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Anyone who is following the economy knows that the employment landscape has changed over the last five years. We are finding ourselves in front of a computer buying products, seeking information and, better yet, communicating quickly and inexpensively with friends and families.

As a Human Resources Practitioner, I see dynamic changes in the job market. Companies are bringing in technology to accomplish several recruiting objectives:

1. Attract enough of the right people.
2. Do it in the shortest possible time.
3. Do it at the lowest possible cost.

Lowest possible cost does mean offering low or non-competitive wages or compensation packages. Without question, an organization must "pay for talent." Otherwise the company is not meeting the first objective of attracting enough of the right people.

### The Cost of Hiring:

Today, human resources department and hiring managers across organizational lines are improving the hiring process. As we all know, the internet has revolutionized the economy. Human resources executives are purchasing information technology solutions to refine and improve the hiring process. Hiring people costs money-lots of it. When one considers cost of vacancies, reductions in productivity, recruiting advertisement dollars, increased stress levels and managers and support staffs' time going through interviews and paper, the cost can be overwhelming. Hence, advanced organizations are implementing a total "recruitment management system" to manager their most valuable asset – their people.

### Using Traditional Resumes Less:

Companies are taking steps to significantly reduce paper because of cost. They also have been focusing on building candidate qualifications. In today's marketplace, companies are capturing job seekers' skills and abilities in a format that will make sense to recruiters and hiring managers. Resumes are fading in the job market due to a high rate of misleading statements and falsification of information. Moreover, resumes come to recruiters in various formats and in many cases, job seekers do not address the essential elements required for the position. Employers are starting to control the hiring process by adjusting the way job seekers apply for a position, asking questions related to the essential elements of the position and capturing important elements of the job seekers' professional background and experiences. Look around, companies are encouraging job seekers to "apply online".

### Applying the Technology

One of the best Recruitment Management Systems cited in "The 2003 Buyer's Guide to Talent Management Systems" published by the Talent Market Group and HR.com is Recruitsoft, ranked as the leading provider of staffing management solutions. Recruitsoft and other systems in the marketplace such as Brassring or Web Hire can save companies millions of dollars over a 2-5 year period. These information technology systems can reduce paper processes and streamline the hiring process to be efficient. Recruiting technologies allow companies to offer skill based and competency-based questions, prioritize job seekers based on position requirements, and respond very quickly to job seekers' inquiries and questions. These technologies can also push additional company job openings directly to the job seeker (if the candidate agrees) via email messages. Companies are also receiving metrics reports that define elements of the hiring process, which permit continuous improvement initiatives, related to accomplishing employment objectives.

### Email and Access:

Email addresses are becoming the job seekers' unique identifier, like a Social Security number is to the IRS. If you don't have one, there are free email addresses on the Internet, such as hotmail.com, aolnetmail.com and ivillage.com.

The next step is to learn how to access the Internet and send email. Once job seekers learn these basic tools, they are on their way to applying for 20 or more jobs in a day or two. All that is required is time and effort. Consider looking for a job as a part time job of its own. A job seeker must have a plan regarding what type of job they prefer, location and should crystallize their experience in years and highlight the positive impact they made in a previous organization.

If one does not have access to a computer, have a seat at the local library, Kinko's, or a neighbor's computer and begin accessing companies' Web sites for employment opportunities. Applying online should only take you 15-25 minutes. Companies with robust staffing management systems will retain your information in their database for easy retrieval and can automatically match you to other positions. Completing subsequent applications should only take 5 to 10 minutes.

### Apply Online Anytime, Anywhere:

According to iLogos Research, 92 percent of Fortune 500 companies have a dedicated career Web site, and use a series of best practices to attract, convince, capture, and process candidates on their corporate Web



site. I encourage job seekers to apply directly to companies that have an online application process versus faxing or mailing a resume. Paper slows down the recruitment process and technology speeds it up.

### The Bay Area-Pacesetters in the Market

The San Francisco area is recognized as the "most-wired" market in the country and even traditional help wanted ads have embraced technology. The San Francisco Chronicle offers an Online Job Board package to print advertisers in order to enhance their exposure within other advertising mediums and geographical areas. This audience reach and exposure is impressive. The San Francisco Chronicle and SF Gate.com present more employment ads and exposure than any other medium in the world, with 1.4 million print readers and 3 million page views of TopJobs per week. The numbers are indicative of what the future holds for job seekers.

As we move forward in time, the job seeker should embrace the recruitment and employment technology that employers and businesses offer. The handwriting is on the wall, and if a job seeker is comfortable using an Internet browser, they will do wonders for increasing their chances of locating and securing a new job or career with a click of the mouse.

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