

Leveraging Recruitment Media

Q It's not just about job posting anymore: multimedia and optimized job ads

New online job advertising methods and technologies are becoming increasingly important, abundant and accessible with each passing year. In these days with floods of resumes, your ability to source and deliver the right talent is more important than ever. Staffing firms and hiring companies compete heavily for the same talent. Effective use of recruitment media can be a differentiator that enables companies to win the attention of qualified talent. The pervasive use of the Internet, candidate expectations and conventions about how and where online users want to be communicated with have demanded that recruiters move beyond the text-based job posting and explore new formats for job advertising and brand building. Recruitment ad experts analyzing the various types of media available today are finding that those who experiment with the new methods can be rewarded with greater applicant flow without necessarily increasing their advertising budget.



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“In today’s employment environment, information competency gained through technology is pervasive,” explains Marcia Biggar, VP of Strategic Partnerships at Monster. “A staffing firm is already at a disadvantage as the candidate pool is generally unaware of the level of services a staffing firm has to offer. With information exploding in quantity and formats, employers must embrace every branding opportunity within these communication vehicles to increase visibility while enhancing brand identity within the targeted audience demographic. Two-way interaction is critical as these candidates will continue to assume greater control over all stages of their career life.”

“Staffing firms with a consistent local market brand message that capitalize on the staffing firm’s fundamental brand promise stand to gain most,” adds Biggar. “The integration of a brand message throughout all aspects of the seeker acquisition campaign will serve as a solid foundation in establishing a trusting candidate relationship, the key to acquiring top talent.”

Candidates aren’t finding job ads; job ads are finding candidates.

Job seekers are not deliberately visiting job boards to search for jobs as much as they have in the past. Today’s candidates expect the opportunities to find them, wherever they are on the Web. Recruiters must venture out past the job boards, place their ads where the seekers are spending time online, get their attention and entice them to the job posting. Increasingly, job seekers are having jobs advertised to them while they are Googling, socializing online and visiting niche destination sites. The savviest recruiters are now marketing to candidates anywhere and everywhere online.

Search engine optimization makes your ad one in a million.

There was a time, not so long ago, when one could not imagine a seeker going to Google’s Web search to start their job search. Today, well over 140 million Google searches containing the keyword “job” are conducted each month. That means Google ranking is very important for any job marketer; high rankings are clearly a market advantage. Neal Washington Thompson, president of WashingtonHealthcareCareers.com, makes sure its job board comes up in the number one position on Google for over 100 keyword combinations. “Our number one position in Google’s organic search

to the top of page one in the search results is critical. By applying SEO techniques you can move from page two to page one in a Web search, and that will increase your traffic threefold. Moving from the bottom to the top of page one will increase traffic three to four times again. Using paid advertising or sponsored links in combination with SEO for organic ranking brings even more traffic. Making your way to the top of Google’s organic results is inexpensive but can take three to six months, whereas the benefits of paid search are immediate.”

Doug Berg, founder and chief innovation officer of Minneapolis-based Jobs2Web Inc., a firm that specializes in

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results is a key selling point to our clients. We all understand that the number one position means more applicants and faster fill times.”

Job ads appearing above the fold on the first page of the Web search results get the most views. This means that staffing firms must employ search engine optimization (SEO) techniques so that their ads are ranked as highly as possible. “A number of techniques can be used to improve your position in Web search results,” says Paul Taylor, president of Webmarketing123, an Oakland CA-based firm specializing in SEO. Taylor explains that there are four main drivers of organic ranking and your keywords need to appear in all of them: page title, URL, page content and inbound links. “Getting

optimizing company career sites and job content for major employers, suggests making job titles and job postings Google friendly by including the most searched keywords, skill names, job titles, and location names (including the zip code) in your jobs to increase candidate flow.

Berg said firms can do their own research on these keywords using Google’s research tool online where they can type in the job title or skill name (for example, “Oracle Database Jobs”), and Google will show you how many searches there are for that term, and will recommend similar terms that might get more searches and improve your results. (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>)

Another approach to achieving SEO is to develop job or job category-specific

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Spherion Takes the Cake

Spherion's new media marketing initiatives are astounding. Interactive video guides candidates through their Website and service offering to a career center that is "tailored to who you are and where you are in your career." Once the seeker identifies the most appropriate career center, its avatar says, "Welcome to your Spherion career center, we want to get you working as soon as possible" and encourages the candidate to spend 30 to 40 minutes to complete their profile. The experience of navigating to the online application feels like a role playing game – fun.

"As the way people choose to receive information changes, we too must evolve our marketing programs to ensure we are reaching the right candidates with the right message," said Kip Havel, director of corporate marketing and public relations at Spherion. "We saw the trends changing years ago and were eager to take full advantage of the new interactive and social media tools available to us. Effective Web marketing must be interactive, targeted and engaging – and we believe the actions we have taken help us promote the message that Spherion understands what job seekers are looking for and what they deal with and will ultimately offer them a better experience. We've seen very positive results from our initiatives and expect to continue to expand and enhance our programs in 2009 and beyond."

