# 2022

# North American Candidate Experience Benchmark Research Report

Talent Board

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE AWARDS℠

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# FOREWORD

Just when we thought we were in a better place coming out of the pandemic, we instead watched as inflation skyrocketed, political and social divisions continued, a war started in Ukraine and, along with recession fears, mass layoffs in tech began (and as of this writing, are most likely not done), many of which are recruiting professionals. Plus, employees continue to quit in record numbers, hiring is still strong across industries, candidates and employers alike are ghosting, and we still have more jobs than candidates.

Our latest Recruiting Focus 2023 research also revealed something we haven't seen during the past few years of doing this end-of-year addendum: The fact that organizations big and small, across industries and around the world, have prioritized onboarding as their number 1 recruiting focus for next year. Candidate experience, diversity and inclusion, and employee referrals follow in the next three spots.

Why onboarding? Unfortunately, many employers have lost new hires — hourly and salaried — before they even started. Even Candidate Experience (CandE) Award Winners, those companies with above-average key ratings in our benchmark research, struggled with pre-boarding to onboarding this past year.

How are these companies going to execute all these priorities effectively and efficiently? Technology, along with continually improving recruiting processes and leveraging current staff, continues to help companies with hiring volume and scale. Recruiting technologies help automate more of the candidate journey so recruiters and hiring managers can save on administrative time and add high-value human interaction activities.

Burnout continues to hit talent acquisition (TA) teams hard, and this year's layoffs haven't helped. Business leadership continues to have an unrealistic view of what recruiting and hiring professionals do. For those who remain in TA, the fear of what's next will haunt them for the unforeseeable future. And once hiring picks up again in technology across industries, those recruiting teams will have to again ramp up quickly and hire more help. They will continue to be overworked and burned out.

Thankfully, there are companies focused on their work environments — creating healthy, positive, flexible, inclusive ones. These are the companies that will improve their recruiting, hiring and retention efforts — and, of course, their external and internal candidate experiences.

But as we've seen measuring candidate experience for over 11 years now, sustaining a consistent recruiting and hiring practice and a quality candidate experience is challenging no matter what the world looks like. It's a very small universe of companies that have above-average ratings year after year.

**Thankfully, there are companies focused on their work environments — creating healthy, positive, flexible, inclusive ones. These are the companies that will improve their recruiting, hiring and retention efforts — and, of course, their external and internal candidate experiences.**

# FOREWORD

However, hundreds of employers big and small, across industries and around the world, participate in our annual benchmark research (including North America, EMEA, APAC and Latin America). They support our mission of elevating and promoting a quality candidate experience with industry benchmarks that highlight accountability, fairness and business impact.

In turn, we help employers collect their own candidate experience feedback and sentiment and then compare them against all the other employers in our annual benchmark research program. We then uncover and publish the insights that all employers need in order to raise the bar on their own candidate experience.

To date, we've now worked with more than 1,350 employers, and over 1.4 million of their candidates have participated in our confidential and anonymous benchmark research since 2011. We then publish the names and best practices of employers with the highest positive candidate ratings so companies everywhere can benefit.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the participating HR and talent acquisition leaders and their teams, the Talent Board's dedicated staff, supportive volunteers, industry evangelists and an extraordinary group of supportive sponsors who share our vision and mission. All of whom we had the pleasure of being together with this year at our annual CandE Awards Conference, our first in-person conference since 2019.

We hope our latest annual candidate experience benchmark research reports provide your organization with the insights and proven practices necessary to develop a high-quality candidate experience.

— Talent Board members: Debbie McGrath (chair), Gerry Crispin (co-founder), Ed Newman (co-founder) and Kevin Grossman (president)

## Regular Candidate Surveys

**Did the interviewer make good use of your time?**

| | Yes | Somewhat | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 33% | 25% | 42% |
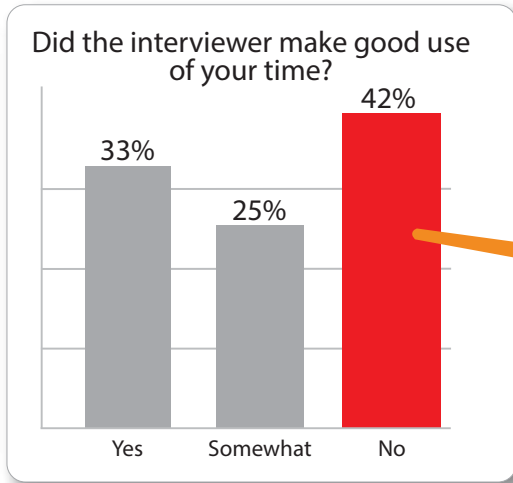
**Interview Problems**

## SURVALE

### Hiring Manager Satisfaction Scores from Candidates

| | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greg Chartoff | 2.1 | | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| Talle Singleton | 1 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 2.5 | 2.3 |
| Malik Tansil | 2.1 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 2.4 |
| Jason Moreau | 3.9 | 4 | | | 4.0 |
| Ian Alexander | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.4 |
| Shash Joshi | 4.6 | 4.2 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.6 |

**Interview Solutions**

# Survale Solves Hiring Problems

Survale Enterprise* goes deeper than standard surveys and pinpoints the precise source of positive and negative feedback. Then it prioritizes which issues have the most impact on your success. Survale gives you continuous real-time feedback from candidates, recruiters and hiring managers at each recruiting stage to optimize the people, processes and technology in your hiring efforts.

**WINNER** · TOP HR PRODUCT · Human Resource Executive · **WINNER**

## To request an eye-opening demo, visit Survale.com

*A limited version of Survale is used to power the Talent Board's annual candidate experience research project.*

**SURVALE** Talent Feedback Platform

# EXECUTIVE BRIEF

## The 2022 North American Talent Board Candidate Experience (CandE) Benchmark Research Report

Businesses weathered a series of intense storms in 2022, from soaring inflation and a potential recession to plummeting unemployment and record attrition. Talent shortages are the highest they've been in 16 years, with **75% of companies** reporting difficulty hiring. Job vacancy rates are on the rise, with **10.7 million openings in the U.S. alone**, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (as of the end of September). And the already tense hiring situation is further complicated by the **global economic slowdown**.

In the face of this continued uncertainty and volatility, companies are challenged to deliver a positive candidate experience — and candidates are noticing. Globally, the rate of candidates reporting a great experience in the annual Talent Board benchmark research has trended down, while multiple regions (EMEA, APAC and Latin America) are reporting higher rates of candidate resentment.

Employers need to monitor these trends. When you provide a great experience, candidates indicate a willingness to maintain a relationship with the business or brand — whether that means reapplying in the future, recommending others, making purchases (for consumer brands) or, for internal candidates, choosing to stay with your business.

**When you provide a great experience, candidates indicate a willingness to maintain a relationship with the business or brand, while poor candidate experience can lead candidates to break ties with your brand.**

Poor candidate experience, on the other hand, can lead candidates to break ties with your brand, which can affect your reputation, retention and recruitment.

Every year, Talent Board surveys hundreds of thousands of job candidates across four primary regions: North America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), Asia-Pacific (APAC) and Latin America (LATAM). Over the 11 years we've conducted our research, we've surveyed more than 1.4 million candidates across more than 1,350 companies, creating a comprehensive dataset for tracking trends in candidate sentiment.

Here's what we learned this year.

# Overall Trends in Candidate Experience

Talent Board uses 4- and 5-point rating scales to determine general candidate sentiment that are easily converted to net promoter score (NPS) ratings. This year, employers in all four regions where we surveyed candidates posted positive net promoter score ratings - NPS ratings. Although the overall ratings aren't extremely high, we consider anything positive to be good, given that these numbers are largely from candidates who have been rejected by employers (and many who didn't advance past the application stage). Scores of 50 and above are typically confined to candidates who get hired.

It's important to note that there's a positive skew to responses from APAC and Latin America. Candidates from cultures in those regions are historically less likely to leave negative feedback even when they didn't have the best experience.

APAC also skews positive because fewer respondents were rejected. Across other regions, about 90% of survey respondents were rejected, but only about 70% of APAC respondents were.

Every year, we ask companies to self-assess how willing they think candidates are to apply again, refer others or change their relationship with the brand.

For the first time that we can recall in our data, employers in North America rated themselves lower than candidates did (this was also true in APAC and partially in Latin America — EMEA employers still rated themselves higher). That tells us that employers are going through a reset in a challenging market. They've reassessed the experiences they're delivering — and how candidates are responding.

In addition to candidate sentiment, we also measure candidate experiences across six stages of the hiring process: research, application, screening/interview, rejection, offer and new-hire onboarding. Employers rated themselves lower across the candidate journey, but there is generally a high level of alignment between how employers perceive the candidate journey and how candidates do.

On the journey rating, employers only rated themselves higher than candidates at the rejection stage — which makes sense, as that is always the lowest-scoring stage for candidates. The average of all companies in North America is only 2.5 on the five-point Likert scale, and even the top winners rarely break 3.

## Net Promoter Score CandE Rating Conversion

**For example, when converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). When we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:**

*4 — Extremely Likely*
3 — Likely
2 — Unlikely
*1— Definitely Not*

If a company had 35% of its candidates respond that they were extremely likely to apply again, and 15% said they would definitely not, that company would have an NPS score of 20.

**We simplify it even further for our CandE Benchmark Research and group results as follows:**

- **AMAZING** (scores above 50) are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.

- **OKAY** (scores between 0-50) are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be too enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.

- **NOT SO GOOD** (negative scores) are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede

**Employers are going through a reset in a challenging market. They've reassessed the experiences they're delivering — and how candidates are responding.**

*Table 1. Overall Benchmark Key Ratings by NPS*

| North America | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 30 | 22 | 23 |
| Apply Again | 19 | 19 | 25 |
| Refer Others | 18 | 17 | 22 |
| Relationship | 16 | 14 | 16 |
| Hired | 74 | 73 | 76 |
| Resentment | 12% | 14% | 8% |

| EMEA | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 25 | 29 | 28 |
| Apply Again | 20 | 19 | 27 |
| Refer Others | 18 | 19 | 26 |
| Relationship | 14 | 16 | 16 |
| Hired | 74 | 84 | 71 |
| Resentment | 11% | 10% | 8% |

| APAC | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 51 | 53 | 35 |
| Apply Again | 37 | 39 | 30 |
| Refer Others | 35 | 37 | 28 |
| Relationship | 32 | 34 | 23 |
| Hired | 83 | 84 | 78 |
| Resentment | 7% | 6% | 6% |

| Latin America | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 31 | 53 | 39 |
| Apply Again | 23 | 40 | 35 |
| Refer Others | 25 | 43 | 36 |
| Relationship | 20 | 33 | 28 |
| Hired | 87 | 89 | 78 |
| Resentment | 8% | 4% | 5% |

*Figure 1. Employer and Candidate Key CandE NPS Rating: North America*

Net Promoter Score Rating



Legend: ■ All organizations  ■ All candidates

Apply Again: All organizations 14, All candidates 19
Refer Others: All organizations 16, All candidates 18
Relationship: All organizations 14, All candidates 16
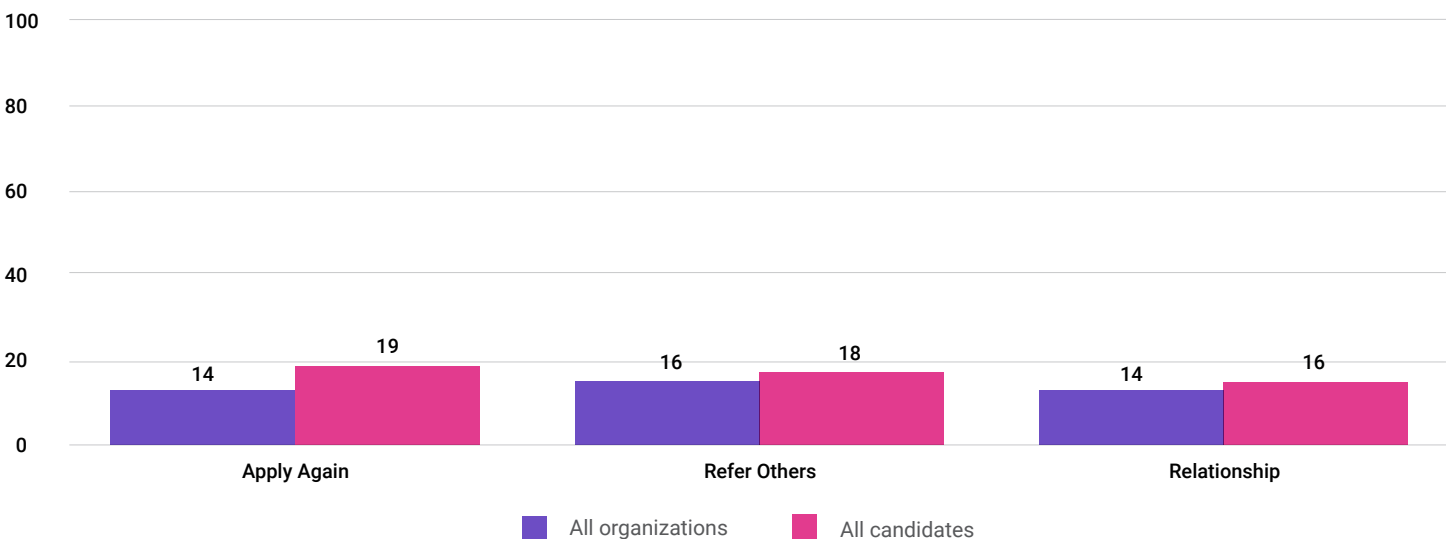
# Top CandE Award Winners vs. Everyone Else

The good news is that we know what constitutes a good candidate experience. Year after year, these are the key competitive differentiators we find in the data:

- Providing consistent and timely communication from pre-application to onboarding.
- Setting timely expectations about the recruiting process.
- Asking for timely feedback and providing timely feedback more often.
- Being transparent and accountable about your recruiting and hiring.
- Ensuring a higher level of perceived candidate fairness (the top four roll up into this one).

In the process of conducting our annual research, we rank the companies that provide the best experiences. And each year, the top 10 Candidate Experience (CandE) Award Winners in North America and the highest-rated companies in the other regions we track exemplify best practices for improving candidate experiences in the hiring process.

Note: When segmented by size, data points refer to North American CandE Award Winners, our largest data set. The sizes break down as follows:

- Small: 501 to 2,500 employees
- Medium: 2,501 to 10,000
- Large: 10,001 or more

Broken down by industry, the top 10 CandE Award Winners across company sizes are most concentrated in the healthcare, technology and energy sectors.

In general, the top 10 CandE Award winners have higher candidate experience ratings than all other surveyed companies combined. Here's what sets this elite group apart.

## Top 10 Large Employers — North America

| | |
|---|---|
| NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital | GuideWell |
| Conagra Brands | Inspire Brands |
| Walgreens | Atlantic Health System |
| Stantec | Sorenson |
| Sharp HealthCare | KeyBank National Association |

## Top 10 Medium Employers — North America

| | |
|---|---|
| Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian | SASR Workforce Solutions |
| Virtusa | Shaw Industries |
| St. Jude Children's Research Hospital | Aspen Dental |
| UST | Messer |
| Deluxe | E. & J. Gallo Winery |

## Top 10 Small Employers — North America

| | |
|---|---|
| D2L | Atmos Energy |
| Apeel Sciences | Colorado Springs Utilities |
| Dr. Reddy's Laboratories | Progress Residential |
| Galloway & Company | FAIRWINDS Credit Union |
| DispatchHealth | Brown-Forman |

## Top Winners Leverage Company Resources

The top 10 CandE Award Winners don't leave candidate experience to chance. They use the resources at their disposal to foster better candidate experiences in their processes and infrastructure.

The top 10 winners by size, for example, are more likely to align recruiter performance with candidate experience across company sizes in North America than all other companies surveyed, with large employers demonstrating the biggest difference — 26% more likely than all companies combined. This is also true for all CandE Award Winners in EMEA, APAC and Latin America. Using candidate experience as a signifier of performance demonstrates how important it is and incentivizes recruiters to maintain a good experience.

Similarly, top companies tend to leverage recruiting technology to improve the candidate experience. The top 10 CandE Winners by size are more likely to utilize artificial intelligence (AI) recruiting technologies across company sizes in North America, with small employers leading the pack — 68% more often than all companies combined.

This trend is not true for EMEA, APAC and Latin America in our data this year. It's important to note that the total number of participating companies in those regions is much smaller than in North America.

## Top Winners Treat Internal Candidates Differently

The stakes for providing a good candidate experience are even higher when job candidates are also employees. A tailored hiring process for internal candidates goes a long way toward improving their hiring experience.

The top 10 CandE Award Winners by size have recruiters and/or hiring managers give at least some feedback to finalists who are also internal candidates more often than all other companies combined. Small employers show the biggest difference — 63% more likely to give feedback than all other companies combined. This is true with this year's data in the EMEA and APAC regions, but not in Latin America. Overall, 50% of all companies combined are more likely to give at least some internal feedback.

Referrals are a key differentiator in hiring. When the candidates are current employees, it makes an even bigger difference. In North America, the top 10 CandE Award Winners by size have a much higher referral rate from current employees than all other companies combined. The top 10 small employers lead the way, seeing a 44% higher willingness of current employees to refer others than all other companies combined.

### Top Employers — Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

Borusan Mannesmann Pipe

Mphasis

Virtusa

Talend

Broadridge

Intel

Wayfair LLC

JLL

Foot Locker

Avanade

Brown-Forman

### Top Employers — Asia Pacific (APAC)

Virtusa

TTEC

Hudson RPO (Komatsu Solution)

Broadridge

Intel

JLL

Western Union

Foot Locker

Flex

Northern Trust

Thermo Fisher Scientific

### Top Employers — Latin America

Intel

Western Union

Avanade

**A tailored hiring process for internal candidates goes a long way toward improving their hiring experience.**

## Top Winners Respect Candidates' Time

Another key differentiator of a positive candidate experience is timely communication and disposition. Keeping candidates in the loop helps them see where they stand and demonstrates respect for their time.

That's something that top winners are keen to do. The top 10 CandE Award Winners by size all have fewer candidates still waiting on next steps one to two-plus months after applying. Top 10 small employers see the biggest difference, with 58% fewer candidates waiting on direction than all other companies combined. This is also true across all regions. This statistic aligns with CandE Award Winners rejecting in a more timely manner overall.

However, only the top 10 medium and large CandE Award Winners are more likely to review applications within three to five days to reject or move forward. Here, large employers have the biggest difference — 50% more likely than all companies combined. Award winners in other regions have similar requirements.

And it pays off. In North America, the top 10 CandE Award Winners by size all have fewer candidates withdraw due to their time being disrespected during interviews and appointments when compared with all other companies combined. Top 10 large employers have the biggest difference — 67% fewer candidates withdraw compared with all other companies combined.

**Keeping candidates in the loop helps them see where they stand and demonstrates respect for their time.**

## Top Winners Implement Fair Interview Processes

Our benchmark research has proven time and again that perceptions of fairness are key to a positive candidate experience. That's especially important in the screening and interview process, when bias is most likely to creep in. That's why the top 10 CandE Award Winners have doubled down on fair assessment and interview processes.

The top 10 CandE Award Winners by size are all conducting structured interviews (asking the same questions in the same order) more often. Small employers stand out most here — 37% more often than all companies combined. This trend is also true for all other regions.

**Perceptions of fairness are key to a positive candidate experience — and that's especially important in the screening and interview process when bias is most likely to creep in.**

When given tests and/or assessments, candidates for the top 10 CandE Award Winners by size feel the overall assessment process (e.g., written tests, simulated job tasks, etc.) was more fair compared with all other companies combined. Top 10 medium-size employers see the biggest difference — a 68% higher fairness rating than all other companies combined. This trend is also true in the other regions.

The top 10 CandE Award Winners for small and medium companies have candidates who feel the overall interview process was more fair compared with all other companies combined. Top 10 small employers have the biggest difference — 31% higher fairness rating than all other companies combined. Interestingly, this isn't true for the top 10 large CandE Award Winners, but all North American CandE Award Winners collectively have a higher interview fairness rating. Interview fairness is also higher for all CandE Winners in other regions than the full group of participating companies.

Some of the winners have implemented simple measures that produce a significant effect on perceptions of fairness. Candidates from all North American CandE Award Winners, for instance, are 22% more likely than all other companies combined to be informed of the position's salary without asking. This trend is also true across all regions. Pay transparency will continue to be a key differentiating factor in hiring.

## Top Winners Know That Feedback Matters

Providing feedback to finalists can help increase perceptions of fairness and soften the blow of rejection. That's why top winners offer more feedback to candidates at the rejection

## Providing feedback to finalists can help increase perceptions of fairness and soften the blow of rejection.

stage following the interview. The top 10 CandE Award Winners by size are all giving more general and/or specific feedback to candidates. Top 10 small employers have the biggest difference — 41% give feedback more often than all other companies combined. This trend is also true across all regions.

Top winners don't just offer feedback; they also ask for it. Interestingly, though, only the top 10 small and large CandE Award Winners are asking finalists for feedback more often than all other companies combined. However, it's good to see companies asking for any amount of candidate feedback. All other regional winners are asking finalists for feedback to some degree.

## Top Winners Build Lasting Relationships

Top CandE Award Winners don't cut ties with rejected candidates. The top 10 CandE Award Winners in small and medium companies encouraged rejected candidates to apply for another job more often than all other companies combined. Top 10 small employers have the biggest difference — 46% more often encourage other applications compared with all other companies combined. Interestingly, this trend holds for all CandE Award Winners and for other regions, but not for the top 10 large CandE Award Winners.

Staying connected with rejected candidates pays off. Resentment rates among all CandE Award Winners — the percentage of candidates who say they'll never do anything again with an employer because of a poor candidate experience — are significantly lower (40%) than all other companies combined. This trend is also true across all regions.

Additionally, the top 10 CandE Award Winners by size all have candidates who are more likely to share positive experiences with their inner circle (friends and family) and publicly (online reviews, etc.) than all other companies combined. This isn't the case in the other regions, but it's good to see that so many candidates overall are willing to share their positive experiences.

## Staying connected with rejected candidates pays off. Resentment rates among all CandE Award Winners are significantly lower than all other companies combined.

# 2022 North American CandE Benchmark Research Overview

Over the past 11+ years, Talent Board has identified clear competitive differences between CandE Award Winners (the top-ranked benchmark companies big and small across industries) and all other participating companies. CandE Award Winners are more often shown to:

- Consistently acknowledge initial job-seeker interest and provide definitive closure within three to five days when no longer pursuing candidates
- Deliver consistent candidate communication from pre-application to onboarding
- Deliver consistent and fairer screening and interviewing experiences
- Ask for candidate feedback and provide feedback more often with rejected candidates as well as new hires
- Consistently make offers within one week after the final interview
- Set better expectations about the recruiting process for candidates from application to offer
- Hold themselves more accountable for the overall recruiting process and resulting candidate experience while measuring it regularly and consistently

## Participating Employers by Industry, Revenue and Employee Size

Over 75% of this year's employer research participants were from the technology, healthcare, finance and insurance, manufacturing, service and consumer goods industries. These tend to be the most represented year after year in Talent Board research. Also, 48% of employers said they generated over $1 billion in revenue annually, and 73% of companies that participated in the 2022 North America benchmark research had over 2,500 total employees (see Figures 2, 3, and 4).

*Figure 3. Participating Employers by Revenue*



- Unknown/ Decline to State
- Over $10B
- $3B-$10B
- $1.1B-$3B
- $501M-$1B
- $101M-$500M
- $51M-$100M
- $11M-$50M
- Under $10M

*Figure 2. Participating Employers by Industry*



- Technology
- Healthcare
- Finance & Insurance
- Manufacturing
- Services
- Consumer Goods
- Pharmaceutical
- Construction
- Education
- Others

*Figure 4. Participating Employers by Number of Employees*



- Up to 500
- 501-2,500
- 2,501-5,000
- 5,001-10,000
- 10,001-25,000
- 25,001-50,000
- 50,001- 100,000
- Over 100,000
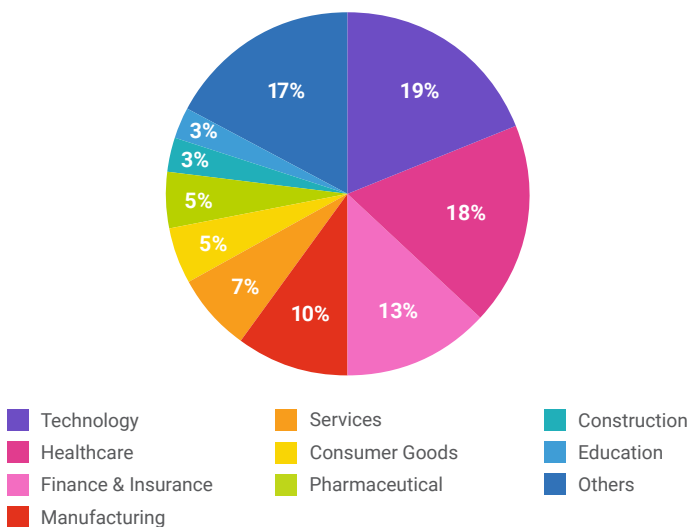
## Participating Employers' Operating Models

Employers can and do vary how their talent acquisition operational models are set up. Usually, the majority of the models fall into these three types: centralized (central recruiting team that ensures consistent hiring processes across the organization), decentralized (separate recruiting teams not necessarily following consistent hiring processes across the organization) and outsourced (where large portions of talent acquisition are handled by third-party vendors like recruitment process outsourcing firms). Some companies move from one model to another every few years depending on how the business evolves, or because of disruptive impacts like COVID-19, leadership changes, merger and/or acquisition activity, etc. The centralized model increased 21% from 2021, and the decentralized model increased 35% (see Table 2).

However, it's important to note that the companies that participate each year vary, with a mix of returning and new.

A company's overall candidate experience has a definitive potential impact on the business, and that impact is improving incrementally, from talent attraction to onboarding. The majority of employers in North America in 2022 (75%) described their overall candidate experience as leading or competing, while 23% described it as improving and 2% described it as lagging (see Table 3). This year, CandE Award Winners who identified as "competing" decreased by a small 4% from 2021, versus a small increase of winners who said they identified as "leading" this year compared to last (see Table 3). Overall, the self-ratings have been consistent year after year.

