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How Blogging Can Help You Get a New Job

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Corporate recruiters have long surfed the Web to vet potential hires, but now they are also surfing blogs to unearth job candidates, expanding their talent pool and gaining insights they say they can't get from résumés and interviews.

Ryan Loken, a **Wal-Mart Stores Inc.** recruitment manager, says he spends one to two hours a week searching through blogs for new talent or additional information about the candidates he has interviewed. "Blogs are a tool in the tool kit," he says. Since he joined the Bentonville, Ark., retail giant three years ago, Mr. Logen estimates that Web journals have helped him fill 125 corporate jobs. Most of the recruits were referred to him by bloggers and blog contributors, and some were the writers themselves.

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The blogosphere has become a virtual career center for job hunters seeking advice. See what job seekers can gain from [blogs about recruiting](#)¹.


In addition to blogs that focus on their industry or field of interest, recruiters say they check candidates' blogs about noncareer-related topics for evidence of writing skills and clues to how well rounded they are.

Most blog-related recruits are professionals in technology and media because jobs in these fields often require knowledge of the blogosphere, says Kirsten Dixson, a founding partner at Brandego LLC, a career-management firm in Exeter, N.H., that specializes in personal branding.

In June, Brian Balfour's blog, SocialDegree.com, inspired an unsolicited offer for a product-manager job from an executive at Zoom Information Inc. "I was impressed by the points Brian was making and the way he was making them," says Russell Glass, vice president of products and marketing at the Waltham, Mass., technology company. The blog also offered details about Mr. Balfour's work history and education. "It was a no-brainer to give him a call and see if he'd be interested," Mr. Glass says.

Mr. Balfour says he was intrigued when he heard about the opportunity. "It came at a time that was pretty right for me because I was just coming off selling a business and looking for where I would head next," he says. Three months later, Mr. Balfour, who is 24 years old, got the job.

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Greg Sterling, a strategy consultant for Internet companies and a blogger in Oakland, Calif., describes job offers as "a natural byproduct of the exposure you get from blogging." He says he gets about 15 inquiries a month from companies and search-firm recruiters seeking to fill consulting gigs and full-time jobs. "My blog is a vehicle that keeps me exposed to people on a daily basis," he notes.

Mr. Sterling believes that one reason his Web journal, Screenwork, regularly generates job offers is that he has never written about wanting them. "If you [blog] to get a job, you'll be less successful," he says. "It's just like dating. If you appear too hungry, nobody wants to date you."

But Ms. Dixon disagrees. "If you're currently job hunting, say so in your blog's 'About Me' blurb," she advises. "Say you're interested in learning about opportunities in your field."

Blogs also help employers probe the qualifications of potential hires, says Wal-Mart's Mr. Loken. "If they have a blog or made a comment on one, you can see what their knowledge level truly is because résumés can be full of fluff."

Job seekers who blog increase the odds that a potential employer will find information online that the candidate wants to be seen, says Debbie Weil, a corporate blogging consultant in Washington and the author of "The Corporate Blogging Book," which was published last summer. "Everybody has an online identity whether they know it or not, and a blog is the single best way to control it," she says. "You're going to be Googled. No one hires anyone or buys anything these days without going online first and doing research."

Indiscrete bloggers can derail job opportunities. A candidate for an entry-level sales job at Zoom was knocked out of the running in December after Mr. Glass read his blog. "My jaw dropped," he says. "The person started to make disparaging remarks about the people he interviewed with."

Mr. Glass was also put off by instances of foul language and comments about getting drunk. "This was a character problem," he says. "Whether you're writing about people you interviewed with or you're making a public statement that can be construed as immoral, these are the types of things an employer is going to look at and consider in their assessment of you as a candidate."

Mr. Glass adds that he doesn't read blogs on a regular basis. He came across the candidate's blog postings because the word "zoominfo" was flagged by a system he uses to alert him to any mentions of his employer's Web site.

Some job seekers call recruiters' attention to their blogs as a way to boost their candidacy. In an interview for a public-relations job in late 2004, Kevin Dugan says he told recruiters at Cincinnati-based FRCH Design Worldwide that he had been writing a blog for two years. "Blogging was a way for me to build credibility," he says. "It was a way to show my writing skills pretty easily as well as my knowledge of blogging and the public-relations industry." Mr. Dugan, 36, got the job and continues to write his blog, which he says generates about one job lead a month.

Companies that allow their employees to continue to blog run the risk of having a competitor poach their talent. Mr. Balfour, who continued to blog after he joined Zoom, says he has been invited on several job interviews because of his blog, though he turned down the opportunities that were offered.

"We wanted Brian to continue to blog because it's a great way to show leadership through zoominfo,"

says Mr. Glass. "But it's a double-edged sword since he continues to receive job offers."

Some companies encourage employees to blog because they can use them to recruit others. When recruiter Harry Joiner was hired to fill two positions at Musician's Friend Inc. in November, he used an employee's personal blog to help sell his client's rural location of Medford, Ore., to job seekers. "Candidates were using Medford as a reason not to consider the jobs," he says. "As a marketer, I thought, if you can't change it, promote it."

The blog, by So Young Park, the company's director of e-commerce marketing and customer-relationship management, describes her move to the area a year ago from New York City. It includes details about her work, her experience owning a car for the first time, a bear sighting near her new home and related topics. While she started the blog to share information about her experiences with family and friends back East, she acknowledges that it has also been a good resource for attracting job hunters.

Mr. Joiner says he linked to the blog in ads he posted on job boards and in emails to potential candidates. He says it helped him get professionals to leave jobs in Los Angeles. "The blog made a ton of difference," he says. "It humanized [Ms. Park] to candidates and made the jobs more attractive."

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