

HIRING MISTAKES YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE:

How to win the war for talent in today's competitive market



TABLE of CONTENTS

2	INTRODUCTION
4	MISTAKE #1: NOT BEING FLEXIBLE
7	MISTAKE #2: NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH
10	MISTAKE #3: NOT FOCUSING ON EMPLOYER BRANDING
13	MISTAKE #4: NOT EMPHASIZING COMPANY CULTURE
16	SOURCES



INTRODUCTION

There's no doubt that the job market today is booming—it seems that nearly everyone who wants a job can find one. But what does that mean for employers?

As the job market continues to improve, employers are struggling more and more with finding the talent they need to run their business smoothly. In addition to a low unemployment rate, employers are also struggling with a skills gap in the workforce; **while employers are looking for specific skillsets in the talent pool, it can be extremely difficult to find candidates who possess all of these qualities.** As a result, the hiring process is only becoming more drawn out:

**THE TIME IT TAKES TO FILL A POSITION
HAS INCREASED BY 50% SINCE 2010¹**

This struggle to hire talent isn't just challenging—it's costing organizations money:



**THE AVERAGE VACANCY COSTS
\$500 PER POSITION PER DAY¹**



\$22,000 PER POSITION
OVER THE AVERAGE HIRING PERIOD OF 44 CALENDAR DAYS

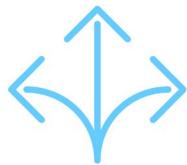
As hiring gets harder, many employers are turning to alternative solutions like focusing on employee retention, looking towards other talent pools, or making improvements to their company culture. While all of these efforts are critical to an engaging employee experience, many employers forget about their actual hiring process and how that is affecting every candidate who walks through the door.



78% of candidates say that the overall candidate experience they receive is an indicator of how a company values its people¹

Because first impressions often become lasting ones, employers must focus on retention even before they extend an offer—and securing the very best candidate in the talent pool starts at the beginning of the hiring process. However, many employers are making critical errors in this competitive market—and losing out on top talent as a result.

Read on to learn the critical mistakes many employers are inadvertently making during the hiring process and how you can improve your hiring strategy to attract top talent:



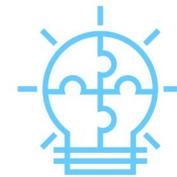
**NOT BEING
FLEXIBLE**



**NOT MOVING
FAST ENOUGH**



**NOT FOCUSING ON
EMPLOYER BRANDING**



**NOT EMPHASIZING
COMPANY CULTURE**



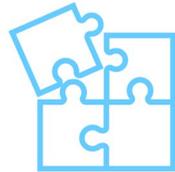
MISTAKE #1

NOT BEING FLEXIBLE

As an employer hiring talent, it is easy to believe that you have all the control in the hiring process. However, in today's job market, it is unlikely that you will find the dream candidate that checks off all of your boxes. **While it's important to know what you want, it is also critical to be realistic in the hiring process. Hiring decision makers often want to find that "perfect fit," meeting high standards in all of these areas:**



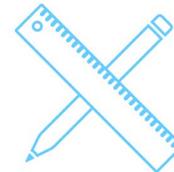
**EDUCATION
+ EXPERIENCE**



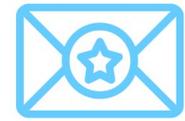
**CULTURAL
FIT**



**PERSONALITY
+ SOFT SKILLS**

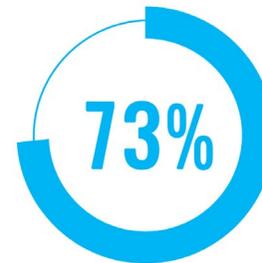


**TECHNICAL
SKILLS**



**COMPENSATION
+ BENEFITS**

However, employers today are struggling to find qualified applicants. And as the skills shortage continues to grow in the U.S., employers are finding that the "perfect candidate" is rather elusive.



73% of employers are struggling to find relevant candidates²

To find the right person for the job, it requires you to stay flexible and open-minded about other possibilities. To do so, start with the strategies on the following page:

[1. LOOK FOR POTENTIAL]

Rather than a candidate who is qualified for every aspect of the job, look for the candidate who can grow into the role. When you place more emphasis on a candidate's soft skills, this allows you to widen your focus and look for the person who is willing to learn—a quality that will make an excellent long-term fit.

