

Corporate Recruiters Add Recruitment Marketing And Supportive Technologies To Their Toolkits

by Claire Schooley
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Why Read This Report

Traditionally, the corporate talent acquisition or recruiting process has focused on the internal activities of moving job seekers from the role of candidate to the role of employee. Today's businesses need to do more because they can't find good candidates. Forrester's report, "Transform The Job Candidate Experience From the Outside In," focused on improving the candidate experience by engaging them socially, enabling them to explore employment opportunities, and providing a painless job application experience. This report focuses on arming the recruiters with new skills to proactively identify the best candidates. Two key platforms enable recruitment success: talent relationship management (TRM) and applicant tracking software (ATS). When integrated together, these platforms enable corporate recruiters to find, attract, and process the very best talent quickly and efficiently. By reading this report, the application development and delivery (AD&D) professional can help the HR professional understand the features of ATS and TRM and how they address the complete talent acquisition process.

Key Takeaways

The Best Recruiters Are Technology-Savvy With A Bent Toward Marketing

Top recruiters are technology experts who use social media to recruit active and passive candidates and identify targeted sources for specific job categories. They use recruitment marketing techniques, have excellent people skills, and nurture candidates and sell them on the company and the position.

TRM Software Manages The Search And Cultivation Of External Candidates

TRM software enables recruiters to search, find, and engage job-seekers from many sources and track sources that provided best candidates. It also supports the candidate referral process, career website development (especially around company branding), and talent communities of potential future candidates.

ATS Manages Workflows That Move Candidates Through The Recruiting Process

ATS receives applications that come from sourcing sites. It eliminates applications that don't qualify based on whether specific information is included. ATS manages the workflow of manager approval/denial and all candidate communications, including interview scheduling, rejection or offer letter, and next steps.

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Forrester interviewed 17 vendor and user companies, including: ADP, Avature, CareerBuilder, Cornerstone OnDemand, Findly, HireVue, IBM, iCIMS, Jobvite, Lumesse, PageUp People, PeopleFluent, SmartRecruiters, Smashfly, SuccessFactors, Technomedia, and Visier.

Related Research Documents

[Beyond The Resume: Digital Technologies Change The Game In Candidate Recruiting](#)

[New Technologies Reshape Traditional Recruiting Practices](#)

[Transform The Job Candidate Experience From The Outside In](#)

New Recruiting Requirements Shift To Externally Facing Capabilities

Recruiting has changed considerably over the past decade. The talent acquisition or recruiting process traditionally focused on internal activities — those of moving job seekers from the role of candidate to the role of employee. Today, however, access to talent is tight and job-seekers have new requirements. Candidates expect your organization to give a sense of what the company is like to work for. Recruiters, in turn, have to locate job seekers earlier and engage them in more activities.

We see several characteristics of the new recruiting professionals that are common in their focus on externally facing activities. In particular, they:

- › **Are experts at marketing and branding.** To attract the best candidates, recruiters must examine job requirements and choose the best sourcing sites that will return well-matched candidates. They understand your organization's value proposition and are effective at positioning your company to attract candidates. For example, they must prepare materials that will attract candidates like marketing emails, branded career pages, and specialty job board distribution.
- › **Use social media to drive engagement.** Recruiters use email marketing and encourage people who visit career sites to share social media profiles and subscribe to talent communities. They also use social media to identify passive candidates, but they must know how to cultivate these candidates with just the right information at appropriate times to pique their interest.
- › **Apply insights from analytics.** Recruitment marketing solutions have analytics that indicate best sources for positions and also tell you what sources returned qualified candidates in areas like candidate capture, candidate engagement, and hiring metrics. Predictive analytics makes recruiters aware of future talent the company will need based on strategic goals and keep these candidates in talent community until job search begins.
- › **Can navigate their companies' existing technology.** Technology already dominates recruiting, but working across technology can be daunting. Applicant tracking systems, HRIS systems, email, job boards, job referral tools, social networks, mobile, and recruiting websites are all part of the recruiting landscape. The best recruiters are technically agile and informed about new technologies, and understand how to use them effectively for recruiting of both active and passive candidates.

Today's Technology Strategy Lags Behind Recruiting Requirements

In today's competitive job market, your talent recruiting process must address the needs of the candidate. If your candidate process is not user-friendly, you will lose good job seekers who will quickly move on.

