2011 Social Recruiting Trends & Strategies

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Overview: Recruiting in 2011

For the past few years, the economy has significantly impacted hiring and recruiting trends across the nation. As higher numbers of anxious job seekers competed for fewer jobs, HR and talent acquisition staff within companies were also reduced. "They just might not come out to campus to recruit for them. They might post them online and [use] less expensive recruiting methods," said Andrea Koncz, employment information manager at NACE.[i]

However, times are changing—for the better. According to the seasonally adjusted results of the latest *Manpower Employment Outlook Survey*, conducted quarterly by Manpower Inc., "Among U.S. employers surveyed, 14% expect to add to their workforces, and 10% expect a decline in their payrolls during Quarter 1 2011 … When seasonal variations are removed from the data, the Outlook is +9%, the most promising hiring expectations reported since Quarter 4 2008. Survey results suggest that employers expect a slight increase in the hiring pace during the January – March 2011 period compared to the last three months of 2010." [ii]

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *Job Outlook 2011*, the job market is off to a positive start for 2011. Employers responding to the NACE *Job Outlook 2011 Fall Preview* survey reported plans to hire 13.5% more new bachelor's graduates than the previous year.[iii]

Small and large companies, career centers, recruiters and staffing firms alike will develop strategic social recruiting plans to create and maintain relationships with prospective candidates through social media and branding tactics. Recruiters and staffing firms have begun to focus on the strategy of social recruiting; career centers potentially will forgo a transition from traditional career fairs to virtual Web-based solutions; and job boards will no longer be the primary source for candidates as employers increase demand for higher quality candidates and candidates demand higher quality communications from employers and recruiters.

With over 85 million members on LinkedIn, 175 million registered users on Twitter, and 500 million active Facebook users, social recruiting will be a great asset to those employers that plan on increasing staff by attracting the best, multitalented candidates through transparent, two-way communication sources like talent communities and social networking sites.

In addition, HR personnel and hiring managers will need to focus on social recruitment marketing solutions, like Cachinko, which offer talent community management features and social applicant tracking systems to ensure their recruitment efforts are efficient and cost-effective.

Social Recruiting Strategies & Benefits

According to Michigan State University's *Recruiting Trends 2010-2011*, four distinct categories of recruiting strategies have emerged:

- Arranged Events (fairs, campus interviews, campus visits): accommodates large companies and the larger end of mid-size employers.

- Agent Connections (resume referrals, faculty, internships, employees): accommodates larger companies, fast growth and small organizations.

- Situational (ads and state & local job boards): accommodates small and mid-size companies.

- Web-based (campus recruiting systems, social media, national web providers): all size groups utilize the same except that social media is almost exclusively utilized by large companies.[iv]

Among the four mentioned, social recruiting has become the primary focus of many recruiters and staffing firms because, unlike various search engines and job boards, social recruiting strategies promote transparent, two-way communication between an employer and job seeker through:

- Top Social Networking Sites
- Talent Communities
- Social Applicant Tracking Systems
- Job Marketing

Throughout 2011, social recruiting will continue to provide employers and job seekers with a clear understanding of job qualifications, requirements and expectations, resulting in continuous return on investment (ROI), increased network building, and productive referral engagement.

Overall, social recruiting strategies enable more effective networking between candidates and employers, and they provide effective engagement opportunities to attract and retain both passive and active job seekers at a significantly lower cost compared to traditional techniques.

Top Social Networking Sites

Although social networking sites have seen tremendous growth in the past few years, according to Michigan State University's *Recruiting Trends 2010-2011*, the use of social media for recruiting is still limited to only 28% of the 4,600 employers surveyed, predominantly among larger employers.[iv]

Linked in

- LinkedIn has over 85 million members in over 200 countries.
- A new member joins LinkedIn approximately every second, and about half of its members are outside the U.S.
- Executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members.[v]

LinkedIn allows recruiters and hiring managers to target passive candidates (those not currently searching for a new position), send direct messages through InMail, post jobs, interact through LinkedIn Groups and LinkedIn Answers, set up automatic search alerts, and set profile reminders. LinkedIn allows employers to leverage their already-existing personal and professional networks through its platform.

twitter

- Twitter has 175 million registered users.

- There are 95 million tweets written per day.[vi]

- Significantly more users are disclosing their location, bio and website information on Twitter profiles. The number of Twitter users offering this information has doubled to 63.3%, compared to 31 percent in 2009.

