



The Handler Report

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Recruiting in the age of Social Media

A brief overview of social media recruiting tools, strategy and resources.

Social media has had an impact on executive search. It's made searching for talent more efficient by created a new active channel to post jobs and engage future prospects in conversation. Social media has added another powerful tool to the recruiter's arsenal, but it's not a replacement for the recruiting process. Here are some of our thoughts on recruiting in the age of social media.

UP FROM THE JOB BOARDS

The rise of the Job boards at the turn of the century provided employers with a bountiful inventory of potential candidates and an easier way to shop resumes. However the boards soon became crowded and most organizations soon discovered that quantity didn't guarantee quality.

When resume services made it possible for job seekers to blast their resumes to multiple job boards even greater crowding and clutter occurred. This lead to a lack of relevance that has diminished the value of job boards for both the candidates and the organizations using them.

Social media impacts more aspects of the recruiting

process than the job boards because it facilitates actual conversation. This conversation has allowed us all to move from searching crowds to asking friends. But if improperly applied, social media can create just as much clutter in the recruiting process as the job boards.

SEARCH CONSULTANTS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Social media is an excellent tool for identifying candidates and spreading the word about job openings. But the same word-of-mouth marketing that makes this channel ideal for accessing junior and middle management talent, may make it unsuitable for fielding mission critical leadership positions. Spreading the word via social media in a senior leadership search can create challenges that compromise strategic objectives and waste precious time. Retained search consultants can add great value in these instances because they can work anonymously to maintain confidentiality and provide a filter that presents only the most qualified candidates to senior decision makers.

Some of the best candidates are happy in their jobs, well compensated and not actively looking. Executive search consultants are well positioned to excel at identifying these invisible candidates. Here social media plays a dual role. It provides consultants a



direct search channel to rapidly build a qualified candidate pool while the organization's outbound social recruiting communications can provide valuable decision support for prospects once interest has been peaked by the search consultant.

CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING STRATEGY

Companies often struggle with social initiatives because social media is a process not an event and processes are far harder to manage than events. Organizations seeking to create internal social recruiting strategies should be prepared to do some strategic thinking. Here are some key factors that should be considered.

The employment brand-

Assess how existing marketing communications reflect the employment culture. Consider organizational strengths and positioning in the employment marketplace.

Level of effort and supporting content-

Assessment of resources that can own initiatives, frequency of communication required to engage audiences and available content that can be leveraged.

Clear target audience definition-

Define your audience segments and gain a clear understanding of each segment's media consumption habits and the cultural intangibles beyond skill that create fit.

Tools and platforms-

Choose the right tools and tactics to support the brand, level of effort, content and target audience profiles.

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A SNAPSHOT OF TOP SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING PLATFORMS

We utilize many platforms and tools to maintain our networks and execute searches. Here is a quick snapshot of some of the major social media recruiting platforms.

LinkedIn-

As of February, 2012, LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 150 million members in over 200 countries and territories. On average a new user joins

LinkedIn ever second. Still the dominant recruiting platform, LinkedIn makes it easy for professionals to manage their resume, professional network and get recommendations. Features such as LinkedIn Groups and LinkedIn Daily, provide excellent opportunities to interact with other professionals to showcase industry expertise and demonstrate thought leadership that can increase personal brand value.

Facebook-

The social nature of Facebook hasn't made it an obvious recruiting tool, but in a recent Wall Street Journal article, Joe Light sited that employers such as Waste Management were beginning to find greater recruiting success on Facebook than on LinkedIn.



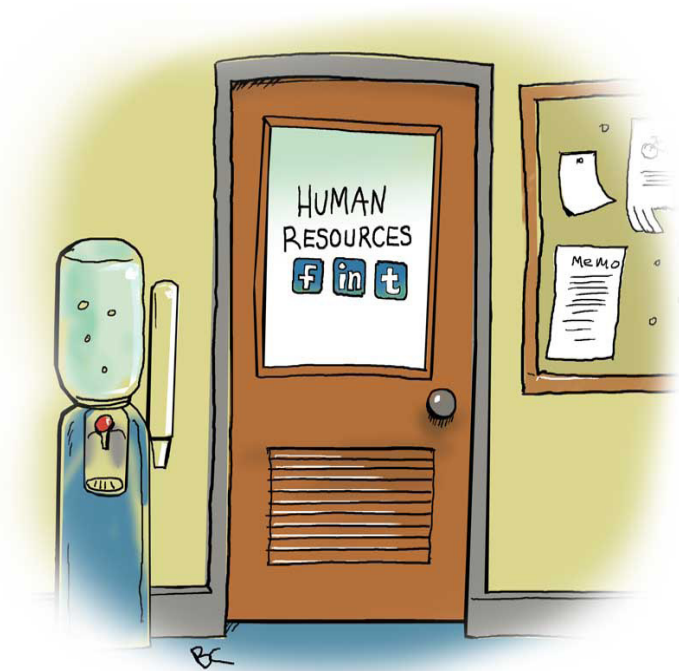
With over 800 million active users worldwide, if Facebook were a country it would be the world's 3rd largest. Even so less than 1% of the total hires that companies are making today come from Facebook, according to a recent Jobs2Web analysis. But with the emergence of Facebook apps like BeKnown and Branchout, if current growth trends continue, Facebook could begin to rival the job boards in 2012.

Twitter-

Twitter has over 100 million global active users, half of which log on everyday. It's short form posts lend themselves to simple sharing of company content and third party content such as industry news. It's simplicity provided the lowest barrier for entry for those seeking to build a following. Once a following has been established though an effort must be made to maintain the conversation and respond quickly—sometimes in real time. If a senior leader or organization has developed an active Twitter presence then it can be very beneficial to use this tool to spread the word about appropriate executive positions. But building and maintaining a following can take time so Twitter may not be practical for searches that require expediency.

CONCLUSION

Over the years we have watched the growth of the online channels such as job boards and social media change the face of recruiting. Social media now rivals the job boards and continues to provide a direct channel to talent and the means to find, attract and engage prospects. Our firm will always embrace new tools that can improve the speed, efficiency and quality of our searches. But we will always remain focused on the value we bring to the table in assessing relevant skills, experience and cultural fit. Social media is an excellent search tool, but it is a facilitator not a replacement for the recruiting process.



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