



Recrooglization

Recruiting in the Age of Googlization

The State of Hiring & Recruiting
for 2016 and Beyond

A White Paper Provided by



www.successperformancesolutions.com

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You must be wondering what the heck is Recrooglization...and how to pronounce it!

For starters, it is pronounced *ree-kroo-gu-luh-zey-shun*.

More importantly, it describes both the current state of recruitment and prescribes a solution based on the art of recruiting and on the science of “Google.”

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ISBN 13: 0-9963156-0-8

Recrooglization: Recruiting in the Age of Googlization

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Employers need to get a grip on reality. Viable and practical plans to compete for talent in the current and future workforce are long past due. Management needs to understand where it will find employees to do the work, manage, and run their organizations today, tomorrow, and beyond. For the most part, the recipe for business success will require a masterful blend of recruiting and retaining a diverse and often time global multigenerational workforce while capitalizing on the forces of technology. It will require a lot more creativity than just saying, “People are our most important asset.”

To describe the state of recruiting and hiring and what needs to be done I’ve coined a phrase – “Recrooglization” (ree-kroo-gu-luh-zey-shun). What is Recrooglization? It’s a blend of Recruiting + Googlization or more specifically where The Art of Recruiting means the Science of Google.

Let’s start with Googlization.

Google has changed our lives. I’m not going to argue whether that is good or bad. Gradually and somewhat insidiously Google permeates almost everything we do. And in response the world has embraced Google as it has touched billions of people in one way or other. Soon it might not only dominate our online activities and shape our persona but transcend into our day-to-day living with autonomous vehicles and virtual reality. It’s not only a brand, a product, a multitude of services...it’s a verb!

For me and for the sake of this conversation, Googlization is not just about Google and its friendly search box and clever logos. Like Apple did with technology, Google disrupted then transformed the way the world’s people operate, communicate, and interact. The entirety of Google, like the genie, is out of the bottle and there is no putting it back in. Our lives are forever changed.

So with much resistance, kicking, and shouting, it’s time for companies and specifically HR to embrace the world as it is today. Businesses can no longer expect to attract and engage workers if they continue to function like it were 1970, 1984 or even 2001. Increasingly Googlization has impacted traditional methods of recruiting to the point where the old way is dysfunctional, inefficient, and likely obsolete.

Recrooglization is the solution to the complex convergence of Recruiting and Googlization. I hope you enjoy reading and learning about how to succeed in today’s labor market.

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Ira S Wolfe

President, Success Performance Solutions

The State of Hiring and Recruiting Today...and Tomorrow

The success of your company depends on a team of qualified, competent, and engaged employees who keep every aspect of your business running smoothly. But according to the Jobvite 2015 Recruiting Nation Survey¹, the ability to be fully staffed and productive is getting much harder. Fifty-six percent of recruiters are hurting for skilled or qualified candidates. In many industries the problem is much worse. The CEO of the National Association of Home Builders describes the situation as “an epidemic.”² The Associated General Contractors survey reports 86 percent of commercial builders are having trouble filling hourly and salaried positions. Sixty-five percent of HR officials at small companies³ are struggling too.

Stories like this pop up in the news on an almost daily basis. And it doesn't seem to matter if the company is large or small, urban or rural, product or service oriented, domestic or international.

There are a number of reasons why filling open positions quickly is getting worse in the U.S. as well as in many other countries.

Growth: While the economy is not robust, it has been growing at a steady pace and is expected to continue. Many companies are hiring especially in skilled positions. While this is great news for their companies - and the economy in general - it can be a challenge for hiring managers to fill many positions quickly enough to keep their companies operating efficiently. And going forward...95 percent of recruiters expect the hunt for talent to remain or grow more competitive.

