

Web Recruiting

(OTTAWA) Canadian governments all use Web recruiting, but not to its full advantage, says an Internet staffing expert.

A study of the 14 Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial governments showed that 100% of them have careers sections on their Web sites to recruit talent, but not all are using the best practices to market their employer brands, says Yves Lermusiaux, Founder and President of iLogos Research, a division of Recruitsoft.

Governments lag behind many private sector employers when it comes to using best Web recruiting practises to attract jobseekers to the sites, convince them of the advantages of working for that government body, and capture from the candidate the information needed to make a hiring decision, the iLogos study found.

For example, governments tend not to use the Web to pre-screen candidates, and are less likely to use "job agents" to notify candidates by email when positions become available. "The private companies were usually a year ago at the level where the Canadian governments are today," Lermusiaux told Workplace Today after presenting the iLogos study results at the HR 2002 conference and trade show in Ottawa this week.

But some government departments are catching up to the private sector, he said. "Usually larger departments... have been a little bit less reactive. People are important, but it's not seen as much mission critical. However, I think there is a huge reaction—in some of those best practices, they are leading and ahead (of the private sector). I think it's because they just realized that lots of people will go and retire pretty soon so there is a demographic issue that will come and they have to invest a lot in those elements," Lermusiaux said.

Yet the need for government recruiters to get a handle on processing employment applications is greater: with the shaky economy, more jobhunters are turning to the government with the feeling that jobs there are more stable, Lermusiaux said. He knows of one department that posted an opening for three days online and received more than 2,000 applications. "The problem is, if you don't have a system that helps streamline those types of application flow, you are inundated and you cannot give adequate service."

Using the Internet to pre-screen applicants could reduce recruiters' screening workloads by up to 90%, Lermusiaux said.

The study found that when it comes to using best practices to attract visitors, 79% of Canadian government Web sites link to their career pages in one click from their front page; 29% allow candidates to search job openings; and 21% use a job agent.

To convince visitors to apply for jobs, 50% of government sites studied include information about the work culture; 21% publish information on the organization's employee benefits; and 64% specifically address college recruiting.

To capture candidate information, 64% of government Web sites require only one click to move from the job description to the actual application process; 29% automatically track the reference number of the position the candidate is applying for; and 7% offer jobseekers the ability to reuse their information.