inside NAPS

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NAPS
10905 Fort Washington Road • Suite 400
Fort Washington, MD 20744
T 301.203.6700
F 301.203.4346
E membership@recruitinglife.com
W www.recruitinglife.com

No Nonsense Software for Today's Recruiter

(…and guess what? It's not just for the Recruiter anymore!)

By John Sacerdote

Recruiters are an amazing bunch to me. After "hanging around" with recruiters since 1977 (I was one for 3 years!), I have found that there is really no profession quite like this profession. You need to be aggressive, yet understanding. You have to want – and get – everything now and you have little patience for anything else. But, in turn, you live (and thrive) in a "what have you done for me lately" world.

So what's all this nonsense about computers? Isn't it just another tool for you to get your work done quicker, better, cheaper? Actually, that's all it is. But, to be a bit more specific, it's the software. That software may not even reside in your building anymore, not to mention minor details such as your data. Does that matter anymore? Not really. In fact, the chances are high that the company hosting your data actually takes better care of it than you do. They will make regular and frequent backups, make sure the server is always running, probably have tighter security/firewalls, etc.

It does not matter where your data and software resides, it matters how well you use it and how many capabilities this software has versus what you need to get your job done.

Picture this: It's 8:30 am, you walk in your office and notice two of your recruiters are already at their desks with their headphones on, busily "hammering" away on their keyboards (actually, they resemble telephone operators or airlines reservation staff, but, who cares, they just need their hands free to enter and retrieve data at their PCs). You sit down at your desk (you're a working owner). The first task of the day is always the same – turn on your PC and log in; let the system know you're there. "Good morning," you're told. "You have mail!" Various items include email from your staff recruiters at this office, your branch offices, your affiliates across the United States, and emails from client companies and candidates. Even your web site has let you know that there are new resumes waiting and some of them are matching your posted jobs!

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You glance through your mail marking those that are completed and those needing later attention. It's prime calling time – you need to check your daily planner …now! A couple of mouse clicks and – zap – a listing of what's happening today….

You're off and running – dialing for dollars – your plan was set from the night before as well as from the normal course of doing your business each day. This is the new millennium. You cannot afford to waste a single minute of the day Gone are the days of looking through hundreds of folders (the best and most recent of which were scattered on different recruiter's desks). Gone are the days of making that 5 minute, round trip to the fax machine and sending it over to your hiring official.

Computers and recruiters are a natural. The employment industry lends itself well to automation. Software as a recruiting tool has been around now for over 25 years. Most people (software vendors) have gotten the basics down, such as record storage, search capabilities, storing resumes, and tracking activity. However, there are some specifics – some areas of "concentration" – where automation will truly make a difference – giving you that competitive edge.

1. Basic design concepts

A "person" file is all you need. Gone are the days of a "Client Contact" file and a "Candidate" file. There is only the need for a person file. The system should have the capability to then "classify" people into what they are – a hiring official, a candidate, a lead, a source or whatever. This way you only have one place to look (especially when they call you on the phone and you can't remember who they are!). Yes, you still need a company file and job order files. Most important is that they all "link" accordingly. But, these days, this is considered "it goes without saying" that your system should be configured that way. If it's not, you're being slowed down.

Also with regard to basic design, the MAJOR part of any system is how well you can track the hiring process. That mean you better have an activity file of some type. And, it better be "relational" to everything. "Relational" is certainly a technical term, but to us it means "no menus please, I know what I want." A recruiter does not need to be slowed down by a selection of choices to pick from when all they need to know is where a candidate has interviewed or how many job orders has this contact given me in the past 3 months. This must be only a click away. Anything more is a waste of time. And, I must be able to perform this task from any direction. That is, if I'm looking at a piece of activity such as a send-out, I may need to see the candidate record of the person on that send-out or the job order involved and/or some info on the client contact or the company itself, and all with just 1 click! Further, while looking at the candidate record that is linked to the activity, it may remind me to see where else that person has activity, and on and on. The point is that I will need to navigate from one point to another, endlessly if necessary. As long as they are "related," I should be able to do it easily.

2. No administrative tasks (aka: Automated Office Support)

This will never approach zero, but the closer you can get to it, the better. Huge examples here are the ability to receive resumes electronically and get them into the system with little to no manual intervention. "Parsing of resumes" is the tech talk on the subject. While no system is perfect, the more a system can "pre-enter" data from the resume, the better off you will be. However, there must always be manual checks and balances. Verify contact information, especially the e-mail address.

WARNING/DANGER! There is something that happens here that is usually the downfall to every recruiter who really doesn't understand that this is "just another tool" to assist you. Stay away from systems that grab all the buzz words in the resumes and "store" them in your skills section of the record.

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If a system allows the searching of key words in the resume (I know of very few systems that do NOT do this) in a timely manner (aka: instantaneously), then why do you also need it in the skills area. Here's the problem: The candidate's resume is the vehicle that allows them to tell you their skills. What you need though, is an area for you – only for you – that tells you how you can make a buck off of this person. Don't kid yourself. That's what we do as recruiters: find people jobs and get paid for it. Let the resume tell me what the candidate thinks of him/herself. Let the "skills section" of my database tell me how I can place this person. That's one of the biggest secrets of an effective use of ANY software package.

