

Case Study Softchoice



Highlights

- Proactively reaches passive candidates with Recruiter and Job Slots.
- Uses Career Page, Recruitment Insights, Recruitment Ads and Talent Direct to engage in more targeted recruiting and raise awareness of the Softchoice brand and market profile.
- Lowers recruitment costs and shortens recruitment cycles for technical roles.
- LinkedIn works as a strong partner with Softchoice, conducting quarterly business reviews and evaluations.

Company Profile

As a leading North American provider of technology solutions and services, Softchoice combines the efficiency and reliability of a national IT supplier with the personal touch and technical expertise of a local solutions provider. With more than 950 employees located in more than 40 branch offices, Softchoice manages the technology needs of almost 15,000 corporate and public sector organizations across the United States and Canada.

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."

“LinkedIn has a connection to the recruiting market that other traditional competitors can’t match. It’s just in a different league altogether.”

Cindy Harvey, HR Manager, Softchoice

She says the team’s aim is to utilize LinkedIn Recruiter seats effectively. “We use it for job postings, as well as to track positions by role or location to determine which candidates are a good fit and share information across the team.”

LinkedIn also plays an important part in measuring recruiter performance, she adds. “Recruiters have a target for number of hires through LinkedIn, so it has become one key focus area for measuring performance.”

Recruitment Insights has played a key role in filling technical engineering and IT architecture positions. “The time it was taking to find the right candidates for these jobs was extensive. Posting jobs to boards did get some traffic in certain locations, but it wasn’t working that well. With Recruitment Insights, we now know how our company is perceived by candidates we are looking for, and we can be much more targeted in our outreach.”

Based on data provided by Insights, the team is using Recruitment Ads to increase visibility for Softchoice through targeted messages developed in collaboration with the company’s corporate marketing team. “We work closely with marketing to come up with ads that speak to what Softchoice is about and ensure consistency of messaging across other sites,” Cindy explains. A custom Career Page was also developed to ensure a consistent Softchoice look and feel for copy, media tools and other content.

Softchoice is also in the early stages of using Talent Direct. The team is using feedback on career aspirations from Insights and building that into the company’s recruitment messaging for InMail campaigns to increase traffic.

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.”

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.

LinkedIn User Tips

- Use LinkedIn to be creative in how you source and engage with passive candidates.
- Use project folders to keep track of potential future candidates by role or location.
- Evaluate your sent, acceptance and decline rate for InMails during quarterly business reviews with your LinkedIn account manager so you can fine-tune your approach.