



Candidate Experience Handbook

How to rev up recruiting results by delighting candidates



Talemetry[™]
HIGH PERFORMANCE RECRUITMENT MARKETING

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FOREWORD

THE CANDIDATE ERA

Sometime over the last decade recruiting became entrenched as a digital endeavor. Gone are the days of paper forms and classified job ads. Gone are the clunky Web 1.0 – even Web 2.0 – online experiences of the first decade of the millennium. They have been replaced by an internet full of dazzling consumer-quality experiences, from shopping to communicating to consuming and beyond.

The hiring market has changed as well. Candidate supply is low and expectations are high. Recruiting organizations are scrambling to increase their outbound sourcing capabilities because job boards are less effective and most of the qualified candidate pool is otherwise employed.

If you've read Talemetry's other publications, [*The Recruitment Marketing Handbook*](#) and [*Predictable Hiring*](#), you know that modern recruiting is moving from a series of transactional events to a longer term, relationship-based process. Organizations are realizing that they need to maximize every candidate interaction, capture candidate information, and develop and engage a curated, proprietary pool of talent over the long term. They are taking a page from the marketing department's playbook and reaping the rewards of scalable, predictable hiring.

And at the core of all these recruitment marketing strategies and programs, from job ads to email campaigns, lies candidate experience. Even before the candidate clicks through to your website, they begin a journey that decides the success or failure of all that came before and all that comes after.

Welcome to the world of candidate experience. This publication aims to be your guide to important strategies and practices that can multiply or reduce the results of everything you do as a recruiting organization.

CHAPTER 1

MODERN CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Candidate experience is defined differently for different organizations. For the purposes of this book, we'll define candidate experience as follows:

"The quality of the interactions a potential candidate has with a prospective employer from curiosity to signed offer letter."

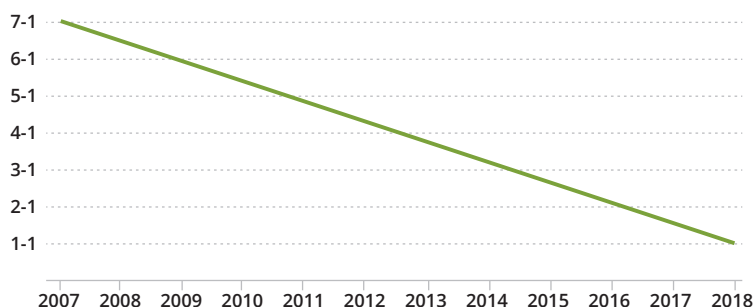
This is a broad swath, but when you think about it, candidate experience starts at the point a potential candidate begins considering your company and/or your jobs, and encompasses all the twists and turns along the way. More specifically, candidate experience includes:

- Employer brand
- Job ads
- Jobs/descriptions
- Career site content & navigation
- Social network content & integration
- Application & engagement
- Communications
- Recruiter interactions
- Scheduling
- Environment
- Interviews
- Offer

Why is Candidate Experience Important?

At the beginning of 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that there were approximately 1.5 active candidates for every open job. This condition is projected to weaken and reach its peak in 2018 with a one-to-one ratio of active candidates to open jobs. In 2007, this ratio was seven to one.

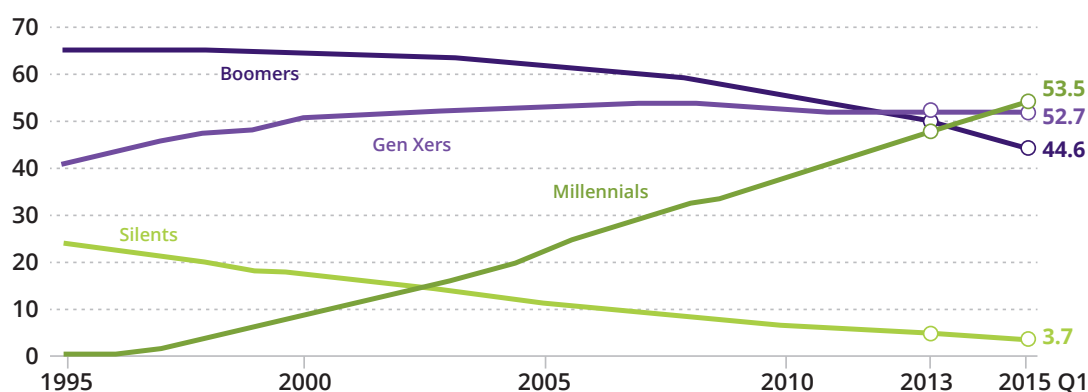
Candidates Per Open Job



With this kind of supply and demand outlook, candidates are clearly in control. A very high percentage of potential candidates already have jobs. They are willing, even eager to change, but they don't have the time and resolve of the typical available candidates. They are getting younger as well, with this year being the first time that Gen Z are reaching critical mass in the workplace. They are digital natives and expect consumer-quality online interactions, high levels of service, and easy ways to search for and apply for jobs because they are more likely to be employed.

U.S. Labor Force by Generation, 1995-2015

In Millions



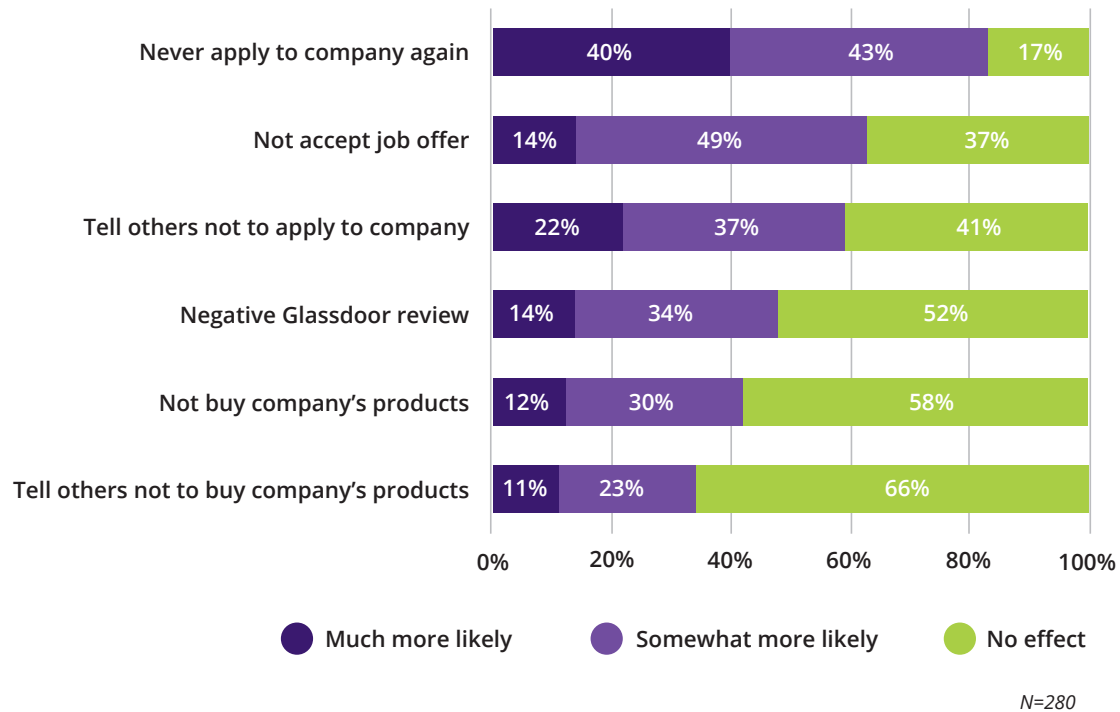
Note: Annual averages plotted 1995-2014. For 2015 the first quarter average of 2015 is shown. Due to data limitations, silent generation is overestimated from 2008-2015. Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of monthly 1995-2015 Current Population Surveys, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

And because a large number of visitors to your career site and jobs are already employed, they don't behave like candidates of old. According to Glassdoor, up to 90% of job seekers will browse on mobile devices. If they can't easily browse your jobs and express interest, that's a large portion of the candidate pool that is likely to abandon their search.

