Active and Proactive Sourcing with LinkedIn
How to Effectively Leverage LinkedIn to Bring Active and Passive Applicants into Your Talent Acquisition System
With more than 300 million users worldwide, LinkedIn has evolved into the largest online business networking platform. Some people use it as merely another way to connect with friends online, while others carefully cultivate a full online resume and/or portfolio to demonstrate their capabilities and skills.

LinkedIn is important for sourcing. In general, recruiters tend to use LinkedIn primarily for active sourcing efforts. While that’s an excellent use of the tool, recruiters should also learn how to leverage LinkedIn to build an arsenal of skilled passive talent for future recruitment efforts.

Now is a great time to assess your use of LinkedIn as a supporting technology in your sourcing process: Are you leveraging it to its fullest capacity? Furthermore, are you using LinkedIn effectively with your existing talent acquisition technology? LinkedIn can provide a powerful return on investment if used appropriately as a supplementary tool to support both active and proactive sourcing.

Active Sourcing and LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a powerful tool for active sourcing, and according to iCIMS Hire Expectations Institute™ research, 65% of job seekers look to LinkedIn as the place to find jobs on social media. Given the overwhelming job seeker interest in LinkedIn, your organization needs to leverage LinkedIn wisely to support active sourcing efforts.

Once you find potential candidates, you must engage them, network with them, and educate them on your employment brand, industry, and products/services. At the same time, you must be completely honest as to your goals and reasons for engaging them. Few people will turn down an opportunity to network with people who have the ability to further their career.

Search

You probably already know that you can search for candidates among LinkedIn members by entering keywords within the search bar, allowing you to find people with the required qualifications listed in their LinkedIn profile. But did you know that if you search for the phrase “LION” (which stands for LinkedIn Open Networker) you can find individuals who are interested in building a social network, including connecting to strangers? By connecting with LIONs, you also build your own social network on LinkedIn significantly.

You can also use the advanced people search tool to search by keyword, name, title, company, school, location, connection, and more. A fantastic use of this technology can be to look up employees at related businesses (or even competitors) to see if you can find qualified individuals with the skills and experience you need. You can then send an In-mail to candidates directly, or request an introduction if you share a connection with the candidate.
With more than 300 million users, there is a wealth of information available through LinkedIn search. The only downside? You need to know how to effectively mine that data. Are you using complex search queries? Are you sorting your results by keyword, relevance, location?

Here’s a quick refresher of some best practices:

- Use **quoted searches** to find an exact phrase (e.g.: “Staffing Professional”)
- Use **OR searches** to see results with one or more terms in a list (e.g.: “recruiting” OR “recruitment” OR “talent acquisition”)
- Use **AND searches** to see results that include two or more terms in a list (e.g.: “recruiting” AND “recruitment” AND “New York City”)
- Use **NOT searches** to exclude a particular term (e.g.: recruiter NOT manager)
- To do a **complex search**, combine terms using parentheses: (e.g.: recruiter OR (staffing AND HR)—this search will return matches for “recruiter” as well as matches for both “staffing” and “HR”)

**Job Posting on LinkedIn**

You can also easily purchase a 30-day job posting on LinkedIn. Job postings are searchable and viewable by all members of LinkedIn. LinkedIn also recommends these jobs to appropriate users through the “Jobs You May Be Interested In” feature.

Once a job has been posted, you can also:

- Forward your job posting to your 1st-degree connections to help generate referral candidates.
- Share your job posting with your LinkedIn Groups or your third party social networks.
- Utilize the Profile Match feature and we’ll search and find up to 24 of the best candidates for your position.
- Run reference searches on applicants by clicking the Search for references link on the right side of their LinkedIn profiles (Premium members only).
- Supplement your search by signing up for LinkedIn Talent Finder to quickly
locate and contact more passive candidates.\(^1\)

Furthermore, you can also leverage LinkedIn’s “Sponsored Jobs” feature to highlight your jobs in front of relevant candidates by [bidding for prime placement in the jobs presented to them](http://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/386/ft/eng). This pay-per-click solution automatically matches profile information with content from the job description in order to place the Sponsored Job in front of qualified candidates.

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**Best Practices: Free Social Media Job Distribution**

In addition to purchasing job posts through LinkedIn, your existing talent acquisition technology provider may provide free solutions that allow you to post jobs automatically via your personal LinkedIn account.

Discuss your options with your existing provider to determine what options you have to supplement your active sourcing efforts on LinkedIn.

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**Proactive Sourcing and LinkedIn**

The goal in proactive sourcing is to create a bench of skilled talent from which you can draw during times of need. Proactive sourcing activities include identifying the skills your company needs to achieve strategic goals. Once those skills are identified, you must be constantly on the lookout for top talent with those skills whether a position is currently available within the organization or not.

