



Podcast: Making the Most of Mobile Recruiting

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David Weisenfeld: I'm David Weisenfeld for XpertHR.com, published by Reed Business Information and proudly partnered with LexisNexis. On this podcast our attention turns to one of the most notable trends in employment law - mobile recruitment.

Employers are facing increased challenges in finding qualified applicants these days. So to the extent they can embrace new technologies, the better their chances of attracting new talent, especially among millennials.

It sounds like an absolute no-brainer. But our guest says many employers are falling short when it comes to their mobile recruiting efforts. To find out where mistakes are being made and what your organization can do better, we will now chat with Steven Rothberg, the President and founder of College Recruiter, which works with finding jobs for recent graduates.

Steven has been named one of the top 20 people for jobseekers to follow on Twitter. He's also been quoted by the *NBC Nightly News*, *CNN*, *USA Today* and other media outlets, and we're glad to have him with us. Steven welcome.

Steven Rothberg: Thank you David, good to be here.

David Weisenfeld: Well, it's great to have you, and you've said that a lot of companies and recruiters for that matter are stuck in a 1950s sort of mentality. What do you mean by that? [0:01:32:03]

Steven Rothberg: Well, the process of recruiting has really not changed all that much from the days in the '50s, '60s, '70s even '80s when, if an employer was looking to hire people that they didn't know, they would advertise those positions. And the way they would advertise them would be generally in the Sunday newspaper in the classified section.

So job search sites like College Recruiter came along, kind of took most of that business away. But the process on the employer's side really hasn't changed all that much. In order to apply to a job right from the beginning, you have to provide an employer with your résumé. That's just the way it is with almost all jobs, almost all employers, and it just doesn't work for candidates using mobile devices.

David Weisenfeld: And for the employers that are trying to take steps to have candidates apply via their mobile device, you just mentioned that that just doesn't work. What's the biggest challenge that you've observed? [0:02:27:5]

Steven Rothberg: The biggest challenge are for users of iPhones, it's just impossible to save a file like a résumé, word document, rtf, which is kind of a sort of a word document, a pdf, any other kind of file like that on your phone and then be able to upload it to a website., You just can't do it.

Other phones like Windows, Blackberry, Android, you can do it, but it's beyond the technical capability of the vast majority of users. So, if you go to an employer's website, they typically use what's called an applicant tracking system, which is basically a database. And you fill in your name, and your email, your address, city, state, zip, whatever. You might answer some screening questions, and then there's almost always that field to click here to navigate your device, your computer, your laptop, your desktop. Select your résumé, and then you click a submit or upload button.

Well, if you're on an iPhone or if you're like 99.99% of say Android users, you don't know how to navigate that device, and you probably just even can't. So, if you cannot select the résumé to upload it to the employer website to the ats, then that means you cannot apply for the job.

I feel that in 2017, employers are putting the cart before the horse. They don't really need a candidate to upload a résumé to start the application process. They need your résumé at some point, but they don't need it right from square one. It could be step two.

David Weisenfeld: Now when you say they don't need your résumé, is that because the person can enter in some basic information about just where they are working and their educational background so that the résumé can be something that comes in later? [0:04:12:4]

Steven Rothberg: Absolutely, so if you talk to a recruiter from just about any sized company, hundreds of employees, thousands, tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands. He will typically admit that when they receive all of these résumés - and a lot of these employers get tens or hundreds of thousands of résumés a year - they're not actually looking at your pdf document to decide whether or not to furtherinvestigate. They're not reading your word document and seeing that your boss, Mr Smith, thought that you were a very good worker.

What they're doing is key word searching. So just like if you go to Google and you type in key words to try to find information, they do the same on their end. So they'll have a bucket of jobs, sales positions, and they might have one recruiter working on 12 of those jobs at a time. And she'll go into the ats, the applicant tracking system, and type in key words.

And if your résumé's one of the ones that comes up, then she'll click and find out more. At that point in time in the process, she could really gather pretty minimal information from you that you can easily fill in from your form. Your name, your email address, they could ask for a

zip code or postal code and then that could tell them geographically where you are located.

If it's a sales position, they could ask things like, 'How many years of experience do you have in sales?' You know, 0-to-1, 2-to-5, 6- to-10, whatever? That should allow that recruiter to see at a very high level is David of any interest to me or not?

