The Pros and Cons of Using Social Media in the Recruiting Process

The social media explosion that has erupted over recent years has given recruiters more tools to use in the hiring process. Facebook has over 1 billion active users and LinkedIn follows with over 283 million users. 92% of recruiters are using social media for recruiting purposes and 87% of those recruiters find LinkedIn as the most effective social media site for vetting candidates during the hiring process. (Especially those under the age of 45). Only 43% of recruiters use Facebook and 22% use Twitter to evaluate candidates. (Jobvite, Inc. Social Recruiting Survey)

The pros of using social media in the hiring decision:

- Inexpensive
- Fast
- Perspective into applicants that you don’t get from application/resume
- Due diligence – guard against negligent hiring claims
- Protection against future reputation/business risks (such as inappropriate content or remarks made about former employers)

The cons of using social media in the hiring decision:

- Obtaining information that is not permitted to be used in the hiring decision
- Potential failure to hire/discrimination claim
- Inconsistent usage
- Unreliable information
- Potential violations of state and federal laws relating to background checks (e.g., Fair Credit Report Act and similar state laws)

Best Practices for Using Social Media in Your Recruitment Process:

- Create a social media screening policy
- Wait to screen until after the initial interview
- Leave the screening to Human Resources
- Inform applicants if a third-party will be conducting the screen or background check
- Keep in mind the Internet Applicant rule definition of “applicant”
- Do not request usernames or passwords

If you need assistance with your organization’s recruiting or Affirmative Action needs, please contact Employers Resource Association.

In Cincinnati: Carolyn Potter or in Columbus: Lori Lewellen.

We look forward to keeping current, compliant and competent.