

# Online Tools and Transformation Techniques for the Looming Talent Shortage

BY MARTY WEIL



*Freelance writer Marty Weil writes a column for Data Center Management called "Personnel Data." He focuses on the human aspect of data centers, so you can look to Marty to help solve some of the people problems in your facility.*

When talking to data center managers about meeting new staffing needs, the two elements mentioned repeatedly are application transformation and online recruiting tools. Two characteristics link those who comprise this new wave of data center employees: an unflinching orientation toward the new, and behavioral patterns shaped by growing up in the Internet age.

Legacy applications are a core part of any data center, although they can be rigid, costly, and hinder company growth. Within the next few years, more than 75 million baby boomers, the creators and keepers of these legacy applications, are expected to retire, taking their knowledge with them. The new hires that will replace retirees may not have or even be interested in the skills necessary to run applications the old-fashioned way.

"Addressing the issue of legacy applications before older employees retire can be a starting point for transforming an organization's application environment," says Paul Evans, worldwide lead, application transformation solutions, at Hewlett-Packard. "Organizations can access the outgoing knowledge and skills held by retiring baby boomers to create a foundation for an application transformation strategy."

According to Evans, CIOs can determine, through a visual assessment, which applications are critical to the business and then evolve the application environment in a more efficient way to help manage shifting business demands and drive growth. By consolidating and modernizing the application environment now, CIOs will minimize the risk of a knowledge gap when baby boomers retire. They will also make the data center environment—inherited by the new generation of workers—more appealing and less daunting.

These strategies should find further support as part of overall data center transformation efforts, which industry analyst Gartner says are driving down costs and minimizing risk while helping to foster growth. Application transformation is described as one of the key "touch points" in this adaptive development.

## The New Recruiting Toolkit

How do HR personnel and recruiters use online resources to find data center management talent to fill positions that require very specific technical skills?

"The first step typically is to look in a company's own resume database," says Raj Singh, co-founder of



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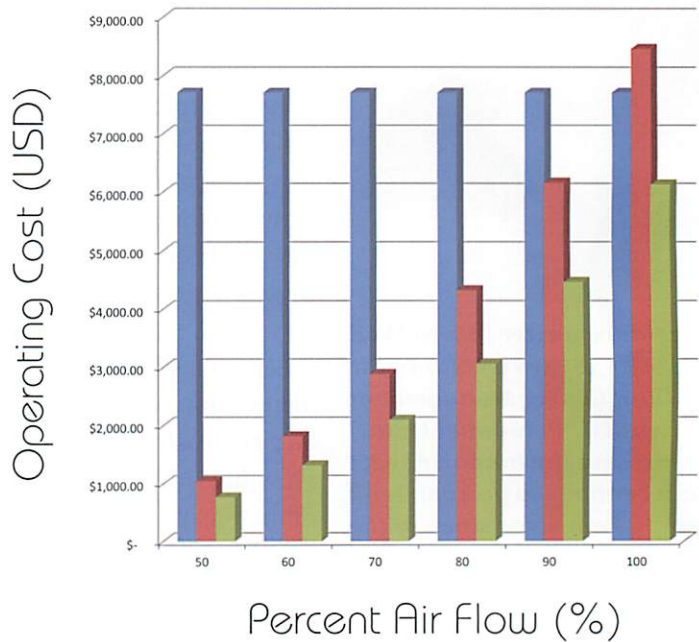
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myJoblinx, a Facebook-based application that boosts referral hiring by unleashing an individual's hidden network. "Someone who was looking for a job a few years ago may be in a more senior position now." The next step is to search the resume databases of online recruiting services such as Monster or Careerbuilder to cast a wide net and narrow the results slowly.

According to Singh, online social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook are excellent for locating individuals. Facebook applications such as myJoblinx also make it easier to form unique talent networks and proliferate job openings online.

"By installing myJoblinx, users can search for a job, see friends at companies, and ask them for referrals," notes Singh.

Searching online via search engines such as Google can also be very helpful. A recruiter can construct strict Boolean strings and run them through a search engine to find conference attendee lists, publications, and so on as sources of candidates. "Typically, any good search string will contain a few job titles of the target position," says Singh. "A good recruiter would use variations."

Perhaps the most significant current online recruiting tools is SimplyHired.com (SimplyHired), the largest job search engine and recruitment advertising network, used by more than 16 million job seekers monthly. Recruiters using this service know their listing is being viewed by the largest possible pool of candidates; they can see the number of times each of their job postings have been viewed on SimplyHired

and its network of 10,000 publisher sites.

"Our account management team has always worked with data center recruiters to apply best practices and engineering resources to optimize their job content," says Gautam Godhwani, CEO and co-founder of SimplyHired. Nothing is certain with search optimization, but SimplyHired recognizes relevant content with the intent to improve performance and help recruiters

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get better overall results. According to Godhwani, as of this writing, there are just under 140,000 positions nationwide for data center-related positions.

Recruiters can gain insight into common job titles and competition simply by running a search on SimplyHired.com. By searching for a specific job title, recruiters can discover the number of similar jobs listed in the US. They can also experiment with different titles to compare their popularity. Titles that produce fewer job listings

may be more competitive due to limited supply, whereas those with high job counts tend to be less competitive.

For local analysis, recruiters can enter a job title in conjunction with a specific location to learn of any slight differences in titles within area job markets. With this information, recruiters can best tailor their job titles based on the market.

SimplyHired also produces a monthly Employment Outlook Report, a summary and analysis of national employment trends. The findings are based on monthly job seeker activity on SimplyHired.com, which aggregates millions of listings from thousands of employment sites, as well as data obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Recruiters can also use the site's trends tool to compare growth rates of different jobs and keywords related to them.

"With a better understanding of what positions are the most competitive, what skill sets are most in demand, and what regions face talent shortages, recruiters are better informed about current hiring trends and the relative strength of their company in the hiring market," concludes Godhwani.

According to comScore Inc., a global leader in measuring digital performance, traffic at employment-related websites has risen sharply with the unemployment rate. As data center opportunities proliferate with the retirement of baby boomers, those who grew up surfing the Web will most likely continue to turn to such sites as prime resources for their own career development.

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