

Employees as Corporate Ambassadors



With today's job market becoming increasingly competitive, companies are having to continually search for new ways to attract and secure suitably qualified personnel. The search for highly trained specialists is proving to be particularly difficult, and more often than not it requires the application of unusually creative recruiting methods. Rather unusually, more and more companies are in fact seeking out their employees to help them fulfil their manpower requirements.

And why not? After all, who is better qualified to impart information on corporate requirements and day-to-day business dealings than a company's employees? Today, employees are being increasingly used to help their employers in their ongoing quest for suitable recruits. So far, however, the extent of involvement of company employees in corporate recruiting activities has in most cases been restricted to the awarding of bonuses for their assistance in the hiring of a new colleague. But things are changing. At the moment, the current trend in HR advertising is focusing on the increased use of "Web 2.0" in corporate recruiting activities.

Corporate consultancies around the world are continually searching for suitable candidates. At Accenture, a leading international management consulting, technology and outsourcing services provider, things are no different. In fact, Accenture is currently looking to fill some 1,200 vacancies in Germany alone. In order to adequately meet this demand, Accenture and its partner agencies, milch & zucker, Burson-Marsteller Frankfurt and Marsteller London, have jointly conceived and implemented a new recruiting initiative for Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The integrated campaign focuses on Accenture employees serving as "corporate ambassadors" while making the most of the technologies offered by Web 2.0.

New colleagues wanted

This new initiative, entitled "Mit-Macher gesucht!" ("Co-Workers Wanted!"), follows up on the existing "Me at Accenture" campaign. The focus of the initiative is firmly placed on Accenture employees, who represent their company in an effort to secure new talent. Accenture is using this initiative to increase awareness among the relevant target groups and thus increase the number of applications submitted by potential candidates. Other recruiting measures support the main initiative in addressing business economists, information scientists, certified IT specialists as well as naturalists and engineers. The newly developed promotional website (www.accenture-mit-macher.com) is at the core of the initiative, and features a variety of interactive elements. Here, Accenture employees representing various corporate departments tell of their jobs or their professional development. They also use personal blogs to recount day-to-day experiences at work. These measures help to convey a favourable image of Accenture, while providing insight into

the company and the career opportunities available. Running parallel to the current recruiting campaign, the new initiative encourages the target group to “discover Accenture”. This basic theme is represented in all of Accenture’s HR recruiting measures and activities.

www.accenture-mitmacher.com



Accenture employees search for new colleagues on the new recruiting initiative’s homepage – not only as co-workers, but as friends.

Example of print marketing



Promotional posters help to raise awareness during the “Campus Promotion Tours”.

Accenture’s recruiting initiative also makes use of the potential of “viral marketing”, that is, the “epidemic” promotion of the initiative by company employees and members of the target group. Measures includes the publication of specially produced video clips on YouTube, which refer to the “www.accenture-mit-macher.com” website. Internal communication plays a key role in the promotion and circulation of the clips and the mobilisation of Accenture employees. Accenture staff members help to support the “viral” dissemination of the initiative by forwarding the clips to members of their “personal network” ,i.e., friends, family, acquaintances etc. Due to the fact that many Accenture employees work on-site at their clients’ offices, Accenture plans to use e-mail and video communication to promote the new initiative, while also distributing flyers and give-aways via conventional internal mail. Furthermore, events, posters and videos inform employees at their respective Accenture business locations. Various community websites, such as “Xing” and “MySpace”, are also being used during the initiative. Finally, advertising banners, print ads, search engine keywords and online advertisements increase campaign awareness and ensure broadest possible target group approach.

Media interaction

It should be noted that the initiative is not limited to the online sphere. Accenture continues to support the effective combination of various distribution channels as well. For example, Accenture recently kicked off a “Campus Promotion Tour”, which pays visits to over 30 universities in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Here, again, Accenture employees are on hand to promote the initiative’s corporate ambassador concept. PR and advertising measures in online, broadcasting and print media have been developed and implemented

accordingly. Meeting real-life employees either face-to-face or by way of multimedia helps to promote transparency, authenticity and "that human touch". Final evaluation of the initiative is still ongoing, but one thing is already certain: the "Co-Workers Wanted!" initiative has already exceeded all of Accenture's expectations. The initiative's interactive core – the new recruiting website (www.accenture-mit-macher.com) - has attracted visitors in the tens of thousands. Over 37,000 site visitors clicked their way through the new candidate portal during the first six weeks, calling up more than 122,000 web pages. By the start of August 2007, over 60,000 visitors had called up more than 180,000 pages. The video clips, meanwhile, were viewed over 12,000 times on YouTube alone. Close to 250 Accenture employees have participated in blogs and social networks to date, their blog entries being read up to 500 times per week. And finally, the most important figure! Since commencement of the initiative on 16 May 2007, over twice as many people have applied for a job with Accenture than during the same period the year prior. In June 2007, the number of applications submitted was an astounding 250 per cent higher than during June of the previous year. Best of all, the campaign has done more than simply attract higher numbers of applicants. The quality of applicants is also much higher, as evidenced by the relation between submitted applications and actual hirings.

Employees in action, technology in support

The "Co-Workers Wanted!" initiative combines various marketing and PR instruments with viral marketing elements and modern Web 2.0 applications. With its campaign, promoted throughout the German-speaking world, Accenture blazes new trails while serving as a shining example for other international Accenture representations to follow suit. The initiative demonstrates how, in view of the current competition for talented candidates, Web 2.0 technology may be successfully integrated into today's recruiting campaigns. Irrespective of the enthusiasm and even hype surrounding Web 2.0, it is in combination with traditional measures that the best results have been achieved.

"The "Co-Workers Wanted!" recruiting initiative is not a typical marketing campaign, but rather an excellent example of authentic communication with applicants", states Mr. Carsten Franke, member of the management board at milch & zucker. Despite of all the technical expertise, it is Accenture's values and employees that are the focal point of all considerations. The initiative has helped to put a face on Accenture and make it more tangible for those who are as yet among the unfamiliar. In the end, it is surely fair to say that a company's employees remain to be the best conceivable method of corporate promotion.

Author

Ms. Sonja Fink,

Accenture, Director

Marketing & Communications

sonja.fink@accenture.com

Author

Ms. Judith Kederer

Accenture

Recruiting Manager

judith.kederer@accenture.com

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