

## **Pluperfect Recruiting**

It's a bit hyperbolic, I admit, but there is a way to be better than perfect when using a job board. Why is that important? Because most recruiters continue to use job boards, so the key to success is to use them to their best advantage. No self-respecting recruiter, however, would admit that their job board strategy to date has been anything less than perfect, so what I'm proposing is a way to be better than perfect. Or pluperfect.

Traditionally, job boards have been viewed as recruitment advertising platforms. We post jobs for openings and watch the resumes rush in. That approach is problematic on at least two score for today's staff-challenged recruiting teams: it drowns us in too many applicants and limits us to too few high caliber candidates among those applicants.

What's a better approach?

Pluperfect recruiting expands our use of job boards from just one activity—job posting—to three sourcing activities:

- Recruitment advertising
- Brand advertising
- Professional networking.

Let's look at each a bit more closely.

### **Recruitment Advertising**

Recruitment advertising online is job posting with a twist. Rather than advertising a job, recruiters promote a career advancement opportunity. That's not semantics. It involves envisioning our ads not as an informative announcement—a description of requirements and responsibilities—but as online sales brochures.

What are the properties of such a communication? There are several, but the two most important are:

- It is designed to convince passive job seekers to do the one thing humans most hate to do: change. It has enough information and enough selling sizzle to compel even the most reluctant candidate to shift from the devil they know—their current employer, boss and commute—to the devil they don't know—a new employer, boss and commute.
- It is front loaded. Passive job seekers aren't job seekers at all. At best, they are prospects. And prospects have the attention span of a gnat. The key to success, therefore, is to front load our ads. Make the title of each ad and its first five lines so interesting that even the most satisfied candidate—the ones who say they will never leave their current employer—have to read on.

### **Brand Advertising**

Most organizations don't consistently invest in promoting their employment brand, but when they do, they spend countless hours and sometimes a lot of money trying to get the message just

right. In other words, the assumption is that an employment brand is what we say about our organization's value proposition as an employer. It's not.

You see, the best talent are good consumers. Just as we do when we buy a new car, for example, they don't take a vendor (or an employer) at their word. They want proof. Now, when they're buying a car, they can test drive it, but when they're considering an employer, they have to make do with a surrogate? What's that? An employer's recruiting process. In other words, the best talent believe that the way they are treated as candidates will be the way they are treated as employees. And they make their employment decisions accordingly.

Does that mean we shouldn't bother with brand advertising? Of course not. But we must also optimize the candidate's experience in our recruiting processes. What is the optimum experience? *An expectation that comes true.* The reality of what happens to a candidate in our recruiting process must match the claim we make in our brand advertising or, to put it another way, we have to walk the talk.

### **Professional Networking**

Social networking is all the rage these days as well it should be. Put 100 recruiters in a room and ask them the single best way to find truly great talent, and 99 will tell you it's by networking. What's untrue, however, is that social networking is new. The capability has been around for years on job boards, as discussion forums, chat areas and professional communities.

There is, however, a difference between social networking and the professional networking done on job boards. On LinkedIn or some other social media site, networking is carried out by making contacts. The more contacts a person has, the higher the probability they will find a candidate who matches the requirements for their opening.

On a job board, in contrast, networking is about building relationships. The participants are drawn together not to find a job, but to explore a topic of common interest (typically, their career profession, craft or trade). The key to recruiting them, therefore, is not to establish a connection, but rather to contribute to their dialogue and thus the benefit they gain from the interaction.

Pluperfect recruiting expands the use of job boards from a first generation focus on job posting to a second generation strategy that encompasses brand advertising and professional networking as well as recruitment advertising. But even that isn't enough. We can do all of the right things, but if we do them on the wrong sites, our yield will still fall far short of better than perfect. To achieve pluperfect recruiting, therefore, we must do all three of the right things and do them on all of the right sites—the sites that attract the top talent in our target demographics.

Thanks for reading,  
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