

Search Industry Essentials – Tech, Social Media, and AI

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2020 changed the landscape to “Tele-Everything.” It was a challenging year for most employers and their employees as the Covid-19 pandemic caused global economic disruption and left most countries in some form of lockdown. Despite adversities, many companies responded with innovation and creativity, shifting rapidly to online channels. A McKinsey study conducted in October 2020 discovered that “companies digitized many activities 20 to 25 times faster than previously thought possible.”

A recent survey of experts in technology, communications, and social change conducted by Pew Research Center and Elon University’s Imagining the Internet Center finds that life post-

pandemic and through 2025 will include a deeper reliance on “tele-everything”- technology for work, education, health, retail, and social interactions. And, the March 2021 McKinsey Global Survey finds “executives see positive momentum building in the economy” with “greater optimism than respondents have expressed since the crisis began.”

So, as safety measures, vaccines, and immunizations remove many restrictions, and experts predict the potential for employment growth, we may see more people re-entering the workforce in 2021/2022 than ever before. However, the workplace employees rejoin has been altered forever and along with it, the hiring process has also changed. According to IMSA Search Global Partners President Monika Ciesielska, “Much like we expect a hybrid workplace in the future, with some people onsite, and others on technology, we expect a hybrid recruiting process. Virtual combined with in-person will be the norm. Searches will utilize more online processes, saving both time and money.”

Social Media Recruiting is Here to Stay

Social Media Recruiting, the process of using social media to advertise, recruit, and acquire talent is now a standard part of many searches. Glassdoor asserts that 84% of employers use social media in their recruiting strategy with another 9% planning to do so in the near future.

LinkedIn, the most prevalent professional social media platform for executive search in the world boasts 740+ million members in 200+ countries, with 55 million companies using their page to build brand connections. LinkedIn asserts that 40 million people use it to search for jobs each week and 61 million users are important company decision makers. This month LinkedIn announced the addition of new profile features which will allow job seekers to share a video cover story which will “engage with audiences and reach recruiters.” This follows new features rolled out last year including colorful profile photo ‘frames’ – #Hiring for employers and #OpentoWork for employees.

Employers and Executive Search Consultants Rely on Social

Employers rely on social media to build their brands. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube are among the most important social networks for companies today. These channels help generate awareness, emit brand personality, demonstrate relevance and/or thought leadership, and allow companies to connect directly with customers. They also provide important competitive insights. Smart social media strategies, coupled with strong creative and messaging, helps companies stand out from their competition and among its many other benefits, helps them appeal to top executive talent.

Social media enables employers and search professionals to reach a broad swath of potential candidates across the globe quickly and efficiently. In a recent Harris Poll survey, 71% of hiring decision-makers agree social media is an effective screening tool. Importantly, especially for senior level searches, it helps identify and engage passive job seekers, often the most desirable candidates.

Using Social Media Tools, Search Professionals Are Even More Indispensable

Yet, relying too heavily on social at the expense of other components of the search process is risky. Some social profiles inflate experience, so online information should always be consistent with other components of candidate assessment. IMSA India Managing Partner Rajaram Agrawal shares, “Recently, we had a very senior candidate whose job portal resume was completely different than his LinkedIn profile, which was a red flag signaling significant issues and disqualifying the candidate from further consideration before reaching the short list for the client.”

Some online profiles present an incomplete picture of the candidate, because senior level executives are restricted in terms of what they can post on social, or they withhold information that they would prefer to share in a more confidential communication. The skilled Executive Search consultant will generate a more holistic picture of the candidate, bridging gaps in online profiles, as well as assessing personality, drive, and presence.

IMSA India’s Rajaram Agrawal confirms, “Social media offers a massive pool of prospective candidates which to an employer can become voluminous, time-consuming, and may actually lead to the wrong candidate if the diligence process is not thorough. Our clients rely on us to help.”

Artificial Intelligence is the Search Tool for Future Success

With big data sets, AI is already playing an increasingly important role in the search process. Jerry Chang, IMSA China Managing Partner and Head of AI & New Technologies says, “Our IMSA Barons.ai database is a pioneering artificial intelligence search automation platform with CVs of senior executives from all industries and countries, who are interested in high-level opportunities. IMSA Barons.ai identifies suitable candidates across multi-dimensions at incredible speed. We can now deliver a more diverse short list of top-tier candidates from around the world more quickly than ever before.”

IMSA Search President Monika Ciesielska adds, “Social media and new technologies make us better at what we do. Coupled with our expertise in understanding client needs, providing in-depth candidate assessments, and matching top talent to the right opportunities, we will continue to deliver the leaders for the global companies of tomorrow faster and better than ever.”

