



2023 GLOBAL CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE (CANDE) BENCHMARK RESEARCH REPORT



CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE
BENCHMARK RESEARCH
& AWARDS PROGRAM SM

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FOREWORD

Fifty years ago, candidates knew they had to wait.

They expected bias.

They knew the numbers were not in their favor.

They almost never heard back.

Like today, many job seekers found their open jobs through networking but, without the infinite number of virtual tools embedded on the internet connecting you worldwide, you were relegated to an out-of-date rolodex that was never enough (Google the picture if you need to).

The primary published source of all openings—the ancestor of today’s job boards, were Sunday’s “Help-Wanted Classifieds” found in your local city newspaper. There were two such newspapers in almost every city in the U.S.

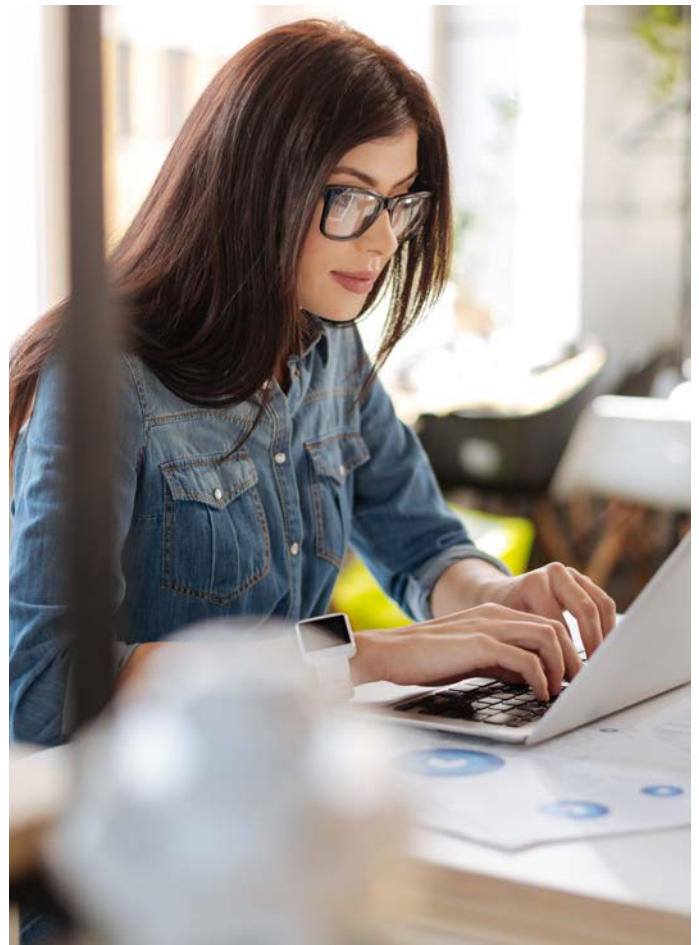
It was a simple process. The employer called their advertising agency on Thursday. The agency wrote the ad (Recruitment Marketing 101) and sent the recruiter the copy to approve via a 6-minute fax machine. The deadline to get the ads into the newspaper was typically Friday. (Don’t get me started on what it took to turn the ad copy into a 3x5 inch artfully designed ad and deliver it to the newspaper. That is another story entirely.)

The smartest candidates learned that the classifieds and comics were printed Saturday morning and sent to stores to be assembled when Sunday’s “news” was printed, and so they would buy the partial paper for full price on Saturday morning. Then they would circle the (hopefully) dozens of possible jobs they wanted to apply to, write the company address on each envelope (always including the job requisition code on the outside of the envelope), and insert a copy of a previously printed resume and possibly a one paragraph freshly typed

cover letter. Then they would drive like hell to the U.S. Post Office’s 1pm deadline to get their letters sent out before next week’s flood of applications from candidates too lazy to get it done on Saturday. (It was more complicated in other countries where each day might be a different type of job being published and in Europe, the employers just had their placement agencies publish the ads for them adding one more expensive layer to the mix.)

And so the first wave of envelopes showed up on Tuesday in the U.S. They were sorted by the code on the outside, opened and stacked for the recruiters to review. Maybe one out of 100 employers made the recruiters return the unwanted resumes each day so that a postcard or letter could be sent offering regrets. No text or email, not even a voicemail existed, and land lines were still common so if you weren’t near a phone when the recruiter called...tough.

At their peak in the late 1990s, even as newspapers were being “disintermediated” by the Internet, US employers still paid 10 billion dollars a year to put 90% of all job ads in Sunday newspapers.



If you weren't around to apply the next week...tough. There was usually a slate to be found by Wednesday for any recruiter hustling to get interviews scheduled.

It was common for candidates to alter their names, location, and other demographics that suggested age, ethnicity, religion and even gender when applying. Diversity was figured out when candidates showed up for the interview...and completed an application.

As the internet arrived many of us predicted changes and published them. We were all wrong about how long it would take. Patience is a necessary attitude in our profession. We tend to adopt technology willingly but take forever to change our practices and as a result, we just do what we've done before only faster and more cheaply without changing the outcome.

Thirteen years ago, the Talent Board was formed, and through our candidate experience benchmark research, we began asking companies to participate in listening to their candidates via a comprehensive survey. At least three out of every four employers I asked to get involved in 2010 said, "No". Two reasons. One was that they wouldn't participate unless they were going to win. They couldn't understand that we wanted real data, independently acquired, that met academic standards to prove a point as opposed to some "pay to play" scheme. The more honest reason for many was they didn't want anyone to know they "lost" if they were not acknowledged as being among the employers whose candidates rated them the highest. We had to promise we wouldn't mention those companies who participated but whose "ratings" were less. We kept that promise.

We've come a long way since then. Thousands of employers

have participated over the last 13 years. Millions of their candidates have been clear about the rewards and regrets of being treated well and poorly on their journey – and shared in detail their experience. We know now that the people who invest in telling you they are interested in working for you can impact your bottom line even when you don't hire them, and especially when you ignore them, leave them hanging, set no expectations, take no accountability, and treat them in a way that makes them feel your decision making is unfair.

The power has shifted a little more to the candidate side. It is a slow, bumpy road ahead, but the trend is unmistakable.

Listen carefully to this latest report.

Fewer quality candidates are willing to wait.

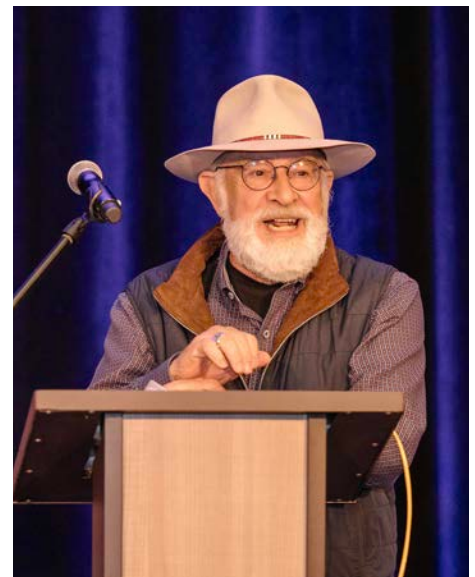
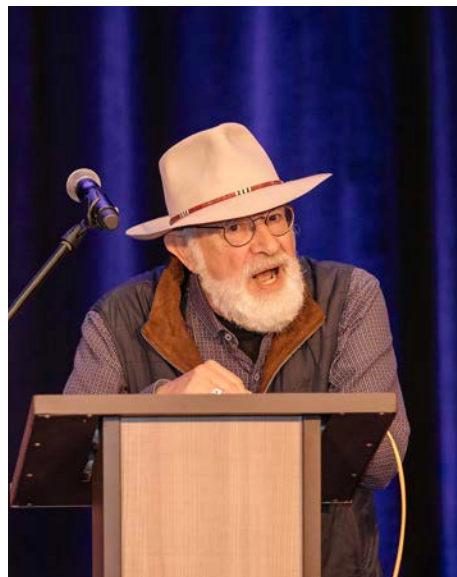
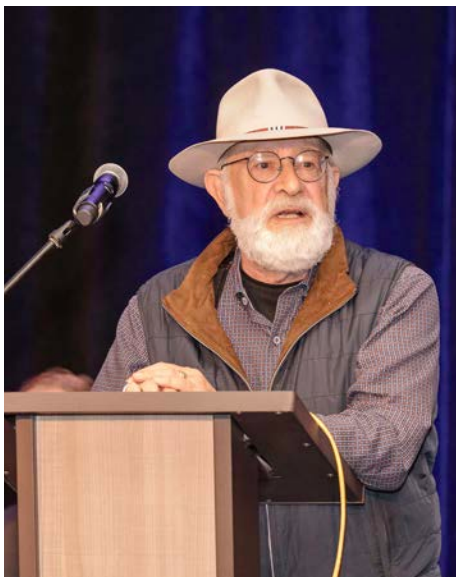
They expect you to manage your bias.

They know the numbers are moving in their favor to learn how to be more competitive.

If they never hear back, there will be consequences.

Gerry Crispin

Talent Board and Candidate Experience Awards co-founder and principal and chief navigator at [CareerXroads](#)





Are You Providing Data Driven Candidate Experiences?

Survale Optimizes Your People, Processes and
Technologies For Better Hiring Outcomes

Survale gathers data about how your people, processes and technologies affect candidate experience and shows you exactly what's working and what's not with your entire recruiting function. From first career site visit to offer accepted and beyond, Survale pinpoints issues with technologies like ATS, CRM Chatbots and more. It monitors recruiter performance and aligns talent acquisition and hiring managers around common metrics and expectations. And it monitors sub-processes like sourcing, assessments, scheduling and internal mobility to ensure candidates get consistently positive hiring experiences.

To see how Top HR Product winning Survale can optimize your recruiting experiences and download our Data Driven Candidate Experience Maturity Model, visit survale.com.



Download the Data Driven Candidate Experience White Paper
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Join These World Class Employers In Creating Better Hiring Outcomes



Premise Health.



