



## Article

### A New Day for Recruitment

If you remember sifting through resumes that arrived via fax or snail mail, answering a classified ad or posting an opening on an online job board, you have some perspective by which to compare – and appreciate – the latest tools and strategies that have become standard in today’s recruiting environment. While staffing agencies and search firms have provided recruitment services for many decades, recent technology advancements and fundamental changes in the US labor market have forever altered the way candidates, employers, and staffing agencies approach recruitment and hiring.

No question, the methods that are available to source and communicate talent have made the recruitment landscape more sophisticated and complicated. This presents two major challenges. The first is to know how to integrate the new tools wisely. The second is to understand that even with the greatest arsenal of technical tools, software and communication gadgets, the basics of effective recruiting and solid relationships, have been, and continue to be the foundation to a fruitful and gratifying employment process.

#### **The Internet: Helping drive the recruiting process .... to a point**

The staffing industry was one of the first to fully exploit the power of the Web. Over the past fifteen or so years, the internet has revolutionized the process of posting, finding, and communicating with candidates. Internet recruiting has blossomed into its own multibillion dollar industry with job boards and social networks replacing classified ads and job fairs as the most used mediums for mass-networking.

So what has happened now that recruiters and employers can broadcast employment opportunities more quickly and easily to a larger pool of talent than ever before? Well, for one thing, the volume of responses has grown exponentially requiring significantly more time and effort to sift through it all. To meet this phenomenon, whole new classes of products and services have been designed to take advantage of the latest Internet and online recruitment developments and manage the deluge.

While employers and agencies have learned to leverage the newly developed timesaving technologies, the most successful of their recruiters continue to focus the recruiting fundamentals of developing long-term relationships, concentrating on specific industry expertise, building and maintaining extensive candidate networks and good old fashioned face-to-face communication.

#### **Social Networking**

It is becoming more common for staffing executives and recruiters to use professional and social networking sites to find people. The professional networking site, LinkedIn, has more than 65 million registered users worldwide, and there are more than 400 million active Facebook users. With numbers like that, it is difficult to argue against becoming a player in this arena.



Technology-based businesses and those seeking employees with very specific skill sets, are starting to include social networking sites in their arsenal of recruitment tools. These sites offer the ability to reach a bigger pool of candidates and connect with highly-qualified job seekers than ever before. Networking sites also provide an effective means of locating and engaging the passive job seekers, those who are not actively conducting a job search but would be interested if the right opportunity comes their way. This traditionally 'difficult to identify' segment is much more identifiable and approachable with the new networking tools.

Networking is a two way street and it makes sense that candidates will examine your organization just as closely as you examine your candidates. Therefore, companies should actively promote their brand across professional and social media while encouraging the use of these across all segments of their organization. A positive brand presence will ensure a more receptive response from candidates on these networks.

### **Rise of the Professional Contingent Workforce**

The Internet and social networking have also supported growth in the market for professional contingent workers ( i.e. Business, IT, Legal, Engineering and Medical professionals working on a per diem or hourly basis). With these online tools providing a professional networking structure outside the traditional office environment, it is easy, and sometimes more comfortable, for professional contingent workers to carry their personal and professional networks with them as they move from assignment to assignment. They can effectively broadcast their skills, expertise and availability for the next assignment quickly and inexpensively.

Coming out of the economic downturn, employers are using temporary or professional contingent workers to jumpstart projects and dodge departmental or company-wide hiring freezes. There has been a marked shift in companies becoming more aware of what a contingent workforce can do and how it can contribute to a company's bottom line. Organizations that tend to engage in a large number of projects or need to scale-up or back quickly, are leading in the use of these contingent workers. We see more and more organizations seeking expertise on how to source and manage their contingent workforce indicating this growing trend. As a result of these developments, the professional contingent worker segment has evolved into one of the fastest growing sectors of the temporary labor force in the new economy.

Incorporating contingent workers into your staffing strategy certainly requires an understanding as to how those workers are best utilized and how they will be integrated into your organization. Of equal importance is developing a plan to effectively recruit them. As the market for contingent workers invariably heats up, companies will increasingly compete for their services and a successful recruiting process becomes critical. To gain the competitive advantage, many companies will incorporate staffing vendors in their recruiting process to ensure success. All vendors are not created equal so it is important to learn what their true capabilities are and how they could be a strategic partner for your staffing success.

It can be daunting to think about how technology has impacted the staffing process and how far we've come from the days of pay phones, faxes, and rolodexes. Matching the right tools to the task will be key to making the most of contemporary hiring and recruitment strategies.