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Recruiting Strategies: **WHAT'S YOUR RECRUITING STRATEGY?**

By Ryan Leary

MR. LEARY: This is the first in a series of podcasts that I'll be recording, centered on recruiting strategies. In conversations, I often have the opportunity to speak with individuals responsible for talent management within their company. Normally the conversation is about new technology and how they can be more progressive. Recently it's been about the economy and the lack of hiring. So it's no secret that a lot of turmoil is taking place in the economy today. It's really no secret that hundreds of thousands have lost their jobs in just the last few months. In fact over 13.2 million people have lost their jobs as of this March 2009. Unemployment is up over 8.5%, and half of this increase for the total unemployment rate and the total number of people unemployed, occurred in just the last four months.

So the question I have for you is, "are you thinking about your recruiting strategy?" I hear far too often that a particular company has frozen hiring, but really has no real strategy around how they're going to determine their success in the future. So I guess a fair question to me would be, "why should companies today rebuild their recruiting strategy when they're not hiring?" The budgets have been slashed, and when they do start to rehire, won't they be able to choose from the 13,000,000 plus that are already unemployed?

Building talent communities today will deliver a talent advantage tomorrow. The economy is going to turn around, and when it does, it will be imperative for companies to rebuild in a more strategic, targeted manner than ever before. Companies that have planned this will certainly maintain a competitive advantage. And by having a trusted recruiting strategy that centers on community and competency-based funnels will allow these companies to maintain an active or working database of high quality and engaged prospects. Developing and implementing a strategy like this is involved. It simply will not happen overnight, but I want to outline a few key areas that you can focus on to get started. You've got to have a fundamental understanding of technology and how candidates are using technology to perform their job search. You've got to have an understanding of SEO, or search engine optimization, and how to leverage this as the cornerstone of your online recruiting function.

And lastly, the data shift. You've got to have a baseline understanding of not just how candidates are searching, but what they're searching, where they're searching it, as well as how and where they are landing when they eventually find your listings. So I mentioned this a few moments ago, that building talent communities today will deliver a talent advantage tomorrow. So one way that companies can get better at finding talent is by creating their own targeted talent communities. To do this, you really have to truly understand how technology really influences the job seeker. Some of the questions you really need to answer are how are candidates searching for your jobs. Is it by key words, titles, skill sets? Without fully understanding how your potential candidates are searching, you simply cannot create an effective strategy to attract the quality talent that you're searching. Developing a strategy takes focus on many levels. Understand that when the day is over, we are in the information gathering business. If for one second you overlook the power of information in this task, you've failed.

Last year over 19,000,000 people searched for new opportunities online. Now this number, 19,000,000, represents unique prospects. The amount of searches was actually much greater. Over the last 15 years, advertising has seen a shift from traditional media, your magazines, your publications, newspapers, and classified ads. So you've seen a shift from traditional media to online media. Social networking sites were born, search engines have gotten smarter, and job aggregators are now starting to reinvent the way candidates search for opportunities. So the second and third idea deals with SEO (search engine optimization), and recreating your career site experience. Do you understand how your company's career site experience really is? Have you ever gone through the application process?

A key phrase that we often hear is talent attraction or interactive social recruiting. Interactive recruiting is actually very simple in definition and really it is only referring to leveraging technology, social sites like a LinkedIn and a Facebook, and so forth to recruit. The goal here is to attract talent that may or may not be looking for an opportunity, but driving them to your career site and then capturing their information for use at a later time. So you need to focus on what I call findability. Understanding how candidates search for a job is key, but so is getting indexed and getting found. If you cannot be found, your efforts are worthless. Corporate career sites are great when used as portals to centralize the information. But in the world of search, they're just not very efficient. Let me explain. So search engines index individual pages, not complete sites. In this case the search engine would index a specific job page. The challenge here is that jobs open and close in short periods of time, leaving really no significant amount of time to be fully indexed or ranked.

So, in this world of evolving technology, intelligent companies are moving towards what we call "landing pages." Career landing pages remain on line. The information contained within these landing pages, such as jobs and career information is constantly changing. And that is what's going to help you create a highly indexed and findable page. It's a progressive concept, sure, but when you succeed at creating a highly optimized career site, you're going to see the return. You're going to drive the candidates from multiple channels via social networks like Facebook or professional sites like LinkedIn into your site. You're going to correct their information, but ultimately you're giving yourself the opportunity to truly engage passive talent in a much more targeted and efficient process. Understand that landing pages serve as the face or the welcoming entry point into your organization. Does it make sense to have a scientist see postings and marketing materials for engineers? Wouldn't it make sense to have a strategic approach to scientists and engineers in a more personal, more targeted manner? Sure it would, but how does this work? Well there's no one answer, and it definitely will be challenging, but by creating a progressive, interactive recruiting strategy, you're going to find that your organization will be able to create a much more targeted talent community, ultimately giving much greater return. So make sure you bookmark this page so you can follow-up on the series and learn how you can start to implement and work with your own interactive recruiting strategy.

Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time.

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