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Recruiting Strategies:

BUILDING YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKING COMMUNITIES

Presented by Ryan Leary

MR. LEARY: Welcome to another edition of “Recruiting Strategies.” With me today I’ve got Craig Fisher, also known as “@FishDogs” on Twitter and Michael Goldberg, also known as “@SuperRecruiter” on Twitter. Welcome gentlemen. How are you today?

MR. GOLDBERG: Fantastic sir, thank you for having us.

MR. FISHER: Great, Ryan. How are you?

MR. LEARY: Doing very well, thank you. Today we’re going to talk about building your social network communities, leveraging tools, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. So let’s just get this started. Craig, talk to me about your background and how you got involved with social recruiting. You and I met over Twitter, actually all three of us met over Twitter, and we’ve shared many war stories about how we source on Twitter, on Facebook, on LinkedIn, and how we take that a step further in building talent communities and then what we actually do with those. Give me an idea about how you leverage these tools?

MR. FISHER: Happy to do that. I started recruiting in 1995 and back then we had a phone, and a fax machine, and a big list, and a big desk to hold all that stuff. We very quickly got into e-mail and databases, etc., and that basically took us through the ‘90s. And then we got into the aughts and here came LinkedIn and changed the game. And LinkedIn really was a game changer. I was a little bit of a pioneer there, doing a lot of things most of my peers weren’t, building groups and building communities there from early on, and that led me to explore more about the emerging social media as they came out. At that time, I was the Director of Sales for a company called “Stark Group” here in Dallas and we were working on moving towards more of a social strategy, and that sort of stalled out and prompted me to start my company, A-List Solutions in 2007. And we do almost everything in our practice through social media. We save a lot of money on marketing and advertising. We do lots of recruiting through social media, saving on job board fees, that sort of thing. And we’re able to give a better, more precise product to our clients in recruiting and staffing at a lower cost. So it has worked out real well for me. And I’ve met more people in the last year of being on Twitter in the recruiting community around the world than I have in the last 15 years or so of doing this in the real world. So the online community, the social community of recruiting is beneficial in many, many, ways not just sourcing, but support, promotion, referrals; I’d highly recommend you get on it if you’re not doing it already.

MR. LEARY: Now Michael, you work with the Freeman Company.

MR. GOLDBERG: Correct.

MR. LEARY: As a recruiting manager?

MR. GOLDBERG: Yes.

MR. LEARY: Talk to me about how Freeman is leveraging social recruiting or the social recruiting tools within your recruiting organization.

MR. GOLDBERG: Yeah, that's a good question, Ryan. A lot of that is just getting started I'm way ahead of the current curve and even ahead of the Marketing Department, and helping them put together some social media focuses. But what we're doing in recruiting, and primarily what I'm doing, is showing my recruiters how to create these talent community puddles, as we like to call them. In the old days we used to call them talent pools. So when you look at social media, you're creating these different groups of people that have certain skill sets, and through Twitter, through LinkedIn, through Facebook, through whatever medium you use on social media, I'm able, with the help of FishDogs who really turned me onto this, said, "Look, you know, create these groups, create a following, brand yourself, and people will follow you. People will want to talk with you about your expertise and what you bring to the table. And eventually they'll want to work with your company." So where Craig works on the Executive Recruit Search side, I'm on the Corporate side. It's a lot different. The relationships and the strategies are the same, but basically, you really need to reach out to these groups and make sure that your name, such as Freeman, is out there every day because these are tough positions to find.

MR. LEARY: Let's talk about the relationship factor there. So we all speak about join the community, get out there, be part of the group, reach out to these groups. What about being a recruiter? So that data shift that we spoke about from when Craig mentioned back in the '90's where you started with a fax machine and just a phone. Till today, we're talking about Linked-In and Recruiter. Just starting today they only know LinkedIn. They only know Facebook. They only know the massive job boards, like a Monster or a CareerBuilder. How do you differentiate yourself now, building your brand, as you had mentioned? So you build your brand, people will come. Get Freeman's name out there.

MR. GOLDBERG: Right, yeah, you can put buzz words to it or you can be yourself. And my recommendation is always to be yourself and talk about how you really feel. Whether you're talking about the culture at Freeman or you're talking about the great opportunities that you have with the company whoever you're working with. You create the brand that you develop and that you put out there on the social media sites. If you want to do buzz word bingo, go ahead and do buzz word bingo. People will follow that, that's fine. But if you really want to build relationships from a recruiting standpoint, my advice is don't use social media to source people. Use social media to establish relationships and create a brand and a following for you and the company you work for.

