



YOUR ULTIMATE RECRUITING CHEAT SHEET

Proven recruiting techniques to optimize your hiring strategy



Chances are, you're reading this guide because you've made the decision to hire. It's no secret that making the wrong hire is expensive. As you probably know, replacing a poor hire within the first six months is estimated to cost 2.5 times the candidate's salary. Keep them on board beyond six months, and the cost grows exponentially. The key is making the right hire in the first place.

In today's, market with average tenures dropping by nearly 10% each year, traditional recruiting tactics simply won't cut it. This guide provides you with proven recruiting techniques to optimize your hiring strategies.

ANTICIPATE & PLAN YOUR STAFFING NEEDS

When it comes to hiring, most managers start with this question: "Sally just left the marketing team...who is going to do her job?" This is followed by "Can we afford to replace her?" While the money conversation is a valuable piece of the hiring puzzle, hiring managers should begin instead by asking a more valuable question, "Do we have the need to hire, and, if so, what specific skills do we need today?". It's important to remember that the department, company, and marketplace have changed from the time you first hired Sally, and now is a good time to assess any skill gaps in your team.

Recruiter's tip: Proactively develop your hiring process so you're not left in the lurch.

Before going to work on your job posting, ask yourself:

Is the team meeting the goals and expectations outlined by the company?

If not, where are they falling short?

Is this gap the result of personnel or procedural issues?

Can these gaps be bridged with further training of existing staff or is it time to hire someone new?

Will a new hire be an addition to the team or must we let someone go? (Learn when to hire and when to fire.)

The last, but often overlooked, question is this: What if you don't hire?

Immediate hiring needs are not the only personnel issues to be tackled. Anticipating your future staffing needs is essential to your recruiting strategy. Study your organization's long-term business plan. With that plan in mind, review high and mid-level positions and look ahead. What will your organizational structure look like in the future? Start identifying the number of employees you will need and in what positions in two, three, even five years to keep your company and team at the forefront of the marketplace, and on the

road to continued success.

As mentioned earlier, the ideal time to recruit new employees is before you actually need them! Spend the time building your “talent bench” – professionals from your industry, sector, geography, domain, etc. that would enhance your team and overall level of expertise were you to hire them down the road. This may seem very daunting- “I barely have the time to review resumes and interview candidates when a position is open, where will I find the time to connect with candidates during my normal schedule?” It certainly isn’t easy, but as the labor pool continues to shrink and the demand for high skilled labor increases, it is incumbent upon businesses to maintain an ongoing dialogue with their “dream hires”. Hiring managers and HR professionals should carve out 2-4 hours/month to connect with potential future hires. Incorporating this time into your schedule will save both time and money in the long run!

Now that you have identified your staffing needs, it is time to build your strategy to attract those dream hires...

ATTRACT TOP TALENT

The best and the brightest will not work for mediocre companies. The key to success is to build a relationship with top-performing candidates long before they become applicants. It is your job to showcase your stellar employment brand. Studies show a strong employer brand can cut cost per hire by over 50%!

Successful employment branding sends a message to the marketplace: *WE are THE place to work*. Build your brand on what makes you a cut above the rest. Emphasize the unique qualities of your corporate culture – Do you offer perks such as alternative scheduling through telecommuting or job sharing? What differentiates your organization’s philosophy from the competition?

You might be surprised to know, compensation is not the primary reason employees leave their jobs. Employees quit managers, not jobs. What makes your organization’s leadership style attractive? How do you prevent office drama and promote a cohesive, collaborative environment?

The answer to these questions and more are the foundation of your organization’s brand. Employers need to understand one key element in today’s world of job search: candidates are investigating your reputation as diligently as you’re investigating theirs. Do you know how your brand is perceived? Search sites such as Glassdoor.com, LinkedIn, and even Yelp to see what message is being communicated about your organization as a place to work.

CONNECT WITH TOP TALENT

Two of the most powerful online tools available to promote your organization and attract high-quality applicants are your [website](#) and your [LinkedIn Company Page](#). Studies show, people make up to thirteen impressions about someone in the first thirty seconds of interacting with them. In this digital, short-attention-span age, your company website has even less time to make a positive impression. Your site must grab your audience's attention fast and deliver your message even faster.