Candidates are also customers, voters, social network commenters, and trusted sources of advice for their friends and families. According to a Software Advice survey, 83% of candidates who have bad experiences are more likely to never apply again. Fifty-nine percent are likely to tell others not to apply, and 42% are likely to not buy your products. As you can see the cost of bad candidate experiences is high, and it's not limited to those who apply for your jobs. It includes all those who wanted to apply, but never went through with it.

Likelihood to Take Actions After Negative Candidate Experience



Survey data from Software Advice

Finally, most organizations spend a fair amount of hard and soft dollars driving candidates to their jobs and career site. A great candidate experience results in higher numbers of visitors converting to applicants and bad candidate experiences result in lower conversion rates. Want to drive down your cost per applicant and cost per hire? Convert more visitors to candidates.

Key Takeaways

1. The number of available candidates per job is dwindling
2. Candidates, especially Gen Y and Gen Z, expect higher quality candidate experiences
3. Poor candidate experience can reduce quality of hire and increase cost of hire
4. In some cases, poor candidate experience can affect customer loyalty and revenue

CHAPTER 2

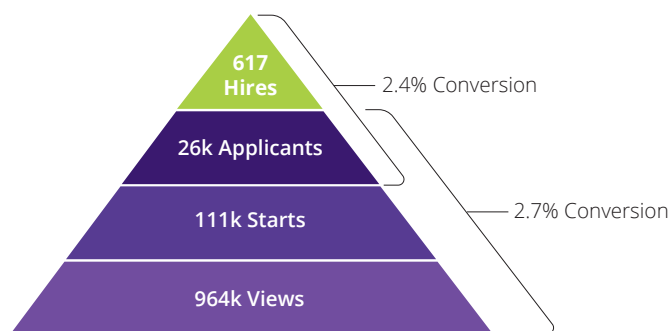
CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE BY THE NUMBERS

Looking at candidate experience, we need to segment it by pre-apply and post-apply. Both phases are important. Pre-apply are your unknown candidates and post-apply represents your known candidates.

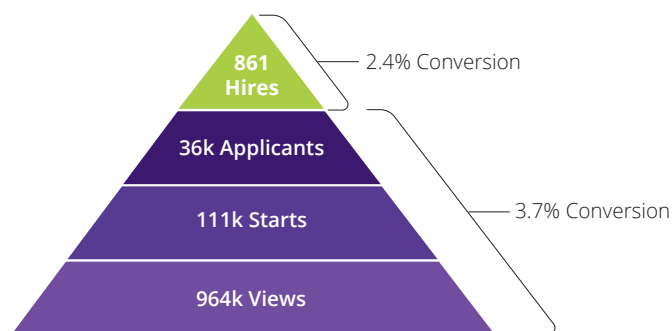
Most organizations will concentrate their candidate experience efforts on their post-apply candidates. This is understandable as this is the pool from which you will be interviewing and making offers. However, post-apply candidates only account for somewhere between one and three percent of all the potential candidates who actively browse and consider your jobs.

According to the Talent Board, your career site is the number one resource candidates use to evaluate your jobs and your company. And job descriptions are the most valued content on your career site. Take it a step further; your career site is typically your number one source of hires as well.

So while it is important to focus on post-apply candidate experience, there is a tremendous potential for affecting recruiting outcomes by analyzing and optimizing your online candidate experience. By increasing your conversion rate by just one percentage point, you can increase your number of applicants by 34%, increase your number of hires by 40%, and reduce your cost per hire by 29%. This is where the feel good aspect of candidate experience aligns with significant bottom line increases for your recruiting organization.



Typical hiring funnel from a Talemetry client



How much would it cost to get this many additional applicants via job board posts?

In addition, if you only focus on post applicant experience, you will be missing a large segment of passive candidates who are already employed and are the first to abandon confusing, non-mobile career sites and difficult online applications.

Online candidate experience represents the least understood link in the candidate experience chain and it accounts for the highest number of candidates and therefore has the most potential for impact.

Key Takeaways

1. Candidate experience begins before candidates apply for jobs
2. Nearly all candidate experiences happen online without you knowing it
3. Improving online candidate experiences can dramatically increase your applicants per job, especially with passive candidates

CHAPTER 3

WHO ARE YOU? – EMPLOYER BRAND

Understanding how candidates and employees perceive your organization is the foundation of your candidate experience, and recruiting success in general. Which benefits are most valued? How do employees view the workplace? The culture? The opportunities for growth and service? What is the emotional value of your company to your employees?

This is the foundation of employer branding. But the truth is, you don't control your brand. Your employer brand lives in the minds of employees and candidates that consume it. Your brand is the sum total of all that you do as an organization – as understood by the outside world.

Every interaction, every message, every product, every success and failure either reinforce positive aspects of your brand or contribute to negative aspects of your brand. Typical facets that most influence your employer brand include:

- Recruiter/candidate interactions
- Employee/candidate interactions
- Crossover from corporate brand
- Third party ratings (Glassdoor)
- Social network chatter
- Job and career site content
- Corporate brand

When it comes to employer brand you cannot create it, you can only influence it. The trick is to understand your employer brand as much as possible so you can develop a strategy for communicating and amplifying the aspects that most align with your recruiting strategy.

The potential benefit of branding efforts is significant. According to LinkedIn research, employers with a strong employer brand:

- Have 50% lower cost per hire
- Enjoy 28% lower turnover
- Get more engagement from passive candidates who place a higher value on company culture and may even put culture fit above compensation and benefits



Not convinced? There's more:

- According to a recent study conducted by Harvard Business Review and ICM Unlimited, companies with a bad reputation are expected to spend at least 10% more per hire
- Harvard Business Review and ICM Unlimited found that companies needed to pay \$4,723 more per hire in order to convince a candidate to accept a job offer at a company with a poor employer brand
- Virgin America surveyed its rejected candidates and found that 18% were their customers. What's worse is that 6% switched to a competitor airline as a result of a negative candidate experience. This weak employer brand cost Virgin roughly \$6.2 million in lost revenue – that was almost as much as the company's annual recruiting budget.
- A CEB study shows that a strong employer brand can increase your quality of hire by 9%.



Companies with a bad reputation are expected to spend at least **10%** more per hire



The first step in understanding and influencing your brand is surveying employees and candidates to understand their perceptions of you as an employer. These can be comprised of onboarding and exit interviews, ad hoc surveys, one-on-one discussions with key influential employees, and the like. Ask questions to get a sense of where they see your organization with regards to:

- Benefits
- Social responsibility
- Work/life balance
- Compensation profile
- Employer mission
- Social/philanthropic efforts

Then ask them how important these areas are for them. Map your perceived strengths against candidate/employee desires. Then map the crossover against any recruiting strategies and talent market issues you might be struggling with such as difficulty attracting certain types of employees, etc.

Once you have all your survey data and internal knowledge regarding your perceived strengths, weaknesses, and any talent market issues, you are ready to create your Employer Value Proposition (EVP). Your EVP is a concise statement or bullet points that convey your unique value proposition to employees and prospective employees.

For example, you could find that your mission and your social philanthropy are clear and resonate strongly with your audience, but your pay is perceived as low. In this case, your corporate mission should be at the center of your EVP. You could take steps to adjust

pay, if that is an area that you believe will increase retention and recruiting effectiveness, but that is a long term effort and it will not affect your branding unless and until it is implemented.

There are many ways to document your employer brand, but all typically include some sort of concise statement and then a series of bullets to support the brand. In any case, your employer value proposition should be the foundation for your employer brand.

For example:

Sample Brand Statement: A Career You Only Dreamed of, Helping Make Others' Dreams Come True

- Mission – How does your mission support this brand
- Values – Which of your values support this brand
- Benefits – Which benefits support this brand
- Social – What social activities support this brand
- Compensation – How does compensation support this brand

The idea is to concisely sum up your brand and support it with the various aspects of your practices that support the brand.

From here, your employer brand should be reinforced across all your candidate facing vehicles, including:

- Job descriptions/job ads
- Career sites
- Email communications
- Signage
- Internal employee communications
- Candidate-facing personal interactions

One key piece to your employer brand is social proof. Social proof is invaluable to marketers as they reinforce brand and feature product or service benefits. Social proof consists of testimonial quotes, videos, case studies, etc. that reinforce your brand and employer value proposition. Showcasing real people experiencing or talking about the benefits of your company is the most powerful marketing for your brand.

