

U.S. Cellular Case Study

Saving millions, while finding uniquely-skilled candidates



The Challenge

Director of Talent Acquisition, Elisa Bannon and her team face the daunting task of pinpointing hard-to-find professional and technical candidates. Recruiting for Sales and Call Center personnel in the telecom industry, they need personnel with very intricate skill sets. They're also competing for these candidates against thousands of companies of all sizes and across all industries. Plus, with offices across the U.S., they need these specialized workers across specific regions and in smaller markets.

Using the large job boards to post jobs and surface candidates, Elisa was spending a tremendous amount of money and resources. However, despite the costs, she was not finding the type of high-quality candidates she required.

In September of 2008, Elisa and her team began a search for a better solution (Elisa first learned of LinkedIn Recruiter while seeing it used by a colleague - though Elisa herself is a LinkedIn member of 2+ years and has used the regular services for some recruiting activity). Hence, U.S. Cellular included LinkedIn Recruiter in a head-to-head interactive review with other companies that provide recruitment sourcing.

In early 2009 Elisa and U.S. Cellular purchased 5 seats of LinkedIn Recruiter. They plan to add more seats soon.

LinkedIn Recruiter: The Solution

In the Spring of 2009, U.S. Cellular selected LinkedIn Recruiter. They instantly began finding higher-quality candidates, and found cost savings in the millions.

"No more post-and-pray," says Elisa Bannon, Director of Talent Acquisition. "We find better depth and breadth of candidates, plus we're saving over \$1 million this year using LinkedIn Recruiter."

U.S. Cellular (United States Cellular Corporation)

Headquarters: Chicago, Illinois, USA
Industry: Telecommunications
Total employees: 9,000
Recruiting for: Sales and Call Center

Executive Summary

With 6.2 million customers across the country, U.S. Cellular has a critical and growing need for Sales and Customer Care employees – in all regions – with highly specialized skills. Unable to find quality candidates through traditional recruitment sources, Director of Talent Acquisition, Elisa Bannon turned to LinkedIn Recruiter. In just weeks U.S. Cellular found both active and passive candidates to fill key positions, while saving over one million dollars.

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Elisa Bannon, Director of Talent Acquisition, U.S. Cellular

Better Candidates, Faster

With the economic downturn, Elisa found increasing numbers of applicants applying for U.S. Cellular jobs. In fact, they were overwhelmed with applications. But with the quality of applicants not meeting her needs, she turned to LinkedIn Recruiter.

“We took a more grass roots approach, more targeted,” says Elisa. “With Recruiter, results are much more focused. The people we find are truly professional and know what’s expected of them to succeed.”

U.S. Cellular also has unique job openings that potential candidates wouldn’t normally know about. For this reason, neither active nor passive candidates were learning about and applying for these highly-specialized jobs. With LinkedIn Recruiter, they could enter specific criteria and get results. “We’ll put in very specific search strings and find five creditable candidates, where normally we wouldn’t have found anyone,” she adds.

Cost-Savings That Can’t Be Ignored

“We’re easily saving \$1 million dollars this year alone,” she points out. “And we’ll save more in months to come, as we learn new ways to put LinkedIn Recruiter to work for us.”

Moving away from expensive “big boards,” third party recruitment agencies (“Why pay anywhere from \$25,000 to \$40,000 just to find a name?” Elisa asks), and costly print and brand advertising, Elisa was able to reduce her recruiting budget dramatically.

Making Contact Comes Naturally

Similarly, Elisa notes that U.S. Cellular now spends less money on corporate branding to entice candidates, as the LinkedIn name adds valuable credibility.

“It’s not cold-calling, it’s just spreading the word,” notes Elisa. “People know that it’s networking, and they approve of that.”

Plus LinkedIn gives them a large and diverse database to choose from, as she uses highly-specific keywords to search for their unique needs. And when job opportunities come from LinkedIn, she finds that candidates are receptive. Elisa estimates a 70% response rate, as people feel confident responding to LinkedIn-based requests.

“It’s also a great tool for filling the pipeline,” says Elisa. They get their future needs met as well, as people respond to inquiries and pass them on to colleagues.

Efficiency And Collaboration, Simplified

LinkedIn Recruiter brings the power of teamwork to recruiting. At U.S. Cellular Elisa often has one person source candidates, while other associates seamlessly follow-up and contact people. Plus tracking is simplified through the entire process.

“The turnaround is much faster,” adds Elisa. “We recently put out a search for an open job, and hired someone in 30 days. For that same job, last time, it took us four months.”

Superior Customer Service

Elisa found that getting up-and-running on LinkedIn Recruiter was a breeze. Her team has yet to come across any problems, and her LinkedIn Account Executive is always proactive - going to U.S. Cellular’s location regularly to ensure the staff is trained and documents are provided.

“LinkedIn makes sure everyone is locked and loaded, and we haven’t been stumped. The technology works,” she adds.

Outstanding Results Came Quickly

Only weeks into their adoption, U.S. Cellular had already made three critical hires using LinkedIn Recruiter.

They’re now using the product as the company’s main recruitment tool. And according to Elisa, they’ll be using it more and more as they discover new ways that the tool can meet their exacting recruitment needs.

In conclusion, Elisa notes, “You’re going to uncover quality candidates, with diverse and relevant experience from which to select, in a more efficient and cost effective way. The product produces results.”

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