However, most organizations are unprepared for new recruiting requirements, because until now, most of their recruiting apps focused primarily on the internal process of moving a candidate through the recruiting process once they apply. This process is traditionally managed by ATS, which tracks

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candidates and their resumes through the interviewing and hiring process. While this internal workflow process continues to be important, it's quickly becoming a commodity. The strategic challenge companies face — attracting qualified candidates — has, for the most part, many more complexities than the typical internal ATS workflow.

As demands on recruiting change, the differentiator is not ATS but the strength of your external candidate component. The external process is handled by your TRM capabilities. Though these capabilities are largely underdeveloped and poorly integrated today, we see the value of TRM changing to meet the strategic challenges that recruiters face. Increasingly recruiters will need informative career websites, the appropriate sourcing sites, video screening, talent communities, and social media opportunities for candidate-recruiter interactions.¹

Recruiting Technology Must Embrace The Full Candidate Life Cycle

Incorporating the externally facing elements of recruiting into your strategy starts with looking at the candidate experience from the outside in. The “candidate life cycle” starts with recruiting, moves to internal hiring, to the onboarding to get up-to-speed in the new job and then full productivity mode with specific goal expectations. Learning opportunities are continuous, and as an employee masters the job, they often look for, or are offered, opportunities for advancement, a journey facilitated with TRM, ATS, and talent management (see Figure 1). Recruiting technology supports the candidate's journey through the following six phases:

- › **Discover a company and its offerings (TRM).** In this phase, companies establish the employer brand as a leading place to work and market to passive talent via social channels. They do this by making openings visible, distributing positions to the right external job boards and aggregation sites, and cultivating employee referrals via their social networks. Branded career websites give job seekers a sense of the company culture as well as job openings.
- › **Explore job possibilities (TRM).** In this phase, companies make it easy for candidates to interact with job opportunities. This involves featuring multimedia content and intuitive navigation on career sites and using keywords and images rather than heavy text. Companies can provide employee “cameos,” which give first-hand accounts of employee work experiences and company culture. It is also where companies encourage candidates to join talent communities for consideration for future jobs. Recruiters keep candidates “warm” with customized campaigns and jobs that fit their skills.
- › **Apply for a position (ATS).** In this phase, companies begin their direct interaction with candidates, so it's up to recruiting professionals to ease the process. For example, companies can facilitate a rapid application process, leaving the detailed application process for later. Because candidates might be interested in more than one role at a time, recruiters must provide dashboards that illustrate the hiring process and key communication points and enable candidates to check the

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status for multiple applications. These activities make it easier for candidates to interact with the company and apply to multiple jobs, increasing the opportunity to match qualified candidates to appropriate positions.

- › **Prove you are the right candidate (ATS).** In this phase, companies establish opportunities for candidates to present their capabilities. Companies interview candidates using on-demand video to narrow down candidates and live video for finalists. They coordinate schedules using automatic scheduling and provide assessments (such as skill assessments, background checks, drug testing, etc.) through partners. As noted, these are the areas that are most developed within organizations. This phase can also be used to survey candidates, post-interview, for continuous improvement.
- › **Join the company.** In this phase, companies make it easier for individuals to move from candidate to employee. They provide open dialogue from offer to acceptance and coordinate preemployment completion of paperwork tasks online. This is also the phase in which companies provide welcoming onboarding experiences, including new hire orientation, new hire social networks, and mentoring programs. They can accelerate productivity ramp-up with formal and informal learning experiences.
- › **Advance through career paths.** This phase is actually an ongoing process, in which companies continuously monitor and measure the performance of employees against employee goals. They can encourage learning opportunities and educational assistance. They also can create formal mentoring, coaching, and career development resources. This phase prepares candidates for the next step in their careers, getting them interested in new positions in your company, and moving them through another recruiting life cycle.

To begin to prepare your organization for the new recruiting requirements, Forrester recommends first understanding the capabilities, mapping them to your technology offerings, and considering how they will integrate in the future. To do this, it's essential to understand the value at each stage.

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FIGURE 1 Manage The Candidate Journey With Integrated TRM, ATS, And Talent Management



TRM Focuses On Finding The Right Candidate

A critical part of talent acquisition is an organization's ability to find quality candidates. Although ATS has varying degrees of assistance in job sourcing, organizations should add the recruitment marketing tools of TRM. Here are some features of TRM solutions:

- › **Distribution channels for job announcements.** Recruiters don't want hundreds of applications; rather, they want candidates that best fit the job requirements. Technology suggests job boards, websites, and other sources that are best for certain kind of positions. It enables them to search internal talent pools of past applicants and current and past employees and scour the Web for relevant profiles and bring this information into one interface rather than requiring recruiters to search individual sites. The technology supports campaigns using email or social media to appropriate candidates.
- › **Ability to track where candidates come from.** Numerous job boards and websites exist for job postings. The important question is what sources provided the best candidates for a position. TRM vendors track the entry points indicating where each candidate came from as well as the hires by source and candidates by source, which informs future sourcing for similar jobs.

