

Nationwide Study from CareerBuilder Reveals Six Facts Every Employer Should Know About the Candidate Experience

- Majority of employers underestimate the business impact of the candidate experience
- Candidates are less likely to purchase from a company that treated them poorly during the application process
- Candidates are more willing to accept a lower salary if they've had a positive application experience

PR Newswire
CHICAGO

CHICAGO, May 21, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Whether it's keeping candidates guessing as to where they are in the application process or simply neglecting to acknowledge their application, some employers are unwittingly leaving candidates with a bad impression – and it's taking a toll on their business.

According to a new study from CareerBuilder, the experiences candidates have with a company throughout the application process can make or break their impression of a company, not only affecting their decisions to apply and accept a job offer, but also their loyalty as customers.

The 2015 Candidate Behavior study, conducted by Inavero on behalf of CareerBuilder of more than 5,013 workers ages 18 and over and 2,002 hiring decision makers between February 3 and February 18, 2015, sheds light on the differences between what candidates expect from potential employers during the job application process and what employers actually deliver. View full results and the executive summary [here](#).

"Today's candidates expect ongoing communication from companies during the application process, and when companies fail to meet this expectation, it can be bad for business," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer of CareerBuilder. "Candidates remember when companies don't respond to them, fail to update them on the status of their application or don't follow up after an interview. Not only do these experiences make candidates less likely to apply to the company again, but they also make them less likely to purchase from the company as customers."

The six facts every employer should know about the candidate experience include:

Fact: Candidate Experience Matters (More Than You Know)

According to the study, 82 percent of employers think there's little to no negative impact on the company when a candidate has a bad experience during the hiring process. The reality, however, is that the majority of candidates do not take poor treatment lying down: 58 percent are less likely to buy from a company to which they've applied if they don't get a response to their application; 69 percent are less likely if they have a bad experience in the interview; and the same is true of 65 percent if they didn't hear back after an interview.

Conversely, a good candidate experience can have the reverse effect: 69 percent of candidates are more likely to buy from a company to which they've applied if they're treated with respect throughout the application process, and 67 percent are likely to do the same if they receive consistent updates throughout the recruitment process.

Fact: Employers May Be Missing Opportunities to Connect with Candidates

Job seekers may be searching for jobs in a lot of places where employers don't have a presence. Candidates consult up to 18 resources throughout their job search – including job boards, social networking sites, search engines and online referrals – but the majority of employers (58 percent) don't use tracking or coding technology to learn where candidates are coming from and ensure they are making efficient use of their recruitment marketing efforts. Without any data on where their candidates are coming from, employers may be missing opportunities to connect with candidates where they are actually searching.

Fact: Candidates Expect More Than You're Giving Them

For some candidates, the myth of the infamous application "black hole" is all too real. More than half of employers (52 percent) respond to less than half of the candidates who apply. What these employers may not realize, however, is that not only do most candidates expect an automated reply that acknowledges their application, the majority (84 percent) also expect a personal email response, and 52 percent anticipate a phone call. Even when the news isn't what they hope to receive, candidates expect a response: 1 in 4 candidates (25 percent) expect to hear if the employer will not be bringing them in for an interview.

Fact: Ongoing Communication is Critical for Candidates

When it comes to candidate communication, employers seem to be falling short of candidates' expectations. Thirty-six percent of candidates expect to be updated throughout the application process, and 41 percent expect to be notified if they weren't chosen after they interviewed with the company. Yet only 26 percent of employers proactively communicate with candidates what stage of the hiring process they're in. Even when they've made it as far into the process as an interview, many candidates are still left in the dark: Nearly three in four (73 percent) candidates who interviewed with companies said they were never given an explanation for why they didn't get the job.

Fact: Candidates Are Frustrated with the Application Process

When it comes to keeping candidates engaged and interested in their opportunities, a company's application process can be its own worst enemy. Forty percent of candidates feel the application process has become more difficult in the last five years. Of those, 57 percent complain the process is too automated and lacks personalization, 51 percent are frustrated they have no idea where they are in the process, and 50 percent say the process has so many more steps than it used to have. A separate CareerBuilder survey found that 3 in 5 candidates do not complete the application process if they feel it is too long¹. Employers can reduce these frustrations by taking the time to respond to candidates, by keeping the lines of communication going and by minimizing the number of steps candidates must go through during the application process.

Fact: Candidates are More Willing to Accept Lower Salaries from Well-Reputed Employers

As noted earlier, treating candidates well is good for the bottom line. More than 3 in 4 candidates (77 percent) are willing to accept a salary that is 5 percent lower than their expected offer if the employer created a great impression through the hiring process; even more (83 percent) would do the same if the company had a reputation as a great employer. Candidates would also accept a lower salary if the company had a lot of positive press recently (69 percent) and had great online reviews (73 percent).

These findings underscore the importance of having a strong employment brand; however, more than half of employers (52 percent) do not have a clearly defined employment brand – giving the other 48 percent a distinct edge when it comes to capturing in-demand candidates at competitive prices.

¹*Nationwide survey, conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from June 2 to June 25, 2014, which included a representative sample of 374 HR professionals and 319 job seekers.*

Survey Methodology

In partnership with Inavero, CareerBuilder surveyed 5,013 workers ages 18 and over, and 2,002 hiring managers, between February 3 and February 18, 2015 in the United States in an effort to understand the factors that influence candidates' job search behavior. With a pure probability sample of 5,013 job seekers, one could say with a 95 confidence interval that the job seeker results have a sampling error of +/- 1.4 percent. With a pure probability sample of 2,002 hiring managers, one could say with a 95 confidence interval that the hiring manager results have a sampling error of +/- 2.1 percent. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

About CareerBuilder®

CareerBuilder is the global leader in human capital solutions, helping companies target and attract great talent. Its online career site, CareerBuilder.com®, is the largest in the United States with more than 24 million unique visitors and 1 million jobs. CareerBuilder works with the world's top employers, providing everything from labor market intelligence to talent management software and other recruitment solutions. Owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE:GCI), Tribune Company and The McClatchy Company (NYSE:MNI), CareerBuilder and its subsidiaries operate in the United States, Europe, South America, Canada and Asia. For more information, visit www.careerbuilder.com.

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