

# Tracking potential

**After hiring a new employee, the resumes of those who didn't quite make the cut are usually discarded. Don't allow your company to make this mistake — turn unused resumes into future hires through effective resource management**

**By Marcus Miller**



Ever receive an e-mail from a friend in which the offer is too good to be true? Maybe it's a message promising endless happiness, good luck, fame and fortune — but first you have to forward the message to your address book in the next 15 minutes. Just an Internet hoax letter.

Letters with false promises appear all the time. Companies have their own hoax letters that are sent to jobseekers. They go something like this:

*Dear Job Seeker,*

*We regret to inform you that your application for employment was unsuccessful at this time. We will keep your resume on file and consider it for suitable roles in the future. Once again, thank you for your interest in ...*

*Regards,*

*Hiring Manager*

Why send such a letter knowing that the probability of revisiting and reconsidering the resume is less than 1%? Maybe it brings closure to the current recruitment project. Or maybe it dissuades the job seekers from calling in for the status of their resume. Will the candidate re-apply for future openings knowing that the employer is unlikely to revisit their resume? Everyone sees the truth. Today's job seekers aren't oblivious to hollow letters with unreal offers.

## **Focused recruiting**

The current strategy in corporate recruitment is to implement customer relationship management (CRM) principles to convert unused resume responses into a valuable resource for future hiring. Through the use of applicant tracking technology, companies retain resumes in a database and build in-depth workflow around managing and developing candidates for future job openings.

The goal of a tracking system is to foster relationships with prospective employees, to categorize their skills for targeted selection and to deliver a fast response for identifying the best candidates for newly approved positions. The process isn't warehousing resumes in a simple database and e-mailing job postings on an ad hoc basis; it's more sophisticated than that. The business process is aimed at engaging candidates and developing a relationship through targeted automated communications, informative newsletters, requests for updated resumes and announcements of additional company information.

The tracking system enables an employer to focus recruiting on specific target audiences, based on how the talent is categorized. Not everyone receives the same message, so the audience doesn't feel like they are being dealt with indiscriminately. Also, the company is presented with the unique opportunity to gather additional information through individual on-line questionnaires. Thus, companies can further shortlist potential candidates based on skills and profiles.

## **Rapid deployment**

Sourcing candidates for an applicant tracking system fits hand-in-glove with existing recruitment activities such as corporate job fairs, employee referrals, recruiting events and public job postings. An integral part of a

tracking system is resume portal access, where resumes are entered by the job seekers through the corporate website and stored directly in the resume database. Hiring managers and corporate staff have direct access for reviewing resumes from their desktop — no more faxing and circulating emails or paper.

Resume reading is getting easier. The latest versions of applicant tracking systems automatically score resumes according to a specific job profile, making it easier to prioritize resume response. As resume response continues to grow for generic positions, the bandwidth to process them stretches as well. Large-scale recruiting projects become less tedious and hiring objectives are met faster. The effort needed to build and maintain an applicant tracking system is spread into continuous activities that are regulated and managed alongside other duties.

Timing is everything in recruiting. A full candidate search can be a lengthy process and an all-consuming task to reach the job offer stage. The hiring manager who is short-handed is anxious to acquire new head count quickly and avoid having the job requisition re-deployed. Left on his own, the hiring manager would quickly engage a third party agency to fill his requisition. With an applicant tracking system, companies can condense the time by exploring a set of pre-qualified candidates, inviting them to apply to the position and responding quickly to the hiring manager with a low-cost answer that doesn't bog down the recruitment process.

### **Defining the job**

Attracting the right candidates is the mantra for the long haul. Hiring is no longer just putting 'bums in seats.' The process of attracting the right candidate is a two-way process that ensures that the candidate is a strong match for the company and the company is a strong match for the candidate. Attracting the right candidate is achieved by giving an accurate account of the job and the environment in which the employee will be working. The process of raising the bar is pervasive through the entire recruiting cycle of evaluation, selection and on-boarding. In the candidate-sourcing step, care should be taken to fully define your corporate culture, job requirements and future opportunities.

The applicant tracking process turns resumes into a valuable resource for future hires. It enables employers to market themselves to a specific set of potential talent or to pre-selected candidates that they could be interested in hiring. A tracking system lets employers keep in touch with specific candidates and compress the time involved in acquiring talent when it's time to hire. Overall the system enables employers to handle large-scale communications in a targeted and personalized way.

Applicant tracking systems deliver long-term benefits. Companies experience an improved calibre of new hires and a reduction in recruiting fees and costs. By taking charge of the candidate acquisition, employers can hire regardless of the market conditions for talent.

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