Recruiting Options: The growth of the Internet has led to an explosion of recruiting opportunities. Job seekers used to rely on classified ads and word of mouth; now, they can use job search engines like Indeed, job boards like Craigslist and Monster; social media, online recruitment agencies, and corporate recruiting websites. Nearly 6 out of every 10 employed workers search monthly⁴ for a new job...and 65 percent of new hires look at new jobs again within 91 days of being hired. This at-your-fingertips ability to find new job opportunities has made it made it ridiculously easy for anyone at any time to

¹ http://web.jobvite.com/Q315_Website_2015RecruiterNation_LP.html

² <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/markets/2015/08/26/construction-worker-shortage/32430517/>

³ <http://www.benefitspro.com/2015/07/28/companies-struggle-to-attract-qualified-employees>

⁴ <http://offers.indeed.com/rs/699-SXJ-715/images/TalentAttractionStudy.pdf>

submit an application. Consequently the mere volume of applications makes it more difficult for companies to screen and vet a high volume of applicants efficiently.

Time: Most recruiters and hiring managers are bombarded with multiple tasks, from placing ads to screening and interviewing potential job candidates. The average recruiter spends from 6 seconds⁵ to 4 minutes⁶ reading each resume that land on his or her desk and a minimum of 25 hours each week on the phone sourcing candidates.⁷ Because of the high volume of resumes coming in combined with inadequate applicant management capabilities, the average job vacancy duration⁸ reached 29 days – an all-time high. For STEM jobs⁹, it takes on average twice as long. For some jobs requiring more advanced skills, 6 months or longer is fairly common. It's a given that even recruiters have only 24 hours in a day and 7 days in a week. Finding more time is not an option.

As you can imagine, there are several business-changing consequences to these trends:

- Too many unqualified applicants congest the hiring process, making it harder to find qualified applicants and extending the duration of job openings.
- When jobs remain unfilled, related tasks are either delegated to inexperienced staff, or not performed at all. As a result the company's overall productivity and profitability suffers and some companies delay or scale back strategic initiatives.
- Alternatively, some companies feel compelled to hire people who are a poor fit for the job, either temperamentally or professionally. The result is that two-in-five hiring managers attributed a bad hire to pressure to fill the job opening¹⁰. This leads to employee turnover, mistakes and accidents, and overall inefficiency.

The new reality is if your business is going to compete effectively, it must hire (and retain) the most talented people in your industry. Traditional recruiting practices are no longer good enough to meet the challenges and demands. Today and going forward recruitment must be multi-faceted, streamlined and responsive too. The only viable option is for companies to start recruiting smarter to hire faster...and that is what this white paper is all about. I hope you find this paper interesting and helpful.

⁵ <http://cdn.theladders.net/static/images/basicSite/pdfs/TheLadders-EyeTracking-StudyC2.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.hreonline.com/HRE/view/story.jhtml?id=533345869>

⁷ <https://www.recruiter.com/i/5-compelling-statistics-about-recruiting-behavior/>

⁸ <http://dhihiringindicators.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-09-DHI-Hiring-Indicators-FINAL1.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2014/job-vacancies-and-stem-skills#/M10420>

¹⁰ <http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?sd=12/13/2012&id=pr730&ed=12/31/2012>

R-E-A-C-H More Qualified Applicants

Imagine how different recruiting¹¹ was just a few decades ago when a foreman in a Philadelphia railroad yard manager exited his office, crossed the workplace campus, and was met by a mob of job candidates each morning. Word of job openings spread like wildfire through the local neighborhoods and community. All that separated the foreman and his next hire was a fence. His whole recruitment and hiring process consisted of tossing a few oranges over that fence. Those lucky few men who caught an orange were invited through the gate entrance and put on the payroll. End of story.



Sourcing and recruiting workers today spins quite a different story. Thanks to technology, the information economy, and social media, job seekers are changing the rules of engagement. Reaching qualified applicants requires a robust strategy significantly more sophisticated than the arm strength of the manager, the eye-hand coordination of the candidate, and an ample supply of fruit.

Just like consumers who have become accustomed to doing online research before purchasing a product or service, job seekers do the same thing. They want to know what it's like to work for you before they apply. They check out your website and read reviews from customers and employees - current and former. If the company site isn't user-friendly and reviews are unfavorable, applicants can merely swipe their finger across a screen and move on to the next one.

