTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING BY DIFFERENT GENERATIONS......................... 23

   2.13 ENTERPRISE SOCIAL NETWORKING................................................................................ 24

   2.14 CONCLUSION...................................................................................................................... 25

**CHAPTER 3** .................................................................................................................................... 27

3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES............................................................................................................... 27

   3.1 INTRODUCTION.................................................................................................................. 27

   3.1.1 RESEARCH STATEMENT 1:............................................................................................ 27

   3.1.2 RESEARCH STATEMENT 2:............................................................................................ 31

   3.1.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT 3:............................................................................................ 32
3.2 CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................ 33

CHAPTER 4 .......................................................................................................................... 34
4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................ 34

4.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................ 34
4.2 METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE ............................................................................ 35
4.3 POPULATION OF RELEVANCE ................................................................................. 36
4.4 UNIT OF ANALYSIS .................................................................................................... 37
4.5 SAMPLING METHOD AND SIZE ................................................................................. 38
4.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD .................................................................................... 39
4.7 DATA ANALYSIS ......................................................................................................... 41
4.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS .......................................................................................... 42
4.9 CONCLUSION .............................................................................................................. 43

CHAPTER 5 .......................................................................................................................... 44
5 RESULTS ................................................................................................................................ 44

5.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................ 44
5.2 GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE SAMPLE GROUP ..................................................... 45
5.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT 1: .......................................................................................... 48

5.3.1 GENERAL FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS ......................................................... 48
5.3.2 UNPAIRED T-TEST - FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS ................................ 52
5.4 RESEARCH STATEMENT 2: .......................................................................................... 61

5.4.1 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS ................................................................................. 61
5.4.2 UNPAIRED T TEST - FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS .................................. 69
5.5 RESEARCH STATEMENT 3: .......................................................................................... 73

5.5.1 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS ................................................................................. 73
5.6 RESULTS OVERVIEW .................................................................................................. 79

CHAPTER 6 .......................................................................................................................... 80
6 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS ............................................................................................... 80

6.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................ 80
6.2 REVIEW: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS – JOB LEVELS ......................................................................................................................... 81
6.3 RESEARCH STATEMENTS REVIEWED: RESEARCH STATEMENT 1 .......... 81

6.3.1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 81
6.3.2 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS ................................................................................. 83
6.3.3 FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS ................................................................. 84
6.3.4. CONCLUSION: RESEARCH STATEMENT 1 ........................................ 87

6.4 RESEARCH STATEMENTS REVIEWED: RESEARCH STATEMENT 2 ........ 87
6.4.1 INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 87
6.4.2 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS ................................................................. 88
6.4.3 RESULTS UNPAIRED T TEST - FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS ...... 90

6.5 RESEARCH STATEMENTS REVIEWED: RESEARCH STATEMENT 3 ....... 92
6.5.1 INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 92
6.5.2 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS ................................................................. 93
6.5.3 CONCLUSION .......................................................................................... 94

CHAPTER 7 ........................................................................................................ 95

7 CONCLUSION .................................................................................................. 95
7.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................... 95
7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS ............................................................................... 96
7.3 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ............................................................ 97
7.4 CONCLUSION ............................................................................................... 98

8 REFERENCES .................................................................................................. 99

9 APPENDICES .................................................................................................. 107

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE .................................................... 108
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH SUMMARY RESULTS ........................................... 116
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Theory of Knowledge Management to prevent Memory Loss............................. 13
Figure 2: Age groups of respondents.................................................................................. 46
Figure 3: Job levels of the sample group........................................................................... 47
Figure 4: Social networks of which the respondents are members................................. 49
Figure 5: Uses of online social networking sites by respondents........................................ 50
Figure 6: Willingness to approach strangers to source work-related information ......... 52
Figure 7: Companies keeping in contact with ex-employees ............................................. 62
Figure 8: Methods companies use to keep in contact with ex-employees ....................... 63
Figure 9: Companies sourcing work-related information from ex-employees.............. 64
Figure 10: Ex-employers keeping contact with respondents............................................. 65
Figure 11: Respondent’s source of work-related information.......................................... 66
Figure 12: Ownership of social networking tools by respondent’s employers............... 67
Figure 13: Access to employers’ social networking tools after resignation..................... 68
Figure 14: Willingness of respondents to share information with ex-colleagues through employers’ social network tools .................................................................................. 69
Figure 15: Previous attempts by respondents’ employers to retain acquired information upon resignation .......................................................................................................................... 74
Figure 16: Previous employers contacting respondents ..................................................... 75
Figure 17: Respondents keeping in contact with ex-colleagues ........................................ 76
Figure 18: Methods used by respondents to keep in contact with ex-colleagues.............. 77
Figure 19: Assessment of whether or not previous employers had social networking tools ........................................................................................................................................ 78
Figure 20: Respondents still using previous employers’ social networking tools .......... 78
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The millennium dotcom bubble vs. Web 2.0 hype ......................................................... 20
Table 2: Required data and potential sources of data ................................................................. 41
Table 3: Employment status of the sample group ................................................................. 47
Table 4: Unpaired T-test results - Research Statement 1 .......................................................... 54
Table 5: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1 ................................................................. 55
Table 6: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1 ................................................................. 56
Table 7: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1 ................................................................. 57
Table 8: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1 ................................................................. 58
Table 9: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1 ................................................................. 59
Table 10: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1 .............................................................. 60
Table 11: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 2 .............................................................. 71
Table 12: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 2 .............................................................. 72
CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 RESEARCH TITLE

The title of the research project is “Enabling retention of organisational memory through social networking.”

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Employees in organisations contribute to organisational success through their knowledge, ideas and collaboration; as a result, knowledge becomes an important asset contributing to the formation of organisational memory (Scalzo, 2006). Dieng et al. (1998) in Abel (2008) refer to organisational memory as the explicit representation of knowledge and information in an organisation to ensure access and re-use by employees for their tasks, while Stein & Zwass (1995) in Abel (2008, p. 19) refer to it as “The means by which knowledge from the past is brought to bear on present activities and may result in higher or lower levels of organizational effectiveness.”

Organisations spend significant resources building intellectual capacity, employee skills and capabilities, but, in the employee life cycle there comes a time when employees leave the employ of companies for which they have worked. The major challenge and risk, facing organisations is the aging workforce and the exit of
experienced, skilled and knowledgeable workers from all levels within organisations (Lahaie, 2005; Calo, 2008). As the experienced workforce exits organisations, the “organisational knowledge and memory” of what has worked and failed over the years is lost in the process. According to Calo (2008), an unprecedented loss of human capital will be experienced between now and the year 2020 unless actions are taken to transfer the knowledge from valued long-time employees.

Organisational memory loss is a resource often unmeasured because its effects are gradually manifested through slow depletion of organisational experiences. This process takes place gradually and yet its cumulative effects over time can be overwhelming (Coldwell, 2007). Organisational memory-loss is a challenge that can significantly influence an organisation’s ability to successfully advance its objectives, avoid repeating mistakes and leverage the accomplishments of exiting employees (Coffey & Hoffman, 2003). The challenge of preventing the loss of expert knowledge to enable knowledge preservation is persistent, and will become worse as the “baby boom” generation approaches retirement age (Coffey & Hoffman, 2003) since they would be exiting the workforce with knowledge and experience which the younger generations cannot acquire quickly through studying, but only through years of staying employed.

The question is whether social networking can be used to capture and maintain organisational memory as employees leave organisations. When individuals leave
organisations to join new employers, often they keep contact with previous colleagues to keep track of changes taking place in the social circles left behind in previous employment. Leavers find strategies to ensure their personal memory related to old employers is regularly updated and maintained, but companies find it challenging to capture and restore lost organisational memory from ex-employees.

According to Office of Communications (2008), social networking sites are a potential mine of information people use to look for current and past colleagues, candidates, employers and prospective employers. Given how social networking sites are being used, there is potential for extending their use towards business-related objectives of ensuring knowledge preservation and organisational memories to enable competitiveness among organisations.

Social networking is perceived capable of expanding social contacts, improving customer relations, enabling cost effective recruitment of high calibre staff and improving staff morale, motivation and job satisfaction (Van Zyl, 2009). Organisations could leverage off the benefits derived from social networking to retain and access the corporate memories as employees exit and enter the workplace.
1.3 RESEARCH SCOPE

The scope of the research is limited to, and encompasses, the definitions of the following terms:

**Social networking:**

*Social networking* sites refer to a group of Web-based technologies, applications and services that enable participation, creation of online communities and easy collaboration and sharing of content or services. It is also known as Web 2.0 (Furness, 2008). It is this definition that will be referred to throughout this document when referring to social networking.

**Social network:**

*Social network* refers to “a community of online users, often replicating a member’s offline social network” (Business Insights, 2008, p. 22). This could be demonstrated in the form of circles, in which people interact and connect with others, often overlapping between business and personal relationships and transcending organisational boundaries and hierarchies (Avram, 2006).

**Organisational memory:**

- *Organisational memory* refers to organisational learning, including information presented in the form of rules, procedures and directives to
facilitate work distribution and the shared assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and
behaviours of a particular organisational culture (Fisher, 2000 in Rusaw,
2004).

• Some authors refer to organisational memory as institutional memory
(Coffey & Hoffman, 2003), while others refer to it as corporate memory
(Sutcliffe, 2003; Beckett, 2000). It is apparent these terms can be used
interchangeably, while having the same meaning. However, organisational
memory is term that will be used throughout this document.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM

The purpose of the research is to assess if social networking can be used to
access organisational memory to mitigate the impact of organisational memory-
loss. This research is not intended to address the technical aspects related to the
function of social networking.

Working individuals, who use social networking tools (Web 2.0), and those who do
not, will be contacted to assess if they maintain contact and interaction with
previous colleagues after leaving previous employment. This is to establish the
extent of continuity of knowledge sharing and preservation of organisational
memory.

The results obtained from the research will inform whether or not the use of social
networking, for the purpose of retaining organisational memory, can be effectively
applied. Paoli and Prencipe (2003) state that firms should revamp their memory and maintain co-ordination by practicing their routines to avoid memory loss. Social networking is one of the tools already being used by the public to share information and knowledge (Andreano, 2008), and this is why a need to explore how its application can be extended to include retention of organisational memory has been identified.

Coghlan and McAuliffe (2003) in Daley (2008) suggest that organisations are open systems dependent on, and continually interacting with, their external environment. In the research, it will be investigated if companies do interact with past employees to withdraw organisational memory, and if the methods used to facilitate this process include social networking.

1.5 RESEARCH MOTIVATION

The challenge of organisational memory-loss is not only an organisational challenge but a country problem. Not only do organisations lose employees to other organisations, but countries lose highly-skilled citizens to other countries through emigration (HSRC, 2004), thereby creating a vacuum of corporate memories. Over the past thirty-six years, the majority of recorded skilled emigrants from South Africa were in the most productive age groups of between 25 and 45 years, implying that South Africa experiences a brain-drain from citizens who are already trained and established professionals (HSRC, 2004). Not only does corporate memory-loss prevent companies from efficiently competing, but it prevents them effectively competing globally.
The use of Web 2.0 technologies, including social networking, has gained momentum, indicated by the escalating number of registered users since the launch of online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (Wilson, 2009). Balas (2006) in Kasavana, Nusair and Teodosic (2010) confirm that online social networks can be used for building online communities, in which individuals worldwide can mutually connect for many and different reasons. This confirms the capability and functionality within social networking technologies. Given the ability of social networks to enable interaction between people, regardless of geographic location (Business Insights, 2008); there exists the possibility that such capabilities could be leveraged to ensure companies can access corporate memories from emigrated or ex-employees. This would ensure although the “bodies” may not be physically present, companies can tap into the intellectual property and corporate memories stored within employees.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The knowledge employees acquire during their years of employment is an asset that organisations should guard and protect. Organisations lose memory as a result of employees leaving and it is crucial they devise ways of minimising the impact of memory loss.