**A company's overall candidate experience has a definitive potential impact on the business, and that impact is improving incrementally, from talent attraction through to onboarding.**

*Table 2. Talent Acquisition Operational Model*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Centralized** Dedicated recruiters, recruiting org structure and budget | 58% | 48% | 63% | 63% | 63% |
| **Decentralized** Division/line of business, dedicated recruiters, org structure and budget | 11% | 17% | 14% | 19% | 18% |
| **Outsourced** RPO, HRO, third-party vendor | 5% | 7% | 14% | 19% | 18% |
| A combination of **Centralized and Outsourced** | 20% | 25% | NA | NA | NA |
| A combination of **Decentralized and Outsourced** | 5% | 2% | NA | NA | NA |
| **Other** | 1% | 1% | 7% | 2% | 6% |

*Table 3. How Employers Describe Their Own Overall Candidate Experience*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lagging | 2% | 2% | 0% | 2% | 1% |
| Lagging - Winners | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 2% |
| Improving | 23% | 25% | 27% | 22% | 25% |
| Improving - Winners | 14% | 13% | 3% | 13% | 12% |
| Competing | 63% | 62% | 61% | 63% | 60% |
| Competing - Winners | 71% | 74% | 85% | 68% | 67% |
| Leading | 12% | 11% | 13% | 13% | 14% |
| Leading - Winners | 14% | 13% | 14% | 17% | 18% |

## Perception Gaps

For the past four years, Talent Board has started to look more closely at candidate experience perception gaps — the differences between how employers self-assess their candidate experience journey and how candidates actually rate their experiences. Although we use primarily 4- and 5-point scale ratings throughout our surveys, these are all easily converted to net promoter score (NPS).

When converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). For example, when we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:

**4 — Extremely Likely**

**3 — Likely**

**2 — Unlikely**

**1— Definitely Not**

The resulting score is the NPS. For a 5-point scale, you subtract the 1 and 2 scores from the 4 and 5 scores, and that's the NPS.

Respondents are then grouped as follows, based on their responses:

**PROMOTERS** (score 9-10) are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and referring others, fueling growth.

**PASSIVES** (score 7-8) are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings.

**DETRACTORS** (score 0-6) are unhappy customers who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

Subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters yields the NPS, which can range from a low of -100 (if every customer is a detractor) to a high of 100 (if every customer is a promoter).

We simplify it even further for our CandE benchmark research and group results as follows:

**AMAZING** (scores above 50) are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.

**OKAY** (scores between 0-50) are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.

**NOT SO GOOD** (negative scores) are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

Any NPS score above 0 can be considered OKAY. The global management company Bain & Co., the source of the NPS system, suggests that anything above 50 is exceptional, and above 80 is world class.

When we look at the candidate journey NPS ratings from last year (see Figure 5), it's clear that there was a consistent alignment of awareness from the research stage through candidates being hired, with the exception of those candidates rejected. No matter what kind of experience is being delivered to candidates, when they're told they're not going to be pursued, their rejected rating always skews negative.

What's interesting is again how similar the alignment of awareness is for 2022 (Figure 6), even though the mix of companies and candidates is different. Again, we see the same pattern in the Offer and New Hire (onboarding) ratings, where the gaps level out and flip positive. We also continue to notice over the past few years that employers feel they have work to do at the onboarding stage. This aligns with our 2023 recruiting focus survey that showed the #1 recruiting priority in 2023 will be onboarding.

**What's interesting is again how similar the alignment of awareness is for 2021, even though the mix of companies and candidates is different.**

*Figure 5. 2021 North American Candidate Experience Journey Rating Perception Gaps*
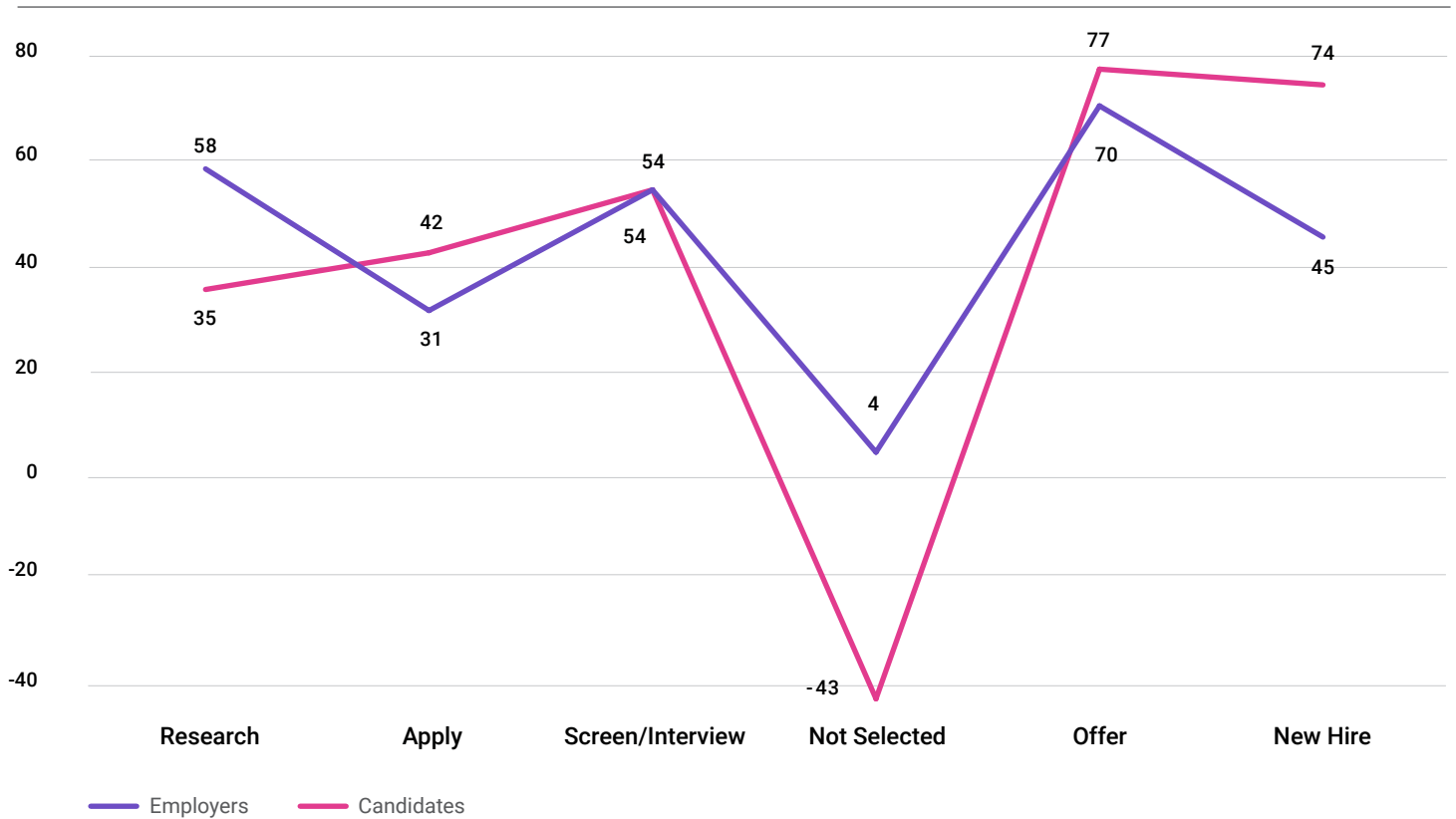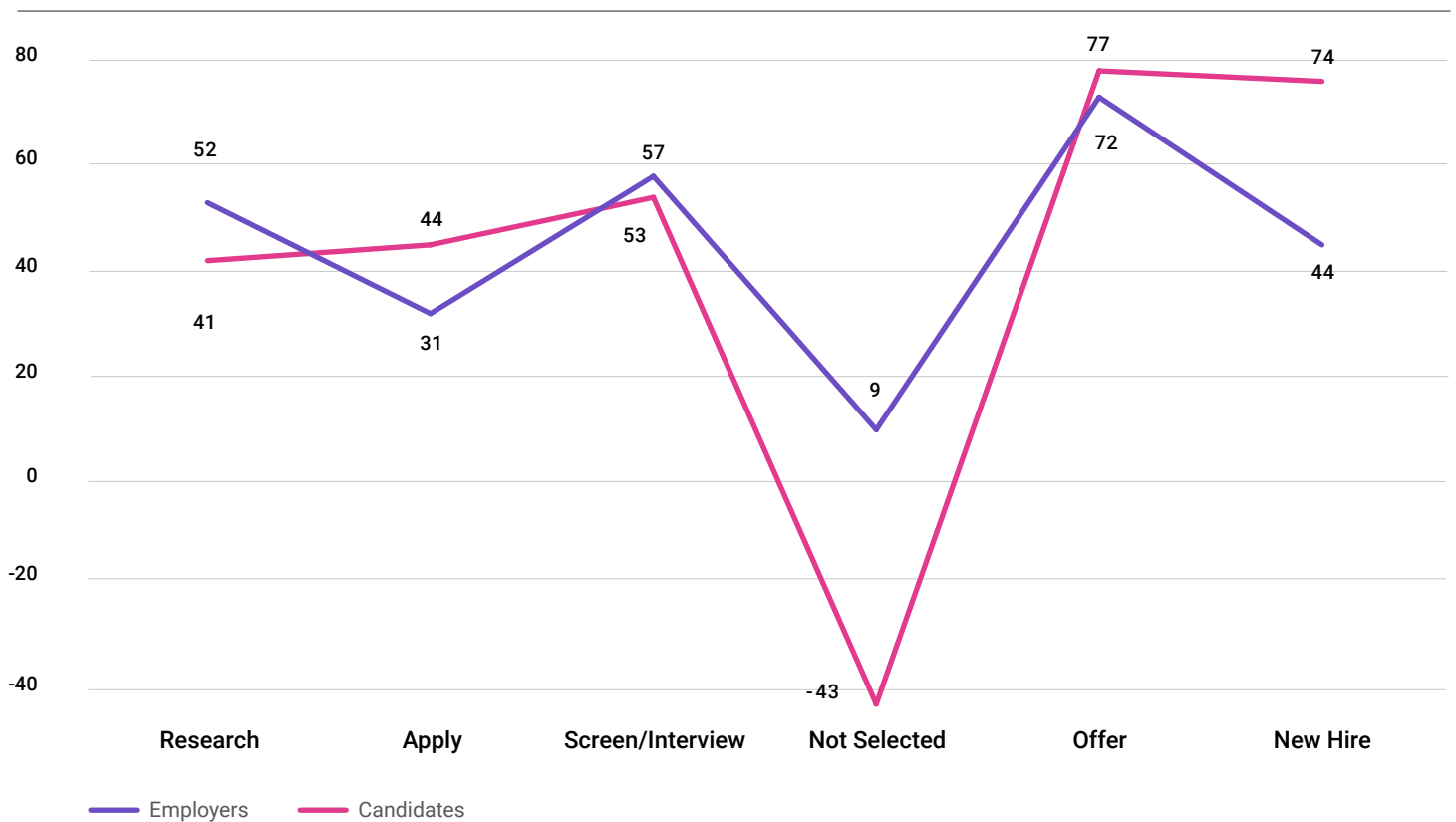


*Figure 6. 2022 North American Candidate Experience Journey Rating Perception Gaps*

## Asking for Candidate Feedback

Year after year, Talent Board benchmark research shows that communication and feedback loops are ongoing differentiators of a more positive candidate experience.

This year, 40% of participating employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which is down 9% from 2021.

The continuing good news is that the majority of employers are asking for feedback across the candidate journey. The percentage of companies that don't survey candidates went from 16% to 13% in 2022, and since 2019 has dropped 24% (see Table 4).

## Recruiter and Hiring Manager Accountability

61% of 2022 North American CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience, which is the same as 2022 (see Table 5). The good news is that, for the past two years, the same percentages of all employers are also aligning performance with candidate experience, and even more in 2022.

While we don't ask employers about hiring manager performance and candidate experience per se, we do ask whether they give feedback to the candidates who have interviewed as finalists and who have not been selected, and if hiring managers are required to do so. 70% of 2022 participating North America employers responded that their hiring managers give limited feedback to internal candidates, up slightly from 2021, but only 15% give feedback to external and referral candidates, which is about the same as in 2020 (see Table 6).

Also, only 44% of the 2022 companies said they establish a follow-up date with finalists, keep the date and establish additional follow-ups as necessary until the position is filled, which is down 10% from 2021.

*Table 4. When Employers Ask for Candidate Experience Feedback*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before candidates apply | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| After candidates apply, but before the interview | 6% | 2% | 9% | 5% |
| After candidates are interviewed, but before they're hired | 19% | 18% | 23% | 19% |
| After candidates are hired | 40% | 44% | 34% | 40% |
| All of the above | 20% | 17% | 17% | 18% |
| We don't survey candidates about their experience | 13% | 16% | 17% | 17% |

*Table 5. How Candidate Experience Is Aligned to Recruiter Performance*

|  | All Employers 2022 | CandE Winners 2022 | All Employers 2021 | CandE Winners 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, we align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience | 63% | 61% | 61% | 61% |
| No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience | 30% | 31% | 35% | 35% |
| I don't know | 1% | 0% | 2% | 0% |
| Other | 6% | 8% | 2% | 4% |

*Table 6. Hiring Managers and Candidate Feedback*

|  | 2022 Internal | 2022 External | 2022 Referral | 2021 External | 2021 Internal | 2021 Referral |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes, hiring managers are required to make a phone call and provide limited feedback | 70% | 15% | 15% | 68% | 14% | 18% |
| No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience | 78% | 8% | 14% | 73% | 12% | 15% |

# CONCLUSION

Although the hiring landscape in 2023 is likely to be challenging, following the lead of the top 10 CandE Award Winners — and all the companies globally with the highest overall ratings — can help improve your organization's candidate experience. That can improve how your employer brand is perceived in the labor market, decrease ghosting by top talent and enhance your ability to fill gaps in your workforce.

However, the constant uncertainty and volatility in the world makes it difficult to deliver a positive candidate experience. Each year, Talent Board sees how hard it is to sustain a quality candidate experience. Job candidates only want one thing — to get the job — but the vast majority will not. So, the second-best experiences include positive communication and feedback loops that, in the end, make all the difference in whether candidates are willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate or be a customer.

## About Talent Board

Founded in 2011, Talent Board and the Candidate Experience Awards is the first non-profit research organization focused on the elevation and promotion of a quality candidate experience. Talent Board delivers annual recruiting and hiring industry benchmark research that highlights accountability, fairness and the business impact of candidate experience. More information can be found at www.thetalentboard.org.

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CLICK HERE to learn more and participate in the Talent Board Candidate Experience Awards and Benchmark Research Program.

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# 10 Key Takeaways From the 2022 North American Candidate Experience Benchmark Research Report

The following are the top 10 key takeaways from the 2022 North American Talent Board Candidate Experience benchmark research.

**1**   **CANDIDATE RESENTMENT ON THE RISE AROUND THE WORLD**

Unfortunately, candidate resentment is on the rise around the world, per our 2022 benchmark research, except for North America, where it did drop slightly. It's still higher than we like to see in North America, however. Negative candidate experiences dropped dramatically during the first year of the pandemic in all the regions we track, but they have been on the rise ever since. This is most likely due to less transparency from potential employers and a competitive and volatile candidate market for most of 2021 and 2022.

Candidates who said they had a "negative" overall experience tell us every year they will take their alliances, product purchases and business relationships somewhere else. A poor candidate experience means a potential loss of revenue for consumer-based businesses, hurts referral networks for all companies and affects which future-fit and silver-medalist candidates will apply again. Most companies depend on referrals, which can make up 20% to 40% of their annual hires. This is the universal business impact that's at stake.

However, the good news is that those who had a "great" overall experience, which is down globally this year, said they'll definitely increase their employer relationships — they'll apply again, refer others, make purchases and/or influence purchases when applicable. These aren't just the job finalists or those hired. The majority are individuals who research and apply for jobs but who aren't hired.

**2**   **RECRUITING TECHNOLOGIES DRIVE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

66% of North American CandE Winners said they used a text-based recruiting system this year, slightly more than all other companies combined in our research, which has increased steadily since 2020. Job alerts and text-to-apply notifications can increase positive candidate sentiment and perception of fairness due to consistent communication.

When potential candidates launched the application from a text to their mobile devices, their application 4- and 5-star rating out of 5 increased 86%, and it's even higher for CandE Winners. And while many employers in our research offer mobile-apply options, only 36% of candidates said they applied via mobile, which is actually 38% more than in 2021. Text-messaging deliverability is also more reliable than email messaging due to spam filters and candidates not checking their emails regularly.

Also, artificial intelligence (AI) and other smart technologies are helping employers with high hiring volume improve their recruiting and candidate communications. We've seen a 31% increase in utilizing chatbots since 2020, and the highest-rated CandE Winners this year are all utilizing more AI technologies than all other companies combined. More employers are realizing that it's a competitive differentiator to communicate early with candidates, even before they apply. Chatbots are being used to answer general employment questions, and this frees up recruiting teams to have more hands-on time with potential candidates who decide to apply. Conversational AI is here now, as well, helping candidates throughout the recruiting process and ensuring a higher level of automated engagement and communication.

**3**

### COMPANY VALUES TOPS CANDIDATE RESEARCH

CandE-Winning organizations have a 31% higher NPS rating in the research/attract stage (56 compared to 41 for all companies in North America). This includes providing content around company values — something that's never been more valuable to candidates in our research. Company values jumped to the number one type of marketing content consumed during research in 2022, with 48% of all candidates citing it as most important, up an incredible 109% from 2021.

In a world that's still fractured from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's obvious that candidates are requiring that potential employer values align with theirs, and the same goes for current employees reviewing their own values and priorities. Besides company values, candidates also want more career sites in multiple languages (it is a multicultural world today), company culture information, products/ services information, diversity and inclusion information and answers to why people want to work at the company — all before they apply for a job.

**4**

### EMPLOYERS CONTROL THE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT DIALS

Employers control the dials of how they respond to interested candidates, when they respond, with what frequency in which they respond and the words they respond with. This includes direct communications and feedback loops. Unfortunately, 34% of candidates were still waiting one to two-plus months on next steps after they applied, 48% more than in 2021. For CandE Winners, only 26% of candidates were still waiting because they are dispositioned more consistently shortly after being deemed not qualified.

Candidates at CandE-Winning organizations are also asked for feedback at the application stage 18% more often than the average for all companies. When candidates had the ability to ask chatbot questions, their application 4- and 5-star rating out of 5 increased 86%, and it's even higher for CandE Winners. These aren't the only activities that drive higher ratings by themselves. Most likely, it's a series of consistent practices (controlling the dials) that we outline each year that drive higher ratings, especially for CandE Winners.

**5**

### THE APPLICATION STAGE IS A VERY LIMITED EXPERIENCE FOR CANDIDATES

It's important to note that the point of application is a very limited experience for most candidates. It's mostly automated, and even though organizations control the tech dials at this stage, there isn't much, if any, human interaction. Timely and personable communications is still key. One of the biggest differentiators at the application stage is the fact that the highest-rated companies in our research (CandE Winners) are dispositioning or moving forward candidates within three to five days after they apply — at most, one to two weeks.

Employers who hold onto candidates after they apply, waiting until the job requisitions are filled, are risking increased negative sentiment and a lower perception of fairness overall. This is a tough spot for employers because, on average, most of those candidates who apply are just not qualified for the job. But it's still better to let them know and focus on screening candidates who are moving on.

**6**

### A HIGHER LEVEL OF POSITIVE PERCEIVED FAIRNESS

Perceived fairness is very subjective, but when candidates are in the running for a position and are being screened and interviewed, their positive sentiment tends to increase — at least until they're told they're no longer being considered. Mostly likely due to the pandemic's disruptive impact on the interview process and companies continuing to leverage virtual interviewing to save time and travel costs, the overall interview fairness NPS rating was still 23% lower in 2022 than in 2019.

Recorded video interviews are perceived as less fair by candidates compared with live video interviews, and both are considered less fair compared with in-person, local interviews. Much has been written about the failings of screening and interviewing via phone, video and in person. It's clear in our research that job candidates prefer live interview interactions where they can see who's interviewing them — in person first, followed by live virtual interviews.

No matter the type of interview, CandE Winners still engage more consistently with candidates, and they have a competitive edge regarding candidates' perception of assessment and interview fairness. In

2022, CandE Winners had a 24% higher assessment perception of fairness and a 12% higher interview perception of fairness than all other companies combined.

Overall, the candidates' willingness to refer others increased 105% when they rated their interview fairness with 4- and 5-star ratings. CandE-Winning candidates usually rate their overall fairness higher, most likely due to the employers investing in more timely and consistent communication.

**7** **STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, NEXT STEPS AND GIVING FEEDBACK**

More organizations are taking steps toward a more candidate-friendly and fair interview process, one that is structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types in an effort to reduce bias. This year, the highest-rated CandE Winners conducted structured interviews 20% more than all employers combined, and all CandE Winners conducted them 12% more often than all employers combined. Structured interviews usually drive higher positive candidate ratings and a higher level of perceived fairness. Also, candidates' willingness to refer others was 71% higher when they were provided with information on their job fit and candidacy status at the end of the interview day.

Recruiters and/or hiring managers at CandE-winning companies establish follow-up dates with finalists and keep those dates 15% more often than all other companies combined. The highest-rated companies in our research this year all provided some level of feedback to candidates, usually finalists in the interview stage, and CandE Winners overall gave 14% more feedback to candidates than all other companies combined in 2022. Here's why giving feedback can pay off: When specific feedback was given to finalists, their willingness to refer others increased by nearly 50% this year, and their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 40%.

**8** **ASKING FOR FEEDBACK IS ALWAYS BETTER**

Candidates who were invited to provide feedback after the interview were 65% more likely to refer others. And CandE Winners asked candidates for feedback after being screened and interviewed 15% more than all other companies combined in 2022. If disruption is at a minimum and candidates feel the interview process was fair, they're more willing to engage the business again and refer others. Asking for feedback is key at any time during the recruiting process, but it can definitely help with retention for new hires before day one. Only about one-quarter of the candidates from CandE Winners and all companies combined said they were asked for feedback about the hiring process. However, those same candidates who were asked to provide feedback prior to their start date had an 87% increase in willingness to refer others and an 88% willingness to increase their relationship with their new (or old) employers. For new hires who received employer feedback, those at CandE-Winning companies found any feedback they received from employers slightly more valuable than all companies combined. We know this is subjective, but CandE-Winning employers are investing a lot more in being consistent and transparent throughout the recruiting and hiring process.

**9** **ONBOARDING ACTIVITIES CAN IMPROVE EARLY RETENTION**

For the past few years, candidate experience was the number one recruiting focus in our end-of-year Recruiting Focus surveys (it's pervasive throughout recruiting and hiring). As it should be, because it's impactful across the recruiting and hiring journey for external and internal candidates. Onboarding has been lower on the list, last year coming in at number five, but this year it's the number one recruiting focus. Why?

We know from the volatile and competitive candidate market we've been in for the past 12 to 18 months that retention has been a struggle for employers. Many continue to lose new hires — hourly and salaried professional — before they even start. Even CandE Winners, those companies with above-average key ratings in our benchmark research, struggle with pre-boarding to onboarding. Only 21% of the candidates from CandE Winners and all other participating benchmark research companies said they were provided multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members and get questions answered prior to their start date. If they do experience this, their willingness to increase their relationship increased 92%, a fantastic retention starter from the beginning.

Only 40% of candidates said they received a call from a hiring manager prior to starting, and only 24% received texts. But if they do get a call or a text from a hiring manager, their willingness to increase their relationship increased 87%. The key here is that the more engagement prior to their start date, the better a retention starter it becomes.

**10** **THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE: REFERRALS**

Referrals are critical for all companies, whether business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B). And while only 22% of North American candidates in 2022 cited referrals as a valuable research channel, down 12% from 2021, referred candidates said they would increase their relationship with potential employers 57% more (apply again, refer others, make purchases if and when applicable) compared with those who conducted their own search or those who received unsolicited outreach from a recruiter. And the more positive the candidate experience, the more likely candidates are to refer others — CandE Winners have a 31% higher willingness to refer others NPS rating (26 compared to 19 for all companies combined in North America). Employers hire 20% to 40% of their workforce from referrals, so referrals are quite the critical competitive differentiator, especially the 2022 candidate market.

Current employees are the brand ambassadors whose referral NPS ratings are the highest versus any other current or previous relationship with the company. But we also know that nearly every year, around 30% of all the candidates around the world who responded in our benchmark research said that they were still extremely likely to refer (it's even higher in APAC), and yet, nearly 90% didn't get hired. That means that even rejected candidates who feel their experience was positive and fair are still likely to be a brand advocate and referral source.

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# EXECUTIVE BRIEF:

## The 2022 Business Impact of Candidate Experience

We've never been here before: low unemployment, high inflation, recession fears, a war in Ukraine, layoffs and yet a still strong hiring market with more jobs than active candidates. Even with growing layoffs in technology, 2022 has brought us a strange post-pandemic (although some would argue we're not post) global economy with uncertainty ahead in 2023. Recruiting and hiring continues to be flung up and down like a yo-yo.

The hiring struggle persists and is painfully real, and burnout also continues to hit talent acquisition leaders and their teams hard. Companies trying to get back to "normal" are chasing an unrealistic goal of whatever that was pre-pandemic; those days are gone. Today, their recruiting workloads have increased significantly, with leaner teams again doing more with less.

Thankfully, there are companies focused on their work environments — creating healthy, positive, flexible inclusive ones. These are the companies that will improve their hiring and retention efforts versus those that will default to pre-COVID-19 recruiting practices with limited communication and feedback loops.

**We've never been here before: low unemployment, high inflation, recession fears, a war in Ukraine, layoffs and yet a still strong hiring market with more jobs than active candidates.**

## The Relationship Question

Every year, we ask job candidates, "How likely are you to change your relationship with us based on your experience?" For those who said they had a great experience overall, they are more willing to apply again, refer others, make purchases if it's a consumer-based company and be a brand advocate going forward, even if they didn't get hired. Most candidates for any given job in our research and in real life aren't hired (see Figure 1). Unfortunately, the great experience is down this year.

Although candidate resentment is also down slightly in North America, something we always want to see, it's up in EMEA, APAC and Latin America in our benchmark research data (see Figure 2). Resentment meaning those candidates who feel they had a very poor experience and will never do anything again with an employer.