What's a company to do? There are literally thousands of best recruiting practices available with a quick Google search, but the list can be narrowed down quickly into an acronym I've created – **REACH: Reach – Engage – Apply – Converse - Hire**

¹¹ <http://www.careerxroads.com/aolloquium/files/TheCandidateExperienceMonograph.pdf>

Reach

Job seekers today search for jobs the same way they search for a car, restaurant, or house – they ask their friends for advice, check review sites, and “Google” it. Ninety-one percent of job seekers in 2015 have started their job search and applied for a job using a mobile device¹². And on average, they use 18 different sources!¹³ But depending on a candidate’s demographics, skill sets, geography, and a dozen other factors, one person’s search might take him to LinkedIn or Twitter and another might lead him to the job search engine Indeed or a college career fair. Different job categories and locations too might influence where the top talent is hanging out. Finding your next hire will depend on your ability to be seen in the right places at the right times by enough qualified applicants.

Engage

First impressions matter and recruitment is no exception. Guess what happens when an interested candidate clicks to apply and is turned off by what they see on your career page? Almost nothing. In fact, for every 100 candidates who click from a job posting to a recruitment portal, surveys show that only 8 complete the application¹⁴ on a desktop. It’s even worse from a mobile device when fewer than 2 candidates¹⁵ who see your posting actually complete an application. Engagement occurs when a job seeker visits your website, reads online reviews about your company, connects with you and your employees on social media...and still wants to apply. Job posting content needs to motivate the applicant to do more than just click the apply button. It must convert the potential employee from the casual inquirer to an engaged participant. Unfortunately most company career pages are woefully unappealing - even to the most desperate applicant.

Apply

Even the best sourcing and engagement strategy falls short when the application process isn’t user-friendly. Considerable cost-savings and improvements in completion rates can be achieved when the application uses a “need to know” model. While 86 percent of all jobseekers¹⁶ start their job search on a mobile device, few company career sites are mobile

¹² <http://www.glassdoor.com/blog/9-10-job-seekers-search-jobs-mobile-glassdoor-state-mobile-job-search-survey/>

¹³ <http://careerbuildercommunications.com/candidatebehavior/>

¹⁴ https://www.appcast.io/mobile_recruiting_guide

¹⁵ https://www.appcast.io/mobile_recruiting_guide

¹⁶ <http://thehiringsite.careerbuilder.com/2015/01/19/2015-is-year-of-mobile-recruiting/>

optimized.¹⁷ Even worse, many companies still require an applicant to email a resume. That is just not a function that most applicants can and will perform using their smartphone. Application length matters too. Applications that take more than 15 minutes¹⁸ to complete experience 365% degradation in completion rates. The bottom line is this: Without the ability to at least start an applicant on a smartphone or tablet, the abandonment rate is ridiculously high, especially when recruiting Millennials and tech-savvy candidates. And if the application is too difficult or too long to complete, job seekers won't apply. Companies must streamline the way they ask questions, the number of questions they ask, and adapt to the way job seekers want to apply if they expect to REACH more candidates.

Converse

Getting candidates to apply is hard enough but turning a deaf ear to them ("ghosting"¹⁹) after they do is just a horrific practice.²⁰ Just ask anyone who has recently applied for a job and the universal complaint is the deafening silence they experience. When a candidate submits an application, it is just common courtesy for the company to at least acknowledge them. Not responding is just unacceptable. Even the unqualified applicant deserves some response. Who knows - they could be a future customer or know someone who is qualified for one of those hard-to-fill positions. Instead of ignoring applicants, start a conversation. Update them on their application status frequently. Invite them to subscribe to a newsletter or blog or future webinar that keeps them informed about your company, your products, your opportunities. Like customers, communication is essential to building your brand and sustaining your reputation.

Hire

Most companies believe the selection process ends when a job offer is extended and a candidate accepts. Nothing can be further from the truth. One in five final applicants turn down or get cold feet and renege on offers. For those that move forward, nearly half of all new hires fail in the first 18 months.²¹ For sure, the number is even higher for many hourly and lower wage jobs. In reality, the hiring stage ends only after a new hire has been successfully on-boarded and integrated into the company culture and his job.

