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Dice is pleased to present the second article in a series on tech recruiting by John Vlastelica, consultant and prior technical recruiting leader with Amazon.com and AT&T Wireless. [Bio](#)

Maximizing Your ROI from Direct Sourcing Three Practical Techniques to Get You Started

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Many articles and conferences can make you feel “less-than” as a Recruiter if you’re not spending almost all of your time going after the elusive passive candidates, leveraging ultra aggressive, direct sourcing techniques every hour of the day. However, with work loads from 20-40 reqs, many recruiters find it’s not realistic, and maybe not even necessary, to just focus on networking and cold calling; more traditional sources (like job boards) may in fact be appropriate for most of their reqs.

Having said that, every recruiter should know how to direct source, and probably should direct source for certain positions. So, if you do decide to get more aggressive, where do you start? How can you maximize your time, so that you spend your limited direct sourcing energy on tactics that are most likely to generate quality candidates and hires?

More traditional sources (like job boards) may be appropriate for most reqs, but direct sourcing can be better for critical, unique, high impact jobs.

Three Practical Techniques to Increase the Return on Investment (ROI) from Your Direct Sourcing Efforts

1

Focus your direct sourcing efforts on the right kind of reqs

Not all reqs are created equal, and — obviously — not all require you to go after passive candidates to hire quality candidates. So, which reqs benefit most from direct sourcing efforts? Many top recruiters recognize that they get the highest ROI from their direct sourcing efforts when they focus on:

- **High impact Jobs**

These jobs may be “worth” 3-5 times what other jobs are worth within your organization. They’re the ones executives lose sleep over, and the ones that are worthy of extra, specialized sourcing efforts.

- **Jobs for which there are very few real candidates**

For some jobs, you know — right away — that there are only eight people on earth who can do this job, and three already work for you. You know what companies they work at — they’re easy to find. So why waste time on ads (which they’ll never read), or waste fees on headhunters (you already know how to find them)? Get prepared, then pick up the phone and call them.

- **Critical jobs, for which there are multiple openings**

Learn from the best headhunters. Your chances of making a “placement” (i.e. a hire) go way up when you have more than one “customer” (i.e. hiring manager) to market your candidate to. By focusing your direct sourcing efforts on multiple vacancy reqs, you can increase your chances of making a hire (if one hiring manager isn’t interested, or doesn’t move quickly enough, you move to the next one), and helping the candidate (you can more closely satisfy the candidate’s interests when you have more than one opportunity available for him/her to consider).

- **Jobs where you already have a really strong network of leads and/or candidates**
- **Jobs where you can save the company big agency search fees**

Not all Req's are Created Equal

Volume of Req's HIGH	Don't invest Direct Sourcing energy on lower impact jobs	Direct Source against multiple vacancy reqs to increase ROI
	Don't invest Direct Sourcing energy on lower impact jobs	Direct Source to avoid agency fees or personally manage high risk or high visibility searches
LOW	LOW	HIGH

Impact on Business

2

Start with the “low hanging fruit” direct sourcing efforts first

Before you begin deep web mining for names, or go out and purchase org charts from competitor companies, leverage the lower hanging fruit sources. Pick up the phone, and solicit leads from people you and/or your company already know:

- 1. Current employees (individual contributors, managers, executives) who have similar backgrounds, or worked at your target companies**

How do you know who to target? Keep a spreadsheet of all of the people your team has hired in the past year (including prior company names, prior job titles, prior school experience, and any association affiliations). See Dice’s [template](#) of an employee work history spreadsheet. Then, make — via email or in-person — personalized solicitation requests for leads.

- 2. Current and past candidates, who may have worked side by side with your target candidates**

How do you know who to target? Search for hires/employees in your Applicant Tracking System and/or HRIS by company name.

- 3. Current and past candidate references, who may know other people who fit your candidate profile**

Take an extra minute to enter references you talk to in your personal contact management system (i.e. outlook contacts), and/or invite references you speak with to join your www.linkedin.com network.

There are eight groups of people you already know who can help.

- 4. Current and past consultants, contractors, and/or temps who may have worked side by side with — or directly for — your target candidates**

Ask the hiring manager for names and backgrounds of contractors who’ve worked for your company (if you don’t have access to their resumes).

- 5. Vendors who sell products and services to your company and your competitors**

Ask the hiring manager or your procurement team for the names of the sales reps who sell products and services to your company.

6. Interns and co-ops who may have worked for your target candidates

If they're not stored in your ATS, ask the college recruiter or recruiting team for names and resumes of the interns and co-ops, or their employment applications, which may list the names of their prior intern managers (in the reference section).

7. Professors and/or career center leaders at target universities who keep in contact with alumni

The college recruiting team, or your university alumni, will have these contacts.

8. Social networking tool contacts (i.e. people you and/or your employees and hiring managers keep in contact with via tools like www.linkedin.com)

Invite your employees to join linkedin or other similar tools, so that you can get access to their networks.

3 Prep your hiring managers for passive candidate conversations

Many times, a Recruiter will work diligently to get a passive lead or candidate interested, only to have the Hiring Manager fail to sell the candidate after the handoff, resulting in a lost lead. It's critical that we teach managers how to talk to these passive candidates. Remember, passive candidates are often pre-qualifying — or interviewing — us as much as we're pre-qualifying them. So, managers should not launch into a "So, why do you want to work here?" interview right out of the gate. They need to pick up the sell-handoff from the Recruiter, and make sure that the start of the conversation draws the passive candidate in, not pushes them away. How?

- **Prepare your managers to paint a compelling picture of the company — and his/her department's — future.** They need to go way beyond the job posting intro, and be prepared to sell the real benefits of this opportunity. Be prepared to answer questions like, "What would I own or be responsible for? How would this help me in my career? Why is this better than what I'm doing now?" Remember, the candidate is thinking: WIIFM (What's in it for me?).
- **Prepare your managers to uncover core candidate motivators** (assuming the Recruiter didn't already uncover them all). These may include boredom, poor management, lack of career growth, lack of recognition, lack of impact, poor compensation. Simple questions like "Tell me a little more about your current role. What do you love about it? What would you change? What do you wish you had more of, less of? What would have to be different for you to consider making a move?" Passive candidates want to see that the Hiring Manager is personally interested in them and their needs.
- **Prepare your managers to sell to each candidate's motivators.** Generally, this includes selling a candidate on the challenges, impact, and career growth associated with this role, and helping the candidate to see how he/she is uniquely qualified to join your company and make a large, visible impact.

Teach the hiring manager how to draw passive candidates in, not push them away.

Wrap Up

Many Recruiters, especially full-cycle recruiters, don't have enough hours in the day to direct source. And, whether they admit it or not, many often think direct sourcing can be quite stressful, even scary. The three suggestions above represent relatively easy, low-cost, practical suggestions for getting started, even if you only have a couple of hours a week to focus on direct sourcing.



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