♥ CVS Health



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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The 2023 North American CandE Benchmark Research Overview

Over the past 12+ years, our Candidate Experience Benchmark Research has identified clear competitive differences between what makes for a positive candidate experience and a higher level of perceived candidate fairness. We've also highlighted the differences between CandE Award Winners (the top-rated benchmark companies big and small across industries) and all other participating companies. CandE Award Winners:

- Consistently acknowledge initial job-seeker interest and provide definitive and timely closure when no longer pursuing candidates
- Deliver consistent candidate communication from pre-application to onboarding
- Deliver consistent and fairer screening and interviewing experiences
- Ask for candidate feedback and provide feedback more often with rejected candidates as well as new hires
- Consistently make timely offers after the final interview
- Set better expectations about the recruiting process for candidates from pre-application to offer
- Hold themselves more accountable for the overall recruiting process and resulting candidate experience while measuring it regularly and consistently

Participating Employers by Industry, Revenue and Employee Size

68% of the 2023 employer research participants were from the healthcare, finance and insurance, technology, manufacturing, hospitality, and pharmaceutical industries. This mix tends to be the most represented year after year in Talent Board (now ERE Media) research, with the exception of fluctuations in consumer goods, services, and food and beverages. Also, 47% of employers said they generated over \$1 billion in revenue annually, and 71% of companies that participated in the 2023 North America benchmark research had over 2,500 total employees (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

When asked "In which country is the job you are considering?" candidates were most likely to have applied for jobs in the U.S. (89%), Canada (10%), and Mexico (1%) (see Figure 4). In 2024, we'll be adding U.S. regions (southwest, northeast, etc.).

Figure 1. Participating Employers by Industry

2023 North America Industry:

Using the following choices, please indicate your company's primary Industry Sector.

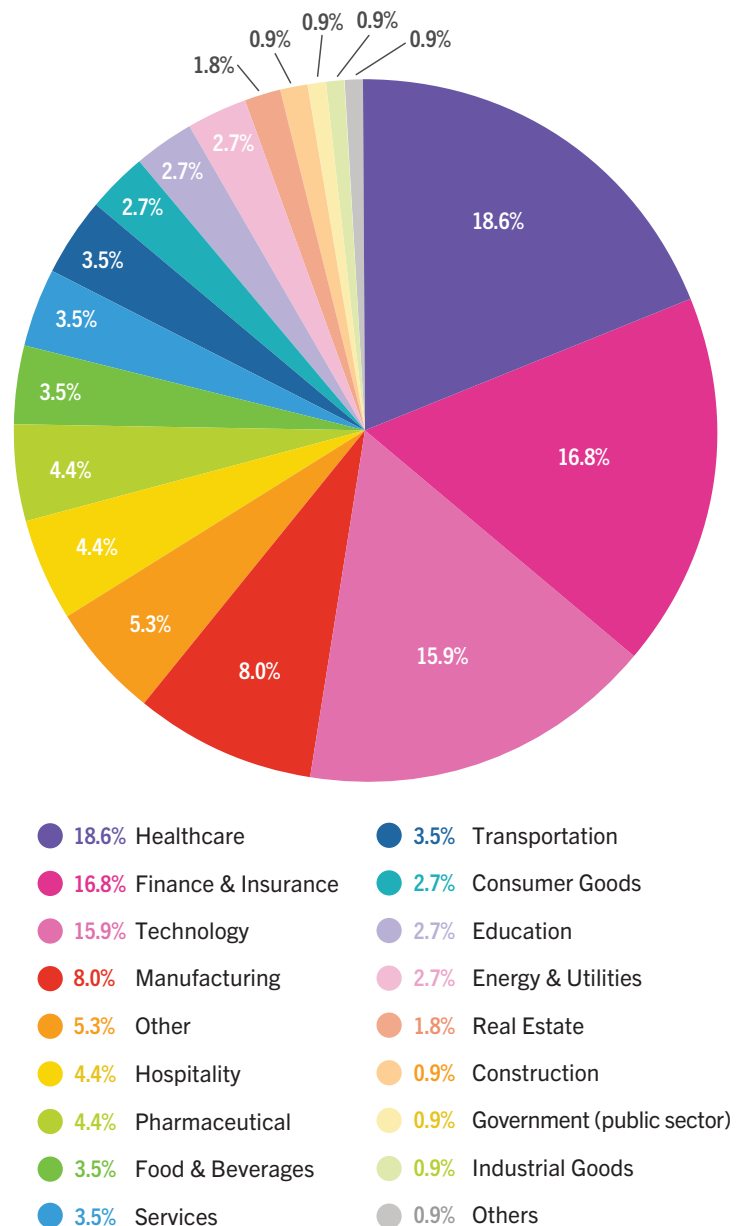


Figure 2. Participating Employers by Revenue

Please select your total annual company revenue for North America. (You can only choose one.)

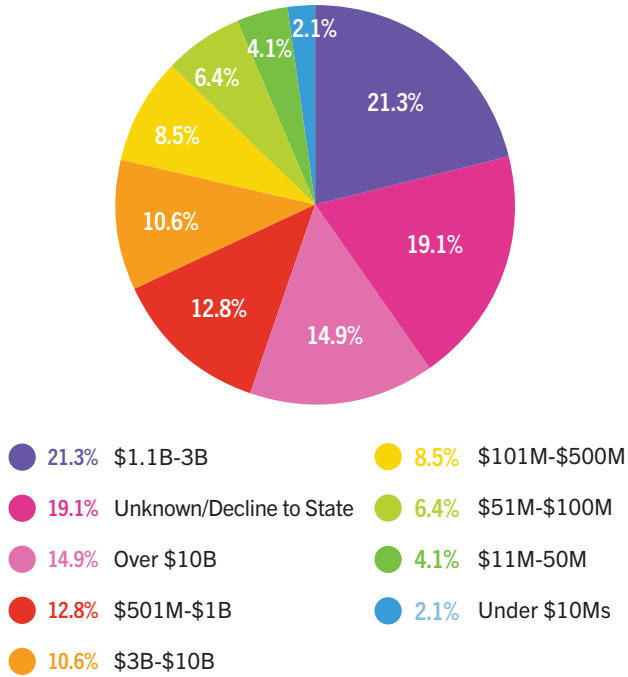


Figure 4. In Which Countries Were the Jobs Candidates Considered?

In what country is the job you are considering?

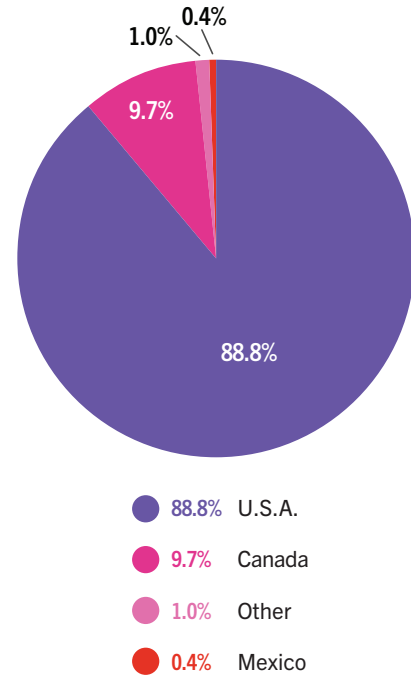
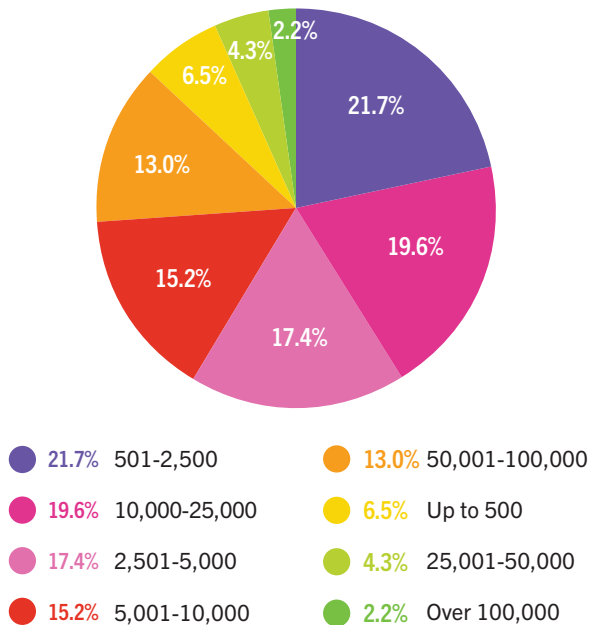


Figure 3. Participating Employers by Number of Employees

Please select your total current employee population size for North America. (You can only choose one.)



Participating Employers' Operating Models

Employers can and do vary how their talent acquisition operational models are set up. Usually, the majority of the models fall into these three types: centralized (central recruiting team that ensures consistent hiring processes across the organization), decentralized (separate recruiting teams not necessarily following consistent hiring processes across the organization) and outsourced (where large portions of talent acquisition are handled by third-party vendors like recruitment process outsourcing firms). Some companies move from one model to another every few years depending on how the business evolves, or because of disruptive impacts like COVID-19, economic fluctuations, leadership changes, merger and/or acquisition activity, etc. The 2023 centralized model decreased 10% from 2022, and the decentralized model increased 73% (see Table 1).

However, it's important to note that the companies that participate each year vary, with a mix of returning and new.

A company's overall candidate experience has a definitive potential impact on the business, and that impact is improving incrementally, from talent attraction to onboarding. **The majority of employers in North America in 2023 (88%) described their overall candidate experience as improving or competing**, while 11% described it as leading and 1% described it as lagging (see Table 2). This year, CandE Award Winners who identified as "leading" increased by 50% from 2022, versus a 30% decrease of winners who said they identified as "competing" this year compared to last. When we compare this to the CandE Pulse surveys we did throughout 2023 and highlighted in the Candidate Expectations Versus Employer Reality special report, the self-ratings were fairly stable month after month.

Table 1. Talent Acquisition Operational Model

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Centralized Dedicated recruiters, recruiting org structure and budget	52%	58%	48%	63%	63%
Decentralized Division/line of business, dedicated recruiters, org structure and budget	19%	11%	17%	14%	19%
Outsourced RPO, HRO, third-party vendor	3%	5%	7%	14%	19%
A combination of Centralized and Outsourced	20%	20%	25%	NA	NA
A combination of Decentralized and Outsourced	5%	5%	2%	NA	NA

Table 2. How Employers Describe Their Own Overall Candidate Experience

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Lagging	1%	2%	2%	0%	2%
Lagging – Winners	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Improving	40%	23%	25%	27%	22%
Improving – Winners	28%	14%	13%	3%	13%
Competing	48%	63%	62%	61%	63%
Competing – Winners	50%	71%	74%	85%	68%
Leading	11%	12%	11%	13%	13%
Leading – Winners	21%	14%	13%	14%	17%

Asking for Candidate Feedback

Year after year, CandE benchmark research shows that communication and feedback loops are ongoing differentiators of a more positive candidate experience.

