

Duelling Applicant Tracking Systems – A Small Business Case Study Evaluation of Maxhire.net versus Taleo Business Recruit.

An evaluation of two leading applicant tracking solutions was recently conducted to help in the selection of a vendor product for a small business. The following is a simple account of the process and the result. Organizations involved in similar selection processes might benefit from this story.

The Context and Needs

A small business providing Information Communications and Technology professional services annually recruits in the range of 25 to 50 consultants and was in search of an Applicant Tracking System. The solution sought was for a single user who was technically aware but not a techie by nature. The office toolset in use was Microsoft Office 2007. Basic functional requirements included direct posting to multiple career web sites and job boards, managing on-line applicants, sourcing candidates on line, tracking applicants and candidates, and communicating with candidates. A predisposition to the sourcing tool TalentHook made integration and importing of candidates a bonus evaluation criterion.

The Evaluation Process

After some initial google based and word of mouth research the short listed alternatives included Taleo Business Recruit (Taleo) and MaxHire.net (MaxHire). Both providers showed good web presence and access to information about their solutions was enticing. Both providers offered a trial, Taleo's at 30 days and MaxHire's at 60 days. Taleo pricing was not published but instead an on-line promise was made that a representative would make contact shortly. After a second reminder no contact was made. However other internet resources suggested that Taleo single user pricing was the same as MaxHire's at \$99 per month per user. The playing field seemed even although MaxHire had an edge through their initial on line sales impression.

After registration for the trial with both solutions, experimentation became the basic evaluation method. Taleo got off to a great start with a fully branded functional careers web site link received within 24 hours of registration. It was almost over at that point but pricing was still uncertain so the experiment continued. After installation of the MaxHire solution its look and feel became attractive for a Microsoft Office User. The Smart client technology created a familiar environment and the performance was more like a desktop solution than was the Taleo browser based alternative.

Both solutions showed similar functionality but the "Plus" and "Premium" Product upgrades and Microsoft Office Integration plug ins required for the Taleo solution became a bit of a mystery. It appeared the ability to post on multiple career web sites and Microsoft Office integration were going to cost a little more each month with Taleo. Integration with a sourcing tool like TalentHook was also going to raise their price tag. Taleo's documentation made many references to multi user and workflow features. The Taleo solution began to look more and more like a smarter choice for an enterprise with significant scalability requirements. Taleo also showed a very impressive training catalogue related to their products and for general learning about recruitment. Otherwise the functionality was comparable across the two solutions for the small business single recruiter requirements in question.

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The Results

With comparable functionality, in the end, the decision came down to fundamentals. MaxHire's out of the box Microsoft integration and familiar look and feel scored it higher for useability. Despite Taleo's impressive turnaround on a customized careers web page, MaxHire's pre-sales follow up showed more commitment to the small business user and scored better on support. Out of the box integration with TalentHook was also a bonus for MaxHire.

So MaxHire won the day. With the solution decision made, next comes implementation and ultimately use of the system to drive productivity and business results. Now the real work begins.

About the author:

Jules Fauteux, CMC, CHRP, RPR is President and Principal Consultant at Talentlogix Inc. a Human Resource Management Consulting and Recruitment firm located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Practice areas include Talent Strategy, Workforce Planning, Business Change, and Recruitment. Jules can be reach at jules.fauteux@talentlogix.com or through www.talentlogix.com.

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