And if he is, all she would have to do is basically check a box, their system would automatically send you an email, and it would say, 'Tiffany, the recruiter for the sales position is interested in exploring this opportunity with you further, please reply back with your résumé.' And that résumé would then go into their applicant tracking system, which the government wants to see for compliance reasons, and Tiffany would get it and then she and you can go back and forth by email, have a skype interview, whatever.

David Weisenfeld: Steven, you of course work with a lot of millennials with your company. Is the ability to apply for a job via mobile a big issue for them? [0:06:24:2]

Steven Rothberg: Very much so. Until a few years ago, what we saw as the typical behavior from a millennial was that they would check email once a day for 30 minutes. They would get home to their dorm, or their apartment or whatever, and they'd go through all of their emails in one batch.

Now, because virtually all of them have smart phones, there is Wi-Fi across virtually all campuses, it's good, it's reliable, it's fast, their preferred device today is very much a smartphone. And so now they're checking email 30 times a day, for a minute at a time, instead of once a day for 30 minutes,

What it means is that their device, their go-to device for almost everything is their smartphone. And if employers basically say, 'Hey, I get that your preferred device is a smartphone, but we're really locked into this 1952 mentality, and if you want to work at our antiquated facility, then you have to go over to your laptop or desktop to apply.' It sends a really bad message to millennials, that the employer has chosen to be very inflexible and very old fashioned right from the get go.

David Weisenfeld: Now if I'm applying to be the CEO of *NBC News* or *Coca-Cola*, it's probably safe to say that I'm not doing that on my iPhone. So, is this something that matters a lot for middle or upper-level employees, or is it more critical really with lower-level positions? [0:07:55:2]

Steven Rothberg: Yes, those jobs are very different. So jobs where middle, especially upper management, executive, officer-level positions, like a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Vice President of Sales etc. Those sorts of positions are rarely held by millennials, and when I'm talking millennials in this conversation, I'm not so much talking the oldest ones which are in their 30s because you could definitely have a 34-year-old CFO. I'm more talking the sort of 18 to 26-year-old, sort of stereotypically student recent grad. It would be incredibly rare for one of those to hold a high-level position.

Those positions tend to be filled through networking. You know somebody at the company, you know a third party recruiter. A lot of people call them headhunters, or you may be working with someone, and that person is retained or hired by the company to find their next CFO.

Those candidates from a formality standpoint, they often will apply to the job online because it helps the company prove that they aren't discriminating in their hiring practices. But that first step, that initial contact with the recruiter, is not going to be through the applicant tracking system, at least not for a successful candidate. It's usually going to be through a friend, or a business associate or a recruiter.

So, for those candidates making the process mobile friendly, I don't think is all that important.

David Weisenfeld:

In terms of making a process more mobile friendly, let's talk about some steps that an employer can take to ensure it does mobile recruiting the right way. What are some tips that you might be able to share? [0:09:40:7]

Steven Rothberg:

There are a number of organizations out there. What they essentially do is that they take that applicant tracking system, that database kind of program that the employer uses. From a candidate perspective it's usually a form. You go to a big employer website, you click 'careers' or 'jobs' and then you go over to a site, you search for the job, you click on it, you then apply, and then all of a sudden you see this form. The first name, last name, address, all this kind of stuff upload a résumé. Sometimes it's one page, sometimes it's multiple pages.

Some employers are doing it themselves, but most of them will outsource it. If they put what they call a skin over that, they create a more candidate friendly experience and the very first screen that that candidate sees once she's decided, 'Yes, this is the sales engineer position in Knoxville Tennessee that I want,' is that, it will ask for her email address. So, she'll enter her email address, that starts the application process.

Then she clicks usually submit, goes to the next page, and that's where she will be asked for some very basic information. And then she'll click submit and go to the next page, and that's probably where she's going to be entering more detailed information, uploading the résumé.

The nice thing about that approach is that if the only thing that she does is enter her email address, the employer knows that she is interested in that specific job, job title, the location, when she expressed interest and what her email address is.

So, if she does not complete the application, their automated system can tick an email back to her and say, 'Hey Tiffany, we didn't receive your completed application. Here's a link to go back and complete the application.' If it's really well set-up, that email to Tiffany, to the candidate, looks like it's coming from the recruiter. And so Tiffany can reply back and say, 'Hey, the reason I didn't finish applying to the job is because it doesn't say anything about compensation. Can you tell me what you pay?'

And then the recruiter can have a dialogue, if Tiffany's interested then she can complete the application.

