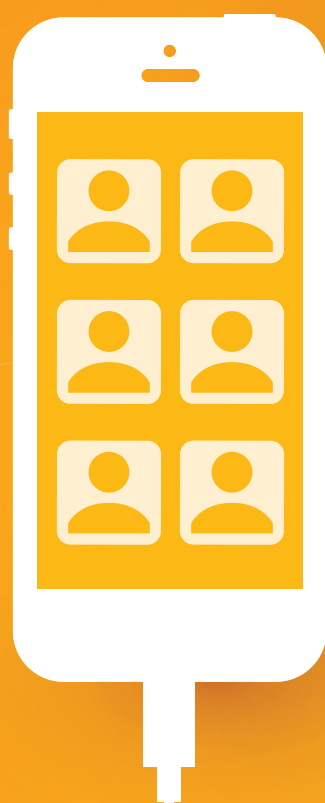


Thinking mobile



How recruiters can
stay connected with
candidates

By Rob Smith

When was the last time you looked at your smartphone or tablet? Five minutes? Ten? Perhaps you're looking right now.

According to research the average person checks their mobile device 221 times per day. Whether that seems excessive, about right or way off, there's no getting away from the fact that portable tech plays an important role in how we find information.

While news and social media take up most of our mobile browsing time, if you look for a new job while on the move you are not alone.

With app downloads around the 100 billion mark it is no surprise that the recruitment business feels the pressure to embrace mobile technology – but how can recruiters work this to their advantage, and is it worth the investment?

Andy Mountney, the Founding Partner of Aspen In-House, believes that we are at a stage where the question of whether or not mobile is needed has passed – the only issue is knowing how candidates want to use it.

“There's an expectation from candidates that they're going to be able to engage with you not just online but via mobile,” he says. “Depending on what stats you believe, it apparent that most candidates will make an initial view of an organisation on mobile even if that's not what they end up doing their application through.”

Managing this initial contact with candidates

is the first step for recruiters embracing the mobile age. While it might seem obvious, a great many organisations have not yet optimised their websites for phones. Companies might spend a fortune on employer brand and recruitment campaigns that are completely on message and the whole package is ruined when the best candidate looks on his or her iPhone and finds the website unusable.

It would be difficult to win these potential star recruits back and Chris Bogh, CTO of recruitment tech providers Eploy, believes that it is this impact on a company's image that makes this a vital part of recruitment.

“Brand consistency across devices is critical,” he says. “If I'm browsing the web researching a product and I go to a website that's not been designed very well for mobile, I'll probably go elsewhere and buy it from somewhere that delivers a more usable experience.”

“What a lot of corporate career sites have done is they've invested in a career site, and have then thought ‘we need to consider mobile candidates’ – so they bolt-on a few mobile pages that don't offer the full recruitment journey. They might advertise a few jobs but that's about it. The candidate can't apply, and if they can apply it's restricted in some way or the forms are difficult to use. Worse still, the candidate can't actually see how their application is progressing – it's not giving them the full experience.” >>



Bogh believes that with so many young professionals using mobile it is important to show that you are an up-to-date company that cares about the impression it makes. "You've got to create that great first impression - because if you're not up to scratch with your web technology then what will that make them think about the rest of your business and systems? Outdated and out of touch, possibly."

With candidate experience apparently at the heart of the matter what is it that makes a good piece of mobile recruitment technology?

For Bogh, the key is maintaining consistency of brand message across all platforms and is part of the wider web package. He therefore believes that it is vital that mobile sites offer all the features that the main, desktop-based, careers site contains – to allow browsers to dip in and out of the site at various times of their day without being shunted between various pages and ATSs.

"If you've got a full career site available on the desktop, it's likely to contain a wealth of content about what it's like to work for that company," he says. "It might have employee stories as well as the actual nitty-gritty of recruitment functionality, which allows you to seek and apply for jobs."

This is just as important to capture mobile users. It needs to give that full recruitment experience to a candidate, whether they're on a desktop, or on a mobile or increasingly likely – on both at different stages of the candidate journey. We're now seeing Eploy customers where over a quarter of all applications now originate on a mobile device. That's why we think 'mobile first' "

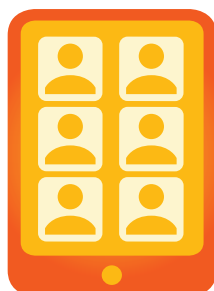
While the candidate experience has often been cited as reason to invest in new technology, there is the argument if it is too easy there could be some unwelcome consequences.

With your dream job now 'just one click away' the has been incidents of recruiters being swamped with candidates – many of whom are not qualified for the role but still have to be dealt with, ignoring them will not do

your employer brand any favours.

For Mountney this is a key point: "This is something I fundamentally agree with. The quality of the candidate can become a huge issue, I'd argue that on a similar set of adverts (or roles), when we looked at the engagement of those who just clicked on a one click apply, and hadn't necessarily even attached a CV, it was very poor or they often weren't qualified for the opportunity – they hadn't read the full advert and considered it." >>

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The situation was highlighted by Chris Hoyt from Pepsico, whom Mountney saw speak recently. He said that by making it much easier to apply they were creating a lot of people they had to reject for every role.

Mountney adds: "I'd like to see candidates thinking about applying for a role and having some kind of barrier to that to make them consider it. It's not about not wanting people to apply it's about considering genuinely whether that opportunity is right.

"You might want to use mobile for one click engagement maybe sending a message saying 'this interests me can we talk' but I think throwing them straight away into an ATS application is probably not the way to go."

Here Bogh feels that the right technology should prevent volume being an issue as there is an element of candidate quality management in the system – and getting people interested in your company means that you have a reservoir of talent that might be suitable for other roles within your organisation.

He says: "We often have this conversation. Clients might say they don't want to necessarily make things too easy – being worried that it will result in high numbers of unsuitable candidates. The benefits of making it easy to apply far outweigh the drawbacks, provided the technology helps screen out unqualified candidates quickly. They may not

be suitable for that particular role at that moment in time, but they could be perfect for another in the future. So, being able to build and nurture your talent pool is critical for long term value to be achieved from your E-recruitment strategy. Essentially, it's about having the right talent, in the right place at the right time."

This notion of using your mobile offering to engage candidates and ensure the right people apply is shared by Mark Stephens, Founder of Smart Recruit Online. These days people are never offline and this lack of downtime means that up-to-date and relevant mobile sites should facilitate casual browsing and encourage people to learn more when they are in front of their desktop.

"I do a lot of things on mobile," Stephens says. "But I don't always perform the final act on mobile. It's about using my time effectively – I'm taking out the time that I would have had to sit there at my PC by searching while I'm on the move. Otherwise sitting on the train it's just dead time."

While the challenge of presenting mobile recruitment platforms differs from that of online, recruiters should not be thinking of it as a completely different beast. The objectives of engagement and accessibility remain the same. While some candidates may wish to wait until they get home to apply others will be ready to do so on the move. If that person happens to be the best candidate, why would you risk missing out? 