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How can **social media** be used effectively in the recruitment process?

By **Pam McKean**, Director of AB Dental

Social media has risen rapidly in the past two years and the bigger platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, touch people's lives multiple times everyday. Using social media to find and source talent is still relatively new for many employers, HR managers and recruiters but it is on the increase. So if you're exploring this type of recruitment method, there are a few things you need to be mindful of as there are plenty of pitfalls for the unprepared.

If you have been trying to hire employees, chances are that you have at least considered using social media to find the right candidate. Social media and the advent of mobile technology have fundamentally changed the way we do things and younger candidates are using their phones and tablets more than they are using computers. Even older candidates are finding that social media makes looking for a new job easier. Recruiters and employers are rapidly using this method to get in touch with potential candidates and to promote new opportunities.

Recruiting active employees via social media seems relatively straightforward, i.e. people who are actively searching for a new role. Active recruiting can be earned or paid. For example, earned would be engaging with prospects in a LinkedIn group, or identifying individuals via targeted searches and engaging, while paid could mean placing an ad on SEEK.

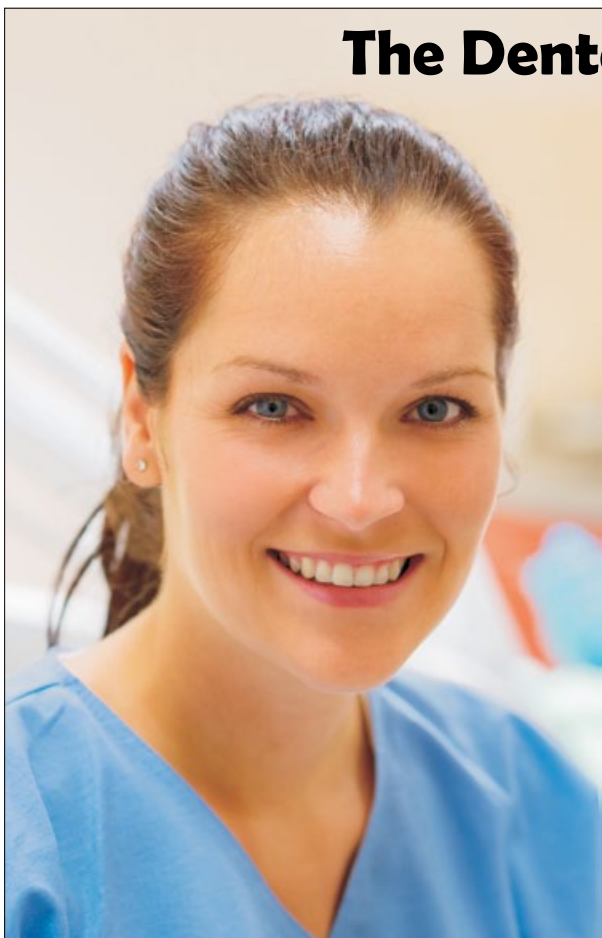
But this approach might not work if you are looking for a quality candidate in a niche industry such as dental; somebody who is currently employed and might not even be thinking about making a move. In this case, posting your job on SEEK is unlikely to have much impact. Fact remains that an active and looking candidate will find you. A passive candidate, no matter how good, needs convincing and often doesn't end up going through with it. Talking somebody out of a job and into a new job is neither quick nor easy.

Sourcing candidates online is really no different to traditional forms of networking.

You meet, engage, then start to build a relationship with that person. One of the key functions of Social Media is about engaging in conversations. So unless you're prepared to invest time into building an ongoing relationship, you may be wasting your time, and theirs. You also need to make sure you make your recruiting efforts are an extension of your brand. That is, portray an accurate image of your practice or company so that people know if they will fit into the culture of your business.

While social media is expanding our reach like never before, as with any tool, it needs to be managed. The central tool is still candidate contact, communication, trust and ultimately relationships. Advertised selection and active candidate management still remains the central theme to a successful recruiting exercise. Social media and other forms are extra add-ons to that fundamental approach. So focus and getting the basics right, and the rest will fall into place. ♦

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