It's important to note that only about 10% of all candidates who answer our surveys are those who were hired. But, as seen previously, 30% of candidates in APAC were hired. This definitely impacted the key ratings we measure with what we call the "halo effect" — candidates who are hired are more likely to rate their experience positively because they were hired. Each year, we also find there's an ongoing positive skew in our APAC and Latin America research data because, culturally, candidates in many countries in these regions are less likely to share negative feedback. We don't measure this specifically, but it has been confirmed by companies that hire in these regions and by the candidates themselves.

What will 2023 bring? Hopefully we'll have a mild recession, if that, and companies that are hiring will continue to improve their recruiting, hiring and retention efforts, and of course their overall candidate experience.
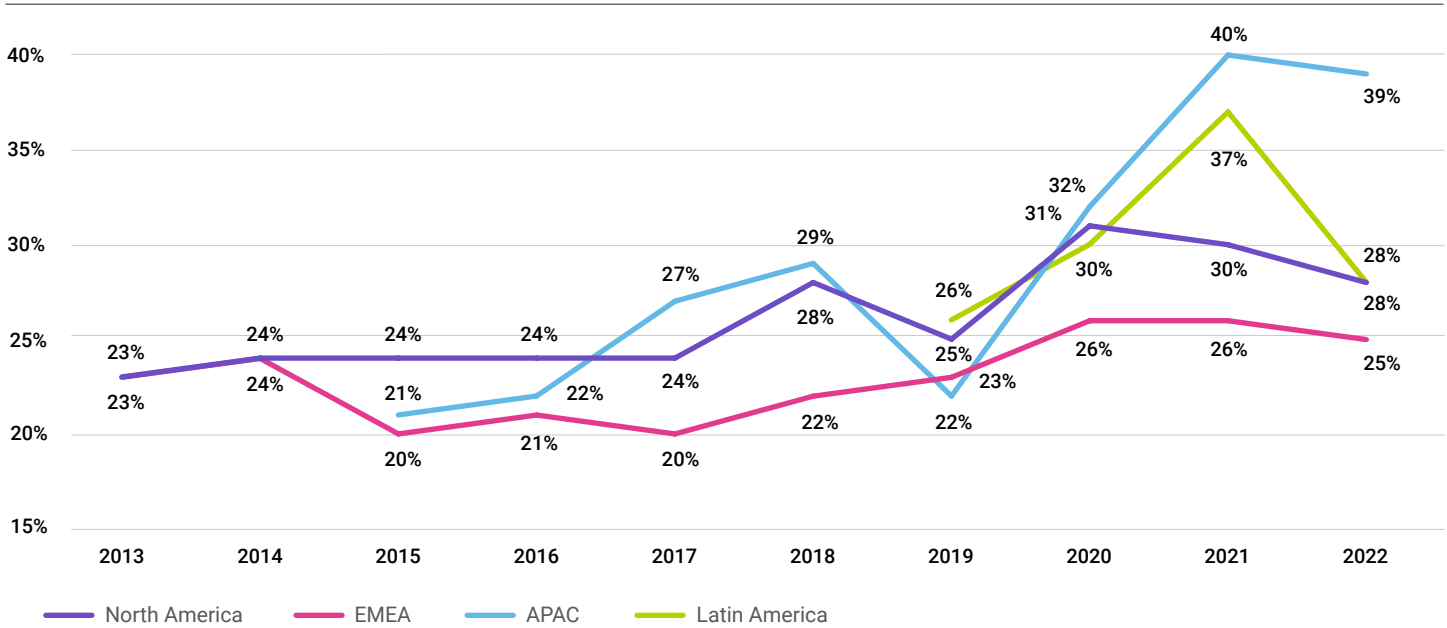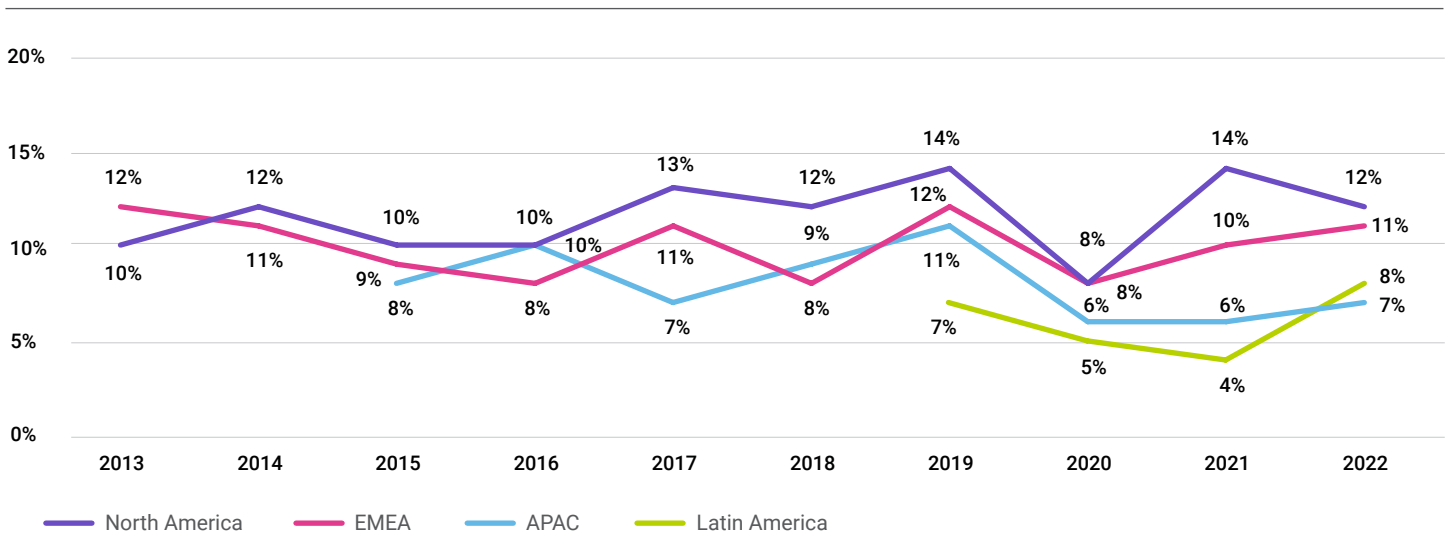
*Figure 1. Great Candidate Experience Globally*



*Figure 2. Poor Candidate Experience Globally (Resentment Rate)*

## Net Promoter Score CandE Rating Conversion

**For example, when converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). When we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:**

*4 — Extremely Likely*
3 — Likely
2 — Unlikely
*1— Definitely Not*

If a company had 35% of its candidates respond that they were extremely likely to apply again, and 15% said they would definitely not, that company would have an NPS score of 20.

**We simplify it even further for our CandE benchmark research and group results as follows:**

- **AMAZING** (scores above 50) are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.

- **OKAY** (scores between 0-50) are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.

- **NOT SO GOOD** (negative scores) are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

**What's important to keep in mind is that the sheer number of candidates who employers reject during the recruiting process can quickly impact the business and the brand (whatever the world looks like) in both positive and negative ways.**

As mentioned above, candidates who believe they have had a "negative" overall experience tell us every year they will take their alliances, product purchases and business relationships somewhere else. A poor candidate experience means a potential loss of revenue for consumer-based businesses while hurting referral networks for all companies and impacting which future fit and silver medalist candidates will apply again. Most companies depend on referrals, which can make up 20%-40% of their annual hires. This is the universal business impact that's at stake.

However, the good news is that those who had a "great" overall experience say they'll definitely increase their employer relationships — they'll apply again, refer others, make purchases and/or influence purchases when applicable. These aren't just the job finalists or those hired. The majority are individuals who research and apply for jobs but who aren't hired.

When you compare all the regions' key net promoter score (NPS) ratings (overall, apply again, refer others, relationship) over the past three years, it's again clear that North America and EMEA candidate experiences were more negative, while APAC and Latin America skewed more positive per what we shared above (see Table 1). Our NPS ratings are always inherently lower due to the majority of candidates not being hired, even in higher positive skews of APAC and Latin America. Usually in our benchmark research, the only time companies will see NPS ratings in the 50s or higher are from candidates who were hired, because those are the only happy customers in the recruitment process.

As mentioned in the Executive Brief, for the past three years, Talent Board has been converting our primary 4- and 5-point scale ratings throughout our surveys into NPS scores.

What's important to keep in mind is that the sheer number of candidates who employers reject during the recruiting process can quickly impact the business and the brand (whatever the world looks like) in both positive and negative ways. That's not to say that those hired aren't important to the business. Of course they are — they're the individuals who help grow and sustain the business. And while all candidates, hired or not, can impact how the business is perceived by other potential candidates, it's simply that those candidates who are not hired need more attention paid to their perceived overall experience.

*Table 1. NPS Ratings and Resentment Across All Regions*

| North America | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 30 | 22 | 23 |
| Apply Again | 19 | 19 | 25 |
| Refer Others | 18 | 17 | 22 |
| Relationship | 16 | 14 | 16 |
| Hired | 74 | 73 | 76 |
| Resentment | 12% | 14% | 8% |

| EMEA | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 25 | 29 | 28 |
| Apply Again | 20 | 19 | 27 |
| Refer Others | 18 | 19 | 26 |
| Relationship | 14 | 16 | 16 |
| Hired | 74 | 84 | 71 |
| Resentment | 11% | 10% | 8% |

| APAC | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 51 | 53 | 35 |
| Apply Again | 37 | 39 | 30 |
| Refer Others | 35 | 37 | 28 |
| Relationship | 32 | 34 | 23 |
| Hired | 83 | 84 | 78 |
| Resentment | 7% | 6% | 6% |

| Latin America | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Rating | 31 | 53 | 39 |
| Apply Again | 23 | 40 | 35 |
| Refer Others | 25 | 43 | 36 |
| Relationship | 20 | 33 | 28 |
| Hired | 87 | 89 | 78 |
| Resentment | 8% | 4% | 5% |

## Candidates Who Withdraw From the Recruiting Process

When it comes to candidates withdrawing themselves from the recruiting process, there are many reasons as to why. But when we look at the Talent Board North America data, for those candidates who have an overall poor (1- and 2-star ratings) experience on a 1-5 Likert scale, the three most negative reasons candidates withdrew themselves in North America in 2022 were:

1. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
2. Salary didn't meet expectations.
3. The recruiting process took too long.

In EMEA, the three most negative reasons to withdraw were:

1. Salary didn't meet expectations.
2. The recruiting process took too long.
3. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.

In APAC, the three most negative reasons to withdraw were:

1. The recruiting process took too long.
2. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
3. There was a difference between the posted job description and how it was presented during the interview.

And in Latin America, the three most negative reasons to withdraw were:

1. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
2. The recruiting process took too long.
3. There was a difference between the posted job description and how it was presented during the interview.

Although it's not the same pool of candidates year to year, "time being disrespected during the recruiting process" (interviews and appointments especially), usually trends as the number one withdrawal reason only in North America. This year it was number one in Latin America, too. The recruiting process taking too long always draws a negative reaction around the world, and this year, the difference between what was advertised and what was revealed during interviews made the top three in two of the regions.

## Candidates Share with Their Inner Circles and Publicly Online

The fact is, people will still talk to one another about their good and bad candidate experiences, especially when we consider their inner circles (e.g., significant others, close friends, colleagues, peers, etc.). When we look at how many candidates share their positive and negative experiences with their inner circle, the trend year after year is clear: most candidates around the world will share their positive experiences and over half will share their negative experiences (see Table 2).

Even with the positive skew in the APAC and Latin America research data, the majority of candidates are still willing to share their negative experiences. What's fascinating about all these global data points is the fact that the mix of companies and candidates are different every year, but their responses have remained fairly consistent.

However, the percentages drop when we look at how many candidates share their positive and negative experiences publicly online (e.g., social media posts, Glassdoor reviews, Indeed reviews, etc.), but there are still significant populations willing to share their experiences publicly (see Table 3). The consistency of this data reveals that employers cannot afford to ignore the impact of candidates sharing their experiences online.

It's important to note that when it comes to sharing positive and negative experiences, about a third of the candidates around the world tell us "this information is private and I don't share publicly." That's because most candidates don't want to shout from the rooftops when they don't get the job, only when they get it, no matter how good or bad the experience was. But our research tells us every year that most are willing to share, and that can definitely impact an employer's business and brand.

**The fact is, people will still talk to one another about their good and bad candidate experiences, especially when we consider their inner circles (e.g., significant others, close friends, colleagues, peers, etc.).**

*Table 2. Candidates Sharing Positive and Negative Experiences with Their Inner Circles in All Regions*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North America Positive | 77% | 75% | 77% | 76% | 78% |
| North America Negative | 56% | 57% | 52% | 72% | 66% |
| EMEA Positive | 76% | 78% | 78% | 66% | 74% |
| EMEA Negative | 58% | 59% | 55% | 50% | 55% |
| APAC Positive | 80% | 82% | 79% | 75% | 77% |
| APAC Negative | 41% | 45% | 47% | 51% | 55% |
| Latin America Positive | 74% | 84% | 78% | 63% | NA |
| Latin America Negative | 54% | 63% | 49% | 41% | NA |

*Table 3. Candidates Sharing Positive and Negative Experiences Publicly Online in All Regions*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North America Positive | 53% | 50% | 57% | 50% | 50% |
| North America Negative | 32% | 32% | 31% | 35% | 35% |
| EMEA Positive | 50% | 51% | 52% | 45% | 52% |
| EMEA Negative | 31% | 31% | 30% | 29% | 31% |
| APAC Positive | 71% | 66% | 67% | 56% | 61% |
| APAC Negative | 31% | 29% | 30% | 32% | 33% |
| Latin America Positive | 60% | 53% | 47% | 26% | NA |
| Latin America Negative | 37% | 28% | 25% | 26% | NA |

## How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others

When we look at how likely candidates are to refer others based on their experience, the good news is that over 70% of all global candidates said they were likely to refer others based on their experience. For most CandE Award Winners this year, it's even higher (see Table 4).

Although it can be harder to quantify the business impact of losing or gaining referrals (something Talent Board is working on — we're launching a referral revenue impact calculator in 2023). Organizations big and small depend on them, equating to upwards of 20%-40% of hires from referrals.

What we also know is nearly every year about 30% of all candidates who respond in our benchmark research say they are still extremely likely to refer, and yet, nearly 90% didn't get hired.

That means that even rejected candidates — those who feel their experience was positive and fair — are still likely to be brand advocates and referral sources. Referrals usually come from employees, alumni and customers, but we haven't heard of many companies that consider rejected candidates as referral pools. But it is possible.

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## Calculate the Potential Costs

For consumer-based businesses, where candidates are customers and vice versa, the potential revenue impact looms large. A commonly referenced case study conducted by Virgin Media and Ph.Creative a few years ago showed that Virgin Media was losing more than $6 million annually in sales revenue due to poor candidate experiences, which they were then able to turn into a $7 million revenue stream.

For companies that are analyzing this level of candidate experience business impact, particularly publicly traded companies, they ultimately aren't willing to share this kind of quantitative data publicly. But in our experience over the years, most companies aren't internally quantifying the cost of a poor candidate experience. They should, because we know it can potentially cost millions of dollars per year of direct revenue and revenue impact from referral loss. This is why incremental improvements to recruiting processes and candidate experience can go a long way toward increasing revenue and referral networks.

We created an online Candidate Experience Resentment Calculator for HR and talent acquisition professionals that generates potential lost annual revenue by plugging in some simple numbers.

According to the 2022 Talent Board benchmark research, the overall candidate resentment rate — those candidates willing

*Table 4. How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others*

| | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **All NA Employers** Candidates likely to refer | 70% | 67% | 66% | 62% | 67% |
| **NA CandE Award Winners** Candidates likely to refer | 79% | 79% | 83% | 73% | 74% |
| **All EMEA Employers** Candidates likely to refer | 81% | 71% | 75% | 68% | 72% |
| **EMEA CandE Award Winners** Candidates likely to refer | 78% | 85% | 79% | 76% | 75% |
| **All APAC Employers** Candidates likely to refer | 81% | 84% | 76% | 67% | 75% |
| **APAC CandE Award Winners** Candidates likely to refer | 82% | 89% | 79% | 79% | 78% |
| **All LA Employers** Candidates likely to refer | 76% | 88% | 80% | 79% | NA |
| **LA CandE Award Winners** Candidates likely to refer | 85% | 89% | 84% | 81% | NA |

to sever the relationship with a prospective employer based on their experience — is now 10% globally this year (average of North America, EMEA, APAC and Latin America) and up from 9% in 2021.

While the resentment calculator only produces a rough estimate based on the hiring numbers used, it helps make the business case that improving the recruiting process benefits companies' bottom lines. Even B2B companies can use it as a conversation starter because, ultimately, if they don't have the candidates they need to grow and sustain their businesses, they will potentially feel an impact to their revenue. As mentioned earlier, we'll be launching a referral revenue impact calculator in 2023.

## Future Fit Matters

Even with all the potential business impact highlighted above, whether or not candidates will apply again and/or refer others based on their overall candidate experience is a vitally important outcome of the candidate experience. And while most companies would argue that they don't want all the candidates applying again, they do want those deemed future fit to apply again. They most certainly want their final interview silver medalists to apply again and to refer others who may also be the right candidates for future roles.

Ultimately, making improvement investments in recruiting, hiring, retention and candidate experience today can ensure a greater return on employment brand and quality of candidate tomorrow, no matter what the future brings.

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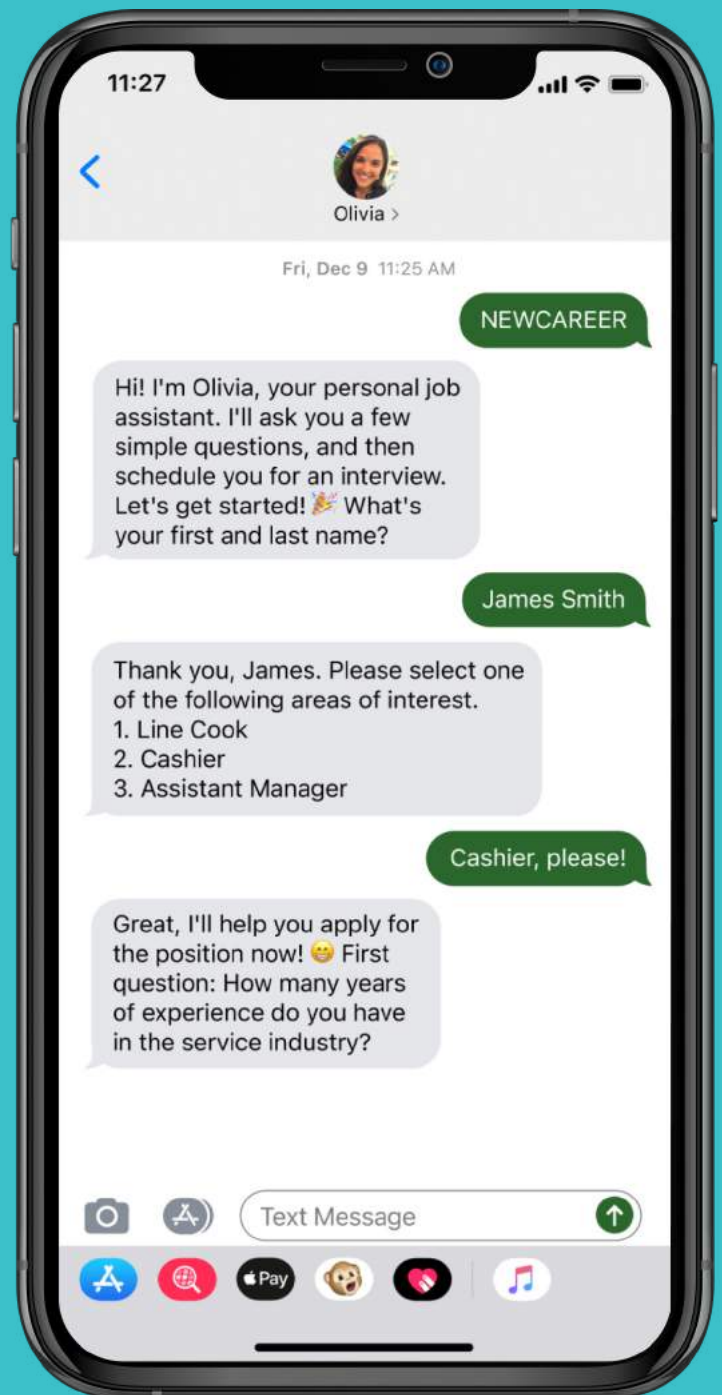
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# EXECUTIVE BRIEF:

## Recruiting Focus 2023: Onboarding Is Number One

The industry has seen almost 150,000 layoffs and counting this year (per Layoffs.fyi), mostly technology professionals across industries. This also includes upwards of 50% of recruiters, by the latest estimates.

With increased layoffs, more candidates will be looking for work in 2023. The only thing any candidate ever wants is to get the job and keep it, but most candidates won't be hired for any given job they're interested in. For now, there are still more jobs than candidates in today's market, and unemployment is currently at 3.7% (as of October), but if that changes in 2023, it will be a tougher market, especially those who are laid off and have gaps in their employment history versus those who are still employed

According to the 2023 Recruiting Focus survey we distributed to our CandE community, only 30% of the nearly 200 companies hiring globally (mostly hiring in North America) that responded said they're on track to hire 1,000 on more people next year, which is down 25% from last year (40%). And 52% of those companies were over 2,500 employees this year, versus 41% in 2021 — 27% larger employers overall. There was a similar proportion of company sizes from 2021 and 2022 in these recruiting focus surveys (see Table 1). However, if layoffs continue, then hiring numbers may decrease.

**With increased layoffs, more candidates will be looking for work in 2023. The only thing any candidate ever wants is to get the job and keep it, but most candidates won't be hired for any given job they're interested in.**

*Table 1. Recruiting Focus Survey 2023: Company Sizes From 2021 and 2022*

| Company Size | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 500 | 31% | 30% |
| 501-2,500 | 27% | 17% |
| 2,501-5,000 | 13% | 14% |
| 5,001-10,000 | 7% | 14% |
| 10,001-25,000 | 10% | 9% |
| 25,001-100,000 | 7% | 10% |
| Over 100,000 | 4% | 5% |

## The Number One Recruiting Focus for 2023 Is Onboarding

For the past few years, candidate experience was the number one recruiting focus in our end-of-year surveys (it's pervasive throughout recruiting and hiring). As it should be, since it's impactful across the recruiting and hiring journey for external and internal candidates. Onboarding has been lower on the list, (number five in 2021), but this year it's the number one recruiting focus (see Table 2).

Why? Well, we know from the volatile and competitive candidate market we've been in for the past 12 to 18 months that retention has been a struggle for employers. Many continue to lose new hires — hourly and salaried professional — before they even start. Even CandE Winners, those companies with above-average key ratings in our benchmark research, struggle with pre-boarding to onboarding.

Only 21% of the candidates from CandE Winners and all other participating benchmark research companies said they were provided multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members and get questions answered prior to their start dates. Only 40% of candidates said they received a call from a hiring manager prior to starting, and only 24% received texts.

Engagement and communication prior to day one will continue to be a key differentiator during pre-boarding and onboarding. There's a lot of room for improvement here, and thankfully there are companies that have designated pre-boarding teams to engage new hires before they start. Even with the recruiter layoffs that have occurred in tech across industries, we recommend companies allocate staff to pre-boarding.

After onboarding, the remaining top three of four include the following:

• **Candidate experience** — The CandE community continues to be acutely aware of how crucial it is to deliver a positive candidate experience, particularly with the continued fierce competition for qualified talent. Deliver a subpar experience and those candidates are gone — especially for those investing more in the recruiting process post-application, from screening to offer. To maintain their superior candidate experiences, this year's top-ranked CandE Award Winners continue to invest more in timely communication and candidate feedback loops. Communication and feedback aren't just essential to a great candidate experience, they're also key differentiators for top employment brands, something that has held true in our benchmark research year after year.

• **Diversity and inclusion** — For the second year in a row, women, people of color and younger candidates (Generation Z and younger millennials) all rated their candidate experiences as more positive and fair, according to our benchmark research. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) recruitment marketing initiatives continue to have a higher level of investment since 2020 and the social unrest that followed. These initiatives are affecting candidates' perception of fairness while going through the recruiting process, whether they are hired or not. These populations are searching for employers who offer diverse and inclusive workplaces and a greater sense of belonging.

• **Employee referrals** — As our annual benchmark research has shown again and again, referrals are one of employers' most valued and trusted sources for new talent. Those companies with the highest ratings overall in our research have nearly a 20% higher willingness refer rating from their candidates than all other companies combined. One of the main drivers of this is the fact that the highest-rated companies are giving job fit and qualification feedback to finalists 50% more often. It's important to note that most of the candidates in our research (90% in most of the regions we track) didn't get the jobs they applied to — just like the real world.

It's important to note that internal mobility and retention came in at number 12. It's an area where we're finding more talent assessment teams partnering with HR and talent management to improve retention. Internal candidate experience is also an area that has been woefully neglected, and we're going to look at the internal experience more in 2023.

*Table 2. Recruiting Focus 2023 and 2022: Top 10 Recruiting Priorities*

| Rank | Recruiting Focus 2023 | % |
|------|----------------------|-----|
| 1. | Onboarding | 40% |
| 2. | Candidate experience | 38% |
| 3. | Diversity and inclusion | 37% |
| 4. | Employee referrals | 37% |
| 5. | Screening and interviewing | 30% |
| 6. | Employer branding | 28% |
| 7. | Recruitment marketing | 28% |
| 8. | Social recruiting | 26% |
| 9. | New technology implementation | 24% |
| 10. | Targeted sourcing | 24% |

| Rank | Recruiting Focus 2022 | % |
|------|----------------------|-----|
| 1. | Candidate experience | 54% |
| 2. | Diversity and inclusion | 50% |
| 3. | Employee referrals | 47% |
| 4. | Screening and interviewing | 41% |
| 5. | Onboarding | 40% |
| 6. | Employer branding | 39% |
| 7. | Recruitment marketing | 38% |
| 8. | Social recruiting | 34% |
| 9. | Targeted sourcing | 33% |
| 10. | Analytics and data management | 31% |

| Rank | How to Accomplish in 2023 | % |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Improved processes and efficiencies | 48% |
| 2. | New technologies | 40% |
| 3. | Current staffing | 38% |
| 4. | More staffing | 33% |
| 5. | Flexible work schedules (remote/hybrid) | 32% |

| Rank | How to Accomplish in 2022 | % |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Improved processes and efficiencies | 53% |
| 2. | New technologies | 44% |
| 3. | Current staffing | 42% |
| 4. | Current technologies | 35% |
| 5. | More staffing | 34% |

## Accomplishing the Priorities

So, how do companies in the CandE community plan to accomplish these recruiting priorities in 2023? Here are the top five responses to this question, with improved processes and efficiencies again at number one (see Table 3).

