

# Employers turn to social media to find talent

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In the job market? The skills you've honed around communications, leadership and people management may be just what an employer is looking for. But those recruiters may never see your résumé if you're not plugged into social media.

Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have established themselves as the center of modern-day communication, keeping people in touch with friends and colleagues. But they have also expanded into the human resources world, where employers are putting them to good use.

"Social media is an additional tool in our communications box," said Alex Brown, who for almost three years has been the social media and employment branding specialist for Houston-based recycler **Waste Management Inc.** "It's a huge part of what I do. It fosters communication with candidates, former employees and employers in the online space."

Being in that space is important recruitment for the company that has more than 1,200 locations across North America, including Atlanta, and employs more than 40,000.

Social media supplements traditional recruiting, Brown said. "While we don't aim to replace what we've done in the past, we do use social media to raise awareness of the company."

One of those awareness-raising tactics is

to post videos on YouTube that give prospective employees a sense of the Waste Management culture. "We use video to tell stories about employment opportunities in a way that communicates with the most people possible. It also is a way for candidates to picture themselves in a role at Waste Management."

While Brown relies on a mix of methods to attract employees, Alex Putman, the director of talent attraction and recruitment branding for Tucker-based **Case-Mate**, finds new hires exclusively on social network sites. When he took the position with the startup a year ago, he had the chance to design a recruitment system, and he chose to go exclusively with online platforms.

He estimates that almost 50 percent of Case-Mate's workforce has come through LinkedIn, and another 35 percent has been from employee referrals.

"It's all technology-driven, but the premise is to use referrals," he said. "I've got 175 people in the company, and when I post a

new job, those people automatically post it to their networks on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. We are also very video-driven: We wanted to showcase how laid back we are, and we can do that by posting videos on YouTube and Facebook."

The process far surpasses the traditional way of recruiting Putman has used for most of his 16 years in the industry.

"Back then, people mailed applications in



**Getting social:** Alex Putman finds new hires exclusively through social media.

and hoped someone got it," he said. "Now, I can cover a lot more ground and go through information much more quickly."

A recent Case-Mate posting for a customer service position netted 500 applications, but Putman narrowed the search through social media.

"I had three or four people who reached out through Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter," he said. "I gave them interviews and hired one of them. If I had had to go through all those applications, I may not have seen the person I hired."

Jim Link, a 25-year human resources veteran and managing director for **Randstad U.S.** for the past three years, agrees that social media's biggest impact

on hiring has been its immediacy.

"When I started my career, you developed a beautiful ad that showed up in the Sunday paper, then over the next several days, people responded, sent résumés through the U.S. post, and maybe two weeks later you had a candidate pool," Link said. "I can now have a list of applicants in 24 hours."

Randstad, a leader in recruiting and placing temporary and permanent employees for a range of businesses, focuses on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to find candidates.

"In the last two years, the numbers of people on LinkedIn have dramatically shifted to include all ages, professions and expertise levels," Link said. "It's now to the point that we find the bulk of our people by their LinkedIn profile. A company today that is not able to do a keyword search on LinkedIn is missing a significant portion of the candidates available."

Limiting a search to online-only candidates may make it harder to uncover top-level executives, Link added. "The higher level the search is, the harder you have to look to find people. At those levels, not everyone has a LinkedIn profile."

On the other side of cyberspace recruitment, job seekers who aren't actively plugged into those networks may be missing out.

"It's become very clear that if you don't have a presence — either as a candidate or a company — on a social site, you aren't covered," Link said. "It's the first and foremost tool to connect candidate with employers."



**Brown**  
Waste Management