- In 2010, 82% of Twitter users provided a name with their account; in 2009, only about 33% did. From January to August 2010, new users accounted for nearly 44% of the total Twitter population.[vii]

Twitter gives recruiters and hiring managers a platform to interact with a variety of candidates through short, personal messages. It also helps them get to know other recruiters and employers and share resources and information with one another.

With Twitter's 140-character messaging, recruiters and employers can promote job openings to their followers and target the message accordingly. Twitter's hashtags (#), lists, direct messaging (DMs), and search features make it a valuable tool for finding and interacting with candidates.

facebook

- Facebook has more than 500 million active users.

- On an average day, 50 percent of active users log on to Facebook.

- The average Facebook user has 130 friends.

- People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook *Mobile*.

- There are more than 200 million active users currently accessing Facebook through their mobile devices.

- People who use Facebook on their mobile devices are twice as active on Facebook than non-mobile users.

- There are more than 200 mobile operators in 60 countries working to deploy and promote Facebook mobile products.[ix]

On Facebook, an employer can have a personal presence and a professional fan page. Recruiting can occur through traditional postings on their company fan page, or through more innovative methods such as using Facebook Ads to target desired candidates. Although Facebook is thought of primarily as a personal networking site, many recruiters and hiring managers are leveraging its wide reach and large audience for influencing potential candidates.

Talent Communities

Talent Communities vs. Talent Pools

According to talent management expert Kevin Wheeler, there are a few key differences between a talent pool and a talent community. Talent pools are essentially a database of candidates' names, whereas talent communities allow for two-way interaction between the employer and the candidate. A talent community also has other distinguishing features:

- Collaboration and sharing of ideas and opinions
- Feeling of belonging and being included
- Sharing of similar values
- Openness and trust
- Engagement and responsiveness

Why would a recruiter or hiring manager prefer a talent community to a pool of candidates? Networking within a community facilitates building one's personal and professional brand. Building a talent community allows an employer the opportunity to get to know candidates personally while the company strengthens its brand. Unlike an e-mail opt-in database, a talent community fosters a deeper connection with prospective candidates. Candidates who like the company and the values the company espouses will share the company's brand and jobs with their personal and professional networks.

Talent communities, much like social networking sites, give candidates and employers a platform to interact and communicate. Having a relationship with candidates prior to a job opening allows the recruiter to skip some of the time-consuming steps of the hiring process (if they so desire) such as posting the job opening, receiving résumés, and determining which candidates are qualified. Instead, they are able to market their jobs precisely directly to the most qualified candidates in their network, to a specific network of candidates with the desired skills, or they can share the opportunity with their entire community.

Talent communities also allow recruiters to have up-to-date information on candidates at the click of a button. A traditional database or "pool" of candidates can quickly become a poor source of information on candidates because it is updated infrequently (or never), whereas a talent community allows the candidate to update their profile directly whenever they've accepted a new job, learned another skill, etc.[x]

In an article written by Kevin Wheeler titled, "It's All About Talent Communities," he said:

> Databases suffer from two major problems when it comes to being effective recruiting tools.
>
> **First of all they tend to get old very quickly, and the data about the people is frequently not current and often not even usable at all.** While no one that I know of has done actual research on the quality of the data in corporate résumé databases, I know from experience and from working with many clients that it is poor.
>
> **The second problem databases have is that they tell you very little.** All a recruiter knows about the candidate is whatever is in the résumé/profile itself. There is no additional information, no personal observations, and seldom any useful reference data. Because the résumés have been added mostly through impersonal methods, the candidates are unknown to the recruiters.[xi]

When executed effectively, a talent community can benefit a company in the following ways:

- Qualified candidates are available to contact by recruiter's fingertips
- Serving as an initial pre-screen of a candidate
- Less dependence on expensive and ineffective job boards
- Less money spent on job advertisements
- Increased interaction with potential candidates
- Access to an extended network of potential candidates
- Better quality of applicants to job openings
- Creating a talent pipeline for future openings
- Attracting passive candidates

How to Build Your Own Talent Community

Make your careers page a central destination for candidates, recruiters, hiring managers, current employees, and past employees ("alumni"). Instead of defaulting to merely listing job openings, create an interactive site with testimonials, forums, groups, and messaging capabilities. The key is to go beyond creating a talent pool or database of names and résumés and start interacting directly with candidates.

