

Detroit Free Press

Jobs in Michigan: Social media aid candidate search

By Greta Guest, February 27, 2011



Finding the right candidate for a job has gotten easier for corporate recruiters since the rise of online professional networks and social media.

It's not unusual to see a job posting on Facebook or Twitter

or for recruiters to obtain an introduction to a candidate through a connection on LinkedIn.

"Social media is so crucial today, and getting more important by the minute," said John A. Challenger, CEO of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, a global outplacement consultancy based in Chicago. "In the last few years as the social networks have filled out, you can essentially look at people's Rolodexes."

He expects more job creation this year, particularly in manufacturing, technology, health care and energy.

Employers say they have a lot of choices.

With the jobless rate still elevated at 9% nationwide and 11.1% in Michigan, recruiters such as Michelle Salvatore at Quicken Loans in Detroit say they are not struggling to find the right people to fill vacancies.

Recruiters use nontraditional ways

Experts say job growth is expected this year and recruiters may step up efforts to find the right candidates.

But the ways in which they'll find those workers won't necessarily be traditional.

Will Boland, chief administrative officer for Sageworks, a Raleigh, N.C.-based firm that analyzes industry financials, said some recruiters would post openings on sites such as

CareerBuilder, Craigslist or LinkedIn, but not all of them. The biggest frustration in posting jobs this way is the sheer volume of responses.

More employers are using social media sites such as Facebook to find candidates, while others are hitting the streets in search of workers.

Here is a sampling of recruiting methods from several business sectors.

Accounting/finance

Kevin Suksi, a recruiter for consulting and executive search firm Accretive Solutions in Troy, recently posted a job to his Facebook friends looking for a logistics manager for a consumer products company in metro Detroit. The candidate needed trade experience in China.

While Suksi typically focuses on accounting and finance jobs, he will turn to Facebook when trying to fill something unusual.

"You just never know who knows who," he said.

But for the bread-and-butter jobs such as chief financial officers or certified public accountants, he is more likely to use LinkedIn, the professional networking site.

"The group that we are targeting in metro Detroit is a pretty finite group, and we pretty much know who they are," he said. "I think that our core value to companies is that we are able to get to people who are passive, who they wouldn't get on their own."

Retail

With 30% turnover, Wal-Mart is recruiting pretty much nonstop. Baldomero Silva, division human resources senior director who oversees Ohio, Michigan and parts of Pennsylvania, said much of the hourly and management recruiting happens at the company's Web site, www.walmartstores.com/careers, and in-store kiosks.

For the three states, he's looking for more than 30,000 employees a year. The company also recruits at job fairs in communities, colleges and military locations. And starting in June, Silva will be looking for 300 employees for its new store in Southgate.

Government

The U.S. Patent and Trade Office expects to start hiring in April to fill 100 patent examiner jobs and about 10 administrative jobs at its first satellite office in Detroit.

"We are looking at engineers," said Peggy Focarino, commissioner for patents. "In terms of locations, we looked at Detroit as a pretty rich environment. We're not concerned

about having a lack of applicants. Some of them have law degrees or practical experience."

The area also has a high unemployment rate and a wealth of engineers. They will be chief among applicants for the jobs, which have an average \$70,000 annual salary. The government also wants candidates with intellectual property experience.

Applicants for these and other federal government jobs must apply through USAJobs, www.usajobs.gov, the government's job site.

Mortgage

For jobs that require strong customer service skills, there's nothing more effective than going out to find them at their current jobs, said Michelle Salvatore, director of recruiting for Detroit-based Quicken Loans.

"We're doing a more rogue-recruiting style where we will send the recruiters out on the streets," she said.

The company's recruiters, for instance, will approach people who work at stores.

She says that up to 20% of hires are personally approached by her in-house recruiting team. Salvatore oversees 27 recruiters.

Her team also uses on-site job fairs and online job sites to find candidates, particularly for the mortgage banker position, which has the highest turnover of any job at the company. The company needs to hire 1,200 mortgage bankers a year to keep up with demand and turnover.

Quicken Loans is in a trial over a lawsuit from more than 300 people working as mortgage bankers in Michigan and Ohio who argue they should have received overtime pay from 2002 to 2006.