

Q4 2018

echogravity

magazine

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Rethinking Your Marketing Strategy

**Your Best
Marketers
Might Not
Be on Your
Marketing
Team**



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Kevin O'Brien
Co-Founder and Partner
at echogravity



As we approach the end of 2018, we reflect on the innovation and success that the staffing and recruiting industry has seen this past year. Our clients in the space have thrived – with many growing exponentially since January, thanks to cutting-edge and strategically-focused hiring processes for contractors and internal candidates alike. Companies maintained their laser focus on filling orders, leveraging new technologies to manage their talent pools. We're clearly witnessing a transformation in the industry like we've never seen before.

So, what's next? As an industry, can we maintain this same level of innovation and success as we head into the new year?

As companies continue to strategize tactics for maintaining sustainable candidate marketing, I foresee a major shift towards sales processes and brand awareness. For the past 18 months, many of our clients have been focusing on their candidate acquisition strategy – hesitant to encourage more orders because they were struggling to find the candidates to fill them. This pattern will inevitably shift. Companies will catch up with their funnel and must be proactive with their sales efforts.

That time is now. If you haven't started planning your new business prospecting strategy for 2019, you need to start – despite your current ratio of open orders to available candidates. We live in cycles, and those who are ahead of the curve on sales will come out on top during times of moderate growth.

At echogravity, we are entrenched in the staffing and recruiting business and strive to be ten steps ahead of trends in order to keep our clients in a competitive position. If you would like to discuss any of the industry insights within these pages or learn more about how we can help you achieve your unique business goals, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin O'Brien'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kevin O'Brien

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our best recruiters and account managers know your industry intimately. They understand the challenges, needs, and goals of jobseekers and clients alike. And they've got the commissions to show for it.

But are they reaching their full potential? It's a hard pill to swallow, but if your company's brand messaging (i.e. the key messages behind any taglines, sales collateral, web copy, social posts, email campaigns, blog posts, whitepapers, etc.) isn't clearly built and communicated, the answer is no.

Here are four quick but effective tips to bring your brand to life and empower your employees for greater achievements.

1. Dial in Your Target Audiences

Your recruiters and salespeople know each client or candidate on an individual level, but to create effective brand messaging, you need to categorize your audiences. Go deeper than just "clients" and "candidates." For clients, dial in to their industry verticals, departments, and titles. For candidates, recognize the differences between early-career and late-career professionals.

Then, for every audience segment, find out what makes them tick. What are their common challenges and goals? What is their background and what do they value? Where do they go to find answers? Documenting your target audiences is a crucial first step to building your brand.

