THE NEW RECRUITING MINDSET:
HOW TO STAY COMPETITIVE IN A CHANGING TALENT LANDSCAPE

WORLD'S LEADING RECRUITER ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

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IT’S HARD OUT THERE FOR AN EMPLOYER.¹

Just ask Brenda Dreyer, head of workforce development for the Ames, Iowa, Chamber of Commerce. Ames has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation at 1.5 percent, which means Dreyer and her fellow Chamber members have had to attract talent from out of state just to meet hiring demands.

While the talent market might be especially tight in Ames, it’s not all that different elsewhere in America. There are roughly 100,000 more open jobs in the U.S. than there are people looking for work.³ Businesses of all shapes and sizes, from growing startups to established corporations, are struggling to find qualified candidates.

“Competition between employers is heating up and organizations are moving at breakneck speeds to grab talent as soon as they find it. In fact, the best candidates are off the market in only 10 days, giving recruiters no time to even stop and think.”⁴

BRENDA DREYER
Head of Workforce Development
Chamber of Commerce
Ames, Iowa

This is not the same world of recruiting. You can’t do just one thing anymore. You really have to be going at it in a number of ways.² “
A combination of factors has led the talent market to this point, each amplifying the effects of the others:

1. **Recruiters have a smaller pool of talent to work with**

The unemployment rate hovered just under four percent for most of last year. By all indications, it will stay low this year as well. That means there are fewer active job seekers on the market.

As a result, many organizations are trying their luck with passive candidates, but engaging this population has always been difficult. Passive candidates are already employed and it takes a lot to convince them to leave their current jobs for your role. Today, capturing the attention of passive candidates is even more difficult than it has been. Employers are well aware of how ferocious the talent market is and they’re pulling out all the stops to keep retention rates high.

Your competitors won’t hesitate to give their star employees salary bumps and better perks to keep them from accepting your offers.

When recruiters can find talent, it often isn’t up to par: ninety-two percent of U.S. business leaders feel the American workforce is under skilled, especially when it comes to soft skills like communication, creativity and critical thinking.
The times they are a-changin’. In the face of these challenges, employers must make some major changes to their recruiting and hiring strategies. Unfortunately, few companies are.

As TalentCare Recruiting specialist Michelle Hawkins told The Ladder, “The biggest challenge in hiring today is that hiring managers do not behave as if they are in a candidate’s market. ... Candidates are being asked to do more and more, but there is no scarcity of jobs to encourage them to participate in a more stringent process.

Some candidates end up abandoning the process early. Others are hired by someone who realizes it is a candidate’s market and moves more quickly to make them an offer.

Rather than being like those hiring managers who still cling to the old ways, your organization can take this opportunity to become an employer of choice for today’s candidates. All you have to do is make a few simple changes to your process.
YOUNG WORKERS HAVE NEW EXPECTATIONS FOR RECRUITING AND EMPLOYMENT

Millennials are now the largest generation in the workforce and Gen. Z-ers are starting to join the working world in droves. These workers have certain expectations for recruiting and employment and many organizations’ current policies and processes don’t meet them.

For example, members of both generations conduct extensive research on employers before deciding whether or not to apply for a job.

When organizations lack transparency into their cultures and operations — or when those organizations clearly don’t invest much energy into building and maintaining engaging employer brands — Gen. Z-ers and Millennials are likely to turn down opportunities with them.

Both generations are looking for convenient, engaging and transparent recruiting processes. They want to know what your company does, what kinds of development opportunities it can offer and how they can make a positive impact on the world by working for your organization. Millennials and Gen. Z-ers want information to be easy to find and they want the hiring process itself to move along smoothly and quickly.

Unfortunately, very few employers offer this kind of hiring experience. Instead, young talent still face long applications, repetitive processes and a lot of hoop-jumping just to get in the door. This is a surefire way for any organization to lose the next generation of talent.
RECRUITMENT TECHNOLOGY STRUGGLES TO KEEP UP

Recruiting technology is at a curious crossroads. While the field is more innovative than ever, those innovations aren’t necessarily translating into better recruiting processes. That said, it’s not like candidates have warmer feelings about less cutting-edge technologies. Applicant tracking systems are still far from user-friendly. Communication tools like live chat are not always reliable. Sometimes, simply navigating a company’s careers page can be a hassle.

