PT WORK Force®

Checklist For A Good Candidate Experience

Hiring has changed. The applicant is now in the driver's seat. Their first impression of your organization will determine whether or not they apply for your opening.

A candidate experience is basically how the candidate feels about your organization once they have been through your hiring process. Was the process easy? Did it take forever to get a response from the company? The experience will influence candidates to apply (or not to apply) or accept your job offer or not.

The experience a potential job candidate has with your organization during the recruitment process can either help them see your organization is a great place to work OR make them not want to connect with your organization again.

Their experience is not limited only to them. They will tell their families and friends about their experience. They may also post to social media and online boards like Glassdoor. A negative experience can spread negative feelings about your company to thousands of readers.

PT WORK Force has put together this checklist for you to use to make sure you are creating an experience every candidate will appreciate.

Checklist for a Good Candidate Experience

___ Before you post the job opening take some time to identify what skills the position requires. This will help you better define the job and fill the business need.

___When developing the job description list only MUST-HAVES as requirements for the job. Candidates who see a long list of requirements may not bother to apply if they don't believe they possess ALL job requirements – so stick to the basics.

___ The Careers Page on your website MUST be visible on the first page of your site and link directly to information on your current open positions. This way potential candidates don't have to dig to find job openings. Studies have shown that most people will stay on your site for 15 seconds or less if they don't find what they want.

____ Make it easy to apply online as well as from a mobile device. (Being able to apply using a mobile device is a **necessity** if you want to appeal to younger generations). Keep your application short, don't give lots of instructions and DON'T make applicants log in to your site to apply. Limit your application to ONE page and only ask for information you need.

___Don't ask for salary history on the application. It is illegal in some states and will also turn off many potential candidates.

___Test your application process by submitting an application through the system. That way you can check how it looks online, if there are typos or unclear instructions, how long it takes to apply, etc. Better yet, have someone else in your company test it for you and give you feedback.

___When an application is received, acknowledge you received it. Applicants hate not hearing from potential employers in **every step of the process**.

___Follow up. Follow up. Follow up. When you review the application or resume, let the candidate know if they will be considered or not. Candidates want to know where they stand and if they don't hear from you quickly (within about two working days) they will look elsewhere.

___When sending an acknowledgement that you have received their application or resume, advising the candidate they won't be considered or setting up an interview, etc. use an email that has a name – not a generic HR@, Careers@, etc. The human touch is what candidates want.

___If you are going to ask candidates to take a test or do an assignment, first contact them and explain why they are being asked to do this. Limit your requests to ONLY viable candidates – you will have to review all items received. Make sure you acknowledge receipt, say **Thank You** and advise the timeline you have for responding to their submission.

____Once you have determined which candidates you want to interview, call or email them to set up a time convenient to both of you. (If you have the ability let them schedule a time using an online calendar). Then send a calendar invitation to them including as much information as possible about the interview. Some things to include:
- Location and directions on how to get there
- Format of the interview and who will be taking part in the interview (name and title). If there is anything the candidate needs to prepare make sure they know what it is
- What the office dress code is and if there is any security they need to go through to gain access
- What floor, suite or area of the company they will be going to and who they should ask for on arrival
- Anything else you believe will be helpful to the candidate

___Before the interview you should review the candidate's information, make sure you have a private place to conduct the interview and create a list of questions to ask (that you will use for all those who interview).

___When the time for the interview comes:
- Start on time
- Make the candidate feel comfortable and welcome – offer coffee or water
- Focus your attention on the candidate and put your cell phone away
- Take notes so you will better remember a candidate's responses AND tell them you will be taking notes to better remember their responses
- Give the candidate time to ask questions

___When the interview has finished show them back to the reception area and thank them for their time. Make sure you tell them when they can expect to hear back from you.

___If, after reviewing all the candidates, you are no longer considering someone to be a candidate – send them an email telling them that – don't leave them hanging. If they might be considered for a future role, let them know. Thank them for their interest in the position and the time they spent interviewing.

Following the steps in this checklist will make the candidate feel comfortable and create a good candidate experience. Hiring has changed. The applicant is now in the driver's seat. The more you can do to make them feel comfortable and appreciative of their interest and their time, the less likely they will be to have negative feelings about the organization.

Remember, the candidate is also interviewing you and your organization while you are interviewing them.