



# From Six – Zero Degrees of Separation Social Network Recruiting

**H**ave you ever heard there are no more than six degrees of separation between any two people in the world? The premise is that any person can be linked to any other person through no more than six other people, each who know one another or are connected in some way. This is also known as the 'small world' phenomenon. Social networking is based upon these concepts and resourceful recruiters are leveraging the 'six degrees' concept to generate hard-to-find candidate leads.

## Social Networking Supports Recruitment

Friends of friends often make the best candidates, and this is why networking and referrals remain top sources for identifying and hiring qualified candidates. Generating good candidates through referrals is not a new concept, as many organizations tap their own employees as referral sources, and compensate or bonus successful employee referrals through formal Employee Referral Programs. The common element between employee referrals and social network recruiting is a connection between an existing employee and a potential hire – social network recruiting can be viewed as an extension of your employee referral network.

With current unemployment rates at less than 4%, recruiters are being challenged to identify and attract qualified candidates like never before. Innovative and creative recruiters are utilizing social networking technology as a strategy to reach passive candidates, specifically for jobs requiring specialized skills and experience as well as for hard-to-fill positions. Top social networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, have successfully combined personal connections and networking with technology, presenting an opportunity for recruiters to tap into valuable passive job candidates by leveraging their personal relationships for professional networking, employee referrals and hiring.

## Who uses Social Networks?

Forrester, an independent technology and research company, revealed in their October 25, 2007 report that the biggest users of social technologies were highly paid professionals, well-educated individuals, and new entrants to the work force. The first group was the most active but also the hardest to recruit. In the latter group—new entrants—70 percent of Generation Y were found to be engaged in social networks and are expected to replace today's business leaders at a relatively younger age.

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## Recruiting through Social Networks

Engaging in social network recruiting can increase your organization's visibility as a potential employer by offering a venue to promote your company and corporate website to candidates who may not be familiar with your organization. Candidates can also increase their visibility to potential employers by creating a searchable professional profile and resume and then assigning public or private (visible to their immediate contacts only) access to the information, with the vast majority of candidates selecting private.

Social networking also facilitates 'connectability' by linking people together with similar interests, education, professions, affiliations, activities/meetings/conferences, and even past companies worked for – all through a common link in their network.

For those organizations willing to invest time into making candidate connections, social networking lays the groundwork for a 2-way dialogue, or private conversation away from the on-line forum - a chance for recruiters and candidates to learn about one another and decide if they are interested in exploring a longer-term relationship.

Social networking has helped many employers find great employees through trusted referrals, by enabling recruiters to tap into a huge pool of referrals and passive candidates they might not otherwise have access to through advertising and other methods targeting active job seekers.

Today we are seeing recruiters, and job seekers, nurturing their networks and utilizing technology to extend those networks, making the workplace more about building communities through the people we know and trust.

## Leveraging Social Networking . . .

Although social networking is still considered an emerging tool, we are already seeing many organizations leveraging social networking with other modernized recruiting strategies and services, such as applicant tracking and resume management software, virtual career fairs, etc. in the war for talent.