2. Align Your Differentiators

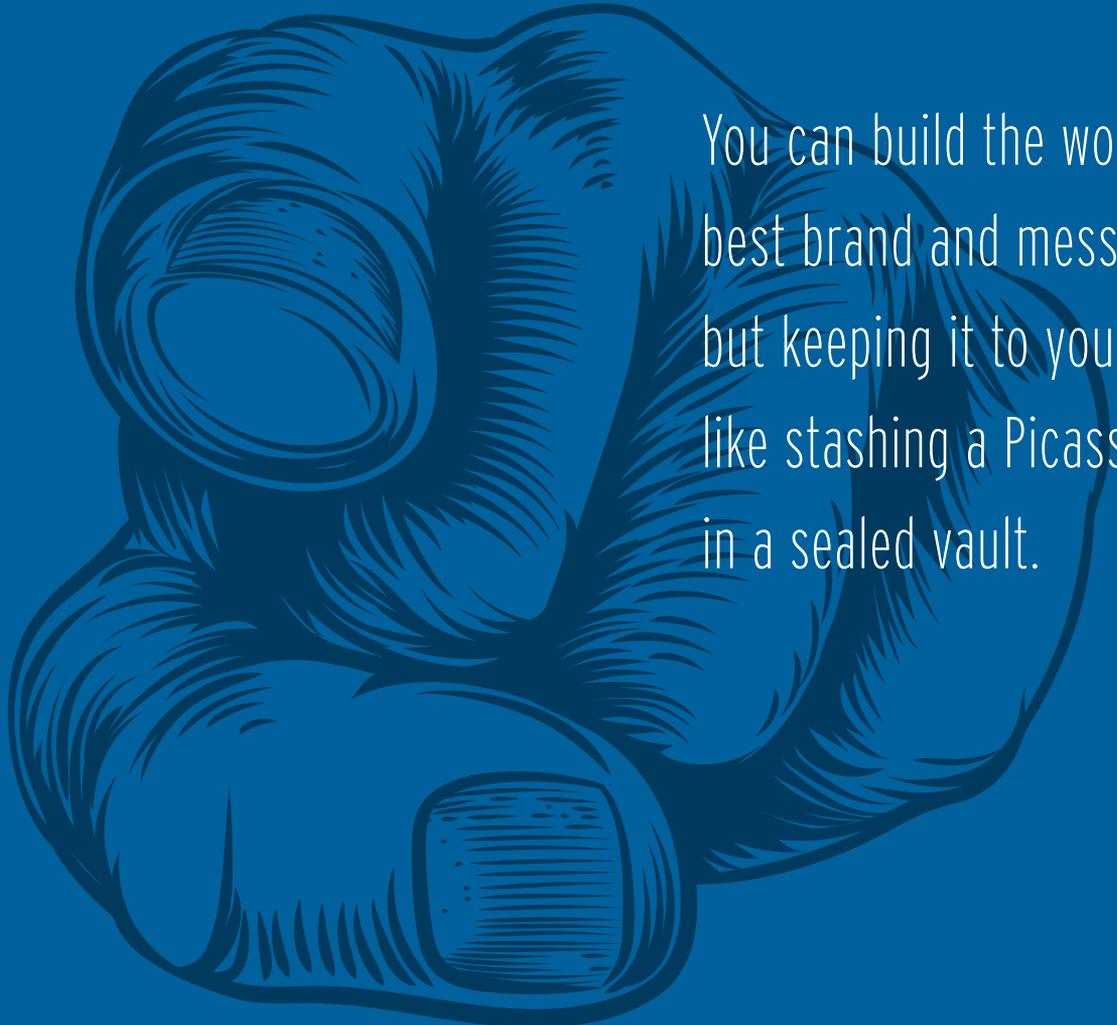
With audience goals and pain points defined, it's time to turn your attention inward. Thousands of staffing firms claim to connect top talent with great organizations, but what actually sets you apart? What are your unique



We Want You!

What Your Recruiters Need from Your Marketing Team

BY CLARE VANDERWEELE



You can build the world's best brand and messaging, but keeping it to yourself is like stashing a Picasso in a sealed vault.

strengths? Why are you and your team passionate about what you do? Why do your clients choose you over your competitors?

Document your differentiators and see how they align with the goals and needs of each audience segment. If you're struggling to define what makes you different, can you create a genuine differentiator based on your audience's needs?

3. Build Your Brand Messaging Accordingly

Once you have your differentiators, it's time for the meat of your brand messaging. Think about the voice that best reflects the personality of your company. Consider what kind of words build the brand image you want to achieve. Is your brand fun or professional? Is it provocative or straightforward? Is it a mix of all these?

Using these voice and word choices to help you document your brand promise and key messages, consider how they align with each target audience and how they demonstrate your differentiators.

4. Shout It from the Rooftops

You can build the world's best brand and messaging, but keeping it to yourself is like stashing a Picasso in a sealed vault. Now is the time to reap the fruits of your labor through communication. With your documented brand messaging in your firm's back pocket, life becomes easier for everyone.

Refining your brand and creating a foundation for messaging creates consistency across your organization while tailoring highly targeted communications to each audience segment. Refer back to it every time you send an email, write a blog, post on LinkedIn, or create new sales collateral.

When you can speak the same language as potential clients and candidates, they're much more receptive to hear what you've got to say.

If it feels like you're doing everything else right but still have trouble keeping your talent or client pipeline strong, then it's time to overhaul your messaging.



Client Spotlight

ATR INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

BY KEVIN O'BRIEN

A big reason why we love what we do here at echogravity is that we get to work with many extraordinary staffing firms who are leaders in their spaces. As one of these clients, ATR International, celebrates their 30th anniversary, we wanted to take a moment to celebrate the ways they've set themselves apart and have grown into a premier organization.