For example, consider the rise of AI and automation. Recruiters and HR pros have plenty to be excited about, but candidates are more hesitant about these developments. It’s easy to see why when you consider the high-profile failures of AI in recruiting, such as Amazon scrapping its AI recruiting tool because it demonstrated bias against women.17

Today’s candidates expect technology to make their lives easier. In the hiring process, the opposite is often true — and that spells bad news for employers.
OUT-OF-THE-BOX SOLUTIONS TO ATTRACT CANDIDATES IN A FIERCE MARKET

The recruiting landscape has changed and it’s your job as a talent acquisition decision-maker to ensure your organization adapts. Here are five ways to make it happen:

1. Boost Your Employer Branding
2. Offer the Right Perks
3. Pay Your People Well
4. Partner with a Third-Party Recruiting Expert
5. Get on Social Media
A strong employer brand is absolutely critical to attracting talent today.\textsuperscript{18} According to LinkedIn, seventy-five percent of candidates consider your brand before deciding to apply and a strong brand can cut hiring costs in half, drive fifty percent more qualified applicants to your jobs and double the speed of hiring.\textsuperscript{19} Here are some of the tactics savvy organizations are using to get the most out of their employer branding efforts:

\section*{FOCUS ON CULTURE}

When potential candidates are researching your company, one of their main concerns is learning about your culture. Information about compensation packages, job responsibilities and the like is certainly important. However, candidates in this market are looking for a little more than that. They want to work in environments where they will connect with their colleagues, enjoy their days and really thrive. Your employer branding efforts offer a great opportunity to showcase your culture.

Give candidates a look at daily life in your company. Highlight your mission, vision, values and share examples of how your workers live those things every day. Use a variety of media — photos, videos, blog posts, etc. — to keep candidates engaged.

Note that candidates find information from employees three times more trustworthy than information supplied by your company.\textsuperscript{20} For that reason, it’s a good idea to get your employees involved in your employer branding efforts. Give them the keys to the company blog to share their own experiences directly. Record and share their video testimonials. When candidates advance in the process, put them in touch with employees so they can have direct conversations with your best brand ambassadors.
SHOW OFF YOUR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Young candidates typically want to make a positive impact on the world at work. This desire extends beyond their job responsibilities and into the realm of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Millennials in particular are attracted to organizations that give back to their communities through volunteer work, charities and other means. Eighty-one percent of Millennials want companies to be “good corporate citizens,” and sixty-two percent of them would take a pay cut to work for a company that practiced CSR. Even non-Millennials are interested in CSR: fifty-six percent of workers across generations would take a pay cut in exchange for CSR.²¹

Show off your CSR efforts in your branding campaigns. Post articles on the company blog about recent charity initiatives. Sponsor a company-wide day of service and have employees document it. Turn their photos, videos and testimonies into content you can use to boost your brand.

HOLD AN OPEN HOUSE

Branding doesn’t have to be limited to the internet. Consider putting on a career event at your organization’s headquarters. Create a fun, interactive event where candidates can take tours of the office, chat with representatives from different departments, participate in games and activities and attend talks by top executives. You can attract the right crowd by advertising to local groups, professional associations and schools that are relevant to your talent needs. Promote the event in social media communities where your target audience hangs out and directly invite the most promising candidates from your pipeline.
GET YOUR CAREERS & REVIEWS PAGES RIGHT

When conducting research on a company, fifty-two percent of candidates first visit its website. This puts you in a great position: It means you control one of the primary sources candidates turn to when assessing your organization.

Make sure your website is easily navigable and user-friendly. Prominently display employer branding content across the site — including on your careers page. It’s tempting to make the careers page all about job ads, but what really hooks candidates is that branding content.

Employee review sites like Glassdoor are also important sources of information for candidates. While you can’t control what gets posted on review sites, you can take some steps to ensure your presence on these sites is as positive as possible.

**Encourage existing employees to share their experiences and show off positive employee reviews on your own careers site.** When you come across a negative review, don’t respond combatively. Instead, address the reviewer’s concerns. Explain the steps your company has taken to address the issue and how it will continue to improve in the future. Candidates know no company is perfect and they’ll appreciate that your organization takes constructive criticism to heart.
In a tight talent market, perks are more than just a way to sweeten the pot. In fact, they can make or break your job offer. According to Glassdoor, perks are the most commonly cited factor in job seekers’ decisions to apply for roles.²³

The array of perks you offer candidates can mean the difference between landing the talent you need and striking out, so make sure you’re offering the right ones:

**FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENTS**

Seventy-seven percent of candidates heavily consider an organization’s flexible work options — or lack thereof — when evaluating potential employment opportunities.²⁴

If you aren’t offering flexible work arrangements yet, now might be the time to start.

