

8 Ways Companies Can Attract the Best Job Candidates

By [Alison Green](#)
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What an organization needs to do and offer to recruit qualified applicants.

While employers often feel that it should be easy to attract great job candidates in a buyer's market like this one, that's not always the case. [Top candidates](#) always have options, and they can generally afford to be picky about what jobs they apply to, let alone what offers they accept. That means that employers who truly care about attracting top talent need to put special thought into how they recruit and screen candidates.

So what does it take to attract the strongest candidates? Much of it comes down to having a hiring process that treats candidates with respect.

1. Have clear, easy-to-understand job descriptions. Too often, employers post jargon-filled, incomprehensible job descriptions that barely explain what the position actually does. If job seekers have to struggle to figure out what the role is or who would be qualified for it, the best will simply move on.

2. Don't force candidates to use convoluted and time-consuming application systems. Online application systems may have made things more convenient for employers, but they've done the opposite for job seekers, who regularly run into systems that are riddled with technical problems, ask yes/no questions that don't fit many candidates' situations and demand enormous amounts of information just to apply. Candidates with options aren't likely to spend an hour wrestling with an application system just to get it to accept their résumé.

3. Don't play games on salary. The reality is, most people work for money. Pretending that's not true and refusing to discuss what a position pays – as plenty of employers do right up until they make an offer – will turn off good candidates. [Talking about salary upfront](#) – ideally in the job posting itself, or at least in an early-stage phone screen – will attract strong candidates who will appreciate the candor.

4. Respect candidates' time. Canceling an interview at the last minute

without any apology, not paying attention in interviews and leaving candidates waiting in the lobby long past their interview time are flags for candidates that this company doesn't respect them. Savvy candidates know that it won't get any better after they're hired, and will focus on companies that treat them with respect instead.

5. Keep interviews focused on questions related to the work.

Employers who ask goofy [interview questions](#) like "If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?" and "What kind of animal are you most like?" will annoy strong candidates – and plenty will decide they're not a good fit with a hiring manager who hires this way. Great candidates want to spend the interview talking about their background, the job and what they might bring to it.

6. Be transparent through the hiring process. [Hiring processes](#) are so often inscrutable from the outside that it stands out when an employer is transparent and open with candidates. That can mean things like making it easy for top candidates to speak with would-be co-workers, being upfront about the downsides of the position (like long hours or difficult clients) and talking candidly about the reasons behind delays in the hiring timeline.

7. Remember that interviewing is a two-way street. Since the best candidates have options, they'll interview and evaluate employers right back. Employers who assume that the assessment process only goes one way and forget to care about how they're coming across to candidates – or even give them opportunities to ask rigorous questions and do their own evaluations – will generally turn off strong applicants.

8. Be worth working for. That means not only offering competitive [salaries](#) and benefits, but also providing a high-functioning work environment, with effective management, professional development and recognition for a job well done. The best-run hiring process in the world won't be able to overcome bad word of mouth about what it's like to work for a particular company.

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