

e-Recruiting

Going Online to Build Your Team

By Mark Gregory

One of the biggest barriers to growth facing the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries is the lack of skilled workers and professionals. Increasingly, companies are using the Web to find the best people. The management consultant firm Towers Perrin found that almost half of the 200 companies they surveyed were managing some basic human resources (HR) services, such as signing employees up for training, via the Internet.¹ Most of the companies surveyed forecast that this trend will grow.

Most companies said they are using the Web to post jobs. Although fewer use it for the actual processing of applicants. In over half the companies surveyed, employees use the Web for training resources and managers use it for office tasks such as skill tracking.

The pharmaceutical and biotech sectors may be slow to catch on to this cost-saving business trend. Many companies continue to rely on traditional recruitment activities, such as newspaper advertising and notices in professional journals. Few companies use "human capital management" (HCM) technology solutions to improve their efficiency.

Last year, in partnership with Pharmahorizons.com, a Canadian career advancement and workforce development site, the Ottawa Life Sciences Council (OLSC) launched BioJobs.ca. The site gives the OLSC's 100 companies and 20 institutional members a powerful tool to find and fill jobs, develop employee skills, and promote Ottawa as a great career destination. The Web portal reflects the cutting edge of an exciting trend towards a powerful online recruiting strategy that can help build and develop strong teams. Recently, Pharmahorizons built a similar career centre Web portal for a leading Canadian biotech association, BioAlberta called FutureJobs. This Web site serves 80 companies and five major institutions.

The move to automated online recruitment makes perfect sense. Today, experts estimate that most life sciences professionals use the Web for their job searches. While many companies place career infor-

mation on their Web sites, few have the type of technology that drives the BioJobs.ca and FutureJobs sites. Their iRecruit software automates aspects of the HR recruitment process, while saving time and money. The technology will enable BioAlberta and the OLSC to build a workforce for the future using a growing database of talent.

"Finding the right individual with the right training and experience is tough. In the life sciences and biotech, we are talking about over 75 different disciplines," said Ken Lawless, the OLSC's executive director. "Having all the Ottawa jobs on one Web site helps us to grow and draw from a pool of qualified candidates. This online approach to recruitment will play an increasingly important role in our efforts to provide the human capital needed to sustain growth in this sector in the Ottawa region."

What is equally important is that the OLSC and BioAlberta chose an HCM technology provider that met their marketing and workforce retention goals. At the end of the day, a clever piece of software is only as good as the team using it. These two science organizations opted for Pharmahorizons.com because of its tailored services for the life sciences community, its sector marketing reach and its expertise in organizational development and training.

Canadian pharmaceutical companies who want to use the Internet effectively to recruit and retain employees can learn from the OLSC and BioAlberta models. Some companies are already working with Montreal- and Oakville-based IsaiX Technologies to build online resource centres to support the development of successful sales force activity.

"Online recruiting and e-learning offers pharma companies two very tangible benefits: automated access to a pool of talent to power future growth, and highly accessible, less costly training available 24/7 to foster a highly skilled team," said Mark Gregory, vice-president, Pharmahorizons.com.

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1. Web use to reach employees on the rise, *National Post*, January 17, 2002.

Web Site Features Job Hunters Love

Connections and Currency: Offer a toll-free number for candidates. Web technology is an efficient way to attract, sort and select candidates, but people hire the best people. Position candidates to build relationships, make contact information highly visible and make sure only unfilled and current jobs are posted on your site. Respond to applications quickly and be sure to keep unsuccessful candidates encouraged and well informed.

Focus and Flexibility: Look for online application software that is built for the life sciences field. This approach ensures candidates can identify their skills and experience effectively. Give them the option of appending their resume to this application.

Quality: Build and run a good site. Make sure your site is well constructed and maintained, up-to-date, and easy to navigate. Remember, your Web site is an extension of your workplace.

Speed: Make your Web site fast and simple. The average Web site visitor spends next to no time on a slow and cumbersome site. Avoid visual gimmicks on your site. Pharma professionals aren't surfing your site to have a psychedelic experience. Less is more.

It's
December 4th,
and some
children are in
the market
for your help.

On December 4th, CIBC World Markets and CIBC Wood Gundy will donate its fees and commissions to children's charities.



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Children's Miracle Foundation
www.childrensmiracle.com