It’s fairly easy to offer flexible work to employees. These arrangements don’t typically require much money. All you need is a comprehensive policy that describes the kinds of flexibility available and how employees can use it. Consider telecommuting options, flexible scheduling, compressed workweeks and other means of flexibility in order to give your workforce the options that work best for them.
Sixty-nine percent of workers feel employee development is important in a job; among Millennials, the number is eighty-seven percent.\textsuperscript{25} And, according to the Harvard Business Review, “[W]orkers who stay longer in the same job without a title change are significantly more likely to leave for another company for the next step in their career.”\textsuperscript{26}

In short, career development can not only help you recruit new talent, but it can also help you keep the talent you already have. With strong career development perks in place, you’ll worry a lot less about recruiting.

The easiest way to create effective development programs is to talk to your employees. Make it standard practice for managers to sit with employees, discuss their professional goals and map out plans for reaching those goals together. Once you know the kinds of goals your employees hope to achieve, you can craft development programs that align with those goals. Offerings to consider may include financial assistance for certificate programs, tuition assistance for higher education degrees, personalized online training portals and in-person workshops.

Unlike most developed countries, U.S. law does not mandate paid parental leave for mothers and fathers.\textsuperscript{27} Given that only thirty-eight percent of companies in the U.S. do offer paid parental leave, this is a great opportunity for savvy employers to set themselves apart from competitors.\textsuperscript{28} Be sure to extend leave to both new mothers and new fathers. Paternity leave is even less common than maternity leave, making it a rare gem that is likely to catch a lot of candidates’ eyes.
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

If candidates see your company as one with a caring, positive culture in which people can live their best lives, they’ll be more interested in applying. This is why you need a solid employee wellness program.

Wellness programs also have benefits for your company beyond recruiting: More than sixty percent of employers say they reduce healthcare costs, too.\textsuperscript{29} Consider offering free or subsidized healthy foods and free or subsidized gym memberships. Sponsor an employee intramural sports league and/or bring in local trainers to lead fitness activities during the day. The key is to offer employees convenient ways to make healthier choices.

Don’t neglect financial wellness. It’s becoming increasingly popular, with eighty-four percent of large and mid-sized companies now offering it as part of their wellness programs.\textsuperscript{30} Money problems are a leading cause of stress among American workers and stress, as we know, hurts employee health and productivity at work. By offering financial wellness benefits, you can help employees better manage their stress and feel more satisfied at work and in life.

DROP THE USELESS PERKS

In the early 2010s, the hottest perks on the market were the nontraditional perks popularized by hip tech companies. On-site dry-cleaning, baristas and daycare were all the rage. Today, however, these kinds of perks no longer seem so glamorous to candidates. As Gallup writes, “[T]he most meaningful perks aren’t rock climbing walls and unlimited beverages. The benefits and perks that employees truly care about are those that offer them greater flexibility, autonomy and the ability to lead a better life.”\textsuperscript{31} To attract candidates in this market, prioritize the practical perks outlined above and shy away from the flashy but superfluous perks that once dominated the discussion.
One of the easiest ways to attract more talent is one of the most obvious: offer competitive salaries. With all the talk of hot perks and the importance of culture, it can be easy to lose sight of the money. However, pay still matters to employees — a lot.

Forty-six percent of candidates consider high salaries a top concern when looking for jobs.32

In this talent market, stressing a great benefits package won’t distract candidates from a salary that isn’t up to par.

Bonuses are also quite popular, but they work best when tailored toward your employees’ wants. According to Software Advice, two-thirds of employees prefer bonuses tied to individual rather than team or company performance and eighty-four percent of employees prefer bonus schemes that allow them to earn partial bonuses even if they don’t meet their full goals.33

Student loan assistance programs are also gaining traction. According to the American Student Association (ASA), eighty-six percent of employees say they would stay with a company for at least five years if that company helped them repay their student loans. If repayment assistance isn’t plausible for your organization, consider including student loan counseling as part of your financial wellness offering. The ASA survey found that seventy-nine percent of candidates would appreciate such a benefit.34
The HR pros and hiring managers involved in the recruiting process have other duties beyond hiring. These duties are urgent and valuable in their own right, which means the recruiting process is not always a top priority. However, in a fast-paced talent market — where the best candidates are gone in a matter of days — employers cannot afford any delays.

Partnering with a third-party recruiter can help. HR pros and hiring managers can hand the time-intensive recruiting tasks over to the third-party recruiter, whose sole job is to fill the role.

