

Human Resources

MARKET LEADER



Business English

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This unit looks at the ways in which employers are using technology in the recruitment process.

BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss these questions.

- 1 When you are thinking about your future career, how can you find out about the different companies and organisations you could work for?
- 2 What sort of process do you have to go through in order to get a job? Describe the various stages.

READING**A Understanding the main points**

Read the article on the opposite page and answer these questions.

- 1 Which modern technological resource are companies now using to recruit the next generation of employees?
- 2 Besides their own website, which two other types of site are companies using to attract and recruit graduates?
- 3 At which stage in the recruitment process is online testing useful?
- 4 In which two main ways is this generally useful to both employers and graduates?
- 5 Why is it important for companies to give quick automated feedback?
- 6 Why is it not sufficient for companies simply to use their own website to attract young recruits?
- 7 What are companies trying to achieve by engaging with potential employees outside of the company's own website domain?
- 8 According to the article, are all employers proficient at using web resources to attract and recruit employees yet?

B Understanding details

Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 Which well-known Internet site is playing a major role in Ernst and Young's recruitment strategy?
- 2 What is the world's largest online recruitment group?
- 3 Give a specific example of how online testing is useful, firstly to the company and secondly to the potential job applicant.
- 4 Which virtual world are some companies using in order to meet potential recruits?
- 5 How can potential recruits use that resource to meet and talk to company employees?
- 6 Which other two Internet forums do employers use to meet young people?
- 7 Once employers have made contact with young people, how do they keep those young people interested in them?

Online recruitment: Shopping for talent in a virtual world

by Sarah Murray



A Since 2007, Ernst & Young's recruitment strategy has included a page on Facebook. On the site, job candidates can meet students gaining work experience, participate in opinion polls and join discussion groups, whose topics cover everything from psychometric testing to working in China.

B However, the accounting firm's move into social networking is only one example of the way companies can use the web to attract top talent. Some companies have extended their use of the Internet in the recruitment process and are using web tools very effectively. As well as making use of the

services of companies such as Monster, the world's largest online recruitment group, they are using online technology to speed up the application process. This allows candidates to find out details about the job they are applying for and complete the first stages of the application.

C One important part of this process is online testing. Taking a practice test on a corporate website means an individual can measure themselves against the standards of the company in areas such as numeracy, for example. For companies, these tests can weed out inappropriate candidates before they have even started the application process. And for graduates, they save time and money. If they don't measure up, they can withdraw from the process without having to spend time on application forms or travelling to another city.

D It is important for companies to follow up with automated feedback on the tests, however. Candidates who do well in practice tests and receive instant feedback telling them that they've exceeded the standard requirements find that very encouraging, and so tend to stick with the company and continue their application.

E However, the web offers more than automated form filling, particularly when it comes to identifying the best talent among the graduate community. Traditionally, companies thought about how to find the right candidate. Today, however, they think about how the right candidate can find them – by 'setting up shop' in other parts of the

Internet, outside their own web domains. Tech-savvy, younger-generation individuals now entering the job market spend much of their lives online and expect recruiters to be there, too.

F For companies, this means engaging in the online social networking that plays such an important part in the way young recruits interact with their peers. As well as social networking sites, virtual worlds such as Second Life also provide opportunities to engage prospective candidates, whose 'avatars' (invented online characters) can interact with those of the company's employees.

G Much of the real power of the Internet in recruitment exists in these external sites, where companies can build an employer brand and tap into potential recruits by engaging in issues about which these individuals are passionate. This means companies need to establish a presence in everything from chat rooms to blogs.

H But while some forward-thinking companies are doing this, many recruiters have yet to tap into these audiences. 'Organisations are a bit unsure at the moment of how to take advantage of this,' says Emma Parry, Research Fellow at Cranfield School of Management. 'But it's something they'll have to do in the future because, for this generation of recruits, that's the way they communicate.'

FT

C Searching for information

1 Look at these reasons why employers participate in social networking sites. Tick (✓) the ones mentioned in the article.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 to attract top talent | 4 to tap into potential recruits |
| 2 to have fun playing on Second Life | 5 to learn more about world issues |
| 3 to build an employer brand | |

2 Look at these reasons why young people interact with companies on social networking sites. Tick (✓) the ones mentioned in the article.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 to develop 'avatars' | 4 to meet interns |
| 2 to improve their computer skills | 5 to participate in opinion polls |
| 3 to join discussion groups | |

VOCABULARY

A Word search

Find three words in paragraphs A and B of the article which follow the word *recruitment* and match the resulting phrases with their meanings.