[Learn how your website can attract and keep job seekers' attention.](#)

Designing a superior LinkedIn Company Page is your strongest weapon in the war for talent. LinkedIn users are 8x more engaged with your brand once they've connected with you on LinkedIn. Create a Company Page that stands out from the competition. Get noticed by showcasing your organization's mission, expertise, and value proposition. Make it eye-catching and use keyword-rich phrases. Engage with your followers and post relevant content to build your credibility and reputation as an industry thought leader. [Here are the LinkedIn Secrets you need to bring ideal candidates to your Company Page.](#)

WRITE HIGH QUALITY (AND ACCURATE!) JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Some employers are under the misconception that writing the Job Description is the “easy part” of hiring. Of course, that might be why so many of them are having trouble finding (and keeping) great talent – they get lazy when it comes to writing their job specs. A good job description begins with a conversation, not a keyboard.

You may be surprised to hear that everyone within your company has a different expectation and need when they are making a hire. Competing agendas lead to job descriptions with outlandish and unattainable expectations. Ultimately, they end up describing three employees in one... dooming the entire hiring process to fail before it even began.

Long before a job is posted, a [hiring committee of key stakeholders](#) should come to a consensus about the core capabilities and expectations. Collectively, they must clearly outline the hard and soft skills of the “[perfect hire](#)”, goals he or she is expected to meet, and how performance will be measured. This success profile is essential. Employers cannot develop a job description in a bubble. Stay abreast of the state of the national hiring market, your local unemployment rate, and high demand skills. Consider the [latest hiring trends](#) in your field, industry, and role to attract the right kind of candidates. These trends

also impact promotion tracks, compensation packages, and other perks – all important pieces of your job spec.

[Learn how to create a compensation package fit for an A Player...without breaking the bank.](#)

Does your compensation package align with the current market? [Download our FREE 2018 Compensation Guide](#) and find out!

Now that the foundation is in place, it's time to draft the job posting. Your job descriptions should replace decades-old headers such as "Requirements" and "Responsibilities" with more engaging language such as "You will be successful in this role if you possess..." and "In this high visibility position, you will impact the business by..." Specifically, be sure to include:

- A clear picture of your corporate culture
- The specific activities the new hire will be charged with and how they will impact the business
- Metrics of success and evaluation
- Demonstrated skills, relevant experience, and education that will ensure success
- Ideal personality/soft skill attributes that match your company culture

When advising candidates on how to draft a resume, we tell them to remember the 3 Bs. Be succinct. Be specific. Be truthful. The same goes for employers. Use job, field, or industry-specific [keywords](#) to concisely outline the qualifications and experience you are looking for. Give an accurate account of expectations and outcomes.

Recruiter's tip: Do not advertise and hire for one job, then expect your new employee to do something else (it sounds preposterous, but we see it happen all the time).

DECIDE WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW

You're almost there... moments away from taking your search public. Only one question remains: Who's running the show? There is nothing more frustrating for all parties involved than a lack of clear leadership in the search.

For the hiring manager, the inability to make decisions causes a number of problems. It undermines her authority. She is the person on the front lines: monitoring the search, reviewing resumes, identifying viable

candidates, and scheduling and conducting initial interviews. If she has no decision-making authority, she will be relegated to the role of “Messenger”. This scenario is ripe with potential problems. For every person she has to get approval from there is the potential for change – changed priorities, changed criteria. This muddies the recruiting waters. Suddenly she’s screening for skills or experience that were not on the initial list. We’ve seen hiring managers and recruiters return again and again to the “well of resumes” as different members of the leadership team suddenly want something new in the candidates they are interviewing – something other than what was agreed to at the outset of the search. In the end, you’re left with a very frustrated recruiter and candidate.

Speaking of candidates, a lack of clear leadership makes their role in the search frustrating as well. Every back-and-forth email between the recruiter and higher-ups, adds time to the process. You’re going to lose many strong candidates as they shift their focus to other, more efficient and responsive organizations.

Avoid this problem by predetermining which decision makers are involved in the process and who will manage each part of the search: from marketing to reviewing resumes; to scheduling and participating in interviews; to who is conducting reference & background checks and ultimately presenting the final offer. This will make your recruiting strategy a well-oiled machine and prevent the loss of excellent candidates.

Recruiters tip: It is a candidate’s market. Act fast! Your dream hire will not wait around while every decision passes through a long chain of command.

