

Internet Recruiting 2.0: The Flow of Information



TALENT ACQUISITION

HCI White Paper

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INTRODUCTION

You can find just about anything on the Internet - sometimes too much. There's an abundance of information for recruiters, employers, and potential candidates, yet this often leads to a great deal of frustration. Candidates complain about the "resume black hole"; recruiters, despite a flood of resumes, assert they don't have enough qualified candidates and are baffled by how to attract the ones that are. Thus, the Internet can lead to a lot of time spent in often fruitless digital transactions and less time spent actually talking to people about job opportunities.

The new HCI learning track, Internet Recruiting 2.0, will help recruiters and candidates make better connections without all the "noise". It will focus on leveraging technology appropriately to put the human connections back in recruiting. To kick it off, Amitai Givertz, a Principal at AMG Management Advisors, will discuss the challenges created by the flow of information and the impact it has on recruiting.

VERSION 2.0

The Internet has given people access to information in volumes and formats that were unimaginable just 15 years ago. This information revolution has affected how recruiters and candidates find one another. The paradox is that despite this incredible rate of change, most recruiting processes have remained static. As such, it is important to consider what's next.

It has become fashionable to put a "2.0" label on things to represent what's next as web-based and web-enabled technologies develop. But what does it really mean? Does it represent a true evolutionary milestone, or is it simply marketing hype designed to attract attention or sell more? There are new "versions" of each of four core concepts that impact the recruiting role.

Web 2.0 The Internet is the underlying platform and technology that allows processes to evolve. It has changed substantially over the last few years and represents a whole new concept of interacting with information. It is characterized by networking sites, two-way communication, and delivery of information across multiple media such as blogs, video, podcasts, social networks and so on. The challenge for all Internet users, particularly recruiters, is how to take in the huge mushroom of content and make it meaningful and useful.

Business 2.0 The new business model which is characterized by the notion of 'what you see is what you get.' promotes the virtues of transparency and authenticity in business, the basis for developing more meaningful and effective relationships. These emerging relationships are enabled by the web. Reminiscent of the concept of glasnost where the transparency and openness of government and state processes inspired a 'new democratic order' in the former Soviet Union, so too are many businesses experiencing a similar type of renaissance with their constituents, enabled by Web 2.0 applications and services.

Enterprise 2.0. Organizations are adopting new approaches that leverage Web 2.0 technology and the Business 2.0 concepts and value system to remove old, hierarchical ways of doing business. The new focus is on information exchange, removing bureaucracy, and engagement and interaction with all stakeholders. Companies are deliberately reorganizing their internal dynamics while taking advantage of concepts such as virtual workspaces and remote work capabilities.

Recruiting 2.0 is essentially a synthesis of the aforementioned three. To appreciate the possibilities of Internet Recruiting 2.0, it is imperative to first understand characteristics of Internet Recruiting 1.0.

INTERNET RECRUITING 1.0 AND 2.0

Despite new technology and strategies, many elements from Internet 1.0 are still relevant. The challenge is to integrate or overlay the two in a meaningful, useful way. Below are some of the key methodologies utilized in Internet Recruiting 1.0.

- o Job boards. Although they have limitations, job boards continue to be an integral part of the recruiting structure because they remain the prevailing way of posting jobs.
- o Job postings. The old default use of Sunday classifieds has been replaced in the main by posting online using one of any number of job boards. Ironically, prior to the dot com boom of 2000 and the use of job boards, companies leveraged mostly active candidates because they were unable to access passive candidates, yet they did not face the talent challenges that exist today. Today, organizations are migrating away from exclusively targeting active candidates and are instead developing strategies to engage passive candidates. This makes job boards attractive as part of integrated approach rather than in the past where the classifieds in print or online were the center-piece of a recruiters outreach.
- o Corporate websites. These are taken for granted now, but not long ago the career or employment section of a company's website was a radical recruiting solution. Often, these do not work well because they are one-dimensional, static, and are rarely designed with the candidate's positive experience in mind.
- o Applicant tracking systems (ATS). These systems are only about ten years old and have not changed much in terms of the limited interaction with the data available to them. Givertz asserts that an ATS is "really just a new way of archiving data digitally instead of a in a cardboard box where resumes used to be stored."
- o The Resume or CV. Resumes are actually very old fashioned, one-dimensional documents that provide a chronological record of experiences but do not address the qualities and attributes that make candidates interesting. Despite these limitations, resumes continue to be the central point of reference for recruiters and candidates, the core data that populates many of the resume databases and applicant tracking systems.