This year, 67% of participating employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 68% from 2022. In fact, this is usually where employers are the most comfortable asking candidates for feedback, so it's not surprising to see the increase here. However, we do still find year after year that there is still a leadership wariness of surveying any job candidates at any stage—for fear of what they'd learn.

Maybe it's the halo effect of employers that participate in our benchmark research willing to survey candidates across the candidate journey, but the continuing good news is that this year the numbers have increased across all stages (see Table 3).

This year, 67% of participating employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 68% from 2022.

Table 3. When Employers Ask for Candidate Experience Feedback

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Before candidates apply	10%	2%	2%	1%	1%
After candidates apply, but before the interview	27%	6%	2%	9%	5%
After candidates are interviewed, but before they're hired	46%	19%	18%	23%	19%
After candidates are hired	67%	40%	44%	34%	40%
All of the above	22%	20%	17%	17%	18%
We don't survey candidates about their experience	21%	13%	16%	17%	17%



Recruiter and Hiring Manager Accountability

72% of 2023 North American CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience, which was up 18% from 2022 (see Table 4). Aligning recruiter performance this way can help ensure a greater delivery of a positive and fair candidate experience, which benefits the business.

While we don't ask employers about hiring manager performance and candidate experience per se, we do ask whether they give feedback to the candidates who have interviewed as finalists and who have not been selected, and if hiring managers are required to do so. 65% of 2023 participating North America employers responded that their hiring managers give limited feedback to internal candidates, down from 2022, but only 17% give feedback to external and referral candidates, up slightly from 2022 (see Table 5).

Also, only 45% of the 2023 companies said they establish a follow-up date with finalists, keep the date and establish additional follow-ups as necessary until the position is filled, which is nearly the same as 2022.

72% of 2023 North American CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience.

Table 4. How Candidate Experience Is Aligned to Recruiter Performance

	All Employers 2023	CandE Winners 2023	All Employers 2022	CandE Winners 2022
Yes, we align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	62%	72%	63%	61%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	27%	19%	30%	31%
I don't know	3%	0%	1%	0%
Other	8%	9%	6%	8%

Table 5. Hiring Managers and Candidate Feedback

	2023 Internal	2023 External	2023 Referral	2022 Internal	2022 External	2022 Referral
Yes, hiring managers provide approved detailed feedback	65%	17%	19%	70%	15%	15%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	79%	10%	12%	78%	8%	14%

Conclusion

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead. Either way, we recommend following the lead of the top-rated CandE Award Winners – and all the companies globally with above-average overall ratings – can help improve your organization’s candidate experience. That can improve how your employer brand is perceived in the labor market, decrease ghosting by top talent and enhance your ability to fill gaps in your workforce.

However, the constant uncertainty and volatility in the world makes it difficult to deliver a positive candidate experience. Each year, the CandE Benchmark Research Program sees how hard it is to sustain a quality candidate experience. Job candidates only want one thing – to get the job – but the vast majority will not. So, the second-best experiences include positive communication and feedback loops that, in the end, make all the difference in whether candidates are willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate or be a customer.

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead.



10 Key Takeaways From the 2023 North America Candidate Experience Benchmark Research Report

1. CONTENTMENT IS DOWN, RESENTMENT IS UP

This year, the overall positive candidate experience, what we now call candidate contentment, declined sharply while candidate resentment, the very negative experience, increased globally. Even in historically positive skewed regions like APAC and Latin America. Candidate contentment has always been the highest on average in APAC and Latin America (with some exceptions), and candidate resentment has always been the highest in North America followed by EMEA.

This data is based on one of the four key ratings we analyze every year in our benchmark research – the relationship question – how likely candidates are to engage the business and brand going forward based on their experience. The “Great” responses are what make up the candidate contentment rate, and the “Negative” responses are what make up the candidate resentment rate.

Resentment is a major indicator we track each year and one we recommend employers track as well. Candidate resentment impacts a business and its brand because candidates who report having a very poor recruiting experience are less likely to apply again, refer others, have any brand affinity, and/or make purchases if the employer is a consumer-based company. Ultimately a poor candidate experience can cause employers to lose revenue and referrals, two things vital to a healthy organization.

2. TOP-RATED EMPLOYERS UTILIZED MORE AI RECRUITING TECHNOLOGIES

The highest rated employers this year in our benchmark research (CandE Winners) tend to leverage AI recruiting technologies to improve recruiting and the candidate experience, more than all other participating companies. AI technologies can help improve communication and feedback loops with candidates throughout the candidate journey.

The impact of artificial intelligence and what’s called generative AI on recruiting technologies has only just begun. The sophistication of technology and the learning algorithms (AI) that process mind-bending amounts of data to improve their purported software outcomes are constantly evolving now. For example, AI is helping automate candidate outreach and communication like never before. It’s also being used to scan resumes for keywords and phrases that match the job requirements, helping recruiters quickly identify the most qualified candidates, with candidate matching, where AI is used to match candidates with open positions based on their skills, experience, and other factors, helping recruiters identify the best candidates for each role they’re hiring for.

3. COMPANY VALUES TOPPED CANDIDATE RESEARCH AGAIN

CandE-Winning organizations have a 35% higher NPS rating in the research/attract stage (57 compared to 40 for all companies in North America). This includes providing content around company values something that continues to be the most valuable to candidates in our research. Values were again the number one type of marketing content consumed during research, with 45% of all candidates citing it as most important, down slightly from 2022, but still up 96% from 2021.

That’s followed by products / services Information (increased interest in exactly what a company does), career sites in multiple languages (it is a multicultural world today), diversity and inclusion information, answers to why people want to work at the company, and company culture information. When asked where employers are engaging with candidates in the attraction stages, career sites remain number one for another consecutive year, with 98% of companies considering their sites to be critical to recruiting success, especially CandE Winners, up 27% from last year.



4. EMPLOYERS DEPEND ON CANDIDATE REFERRALS AND BRAND AMBASSADORS

While only 22% of candidates in 2023 cited referrals as a valuable research channel, same as in 2022, referred candidates said they would increase their relationship with potential employers 32% more (apply again, refer others, make purchases if and when applicable), compared with those who conducted their own search or those who received unsolicited outreach from a recruiter.

And the more positive the candidate experience, the more likely candidates are to refer others – this year CandE Winners have a 38% higher willingness to refer others NPS rating (22 compared to 15 for all companies in North America), which is even higher than in 2022. Employers hire 20% to 40% of their workforce from referrals, so referrals are quite the critical competitive differentiator, especially in today's still highly competitive candidate market. Current employees are the brand ambassadors whose referral NPS ratings are the highest versus any other current or previous relationship with the company.

5. TIMELY DISPOSITIONS SLIPPED BUT STILL A DIFFERENTIATOR

For the past few years, the highest rated employers have been more consistent and timely with their dispositions. In fact, most had told us they were required to review applications within 3-5 days to reject or move forward. While this is still a differentiator for CandE Winners around the world, the overall percentage of top-rated employers doing this within 3-5 days has decreased.

For example, over 80% of the top-rated North America employers said they disposition within 3-5 days in 2022, but this year, that's dropped to 50% or lower. Only 56% of all 2023 North America CandE Winners said they disposition within 3-5 days, but last year it was 63%, an 11% decrease. The mix of participating employers does change each year, but the reality for many employers this year was that their applications increased while their recruiting teams decreased.

Even if their rejection timeliness deteriorated somewhat, the top-rated employers are still more consistent about rejecting candidates than all other employers in our research. This is true in EMEA, APAC, and Latin America as well.

6. CHATBOTS, TEXT TO APPLY, AND MOBILE APPLY IMPROVE THE APPLICATION EXPERIENCE

Recruiting technology today definitely helps with prompting and engaging candidates at the application stage. When potential candidates were able to launch the application from a text, their application NPS rating increased 42%. And when candidates

had the ability to ask a chatbot questions during the application process, their application NPS rating increased 50%. For CandE Winners, 22% more candidates were engaged by chatbots during the application process, and 26% more candidates launched the application from a text alert. While there are strong relationships with these activities, they aren't the only ones that drive higher ratings by themselves. Most likely, it's a series of consistent practices that we outline each year that drive higher ratings, especially for CandE Winners.

Candidates also want ease-of-use when they apply for a job and on the device of their choice. And while nearly all employers said they again offered mobile apply the past few years, only 37% of candidates said they applied via mobile, slightly higher than in 2022. Mobile apply jumped 28% for CandE Winners, which also had a much higher percentage of hourly candidates. This makes sense considering that these candidates' personal phones are their primary personal computers, too.

7. STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND NEXT STEPS

Employers that implement more candidate-friendly and fair interview processes, ones that are structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types, help reduce bias, improve selection, and improve the candidate experience. This year, the highest-rated CandE Winners conducted structured interviews 19% more than all employers combined, and all CandE Winners conducted them 8% more often than all employers combined.

Structured interviews usually drive higher positive candidate ratings and a higher level of perceived fairness. Also, candidates' willingness to refer others was 119% higher when they were provided with information on their job fit and candidacy status at the end of the interview day. While a much smaller pool of candidates received this immediate feedback (over 50% were hourly candidates), it's still a big differentiator for all companies as well as CandE winners. Recruiters and/or hiring managers at CandE Winner companies also establish follow-up dates with finalists and keep those dates 16% more often than all other companies combined.

8. CANDIDATES WITHDRAW DUE TO TIME DISRESPECTED

When it comes to candidates withdrawing themselves from the recruiting process, there are many reasons as to why. When we look at the CandE data, the three most negative reasons candidates withdraw themselves globally in North America in 2023 were once again time was disrespected during the recruiting process, the recruiting process took too long, and salary didn't meet expectations.

