

Turtles and Innovators

The job market changed dramatically on Black Monday and since then, Jeremy Miller, a partner with LEAPJob, a sales recruiting firm, says that two types of companies have emerged. He characterizes these types as turtles and innovators. "As the name implies, turtles are the companies who are pulling their heads back into their shells, and hoping this recession will blow over them," says Miller. "You can see it in their behavior – some are downsizing, implementing hiring and spending freezes, others aren't doing anything. They are protecting themselves. Bad move; they may not survive."

"Innovators are the interesting group," Miller explains. "Even though they are hurting, they are investing in sales and marketing to build their brand, capture market share, and retain sales. They are seeing this as an opportunity for them to take away market share from their competition and come out of this recession as the clear market leaders in their industries. They are building their businesses by changing the way they sell and market. They are identifying and then going after new markets and new industries. "There is an added benefit for the innovators," says Miller. "As the turtles are laying off, they are inadvertently chopping out some of their 'A' players. The innovators who are hunting for specialized talent are now getting access to some really superior people."

With these changes, Miller says we are seeing a much more strategic recruiting initiative. "Hiring managers are now looking for specialized people on a talent profile rather than a pedigree profile," he says. "Recruiting has to be more innovative and recruiters have to be more open-minded. Hiring managers should be actively involved in the business strategies so they can bring in people who can execute those strategies. Often when a company is implementing a new program or new sales strategy, job descriptions need to be refined. It takes a much more creative way of looking at people."

"Recruiting managers have to look beyond their industries – most of the time, recruiting strategies are not based on industry expertise, but based on project or program expertise," says Miller. "They are essentially hiring specialists to implement, execute, and build a program."

Miller believes the Web is the most important recruiting tool and recommends that every company put at least four hours a week into Web-based recruiting and marketing for lead generation on both the business and recruiting side. "We (LEAPJob) are getting far more volume traffic coming to us through organic search than through job boards," he says. "In order to get those candidates, you need to take advantage of search engine

optimization so that you are in the path of search and outbound communications. You have to be engaged with your audience for years ahead of the curve so that you come up first when they are considering a job change.

"In these times, you have a choice – you either turtle up or take a risk and do something different," Miller adds. "If you're an innovator, at least you are running forward instead of standing still."

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