

FEATURE STORY - October 16, 2005

## Cream of the Crop

*The editors of Human Resource Executive® list their choices for the top HR and training products of 2005.*

Once again, the editors of Human Resource Executive® have chosen 10 HR products and five training products that they believe represent the very best of what vendors introduced to the market during the period of July 2004 to July 2005. Out of the 100-plus entries received this year, we narrowed down our selections by judging each one on innovation, the value it adds to the HR function and its user-friendliness. We also consulted with industry experts to determine just how original the products are. In the end, the products we chose (the overwhelming majority of them are technology-based, in keeping with the trends of recent years) exemplify the smart use of the Web to streamline the workflow involved in everyday processes such as benefits enrollment and new-employee orientation. In all cases, the editors feel strongly these products deliver value to HR professionals, but stress the importance of conducting the necessary due diligence before making investments.

### Top HR Products

#### Enterprise Voice Gateway BrassRing, Waltham, Mass.

**What It Is:** Enterprise Voice Gateway is an interactive-voice response tool designed to help companies screen and evaluate job applicants who lack access to the Web or who do not have a resume. Organizations can accept applications via a toll-free telephone number and upload them directly into their BrassRing Enterprise application, which can convert the recordings into WAV sound files that let users listen to answers that require a verbal response. Users can create customized questionnaires or use generic ones. The tool gives clients the ability to ask "closed" and "open-ended" questions to gather information typically obtained during an in-person interview. Candidates can save their information and return later to complete their IVR application by creating a pass code for re-entry into the system. Enterprise Voice Gateway is available in multiple-language versions. It is available only to users of BrassRing's Enterprise hiring system.

**Why We Like It:** True, IVR systems aren't exactly new. We also award top products that are additions to existing systems—which this one is—only in rare cases. We believe this is one such instance. Although computer usage is prevalent in all sectors of U.S. society, the fact is that many hourly job



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candidates still aren't as comfortable using the Web to apply for jobs as they are with more traditional methods, such as the phone. Meanwhile, job candidates in most Third World countries are far less likely to own a computer than their American counterparts—in these cases, Voice Gateway's multi-language capabilities can come in very handy. The tool's ability to convert voice responses into WAV files is extremely useful in cases in which hiring managers want to hear an applicant's response to an open-ended question. All in all, Voice Gateway is a user-friendly, comprehensive tool that should receive serious consideration from BrassRing customers who plan to do any large-scale hiring in the near future.

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