MR. LEARY: I think that's a great point. And I want to kind of segue to Craig. Craig, just this past week you had a conference with TalentNet Live. One, I want you to explain what TalentNet Live is or just what TalentNet is overall. But you had a tremendous, and I just learned this a few moments ago, you had a tremendous support and outcome to the conference. Talk about the conference and then let's talk about the relationship factor that comes out of that so where Michael's saying, don't use social media to source; use it to build that relationship. I think your conference and how you started TalentNet, really how I became in contact with both of you through TalentNet, I think is a tremendous story.

MR. FISHER: TalentNet is a thing we started on Twitter and it's a chat forum for the recruiting community from all over the world that takes place the last Wednesday of every month at #TNL. If you go to Search.Twitter.com and enter hashtag (the # sign) and the initials TNL for TalentNet Live, you can participate in the discussion or follow the discussion on Twitter. And there's anywhere from 150 to 250 HR recruiting people, job seekers, from all over the place at any of these sessions. So it's a wildly popular thing that we do. This year, Dorothy Beach, on Twitter, announced that she was very sad that she couldn't go to ERE this year cause she didn't have the budget. And Mark Sullivan, from Time Warner Cable suggested that she contact me and the recruiter guy, and Dennis Smith, and a few other people. Michael ended up speaking there too to have our own conference at a lower cost for the local community here in DFW. And I got on board and recommended branding it along with TalentNet. So we came up with TalentNet Live. And it was a real groundswell thing. We donated most of the proceeds to a charity because we had the event on 9/11, and it went to a local fire fighter family charity. And

what we're doing here with this, just like with the Talent Net Chat Forum and just like you're doing with all social media, is you're building a relationship network of not just job seekers, but executives and recruiters from other companies all over the world. The idea is that your social network is a huge referral network. You don't have to go out and source somebody brand new every time if you've got enough good contacts that you actively stay in touch with and communicate with and help on a regular basis that will refer talented people to you. If you knew every recruiter in the country and knew that they would refer someone good to you if they had them in their database, you would immediately just send that e-mail out to all those people first. Well you can almost do that sort of thing if you build the right targeted network of job seekers, clients, and your peers. That's really the idea behind all of this.

MR. GOLDBERG: Also from TNL I built a lot of relationships. By the way, on that last Wednesday of every month, it begins at 9:00 p.m. Eastern, 8:00 p.m. Central Time, so please feel free to join us. But Craig has really taken this idea and has done very well with it. And as I've told people in my presentations and people that I talk with, as Craig has met so many people over the last year and one half, two years, since Twitter has come about, I have learned more in the last eight to nine months than I have in the last five to six years and I have 20 years of experience. So imagine the learning curve and the adaptability that I have taken in and have learned so much than just sitting behind a desk, picking up the phone and making the phone calls. I'm reaching out to people I never would have gotten in touch with if it wasn't for social media.

MR. LEARY: So just recently we recorded a podcast with Bill Boorman who is over in the UK. Now Bill also spoke at TalentNet Live. And I thought we spoke about his presentation in the podcast that we recorded with him. And Michael had just mentioned we call them talent puddles. So I was talking to Bill about kind of his theory on that, and we were talking about the talent pipeline, pushes into a talent pool, which eventually pushes or streams out to a puddle or a pond. He labeled it a pond, which would be your top 10% or so of candidates that you ultimately want to reach out to.

Let's get into talent communities. So we do all this social media stuff, right, social recruiting, which is all fun and good, but how do we see the return on that? And a lot of questions that we get from clients and a lot of questions we've gotten here, while we were recording this at our World Conference, is "what's the return?" So do I really need to have my internal staff of 15 recruiters hanging out, on LinkedIn and attracting or going after people on Facebook and playing with Twitter? Are they really playing with this? Is there some return? And how do you translate that into some success within a talent community?

MR. FISHER: I'll tell you one good way you can judge this sort of thing is, if you're not currently using Twitter and you begin building your network there, and posting your jobs, in addition to posting interesting and helpful information for job seekers on a regular basis, you'll see your click-throughs to your job board and your website spike. And ours doubled within the first two months and had tripled within the first 4 months. So the views you actually get to your jobs, to your company, to your website, that's one huge return right now and that's measurable, extremely measurable, and you can obviously see where most of the click-throughs come from. There's a little bit of an art to it but that's a measurable thing. Beyond that, what you really need to be doing on a regular basis, just like I was saying about what you want to post, is helping job seekers. Post helpful information for job seekers, things that job seekers want to know that are in your skill buckets. And if you build groups in LinkedIn and Facebook and target people to those groups from Twitter, you'll get very targeted groups built up where you have a captive audience to present whatever information you want, including jobs and openings and that sort of thing. But you're also building your active referral network that way too. So you've got your top 10% eventually that puddles out from these talent pools, but the best referrals that you get are from those top 10% as well, so if you're actively helping job seekers on a regular basis with the content that you post in social media, blogs, that sort of thing, you're going to grow very good targeted communities that are interested in not only your topics, your niche, but your company as well.

