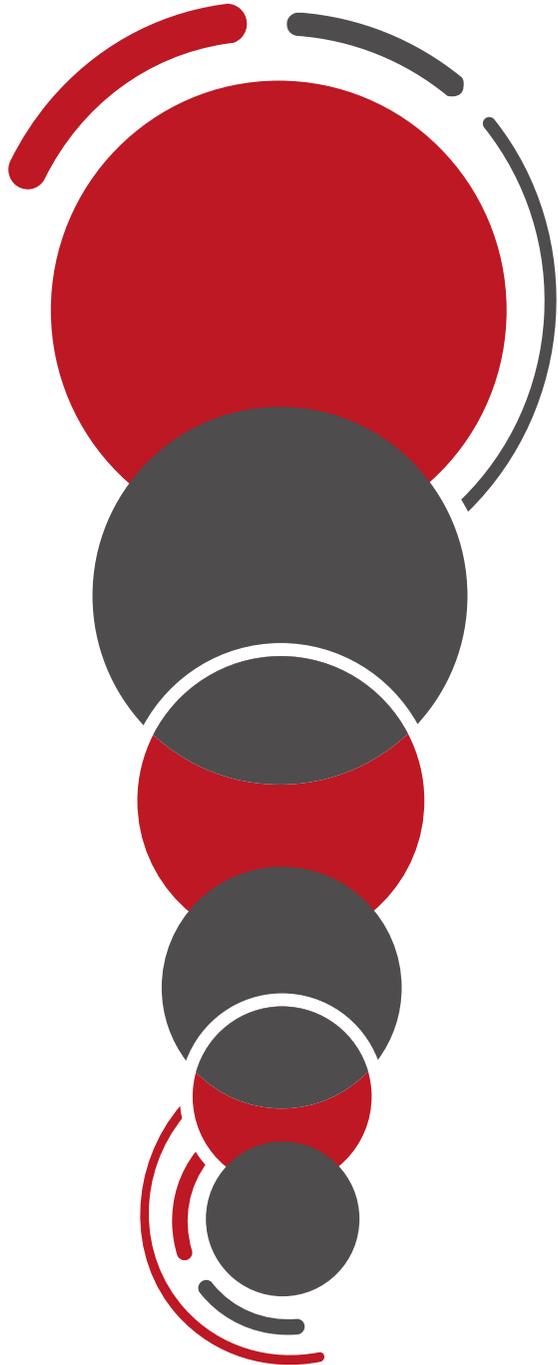# How to consistently deliver a better candidate experience