This document is structured according to chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the literature review around the constructs of the research topic. The literature review also discusses the research performed previously on social networking, organisational memory and knowledge management. Chapter 3 discusses the
research statements and propositions to be evaluated. The research statements are stated as hypotheses. Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology that was followed to enable data collection. Chapter 5 presents the results collected from the online survey, and chapter 6 presents an analysis of the research results in relation to the research statements. Chapter 7 presents a summary of the main conclusions of the study, as well as recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature around the constructs, organisational memory and social networking was explored to get an understanding of its origin and evolution, as well as research already conducted in these areas.

2.1 HOW LEARNING TAKES PLACE

Learning takes place through constructing and transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotion, senses and beliefs (Coghlan & McAuliffe, 2003 in Daley, 2008). From this description it is apparent that through learning knowledge is acquired and accumulated when there is cross sharing among individuals. Employee knowledge-sharing is the ability to exchange work-related experience, expertise, know-how and contextual information with other employees through informal and formal interactions within, or across, teams or work units (Soonhee & Hyangsoo, 2006). It is from this premise that Senge (2006) in Daley (2008) devised the theory, termed organisational learning, which suggests that, in organisations, people continually learn how to learn together.

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Theory on corporate knowledge infers knowledge exists in the form of explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Scalzo (2006) describes tacit knowledge as personal, undocumented, intuitive, difficult to articulate and learned through
experience - knowledge that resides in the individual’s mind, while explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be transferred to paper and stored in files, notebooks, computer databases and emails. Ardichvili, Page and Wentling (2003) are of the view that organisations’ competitive advantage lies in the intangible, tacit knowledge of employees embedded in the stories they tell, and on the skills produced and disseminated in discussions and networking activities.

While face-to-face interactions among employees may be limited due to geographically dispersed multinational companies, and employees exiting employment, virtual communities supported by Internet technologies are some of the alternatives to live conversations and knowledge exchange (Ardichvili et al. 2003)

It is imperative organisational knowledge is defined to clarify the context and methods in which organisations acquire knowledge. Tell (2004, p. 461) describes institutional knowledge as “the reality, as it is perceived by agents in complex organisations, influencing the very peculiarities of organisation members coming from different professions, scientific backgrounds, market conditions, and countries”. This implies that, as organisations evolve, employees scan the internal environment and establish personal interpretations of how the processes work, and this knowledge is acquired through experience and observing what has worked and failed over the years.
Sharp (1996) refers to total corporate memory as formal and informal, collective and individual, data and knowledge held by employees and gained through their experience and positions within an organisation.

2.3 ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY

Rusaw (2004) defines organisational memory as a collection of organisational learning that entails information stored for future individual and corporate use. The author adds that individuals, with technical knowledge, and able to apply it to a variety of complex and novel situations, possess institutional memories. Beckett (2000) expands on Rusaw’s (2004) definition and argues that all organisations, including newly established ones, have their own practices and routines reflecting the organisation’s purpose and prior experience of people in it, and that this combination constitutes corporate memory. Corporate memory may accumulate as a result of shared assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of a particular organisational culture (Fisher, 2000 in Rusaw, 2004).

Lahaie (2005) is of the view that corporate memory is used to maintain the status quo in organisations to predict reactions of people based on shared assumptions, beliefs and attitudes that have evolved over years. When corporate memory or knowledge is not effectively managed, it results in corporate memory-loss (Lahaie, 2005).
2.4 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

It is imperative to differentiate between knowledge management and organisational memory to identify overlapping concepts that may exist. According to Lahaie (2005), knowledge management involves creating and maintaining the optimal environment to retain organisational memory. Knowledge management seeks continuously to convert tacit knowledge, based on employees’ experience, into explicit knowledge for the benefit of the organisation (Lahaie, 2005).

McKenzie and Van Winkelen (2004), state the ability to manage and sustain an effective network of knowledge-based relationships over time is a crucial competence for knowledgeable organisations. This suggests the network of relationships a company keeps and maintains may assist in maintaining its knowledge. The longer employees stay with one organisation, the stronger their awareness of the tacit and explicit knowledge that exists within that organisation, which awareness develops to become their organisational memory to assist them in making decisions for the organisation (Lahaie, 2005).

It is vital organisations evaluate and identify the type of knowledge needed and when it is needed, the resources available externally and how the relationship networks can assist in achieving the identified goals (McKenzie & Van Winkelen, 2004). Organisations have an opportunity to extend their relationship networks to ex-employees for the purpose of sustaining knowledge.
To illustrate the link between the concepts-values, corporate culture, organisational knowledge and knowledge management; Lahaie (2005) suggests the following thread to depict connections between these concepts (See Figure 1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values drive the Corporate Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\downarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Culture becomes the Corporate Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\downarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Memory becomes the Corporate Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\downarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge must be Managed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\downarrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Management Mitigates Corporate Memory Loss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 1: Theory of Knowledge Management to prevent Memory Loss

There is undoubtedly a link between knowledge management and organisational memory.

### 2.5 ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY LOSS

Scalzo (2006) critiques past research conducted on organisational memory-loss, and infers it has focused only on loss of memory as a result of one technical expert retiring from an organisation, or when few people resign, in contrast to the impact of the loss of memory as a result of many individuals leaving concurrently. These are the possible scenarios depicting how organisational memory-loss can manifest.
To effectively manage its impact, organisations must consider all possibilities and devise ways of countering such impact.

2.6 THE IMPACT OF ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY-LOSS

According to Lahaie (2005), a study of corporate memory loss revealed that impact of corporate memory-loss is felt at every level within the organisation and is significant, owing to the fact the more senior the person leaving, the deeper the loss of organisational continuity, and the bigger the decrease in competency levels (Lahaie, 2005; Scalzo, 2006). And the time it takes for new persons to develop and acquire sufficient organisational memory and organisational knowledge for effective decision making, could be regarded as time lost, for the organisation is deterred from functioning at optimum level. To minimise the loss, there is a need to ensure the new person hired possesses specific qualities and competencies over and above prerequisites.

Employees holding senior and managerial positions possess organisational knowledge likely to have taken years to develop. Lahaie (2005) is of the view it is easier to effectively execute a management function when a manager or employee has been with the organisation long enough to have experienced and witnessed the progression, within the company, from planning to executing decisions.
2.7 ATTEMPTS TO PRESERVE ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY

Calo (2008) states once knowledge is lost it can never be fully recovered. However, this research seeks to counter Calo (2008) by evaluating whether or not social networking can enable retention of organisational memory. This implies that although knowledge and memory could be lost due to an exiting workforce, social networking could be used to retain lost organisational memory.

The following methods are efforts, which according to Coffey and Hoffman (2003), were implemented to preserve organisational memory but yielded ineffective results. This resulted from the trade-offs between ease of acquisition and usability of the information acquired. The methods, as stated by Coffey and Hoffman (2003), will be evaluated and included in the research questions. These are:

- *Exit interviews*: Although the information acquired may be useful, exit interviews have been found to be superficial and unworkable if the employee leaves under unpleasant circumstances.

- *Corporate archives*: The search for information from corporate archives may be difficult due to deficiencies in indexing. When companies attempt to automate the process, the work evolved into data mining that did not capture employees’ experiences and know how.

- *Knowledge acquisition tools*: Criticism regarding knowledge acquisition tools is, they consume vast amounts of time and take employees away from main tasks. And diverting time-pressed employees from their main tasks to record information on an ongoing basis poses a challenge.
Some research conducted by Scalzo (2006) revealed, when changes take place in organisations, people remained the primary source of information and knowledge. And, despite attempts to preserve organisational memory through capturing data on paper and tools, people often are the preferred source because information and knowledge shared can be probed and interrogated.

2.8 SOCIAL NETWORKING

“Simply put, there are no alternatives but to become ‘more digital’ with whatever assets are available”, (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010 in Prentice, 2010).

Social networking sites have gained popularity and are among the most accessed sites on the Internet. The popularity of these sites is enhanced as the number of registered users increases (Mislove, Marcon, Gummadi, Druschel & Bhattacharjee, 2007). Facebook, a social networking website launched in 2004 had registered users of 200 million in 2009 and LinkedIn, a site launched in 2003, had 36 million registered users in 2009 (Wilson, 2009). According to Wilson (2009) & Business Insights (2010), LinkedIn has positioned itself as the premier professional network and promotes more networking than socialising. Barnes and Barnes (2009) define social networking as asynchronous and/or synchronous technology platforms that allow a unified communication to take place, where users have the ability of interacting with others simultaneously.
Social networking has altered how people interact, communicate, share and circulate information, and this new form of connectivity is rapidly clouding the distinction between professional and private (Deloitte, 2009). Barnes and Barnes (2009) consider it unwise to remain disconnected from a business perspective due to the benefits associated with social networking.

According to MWEB (2010), in Prentice (2010), approximately 74% of South Africans surfing the Internet intend visiting social networking platforms, and at least 50% of Facebook users log onto the site daily. Globally, 22% of the time spent online is spent on social networking sites (MWEB, 2010 in Prentice 2010). These statistics depict the popularity of social networking and how it has infiltrated people’s lives.

Social networking sites have unique features that enable connection and interaction between strangers for the exchange of information (Kasavana et al. 2010). The interconnectivity can be among friends, family, business associates, colleagues and strangers. Since the channels of interaction can overlap, Kasavana et al. (2010) highlight that active users tend to participate in multiple networks, such as business networks, career colleague networks and family and friends’ networks. Kasavana et al. (2010) are of the view that online social networks, when applied in the working environment, allow employees to find one another and share knowledge.
While social networking is seen to present great opportunities for networking, collaborating, sharing best practices, communicating and connecting with an unlimited group of people of similar needs (Patton, 2009; Barnes & Barnes, 2009), others associate it with great reputational risk manifesting as a result of individuals damaging a brand’s reputation through discussions held via social networking sites (Deloitte, 2009).

Other pitfalls include inappropriate content and misuse of resources (Furness, 2008), legal risks from loss of an organisation’s competitive advantage through confidential company information shared online, as well as operational risks from not complying with operational policies and procedures during implementation of social networking sites (Barnes & Barnes 2009).

Individuals may associate social networking with freedom of speech and consequently share their views openly, not considering how shared information crosses ethical boundaries. In focusing only on conveying the message, care may not be given to the content of the information being shared.

**2.9 WEB 2.0**

Business Insights (2008, p. 32) defines Web 2.0 as “a group of Web-based technologies, applications and services that enable participation, the creation of online communities, easy collaboration, and sharing of content or services.” Web 2.0 involves generating opinions, participating in producing content or using the Internet to share data, making it more than just passively visiting websites.
During a survey conducted by Bournemouth University, in the UK, on behalf of Information Technology service provider, Parity, a significant number of organisations had not adopted Web 2.0 technologies due to senior management’s lack of understanding of the business benefits associated with these technologies (Business Insights, 2008). There seems to be uncertainty from organisations as to whether Web 2.0 is a fad or a sustainable trend, hence the hesitation to fully adopt it (Business Insights, 2008). The section below discusses the opinions from various authors on whether Web 2.0 will be around for a long period or not.

