



Tips for attracting and winning candidates!

Some would describe recruiting for skilled and experienced people to be much like a “battle for talent!” Indeed, in many respects it is a battle. As an employer hoping to recruit skilled and experienced people you face much competition with other employers competing to attract and win over the same candidates.

Whether the market is short of candidates or not it is always important that employers give candidates a good experience of the company, its culture and brand. A negative candidate experience is like having a bad experience at a restaurant. People are usually more likely to talk about a negative experience widely to their social network than to give a positive one sadly.

Hence, we have put together a few pointers and tips to keep in mind as employers looking to recruit talented and skilled individuals. Sometimes it’s the little things that can help win the hearts and minds!

Make your company stand out:

Small companies can compete and win talent over larger companies and vice versa. Much depends on how much time each company invests to make themselves stand-out. Its not always about brand and size. In fact, sometimes companies with stronger brands can lose out as they may have the attitude of “Why should we employ you?” rather than “This is why you should work for us!”

Explain the benefits of working for the organisation, the culture, the technologies, what makes it exciting and how a candidate’s career could develop.

Arm the Recruiter:

Often a candidate’s first experience of a hiring company is via a recruiter. Make sure your recruiter understands the company, the role and the culture. Employers that work with recruiters rely on them to “sell” the opportunity enough for the candidate to apply. So, arm the recruiter with the information they need to attract talent on your behalf.

Recruitment Process:

A long drawn out recruitment process is more than enough to test the patience of a candidate and lose you the battle for talent. A slick process with swift candidate feedback and available and engaged hiring managers will help win the day. Everybody in the recruiting process must be engaged and driven to make the process efficient. Slow feedback for CVs, long times between interviews and lack of communication are killers.

Be swift, be communicative and don’t expect candidates to be available forever! Good candidates will have multiple opportunities, so move fast!

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Profiling and Assessments:

From our experiences, it seems companies that use profiling and assessments are in the minority. Often, they are viewed as an obstacle to the interview process by candidates and a real turn off. If online tests and assessments are crucial to your recruiting process, then perhaps consider a telephone / video call as an initial screening conversation in the first instance to open-up communications and explain the assessment phase. This will keep candidates keen and deter them from withdrawing from their application.

Interview Process:

Again, efficiency is important. A single stage interview may not always give both parties the chance to get to know each other and make a well-judged decision. However, that does not mean that a four or five stage process is necessary either. Try, where possible, to keep your candidate abreast of the process from the start, make sure they know what to expect and manage their expectations.

Hiring managers and decision makers should make themselves available to meet candidates and stick to interview slots. Candidates that use annual vacation time to attend an interview can be put in a very awkward position if they need to make changes at the last minute.

Think of the candidate's experience. Be flexible, communicative and if plans change then do your best to accommodate the candidate's needs.

Be a good host:

When meeting candidates, remember that your recruiting staff and interview panel become brand ambassadors for the business. Engaged and positive individuals that understand the company culture and company goals will probably give the kind of candidate experience you need to attract them to your business.

Often simple things like offering refreshments and a toilet break are missed and don't go unnoticed.

Think about how you would want to be treated.

Sell the Company:

On so many occasions we hear from candidates, post-interview, that the meeting or call was a barrage of questions and not really a conversation. These interview styles often miss great chances to "sell the company" and the opportunity and candidates can come away despondent and unimpressed.

Selling the company shouldn't start at the interview but often it's the time when its most evidently missed. Meeting the candidates is the time when you can engage with them the most so don't miss the opportunity to win them over by reinforcing all the good things about the company, the team and the role.

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Likewise, don't forget, recruiting and interviewing is a two-way process. The candidate may have concerns or questions. Give them a chance to express their thoughts and ask their questions.

Environment and Tour:

Whether your facilities and offices are good or not, don't be afraid to show candidates around. If you offer them the job, then they are going to see the facilities at some point. We are firm believers in "no surprises!" A candidate that accepts a job knowing all there is to know is far more likely to remain than a candidate that is surprised or shocked on day one!

Candidates want to see more than a small interview room by reception. Show them the working environment and make them feel welcome. A job is more than just a salary and benefits. Employees can spend more than a third of their day around their workspace, let them see what it may look like. Also have a think about the brand and culture. Look around the office... do the people and the facilities reflect the brand and the promises your job advert and website offered?

Stability and Future Prospects:

Tempting a candidate to join your business can be hard if they don't feel that your business offers stability and a solid future. Be sure that your job advert, recruiter, website and social media give accounts of the company's stability and prospects. Sometimes start-ups can suffer as they can be viewed as high risk, however even larger internationals suffer with instability and losses from restructures or takeovers.

If your company has a history that may not be appealing, then be open and honest and be ready to discuss concerns and questions around reputation.

Onboarding Process:

Sometimes the last thing a candidate may hear after the offer has been accepted is a congratulations and "we'll see you when you start!" But that can be one to three months or more. In that time a lot can happen. Keep in contact with your future employee and make them feel included. Perhaps consider inviting them to visit the office, a social invitation or inclusion with team meetings where appropriate.

Meeting the team is an important thing to consider. Sometimes it's the team bonds that can help you win a candidate and keep them.

We hope that you have found these tips and suggestions useful. Attracting and winning candidates for your business requires a strong and consistent message from start to finish. Brand alone won't win the day and nor will a fancy website. The experience of the recruiting process, the interviews themselves and the people that a candidate meets on the day and around the office can and will make a difference. Remember, it's a two-way process and your company is being interviewed too!

For more information and ideas please contact Marcus O'Donnell or Katherine Smallwood at Marcus Webb Associates.

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