

Recruiting 2015:

How to Leverage Social Media to Find the Best Candidates While Saving Time, Money, and Hassle

While the fundamentals of recruiting remain timeless—attracting the notice of great candidates and encouraging them to get in touch with your organization—there are now more ways than ever to go about it.

By Jennifer Carsen, JD

Today's world is hyperconnected, and smart organizations know how to leverage the power of social media in creative ways to turbocharge their recruiting efforts without falling prey to unnecessary distractions.

Twitter: #We'reHiring!

Even if your organization has an active Twitter presence, you may not be using the service as the valuable recruiting resource it can be.

Many jobseekers subscribe to the Twitter feeds of the companies they are interested in working for. Still more jobseekers subscribe to feeds that deliver links to job posts all day long. Thousands of jobseekers know that Twitter can be a useful place to look—employers just need to use their 140 characters in a way that actually gets seen and gets prospective employees interested in clicking through to learn more.

Business consultant Bridget Miller offers the following Twitter recruiting tips to get you started:

- > When you post a link to a job opening on Twitter, ask employees to retweet it, which significantly increases the number of people who will see the post.
- > Continually post interesting, insightful, and relevant information to keep people engaged. Some employers opt to share industry info. Others post information that provides a peek into the culture of the company, such as photos from company events. This way, you obtain more followers who will see your job posts later.
- > If there are relevant hashtags for your industry or for an industry event, use those to gain exposure when appropriate. (A hashtag is the use of the “#” symbol at the front of a word or phrase. This allows the word or phrase to be easily searched for and tracked, thus increasing visibility of a post when used properly.)



- > Research the common hashtags used for jobs in your industry or geographic location. If jobseekers are already using them as a search term, this is another way to gain exposure.
- > Another hashtag tactic is to include “#job” in the post. Also put a hashtag in front of other terms that candidates will use to search, such as the position title (#editor), city name (#Boston), or job function (#accounting).
- > If your organization is large enough, consider creating a separate Twitter feed solely for job postings. This will allow candidates to follow and monitor that feed.

blurred the line between personal pursuits and work life ... [Millennials have] an average of 16 co-worker friends on Facebook.”

Because birds of a feather flock together, these co-workers/Facebook friends will probably be linked to a lot of other people who could be a great fit for your organization.

Facebook allows you to create pay-per-click ads that are highly targeted by geography, interests, and a host of other factors that enable you to get your job postings in front of precisely the people you’re most interested in, at a fraction of the cost of traditional broad-based advertising.



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- > Be sure to have dedicated resources to follow up on all responses received via Twitter. In today’s social media environment, it is assumed that responses will be very quick. Potential applicants may post questions to you using Twitter, so there should be someone responsible for monitoring these communications. It’s also important that the company be seen as Twitter-savvy if you’re going to use the platform effectively.
- > Consider enlisting the help of some of the established job networks on Twitter. For example, TweetMyJobs has a reputation for being a source of posts to thousands of jobseekers. By having your job listings distributed on the TweetMyJobs network, you will significantly increase your exposure.
- > Rather than just putting job posts out there, also consider using Twitter to search for candidates based on terms that are relevant to the job. In this way, your recruiting team can reach out to potential candidates and engage with them directly.

Facebook: Not Just for ‘Friends’ Anymore

While Facebook is still viewed as more of a social online resource than a business-oriented one, there are good reasons to consider taking your recruiting efforts there—the biggest of which is sheer volume.

According to Facebook’s own stats, as of September 30, 2014, the service has a staggering 1.35 billion monthly active users. That’s a lot of potential job applicants! Additionally, as iCIMS’ Hire Expectations Institute aptly notes, “Social media has increasingly

What About Pinterest?

Using Pinterest for business may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of this highly visual, crafts-heavy relative newcomer to the social media scene. But with explosive growth and the ability to drive traffic to your website, Pinterest is certainly a tool worth considering.

“You can’t just make one board,” notes Strategic Recruiting Manager Kelly Dingee, who leads the research team at Staffing Advisors. “You need to make sure that you break up the information so that you’re sharing lots of different boards with people—lots of different information—so that it’s very, very easy for people to learn more about your organization in the bite-sized pieces they want.”

Doing it right takes time, and the interaction must run both ways. A company can’t just put information out there and expect others to just consume it without any further engagement from the organization. Follow, repin, and engage—don’t just post your own things.

Another important tip is to be sure to link back to all your other social media sites. Give people as much opportunity as possible to connect with you in other ways. In other words, think about using the site as a marketer, and think of how it will be good for the brand. One such example is that Pinterest can drive traffic to your website.

“When I was learning about Pinterest when I was first starting to use it, and I realized that part of the purpose was to drive traffic back to websites—and that Pinterest actually does a better job at driving traffic back to your website than Facebook, Twitter, or any other social media site—it kind of got my attention,” Dingee says.

While “there’s no business category ... there’s no ‘get a job’ category, there’s no ‘jobseekers’ or ‘careers’ or anything like that,” on Pinterest, Dingee points out, employers can work within the existing parameters to be findable and appealing to potential new hires. There are two perspectives to consider: finding potential candidates and showcasing your organization for people to find.

Finding potential applicants on Pinterest. On Pinterest, you can use keywords to search and also to tag your own content so that it is found when others search. When doing so, think carefully about what keywords to use and where to put them.

Everything on Pinterest is a picture—so what you’re finding in search is what someone has typed about a picture, as a caption or summary. As such, when you add pictures, what you type about it will determine how easily someone can find it. Think about what others will be searching for when you want them to find you.

