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# Strategies to Skyrocket Recruitment



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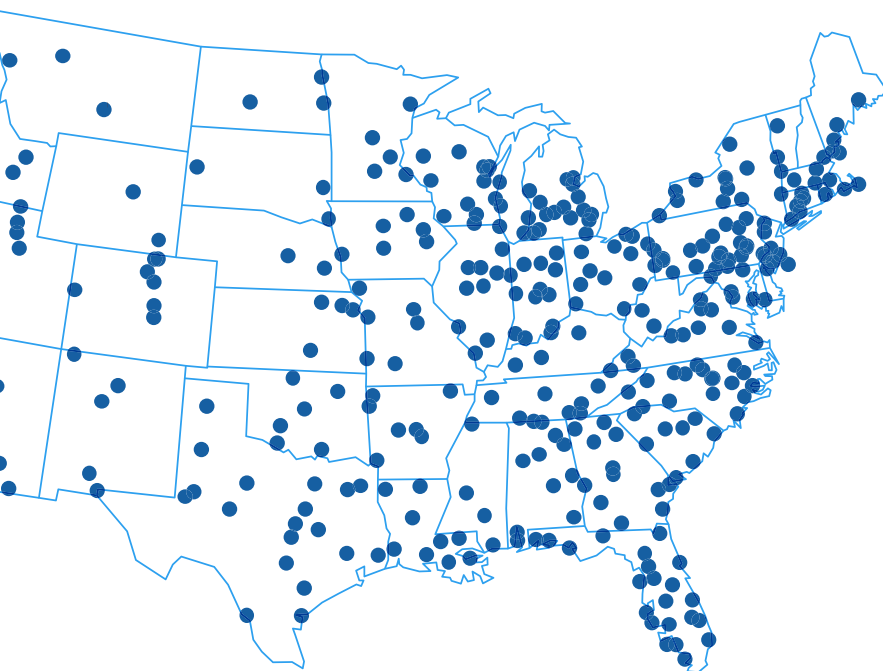
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# Introduction

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COVID-19 has dramatically changed the recruitment process, with social distancing, videoconference interviews and remote work the new norms. Some industries, like travel and restaurants, have been obliterated by the pandemic. But others, such as healthcare, online retail and logistics, have ramped up their hiring to meet demand.

Digital recruiting methods – from online job boards and virtual job fairs to feature-rich interviewing technology – have jumped to the fore as organizations compete for new, top-notch talent in a safety-conscious manner. Indeed, hiring top talent has become increasingly important as today's organizations aim for profitability by becoming leaner and more efficient.

Hiring top-tier talent has become a leading concern of the C-suite, placing heightened pressure on recruiters, hiring managers and Human Resources (HR) departments to deliver

for their organizations. At the same time, nearly half of job seekers in high-demand industries like technology, banking and energy say they've turned down offers because of poor recruiting experiences.

Now more than ever, it's time for every organization to review and supercharge its recruitment strategy to attract top-drawer hires in the most economical manner possible. This eBook outlines six ways to do just that:

