Chapter 46
Using the Internet to Attract and Evaluate Job Candidates

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ABSTRACT

The development of the Internet affords new opportunities for organizations as they add talent to their workforce. Employers are using third-party job placement websites (e.g., Monster.com), virtual job fairs, social networking websites, and even massively multiplayer online games such as Second Life to recruit job candidates. Organizations are also using their own websites to both attract and to evaluate new applicants. Accompanying these trends is the use of Internet-based testing for evaluating job candidates. Such testing varies based on whether it is proctored or unproctored and whether it incorporates dynamic computer adaptive testing. Finally, many firms are using individual candidate's social networking websites (e.g., Facebook) as a background screening tool for evaluating job candidates. These trends are described and research questions identified.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet allows employers unprecedented access to prospective job applicants as they seek to fill vacant positions. With developing technology, new forums are available to recruiters and individuals seeking jobs. These currently include third-party placement websites (e.g., CareerBuilder.com; Monster.com), virtual job fairs, Social Network-ing Websites, and Massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) such as Second Life. Each of these will be briefly described.

Organizations also use their own websites to both attract and to evaluate job candidates. Increasingly, firms are incorporating Internet testing into their web-based application procedures. Such testing varies based on whether it is proctored or unproctored. It also varies in that

some firms require all applicants to complete an identical set of items whereas others use Computer Adaptive Testing. Some firms also use the Internet's multimedia capabilities to conduct video interviews with candidates in distant locations, where travelling to an in-person interview would be prohibitively expensive.

Finally, Human Resource (HR) professionals are increasingly using social media as a way to screen applicants for their available positions. Social Networking Websites such as Facebook, Linkedin, Myspace, and Twitter are social media sites that allow open communication along with a view into the user's personal world. An HR professional can use Linkedin to see connections the applicant has made in the professional world and other jobs the applicant has held that are not listed on their application. Facebook and Myspace show the HR professional the interests that each applicant has, including an idea of their friends that the applicant has outside of work. Media within these websites such as pictures and videos can give an HR recruiter insight into an applicant's behavior when not on the job and an idea of the person's character. While Twitter only allows 140 character messages to be posted, this website can also be used to convey an applicant's likes, dislikes and overall character in both non-professional and professional settings. These social media sites are increasingly used to screen potential employees for companies. These trends for evaluating candidates will be briefly described. Directions for future research will also be identified.

ATTRACTING JOB CANDIDATES

Internet Recruiting via Job Placement Websites

Job placement websites first became popular among computer programmers and other technical staff in the 1990s, but are now widespread (Millman, 1998). One of the largest, the for-profit

Monster.com (formerly known as Monster Board), reportedly had over one million jobs listed and over 150 million resumes posted by job seekers in 2008 (Hudson, 2008). Newer web domains ending with ".jobs" and operated by the nonprofit DirectEmployers Association allow employers to post job openings based on occupation or geographic region (Shapira, 2011). U.S. State and Federal governments maintain similar websites for those seeking government jobs. By using sophisticated software, applicants can search for specific types of jobs in specific geographic locations and organizations can seek applicants with specific sets of qualifications. The result is a system that is often inexpensive, fast, and provides worldwide opportunities for both job seekers and hiring organizations.

Because it is easy for thousands of unqualified people to apply for jobs via generic job placement websites, some firms prefer specialized sites. Such sites list only specific types of jobs and often are sponsored by professional organizations for the benefit of their members. As part of an affirmative action plan or other outreach efforts, some firms also list jobs at sites specifically designed to match qualified minority applicants with employers.

A variation on this is the "virtual job fair," often hosted by professional or civic groups (Stern, 2011). Virtual job fairs have some similarity to traditional career fairs, where recruiters have booths in a large exhibit hall and candidates wander from booth to booth. However, they are less costly and more efficient. Candidates select the firms they wish to 'visit' and schedule appointments. Then the parties chat online (perhaps using videoconferencing via webcams) with recruiters. The fairs are not geographically limited; recruiters can send and receive information, make promotional material and job descriptions available online and conduct virtual interviews with candidates anywhere in the world (Angvall, 2007). Some firms even recruit for actual jobs via virtual job fairs in virtual worlds – including massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs)

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