A third-party recruiter can move much faster than an in-house team to source and engage candidates, making it less likely that competitors will reach those candidates first.35

By shaving days off the hiring process, a third-party expert puts your company in a better position to hire high-quality candidates.

Third-party recruiters can also help an employer make more competitive offers that better attract candidates.

The best talent is likely to be courted by multiple companies, but third-party recruiters have the advantage. They know the talent market better than anyone else, so they know exactly what candidates are looking for in new jobs and what other companies are offering. A third-party recruiter can use this knowledge to help you tailor your offers to appeal more strongly to top-tier candidates.

Finally, partnering with a third-party recruiter puts your company directly in touch with top talent and opens up a whole new source of hires.

Third-party recruiters cultivate and maintain vetted pipelines of the highest-quality candidates — pipelines that no one but the recruiter can access.
Given that fifty-nine percent of job seekers use social media to research potential employers, companies cannot afford to ignore this tremendous opportunity for candidate engagement. Social media presents a powerful channel for employer branding content. Sharing videos, pictures and blog posts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other sites greatly increases the reach of your content. Your fans and followers can even re-share your content with their own networks, allowing your brand to spread even further.

As mentioned earlier, candidates trust your employees more than they trust you. You can use this fact to your advantage on social media. Ask your employees to share branding content and job openings with their own social media networks. Candidates will take messages shared by your employees more seriously and feel more motivated to apply for the jobs they share. Furthermore, getting your employees involved can lead to more employee referrals, which have long proven to be the best source of high-quality hires.

For the best results on social media, you need to make sure you’re using the right platforms. Not every network attracts the same kinds of people and different kinds of content perform better on different platforms.

Determine where your candidates spend the most time on social media and then experiment with different forms of content to find the messaging style that resonates best.

**SNAPCHAT** primarily attracts a younger crowd making it a poor source of seasoned professionals, but a great avenue for promoting your employer brand to younger workers in search of entry- and mid-level roles. Using Snapchat to share pictures and videos of exciting company activities can help you reach this audience.

**LINKEDIN** skews towards the older population. You’ll have an easier time reaching more established professionals on LinkedIn and you can take advantage of LinkedIn’s built-in publishing tools to create and share in-depth thought-leadership content that will appeal to those professionals.
A NEW TALENT MARKET REQUIRES NEW RECRUITING SOLUTIONS

Five things organizations must do to stay competitive:

**BOOST YOUR EMPLOYER BRANDING:**
Seventy-five percent of candidates consider your employer brand before deciding to apply. Give them a reason to submit an application.

**OFFER THE RIGHT PERKS:**
Trendy perks are out. Practical perks like career development, employee wellness and parental leave are in.

**PAY YOUR PEOPLE WELL:**
Employees want positive cultures where they can thrive — but they also want to be well compensated for their work. Without a competitive salary, your offers will be dead in the water.

**PARTNER WITH A THIRD-PARTY RECRUITING EXPERT:**
Third-party recruiters know where to find talented candidates, they can move faster to engage those candidates and they know exactly what it will take to get those candidates to say yes to your role.

**GET ON SOCIAL MEDIA:**
The majority of candidates look to social media for information on potential jobs and employers. Take advantage of the broad reach of these networks by using them to share branding content, promote job ads and solicit employee referrals.
Of the five tactics, the one with the best ROI might just be partnering with a third-party recruiter. These professionals can not only help you fill a particular role, but they can also become lifelong business partners who help you continuously tweak your recruiting strategy and adapt to the ever-evolving talent landscape.

Moreover, third-party recruiters can offer a quick solution to talent shortages in the moment. While revamped perks packages, strengthened employer branding strategies and the other tactics discussed above are key, they are also longer-term approaches to solving hiring problems. Organizations can leverage third-party recruiters to access the talent they need now while planning ahead for the future. This combination of long- and short-term interventions ultimately leads to a more robust, comprehensive recruiting strategy.

Where can you find the perfect third-party recruiting partner for your organization? Check out BountyJobs. We understand the right third-party recruiter can make all the difference in today’s market. That’s why we’ve built a platform that helps you find the perfect match in minutes.

Visit bountyjobs.com
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GET IN TOUCH

Sometimes sourcing talent for business-critical positions requires a little help. Our web-based platform features a marketplace of over 10,000 highly-qualified agencies and a performance-based matching algorithm that helps hiring teams of all sizes find and engage the recruiters for each of their roles. All this inside our simple yet effective platform designed to keep you in control of the entire recruitment process.

Help makes hiring happier.

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