Recruiting through social networks

Hiring the right staff isn't just about qualifications and work experience. Beyond an aptitude for the job, 'soft skills' such as loyalty, honesty, good oral and written communication skills, a strong work ethic and an ability to work harmoniously with others are well worth considering.

One way to get a good feel for a candidate's personality is through their activity on social networking sites. A social recruiting report produced in 2010 shows that 80% of those surveyed say they review social profiles as part of the recruitment process.

What to look for

Social networking profiles include sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. A survey conducted by CareerBuilder.com last year shows that employers are using online social network profiles to check the character of potential employees. Eighteen percent of the employers surveyed said they found content on social networking sites that encouraged them to hire the candidate. Half of these said they were able to get a good feel for the candidate's personality and potential fit within the organisation. They were also able to:

• check professional qualifications tallied with their CV,

• judge the candidate's creativity and communication skills, and

• see they were well-rounded individuals.

A smaller proportion said they found positive references about the candidate and awards and accolades they had received.

You can also use social networking websites to whittle down your candidate lists. Many employers are already looking at social networking sites for signs of inappropriate behaviour, such as compromising photos, links to criminal activity, drink and drugs issues, and breaches of confidentiality and professional etiquette.

Recruiting from within

Social networking doesn't just have to be used for vetting job candidates. You can actually actively recruit and head-hunt potential candidates from within your own online social networks and those of your colleagues and contacts. By joining the appropriate online industry groups, your school or university's alumni group and the alumni group for companies that you have worked with previously, you can enlarge your network of contacts exponentially and recruit qualified passive candidates. Facebook and LinkedIn have particularly strong alumni followings. You can also send out requests for referrals through sites such as LinkedIn and Twitter and get your contacts to do the recruiting.

Sources:

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