

HOW TO CREATE AN



AWESOME!

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

And Why It Matters

Why You Need to Look After Every Candidate



Tracy Welch, Business Director at Priority Appointments, explains why it's not just candidates who need to give their best performance in job interviews.

When you are recruiting, you will – quite rightly – expect every candidate to have done their homework. When they arrive for interview, you will anticipate that they will have planned what they will say and ask, turned up punctually, be appropriately dressed and wearing a smile.

However, in today's climate where businesses are having to compete for the best candidates, employers need to be equally well-prepared and it's worth making sure the experience you give applicants shows your company off to its best advantage.

Word of Mouth Can Help You Recruit...

People who are considering a new role will often ask the opinion of people they know before applying for the job – and word of mouth is often cited as a source of information and intelligence about prospective employers.

... But Bad News Travels Fast – and Far

When candidates visit your business, they will form their own views and opinions about the company. They will have their own personal and professional network of friends, family and former colleagues that they will share their views with – particularly if the candidate in question feels that they have not been treated well. It is therefore vital that every candidate has a positive experience when they come for interview – even if they are not the right person for the job.

In these days of social media, candidates love to share their experiences online too – especially negative ones!

Research conducted by the Recruitment and Employers' Confederation (REC), shows that 26% of people can be dissuaded from applying for a role due to a negative view by someone in their network.

If you gain a reputation for being an uncaring or ill-prepared employer at interview stage, it could very quickly affect your company's brand and narrow down the choice of people who will want to work for you.

Keep Communicating

REC's Candidate Experience research shows that often, what really matters to applicants may not be the things you initially thought.

Employers said that they believed that the most important things for candidates were:

- Improving job-related content for applicants (38%)
- Reducing the average time between interview and decision (33%)
- Tightening screening to reduce the number of applications (17%)

However, candidates who were interviewed said that the top three things that mattered to them were:

- Receiving feedback if you are unsuccessful (34%)
- Getting more feedback throughout the application process (22%)
- Reducing the average time between interview and decision (12%).

To help you build a strong employer brand and be seen as an employer of choice by the best candidates, we have put together our **Top 10 Tips To Create a Positive Candidate Experience** that they will want to share with their network of friends, colleagues and family members

Ten Tips to Create a Positive Candidate Experience

Here are our Top Ten Tips to help make sure that every candidate sees you as a great business - and tells their network about their positive experience:

1

Prepare a detailed, accurate and attractive Job Description

The description should talk about the company culture and ethos as well as the job responsibilities. You need to be clear about the skills and experience you are looking for, which can be separated into 'essential' and 'desirable' skills or attributes.

Don't over-sell the position – not everyone wants exciting! A common reason for leaving a role is that it was not what someone expected or what the job description indicated. Also, do make sure you list all the benefits you offer – for example, one of the first questions that candidates ask us is whether there is free parking!

2

Respond to every application

For candidates applying for a new job, silence is definitely not golden! In an ideal world, you or your recruitment partner should inform every unsuccessful candidate and give them some constructive feedback on why they were not chosen.

If you really don't have time, or if you are recruiting for a large number of posts, you could add a footer at the end of your job advert that says something along the lines of "Only applicants meeting the criteria outlined above will be contacted as part of the shortlisting process. If you are not contacted within 5 working days then unfortunately on this occasion your application has been unsuccessful."

You can also have a message sent automatically to a candidate on receipt of their application, which explains how long the shortlisting process will take.

It's not as personal as a call or an email, but it does mean people are not left wondering if they have reached the next stage or not.

3

Prepare for every interview

'Be Prepared' shouldn't only be a motto only for the Scouts: preparation is a key element for all parties participating in an interview, not just the candidates.

Ensure you give yourself enough time to thoroughly read through a candidate's application form and CV before they arrive for an interview. Flicking through a CV in front of a candidate makes you appear unprepared and unprofessional – not a great takeaway for anybody!

A candidate once told us about an employer who made reference to a university he did not attend and a company he had never worked for.

4

Never keep your candidate waiting

Interviewing is like dating – being late is an unattractive quality and creates a bad impression from the outset! No matter how qualified or experienced a candidate is, a job interview can still be daunting. As an employer, it's important that you make the candidate feel comfortable. A little bit of light-hearted conversation can help someone to relax so that you can see their real personality.

5

Spend at least 30 minutes with every candidate

It may be that you are completing a schedule of booked interviews and already feel that you have found "the one". Bear in mind that the candidate will probably have taken time off work to attend, so it is only polite to spend a reasonable amount of time with them. And you never know – this candidate could be even better than the last!

Try not to make a judgement/assumption that the candidate is not right for the role based on your first impressions – sometimes people take a little time to warm up, and by the end of the interview, you may have found your perfect match.

6

Listen twice as much as you talk

According to the REC Report, candidates don't like interviewers who talk too much or who fail to ask them relevant questions.

A good candidate will have spent hours preparing for their interview and will be eager to share with you what they know about your business and to demonstrate why they would be great for the job. By asking them the right questions, you can give candidates a chance to demonstrate their skills and capabilities, while you listen to what they have to say.

7

Show candidates the environment where they would be working

By having a look around your premises, candidates can get a feel for the company's culture. If appropriate, introduce them to a couple of other people in the team. You can tell a lot about them from how they engage with others, and listening to the questions they ask will give you a good idea of how interested they are in your company.

8

Be clear on timescales and keep communicating!

Set out your timescales for the recruitment process clearly. Candidates should have an accurate idea of when they will hear back when they leave the interview; whether they may be invited to a second interview; who any follow up interviews would be with and what the format will be. If the timings change, then make sure you, or your recruitment partner, let them know in plenty of time.

9

Provide every candidate with feedback

Calling a candidate to tell them how impressed you were with them at interview and to arrange a time for another meeting or verbally offer them a job is very satisfying. Telling them they've been unsuccessful is less enjoyable, but is still very important.

Thank them for their time and interest in your company and provide constructive feedback about why they were not chosen which focuses on factual information such as their experience, ability and skill set.

When you use the services of a professional recruitment consultancy such as Priority Appointments, we do this on your behalf. We have the experience to ensure that feedback is delivered in a positive way, even if the answer is not the one the candidate was hoping for.

Remember, a satisfied candidate might tell a friend about their positive experience. But a disgruntled candidate will tell at least 10 friends how appalled they were with how they were treated.

10

Invite Feedback on Your Recruitment Process

It's not just candidates who can learn from feedback. You can find out how to improve your company's recruitment process by asking for people's views verbally or through a follow-up email with questions such as:

- How would you rate your interview experience?
- Would you apply again for a role in our company?
- How could we have improved?

Priority
APPOINTMENTS
Handpicked People

For support in attracting the best candidates and giving them the best first impression of your organisation, contact one of our friendly professional recruitment consultants today on:

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