

What's Hot

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I am always looking for trends, new ways of doing things, or emerging practices that are changing, or at least influencing, the way we attract, source, assess, and recruit talent. Some of them will most likely slip into history with little impact, but others will become the new way we do things.

Twitter is a recent example of an application that seemed of little practical use to recruiting until hundreds of people began to apply their creativity and developed interesting and useful ways to use Twitter for recruiting. It is being used by many organizations to announce new jobs to those potential candidates who follow them. It is used to help the recently unemployed stay connected and aware of open positions. It is used to communicate with a select group of prospective candidates or to students on a campus.

Here are three trends that I see as potentially significant. Please leave a comment letting us know what you are seeing, and what other tools, applications, or practices you think are emerging.

Simplicity in Sourcing

The first of the emerging trends is a turn to simpler and more basic ways to find talent. With a rise in applicants, many organizations are finding it less necessary to deploy search specialists or engage in complex sourcing strategies. They can focus, instead, on building their employment brand, often by using Facebook or some other social networking tool. They are also screening existing candidates better and are more focused on building a talent pool or community that can be tapped into as needed. In addition, many are tapping their own workforce for internal redeployment and for referrals.

All of this has reduced the need for in-depth Internet search and it has also lowered the need to post to job boards. In organizations with proactive recruiting teams, internal placements may reach as high as 15% while over 30% may come from referrals. With another 20% being sourced by third-party recruiters for reasons of confidentiality or because the particular job is very specialized, only a small percentage needs to be sourced in other ways. A good social network page linked to an interactive career site can probably close much of that gap, leaving a tiny fraction to Internet search or job boards.

As I wrote in my article last week, a comprehensive talent strategy combined with internal development can reduce recruiting requirements significantly. I see this as a continued and growing trend, which ultimately means organizations will employ fewer recruiters but highly skilled in networking, relationship building, and who deeply understand the business.

Social Networks

We are seeing the power of social networking in recruiting growing faster than any other segment. Candidates are able to substitute their social networking profile for a resume at some organizations. Jobvite, an emerging applicant tracking tool listed by Gartner as one of its "Cool Vendors for Human Capital Software 2009," allows candidates to simply

link to their Facebook or LinkedIn profiles. No need for a resume or to fill out anything. Jobvite also provides an organization a button to place on their career site that lets prospective candidates see the people in their network that already work at that organization. This provides candidates with ready-made connections into the organization as well as a source of information.

Social networks will become the ultimate sourcing and screening tools. Recruiters and particularly hiring managers will be able to see a more 3-D version of a person and get a much better sense of their past accomplishments and capabilities. But there are negatives, and many recruiters are concerned about candidate privacy and discrimination. The truth is, discrimination can and does occur in face-to-face conversations, in interviews, and even over the phone because of accents and the way people phrase things. Every new technology and application has to pass through a maturity curve, which is happening rapidly for social networks. Laws will change and policies will adapt to accommodate them.

I think that over time candidates will find that they are better treated and more completely able to present themselves than they can today. I think that as social networking matures, candidates will find themselves moving from a generic social network like Facebook to more specific ones aimed at an industry segment or a profession, and then perhaps to organizational-specific ones. We will have to wait a while to see what model eventually takes shape, but the roots are growing and resumes, traditional profiles, and static career sites will fade away.

Internal Redeployment

Smart organizations prevent the needless loss of talent by developing barrier-free internal transfer policies, by shifting talent and skills as jobs change, and by operating development and coaching programs to help employees successfully bridge skill and experience gaps.

They are also beginning to practice sustainable talent management — sizing the workforce for sustainability through good and bad times — and filling peak needs with temporary and contract staff. But sustainability is not just about numbers; it is also about having the right skills spread across all employees. This means development is continuous, internal movement common and often, and that a goal is for every employee to be able to function well in three or four different positions.

The natural result of this will be more focus on employee development, the rise of learning portals with relevant information and on-line training classes; the capturing of the knowledge of experienced employees on videos (using storytelling, talking about how projects were completed and barriers overcome, and by sharing technical knowledge that might be useful to those who follow); and connections to coaches and experts willing to answer questions or provide skill training.

We will see that more and more people will stay with a single employer for longer periods of time, as they find it easy to get refreshed and retrained.