With a solid EVP and brand flowing through all your candidate facing channels, activities, and interactions, the last thing that is important for your employer brand is measurement and monitoring. Through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and the like, gather consistent feedback as to how your brand is being perceived, which aspects are resonating, and how you can better communicate or alter your focus. This ensures that

you get the most value and that your brand stays current and properly focused on the desires of your employees and candidates.

Key Takeaways

1. Employer brand can significantly increase your recruiting results
2. Organizations can't create their brand, only understand and enhance it
3. Branding requires surveying employees and candidates and using the data to craft an EVP and brand statement
4. Your employer brand should flow through all your internal and external communications
5. Consistently monitor employee and candidate feedback to assess and refine your brand

CHAPTER 4

SEGMENTATION AND CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

As with just about everything else in your recruitment marketing toolkit, segmentation is crucial. Different employee groups, departments, and locations all have unique drivers/interests. Segmentation is simply the process of looking at your job families by segments and using that information to better target potential candidates.

By breaking your jobs into meaningful segments, you then have an opportunity to model the prototypical/ideal candidate for each family and deliver more relevant jobs, content, and messages to them. Some typical segments for recruiting would be:

- Seniority level
- Function
- Geography
- Special groups: military, college, etc.

You can use these segments to create candidate personas. Personas are detailed profiles of the prototypical candidate for a specific segment. For example, an electrical engineer working in a business unit in Ukraine would have very different drivers and interests than a fulfillment manager located in North Carolina. Creating personas for strategic job families or segments can be fun and extremely helpful. Your personas should include standard and non-standard information like:

- Education
- Previous employers or types of employers
- Years of experience
- Typical interests outside of work
- Intrinsic motivators
- Location

Of course, broad marketing groups get very specific about social and personal attributes in their personas, but in HR we must stick to objective, capability-based attributes.

Building detailed personas gets you thinking differently about how candidates consume your jobs and your messages. And they help you define what kind of content your candidates will likely respond to, the best channels to attract them, and the drivers that might motivate them.

You can drive that messaging and content through all candidate facing vehicles, including:

- Career sites
- Applications
- Job descriptions and ads
- Email campaigns and auto-responders
- Social properties like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Glassdoor, etc.
- Recruiting events

With well-defined candidate segments and personas, you have the ability to:

- Segment your career site into targeted pathways for key job families and provide compelling content
- Communicate via email and social networks in targeted ways that speak to each segment's unique drivers
- Create targeted applications for different job families and locations
- Design scheduling and interview processes that are designed to showcase important value propositions

The bottom line is that candidate experience relies in large part on a personalized approach. From job ads to career sites to interviews and beyond, segmentation gives you the foundation to build the most targeted and compelling experience for each individual candidate.

Key Takeaways

1. You need to make each candidate interaction as targeted to their specific interests as possible
2. Segment your jobs by key families, geographical regions, and cultural factors
3. Model ideal candidates for each segment by creating detailed personas
4. Use segments and personas to tailor all communications to each segment (job ads, career site content, emails, and the like)

CHAPTER 5

MOBILE IS EVERYTHING

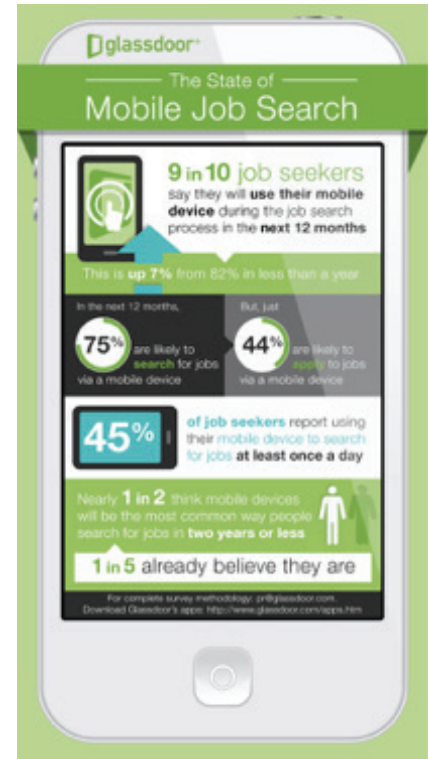
According to Glassdoor research, nine in ten candidates say they intend to use mobile devices to browse for jobs in the coming year. For Talemetry clients, an average of 37% of visitors use mobile devices to browse for jobs. Whether it's 37% or 90%, this is a significant number of candidates who are using their mobile devices to job hunt. And this number will increase over time.

If that's not enough to convince you to take mobile visitors seriously, consider that Google now ranks mobile-optimized pages more highly than non-mobile pages. In 2015, the number of Google mobile searches outnumbered desktop searches for the first time. As you might imagine, Google has tweaked its search algorithm to favor pages and sites that are optimized for mobile devices.

So mobile is now the name of the game and your technology should support it. Using fluid or responsive design templates on your career sites and applications makes it so each page will render in the right size, whether the viewer is on a desktop machine, mobile phone, or tablet. In other words, technology has made it easier to make your jobs and career pages mobile-capable.

But keep in mind that simply rendering a page for the proper form factor does not optimize the user experience. Mobile is not just about screen size, it's about location, ambience, time, and focus. Put yourself in a candidate's shoes who is in the parking lot of their current employer or on the couch at home or at their desk eating lunch. Now think about the best way to present jobs and applications to optimize for this situation. To truly optimize for mobile you need to:

- Keep text short
- Make fonts and buttons large
- Take advantage of graphics and video to get messages across
- Reduce page load times
- Take advantage of long scrolling pages rather than relying on multiple clicks to navigate
- Provide quick and easy methods for candidates to express interest without filling out a long application
- Support visitors in browsing on their mobile device and selecting jobs to apply for later at their desktop computer



Prioritizing your mobile candidate experience is crucial because mobile candidates tend to be candidates that are already employed. That's important for specialized or high volume positions when unemployment is low. It's also important because if you don't cater to these candidates, other recruiting organizations will, leaving you with fewer desirable choices.

Finally, and most importantly, everything you do to cater to mobile will in turn increase the effectiveness of your career sites and job pages for desktop browsers as well.

Attention spans are shrinking and mobile-native candidates are growing in volume every year. Wouldn't your entire online experience and conversion rates improve if there was more video, less text, large apply buttons, easy opt-ins, and apply later options? Guaranteed they would.

So as you turn your attention to improving candidate experience, focusing on mobile provides the largest bang for your buck. Remember, 97% to 99% of the candidates that interact with you do so on the web without you ever knowing them, so all this mobile optimization is designed to get more of that huge number of candidates to apply or express interest in your jobs.

Key Takeaways

1. Up to 90% of candidates say they use mobile devices to browse jobs online
2. Passive candidates are highly likely to use mobile devices
3. Mobile optimizing career sites and applications goes beyond screen size, requiring new design standards and engagement strategies
4. Everything you do to optimize for mobile, will enhance your desktop experience too

CHAPTER 6

CONSUMER QUALITY CAREER SITES

Whether you call it consumer quality or modern web experience, the fact is that there are certain expectations we all have when shopping, researching, or just plain interacting on the internet.

From Netflix to Amazon to eBay to Google and beyond, candidates are accustomed to simple, useful web interactions that are tailored to their device, location, preferences, and more. The bar is much higher today than it was just a few years ago. Your online candidate experience has to reflect this.

Search is the Star

When it comes to career sites, the starting point is search. According to The Talent Board, the number one source for candidates to research your company is your career site. And the most desired content is your jobs. So while your employee testimonials and facility walk through videos are important, finding the most appropriate job needs to be the most prominent and functional aspect of your career site.

Again, everyone on the web expects stellar search because that's the standard out there.

At a minimum that means:

- Type ahead lookup for related terms in the search field
- Alternate job title suggestions
- Location based results
- Faceted results (organized by department, location, specialty, etc.)
- Ability to create notifications

Bottom line: Visitors need to get to your search bar first, enter words into it, and get right to where they need to be. This is especially true for mobile candidates who don't have the ability to easily browse by category and navigate multiple pages.