2.10 IS WEB 2.0 A FAD OR A TREND?

It is critical to evaluate if the wide-scale adoption and enthusiasm surrounding Web 2.0 technology and social networking is another dotcom fad of the late 1990s. If a gap, that has been identified surrounding organisational memory loss, will be filled through social networking it is important organisations base the solution on a trend and not a fad. Raina (2010) defines a trend as a structural change that is sustainable and develops with time, and on which companies can base corporate strategies and business models to ensure they acquire a competitive advantage.

According to KPMG (2007), evidence noted among the increasing number of organisations converting to Enterprise 2.0 technologies, suggests these technologies contribute to making the organisations more efficient and effective. However, Business Insights (2010) infers social networking offers advertisers significant amounts of global consumer expenditure, thereby making the industry
financially successful albeit the success is not transferred to online social networks. There is a need to ensure the success brought about by social networks is transferred to online social networks directly, otherwise their sustainability is uncertain. Business Insights (2008) makes a brave statement on the question of whether or not the Web 2.0 bubble will burst, and suggests there are many key differences between the dotcom bubble of the millennium and today’s hype on Web 2.0, and that these differences favour the sustainability of Web 2.0 technologies. The comparison between Web 2.0 technologies and the millennium dotcom bubble is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: The millennium dotcom bubble vs. Web 2.0 hype

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet companies promise potentially high returns and a short time from</td>
<td>Web 2.0 companies promise potentially high returns but revenue generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>start-up to revenue generation.</td>
<td>takes longer than expected for some companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhyped talk of an Internet revolution.</td>
<td>Fears about a credit crunch and memories of the last dotcom bubble provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a more balanced perspective of the Web 2.0 reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The median time from start-up to IPO was four years in 1999.</td>
<td>The median time from start-up to IPO in the first three quarters of 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was nearly eight years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Business Insights (2008)

2.11 WHO IS LIKELY TO USE SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING?

Research conducted by Marshall et al. (2009) and Ardichvili et al. (2003) suggested motivation and barrier factors to usage of social networking websites for knowledge sharing. These are discussed below.
Marshall et al. (2009) and Ardichvili et al. (2003) highlight the importance of participation among social network members to ensure effective knowledge exchange. It is apparent that successful knowledge sharing facilitated through social networks is dependent on active participation of some members possessing the desired knowledge and others demanding such knowledge (Ardichvili et al. 2003). Consequently for social networking to be effective, the supply of relevant knowledge and active participation of members visiting social networking sites and posting questions when searching for information is needed. This suggests that willingness to display hunger for knowledge, and share knowledge, is crucial for knowledge sharing through social networks.

Marshall et al. (2009) highlight the role that social ties play in online collaboration. Marshall et al. (2009) differ from Ardichvili et al. (2003) and suggest that online collaboration, cooperation and participation are dependent on social ties, which identify the degree to which people interact with one another and their level of mutual trust. Alajmi (2008) concurs with Ardichvili et al. (2003) and suggests that trust-based intra-team relationships motivate individuals’ knowledge sharing behaviour. Trust is a basis for effective online collaboration (Avram 2006, Marshall et al. 2009 and Bergman, 2008), and trust, coupled with reputation, are crucial for online interactions as proved by the importance placed on sites such as eBay on seller’s ratings and reputation. It seems that trust plays a crucial role in ensuring active participation in online communication.
Regardless of the willingness to share and receive information, if there is no prior introduction of parties there would be limited or no knowledge-sharing between them, since social networking websites are used primarily to sustain existing offline relationships and few use social networking websites to meet people (Ardichvili et al. 2003). According to Ardichvili et al. (2003), it seems that for current employees to acquire organisational memory from past employees there needs to be prior introduction of the parties before they can freely exchange knowledge through social networks. Research shows most social networking website users sustain existing offline relationships and seldom make new personal friends or contacts (Marshall et al. 2009).

Organisational culture and climate are highlighted as crucial factors in determining if individuals would be willing to engage in online collaboration and exchange of information. Alajmi (2008) states knowledge-sharing research identified organisational climate as the most crucial component for the success of knowledge-sharing strategies. The author defines organisational climate as a set of characteristics describing organisations and distinguishing one from the other and how this influences people’s behaviour in organisations.

According to Ajaml and Koskinen (2008), in Bergou (2008), an organisation’s culture is based on management and the practices that have been created by employees. Anderson (1984, p. 74) in Lahaie (2005) defines organisational culture as “the pattern of shared beliefs and expectations that govern the way organisation members behave”.

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Employees often base their decisions on the job culture because it determines the correct way of completing tasks (Bergou 2008). This suggests if knowledge sharing forms part of the organisational culture, employees may find it easier to share knowledge (Furness, 2008) through social networks since knowledge sharing would be entrenched in the organisational culture.

2.12 ADOPTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING BY DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

According to Kupperschmidt (2000, p. 364) in Smola & Sutton (2002), a generation is “an identifiable group of people that share birth years, age, location and significant life events, divided by five to seven years into the first wave, core group and last wave”. Chen and Choi (2008) list three generations that exist in the workplace: Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1977) and Millennials (born after 1977). There are bound to be behavioural differences between these generations due to differences in exposure to world events and varying experiences resulting in different approaches, general outlook on life and technological developments.

According to Deloitte (2007), a survey conducted by RHR International highlighted that half of the companies that participated reported they expected to lose 50% or more senior management by 2010, while 15% expected to lose above 75%. The solution to the talent crisis as suggested by Deloitte (2007) is to rely on Generation Y, those born between 1982 and 1993. If companies are to attract and retain this generation, companies should review and adjust their management practices to accommodate the new generation (Deloitte, 2007).
Values espoused by Generation Y

According to Deloitte (2007), people that belong to Generation Y hold the following values and needs in high regard:

- Long-term career development and multiple experiences within a single organisation
- Sense of purpose and meaning in the work
- Availability and access to mentors and other company champions
- Work-life flexibility
- Technology-savvy work environment
- Social networks that embrace open and honest communication

Based on the values listed above, it seems the young generation would embrace the technological features embedded in social networking. If social networking is the “language” of the young generation, who are the future leaders of existing companies, then organisations should adapt and embrace adjustments and changes required in the working environment.

2.13 ENTERPRISE SOCIAL NETWORKING

McAfee (2009) founded the term Enterprise 2.0 to describe how Internet technologies could be used on organisations’ intranets to depict the impact they would have on business. The author places a clear distinction between social networking and enterprise social networking, and proposes that Enterprise 2.0 refers to platforms that companies can buy or build to make visible the practices and outputs of their employees.
These tools emulate the functionalities of social networking sites. *Enterprise 2.0* is now a widely adopted term, which KPMG (2007) uses to define a new suite of emergent technologies designed for the business environment, such as wikis and blogs. A wiki is a website that allows users to create and edit content and is also a form of collaborative working, while a blog is an unedited individual’s online journals that can have links to other blogs (blog-roll) and allow capture of feedback from readers (KPMG, 2007).

As the Enterprise 2.0 and Web 2.0 technologies mature, more web application tools are likely to emerge. Social networking is likely to play a major role in future personal and business online interaction and how information and knowledge is accessed (Mislove et al. 2007).

### 2.14 CONCLUSION

The literature review highlighted the challenge faced by organisations and countries as a result of organisational memory-loss. New technology developments, in the form Web 2.0 technologies and social networking, provide capabilities that could prove advantageous to companies. Data that supports social networking is not a fad that will disappear soon has been interrogated, and contains features in Web 2.0 technology that suggest characteristics of longevity. Generational theory suggests that companies should exploit the preferences that different generations in the workplace embrace.
The uses and features of social networking have been established and have been confirmed to include improvement of productivity in the work environment, as they enable open communication and information sharing (Bennett, Owers, Pitt & Tucker, 2009; Kasavana et al. 2010). However, no literature was found for enabling retention of organisational memory through social networking and it is the intention of the research to focus on this concept.
CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to evaluate if social networking can enable retention of, and access to, organisational memory to mitigate the impact of organisational memory-loss. The literature reviewed highlighted some variation in the approach of conducting research of this nature. Depending on the research objectives, some authors stated exploratory questions (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009), while others used hypothesis (Kim & Lee, 2006). The literature reviewed confirmed that social networking can be used in the work environment to enable collaboration among employees; however, the extent to which its use can be explored has not been addressed. The statements that will be tested during the research are given in the paragraphs below.

3.1.1 RESEARCH STATEMENT 1:

Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more, to enable retention of organisational memory than employees who are older.

Deloitte (2007) stated that people born in the Generation “Y” era (between 1982 and 1993) value the use of social networks to enable open and honest communication. In terms of this statement, this research will verify if the younger generation uses social networking more for retention of organisational memory
than the older generation of employees. To evaluate research statement 1, hypotheses will be tested.

**The hypotheses to be tested are:**

*Null hypothesis*: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to enable retention of organisational memory, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

*Alternative hypothesis*. Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more to enable retention of organisational memory than employees older than 35.

\[ H_0: \mu_{35\text{ (yrs)}} - \text{(social networking usage)} = \mu_{35\text{ (yrs)}} + \text{(social networking usage)} \]

\[ H_1: \mu_{35\text{ (yrs)}} - \text{(social networking usage)} > \mu_{35\text{ (yrs)}} + \text{(social networking usage)} \]

Certain behaviours regarding the use of social networks will be tested between the two age groups, and those are:

*Null hypothesis*: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with friends and family, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.
 Alternative hypothesis. Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more to connect with friends and family than employees older than 35.

✓ Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with current employees, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

✓ Alternative hypothesis. Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more to connect with current employees than employees older than 35

➢ Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with ex-employees, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

➢ Alternative hypothesis. Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more to connect with ex-employees than employees older than 35

 o Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to source work-related information from ex-colleagues, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

 o Alternative hypothesis. Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more to source work-related information from ex-colleagues than employees older than 35
• **Null hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to source employment opportunities, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

• **Alternative hypothesis.** Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more to source employment opportunities than employees older than 35

  ❖ **Null hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the willingness to request work-related information from strangers, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

  ❖ **Alternative hypothesis.** Employees younger than 35 years will be more willing to request work-related information from, strangers than employees older than 35

  • **Null hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the willingness to request work related information from strangers through social networks, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

  • **Alternative hypothesis.** Employees younger than 35 years will be more willing to request work-related information from, strangers through social networks than employees older than 35
3.1.2 RESEARCH STATEMENT 2:

Organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory in ex-employees.

In terms of this statement, this research will verify if organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees can access and retain organisational memory and establish if the relationship built as a result of the interaction between the parties can enable information and knowledge sharing.

To evaluate research statement 2, the following hypotheses will be tested.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the ability to retain organisational memory in ex-employees between organisations keeping contact with ex-employees through social networking and those that do not.

Alternative hypothesis: Organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory in ex-employees.

\[ H_0: \mu_{\text{org mem}} (\text{contact with ex employees}) = \mu_{\text{org mem}} (\text{no contact with ex employees}) \]

\[ H_1: \mu_{\text{org mem}} (\text{contact with ex employees}) > \mu_{\text{org mem}} (\text{no contact with ex employees}) \]

The following hypothesis will also be tested under research statement 2.
Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between companies that have social networking tools and those that do not, in asking about work related information when contacting ex-employees.