- 1 recruitment *s*..... a) a set of companies whose job it is to help employers find new employees
 2 recruitment *p*..... b) a plan for recruiting new employees
 3 recruitment *g*..... c) a series of steps which results in the hiring of new employees

B Word families

- 1 Complete the chart with words from the article.

verb	noun (process)	noun (individual)	noun (company)
to recruit	.....¹	.....²	.....³
..... ⁴	.....⁵	applicant	

- 2 Complete the chart with the corresponding nouns.

verb	noun
to attract	.....¹
to extend	.....²
to withdraw from	.....³
to follow up	.....⁴
to receive	.....⁵

C Word partnerships

- 1 Match the verbs and verb phrases (1–8) with the noun phrases (a–h) to form word partnerships relating to the use of online technology in the job application process.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 to use | a) inappropriate candidates |
| 2 to complete | b) web tools very effectively |
| 3 to follow up with | c) a practice test |
| 4 to find out | d) time and money |
| 5 to weed out | e) details about the job |
| 6 to take | f) the first stages of the application |
| 7 to save | g) against the standards of the company |
| 8 to measure themselves | h) automated feedback |

- 2 Decide which actions in Exercise 1 belong to the candidate and which belong the company. One of them applies to both.

D Sentence completion

Use phrases from Exercises A–C to complete these sentences.

- 1 We have just spent a month working out our for the coming year. We plan to take on 30 graduates and will recruit them all online.
- 2 We are a very popular company to work for. In fact, we were voted one of the top-ten last year.
- 3 Some companies are using online web tools to allow potential recruits to the first stages of their job application.
- 4 Practice tests enable potential applicants to themselves against the standards of the company.
- 5 Online tests allow employers to weed out so that they don't waste time or money visiting the company for tests and interviews.
- 6 Social networking can be a great way to top talent.
- 7 It is an important part of a company's task of building an employer brand to appeal to potential young

E Understanding expressions

Choose the best explanation for each word or phrase from the article.

- 1 '... whose topics cover everything from *psychometric testing* to ...' (lines 6–8)
 - a) mathematical tests
 - b) tests which measure personality and attitudes
- 2 '... in areas such as *numeracy* ...' (lines 29–30)
 - a) skill with numbers and mathematics
 - b) ability to read numbers accurately
- 3 '... can *weed out inappropriate candidates* ...' (lines 31–32)
 - a) select suitable candidates
 - b) eliminate unsuitable candidates
- 4 'If they *don't measure up*, ...' (line 35)
 - a) aren't big enough
 - b) aren't competent enough
- 5 '*Tech-savvy*, younger-generation individuals ...' (lines 59–60)
 - a) with specialist technical skills
 - b) knowledgeable about and able to use modern technology

OVER TO YOU

- 1 Visit the websites mentioned and see if any companies you know of are using them to interact with potential recruits. Describe the ways in which they are doing this.
- 2 Visit the websites of any companies you know of and find out if they provide online services for potential applicants. Complete a practice test or two and see how you measure up.

This unit looks at the way companies are using their existing employees to find new ones.

BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss these questions.

- 1 Describe ways in which companies find new but experienced employees in your country.
- 2 Can you think of any other ways they could do this? Explain your ideas.

READING**A Understanding the main points**

Read the article on the opposite page and answer these questions.

- 1 Who are employers increasingly using to find other experienced employees for their companies?
- 2 What is the benefit for the employee who refers a potential recruit?
- 3 Which feature of modern life has encouraged employers to follow this recruitment strategy?
- 4 Give two examples from the article of online social networking communities.
- 5 What are the benefits for the company?
- 6 Where is this recruitment strategy more common, India or the UK?
- 7 Are there any potential disadvantages in recruiting employees via personal referrals?
- 8 What Internet resource do some employers provide for employees who want to refer friends and contacts as potential job candidates?

B Understanding details

Read the article again and say whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). Correct the false ones. Identify the part of the article that gives this information.

- 1 Companies only ask people who still work for them to look for new recruits.
- 2 Indian employers save 75 per cent of their recruitment costs through personal referrals.
- 3 Employees who bring new recruits to a company are usually rewarded with a job promotion.
- 4 The most an employee can make from a UK employer for a successful personal referral is £2,000.
- 5 Job candidates who have been referred by a friend do not need to go through the same testing and interview process as other job candidates.
- 6 It is best if a company does not tell the people responsible for selecting successful candidates the name of the person who has referred a specific job candidate.
- 7 It can be a good idea for a company to wait until a new recruit has successfully worked for the company for some time before paying a bonus to the person who recommended them.

Social networking hits the workplace

by Alicia Clegg

A Career-minded people know that having a wide circle of friends can be a good thing in the job market. Now employers are benefiting from the address books of their employees by rewarding those who talent-spot for the company.

B Almost half of UK employers offer staff an incentive to get friends and associates to make job applications, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in the UK. Also on the increase are programmes which encourage former employees to feed back recruitment leads and consider rejoining the company in the future.

C Growing enthusiasm for social networking has made 'personal introduction' popular. 'The market is very aware of the power of word of mouth,' says Richard Spragg, Communications Manager at EPC-global. 'It is driven by businesses waking up to communities such as MySpace and Friends Reunited.'

D Employers measurably benefit from referral programmes; they can cut recruitment budgets. According to one group HR director, in the UK, 20 per cent of recruits come through employee referrals, which represent a 50-per-cent cost saving, while in India about half come through referrals, and the savings are closer to 75 per cent.

