A Strategic Guide to Auditing the Candidate Experience

What does your application process say about your organization?

Your recruiting experience helps candidates gauge what it's like to work for your organization and how much your company values its employees. The candidate experience has a direct impact on your hiring success and can even influence how long people will work for you. It influences not just your employer brand, but also consumer brand perceptions.

The candidate experience offers a window into your organization, so it's important that it is regularly audited by your talent acquisition team.

Not convinced? Here are few key statistics make the business case:

- Only 25 percent of job applicants rate their candidate experience as great.

- 95 percent of candidates are more likely to apply again if they had a positive candidate experience the first time.

- The aspects of the hiring process that candidates find most important to create a positive experience include clear and regular communication (58 percent), clear expectations (53 percent) and feedback regarding rejection (51percent).

The Starting Point

While only one in three employers have applied to one of their company's jobs to see what the process is like (CareerBuilder, 2017), this is the best starting point for an audit. Have a go at applying to your organization and take it seriously, making sure that your whole team takes learnings onboard.

- What were your pain points?

- What is your recruiting process communicating to candidates? What does it say about you as an employer?

- What are both your direct and indirect competitors doing? How does your content compare? Why would

candidates choose to apply to your talent community or job post over other companies?

The Devil's in the Detail: Reviewing Each Step

The major milestones are naturally center stage in the hiring process, but do not underestimate the small touches. Review the process thoroughly.

- How many steps are there in your recruiting process? How long does it take for each step to complete? Think about both the admin side e.g. scheduling interviews, as well as candidate input e.g. how long it takes to fill out the pre-screening form.

- What is your candidate drop-off rate? At which points in the process do candidates tend to disappear? What is pushing them away?

- Ask for feedback and provide feedback to candidates. Make this step anonymous so that candidates feel comfortable and be honest about their experience.

- The candidate experience doesn't stop after someone accepts your job offer. Don't forget to evaluate your onboarding process too. The same goes for candidates that are unsuccessful. How is your rejection process? How is your keep-talent-warm process?

- Think about all stakeholders. If your hiring managers or recruiters are having a tough time, it will inevitably affect the candidate experience.

- Eighty-nine percent of job seekers think mobile devices play a critical role in the job hunting process. Make sure your candidate experience - whether top talent are looking at your brand or applying to roles - is mobile-friendly!

- Leverage data to make strategic decisions based on concrete insights. With the right reporting capabilities, you can identify which sources are the most lucrative by tracking where candidates come from. A/B testing can help identify your most impactful communications and get hiring manager feedback ratings.

Keeping Your Target Candidates and Employer Brand In Mind

It is not just about a seamless recruiting process that keeps talent engaged. A winning candidate experience focuses on specific audiences and plays an active role in building a positive employer brand image.

- Who are you looking to hire? Identify your target personas and design an experience in line with their needs and expectations. For more information on how to define them, check out our **candidate persona best practices.**

- Make sure the content they first come across is audience-specific to attract the candidates you are after, including personalizing your career sites.

- Where are candidates finding out about you and where do they apply for jobs e.g. job boards, social media, your career site, employee referrals? Consistency across all channels bolsters your employer brand and helps reinforce authenticity.

- What information are you sharing about your organization? The recruiting process is a two-way street. Candidates care about your employer values and want to know what it is like to work at your organization. Make sure you are genuine and realistic about this if you want employees to stay on board.

- Word gets around. Whether it's for positive or negative reasons. The best way to avoid negative feedback is to put yourself in candidates shoes and to be honest with them about what it's like to work for your organization. If you're not sure where to start, talk to your employees and leverage them as ambassadors. Learn how **here.**