Setting the Stage

Right from its inception in 1988, ATR was different. It was founded by two immigrants, Jerry Brenholz and Maria Novoa-Brenholz, something remarkable in the late 80's and even more poignant looking back in 2018. Jerry was an engineer at the time, granting him a crystal-clear view of how staffing firms were failing candidates and how the process could be better.

Overcoming early adversity set a strong foundation with the belief that ATR could make it through anything. They've since put more than 35,000 people to work, totaling over 14 million working hours.

Focusing on Community

With tremendous growth, it can be easy for a company to lose sight of what's

important. Not with ATR. Just look at their brand promise, a single statement that sets the tone for their entire brand, essentially distilling the company into one sentence: "To deliver next-generation recruiting that enables businesses and communities to thrive."

Note that community is part of what defines ATR. Their dedication and sense of duty to their surroundings inspire us, and their impactful Volunteering Time Off program should be a model not just for the staffing industry, but for companies everywhere.

Living and Breathing Diversity

Part of ATR's sense of community draws from their deep emphasis on diversity. ATR isn't just a Minority Business Enterprise; they're also the recipient of the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council's coveted Supplier of the Year distinction. However, they didn't get to the pinnacle of the MBE world by resting on their laurels.

ATR spends a great deal of time and energy mentoring smaller minority businesses, something we see as a selfless act. Time is a non-renewable asset that

every business never has enough of. That ATR goes out of their way to show others the ropes (not to mention the thousands they spend on goods and services from MBEs) makes us proud to work with them.

Keeping the Pedal to the Metal

Among all the things we respect about ATR, we especially love that they don't settle with today's success. CEO/President Andrea Brenholz is leading the charge in taking ATR into the next generation. They're a future-minded company that doesn't lose sight of what's happening today, and while that is a very hard vision to maintain, ATR has found a way to do it consistently.

It's been an honor to work with ATR, forming a productive relationship that has quickly gone past "partnership" and towards integration. They're a first-class organization that seeks to "make the world a better place, one job at a time," a mentality that all of us at echogravity can get behind. Congratulations to ATR International on this milestone anniversary. We love collaborating on your marketing strategy, and we look forward to the next 30!

Your Best Marketers Might Not Be on Your Marketing Team

BY MEGAN BLAIR

Highly targeted, carefully crafted marketing will always have its value in the staffing industry. Compelling content, persuasive email copy, and engaging social posts are what give your brand its voice, capture the attention of your audience, and drive leads.

However, no matter how many visitors come to your website, how high your open rates are, or how many leads are converted into clients and candidates, the truth is that it's not enough.

The Internet has become a noisy, crowded place. It's getting harder to filter good content from poor content. And buyers are getting better at tuning it all out.

So, who are they listening to instead? It turns out, they're paying attention to other customers.

You know what we're talking about. When's the last time you bought something on Amazon without first reading the reviews? This behavior is now ubiquitous across every industry, even in the staffing world.

The heart of the matter is: your most satisfied clients and happiest candidates are your best marketers.

Rethinking Your Marketing Strategy

Sites like Glassdoor are already well-established in catering to this growing trend. Candidates are certainly reading those reviews left by past and current consultants and employees. The quality and accuracy of those reviews make many staffing firms nervous. What other people say about their firm is, essentially, out of their control.

But review sites are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to word-of-mouth marketing. There are plenty of other ways you can use your client and candidate base to help engage more business.

Think case studies, testimonials, interviews and more. Done well, they are often far more effective than your average blog post. While sales collateral and informational blogs are valuable, it's important to get on a human level and leverage what your networks are already saying about you.

Involving Your Recruiters and Salespeople

We all know what a traditional sales funnel looks like; it typically ends with the sale. But the client and candidate journeys don't end after a placement has been made. The relationship needs continuous nurturing to turn them into promoters of your firm.

This means getting your recruiters and account managers bought into the strategy. They need to be checking in with their contacts via email, phone call, or LinkedIn on a regular basis. They should be encouraging consultants to leave Glassdoor reviews, asking clients for testimonials, and collaborating with your marketing team to tell great stories.

What's Holding You Back?