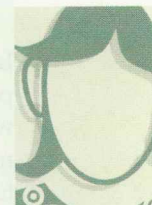
If you are trying to recruit people with particular skills or experience, think about creating boards dedicated to that topic. This will allow you to be found by individuals who are interested in that topic. Soon you

worldwide exchanging information, referrals, recommendations, ideas, and opportunities, so there’s no denying it’s a force to be reckoned with for HR professionals—and a key tool in your recruiting toolbox. However, if you don’t know what you’re doing, you can waste a lot of time and effort spinning your wheels there.

Fifty percent of Fortune 100 companies use LinkedIn for hiring, says expert Dan Ryan of Ryan Search and Consulting in Nashville, Tennessee—and you should be using it, too. “It’s the largest ‘business-focused’ social networking site,” Ryan notes, and “more than 80 percent of [LinkedIn users] are decision makers. The people you want to hire are surely there.”

The search function on LinkedIn is particularly helpful, Ryan says, and it’s how most employers will use LinkedIn for recruiting. This tool allows employers to search on keywords (for example, a programming language), or by name, organization, industry, school, and seniority level (manager, owner, VP, director, entry, students, etc.). In addition, you may search by LinkedIn terms for first-level connections, second-level connections, or all users.

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will have people following those boards who already have an interest in that topic and possibly experience—these people are potential job candidates.

Showcasing your organization on Pinterest. Separately, you can use Pinterest as a recruiting tool by showcasing what it’s like to work at your organization and even how to apply and open jobs. For example, you could create Pinterest boards about:

- > Joining your team (how to apply)
- > What perks there are to working for your company
- > Job search tips, such as how to network or how to prepare for an interview
- > Your company’s departments
- > Your employees’ LinkedIn pages—complete with links to those pages (if you’re comfortable with that)
- > The company blog
- > Current events or news about your organization
- > Job listings

Recruiting on LinkedIn, the ‘Official’ Workplace Social Media Hub

Are you recruiting on LinkedIn yet? As of May 2014, the site claims to have over 300 million members

You can also check by ZIP code or area, indicating how large a mile radius you want to include, Ryan notes. You can also use Boolean search terms if you are familiar with that system.

Although LinkedIn searching is available for free, LinkedIn’s paid plans allow you to send a certain number of “InMail” messages to anyone on LinkedIn—not just your own contacts. You also get expanded search filters and the ability to see who has recently viewed your profile.

Another great feature of LinkedIn is groups, Ryan says. There are groups for almost any imaginable type of job, he notes, and they are a good way to reach specific types of people. They often allow you to reach people who are not actively looking for new jobs.

If there’s no group for your specialized needs, create a group, Ryan says. He had one specialty that he was recruiting for that didn’t have a group, so he started a group. It now has 1,500 members. (Groups of fewer than 1,000 are usually not too helpful for recruiting, Ryan advises.) Additionally, while LinkedIn charges a fee for job postings, there’s no fee if you post your opening through a group.

Smile! You're on Instagram

Perhaps even more than Pinterest, Instagram has traditionally been viewed as a “fun” social media platform with few if any business applications. But that’s starting to change in a big way. Especially if you’re

Accordingly, you need to invest time and effort in making sure your organization has an active, professional presence on all of the major social networking sites—even if you’re not looking to fill any positions right at the moment.



“YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS ARE AN EXTENSION OF YOUR COMPANY BRAND.”

looking to attract young, tech-savvy workers, Instagram may be exactly where you want to be with your recruiting efforts.

Veronica Segovia, until recently the employer brand manager at PR software company Vocus, used Instagram as an opportunity to “make contact with passive candidates, to show them that Vocus is a cool, young, fun company,” she says, quoted on the RIVS blog. “Our original goal with Instagram was to attract entry-level sales talent of about 21–30 years of age.”

Digital marketing agency HelloWorld actually used Instagram to extend a full-time marketing coordinator position to plugged-in applicant Samantha Bankey, who saw the social media posting and accepted within minutes, according to Erin Osterhaus, writing on new-talent-times.softwareadvice.com.

“If your company is seeking young professionals who are social-media savvy, you already employ a social media recruiting strategy, and you happen to be in an industry that uses social media as a business tool, Instagram could very well help you find your next crop of new hires,” Osterhaus writes.

Social Media Sourcing: An Important Caveat

Take care when you perform social media sourcing that you don’t come across as creepy to job candidates, warns Dingee. You don’t want to come across as a stalker! The people you contact are going to want to know how you found them and how you know they can effectively perform XYZ tasks.

Maintain transparency, advises Dingee. Explain how you found them. “You’re not hacking; you’re searching the Internet for publicly available information,” she says.

Remember That Social Media Works Both Ways

Social media is a great tool for finding exciting new job candidates, but it’s equally important to remember that job candidates are using social media to find you, too.

Your social media accounts are an extension of your company brand. Be sure that all of your company profiles are professional and convey the image you’re looking to project—both in the look and in the content. Any messaging should be consistent with the company values and strategy, as candidates will be looking at the account (among other sources) to gain a sense of the organization.

Additionally, it goes without saying that you should have, and enforce, a comprehensive social media policy at your workplace that clearly delineates what employees may say, and not say, about your organization on social media channels. Striking the right balance between professionalism and employees’ rights to express themselves can be legally challenging, so it’s a good idea to have a local employment lawyer review your social media policy on a regular basis—at least once a year. **HR**

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