



IT Recruiting Software: Flexibility Takes Center Stage

Now more than ever, applicant tracking software must not only intuitively increase actual recruiting time, it must improve the communication between customers and candidates via the Web.

by Steve Taylor, President, VCG, Inc.

With the end of the recession and the sure drumbeat of retiring ‘boomers’ feet heading for the doors in the coming years, recruiters and economists alike are seeing a new version of the ‘Talent Wars’ of the late 1990s. Fortunately for recruiters and staffing firms, some vendors of applicant tracking systems and software have kept up with these trends and are addressing many of the changing needs they represent.

Chief among those changes since the late 1990s has been the maturation of the Internet as a driving force for business in general and recruiting in particular. Gone are the days of stand alone search and retrieval systems and contact management. IT staffing and recruiting firms demand more integration with the Web, and so do their customers and candidates.

At the same time, however, recruiters are under increasing pressure to maximize their own efficiency. Now more than ever, applicant tracking software must not only intuitively increase actual recruiting time, it must improve the communication between customers and candidates via the Web. With that two-pronged capability, contract staffing and recruiting firms can see dramatic increases in their bottom line.

First, let’s address how Web portals enhance recruiting and placement efforts. One of the most important shifts you will see in staffing/recruiting software is the emphasis on integrating a Web portal that connects your recruiting software with your Web site. This is important because of the time this saves your staff, your candidates and your clients. Web portals basically serve as a 24/7/365 virtual branch, enabling increased communication among candidates, clients and recruiters. Directly affecting the bottom line, Web portals lead to increased candidate placement.

Consultis, a Boca Raton, FL-based recruiting firm that specializes in contract and full-time positions in both IT and Finance, has seen huge feedback from candidates wanting to apply for positions online through their Web module.

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Web portals enable clients to post orders for recruiters (who are then automatically notified), review order status and search “blind” resumes. Candidates are able to search job postings, apply for jobs, post and update their resumes, profiles or availability.

Jamie Delsing, Director of Marketing for Consultis, says, “when dealing with IT candidates, they would much rather update their own information on our site as it gives them a sense of influence over what types of positions they will be considered for.

Besides the obvious recruiting advantages that Web portals offer, today’s applicant tracking software now makes a serious effort to reduce the administrative load on recruiters and improve the flow of the complete recruiting and sales process.

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One method used by ATS software to reduce recruiter effort is to provide a customizable user interface based on their personal preferences. For example, the recruiter can choose to have 'hot lists' of candidates or customers they are working with instantly available from their personalized 'home page.' This flexibility enables the software to adapt to the needs of the individual recruiter and improves their efficiency.

Another characteristic of an adaptable recruiting software solution is the ability for the software to get the information to the person that needs it quickly and accurately. 'Push technology' leverages all the information in the system and drives it to the specific recruiter or sales person based on what is most relevant to that person's day.

For the recruiter that wants to spend their time as efficiently as possible, he/she can set up automated queries and searches that run on a pre-defined schedule that meet their needs. This eliminates time-consuming daily searches that a recruiter has typically had to run in the past.

Perhaps one of the most time-saving technologies that have evolved in recruiting software is the ability to integrate your company's email with your recruiting software. This feature has a myriad of benefits including: reducing tedious administrative work for recruiters, automating a recruiter's activity list, providing a complete historical record of all electronic communications and enabling recruiters to compose an email one time within their ATS, and submitting it to multiple people. The copying of an email into the system also enables all users to access the information instantly if they are filling an order that has been placed.

Industry veterans Delsing and Gutmann understand that the administrative requirements of the recruiting business place a heavy, non-revenue-generating load on recruiters. By harnessing the power of the applicant tracking system, Consultis employees are able to focus significantly more time on recruiting activities.

The sales side of the recruiting business hasn't been neglected by the latest versions of today's crop of recruiting software. Today, it is vital that your recruiting software must have the ability to consolidate sales and recruiting functions into one system. In the case of sales force automation, sales people should have easy access to contact management, prospecting, forecasting and reporting. The software must be robust enough for the sales person to easily see everything that has happened with the client or candidate. This is especially important, when a sales person is off site, and must logon to the system and be able to get real-time information

With the emergence of this new technology, recruiting firms now have more choices on how they would like to implement their software throughout their organization. The traditional enterprise model, where you purchase software licenses and host and maintain your own hardware, is now just one of several options.

Recruiting firms now have the option of selecting an ASP model, renting software licenses that are hosted on your software vendor's hardware. Another option for those that don't want to deal with the day-to-day maintenance of their system is managed services. In this instance, the recruiting firm purchases licenses and hardware, but the vendor hosts and maintains both the software and the hardware, enabling a recruiting firm to reduce time spent on possible technological issues.

When talking about client implementation of software, we should look at two different types of models: 'thin client' vs. 100 percent Web (browser) based.

A 'thin client' model requires downloaded client software (basically the user interface) on a pc or laptop through an Internet or network connection. All of the intensive data processing is performed on network servers, with the resultant data transmitted to the client for display. This results in a highly secure software solution that can be automatically updated when the user logs in if need be and has quick user response times.

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The second model is the Web browser as the client connected to a network server via the Internet. Unlike the 'thin client' model, a Web browser model depends on the data display, user interface and security limitations of the browser used. These limitations often mean slow responsiveness, data security issues and more. In this model, the server is accessible from any PC/laptop with a browser and Internet connection

All of this new technology, whether we are talking about a software's capabilities or how you decide to implement the software, should be chosen for what works best for your recruiting business. Technology keeps getting faster, ultimately enabling us to do our jobs more efficiently. And with more time, recruiters can focus on profit-increasing activities

As Delsing states, "Time is money."

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About VCG

Our focus is your success. Since 1976 staffing firms have counted on VCG, Inc. for staffing software solutions that help them improve the productivity and profitability of their operations. Founded by staffing professionals and technologists intimately familiar with the business of staffing, VCG is the staffing industry's largest and most experienced dedicated staffing software development firm. VCG solutions today power hundreds of successful staffing companies and 12,000-plus staffing professionals throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia.



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About the author

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Steve Taylor joined the VCG team in 1996 as Vice President. He has over 19 years experience in the software industry, with 14 years in various management positions. Previously Taylor worked with Sales Technologies (a Dun and Bradstreet Company) in implementation and customer services roles, and HBOC. He is a graduate of Georgia State University with a B.B.A. in management and a minor in computer science.

