Match Game

In a recent telephone survey, readers complained how difficult it is to find new employees with the right mix of skills. To help them in their search, this month's cover story offers an in-depth look at the latest Internet recruiting tools and provides advice on how to find the perfect addition to your team

By Joe Dysart

While the first chemical processing industry "career centers" on the Web were often little more than a blurb, a few photos and an e-mail address for resumes, Internet recruiting has now evolved into a sophisticated interactive engine with the ability to automate virtually every facet of the hiring process. Software makers have been busy inventing tools that enable chemical processors to pre-screen applicants online, "inhale" resumes and automatically redistribute resume data into company databases. They also automate the process of candidate referrals from in-house personnel with easy-to-use Web portals. Meanwhile, other software makers are helping to automate recruiting by creating diamond-in-the-rough talent search software that goes after top management level applicants. Such packages can be customized to search the Web for ideal "passive" job candidates, based on what those pros and other candidates post on industry blogs, mailing lists, journals, industry association sites and the like.

The result? All the new tools, along with chemical processors' ever-increasing reliance on the Web, has made Internet recruiting big time and big business, and according to some surveys the No. 1 recruitment tool for employers. In fact, a survey of leading U.S. companies released in February by Booz Allen Hamilton found that 51 percent of all new hires in 2005 originated on the Internet with the greatest number of those hires coming from employers' own Web sites. "The Internet has transformed the way American employers attract and hire employees," says Dr. Richard Cober, team lead on the Booz Allen Hamilton survey. "Employers are giving serious thought to how the Internet can be better used for driving applicant flow." This month's cover story provides an overview of the latest developments in Internet recruiting along with pointers on where to go for more information.

Resume Inhalers

Web site resume inhalers are great time savers that are often components of larger automated online recruiting software packages. Essentially, resume inhalers work by auto-extracting resumes from an e-mail box or other online storage space and then map the mined data into a recruitment database. PC Recruiter's Inhaler (www.pcrecruiter.com/products_inhaler.htm) is designed specifically for such a task and is pre-programmed to recognize the resume formats of leading job boards and resume banks. The software can also be programmed to recognize custom formats items such as forms downloaded from your company Web site or resume formats from an e-recruiting partner. PC Recruiter's Inhaler can also be configured to send an automated e-mail response to someone who submits a resume. Other packages that include various spins on the resume inhaler concept include RecruitTrack Recruiting and Staffing Software from DGCC.com LLC (www.dgcc.com), Electronic Recruiting and Staffing Management Solution from GHG (www.ghg.com) and Humanis from Questek Systems (www.questekinc.com). CH2M Hill (www.ch2m.com/corporate) uses a resume inhaler from Real Resume Technology (www.realresume.com). RealResume's approach is somewhat different. It uploads resumes created in various word processors and then converts those documents into GIF, PDF or another user-chosen image format for easy viewing and storage.

Pre-Screening Software

Pre-screening software packages enable companies to quickly search out the cream of the crop.

Web site pre-screening software packages enable recruiters to custom design online questionnaires featuring basic job requirements. They're a great time saver for both parties. Using this software, chemical processing companies can automatically separate the wheat from the chaff, and potential applicants learn very quickly whether or not they're actually qualified for the job being advertised. Pre-screening software also enables companies to get very detailed information about an applicant's background including information that might not ordinarily be included on a standard resume. But probably one of the greatest advantages of this genre of online recruiting software is that the application is customizable. Each organization has the ability to program in the pre-screening questions it considers crucial. And while applications for typical positions across the industry look similar, some of the pre-screening questions on those applications do vary a reflection of the way company cultures vary throughout the industry. For a look at pre-screening software, check out COREquisites by Interview Exchange (www.interviewexchange.com), which uses weighted scoring to screen applicants. The company also makes a companion tool, Public Profile, which enables online applicants to judge how they stack up against other applicants seeking the same job. Generally, applicants who judge for themselves that they're not competitive tend to move on and save both parties time and effort. Other customizable pre-screening recruitment packages include JobQ from Axiom Systems (www.axiomsoftware.com), StaffCV from StaffCV (www.staffcv.com) and WebPAS from VCG (www.vcgsoftware.com).