E Keeping costs down isn't the only attraction of referral and ex-employee hiring schemes. Just as important are the benefits that flow from appointing someone who is known to share the



values of the culture they are joining. 'The learning curve for becoming effective is much shorter,' says Richard Jordan, Head of Employer Brand at Ernst & Young in London.

F One concern, however, is that referral programmes restrict the flow of new ideas into organisations, because existing staff are likely to recommend people who think like they do.

G As the popularity of referral programmes which offer a reward has risen, so has the size of the reward. A case in point is professional services firms, where bonuses can range from £2,000 for the appointment of a secretary to £10,000 for a partner. However, another concern is that extravagant bonuses may tempt staff to recommend names inappropriately.

H Some feel that friendship can colour someone's view of a prospective mate's capabilities. When a respected employee recommends a friend, employers may be tempted to assume that the candidate will make an equally good colleague.

I Referral programmes are useful, but certain rules are necessary. Rule one is that referred candidates should be assessed on the same basis and by the

same methods as external applicants. Another safety measure is to hide the source, where possible, through which referrals have entered the selection pipeline.

J Recommendations are valuable only if they provide candidates with the required skills. Recruiters must also plan for how to deal with appointments that go wrong. To limit their financial exposure, some employers pay bonuses only after a referred candidate has completed a probationary period.

K One employer invites staff, particularly those in areas of skills shortages, to enrol as 'talent scouts'. They then receive an online magazine that highlights recruitment priorities and offers tips on how to network. They learn how to spot and approach talented people in order to increase the talent pool. In some people's view, though, not paying the recruitment bonus until after a probationary period is a clear case of management avoiding responsibility.

FT

VOCABULARY

A

Word search

- 1 Find words and phrases in the article which describe things employees or former employees can do to help find new recruits for a company.

- 1 to *t*.....-*s*..... (paragraph A)
- 2 to get friends and associates to *m*.....*j*.....*a*..... (paragraph B)
- 3 to *f*.....*b*..... recruitment *l*..... (paragraph B)
- 4 to *r*..... a friend (paragraph H)
- 5 to enrol as a *t*.....*s*..... (paragraph K)
- 6 to *n*..... (paragraph K)
- 7 to *s*..... and *a*..... talented people (paragraph K)

- 2 Find words in the article which describe what companies offer staff in return for this help.

- 1 an *i*..... (paragraph B)
- 2 a *r*..... (paragraph G)
- 3 a *b*..... (paragraph G)

- 3 Find words or phrases in the article which fit these meanings.

- 1 the referral of a friend or associate to the company you work for (paragraph C)
p.....*i*.....
- 2 what a company is said to have made when a candidate is given a new job (paragraph G)
a.....
- 3 the process by which candidates are interviewed, then accepted or rejected (paragraph I)
the *s*.....*p*.....
- 4 the period after a new employee is recruited, during which the company assesses whether they are right for the job and can continue to work for the company (Some employers do not pay referral bonuses until this time has been successfully completed.) (paragraph J)
p.....*p*.....

B

Word families

Complete the chart with word partnerships from the article which include different forms of *refer*.

verb	noun	adjective	adjective
to ¹ someone to a company	employee ²	.....³ candidate	.....⁴ programme

C Text completion

Use words and phrases from Exercises A and B to complete this paragraph.

Companies can save a lot of money by encouraging employees to find new recruits for them. To do this, they usually offer the employee a financial¹. Some companies are so well organised that they have set up employee² to advise employees on the type of recruits the company most urgently needs. Some companies are cautious about rewarding the³ too soon. They sometimes wait until the new recruit has completed a⁴ before paying the employee their⁵. If an employee uses their free time to⁶ and⁷ potential recruits, they can earn a lot of extra money on top of their salary.

D Understanding expressions

Choose the best explanation for each word or phrase from the article.

- 1 '*Career-minded people* know that ...' (line 1)
 - a) people who have strong ambitions for their career
 - b) people who don't like their career
- 2 '*... businesses waking up to* communities such as ...' (lines 24–25)
 - a) becoming more aware of
 - b) saying hello to their neighbours in the morning
- 3 '*The learning curve* for becoming effective ...' (lines 42–43)
 - a) amount of time it takes to acquire the right knowledge
 - b) amount of time it takes to recruit
- 4 '*... extravagant bonuses* ...' (lines 58–59)
 - a) extremely large
 - b) additional
- 5 '*... can colour* someone's view of ...' (lines 61–62)
 - a) influence their judgement
 - b) make them angry
- 6 '*To limit their financial exposure*, some employers ...' (lines 81–82)
 - a) keep their finances a secret
 - b) minimise the risk of losing money
- 7 '*... to increase the talent pool.*' (lines 92–93)
 - a) encourage employees to improve their swimming skills
 - b) raise the number of highly skilled employees in the company

OVER TO YOU

- 1 Write a short report outlining the advantages and disadvantages to companies of using an employee referral scheme.
- 2 The incentives mentioned in the article are mostly simple financial payments. Write a list of other ways in which a company could incentivise its employees to bring in new recruits.