

The Beginner's Guide to Recruitment Marketing Attribution

Understanding How Your Job Advertising Sources
Get Credit for Traffic & Applicants

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An Introduction to Recruitment Marketing Attribution

Job seekers are a complex bunch, and if you're trying to convert them into applicants, it's important to understand their behavior. Unfortunately, job seeker behavior can be difficult to track because the typical candidate journey today crosses multiple job boards, aggregators and review sites on the way to each application.

What we mean by this is, job seekers like to use a multitude of sources to find work today. For instance, according to research by Rake, nearly half of all job seekers use anywhere between four and six job boards and job aggregators to find work. Furthermore, a full 53 percent will use between two and three social media sites, as well, while hunting for their next job.

As an HR or talent acquisition professional, you understand this. It's one of the main reasons why your recruitment marketing strategy includes distributing your job ads to a diverse mix of job boards, job aggregators, social networks and other employment sites. But, with so many job ads living in so many different places, how could you possibly understand which job ad or which employment website ultimately led to an application?

This is where attribution comes into play.



What is Recruitment Marketing Attribution?

Attribution is a term that comes from the performance marketing world and now applies to the recruitment space as it becomes more and more data-driven. In fact, if you feel like you've heard the term before, you're probably not mistaken, as attribution is largely what has allowed Google Analytics to become the go-to resource for anyone interested in optimizing their web traffic. Essentially, attribution is a means of giving credit to the touch points in a candidate's journey that resulted in a valuable conversion--in your case, an application. Therefore, in order to properly understand attribution, we need to consider the candidate's journey in terms of the recruitment marketing funnel.



As you can see, the recruitment marketing funnel is similar to a general marketing funnel in that the further down the funnel a candidate gets, the closer they are to converting to an applicant and eventually a hire. The funnel starts with awareness (the impressions your jobs receive) and works its way down to engagement (where clicks occur) and further to action (where you receive applicants who become hires).

For the purposes of gaining a better understanding of how attribution works, however, we'll focus mainly on the top of the funnel, through to the application.

Consider This: Job Seeker Jen

Now that we've reviewed the basics of what attribution is as it relates to recruitment marketing, and to better understand the different attribution models, first consider the following scenario:

Job Seeker Jen logs onto Facebook on a Monday and sees a social media post by your company, shared by one of your current employees, about open positions for account managers, but she doesn't click on the Facebook post link. On Tuesday, Jen searches Indeed for account manager jobs and finds your sponsored account manager job on Indeed. She clicks on your job on Indeed and views the job description on your website, but doesn't apply just yet. On Wednesday, Jen visits Glassdoor and searches for companies hiring account managers, and looks through ratings and other detailed information, including your company profile on Glassdoor. Finally, on Thursday, she receives an email of job alerts from ZipRecruiter, which includes your account manager job, clicks through to your job description, and ultimately applies for the account manager role.

So, which sources caused Jen to apply for your job? Was it the first job ad she saw on Facebook, even though she didn't click on it? Was it the first source clicked on, which would've been Indeed in this scenario? Was it the last source clicked on, which was the ZipRecruiter email job alert, here? Was it the interaction with Glassdoor where Jen researched your company further? Really, the combination of all of these interactions with your job and your employer brand led to the application, but depending on your recruitment marketing analytics platform and the attribution model it uses, your data could end up crediting the application conversion to any of these sources.

In order to properly understand the successes or failures of your recruitment marketing spend, you need to understand the full candidate journey. Attribution is the method that's used to show, through analytics, which touchpoints lead to applications.

Therefore, attribution helps you understand costs, source performance, traffic types, medium and other important information about the way job seekers are interacting with your job ads.

How Recruitment Marketing Attribution Works

Attribution for recruitment marketing works by setting rules that assign credit for applications or hires to specific sources of traffic. The set of rules used is known as an attribution model.

Since attribution for recruitment marketing is something borrowed from the performance marketing world, there are a number of attribution models that exist that are based on different marketing campaigns. For instance, you might use one attribution model to measure the effectiveness of an awareness campaign and an entirely different attribution model to measure your conversion funnel as a whole.

Let's review the various attribution models next.



The Most Common Recruitment Marketing Attribution Models

To give you a better understanding of the different kinds of attribution models in recruitment marketing, let's take a look at some that you're most likely to come across. Below, we'll explain each attribution model in the context of our previous scenario with Job Seeker Jen.

As a note, please keep in mind that the timeframes used for each attribution model might vary in practice. Since attribution is meant to credit candidate interactions to an application, a timeframe is needed to understand *when* interactions can contribute to an application. For example, many attribution models work within 30-day timeframes, meaning an interaction that occurred last year wouldn't be considered when attributing credit for today's applicants. For our purposes here, let's assume all interactions are occurring within a 30-day timeframe.