Social Applicant Tracking Systems

Traditionally, applicant tracking systems (ATS) were developed for recruiters to manage job applications and résumé data. They allowed employers to create a database of information on candidates, automate collection of certain data needed in the hiring process, and analyze certain aspects of the recruitment process.

With nearly one-third of employers starting to use social media for recruitment, social applicant tracking systems are becoming more important for tracking recruiting efforts and collecting data.

Social applicant tracking systems go beyond traditional ATS to also allow tracking of social media efforts. For example, Cachinko's social ATS has the following features:

- SEO company career page
- Candidates can upload résumés
- Analytics and reporting set up per requirements
- Interview status workflow
- Candidate profile management
- Job postings pushed to the internet and job aggregators attracting jobseekers back to your job site

- SEO social job listing pages
- Supports multiple recruiters & sourcers
- Event calendar
- Employee profile management
- Referral reward payment processing
- Referral tracking

Social applicant tracking systems typically integrate directly into an organization's talent community or careers site to allow a recruiter to track their efforts with candidates. A social ATS shows the employer or recruiter the number of hits their pages receive, where their traffic comes from, which candidates they are interacting with the most, and much more.[xii]

Job Marketing

According to _Recruiting Trends 2010-2011_ from Michigan State University, many organizations use multiple methods to find talent. Though employers are still using more "traditional" means to find candidates (i.e., paper résumés or referrals), social media is used at least 28% of the time.[iv]

Social recruiting has also changed the face of typical job marketing tactics, like career fair attendance. According to _Recruiting Trends_, many career fairs have actually gone virtual. Unlike in-person career fairs, virtual career fairs give employers a chance to not only find and attract local talent, but also state- and nation-wide talent at a fraction of the cost of attending and exhibiting on campus career fairs.

According to research conducted by Jobvite, recruiting through social networks is even higher, with 73.3% of organizations having used social media to recruit talent.[xiv]

"While the economy begins to recover, companies looking to make new hires are seeking the most cost-effective, efficient ways to find new talent. Job boards launched a revolution in recruiting more than 15 years ago. And now, social networks are doing the same—but in a targeted way. Through social recruiting, companies are learning they can find the best talent efficiently, without making a major investment," Dan Finnigan, Jobvite president and CEO, said.

The very nature of social media enables the creation and maintenance of relationships. As a result, job marketing fits in perfectly. According to Jobvite, 58% of respondents indicated that candidates were hired through social networks. The use of Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn were also noted as means of finding talent:

- Almost 80% of those polled said LinkedIn was used as a form of recruitment. Of that, 90% of respondents indicated success of finding the right candidate.
- Facebook was used a form of recruitment 55% of the time, with a 27.5% success rate.
- Twitter was utilized at a rate of 45%. Of that, 14.2% found sufficient talent.[xiv]

Virtual interviews are also being conducted as a new way to weed out candidates. According to _Recruiting Trends_, messaging technologies such as Skype have made interviewing not only easier, but also more cost effective:

- 25% of the respondents have used virtual interviews
- 19% conduct virtual interviews once or twice a year
- 6% use virtual interviews regularly[iv]

Social Recruiting Trends

Small & Large Companies

The beauty of social recruiting is that it can be performed by both small and large organizations. It is usually the most cost-effective tactic recruiters can utilize since there is little risk associated with it.

According to *Inc. Magazine*, there are multiple steps and applications in which organizations can invest their time so that they can transition from traditional to social recruiting effectively. You must make sure you understand each social networking application properly. Since every candidate is different, the types of candidates you may want will reflect the sites they use. For example:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Facebook[xv]

See the "Top Social Networking Sites" section for more details about each.

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Recruiters/Staffing Firms

While social recruiting is a benefit to many recruiters and staffing firms, there are concerns about the validity of social media profiles as well as the strategies behind this evolving recruiting process. However, building talent communities within secure social recruitment solutions and utilizing integrated job posting tools will keep organizations away from those potential pitfalls.

SmashFly TECHNOLOGIES   In the article, "Why Social Recruiting Fails!," marketing specialist for SmashFly Technologies, Chris Brablc, clarifies most recruiters' position on social recruiting:

"Social recruiting has been a really hot topic in recruiting over the past year with a variety of opinions on either side of the fence in terms of it being a viable recruiting strategy going forward or a fad that will die out in the next few years. I for one, think that social recruiting or the act of utilizing social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to engage and recruit qualified candidates can be an important part of your overall recruitment marketing strategy."[xvi]

With regard to the concerns of recruiters, here are five ways (summarized) that Brablc suggests as opportunities to avoid social recruiting failure:

1. **Create an overall strategy.**
   There needs to be a strategy behind your social recruiting. Who is in charge of your profiles? What content will you share with your followers/contacts (this is important!)? Have a strategy to determine what you want from social recruiting.