The top response again this year — improved processes and efficiencies — continues to be a challenge that the CandE community focuses on relentlessly because it's the foundation of a great candidate experience (and recruiter and hiring manager experience). A company can have an amazing talent assessment team and a ton of powerful recruiting technology, but if their processes are disjointed and inefficient, their candidate experience will be too. Improving processes and efficiencies applies to every phase and touch point of the candidate journey — from the creation of job requisitions and ads to resume processing to interviews and assessments to candidate communications to pre-boarding and onboarding — and everything in between.

Number two is all about new recruiting technologies, this year and last. Technology is an important driver of efficient recruiting and hiring, especially for companies with moderate to significant hiring volume. Again this year, most of the highest-ranked companies in our benchmark research around the world are investing more in recruiting technologies, including AI-based tech that better empowers efficient recruiting and hiring. Sourcing, screening, interviewing and communication are just a few of the areas that can benefit from these smart technologies. Current technologies are still on the list this year but came in at number six (last year, this ranked number four).

Leveraging the right recruiting technologies is also key to scaling consistently and giving recruiting teams the time to continuously improve the candidate experience. That's critical when job requisition volume is up and/or steady. This year, 35% of the recruiting teams told us they're now carrying 30 to 100-plus requisitions per recruiter, which is down 13% from 2021 — 40% said they were carrying 30-plus reqs in 2021 (see Table 4). Layoffs and slower hiring most certainly have contributed to a lower req ratio.

Table 4. Recruiting Focus 2023 and 2022: Current Job Requisition Loads

| Job Requisition Load 2022 | % |
|---|---|
| Less than 10 reqs per recruiter | 28% |
| 11-30 each | 36% |
| 31-50 each | 13% |
| 51-75 each | 9% |
| 76-100 each | 6% |
| More than 100 each | 7% |

| Job Requisition Load 2021 | % |
|---|---|
| Less than 10 reqs per recruiter | 19% |
| 11-30 each | 41% |
| 31-50 each | 17% |
| 51-75 each | 11% |
| 76-100 each | 8% |
| More than 100 each | 4% |

*Table 5. Primary Areas Where Companies Plan to Purchase Recruiting Technology Solutions to Improve Recruiting in 2023 (Partial List)*

| Technology Solutions | Total % Planning to Purchase |
|---|---|
| Video job descriptions | 63% |
| Job description optimizations | 55% |
| Candidate experience surveys | 45% |
| Text-based recruiting | 38% |
| Virtual campus recruiting (event platform) | 37% |
| Candidate relationship management (CRM) | 28% |
| Assessment/testing | 24% |
| Talent network | 23% |
| Interview scheduling | 22% |
| Sourcing/mining | 22% |
| Reference checking | 21% |

*Table 6. Primary Areas Where Companies Plan to Purchase AI Technology Solutions to Improve Recruiting in 2023 (Partial List)*

| AI Technology Solutions | Total % Planning to Purchase |
|---|---|
| Machine learning that ensures the application and screening processes remove bias and identifies the best candidates for roles | 79% |
| Measuring and predicting employee job-changing behavior | 72% |
| Assessing candidates with simulations for job performance prediction | 57% |
| Sentiment analysis of candidate open-ended feedback | 55% |
| Sourcing candidates from external sources with a virtual assistant | 51% |
| Pre-qualifying candidates from collective candidate databases | 50% |
| Chatbot recruiting automation (Q&A "customer-service" on career site) | 49% |
| Assessing candidates to identify team personality and culture fit | 44% |
| Video interviewing with assessments | 42% |
| Analyzing job postings for unintentional bias and offer recommendations on how to create job listings with more inclusive language | 41% |

Technology is always important to driving repetitive recruiting processes and practices, and new and current technologies are vital to how global employers will activate their 2023 initiatives. Table 5 summarizes the top employer responses from our 2022 benchmark research about technologies they plan to purchase in 2023. Video job descriptions were again overwhelmingly the primary planned technology investment for 2023. Job-description optimizations were next, followed by candidate experience surveys, text-based recruiting systems and virtual campus recruiting systems (event platforms). Onboarding is still the main priority, and 89% of companies told us they already have an onboarding system.

It's also important to note how AI, smart technologies and machine learning continue to help employers improve recruiting and hiring (see Table 6). We'll continue to see increases in utilizing machine learning to remove bias, measuring job changing behavior (not surprising due to the continuing exodus of employees), job simulations, chatbots (particularly conversational AI), virtual sourcing and more in 2023.

Employers that have any hiring volume need to leverage echnologies that improve quality targeting, automate personalized communications and reduce human bias in recruiting and hiring processes.

**It's also important to note how AI, smart technologies and machine learning continue to help employers improve recruiting and hiring.**

# Another differentiator that wasn't included in our Recruiting Focus survey but is worth mentioning here is pay transparency.

Numbers three and four from Table 3 are both about the role staffing will play in accomplishing recruiting priorities, managing current staff and addressing the need for more staff. Recruiting teams may be leaner because of recent layoffs in tech, but there are still many industries hiring and increasing their teams. This kind of investment isn't just about handling any number of job requisitions. It's also an investment in the human interaction that makes the candidate experience better for job seekers who are qualified, screened, assessed and interviewed.

Flexible work schedules (remote/hybrid) made it into the top five after finishing at number six last year. Remote/hybrid working environments are here to stay and will continue to be a competitive differentiator for employers who can and are willing to offer it for positions that make sense. Many recruiting teams have always had remote recruiters, including talent assessment leadership.

Another differentiator that wasn't included in our Recruiting Focus survey but is worth mentioning here is pay transparency. Pay transparency is coming, and when it's offered today, it improves the job candidates' overall perception of fairness during the interview stage. For example, the highest-rated companies in our benchmark research are telling candidates the salary without them having to ask 22% more often than all other companies combined. And their interview perception of fairness was 26% higher than all other companies.

HR and talent acquisition leaders, recruiters, hiring managers and business leaders can make a positive difference overall by elevating and promoting a quality candidate experience — from pre-application to onboarding — every chance they get. That should always be recruiting priority number one.

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# EXECUTIVE BRIEF:

## Candidate Experience by Gender, Generation, Race & Ethnicity

Talent Board's 2022 candidate experience benchmark research again revealed that women, people of color and younger candidates rated their candidate experiences more positively than older candidates, male candidates and white/Caucasian candidates did. This most likely has to do with more inclusive language and examples of diversity that employers are bringing to their careers sites, candidate communication, job ads and other marketing collateral for their employment brands. This is true around the world in our data, although in this brief, we'll focus more on our North American research ratings.

The recruitment marketing content rated highest by women, people of color and younger candidates in our benchmark research this year included:

- Company values (96%)
- Diversity and inclusion (87%)
- Employee testimonials (85%)
- Why people want to work there (78%)

*Table 1. Referral and Relationship NPS Ratings by Demographic*

| Referral NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 20 | 21 |
| Female | 27 | 26 |
| Nonbinary | 1 | 3 |
| Boomer | 17 | 16 |
| Generation X | 17 | 18 |
| Millennial | 22 | 24 |
| Generation Z | 29 | 31 |
| White/Caucasian | 19 | 19 |
| Black/African American | 31 | 31 |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 28 | 28 |
| Asian | 25 | 31 |
| Native American/Alaskan Native | 15 | 21 |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 30 | 43 |

| Relationship NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 16 | 16 |
| Female | 25 | 22 |
| Nonbinary | -1 | 0 |
| Boomer | 10 | 9 |
| Generation X | 12 | 12 |
| Millennial | 18 | 20 |
| Generation Z | 32 | 33 |
| White/Caucasian | 16 | 15 |
| Black/African American | 28 | 27 |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 26 | 24 |
| Asian | 21 | 25 |
| Native American/Alaskan Native | 16 | 17 |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 28 | 36 |

## NPS Ratings Tell the Story Again

This is the second year Talent Board has asked candidates who participated in our benchmark research to identify their race and ethnicity in addition to gender and generation, which we've been asking about for years. The strongest NPS ratings for those willing to refer others (and those willing to continue a relationship with an employer even when they don't get hired) are among women, people of color and younger candidates (see Table 1).

These NPS ratings are lower overall this year due to most of the candidates in our research not getting hired, but females are 30% more likely to refer others this year based on their referral NPS ratings. Generation Z candidates are over 50% more likely to refer others, and Black candidates are nearly 50% more likely to refer others than white candidates.

How these candidates perceive their recruiting experiences may or may not translate into positive employee experiences. We don't know for certain because we aren't measuring what happens once a new employee starts. But it's clear from the data above that investing in DE&I recruitment marketing continues to pay off for employers through a better candidate experience for traditionally underrepresented groups.

This investment can also produce backlash from those who feel they aren't being heard or represented because others are, even if that perception is false (see the Harvard Business Review article "To Avoid DEI Backlash, Focus on Changing Systems — Not People"). For individuals who feel their own best interests are being challenged and compromised, they may react negatively to DE&I initiatives to protect their own sense of value and self-esteem.

But for those who felt seen, acknowledged and a sense of "belonging" to the organizations they applied to, their positive sentiment regarding their experiences was higher, as was their perception of fairness.

## The Importance of Perceived Fairness

When candidates feel like their overall experience is a fair one (i.e., they're truly "in the running" for jobs they're qualified for), they tend to rate their experiences more positively regardless of their gender, ethnicity, race or age — particularly when they're given direct feedback and told definitively when they're no longer being considered for the job. Their perception can tell them their experience is fairer and more positive, whether that's objectively true or not. Their perception and ratings go even higher when candidates receive steady communication and engagement activities from an employer at appropriate times during their experience.

It almost goes without saying that candidates who actually get the jobs they apply to will rate their experiences higher than those who don't. So, looking closely at ratings from candidates who didn't get hired, especially those from historically marginalized groups, can tell you a lot about the perceived fairness during the recruiting process.

Take screening and interviewing for example. What's clear is that women, people of color (mostly) and younger candidates (Gen Z) expressed a higher level of perceived fairness toward assessments they took and the interviews they went through (see Table 2).

**When candidates feel like their overall experience is a fair one (i.e., they're truly "in the running" for jobs they're qualified for), they tend to rate their experiences more positively regardless of their gender, ethnicity, race or age — particularly when they're given direct feedback and told definitively when they're no longer being considered for the job.**

Some key takeaways here include:

- Job simulations had the highest level of perceived fairness overall for all candidates, along with reviewing and responding to case studies.

- Females had a 27% higher perception of assessment fairness than males did. Besides the more common general screening questions, experience questionnaires and job-specific questions (i.e., can you do these things, etc.), the most common comprehensive assessments females were given this year in our research were behavioral and/or personality assessments and job simulations.

- Gen Z had a much higher perception of assessment fairness than all other generations — 65% higher than the next-highest generation (millennials). The most common comprehensive assessments here were also behavioral and/or personality assessments and job simulations. Gen Z also had a 65% higher perception of interview fairness than the next two highest generations (millennials and Gen X).

- Expectations and complexity of interviews vary based on experience level (new candidates entering the market versus those who have been in the job market longer) and most likely impacted perception across generations.

- Black and Hispanic candidates had a much higher perception of assessment fairness than white candidates — 60% higher overall. The most common comprehensive assessments here were also behavioral and/or personality assessments and job simulations. Black and Hispanic candidates also had a 45% higher perception of interview fairness than White candidates.

- Female, Black, Hispanic and Gen Z candidates had significantly lower resentment rates than the other demographic groups. Resentment refers to candidates who said they will never engage the employer again based on having a poor candidate experience.

- There were no significant differences in fairness ratings when candidates across groups were asked for feedback, were provided feedback or were encouraged to apply for another job.

*Table 2. Referral and Relationship NPS Ratings by Demographic*

| | Assessment Fairness NPS | Interview Fairness NPS | When Process Ended, Asked for Feedback % | Feedback Provided % | Encouraged to Apply for Another Job % | Resentment Rate % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 39 | 36 | 13% | 26% | 51% | 14% |
| Female | 51 | 38 | 13% | 26% | 49% | 10% |
| Nonbinary | 36 | 20 | 14% | 27% | 35% | 17% |
| Boomer | 17 | 34 | 9% | 27% | 51% | 15% |
| Generation X | 21 | 29 | 11% | 26% | 49% | 16% |
| Millennial | 36 | 29 | 14% | 24% | 47% | 15% |
| Generation Z | 71 | 57 | 24% | 26% | 52% | 5% |
| White/Caucasian | 33 | 31 | 11% | 25% | 48% | 14% |
| Black/African American | 62 | 49 | 18% | 30% | 56% | 8% |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 60 | 50 | 15% | 26% | 49% | 8% |
| Asian | 44 | 40 | 19% | 30% | 57% | 13% |
| Native American/ Alaskan Native | 39 | 30 | 13% | 22% | 47% | 14% |

It's important to note here that we have to be careful about how much we infer in what we find in our benchmark research data each year. There are too many variables we can't account for that may or may not be affecting the candidate experience, especially for underrepresented and marginalized groups. For example, although the data shows that Black and Hispanic candidates have a much higher perception of interview fairness, most candidates in our data consistently received similar interview prep ahead of time (interview agenda, etc.) and post-interview (follow-up, etc.). So we cannot infer that interview preparation is having a major impact on perceived fairness — but we cannot rule it out, either.

However, when candidates felt seen and heard, and believed they were able to convey their skills and experiences adequately, their positive sentiment increased, as did their perception of fairness. Historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have experienced bias, discrimination and micro-agressions that impacted their perception and sense of well-being (and they still do today). When more consistent and timely communication and feedback loops, micro-affirmations and other touch points are inserted into the candidate experience, it's possible that the increased positivity is greater than it would be for groups who experienced less bias previously.

No matter what, we do know that the highest-rated companies in our benchmark research (CandE Winners) have a 22% higher perception of assessment fairness rating and a 10% higher perception of interview fairness rating for all candidates. Across the candidate journey, CandE Winners are more consistent and timely with their process structure, communication and feedback loops, optimizing their recruiting technology stack and so much more. You'll find all those differentiators throughout our annual benchmark research reports.

**When we consider the top marketing content that diverse candidates prefer (company values, diversity and inclusion and why people want to work there), their willingness to increase their relationship with an employer increases by 22%, regardless of whether they were hired.**

## Investing in DE&I Can Make a Recruiting and Hiring Difference

Criticism persists that employers aren't doing enough to diagnose and resolve inequities in their businesses (and the world). Since the start of the pandemic and the social unrest around inequality and inequity, more employers have moved to improve their DE&I. But to date, not nearly enough have done so.

That's a problem, because with fewer candidates available to fill open jobs, job candidates (and employees) want to feel good about their potential employers. They also want to feel represented by, included in and feel they belong to the company culture they may be joining.

According to a recent Indeed and Glassdoor survey:

- 62% of U.S. workers said they would consider rejecting a job offer or leaving a company if they didn't think their manager (or potential manager) supported DE&I initiatives.
- 74% said that corporate investment in DE&I is "very important" or "somewhat important" when considering a new job.

When we consider the top marketing content that diverse candidates prefer (company values, diversity and inclusion and why people want to work there), their willingness to increase their relationship with an employer increases by 22%, regardless of whether they were hired.

When it's clear that an employer's values are lived with authenticity and transparency, that they embrace inclusive recruiting and hiring practices and that they value a quality employee experience, it's a win for everyone, not just underrepresented groups.

Values are a high personal and professional priority among the candidates we surveyed this year. The highest-rated companies in our candidate experience benchmark research (CandE Winners) have a 31% higher NPS rating in the research/attract stage (56 compared to 41 for all companies in North America). This includes providing content around company values — something that's never been more valuable to candidates in our research. Company values jumped to the number one type of marketing content consumed during jobs research in 2022, with 48% of all candidates citing it as most important, up an incredible 109% from 2021.

In a world that's still fractured from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's obvious that candidates are seeking greater alignment between their own values and those of their employers, and the same goes for current employees reviewing their own values and priorities. We're all coping with greater uncertainty, so finding a workplace where we feel we truly belong because we're seen and heard has been the great existential crisis for the past few years. That's exactly why employers must commit and recommit to these values and DE&I in their recruiting and hiring.

# ATTRACT

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### What It Is

*The pre-application stage of identifying and engaging with candidates before they apply for a position.*

The candidate experience begins during talent attraction and sourcing, well before a potential candidate applies for a job. In fact, Talent Board believes that the candidate experience is a 24/7 interactive experience, whether for passive candidates or those actively looking for a job.

Onboarding, overall candidate experience and diversity and inclusion are the top three recruiting initiatives or activities employers tell us they're planning for in 2023. Even with the candidate market cooling and the unfortunate layoffs in tech, attracting candidates and retaining employees continued to be a challenge in 2022.

Employer branding is still top of mind in the CandE community, coming in again at number six on the 2023 recruiting focus list. The employer brand is a big part of the reason why someone wants to work for an organization. It encompasses the culture and the employee value proposition. A strong, descriptive and transparent brand will help companies attract talent and alleviate some of the challenges that recruiting the right candidates can create. Unfortunately in 2022, transparency faltered and affected candidate experience, which in turn affected the business and the brand. A weak brand can deter talent or misrepresent the employee experience, which can lead to new-hire turnover and low performance once onboard.

Candidates were also still in the driver seat in 2022, as 57% of the candidates in our North American data had some kind of previous relationships with employers, and 69% conducted their own job research, versus only 4% receiving an unsolicited email or call from a recruiter or third-party agency. Candidates dived deeper into career sites, social media and websites like Glassdoor to get a clear picture of an organization before making a connection (30% of candidates in 2022 used online groups on LinkedIn and elsewhere; 22% of candidates used review sites like Glassdoor, Indeed, Fairygodboss and others).

Candidates continue to do their own research. They want to be prepared and take ownership of their journey, and organizations also need to be prepared. With more job openings this year than available candidates, companies need to provide clear and consistent information so candidates can self-select based on their interests and needs.

### Attraction Highlights

- Over 80,000 candidates said they researched a job and employer.
- Research stage had a 3.7 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 41 NPS rating (up from 2021).
- CandE Winners had a 4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 56 NPS rating (down from 2021).
- The top three resources found to be the most valuable when researching companies were career sites, LinkedIn career pages and referrals.
- The top three types of marketing content found to be the most valuable before applying were company values, company culture and product/services information.
- The top three types of job content found to be the most valuable before applying were job descriptions, details of application, next steps and benefit details.
- 41% of candidates spent one to two hours researching jobs.
- Only 24% of candidates were invited to provide feedback at this stage.
- 74% of candidates completed the job application after researching.

**Employer branding is still top of mind in the CandE community, coming in for the second time at number six on the 2023 recruiting focus list.**

The following section highlights what candidates are looking for in the Attract stage, how employers are responding and what companies can learn from CandE Award Winners.

## What Candidates Want

Candidates always want three things during the pre-application stage: a clear understanding of the company culture, insight into the employee experience and a sense of connection with the overall brand. Essentially, they want to know that the information and content they receive will reflect the work they will be doing, the company and the environment in which they will work.

Candidates are looking for more content from existing employees and peers about the company culture. In 2022, 31% of candidates said they wanted career sites in multiple languages; 29% said they wanted even more information about company culture, 27% wanted more information on why employees want to work for an employer and 27% wanted more information about the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives.

This is why the employee voice is a strong one and should not be ignored during the attraction stage. In our survey, candidates were asked to identify what is most valuable among research channels, marketing information and content.

## Research Channels

Year after year, career sites prove to be the most valuable channel for candidates when researching an employer. They're still the first destination once a candidate has identified an employer and a job, although it's down 21% from 2019, with just 42% of candidates citing career sites as the most valuable research channel in 2022.

LinkedIn career pages were again in second place, with 30% of candidates using them to research jobs, down slightly from 2021. And 27% of candidates cited online groups such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Yahoo as a valuable channel, up slightly from 2021.

**Candidates always want three things during the pre-application stage: a clear understanding of the company culture, insight into the employee experience and a sense of connection with the overall brand.**

*Table 1. Candidate Research Channels (Partial List)*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Company career site | 42% | 46% | 46% | 53% | 60% |
| LinkedIn career page(s) | 30% | 32% | 30% | 28% | 31% |
| Online groups (LinkedIn, Facebook, Yahoo other) | 27% | 25% | 29% | 25% | 18% |
| Job boards | 26% | 26% | 30% | 28% | 26% |
| Employee, candidate or customer referral | 22% | 25% | 21% | 25% | 30% |
| Employer reviews (Glassdoor, Indeed etc.) | 22% | 22% | 24% | 27% | 22% |
| Mobile career site or app | 22% | 17% | 25% | 17% | N/A |
| Career fair/job fair (multiple companies) | 16% | 13% | 16% | 13% | 3% |
| Third-party job notifications or agents | 16% | 15% | 21% | 18% | 32% |
| Facebook career page(s) | 11% | 10% | 14% | 8% | 5% |

Although referrals were down as an important research channel for candidates this year, the importance of referrals for companies cannot be understated (see Table 1).

Job candidates might also have an existing relationship with the companies they're interested in when they begin their job search. Some of these relationships might affect their final key candidate experience ratings (see Table 2). It's clear that candidates who were current employees and those who were brand advocates have the highest key ratings overall, and both ratings are up from 2021. This is interesting because of the volatile, competitive candidate market in 2022 and the fact that employees were still leaving their jobs in larger numbers.

What's key is that existing relationships and brand affinity definitely affected candidate experience for the better in 2022. This, in turn, can impact the quality of referrals that affect all B2C and B2B companies.

## It's clear that candidates who were current employees and those who were brand advocates have the highest key ratings overall.

### Net Promoter Score CandE Rating Conversion

**For example, when converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). When we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:**

*4 — Extremely Likely*
3 — Likely
2 — Unlikely
*1— Definitely Not*

If a company had 35% of its candidates respond that they were extremely likely to apply again, and 15% said they would definitely not, that company would have an NPS score of 20.

**We simplify it even further for our CandE benchmark research and group results as follows:**

- **AMAZING** (scores above 50) are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.
- **OKAY** (scores between 0-50) are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.
- **NOT SO GOOD** (negative scores) are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

*Table 2. Final Refer and Relationship NPS Scores of Candidates Based on Their Relationship*

| Referral NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| I am a current employee of the company | 41 | 38 |
| I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or innovation | 30 | 31 |
| I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company | 25 | 25 |
| I was a customer of the company using their products/services | 22 | 22 |
| I was a past employee of the company | 17 | 15 |
| I have/had no relationship with the company | 9 | 7 |

| Relationship NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| I am a current employee of the company | 36 | 33 |
| I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or innovation | 27 | 27 |
| I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company | 20 | 19 |
| I was a customer of the company using their products/services | 25 | 24 |
| I was a past employee of the company | 12 | 8 |
| I have/had no relationship with the company | 6 | 2 |

*Table 3. Preferred Marketing Content for Candidates (Partial List)*

| | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Company values | 48% | 23% | 27% | 24% |
| Career sites in multiple languages | 31% | 35% | 32% | 28% |
| Company culture | 29% | 35% | 32% | 39% |
| Products/services information | 28% | 23% | 27% | 24% |
| Diversity and inclusion | 27% | 26% | 25% | 24% |
| Answers to "why" people want to work here | 27% | 29% | 32% | 29% |
| Financial information | 24% | 20% | 22% | 19% |
| Answers to "why" people stay here | 23% | 25% | 27% | 26% |
| Employee testimonials | 21% | 25% | 27% | 26% |
| Frequently asked questions (FAQs) | 18% | 19% | 22% | 20% |

## Marketing Content

When asked to identify the most valuable marketing content, company values jumped to number one, with 48% of candidates citing it as most important, up an incredible 109% from 2021. It's clear that many people reevaluated what they wanted to do and where they wanted to do it during the pandemic, culminating in the search for aligned values. Career sites in multiple languages and company culture rounded out the top three types of marketing content (see Table 3).

What's clear again in 2022 is that candidates wanted a high level of transparency regarding the organizations in which they were interested — especially on how companies have treated their employees during COVID-19 and its continued impact on recruiting, hiring and the ability to work remotely (for those who could). This insight also helps when candidates refer others to the same organization.

Candidates also want to understand employers' diversity and inclusion initiatives, and that has increased in importance by 35% since 2018. The social unrest and ongoing inequities for marginalized groups came to the forefront in 2020, and our data has shown employers investing in more DE&I programs since. Younger candidates (Gen Z and millennials), females and people of color have all had a much higher positive and fair candidate experience during the past few years in our research.

Sadly, employee testimonials have dropped in importance to candidates by 43% since 2018. This may mean that candidates have doubts about the validity of testimonials controlled by corporate messaging. If the past two years have taught us anything, it's that most candidates control their destiny, at least for now.

**When asked to identify the most valuable marketing content, company values jumped to number one, with 48% of candidates citing it as most important, up an incredible 109% from 2021.**

## Job-Related Content

When conducting research, job descriptions are always key and have been the number one source of job content for candidates because they describe the skills and experience companies seek. Surprisingly, fewer candidates this year said that knowing more about the details of the application and next steps was valuable (38%), but this number is still important. It's also something we find, each year, that many companies aren't consistent about (see Table 4). This is something we usually see the highest-rated CandE Winners communicate before candidates apply.

Salary and benefits continue to be important to candidates this year due to the competitive candidate market. Candidates and employees this year have demanded to work according to their preferences and want higher pay, flexibility and other benefits and incentives.

Candidates also want to understand what a successful candidate profile looks like for the job, and that increased in importance by 75% this year. Career path examples offered to new hires are also differentiators for candidates, and that increased in importance by 29% this year.

