



2020 RECRUITING METRICS

Candidate Experience Report

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Does Candidate Experience Matter?

In recent years, we've seen a positive trend emerging in recruitment strategies — a focus on candidate experience, which can be defined as:

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE *noun*

\ 'kan-də-, dāt ik-'spir-ē-ən(t)s \

the experience a candidate has with a potential employer throughout the hiring process, from job posting to job offer.

Focusing on candidate experience was especially important when unemployment was low. But now, as we face a high employment rate and the uncertain impact of COVID-19 on the future job market, candidate experience matters more than ever.

Candidates in a COVID-19 job landscape value health and safety and want prospective employers to assure them that they've adapted and are committed to keeping their employees safe during the pandemic. Many job seekers are also looking for indicators that companies are committed to hiring practices that actively promote diversity and inclusion.

Remember: Regardless of the unemployment rate, **the best candidates will always have the ability to be picky about where they work.** That hasn't changed. If you understand what candidates want out of a hiring process, you can put your business at a significant advantage in any job market.

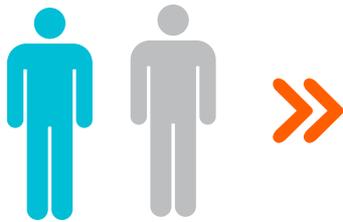
We surveyed 250 people who've applied for jobs within the last year and analyzed their answers about their experience during the hiring process to answer one basic question: Does candidate experience actually matter?

The bottom line: **yes.** The experience a candidate has with a company's hiring process ultimately impacts a candidate's decision to accept or decline a job offer.

What the Data Says

The Impact of Negative Candidate Experiences

We found that:



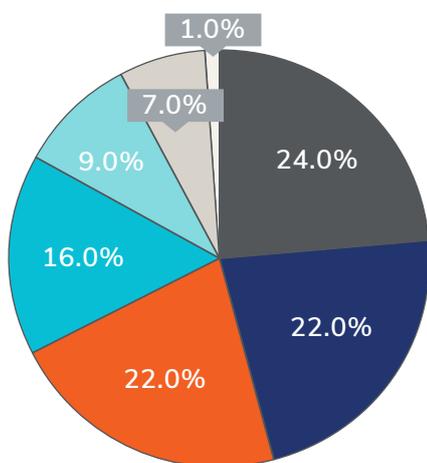
1 in 2 job seekers have had a negative experience during a hiring process and **50%** of respondents had declined a job offer due to poor experience.

First, consider all the hours your business spends on hiring and recruiting. Then consider that when an offer is made, if you've created a negative candidate experience, half of your offers will be declined. Because of this, employers must often settle for their second or third choice for a role. **This results in the number one challenge facing businesses today: making the right hires.**

What Makes a Negative Candidate Experience?

When we looked at the reasons job seekers classified those experiences as being poor, here's what we found:

Reasons Job Seekers Declined an Offer:



- The compensation & benefits didn't meet my expectations
- I had a negative experience with people in the interview process
- The role & responsibilities were different from what I expected
- I disliked the office environment
- I was offered another job that had better compensation & benefits
- The interview process was slow & disorganized
- I was offered another job that I liked more

Candidate Experience Begins with the Job Posting

Looking at the top two indicators for poor candidate experience, we find complaints that are relatively easy for employers to resolve — by updating the job posting.

- **"The compensation and benefits didn't meet my expectations."** We recommend disclosing a salary range in the job posting. This sets salary expectations immediately and helps ensure that you receive applicants you can afford. It's a hard truth for a lot of employers to accept, but it's a waste of everyone's time if you're tens of thousands of dollars off from a candidate's expectations. We're seeing today that there's little to be gained from employers waiting until late in the hiring process to negotiate salary, especially when our data shows that nearly **a quarter of candidates** have turned down offers as a result of this outdated practice.
- **"The role and responsibilities were different from what I expected."** This is another issue that can be resolved by taking the care to write a detailed and accurate job description, outlining both the responsibilities and qualifications for the role. If candidates find in conversations with an employer that the job description wasn't accurate, they'll feel that their time was wasted. For tips on how to improve your job descriptions, read CareerPlug's free guide, [How to Write a Job Posting](#).

