

## Technology streamlines recruitment

*But tech savviness required to reach right candidates*

BY SUSAN GRANT

Technology has fundamentally changed the way organizations look for and acquire talent and the way jobseekers hunt for work. Before web-based job boards and applicant tracking systems, recruiters had to rely on print advertising and Rolodexes to fill open positions. Candidates had to spend a lot of time searching newspapers and trade publications for appropriate opportunities and mailing letter after letter.

The advent of online job boards, social media platforms and increasingly sophisticated and powerful smartphones have made the process more streamlined and efficient.

There are a number of different tools that provide access to prospective candidates, their work experience and other credentials. LinkedIn, a popular online site for working professionals, has more than 90 million members and a strong presence in Canada. These sites allow for different types of networking opportunities through personal contacts and groups, as well as communicating job openings. Recruiters can also access public data indexed in popular search engines, providing additional ways to network and find the right candidate.

But recruiters and applicants need to be technologically savvy to be successful.

### Getting the wording just right

Search engines, corporate career pages, online job boards and job board aggregators (such as Eluta.com) have made it much easier to search and apply for jobs. Instead of searching myriad sites, many jobseekers are going to Google, Bing or Yahoo first because they get immediate results for minimal effort.

However, unless the searcher is using the most appropriate keywords, including possible titles, industries and locations in the search field, they may be missing opportunities. Since most people don't typically go past the second page of search results, hiring managers and recruiters need to review job titles and determine if they match what candidates may be searching in regard to roles and responsibilities.

Many organizations use a generic title on a job posting to attract more candidates, while

using a different title internally. For example, "people manager" could be changed to "human resources manager" to improve visibility among HR professionals who may be seeking a new position. If the title can't be changed, employers should make sure there are word tracks in the posting itself that state "this position is also known as..." so the posting appears on the first page of any search result.

Recruiters should think like a jobseeker when posting employment opportunities. They should conduct searches for their postings using generic terms in Google to see where their postings rank. It's also a good idea to see how those postings rank versus those of competitors.

### Too much information

Prior to online submissions, people were forced to email, fax or mail their resumés and often were unsure if they were actually received. Jobseekers can now apply to multiple positions in a short amount of time by electronically submitting resumés and other information, while applicant tracking systems immediately confirm when resumés are received.

But the effortlessness of the online application process has been a source of frustration for organizations. A large number of people often apply for a job even though they lack the required qualifications.

And while the volume of material available online makes it easy for candidates to prepare for interviews — they have access to information about a company, its products and services as well as current and past employees to gather first-hand information about the organization's culture — it can make the screening process more difficult for recruiters because candidates often give the same answers to many of the questions.

On the plus side, an applicant tracking system can make aspects of the recruitment process much more efficient for recruiters and hiring managers. The pre-screening functionality can significantly reduce time spent reviewing hundreds of resumés and quickly highlight top candidates. Recruiters can access their open requisitions to view resumés and select whom they want to interview. From a compliance and audit standpoint, all the pertinent information, such as the job description, screening notes and background

checks, can be attached to the requisition.

Recruitment metrics can also be gathered through an applicant tracking system to objectively measure the effectiveness of the process. For example, time to fill is an important metric for recruiter performance. Source-of-hire information can be valuable in assessing where successful candidates are hearing about an organization's open positions and help a recruiter develop focused, more effective sourcing strategies for key roles. It's important to note when using metrics for process improvement purposes, an organization must ensure the data in the system is accurate and valid.

### Potential hurdles

A word of caution — while technology has made a huge impact on the recruiting process, it does not replace the human touch and should not be the sole source for finding candidates. Recruiters are often the first point of contact for a candidate. They represent the company for which they are recruiting and are integral in delivering the employee value proposition. The goal is to provide all applicants, regardless of whether or not they become a successful candidate, with a consistent and positive experience. Timely communication and feedback with candidates will further support the employer brand.

There are a number of "job vent" sites that allow employees and others, including unsuccessful applicants, to express both positive and negative feedback about an organization. Prospective candidates are using these sites as part of their research into an organization, often before they apply for a job. Hiring managers need to be aware of what is being posted about their organization so they can address specific questions or concerns during interviews with applicants.

Technology has clearly changed the recruitment landscape for everyone and it's becoming increasingly important for jobseekers and recruiters alike to stay current with new tools and search functionalities in order to meet their individual and corporate goals.

*Susan Grant is executive director of recruitment process outsourcing at Ceridian Canada in Markham, Ont. She can be reached at [susan\\_grant@ceridian.ca](mailto:susan_grant@ceridian.ca).*