

**IS YOUR  
CANDIDATE  
EXPERIENCE  
DAMAGING YOUR  
EMPLOYER BRAND?**



**WHITEPAPER**

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# WHY IS CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE SO IMPORTANT?

Ask yourself, truthfully, do your candidates honestly rate the experience they have had with your company as the most fantastic experience of all time? Probably not.

Harsh we know, but don't worry; you're not the only one. We see, all too often, huge investment thrown into employer branding which often misses the point.

Even large corporations with healthy budgets and teams of top marketing and brand industry experts are very much focussed on presenting the right image, but are then failing to generate great candidate experience.

In the 'war for talent' Employer Branding is more important than ever. It's a candidate-driven market, especially in the tech sector where there is a definite shortfall in skilled talent, candidates have something very powerful: choice. Employer Branding is seen as the magic ingredient that can make you the choice of company above all others.



But, it's not just about presenting the right image to attract talent; it's the candidate experience that follows. The fundamental mechanics of how a person experiences a brand, as a candidate, hasn't changed. Yet, at Context Recruitment we see first-hand that it is still a negative and frustrating experience for many candidates we work with.

The main culprit for this dissatisfied feeling?....

## FEEDBACK

# THE REAL VALUE OF 'FEEDBACK'

Not surprisingly, candidates tell us that a slow response is one of the most dehumanising aspects of the recruitment process. In a recent study by Indeed, once a candidate has applied to a job at a company, the following actions undermine trust, and ultimately destroy the Employer Brand:

- 1 The company recruiter doesn't show much interest in the candidate as a person.**
- 2 The company takes a while to get in touch after receiving the application. Astonishingly, only 6% of UK jobseekers claim to hear back from the employer within one day. Surely, in today's hyper-connected and high-speed world, communication and feedback shouldn't be so slack?**
- 3 The candidate doesn't hear back from the company for a week or longer after their interview.**



And with 76% of European jobseekers saying they would adopt a more negative perception of a company if they didn't hear back after applying, ask yourself, can you really afford to lose potential talent during a time when talent is in high demand?

Furthermore, how many people are they telling of their negative experience? The impact can be costly, especially in close-knit niche sectors and communities such as the IT and tech sector, where people openly share their experiences and views with like-minded people.

According to CareerArc, nearly 60% of candidates have had a poor candidate experience and 72% of them shared that experience either online or with someone directly. Additionally, research from the REC showed that 1 in 4 candidates having a negative experience would dissuade someone else from applying to the same company. Say hello to the snowball effect...

# YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE TO IMPRESS CANDIDATES



Candidates are hard won. If they are talented, experienced and a good fit for your business, chances are they will also be attractive to your competitors. Throw in a poor experience to the pot, and it is highly likely that your ideal candidate will choose to go elsewhere.

A poor first impression can have a lasting effect. According to WorkplaceTrends, 80% of candidates say they wouldn't reapply to a company that didn't notify them of their application status, and with 65% of candidates claiming they never or rarely receive notice – companies are shrinking their future talent pool. Did we mention we're living in a candidate-driven market?...

The problem isn't just with job applications, many companies also struggle to communicate with candidates at the end of the interview process. According to a study by Indeed, 32% of successful candidates noted more than one week elapsed between their final interview and receiving an offer. This is a substantial time to wait and can lead to job offer anxiety and stress, or worse still, the candidate accepts an offer from elsewhere. Did we mention we're living in a candidate-driven market? (there's a theme here!).

As already mentioned before, we see many companies throwing huge investment into their Employer Branding strategy, yet we know from our candidates, that the experience doesn't necessarily match the image portrayed.

**80% OF CANDIDATES SAY THEY WOULDN'T REAPPLY TO A COMPANY THAT DIDN'T NOTIFY THEM OF THEIR APPLICATION STATUS**

In our view, Employer Branding has become another buzzword. We value the sentiment, and the commitment shown by companies to their employer brand, we really do, yet believe in many cases, the impact is lost when the candidate comes to apply for a job.

One of the main reasons is that applying for a job, generally, involves candidates to go through a recruitment funnel. This stage-by-stage examination of whether a candidate is good enough for the company in question, can feel somewhat a little inhumane. So, how should companies overcome this? Simple – be more human.

During the recruitment, and onboarding process, candidates are deciding if your company will be a good place to invest their time, skills and experience. At every stage of the process and at every touchpoint, be more human. Provide the feedback and communication that candidates expect and deserve.

# SEVEN TIPS TO ACHIEVE GREAT CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Candidates get a poor impression if they find out the role has been filled internally...

1

Clearly define exactly what you are looking for in a new hire. Question the scope of the role and responsibilities and map out the future potential. Also check that there aren't already employees in the business who could step into it; candidates investing time in interviewing for a role get a poor impression if they find out the role has been filled internally.

2

If you are working with an agency, engage with them, they are your brand ambassador and they play a critical role in the candidate experience. Give your consultant the information they need to effectively sell your company and employer brand, invite them to visit your offices so that they can really understand the culture of the business and the job position on offer.

3

Show interest from the very beginning. Before most candidates apply for a job they go through considerable preparation. They carefully read the job description, take the time to consider their suitability for the role, research the company, tailor their CV and write an appropriate cover letter. The least you can do is acknowledge their application and thank them for taking the time to apply. An automated reply is better than no reply but try to inject a personal touch.

4

Make sure your interviews are memorable, for the right reasons. The interview stage is the most important part of the process for many candidates. 83% of candidates say a negative interview experience can change their mind over a company or role, and 77% say the interview stage influences their decision to join (LinkedIn). Make sure you have your best people involved with the interview stage, including the prospective manager; you need your best ambassadors to personify and sell your company and the employer brand. You want every candidate, whether successful or not, to want to work for your company and to say great things about you to their friends, family and colleagues. All of whom could be your recruitment targets of the future.

5

Communicate - don't undo all your great marketing efforts by lack of communication and feedback. Use various communication methods that make it easy for you to keep candidates in the loop, whether it be email, text, messenger or just the good old-fashioned telephone call. It sounds obvious, it is obvious. But it remains to be the main frustration for candidates.

6

Go through the process yourself – what rating would you give? Or even better, engage in a mystery candidate to go through the process and give feedback on the results. As consumers, we are used to and expect to be asked our feedback on products and services we have used, yet in the UK, only 29% of candidates reported being asked to provide feedback about their candidate experience. Don't be scared to ask!

## CLOSING REMARKS....



Now is the time for companies to create a more engaging, rewarding and interactive experience for candidates.

The recruiting process is a delicate one and a transparent, well communicated process can significantly transform the candidate experience and lead to better outcomes, for all.

Candidate experience: get it right, and you will secure the best talent for today's hire, as well as build relationships with **tomorrow's talent.**

Even if a candidate already thinks they want to work for your based on what they've seen or heard, their final decision over whether to accept your job offer relies heavily on the experience they get when applying.

Get it right, and you will secure the best talent for today's hire, as well as build relationships with tomorrow's talent. Get it wrong and candidates will go somewhere else, and their frustration will contaminate your employer brand undoing all your marketing efforts.