



The six key marketing challenges facing recruitment firms today



September job opportunities across the UK were up by 16% year-on-year according to research statistics from Reed, and while the British economy emerges cautiously from a challenging environment, it is once again time for recruitment firms to look ahead and invest in their future rather than simply looking to stay afloat.

This period of upheaval has been especially challenging for recruitment, with corporate budgets for new talent slashed. However for executive search firms across the country, there is a real opportunity to prepare for the upturn and adopt a digital marketing strategy, showcase innovative approaches and look for a head start over the competition.

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But, while the time may be right for these businesses to look to grow, the question remains: Are you set up to do all you can to market your company during the economic upturn?

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These are key challenges we know exist from our detailed work in the industry and the recommendations are the strategies that suppliers are using today to generate significant leads and business. So read on to find out the key strategies that will grow your business:

1. Finding new business in a competitive market

It's likely that you'll have a core base of clients, but to grow your business this isn't enough, so how do you reach out to more?

Word of mouth referral is powerful, but it will never bring in the level of business you need, so growing your profile across the industry is key.

You can do this by identifying the key challenges that your clients and potential clients are facing. Then you can effectively market to them with the solution to those very specific barriers.

This is marketing that allows you to stand out from the competition because it shows you have a deep level understanding of the real issues impacting on your clients. It's vital therefore to think about what you've done in the past to connect with new clients, and then apply the approach that we lay out in this document.



2. Getting to grips with social media – does it hold the key?

LinkedIn, Blogging, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter... they all roll off the tongue these days, but how can they actually help a company drive new business and connect with high quality candidates and HR departments of large organisations?

Social media has created a new channel of communication into existing and potential clients, and the levels of activity and engagement on social media means that anyone not engaging with it is effectively getting left behind. Facebook now has well over 500 million registered users worldwide and YouTube is the second largest search engine after Google.

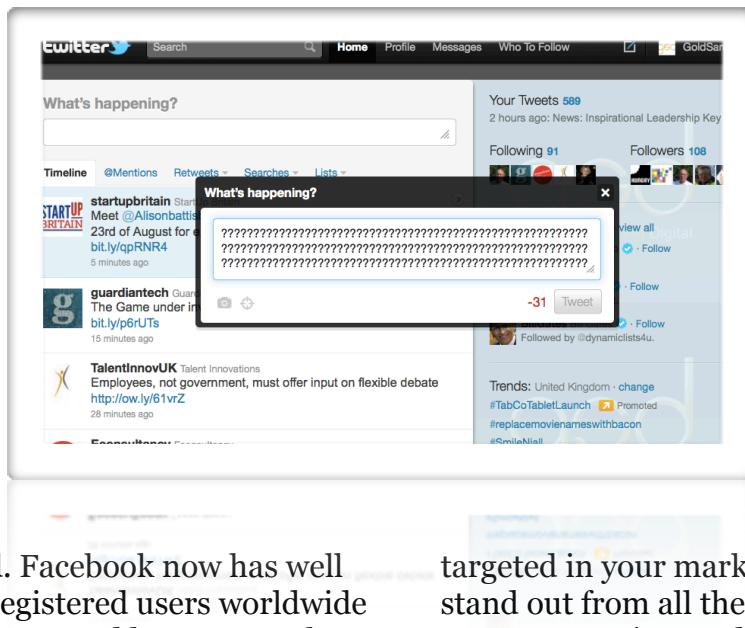
However, sending one tweet a day won't generate new business. But, creating a simple strategy to engage with your clients and prospects online with relevant information is a very effective way to grow your profile and support your company initiatives.

In simple terms, it's free PR and if harnessed properly has the power to get your messages out to a large number of people in a short space of time. Once you have an engaged community on social media channels, the selling process becomes easier because when the community is utilised effectively, your audience will know, like and trust you which are the most important parts in winning new clients.

3. Understanding how to shift from marketing to targeted marketing

Marketing is great, but targeted marketing is even better. Once you have identified a pool of new clients, there are some effective ways

of finding out more about them via some investigative online work. Simply by putting their email address or name and company into Google you can work out whether they belong to associations or groups, and you will almost certainly stumble across their LinkedIn profile – which again can be a rich source of information.