Other admin duties to be eliminated are the manual entry of a daily planner. I want my daily transactions that need to be followed up on, to "become" items in my daily planner. For those tasks that require new development or marketing or recruiting, I just want to point to the names or companies that I need and have them "appear" in my planner. Further, I want items in my planner that are unfinished or need follow up, to appear in my planner, again, but at a later date.

A library of e-mails and letters are needed so that I can just point to the template that I need and not re-type or re-write every e-mail or letter sent. It would be great for me to be able to quickly put together newsletters, candidate marketing tools and e-mail blasts without much effort as well.

I need all my job orders to be posted to my web site automatically and even other job boards outside of my site that are free and/or paid. The system can tell me how much it will be and keep track of all transactions. Further, I want some type of warning system or "auto-matching" capability that constantly compares jobs to candidates and vise versa. You see the pattern, all administrative tasks should be taken care of as much as possible.

3. Automated Desk Management.

The major part of any system is its ability to automate desk management, or to track activity. Activity is defined as any interaction between a client contact and/or candidate, whether there is a job order on file or not. Ask yourself one question: In the end, what is it that I want this software to do for me? The answer is easy. We want this software to organize our lives to the point that we have more phone time. After all, no matter what tools we have – it is our ability as recruiters to put candidates in front of hiring officials. The activity that is entered "on-the-fly" or in "real-time" is the basis of activity which in turn is the basis of our activity/follow-up/daily planner. Good software will organize all activity as they are logged by type, follow up, follow-up by whom, priority and even which time of the day follow up should occur.

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NAPS Bulletin Board

Are You A Member?

Are you reading this newsletter and not a member of the NAPS, but thinking about getting certified? Join as an individual member first, then sign up for the exam and save up just about enough money to pay for your first year's membership!

Visit our website at www.recruitinglife.com/MemberServices/Individual.cfm

Easy Eyeglass Protection…

To prevent the screws in eyeglasses from loosening, apply a small drop of Maybelline™ Crystal Clear nail polish to the threads of the screws before tightening them.

Sore Throat?

Just mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey and take 1 tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar kills the bacteria.

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The ability to "present" these transactions to the recruiter, owner or manager in the appropriate manner (for each person) is the making of a great system.

4. Automated Office Management

There's a theme that is beginning to develop here: in order to stay competitive, your agency will have to produce more effectively/efficiently than the next guy. Automated office management will allow an owner/manager to react to trends as they develop ("Bill, you're 10 market calls off of your goal in the first 2 days of this week…you still have 3 days to get back on target by Friday of this week") as opposed to ("Bill, your numbers were down last month!"). And in the event that a recruiter leaves, a great software package will make it much easier to "plug-in" a new or alternate recruiter, keeping start-up or down time to a minimum.

Reporting tools will be generated from activity. This business is a numbers game. It has always been a numbers game. If a recruiter comes to you and says they want to take home an additional $25,000.00 next year, you can tell them, to the day, what they need to do. How? The answers are in those transactions that they have entered…their activity. Specifically, the answers are in the totals of each activity type and the ratios of one type of activity to the other.

Ratios such as resumes sent/e-mailed to send-outs (1^{st} interviews) and interviews to offers and offers to placements. You can coach a recruiter in all these aspects of the hiring cycle, measuring performance along the way, insuring their success.

5. Web Integration

The new kid on the block to be sure! What goes hand-in-hand with a great software package is its ability to integrate to your web site. There are actually a couple of terms for this already. One that comes to mind is "bi-directional" software. Software that allows interaction from candidates and/or hiring officials is said to be "bi-directional." In these days of "retention" and "competitive edge," a great system will allow a candidate to check his/her own activity, leave a new resume, create a new candidate record or update their own contact information (back to that administrative item). A client company can leave a job order and even do a preliminary search for potential candidates. Or, a hiring official can check feedback and "next-step" items for a particular candidate or other hiring officials under his/her leadership. The portal or the mechanism that allows that to happen is your web site.

In closing, the no-nonsense software for today will organize your life and the lives of all your recruiters. It will not, however, make placements for you. This no-nonsense software list will point you in the right direction; assist you in the areas of research and tracking of activity, become your assistant allowing you to "close more deals" on the phone.

So, it's 6:00 pm – you're ready to go home. Before you leave, you request a report of activity for the entire office for today. Production is on target, calls have been made, goals have been met – wonderful! It's time to log off. The software stops you and asks, "Do you want a list of tonight's calls?" You respond with a verbal "Yes!" …what else?

The Scoop About Snow Shoveling

While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. The National Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

- Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful.
- If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace yourself.
- Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety.
- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.
- Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth or one-half of a large one.
- Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- Dress warmly. Remember that extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.

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"Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them-a desire, a dream, a vision. They have to have last-minute stamina, they have to be a little faster, they have to have the skill and the will. But the will must be stronger than the skill."

— Muhammad Ali —

Recruiting Life