Alternative hypothesis: Organisations that have social networking tools, will ask about work related information more when contacting ex-employees than those that do not.

3.1.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT 3:

Ex-employees who have worked in organisations with knowledge-sharing culture will share knowledge with incumbent employees and enable retention of organisational memory.

This statement seeks to establish if companies cultivating and consequently entrenching a culture of knowledge sharing among employees can access the organisational memory in those employees.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in sharing of knowledge, between employees who worked in organisations with a knowledge sharing culture and those who did not.

Alternative hypothesis: Employees who have worked in organisations with a knowledge sharing culture will share knowledge with incumbent employees and enable retention of organisational memory.
Ho: $\mu$ empl sharing (with previous knowledge-sharing culture) = $\mu$ empl sharing (with no previous knowledge-sharing culture)

H1: $\mu$ empl sharing (with previous knowledge-sharing culture) > $\mu$ empl sharing (with no previous knowledge-sharing culture)

3.2 CONCLUSION

Providing insights and answers to the statements detailed in this chapter will inform whether or not social networking can be used to enable retention of organisational memory.
CHAPTER 4

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology, design and process followed, as well as the research limitations. The aim of the research was to ascertain if social networking can enable retention of organisational memory.

The study followed a quantitative method using an online survey as an instrument for data collection. Quantitative method was selected to enable measurement of the research findings. The research targeted employed individuals and excluded organisations.

The remaining paragraphs in this chapter outline the research methodology, population, sampling method, data collection method, and data analysis in detail. The limitations of the research and conclusion are discussed at the end of the chapter.
4.2 METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

According to Zikmund (2003), a research design is a master plan that defines the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the required information for research. It serves as a framework of actions to be taken during a research project. The information required for the purpose of a research project can be collected through experiments, surveys, secondary data or observation techniques (Zikmund, 2003).

The research methodology followed for this study was a quantitative method. Quantitative research enables the quantification or the extent of an occurrence or event (Zikmund, 2003). The research work performed by Mislove et al. (2007) on “Measurement and analysis of online social networks” and Marshall et al. (2009) on “Online and offline social ties of social network website users,” motivated the decision to conduct a quantitative research. Both authors conducted a quantitative research to derive research conclusions on the subjects of online social networks and social network websites. The descriptive, rather than the causal, method was followed during the research due to cause and effect relationships not being identified in the literature review.

Quantitative research was followed to enable the users of the research work to quantify the extent to which social networking can be used to enable retention of organisational memory. It was also used to provide an insight into the type and age of people who would be interested in using social networking for retention of
organisational memory. Finally, the research methodology was chosen to provide organisations with an insight into whether or not they might motivate employees to participate in social networks to enable retention of organisational memory by introducing a culture of knowledge sharing or through making tools available, which will allow collaboration with employees.

The quantitative data was collected through an online survey posted on the SurveyMonkey website. The data was analysed using descriptive and unpaired $t$-test following Fisher’s exact test. The questionnaire was piloted with five people, who work in different industries, to obtain feedback on how the questions are structured and whether more clarity should be given about the concepts asked in the questionnaire. Piloting helped refine and rephrase the questions to eliminate ambiguity and misunderstanding highlighted by some of the participants.

4.3 POPULATION OF RELEVANCE

Zikmund (2003, p. 369) defines population as “any complete group of people, companies, or the like that share some sets of characteristics”. The population of relevance for this research consisted of individuals employed or previously employed. These included members of online social networking sites at the time of research and those who were not members.
Social networking sites targeted to reach the sample group included Facebook and LinkedIn and this was done by sending the research survey link to registered members. The motivation for targeting these sites was the likelihood of their having registered users who were working professionals and who joined the sites for networking and professional contacts (Wilson, 2009).

Access to the Internet was imperative for participating in the research because any limitations to Internet access prevented users from providing meaningful contribution. The results may be biased towards people who work in certain industries and whose work requires an understanding of the Internet.

Employees that fall within the older generation, who may be considered less knowledgeable technologically, may not be frequent users of the Internet or online social networks and consequently their participation in the research may not have been adequately represented. According to Furness (2008), a study performed by Online Publishers Association revealed those between 18 and 34 years were more likely to go on line; the study also revealed this group was comfortable with social networking and blogging.

4.4 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis is an individual employed at the time of the research or one employed previously.
4.5 SAMPLING METHOD AND SIZE

Zikmund (2003, p. 741) defines sampling as “a process of using a small number of items or parts of a larger population to make conclusions about the whole population”. The sampling technique was used for the research is judgment and convenience sampling. Zikmund (2003, p. 382) defines judgment sampling as “a non-probability sampling technique in which an experienced individual selects the sample based on his/her judgment”. Snowballing technique was also used, and was achieved through requesting targeted respondents to forward the questionnaire to people in their networks. The questionnaires were also distributed to the researcher’s personal network and the respondents were requested to forward them to their networks.

The sample group consisted of employed and self-employed individuals currently working or who had been previously employed by organisations. Only willing volunteers were included in the sample. The sample group included second year Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students registered at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), as well as registered users on LinkedIn and Facebook. The link to the questionnaire was emailed to the GIBS MBA second-year students and to other potential participants.

In a quantitative research, a minimum number of 30 participants are required to conduct a reliable research. The targeted number of respondents was about 400, and a response rate of 10% was expected.
4.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Guidelines for research data collection method were adopted from Groth (2003), who proposed that information on social network analysis be gathered through any of the following methods: interviews, questionnaires and observations. Data for this research was collected through a web-based questionnaire posted on a website designed for public use of web-based surveys, namely http://www.surveymonkey.com. The tool was selected for its ability to send out surveys to a wide audience through allocation of a direct link to the survey, track respondents and consolidate the responses into a report format.

The use of questionnaires was chosen over other methods because they are easier to distribute and administer and reach a wider audience. The design of the questionnaire included a list of fixed alternative questions to enable analysis, and space for respondents to provide additional information. Guidelines on how to phrase the questions were adopted from Zikmund (2003) to avoid ambiguity, double-barrelled and leading questions.

The research work performed by Mislove et al. (2007) on Measurement and analysis of online networks, motivated the data collection method followed in this research. Due to data collection limitations and challenges, Mislove et al. (2007) accessed the public web interfaces provided by the sites, directly, to obtain access to large data sets.
The link to the questionnaire was emailed to the targeted sample group (LinkedIn, Facebook registered users and MBA second-year GIBS students), who were automatically directed to the site upon clicking the link. According to Mislove et al. (2007), previous studies on social networks ensured that research samples comprised users of the social networks being investigated, hence the decision to specifically include users of social networks in the sample.

The questionnaire link was sent out to respondents on 16 August 2010 and the survey closed on the SurveyMonkey site on 29 September 2010. The survey link was secured with a unique username and password to ensure integrity of the data and to prevent data manipulation by unauthorised parties.

A total of eighty eight (88) responses were collected from the online survey. Data integrity checks were done to ensure no questions were left blank, and responses were coded in a spreadsheet for analysis. The questionnaire was based on the literature review and linked to the research statements.
Table 2 below was used as a guideline for sourcing data.

Table 2: Required data and potential sources of data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data required for population of relevance</th>
<th>Potential Sources</th>
<th>Data collection method</th>
<th>Sampling technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of social networking sites likely to have professionals/employed workers as members.</td>
<td>Registered users of Facebook and LinkedIn social networking sites.</td>
<td>Distribution of web-based questionnaires through the SurveyMonkey - Online Survey tool.</td>
<td>Judgmental sampling method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-employees who have joined other companies.</td>
<td>Information Centre research databases at GIBS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups of people who are registered users of social networking sites</td>
<td>GIBS 2009 and 2010 Masters of Business Administration (MBA) GIBS students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The data was extracted from the SurveyMonkey site and presented in an Excel spreadsheet. Responses from the questionnaire were grouped per hypothesis to ensure relevant responses from the questionnaire addressed specific hypotheses. For example, in a comparison of age groups, all responses relating to the respondents’ ages were grouped alongside the relevant hypothesis. Once the pre-analysis work was done, data was sent to a statistician for analysis.
Frequency tables were used to identify trends and patterns in the data. Frequency tables were also used to review how different categories of values are distributed in the sample. The type of statistical analysis used to analyse and compare responses was the unpaired $t$-test using the Fisher’s exact test. Fisher’s exact test is a statistical non-parametric $t$-test used for analysing discrete data when two independent samples are small in size; it is also used to establish non-random associations between two categorical variables (WolframMathWorld, 2010). The test is used mainly for small samples. Fisher’s exact test was instrumental in determining the relationship and comparison between different variables.

**4.8 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The research sample included individuals currently employed, previously employed, and excluded those never employed. The sample entailed MBA students from a university located in South Africa and registered users on Facebook and LinkedIn, and excluded potential participants from other locations. MBA students may be viewed as a group with similar characteristics and interests, thus limiting the findings from being generalised and being applicable to all employees and organisations. However, this group included students from different backgrounds and consequently the results drawn from their responses have a potential for revealing insights that may apply to the general public.
Employees not knowledgeable technologically may have decided not to participate in the research due to being unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the topic and having limited exposure to social networking. The results could be biased towards individuals already making personal use of social networking. The results could also be biased due to individuals already registered on social networking sites and finding it easier to participate in the research.

Readers will gather some knowledge from the research results; knowledge employees are willing to share through social networking; whether or not some are willing to use social networking for knowledge sharing and whether companies can use social networking to access organisational memory. This also presents an opportunity for further research to establish if companies are open to the use of social networking for retention of organisational memory. This research targeted individuals not companies, and future research could target companies to establish if they view social networking as an alternative tool for enabling retention of organisational memory.

4.9 CONCLUSION

The details highlighted in this chapter describe the research methodology followed for the research. The research followed a quantitative descriptive method to enable the quantification of the extent to which social networking can be used to retain and access organisational memory.
CHAPTER 5

5 RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results from the data collection phase of the research study. The results are grouped according to the research statements reviewed in chapter 3 of this report. Three research statements were formulated to form the basis of the research, and the questionnaire was built and clustered around the research statements to assess if it supported the literature reviewed and the research statements. The results highlight the responses collected from the respondents in an online survey questionnaire posted on http://www.surveymonkey.net.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the responses to the questionnaire. Frequency analysis on all questions presented in the questionnaire was used to determine similar trends from the responses and identifiable outliers in the data. Thereafter, unpaired $T$-test, following the Fisher’s exact test method, was used to analyse and establish non-random associations between the variables on each research statement.

The Fisher’s exact test was selected over the chi-square test due to its ability to produce the exact P-values instead of approximate P-values and for its ability to analyse data of small sample sizes. Where the outcome of data has values less
than six, the Fisher's exact test can be used, but chi-square tests require larger sample sizes.

This chapter will first describe the general characteristics of the respondents, followed by a presentation of general frequency results. The presentation of unpaired t-test results will follow, and these are presented per research statement. Lastly, findings of the test results are documented at the end of the chapter. The makeup of the respondents and the results collected are presented in the next section.

5.2 GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE SAMPLE GROUP

The number of people who responded to the questionnaire is 88. The characteristics of the sample group are described in the section below.

5.2.1 Respondents' age groups

All 88 responded to the question posed regarding their age. Figure 2 below depicts that 44.9% of respondents were between the ages of 30-35 and the majority of respondents fall within this group. The 25-29 age group had 32.6% respondents and 15.7% were in the 36-40 age group. Over 40 years had 4.5% respondents and only 2.2% were in the 18-24 age bracket. Obtaining the age of the respondents was imperative to assess the level of experience respondents acquired over the years and to assess the validity of their responses. Figure 2 also
highlights at least 79.7% of the sample group was below 35 years, while only 20.2% was above 35 years.

