

How to select an HR recruitment software vendor and system

Searching for, and then implementing, new HR e-recruitment software can be a daunting task. With a plethora of local and international solutions available, how do you decide which solution would be best for you and your company?

As with any new project, best practice would dictate that you clearly define the problem areas, as this will help you pinpoint what is required in a replacement/new product. Skipping this vital process means you run the risk of settling for a mediocre solution that is likely to increase spend longer term, not solve the real issues, nor provide a good ROI. The following are guidelines that will help you determine how you should approach this process, says Rhett Davies, business partner, Corporate Recruitment Solutions, at MCI Consultants.

Clearly outline your desired e-recruitment outcomes

These could include workflow automation; decreasing time to hire; measurable cost savings; a high ROI; candidate attraction methods; leveraging or building an employer brand; obtaining useful business intelligence; centralised recruitment information management; overall process optimisation; and added value services.

Identify a vendor that has the best fit when considering:

*** Deployment client-server vs cloud/Web-based**

The first is procured via a software licence and annual maintenance fees, and needs to be implemented and maintained on your own server hardware, thus increasing the initial and total cost of ownership. The latter is paid for by a monthly subscription fee; the vendor undertakes the hosting and maintains the system on their servers in a data centre. The software itself will then be delivered over the Web using a browser and has the advantage of accommodating any changes to the system very quickly.

*** Support**

Ongoing short-term and long-term system support capability is vital when considering a vendor. Make sure you clearly define and understand the vendors' service level agreement when it comes to support and beware of vendors or online sites offering free solutions. Many instances have shown that companies offering these types of services struggle to support clients long term.

*** Flexibility and innovation capabilities**

Recruitment is a dynamic industry with new technology and methods of recruitment changing frequently. Also, no two companies are the same and each organisation will often have specific requirements that will need to be met. It is imperative that the selected software system and vendor will have the ability and flexibility to work within your processes and workflow relatively quickly and easily.

*** Market expertise**

It's best to go with a vendor that has been involved in the recruitment software industry for a long period of time. Not only does this give you an indication of long-term stability, but it will also lend an indication as to the level of expertise the vendor will have when it comes to corporate recruitment processes and their solutions.

*** Pricing**

Though this should not be the sole deciding factor, it is a very important part of deciding on a vendor. It is always best to compare the total cost of ownership vs return on investment. Cheaper solutions may come across as being more attractive as it may not impact your budget in the short term. However, in most cases, a recruitment software product on the higher-end of the pricing scale tends to give a higher return on investment and greater costs savings, thus actually paying for itself in the medium to long term.

Functionality

When reviewing new recruiting software to solve business problems and improve HR operations, it's easy to get caught up in comparing features, benefits, bells and whistles. However, all solid and worthwhile solutions should have:

*** Workflow automation and tracking**

Possibly one of the most important features when looking at a vendor's solution, as this will be one of the main ways to reduce the pain points you have identified in your processes. Effective recruiting software should reduce your manual processes and admin and manage the entire recruitment life cycle from start to finish. It should also automatically keep track of activities run through the system as they happen.

*** Online candidate sourcing**

Another vital aspect is the type of methods the vendor's software uses to source applicants. Does the software allow for a link between the system and a careers page, job board and social networks? Does the application make allowance for building a searchable talent pool?

*** Automated candidate screening**

It is not enough to merely source and funnel candidates into your system; you will want to ensure that candidates who come go through your application process meet the minimum criteria for both the company and particular position. Be sure to enquire as to how the vendor makes provision for screening applications, while still making it easy for applicants to apply.

*** Automated response**

One of the biggest complaints job seekers have, is that there is little to no communication from a company after they send their CVs through for a position. This does not do much for a company's employer brand and occurs due to there normally being a high influx of candidates for advertised positions. Be sure to enquire about the software's ability to automatically communicate with candidates.

*** Applicant tracking and CRM**

Find out about the methods used to track candidate applications across single or multiple

vacancies. Also find out what level of applicant activity tracking is available; this could include; interview tracking, reference tracking, credential verification tracking and referral tracking.

*** Searching**

If the recruitment software package allows for a candidate database to be built from all applications received, review the methods they incorporate to search the database.

*** System self-administration**

While your vendor should provide support for all aspects of its product, it is extremely useful if the software allows a user to administer and change aspects of the system themselves.

*** Recruitment agency management**

While one of the main aims of using in-house recruitment software will be to reduce the dependency on third-party suppliers, such as agencies, there should still be provision in the application to manage recruitment agency suppliers.

*** Reporting and business intelligence tools**

There is no point in streamlining and automating recruitment activity if one cannot obtain measurable data to monitor progress. Make sure the recruitment systems you consider allow for vacancy reporting, source success analyses reporting, turnaround time reporting and application reporting, to name but a few.

Implementation approach

Successful deployment and implementation is as vital as the effectiveness and functionality of the software itself. Should it be difficult to implement rapidly with the required objectives met, it is irrelevant how good the package is. Be sure to obtain a clear implementation plan from the vendors, while still in the investigation stage.

Finally, contact a vendor that is able to offer a wide variety of recruitment solutions across a range of different types of companies. One such vendor and system to consider in this regard is MCI's Direct Hire HR recruitment system, which is able to cater to all the aspects discussed here and more, since they have been doing this for more than 17 years.

To obtain more information about the Direct Hire system from MCI Consultants, visit www.mcidirecthire.com or e-mail directhire@mci.co.za.