

Hotel Business Review

Best practices, insights & trends

Has the 'Net Made Old-Fashioned Recruiting Obsolete?

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Mr. Paul Feeney

It seems to be an employer's dream come true: tens of thousands of resumes out there in cyberspace, waiting to be plucked. Need more? Then list your position on the Internet and They Will Come.

Alas, while companies across the country have experimented and implemented electronic recruiting as a very beneficial and cost effective tool, results can be decidedly mixed for recruiting for all positions. In order to understand the potential and the pitfalls of on-line searches, those who are considering a cruise on the Internet may appreciate a few words of explanation first.

Much of this business presence is found on the Internet, the "Yellow Pages" of cyberspace. All sorts of for-profit and nonprofit organizations have established Home Pages on the Web to promote their products and services (and, in some cases, to advertise for job applicants).

The Function of Outside Recruiters

Recruiters of executive, managerial and professional talent know one simple truth: If hiring managers didn't have problems finding people, they wouldn't turn to outside recruiters for help. When a position opening occurs, the ideal solution often may be to promote a qualified candidate from within - assuming that one exists. (In some situations, however, the company may want the fresh perspective of an outsider.) Promotion from within costs nothing, enhances at least one employee's career and bolsters organizational morale.

The next best solution, especially at lower levels, may be an existing employee's referral (usually a financial "reward" is now the norm with many firms) of a respected business or personal acquaintance. After that, a lot of companies will turn to advertising - at least once.

What happens when you have advertised in some local newspapers and on some of the more popular job recruitment web sites and you have not found "the most suitably qualified candidates?" These days it is very easy to apply to a few jobs online in a matter of minutes, but this will also mean that many candidates will send resumes everywhere to every company "spraying and praying" whether they are qualified for a position or not. When advertising produces several thousand resumes of people who are looking for work and (after laborious screening) prove to be under-qualified, over-qualified or simply lackluster, employers at last enlist a professional recruiter.

In many instances companies will turn to outside recruitment firms where they can identify the very best people are usually not "in" the job market and, hence, are not reading want ads. For middle and senior management positions, professional search consultants know how to identify the best candidates, regardless of whether they are actively seeking new employment opportunities. Professional recruiters also know how to interview these candidates on a highly confidential basis, protecting the interests of both client and candidate. And they know how to screen out the 95% who may "look great on paper," but who lack the specific skills, work experience and personality to match the client's job requirements and corporate culture.

Although recruiting has greatly changed the speed and efficiency in identifying people for

positions, the rules of the game have not. Vast amounts of information about the a company can be found via their web site, financial information and online chat rooms regarding public opinion (be it good or bad!).

Companies still want people to join their firm for the right reasons and potential candidates are still looking for the same things with employers that existed before the Internet. The speed at which the Internet can have people react to a potential as changed with the Internet and email that people can react much quicker, than the bad old days of snail mail and fax.

Things might have changed with the Internet but the rules of the game of recruiting have not changed that much as long as we are still dealing with human beings!

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