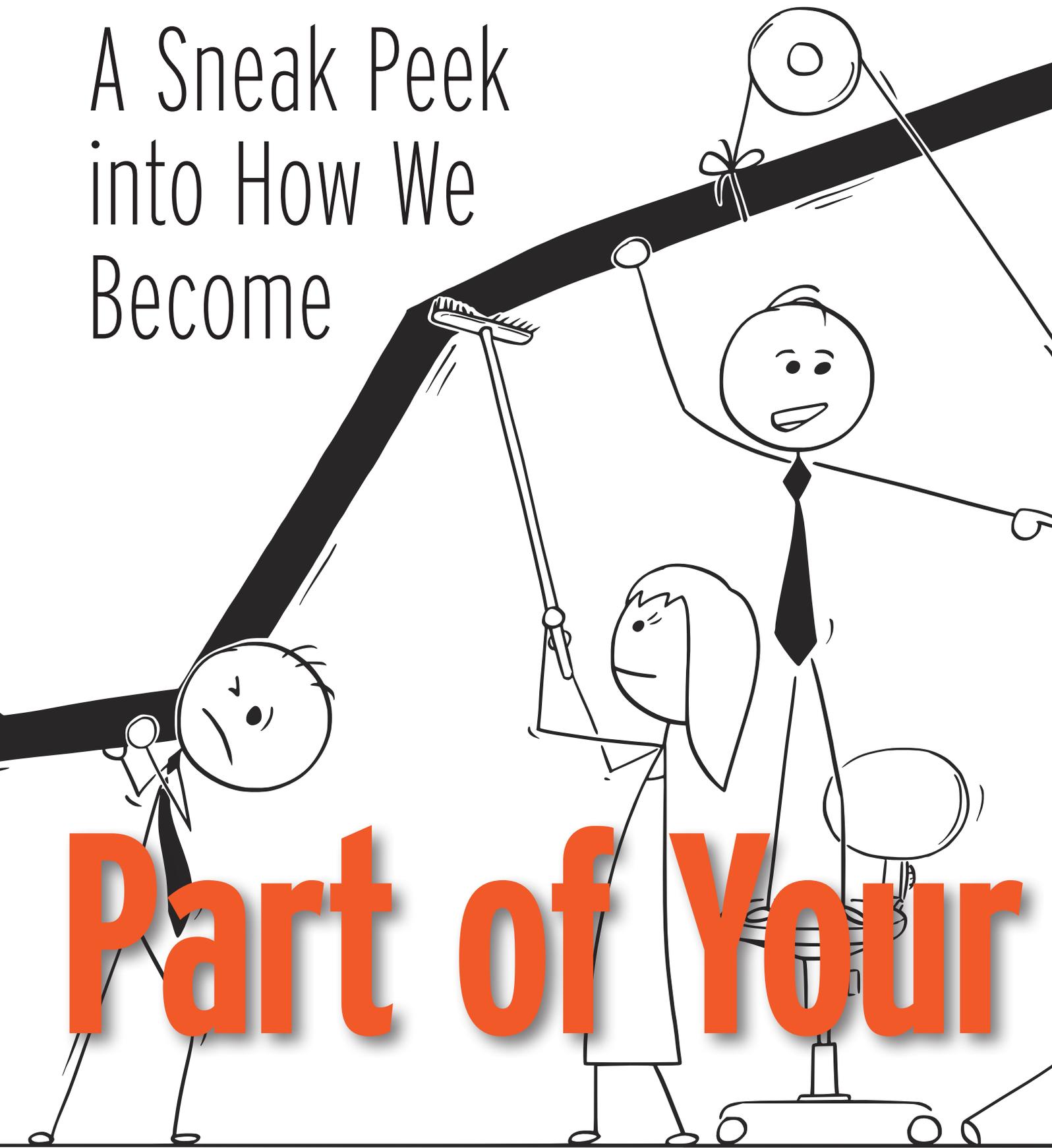
The biggest objection we hear when we talk to staffing firms about getting their clients and consultants involved in the marketing process is the worry that their competitors will poach these companies and individuals. We get it. Revealing who you're working with comes with its risks. You want to keep your secrets to success safely up your sleeve.

But you can't get around the fact that in the current marketing climate, people are becoming overwhelmed, impatient, and skeptical. The only time they're more willing to listen is when it's their peers doing the talking. But it's up to you to get them to spread the word. Plus, if your clients and consultants are willing to share their stories, that probably means they're happy working with you and unlikely to be swayed by your competition.

