



Build a Better Candidate Experience:

The Step-by-Step Guide for Enhancing Your Employer Brand



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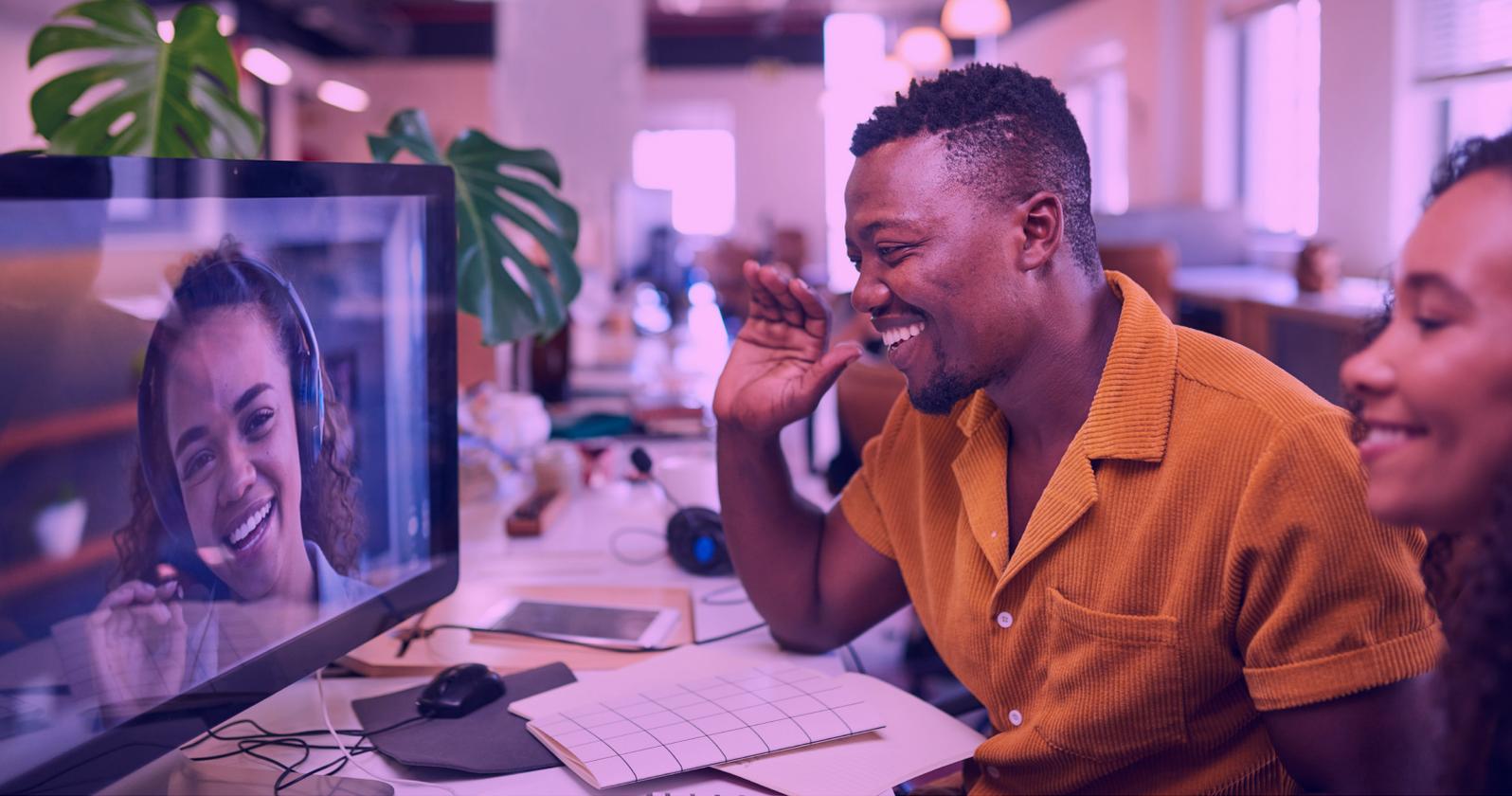
Introduction

Today's job seekers continue to have an upper hand in the labor market. Qualified candidates are short in supply, giving top talent the ability to negotiate for higher compensation, better benefits, remote work, and an attractive workplace culture.

