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Web-Based Software Eases Holiday Hiring

Millions of workers are hired during the holiday season, and Taleo's software is designed to help businesses handle the onslaught. The software helps establish, automate, and manage processes for salaried, hourly, and temporary staff.

By Elena Malykhina

More than 24 million seasonal workers are hired during the six weeks between Thanksgiving and early January, according to the National Retail Federation. To more effectively manage the application process during this peak hiring season, some companies are turning to Web-based software that helps them select candidates online, and better manage workforce logistics.

Taleo Corp. is one vendor that offers software and services to help companies establish, automate, and manage worldwide talent-management processes for salaried, hourly, and temporary staff. Taleo's Enterprise Staffing Management Suite of products lets companies structure employee and candidate data by skills, profiles, and career preferences, and provide customized process workflows. The software is powered by a network of corporate career Web sites, where candidates can apply for positions.

The Taleo Hourly application is particularly geared to help during the holiday craze. It's designed for staffing hourly positions through the use of best-practice workflows, behavioral assessments, and tax credit screening. Taleo Hourly provides online application options for candidates, as well as the option to apply in-store using a staffing station. The data from online career centers and staffing stations is transferred to Taleo's centralized Web app, where managers or the human-resources staff can instantaneously review candidates.

"By putting the application process online, companies have the ability to weed out the candidates who aren't minimally qualified for the position," says Mary Grace Wilkinson, product line manager at Taleo. The applicants are informed right away without interacting with the company to which they're applying.

This is exactly what Hyatt Hotels Corp. is doing: The company has moved to 100% online hiring after going live with Taleo's software in March 2001. "We have 121 hotels and we're almost completely paperless," says Susan Steffy, director of recruitment at Hyatt.

Hyatt has been using Taleo Professional and Taleo Hourly almost exclusively for the past two years to hire salaried, hourly, and temporary staff such as on-call banquet-services employees during the holidays. Taleo enabled Hyatt to staff two new hotels completely online, delivering benefits such as reduced advertising costs, reduced cycle time, and increased productivity, Steffy says. Additionally, Hyatt has integrated Taleo's software with its human-resources system so it can conduct tax-credit screening, as well as requisition management, sourcing, resume scanning, searching, background checking, and more.

Another Taleo customer, Mosaic Sales Solutions U.S. Holding Company, which supplies field specialists at retail department stores, specialty stores, banks, and small businesses across North America, had an inconsistent staffing process and was looking to reduce turnover, get a better handle on staffing, and find the most-effective way to source candidates. Mosaic implemented Taleo in January 2003 to manage the hiring of approximately 10,000 annual hourly workers.

Taleo has helped Mosaic cut the time to hire a qualified candidate by 33%, decrease hiring managers' time in the staffing process by 75%, and reduce advertising costs by 90%, translating into \$1.2 million annual savings for the company, says Karen Scott, director of talent acquisition at Mosaic.

Now with the holiday season in full swing, Scott says Taleo makes the search for qualified staff much more flexible. "At any time where there is a peak in retail business or festival/event business, which usually takes place around the holidays, the system allows us to search [for] candidates easily and prescreen them quickly," Scott says.

Hourly hires make up 60% of the workforce, says Alice Snell, VP of iLogos Research, a consulting firm. "There's an opportunity for process improvement with technology platforms like Taleo's," Snell says. "Turnovers cost companies a tremendous amount and eliminating them with technology platforms can bring major benefits."