The site provides a number of other career resources in numerous media formats including online games like "Cubicle Racer!" and "Meeting Bingo."

The site includes online polls, streaming content, recruiter tip videos, various podcasts and two well-maintained blogs. The site is RSS-enabled so that subscribers can be notified of new content. Spherion's Facebook profile page shares many of these multimedia elements and has over 800 fans.

Perhaps the most entertaining feature of the site is the "My Temp Life" video series, which are short original videos about a crew of hapless temporary workers forced to endure a series of insufferable temp jobs under their agency's clueless, scheming CEO. The shorts are hilarious and highly rated by YouTube viewers. Opening lines include "Hellllllloooo, Temp" and "Spherion realizes not every temp job is a soul-crushing nightmare."

In its first season My Temp Life was listed among Brandweek magazine's top 10 Bright Ideas of 2008. The series can be viewed at <http://thetemplife.tv> and is syndicated across multiple video portals including YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Funny or Die, Yahoo, Break, Crackle and Blip. New episodes of My Temp Life posted regularly through the end of the year with a third season planned for mid-2009. To date, My Temp Life has garnered nearly 250,000 views. With that kind of humor and reach, there is no doubt that Spherion's videos will tap into new talent pools.

What is uniquely compelling about Spherion's approach is that they accomplish many things with their marketing program. In addition to advertising specific job opportunities, the site builds and positions Spherion's employment brand while building and positioning the value of temporary labor. ■

micro sites. Having more content on a specific category helps your company and jobs move up the organic search rankings. Micro sites also give recruiters the opportunity to interact and communicate with niche talent communities.

The end of text-only job ads; candidates require engaging, multimedia content.

Not only does the job ad need to be everywhere and keyword-packed so that it can be found on the Web, but also it needs to be compelling enough to engage seekers and get them to take action. Static and poorly written job ads won't make the cut. Ads need to be visually attractive and branded. Even more, today's online job seeker wants video.

Service providers such as Smashfly, Snaptalent, Vcruit.com and VideoJobShop make it amazingly easy and inexpensive to distribute, and in some cases produce, job videos. The most common use of job commercials is to embed them in the job posting, but they can be easily added to any Web page, uploaded to video sites like YouTube or added to your company's Facebook profile page.

Embedding video into job ads is becoming quite common. Videos can be corporate branding videos or job ads. Corporate employment videos give candidates a feel for the company's background, culture and work environment. Job videos focus on a specific job or job family and sell the job to the candidate while explaining the opportunity and job responsibilities.

Of course, staffing companies hire talent on behalf of their clients, and that can make video content more complicated. In its 2008 report, "Recruitment Advertising: Moving in New Directions" the Advanced Interactive Media Group, publishers of Classified Intelligence Report, provides

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examples of how video job ads increase applicants by three to five times. Video drives so much additional applicant traffic that it has become a very important aspect of the job marketing toolbox. Staffing companies must find a way to make the medium work to their advantage.

Candidates expect ads to be targeted specifically toward them.

Today's candidate wants to be drawn into the job search through dynamic and

engaging ads targeted, quite literally, to them. They expect the job ad to fit their experience level, career desires and interests. This may sound like a tall order. Luckily, online advertisers are increasingly able to place ads much more effectively by capturing and leveraging detailed profile data, and through behavioral and contextual ad targeting. In his 2008 white paper, "A Look at Key Emerging Media Trends," Jeremy Lockhorn, director of emerging media and video innovation at Razorfish, explains, "It's not just about personalizing

a Website anymore. Now it's also about changing a banner ad or even a video ad based on a range of available criteria, such as geographic location, a behavioral targeting profile, the weather and so on."

"As goes staffing, so goes the employment landscape affording staffing organizations first-strike advantage with new technologies and recruitment offerings. Staffing is always the first to embrace new methodologies, especially when it comes to attracting candidates," explains Jim Dwyer, senior director of staffing at Monster. Every staffing company is targeting the same candidate over and over, so firms need something new just to differentiate themselves to candidates. "Staffing firms that are early adopters utilizing the latest recruitment tools are not only able to uncover untapped pools of hidden talent but also reach a much more highly targeted candidate offering," adds Dwyer.

Monster's Career Ad Network (CAN) uses patent-pending techniques to place ads in content communities. "Monster's Career Ad Network transforms job postings into compelling, targeted online ads, and syndicates them strategically across partner sites," explains Dwyer. "By using a sophisticated set of algorithms that factor in job title, occupational category and location, among other key matching factors, CAN extends reach beyond the Monster network, tapping into an audience of over 100 million active, poised and passive candidates. On average, when compared to basic job postings, companies using CAN for 30 days have seen 50% more job views, 100% more applicants and 100% more job response clicks."

