
Social Networking Sites and Recruiting

Information provided by HR Business Solutions

As companies seek ways to cut recruiting costs and avoid the over-abundance of resumes now generated by job postings, many are utilizing social and professional networking sites for candidate sourcing. Not surprisingly, there are potential hazards that should be considered.

Candidate Sourcing: Sourcing from these sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, or Twitter, can quickly exclude entire subsets of the workforce because users tend to be of a limited racial and age range. There may be an unplanned negative impact on the under-represented parts of the labor pool who are not then considered in the recruiting process.

Recordkeeping: Maintaining legally-required applicant records is very difficult when the source of applicants is not controlled by the employer and data may be unavailable to produce if needed.

Candidate Information: There are concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the information available on these sites (similar to the concerns about the truth of information included in resumes).

Discrimination in Decision-Making: Even if the employer effectively avoids the sourcing concerns about social networking sites, care must be taken if these are used to help evaluate candidates in the selection process or do background checks through a Google or Bing search. One of the key concerns is the access to information that would not normally be available from the application/interview process, such as religion, pregnancy, age, leisure activities, or sexual orientation. Once it has been viewed, it is nearly impossible to prove that this information was not used in the decision-making process.

Best practices for the use of this on-line information include:

- Developing and using a standardized process, including limiting who has access to the information;
- Using these sources only as part of an employee referral program, and utilizing broader general sourcing methods;
- Treating each possible candidate consistently;
- Actively looking for any possible adverse impact and modifying processes as needed;
- Notifying job seekers that you may use these sources as part of the selection process; and
- Maintaining complete and centralized records of what was viewed.

More information on recruiting best practices and services is available from HR Business Solutions.

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