**Salary and benefits continue to be important to candidates this year due to the competitive candidate market. Candidates and employees this year have demanded to work according to their preferences and want higher pay, flexibility and other benefits and incentives.**

*Table 4. Preferred Job Content for Candidates (Partial List)*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job descriptions | 66% | 63% | 66% | 64% |
| Details of application and next steps | 38% | 44% | 50% | 42% |
| Jobs currently open | 39% | 46% | 42% | N/A |
| Benefit details | 35% | 28% | 27% | 28% |
| Salary ranges and compensation structure | 32% | 24% | 26% | 24% |
| Career path examples | 22% | 17% | 18% | 17% |
| Employee day in the life (job overview) | 15% | 16% | 16% | 15% |
| Successful candidate profile for the job | 14% | 8% | 9% | 10% |
| Frequently asked questions about recruiting/ applicant process (FAQs) | 11% | 18% | 16% | 13% |
| Overview of recruiting process for this job | 10% | 9% | N/A | N/A |

*Table 5. Critical Online/Interactive Ways Employers Engage with Candidates Who Have Not Yet Applied (Partial List -- General Use)*

| | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Career site (primary) | 77% | 70% | 76% | 68% |
| LinkedIn recruiter outreach | 67% | 60% | 63% | 58% |
| Job board/other site company pages (job/career specific) | 54% | 54% | 52% | 53% |
| Career site (micro-sites) | 38% | 30% | 32% | 29% |
| SEO/SEM paid advertising (social and search) | 33% | 25% | 32% | 27% |
| Videos (across websites and social channels) | 29% | 37% | 31% | 26% |
| Mobile career/job apps | 26% | 33% | 29% | 26% |
| Talent community | 25% | 30% | 30% | 31% |
| Facebook pages | 19% | 36% | 26% | 23% |
| Mobile text-messaging campaigns | 18% | 25% | 32% | 27% |

## What Employers Are Doing

The gap between what employers are doing and what candidates want persists, although it was more aligned in 2021 and 2022 (see perception gaps in the Executive Brief on Business Impact). Overall, employers must consider how the attitudes, expectations and behaviors of increasingly sophisticated candidates continue to shift, especially when it's still a candidate market like in 2022.

When asked where employers are engaging with candidates in the attraction stages, career sites remain number one for another year. 77% of companies consider these sites to be critical to recruiting success, up 10% from 2021 (see Table 5). This is also where candidates go first after they identify a company they're interested in applying to. Micro-sites were also utilized more this year by employers to market their brand and their jobs. In addition, LinkedIn recruiter outreach increased by 12% from 2021.

What's interesting is that video usage is down this year with the companies that participated, although video is still used by nearly a third of employers. We saw the same trend with mobile text-messaging campaigns. However, 62% of employers said they used a text-based recruiting system this year, a rate that has increased steadily since 2020 (see Table 6). Text-messaging deliverability is also more reliable than email messaging. Not all candidates have email addresses, much less check them with regularity.

Also, as it relates to pre-application activities, job distribution and social media distribution systems are still heavily utilized by employers. So are sourcing/mining systems, although employers tell us utilization is down 11% from 2021.

It's also important to note here how AI and other smart technologies are helping employers improve recruiting and hiring. We've seen a 31% increase in utilizing chatbots since 2020 (see Table 7). The highest-rated CandE Winners this year are all utilizing more AI technologies than all other companies combined.

More employers are realizing that it's a competitive differentiator to communicate earlier with candidates, even before they apply. Chatbots are being used to answer general employment questions, and this frees up recruiting teams to have more hands-on time with potential candidates already in play. Conversational AI is the next step in communicating with candidates throughout the recruiting process, ensuring a higher level of automated engagement and communication.

Virtual career fairs with smart matching technology have also increased the past two years, primarily because the pandemic dramatically reduced in-person events. 64% of employers are utilizing these activities. And although there are more in-person career fairs in the second half of 2022 and more planned for 2023, we'll see a primarily hybrid model of recruiting events going forward.

Analyzing job postings to remove bias and insert more inclusive language increased 23% from 2021 with employers. These smart technologies can help employers improve their job description development, which could attract more qualified candidates willing to apply.

What's surprising is the decreased utilization of job simulations, down 19% from 2020. To be able to assess whether a candidate can do the job prior to actually doing the job is an important differentiator for high-churn positions like call centers and customer service representatives.

As organizations look to close this gap and become more aligned with the talent they want to attract, the following section contains recommendations and lessons learned from the 2022 CandE Award Winners.

*Table 6. Recruiting Technologies That Employers Currently Use (Partial List)*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Applicant tracking system (ATS) | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Background screening system | 98% | 99% | 100% |
| Job distribution system | 91% | 93% | 93% |
| Onboarding system | 89% | 83% | 79% |
| Social media distribution system | 84% | 84% | 84% |
| Video interviewing system | 84% | 85% | 79% |
| Reference-checking system | 79% | 84% | 83% |
| Sourcing/mining system | 79% | 89% | 90% |
| Interview scheduling system | 77% | 83% | 80% |
| Assessment/testing system | 76% | 81% | 79% |
| Text-based recruiting system | 62% | 61% | 57% |

*Table 7. Enhancing Recruiting Efforts with AI Technologies*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Virtual career fairs that match candidates and screen/interview | 64% | 59% | N/A |
| Analyzing job postings for unintentional bias and offering recommendations on how to create job listings with more inclusive language | 59% | 48% | N/A |
| Video interviewing with assessments | 58% | 58% | 48% |
| Assessing candidates to identify team personality and culture fit | 56% | 59% | 66% |
| Chatbot recruiting automation (Q&A "customer-service" on career site) | 51% | 42% | 39% |
| Pre-qualifying candidates from collective candidate databases | 50% | 48% | 46% |
| Sourcing existing candidate database with a virtual assistant | 49% | 30% | 34% |
| Sourcing candidates from external sources with a virtual assistant | 39% | 38% | 40% |
| Assessing candidates with job simulations for performance prediction | 43% | 49% | 53% |
| Measuring and predicting employee job changing behavior | 28% | 37% | 33% |
| Machine learning that ensures the application and screening processes remove bias and identifies the best candidates for roles | 21% | 20% | N/A |

## Key Recommendations
## What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Companies that improve the candidate experience and provide more value to candidates in the attraction stage have a competitive advantage. There are several examples below that help differentiate the 2022 CandE Award Winners and provide guidance to organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the attraction stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

### COMPANY VALUES TOPS CANDIDATE RESEARCH

CandE-Winning organizations have a 31% higher NPS rating in the research/attract stage (56 compared to 41 for all companies in North America). This includes providing content around company values — something that's never been more valuable to candidates in our research. Values jumped to the number one type of marketing content consumed during research, with 48% of all candidates citing it as most important, up an incredible 109% from 2021.

That's followed by career sites in multiple languages (it is a multicultural world today), company culture information, products/services information, diversity and inclusion information and answers to why people want to work at the company. When asked where employers are engaging with candidates in the attraction stages, career sites remain number one for another consecutive year, with 77% of companies considering their sites to be critical to recruiting success, especially CandE Winners.

### CANDIDATE REFERRALS AND BRAND AMBASSADORS

While only 22% of candidates in 2022 cited referrals as a valuable research channel, down 12% from 2021, referred candidates said they would increase their relationship with potential employers 57% more (apply again, refer others, make purchases if and when applicable), compared with those who conducted their own search or those who received unsolicited outreach from a recruiter.

And the more positive the candidate experience, the more likely candidates are to refer others — CandE Winners have a 31% higher willingness to refer others NPS rating (26 compared to 19 for all companies in North America). Employers hire 20% to 40% of their workforce from referrals, so referrals are quite the critical competitive differentiator, especially the 2022 candidate market. Current employees are the brand ambassadors whose referral NPS ratings are the highest versus any other current or previous relationship with the company.

### TECHNOLOGY DRIVES CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

66% of CandE Winners said they used a text-based recruiting system this year, slightly more than all other companies combined in our research, and this has increased steadily since 2020. Job alerts and text-to-apply notifications can increase positive candidate sentiment and perception of fairness due to consistent communication. Text-messaging deliverability is also more reliable than email messaging due to spam filters and candidates not checking their emails regularly.

Also, AI and other smart technologies are helping employers with a greater hiring volume improve their recruiting and candidate communications. We've seen a 31% increase in utilizing chatbots since 2020 and the highest-rated CandE Winners this year are utilizing more AI technologies than all other companies combined. More employers are realizing that it's a competitive differentiator to communicate earlier with candidates, even before they apply. Chatbots are being used to answer general employment questions, and this frees up the recruiting teams to have more hands-on time with potential candidates who decide to apply. Conversational AI is here now, as well, helping candidates throughout the recruiting process and ensuring a higher level of automated engagement and communication.

## The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices

| ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND | APPLICATION | SCREEN/ INTERVIEW | NOT SELECTED | OFFER | NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES** | | **FEWER CANDIDATES** | **MOST CANDIDATES** | **10% OF CANDIDATES ON AVERAGE** | |

| ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND | APPLICATION | SCREEN/ INTERVIEW | NOT SELECTED | OFFER | NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Align employer and corporate brands<br>• Market culture, testimonials, diversity, inclusion, values<br>• Automation to answer questions (chatbots)<br>• Referrals and brand ambassadors<br>• Customer-centric approach<br>• Ask for candidate feedback | • Apply for your own jobs<br>• Different process for internal mobility<br>• Mobile apply<br>• Personalize the experience by job type<br>• Ensure personable acknowledgment and closure<br>• Expectation setting and next steps<br>• Ask for candidate feedback | • Leverage AI, automation screening and tests<br>• Prep candidates for video interviews<br>• Ensure candidates can present skills and experience<br>• Stick to schedules<br>• Expectation setting and next steps<br>• Ask for candidate feedback<br>• Offer feedback<br>• Nurture silver medalists | • Timely automated and recruiter and/or hiring manager rejections<br>• Thank candidates for their time<br>• Ask for candidate feedback<br>• Nurture silver medalists | • Timely offers after final interviews<br>• Negotiate wisely if necessary<br>• Expectation setting and next steps<br>• Ask for candidate feedback<br>• Offer feedback<br>• Nurture declined offers | • Be accountable for the entire hiring process<br>• Engage new hires before day one<br>• Ask for new-hire feedback<br>• Offer feedback<br>• Expectation setting and next steps post-hire<br>• Keep re-recruiting to retain<br>• Shift employee experience |

**NOT SELECTED**    **DECLINED**

## The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations

**Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:**

| ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND | APPLICATION | SCREEN/ INTERVIEW | NOT SELECTED | OFFER | NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES** | | **FEWER CANDIDATES** | **MOST CANDIDATES** | **10% OF CANDIDATES ON AVERAGE** | |
| • Career site<br>• Chatbots<br>• Video job descriptions<br>• Candidate relationship management (CRM) system<br>• Programmatic advertising<br>• Job distribution<br>• Virtual sourcing<br>• Candidate survey system | • Applicant tracking system (ATS)<br>• Assessments and tests<br>• Text-based recruiting<br>• Chatbots and conversational AI<br>• Candidate survey system | • ATS<br>• Video interviewing<br>• Assessments and tests<br>• Chatbots and conversational AI<br>• Interview scheduling<br>• Candidate survey system | • ATS<br>• CRM<br>• Talent network/ community<br>• Candidate survey system | • ATS<br>• Reference checking<br>• Candidate survey system | • Onboarding system<br>• Background checks<br>• Candidate survey system |

**NOT SELECTED**    **DECLINED**

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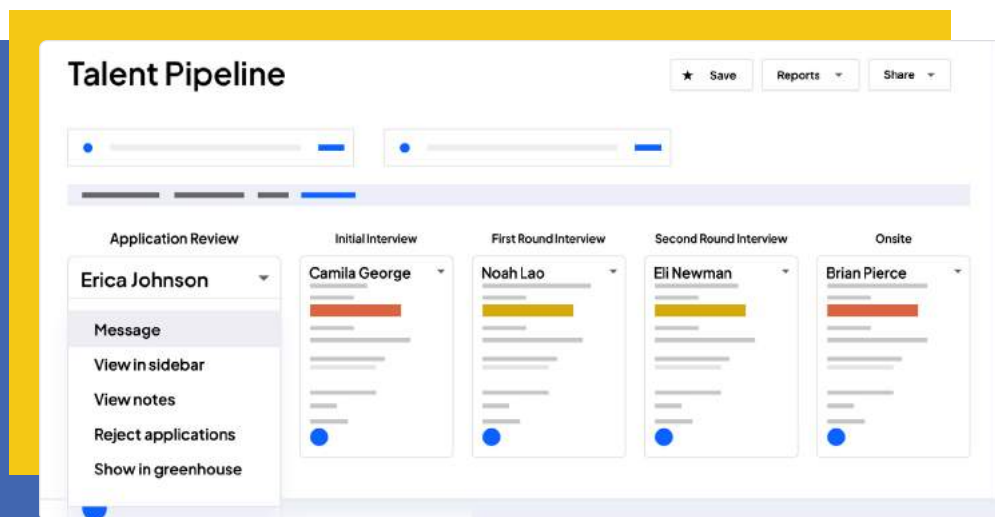


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# RECRUIT
## Application

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### What It Is

*The process candidates go through when filling out and submitting a job application.*

The application process is driven primarily by whatever applicant tracking system is being utilized and, thankfully, has improved significantly. Recruiters are able to handle an increased volume of applications and better manage the administrative side of the application process. Plus, automated communications can be triggered at various disposition stages. Screening and assessment tools can be integrated throughout the application process. And applicants can be notified of their status and connected via the ATS, recruitment marketing systems and CRMs.

It's still not without its limitations and shortcomings, however. In 2022, 34% of North America candidates reported that they had not heard back from employers two months after they applied, which is unfortunately up 48% from 2021.

When we ask candidates about the last step they remember completing in the recruiting process, 55% of them said they had applied, and 7% said they had been informed they did not get the job. This means that a good portion of candidates simply don't remember receiving the automated message telling them they weren't going any further. Or, worse, they didn't actually hear back after they first applied. This is a trend we see year after year.

Despite the number of unqualified candidates who apply for

**In 2022, 34% of North America candidates reported that they had not heard back from employers two months after they applied, which is unfortunately up 48% from 2021.**

### Key Takeaways

- Over 52,000 candidates said they applied for a job.
- Application stage had a 3.7 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 44 NPS rating (up from 2021).
- CandE Winners had a 4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 59 NPS rating (down from 2021).
- 48% of candidates applied for hourly jobs.
- 36% of candidates applied on a mobile device, up 38% from 2021.
- 60% of candidates said it took 15 minutes or less to complete the job application, 11% more than in 2021.
- Only 35% of candidates were invited to provide feedback at this stage.
- 34% of candidates were still waiting one to two-plus months on next steps after they applied, 48% more than in 2021.

The recruit stage involves activities that help identify the right fit, converting interest into hires as candidates move from application to final interview. What sets successful companies apart from the competition is their ability to create a consistent and transparent candidate experience throughout the following processes:

- **APPLICATION:** The process candidates go through when filling out and submitting a job application.
- **SCREEN AND INTERVIEW:** The evaluation stages that help recruiters and hiring managers determine the best candidates to hire for the organization.

jobs every year, without some level of communication being provided, the candidate's perception of that employer can be negatively impacted. And regardless of the level of automation, providing definitive closure by letting candidates know they won't be pursued any further can help keep the perception of fairness at least neutral, if not positive.

Of course, not all employers want everyone to apply again, even with application rates trending lower for many companies in 2022. However, most employers do want those candidates who could be deemed as "future fit" to apply for other jobs.

Thankfully, more employers have collapsed the time it takes to initially apply, with 60% of all candidates saying it took less than 15 minutes, an 11% improvement on 2021. And in 2022, only 15% of employers received over 100 applications per job, which is much lower than in 2021 and indicative of lower application volumes overall in the past year (see Table 9).

On average, most candidates who apply for all position types are not qualified. It's no surprise that high-volume hiring companies can become cynical about the vast number of unqualified candidates. However, acknowledging applicant interest and ensuring definitive closure always leads to the best possible candidate experience outcomes for employers and a more positive impact on the business and the brand.

## What Candidates Want

The majority of candidates in this year's survey (92%) were again external, and 48% applied for hourly positions. The remaining were mostly entry-level professional, professional and management candidates. Even with higher attrition this year, candidates expected a simple and straightforward process with some level of acknowledgment of next steps after they apply. Only 29% said that happened for them this year, the same as in 2021.

Only 58% of candidates said they received an automated "thank you" message, which is interesting since more companies automate the application acknowledgement (as well as the rejection notice for unqualified candidates). We speculate that email deliverability gets more difficult every year, and that's why we're seeing mobile text-based notifications increasing each year.

Also, only 33% had a process indicator showing completion, and only 23% of candidates were told how long the application process would take. All these things can add perceived fairness to the application process.

Unfortunately, 34% of candidates were still waiting one to two-plus months on next steps after they applied, 48% more than in 2021. For CandE Winners, only 26% of candidates were still waiting because they disposition more consistently shortly after being deemed not qualified.

*Table 8. Average % of Applications Companies Receive Per Job*

| Number of Applications Per Job | Average % of Applications Per Job |
|---|---|
| 1-25 | 24% |
| 26-50 | 36% |
| 51-100 | 25% |
| 101-200 | 6% |
| More than 200 | 9% |

*Table 9. Types of Screening and Evaluation Candidates Received During the Application Process*

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| General screening questions | 86% | 87% |
| Detailed questionnaire about work history and preferences | 78% | 79% |
| Job-specific questions | 58% | 58% |
| Behavioral and/or personality assessments | 42% | 38% |
| Simulated job tasks | 27% | 25% |
| Test (reading, math, etc.) | 16% | 15% |
| Review and respond to a case study | 15% | 13% |
| Games or puzzles | 8% | 7% |

## Net Promoter Score CandE Rating Conversion

**For example, when converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). When we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:**

*4 — Extremely Likely*
3 — Likely
2 — Unlikely
*1— Definitely Not*

If a company had 35% of its candidates respond that they were extremely likely to apply again, and 15% said they would definitely not, that company would have an NPS score of 20.

**We simplify it even further for our CandE benchmark research and group results as follows:**

- **AMAZING** (scores above 50) are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.

- **OKAY** (scores between 0-50) are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.

- **NOT SO GOOD** (negative scores) are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

# Not all positions have the same candidate experiences, and it's clear that some job types have more perceived positive experiences and much greater negative experiences than others.

In fact, the highest-rated companies in our research disposition or move people along within three to five days after applying. A clear and definitive yet personable automated rejection email and/or text notification is all that's needed here.

Candidates want simplicity when they apply for a job. They want to understand the questions they are being asked and have an opportunity to share their skills and experience. More importantly, they want to be able to do this quickly and easily. As mentioned above, the time it takes to complete an application has been reduced. And while nearly all employers said they offered mobile apply the past few years, only 36% of candidates said they applied via mobile, even though that is actually 38% more than in 2021.

Again, perceived fairness continues to be a differentiator in candidate experience, and the application process is a key crossroad for this issue. The application process is as far as the majority of applicants make it today in the recruiting process. The more engagement activities that occur with candidates, the higher the positive ratings go, and the higher the level of perceived fairness.

*Table 10. Final Refer and Relationship NPS Ratings of Candidates Based on Job Types Applied For*

| Referral NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Paid or unpaid internship | 24 | 23 |
| Contract | 27 | 23 |
| Hourly | 26 | 23 |
| Salary, entry-level | 16 | 17 |
| Salary, technical position (2+ years) | 11 | 14 |
| Salary, nontechnical position (2+ years) | 12 | 14 |
| Management | 8 | 8 |
| Senior leadership | 0 | 3 |

| Relationship NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Paid or unpaid internship | 19 | 21 |
| Contract | 21 | 18 |
| Hourly | 25 | 22 |
| Salary, entry-level | 13 | 13 |
| Salary, technical position (2+ years) | 5 | 8 |
| Salary, nontechnical position (2+ years) | 7 | 8 |
| Management | 4 | 2 |
| Senior leadership | -5 | -4 |

Nearly 90% of all candidates received general screening questions during the application process, while only 8% had to solve games or puzzles (see Table 9). Overall, there's little difference between 2022 and 2021 on the types of screening employers delivered to candidates.

Not all positions have the same candidate experiences, and it's clear that some job types have more perceived positive experiences and much greater negative experiences than others. When we look at the job types applied for, the refer NPS rating from hourly candidates is 75% higher than professional hires in 2022 (see Table 11). Obviously, the complexity and time to hire varies across job types, but we would still argue that timely communication and feedback could tighten the perception gaps we see in all the job type data.

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## What Employers Are Doing

Employers are measured on three areas of the application process: communication before the application process, during the application process, and after. Employers need to think about an application strategy that keeps candidates informed through a simple process that leverages the right technology. This communication needs to be consistent and frequent.

In fact, overcommunicating and ensuring fairness through engagement activities are where many CandE Winners are investing more of their time throughout the recruiting process. Like the attraction stage, however, a gap exists between how companies view the application process and how candidates experience it.

Still, more companies — including CandE Award Winners — are differentiating themselves through stronger communication about next steps, enhanced screening throughout the application process and timely dispositions. For example, many employers provide application guides with FAQs and contact information, as well as visual indicators of next steps and application status.

Time is always a major factor in the recruiting process, and the application process is no exception. The longer the time between applying and hearing back from the company, the less likely candidates are to apply again or make referrals in the future. The same goes for how long the application process takes.

One of the biggest differentiators at the application stage is the fact that the highest-rated companies in our research are dispositioning or moving forward candidates within three to five days after they apply. At most, this process takes one to two weeks. Every year, Talent Board emphasizes the fact that employers control the dials of how they respond to interested candidates, when they respond, with what frequency in which they respond and the words they respond with. Employers who

hold onto candidates until the job requisitions are filled are risking increased negative sentiment and a lower perception of fairness overall. This is a tough spot for employers because, on average, most of those candidates who apply are not qualified for the job. But it's still better to let them know and focus on those they are going to screen.

Also, when employers add screening and evaluation during the application process, that increases the ability for candidates to present skills, knowledge and experience. The more opportunities the candidates have to present their skills — general screening questions, job-specific questions, etc. — the greater their positive sentiment.

Technology also helps with prompting and engaging candidates at the application stage. When potential candidates launched the application from a text, their application 4- and 5-star rating out of 5 increased 86%. And when candidates had the ability to ask a chatbot questions, the same ratings increase occurred. These aren't the only activities that drive higher ratings by themselves. Most likely, it's a series of consistent practices that we outline each year that drive higher ratings, especially for CandE Winners.

# One of the biggest differentiators at the application stage is the fact that the highest-rated companies in our research are dispositioning or moving forward candidates within three to five days after they apply.

Ultimately, the true test of a positive candidate experience in the application stage is whether a candidate would reapply (especially for those that employers want to apply again). In 2022, 30% of candidates said they were extremely likely to apply again. For CandE Winners, it was 33%. For those candidates who gave their application experience a 4- and 5-star rating out of 5, their extreme likelihood to apply again increased by 48%.

Each year, we also recommend that employers go through their own application process from the candidates' perspective, making notes of what to improve upon (time, redundancy, outdated questions, etc.). Then, improve upon them! Of course, employers don't want everyone to apply again — just those candidates deemed future fit, silver medalists, etc., which is why the experience still matters during the application stage.

# Key Recommendations:
## What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Companies that want to improve their candidate communications will provide greater transparency and offer a simple and timely candidate-centric application process. There are several examples below that help differentiate 2022 CandE Award Winners and provide guidance to organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the application stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

### TIMELY DISPOSITIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO CANDIDATES

One of the biggest differentiators at the application stage is the fact that the highest-rated companies in our research (CandE Winners) are dispositioning or moving forward candidates within three to five days after they apply. At most, this process should take one to two weeks.

Employers who hold onto candidates until the job requisitions are filled are risking increased negative sentiment and a lower perception of fairness overall. This is a tough spot for employers because, on average, most of those candidates who apply are not qualified for the job. But it's still better to let them know and focus on those they are going to screen.
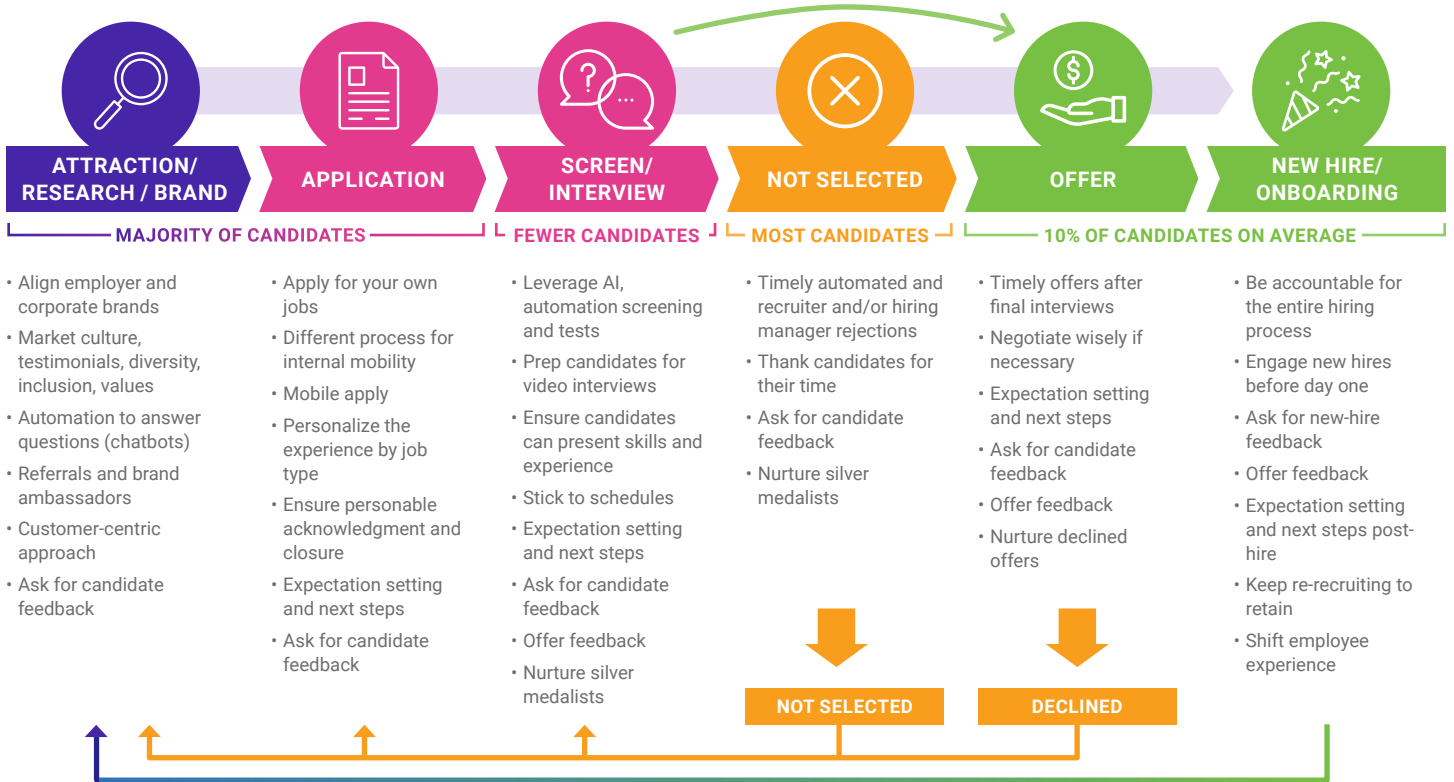
### TEXT TO APPLY AND MOBILE APPLY ARE WINS

When potential candidates launched the application from a text to their mobile devices, their application 4- and 5-star rating out of 5 increased 86%, and it's even higher for CandE Winners. And while many employers in our research offer mobile apply now, only 36% of candidates said they applied via mobile, although this is actually 38% more than in 2021. However, candidates at CandE-Winning organizations said they applied via mobile 31% more than the average for all companies, which in turn increases their willingness to apply again.