Once you've magically whisked them to the correct job pages, you need to have content that is targeted, compelling, and concise. Your job content should:

- **Include relevant keywords in the title.** Don't go with standard internal job titles from your ATS. Research relevant alternate titles to ensure you cast the widest net.
- **Paint a compelling picture.** Focus on what candidates will be doing and their relevant outcomes rather than skills and qualifications. Make sure your job content reflects your employer brand and EVP.

- **Boil job descriptions down to the most essential elements.** Shorter text and more visuals will increase engagement with your candidates. Now is the perfect time to explore more dynamic options like video job descriptions as well.
- **Make sure your job pages can be indexed by search engines.** Some ATS-generated job pages are not accessible to Google and therefore do not get into search results. If you have an ATS that falls into this category, there are lots of options for using third party agencies and/or tools to design and host your career sites and job pages.
- **Optimize your job pages.** Create a keyword map for your important job families by researching popular search terms related to these jobs. There are several free online tools that allow you to enter keywords and see how many searches are performed each month and how competitive it is to rank for the keyword. Many offer alternate keywords that are related to your keywords. The name of the game is finding the keywords that have the most searches with relatively low competition. Once you've mapped these keywords to your job families, ensure that these keywords show up in the URL for each job, in the title, and a few times in the body of the job description. Even if you have your internal marketing team or an agency perform this function for you, it is a good exercise to go through the mapping process so you can guide them as they begin to search engine optimize your jobs.
- **Create career pathways.** Organize your career site menu to provide clear paths to targeted pages for your strategic job families. This makes it possible for you to funnel potential candidates to pages with jobs, content, and branding that map to their sensibilities and professional goals.
- **Make it mobile.** As discussed in previous chapters, all your optimization for mobile devices need to carry through to your desktop experience: Large text, pages with long scrolls, fewer words, more graphics, prevalent video, and large prominent calls to action.
- **Localize your content.** Keep in mind that various countries place additional requirements on your web presence that could affect how candidates perceive your company and consume your content. The EU requires disclosure and consent when cookies are used. Failure to do so could have legal ramifications and certainly make the candidate question your brand. Similarly, compliance with Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act for visitors with disabilities shows that your organization supports people with disabilities and can increase the number of potential candidates for your jobs.

Consumer quality candidate experiences are all about providing targeted, personalized, and branded content to candidates at the point of engagement. That means spending more time structuring your career sites to cater to your most valued candidates and putting less stuff on the pages. Don't let your lack of technical capability to target and personalize drive you to overdo your content. Better to invest in tools that support targeted, personalized experience and keep things simple.

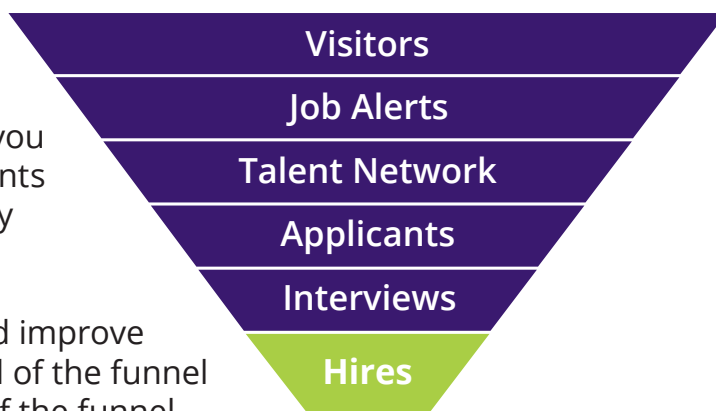
Key Takeaways

1. Candidates expect consumer quality online experiences
2. Your career site should provide personalized, targeted content at every level
3. Search should be front and center on all pages and provide laser accurate results
4. Job content should be the star of your career site
5. Job ads should reflect your employer brand and focus on outcomes and experiences rather than ATS generated job descriptions
6. Experiences should go beyond mobile-enabled to mobile-optimized

CHAPTER 7

CANDIDATE CONVERSION AND ENGAGEMENT

When it comes to candidate experience and recruitment marketing in general, conversion is the ultimate measure of success. How many visitors you convert to applicants, how many applicants you convert to interviews, and how many interviews you convert to hires.



Your candidate experience efforts should improve your conversion rates from the wide end of the funnel (visitors to applicants) to the small end of the funnel (interviews to hires). And as we covered in Chapter 3, the greatest opportunity for scale comes at the wide end of the funnel.

At the wide end, the basic conversion devices are:

- Applications
- Talent networks
- Job alert opt-ins

If you are like most organizations, you've got online applications. And every dollar and person-hour you invest in recruiting ends up here at your online application in the form of a candidate who decides whether it's worth their time to give you the information you need to convert them to an applicant.

Clearly, the application in this regard is a very important piece of your recruiting success.

But your application shouldn't be your only method of converting unknown candidates to known candidates. There are other conversion devices that should be in place to make it easier for casual candidates to engage your company:

Talent networks. Talent networks are simply a means for casual candidates to express interest in working for your company and present their qualifications and contact information. Sometimes talent networks include engagement tools like the ability to send out job alerts to members or other ongoing nurture emails like company newsletters, etc.

Job alerts. Job alerts provide an easy way for potential candidates to opt in to notifications when jobs that match their interests open up. Signing up for job alerts can be quick for candidates, and provide another channel to get your jobs in front of more

people. Some talent networks and applicant tracking systems include job alerts, so there are several options for implementing this type of conversion device.

The idea is to create multiple points of engagement on your career site because every candidate is different, and your goal should be to convert as many as possible to candidates you know.

Some will be very motivated and fill out full applications. Some will be casually interested and/or otherwise employed and not willing to fill out a full application until they know it's an appropriate opportunity. You want to know both of those types of candidates because each is valuable to you, either now for a currently open position, or for future positions.

Rethink Applications

You should also rethink how much information you require for your applications. In the old days, candidates would mail or hand-deliver resumes. Based on these resumes, a short list of candidates was selected for interviews. Once candidates came in for interviews, they were asked to fill out an application.

With the advent of applicant tracking systems, it became easy to replicate applications online, so that became the candidate's price of entry into the hiring process. With the prevalence of mobile job seekers, the elegance of modern online experiences, and shortages in many skilled positions, the job application needs to be redesigned.

Organizations need to radically pare down the amount of data they require from candidates. Any marketer can easily demonstrate that the less information you require on any form, the higher the conversion rate.

With current resume parsing technology and the availability of portable profiles from LinkedIn, Indeed, and others, there is no need to have a candidate spending an hour entering everything, including their sixth grade GPA, into an online application.

There is no reason candidates can't simply have their demographic and work history information extracted from a resume or social profile and then be sent a link to the full application if and when they become an actual candidate for the job.

And when they do become candidates, and you ask for a full application, break it up into sections, allowing applicants to fill it out over several sessions if needed. This ability to return to an application and pick up where you left off opens up the door to notifying candidates by email to return and continue their application when they fail to complete it – just like modern shopping carts do when you fail to complete a purchase.

When all is said and done, everything you do to make the conversion process faster, easier, and more convenient for candidates increases your conversion rate and gives you more candidates per job.

And despite old biases that view the application process as a means to weed out candidates that aren't serious, the fact is that the easier you make the engagement process, the more passive or already employed candidates you will convert. Difficult and time consuming applications usually result in fewer, more desperate candidates with a higher percentage that are unqualified.

Key Takeaways

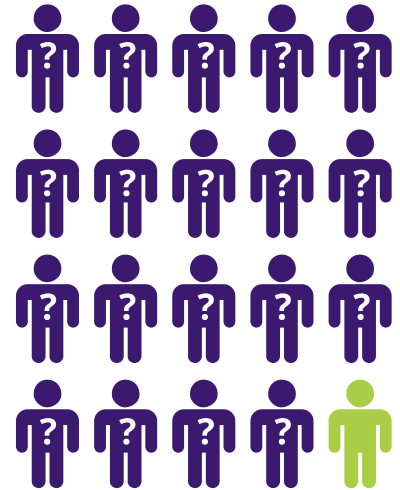
1. Focus on engaging and converting candidates from visitors through to applicants, interviewees, and hires
2. Use multiple conversion/engagement devices, including opt-ins for job alerts and talent networks, surveys, and the like
3. Simplify applications by using resume and social profile extraction, reducing up-front data capture, and consider two-step applications

CHAPTER 8

CANDIDATE COMMUNICATION AND LONG TERM ENGAGEMENT

According to the Talent Board's annual candidate satisfaction survey, over 95% of candidates who apply for a job never receive any additional communication from the recruiting organization. As much as experts talk about relationship-based recruiting, there is clearly very little movement happening if less than 5% of all candidates actually hear from a recruiter after applying.

