



Recruitment Solutions for Recruitment Agencies

With so many options on the market, how can you be sure that the recruitment solution you select is right for your company?

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Executive Summary

How do you know if your hiring process is as efficient as it can be? Are your consultants wasting valuable time on administration duties when they could be doing other more valuable tasks? We will show you how you can save 40% of your time-to-hire, streamline your recruitment processes and enjoy the cost savings and business enhancement that come from that.

In this white paper we will show you how you can use technology to enhance your business, and make your consultants more productive. We will show you how the online/e-recruitment market has matured and how the innovation of Software as a Service (SaaS) products has continued to grow.

However as the e-recruitment market is extremely fragmented due to technological growth, we have also provided a list of objectives and expectations that you should look to fulfill when selecting a recruitment software provider.

We have also included a section entitled 'Recruitment Processes and Recruitment Software', for those who have not used recruitment software before and are curious as to how it handles your everyday recruitment activities. Read on to find out how you can accelerate your recruitment processes with a streamlined recruitment system.

Technology and Business Process Optimisation

In today's crowded marketplace, it is essential that businesses find some type of competitive edge that differentiates them from the crowd, usually coming in the form of providing a winning service. In order for businesses to gain this competitive edge, they must look for ways to constantly optimise and automate their business processes, so they can better focus on improving their business processes and networks.

Many business owners now see technology as a means of improving their processes, boosting productivity, and cultivating and leveraging their business networks. Productivity software is developing in all industries, and in the recruitment industry, this comes in the form of recruitment software systems. These systems centralise and manage applicant data, therefore allowing consultants to better focus on candidate and client networking.

Recruitment Systems—Enhance Your Business

Recruitment systems streamline and automate recruitment processes, thus making consultants more productive—the simple, routine tasks are done for them. So it makes sense that these systems are the answer to business process optimisation—they allow staff to spend their valuable time on the more important and complex tasks that actually enhance the value of the business.

However, obviously not all recruitment systems are equal; there are hundreds of products and the market is extremely fragmented because of the acceleration of technology. Some software providers have chosen to innovate and invent, others have fallen behind and still continue to provide systems that create just as many problems as they solve. The most innovation has gone into products that support the growing significance of the internet as a medium for recruitment—these products are known as Software as a Service technology, or on-demand software. You will become familiar with these terms as the white paper progresses.

Recruitment and the Internet

The emergence of the internet as an interactive medium has been a major influence on the recruitment industry. There are now online sourcing channels such as job boards, classified sites, public recruitment databases, search engines, social networking sites and corporate career sites, all of which are far superior to paper-based job posting. Online recruitment is faster, cheaper and easier than paper-based advertising, and it enables companies to reach a wider audience of both active and passive candidates. As a result, the recruitment software market has undergone massive growth to support these up and coming channels of recruitment, as well as support the usual recruitment processes.

The Recruitment Software Market

E-recruitment:

When recruitment processes are carried out using electronic resources.

Traditionally when agencies were looking to streamline their processes with software, they opted for 'out-of-the-box' software, or paid to have software installed on-site. However as the e-recruitment software market matures, better solutions are emerging in the form of Software as a Service (SaaS) technology.

Software as a Service (SaaS) is the upcoming trend in the IT and recruitment industries, and according to market research firm Gartner, global SaaS sales are expected to double by 2012¹. And in a more recent study of vendors in the e-recruitment industry, 77% of their customers used SaaS systems, compared with 23% using on-premise solutions.²

Essentially, SaaS systems are all provided over the internet, with the vendor hosting the system for you, proving to be a much more cost-effective and flexible system than running software in-house. But whilst SaaS systems are a growing trend, its basic concepts have been around for years. Some of the following large, well known SaaS systems provide their services exclusively over the internet—

- www.salesforce.com – the world's fastest growing customer relationship management system
- Online banking
- Online flight booking
- Hotmail, Gmail, Facebook etc.

So why is SaaS technology so popular?

SaaS Systems vs. Licensed Software

Licensed in-house software typically needs to be installed, maintained and managed on your own computer hardware. This is a rather old fashioned method of software delivery but it is often chosen by agencies because it is a more familiar system, even if it is dated. However, with the advancement of technology, newly-emerging web-based software solutions have eliminated many of the problems of licensed software. Many have also adapted to solve problems of the original web-based software systems, providing you select the right product.

¹ "Market Trends: Software as a Service, Worldwide, 2007-2012", September 2008—Gartner Research

² "Magic Quadrant for E-Recruitment Software", December 2009—Gartner Research

The following points address some of the major benefits and advancements of SaaS technology, compared to licensed, in-house software.

