The candidate experience playbook - Part 2

By Henneri Crous , issued by Simplify   6 Aug 2019

Practical interventions to improve candidate experience through the application and feedback process

In July I wrote the first part of this series about the candidate experience and the importance of positive interactions with potential candidates in terms of creating the right first impression. In this piece, part 2 of The candidate experience playbook, I am going to unpack it further by offering some practical interventions that can be applied during the application and feedback processes.

So, the best candidates have successfully applied for the right jobs on your books. Now what? Does this mean that you can leave the process to unfold naturally? Absolutely not, and this is why.

Your candidates are still on a journey with your brand, and at this stage in the journey there are three important elements at play:

- Communication
- Efficiency of processes
- Interview structure

Communication is key

Talentegy's 2019 Candidate Experience report was released in March this year and was based on a survey of 4,000 candidates across all industries, generations and job levels who had applied for a job in the last 24 months. According to their findings, 63% of applicants rated themselves as dissatisfied to very dissatisfied with the communication from most employers. This is clearly due to far too little communication as 55% of jobseekers indicated that they were rarely or never kept informed of their status in the process. Interestingly these findings were across both internal and external jobseekers, meaning even when they are in the same company as the recruitment team, candidates often feel left out in the cold.

Poor communication results in a negative candidate experience, which in turn will undermine the company's overall brand and your employer brand. As mentioned in part 1 of this series, consumer facing brands face a higher risk of brand damage through poor recruiting processes because of the direct link between consumer behaviour and brand association. This is definitely something you want to avoid.

Other negatives are a weaker talent pool and fewer job acceptances by candidates.

The importance of efficiency

Let's look at a typical recruitment cycle. Recruiters will normally follow the cycle of prepare, source, screen, interview, evaluate, offer and onboard. It may sound simple but when you unpack it further it becomes clear that there are multiple moving parts and numerous opportunities for error.

- Prepare *(including job descriptions, line manager interviews, requisition, benchmarking, evaluation guides and the hiring team)*.
- Source *(through job adverts, current employees, talent pool, career portals, job boards, social media, referrals, headhunting and agencies)*.
- Screen *(through automated questionnaires, telephonic screening, social media screening, follow up questionnaires and a shortlist to hiring manager)*.

- Interview (*including interview guides, pre-interview team meetings, interview, panel interview, team/cultural fit interview*).
- Evaluate (*post-interview team evaluation, competency assessments, behavioural assessments, reference checks, social media risk checks*).
- Offer (*Following internal approval, understanding candidate requirements, negotiating terms and start date, drafting the written job offer with responsibilities, sending offer to candidate*).
- Onboard (*Scheduling first day, preparing workstation and tools, arranging orientation, announcing employee and introduction to the team, organising training and mentoring*).

These processes can be ingrained and start to feel like a day in/day out flow – with little room to breathe and space for improvement. This is where technology can help – and there are many systems, like Simplify, that make these processes simpler, more effective and better managed with improved outcomes for all.

Structured interviews

The Talentegy report also tells us that 26% of jobseekers felt that the interview process didn't align with their expectations of skills and experience needed. This is problematic as it works out to be a significant amount of time invested that won't bear fruit. The solution here is a structured interview process that weeds out unsuitable candidates including pre-screenings and pre-interviews.

In part one of this series I break down the financial implications of rejected applicants – these are worth looking at again. Let's say the number of rejected applicants you have annually is 1,000 of which 15% were clients of your company at the time of application. If the average annual value of one customer is R1,000, your risk element is: R150,000. (1,000 x 15% x R1,000).

A strong candidate experience has numerous benefits on multiple levels and it becomes very worth it for a brand to engage in a support system that will aid their recruitment process and positively impact the bottom line.

ABOUT HENNERI CROUS

Henneri Crous is the Head of the Careers24 and Simplify Group's Sales Function. He has more than 19 years' experience in sales, with more than 11 of those years gained in the recruitment space.
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