

# change

COMMUNICATION IN THIS AGE OF CHANGE



**NEW IDEAS ON  
THE ALIGNMENT  
OF SALES AND  
MARKETING**

# SMART MARKETING

A dense field of blue butterflies with a single orange and black butterfly in the center. The blue butterflies are the dominant color, filling most of the frame. The orange and black butterfly is positioned in the lower right quadrant, standing out due to its contrasting colors. The word "STANN" is overlaid in large, bold, black letters with an orange outline, spanning across the top half of the image.

# STANN



# How technology and social media are dramatically impacting today's hiring process

**By Michael J. Solender**

**E**mployers and job seekers alike are harnessing the power of online technology in unprecedented ways when it comes to the perfect marriage between job candidates and position openings.

Sourcing, screening, vetting and interviewing — staffing tasks once relegated to armies of in-house human resources professionals — are increasingly being automated through applicant tracking systems and tightly managed just-in-time hiring processes. Social media is taking a leading role as a conduit between employers and candidates, calling for savvy navigation and updated strategies from both for success.

"Finding talent today is no longer a matter of simply using online job boards to 'post and pray,' to attract the right personnel for open positions,"

says Bill Gunn, a senior recruiter with Gunn & Associates, a niche search firm specializing in digital marketing and technology. "It is more about understanding and using social media as a base from which to actively establish and maintain a pipeline of talent, readily available when needed."

The era of online recruiting through job boards and company websites, while far from over, is ceding ground to the pursuit of passive candidates, those individuals who while not actively looking for a job, may be amenable to unsolicited contacts for intriguing career opportunities. This is especially prevalent at more senior position levels and for those with more highly specialized skills.

## **Applicant Tracking & Candidate Management Systems**

Gunn explains that many organizations, especially those with ongoing staffing needs, look to Candidate Management Systems (CMS) to manage longer-term

relationships with broad pools of potential talent.

"We also refer to these as Customer Relationship Systems because we think of candidates ultimately as customers," says Gunn. "Recruiters and hiring managers know acquiring talent is highly competitive and by ensuring the candidate experience is a positive one, it can pay big dividends."

Gunn said his prior experience as Director of Recruiting for Dominion Resources in Norfolk, Virginia, underscored the importance of automated systems. He cites the use of Jobvite, an enterprise-wide recruiting software, as a tool that combined traditional applicant tracking with candidate management features, allowing his team to fill up to 400 positions annually for the company and its affiliates.

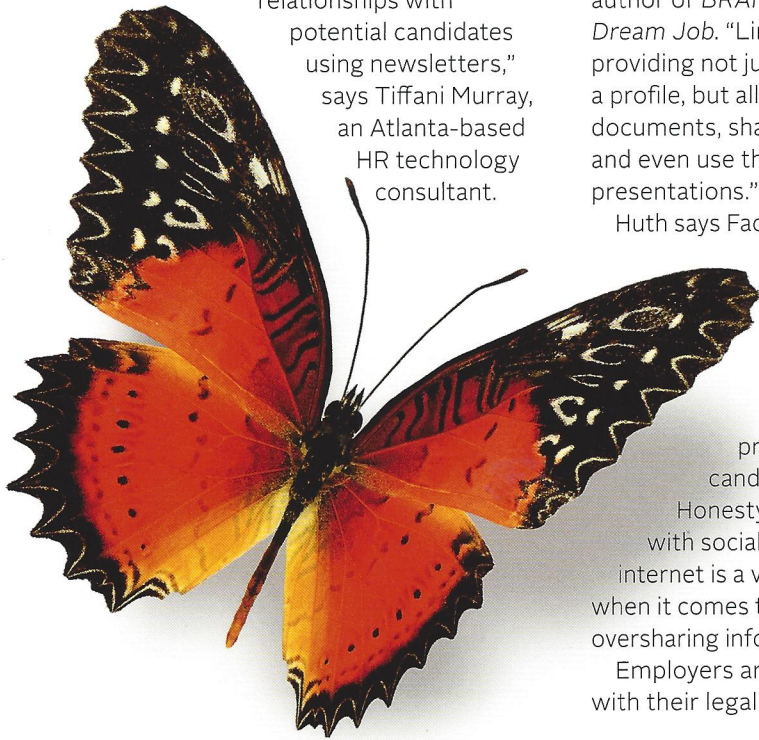
"Having a pipeline filled with people you can't wait to hire is the key to recruiting top talent today," says Gunn. "One of the most effective ways to do that is to reach through social meeting