**ABS – Always Be Searching**

Keep searching for key skills even when jobs aren’t open, and engage with the talent you find! If your organization often needs individuals with certain skills, don’t wait until a job opening is posted to begin interacting with skilled individuals. Invite them to connect with your organization through your Talent CRM (Candidate Relationship Management) / Recruitment Marketing Automation tool so that they can receive ongoing information about your organization and alerts when new jobs matching their skill set are posted.

**Groups**

Joining groups is another effective way to connect with potential candidates. Look for popular groups on topics relevant to your industry or desired skill sets. Once you join a group, find authentic ways to begin discussions with people in that group who have the skills you need. You can also contact people individually, or people may directly contact you.

On LinkedIn, your extended network grows with each group you join, making it useful to join as many relevant groups as possible. There are a number of HR and recruiting groups you should join to receive best practice information about your own industry (like [ERE](http://www.ere.net), [SHRM](http://www.shrm.org) and [Linked:HR](http://www.linkedinhr.com)), but be sure to join niche groups specific to your industry or frequently-sourced jobs as well.

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\(^1\) [http://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/386/ft/eng](http://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/386/ft/eng)
General Best Practices for Your LinkedIn Account

Finally, to round out your LinkedIn presence, make sure there are easy ways for candidates to interact with and come to you!

Personalized, Up-to-Date Profiles

Start by making sure that your personal profile and your company’s profile are complete and easily searchable. Within your personal profile, you should provide information that will allow job seekers to identify you as a hiring professional. Build a professional-looking profile with an appropriate photo, your current position, a list of skills, and information about past experiences. Write a keyword-rich summary to describe yourself and your career in order to appear in more search results.

And if your organization does not yet have a LinkedIn profile, start now! Go to www.linkedin.com/companies and click the “Create” button on the right-hand side. Make sure that you have appropriate permission to create this account on behalf of your organization, and that the branding of the LinkedIn profile matches your organization’s desired employment brand.

Networks and Connections

Decide what your personal strategy will be regarding LinkedIn connections! Many hiring professionals choose to be LIONs (LinkedIn Open Networkers), or at least choose to accept connection invitations from many individuals. The larger your connections list, the more people will potentially see your status updates and the jobs you share via your own LinkedIn account.

If you wish to proactively connect with qualified talent, make sure to personalize your connection message to explain why you are interested in connecting. If you are simply interested in sharing a job opportunity, it may be safer to use the InMail feature, but it would be very appropriate to attempt to connect with an individual with whom you share a group, alma mater, or other association—provided you make your reasoning clear to the other individual! LinkedIn does allow users to report connection requests from individuals they do not know; by personalizing your request, you reduce the likelihood of being flagged as a potential LinkedIn spammer.

Update Your Status!

Posting status updates to both your personal network as well as your organization’s network alerts interested parties about job openings and company initiatives. If you can automate job posts to your personal and company account by leveraging your talent acquisition technology’s social recruiting feature, you will save time and effectively spread the word about your open positions.

Beyond job posts, you should also update your personal and corporate statuses with relevant information, events, and branding materials that highlight the perks of your organization. What do I mean by “branding materials”? Use your status to link to the company’s latest blog post, press release, case study, or information about new and upcoming products and services. Any of these pieces of content helps interested talent better understand your organization’s priorities and position in the industry.

You’re a recruiter, but you can also do a bit of PR work with your LinkedIn account and humanize the sourcing and recruiting experience. By showing your connections how great your company is and by making careers at your organization
obviously appealing, the job of recruiting great talent becomes much easier!

**I Have All This Information from LinkedIn: Now What?**

iCIMS Hire Expectations Institute™ research illustrates that 66% of organizations surveyed state that they are using some kind of ATS. If you’re fortunate enough to work for a company that leverages a dedicated talent acquisition suite that includes a Talent CRM/Recruitment Marketing Automation tool, make sure you’re utilizing LinkedIn and your talent acquisition system hand in hand. LinkedIn can facilitate your sourcing and recruiting processes, while the talent acquisition solution automates and streamlines your candidate management and facilitates recruitment marketing automation. Make sure you have the two working in tandem so that you can truly maximize their combined value.

How? The answer is simple!

- **Track**: Leverage your talent acquisition solution as a central database to store, track and manage all the qualified talent you find on LinkedIn. By importing LinkedIn contacts into your talent acquisition solution, you also ensure that no top candidates get lost in the shuffle of LinkedIn because the information is in a single, online repository with the data owned by you.

- **Communicate**: Once candidates from LinkedIn enter your Talent CRM/Recruitment Marketing Automation solution, take advantage of the solution’s automated email campaign mass communication tools to build and maintain professional relationships. You can easily send scheduled, unlimited, fully-branded messages to any contacts via your talent acquisition solution, rather than relying on one-off, limited InMails for all correspondence. With these messages, you can invite specific skilled individuals to apply for current openings as well as nurture passive candidates to create a pipeline for future hiring needs.