Yahoo's HotJobs is also adding some innovative tools. For example, there is HotHire, a candidate matching feature that delivers recruitment advertisers increased performance and flexibility with real-time candidate recommenda-

Smashfly's Talent Marketing Platform

Boston-based Smashfly Technologies is the mastermind of Mike Hennessy, former BrassRing chief architect. WildFire is Smashfly's flagship product and is a talent-marketing platform that allows users to create multimedia job marketing campaigns. A single campaign can include an email job blast, a referral email blast, a keyword ad buy and distribution of the posting to job boards. The Web-based system also helps users embed video Web commercials before distributing the posting.

One of Smashfly's specialties is enabling their clients to post to any job board. "While our clients often do post to the mainstream boards we know that posting to small, niche boards can be even more valuable," explains Hennessy. "That's why we designed our solution with the ability to quickly configure WildFire to post absolutely anywhere our clients want to post, including international boards." Set up of new boards is charged at \$250/board to clients and takes a few days to configure.

Referral emails can be created using templates. The emails are then distributed to social and professional networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and MySpace. Users can dynamically import their contacts from their favorite social network sites such as LinkedIn, MySpace and Facebook directly into the WildFire CRM solution. They can also leverage an Outlook plug-in to keep their local contacts in sync. Additionally, keyword ad campaigns can be set up on Google and Yahoo via WildFire.

Smashfly has partnered with a number of applicant tracking systems via open application programming interfaces (APIs) so that the candidate source data can be captured and linked to actual applicants to get a better handle on ROI. "WildFire enables talent marketers to capture detailed data about job ads across the media mix. Analyzing and acting on the data and making data-driven marketing decisions has created an increase in applicant flow for our clients. In one example, our client increased applicant flow by 60% without increasing its advertising spend." ■



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tions that are generated as job listings are posted. This is to help increase the velocity of time to fill. With the introduction of HotHire, recruiters can jumpstart their candidate searches by receiving real-time recommendations from HotJobs based on the information in their job listings. Users can modify HotHire's search criteria without changing the job description and use HotHire across all of their open positions according to their specific hiring needs. HotHire's matching technology is tuned to over 100,000 job titles, thereby helping recruiters find the best candidate matches across geographies and job categories.

On the other side of the equation, for frustrated candidates in the current market, HotJobs has created The HotJobs 100, a regularly updated list of the top 100 companies across all industries that are currently hiring.

Staffing firms can gain from executing comprehensive campaigns.

According to new research from CareerBuilder.com and the Inavero Institute for Service Research, only one in five job seekers use a staffing firm in their job search and 30% of corporate clients cannot name more than one staffing company from memory. There is a huge opportunity for staffing firms to build their brand by educating candidates and clients on the value of working with a staffing company. Todd McCormick, president of CareerBuilder.com's recruiter business unit and Canadian operations explains, "We consult our clients so they get the greatest return from the new recruitment media available today. We see an opportunity for our clients to really benefit from using compre-

hensive online media plans to advertise their open positions and highlight their brand to candidates, clients and internal employees. A plan can include rewriting job postings, updating the look and feel of ads, producing and embedding videos to increase engagement alongside the planning, placement and optimization of targeted display advertising. We've seen that running a targeted banner campaign along with job postings within CareerBuilder.com specifically can increase applicant flow by 20 to 40%. We've seen \$5 million firms grow to revenues exceeding \$25 million in a relatively short timeframe by employing a full-scale media plan to attract and engage their target audience." Boutique staffing firms can compete online by making themselves look bigger than life. In marketing, frequency is the key,



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and the more exposure a firm and its open positions get, the more applicant flow it will see. Therefore, comprehensive online campaigns can really elevate both the brand and applicant flow. More than ever before, branding is key in staffing.

New Media Rules

Candidates are becoming demanding consumers, and their expectations about their online experience are on the rise. In order to engage them online, recruiter advertising must be more dynamic and interesting than ever before. At the same time, job postings and ads must be more widely distributed, both to job boards and to the Web destinations where potential candidates spend their time. Job ads must be presented to a very tightly defined niche

group of targeted users and personalized to the candidate.

Job posting, once considered an administrative function, is now a skilled marketing role. Staffing companies post masses of jobs each month and, in most cases, recruiters are responsible for writing and posting the jobs. Staffing firms can be very successful in increasing applicant flow if they adopt next-generation job ad methods and technologies. This will likely require additional marketing skills, such as search engine optimization, video production, copy writing and copy editing. While the challenges are many, the fact is that firms must become experts on interactive recruitment advertising in order to win today's candidate. **si**

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Examples of online recruiting advertising media:

- Job postings (national, local, niche, paid and free, aggregators, etc.)
- E-newsletters
- Email blasts
- E-cards
- CD-ROMs
- Banner, button and tile ads
- Digital signage and billboards
- Career Web pages
- Recruitment micro sites
- Experience sites
- Search engine marketing and optimization
- Video/multimedia ads
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