So if you've formalized your employer brand, spruced up your career sites, optimized your applications, and trained your managers and recruiters on how to work with candidates, you've wasted every dime. If a candidate applies and never hears from you again, you've completely disrespected their time and squandered any goodwill associated with your brand.



When it comes to communication, more is more. Most applicant tracking systems support auto-emails with personalization for application submission acknowledgement through each stage of the selection and vetting process. There is no excuse for not acknowledging receipt of an application and notifying candidates when they are not being considered. These emails should be pre-written and automatically triggered by a stage change in your ATS.

These communications are golden opportunities for your organization to differentiate itself from the competition. And all it takes is some creativity and some configuration of your ATS. In all cases, use these automatic emails to wow your candidates by following some basic guidelines:

- **Be TIMELY.** Most candidates will be getting bad news from you. Bad news gets worse if it comes months after an application. Set your auto-emails to notify candidates as soon as they are disqualified. Don't wait until the position is filled to notify unsuccessful applicants. If a position gets put on hold, create hold statuses in your ATS that notify candidates that the hiring situation has changed and there will be a delay.
- **Be compassionate.** Communicate with respect and timeliness. Thank them for the time they devoted and look for ways to reward them with discounts on products or services or other incentives to show your appreciation. Be creative and be generous.
- **Be inquisitive.** Gather feedback on the process, both before and after candidates apply, so you can fine-tune your communications for the future.

- **Be a recruiter!** Assure candidates that their application is not wasted. Encourage them to opt-in to job alerts, join a talent network, or otherwise commit to considering future jobs.
- **Build a relationship.** Nurture these unsuccessful applicants with relevant content like newsletters, tips on getting a job with your company – any information that will educate candidates and keep them warm for future positions as they arise.

Relationships are About Communication

As we've covered in previous publications, [The Recruitment Marketing Handbook](#) and [Predicable Hiring](#), your entire recruiting process must evolve to become more relationship-based. That means that each applicant or talent network member should be centralized into a proprietary talent pool where you can source, engage, and nurture them over time.

In this environment, frequent, relevant, and honest communication, both during the post-application selection process and long term after selection, becomes a key piece of the candidate experience. If you communicate with candidates frequently and truly have a process to circle back around and source from past applicants, then you have the foundation for excellent candidate experience, as well as a valuable resource for optimizing your recruiting capabilities overall.

Key Takeaways

1. Less than 5% of candidates hear from a recruiter after applying for a job
2. Focus on leveraging technology to email candidates at each phase of the hiring process
3. Over-communicate with candidates and you'll enhance your employer brand and increase your ability to hire for future jobs
4. Capture, communicate, and source from your past applicant pool
5. Relationship-based recruiting begins with post-applicant communication

CHAPTER 9

CHANNEL INTEGRATION

To truly understand the scope of the experience candidates have with your organization you need look beyond your interviewees and your new hires. Even beyond your career sites and application processes.

The true candidate experience journey begins with job sites that host your job ads, social sites that you post job ad links to, and communities where professionals research your company and your jobs. You must also understand that your jobs make their way to some job boards that you know about, and likely to many that you don't know about. Your jobs are often scraped from your career site and hosted by reputable boards like Indeed.com, LinkedIn, and Monster. But they are also often scraped by other boards that use your content to collect candidate data before handing them off to your job pages to apply.

This typically leads to confusion for the candidate who is unaware of where they are in the application process as they are handed off to your site. To fully understand the candidate experience, you need to monitor your referral traffic to find out where your visitors are coming from. Google Analytics and other dedicated tools for monitoring traffic sources can alert you to previously unknown sources of traffic so you can find your jobs and follow the apply process from all your sources and discover any confusing or downright shady experiences that might be in play.

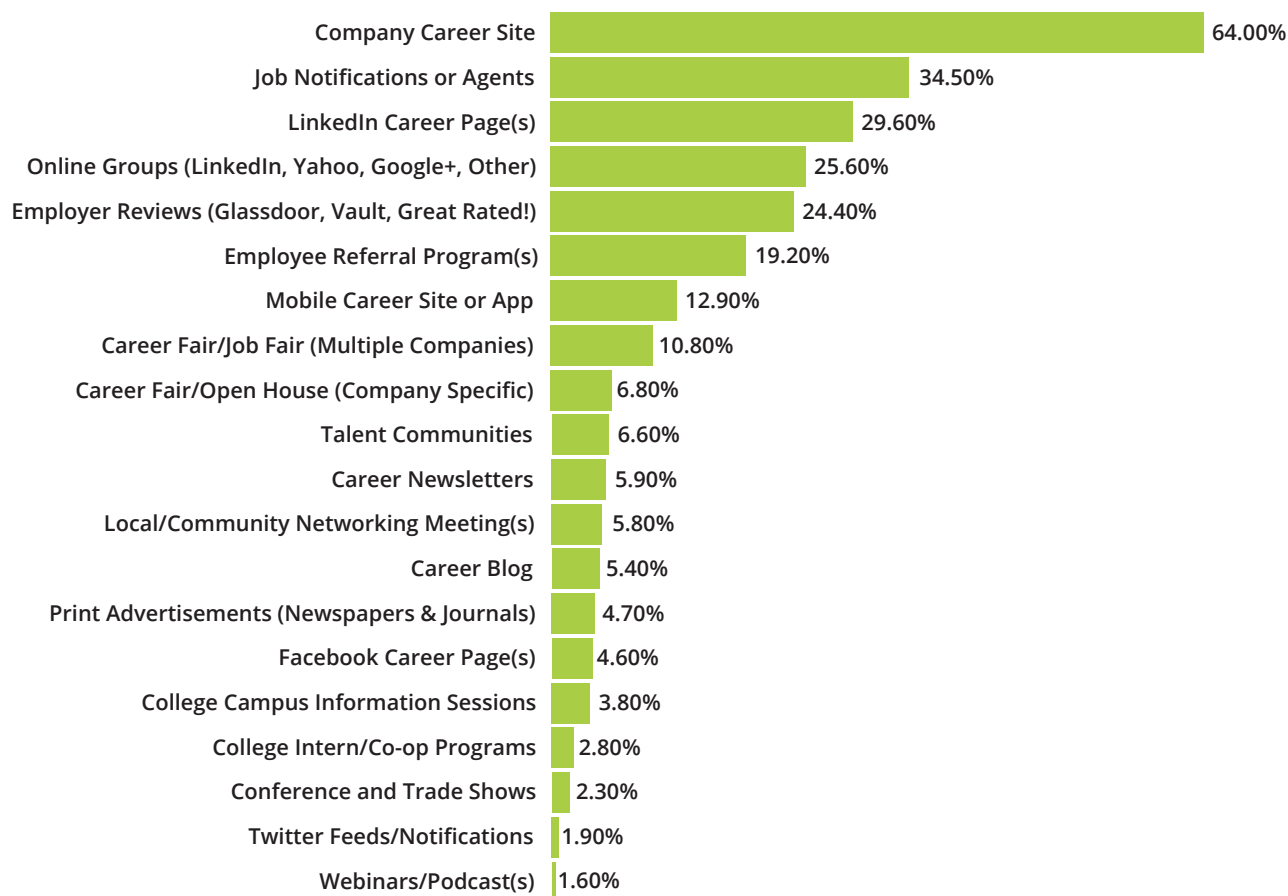


It is important to know where these bad experiences are coming from so you can take steps to block crawlers from the sites scraping your jobs. Another side effect of having your jobs scraped from your career site by third parties is that they often stay posted after you have closed the jobs and pulled them off your site.

That's why it's also a good idea to use a job distribution tool to distribute your jobs to free job boards so you can control the content, measure the effectiveness of each source, and ensure that closed jobs get pulled off these third party sites automatically.