The Most Common Recruitment Marketing Attribution Models

LAST INTERACTION

The Last Interaction Attribution Model gives credit to the very last touchpoint the job seeker had before applying to the job, regardless of whether the touchpoint was a paid or unpaid channel, putting the importance on the engagement part of the funnel. In our scenario, ZipRecruiter would receive credit for the application, because the job seeker clicked from the ZipAlert (email job alert) before they were converted into an applicant.

LAST NON-DIRECT CLICK

The Last Non-Direct Click Attribution Model gives credit to the very last paid or unpaid click touchpoint the job seeker has before an apply, as long as that last touchpoint isn't a direct visit to your job page. Using this model, ZipRecruiter would still get credit for the conversion, since that was the last non-direct click the job seeker took before applying to the job.

LAST KNOWN PAID

The Last Known Paid Attribution Model gives credit to the very last paid click touchpoint the job seeker has before an apply. Since ZipRecruiter only shows jobs that have been sponsored (or paid for), ZipRecruiter would again get the credit for the application in this case, as that was the last click that occurred before the application, and it cost budget dollars to produce.

FIRST INTERACTION

The First Interaction Attribution Model puts a premium on initial engagement and gives all the credit for the application to the very first touchpoint. In this case, the first click was on the Indeed sponsored job, so Indeed would get credit.

LINEAR

The Linear Attribution Model weighs all touchpoints evenly and therefore distributes credit equally amongst all touchpoints. Using a linear model, the Indeed sponsored job, the Glassdoor profile views and ZipRecruiter's job alert email would all receive the same amount of credit for the application.

TIME DECAY

The Time Decay Attribution Model looks to distribute credit similarly to the Linear Attribution Model; however, it doesn't do so evenly. Rather, the Time Decay model gives the most credit to the last (most recent) interaction, the least amount of credit to the first interaction, and proportionally distributes credit to any other touchpoints in between, using similar logic. The Time Decay model is also a prime example for why attribution models require some sort of time constraints.

POSITION-BASED

The Position-Based Attribution Model gives the majority of the credit for conversions to two touchpoints: those that promote awareness (first interaction) and those that promote action (last interaction). Here, 40 percent of the credit would be given to the Indeed sponsored job, 40 percent would be given to your ZipRecruiter's job alert email and the remaining 20 percent would be evenly distributed to your Glassdoor profile.

THINGS TO NOTE

Awareness-building campaigns are typically measured by impressions, and therefore require unique and varied attribution models specifically to capture and attribute back to the impressions. In the case of Job Seeker Jen, the Facebook post was only seen and not clicked on, so none of the mentioned attribution models above account for it.

While this might seem like an overwhelming amount of attribution models to wrap your head around, don't panic. First and foremost, some of the attribution models above will most likely never find their way into a recruitment strategy. For instance, the Time Decay model is really best used to measure the effectiveness of a sale or other promotions. Since recruitment doesn't deal with this part of marketing, chances are you'll never find yourself in need of this type of attribution.

Secondly, and most importantly, the attribution model you use will largely be determined by which recruitment analytics dashboard you choose to use, so it's important you choose the right analytics software, with a robust attribution model.



DON'T HAVE A RECRUITMENT MARKETING ANALYTICS DASHBOARD? GET ONE NOW, FOR [FREE!](#)

Sign up for Recruitics Analytics, the industry's first FREE recruitment marketing analytics dashboard which uses our preferred recruitment marketing attribution model, Last Known Paid. Find out why we use that attribution model on the next page!

What Attribution Model does Recruitics Use?

At Recruitics, we're primarily concerned with making it easy for you to understand and optimize your job advertising strategies. For that reason, we believe that attribution should help you give credit to your job advertising sources where it's due. That way, you can better understand cost-efficiency of every source and for every job and make smarter, more data-driven budget decisions. And, since attribution in recruitment marketing is the process that assigns a source, cost, traffic type (i.e. paid, organic), medium (e.g. CPC, CPA, etc.), and any other important information to job advertising activity, it's critical that we get our attribution model right.

That's why we decided to use the **Last Known Paid** attribution model.



In using the Last Known Paid attribution model, our analytics dashboard can give you the most accurate representation of the performance of all of your paid and unpaid sources while tying in cost. By using Last Known Paid rather than Last Non-Direct Click--as many other recruitment analytics dashboards do--we can differentiate between paid and organic traffic, ensuring you can demonstrate the full value you're receiving from your paid media campaigns.