67%

of HR managers said they'd hire a candidate with strong soft skills even if his or her technical abilities were lacking—only 9% would hire someone with strong technical credentials but weak soft skills³

Not only does focusing on these attributes benefit you as the employer, but providing meaningful professional development for your new hire will help you develop a trusting relationship and establish loyalty. **To effectively “hire for potential,” look for qualities like critical thinking skills, drive to learn new skills, and ability to adapt to challenges.**

[2. FIND PERSONALIZED SOLUTIONS]

When you find a candidate that would work well with your team and adapt to the demands of the role, it can be difficult to recognize that it's time to stop looking. However, you may risk losing a great candidate while you're out looking for the “perfect” candidate. **Because the competition is fierce, it is important to take an individualized approach to an offer; what worked for your last employee may not work for their replacement. This could mean compromising on many things, including compensation, training opportunities, a leadership timeline, benefit offerings, and scheduling.**

[3. UTILIZE THE TEMPORARY WORKFORCE]

Being flexible not only means flexibility in your hiring practices, but also flexibility in your overall hiring strategy. While many employers feel that full-time staff is most appropriate, today's job market and ever-changing technological landscape requires more agility in a hiring strategy. Whether you're struggling to fill an open role or you're scaling your business quickly, this dynamic workforce can help you remain competitive and keep you from spreading full-time employees too thin. **Temporary, freelance, and contract professionals can be utilized for highly specialized roles, large projects, system implementations, seasonal roles, and coverage for vacancies.**

72% of employers utilize contract, freelance, consulting, or temporary-to-permanent staff⁴



MISTAKE #2

NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH

During the hiring process, nearly every business makes the same **critical misstep: not moving fast enough**. With corporate red tape, HR policies, scheduling conflicts, and formalities, it can be difficult to speed up the process. However, it is important to realize that top talent will not be waiting around.

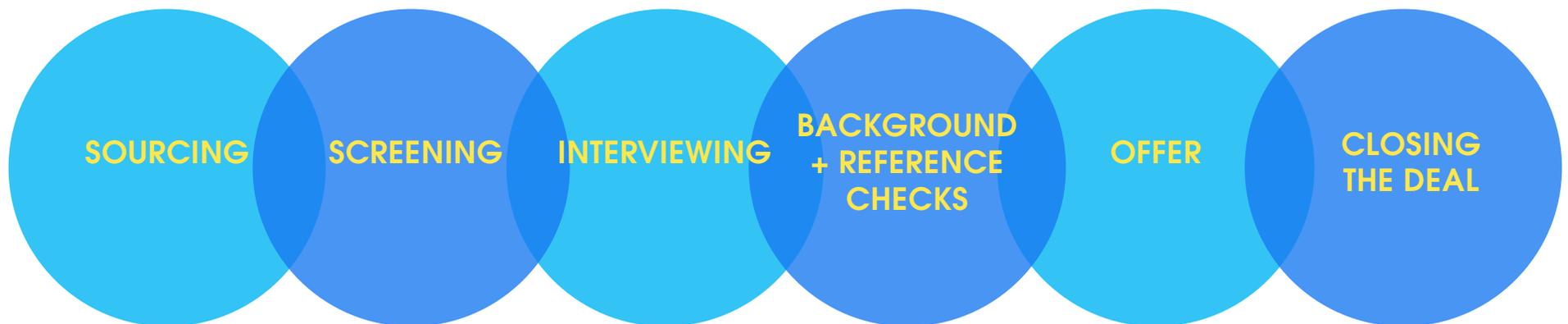
TOP CANDIDATES STAY AVAILABLE FOR ONLY 10 DAYS BEFORE GETTING HIRED²

55% of professionals were interviewing for 2+ other roles while they were interviewing for their current position⁴



Considering that top candidates can get hired in a matter of days, it's important to think about whether your hiring process would allow for you to do that. **If you can't move quickly enough, you're missing out on the best employees—and the best investments in your business.**