Your candidate experience goes beyond job boards and your career sites. According to the Talent Board's annual candidate experience survey, the top resources for candidates to research your company and jobs are:

- Your career site
- Job alert notifications
- LinkedIn career pages
- Relevant online communities
- Employer review sites like Glassdoor
- Employee referrals
- Mobile career sites



It is a good idea to extend your employer branding, messaging, and jobs beyond your career site and into these sources that candidates rely on. Certainly your Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter pages should reflect the same brand and the same tactics discussed in this book. It also makes sense to extend your brand where possible and monitor and be active on employee review sites as well.

While your career site is the number one resource for candidates finding and researching your jobs, it's important to understand that candidate experience begins well before candidates encounter your career site and the research process spreads beyond it. If candidates get conflicting information, encounter old jobs, or get suckered into registering for another site when they think they are applying for your jobs, they don't blame bad luck. They blame you.

Key Takeaways

1. Candidate experience often begins with those job boards you know about and those you don't
2. Investigate where candidates are finding your jobs and follow the apply button to your jobs. Use career site analytics and Google to find sources you don't know about.
3. Extend your employer brand and targeted messaging beyond your career site to job boards and social networks
4. Consider actively posting your jobs to free job boards and blocking sites from scraping your jobs to gain more control over candidate experience and eliminate dead job links on other sites

CHAPTER 10

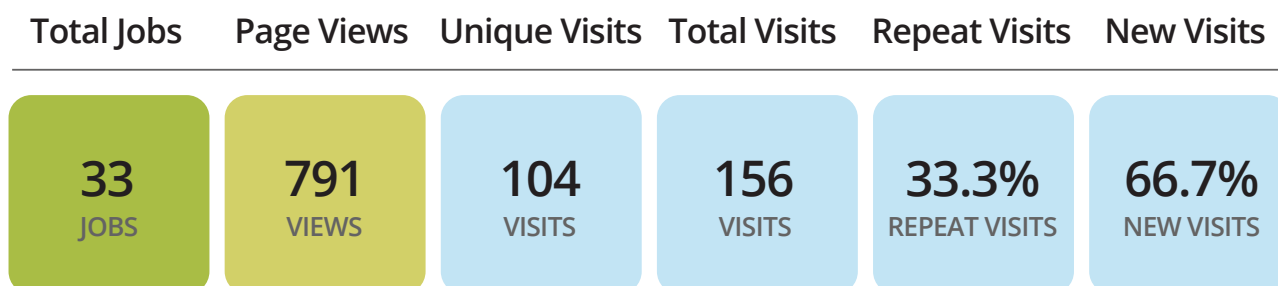
ANALYSIS AND REFINEMENT

Like all other areas of recruitment marketing, candidate experience needs to be measured, analyzed, and refined. Of course, with interviewees or new hires, you can use direct interviews or basic survey tools to measure satisfaction and the candidate's experience while searching and interviewing for your jobs.

But again, this is a tiny fraction of candidates who are having candidate experiences. In order to understand what's happening with the other 99% of the candidates that you don't interview or hire, there are some key metrics every organization should monitor:

- Number of career site visitors
- Source of visits (where were they before they clicked onto your site)
- Career site bounce rate (the number of people who come to your site and immediately leave)
- Number of pages viewed per session
- Time spent on your site per session
- Mobile vs. desktop traffic including device type

These basic traffic measures will give you a sense of how popular your site is, which sources are giving you the most traffic (Google search, job boards, social networks, etc.), and how engaged they are with your content. Higher bounce rates and lower page views per visit can indicate problems with design, content, page load speed, etc.



With these metrics in place, you should then measure traffic to pages at each level of your career site and identify what the typical navigation funnel looks like. What paths do candidates take through your site? By looking at traffic by page, you can see where most people are entering, understand the flow of their navigation, and see where they exit.

This extends to your applications as well. You should measure how many people get to the point of clicking your apply button vs. how many complete the application. It's also good to know where in your apply process candidates drop off, if you have multi-step applications. Ideally, you should have a full picture from landing page to jobs to

application start and application complete so you can see where you are gaining visitors and where you are losing them.

Do this same exercise for mobile visitors as well as desktop. These metrics become your jumping off point for optimizing your career site and application process. As you make changes to improve design, navigation, and messaging, you can measure the effectiveness of those changes by monitoring how they affect these metrics.

Career site metrics like these should become an extension of your other key recruiting metrics, giving you new indexes like visitors per applicant, visitors per hire, applicants per hire, application starts per hire, and more.

Need to hire 950 employees next year? If you know your visitors per applicant and your applicants per hire metrics, you can plan for how many candidates you will need to drive to your jobs in order to meet your goals at a high level.

Advanced Metrics

If you are serious about optimizing candidate experience, the more you know, the better. Embedding surveys or using a dedicated candidate feedback platform on your career site can add qualitative data to your analysis and surface any issues that candidates might be having while researching or applying for your jobs. Asking visitors what’s working and what’s not is a great way to understand the other 99% of candidates you don’t know.

Embedding free/inexpensive monitoring tools like [Inspectlet](#) can actually show you the movements of realtime users as they navigate through your pages and provide heat maps showing where users are looking and clicking on your pages. When it comes to optimizing your candidate experience, the more data the better.

The fact is, recruiting organizations spend a great deal of time and money researching and developing an employer brand, designing and implementing career sites, and driving potential candidates to their career sites and job pages. Yet few measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts with an eye towards increasing conversion rates and building an army of satisfied candidates they can source from in the future.

Content				Pages	Entrance	Exit	Downloads	Events	Media
/				114		0%			
Home - BlackBearTest - Jobs in Alpharetta, GA									
/jobs/search				19		0%			
Jobs Search - BlackBearTest - Jobs in Alpharetta, GA									
/pages/talent-network				7		0%			
Talent Network - BlackBearTest - Jobs in Alpharetta, GA									
/pages/thank-you				3		0%			
Thank You - BlackBearTest - Jobs in Alpharetta, GA									
/pages/Technical				2		0%			
Technical Careers - BlackBearTest - Jobs in Alpharetta, GA									
/jobs/5548639-cloud-dba				2		0%			
Cloud DBA in San Francisco, CA - BlackBearTest									
/jobs/5231543-hris-specialist				2		0%			
HRIS Specialist in Bridgeport, CT - BlackBearTest									
/jobs/5333760-web-developer-internship				1		0%			
Web Developer Internship in San Bernardino, CA - BlackBe...									
/jobs/5488050-cloud-dba-financial-systems				1		0%			
Cloud DBA - Financial Systems in Bridgeport, CT - BlackBe...									
/job/5244980-systems-consultant				1		0%			
Systems Consultant in Walnut Creek, CA - BlackBearTest									
/pages/Military				1		0%			
Military - BlackBearTest - Jobs in Alpharetta, GA									
/job/5488050-cloud-dba-financial-systems				1		0%			
Cloud DBA - Financial Systems in Bridgeport, CT - BlackBe...									
/job/5333466-director-call-center-customer-service-and-s...				1		0%			
Director Call Center Customer Service and Sales in Alph...									