Employers today can no longer expect to hire high-quality employees with the bare minimum of an employee value proposition (EVP). Candidates are placing heavy emphasis on the candidate and employee experience. They are seeking mission-driven organizations and companies that will invest in them and their priorities for the long-term.

Here are some of the top items that candidates are looking for when searching for a job:

- ✓ An easy, intuitive application process that is mobile optimized
- ✓ Timely responses and proactive communication from recruiters throughout the process
- ✓ A short feedback loop with recruiters and hiring managers
- ✓ Clear expectations for the hiring timeline and visibility into the hiring process
- ✓ A remote-first or hybrid work environment
- ✓ Salary transparency, competitive benefits and total compensation packages
- ✓ A supportive workplace that prioritizes DEI into the company culture



Importance of the Candidate Experience

Candidate experience matters to the success of your organization more than you think. Providing a quality candidate experience allows you to find and recruit top-quality talent to impact the success of your business. A solid candidate experience also ensures you can build a robust talent pipeline and employer brand that will strengthen your reputation relative to competitors.

But the problem in today's recruiting climate is that positive candidate experiences are declining, and candidate resentment is rising, spiking 75% in 2021 to more than 14% of candidates. A negative candidate experience not only impacts your ability to attract top talent, but can also leave a lasting effect when it comes to wanting to spend money at your organization, too.

A Great Candidate Experience Helps Build a More Robust Applicant Funnel

Companies typically spend significant time promoting their employer brand in the marketplace. But if they fail to pay the same attention to the candidate experience, they can erode their ability to attract new talent to the business and convert them during the application stage. Yet, with strong employer brand messaging, tailored content, and streamlined experiences, companies can successfully broaden their talent pipeline and better convert candidates into applicants.

Simply, delivering a positive candidate experience that empowers candidates and makes them feel confident in applying to an open position is a major step in delivering better recruiting results for your business.

A Solid Candidate Experience Helps Improve Your Quality of Hire

So much of the candidate experience comes down to one thing – engagement. Candidates want to be valued. One study even suggests **more than 9 in 10 senior HR professionals agree** that the quality of candidate experience directly impacts the quality of hire. And the best way to engage them is to ensure they have a positive impression and experience from the first look to the first day. This is particularly important based on the current labor market, with 1 in 3 hires leaving in their first 90 days after joining a company.

Remember, when you communicate consistently, provide a streamlined process, and give candidates what they want and need, you will likely motivate top talent to accept your job offer even before a competitor has a chance to extend one. Simply said, the candidate experience is essential to attracting and hiring better quality talent, and it is within your control to deliver.

Another simple step to ensure a great candidate experience is to make sure the employer brand is consistently presented through every aspect of their recruitment process. This means that employers should consider the look and feel of their website, social media, and other places where candidates may interact with their company. Beyond consistency, they should also align with the values and mission of the business.



A Positive Candidate Experience Enhances Your Employer Brand Presence

Providing a great candidate experience is not that difficult. And that's why job seekers get so frustrated if they encounter experiences that make them feel unappreciated. No one wants to spend an hour filling out the same information for an application that was already in their resume to begin with. With the talent acquisition technology available today, purpose-built for companies of all sizes, there is no excuse for employers to provide a poor candidate experience. Even companies that receive hundreds of applications per opening can leverage recruitment technology solutions that ensure a positive experience for candidates.

Remember, when job seekers have a bad experience, they are likely to tell others. According to research from Talent Board, 33% of job seekers who have a bad candidate experience will post about it online, where it may come up in search results. However, [SHRM reports](#) that when you effectively communicate with candidates throughout each step of the hiring process, they're far more likely to report a positive experience with your company.

