The Challenge: Bringing Recruitment In-house

As HR Manager, Cindy Harvey oversees the company's North American recruitment activities. She is also the company's HR business partner for sales and business development, where she works closely with hiring managers to help them better understand their roles in the recruiting process.

Cindy has been in HR her entire career, and extended her focus to recruiting when she joined Softchoice in 2007. While Cindy had used LinkedIn in the past, it wasn’t until 2009 that she began to use it for more targeted and proactive sourcing of “passive” candidates.

Cindy works with six recruiters, structured by client groups, who perform end-to-end recruiting functions from their offices in Toronto, Seattle and Atlanta. Cindy and her team may have anywhere from 50 to 80 hiring requisitions open at any one time, with recruiting requirements that vary from inside and field sales roles to technology, marketing and operations functions. While Softchoice uses an approved list of recruitment partners, as well as job boards, the associated costs are high and budgets often have to be re-evaluated halfway through the year. “The aim is to have the recruitment done by our team wherever possible,” Cindy explains.

“Recruitment is an ongoing process and an integral part of our company strategy,” she adds. “As a company, we don’t have a lot of consumer brand recognition, but we are well known in our industry. An important part of what we need to do is build awareness in the marketplace.”

Maximizing a LinkedIn Approach

In 2009, Softchoice began using LinkedIn. “As a forward thinking company that is always trying to be on the leading edge, I knew LinkedIn had a strong future and could be a great match for Softchoice. We saw that these services offered great new potential to reach out to both active and passive job seekers.”
Using LinkedIn for recruiting has been so successful that Softchoice is now revamping its spending plan for the coming year. “We made a conscious decision to switch some budget from traditional job boards to LinkedIn campaigns like Insights and Talent Direct,” she says. “We did that because the people we need to hire are highly sought after and aren’t necessarily looking for jobs, and LinkedIn is the perfect place to go after them.”

Cindy reports that LinkedIn also “forces” the team to be more strategic in planning out job descriptions and targeting the most qualified people. “We recently reviewed how many positions were filled last year, their source, and the candidate profiles for each. We found that the majority of candidates came through referrals and sources like LinkedIn. That proves LinkedIn is making a big difference.”

“LinkedIn is a very strong partner, and we consider them to be an extension of us,” Cindy notes. “They understand who we are as a company and as a team.” LinkedIn also takes the time to do quarterly business reviews with the Softchoice team to evaluate programs that have been put in place, and share insights on what’s new.

Tapping Into a Broader Talent Market

Although Softchoice continues to use outside agencies as part of its overall recruitment efforts, things have changed since the LinkedIn relationship began, Cindy says. “Once we started working with LinkedIn, we knew we could be more targeted and proactive in sourcing people for jobs.”

She says that tapping into the passive audience has been a definite plus for the company. “We have the ability to communicate directly with many potential candidates. LinkedIn has a connection to the recruiting market that other traditional competitors can’t match. It’s just in a different league altogether.”

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