

Social Media and Recruitment: Maximizing its Value

By: Andrea Csordás, PHR, and Brittany J. Harris

Much like it has in our personal lives, social media has found its way into almost every aspect of how organizations do business. Some companies are embracing social media to communicate their brands, sell products and services, and of course recruit their workforces. On the other end of the spectrum there are businesses weary of social media use, and some have even gone as far as developing policies forbidding the use of social networks within their businesses. Although this could be assumed as a means of protecting a company, it can have negative consequences. In today's market, the level of access social media and networks afford organizations to candidates is invaluable, and continues to be a powerful tool—one that should not be feared or ignored.

The growing popularity of smart phones makes it easy to surf online at any given time. Studies continue to show more and more people spend a significant number of hours a day on the Internet—mostly engaged on social networks. Pew Research Center found although members of younger generations use the Internet more than their older counterparts, the difference isn't much. While it was found that 98 percent of individuals between the ages of 18 and 29 are Internet users, 83 percent of those between the ages of 50 and 64 were engaged as well. Naturally, education level also plays a big part in one's Internet use. The higher one's education level is, the more likely they are to use the Internet.

Networks like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, grant recruiters and HR professionals immediate access to large pools of talent. Although job boards like CareerBuilder, Indeed, and Monster remain relevant in the practices of recruiters, social networks allow for a greater level of access and engagement with both active and passive job seekers.

This access should motivate recruiters and HR professionals to take advantage of the opportunity to be more creative and strategic in how they acquire new talent. This involves going beyond the traditional job posting, and requires more than sourcing candidates on LinkedIn or soliciting followers and likes on Facebook. Maximizing the potential of social media to find talent requires recruiters to actually be "social." To do this, employers must be proactive in establishing talent pools and engaging and developing relationships with passive candidates who may not be looking for a job.

Social recruiting involves getting conversations started with candidates, even before a job may be readily available. It allows a recruiter to connect with their talent pool. Here are some ways this can be executed:

- **Conduct research** to identify sites frequented by the candidates you are typically trying to attract. Not all networks will be as effective in developing

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talent pools. Ensure your social media approach is tailored and meaningful through thorough identification of the most appropriate networks.

- **Share industry-related content** on Facebook pages or LinkedIn groups, and solicit the opinions and insight from professionals and subject matter experts. This gives you the opportunity to not only stay current on news and trends that may impact the roles you recruit for, but also allows you to engage professionals who may qualify for those roles. You can also comment on relevant postings to join conversations and engage others.
- **Avoid using social media as a screening tool.** Social networks give access to what would otherwise be considered a candidate's "protected" information. Focus your efforts on building a talent pool using social networks, and not screening out potential candidates based on information irrelevant to roles for which you may be recruiting.

In addition, there are many tools available that aid in reducing the more tedious aspects of social media recruiting. Some applicant tracking and recruitment systems allow recruiters to link job postings to multiple job boards and social network sites—all with a click of a button. There again, granting recruiters and HR professionals with access to a large pool of candidates, in a short period of time.

So, if social media is such an excellent tool, and with such little effort organizations can reach potential candidates, then why do many still have doubts about its use?

The biggest concerns in regards to social media involve legal consequences. Though widely used, social media and networking within organizations is fairly new. An inappropriate Facebook comment on your organization's page or a derogatory Tweet about your company can be detrimental if not handled appropriately. ([Check out these organizations' social media disasters](#)).

While the concerns are legitimate it comes down to effective execution and development of proactive policies. Consider incorporating a social media policy in your organization's guidelines. It is equally important employees and managers are educated and trained on what is acceptable and appropriate in regards to social media use. When used strategically, appropriately, and with caution, social media presents enormous opportunity and can be an excellent tool to strengthen your organization's brand and recruit talent.

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Facebook:
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Twitter:
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LinkedIn:
<http://www.linkedin.com/company/berkshire-associates.inc>

Berkshire Associates Inc., Corporate Headquarters
8924 McGaw Court, Columbia, MD 21045
Phone: 800.882.8904
Fax: 410.995.1198
Email: bai@berkshireassociates.com
Web: www.berkshireassociates.com

