



Trust:

The Key to Attracting and Retaining Talent

Part 2: Designing a Trustworthy Recruitment Process

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W. Edwards Deming in his book *Out of the Crisis* estimated that 94% of organization troubles and opportunities for improvement lie within the *systems themselves*. So, how do you design a recruiting system that fosters a sense of trust from beginning to end?

Step 1: Carefully Design the Role.

A role within an organization must first be understood as filling a specific need and aligned to an organization's goals. The Hiring Manager, working with key stakeholders, spends time and care developing the scope of the role: what is required, key skills needed, KPIs, roles and responsibilities. Everyone that touches this process needs to be on the same page about what the role entails. This assures that by the time the role is posted, and the recruiter starts sourcing, candidates are clear from day one what the Organization does, what the role has to offer, and why it resonates. The right candidate for the job should be able to read the offer and go "hey, that's me!"

Something to watch out for - organizations are now moving so fast that roles and responsibilities can shift quickly, causing an increase in scope creep. If a candidate reads a job description, they are forming



expectations and a narrative around what the job entails. Trust is the marriage of integrity and consistency, and a role being misaligned to what someone *perceives* the job to be is a red flag that can eventually grow into employee resentment and rapid turnover. There needs to be consistency in the role and in the description of the role *or* an organization needs to be upfront about how things might shift.

Step 2: Design the Recruiting Process.

This process varies by role and level as well as the culture of the organization but developing a process that people can stick to and *trust in* is important. A clear process builds trust with candidates and can foster a positive perception of the brand.

A recruiting process could look something like this:

- Resume review and phone screen within 3 days of application/first contact by recruiter
- 1st interview within 3 days with Hiring manager
- 2nd interview within 3 days with Stakeholder #1
- 3rd interview within 3 days with Stakeholder #2
- Assessment/Background Check/Reference check finished within 4 days
- Offer is extended verbally and in writing, candidate signs within 3 days

In this process, a candidate moves from first contact to hire in just under a month, or 19 business days. This example could feel like a fast process or a slow one depending on the role, but the important thing is that process and protocol is established to have a baseline for tracking successful recruiting outcomes and to have a process that is reliable, open, and consistent for both employees and candidates. Tailoring the process to the level and scope of the role is even better and can help inform the next key steps.

Step 3: Assign Roles and Responsibilities.

Structure who you pull into these conversations - start with 'immediate environment' and figure out who needs to be included into the conversation and when. Be clear about who is responsible for what. Too often employees are made responsible for tasks but aren't given the authority to deliver results. The rule is simple: if an employee is responsible for an outcome, they should have the authority to make the necessary decisions, without being forced into an endless string of emails, meetings, or presentations.

I'm sure that many of us have been in a hiring situation when we are in the process of interviewing and the recruiter says, "you'll be speaking with X, then X, and an assessment, and then we will select the candidate we want to send an offer to". And without fail other people get pulled in to provide color commentary or feedback, or the person who is designated as the decision maker ends up pulling others into making the decision for them. All of this ends up protracting the process. Candidates may get cold feet and jump at another opportunity with a process that feels smoother.

Too often I've seen a candidate move through several interviews and assessments and all of a sudden, a single executive leader far removed from the role suddenly has a change of heart about a candidate and then the process is back to square one. This is a violation of trust - the person at the top doesn't trust their reports to make a valuable choice and by result the middle managers now feel like they must get the approval of the executive for every little thing. It's setting a tone of micromanagement.



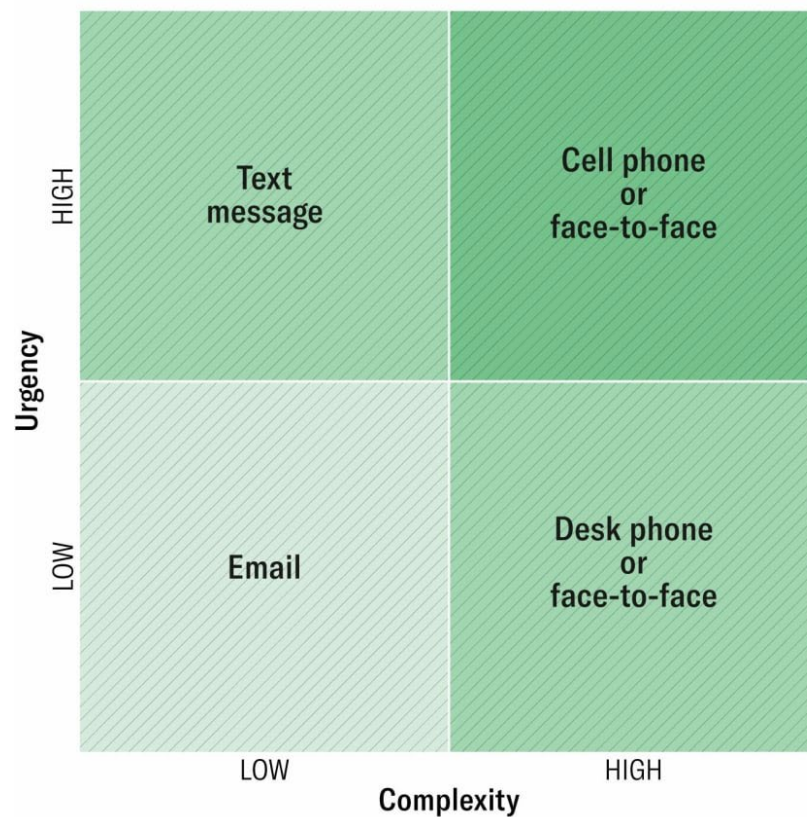
Some key questions to ask in this step:

- Who is responsible for what in this process?
- How are we communicating during this process? How is urgency expressed?
- How is the hiring decision made? Is it a vote? Who is the tiebreaker? Who has veto power?

Determining how you communicate with one another during this process is important as well:

What's the Best Medium for Your Message?

Clarify which channel to use depending on the urgency and complexity of the issue.



Source: Markovitz Consulting



(Image Source: Harvard Business Review)



Whoever you decide to pull into this process, assure that they buy-in, understand and sign-off on the time commitment to interview and evaluate potential candidates. Setting up proper communication pathways allows you to effectively track a recruitment process from beginning to end.

Step 4: Evaluate Outcomes.

Organizations often have a robust process in the beginning when recruiting someone for a key role. As the process reaches a conclusion, things don't often resolve cleanly, and then it's on to the next search. It's important to conduct careful evaluations around a recruiting process every step of the way. Here are some thoughtful questions you can ask that will help you evaluate your recruiting process to ensure you're building trust with candidates:

- What was our time to fill? How long was the role open for, and how long did it take for the role to get filled?
- Are we interviewing candidates consistently? Do we need to conduct additional interview training for the hiring manager or stakeholders?
- What kind of feedback are we getting from candidates that are currently in the process? Ask candidates for feedback at key points - what's missing? What do you want to see more of?
- What are some moments that caused trust to possibly erode? A missed meeting, drop in communication, repeating interview questions, lack of consistent feedback?
- If a candidate dropped out of the process, ask them what caused them to fall out, why, and their feelings around the process.

About the author:



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