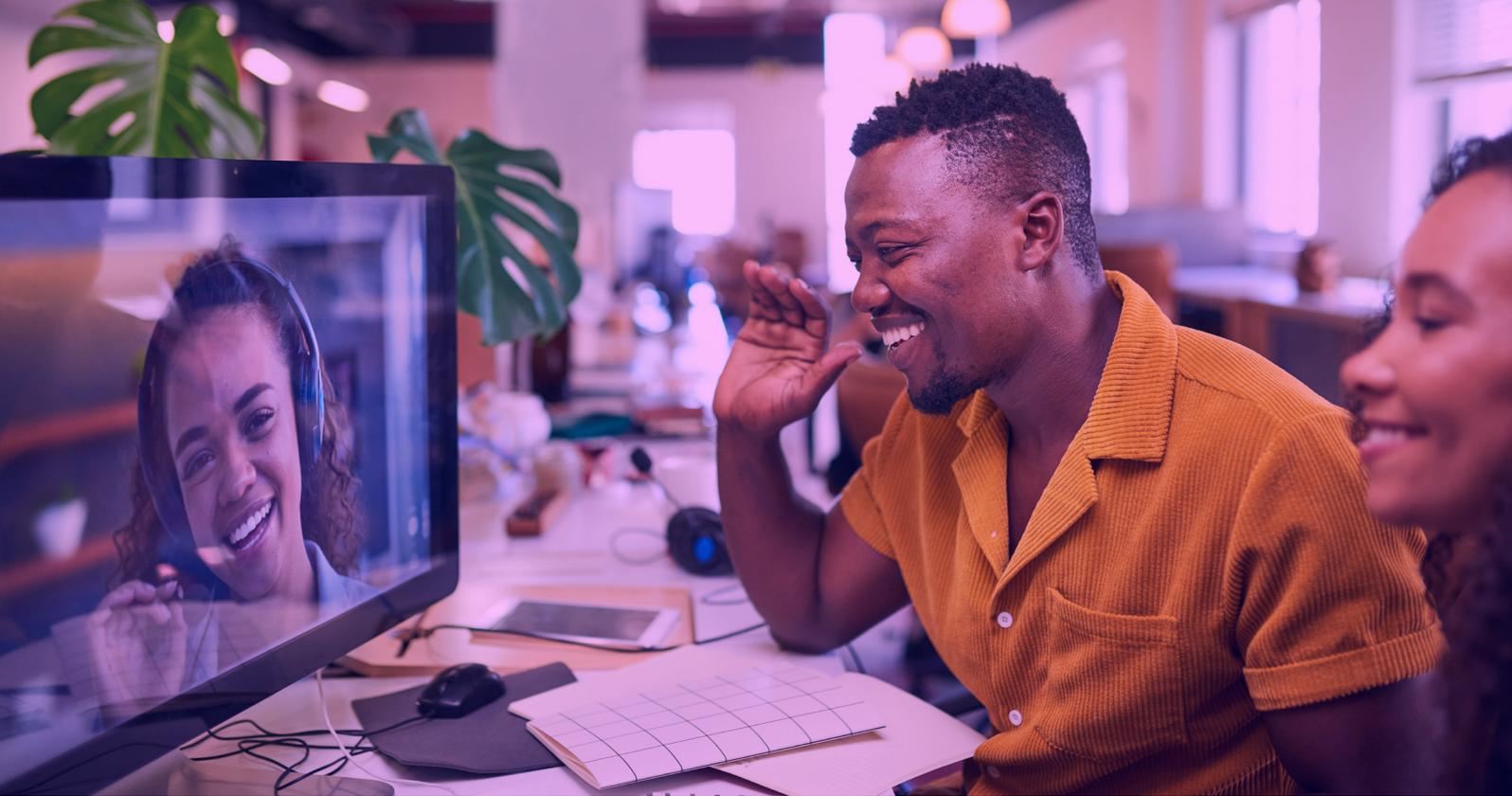
So, how can you leverage the candidate experience to positively impact your business outcomes when it comes to achieving better hires?