- **Manage**: Piggybacking on these communication tools, you can use different talent pools within your Talent CRM/Recruitment Marketing Automation tool to manage your pipeline of top talent. Your “hot” prospects can be grouped together in one talent pool to receive certain notifications, such as the latest job openings within your organization. Applicants can also self-identify with specific talent pools by interest, location, or other qualities for your review and access when merited.

- **Measure efficiency**: Sure, LinkedIn is great for a number of things, but how effective is it proving to be for you in your sourcing and recruiting? Leverage your talent acquisition solution’s analytical reporting tools to find out this vital information and determine LinkedIn’s value. These reporting capabilities determine how effective a source LinkedIn is compared to your other sources. You can determine whether or not your presence on LinkedIn is delivering you top talent, if it’s helping decrease cost-per-hire or time-to-fill, and more.

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**Measuring LinkedIn Recruiting Results**

The overall goal of sourcing efforts on social media is to build a large, high quality talent pool. To make sure that your goals are achieved, your company must first create goals against which you measure your success. Such goals may include:
• Increase traffic to career site
• Increase follower count on LinkedIn
• Increase traffic to job postings

You can also measure how social sourcing directly impacts the bottom line by reporting on:
• Top sources of hire
• Sources for high performers
• Time-to-fill
• Cost-per-hire

Before you implement your LinkedIn social media strategy, collect baseline key metrics on your current sourcing and recruiting efforts. Then, set goals that you would like to achieve with your social sourcing efforts.

Is LinkedIn a Viable Alternative to Dedicated Talent Acquisition Technology?

No! Just as talent acquisition technology is not a replacement for LinkedIn, LinkedIn is not a replacement for dedicated talent acquisition technology. Rather, they are complimentary solutions. While LinkedIn offers organizations an option for candidates to apply through LinkedIn, this solution is in many ways more basic than other “best practice” alternatives. While the convenience factor may seem appealing, organizations that value their employment brand and the candidate experience tend to leverage best-in-breed talent acquisition technology as a complimentary solution to their LinkedIn initiatives. When organizations like LinkedIn offer solutions as “alternatives” to formal applications via your organization’s career website, you must evaluate the following:

• Who owns the candidate data?
• Who owns EEO and other compliance data?
• Are your candidates being shared with competing organizations?
• Who controls the application process and its impact on your employment brand?

Talent acquisition technology serves as the system of record for all things related to hiring, including compliance and candidate data. From a practical perspective, it makes sense for organizations to source widely—but make sure all recordkeeping and data is accessible and protected in case it is needed in the future.

Furthermore, organizations can use the configurability of their talent acquisition technology to set a candidate experience that truly reflects the organization’s specific culture and hiring needs. Leverage your talent acquisition suite to create an application process that collects all necessary information, like pre-screening responses, in a prompt and compliant manner.

How iCIMS Can Help

LinkedIn is one of the best ways to open the door of communication with these passive candidates, and also serves as the top social media resource for active job seekers. It’s a win-win!

It takes time and resources to build a social media presence on LinkedIn. By working
with iCIMS, you can increase efficiency, reach more candidates, and improve the candidate experience.

The iCIMS Talent Acquisition Suite is an easy to use, configurable software solution that empowers users to streamline processes, engage the right candidates, and make quality hires. iCIMS Connect, a Talent CRM/Recruitment Marketing Automation solution, provides customers with an easy way to attract and engage candidates who may not yet be ready to apply for a job, but are interested in the company’s employment brand. iCIMS Connect allows clients to easily collect basic information from candidates online and at career fairs and other events using the kiosk mode as a standard element of the solution, available at no additional cost. Bring candidates in through a fully branded Social Connect Portal and leverage iCIMS powerful recruitment marketing automation capabilities to communicate with passive candidates. iCIMS Connect offers clients the ability to secure a stronger pipeline of talent to select from when filling open requisitions while increasing your company presence and creating a positive employment brand. Further, the iCIMS Talent Acquisition Suite can help businesses report on top sources of hire, sources for high performers, time-to-fill and cost-per-hire. Social recruiting will improve your hiring metrics in the long run, and you will be able to demonstrate the impact with easy-to-interpret visual reports and charts.

With iCIMS advanced social media technology, you can enable candidates to apply to your organization using the information from their LinkedIn or other social media profiles. In the system, recruiters may be able to access candidate social media resume information as well. In addition to helping the recruiter, the “social apply” feature greatly enhances the candidate experience by simplifying and shortening the application process.

Furthermore, with iCIMS Social Distribution, you can simultaneously post jobs to your LinkedIn and other social media sites. You can even schedule the postings to occur at certain times and at certain frequencies. You can also allow other employees to automatically post jobs to their own social networks, so that your jobs will reach hundreds of other potential applicants.

To learn more about the iCIMS suite of solutions, call 1-800-889-4422 or take a look at our demo at: http://www.icims.com/view-demo

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