platforms to look at demographics, job titles, geographical locations, skill sets, education and experience to build a database of potential candidates. Just as marketers reach out to potential customers of products and services, these systems allow companies to craft specific messaging for distribution to their pipeline.”

Through periodic messaging and sharing information such as new product introduction, company growth plans, financial results and industry updates, companies can build brand awareness, create interest and give easy access points for talented candidates to explore employment.

“I see many companies build relationships with potential candidates using newsletters,” says Tiffani Murray, an Atlanta-based HR technology consultant.



“This can be built into applicant tracking systems using automation to greatly reduce staff time investment, yet the newsletters still make personal contact and keep the company top-of-mind with external talent.”

#### **Social Media — A Platform for Talent Search**

Professional networking social media giant LinkedIn is a significant go-to source for companies when building their talent pipeline.

“I recommend all professionals use six social media platforms,” says Dianne Huth, adjunct professor of international marketing at Texas A&M University and author of *BRAND YOU! To Land Your Dream Job*. “LinkedIn tops that list by providing not just the ability to create a profile, but allows users to attach documents, share a portfolio of articles and even use the platform to share presentations.”

Huth says Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are also platforms where employers often look to evaluate what influencers candidates may be following or promoting and gain insight to candidate values and character.

Honesty and consistency is key with social media profiles as the internet is a very unforgiving place when it comes to misrepresentation and oversharing information.

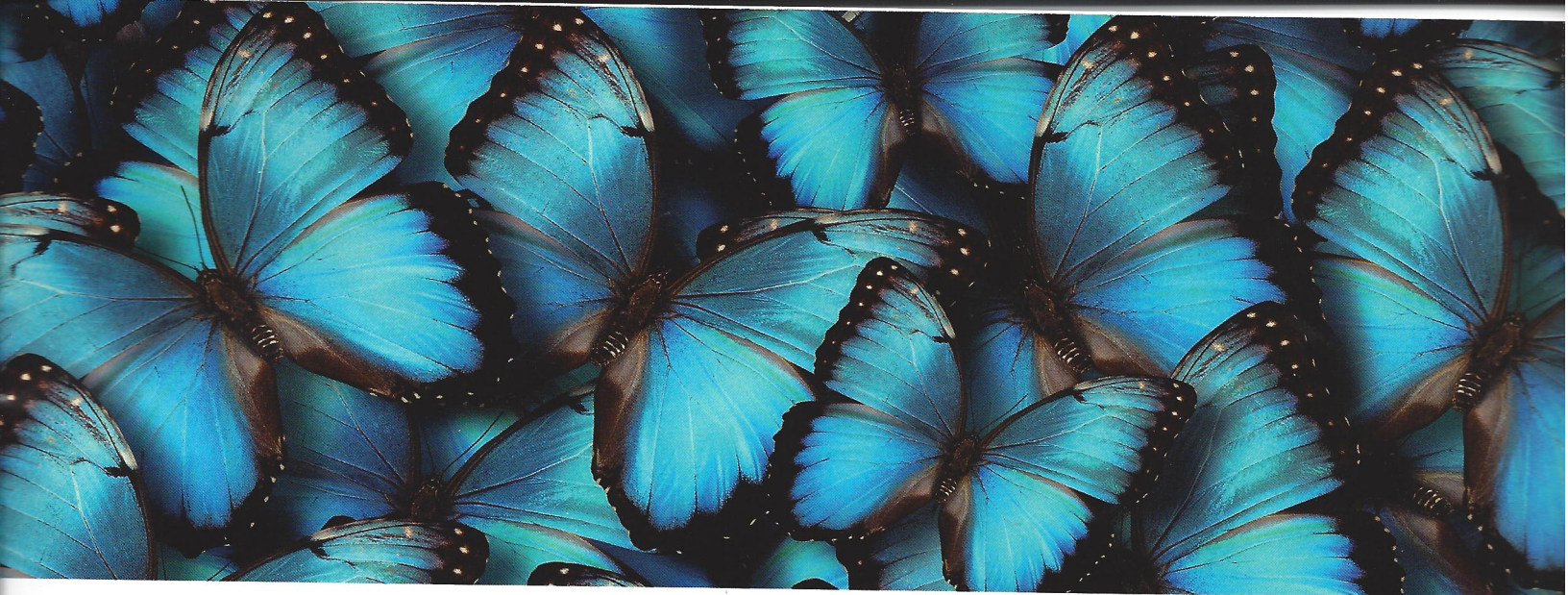
Employers are well-advised to consult with their legal team as to how and