It's similar in the other global regions, just not the same order, but "time disrespected" is most certainly a common theme we hear in the candidate comments year after year. Based on what we know each year, the top-rated employers have a much lower percentage of candidates withdrawing because their time was disrespected. The difference is significant – the top 10 overall North America CandE Winners had dramatically fewer candidates withdraw than even all CandE Winners in North America.

9. FINALIST FEEDBACK INCREASES WILLINGNESS TO REFER

The highest-rated companies in our research this year all provide some level of feedback to finalists, and CandE Winners overall gave 12% more feedback to finalists than all other companies combined in 2023. Here's why giving feedback can pay off: when specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by 46% this year, and their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 47%.

This year, 25% of all candidates were asked for feedback after being screened and interviewed, and 29% CandE Winner candidates were asked. Those invited to provide feedback at this stage were 114% more likely to refer others. These relationships are always impacted by a combined variety of other positive activities that impact experience. And as always in our research year after year, if disruption is at a minimum, and the candidates feel the interview process was fair, they're more willing to engage the business again and refer others.

10. PREBOARDING ENGAGEMENT AND NURTURING CAN INCREASE RETENTION

More employers, whether they've won a CandE Award or not, struggle to invest in more communication and engagement preboarding activities with new hires before their start date. However, the percentage of candidates who received a text from their hiring manager before day one increased 19% since 2021, from 21% to 25%. And the percentage of candidates who received a text from recruiters and/or HR before day one increased even more – 80% since 2021, from 15% to 27%. This aligns with the increase of text messaging and automated outreach we've found in our research.

Also, when employers provide multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members, answer questions, prior to candidates' start dates, these candidates were 137% more willing to increase their relationship out of the gate, compared to 110% higher just because they accepted the job offers. Again, the more nurturing and engagement that occurs prior to their start date, the greater opportunity to improve new hire retention from the beginning.

Incremental Improvements Go A Long Way

Even with all the potential business impacts highlighted in this year's North America CandE Benchmark Research Key Takeaways, whether or not candidates will apply again and/or refer others based on their overall candidate experience is a vitally important outcome of the candidate experience. And while most companies would argue that they don't want all the candidates applying again, they do want those deemed future fit to apply again. They most certainly want their final interview silver medalists to apply again and to refer others who may also be the right candidates for future roles.

Ultimately, making incremental improvements in recruiting, hiring, retention, and candidate experience today can ensure a greater return on employment brand and quality of candidate tomorrow, no matter what the future brings. This is why incremental improvements to recruiting processes and candidate experience can go a long way toward increasing revenue and referral networks.

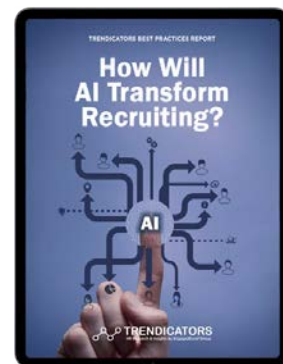


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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

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- Ask for candidate feedback and provide feedback more often with rejected candidates as well as new hires
- Consistently make timely offers after the final interview
- Set better expectations about the recruiting process for candidates from pre-application to offer
- Hold themselves more accountable for the overall recruiting process and resulting candidate experience while measuring it regularly and consistently

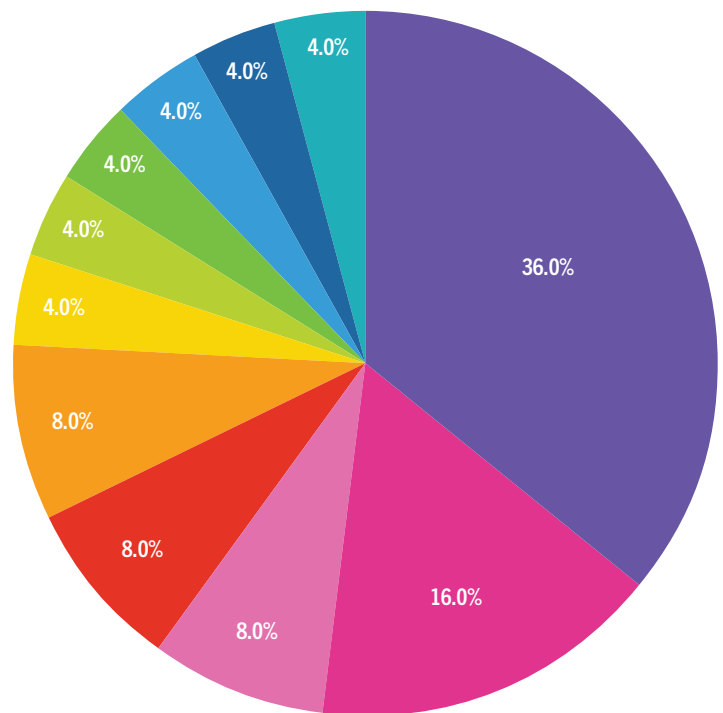
Participating Employers by Industry, Revenue and Employee Size

76% of the 2023 EMEA employer research participants were from the technology, finance and insurance, hospitality, manufacturing, and pharmaceutical industries. Usually there's more healthcare representation globally, but not this year in our research. Also, 26% of employers said they generated over \$1 billion in revenue annually, and 50% of companies that participated in the 2023 EMEA benchmark research had over 2,500 total employees (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). Compared to North America, EMEA participation is a much smaller percentage of employers overall and a greater proportion of employers with less than 2,500 total employees.

When asked "In which country is the job you are considering?" candidates were most likely to have applied for jobs in the U.K. (22%), Italy (12%), Spain (10%), France (8%), Germany (7%) and Ireland (5%), among many others (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. Participating Employers by Industry

Using the following choices, please indicate your company's primary Industry Sector.



- 36.0% Technology
- 16.0% Finance & Insurance
- 8.0% Hospitality
- 8.0% Manufacturing
- 8.0% Pharmaceutical
- 4.0% Arts & Entertainment
- 4.0% Consumer Goods
- 4.0% Energy & Utilities
- 4.0% Food & Beverages
- 4.0% Other
- 4.0% Real Estate

Figure 2. Participating Employers by Revenue

Please select your total annual company revenue for EMEA. (You can only choose one.)

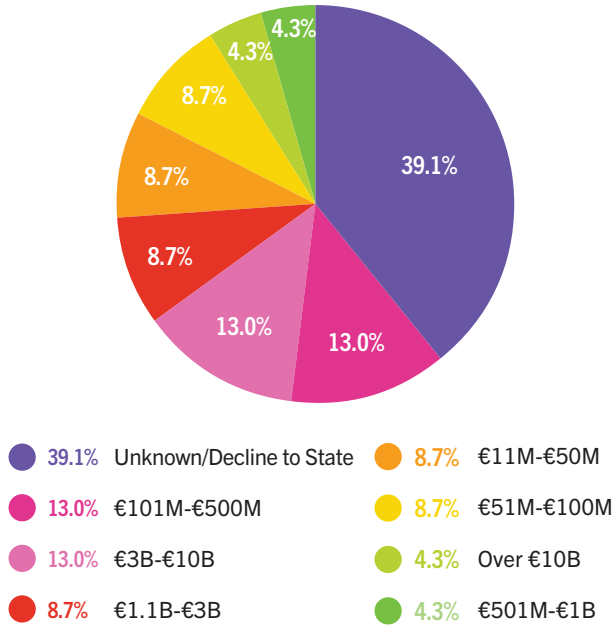


Figure 4. In Which Countries Were the Jobs Candidates Considered?

In what country is the job you are considering?

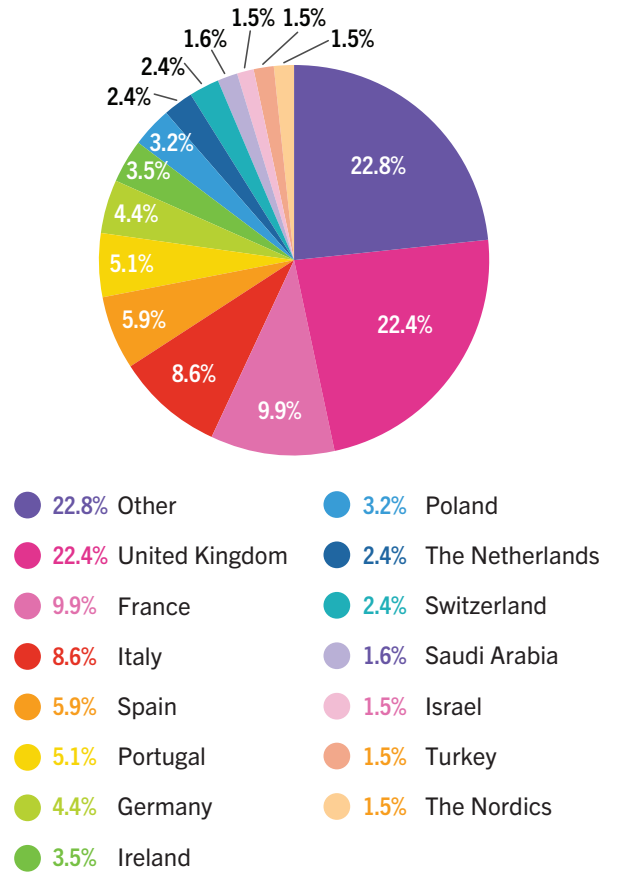
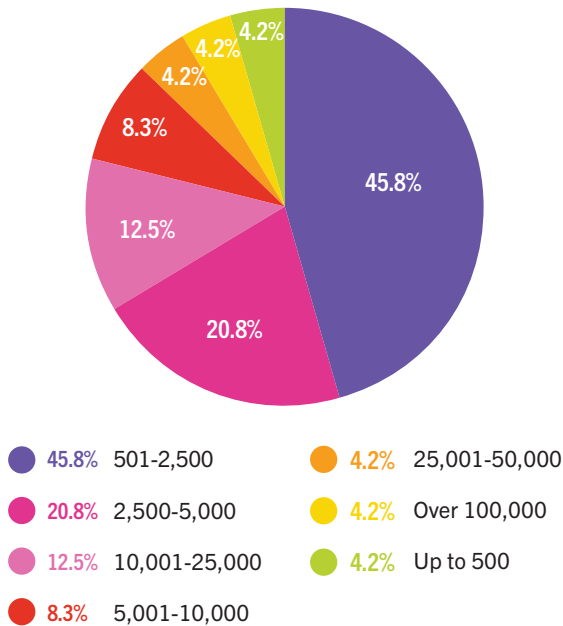


Figure 3. Participating Employers by Number of Employees

Please select your total current employee population size for EMEA. (You can only choose one.)