Rethinking Your Marketing Strategy



A Sneak Peek
into How We
Become



Part of Your

BY AMY WUNDERLICH



Besides all the metrics, conversion rates, and analytics we regularly measure to ensure the success of your marketing projects, our favorite indicator of a successful partnership is when a client nicknames our team to match their own team's monikers. Another indicator, believe it or not, is an after-hours text about a random idea that occurred to them. Or even a phone call asking for advice on a new business initiative.

These instances are a big deal to us because they mean we've become a strategic part of our client's team. This isn't random. We know that when we're an extension of your team, it enables better marketing outcomes. That's why we build our team carefully and nurture our company culture.

The echogravity Recipe for Success

Our team has grown significantly over the last several years, and with each hire, we're more convinced that there are a few specific traits that

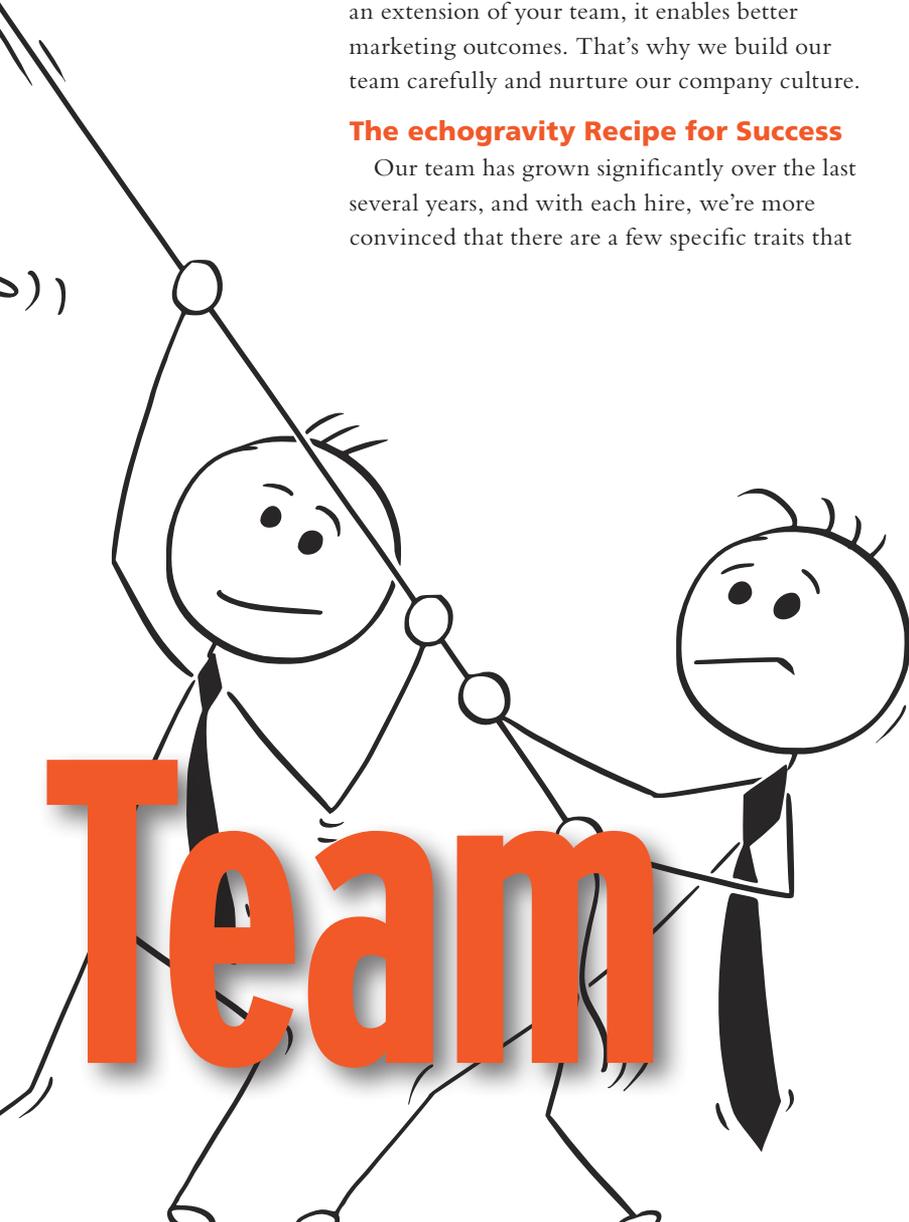
are essential to our team. Yes, we also look for experience, skill sets, communication, and everything else that makes a good marketer. But the following traits ensure that every echogravity employee will blend right into both our own and our clients' teams:

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS – This trait always shines in our best people. A conscientious person is fully aware of how their actions and attitude impact people, and they act accordingly. Whether it's over email, on the phone, or in person, the way they interact reflects true mindfulness and self-reflection. They're quick to follow up, demonstrate high work ethic, and are very reliable. It's a trait that means they're always acting in your best interests.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL – When coupled with the right experience, attention to detail makes someone more than just a terrific proofreader; it makes them a marketing mastermind. Meticulous people are naturally adapted to connecting with our clients. They do their homework, understand the big picture, anticipate obstacles, and take action to deliver top results. They may not have all the answers, but their thoroughness provides clients with an effective solution every time.

SELF-MOTIVATED – This is another quality that sounds simple enough but is actually one of the most critical personality traits we hire for. Our team members have to be hungry for a challenge. The world of marketing – much like technology – is constantly evolving. On top of that, our clients and their business goals are dynamic and future-focused. That means a lot of uncharted territory stands ahead of us every day, and we have a team of people that is self-motivated to take that in stride and make an immediate impact.

ZEALOUS – At last year's TechServe Alliance Conference, we took our entire team to Arizona, convinced them to throw on their cowboy boots, hop onto a horse, and herd a pack of cows for one intense team-building activity. Does that tell you something about the type of people we hire? We're enthusiastic, passionate, and committed to doing whatever it takes to get things done – whether that's in the office or in the Arizona desert.



Team

Is automation the end of the staffing and recruiting industry, a boogeyman that is out to replace staffing firms? Ben Solomon, Director of Research at IT recruiting firm, Objective Paradigm, doesn't see it that way. Instead, he sees this technological revolution as a new beginning rather than an end – and we happen to agree. Here are the technologies he expects to reshape the staffing industry and what they can do for your business.

Sourcing Automation:

How much time do recruiters at your company spend sifting through hundreds of candidate profiles on dozens of different websites? The answer is simple: way too much time. In fact, the average recruiter spends about 1/3 of their work week sourcing for just one position.

Enter sourcing automation technology.

Comprehensive talent aggregators powered by AI are becoming increasingly common within recruiting firms. These sourcing tools scour the depths of the web to aggregate extensive candidate data. Programs such as SeekOut, Entelo, and Hiring Solved aim to be a recruiter's secret weapon, not replacement. Currently, Solomon and his teams are pretty jazzed about SeekOut, which comes equipped with an advanced GitHub sourcing feature for finding tech gurus.

Screening Automation:

Candidate screening comes next, and you guessed it – that's automated too. With a few clicks of a button, recruiters have the power to filter through millions of candidates to find their ideal match. As client requests become increasingly niche (especially in the world of IT), Solomon believes tools like this are invaluable.