Key Takeaways

1. Up to 99% of all candidates don't immediately convert to applicants
2. Set up basic metrics to understand how they are consuming your content and converting to applicants so you can improve performance
3. Use Google Analytics, or better yet, a career site hosting tool to get basic metrics
4. Integrate traffic and conversion metrics into your key hiring metrics
5. Measure application conversion rates and drop off at each step of your application
6. Survey career site visitors, applicants, interviewees, and hires to gain insight into what's working and what's not with your candidate experience efforts

CHAPTER 11

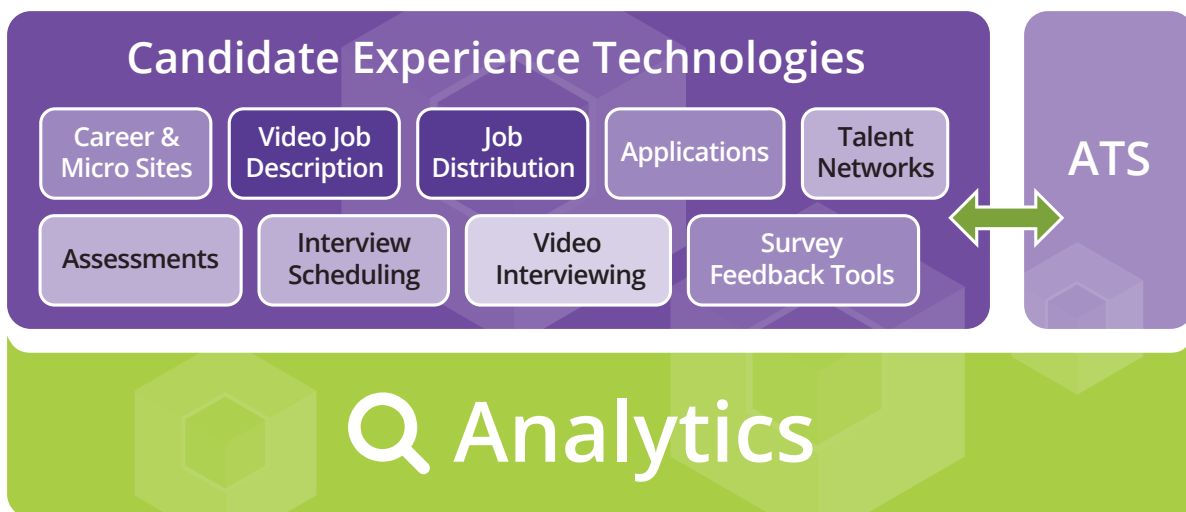
CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE TECHNOLOGIES

The strategies outlined in this book are based on best practices honed by marketing and recruiting organizations over many years. As you've probably guessed, they are not based on the capabilities of most applicant tracking systems. As with most modern recruitment marketing strategies, they require tools that go beyond, but also integrate with your ATS.

While most applicant tracking systems can support some of the strategies and techniques contained herein, they are not designed to provide consumer quality online experiences. Doing so requires a look at third party solutions in a number of areas:

- [Career site platforms](#)
- Video job description solutions
- [Job distribution tools](#)
- [Online application solutions](#)
- Assessments
- Video content delivery systems
- Traffic and conversion analytics (often provided as part of a career site platform)
- Google Analytics (for raw web metrics and traffic monitoring)
- Interview scheduling solutions
- Video interviewing platforms
- Survey tools and/or candidate feedback platforms

The days of framing up your colors and logo into an ATS and rolling out career pages and applications are pretty much over. Candidate expectations for online experiences are too high.



When investigating the technologies required to deploy and measure modern candidate experiences, there are core principles that should guide your efforts. Your candidate experience solutions should:

- Integrate with your ATS
- Integrate with each other
- Measure candidate experience in a common way
- Pull hiring data from the ATS to provide source-to-hire metrics for candidate experience

Recruitment marketing platforms with multiple pieces of the candidate experience pie are preferable to stitching disparate add-on tools together for a number of reasons. First, it's easier to manage and hold one vendor accountable for key solutions. Platforms integrate between individual tools and measure the results of your candidate experience across each of the tools in an apples-to-apples perspective.

Having a career site tool, for example, that measures traffic on a visits-per-session basis and an application workflow tool that measures *visitors*-per-session will result in two data silos that don't relate to each other, leaving you with useless metrics.

As with all other areas of most businesses, recruiting has become a technology driven endeavor, with competitive advantage almost always predicated on the effective use of technology as an enabler of service delivery. Nowhere is this truer than with candidate experience.

Key Takeaways

1. Technology is a key enabler for candidate experience success
2. Consumer quality experiences require more than basic ATS career sites and applications
3. Integrated career site or recruitment marketing platforms are preferable to disparate tools for delivering modern candidate experiences

CHAPTER 12

CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The University of Calgary (UCalgary) has 5,000 employees with 31,000 students across 14 different faculties. Lauded as #12 on the QS worldwide ranking of Top 100 Universities Under 50 Years Old, it is not resting on its laurels. It has a strategic vision to become a Top 5 Research University by its 50th anniversary in 2016.

With their "Eyes High Top Five vision," UCalgary had important talent needs and a good story to tell prospective candidates.

To meet these hiring needs, they identified several key goals:

- Increase their brand awareness
- Expand the visibility of their open jobs
- Provide exceptional candidate experiences
- Target individual faculty candidates with relevant online content
- Track and optimize results.

UCalgary's ATS presented several barriers to achieving their goals without using third party tools:

- Search engines and aggregators couldn't index their jobs
- Browser incompatibility and lack of a mobile interface proved frustrating for candidates
- Disparate, non-integrated faculty pages on their career site made brand uniformity and maintenance of job listings time consuming and expensive
- All metrics stopped once a candidate viewed a job within their ATS, making important traffic analysis impossible

Search for a Solution

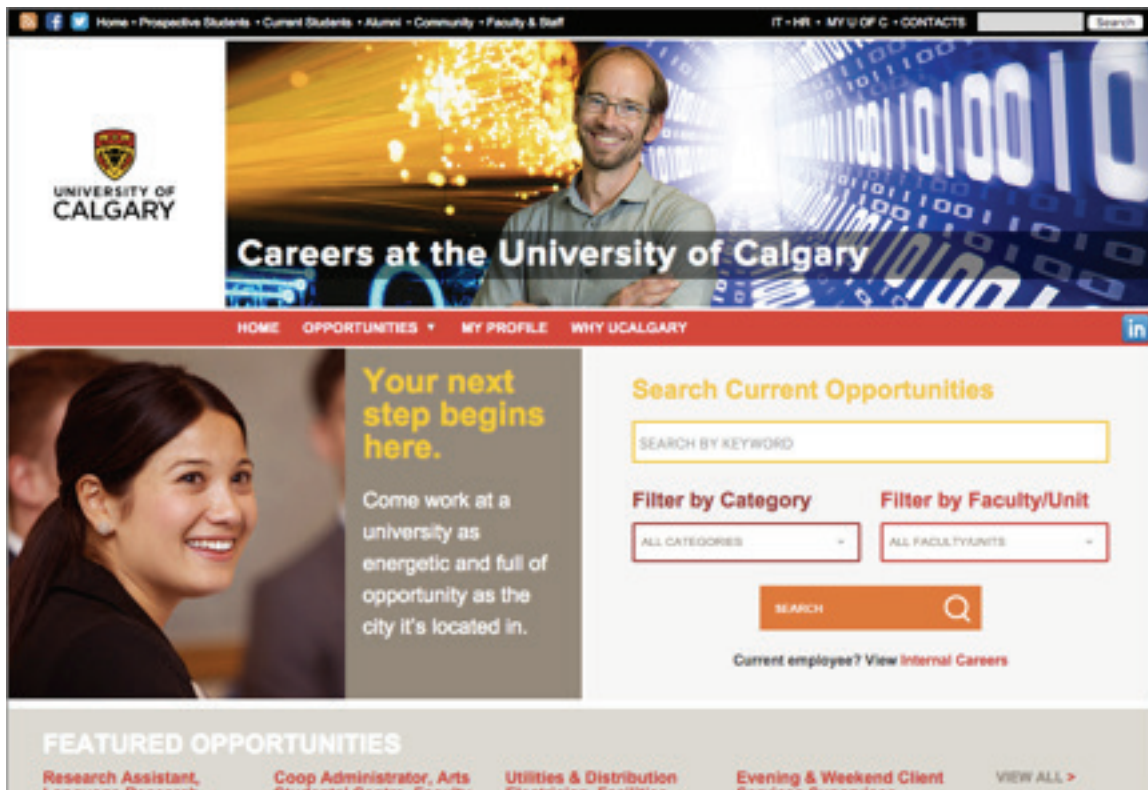
The University of Calgary team searched for a solution that could integrate with their ATS and give them the tools and analytics necessary to refine their approach and meet their hiring goals. They needed a solution that could:

- Create an engaging, easy to use, mobile friendly career site
- Support segmented microsites for faculties with consistent branding
- Provide a view into their recruitment analytics for optimization

After evaluating several solutions, University of Calgary chose the Talemetry recruitment marketing platform, specifically their Career Sites, Apply, and Job Broadcast modules.

Implementation

UCalgary began by deploying their global career site and three faculty microsites. Their internal team started designing additional faculty sites to be deployed after the initial implementation. Their goal was to achieve a consistent design across all sites, with responsive mobile capability and SEO optimization of the site and job pages.



