

5 Tips to Improve the Candidate Experience

Simple hiring shifts that will have talent flocking to your front door.

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As attracting and engaging talent continues to become more competitive, how recruiters and hiring teams design and deliver the candidate experience is finally getting the attention it deserves. The Talent Board, which runs the Candidate Experience Awards, published Candidate Experience 2014 and shared insights collected from nearly 95,000 candidates who applied to approximately 140 companies.

Highlights from the study include:

- Employers are lagging in sharing important job information such as "day in the life" (57.1 percent) and career path examples (49.4 percent).
- For unqualified external applicants, 91.4 percent of the employers made zero contact beyond the automated acknowledgement of application receipt.
- 31.9 percent of candidates reported that they received no information to help them prepare for an interview.
- Only one in five candidates indicate they received a quality final communication, leaving significant room for improvement.
- Less than half of new hires received a phone call from the hiring manager during the onboarding process, and less than 20 percent had any social connection with their future team members.

What can you do to stand out from the competition? Here are five tips to design and deliver an exceptional candidate experience:

1. Redesign your application.
2. Increase candidate preparation. Ensuring candidates feel confident prior to an interview is an important step. While some employers leave it all up to a candidate to do all of the research on their own as some sort of test, showcasing a standard communication package for interviewees will go a long way. Include things like ratings of your company, products, hiring team profiles and employee survey data.
3. Communication is king. Beyond the stale message that comes from your outdated applicant tracking system, focus on constant communication with applicants. It's ok to use technology when experiencing a high volume of candidates. What's not ok is to leave applicants wondering.
4. Get feedback. According to the Candidate Experience 2014, over 60 percent of candidates were never asked to provide feedback on their screening or interview experience. There's a disconnect if you say you care about the candidate experience, yet you don't ask for feedback from your customers (candidates). Ask--whether formally through a survey or informally as part of the interview process.
5. Onboarding. Between the time your new hire accepts an offer and officially joins on day one, there is a significant opportunity to provide an unforgettable experience. And I'm not talking about completing HR paperwork online. There should be several touch points between a new hire and the hiring manager. Some organizations deliver a gift, welcome basket or company swag. Your new hire should be assimilating to his/her new role and your company culture far before day one.

You wouldn't treat your customers in a way that kept them from coming back and buying from you. Take a leadership position, redefine your priorities and start treating candidates like customers.

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