

Maury Hanigan

Adding a 'Sparc' to Talent Acquisition

In the rapidly changing global economy, the role of Human Resources is changing dramatically. Moving from traditional inefficient processes to innovative HR software solutions, the evolution in HR, and specifically in talent acquisition, has revolutionized the industry.

Maury Hanigan, founder, and CEO **SparcStart**, an award-winning recruitment marketing platform, is a leader in this evolution. Drawing on her background as a marketing executive, she has brought the sophistication and expertise of consumer marketing to recruiting. She has combined disciplined research with intuitive software design to create a video-powered tool that informs and persuades job candidates resulting in a more efficient and accurate recruiting process. SparcStart helps candidates make well-informed decisions about job opportunities by giving them engaging information about the things that matter to them.

Maury explains, *"Marketers know a lot about getting people's attention, connecting with them, building credibility and prompting them to act, but none of that expertise was serving HR."*

Applying Expertise Where it Matters

But why focus on recruiting? We all know that jobs are critically important to people. Not only do jobs provide

income, but they also provide intellectual stimulation, challenges, pride and satisfaction, social connections, and much more. On the flip side, employees are critically important to the success of companies, regardless of the industry. When you have a good match between an individual and a job, everybody wins.

But it can be difficult to get that match right. Candidates have limited information about job content, colleagues and company culture. Written job descriptions are grossly lacking, and even if they do contain relevant information, it is usually buried so deeply under requirements and responsibilities, the candidate stops reading before they reach it.

Creating a video platform for employer brand and recruitment marketing, Maury designed SparcStart to help employers humanize their opportunities, connect with candidates and make their brand stand out. She explains, *"We make it easy for employers to create an informal video to use in their job descriptions, social media, internal networks, career sites, CRMs, and other outlets. The platform is very intuitive and automates steps such as approvals, editing, and sharing."*

A Blend of Marketing and Human Resources

A seasoned marketer and former employee of Procter & Gamble, and PepsiCo, Maury spent most of her



days reviewing storyboards for TV commercials and working on marketing strategies that differentiated the brands. *“When I would have an opening on my team, I would sit down with a recruiter from the HR department and they would pull out a job description and tell me they were ready to market my position. I would look at the job description and see an internal Compliance document. It was almost as bad as marketing a laundry detergent using the usage instructions on the back of the box,”* she shares.

This led to Maury researching and identifying the information that job candidates actually wanted during their job search. She also noticed how little of the actual information wanted was mentioned in a job description. *“It was unbelievable to me that every single employee was walking around with a high-definition video camera in their pocket, yet all job advertising consisted of black and white type. Our phones have had very sophisticated cameras for decades, this isn’t bleeding-edge technology. Even your parents know how to use their video cameras.”*

This led to the creation of SparcStart, an innovative marketing-driven HR-tech platform that helps employers connect with candidates and differentiate their jobs. Headquartered in New York City, today SparcStart has employees across the United States and around the world.

Jumping on the Bandwagon

“When you market your jobs compellingly and credibly, you attract candidates faster and allow candidates to appropriately opt in and opt out,” states Maury. This is one of the main factors that has contributed to the rapid growth of SparcStart.

Most candidates don’t read the entire job description so they apply to jobs they don’t want or aren’t qualified for. SparcStart has allowed candidates to make well-informed decisions to apply to jobs while giving

organizations a higher quality applicant pool. This also results in faster time-to-fill, reduced cost, and a higher retention rate for companies. It is no wonder that today global brands such as Ford, Regeneron, Ulta Beauty, and many more use SparcStart for their recruitment.