Twitter also is a useful tool, and typing their name into the search tab can reveal whether they are active social media users and the type of content they enjoy sharing.

This whole investigative process helps you to build a profile of your potential client and means you can be targeted in your marketing. This will help you stand out from all the marketing 'noise' that most companies send out.

4. Re-marketing and 'staying in touch'

So, once you generate a lead and a business shows interest in your approach to recruitment, how do you maintain that relationship and manage it through to the sales stage? This is where you need to get creative, and where social media can help, as well as innovative ideas like webinars and podcasts.

It's not enough today to send an email once a week and make the odd phone call – your competitors are doing more. Adding value is key, so by inviting a potential client to a free webinar you could get the chance to further engage and show off your knowledge, expertise and ability in the recruitment world.

It also gives your clients a chance to ask questions that are directly affecting them today which will give you incredible insights into the key challenges of today's business.

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By showing that you have the expertise and experience to answer these tough questions effectively, you are showcasing your business as the answer to their problems and this will get you in front of more companies than anything else.

5. Does my website sell my business effectively?

In the digital world we now live in, being able to sell and promote your recruitment services via your website is crucial. Consider it your senior sales person, marketing director and customer service all rolled into one.

If you don't think your website effectively reflects your company's ability, it could be time to revamp or update. The key challenge here is knowing how much of an impact the site has. Via various online tools you can drill down and work out how popular your site is, how people find it, and how long they spend on it. Think about the language on the site as well, does it reach out to your potential clients and identify the challenges they face, then effectively describe how you can solve those challenges?

A website is not a bolt-on anymore. It's a crucial part of your business and without an effective website, you are losing business to your competitors.

6. Knowing how to effectively grow your profile within the industry

In a busy and competitive market, your profile is crucial – how are you looking to grow yours in the HR, recruitment and the talent management arena?

Writing articles, blogs, letters, and requesting to

provide content for 'ask the expert' sections in magazines and websites is an ideal way to improve your popularity with the HR world. By targeting certain publications and building strong relationships with editors, you will find that your expertise is not confined to a small number of current clients, it is spread far and wide to a magazine or website's vast audience.

Choose topics to write on, comment on other people's articles and start to build a portfolio of editorial content – if you have the knowledge and the expertise it is crucial to share that as much as possible and drive interest back to you and your business.

Although these strategies may seem simple, if you implement just one of them effectively and commit to making it work, then you will already be ahead of 90% of your competitors.

Digital marketing is incredible because of how far and how quickly you can spread your message. So, don't wait, you're losing out! Get going today!



Generate new clients and increase your market share

For a limited time, GoldSand Digital is offering recruitment companies a special offer on web management and digital marketing...

Having a website that merely tells visitors what you do and where you are, or a Facebook page and Twitter account that are never updated or effectively managed, is no longer having a 'digital strategy'.

In 2011, for recruitment firms that want to compete online, win new clients and candidates and drive quality traffic to their websites, a modern approach of constant and consistent nurturing is essential. This means blogging, news writing, keyword research, Google Analytics, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Below is a more detailed list of what an effective web management strategy looks like:

Social Media

From news channels to large corporations, social media is utilised to share information far and wide in a very short space of time. It has literally transformed the way businesses communicate. Facebook now has more than 500,000,000 members (making it the equivalent size of the fourth largest country in the world). Recruitment firms should be benefiting from this media platform through the identification of new clients and candidates and engaging with existing ones.

- **Facebook** is the single most important marketing tool in 2011. In 2010 Facebook came of age for business. Now, with more tools and the Facebook 'Like' button on most websites it's the place where you can win more business.
- **Twitter** will help to increase customer loyalty and share business critical information faster with an effective Twitter strategy. We show you how, and more importantly, provide detailed customer strategies that work.
- **YouTube** is now the second largest search engine on the planet, and many YouTube videos are on the first page of Google? We will devise a strategy that allows you how to make video marketing and YouTube work.
- **LinkedIn** is an essential tool for organisations. It is the Facebook of the corporate world and used correctly, reflects and enhances your brand through regular interaction within your industry, a constantly updated, interesting profile and proactive targeting of new candidates to bring within your 'tribe'.

The key to an effective social media strategy includes three things:

- **Continuous activity**
- **Direct engagement**
- **Fresh, interesting and valuable content**

Information should be coming from many sources that include national news, industry bodies, competitor news, industry publications, areas of general target market interest.



