

ONLINE RECRUITING: THE BEST-PRACTICES WAY



It has become a cliché to say that there is a war for corporate talent going on, and the Web has become a powerful weapon in the battle. With its impressive user demographics and advancing technology, the Internet provides a key venue for competitive recruiting.

A recent groundbreaking study by Recruitsoft/iLogos Research found that an overwhelming majority of Fortune 500 companies are making the Careers section of their Web sites a point of contact between job candidates and the company. Among the study's participants, 89 percent said they have a Careers section on their corporate Web sites, 76 percent said they post job positions to their Careers sections and 71 percent said they post job positions and accept applications through their Careers sections.

Visitors Welcome

Smaller and midsize companies need a tightly targeted campaign to draw job seekers to their corporate Careers Web sites. Of equal significance, these sites must focus not only on active job seekers; the entire stream of Web site visitors presents a ripe (and desirable) pool from which to gather candidates. No matter their size, corporations that understand and adopt Web site-recruiting best practices can optimize the powerful opportunity from having a Careers section on their Web sites.

Alice Snell describes how the Internet provides strong advantages in acquiring the best candidates for job openings — to companies that use it properly.

The goals of the best practices are to attract traffic to the corporate Career Web site, convince potential candidates of the company's status as an employer of choice and capture and process the candidate's information in a streamlined process that benefits both candidate and corporate recruiter.

An often overlooked, yet simple-to-implement, best practice is to have a prominently positioned link or button on the corporate home page leading directly to the Careers section. This makes it easy for all Web site visitors to pursue job opportunities with a company. Another best practice is to enable the site visitor to e-mail job descriptions to a friend. The e-mail-to-a-friend feature taps into a site visitor's referral network and effectively provides prescreened applicants at no sourcing cost.

Showing the Money

Potential hires are concerned about compensation and benefits issues. When presenting information on company benefits plans, show, don't tell. Don't merely say, "We have a competitive benefits package that includes health, dental, 401K and stock option plan." Rather, exploit the Web's ability to supply comprehensive information.


In the current job market, in which a qualified candidate may have the luxury of a choice between several competing companies, candidates are looking for "fit" just as much as employers are. Job culture is an extremely important consideration in assessing fit. Virtual tours, day-in-the-life narratives and profiles of employees at all levels convey a sense of the work atmosphere and corporate culture.

The best chance to sell a position to a potential candidate is the job description. The job title must catch the eye and draw the job seeker in, perhaps by using an "externally focused" title. Instead of "materials manager," try "materials management kingpin." The job description has to cover the basics, such as the requisite abilities, credentials, past experience,

location, travel requirements and salary range. But to convince the site visitor to take the next step, sell each position along with the company. Describe exciting projects that the job will involve, or the opportunity it represents for furthering skills or career paths.

Just a Click Away

For a candidate to respond online, it is a best practice for the "apply-online" feature to be no more than one click from a job description. Don't make candidates go hunting for instructions on how to apply for a suitable job opening. Also, not all candidates have an up-to-date resume on hand, so don't force them to use an online response form that presupposes that they are "resume-ready." Instead, offer candidates a choice between a cut-and-paste form (for those with a resume on hand) and a resume builder, to help those without a current resume construct one on the fly. Online applications can also incorporate questions to assess the match between a candidate's skills, credentials and experience, and the requirements of a particular job position.

Companies that are behind in online recruiting will find it increasingly difficult to compete. New hiring-management-systems databases and software make it possible for companies to equip their Web site-recruiting efforts with the right tools overnight, to help them maintain their lead or to leapfrog ahead of their competition. In the online talent war, victory will go to the most nimble companies. 

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