ABSTRACT

The traditional method of recruitment has been revolutionized by the emergence of the Internet. In the past few years, the Internet has dramatically changed the face of HR recruitment and the ways organizations think about the recruiting function. In the coming years, digital recruiting and hiring are expected to continue their explosive growth. Presently, e-recruitment has been adopted in many organizations either from large organizations to small size companies, even in Malaysia. Most organizations are already using e-recruitment to post jobs and accept resumes on the Internet, and correspond with the applicants by e-mail. It brings the benefits to the organizations. In this article, there will be an introduction on e-government and e-recruitment and its practice by government agencies in Malaysia. There will also be a discussion on the pros and cons of e-recruitment practice broadly taken from literatures.

Keywords: e-recruitment, e-government, recruitment methods

1. INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, e-recruitment is one of the electronic services (e-services) applications, which is the fifth pilot project of e-government flagship application. As Malaysia moves towards achieving K-Society by the year 2020, e-recruitment instead is in line with E-World expectation where the primary goal of National IT Agenda (NITA) is to migrate all Malaysians and institutions into the E-World for the new millennium. The five thrust areas of E-World comprise of K-Economy, K-Community, K-Learning, K-Public Services and K-Sovereignty. E-recruitment is part of the e-services applications offered by the government of Malaysia. E-Government is a large component of K-Public Services which basically is about the opportunity to transform a public sector organization’s commitment in order to function as citizen-centric.

The Electronic Government (e-government) initiative was launched in Malaysia as the first step into the Information Age by National IT Agenda (NITA). E-government was one of the seven innovative Flagship Applications. It was aimed to improve the government internal operations and also service deliveries towards Malaysians.

E-government by definition is a multimedia networked paperless administration linking government agencies within Putrajaya with government centres around the country to facilitate a collaborative government environment and efficient service to businesses and citizens (Afrika-Asia, 2002). The objectives of the e-government are to offer efficient, high quality on-line services to citizens and businesses, streamline government’s processes to improve quality of service, reduce costs and increase productivity, strengthen data security and protect data, increase citizen participation in government and to create good governance and transparency through effective communication and trace ability. The seven pilot projects of the Electronic Government Flagship Application are as follows:

1. Project Monitoring System (SPP II)
2. Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS)
3. Generic Office Environment (GOE)
4. Electronic Procurement (EP)
5. Electronic Services (E-Services)
6. Electronic Labour Exchange (ELX)
7. E-Syariah
Relevant literatures from USA and UK have several definitions of online recruitment or better known as e-recruitment. Basically, e-recruitment refers to the use of the Internet to facilitate the recruitment process by advertising jobs or contact applicants electronically. It can be conducted by using an organization’s own Corporate Web Site or a Web-based job site. According to Gentner Gentner (1984) and Casper (1985), the first references to online recruitment appear in articles of the mid-1980s while systematic reference to online recruitment in the HR journals began almost a decade later, in the mid-1990s, when IT companies and universities began to use the Internet extensively.

2. RECRUITMENT METHODS

There are a lot of recruitment methods available, either traditional method or the latest. From the study of Arboledas, Ferrero and Vidal (2001), they present some examples of recruitment methods that organisations are using: newspaper advertisement, faxed/mailed resumes, recruitment agency or headhunter. All these methods are defined as traditional recruitment method Galanaki (2002). From relevant literature, the traditional recruitment method is the way that a company announced a job opening to the marketplace through a classified advertisement, an executive recruiter, a job fair or other media. Any candidate who happened to see the announcement would submit his or her resume. Also, previous studies show that advertisements in newspapers are used more frequently than other methods of traditional recruitment (Arboledas, Ferrero & Vidal, 2001). There are several tools that have been used by companies with the aim of recruiting their employees. Some of them are more traditional or considered to be generally effective, while others may prove appropriate for specific situations only. The table below presents the summary of recruitment method from Galanaki (2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Fair</td>
<td>Free service, provided at local or national level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection consultants-management selection</td>
<td>They recruit and select for positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head-hunters</td>
<td>Keeping of informal network of contacts, especially of those who may be on constant demand, i.e. senior managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary agencies</td>
<td>Provision of short term cover as an alternative to recruitment of permanent employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising on press</td>
<td>Local and national papers or trade and professional journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV, Radio advertising</td>
<td>For local or national coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing employee contacts – word of mouth</td>
<td>The most traditional and yet considered by some as the most effective recruitment method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Colleges and Universities and the Careers Service</td>
<td>The Long – established practice to select employees since they get out of educational institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union and professional referrals</td>
<td>Registers kept by unions or professional institutes of employees seeking employment.</td>
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In order to choose which recruitment method the employer is going to use, the employer needs to consider many aspects, for example, the cost of reaching the candidates, the time scales involved, and the culture of the organization.

