

Susan Gross Sholinsky Quoted in "Social Media Recruiting Has Similar Risks as Word of Mouth"

Society for Human Resource Management

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Susan Gross Sholinsky, Member of the Firm in the Labor and Employment practice, in the firm's New York office, was quoted in *Society for Human Resource Management*, in "Social Media Recruiting Has Similar Risks as Word of Mouth," by Allen Smith.

Following is an excerpt:

Just as word-of-mouth recruiting can lead to discrimination claims if it is the sole method of recruiting used in a nondiverse workforce, "recruitment performed solely through social media could lead to potential discrimination issues," Susan Gross Sholinsky, an attorney with Epstein Becker Green in New York City, told SHRM Online. ...

Sholinsky remarked that "some social networking sites, such as Twitter, have an even larger gap in user demographics based on age than other sites, such as LinkedIn. For example, statistics I've seen show that while 30 to 42 percent of 19- to 29-year-olds use Twitter, only 2.6 to 5 percent of those older than 65 use it. In addition to age, studies show that the number of white users of certain networking sites is more prevalent than use by nonwhites. Generally, therefore, focusing recruitment efforts solely on social media sites could create the same types of barriers the EEOC warns against when discussing nepotism and word-of-mouth recruitment policies." ...

But be wary of relying too much on one method of recruiting, whether social media or word of mouth. "By relying exclusively on word-of-mouth recruiting techniques to locate individuals that would be a 'good fit,' companies may be exposed to the

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subconscious bias of their employees,” Sholinsky cautioned. “Studies show that individuals are more likely to recommend applicants with similar attributes to themselves. In one particular study, 71.5 percent of those surveyed referred individuals of their own race/ethnicity and 63.5 referred applicants of their own gender.”

Sholinsky noted, “Such recruitment also has a disparate impact on the unemployed, who tend to have weaker networking ties to those in the active workforce.”