2. **Determine and follow through with measurement.**
   Here are a few ways to measure your social media impact:

   - Career site (talent community) hits

- Mentions/RT's/messages
- Social applicant tracking systems (ATS)

3. **Allocate time for the process.**
   While social recruiting is cost-friendly, it is expensive in terms of labor hours, at least initially. So take note that there will be a time commitment associated with it.

4. **Transparency.**
   Transparency in the social media world is the best policy, and the more you stay on top of comments about your company on these channels, the faster you can deal with problems and figure out what's broken in your process.

5. **Don't treat it like a job board.**
   Social media is about engaging, having conversations, and sharing great content. When you put together your social recruiting strategy, make sure to discuss what types of content you think will be valuable to share with the candidates with whom you want to engage.

Overall, social recruiting has become a great tool for accessing potential candidates (passive and active) within any industry through referrals, talent communities, and transparent, two-way communication.

Campus Career Centers

As long as campus career centers continue to focus on traditional recruiting strategies—such as posting jobs in on-campus employment systems and career fairs—employers will continue the traditional process of requesting résumés from campuses and using faculty to help identify talent. However, employers are ready for a more brazen move into social recruiting, which may not include the traditional career fair!

Campus-Oriented Recruiting Strategy	Usage
Postings in on-campus system	80%
Internships & Co-ops	61%
Career Fairs	54%
Résumé Referrals	41%
Campus Info Visits	40%
Faculty	36%
Interviews	33%

Source: Michigan State University's Recruiting Trends 2010-2011[iv]

But employers and recruiters are beginning to suggest social media-based alternatives, such as:

• **Virtual career fairs:**
  Holding a national career fair for students during a specified time period in order for employers to identify who they want in their pool.

• **Networking:**
  Expand opportunities to interact with students through student groups, information sessions, and online technology, such as chat nights.

• **Forums:**
  Switch from career fairs, which are one-time events, to a sequence of forums to engage student interest and determine fit between companies and prospective candidates.

• **Virtual interviewing:**
  Utilizing Web-based technologies, such as Skype, during the interview process.

As nearly half of employers chose not to attend career fairs, either because of the low returns on investment (ROI), chaotic and impersonal atmospheres, unprepared and unmotivated students, or mediocre talent, they will continue to pursue passive, top students through budget-friendly, two-way communication options like social media recruiting.

Campus career centers need to start focusing on providing students with social media networking skills to accompany the Web systems that are becoming more cost-friendly for the employer and provide a better candidate experience for the students.

Social Recruiting vs. Job Boards

Job Boards

Job boards primarily focus on one-way communication and create barriers between the job seeker and the employer. Between ads that lack important information, anonymous e-mail addresses, and communication blasts, multitalented candidates are guessing about whether or not they're qualified—and whether or not they even want to work for the organization.

Once an applicant applies to an opening, recruiters become so overwhelmed with irrelevant résumés that they begin to follow strict job qualifications to sort through the pile—and potentially cost the organization a few top-talent candidates who may be perfect for the job but are missing something from the "checklist."

In order to match the best candidate with your open position and company culture, this process needs to be a social, two-way interaction in order to build and maintain your company brand, as well as attract, hire, and retain candidates.

Even industry experts are aware of the evolving role social recruiting plays in the hiring process. In the article "Social media, recruiting, and job boards: which way are we going?," job board and career site consultant Jeff Dickey Chasins said:

"Job boards that don't evolve will fade away. Job boards are in a unique position - they have the opportunity to expand their market...or lose it. Smart sites are already integrating social media (emphasis on 'social') into their offerings - and transforming themselves into the vendor of choice for social media recruiting."[xvii]

Social Recruiting

Even though social recruiting is more cost-effective than a job board, it takes more time to yield results than traditional recruiting methods, at least initially, because of the networking aspect of the technique. There will always be a time commitment, and therefore a cost, associated with any type of recruiting. However, the yield of quality applicants to posted positions will be higher and the time-to-hire will be reduced.