¹⁷ <https://www.jibe.com/blog/9-global-recruiting-statistics-every-talent-acquisition-leader-should-know/>

¹⁸ https://www.appcast.io/mobile_recruiting_guide

¹⁹ <http://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/blog/why-ghosting-recruiting-needs-stop#>.

²⁰ <http://careerbuildercommunications.com/candidatebehavior/>

²¹ <http://www.leadershipiq.com/blogs/leadershipiq/35354241-why-new-hires-fail-emotional-intelligence-vs-skills>

Start Here to REACH More Applicants!

No matter how talented your human resources staff, their effectiveness is hindered if they don't have the tools and strategy to make screening and hiring processes easier to design, execute, and manage.

Use Recruitment Marketing Tools More Effectively

Most companies limit candidate sourcing to ads they post online and in print media. But that's a narrow and misleading mindset. Recruitment marketing includes all communications that an organization uses to reach and engage job seekers, from the job posting and personal emails to social media and career fairs. Here's a short list of marketing tools, many of which are free, available to any size company in any industry.

Career site

Every company must have its own career site, even if it is only one page. When the only job posting is placed on a third party site (such as CareerBuilder or Indeed), the marketing opportunity starts and ends when you stop paying, typically 30 days. During that time, the job posting often slides off the first page or two as new competitor opportunities are posted, unless you invest in sponsored ads. But those too only work as long as you keep funding the meter. A company career site optimized for search engines on the other hand keeps your job posting front and center, 365/24/7. It also provides opportunity to show off your company and its brand. In addition to posting open positions, highlight images of your facility and employees and provide contact details. Make sure to include photos and videos – they bring your culture to life, giving candidates an inside view of what it's like to work there. Video might also feature a brief introduction of managers, “a day in the life” at your company, and testimonials from employees. While professionalism is important, don't be afraid to post “YouTube” quality videos and even selfies. They appeal to the modern-day candidate seeking authenticity, not promotional hype.

Job posting

Tell a compelling story. Job descriptions need to be convincing (and optimized) too. Avoid cutting and pasting the description you use internally. A job posting should reflect and define your employer brand and list realistic requirements that attract talent with the right potential rather than scare them away. Don't forget that job titles must be keyword optimized and similar

to what candidates will use in their search. Describe your company culture but be authentic and transparent, not full of rhetoric and buzzwords. Use specific descriptions of required (not just desirable) experience and education and connect them to the job, culture, and overall mission of the company. If a certification, degree, or experience isn't essential, omit it.

Social media

To attract enough qualified talent today, effective recruiting requires the intelligent use of social media. Unfortunately social media is so easily abused and misused. Social recruiting also requires the technical skills of marketing, sales, and data science and the art of conversation all rolled up in one - skill sets many HR professionals haven't acquired. And whether management likes it or not, a company owns but no longer controls its brand. What other people are saying and how they view your company is what your brand is. If you don't have company profiles built and optimized for social media channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, other people are talking about you on social media even when you're not. And if they're not that might be an even bigger problem! If your company and employees are not connected, top talent may question whether your company is an attractive place to work. Ultimately consumers and job candidates alike don't really care about the company message you want them to hear. They want to know if you really walk the talk. Creating a strategy, maintaining an active presence and regularly publishing content is a great way to amplify your job openings. Besides the very best source for talent is still referrals and social media is like word-of-mouth on steroids.

Blog

Start a business blog to showcase who you are and what you stand for. Attract candidates with relevant articles and posts about what it's like to work for your company. Include tips about how to prepare for an interview and improve career skills. Encourage employees to write articles about their career, working at your company, and even where and how they volunteer. Feature company news and employee success stories too. And don't hesitate to offer advice for professional and personal development, even if it's not related specifically to your company. You might even consider department or job-specific blogs (such as tech or sales) for hard-to-fill positions.

