

Hire Boston

Online networks gain speed among HR departments

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Glenn Gutmacher has a secret. Some executives may already be plugged into it, some not. It has to do with the fine art of sourcing, and for this executive recruiter, who's a lead researcher for Getronics in Billerica, it has a lot more to do with networking than handshakes and business lunches.

What he's referring to are social networking portals or virtual networking opportunities that some may not know exist.

"It's the 'six degrees of separation' networking concept," says Gutmacher. "It's on steroids this way."

The idea is, you have a person you want to contact for a position, or vice versa. It's someone not in your circle. Think "coffee with Bill Gates" (with the exception of those who may have already had coffee with Bill Gates) and you're on the right track.

Once you plug in all your contact information, it will automatically "spider out your web" to see how you would connect to any of the millions of people in the social networking portal, Gutmacher explains.

You search for a given job title in a certain geographic range or industry. You

go through a number of intermediaries, making an introduction of who you are and whom you would like to contact.

"As long as two to three intermediaries cooperate, your message will get to that person," says Gutmacher, who says he's never seen a request for connection rejected.

Two sites he uses and recommends are www.spoke.com and www.linkedin.com, which started last year but just this year are gaining speed.

What online networks do is give recruiters a chance to reach a valuable job candidate — something that's always in demand — and it gives job seekers a more level playing field.

David Carpe, founder and principal of Clew LLC, an intelligence consulting firm, says that by increasing your centrality, you are also wielding influence.

"What it's really about is building relationship capital," he says. "In an analog world, it's 'Who do you know?'"

Carpe says the latest changes in such portals as LinkedIn.com include adding a privacy option (where others can't view your detailed information) and including a group search, where you become part of a group that reaches a wider audience.

Gutmacher says the sites were origi-



Gutmacher: Web-based networking levels the "it's who you know" playing field for recruits.

ever replace the kind of face-to-face networking that occurs in trade shows and trade association meetings or just colleagues that you'll meet at a party. ... The live connection has special value and always will, but the reality is, most of the time you can do virtual networking and (it's) almost as good."

Getronics, which is based in Amsterdams, The Netherlands, has 29,000 employees in more than 30 countries and annual revenue of \$4 billion. The provider of vendor-independent IT services is hiring in its U.S. headquarters in Billerica. Job postings include:

nally created to benefit people on the sales side to get an inside connection to a company. "Recruiters realize it's just as valuable for them," he says.

In the end, however, Gutmacher does concede: "Nothing will ever replace the kind of face-to-face networking that occurs in trade shows and trade association meetings or just colleagues that you'll meet at a party. ... The live connection has special value and always will, but the reality is, most of the time you can do virtual networking and (it's) almost as good."

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- Leader, IT services solution consulting. A senior leadership role in the IT sales support organization for a growing team of sales consultants.
 - Leader, IT services solution engineering. A technical subject-matter expert (data network, LAN, VOIP and/or help desk solutions) who's managed SMEs.
 - Senior solutions consultant, IT services. A tech-oriented business pro who understands all aspects of outsourcing, can develop integrated solutions that demonstrate a compelling business case and turn opportunities into wins.
 - Senior marketing and pricing analyst, IT services. Someone to develop and analyze cost components of potential and current business, project and monitor cash flow and translate into financial reporting metrics.
 - Finance manager, IT services. Someone to manage and coordinate all financial budgets, forecasts, reporting, analysis and other financial support.
- For information, contact <http://getronics.hrdpt.com>.**

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