The use of Last Known Paid also provides the best understanding of the traffic sources that deliver candidates to your jobs at the time they're ready to convert (or apply), especially when compared to the attribution models of individual sources or ATS platforms. For instance, the typical ATS either gives credit to the very first source a candidate interacts with (regardless of how much time has passed since that first interaction, and often relying on candidate-selection--which source they choose from a drop down menu during the application) or uses basic URL tagging to "track" referral traffic, neither of which are true attribution models at all. **Therefore, simply relying on ATS data or reports provided by your sources can make it more difficult for you to understand which of your paid and unpaid job advertising channels are producing the most cost-effective quality applicants.**

The Importance of Attribution in Recruitment Marketing

Attribution in recruitment marketing is extremely important because where you assign credit for applications determines source efficiency (quality applicant volume and cost-per-application). As a result, attribution has an outsized impact on budgets and buying decisions. **When running a data-driven recruitment marketing strategy, you'll need a clear and unbiased picture of how your jobs are performing in order for you to allocate your recruitment budgets most effectively.**

Simply put, we recommend that you do not rely solely on apply numbers reported by your sources or your ATS, because there's a good chance that more than one source will receive credit for the same apply. You also might miss out on giving credit to sources that drive candidates who apply to one job but get hired for another. Plus, when reviewing reports provided by various sources, it's often not an apples-to-apples comparison of data, as different sources and ATS platforms use varying attribution models. Rather, to run an efficient and optimized strategy, you'll need a consolidated and centralized recruitment analytics platform using a single attribution model across all channels, where you can view and compare the performance of all your sources confidently. This way, an application is always attributed in a consistent manner--similar to the way Recruitics' attribution model works.

(In fact, that's part of the reason industry experts are calling Recruitics Analytics the "Google Analytics for recruitment.")

By having a single analytics platform that uses one attribution model, you can learn to trust your data--allowing you to confidently make data-driven budgeting decisions in your recruitment marketing strategies.

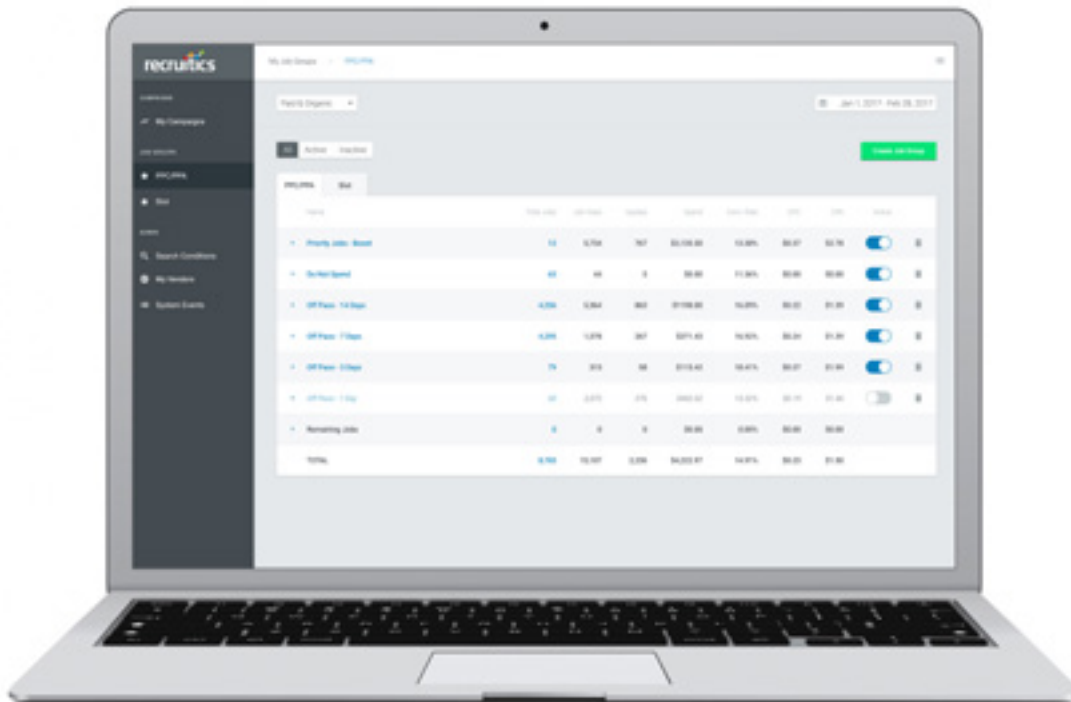
WANT MORE INFO?

To learn more about recruitment marketing attribution and how Recruitics can help you get the most accurate picture of your recruitment marketing strategy, [contact us](#) today.

About Us

Recruitics is a data-centric recruitment marketing agency that makes it easy for the world’s leading brands to attract and hire great talent. Our Four Pillars of Talent Attraction are powered by our award-winning recruitment marketing analytics and optimization platform. We revolutionized recruitment advertising in 2012 with the introduction of the world’s first recruitment marketing analytics and optimization platform.

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