when use of online and social media vetting is appropriate — or even legal — when making hiring decisions. Laws vary state to state and inconsistent use or application within a company for decision-making can be problematic. Policy development and adherence regarding use of social media in the selection process is a must.

Huth notes that in today’s market, half of all open positions are filled online, making it critical for active job seekers to be mindful of the high rejection rate applicant tracking systems yield and how to best position their credentials to successfully make it through the “online job search funnel.” She says 75 percent of all resumes are rejected by applicant tracking systems and “resume reading robots” before making it to an actual recruiter. And even then, the recruiter spends just seven seconds, on average, before deciding to reject it or move on to the next step in the screening process.

“Resumes need to appeal to three completely different audiences,” says Huth. “The first is the resume reading robot. Applicant tracking systems use Boolean key word search algorithms looking for word-for-word matches with job requirements. The second is Human Resources, who make sure you have the right credentials (schools, companies, etc.). Finally, resumes must also appeal to the hiring manager, who candidates want to impress as someone they want on their team, someone who is interesting and likeable and who they want to meet to learn more.”

Creating custom resumes for each position applied for online is essential



and is often the differentiating factor helping candidates leap each hurdle in the process, according to Huth. She says it is important for resumes to “mirror” the requirements listed in position listings in order to move on to human screeners.

“By the time candidates are face to face with hiring managers, their backgrounds and qualifications are well known and understood,” says Huth. “What hiring managers are trying to decide in an interview is, ‘Are you the kind of person I want? Are you likeable? Are you someone that’s going to fit into my team and my culture?’ They are also trying to uncover your passion and determine why they should hire you.”

#### **Video Screening & Online Interviews**

“Today’s technology allows recruiters to pre-screen candidates using a series of online questions at their site and even video screening,” says Murray, explaining how candidates may be timed to answer a series of questions, recorded for later review. “Technology is making the process much more efficient and a time saver. Recruiters can review candidate responses on their phones when they are on a plane or in other down-time situations.”

Candidates should prepare for situations such as these and practice their video responses. Candidates who video record themselves for review can build a comfort level with the technology and see how they appear in various formats such as on a laptop or a smaller mobile device.

Solid research and due diligence on potential employers will give an edge

when it comes time for interviewing, according to Huth.

“Company research is critical and often overlooked,” says Huth. “I recommend candidates spend eight hours researching the company, the industry and the people they’ll be talking with to be an informed candidate.”

While the advances in recruiting have been most drastic with larger

technology companies, the use of applicant tracking systems, social media vetting and online screening is near-universal across industries, regardless of size.

“The tools available today are simply necessities of competing,” says Gunn. “Everyone needs top talent.” Employers and job-seekers alike must be prepared to compete in this new age of hiring.

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## **M**ake the most of your video recording or interview by following these tips:

- 1. Keep the camera in tight.**
  - 2. Make sure your face is well lit.**
  - 3. Wear solid colors and professional / culture-appropriate dress.**
  - 4. Prepare your surroundings. Look behind you to see what the interviewer will see.**
  - 5. Respond concisely to questions.**
  - 6. Maintain eye contact with the camera just like you would in-person.**
  - 7. Practice with a dry run or two before the final recording or live interview.**
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