Recruiting with Talent Communities

Attract, engage and hire the best with today's social tools

Social Recruiting is More Important than Ever

- 92% of human resource and recruiting professionals use or plan to use social recruiting.[1]

- 69% of job seekers feel more favorably about companies who are participating in social media.[2]

- 42% of job seekers are more likely to apply for a job at a company after they've interacted with it online.[2]

- Across generations, job seekers are spending over 90% of their time searching online.[3]

Recruiting is moving in a decidedly social direction. To compete, you can't just go with the flow--you must develop new ways to stay ahead of the curve.

Properly launched and maintained, a talent community can be an invaluable cutting-edge recruiting tool. But what can a talent community really do for your company? And how do you actually build one?

This eBook can help you get started. It contains straight talk--and practical tips--for better understanding, developing and leveraging talent communities.

Sources:
[1] Jobvite 2012 Social Recruiting Survey; [2] CareerBuilder Job Seekers' Perceptions of Social Media 2010 and 2011 surveys;
[3] "The Multigenerational Job Search" 2012 survey by Millenial Branding and Beyond.com

Communities and networks and pools–oh my!

The advent of the somewhat nebulous term "social recruiting" has created an entirely new lexicon for HR and other hiring managers. If you haven't already, it's time to wrap your head around these increasingly common terms:

1. **Talent Pool:** A talent pool or ATS is a database of everyone who has ever applied for a job with you, regardless of their relevance or potential value to your organization.

   a. How it differs from a talent community: Communication is one-way, which gives you a one-dimensional view of candidates (generally only from the resume itself).

2. **Talent Network:** A talent network is an opt-in candidate database that enables you to build your candidate talent pool for future employment opportunities. Candidates opt-in to this network (via the job application process or your career site) and want to hear about your company and employment opportunities.

   a. How it differs from a talent community: Engagement is flat and one-directional, with all content created by your organization.

Okay; so what IS a talent community?

It's something more than just a pool, pipeline or network. But honestly, the concept is hard to define simply.

Here's a "Twitter length" definition proposed by Marvin Smith, contributor to RecruitingBlogs.com:

> *A talent community is a segmented audience of targeted talent that maps to current and future hiring needs contained in the workforce plan.*

Here's another, courtesy of Wikipedia:

> *A talent community is a method of social recruiting that relies on the collection of social cliques (or talent networks) of people who are part of the job-seeking process.*

And one more from Stephanie Lloyd, Strategist-in-Chief for Calibre Search Group:

> *A talent community is an opt-in, interactive forum where individuals with particular skill sets and interests can interact in a personal and meaningful way with corporate HR and company management in order to better understand--and be a part of--the firm and all that it has to offer from an employment perspective.*

However you choose to define it, a talent community:

- Has two-way communication.

- Has opt-in members.

- Allows these members, primarily through various forms of social media, to freely exchange ideas and information about topics ranging from your employment brand and company culture, to career advice and, yes, career opportunities (although the goals of communication are not focused solely on job openings or recruitment).

The Upside–Talent communities offer great recruiting potentials

The rise in social recruiting has made it easier than ever for recruiters like you to find great candidates. If you're wondering whether a talent community is the right choice for your organization, consider the potential advantages one can offer:

a. **Improve quality of applicants applying to job openings.** In their 2012 Social Recruiting Survey, Jobvite found that 43% of recruiters who use social recruiting saw an increase in candidate quality.

b. **Attract passive candidates.** When you regularly engage candidates and nurture relationships with them, your company will be top-of-mind when the time is right for a community member to change jobs.

c. **Find great talent before you need it.** A talent community allows you to develop relationships with candidates ahead of your hiring needs. When a job opens up, you may already have viable prospects within your community--and fill your position faster.

d. **Identify candidate fit.** With an online talent community, you have the opportunity to interact and demonstrate your company's brand, values and mission. Candidates, likewise, have opportunities to engage you, demonstrating their values and capabilities to fulfill your job requirements. As a result, you can source candidates who are not just right for the job, but right for your company.

e. **Build your brand with potential candidates.** Even when you don't have a specific job opening, a community provides opportunities to maintain conversations about candidates' career aspirations and interests. You can position your company as a thought leader in specific subject areas and demonstrate your commitment to candidates' career development--effectively building your employment brand.

Choices, Choices–Creating the right platform to attract participants

As a recruiter, you can connect digitally and socially with talent in a number of ways--Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, your ATS, your recruitment marketing and your CRM, to name a few. To compound the virtual challenge, most of these platforms have their own "rules of engagement" and methods for communication and feedback.

With so many options available, where should you start developing your talent community? Here are a few ideas to get the ball rolling:

1. **Analyze your current talent inventory** and (as accurately as possible) estimate the volume and types of talent needed over a two- to three-year period. Only once you understand your strategic growth can you translate it into a tactical plan for building a community.

2. **Develop a profile** of those with whom you're already interacting. If you're already using social media like LinkedIn or Facebook, you probably have a wide range of people who already know you and interact with your brand.