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- › **Connections to social networks.** TRM supports the major social networks like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook with deep integrations. They also support hundreds of other networks including job boards and websites. Recruiters can automatically publish jobs to their social networks by conducting matches by title, location, or profile. These vendors enable tracking of the type of social like LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter that brought the candidate into the applicant workflow.
- › **Easy features to make candidate referrals.** Candidate referrals from existing employees and from people outside the company are still the best way to find active and passive candidates. Templates for employees allow an employee to send personal job invitations to share specifics of a job opportunity to network parameters set by the employee. Vendors also provide tracking of referrals enabling company to determine the type of referral, and the channel used.
- › **Career site development assistance.** Career websites rank toward the top in ways job seekers find out about positions. This means that the company must have an engaging career site or multiple career sites depending on their business. Vendors provide three levels of assistance. Some simply address the technical aspects of creating a site. Others will help the organization think about what the website needs to look like and may provide a choice of templates. Still other vendors offer complete website development from technical to design to content creation. Some will also produce any desired videos.
- › **Talent community for future job candidates.** Many companies receive a large number of applications for a position. Some may be quite qualified but not appropriate for the advertised job. The company needs to hold onto these people for future jobs by inviting them to join the talent community. Even people who just visit your career website should have an option to join the talent community if they feel this is a company they would like to work for. The talent community becomes the first resource the company turns to when looking for candidates for future jobs.

ATS Automates The Recruiting Process Using A Defined Workflow

ATS is the software application process that takes in applications, evaluates them, decides which candidates move forward in the hiring journey, and tracks the process from application to hiring. ATS technology has existed for well over a decade to streamline this recruiting process. Here's what it does:

- › **Distributes the job description.** The hiring manager crafts the description and requirements of the open position and discusses the position with the recruiter responsible for the position. This job description is posted to the company's career website, as well as to selected job boards and social networks like LinkedIn and Facebook.
- › **Provides the job application.** Job seekers who are interested in a posted job complete the online job application and attach their resume. Typically these applications have been long and time consuming to complete. Some companies realize they don't need all this information at this early stage and have shortened the initial information gathering process. Many ATSes also support an applicant's LinkedIn profile in lieu of a resume.²

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- › **Processes the applications.** All applications are cataloged and kept in a database. Parsing technology “reads” the application and looks for a match with job criteria to identify qualified candidates. This is the “workhorse” of the ATS, especially when there are hundreds of applications for a position. The workflow moves the final applicants to the hiring manager for further team discussion or approval for interviews.
- › **Communicates with applicants.** Candidates receive automated messages indicating the status of their application, whether they are moving forward in the process, and what next steps to expect. In some cases, candidates can log on to a portal and see where their application is in the process. The technology helps facilitate scheduling of candidate interviews.
- › **Delivers disposition letters based on hiring decisions.** After the hiring team has completed the interviews, reference checks, and any additional testing, the team or hiring manager makes a decision on the applicant. The technology will send out a personalized disposition letter to the candidate, informing the candidate of rejection, offer, or deferral.

Onboarding And Performance Management Bring New Hires Up To Full Productivity

Onboarding is the transitional component between recruiting and performance with the goal of bringing the new employee up to full productivity to become a workforce contributor as soon as possible.

From onboarding, the employee moves into performance management, the growth and development component of the employee life cycle. Onboarding includes the following activities:

- › **All new hire forms completed before the first day.** Background checks, employee assessments, personal data, payroll information, and forms like i9 and W4 are available on a new hire portal as self-service to complete and return early so that the first day can focus on the new job and meeting team members.
- › **A personal welcome page greets the new employee.** A personalized welcome message from the CEO or business unit leader and greetings from the new hire’s team members welcome the new employee. An invitation to the new hire online network, a mentor or buddy, and some early procedural learning help employees enter their new work environment.
- › **Triggered tasks over three, six, or nine months help employee ramp to productivity.** This ramping process is relatively new to onboarding. Paperwork and first day “hellos” is only part of onboarding. Spacing out new information and activities over a period of months helps the new employee, gradually, and at the appropriate time, absorb large amounts of information. In the past, all this information was crammed into the first day’s orientation. Because of new employee overload, most information was soon forgotten.
- › **As new employees become productive, they leave onboarding and enter performance phase.** Employees have specific goals they must meet in their work as well as a development plan that may include learning as well as coaching activities. As they show that they can perform as a valued contributor to the company, they begin to look at growth opportunities within the company.