Figure 2: Age groups of respondents

5.2.2 Employment status of the sample group

Table 3 below describes the employment status of the sample group. Respondents employed at the time of the research totalled 96.6%, while only 3.4% were unemployed when the survey was completed. It was imperative to determine the employment status of the respondents since the research is targeted at employed individuals and how changing from one job to another affects organisational memory. These results present largely the opinions of employed individuals from whom organisations, according to the reviewed literature, should attempt to capture organisational memory.
Table 3: Employment status of the sample group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you currently employed?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3 Respondent’s job levels

Figure 3 below highlights 13.8% of the sample group were in administrative roles, 23% in technical or specialist roles, 17.2% in junior management roles, 27.6% in middle management and 18.4% in senior management roles. The majority of the sample group were in middle management. It was imperative to assess the job levels of respondents to determine their profiles in the organisations for which they work.

Figure 3: Job levels of the sample group
5.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT 1:

Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more, to enable retention of organisational memory than employees who are older.

In terms of the above research statement, the questionnaire was constructed from the literature review. The questions aimed at assessing differences in behaviour between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years. The responses obtained are presented below.

5.3.1 GENERAL FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS

The figures below present the responses for each question associated with research statement 1, and these were obtained by examining the frequency tables. For questions that follow, respondents could select multiple answers. The results (number of times an option was selected) were summed up. This implies the total number of people who selected a specific option is a percentage of the total population of 88.
Respondents were asked to select the social networks of which they are members. They could select any number of social networks listed provided they were registered members of those sites. Figure 4 above ranks the usage of the listed social networks, as chosen by respondents, and it is important to note a significant number of respondents were members of multiple social networks.

Figure 4 above denotes 67 respondents (which is 79% of the sample group) were registered users on Facebook. This also implies Facebook was the most popular
online social networking site among those listed. Forty-two respondents (50% of the sample group) were registered users on LinkedIn, while 21 respondents (25% of the sample group) were registered users on Twitter. Only 3 respondents (3.6% of the sample group) were registered users on MySpace, and only 1 respondent was a registered user on the Bebo social network. A total of 13% of respondents were not members or users of any online social networking tools, and 87% of respondents were members of social networks.

Twenty-five respondents were members of two social networking sites, 13 respondents were members of three social network sites, three respondents were members of four social network sites and one respondent was a member of five social network sites.

Figure 5: Uses of online social networking sites by respondents
The reasons for using online social networking sites, and the frequency of use, were investigated. Connecting with family and friends was the most popular reason for using online social networking sites and 45 (56.4% of the respondents) were in this category. Those never using social networking sites to source work-related information from ex-colleagues totalled 35 (56.5% of the respondents), while 20 (30.6% of the respondents) stated that they occasionally used social networking for this reason and only 8 (12.9% of the respondents) stated they frequently used social networking for this reason.

About 34 respondents stated they occasionally use social networks to connect with ex-employees and about 20 respondents said they occasionally use social networks to source work-related information from ex-colleagues.

At least 27 (43% of the respondents) occasionally use online social networks to source employment opportunities, and 26 stated they never use online social networks for this reason. Only 11 (16% of the respondents) frequently use online social networks for this reason. From figure 5 above, it seems that social networks are mainly used for social reasons in contrast to work-related reasons.
Figure 6 above, highlights that 71.8% of the respondents were willing to request work-related information from people they never met before by contacting them personally, while 28.2% were unwilling to do so.

5.3.2 UNPAIRED T-TEST - FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS

The hypothesis for research statement 1, tested using Fisher’s exact test is the following:

**Null hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to enable retention of organisational memory, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.
The questions used to assess the behavior of different age groups (those younger and older than 35 years), regarding the use of social networks, and willingness to share or request work-related information, were

1. Question 1: Please select the age group that best describes your age

2. Question 6: Why do you use online social networking sites? Please rank your responses according to the given scale. The five options were: to connect with friends and family; to connect with current employees; to connect with ex-employees; to source work-related information from ex-colleagues and to source employment opportunities.

3. Question 9: Would you be willing to request work related information from people you have never met before, by contacting them personally?

4. Question 10: Would it be easier to request work related information from people you have never met before if it were done through a social network?

The following section presents the results obtained from the Fisher's exact test.

5.3.2.1 COMPARING THE AGE GROUP (Question 1) WITH THE USE OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING (Question 6)

A. *Null hypothesis:* There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with friends and family, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the use of online social networking (question 6); option one – to connect with family and friends. The options were *frequently, occasionally* and *never.*
Table 4 below lists the percentage of respondents who selected the different options. From the group of respondents younger than 35 years, 57.8% said they frequently use social networks to connect with family and friends, 29.69% said they occasionally use social networks to connect with family and friends and 12.50% said they never use social networks to connect with family and friends. From the sample group older than 35 years, 53.85% said they frequently use social networks to connect with family and friends, while 38.46% said they occasionally use social networks to connect with family and friends. Only 7.69% said they never use social networks to connect with family and friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>57.81%</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>29.69%</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that there is no statistical significant difference in the two age groups in how they use social networking to connect with friends and family; in fact, similar patterns were noted. The “p” value obtained is 0.9078, greater than 0.05. For the statistical difference to be significant, the “p” value has to be less than 0.05. The null hypothesis could not be rejected.
B. Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with current employees, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the use of online social networking (question 6); option two – to connect with current employees. The options were frequently, occasionally and never.

Table 5: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>13.21%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>45.28%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>41.51%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that there is no statistical significant difference in the two age groups in the use of social networking to connect with current employees. The “p” value obtained is 1.0000, and since this value is greater than 0.05 there is no statistical significant difference in the two age groups. The null hypothesis could not be rejected.
C. Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with ex-employees, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the use of online social networking (question 6); option three – to connect with ex-employees. The options were frequently, occasionally and never.

Table 6: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>16.36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>47.27%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that there is no significant statistical difference between the two age groups in how they use online social networking tools to connect with ex-employees. The “p” value obtained is 0.5161, and since this value is greater than 0.05 there is no statistical significant difference in the two age groups. The null hypothesis stating “there is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to connect with ex-employees, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years” could not be rejected
D. Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to source work-related information from ex-colleagues, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the use of online social networking (question 6); option four – to source work-related information from ex-colleagues. The options were frequently, occasionally and never.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>11.54%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>57.69%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that there is no significant statistical difference between the two age groups in how they use online social networks to source work-related information from ex-colleagues. The “p” value obtained is 0.7632, and since this value is greater than 0.05 there is no statistical significant difference in how the two age groups use social networking. The null hypothesis which states “there is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to source work-related information from ex-colleagues, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years” could not be rejected.
E. **Null hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the usage of social networking, to source employment opportunities, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the use of online social networking (question 6) option five – to source employment opportunities. The options were *frequently, occasionally and never*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequently</strong></td>
<td>14.81%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occasionally</strong></td>
<td>40.74%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Never</strong></td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that there is no significant statistical difference between the two age groups in how they use social networking to source employment opportunities. The “p” value obtained is 0.7712, and since this value is greater than 0.05 there is no statistical significant difference in how the two age groups use social networking. The null hypothesis could not be rejected.
5.3.2.2 COMPARING THE AGE GROUP (Question 1) WITH THE WILLINGNESS TO REQUEST WORK-RELATED INFORMATION FROM STRANGERS (Question 9)

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the willingness to request work-related information from strangers, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the respondents’ willingness to request work-related information from strangers (question 9).

Table 9: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70.59%</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that even though a larger number of people from group older than 35 years answered “yes” to the willingness to request work-related information from people they have never met before; there is no statistical significant difference in the various age groups. The “p” value obtained is 0.5420, greater than 0.05 and rendering the result insignificant. The null hypothesis which states “there is no significant difference in the willingness to request work-related information from strangers, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years” could not be rejected.
5.3.2.3 COMPARING THE AGE GROUP (Question 1) WITH THE WILLINGNESS TO REQUEST WORK-RELATED INFORMATION FROM STRANGERS THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS (Question 10)

*Null hypothesis:* There is no significant difference in the willingness to request work-related information from strangers through social networks, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years.

To test the null hypothesis, respondents’ age group (question 1) was compared with the respondents’ willingness to request work-related information from strangers through social networks (question 10).

Table 10: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group younger than 35 years</th>
<th>Group older than 35 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66.18%</td>
<td>70.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.82%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was concluded from Fisher’s exact test that there is no statistical significant difference between the two age groups in their willingness to request work-related information from people they have never met before through social networks. The “p” value obtained is 1.0000, greater than 0.05 and rendering the result insignificant. The null hypothesis which states “*there is no significant difference in the willingness to request work related information from strangers through social*
networks, between employees younger than 35 years and those older than 35 years” could not be rejected.

5.4 RESEARCH STATEMENT 2:

Organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory in ex-employees.

5.4.1 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS

The following frequency test results present the general trend of the responses obtained from respondents in relation to the questions asked under research question 2.

Companies keeping in contact with ex-employees

Figure 7 below highlights a significant number of respondents (52.9%) did not know if their companies kept in contact with ex-employees and 34.3% stated their companies do not keep in contact with ex-employees. Only 12.9% of respondents stated that their companies do keep in contact with ex-employees.
Methods companies use to keep in contact with ex-employees

Figure 8 below depicts the methods companies use to keep in contact with ex-employees as stated by the respondents. From the 12.9% of those who stated their companies keep in contact with ex-employees, 5 said their companies send emails to ex-employees regularly, as a way of keeping in contact. Four stated their companies use newsletters to keep in contact with ex-employees. At least 7 respondents said their companies invite ex-employees to company functions, and 6 of the respondents said their companies use social networking to keep in contact with ex-employees.
Assessment of whether or not companies source work-related information from ex-employees

The question of whether or not companies ask about work-related information when contacting ex-employees was important to assess the level of engagement and depth of discussion companies hold with ex-employees. Figure 9 below highlights that 17.1% of respondents confirmed their companies asking about work-related information when contacting ex-employees, while 17.1% said “no” and the majority - 65% - said they did not know.
Assessment of whether ex-employers keep in contact with respondents

The respondents were asked if their ex-employers currently kept in contact with them. Figure 10 below highlights the responses obtained. A total of 22.1% said their ex-employers contact them for work-related information and 77.9% said their ex-employers make no contact.
Sources of work related information used by respondents

Respondents were asked to select alternative solutions to work-related questions and problems, other than their current colleagues. The respondents could choose any option and more than one, if desired. This question was asked to determine if respondents contact ex-colleagues or ex-employers as sources of work-related information.

Out of a total of 90, 86 responded. Figure 11 below highlights that, from the sample group, 76 respondents selected Google as their source of information for work-related problems, 42 said they use documented company processes and procedures, 43 use general contacts, 27 use the library, 25 said ex-employees from previous jobs were their source of work-related information and only 13 said ex-employees, who have resigned from current jobs, are their source of work-related information.
Ownership of social networking tools by respondents’ employers

Respondents were asked if their current employers have social networking tools. Examples of social networking tools were provided in the questionnaire. This question was asked because it was mentioned, in the literature review, that social networking tools have a place in organisations and can be used to interact with companies’ stakeholders. Figure 12 below shows that 50.6% of respondents confirmed their current employers have social networking tools, 45.5% said their companies do not have social networking tools and 3.9% said they did not know if their companies had social networking tools.
Access to employers’ social networking tools after resignation

Respondents were asked if they would be allowed access to their current employers’ social networking tool after resignation. Figure 13 below indicates only 7.3% said access would be granted, 61.8% said access would not be granted and 30.9% said they did not know if access would be granted.