The Impact of Positive Candidate Experiences



75% of candidates said a positive candidate experience influenced their decision to accept an offer.

Our candidate experience data isn't all doom and gloom. **The upside:** The majority of people surveyed are currently working at companies where they had a **positive candidate experience** during the hiring process, with 75% reporting that it influenced their decision to accept the offer.

Candidate Experience and Your Employer Brand

The impact of poor candidate experience extends beyond the disappointment of a rejected job offer — it has serious implications for your **employer brand**, or your business' reputation as a place to work.

In 2020, it's now considered standard for job seekers to spend significant time researching a company's reputation on employer review sites like Glassdoor and Indeed. These reviews serve as social proof, signaling to candidates what they can expect from your hiring process and work environment. This means it's crucial to maintain a positive candidate experience for all applicants — **whether you hire them or not.**



24% of candidates said they've left a **negative** review online after having a negative experience.



44% of candidates said they've left a **positive** review online after having a positive experience.

In our survey, about a **quarter of respondents** said they have left a **negative review online after having a negative candidate experience**. This is significant because **over half** of job seekers abandon their pursuit of a company after reading negative reviews. Don't miss out on the best candidates by allowing negative candidate reviews to define your employer brand.

How to Improve Candidate Experience

Creating a positive candidate experience is more straightforward than you might imagine. Job seekers aren't expecting you to roll out a red carpet, but many hiring managers overlook the basic fact that candidates are evaluating them just as much as they are evaluating candidates.

Here's what we found when we asked our job seeker respondents to identify what employers could do to improve the hiring process that would have the most impact on candidate experience.

1. Provide clear information upfront about job responsibilities and expectations, as well as compensation and benefits.



31% of respondents expected to be informed about compensation in the initial job post.

Job seekers want to know more information about the job sooner in the hiring process so they can make informed decisions. For example, 31% of respondents expected to be informed about compensation in the initial job post. This is a huge — and easy — opportunity for employers to improve candidate experience while also creating a win for their screening process, as job seekers will self-select in or out early in the process.

When job seekers expect to learn about the following during the hiring process:

	BEFORE APPLYING/ IN THE JOB POST	BEFORE THE INITIAL INTERVIEW	DURING THE INITIAL INTERVIEW	IN THE LATER INTERVIEW STAGES	AT THE OFFER STAGE
Compensation	32%	16%	38%	8%	6%
Benefits	20%	14%	43%	15%	7%
Company Culture	20%	14%	50%	13%	3%
Stages/Next Steps in the Hiring Process	10%	17%	54%	16%	3%

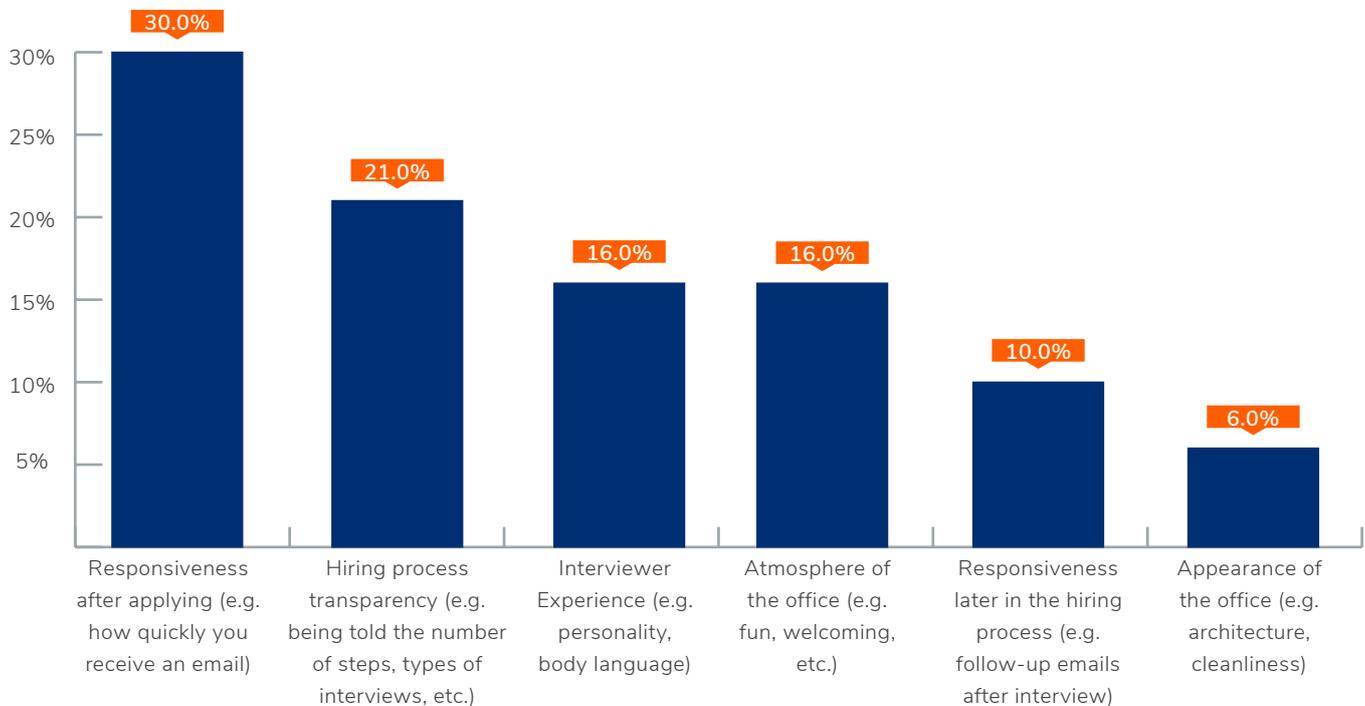
2. Respond quickly to applicants after they apply and continue to be responsive throughout the hiring process.



