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(ATS) to continue a satisfying applicant experience. If you use a pre-screening assessment, design it so that applicants can stop and start on their own time. Use automated responses (for more personal keep-in-touch correspondence), interview scheduling, and online status checks. All these elements keep the conversation going.

A major car parts retailer overhauled its career site when it purchased an ATS. The company implemented many of these ideas: multiple languages, a two-track application process for hourly and salaried positions, 24/7 access to the application with stop-and-start privileges, and easy online status checking. This attention to applicants paid off: the company has seen a dramatic increase in the number of hourly candidates, and a 20 percent reduction in time-to-fill for corporate jobs. They also enjoyed an average 90 percent applicant satisfaction rate, based on a voluntary survey.

Incorporating Social Media to Enhance the Applicant Experience

Online social networking has changed the applicant/ employer conversation, and you need to embrace and apply elements of online networking in order to join the conversation—and carry it out to a satisfying conclusion for all involved. Key takeaways from this paper include:

- Understand how social media has changed the game.
- Discover your candidate populations' demographics.
- Make your career site user-friendly and user-attracting.
- Marry your site to your ATS for continued communication.

As you implement these guidelines, you are likely to attract the candidates you want and build brand at the same time.

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Social Networking and Your Career Site:

Innovating for a Better Applicant Experience

Going Beyond Applicant Tracking



NOWHIRE
GOING BEYOND APPLICANT TRACKING®

Networking for business is a natural carryover, and that desire to connect does not stop when we sit down at the computer.



A New Approach to Applicant Interaction

Today's jobseekers are a diverse and savvy lot, using the wealth of technology resources available to find and apply for jobs. Organizations need to be creative and compelling in their approach to woo and secure top candidates. The standard, static career site will no longer do. You need to understand the world your candidates live in, how they use technology, and why that affects how you build your site — and your brand.

The Social Media Revolution Will Be Televised, Bookmarked and Twittered

Human beings are social creatures; we are always looking for ways to connect with others. Networking for business is a natural carryover, and that desire to connect does not stop when we sit down at the computer. Hence the advent — and wild appeal — of online social networking. Here is a quick overview of the most established social networking forums:

Facebook allows users to create personal profiles, join various networks and send messages to friends. Initially restricted to Harvard students, the site became so popular that membership has expanded to include anyone on Earth who is 13 or older. Facebook has more than 69 million active users, and active users are doubling every six months. There has been an average of 250,000 new registrations per day since January 2007.

MySpace has more than 110 million active users around the world. One in four Americans has a MySpace page. 85% of MySpace users are of voting age (18 or older). The site is more media-rich than Facebook and allows for blogs, videos, music, and pictures. Rupert Murdoch saw the potential in this type of social networking; his News Corporation bought MySpace in July 2005 for \$580 million.

LinkedIn is a professional networking site with over 22 million users across 150 industries. Users build a network of friends, each of whom has their own contacts, and these “connections” can be used to “meet” people via a trusted contact. Users work their connections to find jobs, people and business opportunities.

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service for those who want to stay in detailed contact throughout the day. Over one million users send updates (or “tweets”), which are text posts up to 140 characters long. Organizations like the Los Angeles Fire Department and universities — and even most of this year's presidential campaigns — use this service to quickly relay important information. Business members have found prospects and potential business partners by tweeting.

In addition to social networking, social bookmarking (whereby people share their Web favorites) has become a phenomenon as well with sites like Stumble Upon (<http://www.stumbleupon.com>), Furl (<http://www.furl.net>), Digg (<http://digg.com>) and De.li.cious (<http://del.icio.us>). Blogs are another form of online opinion-sharing, with an estimated 9 million blogs in the U.S. alone.

What does all this mean? It means that certain standards have been set and need to be met in order to hold job seekers' interest. Applicants are used to building relationships online; they expect more than one-way communication with the organizations they'd like to work for. They also expect honest and engaging job descriptions, and a real feel for what the job would be like at your company. They may be looking for authentic blog postings from your employees or day-in-the-life video tours. But many companies are not yet meeting these expectations. Now,

"To improve the career Web site experience, human resources... professionals should seize the opportunity to differentiate their career site experiences by designing them with job seekers in mind."



while the importance of applicant-focused career sites is underestimated, there is a great opportunity to stand out and brand your company as leading-edge and applicant-friendly.

Designing for Your Applicant

"If it ever really hits the fan again and you see multiple counteroffers flying around, you'll wish that you had taken the time to think of your candidate experience like a customer experience." Dave Levkow, "Are You Prepared For A Candidate's Market?"

"This sense from rejected applicants that they don't make the cut could really harm Google in the long run. At some point, they won't be the trendy company to work for (think Microsoft), and public opinion and how they have treated large masses of people will matter." [from the SystematicHR blog]

Applicants are consumers of your brand. Your career site is a gatekeeper of that brand — like it or not. As you design or re-design your site, consider your candidate demographics:

- Age – If you are targeting older workers, they may not appreciate a loud, flashy video welcome. If you're looking for twenty-something, they more than likely will.
- Mother tongue - In an increasingly multi-cultural society, an English-only career site may be obsolete. Think about who is applying and how to make them feel welcomed and successful throughout the process. Some may consider this an over-and-above step — what a great way to distinguish your organization.
- Education level – Who are you talking to? Candidates know immediately if they are being talked down to, or if the language used is going over their heads. Entry-level employees and executives have different vocabularies, so make sure your wording is appropriate.

Are your employees hourly, salaried, contract, contingent, or a mix? Chances are, you are looking to fill more than one type of position. First-time retail job seekers won't have

a resume to upload, so their process will necessarily be different from that of senior managers. Create a separate page for each employee type.

But make sure those pages are clearly labeled and easy to find. Do prospective employees have to hunt through your site to find job openings, or is there a prominent link on the home page? Do you expect applicants to spend an hour plowing through forms and questions, or have you streamlined the process in consideration of their time? Is there a logical flow to the process — that is, does the applicant understand why certain elements are required?

Finally, don't bore prospects to distraction with badly-worded job descriptions that contain indecipherable industry-speak and little idea of what the position actually requires. Think about it: are you just trying to get people to apply for a job, or are you taking the opportunity to immerse them in your culture? Use this instance to convey your organization's values and work style. Sell your strong points — what's attractive to your demographic — within the job description itself. This will help job-seekers decide if they are a good fit before they even apply, saving everyone time.

The ATS: A Critical Integration Tool

"[F]ormer Valero genius Dan Hilbert once stated, 'When the war for talent is waged over the Internet, major corporations will be won and lost over staffing technology.'" [article by Elaine Rigoli at Inside Recruiting]

"Tight integration between the hiring management system and corporate recruitment site. This is key because it is the basis for ensuring a consistent and positive job seeker experience, and the most visible aspect of the online employment brand interface." [Net-Temps article]

All of this diligent and thoughtful work on your career site needs to be integrated with your applicant tracking system