

Recruiting in the Web 2.0 World– Part 1

We have all heard the phrase used when selling real estate – it's all about 'location, location, location'. In recruitment today, as a result of increased role of social media, I would suggest the key phrase should be 'timing, timing, timing'.

In real estate, there are always nice houses. The role of the real estate agent is to get you the dream house you want, at the time you need it, and at the price you are able to pay.

In recruitment, there are always high performing employees. The role of the Hiring Manager of a company, and/or their Human Resources representative, is to hire the best employee for your organization. However, that employee has to be available at the time you need him/her, and at a compensation level that your business can afford.

Over the past few years, I have conducted a number of searches for my clients, the majority of which have been at the professional or senior managerial level. The good news is that my clients have been successful in hiring high performing employees. The bad news is that, in the majority of these searches and especially at the more senior levels, good candidates have withdrawn their candidacy partway during the search process due to finding alternate employment. Now, it is difficult to say if those 'lost candidates' would have been better than the candidates my clients eventually hired; we hope not, but we will never know.

And why is this happening now?

Are we not all reading about the tough economic times and the difficulty of people finding work? Yes, we are however, I believe that regardless of economic times, the top performers will always be in demand.

One of the key changes is the utilization of social media for advertising job opportunities (Linked in, Twitter, Facebook and the like). You can communicate a job opportunity very easily and quickly using social media and immediately upon posting, the resumes start to roll in. With the immediacy at which candidates can apply, they are expecting a prompt response. You no longer have the luxury of waiting until the posting end date before you review the resumes received.

I am not saying that we should change our recruitment process – the process still needs to be fair and disciplined in evaluating each candidate against the needs of the company – however, we need to be cognizant of how fast the world is racing forward now, and recruitment is no exception.

Today, you should be reviewing resumes within a few days of receipt, or a week at the most, and then quickly responding to the best candidates. If you do not, you can be assured that they will be receiving a prompt reply from your competitor who advertised their job opportunity.

And the promptness does not stop there. You should be scheduling interviews, second interviews, testing, etc. (whatever you include in your evaluation process) in a timely manner with as little time as possible between steps. And if there is a time lapse between steps, you need to communicate with the 'top' candidates to advise them of the delay, the reason for the delay, and make sure they know you are still interested.

Some tips for keeping the timing tight on your recruitment cycle:

- **Be ready to receive resumes** - do not communicate a job opportunity on the web unless you are ready to receive and review resumes. For example, do not post a job opportunity and then take a week's vacation.
- **Be ready to review resumes received** – your goal should be to review each resume received within 48 – 72 hours of receipt, where possible. For those positions which are more junior or generic in nature, this may not be possible due to the number of resumes received. However, if you are receiving less than 100 resumes, you should be prepared to review them promptly upon receipt.
- **Develop a plan with timelines** - plan out your recruitment process, and estimated timelines, prior to posting the job and communicate same to all parties involved in the process. In that way, they will know when their participation in the process may be required. Losing good candidates because one of the interviewers is out of the country and therefore not available to participate when required is unacceptable.
- **Move promptly through the process** - candidates, whether currently employed or not, are not going to sit and wait for 'your' dream job. If something else comes forward, and the candidate deems the opportunity equal to your opportunity (recognizing that it is difficult to judge without two employment offers in hand with which to compare), they are going to take it. As the saying goes: 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'.
- **Be professional at all times** –do not forget that the candidates are evaluating you and your company as you are evaluating them. If you let the process drag out and/or do not keep the communication lines open, this will tell them something about you. At all times, you should be projecting a professional image to all candidates (the best and the worst) as you never know when they or their friends, family or colleagues may be interested in purchasing your goods or services. (Previously, in my role as HR Manager for Hershey Canada Inc., we told our Hiring Managers that our objective was to ensure that the candidates we did not hire would still go out and buy an 'Oh Henry' chocolate bar).

I believe if you follow these steps above, you will greatly reduce the number of 'lost candidates' during your recruitment process. And this is good for the Hiring Manager as it ensures they are selecting from the best candidates available at the time.