MAY WE SUGGEST BRINGING IN AN EXPERT?

Did you know one in four employers aren’t sure why they hired the wrong person? Most chalk it up to “sometimes you just make a mistake.” That’s one costly mistake! Engaging with a recruiter will help you avoid the typical hiring mistakes most companies make and significantly increase your chances of making the right hire.

There are many benefits to working with a retained search firm like TurningPoint Executive Search. First and foremost, retained searches yield higher caliber candidates who fit most, if not all of a company’s needs. Recruiters with a proven track record of making successful placements (and the retention rate to back it up) will help you find new hires that will be successful and are more likely to stay long-term.

More often than not, a company will choose to retain an outside recruiting firm, rather than utilizing an in-house hiring manager exclusively because of the complexity of the role or the organization itself. Retained

recruiters have a deep pool of candidates, many of whom are not actively looking to change jobs. These employed, top-performing, passive candidates can be hard to find. Retained recruiters invest time to research and maintain deep networks across industries, domains, and job function. This is a key differentiator between hiring managers and executive recruiters, and is extremely important when searching for uniquely qualified talent or a senior-level, high-salary, pivotal position.

Recruiters tip: Investing in a hiring expert with a “partner” mindset, who is knowledgeable across industry and job function will help you find higher caliber candidates.

[Click here](#) for the 7 Questions You Should Ask Before Choosing a Recruiter.

GO LIVE! POST YOUR JOB

You’ve invested many hours to build your recruiting strategy – examining your staffing needs, establishing a strong online presence to attract talent, creating a detailed and accurate job description, and maybe even hiring an expert to help (*hint, hint*). It’s finally time to take your job search live.

As we’ve mentioned earlier, your [company website](#) and [LinkedIn page](#) are your biggest allies for attracting the high-quality candidates you want. Keeping both sites current is the key! You’d be surprised how many companies ignore their own [Open Jobs page](#)! Don’t let this be you.

Use your top-notch Job Description as a marketing tool to attract your dream hires! Market your posting through LinkedIn and your company website. Be sure you include easy to follow directions for candidates to submit resumes. Use your organization’s social media platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to keep your posting in front of your audience. Consider using paid ads, allowing you to market directly your target audience. And don’t forget to make your posting mobile friendly! Nearly 40% of job applications are now completed via a mobile device. You don’t want to turn off great talent thanks to your outdated application system.

Remember to keep your marketing constant and consistent. One update on your LinkedIn page is not enough. Have your entire staff post updates on their social media accounts. Make sure they link to your company’s job page and share what makes your organization such a special place to work.

Recruiter’s tip: Encourage your employees to share positive comments on glassdoor and other review sites.

Consistency is key. Do not change your submission process. Make sure the steps are clear and easy to

follow. Consider including a brief sentence or two about “next steps” in your hiring process, following their resume submission. Create an auto response that acknowledges resume submissions to prevent candidates from feeling like their resume disappeared into a black hole never to be seen by a human.

IT'S TIME FOR THE DREADED RESUME REVIEW!

Ideally, your up-front efforts will make this process easier. Unfortunately, you're bound to run into applicants who ignore your detailed and well thought out job description, treating the “must have” qualifications as more of a guideline. This number should be significantly lower than if you had simply posted a vague description full of clichés.

Depending on the size of your company, you may want to use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to help wade through the resumes you receive. An ATS is a type of software application that sorts through and houses your submitted resumes. The benefit of using such a system is that it is designed to search for the keywords and keyword variations you emphasized in your job description. If you are a large company, an ATS will come in handy as the number of submissions you receive will be equally large

Smaller companies may choose not to use an ATS at all. No problem! In fact, we are amazed at how often we come across companies that rely on a simple Excel spreadsheet or multiple Word documents. Using your keyword-rich job description, create the list of criteria you are searching for in each resume. The more keywords a resume includes, the more qualified a candidate will be.

To best organize the submissions you receive, sort them according to their titles or better yet, their functional expertise. Decide which experiences and skill sets are a must – your “must haves”. Archive resumes that do not possess those key criteria. You're bound to have some expectations that are flexible. Perhaps certain training can be provided by your organization, making it reasonable to consider candidates that are missing a few qualifications. It should be easy to spot unqualified candidates quickly. Those relevant keywords should pop right off the page! If they are nowhere to be seen, the candidate is not viable.