Participating Employers' Operating Models

Employers can and do vary how their talent acquisition operational models are set up. Usually, the majority of the models fall into these three types: centralized (central recruiting team that ensures consistent hiring processes across the organization), decentralized (separate recruiting teams not necessarily following consistent hiring processes across the organization) and outsourced (where large portions of talent acquisition are handled by third-party vendors like recruitment process outsourcing firms).

Some companies move from one model to another every few years depending on how the business evolves, or because of disruptive impacts like COVID-19, economic fluctuations, leadership changes, merger and/or acquisition activity, etc. The centralized model decreased 46% from 2022, and the decentralized model increased 83% (see Table 1).

However, it's important to note that the companies that participate each year vary, with a mix of returning and new.

A company's overall candidate experience has a definitive potential impact on the business, and that impact is improving incrementally, from talent attraction to onboarding. **The majority of employers in EMEA in 2023 (92%) described their overall candidate experience as improving or competing**, which is usually true globally, while 8% described it as leading and none of them described it as lagging (see Table 2). This year, CandE Award Winners who identified as "leading" increased by 55% from 2022, while there was a 5% increase of winners who said they identified as "competing" this year compared to last.

Table 1. Talent Acquisition Operational Model

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Centralized Dedicated recruiters, recruiting org structure and budget	33%	61%	55%	63%	58%
Decentralized Division/line of business, dedicated recruiters, org structure and budget	33%	18%	25%	21%	13%
Outsourced RPO, HRO, third-party vendor	8%	4%	0%	8%	16%
A combination of Centralized and Outsourced	17%	11%	15%	NA	NA
A combination of Decentralized and Outsourced	0%	4%	5%	NA	NA

Table 2. How Employers Describe Their Own Overall Candidate Experience

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Lagging	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Lagging – Winners	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Improving	38%	27%	30%	27%	17%
Improving – Winners	29%	20%	0%	3%	13%
Competing	54%	64%	50%	50%	57%
Competing – Winners	57%	80%	67%	50%	53%
Leading	8%	7%	20%	20%	23%
Leading – Winners	14%	0%	33%	50%	33%

Asking for Candidate Feedback

Year after year, CandE benchmark research shows that communication and feedback loops are ongoing differentiators of a more positive candidate experience.

This year, 74% of participating EMEA employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 56% from 2022. In fact, this is usually where employers are the most comfortable asking candidates for feedback, so it's not surprising to see the increase here. However, we do still find year after year that there is still a leadership wariness of surveying any job candidates at any stage.

Maybe it's the halo effect of employers that participate in our benchmark research willing to survey candidates across the candidate journey, but the continuing good news is that this year the numbers have increased across all stages (see Table 3).

This year, 74% of participating EMEA employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 56% from 2022.

Table 3. When Employers Ask for Candidate Experience Feedback

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Before candidates apply	0%	4%	0%	0%
After candidates apply, but before the interview	21%	4%	5%	8%
After candidates are interviewed, but before they're hired	50%	30%	35%	25%
After candidates are hired	75%	48%	44%	38%
All of the above	0%	7%	15%	8%
We don't survey candidates about their experience	0%	7%	0%	21%



Recruiter and Hiring Manager Accountability

72% of 2023 EMEA CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience, which was up 7% from 2022 (see Table 4). Aligning recruiter performance this way can help ensure a greater delivery of a positive and fair candidate experience, which benefits the business.

While we don't ask employers about hiring manager performance and candidate experience per se, we do ask whether they give feedback to the candidates who have interviewed as finalists and who have not been selected, and if hiring managers are required to do so. 50% of 2023 participating EMEA employers responded that their hiring managers give limited feedback to internal candidates, down from 2022, and 17% give feedback to external and 33% to referral candidates, both up from 2022 (see Table 5).

Also, 56% of the 2023 EMEA companies said they establish a follow-up date with finalists, keep the date and establish additional follow-ups as necessary until the position is filled, which was up 30% from 2022. This is another important differentiator in improving candidate experience for finalists.

72% of 2023 EMEA CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience.

Table 4. How Candidate Experience Is Aligned to Recruiter Performance

	All Employers 2023	CandE Winners 2023	All Employers 2022	CandE Winners 2022
Yes, we align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	60%	75%	57%	70%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	32%	25%	36%	20%
I don't know	4%	0%	4%	10%
Other	4%	0%	4%	0%

Table 5. Hiring Managers and Candidate Feedback

	2023 Internal	2023 External	2023 Referral	2022 Internal	2022 External	2022 Referral
Yes, hiring managers provide approved detailed feedback	50%	17%	33%	78%	11%	11%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	57%	14%	29%	77%	12%	12%

Conclusion

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead. Either way we recommend following the lead of the top-rated CandE Award Winners – and all the companies globally with above-average overall ratings – can help improve your organization’s candidate experience. That can improve how your employer brand is perceived in the labor market, decrease ghosting by top talent and enhance your ability to fill gaps in your workforce.

However, the constant uncertainty and volatility in the world makes it difficult to deliver a positive candidate experience. Each year, the CandE Benchmark Research Program sees how hard it is to sustain a quality candidate experience. Job candidates only want one thing – to get the job – but the vast majority will not. So, the second-best experiences include positive communication and feedback loops that, in the end, make all the difference in whether candidates are willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate or be a customer.

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead.





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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The 2023 APAC CandE Benchmark Research Overview

Over the past 12+ years, our Candidate Experience Benchmark Research has identified clear competitive differences between what makes for a positive candidate experience and a higher level of perceived candidate fairness. We've also highlighted the differences between CandE Award Winners (the top-rated benchmark companies big and small across industries) and all other participating companies. CandE Award Winners:

- Consistently acknowledge initial job-seeker interest and provide definitive and timely closure when no longer pursuing candidates
- Deliver consistent candidate communication from pre-application to onboarding
- Deliver consistent and fairer screening and interviewing experiences
- Ask for candidate feedback and provide feedback more often with rejected candidates as well as new hires
- Consistently make timely offers after the final interview
- Set better expectations about the recruiting process for candidates from pre-application to offer
- Hold themselves more accountable for the overall recruiting process and resulting candidate experience while measuring it regularly and consistently

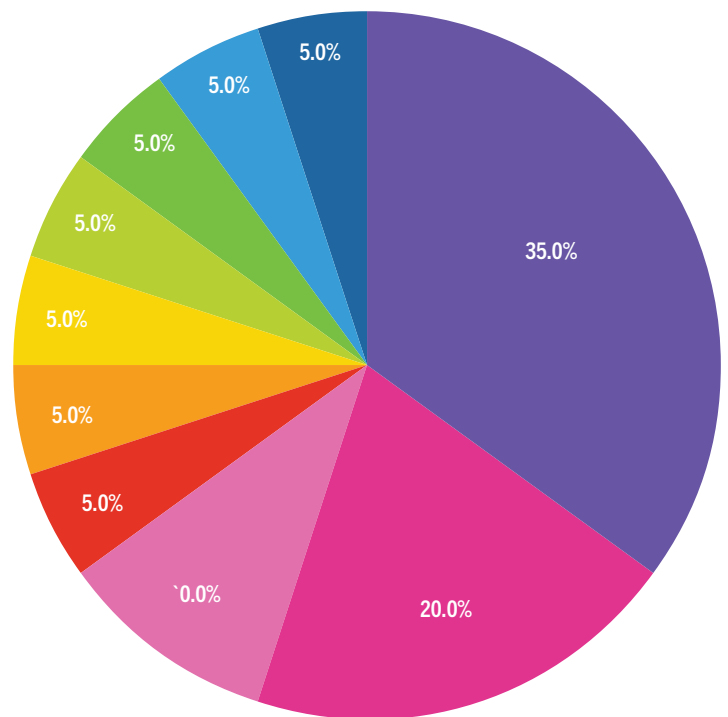
Participating Employers by Industry, Revenue and Employee Size

85% of the 2023 APAC employer research participants were from the technology, finance and insurance, energy and utilities, arts & entertainment, consumer goods, education, and manufacturing industries. Usually there's more healthcare representation globally, but not this year in our research. Also, 43% of employers said they generated over \$1 billion in revenue annually, and 74% of companies that participated in the 2023 APAC benchmark research had over 2,500 total employees (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). APAC is similar to North America with a greater proportion of employers having more than 2,500 total employees.

When asked "In which country is the job you are considering?" candidates were most likely to have applied for jobs in India (69%), Australia (13%), Philippines (4%), and Malaysia (3%), among many others (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. Participating Employers by Industry

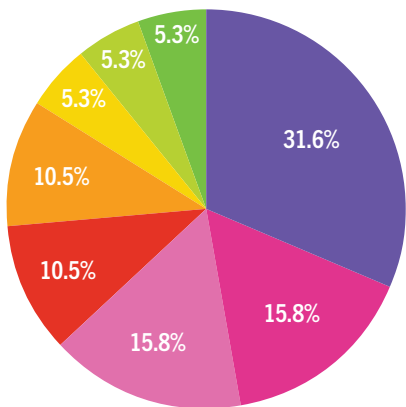
Using the following choices, please indicate your company's primary Industry Sector.



- 35.0% Technology
- 20.0% Finance & Insurance
- 10.0% Energy & Utilities
- 5.0% Arts & Entertainment
- 5.0% Consumer Goods
- 5.0% Education
- 5.0% Manufacturing
- 5.0% Other
- 5.0% Real Estate
- 5.0% Services

Figure 2. Participating Employers by Revenue

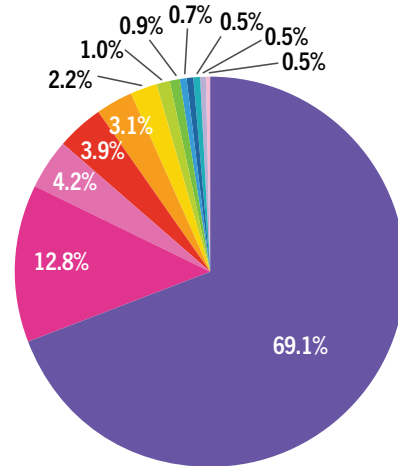
Please select your total annual company revenue for APAC. (You can only choose one.)