As a result, employers must not only recognize when you find a great fit, but also do everything possible to get that top candidate through the hiring process as quickly as possible. This means simplifying every step:



To start, consider the following ways you can speed up the hiring process:

[1. CONSOLIDATE YOUR INTERVIEWS]

When you're planning multiple interview rounds, it will cost you a lot of time and effort to get your top candidates back into your office two to three times throughout the process—especially if they are also interviewing with other employers. This can significantly delay your timeline and ability to hire the best candidates. **As a result, coordinating all the interview rounds to take place in one day can allow your candidate to:**

- ✓ Know that you respect their time
- ✓ Understand more about the company culture
- ✓ Get a better sense of the team and role in one day
- ✓ Have a better idea of where they stand

[2. BE TRANSPARENT]

It's not always possible to be as quick as a candidate would like. In those cases, communicating consistently with your top picks is critical to keeping them from accepting another offer. In addition to providing a specific timeline of when they should expect to hear from you or proceed to the next step in the hiring process, it is critical to be honest with candidates. **As a result, don't risk losing your top choice for the sake of diplomacy—tell the candidate when they are your top pick. If they like the company and the role enough, they may wait out other offers to see what you have.**

[3. BE PREPARED TO MAKE AN OFFER]

When you find the right person for the position, it can be frustrating to slow down and go through the red tape before finally getting an offer to your top candidate. This is especially true when they have competing offers on the table, and you're stuck waiting to process a background check or see how much you can afford for this position. **As a result, doing some of this work before the interview process can allow you to make an offer quickly—ideally, on the spot. To do so, be sure you are prepared for items like:**

- ✓ Your maximum budget for the role
- ✓ Additional perks to sweeten the deal
- ✓ Standard benefit offerings
- ✓ Standard HR policies & procedures



MISTAKE #3

NOT FOCUSING ON YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

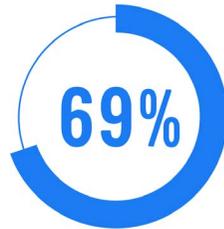
In today's candidate-driven job market, it isn't enough to identify the best in the talent pool. **Rather than relying on job offers to attract new hires, the smartest companies are turning inward by focusing on employer branding.**

This is an especially important tactic when hiring millennials, a generation that looks beyond traditional benefits and compensation to make career decisions. They want to know more about the company's reputation, values, and work environment—information that can easily be found online.

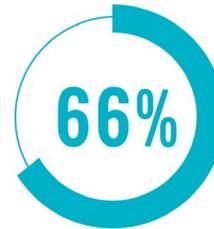
EMPLOYER BRANDING:

The market perception of what it is like to work for your company, especially regarding the value the organization offers employees in exchange for their skills + time

69% of active job seekers are likely to apply to a job if the employer actively manages its employer brand (e.g. responds to reviews, updates their profile, shares updates on culture)⁵



66% of professionals spend at least 10 minutes researching a company before they even apply for a role⁴



With job seekers doing their due diligence, not having a strong employer brand can have a huge impact on your ability to attract top talent. As the first introduction a prospective hire often has to a company, **a negative (or nonexistent) employer brand in today's market will most certainly drive them into the arms of your competitors.**



55% of job seekers abandon applications after reading negative reviews online²

Alternatively, a strong employer brand creates a sense of excitement and urgency about working for the company. While developing one does take time, the effort is well worth it. **Here is how you can get started:**

[1. DEFINE YOUR MESSAGE]

Developing a message about **who you are, what you do, and why you're a great place to work** is key to helping prospective hires envision a future at your company. These are messages that should be communicated consistently across all platforms that are relevant to the organization's business efforts (company website, career sites, social media, 3rd party review sites) as well as during all touch points of the hiring process.

[2. BE AUTHENTIC]

Being authentic is key when attracting talent. Everything you are saying (and showing) must be real. If a candidate feels they are being misled, they will not hesitate to withdraw from the process altogether.

That being said, it's critical for companies to understand how current employees perceive the brand. This is especially true today when platforms like Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and various job boards make the employee experience more transparent. If the hiring manager is communicating one thing, but current (and former) employees have consistently said the opposite, these mixed messages can lead a top applicant to accept a job elsewhere.