Recruiter's tip: Serious job seekers tailor their resume to include the keywords listed in your job posting.

SOURCING PASSIVE CANDIDATES

Many companies rely solely on job boards to secure applicants. While this may seem like an effective and efficient process, it is quite limiting – especially in today’s market of 4.1% unemployment nationally (and half that in many key regions of the country). Creating a comprehensive and effective strategy for proactively sourcing candidates from direct competitors has historically been relegated to larger, more complex companies with high volume, continual recruiting. Sometimes referred to as “headhunting”, this process may take a bit more time but allows an internal or external recruiter to target ideal candidates, most of whom may not even know you are hiring.

Recruiter’s tip: Dream hires aren’t going to see your job posting because they are perfectly happy in their current role.

The sourcing process requires the recruiter to search and target candidates using their internal applicant database, LinkedIn, referrals, internal candidates, and employee referrals. Each recruiter will have their own strategy, but most utilize keywords to narrow the pool. This process puts the hiring power into the recruiter’s hands by targeting high performing, employed, successful talent. Keep in mind, these passive candidates are not looking for a new job. Therefore, the recruiter & hiring manager will need to spend time “marketing” or “selling” the role and the company to compel the candidate to change positions.

Recruiter’s tip: Proactive candidate sourcing allows you to find the “best of the best”, rather than relying on “the best of the available”.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHONE INTERVIEWS

Phone screens are an important part of the recruiting process. Most companies do not have the time or resources to conduct in-person interviews for every qualified resume that comes through the door. Those are reserved for your top-notch candidates who have shown they are more than keywords on a page. In order to find your shining stars, you have to begin with a phone screen.

Recruiter’s tip: Partner with an external recruiter and they will take care of the initial screening, allowing the company to jump right into “in-person” interviews.

Again, do the work ahead of time! Compile a list of suitable questions to ask over the phone to help you quickly identify qualified candidates and eliminate everyone else. Be aware of state and federal laws regulating what you can ask. Like job seekers, it is extremely important for the interviewer to come to the

conversation prepared! Once you've narrowed your pile of resumes to a manageable batch of viable applicants, use your phone screening questions to begin step one of the interview process. Ideally, this initial interview will give the cream of the crop the chance to rise to the top. Be sure to use a consistent set of questions (ideally 10-12) to keep your assessment structured and fair. You want to compare all candidates on the same criteria.

It is your responsibility to review the candidate's resume and LinkedIn profile before the conversation. Skip vague and generic questions and get right to the nitty-gritty. Ask questions about their background as it pertains to the role they are applying for. Give real-life examples of challenges they will face if they get the job.

[Download our FREE Compensation Sales & Marketing Guide](#)

BEGIN THE (REAL) INTERVIEW PROCESS

At the completion of your phone interviews, you should have a solid *short* list of strong candidates. It's time to move them to the next step in your hiring process, the in-person interview.

It goes without saying, (again) prepare for the interview ahead of time. Decide who will be present. Divide questions among all the interviewers so each person has the opportunity to connect with the candidate. Give each interviewer a chance to ask questions specific to their expertise and interaction with the candidate if hired. Prior to launching the interviews, be sure to identify which members of the interviewing committee have true "veto power". This helps to avoid the risk of losing a great candidate simply because one of the new hire's potential peers feels threatened, or even worse, they recommend against making the hire because the candidate reminds them of a former boss, or doesn't understand the intricacies of the peer's unique domain expertise.

Corporate culture and "fit" are almost as important as skills and experience. Your interview strategy should also include questions and discussions to gain an understanding of how this person will fit into your organization. [This piece of your hiring strategy](#) is absolutely critical to find the best applicant for the job.

Recruiter's tip: Using an assessment tool may help you analyze the core behavioral traits which cannot be demonstrated through a resume or phone interview. For example, a good assessment tool will tell you if the interviewee is conscientious or lackadaisical, introverted or extroverted, agreeable or uncompromising, open to new ideas or close-minded. The [success profile](#) you created early on, will help you determine which

traits are important for each role. However, keep in mind that no assessment is foolproof. Even more important, assessments should be one of many data points to consider when making the ultimate hiring decision.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CANDIDATE

With a hiring strategy as detailed as the one you created, selecting the best candidate for the role *should* be easy. Ideally, your biggest challenge will be choosing which candidate because you have so many to choose from! The truth of the matter is, no one will meet *all* the criteria you are looking for. Luckily, they don't have to because "close enough" is more than good enough.

