

Social Networking Sites

Another way of finding applicants is through social networking sites, where friends or acquaintances are used to connect those looking for applicants to those looking for jobs. Many recruiters have turned to social networking websites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook as sources for finding qualified job candidates.⁵¹ The use of social networking has become so prevalent that recruiting software integrates these sites into the applicant tracking process. Recruiters can automatically post openings to these social networking sites and receive reports on which channels are resulting in the most leads and the best candidates.⁵² The use of social networking sites has a number of advantages. Because many of the connections between users are based on professional background or shared work experiences, networking sites often provide access to groups of potential employees with specific skill sets. Some social networking websites geared toward professionals encourage users to indicate the industry and area in which they work. Recruiters can set up their own profile pages with these websites, encouraging potential applicants to apply by making personal contacts. By accessing the social networks of those already employed in the organization, it is possible to locate passive candidates who are already employed and not necessarily looking for a new job. In fields where the unemployment rate is very low, such as engineering, health care, and information technology (IT), these passive candidates may be the primary source of potential applicants.

However, some recruiters find that these networking sites are not very efficient, because of the large number of passive candidates who are not interested in alternative employment offers. Organizations can face troubling legal and ethical quandaries when using social networking sites, because candidates' personal information, such as marital status, health status, or demographics, is often publicly available on personal pages. To avoid these problems, recruiters are strongly advised not to ask potential applicants to provide access to personal information when conducting networking-based recruiting. Only publicly available information should be viewed. Companies should establish strong guidelines for the use of social media, because managers may be using personal information without the company's knowledge or consent.⁵³

Professional Associations and Meetings

Organizations can take advantage of the relationships their employees have with professional associations. Through networking with others who do similar work, employees can develop contacts with potential new recruits. This contact can be established informally by reaching individuals via e-mail or through message boards. Professional associations sometimes have a formal placement function that is available throughout the year. For example, the websites of professional associations often advertise both positions available and interested applicants. Others may have a computerized job and application bank.