Figure 12: Ownership of social networking tools by respondent’s employers
Willingness of the respondents to share information with ex-colleagues through their employers’ social network tools

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to share information with ex-colleagues after resigning, using their companies’ social networking tools if they were granted access. This question was asked to assess the willingness of employees to engage with ex-colleagues using company-owned social networking tools. Figure 14 below highlights 67.3% of respondents are willing to share information with ex-colleagues using their companies’ social networking tools, and 32.7% would not be willing to do so.
If your current company allowed you continued access to its social networking tool after resigning, would you be willing to share information with your ex-colleagues using the tool?

No 32.7%
Yes 67.3%

Figure 14: Willingness of respondents to share information with ex-colleagues through employers’ social network tools

5.4.2 UNPAIRED T TEST - FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the ability to retain organisational memory in ex-employees between organisations keeping contact with ex-employees through social networking and those that do not.
The questions used in the Fisher’s exact test the hypothesis for research statement 2: *Organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory from ex-employees,* were:

- Question 11: Does your current employer have an internal (company) social networking tool?
- Question 16: How does your company keep contact with ex-employees?
- Question 17: If your company/business unit keeps contact with ex-employees, does it ask about work-related information?

The following results were obtained from the Fisher’s exact test.

**5.4.2.1 Comparing Whether or not Current Employers Have Social Networking Tools (Question 11) with How Respondents’ Companies Keep Contact with Ex-Employees (Question 16)**

The respondents could choose any one or more of the relevant options. The options for question 16 were:

- Emails sent to ex-employees at regular intervals
- Newsletters
- Invitations to ex-employees to attend company functions
- Social networking
- Other

Table 11 below lists the results obtained after comparing whether or not the respondents’ current employers have social networking tools (Question 11) with how respondents’ companies keep contact with ex-employees (Question 16),
and deals with option one: emails sent to ex-employees at regular intervals. The Fisher’s exact test was used to compare questions 11 and 16. The “p” value obtained is 0.5066, which is more than the 0.05 required to make the results significant. Based on the results from the test for how companies keep in contact with ex-employees, there is no significant difference between companies that have social networking tools and those that do not in how they keep in contact with ex-employees.

Table 11: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Companies with social networking tools</th>
<th>Companies without social networking tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emails sent to ex-employees at regular intervals</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitations to ex-employees to attend company functions</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.2.2. COMPARING WHETHER OR NOT CURRENT EMPLOYERS HAVE SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS (Question 11), WITH WHETHER OR NOT COMPANIES KEEPING CONTACT WITH EX-EMPLOYEES ASK ABOUT WORK-RELATED INFORMATION (Question 17).

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between companies that have social networking tools and those that do not, in asking about work related information when contacting ex-employees.

Table 12: Unpaired T-test - Research Statement 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When a company keeps in contact with ex-employees, does it ask about work-related information?</th>
<th>Companies with social networking tools</th>
<th>Companies without social networking tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 above lists the results obtained from comparing questions 11 and 17 using the Fisher’s exact test. The “p” value obtained is 0.8773, which is more than the required 0.05. The null hypothesis could not be rejected; implying that based on Fisher’s exact test results, there is no statistical significant difference between companies that have social networking tools and those that do not, in asking about work related information when contacting ex-employees. When comparing companies with, and without, social networking tools against companies that ask, and do not ask, about work-related information when contacting ex-employees, the
respondents saw a similar pattern in companies’ behaviour. However, it must also be noted that a significant number of respondents did not know if their companies ask for work-related information when contacting ex-employees.

5.5 RESEARCH STATEMENT 3:

Ex-employees who have worked in organisations with a knowledge-sharing culture will share knowledge with incumbent employees and enable retention of organisational memory.

5.5.1 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS

The following frequency test results present the responses obtained from respondents in relation to questions asked under research statement 3. Knowledge-sharing culture was fragmented into questions about actions that explained a knowledge-sharing culture because the phrase knowledge-sharing culture may have been unknown to some respondents and has different meanings for different people. The responses are presented in the figures that follow with a brief overview of the results.
Attempts by respondents’ previous employers to retain information acquired upon resignation

The respondents were asked to list the methods their previous employers used to retain information they acquired while employed. They were allowed to select one or more relevant options. Out of 90, 59 responded to the question and 31 skipped. Figure 15 below indicates 31 respondents stated their previous employers conducted exit interviews, 35 said their ex-employers used handover processes to retain acquired information and 20 said their ex-employers documented records of information to retain acquired information.

Figure 15: Previous attempts by respondents’ employers to retain acquired information upon resignation
Previous employers still contacting respondents

Figure 16 below highlights that only 22.1% of respondents were contacted by their previous employers for work-related information and 77.9% not contacted, at the time of survey.

Figure 16: Previous employers contacting respondents
Respondents keeping in contact with ex-colleagues

Figure 17 below highlights that 92.5% of respondents keep contact with ex-colleagues and 7.5% do not.

Methods used by respondents to keep in contact with ex-colleagues

Respondents were asked to select the methods they use to contact ex-colleagues and could select one or more relevant options. Figure 18 below highlights 51 respondents use email to keep contact with ex-colleagues, 40 use social networks and 39 make telephonic contact.
Figure 18: Methods used by respondents to keep in contact with ex-colleagues

Assessment of whether or not respondents’ previous employers had social networking tools

Figure 19 below highlights that only 8.8% of respondents stated ex-employers had social networking tools, 76.5% said ex-employers did not have social networking tools and 14.7% did not know.
Figure 19: Assessment of whether or not previous employers had social networking tools

Respondents’ access to previous employers’ social networking tools

All respondents said they did not have access to previous employers’ social networking tools. This is the group of 8.8% which said their ex-employers had social networking tools.

Figure 20: Respondents still using previous employers’ social networking tools
5.6 RESULTS OVERVIEW

The results for the three research statements appear below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research statement</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more than those older than 35 to enable retention of organisational memory</td>
<td>Cannot reject the null hypothesis. There is no statistical significant difference between people younger and older than 35 years for using social networking to enable retention of organisational memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations that keep contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory from ex-employees.</td>
<td>Cannot reject the null hypothesis. There is no statistical significant difference between organisations that keep contact with ex-employees through social networks and their ability to retain organisational memory from ex-employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-employees who worked in organisations with a knowledge-sharing culture will share knowledge with incumbent employees and enable retention of organisational memory.</td>
<td>Cannot reject the null hypothesis. There is no statistical significant difference between employees who worked in organisations with a knowledge-sharing culture and those who did not, and their willingness to share information with incumbent employees to enable retention of organisational memory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three research statements evaluated aimed at explaining the use of social networks for retention of organisational memory, but were not proven.

Consequently the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The data evaluated implies no proof that employees younger than 35 will use social networking more than those older to enable retention of organisational memory. The data also does not prove organisations keeping in contact with ex-employees through social networking will retain organisational memory from ex-employees. And the data does not prove ex-employees, who worked in organisations with a knowledge-sharing culture, will share knowledge with incumbent employees and enable retention of organisational memory. The link to the literature, and the interpretation and significance of these results, will be reviewed in chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6

6 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The results presented in chapter 5 are here reviewed. The objectives are to assess and analyse the survey findings and statistical tests to determine if they support the literature reviewed in chapter 2. The discussion follows the same structure presented in chapter 5 and is clustered according to the research statements presented in chapter 3.

Notwithstanding the research statements were unsupported, it should be noted a significant number of respondents showed positive willingness to contact people they have never met before, personally or through social networks, to request work-related information. This shows willingness from employees exists but that the employer is not deriving benefit because no co-ordinated or facilitated framework is in place to generate and maintain the required interaction. There also appears to be a lack of knowledge on whether or not respondents’ employers keep contact with ex-employees and that relationships and interaction with ex-employers are discontinued when employees resign.
6.2 REVIEW: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS – JOB LEVELS

The majority of the sample group were in middle management, followed in descending order by those in technical roles, senior management, junior management and administrative roles. The literature revealed the longer employees stay with one organisation, and the more experience they acquire, the richer their tacit and explicit knowledge for organisational memory (Lahaie, 2005). At management level, the skills acquired by employees take longer to replace, compared with those acquired at administrative level, due to the repetitive nature of the tasks performed. Consequently it was important to obtain views from individuals at all levels of organisational hierarchy because it is the exiting of experienced and skilled employees at all levels which results in organisations losing organisational memory.

6.3 RESEARCH STATEMENTS REVIEWED: RESEARCH STATEMENT 1

6.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research statement under review is “Employees younger than 35 years will use social networking more, to enable retention of organisational memory than employees who are older”.

This sample group had 79.7% of respondents 35 years and younger and only 20.2% older than 35 years. The makeup indicates a big representation of younger generation individuals, which Chen and Chou (2008) describe as Millennial and Generation X, and a small representation of individuals older than 35. Within the 35 plus sample group, there were some Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964, defined according to Chen and Choi (2008).

Facebook proved the most popular social network site, with 67 respondents, followed by LinkedIn’s 42 respondents. The rest were Twitter (21), MySpace (3) and Bebo (1). The popularity of Facebook and LinkedIn is in line with the assertion by Mislove et al. (2007) that the accelerating number of registered users on these social networks is the reason for their increasing popularity. Facebook was reported to have had 200 million users in 2009 and LinkedIn 36 million.

Social networking has not caught everyone’s attention because 13% of respondents were not members of any online social networking tool. The “disconnected” 13% are not persuaded by capabilities, functionalities and advantages of online social networking tools, mentioned by Barnes and Barnes (2009), who said it is unwise to remain disconnected from online social networking. The remaining 87% of the group highlighted the shift from face-to-face physical contact to virtual online communication. The trend also supports the view, held by Deloitte (2009), that online social networking has altered how people interact, communicate and share information
6.3.2 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS

Based on the survey results, online social networks are being used largely for personal reasons, such as connecting with family and friends and sourcing employment opportunities. This supports the idea stated by Communications (2008) that people use social networking sites to look for current and prospective employers.

A significant number of respondents (56.5%) confirmed they never use social networking sites to source work-related information from ex-colleagues, 30.6% stated they occasionally use social networking for this reason and only 12.9% confirmed they frequently use social networking sites for this reason. There seems to be a slow shift in the adoption and use of social networking sites from informal personal use toward work-related use.

Although the respondents use social networking sites mainly for personal use, an overwhelming 71.8% were willing to request work-related information by personally contacting people they had never met before. There is an opportunity for organisations to use the willingness of individuals to contact strangers to source work-related information, and it would be to their advantage to enable the interaction to take place through social networking. This would require employers facilitating the interaction by enabling access to the sites.
6.3.3 FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS

The null hypothesis for research statement 1, tested using the Fisher’s exact test, could not be rejected. The research statement is “Employees younger than 35 will use social networking more than those older to enable retention of organisational memory.” The null hypothesis could not be rejected, implying no significant difference between employees younger or older than 35 in how they use social networking.

Behavioral differences were expected between the two age groups, according to studies by Deloitte (2007) and Chen and Choi (2008), who suggested that different exposure to world events and different experiences among the groups will dictate their reactions to technological developments. However, the study noted similar patterns among these groups.