- 31.6% Unknown/Decline to State
- 15.8% \$1.1B-\$3B
- 15.8% \$3B-\$10B
- 10.5% \$51M-\$100M
- 10.5% Over \$10B
- 5.3% \$101M-\$500M
- 5.3% \$11M-\$50M
- 5.3% \$501M-\$1B

Figure 4. In Which Countries Were the Jobs Candidates Considered?

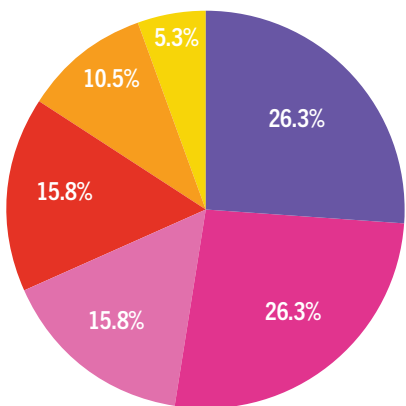
In what country is the job you are considering?



- 69.1% India
- 12.8% Australia
- 4.2% Other
- 3.9% Philippines
- 3.1% Malaysia
- 2.2% Singapore
- 1.0% Japan
- 0.9% New Zealand
- 0.7% China
- 0.5% Vietnam
- 0.5% Taiwan
- 0.4% Indonesia
- 0.3% Thailand

Figure 3. Participating Employers by Number of Employees

Please select your total current employee population size for APAC. (You can only choose one.)



- 26.3% 25,001-50,000
- 26.3% 501-2,500
- 15.8% 10,001-25,000
- 15.8% 2,500-5,000
- 10.5% 5,001-10,000
- 5.3% Over 100,000



Participating Employers' Operating Models

Employers can and do vary how their talent acquisition operational models are set up. Usually, the majority of the models fall into these three types: centralized (central recruiting team that ensures consistent hiring processes across the organization), decentralized (separate recruiting teams not necessarily following consistent hiring processes across the organization) and outsourced (where large portions of talent acquisition are handled by third-party vendors like recruitment process outsourcing firms).

Some companies move from one model to another every few years depending on how the business evolves, or because of disruptive impacts like COVID-19, economic fluctuations, leadership changes, merger and/or acquisition activity, etc. The APAC centralized model decreased 30% from 2022, and the decentralized model increased 113% (see Table 1).

However, it's important to note that the companies that participate each year vary, with a mix of returning and new.

A company's overall candidate experience has a definitive potential impact on the business, and that impact is improving incrementally, from talent attraction to onboarding. **The majority of employers in APAC in 2023 (90%) described their overall candidate experience as improving or competing, which is usually true globally,** while 10% described it as leading and none of them described it as lagging (see Table 2). This year, CandE Award Winners who identified as "leading" decreased by 29% from 2022, and there was a 6% decrease of winners who said they identified as "competing" this year compared to last.

Table 1. Talent Acquisition Operational Model

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Centralized Dedicated recruiters, recruiting org structure and budget	47%	47%	47%	47%	56%
Decentralized Division/line of business, dedicated recruiters, org structure and budget	21%	21%	21%	21%	19%
Outsourced RPO, HRO, third-party vendor	5%	5%	5%	5%	12%
A combination of Centralized and Outsourced	16%	16%	16%	16%	NA
A combination of Decentralized and Outsourced	5%	5%	5%	5%	NA

Table 2. How Employers Describe Their Own Overall Candidate Experience

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Lagging	0%	5%	4%	5%	3%
Lagging – Winners	0%	0%	0%	12%	7%
Improving	30%	18%	29%	24%	26%
Improving – Winners	38%	22%	11%	13%	14%
Competing	60%	64%	54%	47%	56%
Competing – Winners	50%	67%	56%	25%	57%
Leading	10%	14%	12%	24%	15%
Leading – Winners	13%	11%	33%	50%	21%

Asking for Candidate Feedback

Year after year, CandE benchmark research shows that communication and feedback loops are ongoing differentiators of a more positive candidate experience.

This year, 78% of participating APAC employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 70% from 2022. In fact, this is usually where employers are the most comfortable asking candidates for feedback, so it's not surprising to see the increase here (even with the different mix of employers each year). However, we do still find year after year that there is still a leadership wariness of surveying any job candidates at any stage.

Maybe it's the halo effect of employers that participate in our benchmark research willing to survey candidates across the candidate journey, but the continuing good news is that this year the numbers have increased across all stages (see Table 3).

This year, 78% of participating APAC employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 70% from 2022.

Table 3. When Employers Ask for Candidate Experience Feedback

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Before candidates apply	0%	0%	0%	0%
After candidates apply, but before the interview	32%	9%	8%	5%
After candidates are interviewed, but before they're hired	63%	23%	25%	19%
After candidates are hired	78%	46%	33%	43%
All of the above	0%	14%	21%	9%
We don't survey candidates about their experience	11%	9%	12%	24%



Recruiter and Hiring Manager Accountability

63% of 2023 APAC CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience, which was down 10% from 2022 (see Table 4). Aligning recruiter performance this way can help ensure a greater delivery of a positive and fair candidate experience, which benefits the business.

While we don't ask employers about hiring manager performance and candidate experience per se, we do ask whether they give feedback to the candidates who have interviewed as finalists and who have not been selected, and if hiring managers are required to do so. 63% of 2023 participating APAC employers responded that their hiring managers give limited feedback to internal candidates, down from 2022, and 13% give feedback to external, down from 2022, and 17% give feedback to referral candidates, up from 2022 (see Table 5).

Also, 58% of the 2023 APAC companies said they establish a follow-up date with finalists, keep the date and establish additional follow-ups as necessary until the position is filled, which was up 66% from 2022. This is another important differentiator in improving candidate experience for finalists.

63% of 2023 APAC CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience.

Table 4. How Candidate Experience Is Aligned to Recruiter Performance

	All Employers 2023	CandE Winners 2023	All Employers 2022	CandE Winners 2022
Yes, we align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	58%	63%	57%	70%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	32%	37%	39%	20%
I don't know	11%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	4%	10%

Table 5. Hiring Managers and Candidate Feedback

	2023 Internal	2023 External	2023 Referral	2022 Internal	2022 External	2022 Referral
Yes, hiring managers provide approved detailed feedback	63%	13%	25%	67%	17%	17%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	70%	10%	20%	67%	17%	17%

Conclusion

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead. Either way we recommend following the lead of the top-rated CandE Award Winners – and all the companies globally with above-average overall ratings – can help improve your organization’s candidate experience. That can improve how your employer brand is perceived in the labor market, decrease ghosting by top talent and enhance your ability to fill gaps in your workforce.

However, the constant uncertainty and volatility in the world makes it difficult to deliver a positive candidate experience. Each year, the CandE Benchmark Research Program sees how hard it is to sustain a quality candidate experience. Job candidates only want one thing – to get the job – but the vast majority will not. So, the second-best experiences include positive communication and feedback loops that, in the end, make all the difference in whether candidates are willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate or be a customer.

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead.





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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The 2023 Latin America CandE Benchmark Research Overview

Over the past 12+ years, our Candidate Experience Benchmark Research has identified clear competitive differences between what makes for a positive candidate experience and a higher level of perceived candidate fairness. We've also highlighted the differences between CandE Award Winners (the top-rated benchmark companies big and small across industries) and all other participating companies. CandE Award Winners:

- Consistently acknowledge initial job-seeker interest and provide definitive and timely closure when no longer pursuing candidates
- Deliver consistent candidate communication from pre-application to onboarding
- Deliver consistent and fairer screening and interviewing experiences
- Ask for candidate feedback and provide feedback more often with rejected candidates as well as new hires
- Consistently make timely offers after the final interview
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- Hold themselves more accountable for the overall recruiting process and resulting candidate experience while measuring it regularly and consistently

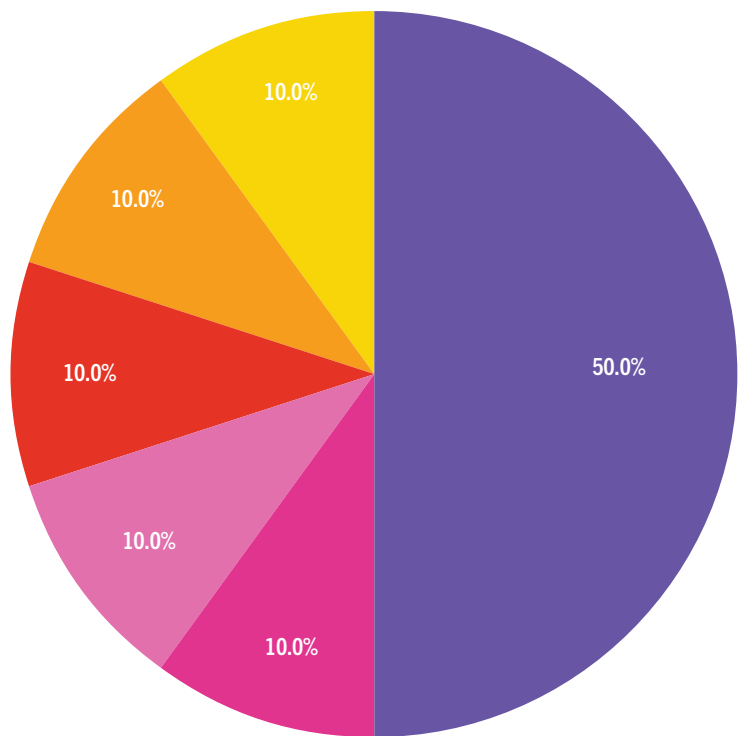
Participating Employers by Industry, Revenue and Employee Size

Latin America is still the newest part of our research with the lowest number of participating employers, and this year research participants were from the technology, arts & entertainment, energy and utilities, finance and insurance, and real estate. Usually there's more healthcare representation globally, but not this year in our research. Also, 40% of employers said they generated over \$1 billion in revenue annually, and 60% of companies that participated in the 2023 Latin America benchmark research had over 2,500 total employees (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). Latin America is similar to North America with a greater proportion of employers having more than 2,500 total employees.

