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Your toolkit to building a winning recruitment and retention strategy

You're not alone in the current labor shortage battle!

There are 10 million open jobs in the U.S.¹ But only 6.5 million people are looking for work.² It's no wonder the number one business challenge for employers is finding qualified employees.³

As recruiters, we spend all day, every day, with candidates and small and mid-sized business leaders. And big changes have come in a short amount of time. To truly compete to fill those open jobs, you need to be in tune with what it takes to find candidates and hire right now. We've put together a toolkit with the five hottest tips you need to build a successful recruitment strategy.

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Employees — not employers — are driving the car

Given this trend, employers need to embrace a new mindset: Employees have gained the upper hand. No longer can a company simply post a job and wade through a mountain of resumes. In today's world, employers must be flexible and creative if they want to win the war for talent. Use these five tips to navigate this challenging environment.

#1: Get your company reputation right

Before prospective candidates consider applying for a job, they've likely already done some due diligence on the company — whether it's perusing their website or checking out reviews on websites such as Glassdoor. To make a good first impression, take the time to develop a strong and compelling employer brand that includes your:

- Mission statement
- Workplace culture
- Understanding of the work-life balance
- Core values and causes you support
- Position on diversity/equity/inclusion

In addition to featuring your employer brand on your website, include it in your communications in job postings, social media posts and in discussions with prospective employees. In today's environment, also clearly articulate how you're navigating the pandemic challenges and your commitment to keeping employees safe.

#2: Be flexible, flexible, flexible

When you're looking to add talent, flexibility is key, and it applies to virtually all aspects of the hiring process, including:

Work-life balance

Remote work in some form is here to stay. 46% of employees currently work remotely, and among that group, 70% expect to continue doing so over the next 6–12 months.³ Given this dynamic, consider being open-minded about your remote working policy. An alternative is to offer a hybrid model that allows employees to work longer hours for four days a week and then get Mondays or Fridays off.

The top five employee-related challenges SMBs told us they're currently facing

1. Finding qualified employees
2. Retaining employees
3. Need for additional employees
4. Bringing employees back to work locations
5. Employee productivity

Salary

The days of low-balling a candidate are a thing of the past. With more job openings than candidates, you can expect to pay top dollar to remain competitive in today's marketplace. Some employers are offering more than the going rate to employees. Others are offering sign-on bonuses or automatic raises after 30, 60 or 90 days to provide a further incentive to joining the company. Be sure to remain flexible during the negotiation process.

Benefits

Not surprisingly, benefits packages are evolving. An increasingly popular perk is for companies to pay 100% of the employee's medical insurance. Offering to pay for college/advanced degrees also remains popular, as does health and wellness perks, such as gym memberships and mental health. Paying for a portion of daycare expenses may also help to broaden your array of candidates and set you apart from the competition. According to one survey, 1.9 million people have turned down job offers because they didn't have child care.⁴

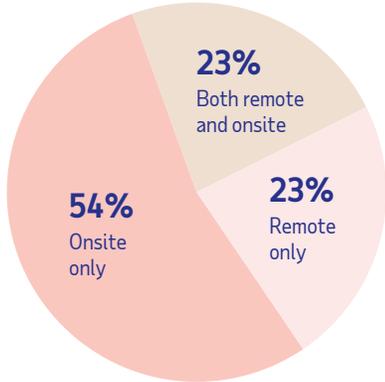
#3: Employee referrals are golden

While many aspects of the post-pandemic workforce have changed, many of the traditional methods of finding employees remain intact. Continue to solicit referrals from current employees, as they're your best resource for qualified candidates. Be sure to reward them, perhaps with a cash bonus, additional PTO or other perks.

Working with a recruiter who understands your organization and can communicate your brand is still an effective approach to find qualified candidates. Online job postings are another tried-and-true strategy. To stand out from the competition, you should consider adjusting your posting strategy. Weave in key aspects of your brand, along with your commitment to employee safety and inclusion. In terms of the positing itself, it's out with "salary commensurate with experience" and in with including the salary range and your remote work flexibility.

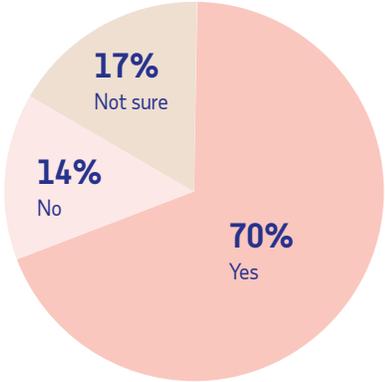
With the tight light labor market, a number of organizations have also turned to non-traditional approaches to attract candidates, such as offering a cash award or gift card to apply for a position. Some companies offer a paid trial "work-for-a-day/week" for a candidate/employer to learn if it's a good fit. Finally, remember that remote working opens the geographical area for the search and can lead to a greater pool of applicants.

Where employees work



Interestingly, when you look at the numbers by age demographic, 69% of workers age 55-74 only work onsite whereas 29% of workers age 18-34 only work remote. Flexibility may be more desirable to some employees than others.

Do remote employees expect to stay remote?



Employees who work remotely, or in a hybrid situation today, expect to continue to do so for the next 6-12 months. The expectation is even higher at larger companies. 76% at companies with 50-99 employees and 74% at companies with 100-249 employees expect to continue working remote.

#4: Make the most of your interviews

To sum up this critical step, “you snooze you lose.” That’s because candidates could be juggling a number of prospective jobs, so look to streamline your hiring process or risk getting left behind. Take a step back before you post a job to determine what’s needed to reduce the time from interview to offer. This may mean less people are involved in the interview process, or even offering a job on the spot. It’s also critical to keep the lines of communication open with the candidate and explain where they stand in the interview process. Finally, be sure to personalize your communications and explain why they’re a good fit with your company.

#5: Onboarding and beyond!

Congratulations — you’ve landed your new employee! But your job isn’t over yet — far from it. Before a new employee’s first day, map out a detailed onboarding plan that makes them feel welcome and reminds them why they made the right decision. Another key aspect is training. Don’t assume a new employee will automatically hit the ground running. Rather, establish a 30, 60 and 90 day training/onboarding plan that includes frequent “check-ins” to see how the employee is assimilating. Further out, demonstrate your commitment to employee growth and engagement. This can include regular training opportunities and clearly communicating the path and timing for advancements.

About the authors



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New rules for the “hard no”

You may need to re-evaluate what you consider to be a “hard no” for a candidate. If you want 10 years of experience, you may need to scale it back. You may also think a college degree is imperative. But a candidate with more work experience, or a person that would fit well in your culture, may supersede the educational requirement. Again, be flexible!

1. Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 12, 2021, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2021/job-openings-up-to-10-1-million-in-june-2021.html>
2. Bureau of Labor Statistics, August 6, 2021, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jec.nr0.html>
3. ADP SMB study – July 2021.
4. Inc. July 29, 2021. <https://www.inc.com/suzanne-lucas/the-number-1-reason-unemployed-turn-down-jobs.html>