Events

Who said that face to face events are dead. Despite the perception that Millennials only communicate electronically, surveys confirm that they value face-to-face meetings as much if not more than other generations. But events take time and money. While college job fairs and other networking events are still effective, they are not always practical. Online events are growing in popularity. They are affordable and as simple as scheduling a webinar or conference call on Skype or Google Hangout. Announce job openings to participants during a scheduled webinar and then have an open discussion about the job, what it's like to work at the company, or just open it up for question. Or schedule some time each week to answer questions posted by candidates on sites like Quora or within LinkedIn groups.

Email Marketing

Despite the disdain for email, it still can be effective. Emails continue to read by most people, particularly when the content is targeted to them. Create emails that inspire, engage, and delight both passive and active candidates. While personalized messages are preferred, tasteful automated ones work too. As for definite no-no's- do not blast out emails with generic messages that reek of advertising. They will likely be deleted or identified as spam. They may even do more harm than good. Email marketing requires informative, useful, and engaging content to a targeted audience.

Ultimately the purpose of recruiting is to fill open positions. Turnover and new position creation opens up jobs all the time so it makes sense to avoid recreating the wheel every time. The recruiting tools mentioned above allow an organization to build a talent pipeline, an engaged database of qualified candidates from which recruiters can continuously pull candidates.

But let's not forget about opportunities available through some traditional recruiting sources that can be improved by tweaking them a bit.

Classified ads have long been a standard tool for recruiters, and now print ads can be supplemented by digital ads. Classified ads may still work because they often appear only on locally-based sites, which is a plus when the local labor pool holds some possibilities. Classified ads may also be useful in certain industries when well-read publications or association websites reach the right audience. They can be particularly helpful to attract the highly skilled specialized employee. But classified ads, especially print ads, take more time to get published and get

noticed. They take the shotgun approach to advertising rather than a more focus strategy, similar to the cattle call approach described earlier in this paper. Classified ads typically cost more, deliver lower ROI, and do not produce consistently good results.

Job boards like Monster, Careerbuilder, Indeed, and SimplyHired allow you to post ads in searchable databases that are seen by people all over the country as well as around the world. But these sites are often flooded with spam ads, making it harder for job seekers to find your ads. These sites also have options for employers to pay fees to search their databases. Like the spam ads, it's just as likely that many of the candidates in the database are not qualified. The process is equivalent to finding the proverbial needle in the haystack, a tactic that requires a lot of time and resources – assets in short supply.

Internal job boards are possibly the most effective means of recruiting, especially when a company has invested successfully in extensive workforce planning and succession management. Internal job boards enable you to recruit from within your organization, allowing current employees to apply before anyone else does. Since these candidates are already familiar with your organization, the orientation time is drastically shorter. But the pool of candidates is smaller, and understanding the business isn't the same as understanding the job.

In short, multiple sourcing and recruiting options can help:

- Expand the pool of potential candidates, both in terms of numbers and geographic location;
- Slash advertising costs through free and low-cost listing sites;
- Allow ads to go viral through content marketing and social media;
- And reach both passive and active job seekers.

But they can also stifle or even cripple an organization:

- More candidates doesn't mean more *qualified* candidates;
- The high volume of resumes is hard to manage, making screening more difficult;
- Recruiters can't always link the applicant to the sourcing channel;
- Channels are often used in isolation without an integrated recruiting strategy.

Optimize! Become “Mad-Men” of Recruiting

In a search-driven digital world, recruiting tools like those just described are merely commodities – available to anyone who wants to use them. But that doesn't mean you should declare them useless. What differentiates one company from the next and one campaign from the next is how well content is targeted and optimized. And that requires HR to begin thinking like digital marketers.

Unfortunately for as long as one can remember, marketing and HR have coexisted like oil and water. Today they must blend together like sugar and spice. It's time for HR and especially recruiters to adopt a marketing mindset and partner with marketing departments and professionals to REACH more applicants. When it comes to online marketing, HR is woefully behind.

