Web-based Recruitment
Taking Advantage of Available and Future Technology

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In 2001, recruiters across most industries felt the pinch as budgets and recruiting staff shrank. Therefore, with fewer resources and support, in addition to increased demands, recruiters have had to optimize their current resources to continue to function under pressure.

Practices that recruiters have had to use to work efficiently include:

1. A focus on automating more steps of the recruitment process
2. Accountability for ROI and metrics
3. The ability to perform multi-task recruiting across various areas using a generalist background

Recruitment research statistics remain staggering. IDC forecasts that the worldwide recruiting market will exceed $13 billion by 2005 and that nearly 100% of companies will use the Internet for part of their recruitment strategies. The good news is that Web-based recruitment strategies have been shown to be significantly more cost-effective and efficient than job fairs, newspapers and campus recruitment strategies.

When Internet recruiting first became popular, the medium was best suited for filling specialized technical positions. However, half a decade later, the Internet makes it as easy to find administrative assistants and sales associates as database administrators.

In fact, the use of recruitment Web technology has been shown to:

1. Assist recruiters and HR departments in establishing an organized and standardized recruitment and selection methodology
2. Significantly expedite the selection process to capture the best talent
3. Reduce cost and time-per-hires
4. Increase the transparency of candidate information

These factors compounded were the primary reasons for the initial and current Internet recruitment explosion. And although the economy may have slowed, don’t expect the Internet recruitment industry to suffer in the long run.

Industry Statistics and Forecast

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that between 1998 and 2008 total U.S. employment will increase by 14 percent with growth areas being concentrated within service industries. In contrast, the supply of workers is projected to increase by only 12 percent.

Analysts predict this shortage of workers will initiate a market drive towards the establishment of technology-based recruitment and workforce management solutions, such as applicant tracking, workforce planning, candidate assessment and screening. Although traditional recruitment markets are unlikely to ricochet to their pre-recession frenzied state, both the market and firms are more than ready to invest in high-growth, high-margin solutions. IDC expects the workforce management tools market to exceed $4 billion by 2003.

These statistics indicate the tenacity of the e-recruitment industry and dependence that we have placed upon the technology and e-recruitment processes despite an economic slump. Thus, the online recruitment industry has carved itself a place in history, and with over 2.5 million resumes floating
online, the "trickle down effect" has built a huge market for Web products that aid recruiters and hiring managers.*

As the ever-present need to hire talent continues, expect to see increases in the adoption of process improvement technology within the sectors that have had a historical shortage of staffing professionals. These industries include healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, and high-tech – the top four industries using corporate Web sites for recruitment.

**Recruiting Technology Trends**

In fact, since employers and recruiters are working with tighter budgets, fewer resources and less support, the strengths of online recruiters are being optimized through cost efficiency and the potentially dramatic savings in labor-per-search and time-to-hire.

As technologies are being refined, recruiters have found that steps are being made to improve:

1. The quality of candidates
2. Candidate screening and resume forwarding
3. Overall hiring costs
4. The ability to track and screen responses

For example, new screening and assessment technologies are being integrated as an extension of the basic online recruiting strategy. Now recruiters are being given the tools to refine the recruitment process and capture only the most desirable candidates. When nearly 100% of all companies turn to the Internet for recruitment networking, the further advancement of technology opens the opportunity for enterprise wide systems integration combined with the expansion of the staffing and recruitment functionality.

Although the economic downturn has significantly affected the recruitment industry, employers and recruiters have continued to solidify and expand their recruiting practices, particularly at the management and senior executive levels. Since organizations often eliminate executive levels at the beginning of a downturn, and an increase in the executive search arena has occurred, we may be experiencing a shift out of the recession.

Although in general, the HR industry tends to be conservative, a slower economy is the best time to start considering your recruitment strategies. When the economy picks up, companies prepared for the increase in labor demand will be able to quickly ramp up their workforce to meet new organizational pressures.

**The Future of Web-based Recruitment Technology**

As aforementioned, a downturn in the economy does not indicate that the recruitment industry has slowed. In fact, much more is expected from recruiters such as improved quality of resumes. To this end, specific technologies are being developed that refine the screening and assessment process.

Vendor relationships are being built to take advantage of existing best-of-breed technology instead of attempting to reinvent the wheel. This aggregation of products and services will lead to single recruitment solutions comprised of numerous integrated vendors. Therefore, organizations will be able to access the expertise of vendors that specialize in recruitment strategies. For example, one vendor may provide

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assessments and screening capabilities, another an applicant tracking system, while another develops and hosts corporate career Web site capabilities.

**Figure 1:**
Aggregation and Integration of Best-of-Breed Recruitment Technology Partners

These types of improved tools will only help recruiters and organizations find and capture the most suitable candidates. As the tools become increasingly sophisticated and are integrated within organizational processes; firms should be able to manage longer-term candidate relationships and connect the recruitment process to broader HR processes throughout the employee life cycle. For example, recruitment and hiring results will connect to competency and employee development plans to hone specialized skills and build workforce planning strategies. Employers will also have access to timely and accurate hiring statistics and HR metrics giving them the means to track candidate and successful hires over time.

**Conclusion**
Recruitment Web technology has injected a degree of automation within the hiring process and has succeeded in increasing the overall speed and efficiency of hiring. This cost savings is possible through the widespread use of real-time technology as a communication tool and the integration of external hiring practices and internal organizational processes. Over time, we should expect to see increased technology integration, improved recruitment capabilities, and multiple vendor partnerships within this space. For the last five years, recruiters have taken advantage of access to a global labor pool. This real-time access has not only positively impacted the global economy, but also the individual recruiter and organization enabling them to impact the bottom-line in a significant, efficient and cost-effective manner.

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