

# How companies can use LinkedIn to reach passive candidates

 By [Matthew Gray](#)

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Companies are increasingly targeting passive candidates to fill vacancies as the skills shortage takes its toll on the availability of skilled candidates who are actively looking for a job.

While around 20% of the workforce is made up of active candidates, this pool is increasingly dominated by more common skill sets, as companies do more to retain employees with scarcer skill sets. This forces companies into a strategic sourcing scenario where they are increasingly required to target passive candidates, who have no immediate plans to move to a new company.

However, reaching passive candidates can be a costly, imprecise exercise with companies using recruitment agencies or mass media advertising to build their employer brand and reach passive candidates - more than often producing very poor results.

LinkedIn provides corporate recruiters with the ability to easily target passive candidates and create a talent pipeline to ensure the right skill sets move into a company as vacancies open up.

Of the 225 million users on LinkedIn, only 20% are actively pursuing job opportunities, while 80% are passive candidates. Locally, LinkedIn has grown to 2.5 million users and is growing at over 3000 new South African members per day.

Interestingly on LinkedIn, job seeking ranks third behind engaging over relevant content and networking with other professionals.

## Search, target and engage

Users' desire to participate in relevant discussions and grow their personal network means that they generally have detailed profiles and LinkedIn's recruitment solutions give companies the ability to search for relevant candidates, target these passive candidates directly, and engage them to grow talent pipelines. This process of searching for specific people according to defined criteria is called strategic sourcing.

Companies can also source candidates automatically on LinkedIn through job placements on employee profiles, targeting specific highly sort after skill sets or create alerts when a profile matching search criteria is added to LinkedIn or an existing profile is updated. This makes companies aware of potential candidates without having to actively go and look for

them.

Furthermore, companies can build their employer brand through company pages or portals targeting specific skill sets, adding content and participating in group discussions on LinkedIn to build their employer brand with passive candidates.

Once companies begin to use LinkedIn to target passive users, there are different strategies that can be used to build their talent pipelines.

Here are five key recruitment tips from LinkedIn on proactively targeting passive candidates:

1. Identify the right talent early. If you're waiting until you need a hire to start looking for candidates, you're too late.
2. Reduce your time to fill. Establishing an on-going dialogue with candidates you prefer gives you the option to accelerate the discussion when the time is right.
3. Prevent superstar candidates from slipping away. When the time to recruit arrives, you're already top of mind for your chosen candidate, reducing the risk of a salary war against the competition.
4. Minimize the business disruption caused by vacancies, especially unexpected ones, making you a better partner to the business.
5. Strengthen your company employment brand, as well as awareness that you're hiring, by being continually 'out there' engaging prospective candidates.

## ABOUT MATTHEW GRAY

Matthew Gray is client service director at cloud based e-recruitment company, Graylink. Passionate about the growth of digital and its role in rapidly changing business processes, Matthew has been at the forefront of solutions delivery, driving recruiting process change to Graylink's customer base, since the inception of the business in 2003.

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