



Social Targeting and Recruiting: Filling Gaps in Skilled Workforce

How can I hire the right talent?

Why are there an inadequate number of skilled workers? How can I find a job that suits me? All of these are questions all too often asked by Human Resources departments (and those on the job hunt) in major companies today. A sentiment echoed by people like Mike Rowe and his efforts with [Profoundly Disconnected](#), gaps in skilled workforce continue to pose a problem for growing businesses, especially manufacturers – whose leaders are vocal and actively speaking of the need to find more skilled workers that are necessary to support their present business and carry them into the future.



The skills gap is here, and if we don't close it, it'll swallow us all.

This viewpoint is echoed by some of today's top manufacturers like Dan Ariens from the Ariens Company and Mary Andringa, CEO of Vermeer, Inc. These leaders have been vocal and actively speaking of the need to find more skilled workers that are necessary to support their present business and carry them into the future. If there is record unemployment and yet a high demand for workers with certain skills - it would appear that we could put a dent in this problem through increased awareness on both sides of the equation. If you can relate to this trend, this mini ebook is for you.



Gaps in Skilled Workforce

The best way to fill the deficit is to shift your behavior. Just doing more of what you have done in the past is not the answer. So how can you effectively and economically compete with other employers all looking for the few skilled workers? The economy is volatile. Budgets are tight. Business is living in uncertain times as to the future and shareholders want results. This climate reduces the likelihood that your company is going to be able to allocate a sound dollar investment to its recruiting and marketing efforts to attract skilled workers. So you are stuck? Not really.

The ideal solution is to raise the supply of available skilled workers. That will take time. In the mean time there are things you can do in the short term – you need visibility. Visibility to the pool of available skilled workers, who in turn need visibility to you. Neither of you know each other exists. Raise visibility for your company and as a result, improve your ability to identify available skilled workers. This is done in one of two ways: how we've always done it or a new approach.



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The Old Way

The traditional approach of recruiting involves time-tested techniques that have been identified and proven to help formulate local influence; but it involves a great deal of time, money, and knowledge into external sources. Recruiting tactics and positive outreach that you're likely familiar with include: funding programs, educational outreach, public speaking, and giving back to the community. These things work on a local level and offer consistent exposure, proximity, visibility, and local impact. But only to potentially bring in new recruits restricted to a certain geographic range.



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Introducing Social Recruiting

Enter: social engagement. Yes, we are talking about social media. But not just social media as you know it. There is a good deal of hype today about social media and its business value, though most of those conversations revolve around generating new sales. Never has anyone worked to leverage social to stay on the offense of seeking skilled workforce rather than on the defense.

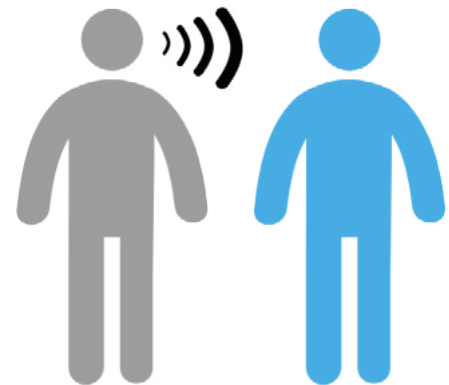
Think of it as your traditional, often local approach expanded to a national and global solution using social media. You can interact with, engage, and build relationships with someone in your backyard or the next state over. You can build a community, a pool of recruits, where potential new employees can talk to you (and each other), learn about your company and the industry, ask questions and get answers. Either way, your company is positioned as a valued resource in their career search and as a likely candidate when they're ready to commit to a job in their field.





Taking An 'At Them' Vs. 'With Them' Approach

If you like the idea of creating a pool of recruits that come to you, rather than you searching high and low for them - building a social community is for you. However, a fundamental premise of why most people fail on social media comes from taking an 'at them' versus a 'with them' approach.



“With social recruiting, you can go beyond job boards and the ‘spray and pray’ techniques to find and personally engage with candidates.’

Traditionally, we've always wanted to preach, to talk “at” people. As companies, we're always excited to share branded content, new product or service info, or just talk about ourselves. And people today don't have the time or the willingness to hear these messages and be sold. People today - whether it's customers or recruits - require something of value in return. It's time to ditch the PR approach and focus on the foundation behind human behavior, persuasion and relationships - simply put, conversations or talking 'with them.'

As you build real connections and relationships, you'll be able to assess applicant's skills, learn more about their personalities and understand how they'll fit within your culture - all while helping them job search.







Sharing a Message That Drives Recruits


When it's done right, digital content can have the same transformative impact on HR as it does on marketing. It's simple: great content attracts great people, and it encourages the people who are creating it to stick around.

Imagine that the ideal candidate finds an article that you published in your blog. As he reads the article, he develops a deeper understanding of your industry niche. Clicking through to your social media presence, he finds himself immersed in your team's content among many other conversations from people just like him searching for information on the field. Your blog posts, LinkedIn discussions, and private Facebook groups come together to create a clear picture of what it's like to work at your company. The candidate feels a sense of connection to your corporate culture and decides to send in his résumé.



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Social communities will help spur actions as mentioned above. However, even tactics as simple as recruiting ads via social media can yield significant return at a low investment. Take the ad on the right for example. National flooring contractor, HJ Martin and Son, often looks to expand their skilled installation crews. This “Now Hiring” ad on Facebook drove 519 people to the HJ Martin Employment Page, 35 of which completed a Commercial Contact Us conversion (i.e. reached out to HJ Martin) about the position in just over a week. Even more significant is that this ad spurred ongoing conversations between HJ Martin and prospective recruits, in which HJ Martin helped to educate, share stores, and outline possibilities for growth in this field. In short, they acted as a willing and trusted resource throughout the job search and as such, positioned themselves perfectly for top candidate considerations.

For companies that are getting it right, content and good conversations are their most powerful recruiting tool. The right content, coupled with a true desire to help, humanizes your brand; it provides a window into the soul of your company, and when you have a voice, you can have big wins.

Reduce Your Cost-Per-Hire

Social recruiting is a cost-effective way to source candidates. Unlike job boards or other traditional recruiting sources that push your own positions to the masses, social media can be targeted to zoom in on specific candidate profiles. By personalizing your hiring message, you’ll get more candidate engagement and increase your applicant conversation rates.





Core Strategy & Conclusion

We've seen it work, though there are a few important considerations as you begin your social recruitment journey:

- Follow this equation: $\text{Visibility} + \text{Engagement} = \text{Relationships}$
- Build a team around social recruitment.
- Create a content strategy.
- Whether job seeker or provider, make sure it's about the relationship.
- Ditch the “at them” approach and embrace “with them” conversations.

Since many of our partners live and breathe dirt, sweat, and machines – addressing these gaps isn't a foreign concept to us. We also believe that organizations that make the journey will become highly competitive just a few years from now. The executives we interviewed at companies that have made the transformation to social business are experiencing higher-than-industry-average growth. For one of the primary benefits of social business is real-time, dynamic feedback from employees, customers, and partners. In most cases, the adaptive abilities of the social businesses we reviewed produced powerful competitive advantages and superior returns in capital.

Connect with us to chat more about our passion for social recruitment. In the mean time, stay tuned for more quick tips on Social Targeting and Recruiting: Filling Gaps in Skilled Workforce, where we'll dig share some tools that are NOT new or experimental. They are time tested and have demonstrated success in solving similar visibility problems.