

USING LINKEDIN FOR RECRUITMENT

LinkedIn is a great business networking tool, particularly when you are recruiting or looking for a job. If you are to find new recruits effectively, however, you need to adopt several different strategies

Like most social networks, LinkedIn provides a variety of ways to engage with other people. By considering all ways to engage with potential candidates, a recruitment campaign can be made much more effective than simply using LinkedIn to distribute a job advertisement. This tip sheet explains the most effective approaches to recruiting on LinkedIn.

The most obvious approach is to post a job on the system. LinkedIn allows you to post jobs at a competitive rate, with discounts for buying bundles of multiple job postings. Jobs are displayed in a box entitled "Jobs you may be interested in", with LinkedIn attempting to match skills, experience and location.

Once you've posted a job, it makes a lot of sense to publicise the vacancy. You can easily post a status update on LinkedIn, but the most effective campaigns will use several channels to highlight the role: Facebook, twitter, blogs and the company website are all good places to post a link.

Although the LinkedIn job advertisements are effective – on average attracting 30 applications according to the site – you can use many other approaches to attract candidates to your company. Getting people to follow your company is a great way to ensure that prospective employees get told about opportunities. A well-written, keyword-rich company profile is essential to attract followers but this takes time, and so you should start immediately and not wait until you have a vacancy!

LinkedIn offers the option of premium careers information in your company listing. If you are recruiting frequently, the cost might prove to be a great investment.

Once you have a vacancy, you will want to fill it as quickly as possible. The LinkedIn search allows you to look for people with the skills and experience that you want. InMail is the LinkedIn system to contact people you don't know personally. Although it's often possible to find the direct email address of someone with a simple Google search – especially if they are in a high-visibility occupation such as marketing – InMail is relatively cheap and easy to use, and you only pay if you get a reply. Note, however, that the number of InMail contacts you can buy is limited, particularly if you have a standard free account.

LinkedIn restricts what you can see in the profile of people to whom you are not closely connected, but there are three different premium "Talent Finder" accounts that allow you to get more information about 3rd degree contacts and fellow group members. These options also provide additional bundled InMails to allow you to contact potential candidates.

Groups are a great way to highlight vacancies, and posting a note about a vacancy in a group can be a very effective way of reaching a highly targeted audience. Joining groups also means you are able to see more details about group members (depending upon your membership level), which can also help identify potential candidates when searching for possible recruits.

Perhaps the most important thing is to spread the news widely by encouraging employees to post the vacancy in their status updates and in the groups in which they are active. Employees might also be prepared to promote the role on their twitter, Facebook and other social media accounts.

LinkedIn hasn't killed off the recruitment consultancy business. Premium accounts provide a much better way to find potential candidates, but are expensive. Sometimes it can make more sense to work with a specialised recruitment agency than to pay for one of the top-tier memberships and try to search for candidates yourself.

LinkedIn doesn't stop being useful when a candidate applies. A very useful technique is to connect to all applications as soon as they apply – this will quickly expand your network and may well lead you to find other potential candidates when searching a wider network. LinkedIn – and other social networks – also provide valuable background information on candidates. It's also often possible to identify mutual acquaintances to provide references on the candidate's calibre and personality.

Finally if you are hosting vacancies on your website, LinkedIn now offers the ability to use a LinkedIn profile as an online job application. Once you add the button to the vacancies on your site, an applicant only needs to click a button to apply, ensuring that you get as many applications as possible.

LinkedIn is by far the leading professional network. By using a mix of the tactics described above, you can maximise the size of the applicant pool whilst ensuring high quality applications by focussing promotion of the role on people who are most likely to be suitable candidates.

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