1 » Locate New Sources of Talent

2 » Enhance the Talent Fit

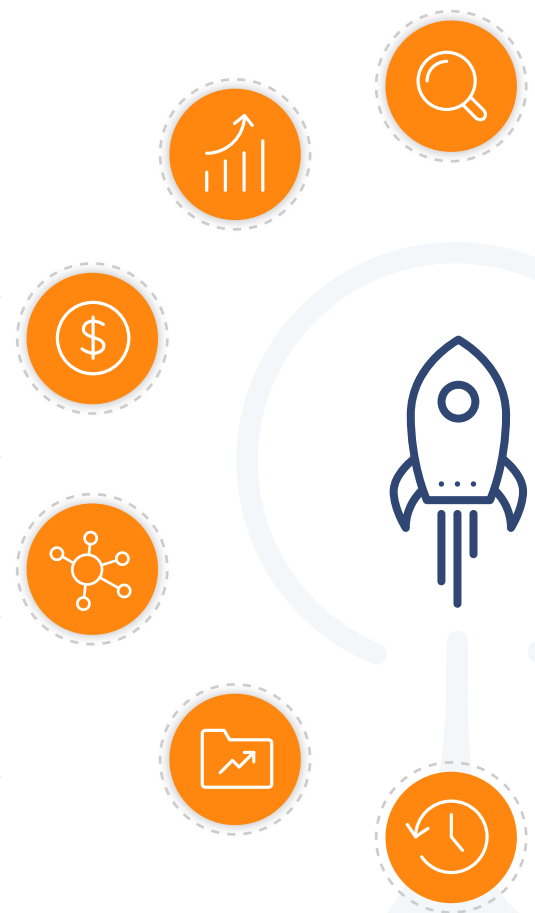
3 » Improve Salary Expectations

4 » Bolster Applicant Pools

5 » Decrease Abandoned Applications

6 » Reduce the Time-to-Hire

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When considered together, these six approaches will create a positive candidate experience while ensuring that organizations recruit and retain the talent and skills they'll need to grow along with the recovering economy.

# » Recruit Strategically with Tailored, Actionable Insights

When there's an open position, how does an organization identify the talent supply? How do HR leaders become strategic assets for the executive team? How do recruiting teams refresh conventional hiring practices?

The answer typically lies at the intersection of data and insights, known as actionable insights. Traditional approaches utilizing online postings and lateral moves of internal employees often yield few candidates, and typically take a great deal of time. But with tailored, actionable, technologically sophisticated insights, organizations can create fresh recruiting opportunities.

*Hiring teams shouldn't have to go "fishing" in the dark. Instead, they need to be able to procure talent with laser-like precision.*

For example, they might:

- *Find new employee pools by recruiting from unexpected industries. Certain industries are shedding jobs, so the talent supply from those sectors will be increasing.*
- *Slice recruiting time in half by targeting new college graduates in nearby areas with an abundant supply of talent.*
- *Recruit employees to work remotely in specific roles – an increasingly common trend, with nearly half of all U.S. employees now working from home.*

These are the data-driven actions that lead HR and hiring teams to become strategic business leaders. In the past, many people in HR and hiring roles have not been adequately armed with efficient methods to identify and manage this type of data. And businesses have not had access to the critical insights and content they need to gain a competitive edge and meet their growth goals.

Today, though, the labor market has been fundamentally altered, creating a new business landscape. There's been a technology evolution for the way we currently work that connects labor market analysis and salary insights.

Incorporating actionable data enables managers to know where to begin the search for viable candidates. This data helps business leaders understand their markets on a macro level, and how the economics of supply and demand in nearby areas impact a business.

Start with highlighting the available talent in an area. For example, the supply of data scientists in a particular area may be low. So instead of only recruiting locally or in a city nearby, focus on locations – even if many states away – that may have a talent oversupply. With the rapid growth and popularity of remote work, this is likely to remain an increasingly viable solution.

Hiring teams shouldn't have to go "fishing" in the dark. Instead, they need to be able to procure talent with laser-like precision.



# » Provide Accurate Job Descriptions

Vague or overly complex job descriptions are often a reason desirable candidates may not apply for a position. Poor descriptions can also create a scenario where unqualified, unsuitable applicants make it too far into the hiring process. Some job descriptions are too brief and difficult to understand. Others misrepresent the role or make interesting positions sound tedious.

To create an accurate job description, organizations first need to determine what skills and traits are required for each job. To stay on top of this, some companies ask their employees to document their current duties each year. Hiring managers can also gain this understanding by researching and analyzing the job's actual tasks, asking current employees what the role entails and determining the position's baseline functions and expected performance outcomes. After doing this, managers will be better prepared to "sell" the job in a clear, concise manner.

***"It's important to get the job description right on the first swing,"*** said Marisa Vrona, client engagement director at the WunderLand Group

in Chicago. ***"You want to ensure all the right details are there, but not too many to overwhelm candidates."***

It's also important to use an accurate, modernized job title. Too many companies have reduced analytics roles to Data Ninja and project managers to Cat Wranglers. Job titles should reflect the role's requirements and expectations and how the role is valued within the organization.

