4 Steps to Creating a Successful Social Recruiting Strategy
By Sharlyn Lauby, SPHR, CPLP
Introduction

Social recruiting is the concept of using social tools in the recruitment process. Many different social platforms exist and as quickly as one rises to prominence another will cease to exist. However, there are some concepts about social recruiting that can guide a company’s hiring strategy.

Even with the introduction of social recruiting, the basic fundamental goal of recruiting hasn’t changed. It’s to find the most qualified talent for the organization. As a recruiter, hopefully we are able to do that quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively.

From a company perspective, we want the best and brightest talent to find us and apply. We want applicants to know who we are and have a desire to work at our company.

Job applicants have some needs and wants too. They want easy access to a list of available openings and a painless application process. They want to be kept in-the-loop regarding the status of their application.

Social tools give us the ability to accomplish all of these things. It’s not difficult but it does take a bit of planning and preparation. This whitepaper will give you an outline of the steps to consider when you’re trying to ramp up your social recruiting efforts.

Business Case for Social Recruiting

For companies currently using social media platforms, the thought of adding social recruiting will be a no-brainer. That being said, there’s still a big gap in the number of companies using social media for recruiting. According to The Information Daily, 65% of small businesses use social media for recruiting compared to 51% of medium companies and 44% of large businesses. So while the numbers are good, there are still quite a few organizations not on the social recruiting band wagon.

The real business case for social recruiting is the business case for social in general. Here are a few statistics from Statistic Brain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of 18-24 year olds who use social media</th>
<th>Average amount of tweets per day</th>
<th>Average amount of time a person uses Facebook per month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>190 million</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
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The bottom line is, people spend time on social media. A lot of time. Couple that with in today’s job market where very few companies still run newspaper employment advertising. Chances are more than good that people are looking for jobs on social media.

If companies are looking for the best talent, then they need to be where the best talent is spending their time.

Step One: Analyze the Environment

Any time we develop a strategy, it only makes good business sense to take a pulse on the environment. Many social media platforms have vibrant audiences already in existence. It can be easy to get distracted by the pace of
communication. Doing a comprehensive assessment will keep your efforts focused.

**Determine your goal.** The effort will not be successful if the company doesn’t have a focused conversation about why they are using social media for recruiting. Maybe it’s because of the perceived cost savings since many social sites are free. Or possibly it’s because the company’s competitive set is using social and they need to keep up. Regardless, make sure you have an honest conversation about why you’re doing it. It will drive future decisions.

**Choose 1-2 sites to drive traffic to.** When you post something on a social networking site, often it’s a link to somewhere else. In the case of social recruiting, you might post a link to your LinkedIn company page where openings are listed. Or a link directly to your company careers page. Figure out where you want to drive traffic. And make sure those sites are always up-to-date!

CapTech is a national technology consulting firm offering a full suite of services including management consulting, systems integration and data management. For the past four years, they have been named one of Inc. Magazine’s Inc. 5000, reserved for the nation’s fastest growing private companies. CapTech wanted to leverage technology and their employment brand to automate and store candidate information across multiple locations.

CapTech created a centralized career site with a focused message – “Others Talk, We Listen”. In addition, they incorporated iCIMS’ Social Recruit and Mobile Portal into their recruiting process. As a result, CapTech realized a measurable increase in job applications. Over a nine-month period, there were 630 mobile submissions and 233 employment applications received via social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

**Find the demographic information for social networking sites.** Despite what others might say, companies do not need a presence on every social media site. They do need a presence on the sites that fit their audience. Since we’re talking about recruiting, chances are good that a company needs to be on LinkedIn. But maybe not Pinterest. Every social networking site shares their demographics – do a quick search and find the right site for your audience.

**Step Two: Develop a Strategy**

Once the goals for the program have been established, it’s time to put a logical plan in place that will accomplish what you’re setting out to do – hire great talent!

**Test the application process.** Since ultimately you want jobseekers to apply for open positions, make sure your career site works the way you want it to. There’s nothing worse than being redirected to another site only to discover it’s clumsy and slow.

Many recruiting professionals are surprised to see how many steps a jobseeker has to take in order to apply online. It’s an all-around best practice to try the process out before launch.

**Prioritize social networking sites.** Consider what makes the most sense for your team in terms of a rollout. It might be preferred to sign up for one social site at a time versus several at once. Once you know the sites it makes sense to recruit
on, give them a priority order. For example, LinkedIn first, then Twitter and last Facebook. Pace your efforts, become proficient at one then move to the next.

**Create a social networking account.** Before signing up for your first account, spend some time thinking about what you want to call the account. Will each recruiter have their own individual account? Or will there be one company account that recruiters take turns monitoring?

Decide what the avatar for the account will be. If each recruiter will have their own account, maybe the recruiters need to agree upon a few guidelines or branding elements for their avatars. If it’s a company account, will the avatar be the company logo?

And what about the introduction or bio for the account? Depending upon your industry and your location, corporate counsel might have a couple of disclaimers that need to be included.

