Press Contacts*:*
Jennifer Hughes / 703-535-6072
jennifer.hughes@shrm.org

Julie Malveaux / 703-535-6273
julie.malveaux@shrm.org

http://www.shrm.org/about/pressroom/

Social Networking Sites Increase in Popularity for Recruiting Job Applicants, SHRM Survey Shows

LAS VEGAS, April 15, 2013 – The majority of employers (77 percent) recruit job candidates via social networking websites, according to a new survey from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

Released today at SHRM's Talent Management Conference and Exposition at the Mandalay Bay Hotel, the survey found that the number of organizations using social networking sites to find and communicate with applicants jumped significantly from 2011 (56 percent) and 2008 (34 percent).

Why are employers drawn to social networking sites during the recruitment process? Most of the surveyed employers (80 percent) cited the ability to recruit passive job applicants who might not otherwise apply. Other top reasons include the ability to target job candidates with specific skill sets (69 percent) and increasing employer branding and recognition (67 percent).

The survey − *"Social Networking Websites and Recruiting/Selection"* − also discovered that LinkedIn is the most popular website (94 percent) used by HR professionals for recruiting. Other top social networking sites for recruiting are Facebook (54 percent), Twitter (39 percent) and professional or association social networking sites (29 percent).

"Social media is changing how HR professionals do their jobs, most dramatically in recruiting," said Alexander Alonso, SHRM's vice president of research. "SHRM's research shows that HR professionals are using social media mainly as a recruitment tool with four out of five saying its ability to recruit candidates who might not normally apply as a chief reason for their use."

Other key findings include:

- The majority of organizations target non-management salaried employees (87 percent) and management (directors and managers) (80 percent). About one-half (48 percent) target non-management hourly employees, and 41 percent target executive/upper management (e.g., CEO, CFO) when searching for job applicants on social media websites;

- More than one-half (57 percent) of employers do not have a formal or informal policy on screening candidates via social networking websites.

- Organizations that have policies on screening job candidates are evenly split in terms of prohibiting the use of these sites and allowing the use of these sites (both 21 percent). About two-thirds of organizations never have used or no longer plan to use social networking websites (69 percent) or online search engines (65 percent) to screen job candidates; and

- The organizations that did not screen job applicants on social networking websites cited a myriad of reasons for not doing so, including concern with legal risks or discovering information about protected characteristics (74 percent) and information irrelevant to applicants' work-related potential or performance (63 percent).

To read the full survey, visit: http://www.shrm.org/research. Follow SHRM Research on Twitter @SHRM_Research.

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