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Recruiting 3.0: Web Advances Change the Landscape

By SARAH E. NEEDLEMAN
February 13, 2008 10:27 a.m.; Page B6

This isn't your father's recruiting market, or even your older sister's.

Advances in technology make the way jobs are found and filled online distinctly different from just a few years ago. Employers are now experimenting with innovative strategies for spreading their recruitment messages and screening candidates online. And Web-savvy job hunters are taking advantage of new Internet resources aimed at helping them make better career decisions.

Video, podcasts and interactive media

Until recently, few employers produced Web videos describing what it's like to work for them. "Video is finally catching on with employers in a fairly big way," says Joel Cheesman, author of Cheezhead.com, a blog on Web recruiting.

Today's videos are a step above early examples. They're higher quality and tailored to address a variety of job hunter interests, he says. And, they're more ubiquitous, finding homes on job boards, company career sites and video-sharing sites like YouTube.com. One example: About 7,000 videos are currently posted on Jobing.com, a job board that specializes in listing career opportunities in specific geographic communities.

Similarly, a growing number of employers are creating podcasts, voiced by employees, on career-related topics. [Accenture](#) Ltd. has been producing about one a month for its online career portal since mid-2006.

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To captivate and engage job hunters, more employers are also adding interactive media to their online career portals such as games, blogs and real-time chat services. For example, in December, [ASML Holding N.V.](#), an equipment supplier for the semiconductor industry, designed a recruitment-events page that job hunters can synchronize with their Microsoft Outlook calendars. Users also can opt to receive event reminders via email or text message.

Digital dirt, digital attraction

Scanning the Web for information that might derail a job hunter's candidacy is now routine procedure for recruiters at many firms, says Cynthia Shapiro, author of the forthcoming book, "What Does

Somebody Have to Do to Get a Job Around Here" (Griffin Publishing LLC, 2008). Many recruiters now even engage in the practice before extending interview invites, she adds.

"If what pops up is a ranting blog about the evils of corporate America or a picture of you topless in Cancun with a beer in your hand, you're in trouble," she warns. "Your resume will land in the trash and you won't even know what happened."

Job hunters can turn the tables in their favor by creating a Web site, blog or networking profile specifically for employers, offers Ms. Shapiro. "The Internet

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lets you flaunt things you can't put on a resume," she says. "If you don't have that kind of presence on the Web, you are losing a critical opportunity to put yourself at the top of the list."

Companies are also increasingly using social-networking sites to vet potential hires. It's ripe territory as the membership databases of these sites continue to grow rapidly. For example, five-year-old LinkedIn.com, which caters to experienced professionals, now has roughly 19 million members, up from 8 million in 2006.

Another example: Recruiters for [Electronic Arts Inc.](#) began perusing MySpace.com and Facebook.com a little over a year ago to learn more about and engage with prospective hires, says Matthew Jeffery, head of global talent brand for the gaming company. "We want people who are passionate gamers, and often on these sites, people talk about their hobbies," he says.

Job boards

While employers are doing more to reach out, there are also more online destinations than ever for job hunters to find employment ads.

About 2,000 new job boards have launched annually since 2000, and there are currently about 50,000, says Peter Weddle, chief executive officer of Weddle's, a publisher of guides to job boards. Of these, about 30% are general job sites while 70% specialize in a particular niche, he adds.

One reason for the explosion: "very inexpensive entry costs," says Mark Mehler, co-founder of CareerXroads, a staffing consulting firm.

Still, the nation's largest job boards saw fluctuations in traffic over the past year. For example, [Monster.com](#) had 11,317,000 unique visitors last month, about 9% less than for the same month a year earlier, according to comScore Inc., an Internet-research firm. And that's down more than 7% from 12,219,000 in July 2007. CareerBuilder.com had 24,752,000 unique visitors last month, about 17% more than for the same month the year before. But the site saw a 14% increase from July 2007 when it had 21,723,000 visitors.

To broaden their customer bases and keep up with the masses, Monster and CareerBuilder both power job boards within newspaper and other Web sites: Monster services 4,150 in the U.S., and 3,350 outside the U.S.; CareerBuilder operates 8,750 in the U.S. and 250 elsewhere. Many job sites have also added networking components to attract and retain more users. Among them is Dice.com, a technology job site, which launched discussion forums last year on a range of career-related topics. Site visitors can ask questions and swap advice with other users.

Ensuring a good fit

Once you get from the job ad into the application process, more employers are adding assessments -- a form of candidate screening previously reserved for the interview stage, says John Hancock, managing director of recruiting services at Capital H Group, a human-resources consulting firm. The idea is to learn about candidates' intangible qualities, like leadership skills, work ethic and business acumen, he explains.

Companies are also using assessments to weed out applicants who aren't serious, says Mr. Hancock. "It's an indication of interest from a candidate to spend time completing a more comprehensive application process," he says. Indeed, some assessments can take up to an hour to complete, he adds.

Similarly, some Web sites now offer free assessment quizzes designed to help job hunters find positions that best match their qualifications, work history and job preferences. For example, visitors to nine-month old Climber.com are prompted to answer about 25 questions on these topics, which take about 30 minutes to complete, and results in a personal profile. Climber works with roughly 40 corporate clients in a variety of industries and sends them profiles of job hunters that closely match their hiring needs. Job hunters whose profiles aren't a strong fit for any of Climber's clients are directed to ads for positions posted on the Web.

Video interviews

More employers are conducting first interviews with candidates over the Internet now that many popular personal-computer brands have built-in video capabilities, says Ms. Shapiro. "This is just starting to get going," she says. The strategy helps employers save time and avoid recruiting expenses like plane ticket and hotel costs, she adds.

Some employers are using the technique to have candidates meet hiring managers in faraway locations. Six candidates for a senior finance job recently came to One Communications Corp.'s Waltham, Mass.-headquarters and interviewed via video with executives based in several different locations at once, says Linda Chapman, executive vice president of human resources at the telecommunication firm. "Video really accelerates the hiring process," she says.

Write to Sarah E. Needleman at sarah.needleman@wsj.com

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