When asked "In which country is the job you are considering?" candidates were most likely to have applied for jobs in Mexico (24%), Brazil (19%), Costa Rica (16%), Argentina (11%), and Columbia 7%, among many others (see Figure 4).

Figure 1. Participating Employers by Industry

Using the following choices, please indicate your company's primary Industry Sector.



- 50.0% Technology
- 10.0% Arts & Entertainment
- 10.0% Energy & Utilities
- 10.0% Finance & Insurance
- 10.0% Other
- 10.0% Real Estate

Figure 3. Participating Employers by Number of Employees

Please select your total current employee population size for LATAM. (You can only choose one.)

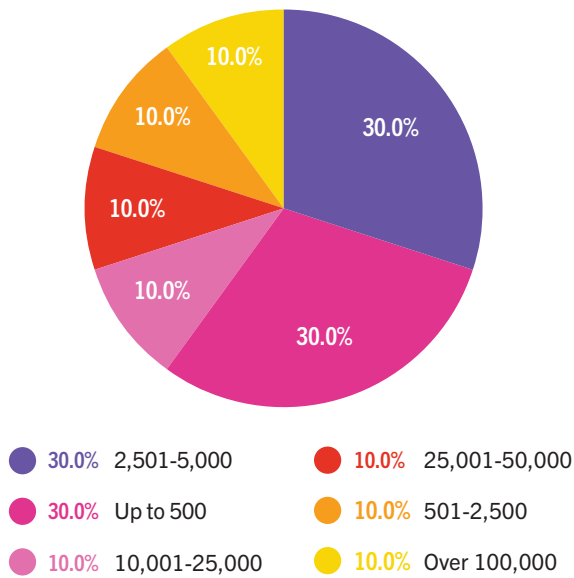


Figure 4. In Which Countries Were the Jobs Candidates Considered?

In what country is the job you are considering?

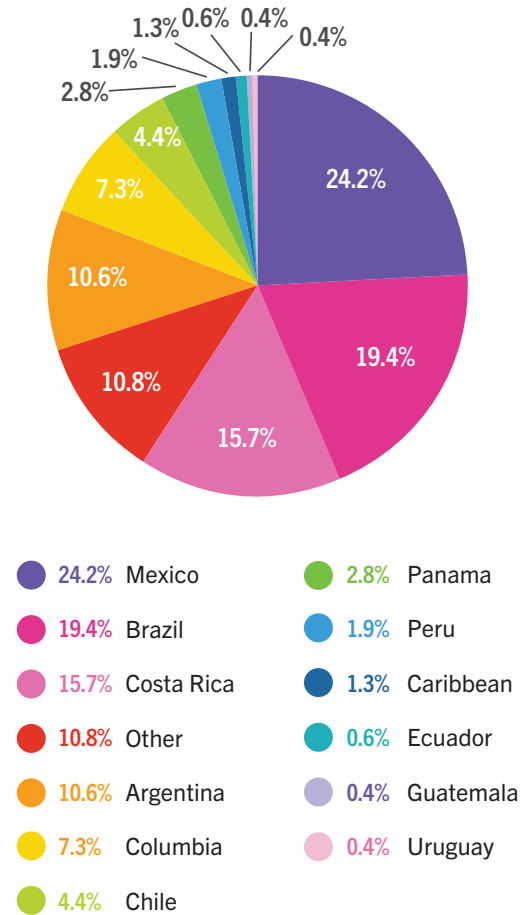
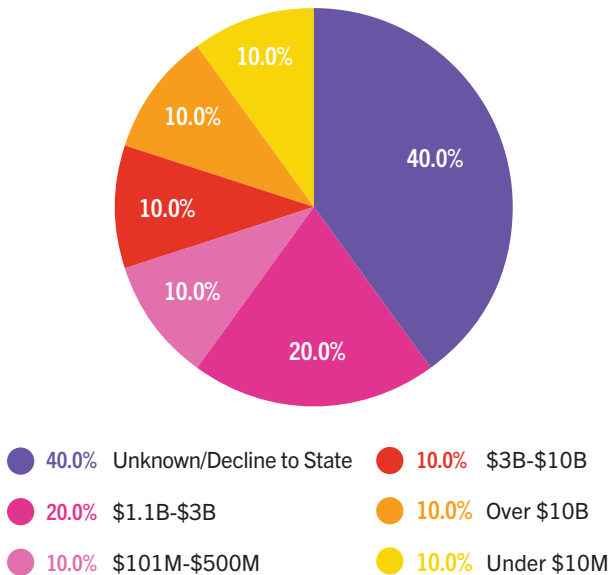


Figure 2. Participating Employers by Revenue

Please select your total annual company revenue for LATAM. (You can only choose one.)



Participating Employers' Operating Models

Employers can and do vary how their talent acquisition operational models are set up. Usually, the majority of the models fall into these three types: centralized (central recruiting team that ensures consistent hiring processes across the organization), decentralized (separate recruiting teams not necessarily following consistent hiring processes across the organization) and outsourced (where large portions of talent acquisition are handled by third-party vendors like recruitment process outsourcing firms).

Some companies move from one model to another every few years depending on how the business evolves, or because of disruptive impacts like COVID-19, economic fluctuations, leadership changes, merger and/or acquisition activity, etc. The Latin America centralized model decreased 30% from 2022, and the decentralized model increased 113% (see Table 1).

All the employers in Latin America in 2023 described their overall candidate experience as improving or competing.

However, it's important to note that the companies that participate each year vary, with a mix of returning and new.

A company's overall candidate experience has a definitive potential impact on the business, and that impact is improving incrementally, from talent attraction to onboarding. All the employers in Latin America in 2023 described their overall candidate experience as improving or competing (see Table 2). This year, 100% of the CandE Award Winners identified as competing this year, which is exactly what they did in 2022 and 2021.

Table 1. Talent Acquisition Operational Model

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Centralized Dedicated recruiters, recruiting org structure and budget	27%	43%	50%	44%	75%
Decentralized Division/line of business, dedicated recruiters, org structure and budget	36%	14%	12%	13%	13%
Outsourced RPO, HRO, third-party vendor	9%	0%	37%	12%	12%
A combination of Centralized and Outsourced	18%	29%	38%	11%	NA
A combination of Decentralized and Outsourced	0%	14%	NA	NA	NA

Table 2. How Employers Describe Their Own Overall Candidate Experience

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Lagging	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%
Lagging – Winners	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Improving	36%	29%	25%	22%	37%
Improving – Winners	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%
Competing	64%	0%	50%	0%	63%
Competing – Winners	100%	100%	100%	25%	40%
Leading	0%	14%	25%	44%	0%
Leading – Winners	0%	0%	0%	75%	0%

Asking for Candidate Feedback

Year after year, CandE benchmark research shows that communication and feedback loops are ongoing differentiators of a more positive candidate experience.

This year, 78% of participating Latin America employers said they ask for feedback after a candidate is hired, which was up 70% from 2022. In fact, this is usually where employers are the most comfortable asking candidates for feedback, so it's not surprising to see the increase here (even with the different mix of employers each year). However, we do still find year after year that there is still a leadership wariness of surveying any job candidates at any stage.

Maybe it's the halo effect of employers that participate in our benchmark research willing to survey candidates across the candidate journey, but the continuing good news is that this year the numbers have increased across all stages (see Table 3).



Table 3. When Employers Ask for Candidate Experience Feedback

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Before candidates apply	0%	2%	2%	1%
After candidates apply, but before the interview	27%	6%	2%	9%
After candidates are interviewed, but before they're hired	55%	19%	18%	23%
After candidates are hired	82%	40%	44%	34%
All of the above	0%	20%	17%	17%
We don't survey candidates about their experience	0%	13%	16%	17%



Recruiter and Hiring Manager Accountability

75% of 2023 Latin America CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience, which was down 25% from 2022 (see Table 4). Aligning recruiter performance this way can help ensure a greater delivery of a positive and fair candidate experience, which benefits the business.

While we don't ask employers about hiring manager performance and candidate experience per se, we do ask whether they give feedback to the candidates who have interviewed as finalists and who have not been selected, and if hiring managers are required to do so. 50% of 2023 participating Latin America employers responded that their hiring managers give limited feedback to internal candidates, up from 2022, and 25% give feedback to external, down from 2022, and 25% give feedback to referral candidates, also down from 2022 (see Table 5).

Also, 36% of the 2023 Latin America companies said they establish a follow-up date with finalists, keep the date and establish additional follow-ups as necessary until the position is filled, which was down 16% from 2022. This is another important differentiator in improving candidate experience for finalists.

75% of 2023 Latin America CandE Award Winners align recruiter performance with candidate experience.

Table 4. How Candidate Experience Is Aligned to Recruiter Performance

	All Employers 2023	CandE Winners 2023	All Employers 2022	CandE Winners 2022
Yes, we align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	46%	75%	71%	100%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	46%	25%	29%	0%
I don't know	9%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 5. Hiring Managers and Candidate Feedback

	2023 Internal	2023 External	2023 Referral	2022 Internal	2022 External	2022 Referral
Yes, hiring managers provide approved detailed feedback	50%	25%	25%	33%	33%	33%
No, we don't align recruiter performance with improving candidate experience	75%	0%	25%	57%	0%	33%

Conclusion

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead. Either way we recommend following the lead of the top-rated CandE Award Winners – and all the companies globally with above-average overall ratings – can help improve your organization’s candidate experience. That can improve how your employer brand is perceived in the labor market, decrease ghosting by top talent and enhance your ability to fill gaps in your workforce.

