

Using Twitter to recruit in 140 characters or less

 By [Matthew Gray](#)

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Twitter is now one of the fastest growing social networks in South Africa, expanding by 129% to reach 5.5 million users by August 2013. That is an increase of more than 250,000 new members per month over the last year. Looking at Twitter use across the African continent, 60% of people are in their twenties, 57% access Twitter via their mobiles and 22% troll Twitter for job opportunities.

This makes Twitter an increasingly attractive network for recruitment in Africa.

How HRs are using Twitter

Twitter is a great way to engage specific types of candidates, including those with senior and specialists skills, and is not just a pace for young people. Tools like [TweetMyJobs.com](#) and [TwitJobSearch.com](#) can be very useful in getting your job advert to a targeted audience. If you have a strong employer brand presence and the right message, tweets can even go viral and reach many more candidates.

But, most local companies are still using Twitter in a very basic web 1.0 way by automatically posting all their jobs to the network, which amounts to spam and damages the employer brand. Companies are also not proactively managing a conversation with candidates or ensuring a timely response to replies.

Cutting through the clutter

Companies should manually post their most strategic jobs and use hash tags to make them stand out. A hash tag is a keyword that is preceded by a hash symbol (#) in a tweet. Making information on Twitter instantly searchable, job candidates can use hash tags to find and follow specific companies or topics related to their industry, catalogue their favourite tweets, organise them into lists, and easily converse with like-minded individuals.

HR recruiters can either create their own hashtags with combinations like `YourCompany+Jobs` (e.g. `#AppleJobs`) and `Industry+keyword` (e.g. `#PharmaNews`), or use the hash tag of an existing group to promote their jobs (e.g. `#Hiring`, `#JobOpening` or `#Employment`).

To start building up your own community, run a search on Twitter (search.twitter.com) for anybody discussing keywords relevant to your company and follow them to attract return-followers that quickly adds up to hundreds of new contacts.

Striking up a conversation

Companies should also get more proactive about their employment brand awareness to promote interest in their jobs. Above job posts, HR recruiters should look at providing value-added content on what the company is like as an employer, what's happening with careers in its industry, and how its employment process works to market the company and its culture.

By highlighting staff recognition, growth at the company, what kind of talent the company values, and tips to ace that CV or interview, HRs can start having a conversation with candidates so they consider the company as an employer.

The key to raising employer brand awareness is being consistent and posting regularly, as well as constantly monitoring Twitter for candidates responding to posts or asking questions that could provide an opportunity to interact.

Reaching a discerning new market

It's becoming increasingly evident that beyond an Applicant Tracking System with a corporate career site component, companies need a social careers website to connect with talent. Top candidates are doing a lot more comparison between job opportunities before they apply and companies need to make their jobs accessible on more than one social recruiting platform to improve visibility.

As Twitter grows in Africa, with South Africa already seeing several hundred thousands of tweets a day, it will bring both exciting new opportunities and challenges for HRs to reach talent as the levels of activity increase.

ABOUT MATTHEW GRAY

Matthew Gray is client service director at cloud based e-recruitment company, Graylink. Passionate about the growth of digital and its role in rapidly changing business processes, Matthew has been at the forefront of solutions delivery, driving recruiting process change to Graylink's customer base, since the inception of the business in 2003.

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