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4 Key Steps to Successful Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition is now a top business challenge—and a growing body of research shows just how widespread this challenge has become.

PricewaterhouseCoopers' 2016 Global CEO Survey found that an alarming 72% of CEOs called a shortage of skilled labor a threat to their business, up from 46% seven years earlier. And according to CareerBuilder's 2015 Candidate Behavior Study, 54% of employers admit that over the past five years it has become increasingly difficult to find qualified candidates.

As a result, organizations are using a variety of strategies to woo the talent they need. Some are intensifying their recruiting efforts. Others are enhancing compensation or expanding benefits programs. But none of these strategies can overcome a poor talent acquisition process.

Yet many organizations—especially small and mid-sized companies—rely on outdated technologies, or are still using paper, email, and spreadsheets, to support their talent acquisition process. And many fail to have a clear and full understanding of the process itself.

Don't fall victim to these all-too-common talent acquisition traps!

By focusing on the 4 Key Steps to Successful Talent Acquisition, you'll know exactly how to maximize the success of your talent strategies… and how modern software solutions can help you compete for and win the best talent.

The 4 key steps to successful talent acquisition

1. Sourcing and your talent pipeline
2. Managing the recruiter/hiring manager relationship
3. The candidate process
4. Onboarding

1. Sourcing and Your Talent Pipeline

Sourcing

This is where your talent acquisition efforts start—and, according to Aberdeen Group's *An Employee-Centric Digital Workplace* report, this is where trouble often starts. The report shows that 47% of respondents have trouble sourcing enough qualified candidates.

Think of it this way: Your sourcing won't win the war for talent for you, but it sure can lose it. Your sourcing either sets your company on a path for success or undermines all of your efforts, because you're targeting the wrong talent or not enough of the right talent.

To make sure you're on the right path, it's critical to track and measure the performance of your talent sources (internal referrals, external recruiting partners, social sites, job boards, etc.). Know where your most successful, most engaged, and most loyal candidates are coming from. This is the only way to optimally focus and adjust your sourcing efforts and budget.

Today, however, even optimizing your talent sources isn't enough. Recruitment marketing also needs to be a key part of your sourcing strategy. Consistently communicating positive, truthful, and intriguing messages about your organization and your culture will help you attract more quality candidates. More importantly, it will help make candidates eager to join your organization.
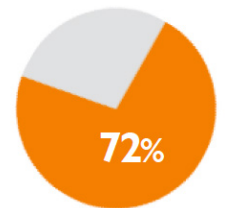
72%

... say a shortage of skilled labor is a threat to businesss.

Your recruiters, as candidates' initial human point of contact with your organization, need to be at the forefront of your recruitment marketing. In other words, they must be ambassadors for your brand. As such, they must understand what motivates job seekers to take action, and communicate with them in a fashion that entices and excites them to do so. An important aspect of this is knowing your culture and communicating it effectively. Cultural fit is important for attracting job seekers, but also for engagement and retention after they become employees.

47%

... have trouble sourcing enough qualified candidates.

Given the high competition for talent, it's not surprising that recruitment marketing is on the rise. According to LinkedIn's *Global Recruiting Trends 2016* report, 59% of respondents are "investing more in their employer brand compared to last year."
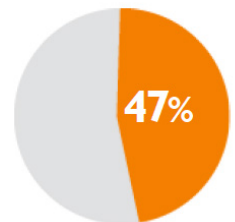
Talent Pipeline

The first step to find and hire the right people (those with the specific skills, qualities and capabilities your organization needs) is knowing exactly who's in your talent pipeline.

Your organization may have a surplus of some skills, qualities, and capabilities, and a shortage of others. By understanding your internal talent pipeline, you'll know which positions you have the bench strength to fill

Talent Sources: Corporate career sites, Internal referrals, Job boards, External recruiting partners, Social sites

internally. You'll identify organizational skills shortages that you need to fortify—before they become major problems.

It's also important to be aware of and manage your candidate pipeline. According to Aberdeen's report, *Best Practice: Use Modern Recruiting to Stay Cutting Edge*, best-in-class organizations are 55% more likely to proactively build and expand their candidate pipelines, regardless of current hiring needs.

How Modern Talent Acquisition Software Can Help

Modern talent acquisition software can show you the quantity and types of candidates you're receiving, detail the talent sources they came from, and identify trends. It can even help you identify the effectiveness of individual job postings, showing you the types of candidates being attracted and how far those candidates made it through the hiring process. Plus, you can search records of employees and past applicants, making it easier to access your talent pipeline.

Additionally, you can also track your current employees' skills and abilities to both evaluate internal candidates and identify skills needs in your organization. Simply being able to search records of employees and past applicants makes it easier to access your talent pipeline.