However, in recent years, the Internet has made an impact on the human resource field (Bussler & Davis, 2002). Organizational recruitment efforts have increasingly relied on computer technology and one area that has evolved is recruiting via the Internet, otherwise known as e-recruitment (Mottl, 1998). This technology can be used in application tracking, job posting and electronic job application. It can facilitate the human resource function and reduce human resource works.

From the relevant literature, there is an argument that e-recruitment is needed to be used in conjunction with other techniques. Borck (2000) and Caggiano (1999) argue that Internet-based recruiting will not replace traditional practices, but a well-implemented e-recruitment strategy can help the recruitment process become more successful. Internet recruiting should be only one of many tools used to find and recruit applicants. Similarly, Pearce & Tuten (2001) pointed out that although the employers see the advantages of e-recruitment, they continued to use traditional methods such as newspaper ads, personal referrals, and search agencies for most their recruiting. Employer viewed the Internet as an important additional tool.

Cullen (2001) also supports that e-recruitment is not treated as a stand-alone human resource tool but is integrated into an overall recruiting and selection strategy that includes, among other things, sophisticated behavioral and skills assessment, interviewing, and additional means of identifying needs and sourcing candidates. Previous studies show that a human resource department still uses both traditional method and e-recruitment in recruiting process. More than 75% of HR professionals are now using Internet job boards in addition to traditional recruiting method (HR Portal, 2003).

The e-recruitment method has also been applied by government agencies in Malaysia. For example, the Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) has developed an online application known as Electronic Labour Exchange (ELX). The application offers a one-stop service where few services are being offered such as job registration and matching, place of work registration and employer's annual returns or retrenchment reporting, list of private employment agencies and report on foreign employee engaged. Besides that, it also offers a job-clearing system for the handicapped. By using this e-service, employers can send or update personal information, post job vacancies, search for job opportunities and apply online and seek advice and help from the ministry.

Another example of e-recruitment application is in the state of Sarawak, where the Sarawak Government has developed an e-recruitment application. The e-recruitment website is one of the online services provided by the Sarawak Government. The application is actually an online job application system for the state government of Sarawak. It provides an easy way to search and apply for vacancies in the Sarawak State Government. It allows submission and updates the application, personal details and qualification on-line, anywhere, anytime. Interestingly, any notification is sent immediately via e-mail and/or Short Messaging Service (SMS). Applicants can view application status and interview details online.

By using this system, applicants can search for any available jobs within the State Government of Sarawak. Applicants can submit and update their personal information in the system. Applicants can also apply the jobs online, lookup for timetables and venues of interviews, receive SMS or email containing interview time-tables, check online status of job application and interview results and finally receive information on available jobs personally via email.

Pros and Cons of e-recruitment

In most relevant literatures, there are some commonly identified advantages and disadvantages for the organisations which are using e-recruitment. The advantages of e-recruitment will be discussed first in this section and followed with the disadvantages.

One of the pros of e-recruitment is that e-recruitment facilitates the organisation to reach the large target and bring the qualified candidates. Millman (1998) cited in Rozelle & Landis (2002) suggested that online recruitment offers an efficient way to identify and classify a virtually unlimited number of job seekers. Similarly, e-recruitment allows employers to broaden the scope of their search, as a result significantly increasing the likelihood that high-quality candidates will be found (Markevieius, 2000). It has been sustained that e-recruitment can bring the qualified candidates to the employers. From relevant literature, applicants through the Internet are mostly young, computer literate, educated and showing some interest in the recruiting company ([Ganalaki, 2002]), (Zall, 2000)). From iLogos research 1998 (iLogo, 1998), results show that the Internet helps companies to attract better quality applicants and Internet users tend to be better-educated and obviously more computer literate than non-users. Additionally, e-recruitment can bring a never-ending
it is considered to attribute to the company an image especially when building a corporate recruitment site, E-recruitment can increase the image of organisation, [(Rudich, 2000), (Sunderland, 2000), (Weingarten, 1998)].

applications the very day a vacancy is posted on web response by candidates. The employers may receive practice is fast-tracked, starting with an immediately system can reduce the hiring time by two-thirds. This Bussler & Davis (2002) in particular, said that e-recruiting most widely adopted assumptions on e-recruitment. Not only cost saving that e-recruitment could bring to the company, but also the relevant literature presented savings [(Cullen, 2001), (Rudich, 2000)]. Furthermore, Elswick (2000) cited in Bussler & Davis (2002) that a good e-recruitment system could bring lower cost by 90%. It is similarly supported the greatest (2002) that a good e-recruitment system could bring reduced workload for human resource department. Also, in terms of time saving the result shows that e-recruitment can help companies achieve faster recruiting cycle. There are three results: faster posting jobs on the Internet, once a job is posted human resource department starts receiving resumes the same day and the Internet can speed up the processing period by automating some tasks. Moreover, a major human resource trade association recently conducted a survey to gauge the advertising costs of traditional recruiting methods versus Internet recruiting. It found that traditional advertising costs are more expensive that Internet recruiting (IDC, 2000).

