



The Marketplace

By Freddy Silverman, Jeitosa Group International

While major acquisition activity in the HR technology market has died down somewhat, vendors are still making smaller buys, as well as forming strategic partnerships with other vendors. Social networking tools continue to play a major role in product development across the HCM spectrum and particularly in recruiting and learning.

Let's look at the recruiting domain first.

One of the newest products is TalentBin. TalentBin has a toolset used to assess talent via social information and mine the data associated with a person online, such as his friends and their activities, to figure out that person's skills.

Similar to TalentBin are the offerings of two other vendors, Gild and Entelo. Gild Source is a technical recruiting tool that uses a three-pronged data mining approach to find the most qualified candidates. For example, if you were looking for a developer, Gild first searches communities where developers hang out, such as Github, Bitbucket and StackOverflow. It then evaluates the quality of the developers' public code and their professional knowledge, giving them a Gild score. Finally, it finds all of the candidate's social profiles and then presents ranked developer profiles which include, per Gild's website, "rich talent intelligence and social insights." An accompanying product is Gild Spark, which automates résumé reviews by matching a company's applicants against the Gild technical talent database. If there is a match, the already calculated Gild score is applied and the recruiter will receive ranked profiles of these applicants.

Entelo, while similarly creating a passive database of technical talent from the top sites where techies spend their time online, takes the process a step further. They have created a patent-pending algorithm, which looks at more than 70 variables that are leading indicators of an upcoming career change. Client companies receive daily e-mail alerts with these potential candidate names and profiles. Entelo has then wrapped other tools around these results: powerful filters to search, rank and query, as well as CRM (candidate relationship management) functionality to both share the results with an internal team and

import to an applicant tracking system. To round out the product, Entelo also provides a single view profile with contact information (e-mails, social networking profiles) to enable direct communication with the candidate. These new technologies offer an alternative to more traditional behavioral and skills assessments and automate steps that have, until now, been very labor intensive.

Continuing in the recruiting domain, there are many new market entries that each try to fill a niche in the recruiting process. Several vendors offer video interviewing capabilities, including HireVue, Talent Rooster, Interview Rocket, Alpine Interviews, Montage Talent, and Vidcruiter. SparkHire, not only provides video interview capability, but also video résumé functionality. Good Job leverages the power of social networks to increase employee engagement and spur high quality employee referrals. This provides client value, since research has repeatedly proven that employee referrals are one of the best sources of future high-performing employees.

Maximizing the use of social networking tools is a common theme among most vendors in the recruiting sphere. One product that fills a totally different niche is Terefic, which, if you haven't guessed by the spelling, focuses on references. By helping a candidate create a "sealed envelope" of references that the candidate can provide upon request, Terefic markets to the applicant. Whether or not you are currently applying for a job, you fill out a profile and request references via e-mail from former managers, employers, and coworkers. The references will be sent a list of questions from Terefic to which they will respond and send back to your profile. The references remain on your profile, but are confidential; the reference profile can be sent by you at any time to any employer.

Besides these niche products there are still the major players in the recruiting space with broad functionality. While LinkedIn is not a product specifically aimed at the HR technology market, it has in fact, become one of the top recruiting tools for many companies. Other major players continue to be Taleo (Oracle), Kenexa (IBM), and Lumesse (formerly Stepstone), which has a strong global presence. Workday, which currently does not offer recruiting functionality, announced at its annual conference that it will be developing its own solution to be released in 2014. SuccessFactors, an SAP company, recently announced a partnership with Talemetry to strengthen its recruiting functionality.

Continuing in the recruiting domain, there are many new market entries that each try to fill a niche in the recruiting process.

One word of caution here, integration at this stage may look more like interface under one product umbrella.

Talemetry is a talent generation solution; it searches the client's applicant tracking system, job board candidate databases, social networks, and the open Web for candidates based on attributes entered by recruiters. Its search tool uses semantic technology to look for "concepts;" the use of this technology purportedly produces much more valuable results than other search tools.

Let's move onto learning management systems (LMS). The LMS market is going through vast changes right now. Subsequent to the acquisition frenzy, with the most recent purchase being Skillsoft's acquisition of Mindleaders, one of its competitors, there has been the typical market shakeout. The pendulum is now swinging back to integrated systems rather than "best-of-breed" products because so many of those products are now part of a broader solution. As mentioned in the recruiting domain, the same acquisitions (Oracle of Taleo, IBM of Kenexa) have brought strong learning management tools into the ERP fold. Added to that list are SAP's acquisition of SuccessFactors (SuccessFactors had previously acquired Plateau, a major LMS) and ADP's rollout of its new LMS offering. It's clear that many HCM market leaders are strengthening their LMS functionality and expanding their integrated product offerings. Oracle is moving Taleo, which had previously acquired Learn.com, to the Oracle Public Cloud so it will not only be leveraged by Oracle premise tools, but also Oracle Fusion HCM.

One word of caution here, integration at this stage may look more like interface under one product umbrella. Workday has not offered LMS functionality to this point, but partners with and provides integrations (data transfers) to Saba, ExpertusONE, and Cornerstone onDemand, among others. The vendors who have chosen the acquisition path will be plowing funding and heavy development efforts over the short, and possibly, long-term to get these diverse products to connect more seamlessly and deter-

mine their future product portfolio.

How do social networking tools fit into the LMS sphere? Capitalizing on these popular tools, several vendors now offer social learning as part of their solution. SumTotal combines formal learning from traditional structured learning content with social-enabled learning programs. These programs have familiar social tools embedded, such as discussion forums, blogs, content ratings tools and content libraries, allow learners to collaborate and share knowledge around topics or activities and foster informal learning. This combination of formal and informal approaches claims to provide a richer learning experience, promotes knowledge retention, and ultimately drives improved business performance. Saba also offers a social learning solution as part of its Learning Management Suite. In addition to the accelerated knowledge flow, Saba states that the social learning method attracts high performers, encourages retention through connection and collaboration, and helps identify individual and team competencies for improved work management.

Whether or not the power of social tools will prove itself in the bottom line for all companies, these tools have undoubtedly had a major influence on product development and sales strategy in the HCM market. The most obvious impact has been in the recruiting and learning areas and it appears that vendors will continue to plumb the popularity of these tools as they expand their solutions, whether through internal product development, acquisition of complementary and competing products, or partnerships with niche providers.

About the Author



Freddy Silverman is vice president of the Eastern region for Jeitosa Group International, an HR consulting firm specializing in midmarket global strategy and systems deployment. She has more than 25 years of experience, both as a consultant and as VP of HR Technology Solutions at Cendant Corporation, responsible for technology strategic planning and oversight of global HR systems and the U.S. payroll system, serving 90,000 employees of multiple businesses in more than 50 countries. She also serves as an associate editor for the IHRIM *Workforce Solutions Review* magazine. She can be reached at Freddye.silverman@jeitosa.com.