Candidates want simplicity when they apply for a job. They want to understand the questions they are being asked and have an opportunity to share their skills and experience. More importantly, they want to be able to do this quickly and easily. Mobile apply, combined with the fact that 60% of candidates said it only took 15 minutes or less to complete the job application, is a positive win for candidate experience.

### EMPLOYERS CONTROL THE DIALS

Employers control the dials of how they respond to interested candidates, when they respond, with what frequency in which they respond and the words they respond with. This includes direct communications and feedback loops. Unfortunately, 34% of candidates were still waiting one to two-plus months on next steps after they applied, 48% more than in 2021. For CandE Winners, only 26% of candidates were still waiting because they are dispositioned more consistently shortly after being deemed not qualified. Candidates at CandE-Winning organizations are also asked for feedback 18% more often than the average for all companies at the application stage. When candidates had the ability to ask chatbot questions, their application 4- and 5-star rating out of 5 increased 86%, and it's even higher for CandE Winners.

These aren't the only activities that drive higher ratings by themselves. Most likely, it's a series of consistent practices that we outline each year that drive higher ratings, especially for CandE Winners. It's important to note that the point of application is a very limited experience for most candidates. It's mostly automated, and even though organizations control the tech dials at this stage, there isn't much, if any, human interaction. Timely and personable communications is still key.

## ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND
**MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES**

- Align employer and corporate brands
- Market culture, testimonials, diversity, inclusion, values
- Automation to answer questions (chatbots)
- Referrals and brand ambassadors
- Customer-centric approach
- Ask for candidate feedback

## APPLICATION

- Apply for your own jobs
- Different process for internal mobility
- Mobile apply
- Personalize the experience by job type
- Ensure personable acknowledgment and closure
- Expectation setting and next steps
- Ask for candidate feedback

## SCREEN/ INTERVIEW
**FEWER CANDIDATES**

- Leverage AI, automation screening and tests
- Prep candidates for video interviews
- Ensure candidates can present skills and experience
- Stick to schedules
- Expectation setting and next steps
- Ask for candidate feedback
- Offer feedback
- Nurture silver medalists

## NOT SELECTED
**MOST CANDIDATES**

- Timely automated and recruiter and/or hiring manager rejections
- Thank candidates for their time
- Ask for candidate feedback
- Nurture silver medalists

**NOT SELECTED**

## OFFER
**10% OF CANDIDATES ON AVERAGE**

- Timely offers after final interviews
- Negotiate wisely if necessary
- Expectation setting and next steps
- Ask for candidate feedback
- Offer feedback
- Nurture declined offers

**DECLINED**

## NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING

- Be accountable for the entire hiring process
- Engage new hires before day one
- Ask for new-hire feedback
- Offer feedback
- Expectation setting and next steps post-hire
- Keep re-recruiting to retain
- Shift employee experience

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**Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:**

## ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND
**MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES**

- Career site
- Chatbots
- Video job descriptions
- Candidate relationship management (CRM) system
- Programmatic advertising
- Job distribution
- Virtual sourcing
- Candidate survey system

## APPLICATION

- Applicant tracking system (ATS)
- Assessments and tests
- Text-based recruiting
- Chatbots and conversational AI
- Candidate survey system

## SCREEN/ INTERVIEW
**FEWER CANDIDATES**

- ATS
- Video interviewing
- Assessments and tests
- Chatbots and conversational AI
- Interview scheduling
- Candidate survey system

## NOT SELECTED
**MOST CANDIDATES**

- ATS
- CRM
- Talent network/ community
- Candidate survey system

**NOT SELECTED**

## OFFER
**10% OF CANDIDATES ON AVERAGE**

- ATS
- Reference checking
- Candidate survey system

**DECLINED**

## NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING

- Onboarding system
- Background checks
- Candidate survey system

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# RECRUIT
## Screen and Interview

### What It Is

*The evaluation stages that helps recruiters and hiring managers determine the best candidates to hire for the organization and then disposition the rest.*

A strong connection exists between how candidates are treated during the screening and interviewing stage and whether they'll continue to associate with the business and the brand. This is where there is more investment from both the candidates and employers. By the time potential candidates make it through screening — and perhaps make it to the interview stage — positive ratings tend to increase, even if it's not the best experience. This is because when there is more communication and opportunities for engagement because candidates are "in the running," they tend to rate their experience higher.

That's not to say they won't rate employers lower if their experience is bad, because they will. It's just that this is where companies can win (or lose) with candidates they definitely want to apply again and refer others.

Through strategic recruiting, organizations can make sound investments in applicable tools, assessments and tactics, expand their local and global reach, improve the candidate experience and strengthen their overall quality of hires. In 2022, 45% of organizations said they used pre-employment assessment and selection tests prior to the interview, and only 19% did so post-interview.

Screening and interviewing are often the deciding factors in hiring a candidate. After screening all the applications and early assessments, and conducting early phone screenings and/or video interviews, this is where the final list of candidates is evaluated by the recruiters, hiring managers, potential colleagues and other leaders and individuals in the organization. When recruiters and managers have the right tools and use best practices, interviewing can be a powerful process that determines the best fit for the organization.

However, only 56% of organizations in our North American research have a structured interview process. For CandE Winners, it's 63%. An inconsistent interview process can have a negative impact on both the quality of hires and the candidate experience, especially when recruiters and hiring managers don't prepare ahead of time.

This year, more candidates said they interviewed in person again, although nearly half still said they interviewed virtually.

### Screen and Interview Key Takeaways

- Over 13,000 candidates said they were invited to be screened and interviewed.
- Interview stage had a 3.9 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 53 NPS rating (down from 2021).
- CandE Winners had a 4.1 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 63 NPS rating (down from 2021).
- 8% of candidates were scheduled for a screening event after applying (phone screen, video screen, test, assessment).
- 18% of candidates were scheduled for an interview after applying.
- 52% of screened candidates had a phone screen, down slightly from 2021.
- 47% of interviewed candidates had a live virtual interview (down slightly from 2021) versus 34% who had an in-person interview (up 55% from 2021).
- 16% of candidates were told the salary during interviews without requesting it, down 11% from 2021.
- 67% of candidates had one or two interviews total, about the same as in 2021.
- At the end of the interview, 44% of candidates were told what would happen next by recruiters and followed up with as indicated.
- Only 24% of candidates were invited to provide feedback at this stage.

Some employers fared better than others in doing this. Plus, the number one negative reason candidates withdraw themselves from the recruiting process is because their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments.

This is why, whether it's in person or virtual, the candidate experience trends positive when companies help candidates prepare, ask relevant questions and communicate with candidates throughout the interview process — all while adhering to schedules overall.

# What Candidates Want

Screening assessments and tests have been around for decades, and recent years have brought new providers bringing their products to market. Assessments and tests are used to qualify candidates — usually before the interview stage, but not always. Each year, we ask candidates and employers what types of assessments and tests they're receiving and delivering. For candidates, that ranges from general screening questions to simulated job tasks (see Table 11).

The majority are general screening questions, detailed questionnaires about work history and preferences and specific job-related questions. But how do each of these impact the candidates' perception of fairness? The questions that are perceived as the most fair to candidates are those that are the most engaging for them: measuring their possible cultural fit and leadership ability, their specific skill set and their ability and potential to do the job (see Table 12).

Over 11 years of Talent Board candidate experience research has revealed candidates still have one basic expectation of employers when it comes to screening and interviewing: feedback. They don't get enough of it, and they aren't asked for much of it. Candidates want to understand what is involved in the hiring process, what the results of their screening assessment and/or test was and whether they will be moving forward — and why.

According to our 2022 survey results, only 6% of candidates received assessment and/or test feedback about their results. 63% of candidates received no feedback after being rejected during the screening and interviewing stage, up 5% from 2021. And yet, the highest-rated companies in our research this year all provide some level of feedback to candidates.

*Table 11. Types of Assessments and Tests Candidates Encounter*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| General screening questions (i.e., eligible to work in the U.S.) | 86% | 87% | 91% |
| Detailed questionnaire about work history and preferences | 78% | 79% | 84% |
| Specific job-related questions (i.e., able to lift 50 pounds, etc.) | 58% | 57% | 64% |
| Behavioral and/or personality assessments (i.e., leadership styles, personality traits, etc.) | 42% | 38% | 47% |
| Simulated job tasks/ activities to respond to | 27% | 24% | 31% |
| Test (reading, math, mechanical, etc.) | 16% | 15% | 19% |
| Review and respond to a case study | 15% | 13% | 16% |
| Games and/or puzzles | 8% | 7% | 9% |

*Table 12. Perception of Fairness NPS Rating Impact From Assessments and Tests*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Assessment Perception of Fairness NPS Rating | 48 | 44 | 57 |
| General screening questions (e.g., eligible to work in the U.S.) | 54 | 49 | 60 |
| Detailed questionnaire about work history and preferences | 58 | 54 | 64 |
| Job-specific questions (i.e., able to lift 50 pounds, etc.) | 62 | 57 | 67 |
| Behavioral and/or personality assessments (e.g., leadership styles, personality traits, etc.) | 71 | 67 | 73 |
| Simulated job tasks/ activities to respond to | 77 | 72 | 77 |
| Test (reading, math, mechanical, etc.) | 72 | 67 | 75 |
| Review and respond to a case study | 76 | 74 | 80 |
| Games and/or puzzles | 76 | 69 | 79 |

| | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interviewer names and background info provided prior to the interview event | 42% | 43% | 39% | 38% |
| None of these | 33% | 32% | 34% | 32% |
| Video information, tools and instructions provided prior to the interview | 26% | 30% | 20% | 10% |
| A detailed agenda provided in advance of the interview | 22% | 25% | 24% | 27% |
| Provided job fit and candidacy status feedback at the end of the day | 12% | 10% | 11% | 11% |
| A campus/facility tour provided during the interview event | 8% | 6% | 9% | 15% |
| Escorted between each interview event | 6% | 5% | 11% | 22% |
| Provided process, etc., and follow-up promise afterward | 6% | 6% | 7% | 8% |
| Provided an updated, printed agenda at the interview event | 5% | 4% | 6% | 7% |
| Had to pay for own travel expenses | 5% | 3% | 5% | 10% |
| Travel was fully coordinated | 2% | 1% | 4% | 7% |
| I was reimbursed for my travel expenses | 1% | 1% | 2% | 4% |

Of those candidates who said they received feedback after being rejected, only 22% indicated the feedback was useful, which is low and always highly subjective. 49% said they were encouraged to apply again for another job, down 9% from 2021.

However, there are more employers giving feedback at the screening and interview stage, and here's why giving feedback can pay off: When specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by nearly 50% this year. Their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 40%.

When we look at whether candidates were invited to provide feedback after the interview, we see the same patterns: Those invited to provide feedback were 65% more likely to refer others.

How candidates are notified that they're being rejected after the interview stage is also critical. In 2022, 61% of candidates received an email from a "do-not-reply" address notifying them

**When specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by nearly 50% this year. Their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 40%.**

that they were no longer considered after the interview stage. Only 20% received a personal email from the recruiter or hiring manager, and only 7% received a phone call, similar to the past two years. Only 1% said they received a text from recruiters and/or hiring managers at this stage.

**Perceived fairness is very subjective, but when candidates are in the running for a position and are being screened and interviewed, their positive sentiment tends to increase — at least until they're told they're no longer being pursued.**

Besides feedback, consistent communication and interview prep from employers are just as important. Candidates want to feel confident about the interview process, and without the proper communication and preparation, they are left feeling confused and uncertain. In 2022, 33% of North America candidates received no preparation before the interview, slightly up from 2021. The more organizations can do to empower candidates before and during the interview, the more positive their experience will be (see Table 13).

What's interesting is that candidates' willingness to refer others was 71% higher when they were provided with information on their job fit and candidacy status at the end of the interview day.

*Table 14. Types of Interviews Experienced*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phone screen with recruiter | 52% | 50% | 53% | 56% |
| Video interview (live) | 47% | 55% | 26% | 8% |
| In-person interview | 34% | 20% | 38% | 67% |
| Phone interview with hiring manager | 31% | 38% | 27% | 31% |
| Video interview (recorded) | 5% | 3% | 6% | 6% |

*Table 15. Candidate Perception of Interview Fairness NPS Ratings*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interview fairness NPS ratings | 57 | 56 | 55 | 74 |

However, this is difficult for many recruiting teams to do when awaiting feedback from hiring managers.

Obviously, the pandemic changed forever how companies prepped candidates for and conducted interviews. Since 2019, there has been more video prep and less in-person prep and on-site interview management.

Live video interviewing happened 47% of the time, down 15% from 2021. In-person interviewing increased 70% in our data this year, but was still well behind the peak of 67% in 2019. While in-person primary screenings were the preferred approach in 2019, they fell behind live virtual and phone screening the past three years (see Table 14). Video interviewing trailed phone screening in 2022 after topping it in 2021.

Perceived fairness is very subjective, but when candidates are in the running for a position and are being screened and interviewed, their positive sentiment tends to increase — at least until they're told they're no longer being pursued.

The overall interview fairness NPS rating is still 23% lower than in 2019 (see Table 15). This is most likely due to the pandemic's disruptive impact on the interview process and companies continuing to leverage virtual interviewing to save on time and travel costs.

This year, we dug deeper into the differences in fairness and referral ratings between interview types and found the following:

• Recorded video interviews are perceived as 23% less fair by all candidates compared with live video interviews and 32% less fair compared with in-person local interviews.

• Recorded video interviews are rated overall 16% lower by all candidates compared with live video interviews and 24% lower compared with in-person local interviews.

• Recorded video interviews result in 13% lower referral NPS ratings by all candidates compared with in-person local interviews.

• Professional candidates rate their phone screening fairness NPS with recruiters 29% lower than hourly (48 versus 64) and 31% lower in overall interview NPS (44 versus 60).

• Hiring manager phone screening fares better, as professional candidates rate their phone screening fairness NPS with recruiters 13% lower than hourly (58 versus 66) and 17% lower in overall interview NPS (54 versus 64).

Much has been written about the failings of screening and interviewing via phone, video and in person. It's clear in our research that job candidates prefer live interview interactions where they can see who's interviewing them – in person first, followed by live virtual interviews. But disruption can derail even the best candidates during live interviews, which is why the number one negative reason candidates withdraw themselves from consideration is that their time was disrespected during the recruitment process, particularly during the interview process.

For example:

- The highest percentage of all candidates stating their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments was during recorded video interviews and in-person interviews (25% and 27%, respectively).
- The highest percentage of all hourly candidates stating their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments was during recruiter phone screens (25%) and in-person interviews (27%).
- The highest percentage of all professional candidates stating their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments was during recorded video interviews (33%) and in-person interviews (26%).

Also, when analyzing candidate comment sentiment, these three themes were clear in the data:

- Poor communication during and after interviews
- Too much time to complete interviews
- Technical issues with video interviewing

If disruption is at a minimum and candidates feel the interview process was fair, candidates are more willing to engage the business again and refer others. When candidates received any information about next steps and were followed up with by the recruiter/HR professional post-interview (44% said they did in 2022), candidates' willingness to refer others increased 59%. At this point, both the employer and candidate have invested a lot in the interview process, so timely follow-ups are a big differentiating factor as to whether the candidates will do anything again with the employer.

*Table 16. Percentage of Employers Using Various Assessments Types*

| | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job-specific skills | 46% | 52% | 58% | 58% |
| Personality | 28% | 34% | 24% | 36% |
| Ability/cognitive | 26% | 37% | 42% | 46% |
| Competency | 26% | 38% | 43% | 43% |
| Culture fit | 18% | 26% | 29% | 36% |
| Job simulations | 17% | 26% | 34% | 36% |
| Case studies | 16% | 18% | 24% | 19% |
| Situational judgment tests | 15% | 23% | 25% | 24% |

## What Employers Are Doing

Although there have been fluctuations in the type of screening assessments used by employers over the years, measuring job-specific skills is still number one. Employers have a myriad of screening assessments and tests to choose from to help them select candidates to interview or to proceed to disposition (see Table 16). Many of the different types were down this year, but that doesn't mean they were any less important than in previous years — it's just a different mix of companies with varying screening priorities this year. The reality is that employers are in the business of "no," and most candidates do not get the job.

That said, only 34% of recruiters were required to make a phone call when rejecting external candidates with limited feedback this year (similar to 2021), and 37% were required to do the same for referrals. However, while 29% of recruiters were required to make phone calls for internal candidates, 70% of hiring managers were required to make a phone call with limited feedback to internal candidates. For many companies, it's the hiring managers who have the last word with final candidates.

While the use of pre-employment assessments or testing has also differed among CandE Winners and all other participating employers in the past, usage in 2022 continued to be aligned, although those who don't use them was up 31% this year. Pre-employment assessments can offer a degree of objectivity and fairness to candidate screening (see Table 17).

**Although there have been fluctuations in the type of screening assessments used by employers over the years, measuring job-specific skills is still number one.**

*Table 17. Are You Using Pre-Employment Assessments/ Selection Tests?*

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| No | 47% | 36% |
| Yes, but we haven't conducted an in-house validation analysis | 19% | 24% |
| Yes, and we have conducted an in-house validation analysis | 34% | 40% |

*Table 18. The Business Reasons For Using Pre-Employment Assessments*

|  | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Help hiring managers make better selections | 54% | 52% |
| Improve new-hire performance | 33% | 47% |
| Increase early retention | 27% | 34% |
| Risk mitigation | 23% | 34% |
| Help candidates understand role | 23% | 31% |
| Candidate flow efficiency | 20% | 31% |

**More organizations are moving toward a more candidate-friendly and fair interview process, one that is structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types, helping reduce bias.**

*Table 19. Interview Process Types: Structured and Unstructured Interviews*

|  | All Employers 2022 | CandE Winners 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| Structured | 56% | 63% |
| Unstructured | 44% | 37% |

|  | All Employers 2021 | CandE Winners 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Structured | 61% | 67% |
| Unstructured | 39% | 33% |

The business reasons are many as to why employers use pre-employment assessments in hiring, with 52% of North America employers saying the top reason was to help hiring managers make better selections, up slightly from 2020 (see Table 18). However, with this year's group of employers, all the remaining business reasons have decreased in importance, which seems to be counterintuitive in such a competitive environment with continued high attrition rates.

More organizations are moving toward a more candidate-friendly and fair interview process, one that is structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types, helping reduce bias. This year, the highest-rated CandE Winners conducted structured interviews 20% more than all employers combined, and all CandE Winners conducted them 12% more often than all employers combined (see Table 19).

Again, the mix of employers does vary from year to year, and those not conducting structured interviews can potentially negatively impact their candidate experience and hiring decisions.

But the selection process — complicated by the volume of candidates, types of positions, skills and experience, recruiting and hiring manager turnover and the business itself — is never an easy one. Even companies that have developed more effective interview strategies can struggle in getting the most value from their recruiting process and their hiring managers.

And while many states also limited the kinds of salary questions employers can ask candidates (salary history, for example), this year in our benchmark research, 65% of employers asked candidates about salary expectations, and 9% of employers told us they no longer ask.

The candidates told us this year that they were asked about expectations 35% of the time, while 8% were asked what their most recent salary was. 16% were told what the salary was without requesting it. For those candidates, their interview perception of fairness increased 26%. Pay transparency will be required legally in more countries in the years to come, and this will pay dividends in a positive candidate experience.

## Key Recommendations:
## What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Companies that have been able to differentiate themselves by making screening and interviewing more personal and engaging, by providing communication consistently before and after the screening and interview stage, and by providing feedback to final-stage candidates, are usually the ones that have above-average candidate ratings, i.e., the CandE Winners. There are several action items that differentiate the 2022 CandE Award Winners that can help organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the screening and interview stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

### A HIGHER LEVEL OF POSITIVE PERCEIVED FAIRNESS

At this point in the recruiting process, most employers are engaging candidate semifinalists and finalists more consistently and fairly. However, based on all activities from pre-application to the interview stage that CandE Winners engage in more consistently, they have a competitive edge when it comes to candidates' perception of assessment and interview fairness.

In 2022, CandE Winners had a 24% higher assessment perception of fairness and a 12% higher interview perception of fairness than all other companies combined. Overall, the candidates' willingness to refer others increased 105% when they rated their interview fairness with 4- and 5-star ratings. CandE-Winning candidates usually rate their overall fairness higher, most likely due to the employers investing in more timely and consistent communications.
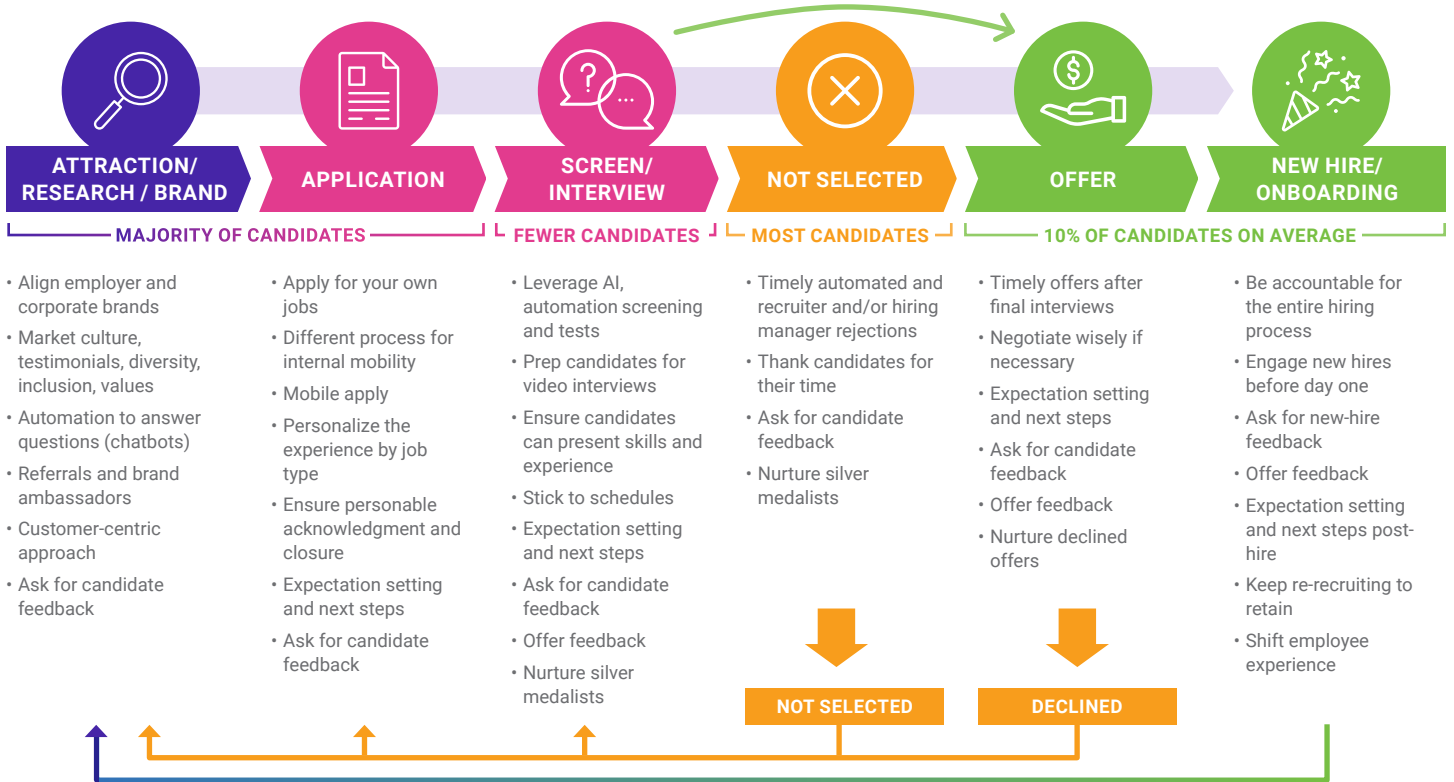
### STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND NEXT STEPS

More organizations are taking steps toward a more candidate-friendly and fair interview process, one that is structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types that helps to reduce bias. This year, the highest-rated CandE Winners conducted structured interviews 20% more than all employers combined, and all CandE Winners conducted them 12% more often than all employers combined. Structured interviews usually drive higher positive candidate ratings and a higher level of perceived fairness. Also, candidates' willingness to refer others was 71% higher when they were provided with information on their job fit and candidacy status at the end of the interview day. Recruiters and/or hiring managers at CandE Winner companies establish follow-up dates with finalists and keep those dates 15% more often than all other companies combined.
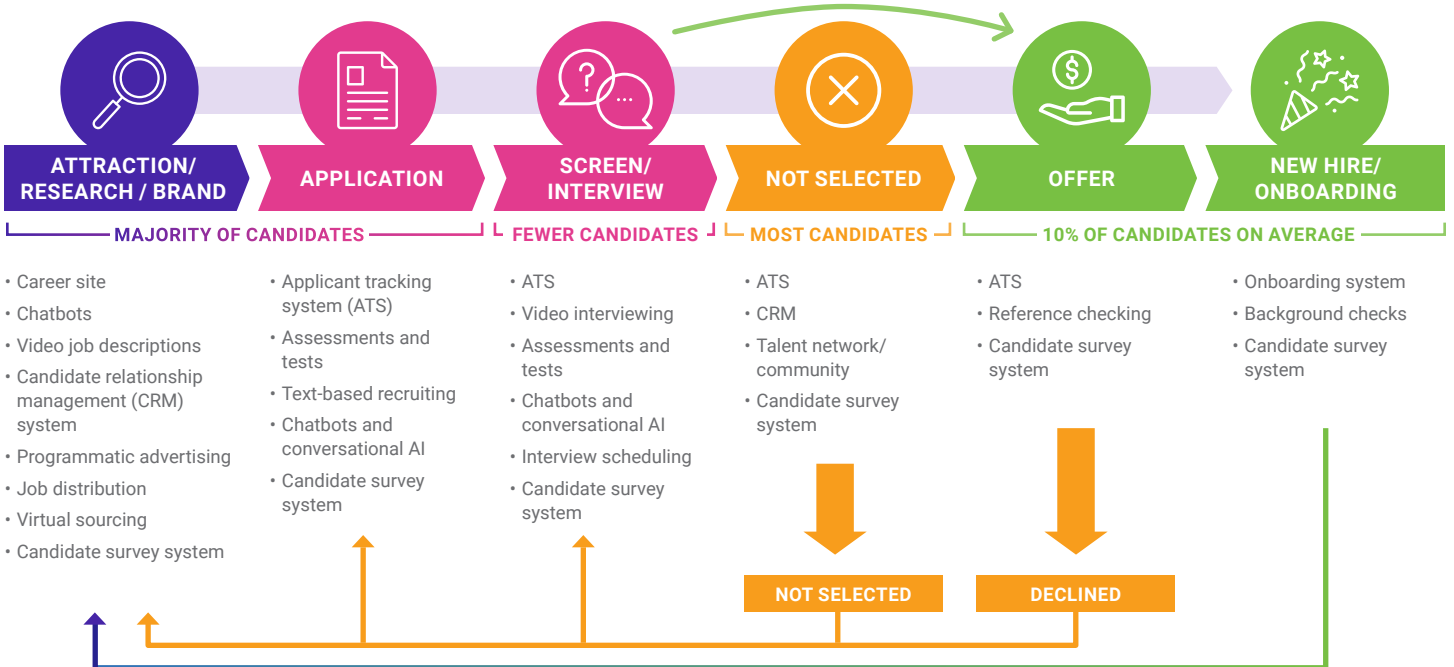
### THE MORE FEEDBACK THE BETTER

The highest-rated companies in our research this year all provide some level of feedback to candidates, and CandE Winners overall gave 14% more feedback to candidates than all other companies combined in 2022. Here's why giving feedback can pay off: When specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by nearly 50% this year, and their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 40%. And when we look at whether candidates were invited to provide feedback after the interview, we see the same patterns, where those invited to provide feedback were 65% more likely to refer others.