Comparison of the respondents’ age groups with the use of online social networks to connect with families and friends

The Fisher’s exact test revealed there is no statistical significant difference in how the younger and older age groups use social networking to connect with family and friends. Similar patterns were noted in how the groups use online social networks to connect with families and friends. A majority of the respondents from both age groups confirmed they frequently use online social networks to connect with families and friends. This contrasts with the view of Deloitte (2007) that it is mainly
Generation X (those born between 1982 and 1993) who embrace online social networks.

Similar patterns were noted in how the two age groups use social networks to connect with current employees. The Fisher’s exact test revealed no significant difference between the two age groups in how they use social networking to connect with current employees. The null hypothesis was not rejected. At least 45% from both groups stated they occasionally or never use social networks to connect with current employees, while 13.21% and 9% said they frequently use social networks to connect with current employees.

Comparison of the respondents’ age groups with the use of online social networks to connect with ex-employees and to source work-related information from ex-colleagues

The Fisher’s exact test revealed there is no statistical significant difference between individuals younger or older than 35 in the way they use social networks to connect with ex-employees or source work-related information from ex-colleagues. Respondents from both groups behave similarly in using social networks to source employment opportunities. The similarities between these groups reveal that if organisations were to use social networks as tools for connecting and exchanging information, they will not have to apply different strategies to capture the interest of employees. The same message can be used to invite employees to exchange information through social networks, and employees would respond similarly.
Comparison of the respondents’ age groups with the use of online social networks to request work-related information from strangers personally and through social networks

A significant number of respondents older than 35 stated a willingness to request work-related information from people they had never met before, compared with those younger than 35. However, the null hypothesis was not rejected in analysing the Fisher’s test results, implying there is no significant difference between these two groups. Notwithstanding, it must be noted an overwhelming 72.6% and 66.7% of respondents confirmed their willingness to source work-related information from people they had never met before, and to source work-related information from people they had never met before through social networks.

The null hypothesis was not rejected when comparing the two age groups in their willingness to request work-related information from strangers through social networks. This supports the view of Kasavana et al. (2010) that social networks can connect strangers to enable the exchange of information. However, views by Marshall et al. (2009), Bergman (2008) and (Avram 2006) suggesting trust and social ties as crucial in ensuring effective online collaboration were not very well supported. Respondents from both groups seemed willing to connect and exchange information through social networks with strangers.
6.3.4. CONCLUSION: RESEARCH STATEMENT 1

The results obtained from the tests performed on the different age groups highlight that age does not define how people use social networks. It seems, as long as there is a need and a compelling reason, individuals will use online social networks regardless of age. Generally, the respondents were willing to contact strangers personally or through social networks to source work-related information. It also seems, if employees can source work-related information from people they have never met, including the organization’s ex-employees, organisational memory can be accessed.

6.4 RESEARCH STATEMENTS REVIEWED: RESEARCH STATEMENT 2

6.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results from the analysis of research statement 2 are presented and reviewed under the frequency and Fisher’s exact test results below.

Research statement 2 states that, “Organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory from ex-employees.”

The literature suggested managing and sustaining an effective network of knowledge relationships is crucial for creating knowledgeable organisations (McKenzie & Van Winkelen, 2004). Organisations need to define who falls within
this network of relationships and it was assumed, as employees connect with
organisations through knowledge acquisition, they would be included upon
resigning. This notion was further strengthened by Coghlan and McAuliffe (2003) in
Daley (2008) who viewed organisations as open systems dependent on a
continuous interaction with the external environment.

6.4.2 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS

It is surprising to note a significant number of respondents (52.9%) did not know if
their employers kept in contact with ex-employees, while 34.3% said their
employers did not keep in contact with ex-employees. Furthermore, 77.9% of
respondents were not contacted by their ex-employers for work-related information.
It seems a significant number of companies do not include ex-employees in the
network of knowledge relationships, a notion proposed by McKenzie & Van
Winkelen (2004) as crucial for building effective knowledge networks. The
responses obtained do not suggest organisations treat the loss of expert
knowledge with urgency, which Coffey and Hoffman (2003) deem will become
worse as the Baby Boomers approach retirement. Exiting employees possess
mines of information, into which organisations should be tapping to mitigate the
impact of organisational memory-loss.
Methods companies use to keep in contact with ex-employees

The results suggest a significant number of companies do not keep in contact with ex-employees, and those that do (12.9% of the respondents) do not use virtual communities supported by Internet technologies, as suggested by Ardichvili et al. (2003). However, while trying to maintain contact with ex-employees, some companies send emails to them regularly, while some send newsletters and invite them to company functions. Of the 12.9% respondents, only 6 said their companies use social networking to keep in contact with ex-employees. At least 51.3% of respondents said their employers have social networking tools, but access to these tools is not granted to ex-employees. The efforts by companies to engage with ex-employees seem to be a once off (invitations to company events), and one way (newsletters). These methods are what KPMG (2007) refer to as inefficient for knowledge sharing and knowledge management and advocate the use of Web 2.0 technologies because they enable a wider audience to contribute to a knowledge pool. Depth in discussions held between organisation and ex-employees was noted to be lacking due to at least 17.1% of respondents saying their companies do not ask about work-related information when contacting ex-employees, while 65.7% stated they did not know.

Sources of work-related information used by respondents

While the popularity of social networking is increasing, as suggested by Wilson (2009) and MWEB (2010) in Prentice (2010), employed individuals still use
traditional methods such as Google, documented company processes and libraries to source information for work-related problems.

Ownership of social networking tools by respondents’ employers

Scalzo (2006) made a bold inference that when organisations are faced with changes, people are the primary and preferred source of information rather than tools or information on paper. However, it appears few organisations make an effort to facilitate interaction among employees. Not more than 50.6% of respondents said their employers have social networking tools and, of those, 61.8% said they would be denied access upon resigning, while 30.9% did not know.

6.4.3 RESULTS UNPAIRED T TEST - FISHER’S EXACT TEST RESULTS

The proposition “Organisations that keep in contact with ex-employees through social networking can retain organisational memory from ex-employees.” was not rejected.

It can be inferred that the instrument used by organisations to keep in contact with employees does not determine the organisation’s ability to retain organisational memory. Social networking tools alone do not predict an organisation’s ability to retain organisational memory. It seems there needs to be more than simply a tool to enable retention of organisational memory. It is unlikely to happen by default and resources need to be aligned with the intent and actions of both the
organisation, current and ex-employees. This supports the view of Ardichvili et al. (2003) that exchange of information for online social networks is effective only when there is supply of relevant information and active participation of members.

A test for whether or not a difference exists between employers that have social networking tools and those that don’t, and how these companies keep contact with ex-employees, was performed using the unpaired t-test (Fisher’s test). The results revealed no significant difference, in how they keep contact with ex-employees, between companies that have social networking tools and those that do not. It was also highlighted that there is no significant difference between companies that have social networking tools and those that do not in asking about work-related information when contacting ex-employees. However, these results must be viewed in the context that the majority of respondents did not know if their companies ask about work-related information when contacting ex-employees.

6.4.4. CONCLUSION: RESEARCH STATEMENT 2

Findings from the tests performed highlighted; there is no significant difference between organisations that keep contact with ex-employees through social networks and their ability to retain organisational memory from ex-employees. The findings also highlighted there is no significant difference between organisations that have social networking tools and those that do not in asking about work-related information when contacting ex-employees. The information exchanged by these organisations with ex-employees does not suggest organisational memory is accessed or retained as a result of the interaction. It came to light that
organisations with social networking tools do not allow ex-employees access to these tools.

6.5 RESEARCH STATEMENTS REVIEWED: RESEARCH STATEMENT 3

Research statement 3 says: “Ex-employees who have worked in organisations with a knowledge-sharing culture will share knowledge with incumbent employees and enable retention of organisational memory.”

6.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature suggested, for knowledge sharing to be effective, that the active participation of individuals who require knowledge, and those who possess the required knowledge, is crucial (Ardichvili et al. 2003 & Marshall et al. 2009). A general trend in the use of traditional methods for retention of organisational memory by organisations was noted from questionnaire responses. Upon employees resigning, it seems that organisations still record information in documents, conduct exit interviews and handover sessions. One could assume that if the challenge of organisational memory loss becomes prevalent, organisations should move towards sophisticated ways of retaining organisational memory. Documents on their own may not be adequate to meet the expectations of the worker in the year 2010 and years to come. As mentioned in the results, a significant number of respondents were members of multiple networks and are therefore comfortable with the interactive feature that social networks offer during information sharing.
6.5.2 FREQUENCY TEST RESULTS

Furness (2008) and Alajmi (2008) suggested that organizational culture is a critical factor that influences an individual’s willingness to exchange knowledge with other employees.

The results presented in chapter 5 suggest that a significant number of organisations do not keep in contact with ex-employees. However, employees do keep in contact with ex-colleagues, and 92.5% of respondents confirmed this. Email, social networks and telephone seem to be major channels of communication used by individuals to keep in contact with ex-colleagues.

All of the group stating ex-employers had social networking tools, said they were denied access to those tools after resigning. It seems that organisations’ knowledge-sharing culture, if it exists, does not extend beyond current employees. It also is apparent that organisations do not tap into ex-employees’ knowledge in an attempt to preserve organisational memory, although there may be tools available.

A total of 14.7% of the sample group did not know if ex-employers had social networking tools, and, 76.5% said ex-employers did not. Only 8.8% said ex-employers did have such tools. If such tools did exist, a lack of knowledge about whether or not ex-employers had social networking tools displays either disengagement by employees to the affairs of the work place, or the employers’ lack of awareness and engagement with employees regarding communication strategies. This also implies if organisations use social networks as a medium of communication, not all employees will use them. Therefore organisations should drive awareness of these tools aggressively to ensure their wider use by employees.
6.5.3 CONCLUSION

The findings for research statement 3 highlight that an organisation’s knowledge-sharing culture does not predict whether or not employees will share knowledge with incumbent employees to enable retention of organisational memory. The knowledge-sharing culture may exist through the use of tools or certain practices, but some employees may not support those practices and not engage in what the organisation is seeking to achieve.
CHAPTER 7

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the meaning of the findings, recommendations and suggestions for future research. These were noted on realising that had certain factors been considered during either the sample selection, or data collection, phases of the research study, improvements or greater clarity would have been achieved in the results.

This research has investigated issues regarding the use of social networks and how they can be used to benefit the employer to retain organisational memory. An investigation of the different age groups likely to use social networks and whether or not employers can facilitate the use of social networks was also explored.

The literature highlighted a challenge in the loss of organisational memory when employees resign. A new trend in the use online social networks is viewed as a phenomenon that will last due to popularity of social networking sites. Since these sites serve different purposes and target different people such as professionals, family members and social groups, people tend to register for membership in multiple networking sites.

The study found that organisations do not allow ex-employees access to internal social networking sites and often do not contact ex-employees after resignation. Practises for entrenching a knowledge sharing culture in organisations seem to be shared with current employees only and do not extend to ex-employees. The study
also highlighted that where social networking is used as a tool by organisations to enable retention of organisational memory, the age of employees is not a predictor of how they will use the tools. Employees from different age groups tend to display similar behaviour toward the use of online social networks.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

There seems to be a slow shift, in adopting and using social networking sites, from informal personal use toward work-related use. The reasons should be investigated to verify if denial of access to social networking sites by companies does not perpetuate this. It is likely, since employees connect to these sites using personal devices, such as cell phones or personal computers outside the working environment, they tend to engage in discussions that benefit them personally and shy away from discussions that might benefit the employer. Employees may view denial of access to social networking sites by companies as a reason for not offering their personal resources for the benefit of their companies.