With all key stakeholders involved, revisit the job description and the "must haves". Now ask yourself how many of those "must haves" are present among your top candidates. Remember, those who did not demonstrate all of the key technical skills are not automatically out of the race! Ask yourself if it's possible to give them the training and guidance necessary to bring them up to speed when they come onboard. More than likely, anyone you hire is going to need training in some areas. What training does your organization provide and what would require outsourcing? This will help you decide who is the most qualified candidate. If you used an assessment tool, compare the results to your target soft skills. If you did not use an assessment tool, confer with the people who participated in the interview. Did they feel the applicant demonstrated those soft skills that will ensure a strong culture fit? What did the candidate convey through their body language, ease of discussion, engagement, listening skills, ability to cite specific examples and follow up questions?

Recruiter's tip: Don't panic! Many fear a candidate's market will force them to hire a less than qualified applicant. In our experience, there are plenty of excellent candidates available. In reality when it comes to selecting your dream hire, "close enough" is more than "good enough."

BEFORE YOU MAKE THE OFFER

No one wants to rescind an offer because of a technicality. Begin with reference checks. Surveys indicate, that while 80%+ of companies conduct a reference check before making a hire, many complain about the lack of information gathered from the reference. Chances are, they're doing it wrong. A strategic reference check will give you true insight into a potential hire.

[Here are two videos](#) with tips on [how to conduct an effective reference check](#).

In addition to reference checks, we suggest completing degree verifications. If a degree is not one of your “must haves”, it’s up to you if you want to validate your candidate’s claim that they have a degree. Again, we strongly recommend doing one.

Background checks are becoming more and more common. It’s important to uncover any potential problems not revealed by previous testing and interviews.

We also suggest visiting your candidate’s social media platforms. While everyone is entitled to privacy and “off time”, your organization may have a morality or behavior clause. Like a background check, social media provides insight into your candidate that was not otherwise evident.

Recruiter’s tip: We urge you to develop a detailed social media policy that is clearly documented and communicated to all staff.

MAKE THE OFFER

Congratulations! You’ve found your dream hire and you’re ready to make an offer!

Now it’s time to negotiate a compensation package that is competitive, meets your candidate’s financial needs, and falls within the company’s budget. Take some time to determine the appropriate compensation package for the position, considering all aspects of the job (location, travel, upward mobility, the state of the business, the expectations of the company, etc.). Before the search was launched, your team probably set an expected salary range. But remember...

Candidates have choices. They are no longer feeling the squeeze to accept any role at any amount not will they take a job for less money (they have too many other options). Few are willing to entertain a lateral move. This means you must be willing to pay more than they are currently making. On average, we are seeing candidates changing jobs for an increase in base pay of 15-25%. Do your due diligence. Research what other companies are offering for similar roles, years of experience, skill sets, etc. Know the competition, determine the minimum the candidate is comfortable with accepting, and the maximum you can afford to pay. You always want to leave room for negotiating.

Recruiters tip: When it comes to compensation packages it may make sense to enlist the support of a seasoned, well-informed compensation consultant to validate the numbers.

When negotiations are done effectively and for the right position, you'll be adding a rock star to your team.

HELP YOUR NEW HIRE FEEL LIKE PART OF THE TEAM

You have invested a significant amount of resource to find the perfect candidate. Now you need to make sure they stick around. Left unsupported and underappreciated, nearly 50% of new hires leave their job within 18 months! It is imperative that you keep your new hires engaged.

Retention starts the moment your employees set foot in the office.

If you want to attract, engage, and retain top talent, you need an on-boarding program that is on-going. According to recent research, 69% of businesses do not have a formal new employee on-boarding process in place. These companies are all but pushing their new hires out the door.

Recruiter's tip: Clearly defining expectations and means of assessment before day one, affirming their decision to join the team and future growth, an introduction to the team and other staff, and even a latte from the coffee cart in the lobby will go a long way to ensuring your superstar new hire feels at home from day one and beyond.

Find out how effective your Onboarding Program is by reading up on the latest research.