Steps for Auditing Your Employer Brand

Any time consumers interact with your corporate brand, they are forming a relationship with your company. **The Content Marketing Institute reported** that 89% of B2B marketers believe brand awareness is more important than sales and lead generation.

The same is true for your employer brand. When candidates have interactions with your employer brand during their talent journey, they are forming the relationship with your company as a place to work. A poor candidate experience harms your organization by damaging its brand and resulting in lower-quality hires. Here are the areas you should take a look at to bolster your candidate experience and ensure your employer brand is delivering a consistent, positive experience for job seekers.



Review Your Career Site & Audit Your Application Process

Two of the most important areas to optimize for candidates are **your career site and the application process**. These are key areas within your control to inform, engage, and convert candidates into applicants. Let's look at three ways to ensure your hiring process does not turn off candidates within the current hiring landscape.

1

Skip the Required Registration

Industry averages show that only 30% of applicants who start the application process actually complete it. That means 70% of the candidates you worked hard to attract in the first place are choosing to walk away from the application process before you even know they were interested.

Successful companies should break down the barriers of entry for job seekers. Eliminating the dreaded registration requirements as the first step when a candidate applies is an easy way to increase your candidate conversion and boost your employer brand while you're at it.

2

Enable Quick Apply Options

Allowing candidates to leverage their social profiles, like LinkedIn and Facebook, to apply for jobs on your career site is now an industry best practice. Having the option for applicants to automatically populate relevant information from their social media profiles is an effective way to convert your site visitors into applicants. Not to mention, it eliminates repetitive data entry for candidates who we know demand a fast application process.

While the application process remains top of mind for candidates, so does company culture. Enabling social apply is a great way to modernize your employer brand, while moving more candidates into your active talent pipeline faster.

3

Integrate Candidate Texting

Engaging with candidates to create a positive candidate journey is critical for recruiting teams to get right. Of the candidates who have experienced texting in the hiring process, 69% preferred texting over email or phone calls. Texting has a 98% read rate, making it a no-brainer for modern talent acquisition teams to use in connecting with candidates.

While candidate texting may not fit every open position, high-volume roles are often very successful when leveraging this additional avenue for adding applicants to the talent funnel. Examples of roles that succeed by leveraging text-to-apply and automation include retail workers, restaurant employees, and many other entry-level roles.



4 Mobile Apply Capabilities

If your application process isn't optimized for mobile, you're most certainly losing out on candidates. Although most organizations have incorporated this tactic, some career sites still do not render well on mobile devices.

Career sites accessed via mobile should include reformatted content and graphics built for easy navigation. Mobile optimization also means that you offer candidates the opportunity to take advantage of existing social profiles and cloud-based storage for completing their resume or work history information. This increases the time your candidates will spend on your site and the likelihood that they will complete an application.



Nail the Job Description

Writing an effective job description is critical to selling your brand and attracting talent to your open role. Job descriptions must be compelling, accurate, free of bias, engaging, and concise. If you're unsure about what to write in the description, consider these six tips for writing a great job posting.

Be Concise and Use Bullet Points

To get potential candidates to read through your entire job description, try bullet points. Short, concise language that uses key phrases and statements is beneficial for several reasons, making it:

- ✓ More easily digestible
- ✓ More engaging and easy to read
- ✓ Clear and full of relevant information
- ✓ Compelling and reflecting of your employer brand

Job seekers might skip your entire job description if it is too text heavy, and instead skim the title and the bullet points you use. So make sure you think about writing your job description like writing the news. Give them an attention-grabbing headline and a quick recount of the facts using bullets.

□ Ask Your Employees for Input Prior to Creating the Job Description

Nobody knows your business better than your current employees. If you're hiring in a specific team, interview and ask for input from existing team members before drafting the description. At the very least, request their insight on why they love their job or their favorite part of working for your company.