Also consider this neat feature – debiasing

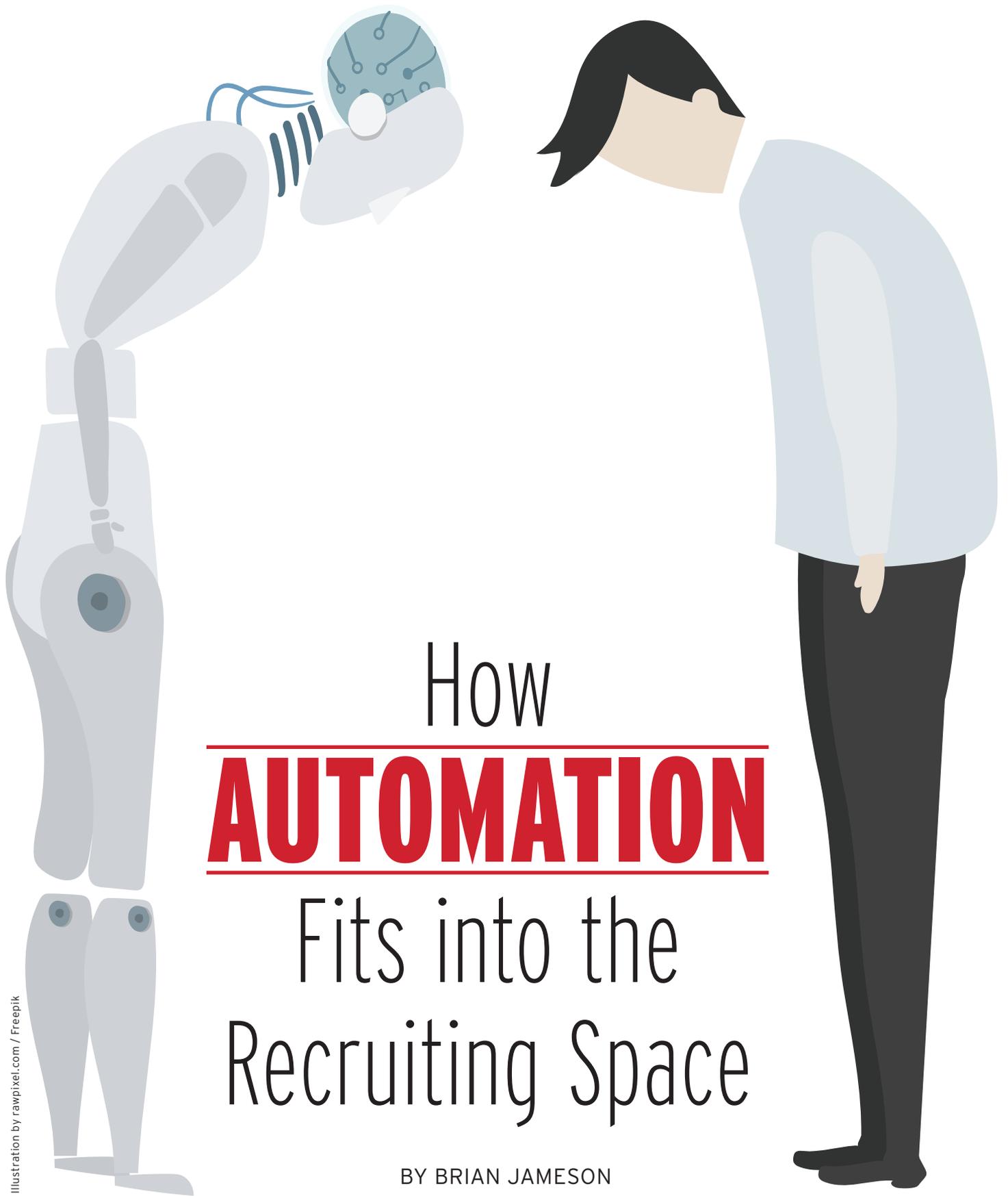
software. While most recruiters have good intentions and practice ethical hiring practices, unconscious biases may, unfortunately, still exist. Some screening programs come equipped with debiasing software and can be set to simply ignore or hide demographics.

Communication Automation:

Although we nix the idea that robots are taking over the world (well, at least the world of recruiting) we consider chatbots a necessary tool in a recruiter's inventory. In fact, Hire Abby, a recruiting automation program, positions itself as a "recruiting assistant." Through seemingly authentic conversations, Hire Abby's chatbots can keep your candidate pool warm and up-to-date by checking in with talent, learning about their job search and what types of positions they're qualified for. Only then do your recruiters take the reins on building meaningful relationships with the best-fit candidates.

Solomon also draws our attention to a tool he currently has his eye on, Textio. Textio claims to have made the art of writing a science – and to the scoffs of writing professionals everywhere – they might be on to something. Using predictive analytics and a ton of data, Textio can gauge the potential effectiveness of job posts and emails. Get ready to see higher response rates and more relevant applicants.

So, there you have it. Technology and rising automation shouldn't be considered a threat to the staffing industry or an insult to the recruiting craft – far from it, actually. With automated programs continuously running in the background, recruiters will have the bandwidth to focus their energy on building real connections with qualified candidates. Recruiters are people experts, and this technology allows them to direct their talents toward the human element of the hiring process – not endless hours of searching the web.



How

AUTOMATION

Fits into the
Recruiting Space

BY BRIAN JAMESON

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