

Three Simple Steps to Better Candidate Care



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Not responsive. Late for interviews. Unprepared. These complaints have been made about candidates, especially during times when the number of job openings far surpassed the number of qualified applicants. But now these negative phrases are being levied against recruiters and hiring managers by candidates who are frustrated by the hiring process.

“Beyond what the media says about the job market, I think that candidates are just very discouraged by the fact that there’s so little candidate care that happens,” says Jennifer Way. As owner of Way Solutions in Nashville, Tennessee, Way leads a team of hiring strategists that provide resources, tools and insights to companies and candidates about how to make the most of their connections.



Jennifer Way

Focusing on candidate care builds your employment brand, your network of prospective candidates and referrals.

At a time when resources are limited and HR departments have been downsized, many recruiters and HR managers are asking: “Who has time for candidate care?” The answer is that *every* company has the time – and should make the time – to focus on candidate care because it’s one of the easiest, least expensive ways to build your employment brand, your network of prospective candidates and referrals.

Candidates who feel they’ve been treated fairly by your company – whether they’re hired or not – are bound to give your company’s employment brand positive marks and be solid sources for future job openings and referrals. Candidates who have been treated discourteously or simply ignored may disregard future openings at your organization. Worse yet, they may decide to use social media to spread their negative experience. “Our hiring processes have not caught up with the sophistication of social media,” says Way. “We have to be extra sensitive because with social media, there’s a level of transparency that wasn’t there before.”

Because of the sophistication of social media, employers have to be extra sensitive about candidate care.

Read on to learn about three common mistakes companies make when it comes to candidate care, and simple ways to fix them.

Three common mistakes

1. Being non-responsive

One of candidates' top complaints is that employers don't respond to their job applications or follow up promptly after interviews to give them feedback. Leaving candidates in limbo – or the notorious “black hole” – causes frustration and creates a negative image for the company in candidates' eyes. In fact in a recent Dice survey of candidates, when asked, “*Do you seek feedback from HR or hiring managers when you don't get the job?*” a whopping 82% replied, “I would but no one gets back to me” or “Why bother?”

The fix: Many companies have a solution to the “black hole” problem right at their fingertips. Take the time to create a series of customized response templates, establish a simple process to acknowledge candidate communication and provide feedback, and then commit to replying promptly. Every company should at least have one template acknowledging receipt of a resume and one informing candidates that they didn't make the cut. Keeping candidates informed throughout the hiring process is one of the smartest ways to improve candidate care.

Use response templates so you don't perpetuate the “black hole” problem.

2. Lacking focus

Do you need a candidate who knows “HTML5” or should the job requisition really say “HTML5 and CSS3?” Should the candidate have “experience with Java” or “*at least five years of* experience with Java?” And during the interview process, do candidates answer the same question from four different people in your organization?

Broad job descriptions, redundant interview processes and a lack of focus on the type of candidate you're looking for wastes your time – and the candidate's. The result is that you'll spend precious resources interviewing 20 people – and issuing 19 rejection letters – when a little more focus and planning up front would yield perhaps five highly-qualified candidates, a shorter interview cycle and only four rejection letters.

Add pre-screening questionnaires to job postings to save time.

The fix: Way suggests careful pre-screening. “If you do more on the front end to understand the nuances of what the hiring manager is looking for, you can do a better job of pre-screening people,” she says. “Then if you introduce only top candidates, you can afford to provide a better candidate care experience.”

Does your hiring
process last months
rather than weeks?

3. Wasting time

Does your hiring process span months rather than weeks? Do you gather data on your online application that you don't use? Does it take candidates half an hour to complete your online application? If you answered, "yes" to any – or all – of these questions, your hiring process may be more lengthy or complicated than necessary. "We're very concerned with creating an efficient process and how it works within the four walls our organization, but we're really not looking at what it's costing in terms of the quality of candidate or candidate care," says Way.

The fix: Step back and review every aspect of your onboarding process from a candidate's point of view. During the process ask yourself:

- Is every step we take really required?
- Is every question we ask during the interview necessary?
- Are the right questions being asked at the right time?

You'll be surprised at how simple ways to streamline will become evident.

Using an easy reply mechanism, having more focus and saving time – these three simple, low-cost steps will create a better experience for your candidates and better results for your company.