Lastly, agree upon what information conceptually can be sent from the account. For example, it’s a given that you’ll send out job openings. But what else? Remember, you don’t want to just disappear during slow recruiting times. Can you send out general articles or blog posts that job seekers might find interesting?

**Step Three: Implement the Strategy**

**Find other people and organizations to connect with.** Many will tell you that the number of individuals and companies you’re connected with doesn’t matter. And that’s true. To a point. If you don’t connect with anyone, then you don’t get the benefit of others spreading the word about you. The key is balance.

Javelin Marketing Group is a full-service customer marketing agency that bridges the gap between brand promise and the customer experience. They have offices in Dallas, New York, Atlanta and Seattle. Being in a niche market, Javelin found making job seekers aware of their openings was a big challenge.

Javelin revamped their recruiting strategy by implementing iCIMS Talent Platform which included the Social Distribution tool as well as an Applicant Tracking System. Within weeks of going live, they received 15 employee referrals in addition to 10 applicants from Facebook and Twitter. This was a result of recruiters and current employees sharing open positions on their personal social networking accounts. So it’s not about how many people you’re connected with, it’s about connecting with the right people.

**Step Four: Evaluate Progress**

**Establish a few introductory metrics.** Social media is incredibly popular but the value metric is still being defined. So, like other forms of recruiting, establish a couple of social media metrics to gauge your success. Off the top, companies should track how much applicant flow they get from social sites. No different than the old days when we tracked how much applicant flow we got from the newspaper. Here are some common metrics to consider:

- Traffic to your career site
- Number of comments and/or mentions on social media channels
- Number of connections, likes, and followers on your social media profiles
- Cost savings through lower media buys and job board spending

**Find social distribution methods to increase productivity.** After getting comfortable with social recruiting, the company can look for ways to automate certain aspects. It’s not necessary to automate everything because there’s still a need to be engaged on social media. But applications exist that can increase your productivity. Also check your applicant tracking system (ATS) capabilities.

**Commit to reading and staying current about social recruiting.** The world of social media is changing all the time. Applications change their offering. Sites increase and decrease in popularity. Once a company starts recruiting using social media, they should commit to regularly taking a pulse on their efforts. Ask the questions: Is this networking site still giving us the results we need? Should we experiment with this new site?

**Conclusion**

Social media has a place within the rest of your recruiting strategy. It’s not the end all be all – it’s one tool in your recruiting toolbox. And it’s a very effective way to reach a specific audience that maybe you’re not connecting with right now. If you leverage it as the unique tool it’s intended to be, the results will happen.
## Appendix: Social Recruiting SMART plan

SMART is an acronym to guide users in project management to set goals, stay on task and finish on time. Here’s a starting SMART plan to help develop a social recruiting strategy.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Analyze the Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are we going to do?</td>
<td>1) Determine the goal 2) Choose 1-2 sites to drive traffic to</td>
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<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will we measure our success?</td>
<td>All stakeholders will agree upon the goal for a social recruiting program. Two (2) web sites will be clearly identified as primary drivers for all social recruiting activity.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Achievable</th>
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| What are the steps that will help us attain our goal? | Discuss key deliverables with stakeholders including:  
- Finance (cost)  
- Marketing (exposure)  
- Technology (capability)  
- Operations (hiring results)  
Discuss with Marketing a strategy for selecting primary sites.  
Get recommendations from recruiting team on primary sites.  
Meet with technology team regarding site maintenance, traffic, and mobile feasibility. |

<table>
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<th>Responsible</th>
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| Who will be accountable for each step? | Human Resources, Recruiting team, Technology department, C-Team  
Marketing department, Technology department, Recruiting team |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Trackable</th>
<th></th>
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| When will the task be completed? | Q1  
Q1 |
Resources and Acknowledgements

“7 Not So Scary Ways to Engage Job Candidates”, HR Bartender, October 2012
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About Sharlyn Lauby, SPHR, CPLP

Sharlyn Lauby is author of the HR Bartender blog and president of ITM Group Inc., a South Florida based training and human resources consulting firm. Her company focuses on providing solutions to engage and retain employee talent so their clients can innovate and create shareholder value.

Prior to starting ITM Group, Sharlyn was vice president of human resources one of the world’s largest organizational consulting firms. She has designed and implemented highly successful programs for employee retention, internal and external customer satisfaction, and leadership development.

To learn more Sharlyn and ITM Group, please visit her website (www.itmgroupinc.com) or her blog (www.hrbartender.com). You can also contact her via phone (954.659.2237) or email (focus@itmgroupinc.com).

About iCIMS

iCIMS is a leading Software-as-a-Service provider focused on taking the hassle out of human resources processes. Through the implementation of easy-to-use, web-based solutions, iCIMS’ Talent Platform helps organizations manage everything from sourcing, to recruitment, to onboarding all within one streamlined application.

Pairing this vision with a dedication to superior customer support has proven to be a winning combination. iCIMS has been recognized by Forbes, Inc. Magazine, Deloitte, The Stevie Awards and more for staying true to its core values of customer orientation, adaptability and innovation.

To learn more about the iCIMS, call 1-800-889-4422 or take a look at our demo at:

http://www3.icims.com/candidatemanagementdemo/1553/9948