

The Importance of Social Media in Your Talent Hunt

Social media is no longer "new media" but mainstream. With more than 175 million users on LinkedIn, 140 million registered users on Twitter, and a massive 955 million active users on Facebook, companies are beginning to appreciate the value and drawbacks of using such mediums - particularly for recruiting purposes." (Hunt) (numbers have been rectified to reflect present values as of 2012)

According to a survey cited by Brotherton, 2012, nearly two-thirds of employers surveyed in the U.S. had successfully recruited employees through social networks, with 64 percent stating that they made successful hires through a social network in 2011 compared with 58 percent in 2010. Most companies are using multiple social networks in their recruiting efforts.

LinkedIn is on the list for 87 percent of companies, up from 78 percent in 2010; 55 percent use Facebook and 47 percent are using Twitter. According to a recent survey, in the first six months of 2011, 73 percent of 'social hires' came from LinkedIn, 20 percent from Facebook, and 7 percent from Twitter (Brotherton 24).

Fueling conventional recruiting strategies with social media requires understanding how the different sites operate. The three most prominent social media business-recruiting networks are LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. LinkedIn recruiting tools focus on discovering candidates and networking online; while Facebook and Twitter recruiting tools provide an edge in employer branding. (Hunt)

LinkedIn

On LinkedIn's most basic level, companies can search for talent and establish relationships with potential candidates for free. Companies may go a step further, though, and purchase a business account for bonus features like posting jobs; sending private messages directly to any LinkedIn user regarding career opportunities; saving and managing profiles of prospects; and requesting introductions to people inside target companies. LinkedIn also offers an exclusive corporate recruiting package with additional custom options and account management.

"The beauty of LinkedIn is there are more than (1)75 million users; the detriment of LinkedIn is there are more than (1)75 million users," says Darin Hartley, director of client management at Intrepid Learning Solutions in Seattle, and author of 10 Steps to Successful Social Networking for Business.. "Your net could be so broad; you could wind up with 5,000 candidates. Be very clear what you're looking for." (Hunt)

According to claims made by LinkedIn, on an average two professionals sign up per second on the site as of June 30, 2012.

Facebook

Businesses are using Facebook for recruiting purposes, particularly to promote their employment brand and value propositions. Facebook offers a variety of mediums for companies to communicate their message and corporate culture - from simple text and mini blogs, to photos, and video and audio clips, to polls and surveys. Facebook is optimal for engaging people. (Hunt) 750 million (955 million as of March 2012) worldwide users and 155 (165 million as of this year) million users in U.S. offers a proposition that recruiters can neglect only at their peril.

To be effective, though, Hartley says companies need to actively attract "friends" by keeping their content fresh and engaging. Facebook offers advice on building a presence on the site on the "resources" section of its "about" page. (Hunt) Common Facebook corporate recruitment strategies include employment branding efforts and linking back to corporate websites or career pages.

Twitter

Businesses are using Twitter in a variety of ways: Many companies simply post open jobs to their Twitter accounts with a compressed URL for the corporate Web sites, which followers can link to. Twitter offers a special guide called Twitter 101 for businesses on how to use the site to their advantage, along with best practices and case studies. The information is available on the Twitter Web site.

Determining Twitter's effectiveness might be difficult, however. Despite today's more than 140 million registered users, a study released in January 2010 from RJMetrics indicated that only about 10 to 15 million accounts are actually active. At the time of the study, Twitter had 75 million registered users-25 percent of which had no followers; and upward of 40 percent had one to five followers. (Hunt)

Conclusion

For the majority of recruiters, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and employee referrals have officially surpassed traditional job boards as the preferred way to acquire talent. In 2011, increasingly more companies improved their recruiting efforts by investing in social media to get to job candidates. The best moving companies are increasingly using the opportunities of profiles in LinkedIn, the influence of online connections in Facebook, and the direct reach of Twitter to develop valuable talent pools and recruit new employees (Brotherton 24).

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