Being able to access all of this data will allow you to make better decisions and identify better candidates, ultimately fueling your organization's growth.

"Being able to access a variety of data will allow you to make better decisions and identify better candidates."

"The lack of communication between recruiters and hiring managers is the biggest challenge we have in the industry—period."

2. Managing the Recruiter/Hiring Manager Relationship

Effectively managing the relationships between your recruiters and hiring managers is critical for the success of your entire talent acquisition process.

Recruiters need to understand the skills and qualifications hiring managers are seeking for given job roles, or the wrong candidates can be delivered, resulting in bad hires or delays in hiring. Additionally, recruiters and hiring managers need to work together to avoid bottlenecks that cost you time and slow the hiring process.

The foundation of the recruiter/hiring manager relationship is effective communication. Unfortunately, at many organizations, this foundation is on shaky ground or is missing altogether. "The lack of communication between recruiters and hiring managers is the biggest challenge we have in the industry—period," Steve Lowisz, CEO of recruiting and recruitment research firm Qualigence International, told SHRM. Individual instances of poor communication between recruiters and hiring managers are costly enough, but when they and the resulting bad hires and hiring delays accumulate, the relationships can crumble. And your talent acquisition efforts along with them.

How Modern Talent Acquisition Software Can Help

Modern talent acquisition software helps recruiters and hiring managers stay organized by consolidating candidate and job information, and prevents communication breakdowns by using notifications and auto-alerts. In fact, recruiters and hiring managers don't even have to log in to the software to be alerted of an update—smart emails keep everyone on the same page. So, for example, both recruiters and hiring managers will be aware if changes are made to a job description. Plus, there are no more giant piles of paper to sift through, which saves time, eliminates frustration, and reduces cost.

3. The Candidate Process

You've had a job open up. You've created the job description and requirements. You've advertised it in your best talent sources, and done an effective job of recruitment marketing. The result: you have a quality pool of highly interested candidates. Now you need to smoothly and effectively manage the candidate process. Then, the best candidates not only make it to the end of the process, but also are excited about the prospect of going to work for you.

In other words, you need to create a positive candidate experience. According to CareerBuilder's 2015 Candidate Behavior Study, more than three of four candidates would be willing to "accept a salary that is 5 percent lower than their expected offer if the employer created a great impression through the hiring process."
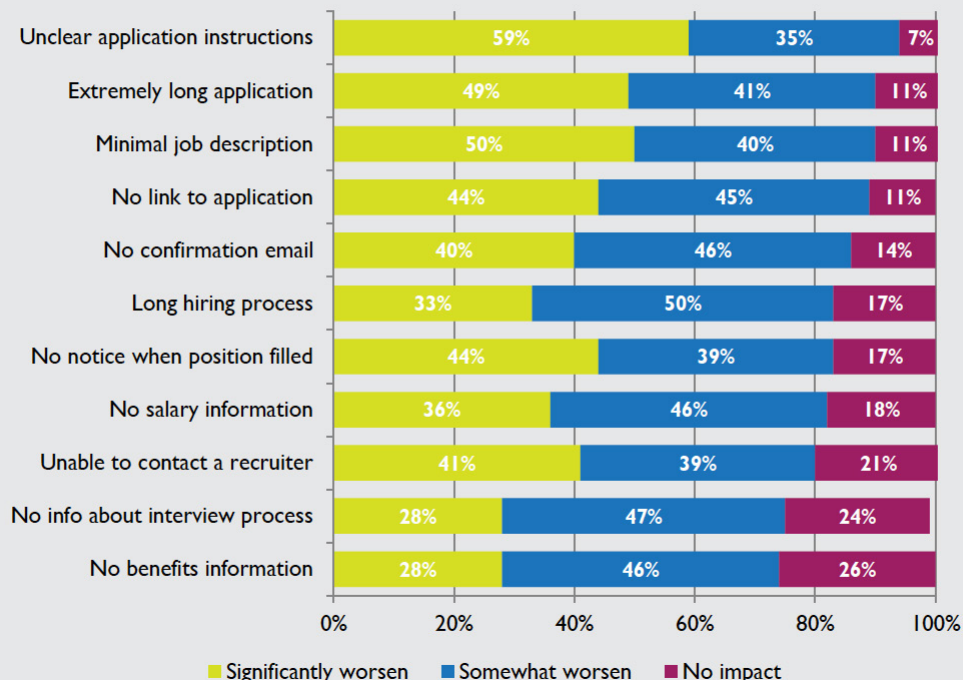
To create a great impression, quality candidate communication and an efficient process are both musts.

Candidate Communication

A 2015 Software Advice report found that 34% of job seekers said that more communication during the hiring process would improve their candidate experience. And according to the CareerBuilder study, 36% of candidates expect to be updated throughout the application process, while only 26% of employers actively communicate to candidates their stage of the process.

