

In Search of the Passive Candidate

Sometimes the best-qualified RFID professionals are those not actively seeking a new career opportunity.

By Shel Myeroff

Oct. 17, 2005—There's a popular trend when it comes to sourcing for RFID job candidates. More and more hiring managers are searching for what has been dubbed the "passive candidate." Defined as candidates satisfied with their current position and accomplishing great things, passive candidates are not actively seeking new opportunities, and job hunting consumes zero percent of their time. Many of them haven't even have updated their résumé. So why the current fascination to reach out and attract this elusive group?

In the RFID marketplace, talent is in high demand. There are jobs that must be filled that require more talent than what is present in the active job pool. Résumés currently in a database or candidates posted on an Internet job board sometimes just can't fit the bill.

Many hiring authorities feel that passive candidates represent some of the best talent in the workforce. There are exceptional RFID professionals who have been working with this technology for decades. They are worth the hunt. In addition, there seems to be a mystique surrounding the passive candidate. Perhaps it lies in the challenge of how to lure them away. Whatever the case, companies are investing considerable amounts of time and resources to vie for their attention and interest.

With the recruitment of passive candidates on the rise, here are some suggestions on how to get the attention of a group that represents the path of most resistance:

- *Use referral programs.* Ask your best people to identify the best people they've worked with in the past. Referrals are the number-one way to identify and establish contact with them. Determine their interest level, and if they are what you need. If you don't have a match, ask them for other respected names.
- *Create an enticing work description.* You need to pique the interest of a candidate who is not looking for a position but may be interested in an excellent career opportunity. This means you must say the right things and create a description that has a "wow" factor.
- *Identify their pain.* Diligent, high-caliber workers often don't even realize they have pain regarding their employment or employer. Enlighten them on where they are with respect to the skill sets and compensation of others in the same industry. Educate them on the RFID technologies your company is planning to implement. Show them how they can play an integral role in these new RFID applications. This type of information can lead to a lightbulb moment.
- *Shift your focus from "What can you do for me?" to "What can we do for you?"* Let them know your company recognizes and promotes top performers. Discuss the benefits of your company culture and managerial style. Offer excellent RFID training programs, incentives, higher earning power, etc.

- *Contact reputable search firms.* Respected and ethical search firms specializing in the RFID industry will have the latest resources and tools specifically designed to target passive candidates. Their industry connections and processes can save you time and money.

The trend to recruit the passive candidate will continue well into the future. While hiring passive candidates may seem desirable, it presents a challenge. The big picture is that hiring managers will need to shift to innovative sourcing, which means they will need more time, training and resources. However, many recruiting experts feel that going in search of the passive candidate is well worth it.

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