Costs Analysis

Client/server licensed software systems require up-front costs such as the license cost, servers, tape backup equipment, installation, configuration and IT employee training. Ongoing maintenance, personnel and technician employment costs can also be pricey. And because of the nature of this system, software faults and updates are often unpredictable so this type of solution offers little help for budgeting.

SaaS systems offer predictability in costs, as all updates and fixes are performed by the vendor, with minimal interruption to the software user. And because of their low up-front costs, SaaS systems allow many organisations to invest in a high-end application that they might have otherwise not have been able to afford because the costs are spread out in installments.

It also reduces the risk involved with buying new software because the contract can be terminated at any time. However—you should always enquire with the software vendor regarding their cost structure and find out what is included in your fees, to ensure there are no hidden costs. This will ensure that the system you select is cost-effective in the long-run.

Product Deployment

SaaS solutions have far shorter deployment times, and are easily integrated into the company. Its rapid deployment times are due to the software being readily available on the vendor's server—the purchasing company only needs to access it via the internet, without the need to integrate it into their own hardware.

Usability

The SaaS delivery mode has grown immensely over the last few years, and as a result, there have been changes to the way the software is developed, eliminating complaints about the original generations of the software regarding interface design. The best systems are the ones where the user can, for the most part, use their intuition when navigating their way around the software. Providers are also integrating tools in the software that allow users to customise the application themselves. Also due to the nature of SaaS products, and the immediacy of their upgrades, providers are increasing usability testing with interface design, therefore providing a rich user experience.

Security

Sometimes there is apprehension from consultants with regard to using web-based technologies because they have little knowledge of how the software works and may be fearful of security aspects of the product. Instead, they opt for an in-house solution that is stored on their own computer hardware. However, whilst security is a valid concern, for web-based solutions from reputable providers this should not be an issue—as they will have comprehensive security features and most providers are happy to demonstrate this upon your request.

Database protection

Whilst in-house software may seem to provide protection to those with less understanding of technology, the risk is actually because your data is stored on your own hardware. What this means for you is that if your hardware breaks down, so does your information source. The main reason behind recruitment systems is to make consultants more effective. However if your recruitment system relies heavily on your hardware, how can you ensure that this system will never fail?

Internet access

Many in-house software providers have argued that web-based software relies on the internet, and therefore depending on the speed and reliability of your internet connection, you may experience considerable delays in recruitment processes. However, today it's rare for a company not to rely heavily on the speed and reliability of its internet connection for ALL its processes, not just recruitment. Companies in the 21st century just aren't viable without the internet.

However, whilst these points illustrate that SaaS/web-based systems have a clear advantage over in-house systems, not all SaaS systems are the same, nor is every provider. The following checklist will help you when you are considering a SaaS solution for your recruitment agency.

Selecting a recruitment software—Find one that ADDS value to your business

A mistake often made by agencies, especially with the vastness of the e-recruitment solution market, is choosing a product which appears to have all the ‘bells and whistles’, but doesn’t actually improve or add value to their business. How does this happen? Often it is just a case of forgetting their business goals and expectations, and failing to translate this into their software search. So hence the first step to choosing a recruitment solution is detailing your business goals and needs, and then objectively evaluating the solutions available.

Defining your business needs

Before researching a solution to your recruitment problems, you should define your business objectives and needs (current and future), and also make sure you understand how recruitment software will help you achieve them. We have listed the main ones below that you should look for in a recruitment software solution, and perhaps you can also make a list of your own which is tailored to your company.

Flexibility

An ideal SaaS solution needs to be highly flexible. Your business will benefit from a system which can be configured to work within your established hiring processes rather than one that forces you to make compromises. Whatever your choice in vendor, make sure that they are able to support your business processes and needs, as well as being able to adapt as these change over time.

Quantifiable Cost Savings

Cost savings should be one of your main objectives when considering recruitment software. With most software solutions, cost savings come directly out of the automation of routine tasks and streamlined processes. The system facilitates a consistent business-wide recruitment process, and decreases your time-to-hire through workflow automation—meaning more time savings and cost savings.

Process Improvement

Ideally, recruitment software should streamline most of your recruitment processes. By streamlining and automating some of the simple, routine tasks, consultants can focus on those more complex tasks that actually make money, and add value to the business. For example, resume screening. If you are in agency recruitment, you know the feeling of trawling through resume after resume to find the right candidate your client. Recruitment software usually performs resume screening for you, showing you where candidates are at a glance, and automatically rejecting under-qualified applicants. Recruitment software also improves all your

other recruitment processes through streamlining. Read the next section entitled: 'Recruitment Processes and Recruitment Software' to find out more.