Here's one example of the major disconnect. When a company decides to advertise for a job, HR typically reaches for its job description and performs a copy and paste. The job description may be legally compliant but functionally useless for marketing. It often contains few if any searchable keywords. In comparison when a candidate begins his job search, he reaches for his mobile device. A recent CareerBuilder study in fact found that 86 percent of all job searches begin on a mobile device. He then enters a few keywords into Google, most often the job title. Sometimes an applicant might search for the company name. Other times it could be a specific skill. Whatever words or phrases he types, they better be included in the company's job posting (but are typically not!) Without the right keywords and content, the chances of getting noticed are slim to none. Just like searches for anything from restaurants to headline news, getting your job posting to show up on the first page or two is critical too.

The first milestone of any recruitment campaign then is to get the job posting seen. If applicants don't know you have a job opening, they can't apply. Consequently, to reach and attract more applicants, marketing content must be laced within the fabric of recruiting. Here are a few basic tips for writing online job postings that get noticed.

Let me start by introducing a new acronym into the EEO-ADA-FMLA-NLRB-FCRA-and-so-on lexicon of HR.

SEO

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. Of course, you might be thinking what the heck does SEO have to do with HR? Isn't that a function of online marketers and website developers? Yes, of course it is. But recruiting today is as much marketing as it is HR and SEO is an essential ingredient.

To be discovered by job applicants more often and more quickly, content must be optimized and that includes the job title, job posting and job description. With over 300 million job-related searches just on Google each month and more than 24,000 gigabytes of data uploaded to the Internet every second, it is all too easy for your job posting to be an insignificant and invisible blip in a sea of information.

Do Research First

Keywords are like cookie crumbs. They lead an applicant to the treasure. Whatever words or phrases an applicant is typing are the same words or phrases that a recruiter should be using in the job posting. Think about how job seekers search for jobs. Type different words and phrases into Google and other search engines. Do the same things on job boards like Monster and CareerBuilder. What jobs show up on top? What words did your competitors use to rank number one in job searches? Add those keywords to your ad copy, and you'll increase the chances that the people you're looking for will see your job posting.

Use Simple, Search-Friendly Job Titles

Use familiar titles commonly used in your industry. Instead of Customer Care Associate (which might be the job title in your company), use Customer Service Representative in order for people to find your listing. It could be the catalyst that pushes your job opening out to thousands of potential applicants or the choice that buries it deep out of sight. Better yet, be as specific as possible - Home & Bath Customer Service Representative. Promote an opening for Web Developer and keep Coding Extraordinaire for the name plate and business card. Instead of Director of First Impression, simply call the job what it is: a Receptionist.

Optimize Your Content

Search engines depend on content which includes text, images, and video with relevant keywords and phrases. I repeat: a copy-and-paste from your standard job description just doesn't work. Be creative. Repeat the keyword 2 or 3 times and use 3 to 5 related words or phrases throughout the description. Use bullet points to make the description easy to read. Does your company have or sell a recognizable brand or use abbreviations such as RN for Registered Nurse? Include them too. Many job seekers search location + job title. Make sure you include location (city and state) too.

Be Specific

If a job description is too vague, you'll receive resumes from people who are either unqualified for the job or wouldn't be interested in doing it. To better match tasks to talent, write detailed ads with better descriptions (including key search terms described above) of the requirements and tasks. This discourages ill-fitted candidates from applying, and those that do apply will know exactly what the job entails.

Add a Code to Each Ad

In a perfect world, every company should have a comprehensive analytics system to measure the response to each ad, social media post, and link. But even without that, you can still get a basic breakdown of how well each ad is performing. Assign a unique code to each ad and ask applicants to include it with their applications. This gives you at least a general idea of which ads are working.

1970 Called and Wants Its Recruiting Model Back.

It's time to automate. Truth be told, many companies today still manage recruiting as their grandparents did. They manually accept, sort, review, evaluate, and file resumes and applications. Long after the campaign is over a few organizations may create a spreadsheet to evaluate its success or failure, costs to hire, and other metrics. But that is a post mortem approach. At best it allows a company to learn from its mistakes the next time an opening exists. But because labor market conditions are dynamic and unpredictable, fighting the war for talent with old data is like entering a gun fight with a knife. There is one sure benefit to recruiting the way you have always – job security. The old methods are mostly ineffective and costly today. It is time to automate many recruiting functions to allow recruiters to focus their time on what really matters – research, outreach, interviewing, and continuously improving quality of hire.