While social recruiting does require time and effort, it also allows you to reduce costs-per-hire and time-to-hire. Being able to directly connect and interact with potential candidates is a huge advantage compared to receiving dozens of résumés through an automated system like an ATS or job boards.

It's also possible to target passive candidates (those not currently searching for new jobs) through social recruiting. You can pre-screen and "handpick" (directly contact) any candidates you deem as qualified and a good match for the job opening.

In addition, more candidates (passive and active) are using search engines for their initial search, and if companies want greater reach, social media recruitment solutions market positions through search engine optimization (SEO) to various search engines and job aggregators.

Finally, social recruitment solutions are multifaceted, offering leads through advanced referral systems, social ATS, two-way communication tools to connect with candidates, access to larger networks, and job marketing and SEO—all of which focus on the effort to recruit top talent and avoid the time-consuming job board process.

Hiring Trends

By Industry

According to Michigan State University's *Recruiting Trends 2010-2011*, hiring will increase by 3% over last year's hiring forecast. And the labor market is expected to expand by 10%. For candidates who are pursuing higher levels of education, such as an MBA, their market will improve by 10%. Hiring for candidates with PhD's will also increase in comparison to last year's market.[iv]

Compared to last year's trends, it appears that Bachelor's level hiring will increase this year. The previous year, companies hired an average of 32 employees per company. Due to improvement in the economy during recruiting season, employers were able to raise their hiring targets. For example, employers that projected to hire 20 employees per company and actually hired 24 employees.[iv]

Though the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows slow progression in hiring among the private and public sector, *Recruiting Trends* shows a positive outlook for recent graduates at the Bachelor's level. Industries like manufacturing, retail, and professional services are leaving the negative numbers behind and beginning to increase their hiring targets.[iv]

Retail is averaging 32 Bachelor's hires per company, an increase of 37%. These numbers are low compared to previous years. However, with low consumer spending due to the economy, it's a positive number to see within an industry that was hit hard.[iv]

Professional services is one of the strongest industries right now for college graduates. This industry ranges from legal, accounting, architectural, engineering, computer, management, environmental, scientific, advertising, and marketing services. Being such a broad industry, the risk is higher to see a negative effect take a toll on the industry as a whole. However, they are predicting an increase of 7% in new hires, averaging 23 hires per company, of whom 18 are at the Bachelor's level. Within this industry, computer services is bringing the biggest percentage change at more than 100%, according to *Recruiting Trends*.[iv]

Manufacturing is going through a strong economic period, expecting to hire 23 new hires per company, 18 of these new hires are those with a Bachelor's degree. This means an 8% increase within the industry. Government agencies will also see an increase in their target hires of 7%. The education sector reported a decrease of 6% from last year in hiring. However, this industry may change their needs if their funding from state and local institutions changes.[iv]

Industries that are still struggling are **construction and health services**. The construction industry's overall hiring is down by 6%. However, they do expect to hire more skilled workers with higher levels of education this year. Also, health services continues to struggle due to the tough economic climate. They continue to reduce hiring opportunities by 7%, as well as a 12% decrease among ambulatory facilities. As long as the economy remains in a slump, Recruiting Trends predicts this industry will remain the same.[iv]

Hiring Trends

By Location

The labor market is slowly recovering across the United States. This year, Bachelor's level hiring among global employers is up 6%, averaging out to over 100 new hires per company.

Recruiting Trends[iv] **reports the following trends around the United States:**

- **Northeast:**
  Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts continue to **reduce hiring by 1%**. Most of the reduction is happening at the Bachelor's level.

- **Mid-Atlantic:**
  New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. show one of the highest **increases in hiring at 10%.**

- **Great Lakes:**
  Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin show strong gains with an **increase of 13%** in hiring, which translates into 18 new hires per company at the Bachelor's level. This is the highest increase across the nation.

- **Upper Plains:**
  Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming report an **increase of 4%.**

- **Southeast:**
  Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina are seeing a small **increase of 1%** for new hires.

- **South Central:**
  Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Louisiana, Colorado, Missouri, and Arkansas show a solid **increase of 8%.**

- **Southwest:**
  Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, California, Nevada, and Hawaii are among the areas that are not showing an increase in new hires but also are not shedding jobs. Their growth **remains at 2%.**

- **Northwest:**
  Alaska, Idaho, Washington, and Montana are not seeing any growth at all, and they actually keep declining their numbers with a hiring **decrease of 10%.**

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