Not all things 2.0 replace version 1.0, but there are new features within the Internet Recruiting 2.0 landscape that make it particularly interesting, including:

- o Data portability is an increasingly important component. It takes historically siloed information from resumes and job boards and allows the connection, transfer and sharing of that information to make it more useful.
- o Wireless technology has developed dramatically over the last few years increasing both the volume and frequency of information. An example is the ability to look at job postings on a Blackberry at any time from any location.
- o Long tail. This concept explains that the majority of content searched for on the Internet is narrow and the rest of the information trails behind it in a long tail. Previously, recruiters were concerned with the quantity of data, but now data quality is more important. To address this issue, markets are becoming increasingly fragmented and narrow. For example, there used to be only 20 to 30 job boards in existence but now there are thousands of boards broken down by things like professional associations, demographics, and skill sets creating communities of candidates that are more easily filtered.
- o Metasearch and the deep web. Metasearch engines aggregate results from other engines, making it easier for candidates because all available positions are integrated in one place. The deep web refers to those

pages which are not indexed by the search engines but which can be searched nonetheless.

- o Social media and social networks. This area represents a wide range of self-publication possibilities that are important to recruiters and organizations but are overwhelming because of the high volume. Examples include social networking sites such as LinkedIn, MySpace, and Facebook. The irony about this area is that while most people know about these changes, many are still not involved in it. Although there are many prospective candidates represented on these sites, the question for recruiters is how to leverage these networks for a corporate advantage.
- o Really simple syndication (RSS). This includes tools that help make some order of the chaos created by such high volumes of information available online. For example, Google Reader is a web-based reader that provides efficiency by listing all of an individual's subscribed blogs and news in one easy-to-view location.
- o Word of mouth. This is a way to share our experiences and aspirations with each other, increasingly done through technology. One example is Jobster.com where candidates can relate their experience as candidates to others.

TRENDS IN INTERNET RECRUITING

There are several trends in recruiting that impact the way recruiters look at, process, and store information. One of the most important is optimiza-

tion, which is the process of generating content in a variety of unique ways to make it look more interesting and relevant to the person searching. This yields better rankings in search results, ensuring visibility since most users do not usually look beyond the first one to two pages of search results. Recruiters are also relying on the social web, talent communities, and recruiting conversations.

The proliferation of tools, technologies, and information continues unabated. An ever-widening array of choices promises recruiters an easier way to get their jobs done. Yet attracting, hiring, and retaining talent seems to be getting more difficult rather than easier.

The surge of data camouflages usable information about candidates. Givertz illustrates the astoundingly high volume of candidate data by explaining that there are around 43 million resumes on Monster.com, 24 million on Hotjobs.com, and 18 million on CareerBuilder.com. Even assuming that 20 to 30 percent of these are duplicates, the number of resumes available on these sources and thousands of others is still in the hundreds of millions. Add to these profiles from social networking sites and other sources, and the numbers become mind-numbing. Recruiters are challenged to search and process all of this data effectively To identify a shortlist of potential recruits.

Recruiters must also bear in mind that the Internet provides only a one-dimensional view of candidates that may not be an accurate representation of the person. For example, a picture on MySpace of someone holding a beer can at a party may not result in the most accurate impression of the person relative to job-fit.

There are three critical pieces of information recruiters should know upfront that will help filter the data and identify possible candidates.

- o Who are you looking for? It is imperative to prioritize positions and understand the competencies, skill sets, and attitudes necessary for the job.
- o Where will you find them? Effective recruiters know how to interface with the Internet to find these candidates. They must also bear in mind that not all candidates exist online. Although most people are utilizing the Internet for social networking with family and friends, the reality remains that it is easier to recruit a software engineer than a welder, for example.
- o How will you attract them? Recruiters must develop a strategy and approach to attract the appropriate people to the position. This requires understanding how to convey the value proposition in terms that candidates will respond to.

