"Social Recruitment – Top 10 Features for effective engagement with Candidates and Clients"

More than ever before, your website is a hugely important part of your client presentation and candidate engagement activities. Whilst this presents a few challenges it also creates many exciting new opportunities for those ready to take them. Witness the success of social media – personal communication and collaboration on a scale unimaginable just a few years ago.

The smartest businesses will use social technology to build significant competitive advantage and achieve outstanding results. This paper is designed to help you become one of those companies.

> "Analog companies are going to get swept aside by digital companies. It's my firmest belief about the future of business."
>
> Andy McAfee, MIT's Principal Research Scientist for Digital Business.

How will your new website help you to establish yourself as a digital business? We are going to describe 10 capabilities which you will need as part of your strategic investment in social technology. Of course it is taken as read that this will include a stunning design and easy to use navigation - we also assume that you will be planning compelling and well-presented content. We believe your ambitions should extend to new ways to engage and communicate with both clients and candidates - this will be their expectation too.

We recommend you consider your website as the digital business hub for your company. It will increasingly become the primary communications point where every item of news and other information – including assignment updates and even candidate profiles - will always be accessible (for selected users). It will also be a highly effective communications and collaboration tool – accessible to your clients and candidates 24 x 7 x 365. That's when you start to become a digital business.

The following 10 items provide a comprehensive set of capabilities that every organisation should include in a strategic web purchase - with even the most humble of budgets.

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1. Registered User Login.

When visitors reach your site you want them to be able to not only register their details but also to be able to login. Most sites allow people to send through their data but this is not stored online and they are not able to login into the site for more advanced features. Creating a login is the fundamental step which enables all of the communication and collaboration you will need so this is essential. From the start this capability ensures you can recognise returning users, review their activities on the site and enables you to contact them via the details they have provided. Ideally you should be able to amend the fields and allowable values in the user registration process without having to return to your software provider.

2. Personalised Content

Clients and Candidates have different perspectives on your business and it is very powerful if you are able to provide them with personalised content based on instant recognition. All Users should be assigned to one or more user groups (initially self-selected) so you can seamlessly deliver tailored news and information for candidates and have content areas applicable only for clients. Personalisation enables you to deliver targeted content and shows you are focussed on your users needs and providing tailored services accordingly.

Personalised content can also be useful for providing a private area for your staff, effectively creating an intranet as part of your website. Here you can publish standard documents such as important staff policies and templates and be sure that all staff, in all locations, have access to the same, latest version.

3. Interactive Features

Increasingly people want to be able to interact on your website - not just visit and read. It pays dividends if you engage them and allow them to be able to respond to your published content. This can be as simple as letting people rate some of your content or you may let registered users add comments. You may decide to provide discussions forums (moderated if preferred), blogging or even a wiki where candidates can share topical issues and information. Giving users a voice helps them feel involved and engaged and can provide you with valuable insights. You can be part of the conversation and take credit for hosting it.

4. Social Media Management

Everyone is now interested in social media and many of your contacts will be active on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Your new website should link to all of these and automatically post updates when there is new content on your site. This keeps your media management under control whilst ensuring you have the widest possible coverage for your content. The platform should help to implement your social media policy and protect against banned content being published on social media sites.

5. Multi-media and Virtual Events

It is now very easy to produce audio-visual content which can be much more impactful and accessible for busy clients and candidates. Your new site should enable you to easily publish video and audio content probably only to registered users or even selected user groups. You may not want to produce live events but recorded presentations, discussions or other content can be just as productive and is of course constantly available to your selected audience.

Some companies are already starting to use recorded candidate interviews during shortlisting and have found this can greatly expedite the client review process.

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6. Client/Candidate Relationship Management (CRM).
Registering on your site could mark the start of each client/candidate relationship and your web software should support some basic capabilities to support this including :
(a) Easily create and send HTML newsletters and campaigns to your database or segments within it – with full response tracking for follow-up purposes.
(b) Comprehensive activity tracking so you can see how often people have been on the site and what they are doing, whether they are reading/clicking through on your campaigns etc.
(c) The ability to store internal notes and actions about specific candidates and clients so your team can follow-up as required.

7. Candidate Self-Service
Your candidates want to feel they are in control of their profile on your system and are able to manage their applications and information. Your site should enable them to update much of their personal information which may well save you the work of updating their latest availability, project experience or contact details. They should also be able to upload a new version of their CV and any other documents they want to share with you. Of course your system should track these changes so you can easily review all activity and content.

Candidates will want to be easily able to apply for jobs online, manage the alerts which they receive and refer a friend if appropriate. Enabling all this on your site ensures these services are available to them 24 x 7 and 365 days of year is very useful and increasingly an expectation in today's business world.

8. Secure Client Areas
Clients love to know that the latest information about their assignments is immediately accessible whenever they need it. Your site should provide secure client access to private areas where they can find the latest information, status reports, links to relevant candidate profiles etc.

Of course this does not replace your regular client contacts but it provides a useful additional service and repository where information is always available. Clients should be able to specify which employees have access to these areas and all users will benefit from content alerts when new information is available.

9. Search Engine Optimisation
It's important that your content is well indexed on Google and other search engines so that prospective new clients and candidates easily find you on the web when they are looking for related information. Your system should enable you to easily update your SEO metadata so you can target the areas where you want to be found.

10. Reporting
Last, but not least, you should make sure that your web software provide good reporting so you can see what's going on on your site: which content is most popular, where visitors are going etc. This insight is invaluable for helping you fine-tune your content to meet the needs of your audiences. Most software can provide integration with Google analytics. Your website software needs to take the reporting to the next level - tracking logged-in users.

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