Furthermore, Elswick (2000) cited in Bussler & Davis (2002) that a good e-recruitment system could bring lower cost by 90%. It is similarly supported the greatest benefit of e-recruitment by creating enormous financial savings [(Cullen, 2001), (Rudich, 2000)].

Not only cost saving that e-recruitment could bring to employers, but also the relevant literature presented that e-recruitment could help the company to save the recruiting process time. Time saving is the one of the most widely adopted assumptions on e-recruitment. Bussler & Davis (2002) in particular, said that e-recruiting system can reduce the hiring time by two-thirds. This practice is fast-tracked, starting with an immediately response by candidates. The employers may receive applications the very day a vacancy is posted on web [(Rudich, 2000), (Sunderland, 2000), (Weingarten, 1998)].

E-recruitment can increase the image of organisation, especially when building a corporate recruitment site, it is considered to attribute to the company an image of innovation and flexibility (Fister, 1999). The study from Pearce & Tuten(2001); Hogler (1998) presented that the organisation with a strong brand name and strong geographical presence found their corporate Website could attract more applicants. Finally, e-recruitment is considered as a very good tool to reach the global target (Ganalaki, 2002). It appears that other than language barriers, which can be overcome, the Internet has no boundaries.

However, there are some disadvantages of e-recruitment. The first issue that relates to drawback of e-recruitment and that is the discrimination issue forwarded to internet non-user [(Flynn, 2000), (Hogler, Henle & Bemus, 1998)]. It is claimed that e-recruitment may have a disparate impact on certain groups of particularly ethnic minorities. People may lack access to computers or do not have the skills necessary to use online recruitment. Therefore, employers need to remember that although the Internet has increased the geographic scope of recruitment, at the moment, it remains limited in its demographic scope (Hogler, Henle & Bemus, 1998).

Moreover, organisations find it difficult to recruit executive-level talent on the Internet. Arkin and Crabb (1999) conclude that executive job applicants still prefer personal contact. Similarly, a point from Seminerio (2001) is that, many companies will want to continue to use more traditional recruitment services for hiring certain employees, such as executive level staff. Arboledas, Ferrero and Vidal (2001) similarly argued that using e-recruitment tends to use only looking for junior positions and from recent university graduates. It is not suitable for recruiting top management. Also, there are some positions that are usually better resourced by using a newspaper or using both newspaper and website advertisement.

An organizational economic framework suggests that electronic recruiting will make up an important dimension of human resource management activity in the future. The technology, however, may have a disparate impact on certain groups of particularly ethnic minorities. People may lack access to computers or do not have the skills necessary to use online recruitment. They suggest that such a drawback could make it difficult for a company to achieve diversity goals and could represent a potential legal threat (Hogler, Henle & Bemus, 1998). The use of the Internet to hire can create discrimination issues (Flynn, 2000). Employers need to remember that although the Internet has increased the geographic scope of recruitment, at the moment, it remains limited in its demographic scope.
Another disadvantages that could be considered is the fact that e-recruitment proves more effective for companies already known (Greengard, 1998), (William & Klau, 1997)). However, Galanaki (2002) argued that the reputation of the company can prove a critical factor to the success of the recruitment effort, not only this is performed online, but with any other recruitment tool. Other issues that relate to e-recruitment is the risk of overload of resumes as the Internet makes it easier for applicants to summit their resumes and it remove all barriers of time and geography in communication between employers and applicants. As a result, it could create a huge volume of unqualified candidates (Ganalaki, 2002). Similarly, Pearce & Tuten (2001) argued that Web-based job sites yielded a high volume of applicants but a low quality fit.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, to become a developed nation by 2020, Malaysia is aggressively transforming the orderly current governance structure to more participatory comprising members from public, private and community - interest sectors through e-government. E-recruitment is an example of e-government applications. Several traditional and latest recruitment tools were reviewed. Internet recruitment is viewed as an important additional tool and traditional methods are continued to be used in recruiting process. This paper has discussed the pros and cons of e-recruitment practices in the previous section. The pros of e-recruitment were to identify and reach large of qualified candidates, advertise with dispersed location, provide cost effective method, save the recruiting process time and increase image of organization. The cons of e-recruitment were the discrimination issue forward to Internet non-user, difficult to recruit executive-level talent on the Internet, the digital divide gap between computer literate and illiterate and the risk of overload of resumes

4. REFERENCES