A Kallidus e-guide to successful recruiting

KALLIDUS

The Recruitment Evolution

The HR and recruitment landscape is evolving at a rapid pace. **New technology** has driven huge changes in the way businesses recruit and the way in which candidates search and apply for roles.
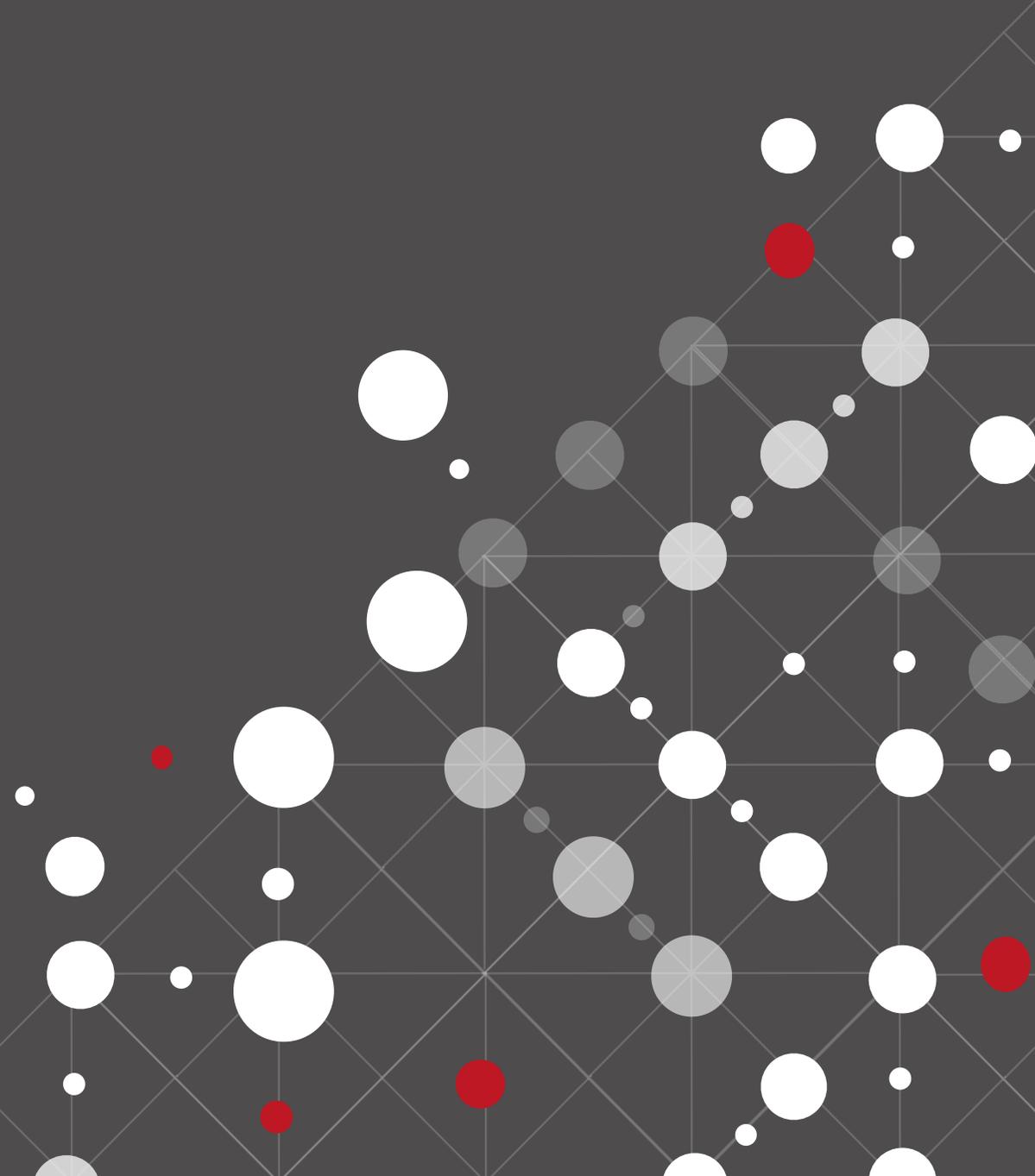
In recent years one of the **biggest changes** has been the realisation that **candidate experience is intrinsic to recruitment success**. HR teams are increasingly aware that the experience pre-application, during and after hiring is a real differentiator over competitors, enabling them to secure the best talent.

In this eBook we will explore the factors that contribute to a negative candidate experience. We'll look at feedback from candidates on how to improve the application process and how Applicant Tracking System (ATS) technology can support recruiters to consistently deliver a better candidate experience.

What is candidate experience?

Candidate experience is a job seekers reaction to an **employer's sourcing, recruiting, interviewing, hiring and on-boarding process**. The experience is comprised of all the touchpoints and not just human ones but digital too including **automated communications, social media, job boards and third party review sites like Glassdoor.**

In recent years candidate experience, has been directly linked to recruiting performance making it an increasingly important aspect of talent acquisition strategies for organisations of all sizes around the globe.

Why does candidate experience matter ?

Hiring is not an easy process for all the parties involved. The organisation looking to recruit invests a considerable amount of resource into finding new talent, and **the longer a position is vacant the more it costs the business.**
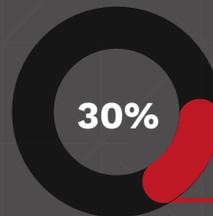
The applicant is betting their future by offering their talents. It's a decision that puts them in a vulnerable position, **moving jobs creates uncertainty and is stressful** - applicants need to **have confidence they are making the right decision.**
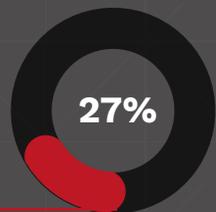
50%

Of positive respondents will share their positive experience

32%

Of negative respondents will broadcast their bad news
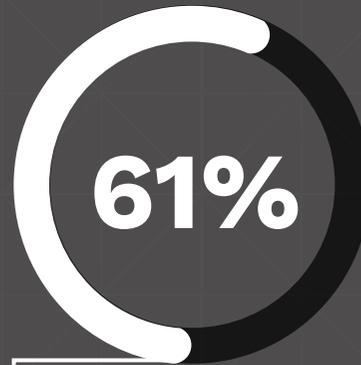
30%

Who had a negative experience would **discourage colleagues from applying**

27%

Who had a negative experience would **discourage colleagues from applying**

40%

Of the positive respondents said they would buy more goods or services the company sells even if they weren't hired

61%

Who had a positive experience would actively **encourage colleagues to apply to the organisation**

The Talent board who run the Candidate Experience Awards (1) surveyed over 45,000 job applicants about their experience.

