

BITS & PIECES

Waldthausen & Associates, Inc. is a Retained Executive Search firm with the focus on recruiting managers that influence a company's result and earnings. The firm focuses on recruiting professional managers for US subsidiaries with parent companies located in central Europe.

SLEUTHING THE INTERNET; RESUME SURFING

The exploding popularity of personal Web pages and Internet blogging has created new opportunities that can help an employer make better business decisions. From disgruntled employees to potential job candidates, everyone is broadcasting personal information on *Myspace*, *Facebook* and similar Web sites.

For most people, personal Web pages are nothing more than a fun and an easy way to keep in touch with friends and family. However, a significant minority reveal a little too much about themselves ...including their sexual proclivities, their prejudices, their work ethic, and even their illegal activity. Because people (especially young people) generally view personal Web pages as a way to socialize, they fail to recognize the potential ramifications that their postings may have on their professional lives.

According to the Tampa Tribune, an estimated 21,500 of the 43,000 students at the University of South Florida have registered on *Facebook*, a social networking Website that is designed for students. Of those students, 149 belong to the group "My Blood Alcohol Level Is Higher than My GPA." Another 451 joined the group "I Would So Have Sex in the Library," and there are 204 members of the "Trophy Wives in Training" group. The paper also reported that universities across the country have uncovered pictures and admissions of criminal activity based upon student misconduct complaints.

Therefore, it may be a good idea to run an Internet search on job candidates who have made it past the initial screening process. Personal Web pages can reveal personality traits or other potentially problematic behavior that may not be discovered during a job interview.

Companies have also been able to use personal Web pages to their advantage in litigation defense. For example, in a case that the firm Constancy, Brooks & Smith recently handled, a terminated employee alleged that she was sexually harassed. Within hours of her termination, the company conducted an Internet search on the individual and found her personal Web page.

She had actually posted compromising information about herself and her voluntary participation in the activities. Several months later, when a suit was threatened, the company responded with the information and the matter was dropped.

Not every personal Web page will be this helpful, but even little pieces of information can be invaluable. Employers should

search the Internet on candidates for at least executive, management or management-training and professional positions. And a search regarding employees who threaten litigation is definitely wise also. David Steffen, Constancy, Brooks & Smith, LLC www.Constangy.com.

CHOOSING AN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS BROKER

In today's economic environment, the ability to offer group employee benefits has become a major concern for many businesses. Continuing double-digit increases in health care costs over the past few years have resulted in decreases in companies offering health care and decreases in coverage provide by companies. Yet, employee benefits are key when it comes to recruiting and retaining the best talent.

Selecting an employee benefits broker is an important step to the long-term success of company efforts to control costs. Below are several tips any company should consider when selecting a broker:

Does the broker *understand your business* and the demographics of your work force?

Look for a "*Business Partner*." Partnership should include a willingness to share in the financial success or failure of recommended strategies. Commission structures are often negotiable; some brokers work on a flat fee basis.

Is the approach taken by the broker an effort to create a *long-term strategy* based on your company's philosophy, demographics and finances or is it a short-term fix for the immediate problem?

Does the broker have relationships with a *number of strong carriers* as opposed to being limited in their ability to obtain quotes during the bidding process?

What *customer support staff* does the broker offer to address your ongoing service needs?

Is the broker *financially stable*? How many and what type of companies do they currently represent?

What kind of *reputation* do they have in the marketplace? Ask for references from current clients and from carriers.

Does the partnership provide you with *value-added services*?

Support in setting up wellness programs, production of employee benefit statements, benefit communication materials for your enrollments and technology assistance may be available through *the right partner*. *The New Carrer Paradigm, 2007*

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