David Weisenfeld: Steven are there examples that you can give of some companies that are really making the most of mobile recruiting? [0:11:55:06]

Steven Rothberg: The ones that are the best at it are the gig economy employers. If they're willing to take a clean slate look at this, and not be holding onto their old process simply because it used to work, if they really want to start kind of from square one, have a look at what Uber does, have a look what Lyft does.

Uber, for example, their contractors, the driver's contractors, they do require them to upload a lot of documents. You have to upload photos of your car. You have to upload photos of your driver's license and all that. That's similar or akin to a résumé. But they don't require you to do that at the very first step. You go to Uber's website and you basically say, 'Hey, I want to drive for you.' And they're just going to ask you, first name, last name, I think it's your zip code and email address, and that gets you started.

Then they're going to automatically start emailing you back, 'We need this piece of information, this is how you get it to us. We need this piece of information, this is how you get it to us.' There's absolutely no reason why mid-sized and large, very large companies can't do exactly the same thing.

But when you talk to a recruiter or a talent acquisition leader at a lot of these companies, they will say to you, correctly so, 'We can't hire someone without a résumé.' The response back is that you don't have to have a résumé from the first step. You can automate that process. And you can get someone in so they can start it on their mobile and then you email them later, and that reminds them to complete the application when they're on their laptop or desktop.

David Weisenfeld: Again our guest is Steven Rothberg, the president and founder of College Recruiter. Steven, from your work with millennials are there any other issues that are really resonating with them that can help HR folks in their recruiting efforts? [0:13:48:7]

Steven Rothberg: I often will hear both from the candidates, typically millennials who are now starting to see some of Gen Z come into college, they're the next year's freshman, they are now 17, 18. They are very understandably so, very concerned about compensation. The minimum wage in most areas of the country is about half of what it was in real terms in 1972, and the cost of college is 30, 40, 50 times what it was in 1972.

So, a lot of employers that are paying minimum wage are very frustrated that they can't hire the people that they need to hire. I think that they need to have a better understanding about what the costs to these people are for what they need to live. So, to be paying them a living wage, to pay them a better hourly or salary kind of compensation is something that employers really need to start doing a better job with.

Some are, many are not. The ones that are paying more are finding no shortage of talent. So when I hear employers saying, 'We can't find

anyone There aren't any good people out there This generation is lazy.' If you just ask a couple of questions, it's usually very obvious that what these employers are paying is effectively half of what they were paying in 1972 to a group of people who have far greater expenses than graduates did in 1972.

David Weisenfeld: And I take it considering other benefits, even some that might be non-monetary, is very important as well because having a work life balance and things like that can resonate. [0:15:28:4]

Steven Rothberg: Absolutely, when speaking of mobile usage, I was in a conversation yesterday on Facebook, and one of my friends, a talent acquisition leader at a pretty big company, basically posed this question like, 'Who works for a company that still blocks usage of Facebook, Twitter, other social media sites?' There were probably like 30 responses, probably half of them said that their employer still blocked the use of social media sites.

My response to that was, 'Okay, do those employers also block or prohibit employees from doing work during no-work hours? If so, fair enough. Right? So if you're at work you only work, if you're at home you do not work.' I think when confronted with it in that context very few employers, HR people would say, 'It's fair for us to ask the employee to be working at 10pm at night, but it's not fair for the employee to jump onto Facebook at 10am during the day.' It's got to be what's good for the goose is good for the gander.

David Weisenfeld: Good point. Well, we've only got a minute or so left, but is there a final takeaway that you'd like to leave with our audience about these issues? [0:16:49:2]

Steven Rothberg: If you're in HR, if you're the owner of a small business, if you're advising them, pull out your phone and try to apply to one of the jobs. And I think when you understand firsthand what a gruesome experience that is, you will be a very powerful advocate for bringing that employer into the next century.

David Weisenfeld: Well we'll let that be the last word. Steven Rothberg is president and founder of College Recruiter. If you would like to hear more from him and other experts, please read Xpert HR's recent white paper, *Winning the Talent Acquisition War in 2017*. Steven, thanks so much for your insights.

Steven Rothberg: It's been my pleasure, thank you.

David Weisenfeld: I'm David Weisenfeld. We hope you've enjoyed this podcast. Thanks for listening. Continue checking our website regularly for more podcasts on key workplace related topics including, *Why Background Checks Pose a Catch 22 for Employers*, and a look at the dramatic changes with Puerto Rico employment law.

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