The sweet spot for job descriptions is anywhere from 250 to 2,000 words. Within this range, organizations are more likely to obtain the maximum completion rate for applicants, delivering conversions five times higher than job descriptions of 170 to 250 words.

Descriptions must include an accurate title, relevant hard and soft skills sought, education requirements and the desired amount of experience. To further optimize, don't rely too heavily on text alone. Descriptions can be supplemented by video, photos and other visuals, if used with discretion, to help the organization stand out.

Hiring managers should imagine what skills and personality traits will best fit the role, responsibilities and, most important, the company's culture. Recruiters and hiring managers are then aided with the right words to help applicants picture themselves in the role. The description should also speak to the company's long-term vision, and how the role will impact the department and the company.

***"Spending resources on social media postings to draw candidates to job openings, only to have them click through to poor job descriptions, negates those marketing efforts,"*** cautioned Kristen Fife, a Seattle-area recruiter with experience at multiple Fortune 100 companies.

Accurate job descriptions can be the key to attracting or turning off talent. Hiring managers are creating a billboard-like advertisement, inviting applicants to work for their company. It helps to make the billboard attractive, while accurately describing the position. This will ensure that the ideal talent gets into the candidate pipeline right away.





# >> Assessing Salary with Analytics



One of the most challenging elements of recruiting and hiring is understanding competitive salary ranges. An increasingly popular practice is to include the salary range within the job description. Indeed, 74% of job seekers now expect to find this information in the description, according to CareerBuilder. Providing the salary instantly eliminates job seekers who would not agree to the listed range. But, whether or not a company decides to disclose a salary range upfront, effectively identifying accurate and competitive salaries is never easy.

There are websites that provide ballpark compensation figures, but approximate figures will neither effectively nor efficiently support smart budgeting and hiring strategies. Listing exceptionally broad salary ranges also can make companies appear disconnected. The use of micro-analytics, however, will help pinpoint how much to offer each candidate.

Factors that affect salary ranges include talent supply and demand, soft skills, hard skills, education and certifications. The right certification, combined with sought-after soft skills, could mean a 20% to 30% lift in salary, for example. This precision removes the uncertainty that accompanies salary offers and places the salary needle exactly where it needs to be for each candidate.

Organizations should keep in mind that these analytics can also work in reverse. Candidates who realize that the salary budget for a role requiring an advanced degree is 10% under market value may view the company as “cheap,” dishonest or poorly informed.

The solution is to align expectations across recruiters, HR, hiring managers and company leaders with detailed salary data and insights from a trusted source.

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Accurate salary data by market, and even industry, can enhance hiring strategies. Conversely, companies without their finger on the pulse can find themselves at a competitive disadvantage. Competing for top-shelf employees, organizations need to be especially competitive with compensation packages – the base salary, plus desirable perks like flexible schedules, bonuses or volunteer days – and most importantly, prepared to extend offers quickly. As salary ranges can shift rapidly based on supply and demand, organizations will be best equipped by referencing this data every 30 to 60 days.

# 4 Re-evaluate Requirements

Even during a recession or an economic-recovery period, employers looking to distinguish themselves from the competition will fight to bring in great workers to fuel their company's growth. As a result of this ongoing competition, some organizations have decided to reduce their degree requirements.

Companies like Google, Home Depot, Apple and IBM have opted to reduce or drop specific education requirements altogether. A Northeastern University study found that, after the Great Recession, the percentage of online job listings requiring at least a four-year degree fell in tandem with a drop in the local unemployment rate.

**"Instead of looking exclusively at candidates who went to college, IBM now looks at candidates who have hands-on experience via a coding boot camp or an industry-related vocational class,"** said Joanna Daly, IBM's vice president for compensation, benefits and HR business development.

Today, multiple options exist for job candidates looking to add value to their résumés outside of enrolling in college. Online courses, coding programs, internships, certifications and vocational education can provide the experience needed to flourish in a specific career. In fact, it may behoove an organization to give those with lesser degrees or without post-secondary education a shot. As an added benefit, hands-on experience – in coding, for example – typically yields observable skills that can be easily verified.

