



# Is Your Employer Brand Turning Away Candidates?

A QWALIFY™ WHITEPAPER

Today's job seekers are looking for a positive candidate experience. They want to walk away feeling that their time has been well spent and their application will be accepted and reviewed. From the design and usability of a company's careers page and the availability of company information to the interactions with the recruiter, each and every step of the process impacts how a candidate perceives a company and helps them determine if the company is a worthwhile employer.

Job seekers are a savvy bunch. They are empowered by new tools and technologies available, allowing them to research companies thoroughly and help form opinions around 'buying-in' to employers. Whether job seekers are looking on company websites, reading trade magazines, or searching for articles and announcements, they are no doubt compiling a collection of information and data about the companies they are considering.

*38% of candidates will tell their friends and family about a negative experience during an application process. Almost 10% will post about it online.*

In addition to this research, nearly two-thirds of people will visit review sites such as Glassdoor.com, which provides insider reviews from employees. Employers need to respond to this shift by earning the trust of their potential candidates through continuous, consistent and honest messaging.

As noted in the *2012 Candidate Behaviour Survey* from CareerBuilder, "Today's job candidates think like a consumer, so you, as an employer, need to think like a marketer. Where a marketer would work to increase brand awareness, you need to work to increase employer brand awareness; and where a marketer's job is to generate customer loyalty, your job is to foster candidate loyalty." The key to remember is this: just like a marketer would research their customer base, recruiters need to research their candidate base. They need to understand what candidates are looking for, what is important to them, and what actions will make them loyal to your brand.

### **What are candidates looking for?**

Today, talent not only expects but also needs to be informed of the recruiting process. Recruiting is arguably broken; recruiters seek to attract candidates to job postings, conduct interviews, and move forward only with the selected candidates for further engagement, leaving a larger portion of interested candidates in the dark. Those who are deemed either unqualified candidates or qualified candidates who are no longer being considered are left with no notification as to why they were not selected to move forward, as the communication between the candidate and recruiter has reached a hard stop.

Let's contrast this broken model with a recruiter who nurtures their relationships with candidates and leaves them with a positive impression of the company. Setting expectations of the recruitment process, providing follow-up communication of candidacy, and thanking a candidate for their time and effort to apply, increases the positive experience that a candidate will have. This dialogue is essential, though sadly lacking. People have a hunger for information and in this day and age, they are accustomed to receiving it.

Talent Board, the non-profit organization who founded the Candidate Experience Awards (CandE), has been conducting an annual survey since 2010 to gauge how employers aid in the candidate experience. The results of their 2013 survey support the fact that the more transparent and accessible an employer is in regard to their recruitment process and strategy, the better they are perceived by candidates.

The results of the 2013 study included responses collected from nearly 50,000 candidates and approximately 100 companies who were actively implementing actions to increase a better candidate experience. Contrasted below are two tables:

*63% of candidates will tell their friends and family about a positive experience. 14% will post about it online.*

*57% discouraged by lack of contact with a recruiter*

*Candidates are looking for an experience where information is readily available and they are engaged in communication.*

Content available to candidates before they apply	% of employers
Values ('Fit')	92.2%
Answers to 'Why' people want to work there	92.2%
Answers to 'Why' people stay	89.1%
Employee Testimonials	87.5%
Diversity – Cultural Information	82.8%
Career Related Events (listings, dates, locations)	76.6%
Overview of Recruiting Process	73.4%
Details of Application and Next Step	71.9%

Content that candidates access before applying	Aware, Useful	Aware, Not Useful	Not Aware
Values ('Fit')	48.7%	20.2%	31.2%
Answers to 'Why' people want to work there	48.6%	17.8%	33.6%
Answers to 'Why' people stay	44.7%	18.1%	37.2%
Employee Testimonials	27.8%	21.3%	51.0%
Diversity – Cultural Information	30.9%	25.6%	43.5%
Career Related Events (listings, dates, locations)	18.7%	18.2%	63.1%
Overview of Recruiting Process	39.3%	18.3%	42.4%
Details of Application and Next Step	52.6%	15.0%	32.5%

What is interesting is the gap between what is available and what candidates are *aware* is available. Somewhere, the communication is lost, much to the detriment of the employer by potentially losing out on top talent who are discouraged from applying.

It is evident that even when an employer is showing effort to provide information which a candidate wants (or what they think a candidate wants), candidates still have difficulty in

accessing that information, resulting in candidates possibly turning away either at the onset or part way through the process, feeling uninformed.

