

# The social side of recruitment

 By [Shan Raddiffe](#)

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Technology is rapidly expanding recruiters' reach to potential candidates, but the core basics remain the same. Job ads now appear online rather than in newspaper classifieds; recruiters leverage online resources and connections to canvass talent; and now, word-of-mouth referrals have gone social.



George Binikos, CEO of Global Refer

We speak to George Binikos, the CEO of social recruitment platform [Global Refer](#), about the company's origins and success, and what is in store for the future.

## ■ ***Tell us about Global Refer and how it all started?***

Prior to starting Global Refer, I had a small business and I wanted to recruit a new staff member. After paying for an advert on a job portal and not finding a suitable candidate, I considered a recruitment agency, which in the end, was going to be too costly for my small business.

In the end, I asked around and eventually word got out through people I knew that I was looking to hire someone and I filled the position. Little did I know, what I was actually doing was referral recruitment.

For some time, I kept thinking about this process, wondering why asking around had worked so well and whether there were systems out there that worked on this basis?

I started researching the South African market and found nothing. I therefore researched the international market and there was the answer. The market was moving towards social recruitment, which combined referrals with social networks. And immediately it hit me: with Facebook, there is a market of 2-billion people already connected online to people they know - what better way is there to get the word out that you're looking to hire staff by starting with the people you know and letting them refer to their friends and family?

Not only would you reach people looking for jobs, but also people not actively looking yet might be interested if the right job came along.

I decided there and then to build a platform for the South African market. It also seemed so obvious once I understood what I was looking for, that both companies doing internal recruitment and agencies recruiting on behalf of companies would benefit from the system.

Initially I thought we would be competing with recruitment agencies but this was not the case. What we would be competing with was job portals, as both companies and agencies use portals to advertise their positions. The common denominator and our competitor was the job portal. My mission had become clear, replace the job portal with, in essence, a modern-day job portal which incorporated a social element ie. Facebook and then LinkedIn and Twitter.

So I approached an e-commerce development company to build the platform. In doing so, I got quite close to the head of development, who was personally working on the project and enjoyed and believed in what we were building.

After we had built version 1, he resigned and joined the project full time and Global Refer was born. Although we had a minimum viable product at that stage, we never went to market straight away, and decided we wanted to provide a platform that was backed by dynamic technology.

We spent two years improving the platform and building additional features. We took a chance and never knew whether it would work until we tried it, so we had to believe in what we were doing and we had to first build before we could test it. Once we had built it, we had to convince someone to try it.

We were blown away with the results of our first advert, which was only posted on Facebook. The advert received 1072 views within three days, 504 of those coming within 24 hours, with 205 views in the first hour. We also got 26 shares and 24 applications and the company had made a hire within five days and advised us they had seen six suitable candidates who could have filled the position. What was also surprising was that after three days, there were very few new views or applications. That is how quickly social media moves - the entire campaign basically happened within three days!

We knew there and then we had created something fast and all we had to do was position the pricing at a fraction of the cost of a job portal to make it accessible for everyone to use and we would get traction. To place a single advert costs R150 or R1000pm for unlimited use.

### **How does the platform work?**

There's a simple sign up process, requiring only an email address and a password. Once signed up, we capture the company details including the company logo, which is displayed with each advert posted on social media and a company address providing the Google maps location and directions, along with the actual job specs.

Once the advert is created, you can set a reward and share the advert. The whole process takes less than five minutes. Anyone who sees the advert can click on it and apply immediately for the position, or they can share the advert to their networks.

Let me explain the reward. The reward is to incentivise people to share the advert - in this case your company employees or extended networks. It turns everyone who shares the advert into a recruiter.

If you take, for example, a company that employs a 1000 people, by sending them the advert with a reward there is an incentive for them to share the advert. If all the people shared the advert and let's say all the employees had 500 unique friends each, it means the advert would reach 500,000 people within hours or a couple of days. These days, people are connected and tuned into social media, so they receive and apply 'share' quickly.