Including real-life examples of tasks a new hire will complete or office etiquette they'll encounter is extremely attractive to job applicants. Job seekers want to know what to expect prior to joining an organization.

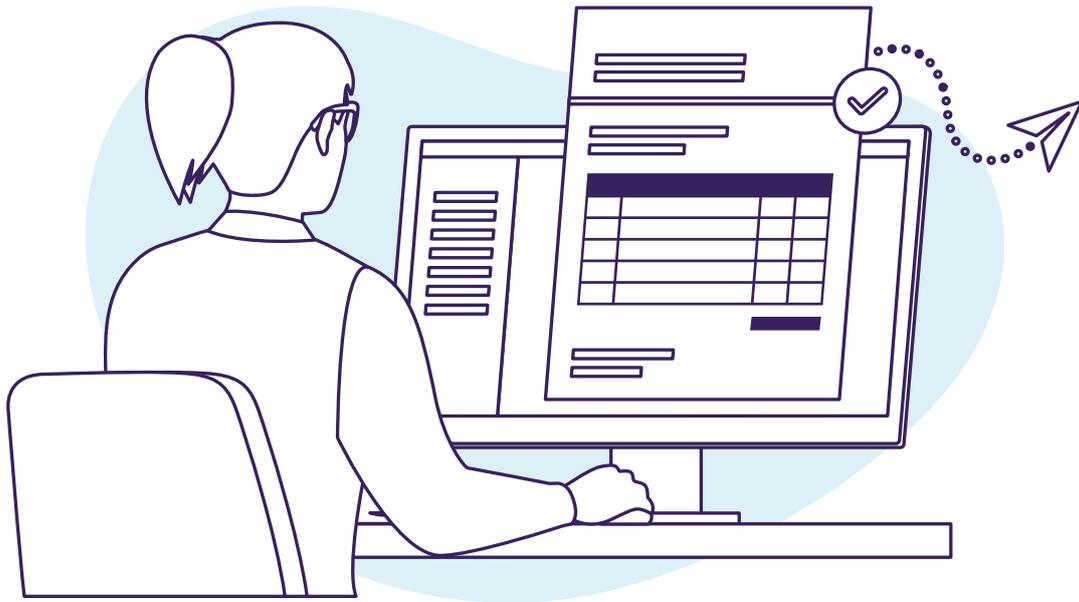
□ Be Concise and Use Bullet Points

Whether posting to job boards or social media platforms, your job description must contain correct information. From accurate spelling and grammar to details on pay and job role, your content must be trustworthy.

To avoid errors, be sure to:

- ✓ Create an outline or plan for the job description
- ✓ Draft using compelling, accurate language
- ✓ Have multiple reviewers to edit the description
- ✓ Use Job Description Grader tools

Once it is reviewed and approved internally, make sure to recheck your job description after posting to make sure it is presented accurately and includes all the details you need to find an appropriate candidate. You might be surprised at how many businesses leave something out in the final stage of posting. This will save you some awkward questions and ensure job seekers get all the information they need upfront.



Be Direct and Clear in Highlighting What the Job Requires

There's nothing worse than a vague job description. As you write your job description, think about the role you're hiring for and what that position entails. Be sure to include everything the job requires in the ad.

While a job you're hiring for may mainly deal with filing, you could find that a potential candidate is most interested in the correspondence aspect of the role. When you leave out details of a position, even those you find unimportant, it can impact the number of applicants you see.



Invest and Prioritize DEI Initiatives

In today's competitive, candidate-focused job market, a diverse and supportive work environment is more important than ever. Employ research shows 49% of candidates ask about a company's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs during the interview process, and 44% say an organization's commitment to DEI is a key factor in accepting a job offer.

There's a wealth of information available to help, but it can be difficult to cut through the clutter. That's why we've boiled down DEI guidance to the "5 Ws" of DEI:

WHO Are Your Ideal Candidates?

