

Superdrug prescribes e-recruitment to enhance employer brand and improve talent management

Superdrug is a leading health and beauty retailer with over 700 stores throughout the UK. The company employs 12,500 people and serves over 4.5 million customers each week. To remain a market leader, effective talent management is critical. The introduction of an online recruitment tool from Jobpartners has enabled Superdrug to take its recruitment process to another level and enhance the employer brand, as well as make impressive cost savings.

A slow and lengthy recruitment process

Superdrug is continually searching for hot talent for positions which range from store managers to pharmacists to head office roles. In late 2004, Superdrug launched its careers website and ran several job-board campaigns to help fill vacancies across the UK. There was a fantastic response with an average of around 2000 CVs per month. However, at that time applications were sent to a central email address and were administered using spreadsheets and email. Processing such a large number of CVs became a hugely time-consuming task, particularly for the field recruiters.

“Our employer brand is very important in helping us to attract talent. It is therefore essential that our recruitment process is as fast and efficient as possible,” explained Fiona McLean, HR Manager, at Superdrug. “Following the launch of our careers website, it soon became clear that we needed a tool to help us streamline our recruitment process and to help us quickly and efficiently process large numbers of applications. We also wanted to reduce the administrative burden of processing CVs.”

Moving recruitment online

The decision was made to automate recruitment by moving the entire process online. Hire Strategies, a retail consulting company, was engaged by Superdrug to assist with sourcing the best online recruitment solution to meet Superdrug’s needs. After reviewing the offerings of nine software providers, Jobpartners’ ActiveRecruiter was chosen. ActiveRecruiter has been designed to manage the entire recruitment process and support internal mobility.

ActiveRecruiter is currently being used by regional, head office and distribution HR teams across the UK to fill vacancies for store managers, assistant store managers, pharmacists, head office and distribution management roles.

“ActiveRecruiter eases the pressure of dealing with high volumes of applications, and is very easy to use,” commented Fiona McLean. “The application process gathers the essential selection information and the candidate management ensures effective and timely communication with applicants.”

The Issue

Superdrug receives over 2,000 CVs per month for various vacancies. Without a tool into place, processing a large number of CVs became a hugely time-consuming task. In order not to put the employer brand in jeopardy, it was critical for Superdrug to have a faster and more efficient recruitment process.

The Solution

Superdrug chose ActiveRecruiter, designed to manage the entire recruitment process and support internal mobility.

Cost savings have been dramatic – Superdrug has reduced its cost per hire by 87%, and the company now recruits 54% of all its store and head office management and pharmacist vacancies via its website.

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Making applications easy

To apply for a vacancy, applicants simply go to www.superdrug.jobs to view the positions available and apply for specific vacancies. Candidates are provided with a user profile and can update their profiles, search for positions and create email alerts for positions matching their criteria. They can also monitor the progress of their application online.

ActiveRecruiter makes the first match between the job requirements and the competencies and experience of the candidate. The system then retains a pool of applicants on file, which ensures Superdrug has a readily available supply of CVs for open positions. Each registered applicant is automatically asked to update his or her CV in order to remain active on the system. The system then has the capability to search an expanding database of future interest when open positions arise if required.

Internal applicants are encouraged to visit the website to view the list of vacancies. According to the Superdrug KPI log for the regional HR managers, it appears that for retail, i.e. store specialists, assistant store managers and store managers, 85% of recruitment has been from internal applicants in past year.

"This means we are definitely 'growing our own'," Fiona McLean commented. "Through the success of our training and induction programmes we are equipping our sales assistants with the skills to progress through to management roles within the organisation."

In the near future, Superdrug will be using the ActiveRecruiter Candidate Gateway to ensure all vacancies on the website are also automatically posted to the company's intranet so employees can log on and see a complete list of vacancies and apply directly, which will help to encourage internal mobility even further.

The company has recently begun to sell 3 phones in its stores and successfully sourced phone specialists via ActiveRecruiter. These specialists needed to be fun, friendly and passionate people to work in-store selling the 3 phones to a predominantly female market. As well as using ActiveRecruiter, Superdrug used job-boards aimed at the target candidates such as Handbag.com and also placed a national advert on Totaljobs. Using ActiveRecruiter, Superdrug was able to post adverts directly to the job-boards. Candidates using the job-boards could then apply online via Superdrug's careers website. The result was a high number of very capable applicants.

Fast, effective recruitment and great cost savings

ActiveRecruiter provides a single source for all of Superdrug's recruitment information and the recruitment process has become considerably quicker and more efficient than before.

About Jobpartners :

Jobpartners is a unique supplier of software and services for people management : no other company can match our expertise in delivering rapid, workable & effective solutions to real business challenges. We are recognised as the market leader in Europe.

HR processes we cover include:

- Recruitment
- Internal Mobility
- Annual Review
- Compensation Review
- Career Development
- Personal Development plans
- Executives Management
- Key People Management

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“Prior to implementing ActiveRecruiter, we were always a bit nervous about placing recruitment adverts online as the company couldn’t handle huge numbers of CVs,” explained Fiona McLean. “We can now advertise on job-boards with confidence as we know we can deal with applications efficiently. Faster response times together with greater consistency in handling CVs are helping us to meet our objective of improving the Superdrug employer brand and attract, hire and retain talented people.”

Cost savings have been dramatic – Superdrug has reduced its cost per hire by 87%, and the company now recruits 54% of all its store and head office management and pharmacist vacancies via its website. Superdrug also uses recruitment agencies to find candidates and has provided its suppliers with a unique log-on to the website. This ensures that the agencies are notified of new vacancies, and that candidates who are put forward can be tracked through the process and can be given specific feedback.

In early 2007, Superdrug plans to trial online recruitment amongst its in-store sales teams. Store managers recruit for sales staff at a local level so the trial will provide them with access to ActiveRecruiter with the aim of making recruitment much easier to manage and more effective for this population. Superdrug hopes to utilise mobile phones as part of application process. This will mean that candidates can text a mobile phone number advertised on in-store posters as the first stage of their application. They then complete a mini application form on their phone which is automatically sent back to be processed by ActiveRecruiter. As well as providing a greater choice of application methods, the text service is very immediate and therefore is in keeping with the Superdrug values of being bold and fast in its recruitment. Candidates will be able to continue to keep in contact with www.superdrug.jobs by text if they choose, however as the process is fully integrated with the Superdrug e-recruitment solution the applicant can still chose to update their details via the website.

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Fiona McLean
HR Manager
Superdrug

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