MR. GOLDBERG: Yeah, one of the things that I think that where talent communities can come into play is think about this. And I sat in on a presentation by Larry Kleinman of Kenexa today and he talked about human capital, knowledge capital and structure capital. And think about the fact that social media can help build your knowledge capital by finding the right people. It can build your right structural capital because you are taking that

information and using it to progress forward ahead of your competition. So when you provide people with information, they are going to follow you and look at you as that subject matter expert. And again, like Craig said, if they're going to provide you those referrals and you're going to have so much human capital, so much structural capital and a lot of knowledge capital. Like I said, I've got a ton of knowledge capital by using social media, and I want to share that with my fellow Tweeters. I want to share that with my LinkedIn groups. There's a lot still to be done in terms of taking that information and really combining it so you have one tool providing you good contacts, good people to network. And I know Craig, you talked a little about that, if you want to, not take over the show, but if you want to explain a little about what we talked about and how to do that.

MR. FISHER: Well, which part do you mean?

MR. GOLDBERG: The My Tweeples.

MR. FISHER: OK, yeah, there are tools out there for your Twitter followers that can help you sort of measure what you're doing and find people within your communities. My Tweeples is one of them. It allows you to export all of your followers into an Excel spreadsheet. It gives you data that you can search on and arrange however you like from their biographical information, their location, and of course their name. This data is useful beyond what you can normally search through on Twitter because you can mix and match. You can find all the people with finance in their background, all the people with Java in their biography from Twitter. So the other interesting thing you can do is with TweepSearch. You can search very well within your community as well. You can't export there as well, but you can actually siphon a little better there. TweepSearch and My Tweeples are two really excellent sort of gold diggers, if you will, to find the targets that you want within your community and start relationships with them, start interacting with them. Build groups in your Tweet Deck. If you're a Twitter guy, and you should be, or girl, and actively interact with those people on a regular basis. Every week you want to have some interaction with your target community.

MR. LEARY: So I think we have an interesting dynamic here. So Craig, you're on the executive search side.

MR. FISHER: Mm Hm.

MR. LEARY: Michael, you're in a corporate setting.

MR. GOLDBERG: Right.

MR. LEARY: We gave a presentation today on social media from a branding perspective as well as from a recruiting perspective. So one of the questions that continually came up was, "I could see an agency guy doing this." And I use that term in quotes because that's what they were saying. But an executive search guy, an agency search guy using these techniques because they need a quick hit. They need to develop those relationships, etc. etc... Where do you see that at Freeman? And I want Craig to respond to this as well. But Michael, within Freeman, how do you justify the time spent on this? How do you justify the results, whether they are measurable or not? How does that work for you?

MR. GOLDBERG: Delivering good candidates, delivering a following, finding people, bringing those people to the table to our hiring managers even when we don't have needs in terms of building a good pipeline. But to your point, Ryan, I think what is fantastic is you have to show measurable hits. You've got to have those metrics along, which social media sites are working for you. And there are great search engine optimization companies out there, Talent Seeker being a great one out of Provo, Utah, and also Avature is also a good way to manage your overall sites. There're based out of Portland, Oregon. And whether you're utilizing those types of companies or doing it yourself, you have to have some measurable results. And what I do is I provide my list of sources, and I'm finding that my list of sources when I'm reporting back to where we're finding the hires that we've done are more around LinkedIn, Twitter. Employee referrals, which are common, but referrals from people where I got them on Twitter or I got them on LinkedIn or I got them on Facebook, so I think those are the values.

Then when they start producing, you're driving bottom line revenue.

MR. LEARY: So talk about the time factor there. So another question that constantly comes up and continually came up today was, my recruiters have so many requisitions, we don't have the time in a corporate setting to manage these groups and create these groups and actively participate in these groups as an agency recruiter would. In a corporate world I guess the view is a recruiter has the administrative end, they've got the full-desk recruiting end. How does that work for you?