Better Client Service

“The better your relationships, the shorter your sales cycle and the more money you will make”, says American business writer Dan Brent Burt. Successful relationships begin with building knowledge of your clients' contacts, company and requirements. Most good recruitment software solutions support this by allowing your team to coordinate client information across disciplines, market sectors and locations. By linking candidate sourcing and recruitment process management with detailed client records, you will have an unparalleled depth of information at your fingertips. This knowledge base of client interactions ensures your recruiters can effectively anticipate the needs of clients.

Positive User Experience

This is important for both the consultants and applicants. Many recruitment systems do not have ease-of-use. Some systems contain too many components and may be too complicated for your company needs. You should select a system which is easily integrated and is practical and intuitive to use. How do you find out if a SaaS solution has ease-of-use? That brings us to our next point.

'Try Before You Buy'

One way to ensure the system you select is suitable for your agency is to take part in a free trial. Some vendors will allow you to have a free demo of their product without paying any user fees. This is a good idea if you have never used this kind of software before and want to test it before you invest in it. But also keep in mind, whilst it is not ideal that you select the wrong SaaS system, the advantage of SaaS systems is that with most, you can end your contract without making the large investment you would have with in-house software. This feature of SaaS systems mitigates the risk of new software ventures.

Migrating from an existing system

You should ensure that, if you already have a current, but ineffective recruitment system that the provider you choose will take the time to understand your needs, and roll-over your existing data from your old system, to the new one. Also, you should make a list of any problems that you experienced in the first system, or perhaps any newly arisen business needs—just make sure that the new system addresses most of the important ones.

Candidate Management

Successful recruiting occurs over time. Software with candidate management tools can allow consultants to automate simple, time-consuming tasks, so they can better focus on other more

valuable tasks. There are recruitment systems that have built-in intelligence to better match candidates with job requirements with screening questions and resume data bases. This will allow you to secure the most qualified applicants and give feedback to those who are not suitable, and quickly. Screening technology also assists in managing high numbers of applicants—look for a SaaS solution with innovative resume parsing technology. Resume parsing allows consultants to process resumes faster—it is a tool that automatically gathers information from resumes and uses complex pattern and language analysis techniques to extract the relevant information. With this function you will also be able to search your resume database for any particular trait your client is looking for in a candidate.

Compliance

Compliance is a growing concern for consultants, and many solutions are emerging in new technology and products because of this demand. Issues such as privacy, anti-discrimination and other compliance issues come into play in recruitment. Some recruitment systems can offer built-in reporting requirements, as well as being capable of filtering data to ensure that confidential or prejudicial information is appropriately dealt with.

Mobility

One of the best features of SaaS web-based products is that all services are delivered over the internet, which means that they can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection, though only by authorised parties. This means that your consultants can access the system from anywhere, and with the introduction of smart phones and portable internet, having a mobile recruitment system is a definite advantage.

Cost-Effectiveness & Affordability

An advantage of SaaS solutions is that they eliminate the large up-front costs of client-server systems such as the purchase of servers and expensive software. SaaS solutions also save you maintenance expenses as well as the time that is needed for installation and integration of the software. Another positive of SaaS is that it is available immediately, hence its other name of 'on-demand software'. The software vendor takes care of all maintenance, updates and security. Software is always current as vendors can update the software directly on their own servers. SaaS products also eliminate the personnel expenditures that are required for installation, maintenance and updates. However, not all SaaS product vendors are the same. You should also consider a vendor's pricing strategy when selecting a system. Look for methods of quoting used by the vendor, any hidden fees and the overall pricing strategy from the vendor.

Integration Approach

You should look for a product which will be implemented in a timely fashion with the desired outcome reached. You could try researching the provider's implementation history, or talk to

reference companies that have used the prospective vendor. You need to know how quickly you will see results, and where. This brings us to our next point.

Reporting & Analytics

Most SaaS systems should be able to manage recruitment metrics by generating pre-packaged reports and also any additional information that you request. You should find a product which delivers comprehensive reporting packages and any metrics that you feel are relevant to you. This will help you provide the best service to your clients, for example, one of the metrics you can obtain is where your candidates are coming from—in order to determine the most effective advertising portal.