Watch For More Integration And A Diminished Role For ATS

Today, there is no single vendor that has robust capabilities that span the candidate lifestyle from attracting the candidate, to hiring, to growth and development. As companies embrace recruitment marketing, social recruiting, and talent networks, new flexible recruiting platforms will incorporate integrated TRM and ATS features to provide a seamless “outside/inside” recruiting experience Forrester calls the hiring management platform (see Figure 2).

As customers grow in their knowledge of TRM features and TRM adds some ATS components, the ATS as customers know it today will become less important. Companies will find candidate sourcing and management handled through TRM a faster, more flexible, and more effective way to hire and onboard new employees.³

FIGURE 2 The Hiring Management Platform



Recommendations

Make Your Recruiting A Candidate-Centric Experience

The recruiting market is evolving very fast. You must engage candidates before they apply as well as after they submit the application. Prepare for a future by:

- › **Making sure recruiters have recruitment marketing skills using social.** Hire people who use social well to recruit passive candidates and are willing to have a peer-to-peer mentoring relationship with more traditional corporate recruiters. Let recruiters know their importance in representing and building the brand. Work cooperatively with marketing staff that can help plan and share ideas to engage, particularly hard-to-find candidates.

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- › **Using a talent pool network or talent community to capture active and passive candidates.** Done well this talent community becomes a rich resource of future candidates. Make it easy for career site visitors to join a community. Market appropriately filtering by member interests and expertise.
- › **Embracing advanced analytics to enable smart hiring decisions.** Big data, machine learning, and predictive analytics help make better informed hiring decisions. Companies will increasingly use data that shows the kind of expertise and skills the company needs. This data enables HR to begin to hire appropriately to meet future company goals.
- › **Assuring that all candidate, recruiter, and hiring manager processes embrace mobile.** Make sure your talent acquisition process is mobile optimized from beginning to end. Provide a short initial application capturing only essential data. This will encourage mobile apply. In the longer term, enable recruiting and hiring managers to complete activities in the workflow processes from mobile devices.
- › **Keep the employee life cycle in mind.** Map your existing capabilities to the employee life cycle and understand where you need to fill critical gaps. Many vendors do not yet have an integrated TRM and ATS, so be prepared to fill in the gaps until vendors catch up to requirements.

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Supplemental Material

Companies Interviewed For This Report

ADP	Lumesse
Avature	PageUp People
CareerBuilder	PeopleFluent
Cornerstone OnDemand	SmartRecruiters
Findly	Smashfly
HireVue	SuccessFactors
IBM	Technomedia
iCIMS	Visier
Jobvite	

Endnotes

- ¹ Well-run companies invest heavily in establishing their corporate brand and in business technology to win, serve, and retain customers. Many of these same companies, however, offer only rudimentary career pages and use outdated technology to attract talent and hire people. We believe companies should apply customer-centric best practices and an outside-in philosophy to attract the best talent and leverage the corporate brand as an employer of choice. See the [“Transform The Job Candidate Experience From The Outside In”](#) Forrester report.
- ² Today, the typical resume holds less weight, as technologies like big data, machine learning, and algorithms allow organizations to assess a candidate’s digital assets and build a more rounded candidate picture. Technology even allows hiring managers to determine if a candidate is a good cultural fit for the company or has the characteristics of the company’s best performers. See the [“Beyond The Resume: Digital Technologies Change The Game In Candidate Recruiting”](#) Forrester report.
- ³ Processes and strategies for people and talent are evolving quickly as companies learn how to harness disruptive new technologies. A decade ago, companies viewed their people and talent management technologies as tools to support HR professionals in automating tasks that were tactical and administrative in nature. Today, however, people and talent technology has become an embodiment of the strategy itself — as companies must recruit the best talent, engage and motivate employees, and execute on the business technology (BT) agenda to drive growth and customer loyalty. See the [“Brief: People And Talent Applications Will Promote Engagement And Performance In 2015”](#) Forrester report.

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