



Employers Actively Seeking “Passive” Candidates to Fill IT Jobs

Many of the best IT job candidates aren't in the hiring pool. They are happily employed. But with demand high, more employers and recruiters are actively seeking these so-called “passive” candidates. Here are four ways to locate, entice and land the best and the brightest.

As technology workers continue their evolution from low-profile worker bees to irreplaceable assets, hiring top candidates has become harder. As a result, more companies are targeting passive candidates - those who are happily employed elsewhere but could be persuaded to switch for the right opportunity. The challenge is finding them. Since they are “passive,” or not actively looking, their resumes aren't in circulation and they aren't immediately visible.

What's needed to locate, entice and land these elusive gems is a mix of tested and emerging strategies. Take heart: The IT person you need is just waiting to be found, even if he or she doesn't know it yet.

Internet a Hotbed of Untapped Talent

The Internet is a second home for many IT people. They are on professional networking sites, such as LinkedIn, and social networking sites. These sites provide a great opportunity for initiating contact, seeking referrals or delving into professional qualifications.

There are also numerous online industry blogs, discussion boards, trade publications and organizations. Consider commenting on or starting a blog or Twitter feed. Being part of the action is a strategy that works.

Personal Networking Still an Unmatched Tool

Whether it's connecting with current and former colleagues, alumni, friends or neighbors, networking is powerful. It can be as simple (and focused) as asking professional contacts to name the three or four smartest people they've worked with during their career.

Seminars, conferences and meetings are also great places to make connections. Professionals who take the time to educate themselves about developments in the field are the kind of self-motivated, forward-thinking workers businesses crave.

Getting Close to Candidates: What Have I Done for You Lately?

Successful recruiters are equal parts career coach and sympathetic friend. They focus on the candidate - what does he need, what does she want, what's lacking in the current job?

Many people, once they've settled into a job, lose track of what's going on in the market. Providing them with substantive information on pay, trends and opportunities is a great service - and one that is sure to be appreciated.

Expand the Job, Widen Your Net

People working in similar jobs are just the beginning. Outside that sphere are teachers, vendors, consultants, even non-tech businesspeople with an interest in and knack for IT. As more companies seek IT pros with management and operations skills, it makes sense to look beyond purely technical expertise. A top candidate may have specific knowledge, such as network security or finance, or skills such as project management.

Recruiting passive candidates will become even more critical as the IT job market tightens further. For candidates, the hope is that they will be pleasantly surprised to find that good things happen – even when you're not looking for them.

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