Email marketing

When executed correctly, email marketing is an extremely powerful way to stay in touch with existing and potential clients by sending well-designed, well-written, engaging, professional and, above all, valuable emails.

Recruitment firms should be using advanced email software that allows you to report accurately on email marketing campaigns and tell who has opened the email and which area they have clicked on – this gives you invaluable information with which to build the next campaign, and also tells you when your leads are warm.

We would suggest sending two newsletter style emails every two weeks, targeting clients and candidates, and include links to your blogs, news, articles and also encourage your contacts to read the latest job posts.

Editorial services

Sharp and accurate editorial is no longer confined to the newsrooms, today businesses need to distribute written content that is valued by their audience if they want to grow their profile and celebrity within their industry. So, the following have become increasingly popular, with good reason:

- **News writing**
- **Blog writing**
- **Article writing**

When a recruitment or industry-related story breaks in the national newspaper it is important that your website is carrying that story with your own views.

This can then be followed up with extended comment and opinion on blogs and articles. By having these regularly posted to your site you can engage with visitors and keep them on the website for longer. However, it is not just the website that blogs and articles must be posted, they can provide excellent links back to your site when distributed elsewhere.

Google Analytics

Without any tracking you cannot identify how effective your campaigns have been. Tracking and measurement are critical to all marketing campaigns to ensure you are getting value from your campaigns and so that they can be tweaked to continually improve results.

Google Analytics can be set up for your website so that you can see where traffic is being sent from as well as where a visitor is looking, the path they take and how long they are spending on the website.

Article distribution

Writing articles that meet the key challenges of your core target audience is a very effective way of collecting traffic and driving it back to your website. You should not only be writing the articles, but also distributing them in the right places as well.

These articles can be distributed so that they are picked up by websites across the internet over and over again, creating multiple backlinks to your site and multiple opportunities for candidates or clients to read the article and click through to your website.

The distribution process should also target more niche sites within the industries you recruit into, these will provide a stream of targeted traffic back to your site.



One Month FREE - GoldSand Digital Web Management and Digital Marketing Special Offer

This is your opportunity to either test the water with digital marketing, or to extend your strategy and gain some expert insight into the world of marketing in the recruitment industry.

Limited offer when clients sign up for six months:

GoldSand Digital Web Management Services

- Social media management – Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter
- News writing and posting onto site
- Blog writing and posting onto site
- Article writing and distribution
- Google Analytics and reporting back to client
- Keyword research
- Email marketing – writing, broadcast and reporting (two campaigns per month)
- Email template design

Cost per month just: £1,500 + vat with ONE MONTH FREE!

Contact us today about your digital marketing and lead generation requirements:

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About GoldSand Digital

At GoldSand Digital we work with companies within the HR supplier industry, from recruitment to leadership development, and HR software to training providers, that want to further engage with their existing clients, grow profile online and reach out to new business.

We have a track record of driving new leads for clients and dramatically transforming their profile in the via a range of strategies and marketing solutions. This experience comes from co-founders Nick Golding and Ingram Sanders who have over ten years combined experience working in the HR and event industries.

We would love discuss how our digital marketing campaigns and web management solutions have driven dramatically increased the amount of time web visitors spend on client sites, and led to one-on-one conversations with decision makers at companies like Network Rail, Sainsbury's, BT, Zurich, UBS, Lloyds Banking, Barclays, and Virgin-Atlantic. If you think your business could benefit from this kind of exposure get in touch with GoldSand Digital today!

What our clients say...

"We know how important it is to have fresh content onto our website on a regular basis, so having a digital marketing company like GoldSand Digital that specialises in the HR and recruitment industry, is so useful.

Their blogs, news and article writing had a direct impact on the time visitors spent on the site, with visitors shifting from just 1.49 minutes on the site, to just under 5 minutes on average. Their management of Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn helped to drive traffic back to the website. A reliable, professional and results-driven company to work with."

Malcolm Clark, managing director at Bayley Needham

"We felt confident and inspired by the potential of what you could do and offer our company. You offered a range of services and expertise that we required, and we liked your approach, efficiency and the way you work with us."

Karen Murphy, director at Muika Leadership