



PT WORK Force®

Winning the War for Talent

#5 in a six-part webinar series

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Although the dynamics of the labor market are starting to loosen up a little bit, it remains very much a candidate driven market. This means you need to adapt different strategies and techniques than what you have been doing in the past. If people are your greatest asset, you need not only the HR department to focus on talent acquisition, hiring and retention, but the hierarchy. Involve the most senior members of every organization. Allocate resources, including money, people's time and energy, and a commitment to developing and continuously improving a strategy that allows you to scale as the business grows.

Everything you do needs to be informed by data—it can't be a matter of “well, we've always done it this way,” or “gut feelings.” You need data that is reliable, consistent and independent of emotion and bias in order to make decisions. Additionally, you need to form partnerships and alliances. You cannot win the war for talent by yourself. There is expertise outside of your own business that will help you achieve better outcomes and have a terrific ROI.

Tactical elements of attracting, hiring and retaining workers.

Attracting

Attraction is not just an HR function, but a sales and marketing function within your organization. Change the way you project the story of your business and better understand the job candidate sitting across from you so you can customize and tailor the message to be unique to that individual. There's competition and so much opportunity for remote and other positions out there. Sell the idea of why somebody wants to work for you using these four key sales pitch elements:

1. Talk about why the market in which you operate is exciting and revolutionary, why it's changing and why they want to build a career in that space.
2. Highlight the products and services you provide within the market. Why will working for you allow the candidate to achieve success independently, individually and as part of a broader collective within your company?
3. People want to be associated with winners. Sell your team and all they've accomplished. Share how joining your organization and team will make them stronger
4. What is it that your company does that goes beyond just making money? How do you serve society? How do you improve people's lives? Why is it that somebody can feel good about working for your company?

Use these four elements to develop a concise message you can deliver through your marketing channels or sales techniques, and it will go a long way in making you a more attractive employer to potential candidates. Candidates are motivated by different things. Younger people really care about promotion and advancement opportunities and who they're joining, whereas mid- to late career people talk about location, remote work capabilities and job security. Put yourself into the mindset of the candidate: if the company that you're interviewing with is addressing the things you really care about, the likelihood you'll want to join that organization increases substantially.

Hiring

1. Understand the difference between active and passive candidates. Active folks are unemployed and proactively looking for jobs. You need to also engage with passive candidates—those currently employed, but not happy. They might be casually browsing on LinkedIn, Glassdoor and Indeed, but never actually take the step to reach for organizations or apply for positions. These people often need someone to compel them to apply.
2. Partnerships. Identify an internal hire or an external recruiter partner who will engage passive candidates on your behalf. If they apply, be efficient with the interview process. This insight comes from surveys I've conducted over the past several years with thousands of candidates: 83% said the ideal is no more than two interviews.
3. Salary is motivating, but only a single component of what you can offer. Things like mental health benefits, PTO, flexible working arrangements, etc. are really resonating, particularly with the younger generation. Ask the candidate what besides salary matters to them. You also can use this approach with current employees, asking “How can we help you get to where you want to be?” to improve retention metrics.

Retention

You want to understand how people perceive your business and what, if necessary, you can do to improve that perception. The Gallup Q12 Engagement survey costs about \$20 per person to administer and offers great perspective on where people stand in terms of their assessment of you as a company and if they're likely to leave the business in the near term. Even though we're likely heading into an economic slowdown, with a very high probability of a recession, hiring challenges will continue. “Labor hoarding” is increasing as companies are retaining employees to avoid having to hire, onboard and train new talent.

Compensation considerations

Compensation differs across industries. For an HR manager with a certain set of specific characteristics, the same kind of candidate, same education level, same years of experience, simply going into a different industry like finance and insurance might receive an offer up to 20% or more relative to another sector. We see this this across the board with salespeople, engineering, talent, marketing, blue collar positions are all vying for supremacy. You've got to be competitive not only within your sector, but also in the broader market as a whole.

Even though both the number of people looking for work and the number of job openings are decreasing, it's still very much a candidate driven market and is expected to remain that way for the foreseeable future. Focus on the folks that are going to make your business great, both through the downturn and in the growth period afterwards

QUESTIONS

How do you attract job seekers who don't use social media?

Typical white-collar employees—those in sales, engineering, marketing, any of the support functions—are active on LinkedIn, Glassdoor. It's not the same with blue collar workers. The way that they communicate is different, both in terms of notifying them of job openings and then communicating with them while they're on the job. Text messaging is preferred and Craigslist is a great place to post blue-collar positions.

What is the best assessment tool for reviewing candidates regarding sales roles?

Look for the network that they're going to be able to bring to the table. More experienced and more seasoned people cost more money, but their ability to impact the business right away through existing relationships and their Rolodex is going to be much more meaningful to your top and bottom lines.

Do you have data on what employers are doing when it comes to the interview process?

If the interviewer is asking the right questions, you'll be able to get the type of responses and the insight into the candidate faster than if you're working without a clear-cut plan. Outline the specific expectations and goals for that interview beyond just saying “get to know this person and get a feel for whether or not they're going to be the right fit in the organization.”

How important is company's social media and online footprint? What's are best practices?

With social media, younger generations may make a judgment call about a company before they ever had a chance to engage with anyone from the organization. Companies that introduce a little bit of their character, personality or culture into some of their social posts really stand out. Those that address things that young people particularly care about the most, like DEI initiatives, environmental sustainability, mental health and representation of people that look, talk and act like them really make for a standout experience.

Is there data on how many candidates or employees are lost due to work-from-home no longer being an option offered by companies?

Pre-pandemic, if you looked at places like Monster, Indeed or LinkedIn, the number of advertised positions offering remote work capability was less than 5%. Today, that number is over 30%. There is greater propensity for companies that offer those kinds of positions. Many positions need to be in person full time. Specific industries that need people in person to do jobs tend to represent about 55–60% of the total labor force. Treat each position and everyone on a customized basis; you can't really apply broad based policies to everyone in the organization without getting some sort of pushback and making some of your workforce unhappy. Don't try to template, but really look at the needs and the unique situation within each function of your company, and then put together a policy that makes sense for those positions.