



Hiring Top Talent: Shifting Conventional Thinking

Employers or candidates—who's in the driver's seat when it comes to hiring top talent? [Charlene Bergman](#) asserts that candidates are definitely the ones at the helm, and employers need to adjust their expectations to accommodate this reality. Therefore, she proposes that equal consideration should be given to what a hiring manager is looking for and what will attract a candidate.

2020 presented a year of ambiguity, transformation and adaptation in all aspects of our personal and professional lives. Yet in the world of talent acquisition, not much has changed. We are still experiencing a market in which exceptional talent call the shots. A market where A-Players are receiving multiple offers and counter offers and a market in which they may be apprehensive about making a move and need to be enticed by an extraordinary opportunity.

While we have seen a slight shift with hiring employers providing an exceptional candidate experience and paying attention to what the candidates needs are, for the most part, we continue to see employers operating as if they are in the driver's seat. A high percentage of hiring teams do not consider the candidate's perspective but rather endeavor to determine if a candidate is right for them or their opportunity.

So, why is it important to listen to candidates needs and create a positive experience?

- caring enough to ensure that the fit for the candidate is equally important as the fit for the organization, can be a clear differentiator. As stated, we are in a market where demand surpasses supply of great talent. A-Players expect exceptional treatment from prospective employers. This is especially true for passive candidates.
- candidates perceive their experience during the hiring process to be a key indicator of corporate culture, impacting their decision to join or not. If treated right, they will become advocates of your brand. If treated poorly, they will be sharing that experience.
- paying attention to a contender's needs and interests every step of the way can also save a lot of time and energy. Of relevance is a quote from prior 3M CEO, George Buckley when referring to recruitment practices, "Don't get the fish on the line but fail at getting it into the boat."

- ensuring that a prospective candidate career goals are aligned to what you can provide as an employer will ensure a committed, happy employee for the long-term.

Case in point, desirable employer Google uses a six-step hiring process. Before getting into “what’s-in-it-for-them”, the first three steps, clearly focuses on the candidates, recommending that the candidate walks through a visualization exercise of self-reflection. In Google’s words, “If we hire you based on your skills, we’ll get a skilled employee. If we hire you based on your skills, your enduring passions, your distinct experiences and your perspectives, we’ll get a Googler.” Now that’s foresight!

In capturing the attention and holding the interest of top-tier talent, the hiring committee needs to shift the focus from their needs to the candidate needs. Below are important considerations for personalizing the candidate journey and making those individuals feel important, respected, and desirable throughout the entire hiring process.

1. **Know the candidate’s pain points** – pain points are what will motivate a candidate to make a move. As part of the recruitment team, you will need to understand what a candidate may not be fully satisfied with in their current role so that you can assess your opportunity to determine a better fit.
2. **Empower talent to transform your business** – so you wish to hire A-Players or HiPo’s (High Potential Individuals)? Your culture will need enough elasticity to embrace these in-demand candidates who can and will challenge you in areas where you need to be challenged. You will need to provide freedom and flexibility for them to operate as they see fit to deliver on mandates and implement transformation. Offer them challenges and opportunities to enhance their skills and leadership capabilities, paving the way for further development.
3. **Know and understand the candidate’s 5 F’s** – in Geoff Smart’s book *WHO*, he suggests that you put yourself in the candidate’s shoes to understand their view on the 5 F’s which are Fit, Family, Freedom, Fortune and Fun. However, this is not intended for only the commencement of the search. You will need to constantly check in on the 5F’s throughout the entire recruitment process and onboarding:
 - at sourcing
 - during interviewing
 - after offer but before acceptance
 - after acceptance but before joining
 - after joining and during onboarding. Once you secure the candidate, make them feel right at home!
4. **Be transparent** – being transparent lets potential candidates know you are authentic, professional and trustworthy. It also shows that you care about their experience regardless of the outcome. It’s time to get rid of the game face and conduct the hiring process with open and transparent dialogue.

Seize the Day!

A new year brings a new opportunity to look at things with a fresh pair of eyes. As you shift conventional thinking to give equal consideration to what's important to candidates, the rewards will be significant. You will achieve a winning solution for a "talent-first" culture and a successful outcome for hiring and retaining top talent. Good luck!

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