CandE Winners asked candidates for feedback after being screened and interviewed 15% more than all other companies combined in 2022. If disruption is at a minimum, and the candidates feel the interview process was fair, they're more willing to engage the business again and refer others.

*The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices*

## ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND
**MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES**

- Align employer and corporate brands
- Market culture, testimonials, diversity, inclusion, values
- Automation to answer questions (chatbots)
- Referrals and brand ambassadors
- Customer-centric approach
- Ask for candidate feedback

## APPLICATION

- Apply for your own jobs
- Different process for internal mobility
- Mobile apply
- Personalize the experience by job type
- Ensure personable acknowledgment and closure
- Expectation setting and next steps
- Ask for candidate feedback

## SCREEN/ INTERVIEW
**FEWER CANDIDATES**

- Leverage AI, automation screening and tests
- Prep candidates for video interviews
- Ensure candidates can present skills and experience
- Stick to schedules
- Expectation setting and next steps
- Ask for candidate feedback
- Offer feedback
- Nurture silver medalists

## NOT SELECTED
**MOST CANDIDATES**

- Timely automated and recruiter and/or hiring manager rejections
- Thank candidates for their time
- Ask for candidate feedback
- Nurture silver medalists

**NOT SELECTED**

## OFFER
**10% OF CANDIDATES ON AVERAGE**

- Timely offers after final interviews
- Negotiate wisely if necessary
- Expectation setting and next steps
- Ask for candidate feedback
- Offer feedback
- Nurture declined offers

**DECLINED**

## NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING

- Be accountable for the entire hiring process
- Engage new hires before day one
- Ask for new-hire feedback
- Offer feedback
- Expectation setting and next steps post-hire
- Keep re-recruiting to retain
- Shift employee experience

---

*The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations*

**Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:**

## ATTRACTION/ RESEARCH / BRAND
**MAJORITY OF CANDIDATES**

- Career site
- Chatbots
- Video job descriptions
- Candidate relationship management (CRM) system
- Programmatic advertising
- Job distribution
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**MOST CANDIDATES**

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- CRM
- Talent network/ community
- Candidate survey system

**NOT SELECTED**

## OFFER
**10% OF CANDIDATES ON AVERAGE**

- ATS
- Reference checking
- Candidate survey system

**DECLINED**

## NEW HIRE/ ONBOARDING

- Onboarding system
- Background checks
- Candidate survey system

# Assessing Neurodiverse Talent:
## Insights from SHL's Neurodiversity Research Program

SHL has joined a global movement of organizations that recognize **neurodiversity** and **disability** as a vital and often missing part of corporate inclusion. SHL's ongoing Neurodiversity Research Program, part of SHL Labs, exists to gather and inform evidence-based best practices and to create selection tools that provide an inclusive experience in which all candidates can perform to the best of their abilities without the need for adjustments.

Individuals with neurodivergent conditions are believed to make up about
## 15-20%
of the population.

Unemployment for neurodivergent adults runs at least as high as
## 30-40%.

After one year of employment, the retention rate of persons with disabilities is
## 85%.

**SHL.**

**Download our white paper.**
**shl.com/neurodiverse-talent**

# HIRE
## Offer & Onboarding

**When new hires have positive pre-boarding and onboarding experiences, they are more productive in their first few weeks and may be more likely to stay with their new employer.**

### What It Is

*The final hiring stages where recruiters and hiring managers make offers to the best candidates and hire and onboard those who accept the offers.*

Once an organization decides to hire a given candidate, it first sends an offer letter and may or may not negotiate. However, this intricate and emotionally charged final step in the process can bring frustration because the organization may not succeed in closing the deal — especially when the process takes too long overall. Time continues to be a big frustration factor with final-stage candidates.

This is why organizations must continue to provide a positive candidate experience and communicate with candidates throughout this process and beyond via pre-boarding and onboarding. Pre-boarding is the stage before offer acceptance and day one, and onboarding is the final stage of starting employment. When new hires have positive pre-boarding and onboarding experiences, they are more productive in their first few weeks and may be more likely to stay with their new employer. The good news at this stage is that most employers are "all in" with those they want to hire, and each year we see little to no difference in overall ratings during offer and onboarding compared to CandE Winners.

Some companies, however, make a heavy investment in earlier stages of talent acquisition, but then HR and hiring managers ignore candidates (now employees — but candidate experience is perpetual) after they've been hired.

### Offer and Onboarding Key Takeaways

- Over 7,000 candidates said they were made offers.
- Over 6,500 candidates said they accepted those offers and were hired.
- Offer stage had a 4.4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 77 NPS rating (same as 2021). CandE Winners had a 4.4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 78 NPS rating (down from 2021).
- Onboarding stage had a 4.3 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 75 NPS rating (up from 2021). CandE Winners had a 4.2 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2021) and 72 NPS rating (down from 2021).
- 61% of candidates said they received an offer within one week after their final interview, up 7% from 2021.
- 34% of candidates said they accepted another offer from a different company, slightly higher than 2021.
- After accepting the job offer, 67% of candidates received additional onboarding resources.
- 43% of candidates received a call from the hiring manager, and 24% received a text from the hiring manager before their start date, about the same as 2021.
- 21% of candidates said the company provided multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members and answer questions prior to the start date.
- Only 26% of candidates were invited to provide feedback before their start date.

When pre-boarding and onboarding go well, the benefits directly impact organizational success. When they go badly, employee morale and retention are at risk. This section will explore what candidates expect during the offer and onboarding stages, what employers are doing to meet the needs of candidates and new hires and what organizations should be doing to improve the overall candidate experience.

### Net Promoter Score CandE Rating Conversion

**For example, when converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). When we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:**

*4 — Extremely Likely*
3 — Likely
2 — Unlikely
*1— Definitely Not*

If a company had 35% of its candidates respond that they were extremely likely to apply again, and 15% said they would definitely not, that company would have an NPS score of 20.

**We simplify it even further for our CandE benchmark research and group results as follows:**

- **AMAZING** (scores above 50) are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.
- **OKAY** (scores between 0-50) are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.
- **NOT SO GOOD** (negative scores) are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

## What Candidates Want

It is no surprise that candidates want responsiveness during the hiring process, specifically on whether they will receive an offer based on their interview. 62% of candidate respondents said that less than one week elapsed between the last interview and their receipt of an offer letter, up 9% from 2021 and up 13% from 2019 (see Table 20). Collapsing this timeframe can make a big difference in hiring highly sought-after candidates, and we're glad more companies have done so this year.

Similar to 2021, 92% of participating candidates in 2022 accepted the offers presented to them. Yet only 27% of candidates in 2022 were invited to provide feedback on their candidate journey before their start date. This is a missed opportunity to glean insight that may help improve retention in the long run (see Table 21). However, the percentage of those candidates not asked for feedback before their start date was down 7% from 2019, a trend we prefer to see.

When employers asked candidates for feedback prior to their start date, these candidates were 88% more willing to increase their relationship out of the gate. This engagement is also

*Table 20. Time Elapsed Between Last Interview and Receipt of Offer Letter*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 1 week | 62% | 57% | 57% | 55% |
| 2 weeks | 23% | 25% | 24% | 25% |
| 3 weeks | 7% | 9% | 8% | 8% |
| 4 weeks | 3% | 3% | 4% | 4% |
| More than 4 weeks | 7% | 6% | 7% | 7% |

*Table 21. Were Candidates Asked for Feedback Before Starting Work?*

|  | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 27%ı | 26% | 24% | 26% |
| No | 42% | 43% | 44% | 45% |
| Not sure, I don't remember | 31% | 31% | 32% | 29% |

critical to ensuring retention, at least in the short run, and building the bridge from candidate to employee experience.

Job candidates may also have an existing relationship with the companies they're interested in when they said they began their job search. Some of these relationships may impact their overall key candidate experience ratings, even if they accept an offer of employment (see Table 22). 29% were current employees, 17% had friends/family who worked for the company, 12% were customers and 4% were fans of the brand and followed their thought leadership. These groups all have the highest key ratings overall.

In fact, those with brand affinity had the highest NPS ratings of those hired, followed by those who were customers — both rating higher than current employees. And no matter how you cut the data, the only time companies ever see candidate NPS ratings of 50 or above is from those candidates who were hired, because they're the only "happy customers" in the recruiting and hiring process.

Interestingly, candidates who were past employees and were hired again had the lowest NPS ratings for refer and relationship again this year, which seems to indicate that their second time around wasn't a very good experience.

| Refer NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| I am a current employee of the company | 58 | 54 |
| I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or company innovation | 75 | 71 |
| I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company | 66 | 67 |
| I was a customer of the company using their products/services | 58 | 58 |
| I was a past employee of the company | 32 | 25 |
| I have/had no relationship with the company | 59 | 56 |

| Relationship NPS | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| I am a current employee of the company | 55 | 51 |
| I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or company innovation | 71 | 71 |
| I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company | 59 | 58 |
| I was a customer of the company using their products/services | 57 | 58 |
| I was a past employee of the company | 29 | 21 |
| I have/had no relationship with the company | 54 | 49 |

## What Employers Are Doing

It's still surprising each year how many companies ask new hires for feedback before they start day one, especially compared with what their candidates tell us. Only 66% said they ask for candidate feedback before day one, but only 27% of candidates said they were asked, a clear disparity. And while 72% of CandE-Winning companies said they ask for candidate feedback before day two, only 26% of CandE-Winning candidates said they were asked. It's true that many candidates may not remember seeing the invitation for feedback via email, which is another argument for texting candidates.

The benefits to asking for feedback are always positive: Candidates who were asked to provide feedback prior to their start date had a 75% increase in willingness to refer others and a 71% increase in their positive relationship with employers.

*Table 23. Employer Onboarding Activities Communicated to New Hires*

| Asked for Feedback? | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|---|---|
| Touch points are orchestrated between company team members and the selected candidate | 83% | 74% |
| Online application/concierge services are provided to the selected candidate to leverage | 69% | 69% |
| Concierge relocation services provided to family (if needed), when relocation is involved | 54% | 54% |
| Specialized marketing and congratulations content and packages are mailed to the selected candidate | 46% | 49% |
| Candidate experience survey completed prior to start date | 42% | 33% |
| Recruiter follow-up with the new employee within six weeks of start date to confirm expectations reflect reality | 33% | 23% |
| Candidate experience focus group/ debrief within first month of start date | 13% | 8% |

Besides asking for feedback, engaging candidates prior to their start date can get them excited and further increase their overall positive rating. In 2022, 83% of employers orchestrated specific touch points between the selected candidates and team members, up 12% from 2021. 46% of employers said they sent specialized marketing and congratulations content and packages to their hired candidates, down 6% from 2021 (see Table 23). This can help increase their brand affinity and, at least from a short-term perspective, their initial retention. And 33% of employers said recruiters followed up with the new employee within six weeks of the start date to confirm that their expectations reflected reality. This is up 43% from 2021.

For the past few years, candidate experience was the number one recruiting focus in our end-of-year Recruiting Focus surveys (see the Recruiting Focus 2023 Executive Brief). As it should be, since it's impactful across the recruiting and hiring journey for external and internal candidates. Onboarding has been lower on the list — last year coming in at number five — but this year, it's the number one recruiting focus.

Why? Well, we know from the volatile and competitive candidate market we've been in for the past 12 to 18 months that retention has been a struggle for employers. Many continue to lose new hires — hourly and salaried professional — before they even start. Even CandE Winners, those companies with above-average key ratings in our benchmark research, struggle with pre-boarding to onboarding.

**The benefits to asking for feedback are always positive: Candidates who were asked to provide feedback prior to their start date had a 75% increase in willingness to refer others and a 71% increase in their positive relationship with employers.**

# Key Recommendations:
## What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Although all participating employers continue to close the gap at this stage of the talent acquisition process, CandE Award Winners still have a slight edge in terms of more proactive communication and engagement with candidates who received an offer and those hired. Also, there are several action items that differentiate the 2021 CandE Award Winners that can help organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the interview stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

### INTERVIEW TO OFFER TIME

Time is always a crucial factor in recruiting, especially for the candidates who get the offers. 62% of candidate respondents said that less than one week elapsed between the last interview and their receipt of an offer letter, up 9% from 2021. If employers make the offer within one week of the final interview, the candidates' willingness to refer others increased 76%, and their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased 77%. CandE-Winning companies made the offers within one week of the final interviews 8% more often than all companies combined.

### ONBOARDING ACTIVITIES IMPROVE EARLY RETENTION

More employers, whether they've won a CandE Award or not, are investing in communication and engagement with new hires before their start date. The more engagement prior to their start date, the better a retention starter it becomes. For candidates who get multiple opportunities to communicate goals, meet team members and get questions answered prior to their start date, their willingness to increase their relationship increased 92%, a fantastic retention starter from the beginning. And if they got a call or a text from the hiring manager, their willingness to increase their relationship increased 87%.

### THE BENEFITS OF NEW-HIRE FEEDBACK

Asking for feedback is key at any time during the recruiting process, but it can definitely help with retention for new hires before day one. Only about 25% of the candidates from CandE Winners and all companies combined said they were asked for feedback about the hiring process. However, those same candidates who were asked to provide feedback prior to their start date had an 87% increase in willingness to refer others and an 88% willingness to increase their relationship with their new (or old) employers. For new hires who received employer feedback, those at CandE-Winning companies found any feedback they received from employers slightly more valuable than all companies combined. We know this is subjective, but CandE-Winning employers are investing a lot more in consistent and transparent processes throughout the recruiting and hiring process.

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- Onboarding system
- Background checks
- Candidate survey system

# APPENDIX

## About Talent Board and the Candidate Experience Awards

Founded in 2011, Talent Board and the Candidate Experience Awards is the first non-profit research organization focused on the elevation and promotion of a quality candidate experience.

Talent Board delivers annual recruiting and hiring industry benchmark research that highlights accountability, fairness and the business impact of candidate experience.

The organization, Candidate Experience (CandE) Awards program and its sponsors are dedicated to recognizing the candidate experience offered by companies throughout the entire recruitment cycle and to forever changing the manner in which job candidates are treated.

The CandE Awards also serve as a benchmarking program to raise awareness of the benefits of a positive candidate experience and highlight the processes, methodologies and technology that can enhance the recruiting experience as demonstrated by the winning organizations.

More information can be accessed at https://www.thetalentboard.org.



**DEBBIE MCGRATH**

"The CandE Awards have helped demonstrate the business value of positive hiring practices by advocating for the importance of the candidate experience and the impact on recruiting and the bottom line. Congratulations to this year's Candidate Experience Benchmark Class for their proven commitment to promoting candidate experience excellence."

**GERRY CRISPIN**

"After 11 years, the CandE Awards benchmark research continues to prove that positive candidate experiences lead to positive hiring outcomes, which often have positive business implications, even during such volatile economic times. This year's CandE Award winners have again demonstrated their commitment to upholding this practice, and we are delighted to recognize their work advancing the recruiting process."

**ED NEWMAN**

"Since founding the Candidate Experience Awards 11 years ago, we have amassed an unprecedented amount of data on the recruiting and hiring process and, in effect, worked to foster a community interested in transforming talent acquisition practices. The 2022 CandE Awards Benchmark Class understands the value of transparency and a better candidate experience. Congratulations to this year's CandE Award Winners."

**KEVIN GROSSMAN**

"No matter what the world looks like — and in 2022, it continues to be a recruiting and hiring world we've never seen before — it's inspiring to see so many companies continue to improve their candidate experience. Transparency, consistent communication and feedback loops at every stage of the recruitment process are always critical and can equate to positive business outcomes and employment brands."

# Program & Scoring Methodology

The Talent Board Candidate Experience (CandE) Awards Benchmark Research Program is open each year to employers that hire around the world (North America, EMEA, APAC and Latin America). The CandE Awards and benchmark research are composed of two rounds of evaluations: Round 1, the employer survey; and Round 2, the candidate surveys.

Round 1, the employer survey, is designed to capture and evaluate the participating company's recruitment processes and practices that affect the candidate experience, and how they would self-rate their own candidate experience. Round 2, the candidate survey, is designed to survey a random sampling of the company's job candidates, ask them several questions about their recruiting experiences and rate their experiences via 4- and 5-point Likert scales, which are also easily converted to NPS ratings.

To qualify for a CandE Award, each firm has to commit to a specific, statistically significant candidate response and a set standard for the proportion of randomly selected respondents who were not hired. This means each company has to first meet a minimum qualification for responses based on the size of the candidate population plus a minimum percentage of those not hired. These candidate responses include multiple touch points from the pre-application process to onboarding (if hired).

These are then scored and normalized to a standard ratio of those "Not Selected" versus those "Hired" (80/20) to eliminate any "halo" effects. This means companies can only include up to 20% of hired candidates in the survey process (the "Hired" percentage could be higher than 20%, but it would affect the final CandE score and ranking).

The data is then run through a statistical analysis and an algorithm that produces a final CandE NPS rating for each company. After that, we stack rank those ratings and select the winners that have CandE scores above the lowest-winning CandE score from the year before. This is in addition to the statistical analysis and algorithm applied above and the selection of the top CandE Winners.

## The four key ratings that determine the winners are:

- The overall candidate experience ranking per the candidates surveyed (on a 5-point Likert scale).
- Whether the candidates would reapply to the organization (on a 4-point Likert scale).
- Whether the candidates would refer others to the organization (on a 4-point Likert scale).
- How the candidates would change their business relationship status with the organization going forward based on their experience (on a 4-point Likert scale).

# Data Collection Overview

- The 2022 CandE Awards and Benchmark Program was open from Jan. 31 to Aug. 31, 2022.
- 150 organizations from around the world registered to participate in this year's program.
- 200,000 candidates completed the candidate surveys.

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# Connect with #TheCandEs

## www.thetalentboard.org

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# How to Get Involved in 2023

**BENCHMARK YOUR CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE**
Registration for the global 2023 Talent Board Candidate Experience Awards and Benchmark Research Program will open for all regions in January 2023 (North America, EMEA, APAC and Latin America).

There is no deadline to start, only to complete all surveys, and that deadline is August 31, 2023.

A little investment goes a long way to understanding the impact of candidate experience on your business, from pre-application to onboarding.

**CLICK HERE to learn more and participate in the Talent Board Candidate Experience Awards and Benchmark Research Program.**

### Registration Process
*Takes employer 1-3 minutes*

### Employer Self-Assessment Survey
*Takes employer 30-60+ minutes*

### Employer Methodology Survey
*Takes employer 1-3 minutes*

### Candidate Surveys
*Takes employer 1-2+ hours to select candidates and distribute surveys*

*Takes rejected candidates less than 5 minutes*

*Takes final-stage candidates, offers and new hires 5-10 minutes*

### Total Investment
*$750 registration fee (can also be paid in other currencies)*

*3+ hours for employers*

*5+ minutes for candidates*

### Registration Process

### Employer Self-Assessment Survey

### Employer Methodology Survey

### Candidate Surveys

### Total Return

# 10 Reasons Why You Should Participate in the 2023 Talent Board CandE Benchmark Research Program:

**1** Learn what your candidate perception gaps are and what candidates value in your recruiting and hiring experiences.

**2** Identify strengths and weaknesses in your recruiting process and your overall candidate experience.

**3** Receive multiple candidate ratings, including how likely candidates are to apply again and refer others.

**4** Understand your recruiting and hiring impact by job type, gender, generation, race and ethnicity and many other filtering options.

**5** Benefit from our proven candidate experience surveys, survey methodology and distribution guidelines.

**6** Access to all your data and the aggregate benchmark data by region via our secure technology partner, Survale.

**7** Receive insightful takeaways and recommendations from the Talent Board team on where to make improvements.

**8** Build the business case with concrete data to develop improvement strategies based on the candidate feedback data you receive.

**9** Track year-over-year changes and the return on investment on improvement initiatives you've implemented.

**10** Connect with like-minded talent acquisition leaders and their teams working hard on improving the recruiting and candidate experience.

> **CLICK HERE to learn more and participate in the Talent Board Candidate Experience Awards and Benchmark Research Program.**

# Candidate Experience: Certification of Learning Program



This course by Talent Board and HR.com is based on over 10 years of Talent Board candidate experience benchmark research and best practices. It's designed to help companies gain a competitive edge in recruiting and hiring, secure the best people and improve their employer brand by improving candidate experience.

**This is a professional development program created exclusively for:**

- Companies big and small across industries
- Talent acquisition managers and teams
- HR managers and teams
- Recruiters
- Candidate experience professionals
- Recruiting marketing professionals
- Employer brand professionals
- Talent acquisition solution and service provider professionals

CLICK HERE to learn more about Online Classes

# CandE Benchmark Memberships



After 10+ years of candidate experience benchmark research, Talent Board offers CandE Benchmark Memberships for HR and recruiting leaders and their teams.
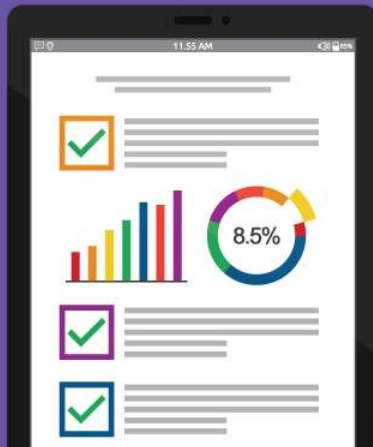
CandE Benchmark Memberships give recruiting teams more in-depth annual benchmark research insights, including all the following benefits:

- **Early insights:** As the aggregate data comes infor the benchmark research program, our team will provide you with early insights we find.

- **Data deep dive:** Once the benchmark research deadline passes, we'll provide you with a deeper benchmark research analysis that includes your CandE data and the aggregate by industry, company size, job type and competitors if available (after current program-year deadline passes). If you have your own internal candidate experience feedback data, we can compare and contrast that with the CandE data, as well. We'll analyze your candidate comment sentiment, and we'll also review external ratings on employer review sites such as Glassdoor, Indeed and others.

- **CandE Community meetings:** Belong to a network of like-minded recruiting professionals that gives you access to unique subject matter experts. Join optional monthly meetings to interact with peers and talk recruiting shop. Topics will be crowdsourced for these meetings.

- **Speaking opportunities:** You'll receive priority professional growth opportunities that include presenting and participating on panel discussions at CandE events throughout the year.

- **Tech checks:** We'll offer periodic tech checks at our CandE Community meetings where you can hear brief pitches from recruiting technology providers, ask them questions and provide feedback.

- **CandEs support:** You'll be helping the CandEs fulfill their nonprofit mission of elevating and promoting a quality candidate experience.

CLICK HERE to learn more about Benchmark Membership

# Candidate Experience Optimization



If the CandE benchmark research program, or the benchmark memberships aren't comprehensive enough for you, then you should consider doing a complete candidate experience optimization project with our Talent Board team of seasoned practitioner advisors.

This includes the following three levels of analysis:

1. **CandE and External Data Deep Dive:** We'll review your current Talent Board candidate experience benchmark program research data, comparing it to the current aggregate employer and candidate data we collect, comparing it by industry and company size and comparing it to competitor data if available, converting Talent Board ratings to net promoter scores (NPS) and analyze your candidate comment sentiment. We'll also review external ratings on employer review sites such as Glassdoor, Indeed and others.

2. **Stage-Based Candidate Journey Mapping and More:** We'll map your candidate experience journey from pre-application to onboarding. We'll also mystery shop your jobs (apply for them) as well as competitor jobs, review your career site content and traffic and competitor sites, review your interview structure and processes, review your social media presence and competitors, review your candidate communications (rejection templates, etc.) and we'll review your job descriptions.

3. **Recruiter and Hiring Manager Interviews:** We'll conduct qualitative research based on interviews with key recruiting and hiring manager stakeholders in your organization to better understand your strengths and weaknesses from their perspectives.

The final candidate experience optimization deliverables will include the following:

1. Complete optimization report with analyses, scorecard ratings, key takeaways and recommendations on what to do next, including how Talent Board can help implement.

2. Executive summary with key takeaways and recommendations to share with leadership.

3. A comprehensive presentation to be delivered virtually and/or in person with time for Q&A with your team (travel expenses billed separately if delivered in person).