The results paint a fascinating picture:

A great candidate experience is a real bonus for any organisation driving sales, advocacy and loyalty. A bad candidate experience creates multiple problems; the biggest of all being the right candidate doesn't apply, or turns down an organisations job offer.

The candidate may also broadcast negative sentiment, losing sales and devaluing the brand. For businesses looking to recruit thousands of new employees a year, a poor candidate experience can have a devastating effect.

The cost of poor candidate experience

In 2014 it's estimated poor candidate experience cost Virgin Media £4.5m in lost revenue. 18% of Virgin Media's candidates were also their customers. Due to poor brand experience as a candidate, approximately 7,500 of the total number of Virgin Media applicants were switching to one of their direct, leading competitors after they'd completed the process. This meant for every one person hired, they lost 2 customers as a result. Poor Candidate Experience can send even the most loyal customers looking elsewhere (2).

1 Top causes of negative candidate experience

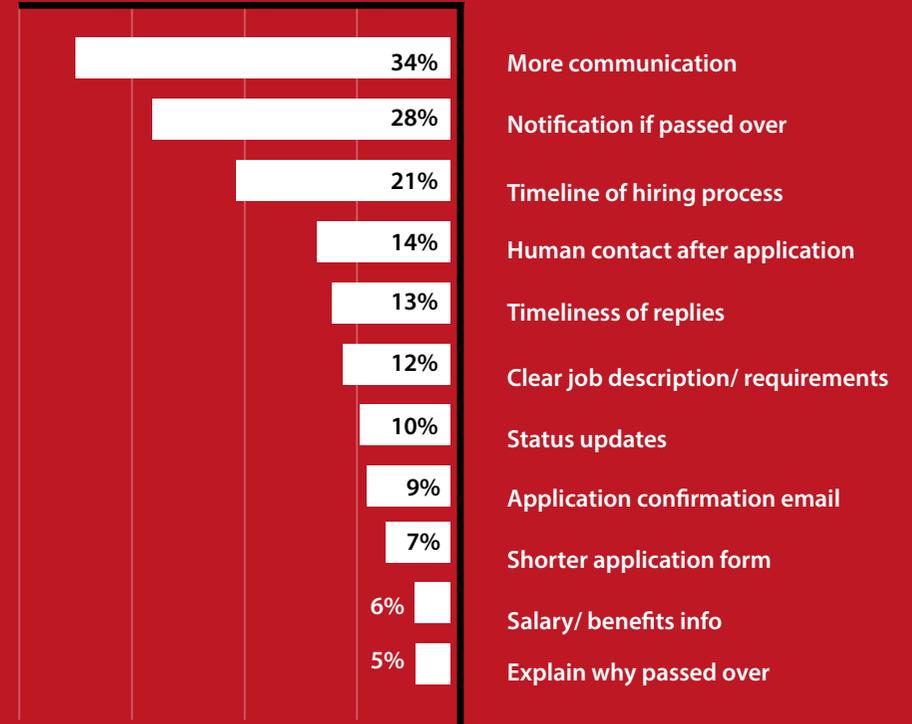| Cause	Significantly Worsen	Somewhat Worsen	No Impact
Unclear application instructions	59%	35%	7%
Extremely long application	49%	41%	11%
Minimal job description	50%	40%	10%
No link to application	44%	45%	11%
No confirmation email	40%	46%	11%
Long hiring process	33%	50%	17%
No notice when position filled	44%	39%	17%
No salary information	36%	46%	18%
Unable to contact a recruiter	41%	39%	21%
No info about interview process	28%	47%	24%
No benefits information	28%	46%	26%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

● Significantly Worsen   ● Somewhat Worsen   ● No Impact

2 Candidates' suggested improvements to application process

40% 30% 20% 10% 0%

Improvement	%
More communication	34%
Notification if passed over	28%
Timeline of hiring process	21%
Human contact after application	14%
Timeliness of replies	13%
Clear job description/ requirements	12%
Status updates	10%
Application confirmation email	9%
Shorter application form	7%
Salary/ benefits info	6%
Explain why passed over	5%

% of sample

How can you improve candidate experience?

There are two major frustrations for candidates: complexity to apply and lack of communication. In this next section of the eBook, we'll explore how these key issues, as well as a myriad of others; can be solved by implementing an Applicant Tracking System to consistently deliver a better candidate experience.

What is an Applicant Tracking System?

An Applicant Tracking System is a software application that enables you to streamline, track and manage multiple recruitment processes. With an ATS in place you can bring together disparate systems and processes resulting in significant time savings and efficiency improvements which deliver a better candidate experience across the entire candidate journey from application to hiring and on-boarding.