MR. GOLDBERG: It's a lot of work because I'm doing it more than my recruiters are. My recruiters are late adopters, but I'm finding myself doing it and yet I'm still managing a number of reqs. I have certain hiring projects. I have projects to get out. And I'm asked that question a lot. And you have to make the time. And a lot of my relationships, I'm not sitting on Tweet Deck or LinkedIn 24/7, I'm out there once or twice a day, spending about 10 or 15 minutes kind of reading through the articles, seeing what's out there, adding them to my favorites, having RSS feeds into my Google reader. And that's where I get it. Now there are positions the company should start thinking about in the future that Susan Burns of Talent Synchronicity has defined as "community managers." And whether they sit in recruiting or whether they sit in marketing, you have to have these community managers who are technically savvy and know how to go out and find that information, but also know how to share that information and market that information to your followers, whether they be your followers personally, or who are following the company brand and the company tweet.

MR. LEARY: Right, and so Craig, what is your take on that from an agency's perspective?

MR. FISHER: I'll tell you that the agency recruiter doesn't really have any more time than the corporate recruiter in general. I mean I can tell you that for a fact. Like any other recruiter, we work basically 24 hours a day. Any time our phone rings or an e-mail comes, we're there to answer it if we're awake. And so we don't really have any more time to do this than anyone else. I'm a big promoter of setting everything up properly in the first place. So if you set up your groups, you set up your following strategy, you set up your connecting strategy. You do all that up front and it may take a month or two to get that working. Then you automate some of your content to your groups, that sort of thing. With RSS feeds, Twitter feeds, to your LinkedIn groups, your Facebook groups, your web pages, your blog, all this stuff can be automated so you're not spending all your time there. You're just reaping the rewards. And that's a big thing. But people buy from people. So as a recruiter, you have to be part of that process. It can't just be a brand and an admin and a company. It has to be you as well, so I'm sorry, but you have to donate some time to this because people don't want to go to work for a company that has no people as its face. And if you're a corporation, send your best people out there who are normally going to be the people that you want recruiting anyway. Send your best people out there to be your face on social media as far as your employer brand goes.

MR. LEARY: Before we end the conversation here, give me your top recruiting tip that you are comfortable sharing, I'll say. I don't want you to give us your secret sauce, but share a tip with your audience. Let's start with Craig, your top tip that you can give today?

MR. FISHER: As far as social recruiting goes, my favorite tip of recent is to do an x-ray of LinkedIn for whatever your skill bucket is. Say it's a project manager with Java in his background. LinkedIn is a much better place to find candidates by job information and skill sets than Twitter is. So if you want to build a targeted Twitter following, x-ray LinkedIn first for your key words and include Twitter or Tweet in your bouillon string and you'll come up with dozens and dozens and dozens of very specific LinkedIn candidates that have their Twitter user name in their profile. Then follow these candidates on Twitter, network with them, build rapport, and then go back and ask them to join your network on LinkedIn. You'll get a much warmer response. So you're using one social media to augment the other and you're building a very targeted candidate community that you can draw from for recruiting, sourcing and referrals.

MR. LEARY: And Michael?

MR. GOLDBERG: Well I couldn't agree more with Craig and definitely the other thing that I like to do is don't hide behind social media to reach out to these candidates. You have to pick up that phone and build the relationships with a voice, and not just a picture or an avatar or whatever you have out on LinkedIn or Twitter. But what I do is when I get a hold of a hot candidate, I'm picking up the phone and calling them right away. I'm not sitting, going, no I don't have anything; no I'm going to wait. So what we do is whether we have a position now or not, I'm building these talent community puddles so that we can deliver to our hiring managers right away. And how do we do it? We do use it through LinkedIn and Search messages or through Google, doing strings with look through LinkedIn and profiles, including Twitter along with some of the skill sets that they bring to the table or the industries that they work in is another way to do it, especially if your industry requires that kind of background. So nothing much different from what Craig said, but the key is taking the next step, which is not being afraid to pick up the phone because that's where recruiters tend to fall down sometime. Because we go, well we don't have anything now, we'll wait. Don't wait, America. Pick up that phone and call the candidates, and get them in the door because they could be the next greatest thing since sliced bread. You'll build a great partnership with your hiring managers, you'll drive revenue for your company, and it'll be a heck of a measurable statistic compared with how your competition is recruiting.

MR. FISHER: That's an awesome point, Michael. And I just want to say on that note, the phone is still a recruiter's best friend. Social tools are just that. They are just tools to help make your job easier and build bigger communities of targeted followers. So phone time is still Recruiting 101.

MR. LEARY: Well there you have it. The world of social recruiting as seen by Craig Fisher, also known as @FishDogs on Twitter and Michael Goldberg, also known as @SuperRecruiter on Twitter, until next time.

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