There is then the option for those 500,000 people to share the advert to their networks and in turn the audience and reach grows even larger.

In the case of agencies, they have thousands of people on their database so not only is it a convenient and easy way to let them know of new openings, but their potential audience on social media is enormous.

The reward incentivises this. The way the reward works is that if a single referrer finds a match, they get the whole reward. When there is more than one referrer, the final referrer gets half the reward and the other half is split between previous referrers who also shared the ad. Giving the final referrer the bulk of the reward ensures there is strong incentive to keep sharing.

We track the entire chain through our applicant tracking system. This is also how social recruitment is different to job portals - the reward is only paid if there is a successful hire, there is no risk. The advert also reaches passive candidates and the advert pops up in your social media. There is no need to visit a job portal. In the case of our first advert, 40 of the company's employees who received the advert posted it to their Facebook profiles and it generated 1072 views.

Other benefits the platform provides: Customise and save contact lists so that adverts can be sent to specific groups to share. You can monitor real-time job ad performance by viewing the ad statistics in the dashboard. This will tell you how many views, shares and applications every job ad has received.

From the dashboard, you can go to the "inbox" to view all the applicants' CVs and make contact. Applicants' replies are automatically forwarded to your inbox, so that you have a single, centralised and convenient way to keep tabs on communications with applicants. You can keep all this information forever without it crowding your main work email. You can upload application forms and other additional documents effortlessly.

You can create additional user accounts under your profile, should you have colleagues involved in the hiring process, while granting access levels to each user. The platform also lets you manage applications in your pipeline from initial application to interview sequences, reference checking, testing, placing job offers and signing contracts.

You can schedule appointments and interviews easily through the calendar feature. You can also connect your careers page to receive all these benefits for applicants you already generate through your own website. Just send us an email and we will do the integration. The latest feature we are working on is a CV template for applicants to complete when applying which will make it quicker for recruiters to scan through multiple CV's and apply filters should they wish.

### ***What have been the driving factors behind its creation?***

It all started off with an experience when hiring and thinking there must be another way to do this. Technology is the driving force behind innovation today. When you consider the impact of social platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn and the way we function as a society, it is significant.

Social media has completely transformed the way we communicate with each other - from keeping in contact and sharing news or how we look for jobs. People are already using social media to hire, we have just formalised and provided the tools to maximise the process.

Another factor was the rise of smartphones. A stat I recently read identified that 65% of adults are using social media on their smartphones on a regular basis. It makes sense recruiting would happen there as well. Online platforms such as LinkedIn are already hugely popular for recruiters when hiring.

### ■ ***What has been the initial reaction to the initiative?***

Very positive from agencies and companies who do internal recruiting. It's much cheaper, faster and easier to navigate; results are instant. One of our clients, Afrihost, gave the following referral: "Global Refer is a technological gem! A truly unique service in a quickly changing industry! The power of social media is no longer up for debate and we believe this service is keeping up with that trend, whether you recruiting in bulk or you looking for a highly skilled individual. The notion that you can find your candidates through sharing a simple ad is actually quite incredible! The numbers quickly pile up; we went from one ad being shared all the way to several hundred applications within hours!"

### ■ ***What's at the top of your wish list for Global Refer?***

To get real traction in the market place. We are still early in the process in South Africa, so we are doing a lot of educating on the benefits of social recruiting. To help with this, we offer a free trial to any client which is accessible upon sign-up. We believe that social recruitment will attract better quality talent for recruiters and also help candidates find better suited jobs referred by people they know and trust. If we can connect people hiring to people looking for jobs in a better way, we have achieved our mission.

### ■ ***Where do you see Global Refer in five years?***

What's clear internationally is that everyone is using social recruitment as part of their recruitment strategy. We would like the same for South Africa and we would like to expand internationally as well. There are so many South African companies that have done well overseas, we would like to be one of them!

## ABOUT SHAN RADCLIFFE

Shan Radcliffe is the editor of Bizcommunity HR, Education and Legal.  
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