Mobile responsive design

Over two thirds of the UK population now own a smartphone overtaking laptops as UK internet users' number one device. The recruitment journey starts for over 86% of candidates on mobile - if you don't have a mobile friendly careers site, you're creating a huge barrier for talent acquisition.

Most good ATSs have a mobile friendly careers portal. From the ATS, you can create new vacancies, detailed job descriptions and then publish a fully mobile responsive job opportunity with no coding knowledge required.

86%
of active candidates user their smartphone to begin a job search

45%
of job seekers say they use their mobile device specifically to search for jobs at least once a day

70%
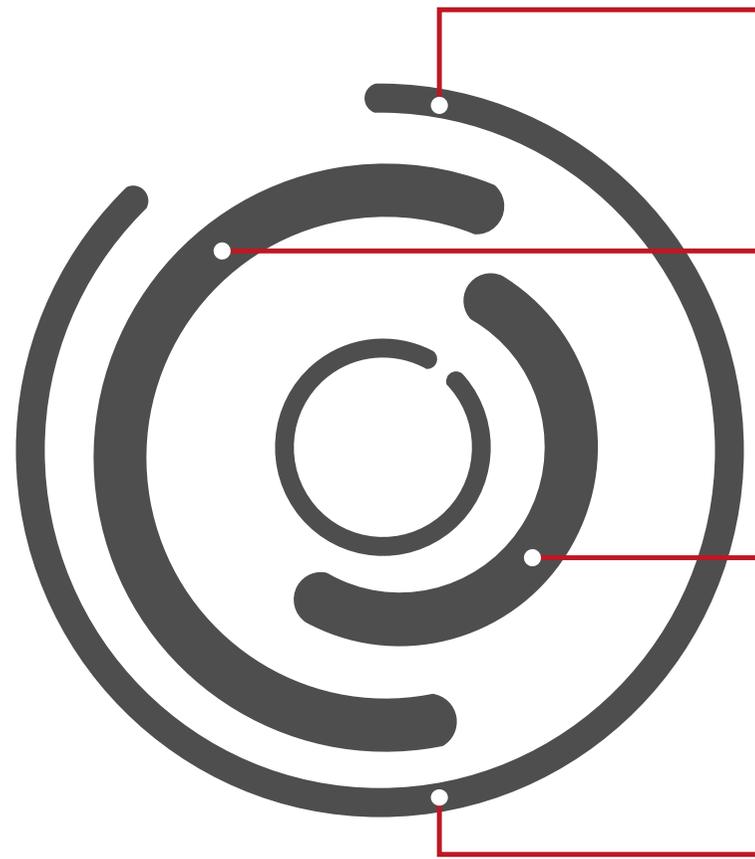of active candidates want to apply via mobile

54%
read company reviews from employees

55%
want to upload a 'CV' to your career site

52%
research salary information

(4)

89%
believe a mobile device is an important tool for job searching

59%
say it is important to be able to save a job from their mobile device and later apply to the job on a desktop

48%
think mobile devices will be the most common way to search for jobs in two years or less

90%
of the Fortune 500 company career sites do not support a mobile apply solution

Key applicant tracking system (ATS) features that improve candidate experience

Branded emails & configurable templates

Brand strength and reputation are a crucial factor in candidate experience so it's important you don't let your organisation down with poorly formatted communications. A good ATS will give you highly configurable email templates enabling you to make sure every email is personalised and on brand.

Automated emails and text messages

More communication was identified as the top experience improvement by candidates. With an ATS in place you can send out more communications with no additional resource. Automated email and text message workflows enable you to manage this complex process with ease. Application confirmations, status updates and general information can all be automated and triggered to be sent out by the ATS as candidates move through each stage of the recruitment process.

CV Uploads

Candidates are often frustrated at how difficult it is to apply for jobs. A must have function for any ATS is the ability to upload candidate CVs directly from the job application page. If the candidate doesn't have a CV to hand, the ability to easily pick up and complete the process at a later stage needs to be supported to improve application rates.

Short mobile friendly forms

Long forms are extremely off putting when applying for a job. Your ATS should enable you to make short forms that make the application process simple from any device. If you need to gather more information, your ATS should be able to create staged forms that break up the information gathering process into more manageable chunks that are much less daunting for the candidates to complete.