In-House Referral Portals

"The best people I've hired came through somebody I knew a referral," says Jason Goldberg, CEO of Jobster, a job board that uses referrals as its primary method of matching jobs with candidates. "The job found them." Fortunately, a chemical processing company can create its own referral portal on its own site with products such as Referred Hire from Interview Exchange (www.interviewexchange.com/static/newsL27.jsp;jsessionid=1424BAB004884C56B88F31BFC2749331). The software essentially creates a secure domain on a company Web site where employees can go to recommend friends and professional acquaintances for current openings and receive a "bounty" for a successful hire. Even if you don't opt for a stand-alone referral portal, you can still reward employees for referring top talent to your company with a simple data field in your online pre-screening form where the applicant can fill in the name of the referring employees. That's the approach used by MeadWestvaco (www.meadwestvaco.com/corporate.nsf), which requests online applicants to include the name of the employee who referred them when applicable.

Job Boards

While posting on every "free jobs" board can quickly turn into a waste of time, there are a few free sites, such as Google Base (http://base.google.com), where such posting makes sense. The reason? Google Base enables you to embed keywords and phrases that describe the job being offered. You can also embed keywords and phrases that help describe the characteristics and qualities you seek in applicants. There are a number of chemical processing companies advertising on Google Base as well as a number of chemical industry related headhunters including Think Energy Group (www.thinkenergygroup.com/think.nsf/JONumAlpha/42360?Opendocument), Engineering Central (www.engcen.com/index.asp) and Engineer Jobs (http://engineerjobs.com).

Talent Search Software

The truth recruiters often lament is that the best candidates are taken. Software solution providers are getting around this conundrum with packages that scour the Web for top education talent based on online articles they've written, postings they've made in newsgroups, positive postings that have been made about them by journalists or colleagues, membership in various professional associations and the like. One of the more interesting sites in this category of automated recruiting is AIRS Oxygen 6.0 (www.airsdirectory.com/mc/solution.guid?_solutionID=2), according to Peter Weddle, a widely recognized recruitment guru. Another application to check out is ZoomInfo (www.zoominfo.com), which is an online search

engine that specializes in tracking business people online. While a basic search is free, ZoomInfo charges a premium to recruiters who want to "go deeper" by conducting searches using 20-plus variables. You can also find some ingenious ways to use everyday search engines to find "passive" candidates in Weddle's book, "Being the Best in Online Recruitment and HR Management." For example, if you're convinced that the person you want is most likely working for a specific company, you can often uncover leaders working there by doing a Google search with the following search string: "RE: @companyname.com." "This search will uncover postings to forums, discussion boards, newsgroups and other sites by the employees of the target company," Weddle says.

Outsourced HR Web Software

Some organizations outsource the operation of their Web career centers to some of the bigger jobs boards. Monster.com (www.monster.com), for example, sometimes handles the online processing of applicants for firms. Essentially, when job seekers visit an organization's career site, they click a link that ultimately brings them to Monster.com's online applicant processing center. Monster processes the information and then sends it along to the applicant's desired employer. Industry users of Monster.com include Fontarome (www.fontaromechemical.com), ENSR (www.ensr.aecom.com), CEMEX (www.cemexusa.com/index.asp) and Online Design (www.o-l-design.com/Default.htm). Other application service providers that can be used to outsource your Internet recruitment needs include Taleo from Taleo (www.taleo.com/solutions/business-edition-solutions.php), which is used by Honeywell (www.honeywell.com), and ApplicanTracker from ContacTracker Ltd. (www.contactracker.com/aboutus.php). These two offer turn-key career centers on the Web for a monthly fee, which enable a company to offer state of the art Internet recruiting without being forced to buy and install the software in-house.

Free Courses

Job boards sometimes offer extensive training in online recruiting techniques as an enticement to get organizations to use their services. JobsInTheUS.com (www.jobsintheus.com), for example, recently opened "JiUS University," which features a series of courses to help recruiters get up to speed on the latest that online recruiting has to offer. Its Internet Recruiting 101 course examines a "Top 10" list of tips for using online job boards. It also focuses on writing and formatting eye-catching job postings including the most effective usage of html, graphics and photos. Additionally, it hones in on industry-specific recruiting tips.

Top Spots

Since there are about 40,000 Web sites involved in Internet recruiting in some way, it would be nice to know which ones are considered the most effective. Fortunately, Weddle did a survey of 15,000 users of such sites both employers and jobs seekers and ferreted out la crème de la crème. The result of his efforts his 2005 Users Choice Awards can be found on his Web site (www.weddles.com/recruiternews/issue.cfm?Newsletter=151). There are 30 top sites in all. The top five are A/E/C Job Bank, America's Job Bank, Best Jobs USA, the Blue Line and CareerBank.com. Joe Dysart is a contributing writer for CHEM.INFO.

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