Because of the wide array of tools and techniques available, there is not a "one size fits all" solution. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the individual recruiter to develop his own competency in crafting appropriate solutions to each unique recruiting situation.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

"Data is useless unless we can translate it into a meaningful format that is informational and actionable" asserts Givertz. The ability to process and manage information runs throughout the entire recruiting lifecycle from workforce planning

to candidate profiling, employer branding, sourcing strategy, screening and assessment, candidate selection, onboarding and engagement, performance management, and retention programs. Traditionally, separate technology has been developed for each of these phases. This lack of integration and interaction is increasingly frustrating for recruiters and candidates alike. The promise of the next generation of talent management systems is to address the entire lifecycle with one robust, interactive system. Vendors are retooling their solutions to ensure a continuity of work- and information flow,

Since recruiters have access to vast amounts of data, they need to understand the challenges and issues associated with managing it, including ownership, privacy, security, compliance, and integrity. It is critical to ensure that they are not compromising the employee or the company's position. For example, many companies use social security numbers as a unique identifier for candidates and employees, but that number is very private and unlocks many personal data sources. As such, employers need to be very protective of that information or ask themselves if it is a truly necessary piece of data or if they could develop an alternative solution.

The Imaging the Internet project undertaken by the Pew Internet Project at Elon University says, "Entirely new technologies and societal coping mechanisms will need to be developed to process

data into information, and who knows if wisdom will follow." There are many tools and technology available to recruiters to help manage data more effectively.

CONCLUSION

The Internet provides huge amounts of information, but most recruiting processes have remained unchanged. In order to effectively reach and engage the right candidates, recruiters must determine how to leverage technology to make sense of the plethora of information available on the internet. Many of the original Internet recruiting elements, such as job boards and applicant tracking systems are still in use today, but these must be aligned with new technologies such as data portability and social networking in order to more effectively and efficiently reach candidates.

To help filter the data available, recruiters must have an accurate picture of what kind of candidates they are looking for, where they will find them, and how they will attract and engage them. Finally, this data must also be translated into an integrated, meaningful format throughout the entire recruiting lifecycle.

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With over 20 years in business, and more than a decade in leadership roles for recruitment process outsourcing, talent management consulting and recruiter training firms, Amitai Givertz has developed a unique perspective seen through the prism of employers, recruiters, candidates and vendors. In his current role as an innovator, advisor and coach Ami continues to focus on how to improve the overall experience and outcomes for everyone involved in the process. Described as "one of the most provocative and infectious of the new voices that have emerged in the industry," and as "fast becoming a central theorist and practitioner in 21st Century online recruiting" Ami is widely recognized for his active participation in the ongoing debate on how social media, networking and "2.0 values" can help advance the recruiting industry's progress in a fast-evolving world. Ami writes daily for a number of online publications that examine recruiting, business and innovation. He is a contributing editor on Recruiting.com and sits on the Advisory Board for Kennedy Information's Recruiting Trends.

MODERATOR

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Amy Lewis is the Director of the Talent Acquisition Community at the Human Capital Institute. Amy's work and passion involves researching and facilitating topics of the greatest interest to specialists and

leaders devoted to hiring top talent at their organizations. Prior to joining the Human Capital Institute, Amy served in corporate recruiting roles at several large financial services companies, and had the opportunity to focus on recruitment-related technology, processes and best practices. She is also an articulate advocate for talent acquisition as an indispensable tool for competitive advantage in the global marketplace, and currently holds the AIRS designation of Advanced Certified Internet Recruiter.

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ABOUT TROVIX

The logo for Trovix, featuring the word "trovix" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "x" is stylized with a large orange cross shape integrated into its right side.

Headquartered in Silicon Valley, Trovix Inc. was founded in 2002 with the goal of providing products and services that would bridge the gulf between employers and people in search of the best career opportunities. To do this, Trovix has developed search technology that uses artificial intelligence and fuzzy logic to understand job descriptions and resumes in the same way a human does. Its first product, Trovix Recruit, helps employers find and hire candidates, while its latest service, Trovix, helps consumers stay aware of the best job opportunities for them. Trovix customers include successful and growing ventures such as Palm, Stanford University, Trend Micro, Extreme Networks, VMware and Rambus. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, Trovix is backed by top-tier venture

capital firms including 3i, Granite Ventures and USVP. For more information, visit www.trovix.com.

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