

Sell yourself on Facebook and land a job at PwC

Joanna Mather

A trio of major Australian employers may have figured out how to harness the power of social networking site Facebook to source young talent.

Thiess, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Lonely Planet are taking part in a competition for university students organised by online recruitment company Lode.

Each company agreed to offer a summer internship to the candidate who could best sell themselves in 100 words or less on Lode's Facebook page.

The competition had attracted more than 1900 entries by the time it closed at the end of last month.

Lode has since identified the best

10 candidates for each position and has passed detailed profiles for each student on to Thiess, PwC and Lonely Planet.

Lode chief executive Justin Robinson said students were free to write whatever they wanted about themselves.

"It was an opportunity for students to really showcase their skills and attributes without trying to focus on a position description," he said.

The three employers are sifting through the finalists before appointing a minimum of one intern each for a four-week stint over summer. PwC has already recruited 300 vacationers and 100 trainees through the traditional channels to work with the firm over summer.

PwC human capital director Sharon Bell said there had been a good response to the Facebook campaign.

"You've got access to a lot of people who traditionally don't go onto our website so it just opens up

It's a complementary way to ensure that they continue to attract very good talent.

a greater market for us," she said.

Much has been said about the potential of social networking sites for recruitment purposes, although the latest Australian Association of Graduate Employers survey found just 4 per cent of candidates said

social networking sites were "very useful" sources of information while they were looking for a job.

However, 60 per cent rated employer websites as very useful.

Mr Robinson believes employers have a fear of the unknown when it

LODE CHIEF EXECUTIVE JUSTIN ROBINSON

comes to interacting with potential employees via social media.

"Our advice to clients is that if you are honest and trustworthy and transparent you've got nothing to fear," he said.

Facebook and other sites could be

used as an additional avenue for attracting candidates, but shouldn't necessarily replace traditional forms of recruitment, he said.

"I think it's a complementary way to ensure that they continue to attract very good talent."

Lode matches employers with students for permanent jobs, work placements, casual employment, cadetships, mentoring and volunteer programs. Students fill out a profile, which is posted online but does not include the individual's contact details. Employers can search the site for free but an exchange of contact details costs \$50.

Companies that have signed on include the Brisbane Lions, Rio Tinto and Australia and New Zealand Banking Group.