CAREERS

Recruitment firms rise to online job site challenges

Paul Findlay and John Belchamber of PD Training and Alan Chambers of ArcTree Business Consulting.

- The Australian
- 12:00AM August 27, 2016
- VERITY EDWARDS

Reporter
Adelaide
@VerityEdwardsau

Alan Chambers is trying his best to "poke a stick in the wheel" of traditional recruiting, knowing that online job sites are disrupting the way people find jobs.

Chambers, the founding director of ArcTree Business Consulting, started his firm in 2010 but knew early on he had to diversify as internet job search sites began to push into the market.

He looked at what his company offered and realised it needed to add value by offering training to the companies he was working with, and psychometric testing to help

organisations determine the type of staff they needed, how they would fit into the business and where their own strengths might lie.

"We can run the psychometric testing and we can go back and say, 'Here's your team, we can see the strengths and weaknesses and identify the gaps,' " Chambers says.

"We'll see that some staff members need training in this area, and some need training in that area. We analyse the weaknesses and gaps, and where best to spend their money."

Chambers says the testing identifies exactly what type of person will fit into a team, then works with the company to recruit the best person. ArcTree will generally work with that person to ensure they have the right skills and training for the role and ensure the company has human resources support if needed.

Some companies may want only psychometric testing, others only recruitment, but Chambers says ArcTree can work through the entire life cycle of a worker in the recruitment process, including exit interviews for departing staff.

"I looked back in 2010 and thought these (other) people spent a lot of money on recruitment and their success rate of retaining them was just 34 per cent," he says.

"If they recruited via LinkedIn or Seek they're still only seeing 10 per cent of the person. A lot of people are recruiting mini-mes via social media, but for us it's totally independent — the psychometric testing will tell us who the best person is."

Chambers says traditional recruitment, where jobs are almost brokered, has little accountability, and if a hire falls through a company must go through the process again.

That often means the company hires someone who has the right qualifications and years of experience, but they may lack emotional intelligence or cognitive ability, which may not be evident in a standard interview.

His system of providing training and analysing staff within the entire business can help ensure those people turnover less frequently because they should be the ideal fit for the role.

He says traditional or "one-dimensional" recruitment will not go away but it will not offer value as companies adapt their services to ensure they provide more for candidates than just a job.

PD Training managing director Paul Findlay has been working with Chambers to provide training solutions to the companies he recruits for.

Findlay also set up his business in 2010 and has grown to offer leadership, personal profile training and customised courses, e-learning and micro training to companies in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore and the US.

By working in partnership with a recruitment firm, they can both add value to their clients.

"The market's very competitive and it's becoming increasingly difficult for them to differentiate themselves," Findlay says.

"It's difficult to maintain relationships and grow businesses in recruitment because it's a race to the bottom in terms of personal interaction. By partnering with us they differentiate their

recruitment process and can offer training through 500 different courses. They can scale their offerings through leveraging off us."

PD Training provides courses to multinationals including Toyota, Cisco, Samsung, Microsoft and eBay, from micro-learning on mobile devices to industry training and development.

"We've got all manner of ways that companies are trying to add value because all industries are becoming more competitive," he says.

"LinkedIn and other online services are trouble for the recruitment industry and if they want to continue to be viable they're going to have to add value beyond reading resumes. ArcTree is adding their strategy and analysis of the big picture and that's where the economy is going, it's going to be automated or outsourced."

However, Robert Half Asia Pacific senior managing director David Jones says the larger bricks-and-mortar recruitment firms are not feeling the pressure to diversify because they offer a high-value service and embrace digital platforms as another channel to find and service clients.

"We're embracing technology massively through hardware, software and digitally," Jones says.

"We have 12,000 employees worldwide and every single one of them is mobile, every single one of them has a tablet, every single one can Skype candidates from their desk or their tablet."

He says there is movement towards the middle ground though, with bricks-and-mortar companies using online services including LinkedIn, Freelancer and oDesk to offer more to clients.

"When we look at the channels the most effective remains our website, and that's candidates relative to jobs. The least effective is posting jobs to jobs boards," he says.

Jones says while smaller companies may need to offer additional services such as training, the larger companies will not need to diversify because they have a wide base of clients and experienced recruiters building strong relationships with companies.

"When I started 20 years ago there was no email. I saw the fax come in and we placed an ad and waited for the candidates to come," he says.

"These days it's far more immediate and there's intimately more noise than there was in the past. If you're recruiting you need that great ability to add value and opinions, both positive and negative."