Unnecessary filtering at the top of the applicant funnel can keep you from finding qualified candidates. Rather than limiting your talent pool by requiring specific skills that aren't deal-breakers, focus on core competencies and indicators of past success. Then build programs to attract, engage, and hire underrepresented groups through strategic audience planning.

□ WHY Should You Focus on Prioritizing DEI Programs?

Diversity of representation is shown to positively impact a variety of areas, including innovation, employee satisfaction, and even the bottom line. In fact, diversity and inclusion is now a key metric for making the Fortune 500 list – a clear indicator that companies will remain committed to improving workplace diversity and inclusivity over the long term.

□ WHEN Is It Important to Prioritize DEI Hiring Initiatives?

This one has a simple answer: the time to prioritize DEI is NOW. It's no secret that TA teams who prioritize diversity and inclusion will find more quality candidates, and those candidates can turn into new hires. Talent teams can improve the diversity of their candidate slates by applying AI and automation throughout the hiring process, including sourcing, relationship management, workforce planning, and audience planning.

□ WHAT Can You Do to Grow Diverse Talent Pipelines?

Today's labor market is incredibly tight, and candidates expect a culture that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion, so top talent teams are working hard to expand their talent networks and source a wide variety of candidates. Some top tactics include interacting on social media, creating engagement campaigns, sponsoring learning sessions and other events, and building relationships with local organizations.

□ WHERE Can You Leverage Technology to Prioritize DEI?

The opportunities can be overwhelming when it comes to improving your DEI efforts. The good news is, adopting recruitment technology can help to save time and streamline nearly every part of the hiring process, including:

- ✓ Candidate sourcing and talent search
- ✓ Job descriptions
- ✓ Candidate skills-matching
- ✓ Screening
- ✓ Candidate experience and communications
- ✓ Scheduling interviews
- ✓ Onboarding
- ✓ Internal mobility
- ✓ Employee referrals

Take a look at your organization's recent DEI initiatives and determine which of four categories you fall into: (1) Reactive, (2) Proactive, (3) Progressive, or (4) Leading. After reflecting on recent successes and areas required for improvement, you should compare the current state of your DEI programs to your ideal state, providing a clear roadmap for what's next.



Create a Culture of Responsive Communication

When seeking to create positive candidate experiences, communication is key. No candidate likes to be kept in the dark; they want to stay informed and updated regarding where they are in the hiring process.

Keep Candidates Informed Every Step of the Way

Unfortunately, too many recruiters and employers treat the hiring process as a one-way street, requiring prompt answers and updates from candidates without offering the same thing in return.

Services like candidate texting and automated intelligent messaging make providing candidates with real-time, helpful feedback easier. Communicating details of the next steps they need to take or just acknowledging when their application has been received and reviewed leaves fewer unanswered questions and room for competition to sneak in.

□ Let Your Candidates Know What to Expect

Hand-in-hand with keeping candidates in the loop during the hiring process, it's equally important to let candidates know what to expect if they are hired. That means offering them a clear and detailed glimpse not only into their new role's responsibilities, but also into your company's unique culture.

More than 88% of surveyed job seekers said they believe that a good company culture is essential to business success. Demonstrate what makes your company culture stand out and you will be ahead of the game.

□ Maintain Relationships with Candidates

When does your candidate experience end? After you decide not to hire them, right? Wrong. Just because a candidate isn't right for the position you currently need to fill doesn't mean they won't be right for a different role in the future.

A good way to improve candidate experience is to keep in touch with all high-quality candidates, not just the ones you hire. Instead of starting over from scratch, you may already have dozens of prime candidates sitting in your recruitment pipeline.

□ Continue Into Onboarding

Communication shouldn't stop once the candidate has accepted an offer. To ensure a smooth onboarding process, ask yourself the following question:

- ✓ Is your onboarding experience seamlessly connected to your hiring experience?
- ✓ Are all of your new hire forms digital so that new hires don't have to fill out forms by hand?
- ✓ Do you have an onboarding portal that prioritizes all of a new hire's tasks?
- ✓ Does your onboarding portal work on mobile?
- ✓ Do you offer preboarding? In other words, is your onboarding portal available to candidates before they start, so they can get a head start on the process?



