

Chapter 45

E-Recruitment

Reanna Poncheri Harman
SWA Consulting Inc., USA

Lori Foster Thompson
North Carolina State University, USA

ABSTRACT

E-recruitment uses the Internet to identify and attract prospective employees through media such as internet job boards (e.g., monster.com), organizational websites, and more recently, social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn.com. There are many advantages associated with the shift toward e-recruitment, such as the ability to easily reach prospective applicants worldwide. However, there are also drawbacks, such as the time and effort required to sift through materials submitted by large numbers of unqualified applicants. Research conducted to date is limited but provides important first steps in understanding internet recruiting. It can be categorized into two main areas: 1) employer adoption of e-recruitment, and 2) applicant reactions to e-recruitment. Research is particularly limited when it comes to the employer's perspective, while relatively more research has focused on applicant reactions to recruitment websites' form, content, and function.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

E-recruiting, web-based recruiting, internet recruiting, e-cruiting, and online recruiting are all terms used to describe recruitment which takes place via the internet. Parry and Wilson (2008) define online recruitment as “the use of the internet to identify and attract potential employees” (p. 657). As this definition suggests, the goals of

e-recruitment are not different than the goals of traditional recruiting practices. The main difference is the type of media used to accomplish these goals. While traditional recruiting practices rely on newspaper postings or other print media and personal contacts or networking to advertise open job positions, the internet has expanded the possibilities associated with these traditional recruitment practices. E-recruitment is often conducted

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via internet job boards (i.e., monster.com) or, more commonly, via organizational web sites (Breaugh, 2008). While much literature does not distinguish between these two types of e-recruitment, research suggests that it may be valuable to do so (Parry & Wilson, 2008). Further distinctions may be warranted between these early forms of e-recruitment and newly emerging ones, such as those relying on social media like Twitter and LinkedIn.com, which offer possibilities for e-recruitment that have not yet been fully realized.

Although e-recruitment was first used in the mid-1990s, research on this topic is somewhat limited (Parry & Wilson, 2008; Ployhart, 2006). In fact, Ployhart (2006) states that “this research has scarcely scratched the surface” (p. 875). While there is much that we do not know about e-recruitment, the research that has been conducted provides important first steps in our understanding of this practice. It can be categorized into two main areas: 1) employer adoption of e-recruitment and 2) applicant reactions to e-recruitment. To date, the research is particularly limited when it comes to the employer’s perspective, while relatively more work has focused on applicant reactions (Parry & Wilson, 2008).

To fully understand the current state of e-recruitment, it is worthwhile to consider several aspects of the practice, which are described on the following pages. First, the costs and benefits of implementing an e-recruitment strategy are discussed. Second, research on employers’ adoption of e-recruitment is described. Third, we discuss findings related to applicant reactions to e-recruitment. Fourth and finally, we consider various areas where research is still needed. Although space constraints preclude an exhaustive description of all of e-recruitment research conducted to date, this chapter describes representative studies by leading researchers to give the reader a feel for the type of work being conducted in the domain of e-recruitment.

BENEFITS AND COSTS OF E-RECRUITMENT

There are many benefits of e-recruitment, including monetary savings, the expansion of applicant pools beyond limited geographical boundaries, and improved efficiency in the hiring process (Chapman & Webster, 2003). Perhaps the most compelling reason for organizations to adopt e-recruitment practices rather than continuing to rely exclusively on traditional recruiting techniques is the potential for monetary savings. Although somewhat dated, early figures indicated “that it costs only about one-twentieth as much to hire someone online as to hire that same person through want ads and other traditional means” (Cappelli, 2001, p. 140). Additionally, the use of e-recruitment expands the former borders surrounding traditional recruitment practices. Historically, organizations advertised locally and hired from a pool of applicants within a certain geographic region. The internet has removed those barriers and allowed organizations to advertise and interview those who are geographically dispersed without significantly increasing costs. Another benefit of e-recruitment is increased efficiency in the hiring process. Organizations are able to reduce their hiring cycles by posting jobs online instead of on paper, accepting résumés online, and screening applications electronically (Cappelli, 2001). Furthermore, e-recruitment provides organizations an opportunity to communicate a lot more information to job seekers than more traditional methods of recruitment. Details pertaining to organizational culture, testimonials from current employees, and other information pertaining to an organization’s employment brand can be easily conveyed online to prospective applicants. Finally, e-recruitment is “friendlier” to the environment compared to recruitment that is paper-based.

While there are many important and tangible benefits for organizations that adopt e-recruitment practices, there are also several potential disadvantages or costs associated with e-recruitment. These

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