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Mobile Applications for Human Resources

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Summary

In Michelle Rafter's article, "Now Showing on the Small Screen," she discusses the impact and trend of software for mobile devices on human resources. The article begins with a scenario that involves a construction worker being hired and filling out paperwork on a mobile device at a construction site rather than having to travel to the company's office. Such a scenario is no longer only a future possibility, as HR applications are available for a range of mobile devices, including iPhones and BlackBerrys. Among these mobile devices, the iPhone has set the standard for usability, especially with HR applications. According to Rafter, pocket devices are ideal for several HR processes, from recruiting and orientation to expense reporting and managing sales commissions to confirming pay raises. Indeed, examples of mobile applications currently on the market include TalentSecure's talent recruiting and staffing module, Varicent and Vaultus' sales incentive management application, and MobileDataForce's interface to Microsoft Dynamics GP. At the current time, most mobile software on the market is aimed at niche markets. However, the future of mobile computing is beginning to take shape, as giants of the software industry are competing to broaden the abilities of mobile software and claim market share. Oracle, SAP, Taleo, Salesforce.com, NetSuite, Apple, Google, and Microsoft are all investing in software and even devices themselves. Salesforce.com has prided itself on opening up its software for developers anywhere to create software. NetSuite has introduced modules to allow mobile devices to do payroll, expense reporting, and employee record keeping. Google and many other companies are openly competing with Apple's iPhone by offering a Linux-based platform called Android. Of course, Microsoft has found itself competing directly against Google with its own Android smart phone that carries Windows Mobile OS. Ultimately, success of mobile software will depend on companies' abilities to offer the same capabilities on mobile devices that are offered on traditional computers, while also providing a secure framework within which to work.

Critique

Michelle Rafter has presented a brief but adequate overview of mobile phone devices and software for the purposes of human resources. By opening the article with a real-world scenario, Rafter is providing the reader with a vivid example to imagine. Such a beginning to the article makes it seem personal to the reader and is a writing good strategy. By mentioning specific mobile devices, companies, and software, Rafter demonstrates that she has researched the topic prior to writing the article. The article mentions the changing workforce, as the younger generation is demanding work environments and mobile devices that match their lives. The article also mentions that "technology is definitely a roadblock." (Rafter) The author also mentions security and competition among other topics. While the author does discuss the broad area of mobile applications, she also mentions the concepts employed in HR mobile applications. When Rafter mentioned the limitations of the mobile devices, she wisely suggested one solution to the problem. The solution presented is one that has different versions of software for different mediums. While one version of the software will be developed for personal computers, another version will be developed for mobile devices. A criticism of Rafter's article is that "HR can be overly concerned with security." (Rafter) In today's world of hackers and terrorists, can anyone ever be overly concerned with computer security? Surely, if there are too many limitations, people will not use mobile device applications. However, mobile devices seem to be much more vulnerable to security attacks than traditional computers and networks. As Rafter states "HR won't ever be the main reason people use mobile devices… But certain HR processes make sense on smart phones and other pocket devices." (Rafter) As the author discusses throughout her article, definite areas exist for HR to benefit from mobile applications, and companies and software developers should focus on those areas.

References

Rafter, Michelle V. "Now Showing on the Small Screen." <u>Workforce Management</u> 13 Mar 2008.

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Nice Paul!!

Be sure to see those comments. I pray all is going well for you this week.

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