

Manchester Metropolitan University

Company description

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) is based at campuses in Manchester and 'MMU Cheshire' at Alsager and Crewe. The central Manchester campuses form part of the largest higher education campus in the UK and one of the most extensive education centres in Europe.

Challenge

To seamlessly integrate online recruitment into MMU's HR system, realising efficiency benefits and delivering service improvements to job applicants

Benefits

- A more efficient recruitment process saving time and money, and freeing up HR staff to focus on value-adding activity rather than administration.
- An online application facility and candidate tracking of job applications, contributing to a good first impression for potential employees.
- A seamless functional and visual integration with the university's main web site.

Background

Previously, all job applications at MMU were received either by post or by email attachments. This meant that all information had to be manually entered by the recruitment team within HR. The university wanted to streamline the system to improve efficiency, recognising that a fully-fledged internet solution would allow for automation of much of the recruitment process to achieve a lower cost-per-application.

Solution

After looking at a number of alternatives, MMU chose to adopt Internet Recruitment, an optional module within Recruitment, a core component of NorthgateArinso's solution. MMU were attracted by the way that the module would enable them to publish vacancies to their web site and then in turn receive candidate applications electronically, removing the burden of manual keying-in for the HR department.

How it works: the applicant experience

The 'jobs' link from the main MMU website opens up the university's Internet Recruitment site. Because this has a similar look and feel to the main site, as far as candidates are concerned there is an almost seamless transition between the two sites.

Once on the recruitment site, candidates see a list of current vacancies broken down into vacancy categories including 'academics', 'IT', and 'technicians'. A search facility further helps candidates to quickly find suitable vacancies, for which job descriptions can be downloaded.

Potential candidates can also configure RSS (Really Simple Syndication) 'feeds' to automatically receive updates of the latest vacancies without the need to return to the web site. They simply download one of the RSS aggregators (feeders) widely available on the internet and then determine how often it is updated, from as often as every minute to once every year. These regular updates mean that people don't have to remember to keep revisiting the web site and let MMU take a proactive approach to marketing its vacancies.

Visitors can also register as a candidate and select a password so that they can visit their own secure area each time they visit the site. Once registered, visitors can click to add vacancies to their own 'job basket' so they don't have to search for them again.

Registered visitors can also apply for jobs and upload supporting documentation such as application forms and CVs where applicable. They can then log in at any time to check on the progress of their application. Registration also means that if they apply for other vacancies in the future they don't need to re-key their details.

How it works: the HR experience

For the recruiters in the HR department, the overriding benefit of Internet Recruitment is the efficiency it has brought. This starts with the way that the recruitment web site is populated with information from the main HR system.



"What our customer said"

"Last year we received over 10,000 applications, if we save just half an hour of admin time per application that's equivalent to about three full time posts - so three HR professionals who could be released away from admin onto more productive work."

Craig Rayner
Manchester Metropolitan University

So when a job description and person specification is created within the HR system the information is pulled into the recruitment site to create the information that candidates need to see. If a change to the job details is made within system, the online details are automatically updated.

The efficiency continues with the application process. Because candidates now key-in their own personal details, the HR staff have just a small number of fields to complete. The candidate registration process also captures equal opportunities information, which enables appropriate reporting on candidate profiles.

Once the application has been submitted, an automatic acknowledgement can be sent and a record of all letters and emails sent to candidates is kept. Where appropriate, this information is also made available to candidates via their own password-enabled area on the recruitment site.

The MMU recruitment team can control when information about an application's progress is shown in each candidate's site area.

For example, they might want to send a letter saying that an application has been rejected but wait a few days before updating the candidate's site area with this news. This postdating facility helps MMU to communicate in the most appropriate way, with just a simple date entry needed to control it.

As a result of this communications capability, the HR team now spends much less time dealing with candidate enquiries, as MMU's Craig Rayner explains:

"We used to receive a great many calls from candidates who wanted to know the status of their application. Even a call as simple as 'did you receive my application' takes up valuable HR time. Now that candidates can check the progress of their application online the bulk of these calls have been removed."

When a candidate is accepted for a post the personal record created within Internet Recruitment is transferred to the main MMU HR system, delivering more efficiency. If on the other hand a candidate is rejected the records are kept for an appropriate period, up to the maximum time allowed under data protection rules.

How it works: security and visual style

On an organisation-wise level, MMU were naturally interested in the security features of Internet Recruitment. They were satisfied with the level of protection, including the system of candidate password reminders through email or personal questions.

The uploading of documents from candidates can also be configured to run with the university's virus software to identify infected documents before they pass through a firewall.

Another important issue for any organisation adopting a system that in effect forms part of their internet presence is that the corporate style is maintained. In MMU's case, they have given positive feedback that the recruitment web site has the same look and feel of the corporate site. They also confirmed that the same accessibility standards adhered to on the corporate site have been maintained with Internet Recruitment.

Conclusion

MMU's Craig Rayner reports a successful introduction and use of Internet Recruitment:

"It's a great introduction to the university to potential employees and feedback from candidates has been that the system is userfriendly. In the first few weeks we did get some feedback that elements of the system weren't so easy to use, so NorthgateArinso created help files that have solved the problem and that are now a standard feature of the solution when supplied to other customers."

"We advertised 650 posts last year and received over 10,000 applications, So even if we save just half an hour of admin time per application that's equivalent to about three full time posts -that's three HR professionals who could be released away from admin onto more productive work."

For more information

With the skills, experience and market knowledge of NorthgateArinso behind you, you too can be well placed to translate the HR challenges your organisation is facing into powerful opportunities.

For an initial discussion about your requirements, call us on 0800 035 0545.
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