Track Record

You should decide which type of vendor is suitable for your company— some organisations are happy to take the risk of engaging small and entrepreneurial software vendors, while others prefer to deal with vendors that have been in the market longer. Whatever your risk profile, you should always make sure you trust the vendor. Remember that SaaS products are by definition, a service, so you should look for a company that is willing to provide you with an ongoing, optimal service. You could ask the vendor for their customer satisfaction metrics, and any other details that can prove their success rate.

Support

Local support and local presence are two different things when it comes to your vendor. If a vendor has a sales organisation in your local market, this does not always mean that adequate support is there. You should find out how your support calls are going to be handled, how resourced the support team is and how they assist with integration of the product into your company. Of course, systems that are locally built and hosted locally are more likely to have better support. You should also ask in regards to support, about:

- ✓ Quoting & pricing practices
- ✓ Account management
- ✓ Issue resolution
- ✓ Technical stability
- ✓ Innovation & flexibility
- ✓ Their ability & willingness to integrate with other technologies and vendors

Recruitment Processes & Recruitment Software

Managing any recruitment process using traditional manual methods wastes time, money and resources. Many of these processes however, can be streamlined and automated with an effective e-recruitment system.

Candidate and Client Relationship Management (CCRM)

This is perhaps one of the biggest benefits of recruitment software—it automates and standardises relationship management, allowing consultants to do more important tasks. It also improves time-to-communicate between candidates and clients.

- You can save your emails from outlook, keep track of hot candidates or groups of candidates (i.e. by industry or job type), set tasks and reminds save interview notes, get candidates to update their details. By automating all these administration processes, it saves time and money.
- You should look for software with an artificial intelligence engine, without the need for messy keyword libraries. Consultants will be able to mine the databases effortlessly, as some systems have the ability to suggest candidate matches, ranked in order of suitability, so you only have to spend the time assessing the ones that are already above the bar.
- Look for systems with customisable workflow systems—so you can keep track and control activities, and automate simple tasks and assign them to the appropriate person, or update candidates on their application at the click of a button.

Sourcing/Job Posting

Sourcing is more than just finding candidates. In order to attract the right candidates, you must have a targeted, strategic sourcing campaign. E-recruitment applications can assist you in this in a number of ways:

1. Makes Job Posts Quicker, Easier, Cheaper

Job posting using paper-based advertising is far more expensive than posting online, not to mention the time it wastes. Job posting online is virtually instant, and because of the nature of the internet, it can reach a wider audience, fast. However manually submitting job ads to the various online job boards can be quite time-consuming for consultants, so SaaS solutions naturally support this function. Posting, renewal and removal of job postings are handled automatically through integration with your requisition database. This automation allows consultants to focus on selecting the right applicants, because these simple but imperative tasks can be done for them

2. Sourcing Strategy & Writing Job Ads

Job posting is an important task, however making sure that you target your job ads in a way that gets the best results is even more important—it will save time and money. Sourcing strategy is usually developed using past results and candidate source tracking data. You should select an e-recruitment solution which has the ability to obtain these types of metrics. Some e-recruitment solutions can trigger surveys during the job application process. These types of surveys can help in the actual writing of job ads. If you can find out what would have made a position more attractive to candidates, such as a minor increase in salary, then you can communicate this to your clients and formulate better job ads for them. A good job description will not only attract the right resumes, but also keep most of the wrong ones at bay.

3. SEO for Recruiters

Search engines are a very powerful tool—they are used by millions of people every day to find information on the internet. So evidently if you want access to this type of medium, you will have to make sure your job ads, company website or whatever you want candidates to see, is “found” by the search engines. Often leveraging simple Search Engine Optimisation techniques in your job ads will ensure that the right people find you.

4. Business Networking

We can't stress it enough—it is a competitive necessity to build good business relationships and networks with your potential candidates. Successful recruiting occurs over time, and a solution which supports this communication aspect of recruitment will help you convince those top candidates to join your organisation.

And because a lot of business networking is now moving online, it is important that you become a part of those virtual communities as well, especially if you want to attract those hard-to-reach candidates.

Social networking sites can expand your company's networks and the information sharing ability of these sites is a powerful prospect for talent acquisition. Sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other social networking avenues can aid talent attraction due to their wide reach and accessibility. How do you use social networking sites in the context of jobseekers?

- ✓ You can target specific jobseeker markets using social networking applications for job listings
- ✓ It can help build your corporate image, and generate more exposure for your company, which is particularly important when it comes to attracting passive candidates.
- ✓ Some e-recruitment solutions directly support these types of social networking sites, so check with your vendor if you are interested in this type of feature.

However, obviously be aware of the privacy legislation associated with gathering information about a candidate that may not be necessary for the recruitment process.