3. **Choose a platform.** Build your community where it already finds itself. Determine which platform is most highly trafficked by the types of individuals you want to engage. Then, if you don't have the expertise on-staff, consider consulting with an experienced contact relationship manager (CRM) who can help you develop a platform that:

   a. captures vital information about potential candidates, which can later be used to attract and engage additional community members.

   b. is geared to the needs of your target talent segments, so they're more likely to engage in meaningful conversation (for example, while Gen Y candidates rarely retrieve emails, they open mobile messages 75 to 80 percent of the time).

4. **Commit to investing.** A talent community requires vast resources. Not surprisingly, a robust, well-managed infrastructure that delivers specific, highly relevant information to candidates isn't cheap to build or maintain.

So before you take the plunge, make sure you're ready to commit the time, money and talent needed to create a true community. Do anything less, and candidates will see your so-called "community" for what it truly is--a self-serving, contact-list-gathering tool.

"If you build it, they will come" (well, maybe)–Driving engagement within your community

Building a platform, in and of itself, will not provide the recruiting benefits (i.e., viable top candidates) your company needs. If you want to see real results, you need to create a real community in which you engage in meaningful, two-way conversations. Here's how:

Don't just send jobs. That's what your job boards are for! A talent community provides opportunities to attract, nurture, inform, listen to and cultivate real relationships with members. If all you plan to do is send jobs, you're wasting your (and your candidates') time.

Invite. Instead of passively waiting for members to find you, develop formal mechanisms for attracting them. Start by inviting current job candidates, past applicants, current employees and members of your existing social networks. Consider using existing social media platforms to invite new members or place a link on your company's home page. Give potential candidates good reasons to opt-in, by externally promoting the value of your community.
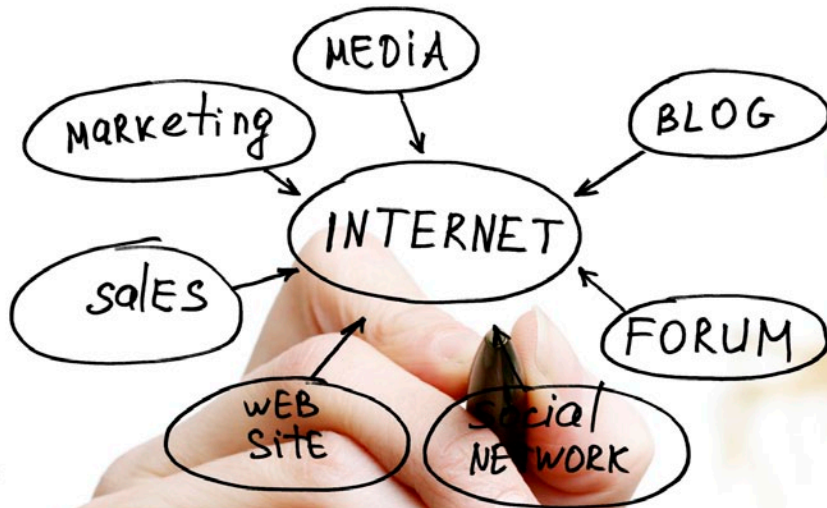
Listen. How do you determine what content target candidates want to talk about? Ask them--and then listen! While building your community, you must pay attention to the needs, goals and interests of your members. So pose questions that help you better understand your candidates. Encourage them to contribute their ideas and start conversations. Determine what's important to them and use those ideas to build your community.

Respond. Answer members' questions. Respond to their comments in a timely manner (think 24 hours or less). Share content that goes beyond vanilla "how to interview" topics and addresses the key issues members bring up.

Share. Provide targeted, relevant content for your audience. Ideas include: labor market analyses, education standards, training required for advancement, industry trends / news / research, managing career progression. When possible, use slideshows, videos or even webinars to keep members interested. Use your members' input to continually hone your list of topics.

Build your brand. Pull the veil back and show members what it's really like to work for your company. Use your community to showcase your authentic employment brand--what the office looks like, who works there and how the work is organized.

Market. Balance value-added content with hot jobs. But don't just send boring old position descriptions. Think out-of-the-box and use the technology you have to "wow" your audience! Consider using a smartphone to film a quick video featuring the hiring manager, or use a tool like Animoto to create a more engaging presentation of the position.

Have fun. Fun, engaging content about your team, your company and your industry will act as a magnet. You don't have to be low-brow or slapstick to have fun within your community. Just make a concerted effort to occasionally inject a little humor and show the human side of your business.

Final Thoughts

Though you will undoubtedly use your talent community to source candidates, make sure you don't just sell, but serve:

• Create a platform that encourages two-way communication and helps members further their careers.

• Work together to solve problems, share opinions and develop ideas.

• Make talented professionals feel included and compelled to contribute positively to the betterment of your community.

Do this, and you'll create a true community that's a self-sustaining source of inspiration and--yes--great talent!

Sources:

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