Whatever your recruitment strategy you use, data on your candidates in today's world will come from multiple sources and multiple people. It is also often amended and supplemented during the course of the hiring process. Each candidate's profile also may be spread out over several system (or desks). Resumes and applications may contain duplicate or outdated information when they are not overlooked, incomplete, and misplaced. The end result is a mountain of paper and cabinets filled with folders and no semblance of order or logic in your process. And the worst example of efficiency occurs when the candidate you need today is already in your hiring system. Because you have no simple way to mine your data in a sea of emails (or locate the right file strewn across desks and floors), you start the process all over. This is expensive, time consuming, and non-productive.

Fortunately there is an easy, affordable, and effective fix. Technology has become an extension of many functions of business. Why should HR be granted an exception? It's time to adopt and reap the benefits of an applicant tracking system (ATS).

The right ATS leverages automation to replace low value administrative tasks and allow recruiters and hiring managers to focus on the mission critical aspects of employee selection – interviewing and testing qualified candidates. Just as important, the right system tracks the effectiveness of each source, collects real-time data, and allows just-in-time analysis of what's working and what's not – from sourcing to time- and cost-to-hire and quality-of-hire.

Here are a few additional benefits that come from automated recruiting and screening.

Faster Recruiting

Think about all the time you spend gathering resumes and cover letters, reviewing them, and organizing them into categories that help you weed out the most (and least) qualified candidates. With time to hire at an all-time high, automation is a strategic necessity. The right ATS can screen and sort qualified from unqualified candidates with several keystrokes, not hundreds of hours of processing paperwork, exchanging voice mail and emails, and wasting time interviewing unqualified candidates. Time saved using applicant tracking software is time better spent on seeking the best sourcing channels and spending more quality time interviewing potentially good fit candidates. Anything that shortens the time required to fill an open position returns big dividends to the bottom line.

Higher Productivity

Low-level but time intensive administrative functions only drag out the process and add unnecessary costs. It is not unusual for HR managers to hire additional staff to collect and organize their records, but those costs add up over time. Plus, even those workers can be put to better use if they're handling more important tasks in the recruiting process. An effective hiring system ensures that job openings are filled quickly with quality hires.

More Qualified Applicants

The time most recruiters spend on each resume and application is far too short to make informed decisions and be confident that the chosen candidate is right for the job. With an applicant tracking system to collect, organize, and data mine applicant data, qualified candidates rise to the top of the stack much more quickly. Recruiters can then focus and take time to scour and scrutinize candidates most likely to succeed.

Lower Costs

At first glance, an applicant tracking system might seem like yet another expense that your organization can't afford. But look over the benefits listed above; they all lead to greater returns on investment.

How to Implement Successfully

We live in unprecedented times. Shortages of skilled workers, economic volatility, persistent turnover and a host of other factors are the new normal. While automation will ultimately be required to improve your recruiting process, it's not a magic bullet. The decision shouldn't be made out of desperation. Nor should management expect miracles. Be realistic and define clear expectations.

Most importantly, any time technology is implemented, work flow changes. Long gone are the days when technology simply helped make a manual or arduous task easier. Today technology improves productivity but it also disrupts how things get done. That's not a bad thing. It's just a fact. The better you plan, the smoother the implementation, and the quicker you will see results.

Whenever you're considering an automated recruiting system, keep these things in mind.

You still need people.

Applicant tracking systems make HR management easier, but they don't eliminate the need for people. Effective recruitment still requires people, especially to nurture passive candidates. It is still a relationship business. While applicant tracking software provides a place to store and organize information on potential candidates, it can't replace the human intelligence and touch needed to write engaging job postings, conduct interviews, and analyze the strengths and merits of each candidate. At least not yet! For now, use applicant tracking software to help people be more productive, not replace them.

