

The future of pre-employment screening

One-on-one with Karen Cariss, CEO, PageUp People

What are the benefits and pitfalls of screening candidates in a market where quality candidates are difficult to find?

Screening is important when recruiting new candidates regardless of whether or not candidates are difficult to find. It's not only a question of hiring the right person; it's also a way to make sure you spend your face-to-face time with candidates who are qualified and who fit both the role and the organisation. The hard work is effectively done up front. Unfortunately companies often skip this step because of the underlying fear that if the timeframe is too long between when a candidate is screened and when he or she is invited to their first interview, then the candidate will choose to go somewhere else.

So why not skip the screening and go straight to the interview? While this may work well for a middle-management position, it won't for a grocery company seeking to fill thousands of entry-level positions every week. This approach is also simply inefficient. There are substantial variations in the timeframes in which organisations get back to candidates, mainly because of the methods and processes deployed. Companies that use technology to automatically vet and screen candidates online enjoy a faster and more seamless turnaround than an organisation that uses a traditional paper-based method. Technology today can do background checks and act as a quality control. Depending on your criteria you can plug in your requirements up front.

What tools do companies use for screening?

There are a number of technology applications in the market. We have, for example, an artificial intelligence component that can preload the CV and automatically scan it for pre-programmed key criteria triggers (for example, years of employment and level of education). The system is quick and simple. Technology is allowing for much faster screening

than ever seen before. The US market uses it well, but the UK and Australian markets still have some way to catch up. The bottom line is that technology not only makes life easier for the candidate, it is also a robust process that allows companies to make informed decisions.

What do you see as the future for screening candidates?

I believe every company will have their own preferred screening style. The traditional approach of relying on the third-party recruiter will change for a lot of organisations and they will be using their in-house resources to pool talent and then screen. As more companies embrace new technology more non-traditional methods will be introduced such as online video interviews. The mining industry would benefit from this approach. Often miners are located in remote areas far away from recruiters who are normally based in city centres.

The future is about making everything easier for the candidate and the organisation. The process will be simplified for the candidate across the board and done in a way that increases a company's ability to make a quick decision on a candidate's fitness for a role.

Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace and Google have already started to become

a screening tool for some organisations. In most cases LinkedIn already acts as a CV; the information is just organised differently to a traditional resume. PageUp People's Recruitment Management Solution system has an application that allows recruiters to research the applicant by searching LinkedIn, Facebook and other social community sites to pull out relevant information. A lot of companies are getting more excited about this option as the online sourcing route is more accepted.

Who screens and what benefits are they reaping?

Mainly companies that do a lot of high-rotation and high-volume entry-level recruitment, for example large grocery chains or retailers. Allowing a computer to make a decision on a candidate allows them to trawl through thousands of role requests on a daily basis and pick the right candidates within moments. Today it takes these organisations only a matter of two to three days between the candidate's application being made and their first day on the job, delivering on the vision of 'right people, right place, right time'.

What is holding companies back from improving their screening methods?

The market is transforming and changing as technology improves. We didn't have as many options a few years ago as we do today and organisations are used to a human approach to screening, not a technology-based one. Organisations will shift to a more technology-based approach with time, as they get used to the concept and see their peers benefiting.

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