

Recruitment reinvented: How mobile and social is transforming HR

Corporate HRs in South Africa have not embraced social recruiting via the Internet with the same speed as their US colleagues, but are lighting the way for mobile in solving the unique needs of the African market.

 By [Mark Gray](#) 21 Feb 2013

In the US, smart recruiters are already integrating social technologies into the way they recruit to build social capital - from advertising on niche job boards and LinkedIn, to running targeted pay-per-click campaigns, to featuring video testimonials, crowd-sourcing referrals and gamification.

South Africa doesn't have the same supportive culture for innovation, which means making a big social recruitment idea work in a corporate setting is often quite a challenge. Inadequate access to affordable bandwidth further keeps four in five South Africans without Internet access, so e-recruitment innovations that have worked elsewhere in the world don't always work here.

While social recruitment via the Internet is an increasingly important part of the process, it is not the full solution. Corporate HRs in South Africa can't just follow US trends or apply the same broad brushstrokes to all hires. They will have to come up with their own mix of tactics, based on local needs. This includes leveraging trust from their own networks instead of just blasting out a job advert and hoping for the best.

As a continent, Africa has been forced to find applications for its own emerging market challenges and part of this answer is definitely mobile.

Capitec Bank has been using SMS very effectively since 2010 as an application channel (www.capitecbank.co.za/about-us/careers) for new sales, branch and call centre staff, who are geographically spread across South Africa and don't always have Internet access. One of the big five accounting firms has also successfully automated candidate referral via SMS. Sending the word "referral" a free SMS shortcode, employees can easily suggest good talent and receive a commission upon placement.

Social campaign responses like these are normally fed into an applicant tracking system to automate the filtering and shortlisting process, which can either be integrated standalone software or be part of an HR Management or ERP system.

New rules of engagement

Finding the best talent quickly and efficiently is going to get much harder as the pool of skilled, experience talent is shrinking; competition for talent is now global as talent is geographically mobile and competitors are willing to pay more and offer extra benefits, such as work flexibility to attract and hold onto talent.

In the old days of Recruitment 1.0, jobs were announced via spray-and-pray print adverts, CVs were received via fax, and candidate databases were built by adding business cards to a Rolodex. Recruiters could take a few months to find a new candidate. In Recruitment 2.0, general online job boards were used to place adverts and search for CVs, and companies set up static career websites to announce new jobs.

Recruiters had to find new candidates in weeks rather than months.

Recruitment 3.0 is about sniper-targeting the right skills through the media channels most relevant to them. It's about building relationships and creating targeted, engaged communities, telling a story, listening to candidate feedback and fostering an emotional attachment with new talent around your authentic employer brand. The test is to get the best talent, who are already working at other companies, to consider joining your company - in days rather than weeks.

The days of Recruitment 1.0 and 2.0, using one-way, mass targeting and completely ordinary communication is gone. Recruitment 3.0 will require far more strategy and forward thinking, getting creative and niche targeting to get the attention of the top talent and deliver a compelling employer value proposition to them.

Marriage of HR and marketing

While there's always been a need for recruitment and marketing to be closely aligned, this need is intensifying. Very similar to how marketing engages with consumers, HR needs to engage with prospective employees.

Companies that take this shift seriously and want to differentiate from their competitors need to transform from within. They need to make their next appointment an HR/ social media person with a background in marketing.

Getting to grips with how to use social media in recruitment requires a learning curve, but will ultimately make the recruitment job easier for HR with more effective targeting, higher quality candidate pipelines of talent with strong relationships, and massive savings in time and effort. It will also help to start building a workforce of the very best people that will move the company to new heights.

ABOUT MARK GRAY

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