



HOW TO
INCREASE
**CANDIDATE
ENGAGEMENT
RATES** IN YOUR
SOURCING
STRATEGY



Traditionally, recruitment has been all about finding people. However, that has started to change.

The connected world we live in means tracking down suitable candidates is easier than ever before. LinkedIn and various other talent watering holes spread across the internet are a recruiter's dream, while companies are now able to access and examine huge amounts of data about potential employees.

Unfortunately, this does not mean that the sourcing process has become easy. Indeed, bringing the right people into your business is as difficult as ever. While it is now simpler to find

talent, the challenge is to engage candidates and convince them to join your company.

If you're finding it easier to locate candidates, your competitors are too, and this means you need to give potential employees a compelling reason to choose you over your rivals. Engagement is the key to achieving this. Quite simply, once you've found talent, you need to engage it, otherwise it will go elsewhere.

The rules of sourcing have changed; engagement is now everything.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT

So, what exactly does candidate engagement mean? In essence, it refers to ensuring a candidate knows who you are and considers your company a worthwhile place to work, even if they are not actively looking for a new position.

Thanks to a combination of cultural changes and economic factors, being able to engage potential employees is now of huge importance. On one hand, there is the rise of the 'TalentSumer', people who have abandoned the nine-to-five, job-for-life approach to work and are happy to work for numerous companies, picking and choosing their employer the same way a consumer purchases from a specific retail brand.

This change in mentality has coincided with the onset of a global skills shortage. From engineering to IT, there is a distinct lack of candidates on the market with the skills that businesses desperately need. As a result, being able to attract the small number of individuals who do possess these in-demand skills is vital, and this is where engagement comes in.

With so many companies keen to hire these people, only the most engaging will stand out. Indeed, in many cases, a candidate now needs a strong level of engagement to simply pick up the phone.

USING THE RIGHT TOOLS

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is an obvious place to start. Almost all sourcers take advantage of this network and it is the go-to channel when looking for top talent. However, not all of these will be using the platform for effective engagement.

Engaging a passive candidate also needs to go beyond simply adding them as a connection. Sending a direct mail can be more effective and even if the person question isn't interested in a new role, a seed has been planted in their mind for the future. When using LinkedIn, sourcers must walk the fine line between engagement and annoyance. Too many messages and group discussions can easily lead to candidates seeing an company as a source of spam rather than a potential place of work, which can do serious damage to an employer brand.

One way to get the most out of LinkedIn is to use the site to locate an ideal candidate and then employ other tools, such as people aggregators, to find alternative contact details like a phone number or personal email address. With so many LinkedIn messages now being sent, people simply don't read

them any more and the chances are your bid to engage with a candidate will fall on deaf ears. You can get around this by utilizing Boolean and X-ray search techniques to find the right name on LinkedIn and then draw on people aggregators to contact them directly.

OTHER OPTIONS

While LinkedIn is undoubtedly the leading channel for sourcing, it should not be the sole extent of a sourcer's focus. Between them, Facebook, Twitter and Google+ have more than 1.5 billion users, which is a talent pool the sourcing profession can ill afford to ignore. These networks are not as effective as LinkedIn, as they were not designed with business use in mind, but they can still prove a useful means of engaging candidates.

With the majority of sourcers focusing all of their efforts on LinkedIn, engaging with an individual via Twitter or Google+ may help a company to bypass the competition and stand out from the crowd. A conversation could always be started on one of these channels and then be continued on LinkedIn, via phone or email.

There is a sense of hesitancy around using Facebook for sourcing, as despite its vast user base, it is very much a personal rather than business network. While it shouldn't be seen as a primary channel, using this platform to some extent is still more than worthwhile. The results may not be as impressive as LinkedIn, but taking the time to diversify your approach could prove the difference between securing a candidate with the key skills your company would otherwise have missed out on.

BACK TO BASICS

Regardless of what online platforms your sourcers take advantage of one core skill remains key: communication. No matter how good a technical search expert a sourcer may be, this is redundant if they lack the people skills to engage a potential candidate. Knowing what medium to use and when, plus having the verbal and written skills to communicate effectively is crucial for superior sourcing. Online search is just one part of the process and old-fashioned sales skills still have a vital part to play. Effective engagement requires a healthy blend of both the old and the new and this means more traditional approaches should not be overlooked.

