Has recruitment automation gone too far?

by Iain Hopkins
11 May 2018

Veteran Fortune 500 recruiter, Stacy Zapar, is all about efficiency. Her 21 years in recruitment have taught her valuable lessons about how to look beyond the fads in technology to focus instead on utilizing that technology to deliver exceptional candidate experiences and enhance productivity in recruitment. Zapar has over 40,000 followers in Talent Acquisition on LinkedIn. She is ranked sixth on *Huffington Post*'s Top 100 Most Social HR Experts and is ranked fifth on LinkedIn's 50 Most Popular Recruiting Influencers.

Zapar will be providing her recruitment tips and views on technology in talent acquisition at the HR Tech Summit Toronto, 26-27 June.

"I'll be talking about ways we can use technology to go from being good recruiters to truly great recruiters – and by great recruiters I mean being focused on a great hiring manager experience, a great candidate experience and really delivering for others. How do we deliver for the business while creating a great experience for our clients, managers as well as our candidates?" she told HR Tech News.

Key to Zapar's success has been process efficiency and automation in the right places.

"Great recruiters know how to leverage technology in a way that enables them to work smarter, faster, better, while still creating that relationship-driven recruiting experience," she said.

At the same time, Zapar warned that in many cases technology can become a crutch and a way to enable lazy habits or bad behaviours in the recruiting community. She added there can also be a tendency in recruiting to not look at candidates as people but instead just "a faceless number".

"We're shuffling all these candidates around and it's a volume game. We forget we're dealing with people's lives and their family's lives and their way of making a living. There are so many pieces to this that are hugely important to people's lives. Often I feel technology has the effect of further automating tasks that really should be more personal."

Zapar, who is the founder of boutique recruitment agencies Tenfold and The Talent Agency, suggested recruiters should "slow the pace" and consider delivering a great candidate experience to fewer candidates, rather than processing more candidates "in a spammy fashion just because we can".

She also urged recruiters to shine a light on their own processes and work efficiency.

"You must have self-awareness, to know if you're not coping with the workload. Maybe you could use some scheduling tools. Or maybe block time in your calendar to stay focused and do one task for an uninterrupted hour every week rather than trying to do it every five minutes throughout the week and not quite getting it done," she said.

Zapar said the best recruiters aren't necessarily any smarter or more qualified than the next person; they are simply more efficient in their work.

"Sometimes it's just the best recruiters are able to get 12 hours or work into an eight hour day. They are efficient and smart with their time management. They automate the tasks that aren't strategic, such as scheduling meetings and the like, and instead concentrate on the relationship building and the strategic work that must be done."

Zapar suggested recruiters utilize other business technology – not necessarily just HR tech – to enhance productivity. Specifically, she likes Mixmax, a CRM for Gmail that includes templates, scheduling capabilities, polling, and the ability to read email receipts and open rates in real-time.

"It means I can tell as soon as a candidate opens an email, or if they click any of the links. Even for hiring managers I can tell when they read my emails. That's when I know when to pick up the phone and engage them in conversation," she said.

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