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Global Recruiting: Star Search

By [Debra D'Agostino](#)

In general, growth is a good thing. And growing globally can be a great thing. But as more companies expand operations overseas, global recruitment is becoming a vexing problem. Manpower Inc., the Milwaukee-based recruiting firm, surveyed 33,000 employers in 23 countries, and found that 40 percent of respondents are having trouble finding qualified people—particularly salespeople, engineers and technicians.

It's a common problem, says Jo-Anne Kruse, executive vice president of human resources at Travel Distribution Services, a division of the \$18.2 billion travel-services giant Cendant Corp. And it's an issue that no company can afford to ignore, especially if, like TDS, your customers are increasingly international. As one of the world's largest online travel-booking companies, TDS employs 8,300 workers, manages 24 brands (including CheapTickets, Orbitz and Galileo International), and generates nearly 60 percent of its revenue internationally. "We may be based in America, but our future is outside the U.S.," Kruse says. As a result, TDS is actively recruiting overseas in its search for qualified employees to fill international positions.

But how to find them? "There aren't boatloads of people who do online travel outside the U.S.," or who are willing to relocate, she says. And while online job recruitment sites such as [Monster.com](#) have become the norm in the U.S., the only way to identify potential international candidates has been "to run an advertisement in every newspaper in every market for every job that was available, and then wait for people to respond," Kruse says. Or hire a recruiter in each city, an expensive option.

That's where technology enters the picture. New applications from software vendors such as **Taleo Corp.**, BrassRing LLC and others promise to locate and recruit qualified workers around the world, and help companies manage their ever-growing pool of talent. These programs let companies post job listings to multiple international Web sites, and create a database of responding candidates that can then be sorted by skill sets. This allows a company such as TDS to track the résumé submissions for a particular job, and match applicants' résumés to other positions for which the candidate may be qualified. TDS began working with Taleo in 2004, and the results have been tangible. "It broadens the search in ways you could never do in the off-line world," Kruse says.

Sounds good, but how can Kruse tell if the system is identifying the right people? "We have a very strong retention rate," she says. In 2005, TDS's retention rate was at 99.5 percent after 30 days, and 98.4 percent after 180 days. Those numbers are consistent with TDS's previous retention rates, "which means that even though we've reduced the time it takes to recruit people, it has no impact on how long we hold on to them. We're placing candidates faster and cheaper, and they're still a good fit." Kruse adds that recruitment costs have come down by 25 percent as a result of the **Taleo** rollout. "Two years ago, about 40 percent of our hires came from recruitment agencies," she says. "Now that figure is at 15 percent."

Of course, the software isn't a cure-all. Not every potential employee has Internet access, and "there are definitely markets where Internet use for recruitment is still nonexistent," Kruse says. "So you have to adjust your strategy in those areas and run an ad in the paper." And there's often another obstacle—your own people. Kruse admits that some HR staffers were skeptical about the new system when it launched. "People thought it would take too long or be too hard to use," she says. "But now no one wants to do it the old way."