### **What can turn candidates off?**

What in particular discourages candidates during the application process? CareerXroads conducts a yearly Mystery Job Seeker study where they create a fictitious candidate and submit their resume to companies on Fortune 100's Best Place to Work list in order to evaluate and audit online hiring behaviors. In the 2013 study, CareerXroads cited 'a flood of inadequacy' with these companies:

- Not responding to applications. Even when they do, they do not follow up with updates. Roughly three in four companies did not offer closure.
- Not sharing enough information for job candidates to make educated decisions.
- Not nurturing a serious dialogue with candidates. Two out of three companies had no two-way interaction with candidates even though this is a building block of the employment brand.
- Not paying close enough attention to resumes but rather relying on their automated systems to screen candidates.

Additional negative experiences relating to technology noted from the *CareerXroads Mystery Job Seeker* study include:

- Clunky corporate websites and insufficient career pages.
- 'Treating job seekers as numbers' and not paying attention to the details, either via malfunctioning computer systems or human error.
- 23% of the application processes evaluated did not offer any feedback to the Mystery Job Seeker that their application had been received.
- In one out of 10 cases, the Mystery Job Seeker required more than an hour to submit his application online. In almost half of the scenarios, he cited issues ranging from minor annoyances to those which barred him from completing the application process entirely, including browser incompatibility, URL's that didn't work and shoddy web design.

*38% of people believe their skills and experiences are not understood by employers*

Patience with broken systems is at an all-time low given that job seekers are much more technologically savvy and know when usability is sub-par. Having a career site, application

process or communications system that is not intuitive or is malfunctioning, does little to inspire potential hires. The 2013 Candidate Behaviour Study by CareerBuilder found that 38% of job seekers will tell their friends and family about a negative job application experience and an additional 7% will post about it online. On the plus side, 63% of job seekers who have a positive experience will tell their friends and family, with 14% who will post about it online. This supports the notion that those with a positive experience will happily direct others to a company for their own job search, thereby increasing the potential talent pool of the employer.

### **Deliver on your employer brand**

It is essential for companies to deliver on a positive candidate experience by following through on a positive employer brand. If they do not, the poor perceptions by candidates could stymie hiring potential, discourage re-application, diminish referrals and could propagate negative feedback.

Key actions to help deliver on your employer brand:

- *Keep it simple and consistent:* Be clear and concise in your messaging. The better people can understand it, the better they can share it and adopt it. Maintain your chosen employer brand. The more consistent you are, the more credible you are.
- *Align your presence:* Ensure your messaging on various platforms is the same, including your company career page, about page, external recruiting sites, as well as any social media sites used by your organization. Aligning your messaging in each spot will ensure that prospective candidates do not get mixed messages.
- *Allow for two-way communication:* Speak and be heard applies to the company and to the candidate. Interaction with your candidates will increase their engagement and satisfaction level.
- *Face time:* While you can't reach out to every single application in person, as you filter your talent pool into a good prospects pool, take the time to personally reach out to candidates – a simple hello or word of encouragement regarding their interest will go a long way. Let candidates know they are more than just a paper resume.
- *Nurture company culture:* Work to develop and maintain the kind of culture you want in your organization. Both the people in your company and those outside of it should easily recognize your company culture. Candidates can be attracted to your company because of the culture, so make sure it's a place that people want to be.

## Conclusion

Be part of the solution; turn your recruitment efforts into a proactive, engaging experience for candidates that boost their experience with you. Learn what candidates are looking for and make that information easily accessible to them. Clean and simple online tools and communications can go a long way in moving interested candidates from the pre-application to post-application phase, increasing your talent pool of potential employees.

Maximize the candidate experience with Qwalify. Qwalify's talent pooling and pre-engagement (TRM™) platform enables a simple experience, encourages interaction, and focuses on relationship development. To learn how Qwalify can help your organization provide a stellar experience that consistently brings candidates back, contact us today at [service@qwalify.com](mailto:service@qwalify.com).

## About Qwalify

Established in Kitchener, Ontario in 2010, Qwalify provides talent pooling and engagement technologies to companies and agencies of all sizes. Simple, powerful, and cost-effective, Qwalify's mission is to fix the broken recruitment industry by focusing on proactive recruiting and talent relationship management, rather than on reactive processes. For more information about Qwalify, visit [www.qwalify.com](http://www.qwalify.com) or call 1-800-535-5043.

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