The Selection Process

E-recruitment assists in the selection process by streamlining the processing of applications. It ensures that you get to the right applicants, fast. An effective e-recruitment tool should also keep a history of all actions taken through any recruitment process.

1. Developing the Selection Criteria

After the position description has been written through your recruitment software, the skills, experience, knowledge and education or training that will be required of the person being sought can be determined. These are the selection criteria against which applicants will be assessed through the processes supported by your recruitment software. The more accurate the criteria, the more likely there will be an ideal match found. The selection criteria may assist the recruitment and selection process by providing:

- ✓ A consistent set of standards for all applicants which can be measured.
- ✓ A structured means for a comparative assessment of applicant.

2. Screening Questions

By defining screening questions, you can filter out ones that may be under-qualified for the position. Most e-recruitment solutions will define screening questions and through built-in intelligence, and filter-out unsuitable applicants. This becomes more important when considering high volume recruitment processes—as it saves consultants the time they would have spent manually screening resumes.

Typically you would ask these questions online however for certain types of recruitment campaigns, such as one for a role requiring a certain level of English understanding or communication skills, some e-recruitment technologies have integrated technology that can allow candidates to call a particular number to answer screening questions via the telephone.

Assessment and Short-Listing

Candidate assessment forms and tests are supported by recruitment software and are used to help identify and select the best candidate for a given role.

- ✓ Assessment tools can give additional information regarding areas of ability of each candidate. These are areas which cannot be assessed objectively from other parts of the selection process, such as details of the level of numerical reasoning ability or the quality of report writing skills.

- ✓ Each assessment focuses on a specific job-relevant skill, so candidates with less experience of a particular job may be able to demonstrate through the test that they have the necessary skills.
- ✓ A shortlist of candidates is created automatically on the basis of assessment results. However, whilst test results have an impact on the recruitment decision, they are not used in isolation—rather they are considered along with the other information gathered so that an overall view of candidate suitability is determined.

The End Process—Choosing and Implementing a System

So you have read our white paper, and hopefully now know a little more about recruitment software, and what it does. Now it is time to select and implement a system. We have summarised this process into nine steps, to get you started—

1. Define your business needs and objectives
2. Link these up with your current processes—and which ones you would like to be streamlined and improved. Prioritise them so you can cut from the bottom up, in case you can't find a software solution that does everything.
3. Decide on the type of software you believe is the best solution for you
4. Gather input from key stakeholders and employees that will be using the system—often getting a second opinion can help if you are stuck between two or more different products/providers.
5. Create a shortlist of providers and contact each one communicating all of your needs and concerns
6. Download free trials and view live demonstrations
7. Choose a vendor which you feel will provide you with optimum support and flexibility, especially if you are new to the software market
8. Make a purchase, then customise and integrate it
9. Obtain metrics when a suitable amount of time has passed, to determine effectiveness

But overall, always look for a solution which adds value to your business, and improves your already established processes and procedures, not one that forces you to dramatically change your business.

About RecruitAdvantage

RecruitAdvantage provides powerful and innovative web-based software solutions that assist recruiters and HR professionals in accelerating their recruitment processes. Our software applications are user-friendly, intuitive, flexible, and are suitable for businesses of any size or type. It is all provided on one seamless platform which is completely reliable and secure.

RecruitAdvantage were pioneers in the Australian market, so have had the experience and the time to develop the most innovative software applications available. And because our software is a service, we are with you from day one, constantly improving our processes to adapt to your individual business needs.

Whether you are in corporate recruitment, or agency recruitment, we have a solution for you. Visit www.recruitadvantage.com.au for more information, a free trial, or you can contact us using our contact information below.

RecruitAdvantage Client Testimonials

John Rawlinson, Managing Director – Talent2

“We implemented RecruitAdvantage recruitment software as a way to improve our recruitment processes which at the time were very manual and time consuming resulting in inefficient work practices and reduced productivity.

After implementing the system, we have seen a definite improvement in consultant and office productivity. We are now able to see at a glance candidates that require screening and are able to correspond with candidates in a more professional and timely manner.

One of the key strengths of the tool is its ease of use and ability to quickly filter and assess hundreds of applicants. One role we were filling had at least 100 applicants which would have taken 4 days to sort and assess. Using RecruitAdvantage software we were able to sort and assess within 2 days. We see this as being vital in our industry as the number of applicants for roles increases with the current economic environment. We believe we have had a return on our investment almost immediately.

The RecruitAdvantage support is tremendous with there being very few post implementation issues and the team is more than willing to help with any questions we have.

We would highly recommend RecruitAdvantage to any organisation.”

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