Get people involved

Every business has that one person who refuses to change. He prefers the old way of doing things, and he hates the changes around him. That person's stubbornness can hold back the entire organization because everyone else has to accommodate his refusal to adapt. But waiting for people to catch up on the skills required to do what's needed ends badly for most companies. Engage stakeholders before you purchase the system. They do the job every day and understand the work flow. Getting users involved in the buying decision always makes implementation easier.

Thorough training is essential

It takes time to learn a new system, but the more training and support you provide, the less time

it takes. Besides, it's not learning a new system that causes the most problems. It's the change in workflow going from paper to digital or changing from one software program to another. Hold training sessions before implementing the system so people can become familiar with it. Discuss the workflow – what will change from the way things are done now compared to after the system is implemented. Once in place, provide a support system that helps users resolve last-minute kinks or get quick refreshers on basic tasks. Be diligent about breaking users of old habits and transitioning them to the new system as soon as possible. And be sure you have managers ready to hold laggards accountable.

Don't overbuy

For many companies, the temptation is to purchase a system with lots of bells and whistles. Don't do it! You will likely pay for more than you need and by the time you're ready to use more advanced features, new updates will be required or even new competitors are available. Features you don't plan to use right away also impede training and implementation. Like any software, many of the available features are nice to have but rarely if ever used. Just think about one of the most popular software systems in the world – Microsoft Office. How many people really use all the programs included or the advanced functions? Identify your goals and purchase accordingly.

Conclusion

The state of recruiting is at a crossroads. The number of recruiting channels has exploded. The new economy has flooded talent pipelines with record levels of unemployed, underemployed, and disengaged workers. This has led to an explosion of resumes and applications, which has essentially overwhelmed the time and resources available to recruiters, hiring managers, and HR. It has dramatically cut the time dedicated to each candidate at a time when talent due diligence carries greater importance than ever before.

This increasingly complex recruiting and hiring process combined with a volatile and uncertain labor market has increased the demand for a much more efficient and effective recruiting process. Automating portions of the applicant screening process is strategically essential. Companies that automate see lower recruiting costs, faster hiring, better quality of hires, and a more productive workforce. If your company wants to stay competitive, upgrade your REACH, focus on a better candidate experience, and arm your HR team with an automated tracking system. Before you know it, you'll be screening faster and hiring smarter, too.

About Success Performance Solutions

Success Performance Solutions is one of the nation's premier providers of employment testing, leadership tests and evaluations, and applicant tracking software for small and medium sized business. The company consistently differentiates itself from the competition with exceptional 1:1 customer service and its proprietary CriteriaOne® Whole Person Approach. From the small mom-and-pop business to companies with up to 10,000 employees, we deliver best practice solutions and prompt, courteous, and reliable service. And our founder and president Ira S Wolfe is recognized as one of the industry thought leaders in employee assessment and workforce trends.

About Ira S Wolfe

With an uncanny perspective and innovative approach to recruiting, hiring, and workforce trends Dr. Ira S Wolfe has become a renowned thought leader and popular speaker/writer on talent management. For over 20 years he has helped hundreds of companies, recruiters, and other consultants reach, engage, hire, and retain top performing employees, from the custodian to the CEO.

Described as a Gen Y trapped in a Baby Boomer body, Dr. Wolfe is president of Success Performance Solutions (<http://www.successperformancesolutions.com>), He is the author of the books *Geeks, Geezers, and Googlization: How to Manage the Unprecedented Convergence of the Wired, the Tired, and Technology in the Workplace* and *The Perfect Labor Storm 2.0*. He recently launched an online learning course titled *Recruiting Gen Y*, available on Udemy. He is a columnist for *Business2BusinessMagazine*, *Huffington Post*, and several regional and industry business journals and blogs. He's been featured recently in articles in *INC Magazine*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes*, *Business Week*, *NFIB, Inc.*, *Intuit Small Business* and *Fox Business*.

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