Understanding Diversity Issues

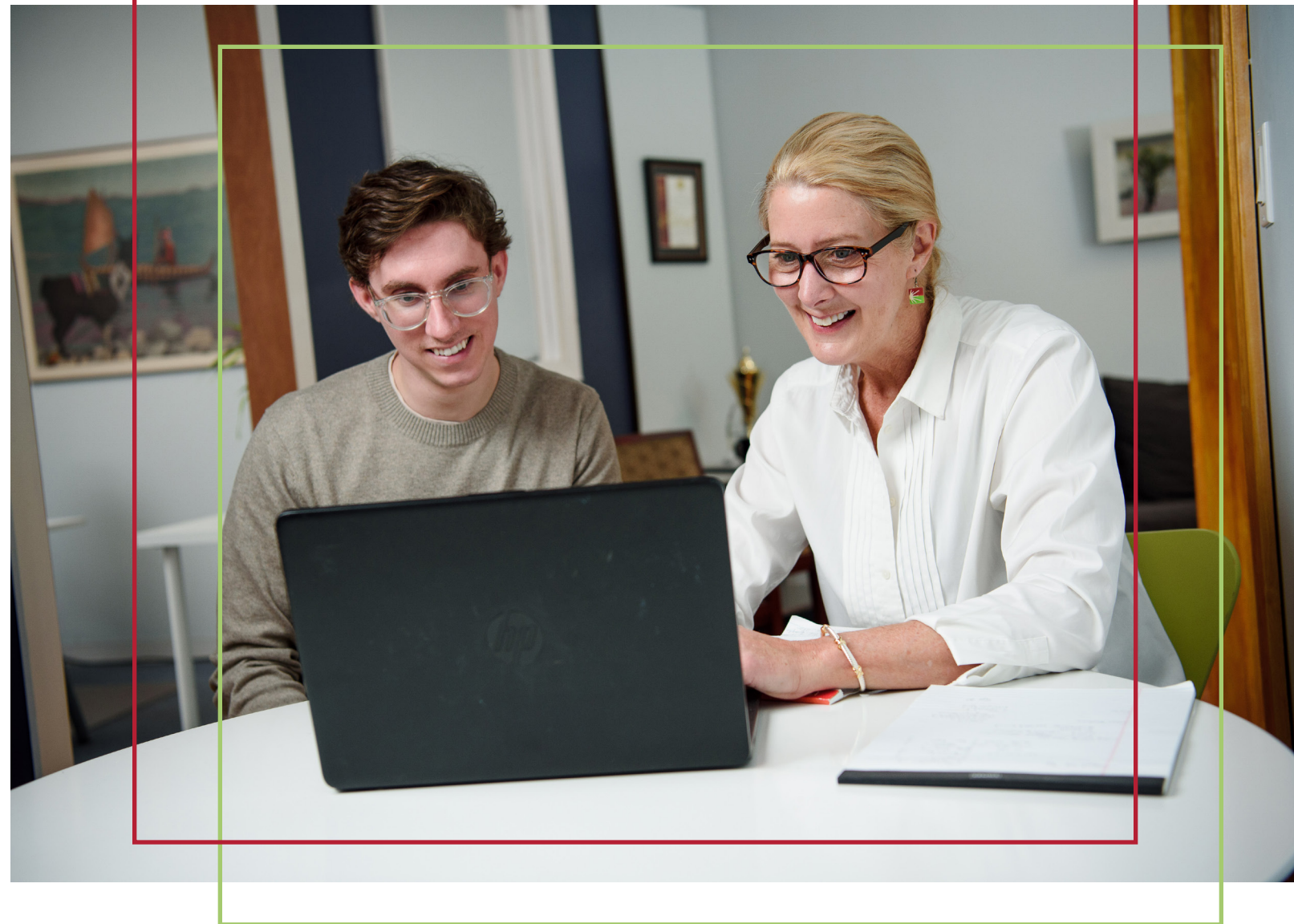
Starting off her professional career in the 1970s, Maury has dealt with her fair share of gender-based biases in the workplace. As a successful female entrepreneur today, Maury feels that women come to product development with different experiences and priorities than men, and often solve problems differently. Sometimes those differences can impact the clients’ results. This is evident in the design and functioning of Sparc.

When creating Sparc and adding the hiring managers’ video to job descriptions, Maury was concerned about the impact it would have on diversity hiring since the majority of hiring managers are white men. She researched to understand if women, and people of color, would be less likely to apply if they knew their potential boss was a white man. *“I conducted focus groups and found that women and people of color didn’t necessarily need to work for another woman or person of color, they just want a boss who will respect them, support their career and treat them fairly – they just want a boss that isn’t a monster.”*

In one study, when a hiring manager video was added, the applications from women and underrepresented minorities increased by 41%. When the candidates could see and hear from the prospective boss, it humanized the boss and reduced the fear that they would be a monster straight from central casting.

On the Growth Path

Over time, there have been tremendous advancements in the HR field. While on the one hand, the Covid



pandemic fundamentally changed hiring processes, and on the other, the labor supply and skills shortage changed dramatically. But, to a large degree, the needs of candidates and employers have not changed – they are both looking for the perfect match.

Because video is such effective and engaging communication tool, Maury believes that SparcStart is the core solution that recruiters need. Looking ahead,

Maury remains committed to driving SparcStart’s growth by enabling candidates and organizations to connect with clarity. *“Candidates expect to see video in the recruiting process, and specifically videos that addresses their specific information needs. The employer who is depending on text to communicate is at a competitive disadvantage and is being left behind,”* concludes Maury Hanigan.