30% of job seeker respondents ranked responsiveness after they initially apply as most important to them when it comes to candidate experience.

Candidates are looking for prompt and clear communication as they evaluate their interest in a position. Hiring managers should plan on reviewing applicants frequently and making decisions to move forward or reject as they review, rather than letting resumes gather dust for weeks (or months). Throughout the hiring process, look for ways to add communication by sharing timelines and hiring process next steps early on and after each interview.

Top ranked experiences impacting a candidate's decision to join a company



3. Create positive interactions between candidates and interviewers.

After compensation or responsibilities not meeting expectations, **having a negative experience with the people in the hiring process was the second most cited reason for turning down a job offer**. Job seekers who turned down a job offer cited interviewers who were **rude** or **distracted** or a hiring process that seemed **disorganized**. Candidates took these as reflections of the company as a whole. Train hiring managers and hold interviewers accountable for conducting great interviews — from questions to ask to proper etiquette (e.g. being on time) and avoiding distractions during the interview.

What You Can Do Now

Invest in Your Hiring Process

Creating a [high-quality hiring process](#) will not only improve candidate experience but will also improve your ability to hire quality people for your team. Remember, having a great candidate experience doesn't mean you need to cut corners on your evaluation — only that you should give candidates a fair shake to evaluate you as well. Taking the time now, especially if you're not hiring, to think through your hiring process and train employees will prepare you to hire when you're ready.

Create a Candidate Experience Checklist

Remember to do the following before your next round of hiring:

- Write **accurate job descriptions** that include core responsibilities and requirements.
- Include **compensation and benefits information** early in the process, on job descriptions or during the initial phone screen.
- Communicate the hiring process steps and timeline upfront**, either during initial phone screens, in the job postings, or on your careers page.
- Include context in interview invites about **who candidates will be interviewing with** and the **format of the interviews** — the goal is to let candidates know what to expect.
- Provide training and **hold interviewers accountable for conducting great interviews** — from questions to ask to proper etiquette (e.g. being on time, avoiding distractions, etc).
- Get feedback from current team members:
 - Ask current employees what their experience was like during the hiring process and **why they said yes to the offer**.
 - Ask current employees what they like about working for your company and gather ideas about how you can **incorporate that culture into your hiring process**.



ABOUT CAREERPLUG

CareerPlug is a software company on a mission to solve the #1 challenge of running a business: attracting and hiring the right people. More than 10,000 clients love working with us because we give them a proven playbook to make the right hires. And you don't need to be an HR pro to succeed, since our software is easy enough for anyone to use. We're so committed to Making Hiring Easier that we require every one of our employees to become a certified Hiring Expert so that they can contribute to our mission.

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