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## **HR seeks new sales and marketing skills as web-based recruitment and internal delays complicate race for talent**

**Senior HR professionals look to broaden their reach, speed up recruitment processes and cut costs, according to Webster Buchanan Research survey**

**Marlow, UK – March 26, 2008** – Recruitment is shifting from a traditional HR discipline to a sales and marketing exercise as web-based activity ramps up, according to a survey published today by Webster Buchanan Research. The survey reveals that senior HR professionals are turning to new recruitment philosophies and a variety of technologies as they battle for talent, looking to expand their reach among potential hires while tackling significant internal process problems.

The findings are detailed in “Recruitment 2008: from marketing theory to the practicalities of web-based hiring”, a report published by Webster Buchanan Research in association with HR software and services specialist Computers In Personnel Ltd.\*

According to the report, the vast majority of respondents (85%) ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that recruitment should be viewed as a sales and marketing exercise, not purely an HR administrative task, and that they need a good corporate image, good marketing skills to identify the best candidates, and good sales skills to encourage them to join. A similar number (87%) ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that HR should actively seek to learn lessons from colleagues in sales and marketing to improve recruitment effectiveness.

### **Biggest Challenges**

Webster Buchanan argues that this shifting philosophy reflects the changing nature of recruitment. Respondents said their biggest challenge was finding enough good quality candidates, with almost four out of five interviewees (79%) naming it a ‘very big or ‘big’ challenge. Part of the answer appears to lie with the web. Asked to rank the potential benefits of Web-based recruitment on a scale of 1-5 (where 5 is ‘very beneficial’), the ability to extend the reach of recruitment campaigns came top (average ranking 4.26), followed by the ability to market their organisation creatively on the web (4.22).

Likewise, while national newspaper and trade media print adverts were identified as the most useful sources for generating high-quality applicants today (average rating of 3.93 and 3.83 on a scale of 1– 5, where 5 is 'most useful'), respondents said that in two years' time, online job sites/job boards (4.16), job adverts on their own websites (4.12) and media websites (4.05) would be the most useful sources.

However, the level of adoption of web-based recruitment is still relatively low. More than four out of five interviewees already use their own websites to display vacancies or plan to use them within the next twelve months, but only 16% currently allow job applications to be submitted via their site. Less than one in ten is currently able to handle web applications electronically throughout the entire recruitment process

The second biggest challenge identified by respondents was delays caused by line managers, described as a 'big challenge' or 'challenge' by 61% of interviewees. Webster Buchanan suggests this may help explain why the market for recruitment automation software – used to manage applicant data, route information, schedule interviews and so forth – is set for rapid growth. Only 14% of respondents said they use recruitment software to manage their internal recruitment activities today, but almost a quarter (24%) plan to do so within the next twelve months. Speeding up the recruitment process was identified as the second most important benefit of purchasing recruitment software, after cutting costs.

"These findings reflect the fact that recruitment is about both effectiveness and efficiency," said Christopher Berry, managing director, Computers In Personnel. "Organisations need to use web-based recruitment to reach the best-quality candidates – but recruitment automation and management software can also help them speed up their internal processes, manage applicants more effectively and cut costs. When you're fighting for the best candidates, speed, reach and efficient Candidate Relationship Management are all critical."

### **Survey surprises**

Webster Buchanan points out that there were one or two surprises in the survey. Firstly, senior HR professionals are clearly unimpressed by the hype surrounding social networking as a recruitment tool. While respondents expect most web-based techniques to become more useful for generating high-quality candidates over the next two years, social networking was the exception. It was ranked tenth as a useful recruiting tool today (average score of 2.27 on a scale of 1-5, where 5 is 'most useful'), and remains in tenth position in two years' time, despite an increase in average score to 2.86. More traditional forms of networking fare better. Respondents ranked employee referrals ninth in usefulness today at 2.98, climbing to fifth in two years' time (3.67).

Secondly, a high proportion of respondents seem to see no link between their concerns about internal process delays and the potential to address them by using HR self-service. Only a quarter of respondents either allow line managers to post jobs

themselves and/or track the progress of applications via self-service today, or plan to do so within a year - and 43% have no plans at all. "While other employee-centric HR disciplines may lend themselves more obviously to self-service, the 'no plans' figure is surprisingly high," says the report. "After all, self-service allows managers to carry out administrative tasks directly, improves their information access and gives them better visibility into the progress of applications."

### **Other findings**

Among other findings in the 21-page report:

- More than half of respondents said they would consider using a 'hosted service', where software is run by the supplier and accessed by the customer over the internet for a fee – while one third ruled it out. Webster Buchanan suggests that the volume of positive responses is significant because the hosted services model is still comparatively new in the relatively conservative HR environment. Key benefits identified by respondents include avoiding the hassle of managing their own software, reducing the cash flow impact of purchasing new software, and allowing users to access the system from anywhere over the web. Chief concerns were around privacy and data security.
- Recruitment reporting is still largely centred on HR-specific metrics such as time/days to hire, rather than business centric measurements. Less than a quarter of respondents (23%) report on the direct cost of recruitment today, for example, and just 6% on indirect costs (e.g. in HR/line managers' time) – although both figures will rise significantly over the next year. However, one third of respondents report on the business impact of unfilled vacancies (e.g. impact on productivity), with another 28% expecting to do so within twelve months.

*\*\*"Recruitment 2008: from marketing theory to the practicalities of web-based hiring,"* by Webster Buchanan Research. Webster Buchanan Research surveyed 100 HR directors and managers in mid-sized and large organisations. Copies of the report are available to the media on request.

### **About Computers In Personnel**

Computers In Personnel is a leading provider of software and services for people and data management. Recognising that effective people and data management are critical drivers to organisational success, it provides a broad range of software, outsourcing services, data management capability and knowledge-based services. CiphR is a richly-functional web-enabled HR management system that helps organisations manage all aspects of people management, from recruiting and training to sophisticated people data analysis. For further information visit <http://www.ComputersInPersonnel.com>

### **About Webster Buchanan Research**

Webster Buchanan Research is a market research company specialising in effective business management and the supporting role of technology. Its primary focus is on People Management, Payroll, Customer Relationship Management and Financial Management. Webster Buchanan is based in London, San Francisco, and Hong Kong. For more information and copies of recent research reports, visit [www.websterb.com](http://www.websterb.com)