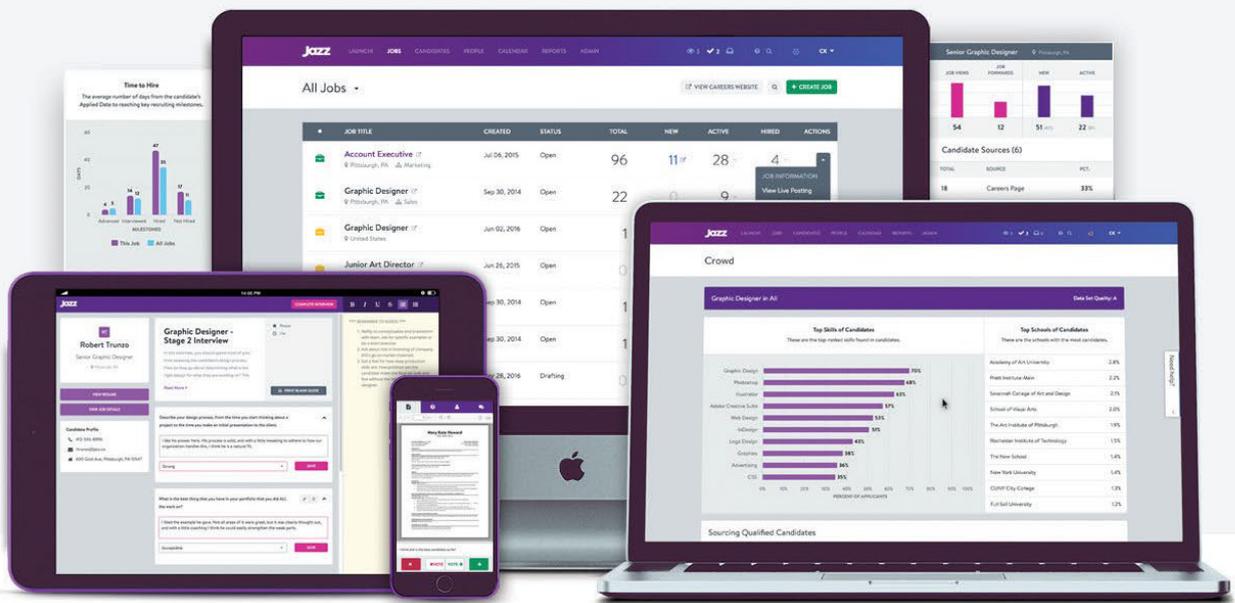
Key Takeaways

Creating a positive candidate experience starts with a positive employer brand. By reviewing these key elements and understanding where your organization currently stands, you can better understand how job seekers are experiencing your employer brand. Here are some final takeaways:

- ✓ **Focus on the little things.** It's the small interactions and personal touches that make candidates feel valued, respected and appreciated. And those are the things they'll remember long after the recruitment process is over.
- ✓ **Keep your promises.** If you say you're going to do something, make sure you do it – whether it's sending a follow-up note after an interview or providing feedback in a timely manner.
- ✓ **Be human.** Job seekers are people too, so treat them as such. Show empathy and understanding, and be genuine in your interactions.

With this resource as your guide, you're well on your way to building a better relationship with candidates and ensuring your employer brand stands out to be more competitive in the labor market.

For more insight into maximizing your employer brand to attract top talent, [visit JazzHR.com](https://www.jazzhr.com).



About JazzHR

JazzHR, an [Employ Inc.](#) brand, is powerful, user-friendly and affordable recruiting software built to help growing companies exceed their recruiting goals. It replaces manual, time-consuming hiring tasks with intuitive tools and automation, empowering hiring managers to recruit and hire the right talent faster.

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