Top Causes of Negative Candidate Experiences

Cause	Significantly worsen	Somewhat worsen	No impact
Unclear application instructions	59%	35%	7%
Extremely long application	49%	41%	11%
Minimal job description	50%	40%	11%
No link to application	44%	45%	11%
No confirmation email	40%	46%	14%
Long hiring process	33%	50%	17%
No notice when position filled	44%	39%	17%
No salary information	36%	46%	18%
Unable to contact a recruiter	41%	39%	21%
No info about interview process	28%	47%	24%
No benefits information	28%	46%	26%

The takeaway from the data is obvious. If you're not communicating regularly with candidates, you should be. Candidates don't want to be left hanging, even if they aren't going to be considered for the position they applied for. The easiest and best way to keep them informed is to provide regular, clear communication from the start.

Efficient Process

Even if your communication practices are ideal, it's critical to get candidates from the application to the end of the process in a reasonable time frame. According to the Software Advice report, 83% of job seekers said a long hiring process would either significantly or somewhat worsen their candidate experience.

The start of the candidate process is notably one of the most troublesome aspects of the entire process, with 90% of job seekers calling extremely long application forms a cause of a poor candidate experience. Limiting the pain candidates experience in filling out your application forms is a key part of getting more candidates to apply, and for getting the entire candidate process off to a good start.

How modern talent acquisition software can help

Technology prevents candidates from falling through the cracks in your communication by sending automated email communication to candidates based on where they are in the process. The right messages are sent to the right candidates at the right times—every time.

Similarly, technology helps your hiring process run smoothly for all parties. Technology can make applying easier by prepopulating relevant application forms with data pulled from LinkedIn, job boards, and straight from résumés. Meanwhile, it can also provide routing notification to immediately inform your internal team when it's time to take a next step in the hiring process. This eliminates internal process delays and miscommunication, two common causes of long hiring processes.

4. Onboarding

Congratulations! You have new hires. Now it's time to get them situated as employees, and producing sooner rather than later.

In other words, you need to get them onboarded effectively. This means getting necessary paperwork completed quickly and efficiently, but also getting the new hires established in their jobs and engaged in your culture.

The quality of onboarding has long-lasting effects. A report by the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton found that effective onboarding improves employee performance by 11.3% and increases employee engagement and retention.

According to Aberdeen's report, "An Employee-Centric Digital Workplace," smart organizations are recognizing that they want to begin the onboarding process even before a new hire's first day. Best-in-class companies are 53% more likely than others to begin the onboarding process before day one (this is also known as pre-boarding). Additionally, best-in-class companies are 39% more likely than others to measure employee engagement with onboarding to ensure new hires understand what's expected of them.

"Technology helps your hiring process run smoothly for all parties."

How Modern Talent Acquisition Software Can Help

Technology enables you to automate crucial aspects of the onboarding process. For example, it helps you ensure all the necessary documents have been filled out correctly, saving time and preventing problems. It also allows you to manage and track the other tasks that need to be completed after someone is hired (email setup, ID photo, parking pass, etc.) As a result, you can put your focus on higher-value onboarding priorities, such as making sure the new employees you just hired have the proper attention to get off on the right foot, which improves engagement and retention levels.

"Technology enables you to automate crucial aspects of the onboarding process."

What's at stake? Nothing less than your future

A quality talent-acquisition process is critical for engaging the right talent. Your business's growth, innovation, and productivity—its very future—depends on your ability to attract, nurture, and retain top performers.

In fact, "finding and hiring top talent" (43%) and "keeping the team I have in place/retention" (18%) were the top two talent concerns, according to a Harris Allied survey.

Modern talent acquisition software is essential for managing the complex talent lifecycle. It streamlines, automates, and improves every critical step: from sourcing ... to keeping your talent pipeline filled with qualified candidates ... to communicating with and onboarding your talent ... to employee learning and development ... to managing the recruiter/hiring manager relationship.

With a small but wise investment in the right tools and technologies, your small or mid-sized company can manage talent as well as the largest, most savvy enterprises.

About Visibility Software

Founded in 1999, Visibility Software, a leading provider of applicant tracking and training management software, has helped thousands of organizations of all sizes solve talent acquisition and talent development problems. Our two primary flagship software solutions, Cyber Recruiter and Cyber Train, provide a simplified, flexible approach to usability, agility, and licensing to deliver fast, game-changing results.

With powerful out-of-the-box integration capabilities to many leading ERP and HR applications, our solutions eliminate redundant inefficiencies in recruiting, onboarding, and training. For us, it's all about placing high value on helping organizations build a strong foundation for their recruiting and training management strategies.

For more information visit www.visibilitysoftware.com.

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