THE #1 OBSTACLE CANDIDATES EXPERIENCE WHEN APPLYING TO A JOB IS NOT KNOWING WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WORK FOR AN ORGANIZATION⁶

[3. GET SOCIAL]

Social media is often one of the first places where job seekers look when researching a prospective employer. Companies can use this to their advantage by establishing a strong presence on sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Glassdoor. **Give candidates a behind-the-scenes look at what it's like to work for your company by sharing photos, highlighting fun initiatives, and publishing frequent updates.**

This is also a great opportunity to enable your current employees to become brand advocates. Encourage them to build their own brands and share their experiences on social media.

CANDIDATES TRUST EMPLOYEES 3X MORE THAN THE EMPLOYER TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON WORKING AT THE COMPANY⁶

The background is a solid light blue color. In the center, there is a faint, semi-transparent illustration of an office scene. It shows several people in business casual attire. Some are standing and talking, while others are sitting on a large, dark-colored sofa or ottoman. There are tables with laptops and books, and a potted plant on the right side. Two pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The overall style is clean and modern.

MISTAKE #4

NOT EMPHASIZING YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

Company culture has quickly become a top priority for many professionals in today's job market. **Today's candidates are looking for an employer that offers them purpose, supports their employees both personally and professionally, and aligns with their values**, so a company's culture can make or break a job seeker's decision to apply for a job and ultimately accept an offer.

Hiring for cultural fit also has major advantages for employers. **Employees who feel they fit into their company's culture are not only more engaged and productive at work, but also happier in general.** Recognizing this and fostering a culture that builds relationships and trust amongst your staff can help you attract and retain the talent your company needs for success.

**A POOR CULTURAL FIT CAN COST A COMPANY
50-60% OF THE EMPLOYEE'S ANNUAL SALARY
IN TURNOVER EXPENSES ALONE⁷**

While it's important to assess cultural fit when hiring, you first need to take the steps to show, not just tell, candidates what makes your company unique. Here's how:

[1. IMPLEMENT COLLABORATIVE HIRING]

One of the best ways to introduce prospective hires to your company culture is through collaborative hiring. A quality candidate will want to ensure they will be working in an environment that they enjoy and with people they connect with, so **having them meet with employees at all levels and across different departments can give them the perspective they need.** To make your hiring process more collaborative, you can:



Have candidates meet with prospective team members



Make introductions to key leaders



Give them a tour of the office

[2. EMPHASIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT]

The perception of job security is shifting, especially as more millennials and members of Gen Z enter the workforce. **Rather than taking one “job for life” or climbing the career ladder with one employer, professionals in today’s market are focused on identifying opportunities that allow for continuous skills development.**

WORKING PROFESSIONALS RANKED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF COMPANY CULTURE⁴

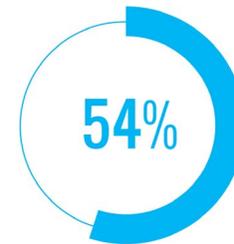
Appeal to this demand by discussing what your company offers in regards to:

- ✓ Employee mentorship opportunities
- ✓ Leadership development programs

- ✓ Training classes
- ✓ Succession planning initiatives

[3. DISCUSS WORK-LIFE BALANCE]

In today’s world, technology enables many professionals to make fewer compromises when it comes to their health, wellness, and personal relationships. Believing that **productivity shouldn’t be measured by hours in the office, but rather by results**, many job seekers are gravitating towards employers that offer a better work-life balance through greater flexibility and other wellness initiatives.



54% of professionals’ career choices are motivated by seeking a healthy work-life balance⁴

While these policies will differ by company, these are all work-life balance benefits that should be emphasized during the hiring process if you offer them:

- Remote work opportunities
- Paid vacation policies
- Parental leave policies
- Alternative hour scheduling
- Compressed work week
- Child care services
- Company outings
- Community engagement

SOURCES:

1. icims
2. Talent Now
3. SHRM
4. The Execu|Search Group 2018 Hiring Outlook
5. Glassdoor
6. LinkedIn
7. Harvard Business Review

ABOUT THE EXECU|SEARCH GROUP

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