



Enterprise Search for the Recruiting Industry: How UnitedHealth Group Increased Employee Effectiveness and User Adoption with Kona DataSearch

From 2008 to 2013, UnitedHealth Group's (UHG) talent sourcers and recruiters used Oracle's CRM On Demand product — known internally as “the pipe” (short for “pipeline”) — as a pre-applicant tracking system. The pipe was, essentially, UHG's primary recruitment tool, the database through which all candidate searches were performed. Theoretically the pipe was supposed to track all of sourcing and recruitment's activities and serve as a tool by which managers could judge their teams' performance. In reality, it didn't always work out this way.

“We monitored adoption of the pipe, literally to the point where we did a sign-on report that showed us who was logging in and using the system,” explained the Associate Director, Talent Acquisition Delivery, for UHG. “There's no question adoption was abysmal.”

According to the Recruiting Manager the poor adoption rates were due to severe limitations built into the pipe's functionality. “There were limitations to how the system interfaced with Taleo,” he said. “And there were major limitations to search.”

Inability to Search Attachments Led to Endless Frustration

The pipe's lack of functionality with regards to search caused widespread frustration throughout the organization. “We could upload attachments but we couldn't search any of those attachments, and when we entered a contact, we had to create multiple fields. If you were going to search for the contact later, you had to fill out all the fields,” said the Recruiting Manager. “The ability to get out of it what you put into it was our biggest issue.”

Because talent sourcers were held accountable for the activities they performed in the pipe, they didn't hold back when it came to voicing their displeasure with the system. According to the Senior Director of Talent Acquisition, “We tracked all this data they

were held accountable for, and because it was what their performance was measured against, they were very vocal about the system's lack of functionality.”

The Recruiting Manager continued, “It became really obvious recruiters were the primary users. We wanted the recruiters to use it and they just wouldn't.”

“From the recruitment side there wasn't any real engagement. We wanted them to use it to find candidates and they wouldn't, because it was just too difficult to do a search,” said the Senior Director.

“You could put a candidate in there one month and go back a month later, and unless you remembered the candidate's exact information, it was impossible to find them,” added the Manager.

“The UHG project had an outstanding outcome. They've referred to it as one of the best projects they've ever done in HR.”

UnitedHealth Group at a Glance

- Fortune 100 health care provider
- 100,000+ employees in 33 countries
- Sourcing and recruitment teams filled 30,000 jobs in 2013
- Implemented Salesforce and Kona DataSearch in July 2013

The Switch to “Search on Steroids”

UHG’s leadership team created a pipe user council to serve as a forum for these complaints, and it soon became clear an entirely new solution was needed. Together with the Solution Delivery Director at Apex IT, and his team, UHG began a comprehensive requirements gathering process that engaged numerous stakeholders within the organization.

“There was an exhaustive review process,” said the Associate Director, Talent Acquisition Delivery for UHG. “It was not an easy decision overall. The talent acquisition team was incredibly frustrated with the lack of functionality from Oracle, so we wanted to make sure that whatever we went with was going to be something recruiters and sourcers could get excited about. There was a lot of drag from an employee engagement perspective around Oracle. We wanted a certain level of adoption with whatever we went with, so it was really critical that we made the right decision.”

Ultimately, UHG chose Salesforce as their system of choice. “The organization already had some experience with Salesforce, which was a positive contributing factor,” said the Associate Director.

While Salesforce’s global search capabilities were an improvement upon the pipe, the Solution Delivery Director knew they wouldn’t be robust enough to meet UHG’s needs. “The issue was really that they wanted to be able to do Google-like searches,” he said. “For that, we needed to look outside of the Force.com platform.”

“We knew Salesforce had global search,” said the Sr. Director of Talent Acquisition, “but we really wanted to be able to take it up a notch and provide our team members with what I like to call ‘Search on Steroids.’”

On a recommendation from Apex IT Solution Delivery Director, UHG decided to include Kona DataSearch in the scope of their implementation project. “Apex IT talked about Kona as a great company with a great reputation that could deliver what we needed,” UHG’s Recruiting Manager said.

Kona’s ability to search attachments and allow team members to perform Google-like searches proved to

be exactly what UHG’s sourcing and recruitment teams needed. “Kona was one of the most exciting things about implementation for our users,” the Manager said. “There was a lot of positivity around it.”

Implementation began in July 2013 and the resulting effects since then have been increasingly promising. “The recruiters are using it now!” said UHG’s Sr. Director of Talent Acquisition.

According to the Recruiting Manager, adoption has been high across the board. “The numbers were dismal when we were on Oracle and they are much, much better now,” he said.

“Some of our more savvy early adopters have very informally started to congregate and share best practices,” said Associate Director, Talent Acquisition Delivery. “They’re sharing ideas over Chatter, picking up the phone and saying, ‘Hey, how did you do that?’”

“If you need a hammer, and you don’t have a hammer in your toolbox, it’s very frustrating,” said the Recruiting Manager. “It’s like, ‘How do I drive this nail?’ Kona takes that level of frustration out, and that’s huge.”

Manager of Recruitment Services sees Kona as a huge asset. “For my team, it’s a matter of efficiency,” she said. “They’re just better able to do their job. The increased access to information through more powerful search capabilities breaks down silos. It creates the ability for them to network within talent acquisition. It makes them more intelligent about what’s happening cross-functionally.”

“It’s like, ‘Okay, I didn’t have a car before, and now I have one that runs,’” the Recruiting Manager said. “And with Kona, it’s like, ‘Hey, we have a Bimmer here, so hop on board!’”

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Enterprise Search Must-Haves for Recruiting Teams

1. The ability to search attachments
2. The ability to filter searches
3. The ability to search keywords
4. “Google-like” keyword highlighting



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