Candidate notifications

44% of candidates said that not knowing if they had been successful significantly worsened their candidate experience. With an ATS in place every candidate knows whether they have been successful or not with email notifications updating them of their status.
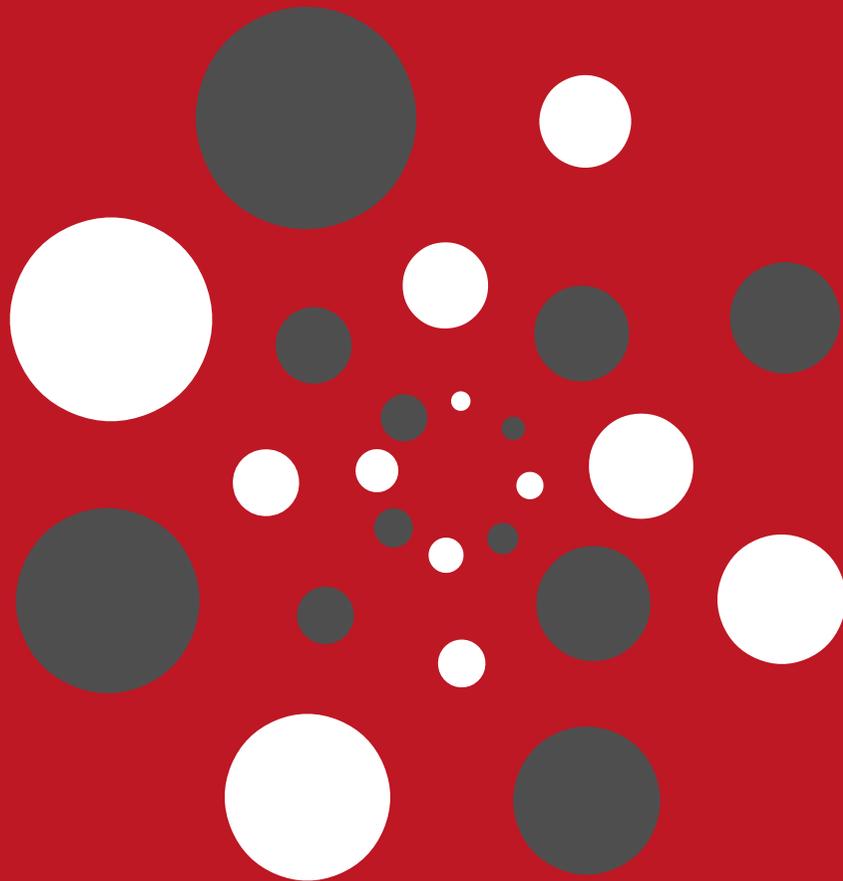
Setting the right expectations using custom pages and emails

It's important to set the right expectations for your candidates. A few examples of setting expectations are:

- **Providing an estimation of how long the application will take up front**

- **Letting candidates know how long it will take to make a hiring decision**

- **Letting candidates know when you will stop taking applications for a position**

- **Detailing who candidates will be speaking with and when, during the on-site interview process**

Your ATS should make setting expectations easy. A good ATS will enable you to create custom information pages and emails so you can let your candidates know exactly what to expect as they progress through the recruitment process. This information can be emailed to candidates in bitesize chunks triggered by a particular stage in their recruitment journey so they get the right information at the right time.

Use your ATS to create a central repository of information

For a great experience you need make sure your candidates have access to all the information they need to make an informed decision about the opportunity with your organisation. You can use your ATS to hold all your essential information such as: the interview process, benefits and salary, pension and promotion opportunities.

You may want to include videos of where the candidate could be working or introduce them to members of their potential team. The knowledge repository can then be leveraged with automated messages to drive greater engagement and a better experience as your candidates' progress through each stage of the recruitment journey.

Conclusion

Among recruiters who think their company's applicants have good experiences, the use of an ATS tops the list of contributing factors second only to excellent recruiter training. 3

One of the key areas that ATS software is used to improve the candidate experience is helping to address job seekers' number-one complaint: a lack of communication throughout the hiring process.

A great candidate experience is becoming more important, not just to successful talent acquisition but the profitability of a company too. According to Denni Oravec director of programs for The Talent Board, a good candidate experience benefits an organisation in many ways.

"Candidates who were not hired but were treated well are more likely to apply again, to refer others to apply and to remain a customer or an admirer of the company,"

References

1 http://www.thecandidateexperienceawards.org/

2 Ph Attraction. The Complete Guide to Improving your
Candidate Experience

3 Using ATS Software to Improve the Candidate Experience
IndustryView | 2015 - Software Advice.com

4 50 HR and Recruiting Stats That Make You Think - Glassdoor

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Find out more

To find out more about how an ATS can improve your organisations candidate experience, speak to one of our experts.

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