



Article

Social Media's Role in Recruiting

Recapping

Last month we discussed how technology advancements have forever changed how companies and their staffing firms approach the recruitment and hiring process. Social media and social networking are a huge part of this change and they continue to generate a tremendous amount of "buzz" - both positive and negative.

Important Considerations

Before you dive head first into the social recruiting world, make sure you know what lies beneath the surface. Questions over privacy, employee and employer obligation and legal liabilities are just some of the social recruiting issues currently being debated and tested as this relatively new medium gains momentum.

Social networking sites such as LinkedIn[®], Facebook[®] and Twitter[™] can be powerful tools for finding candidates but they are just a few of many recruiting tools and it takes a concentrated effort to get results. The fact is, companies and recruiters are sourcing candidates from social networking pools and candidates are being hired. Still, there is a big difference between contacting a few promising candidates as a result of communication on a social network, and having a reliable, repeatable, cost-effective hiring approach. It is not that social media doesn't have a role to play in hiring; it just needs to be part of an integrated approach in which all costs are taken into account and the results are tracked.

The advantage of social media is that it lets you reach people you may never have, and then be introduced to their friends and associates. While this process can certainly yield a huge number of *connections*, there is still a large gap between *connections* and *relationships*. Relationships need time and trust to develop. They require *investment* in order to initiate, monitor and respond to a continuous stream of social media interactions. Social networking is largely about establishing a presence, and earning trust. If you want to use social media to source talent, you must dedicate resources to continuously participate and contribute. It requires consistent, persistent involvement. The cost of the resources needed to execute this, as well as their effectiveness in the hiring process, must be tracked and measured over time to understand the fully-loaded cost of this hiring approach.

From a recruitment firm's perspective, we recognize that the hiring process is being revolutionized by social media and in some ways it is a welcomed adjunct to tried and true practices. Its main value lies in sourcing candidates, which is only one piece of effective hiring. The quality of relationships spawned by social networks is typically low unless they are nurtured through other recruiting efforts. Consider using social media to expand your sourcing efforts but do not expect it to add value unless it is part of a complete strategy. As enticing and exciting as the new technology seems, it needs to fit your overall hiring strategy, not the other way around.

Relationships Are Key

Building relationships remains the most important factor in building successful recruiting strategy. The best hiring firms and seasoned corporate recruiters recognize recruiting as a continual process of establishing and cultivating relationships. Social media is just one more tool in the toolbox.