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Top 10 recruitment technologies, companies

By Dirk Dijkstra

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I recently took over the helm at Ahoy Employ, having no experience in the recruitment sector, at all... Being an entrepreneur/digital strategist however, it didn't take me long to accept the offer by Ute Gass, founder of the company and well-known HR visionary, for the role of SA country manager. Her detailed business plan together with current platform activity, a quick-scan of the market and the various rounds of investment for our international counterparts, quickly sealed the deal for me.

Whilst thinking hard of a strategy for the official launch (beta-testing for nearly a year) of Ahoy Employ and to basically "prepare for business" I spent some time scanning the international recruitment industry for trends and developments and other types of providers of recruitment services and what a journey it was...

While being new to the recruitment industry I have of course had my fair share of dealings with recruiters and employers and I've had very mixed experiences so far. The basics of recruitment are pretty easy to find online so I am now kind of familiar with the workings of the recruitment business and with industry specific terms like external recruiters and head-hunters, contingent and retained search, PSL and ATS, job boards and job aggregators etc.

Furthermore it was also pretty easy to identify the leading HR portals/magazines and the relevant HR people and groups on LinkedIn. It does however get a bit more complicated when you look at all the different software, technology, marketing and consultancy providers in the recruitment industry.

New and promising providers

So let's have a look at some of the other new and promising providers to the recruitment industry. The bulk of them are of course US based and quite a few of them also with significant investments, but all hoping to get a slice of the massive US$140 billion that American corporations spend on recruitment every year.

If we would estimate the South African market to be only 5% of that, we're still talking about an annual spend of R60bn and a market that will continue to grow significantly! Add to that the fact that a large chunk of future jobs in South Africa need to be created by the private sector and we're left with plenty of business opportunities for South African recruitment professionals, entrepreneurs, marketers and investors.

But even if you're a recruiter or employer looking for ways to get even better at your recruitment and looking for the latest recruitment trends and developments let me share my top 10 shortlist of technologies and companies that I'll be following within my social media and Google alerts in the years to come while at the helm of Ahoy Employ.

1. LinkedIn

We all know that LinkedIn, since launching in 2003 as a professional networking site, has now become the most effective social networking tool for job seekers and recruiters. Forbes calls LinkedIn the fastest growing public provider of corporate recruiting solutions and with the bulk of LinkedIn's revenue now from recruitment I'd say Forbes is probably spot on! With recruitment solutions like recruiters, job postings, employer branding and it's brand new talent pipeline (free talent CRM!) product LinkedIn covers a large part of the recruitment business - but I've already realised that LinkedIn is by no means the wholly grail to recruiting.

Here are some of my worries about LinkedIn's future business model:

- Missing, fake and outdated profiles
- Slow response rates from both job seekers and recruiters
- Recruiters abusing the system (spam, ignoring no thanks, old vacancies)
- Automated and irrelevant job postings in LinkedIn Groups "PEOPLE STOP. You need to check this out...EARN $1,549.87 a DAY!" or "Led colours flashing lanyard" or "Plot for sale in Beirut/Tripoli", anyone??
- Professionals in various sectors (IT/Banking) therefore already shutting down their profiles
- Its increase in size might well mean a decline in quality, activity and innovation
- The rise of niche professional networks, just like we are seeing a rise of nice job boards

Leaving recruitment success story LinkedIn with it's massive (2 million+ in South Africa alone) talent database and all it's recruitment products for what it is, let's look at some lesser known but also very innovative companies in the international recruitment sector.

2. Recruitment marketplaces

My favourite one of course. Its business model already seems proven when looking at its impressive client lists (35% of Fortune 500), its growth figures, ongoing investment, expansion and a huge amount of media and industry coverage. With today's official launch of Africa's only Recruitment Marketplace, Ahoy Employ will no doubt quickly replicate the success of its international counter parts right here in the South African market.

