



## Good Enough vs. Great: Selecting the Right Recruiting System

Is your current recruiting solution just good enough? If so, there may be little incentive to find a more productive solution. Don't just accept the status quo or let your CIO dictate your next upgrade. Do your research and find a recruiting solution that delivers much better performance for only a little more.

### **Stuck with Good Enough**

Here's a fictional example that illustrates the limitations of good enough. Ira Lotte was the director of staffing at Conduco. During an economic slowdown, Conduco continued hiring. Ira projected 150 new hires and more than 200 internal reassignments to support business expansion to 3,000 employees.

At Ira's insistence, Conduco purchased its first applicant tracking solution two years ago. The new system increased productivity for the staffing department through basic automation and collaboration. The staff eliminated overnight searches on candidate resumes with a separate tool and then logging into a different homegrown system to track candidates through the recruiting process. The new system produced results with the same speed as a Google search, but sometimes exhibited inaccuracy or irrelevance.

To address a longtime company goal of sourcing a higher proportion of candidates on Conduco's career site, Ira's team selected a web-enabled system that provided a candidate-facing front end. The site had a passable job search engine for candidates to find suitable positions fairly easily. Conduco's job database automatically populated the career site with the details of a requisition, including job title, description, location, and contact information—a major improvement over the old process of sending job postings through the corporate webmaster. A resume builder form imported candidate personal information directly into the database.

When it was first implemented, the new system's basic capabilities were a vast improvement over the previous manual and fragmented systems. The upgrade silenced grumblings within the staffing department, though there were still doubts about adoption and usability. Ira suspected that the more experienced recruiters were using other tools to find candidates. Training by the new vendor focused mainly on screens and buttons, without any discussion of overhauling the recruiting process. But overall, Ira is pleased with the upgraded solution because candidate volume increased with no major crashes.

### **Missing Best Practices, Configurability, and Advanced Tools**

With the economy on the rise, Conduco management informed Ira of a new business plan focusing on aggressive growth. These plans included expanding outside of the US into Canada, Mexico, France, and Germany. They also needed new processes to not only support global expansion, but also to support hiring new engineers and product managers, not to mention supporting higher recruiting volumes.

When Ira shared the plans with the recruiting team, there was some concern about how they were going to recruit talent in international markets, engineering students on college campuses, and hard to find product managers. They thought that the legacy system and processes might not support the new recruiting strategy. They would have to rely heavily on referrals, advanced sourcing tools, and new processes.

Their system did indeed have limitations. On the front end, visitors to the career site could not send a job description to a friend's email address, missing that connection to qualified prescreened candidates. No job agent for passive candidates hindered their ability to recruit for unique skill sets.

The fields in the resume builder form merely mirrored the structure and content of a conventional resume—including contact information, education, and work history. During implementation, the vendor convinced the company to break down the resume into finer levels of detail, requiring numerous fields in the candidate database. To ensure database field population, many of the corresponding resume builder fields needed to be mandatory with the candidate filling out the same unwieldy form while applying for every job.

Conduco did not seek to exploit the interactive nature of the web by asking the candidate for information such as skills, career goals and interests, and work-life balance issues. This information lies outside the bounds of the traditional resume but provides a much more complete picture of the candidate.

Meanwhile, Conduco's back-end functionality was holding recruiters back. The lack of automated pre-screening capabilities on the front end created problems in the backend. Conduco's limited technology left the screening process up to keyword searches on resume fields. Searching for keywords in resume fields is not a scalable screening practice. It takes considerable time to match candidates—and the amount of time increases in linear proportion to the total volume of information being screened.

Finally, Conduco lacked a true workflow. A configurable workflow would enable the department to route the process differently by function or location. This was a roadblock in setting up successful hiring processes to recruit engineers from the best schools in the country. These process and system limitations became serious obstacles to the growth of the company. In many ways, they had outgrown system they bought only two years before.

### **Investing in Great**

In the example, key pieces of front-end and back-end functionality were missing. Conduco thought it had furnished the staffing organization with the right tools, but lacked best-of-breed functionality that great systems deliver. From the beginning, they needed a system that could enable new levels of efficiency and quality—not to mention the flexibility to easily adapt to changing business and recruiting needs. Conduco's technology merely automated an older, resume-based process, making it somewhat faster and less expensive. In the long run, this short-sighted approach was a clear impediment to more efficient staffing and rapid business growth at Conduco.

Although it can be difficult to recognize, be aware of the opportunities for improvement that best-of-breed vendors provide. Implementing a great system could help your staffing department go beyond good enough to drive improved business performance in your organization.

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