Who is “Swimming” in Your Applicant Pool?

As an employer, you want to fill any opening in your organization with the best possible person for the job. But how do you go about finding the best individual for the job? You need to start with an applicant pool with qualified individuals.

It is a process which starts with a job analysis. A job analysis looks at the job and helps to determine (through observation, questionnaires, interview, etc.) what tasks, duties, and responsibilities (and the associated knowledge, skills, and abilities), are necessary for a person to possess in order to successfully handle the job. The second step is developing a job description from the job analysis. These first two steps are necessary because if you don’t know what is required for the job, how will you know what to put into your advertisement, what to look for in a job applicant, and where to look for applicants. Once the job description has been determined, the manager or human resources personnel can take the third step—beginning the recruitment process.

Various venues can be used depending on the position you want to fill. Some commonly used recruitment sources include newspapers, word of mouth, job postings, industry newsletters and web pages, professional meetings, company web pages, and the internet (Monster, Careerbuilders, etc.).

So which recruitment sources should you use? In order to determine what recruitment source(s) seem to work best, several local human resources professionals were asked the following question, “What recruitment source is the most successful for your company?” Linda Ferra, a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor for Ferra and Associates has found Cal Jobs to be a good source for clerical level positions. For professional level positions, she has been successful in finding applicants making announcements at professional group luncheons/meetings. Karen Wilson, Personnel Officer for the Housing Authority of the County of Kern, prefers to make personal contact with potential applicants or to network to find individuals. She also places ads in the local newspaper. Terri Thompson, Assistant Vice President of Branch Administration, who hires a number of part-time individuals, has been successful working with California State University, Bakersfield, and hiring college students for these positions. She, too, has been successful with “word of mouth”, and if necessary, she will place an ad in the newspaper. At State Farm Insurance, Mark Love, Human Resource Representative, utilizes all of the following sources: temporary vendors, job fairs, the State Farm Insurance web site, Monster.com, and word of mouth.

From these responses, you can see there is no single best source for recruitment. As a manager, you have to determine which recruitment source works best for your company. The
following criteria can help you determine what recruiting source(s) is working for your company.

1. Are you receiving a sufficient quantity and quality of applicants?
2. Is the cost of the recruitment source commensurate with the quality of the applicants applying for the job?
3. Has your past experience with this source delivered good results?
4. What is the long term effectiveness of your recruiting source?¹

Conducting a job analysis, completing a job description, and using appropriate recruiting sources are all important in making sure you have qualified applicants “swimming” in your applicant pool. With qualified applicants, making the final selection of the right person for the job becomes a decision made on job related information.