

Finding Right-Fit Candidates through Social Media

It's no secret that employers research job candidates' social media profiles to help them make hiring decisions. In fact, social media presence has become vitally important in the hiring process. According to the [MRINetwork 2017 Recruiter Sentiment Study](#), over 80 percent of employers and 90 percent of recruiters review social media profiles sometimes or all of the time for insight on candidates.

With the advent of social media, companies have more information than ever on job candidates. Hiring managers and HR departments can put together a more comprehensive profile of candidates, beyond what might be seen on a resume or gleaned during interviews. In addition to information about experience and skills, they get a better glimpse into their lifestyle, values and cultural fit.

Vince Webb, vice president of marketing for MRINetwork, notes that social media also provides the opportunity to create a two-way exchange: not only can employers gain insight about candidates, but job seekers can also get a sense of whether the culture and mission of the company is compatible with their expectations. "Candidates are using social media to gain insights, too," he says. "It's a powerful communication tool for attracting and hiring top talent."

Webb offers the following guidelines on what to look for when reviewing the social media presence of potential candidates:

Do you see evidence of thought leadership? Often candidates register with networks or groups devoted to particular business sectors that offer market intelligence, and provide a platform for discussing trends and interacting with like-minded professionals. Look at the kind of information they are sharing and their comments on other people's posts to determine if they possess leadership qualities, or if they are influencers who may have a strong following.

How frequently are they engaged in social media? Low frequency, for example, may indicate lack of tech savvy, or the kind of person who prefers one-on-one relationships. A frequent poster may be someone who has a point of view on a variety of topics, is a social butterfly, or simply wants to share experiences with friends and family in the most efficient way. Well-populated profiles on professional sites like LinkedIn typically indicate that candidates are thinking about their careers and keeping abreast of industry trends. Assessing these habits and patterns can help you decide whether a candidate fits the parameters of your position. Their posts and updates can also help you evaluate their critical thinking and writing abilities, which for some positions are essential skills.

What special hobbies or interests do they pursue? Although this many not reveal much relevance to their professional abilities, it can give you an idea about other talents they possess, their commitment to helping others, or their involvement with their communities - all of which may be qualities of benefit to your organization.

Do any of their posts run counter to the guiding principles of your company? Social media gives you the ability to research candidates before making contact with them, which can help you find employees who are the best suited to your company's culture and mission. If their posts reflect your values and your goals, you will likely want to delve further into their qualifications for your position.



Many employers, Webb warns, often inaccurately evaluate candidates' online personas. "Don't be too quick to dismiss them based solely on a questionable photo or status update without further investigation," he says. "Be very selective when using any information obtained from personal social media sites in making a judgment on a jobseeker's suitability as an employee to ensure that it's not getting in the way of securing top talent."

Webb also cautions companies to be careful to manage the risk associated with violating data protection laws or other legislation when using personal social media in the recruitment process. "The best way of resolving concerns that arise as a result of social media is usually through established processes, such as interviewing and assessment," he advises. "This avoids situations in which candidates feel information is unfairly applied during the recruitment process."

The bottom line, says Webb is that social media can be helpful in evaluating candidates. "It should not replace or override personal contact, interviews and other established recruitment practices that employers use to assess candidates," he concludes. "Excessive reliance on social media could lead to overlooking or deterring strong candidates to the detriment of the business, especially in today's candidate-driven market."

CAUTION - If you learn of a candidate's protected characteristic(s) such as (age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, etc.) by reviewing the candidate's social media sites, you may not allow that to influence your willingness to recruit that candidate. Likewise, you should not share that information with anyone involved in the hiring process.