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Pompano firms helps companies make online hiring smoother

By Jeffery D. Zbar
Special Correspondent
Posted July 28 2003

Jeanette H. Lawrence used to dread recruiting new employees.

When a position opened up, Lawrence would log on to Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com or any other general online placement site, post the job, and prepare for a flood in inbound resumes. Soon thereafter, her inbox would brim with hundreds if not thousands of resumes. Some would be quality candidates, some would have no required qualifications. Computer programmers with no Web experience would apply for designer jobs.

All resumes would need reviewing, a process that could take days, or even weeks.

"It was overwhelming. I was inundated with not just applicants, but recruiters and people trying to sell me other services," said Lawrence, CEO of the Plantation-based technology training and development firm, which has hired upward of 19 contractors nationwide using online services. "Quality candidates weren't coming in."

Then Lawrence turned to Hirebridge LLC, a Pompano Beach-based online recruiting and candidate management site. Hiring companies, mostly small to medium businesses, can advertise their openings on their own or let Hirebridge market the position. Companies then post a Hirebridge link on their home page. Candidates visit the employer's site and click on the link. They're seamlessly transferred to the client's area on Hirebridge's Web site, said Marc Berman, the company's founder and president. The area is custom designed for each client to appear as if it were part of the employer's Web site, he said.

Key to the service is the organizational benefits of this "applicant tracking system," he said. Employers can add job openings and change job descriptions easily. Applicants do not submit resumes, but input their personal and job history information into a template. Applicants can copy and paste their credentials into a

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message area, or use an online resume builder to create their own resumes for submission.

Once submitted, information is stored on a password protected area accessible only to authorized people at the employer, who can review resumes, use keyword searches, input notes, and share their thoughts online with other executives at the company. All resumes are formatted to a common appearance.

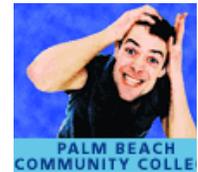
Soon after submitting, applicants also receive an automated e-mail response acknowledging the application.

The service costs more than \$1,000 to use. That's more expensive than some of the free job placement Web sites, and not as much as more robust sites targeting Fortune 500 employers, Berman said.

Hirebridge is now part of Lawrence's recruiting efforts. She puts the Hirebridge job link on her site when a job becomes available. She also contacts local colleges and universities for new graduates for full-time or internship positions.

"Now we get candidates for the position we are looking to fill," she said. "This allows us to have the focus, and you don't get hit the way you did with other sites."

Jeffery D. Zbar is a free-lance writer specializing in small office/home office issues. He can be reached via email at jeff@goinsoho.com.



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