With that in mind, it could prove beneficial to tap into a larger pool of talent with alternative education. According to the

Economic Policy Institute, fewer than one-fifth of adults aged 21 to 24 are college graduates. So, a bachelor's degree as a qualifier will immediately eliminate a large portion of potential candidates who could be taught new skills. To get a leg up in the competition for top job candidates, it may be time to re-evaluate the requirements of a position and make adjustments in order to attract and secure previously overlooked applicants.

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# » Reduce Application Times

There's no doubt, requiring job seekers to endure an excessive number of steps during the hiring process will deter some applicants. This is especially true during a pandemic, when there will be a huge demand for certain rebounding industries to staff back up – and quickly. A PricewaterhouseCoopers study found that application processes lasting longer than a month will discourage applicants from accepting a job.

The conventional wisdom holds that lengthy job applications will screen out less committed candidates, but this can also backfire.

**“Good candidates know their time is important ...”** said Sarah Gregory, a former director of user research at Punchkick Interactive. **“Their tolerance for jumping through hoops is now much lower.”**

In fact, CareerBuilder found that candidates don't want to complete any application that takes longer than 20 minutes. Recruitment company Appcast revealed that recruiters can boost their application-completion percentage by up to 365 percent by reducing time spent on the application process to five minutes or less.

Completion rates drop by almost 50 percent when an application asks more than 50 questions compared to an application asking 25 or fewer questions.

So, HR departments and recruiting agencies should consider shortening the process. But how?

**“Ask yourself what kind of information you really need upfront to decide if you want to move candidates to the next step,”** said Tiffani Murray, a manager of talent management systems. **“You need a name, contact information and a résumé. If you have**

**an application process that is five or six screens deep and a candidate is filling it out on a smartphone, in many cases they'll drop off.”**

Streamlined, mobile-friendly applications are almost a must today. In fact, applicants' expectations about the ease and effectiveness of an organization's online recruiting may strongly influence their opinion of the organization.

**“Companies that allow you to apply with [job profiles] or upload your résumé from Dropbox are those getting some of the higher mobile completion rates,”** Murray said. She also suggests holding off on requesting references until both the candidate and the company display a mutual interest.

With an optimized strategy leading up to the videoconference interview, small application adjustments could make a big difference in the number of candidates considered and ultimately hired.



**20  
MINUTES**

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## » Offer Robust Employee Referral Programs

Since current employees have great insight into who would be a good fit for an organization, hiring managers should consider the advantages of a strong employee referral program. Such referrals, it's been shown, are five times more effective than all other sources of hiring.

More than 60% of recruiters have already established employee referral programs, awarding monetary bonuses as incentives. By enlisting the assistance of current employees in recruiting, the probability of hiring more top performers increases exponentially.

*Referred candidates are hired 55% faster compared to candidates hired through career sites.*

To leverage referral programs effectively, organizations should consider enhancing the standard \$500 referral bonus. Salesforce, for example, has paid its employees no less than \$5.5 million in referral bonuses – in 2017 the company said its standard bonus was \$2,000 – and some companies are shelling out more than \$10,000 for a successfully placed referral.

Some organizations emphasize retention as well, paying out the fee only after the new hire has remained with the company for at least three months.

Referred candidates are hired 55% faster compared to candidates hired through career sites. And more than 45% of them stay with the company for three years or more, compared to just 14% of hires through job boards.

Incentives that are generous enough to get noticed can drive employee behavior and create an all-important, around-the-clock referral pipeline.

## Always Be Recruiting

In addition to the wholesale shift to virtual platforms, the key trends shaping recruiting and hiring these days include the need for more diverse pools of candidates, the use of data and analytics and a fresh focus on the candidate experience.

The six strategies described in this eBook address each of these trends, as they've been tested and proved by companies that are attracting more and better qualified applicants. Each strategy, however, should be routinely re-evaluated as labor markets shift and workforce needs change.

In addition, organizations must make sure their brands stay strong and relatable, and that their recruiters and hiring managers stay connected with top-notch applicants who didn't make the cut the first time around. In the fierce competition for premier talent, after all, the old advice to "Always be recruiting" has never been more relevant than it is now.

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