3. Social recruitment

This is probably not new to you but it's no longer just posting or tweeting and responding to a new vacancy or job application. Have a look at what TalentBin.com (called Google for people) offers by aggregating all the social channels into its search results. Jobs2Web provides a whole array of interactive recruitment services including a social network recruiting solution; it claims to be different from most solutions by doing more than just posting the jobs out. The guys at Work4Labs also know a thing or two about social recruitment, a very impressive number of clients... And brand new local provider Socialrecruit.co.za can help you recruit social media marketers to help you build and manage your company/talent communities.

4. Mobile recruitment

Last week the third annual Mobile Recruitment Conference was held in London and some intriguing figures were shared. Around 15% of all traffic to recruitment websites now comes from mobile devices! Probably no big surprise but why is getting a mobile website still only a priority for a limited number of businesses?

Graylink.biz for example offers cloud based software for recruitment mobilisation but why not invest in a recruitment app, or what about mobile interviewing on Youtube? Fact is that a hell of a lot of jobseekers have smartphones, that mobile recruitment however is yet to really take off is because of the lack of mobile-enabled job sites. But mobile recruitment will no doubt become the key recruitment channel for the future, so be smart and jump ahead of the

competition today! Check GetTalent.com's mobile recruitment offering as well.

5. Crowdsourcing

This modern "process that involves outsourcing tasks to a distributed group of people" has finally also reached the recruitment business. Companies can now post a job outside their company and employees network where a friend of one of your ex-colleagues for example can earn R2500 for referring a candidate. Maybe not something that will immediately activate a lot of people but this could just be another sourcing channel for recruiters. American Zao.com is a great example with its "Create a job, set your reward, forward to your network" intro but we even have a local crowdsourcing player with Hiringbounty.com

6. Gamification

Yes, gamification is probably the latest buzzword in recruitment. "Gamification is the use of game attributes to drive game-like player behaviour in a non-game context." By 2012 nearly 70% of large corporates will use gamification in their business, so why not in their recruitment? SalesForce, Rypple and PeopleFluent are offering gamification services and the likes of Deloitte and IBM already use gamification to improve employee skills and to get access to new sources of talent. San Francisco based Identified.com for example tries to build for your professional life what Facebook has done for your social life. A bit like Klout but with a score for jobseekers based on their connections, skills and experience that employers can use to asses their applicants.

7. Job matching

A dating site for the recruitment industry sounds like a very logical one too, no? But hold on, weren't people on dating sites grossly dishonest and pretending to be someone else? Jobbook.com however disagrees and will anonymously and privately match you with vacancies matched to your profile and selections and it seems to be doing very well too.

8. Niche job boards

Just like we have been witnessing the rise of a whole bunch of niche LinkedIn lookalikes, focus on a specific industry or skill and you could be in for a winner. Construction staff, electrical jobs, honest lawyers, strong men, anyone?

9. Recruitment advertising

New Zealand based Jobfill specialises in providing a cost effective online advertising service to recruiters and employers all over the world. And UK based Thejobcloud.co.uk charges around £15 per job advert which it can push to a network of 3000+ job boards. Just like I always doubted those (mass) search engine submission companies I wonder if auto-posting your vacancy onto thousands of job boards is the best possible recruitment strategy. But then again, looking at its media coverage it might have signed up quite a few of those search engine submission clients in the mean time.

10. Facebook

Yep, in total numbers a lot bigger than all the other companies but it has way less agency and recruiter activity than LinkedIn and Twitter for example. With jobseekers however looking to use Facebook more as a professional network, recruitment activity on Facebook will no doubt grow significantly in the years to come. In the mean time we have Branchout.com, "The #1 Professional Network on Facebook" being very busy re-creating LinkedIn within the entire Facebook environment while BeKnown.com (part of Monster.com) is very busy doing pretty much the same.

Which ever technology or company manages to give LinkedIn a good run for it's money, fact remains that professional and

social networks will keep gaining marketshare from recruitment agencies and the traditional job boards.

ABOUT DIRK DIJKSTRA

Dirk Dijkstra has more than 15 years online and offline marketing experience and works as a catalyst at CRIO, an early mobile adopter - part start-up, dev house and incubator. New Business, Digital Strategy and Growth Hacking are his main responsibilities
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