It is possible employees view social networking sites as a technology for use outside the working environment, hence the differences in how they use the sites. This might be a reason for not bridging the gap and being loyal to employers if the employers do not reciprocate in allowing access to social networking sites.

Organisations should explore the use of internal social networks at the work place to ensure knowledge sharing and retention among employees. Documents, emails
and newsletters may not be adequate to capture the hunger for knowledge that employees of today have. Although organisations may have a mixture of generations, young and old in the workplace, the sophistication through which these employees interact may require a move away from traditional methods of communicating towards instant collaborative forms of knowledge exchange.

7.3 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The design of the questionnaire and structure of questions influence the insights that can be derived from a research project. For future research, the questionnaire should include an inquiry as to whether or not respondents are allowed, by their companies, to access social networking sites during or after working hours. This would unearth if denial of access to social networking sites influences the discussions taking place on these sites, which this study found to be personal rather than work related. If employees were accessing social networking sites in the workplace it is likely that when presented with work challenges they would share this information and seek solutions from online social networks.

Future studies could involve organisations directly in obtaining their views about online social networking sites and whether or not they perceive their incorporation in the work environment as a means for retention of organisational memory. A view on whether or not organisations view social networking tools as assets, that will help companies engage with the sophisticated future employee could be explored.
7.4 CONCLUSION

The results have highlighted social networks as a crucial structure for building knowledge and exchanging information. Where the employer does not facilitate interaction and networking in the workplace, employees will form these structures on their own with current employees, ex-employees, and friends and families in search for information. The consequence is that, when the organisation is not seen to be facilitating these interactions, the employer cannot influence the discussion taking place between the employee and individuals in the networks. The discussions are likely to be personal rather than work related and may not benefit the employer.

To access and capture organisational memory, the employer should engage ex-employees, have meaningful discussions regarding acquired knowledge, and facilitate interaction between current and ex employees.
8 REFERENCES


Deloitte. (2009). Social networking and reputational risk in the workplace, Ethics and Workplace Survey Results


(Accessed 03 July 2010)


Raina, R. (2010). *Corporate Strategy Lecture*. Master in Business Administration, the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria


9 APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Enabling retention of Organisational memory through Social Networking - Survey

Welcome to the survey for the research on "Enabling retention of Organisational Memory through Social Networking". Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. The survey is anonymous and data cannot be traced back to specific respondents.

The purpose of the research survey is to establish if Social Networking can be used to enable retention of Organisational Memory. Organisational Memory is acquired through being employed in an organisation, learning the culture of the organisation and in the process acquire experience that would assist in making decisions on behalf of that organisation.

This research is being submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria, and will be used for academic purposes only.

By clicking on "Next" below, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. You can however withdraw at any time. I would however appreciate it if you could complete all the questions. If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below.

Researcher: Busiwe Stamper (082-998-4326; Busiwe.Stamper@vodacom.co.za )
Supervisor: Karen Luyt (082-895-2289; karen.luyt@bcx.co.za)

2. Default Section

1. Please select the age group that best describes your age:

- 18-24
- 25-29
- 30-35
- 36-40
- +40
2. Are you currently employed?

☐ Yes
☐ No

3. If you answered "No" to question 2 above please respond. Please note this question is optional, you may choose not to respond. How long have you been unemployed for?

☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 12-18 months
☐ 18- 24 months
☐ 2-4 years
☐ More than 4 years

4. If you are employed, please respond. What is your job level?

☐ Administrative
☐ Technical / specialist
☐ Junior management
☐ Middle management
☐ Senior management
3. SECTION 2

Please answer the following questions relating to your networking preferences.

1. Which social network(s) are you a member of? (Select all that are applicable)

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- MySpace
- Bebo
- None

Other (please specify)

2. What do you use online social networking sites for? Please rank your responses according to the scale provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>To connect with friends and family</th>
<th>To connect with current employees</th>
<th>To connect with ex employees</th>
<th>To source work related information from ex-colleagues</th>
<th>To source employment opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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opportunities Frequently

Other (please specify)

3. If you cannot source solutions/answers to work related questions from current employees, where do you get information? (Please select all that are applicable)

☐ Google
☐ Library
☐ Documented company processes and procedures
☐ General contacts
☐ Ex-employees from previous jobs
☐ Ex-employees who have resigned from the current job

Other (please specify)

4. How would you obtain the information as indicated above?

☐ Email
☐ Telephone
☐ Search the Internet
☐ Social Networks
☐ Reading documents

Other (please specify)

5. Would you be willing to request for work related information from people you have never met before, by contacting them personally?

☐ Yes
☐ No
6. Would it be easier to request for work related information from people you have never met before if it was done through a social network?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. **SECTION 3**

Please answer the following questions relating to your current job.

1. Does your current employer have an internal (company) social networking tool? If you answered "No / I do not know", please skip to Question 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. If you have access to your current employer's social networking tool, what do you use it for?

- [ ] To share information with other employees
- [ ] Blogging
- [ ] Newsletter publication and project announcements
- [ ] I do not have access to the tool

Other (please specify)

3. If you resign, will you be allowed continued access to your current company's social networking tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
4. If your current company allowed you continued access to its social networking tool after resigning, would you be willing to share information with your ex-colleagues using the tool?

☐ Yes
☐ No

5. Does your company or business unit keep contact with employees who have resigned? If you answered "No" or "I do not know" please ignore questions 6 and 7

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not know

6. How does your company keep contact with resigned employees? (Please select all that are applicable)

☐ Emails sent to resigned employees at regular periods
☐ Newsletters
☐ Invitations to company functions extended to ex employees
☐ Social networking

Other (please specify)

7. If your company/business unit keeps contact with ex-employees, does it ask about work related information?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not know
8. What efforts are being made by your company to capture the knowledge of experienced retiring or exiting employees?

- Conduct exit interviews
- Document Individual's Expertise on paper
- Assign Knowledge-Capturing tasks to senior staff
- I do not know

Other (please specify)

5. SECTION 4

Please answer the following questions relating to your previous job. If your current company is your first employment, you may end the survey at this stage.

1. When you resigned from your previous employment, how did your previous employer attempt to retain the information you acquired during your employment? (Please select all that are applicable).

- Conducted exit interviews
- Handover process
- Record keeping through documentation

Other (please specify)

2. Does your previous employer still contact you for work related information?

- Yes
- No

3. Do you still keep contact with your ex colleagues from your previous jobs?

- Yes
- No
4. If you answered “Yes” to question 3 above, please respond. Which method do you use to keep contact with your ex colleagues?

☐ Email
☐ Telephone
☐ Social network(s)

Other (please specify)

5. Did your previous employer have an internal social networking tool?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not know

6. If you answered “yes” to the Question above, please respond - Do you still have access to your previous employer’s social networking tool?

☐ Yes
☐ No

7. If you answered “yes” to the Question above, please respond. Do you still use your previous employer’s social networking tool?

☐ Yes
☐ No

THANK YOU – END OF SURVEY
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH SUMMARY RESULTS

Enabling retention of organisational memory through social networking

1. Please select the age group that best describes your age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 88
skipped question: 0

2. Are you currently employed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 88
skipped question: 0
3. If you answered "No" to question 2 above please respond. Please note this question is optional, you may choose not to respond. How long have you been unemployed for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18 months</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 months</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 years</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 years</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If you are employed, please respond. What is your job level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical / specialist</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior management</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle management</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Which social network(s) are you a member of? (Select all that are applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebo</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify) | 9

answered question | 83
skipped question | 6

6. What do you use online social networking sites for? Please rank your responses according to the scale provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To connect with friends and family</td>
<td>67.1% (44)</td>
<td>31.2% (24)</td>
<td>11.7% (9)</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To connect with current employees</td>
<td>12.5% (8)</td>
<td>46.3% (29)</td>
<td>42.2% (27)</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To connect with ex employees</td>
<td>15.4% (10)</td>
<td>60.8% (33)</td>
<td>23.8% (14)</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To source work related information from ex-colleagues</td>
<td>13.1% (8)</td>
<td>29.5% (18)</td>
<td>67.4% (36)</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To source employment opportunities</td>
<td>16.1% (10)</td>
<td>41.9% (26)</td>
<td>41.8% (26)</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify) | 3

answered question | 80
skipped question | 8
7. If you cannot source solutions/answers to work related questions from current employees, where do you get information? (Please select all that are applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documented company processes and procedures</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General contacts</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-employees from previous jobs</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-employees who have resigned from the current job</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 84
Skipped question: 4

8. How would you obtain the information as indicated above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search the Internet</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading documents</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 84
Skipped question: 4
9. Would you be willing to request for work related information from people you have never met before, by contacting them personally?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 84
Skipped question: 4

10. Would it be easier to request for work related information from people you have never met before if it was done through a social network?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 84
Skipped question: 4

11. Does your current employer have an internal (company) social networking tool? If you answered "No / I do not know", please skip to Question 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 75
Skipped question: 13
12. If you have access to your current employer's social networking tool, what do you use it for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To share information with other employees</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogging</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter publication and project announcements</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have access to the tool</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Status</th>
<th>Answered Question</th>
<th>Skipped Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answered question</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. If you resign, will you be allowed continued access to your current company's social networking tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Status</th>
<th>Answered Question</th>
<th>Skipped Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answered question</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. If your current company allowed you continued access to its social networking tool after resigning, would you be willing to share information with your ex-colleagues using the tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 48
skipped question: 40

15. Does your company or business unit keep contact with employees who have resigned? If you answered "No" or "I do not know" please ignore questions 6 and 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 70
skipped question: 18
16. How does your company keep contact with resigned employees? (Please select all that are applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emails sent to resigned employees at regular periods</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitations to company functions extended to ex employees</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. If your company/business unit keeps contact with ex-employees, does it ask about work related information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 34
skipped question 64
18. What efforts are being made by your company to capture the knowledge of experienced retiring or exiting employees?

- Conduct exit interviews: 68.2% (42)
- Document Individual's Expertise on paper: 8.5% (6)
- Assign Knowledge-Capturing tasks to senior staff: 7.0% (5)
- I do not know: 39.4% (28)
- Other (please specify): 5

Answered question: 71
Skipped question: 17

19. When you resigned from your previous employment, how did your previous employer attempt to retain the information you acquired during your employment? (Please select all that are applicable.)

- Conducted exit interviews: 51.7% (30)
- Handover process: 68.8% (34)
- Record keeping through documentation: 34.5% (20)
- Other (please specify): 7

Answered question: 68
Skipped question: 30
20. Does your previous employer still contact you for work related information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 87
skipped question 21

21. Do you still keep contact with your ex colleagues from your previous jobs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 68
skipped question 22

22. If you answered "Yes" to question 3 above, please respond. Which method do you use to keep contact with your ex colleagues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network(s)</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify) 2
answered question 60
skipped question 28
23. Did your previous employer have an internal social networking tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 87
Skipped question: 21

24. If you answered “yes” to the Question above, please respond - Do you still have access to your previous employer’s social networking tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 16
Skipped question: 72

25. If you answered “yes” to the Question above, please respond. Do you still use your previous employer’s social networking tool?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 8
Skipped question: 78