4. A customized training session for your recruiting team based on our overall key takeaways and recommendations from the optimization project.

> CLICK HERE to learn more about Candidate Experience Optimization

# CandE Workshops and Training Seminars

Based on the 10+ years of candidate experience benchmark research, Talent Board offers custom CandE workshops and training seminars for recruiting leaders and their teams.

Our customized seminars will help you and your team understand the key recruiting activities and differentiators of a quality candidate experience and the potential positive and negative impact on your business. Workshops and training can be virtual or delivered on-site and can run two to four hours or be multiple days, if requested.

**Example topics include:**

- Why Candidate Experience Is important: The Business Impact
- Key Points in the Recruiting Process Where Candidate Experience Matters:
    - The Recruiting Kick-off Meeting with the Hiring Manager
    - A Little Attention Goes a Long Way with Job Postings, Applications and Phone Screens
    - Effectively Presenting Candidates to the Hiring Manager and Interview Prep
    - How to Provide a Quality Candidate Experience for Non-Selected Candidates
- And many more

CLICK HERE to learn more about CandE Workshops and Training Seminars

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# Sponsorship Opportunities

Talent Board is supported by the generous donations of industry solution and service providers, individual donations and corporate participation. This allows us to keep our research accessible to all and to provide the talent acquisition discipline with benchmarks and best practices that empower continuous recruiting innovation and a better overall candidate experience — all of which has the potential to impact your bottom line.

Sponsoring the Talent Board CandE Awards is one of the best ways to connect and engage with human resources and talent acquisition leaders around the world who care about recruiting and candidate experience. These buyers and influencers are key additions to any prospect network. CandE sponsors also enjoy year-round visibility and lead generation through Talent Board symposiums, awards galas, research reports, workshops, webinars and more.

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**#1 · Attract**
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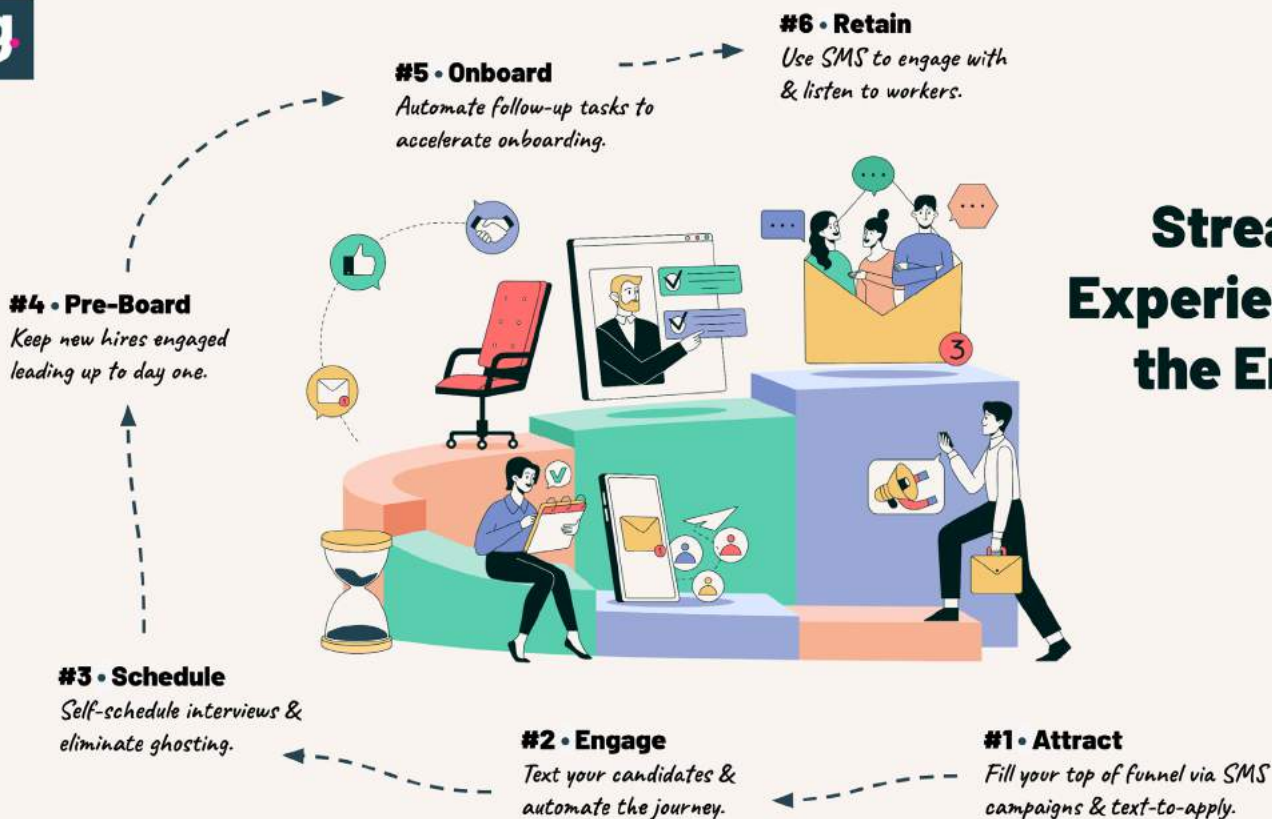
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# Apeel Sciences

*Apeel Sciences is a company based in Goleta, Calif., whose edible coating product Apeel can make avocados, citrus and other types of fruit last twice as long as usual by using a tasteless edible coating made from plant materials.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

We removed a large presentation assessment stage for any candidates interviewing for entry- to mid-level roles. We have also put restrictions on which roles will have on-site interviews.

Both of these adjustments have increased the speed at which we can move a candidate through the interview process.

We put more of an effort into closing our high-level candidates by providing a VIP experience which includes gift baskets, lunch, dinner with the team and direct contact to employees who they may want to speak with privately. These specific employees could include our travel specialist, benefits manager, etc.

In return, we received positive candidate feedback when, prior, there wasn't much communication one way or another on if a VIP candidate enjoyed their time with us.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

We had time to look deeper into our candidate experience due to cutbacks, and we found the interview process was taking too long based on our own experiences and negative feedback from candidates.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your**

team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

This is an ongoing process, including a hiring manager presentation where two recruiters presented on the importance of candidate experience and involvement from everyone based on survey results and direct feedback.

The job market has drastically changed through COVID-19, and we needed to adapt to the changes. We were losing out on excellent candidates and this made us really analyze what we were willing to give up or keep throughout the recruiting and interview process.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

- We leverage surveys: Greenhouse surveys and the Talent Board survey
- Glassdoor reviews
- Quarterly Greenhouse audits

# BASF

**◻▪BASF**
We create chemistry

*Headquartered in Florham Park, N.J., BASF Corporation is the North American affiliate of BASF SE, Ludwigshafen, Germany, with a portfolio organized into six segments: Chemicals, Materials, Industrial Solutions, Surface Technologies, Nutrition & Care and Agricultural Solutions.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

We have implemented new tools (Indeed and Glassdoor) to decrease the amount of time that the candidate spends through the process. Also, we enhanced job descriptions with a job ads format to make it more interesting to candidates. By implementing this, we get more reach and more clicks, filling the candidate funnel.

We are proud to improve the face-to-face experience. Since we implemented the hiring event, candidates are meeting face-to-face in the first contact. Proper candidate experience brings proper talent to the organization. Also, getting the business to understand the value of the candidate's experience and working together to improve it.

We know these changes are making a difference by looking at our pipeline: It is filled, and candidates are moving through the funnel more steps than they did before. More candidates are applying to our job openings.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

We noticed the top of the funnel was not full, and there was a falloff in the middle of it (interest and candidates applying). CandE data and surveys implemented by the company revealed improvements needed.

In response, we implemented new tools and did market research by region to have better keywords to reach candidate interest. This helps us to improve our job ads to make them more searchable and accessible for candidates. Implementing this, as well as changing the assessment process, moved candidates from the middle of the funnel.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

We showed the teams the importance of process optimization by providing results, like more hires in a short time to support them.

We demonstrated the importance of candidate experience by implementing new products that brought new and more qualified candidates and moved the candidates through the pipeline.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage hiring manager behaviors?**

We measured candidate experience with different tools such as CandE Award data, internal surveys and candidate comments on public forums such as Glassdoor.

We have recently determined there is a correlation between the kind of candidate experience received and the experience of the employee as they enter the organization. Given this trend, we have recently started to take a look at first-year employee engagement.

We have implemented biweekly Talent Attraction Forum calls with the broader HR community to keep them aligned with industry trends and candidate behaviors that can influence the recruiting process. During these calls, we align with data and best practices in comparison to our overall candidate commentary. During these calls, we report on topics such as market analysis, candidate care data, open req reports, barriers to entry, best practice, cost to hire and ROI.

As we begin to shift our strategy to include more talent marketing, we can calculate key areas of impact. Our new approach has led us to identify a decrease in agency spend overall. Hiring events we have used have significantly lowered our cost to hire as well as decreased our time to fill on many of our manufacturing positions.

During meetings with our hiring managers, we now present market data and other candidate behavior insights. In addition, we are beginning to advise with supporting campaign analytics from previous use cases. We have found, with a consultative approach supported by budget optimization opportunities, candidate reach and expected apply data, our hiring teams have been more inclined to try new methods and certainly more focused on how these methods positively affect our candidate experience.

# Baylor Scott & White Health

BaylorScott&White
HEALTH

*As the largest not-for-profit healthcare system in Texas, and one of the largest in the United States, Baylor Scott & White Health was born from the 2013 combination of Baylor Health Care System and Scott & White Healthcare. Today, Baylor Scott & White includes 51 hospitals, more than 800 patient care sites, more than 7,300 active physicians, over 49,000 employees and the Scott & White Health Plan.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

We have made several changes during the last 12 months to enhance the candidate experience. Some of these changes include (but are not limited to) job posting optimizations, creating an application acknowledgement email, creating a monthly newsletter, careers website chatbot improvements, revision of application questions, creation of a "featured jobs" page on careers website, creation of region-specific landing pages on careers website, decrease time from application to hiring manager interview, hosting information sessions/ virtual hiring events with candidates, incorporation of policy acknowledgement into application privacy agreement and revisions to candidate communications.

We are most proud of decreasing the time from application to hiring manager interview and the virtual events. We know that these changes were effective because we saw an increased conversion rate from application to HM interview. In addition, we saw as much as 101% increase in candidates after hosting virtual events.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

We had a candidate experience audit performed, as well as competitor studies showing us our opportunities to improve the candidate experience. Candidate drop-off rate, average time to complete an application, along with candidate audit recommendations prompted these changes.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

We shared the results of the candidate audit and competitor analyses, and the candidate drop-off data that highlighted our opportunities.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

Prior to the CandE survey, the only data collected was from new hires within the 10-day survey limiting our view of the candidate experience. We report on our recruiting process by looking at the volume of candidates and funnel activity. We measure and track cost per hire, perform source-channel analysis and brand awareness. We also applied SLAs for recruiters and hiring managers, response time and interview feedback.

# FAIRWINDS Credit Union

⛵ **FAIRWINDS**

*FAIRWINDS Credit Union, led by President and CEO Larry Tobin, is headquartered in Orlando, Fla., and is consistently ranked as one of the best financial institutions and employers in the region. Founded in 1949, the company has 619 employees.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

One change that we were excited to accomplish is a full hiring process timeline, including the automated response email received when a candidate applies. An infographic illustrates the expected timeline for the hiring and decision process. The change we are most proud of is reaching salary transparency on our external job postings. We now post starting salaries for each position. Both changes have received unsolicited positive feedback from candidates during the interview process and have made conversations around pay more comfortable.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

I am fortunate to have the support of my organization to prioritize candidate experience. Our employer brand has received a lot of focus and support over the past few years, and this was an extension of that work. We had never measured candidate experience before, but we always strive to be top of class in what we do. Once we entered this survey process, I started looking at past winners to get ideas of possible changes we could make. There was no specific instance that brought on these changes, just the desire to deliver a best-in-class experience to our candidates and build a strong employer brand.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

When the job market changed and the Great Resignation started, all focus went to recruiting. We had been working towards an employer brand for a few years, but that brought it to top of mind for the organization. This makes it an easy conversation to have, and as a financial institution, we do not make big moves without data. We consistently survey our employees and members but had never looked at candidates before. We also know that a lot of our candidates are our members and want to deliver the same great experience and care they receive when doing business with us. When hiring managers are getting positions filled quickly and retention is high, our organization understands the importance of a good candidate experience.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

This was the first candidate experience we participated in. Previously we would rate our candidate experience with a new-hire orientation survey. However, that mainly focused on the orientation/training process. We also look at time to fill, no-show ratio for orientation and 90-day retention. Our recruiting metrics involve time to fill and retention, and the manager metrics include recruiting timeline standards and retention.

For example, our managers have 24 hours upon receipt of a candidate to reach out to them to schedule an interview. After that, we must have a final decision within seven business days. Our expectation is for managers to be able to evaluate candidates for job fit against the job, not other candidates. This helps us decline or keep a conversation going with candidates in a more timely manner than waiting until we make a selection to inform everyone.

# Foot Locker

*Foot Locker, Inc. leads the celebration of sneaker and youth culture around the globe through a portfolio of brands, including Foot Locker, Kids Foot Locker, Champs Sports, atmos, WSS and Sidestep. With approximately 2,800 retail stores in 28 countries across North America, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, as well as websites and mobile apps, the company's purpose is to inspire and empower youth culture around the world by fueling a shared passion for self-expression and creating unrivaled experiences at the heart of the global sneaker community. Foot Locker, Inc. has its corporate headquarters in New York, New York.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

Enhancing candidate experience continues to remain a priority with the recruitment team. In 2022, we maintained our efforts from the previous year and implemented additional changes as well. We continued to utilize a video interview format for many of our roles to ensure a great experience. For many of our distribution positions, we have continued to utilize a fully virtual hiring process for a safer and more seamless experience. We also remain consistent with additional candidate touch points. These touch points ensure that candidates are regularly updated on their status. To ensure more engagement and connection with our distribution, call center and field candidates, we also continue to employ our talent pools.

Additional improvements made this year include implementing enhancements on our career site, such as making it easier to locate remote positions and clearly indicating in our job descriptions if a position is remote, hybrid or in-office.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

We review responses to the CandE Awards survey and implement changes based on the responses we receive. We also regularly solicit feedback from our regional and global recruiting teams to help identify process improvements and efficiencies. For example, based on feedback we received from our hiring teams, we have made changes as to which areas of the business utilize assessments during the application process.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

Candidate experience is consistently a point of conversation, both within the internal recruitment team and with broader teams when speaking to hiring managers. We regularly review feedback and responses to continually evaluate and adjust where needed.

In addition, all levels of the organization, including C-suite leaders, are involved in the interview process and prioritize candidate experience. To be mindful of candidates' time and to increase efficiency, we have parameters in place to standardize the approved number of interviewers based on job level.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impacts as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

We use a variety of methods to measure candidate experience. First, we use the data and responses from the CandE survey to analyze the experiences of our candidates throughout the hiring process. Second, we include traditional recruiting metrics like time to fill and time to hire in every recruiter's performance evaluation. We are also expanding our reporting and analysis of time-based metrics to discover any areas of opportunity across additional areas of recruitment that previously were not measured. Third, we have continued to expand and develop our field recruitment teams by having them support and enhance the candidate experience in their assigned territory.

Finally, we use our ATS to track the time it takes to move between recruitment phases to identify pain points and increase process efficiencies. For example, how long it takes to move a candidate from "reviewed" to "phone screen" to "hiring manager interview." This data is then reviewed on an annual basis from a global perspective with a member of our management team to identify trends.

# Froedtert Health

*The Froedtert and MCW health network has 10 hospital locations, more than 2,100 physicians and 45+ health centers.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

The COVID-19 pandemic changed many of the dynamics in recruitment in healthcare. We saw a record number of individuals leaving healthcare due to burnout, so the competition became very fierce. With that being said, we saw a need for change to be able to expedite the process for candidates. Our team was able to go back to hosting in-person recruitment events offering interviews and on-the-spot offers.

Additionally, we had to find ways to move our current candidates along more quickly in the process to be able to provide offers before our competitors could. Our team created processes that allowed us to schedule interviews around a candidate's availability, on-the-spot offers at interviews and immediate availability of hiring leaders to conduct interviews based upon candidate preference.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

In 2021, we participated in the CandE Awards but unfortunately did not come out as a winner. We took the feedback to focus on ways that we could provide a better candidate experience, specifically with how the workforce had changed due to COVID-19. We knew our focus was on how we could do it better and faster than our competitors to provide top-notch experiences to candidates. We focused most specifically on the data we were receiving about the workforce to make our changes to the process.

In addition, we also do monthly candidate and new-hire surveys about their experience in the recruitment process. We have begun to dive into that data to create an action log. We first focused on the pain points of the candidate as they are going through the recruitment process.

We have been working on ways we can make different parts of our process better, most recently focusing on our pre-boarding process. We moved to electronic paperwork, and we moved to an electronic I-9 form for candidates to fill out. Education

verification was typically a delay that impacted the candidate's ability to start on time, so we began providing an education attestation form up front for candidates to fill out that assisted our team in helping to validate someone's education sooner. The new-hire start experience was viewed negatively at times. When we would clear a candidate at the last minute, not all pieces were ready for their first day, including IT access, which caused frustrations for our candidates and our hiring leaders. As a result, we came up with a strict cut-off for clearance so that all access would be set up by day one, making for a smooth start to joining the organization.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

We used a top-down approach in many cases. Specifically for our expedited process, we had the support of the CNO within the organization. Our recruitment leaders created the process and shared with the CNO. The process and expectations were shared with the hiring leaders, and then, once we worked through their questions, we rolled this out with our recruitment team to execute.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

We have used survey data from new-hire and candidate surveys. As mentioned above, we send out monthly surveys. The candidate surveys are sent to those individuals who completed an application in the previous month, and the new-hire surveys go out to individuals who accepted a position within the organization from the previous month. We survey candidates on our application process, communication throughout the process and whether they received adequate information throughout the process. Candidates are able to provide more specific feedback within the surveys, as well. Specific feedback enables us to understand some of the specific pain points, but the responses help us see overall trends.

We track withdrawals and declinations to enable us to see which factors contribute to candidates exiting the process. This allows us to identify and evaluate steps in the process that are obstacles to a great candidate experience.

Candidate experience was identified as one of the four major pillars of strategic focus for our talent acquisition team this year. Therefore, it has received greater visibility and focus with both leaders and recruiters alike. There is common understanding that we not only have to provide an expedient and efficient process, but also one that is candidate focused.

We feel that our CandE journey has been critical in emphasizing the impact of candidate experience on net promoter scores, as well as the intent for individuals to continue to utilize our organization from a business perspective. We understand and embrace the notion that a candidate who may not be successful is still a potential future patient within our health system. This ties very closely to patient experience and quality-of-care goals in the long run.

# GuideWell

**GUIDEWELL**

*GuideWell is the parent to a family of forward-thinking companies focused on transforming healthcare.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

GuideWell implemented automated email touch points for internal and external applicants via our CRM. GuideWell manages all candidate responses and inquiries from these emails. We also implemented CRM text campaigns for high-volume roles. The tone of the texts and corresponding emails also changed. The email content was updated to deliver excitement, compassion and empathy. In addition, we leveraged our chatbot feature tied to our internal and external career site by providing personalization on demand, gathering leads and a direct job-search option for applicants. We created a chatbot management team that manages all unanswered questions, up-to-date answers, common phrases and generates related or accurate phrases. This team also created preloaded FAQs to provide valuable information in real time for job seekers. Finally, GuideWell implemented a "Quick Apply" process in which applications take less than five minutes to complete, enhancing the process and overall candidate experience.

The commitment was made by the GuideWell talent acquisition team to implement these changes and improve overall candidate experience.

GuideWell knows that these implementations have made a difference based on direct candidate feedback from automated touch points and survey results.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

Previous CandE results showed us that we needed to respond to applicants within a shorter period of time. Therefore, we implemented a no-more-than-seven-day rule to respond back and disposition candidates.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

GuideWell built support and commitment within our team and the broader organization by demonstrating compassion through communications, promoting brand reputation through our GuideWell Family of companies, motivating candidate(s) who did not receive an offer to apply again in the future and encouraging employee engagement through employee referrals. By providing a great candidate experience, candidates will likely apply again and recommend our company to other job seekers.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

GuideWell measures candidate experience through increased job offer acceptance rate, reduction in time to fill/time to start, reduction in attrition rate, candidate sources, career site conversion rate and candidate feedback. We report recruiting progress, KPIs and demonstrate financial impact to our customers and leadership through our HR scorecard results and frequent touch points with hiring managers and client groups.

# Mettler Toledo

**METTLER TOLEDO**

*A leading international manufacturer of precision measuring instruments, Mettler Toledo is the world's largest manufacturer and supplier of weighing systems for laboratories, industry and food retail.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

The last year was a whirlwind of volume added to our requisition load within North America. At first, like most companies, we were caught in a storm of heavy demands coming from the business paired, unfortunately, with unusual recruiter turnover. It took us a few months to stabilize with some stellar new hires to get ourselves back on even keel. Early in 2022, we were fully and appropriately staffed for the volume of hiring around the country. A few amazing things happen with enough recruiters with strong skills — our jobs get filled faster, our hiring managers are pleased and generous with their praise, and candidates get more thorough communication. With applicant flow hitting the lowest levels we've ever seen, the team did more with less. We spoke to more candidates and leveraged them beyond just the job they applied to. Often, we were able to anticipate an opening or share candidates who fit similar openings to make the most of every person with interest in our company.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

Building out and using our recruiter dashboards showed us that we needed to get more serious about our communication with candidates. We review our data constantly and look over "black hole" or our "stuck" people reports. We can easily see people who have been waiting for over 10 days for news on where they stand in the process and do something about it. Being properly staffed for the volume of reqs makes a big difference in taking care of these very important details.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

Throughout the year, the team hosts interviewing skills seminars for our leaders and anyone who participates in interviews. We spend a large part of the time talking about candidate expectations related to speed, decisiveness and communication. We share data from these annual Talent Board research papers! Every hiring manager within the company today is well aware of the challenges of 2021-2022 and the impact they personally have on hiring successfully. We have seen more flexibility and more open-mindedness from our hiring managers and continue to push and educate them on the benefits of delivering a stellar candidate experience.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

Managers and leaders are interested in time-to-fill metrics. This year, we are introducing a new way to look at time and effectiveness by measuring the time between the moment a person applies to the job to when we have extended them an offer. To the candidate, this is a more relevant time to fill measure that we want to look at more closely and work on ways to shrink it. We believe it will positively impact our offer acceptance rates, as well.

*West Monroe is a digital consulting firm that was born in technology but built for business — partnering with companies in transformative industries to deliver real, measurable results.*

**1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?**

The West Monroe talent acquisition team has made numerous changes this year which have resulted in decreased time to fill open positions, increased number of hires and higher scores in candidate experience.

First and foremost, we went through a complete team restructuring, where we switched from aligning recruiters by geography to instead aligning to skills specialties of our teams. Although everyone's overall requisition load remained about the same, this allowed better opportunity for TA team members to focus on West Monroe service offerings, strategic sourcing and process optimization within the hiring process. From our participation with the Talent Board, and in our Candidate Experience surveys for the past seven years, one of our biggest opportunities for improvement has been candidates wanting detailed feedback and timely decisions. With this new model, recruiters are working more closely with fewer leaders, and can establish a more regular cadence, enabling them to follow up with candidates more quickly and thoroughly.

We have also improved our candidate experience by further refining our virtual interview process to stay nimble, become more adaptive and move through the process more quickly. We have shortened the process by limiting it to five interviews maximum (prior could be six-plus), which puts the total time candidates spend interviewing at around three hours. We also eliminated the write-up portion of our process that was required as a post-interview follow-up to the case study interview. We created a standardized deadline for every hiring team to have their debrief within 24 hours of a candidate's final interview to encourage timely feedback. Lastly, in scheduling interviews, we have implemented a tool called "Good Time," which allows candidates to select open times which match the interview teams' calendars, prompting less back and forth between the candidate and the TA scheduling team.

For campus recruiting, we have also made many changes as we approach the 2023 hiring season. We have implemented the shortened interview process for campus from two live interviews to one, and the entire process is completed over video.

**2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?**

West Monroe continues to grow 20-30% year over year, and our number of hires annually has grown right alongside that. As a fast-growing talent acquisition function, the need to review and process feedback was highly necessary to remain a competitive recruiting organization. CandE data from last year showed us that candidates were looking for more feedback and detail, especially those who made it far in the interview process. With these changes, we saw an increase in our scores this year in all categories.

**3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?**

With West Monroe being a people-first organization, focusing on our culture, team cohesion and accountability are important parts of our talent acquisition function. From the start, we have driven our team to high standards, and we give our team members, regardless of level, ownership of pieces of the process, which builds accountability and trust. Within the team, we have four Centers of Excellence COEs), and team members can join the one that aligns with their interests and career goals. Members can become experts in the area and are able to share their expertise with not only the rest of the team, but the broader organization. The COE is also responsible for initiatives to continuously measure and improve the candidate experience.

Twice a year, we name over 100 members of our broader organization "Recruiting Champions" and thank them for their commitment to the candidate experience. Although a small gesture, it goes a long way in promoting candidate experience within the greater organization.

We annually bring our greater TA team of 50 people together for an all-hands meeting, which this past year took place in August. At this year's meeting, we hosted our chief operating officer, who attended and shared his perspective on recruiting and the importance it plays in our greater firmwide strategy. During this meeting, we also shared our candidate experience data with the greater team and hosted a workshop on conducting tough conversations with hiring managers and candidates. Annual meetings like this are extremely important for us to continue to build team relationships, especially as we have grown so much as a team in the past two years.

**4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?**

In terms of overall candidate experience, we utilize Culture Amp to measure interview and candidate experience internally. Net promoter scores are taken post-interview and at the start of employment. This data is displayed in an employee experience dashboard, which all leaders have access to. It tracks an NPS at these stages, as well as throughout an employee's journey at West Monroe.

Since implementing Greenhouse in 2021, we have pulled and utilized many more metrics than in years past. We can run reports in our system to show outstanding scorecards not turned in, time at each stage of the process, number of interviews each person has completed and more. These metrics hold the team accountable on process, show us where we can improve and provide us with concrete data that allows for regular examination of where we stand against our goals.

# 2022 North America CandE Award Winners