The phone is the prime example of this. Despite the plethora of options available online, a phone call is still perhaps the most effective way of actually engaging a candidate. The

beauty of the phone call is that it is direct and is much harder to ignore than a message on a social network. Response rates for phone calls tend to be much higher than online channels and the platform still has a clear place in the sourcing process.

What else can be done to improve engagement? One thing to consider is personalization. This was one of the key trends discussed at SourceCon this year, with sourcers increasingly looking to tailor the messages they convey to potential candidates rather than relying on standard marketing language. It's now easier than ever before to find out about an individual's career history and taking the time to add a personal touch could be the deciding factor that causes a candidate to choose one company over another.

Even relatively simple factors such as timing can make the difference, with early in the working day widely regarded as the best time to engage with candidates over the phone, while between 6am and 8am is seen as the ideal time to send emails, as they will catch the eye when an individual logs on first thing in the morning.

When engaging with potential candidates it is important not to focus solely on the individual and to also consider their network. While the individual in question may not be willing or suited to the role on offer, they might well know someone who is. People nearly always know others with a skill-set that is similar to their own and asking for a referral could be the key to finding the best person for the job.

GETTING IT RIGHT

How can your company measure its effectiveness at engaging candidates? A common benchmark is to aim for a response rate of 65 percent. Achieving this is not easy and requires sourcers with a range of skills who have the ability to effectively manage each of the channels at their disposal.

On average, it takes about four touch points for a candidate to be effectively engaged, meaning sourcers need to be adept at taking advantage of numerous channels both new and old. The appropriate level of investment needs to be provided to make this possible.

CONCLUSION

So, what does the importance of engagement mean for your company? With the direct access to talent at your, and your competitor's, fingertips, the businesses that are able to effectively engage active, passive and passing candidates will have a genuine competitive edge.

To seize this advantage, it is vital to select the right sourcers

to represent your company. These individuals need to have the ability to really bring your employer brand to life and clearly demonstrate your Employee Value Proposition to potential employees. Additionally, they must be able to make use of all the channels at their disposal, with the ability to mix up mediums and adapt their approach on a regular basis.

Good sourcers need to be supported with the necessary investment and technology to work to the full extent of their abilities. A surprising number of companies still restrict the use of social media websites in the office, meaning many sourcers have to rely solely on their mobile devices.

Your sourcers must be supported by the business itself. Their engagement efforts will be in vain if they are not backed up a strong employer brand that tells a compelling story. While a sourcer can engage a candidate's initial interest, it is the company's overall employer brand that will have the biggest bearing on whether an individual chooses to work for you or not. The messages conveyed by sourcers need to be aligned with your brand, otherwise candidates may feel misled and develop a negative view of the company.

The importance of engagement is the next big development in the world of sourcing and businesses who are getting it right have already moved a step ahead of the competition. Finding suitable candidates is now the easy part; engagement is the battleground on which the war for talent will be won and lost.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

FARA RIVES

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC TALENT ACQUISITION | ALLEGIS GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

Fara Rives is the Director of Strategic Talent Acquisition (STA) for Allegis Global Solutions . Our STA team is focused on sourcing excellence and talent attraction best practice. The STA team provides innovative talent acquisition solutions which, includes talent mapping, market intelligence, social media and talent community management.

The STA team is a support function to our Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) operations and Fara ensures full delivery of an STA plan encompassing strategic sourcing, marketing and diversity and inclusion to all RPO clients.



ABOUT US

Allegis Global Solutions (AGS), an Allegis Group company, is a leader in global talent solutions.

We have reimagined the human work experience.

Through decades of industry experience, and with services across 60+ countries we understand what it takes to consult, design and build successful workforce management solutions regardless of the workforce category.

Whether our customers require an MSP, RPO, Services Procurement (SOW), Freelance solutions or a combination of services either regionally or globally, AGS has the experience, state-of-the-art technology and sustained investments in innovation to ensure your workforce solutions will make your company better.

We live to match exceptional organizations with outstanding people.

WWW.ALLEGISGLOBALSOLUTIONS.COM