University of Calgary sees significant progress toward goals with improved candidate experience

With the Talemetry solution up and running for a full 10 months, University of Calgary has seen solid results in terms of increased visibility for their jobs and improved candidate experience. Talemetry's analytics have given them crucial insights into the performance of their recruiting efforts.

Talemetry's Career Site module supports the main career site and three faculty microsites and has handled 725,000 visitors and 2.5 million page views. Bounce rates have consistently remained under 25% with the average visitor spending 4½ minutes on the site.

This represents a 500% increase in career site traffic.

With increased exposure, the addition of new easier navigation, resume extraction, and mobile-friendly design, “applicants per job” has increased by 50%. Plus, they are now able to deliver content and jobs, showcasing unique value propositions for each specific faculty.

Talemetry’s Career Site analytics have also revealed 377 additional sites referring candidates to University of Calgary resulting in more than 6,500 applicants.



CHAPTER 13

CASE STUDY: UPMC

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is the largest non-government employer in Pennsylvania with 60,000 employees. Equal parts community focused and entrepreneurial, this healthcare provider and insurer is inventing new models of accountable, cost effective, patient-centered care.

A recognized innovator in medicine and in information technology, UPMC was an early adopter of electronic health records and the interoperability solutions that tie them together.

UPMC's Recruiting Challenge

To maintain their leadership role as a very large and innovative healthcare organization, UPMC needed to be able to attract and hire a large number of highly skilled professionals in extremely impacted and competitive healthcare delivery professions.

At the time they faced many challenges. First was a highly competitive environment for healthcare talent in a field where open positions can directly impact their ability to deliver services.

They were also recruiting for multiple facilities across Pennsylvania and their recruiting teams were decentralized with their separate talent pools contained in a siloed, non-integrated CRM system. Finally, their corporate career sites were fragmented across their multiple facilities and were not optimized for mobile devices.

UPMC needed a solution that could immediately help them:

- Increase candidate flow
- Centralize talent pools and recruiters
- Develop capabilities for engaging passive candidates
- Leverage employer brand across all facilities
- Increase their career site's visitor to applicant conversion rate
- Provide consumer quality candidate experience
- Establish metrics for growth, engagement, and conversion of candidates

The Total Solution

UPMC already used Talemetry's Apply Extraction module, so they reached out to Talemetry to discuss their talent acquisition goals.

Talemetry's recruitment marketing platform supports full cycle recruitment marketing from a single integrated platform, including:

- Centralized and automated job distribution to job boards, social networks, recruiting agencies, digital ads, and more
- A single, centralized talent pool with single search sourcing from internal and external sources, full tracking and sharing of candidate data and recruiter activities, talent pipelining and email campaigning capability
- Full mobile and social optimized candidate experience capability, featuring multiple targeted careers sites and targeted mobile optimized apply processes
- Source to hire analytics to measure effectiveness across all programs and sources of talent

Once the selection was made, Talemetry's dedicated team of project management, service, and implementation professionals coordinated with UPMC's internal project team to define a project plan.

UPMC was able to take advantage of improved candidate experience and job distribution capabilities within 60 days of project start and begin using centralized CRM capabilities within 120 days.

Results

Since going live with Talemetry, UPMC has seen significant improvements across their recruitment marketing efforts.

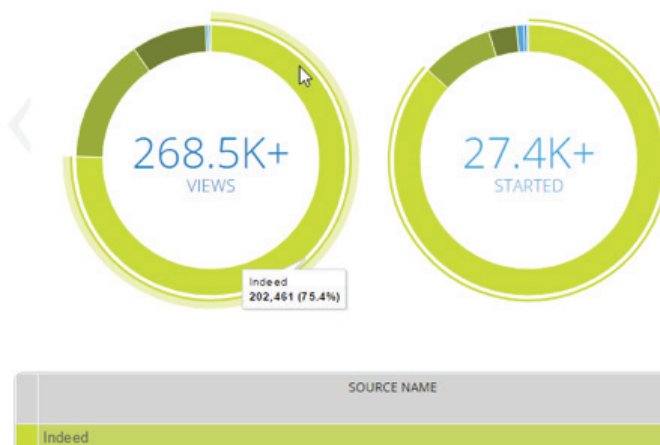
Candidate Experience

UPMC deployed Talemetry Career Sites solution with a cohesive brand for all its facilities. Talemetry has also enabled them to provide several online career pathways to feature targeted content and jobs for their key job families: Nursing, Allied Health, Physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, Professional & Admin, Students, and Service Workers.

UPMC's Talemetry-hosted career sites supported nearly 1M visits, with an average of 5.25 minutes spent on the site, in the first six months after implementation.



UPMC extended their brand identity with Talemetry's auto-broadcast feature that distributed their jobs to preferred job boards. The distributed jobs directed candidates to their new career sites for applying or joining one of their multiple targeted Talemetry talent networks that were segmented for General jobs, Advanced Practice, Military, and Nursing professionals.



Lessons Learned

In implementing a recruitment marketing system, UPMC achieved a significant increase in capability in a short time frame. As a result, they learned some initial lessons very quickly.

One of the most noticeable results was the increase in traffic as their Talemetry career sites made their jobs indexable by search engines and optimized for search ranking.

They have centralized their talent pools and recruiting function, but are taking steps to establish consistent processes and practices around the pre-applicant recruiting function, like standardized tags and programs. Despite good initial user adoption, they realize that centralization is a significant change in recruiting culture and will require strong processes to support ongoing acceptance and utilization by recruiters.

With the large increase in candidate volume being driven to their jobs and career sites, Talemetry's analytics uncovered a bottleneck with their ATS native application process. These insights have accelerated UPMC's move to Talemetry's Apply Workflow module to increase the visitor to applicant conversion rate.



CHAPTER 14

THE MODERN CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Candidates no longer jump through hoops to conform to your processes. As recruiters, we don't have the luxury of putting walls up and keeping candidates at arm's length anymore.

And that's a good thing. Because organizations are keeping huge numbers of mobile candidates from engaging with their jobs and ignoring today's most necessary candidates: the ones that are already employed, don't have time, and approach each new opportunity from a distance until they know whether it is appropriate or not.

But beyond this, the opportunities for increasing recruiting effectiveness by providing satisfying and long lasting candidate experiences are exciting. With proper recruitment marketing capabilities like centralized talent pools, candidate relationship management and sourcing technologies, providing stellar candidate experiences becomes the currency that determines your recruiting success.

Recruiting organizations that build these relationships and serve candidates in the same way their companies serve customers will have a distinct recruiting advantage over those that don't.

It all comes down to a strategic shift toward long term relationship-based recruiting, supported by some simple principles:

- Make engagement simple and intuitive
- Over-communicate
- Forge long term relationships based on brand loyalty and quality of interactions
- Measure satisfaction and conversion
- Continuously improve

Building winning candidate experiences represents one of the most exciting opportunities for increased recruiting effectiveness today. With a candidate-centric focus and the strategies in this publication, the sky is the limit.

What You'll Learn

The *Candidate Experience Handbook* is a concise overview that provides the building blocks for taking candidate experience to the next level. Within these pages, you'll learn:

- What socio-economic factors are driving the focus on candidate experience
- Tactics for engaging a huge pool of neglected candidates
- The numbers behind improved online candidate experience
- Key metrics for satisfying candidates and increasing recruiting effectiveness
- What a consumer quality online experience really is
- Key strategies for turning online applicants into an evergreen well of future hires
- Case studies of winning candidate experience in action

...and much more

ABOUT TALEMETRY®

Talemetry® works with your applicant tracking system enabling you to get more of the right candidates to apply for jobs using all recruitment marketing and sourcing channels and activities on a single powerful technology platform.

The Talemetry platform helps large organizations automatically distribute jobs, search and source candidates, build talent pipelines, engage candidates with full CRM, provide rich social and mobile candidate experiences, integrate external recruiting vendors, and measure and optimize their recruitment operations.

Talemetry, Inc. has been helping hundreds of employers improve candidate experiences, optimize recruiter efficiency, control costs, and get maximum visibility into what works and what doesn't since 2000.

To learn more, visit

<http://talemetry.com> or follow @Talemetry