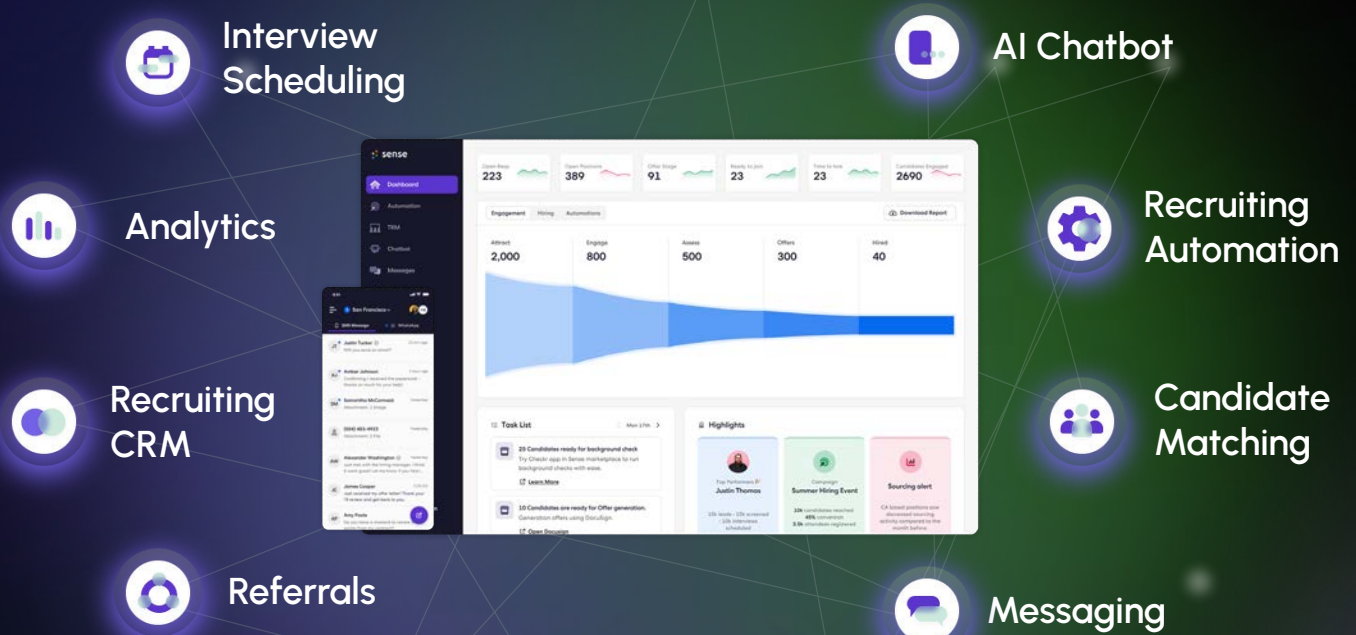
However, the constant uncertainty and volatility in the world makes it difficult to deliver a positive candidate experience. Each year, the CandE Benchmark Research Program sees how hard it is to sustain a quality candidate experience. Job candidates only want one thing – to get the job – but the vast majority will not. So, the second-best experiences include positive communication and feedback loops that, in the end, make all the difference in whether candidates are willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate or be a customer.

Although the hiring landscape in 2024 will most likely continue to be challenging around the world, there are glimpses of economic stability ahead.





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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The 2023 Business Impact of Candidate Experience

Overall, 2023 was a rough year for recruiting professionals. Not only was voluntary (burnout) and involuntary (layoffs) turnover higher for the recruiting industry, time and again those on the job market experienced an ugly truth: that the candidate experience they experienced stunk. Consistent communication and feedback loops and clear and definitive closure was like a fever dream that never manifested.

For those still on the job, recruiting workloads have increased significantly, with leaner teams doing more with less and applicant volumes increasing. The economic soft landing that many thought elusive looks promising in 2024, but recruiting and hiring is as competitive as ever with unemployment staying relatively low.

As mentioned in our special report this year, our past and current CandE Benchmark Research tells us that employers have lost their North Star of improving and sustaining a quality candidate experience. And unfortunately, candidate resentment is again on the rise.

Not only was voluntary (burnout) and involuntary (layoffs) turnover higher for the recruiting industry, time and again those on the job market experienced an ugly truth: that the candidate experience they experienced stunk.

The Relationship Question

Every year, we ask job candidates, “Based on your experience with COMPANY NAME, how likely are you to change your RELATIONSHIP status (whether or not you’ll keep your brand alliance, apply again, refer others and/or make purchases if applicable)”.

For those who said they had a great experience overall, what we’re now calling the Candidate Contentment Rate, they are more willing to apply again, refer others, make purchases if it’s a consumer-based company and be a brand advocate going forward, even if they didn’t get hired. Most candidates for any

given job in our research and in real life aren’t hired.

The Candidate Contentment Rate was down significantly around the world in our 2023 benchmark research (see Figure 1).

The Candidate Resentment Rate was also on the rise globally, something we don’t like to see in our benchmark research data (see Figure 2). Again, candidate resentment meaning those candidates who feel they had a very poor experience and will never do anything again with an employer.

It’s also important to note that only about 10% of all candidates who answer our surveys are those who were hired, which is a closer reflection of the hiring real world. Because 90% of the candidates were not hired, there is a natural negative skew in our data. Remember, the only happy candidate “customers” in the recruiting equation are those who were hired.



Figure 1. The Candidate Contentment Rate

Candidate Contentment (Great Experience)

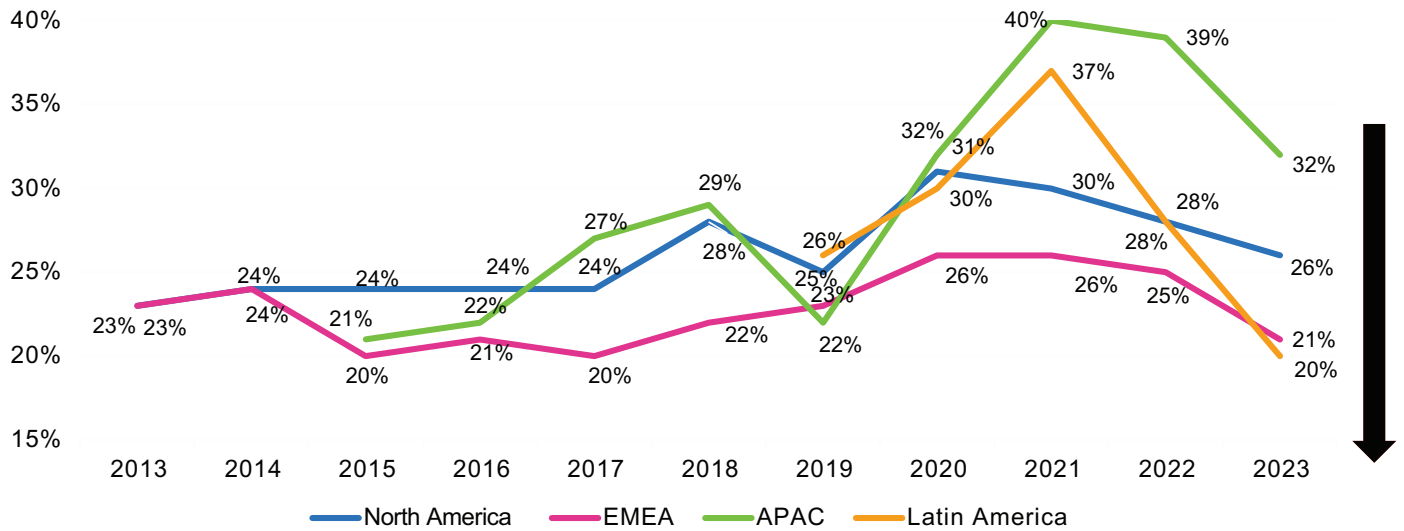
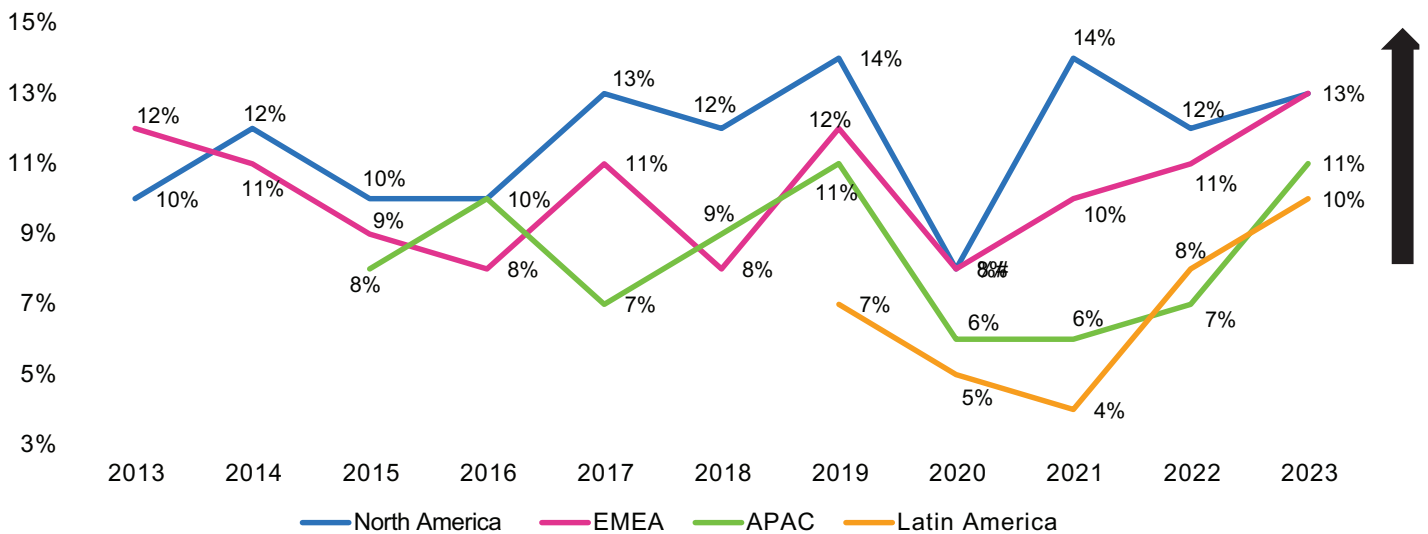


Figure 2. The Candidate Resentment Rate

Candidate Resentment (Poor Experience)



Candidate contentment has always been the highest on average in APAC and Latin America (with some exceptions), and candidate resentment has always been the highest in North America followed by EMEA. One of the main reasons we've found these differences is that culturally candidates in many of the countries in APAC and Latin America are less likely to share negative feedback than their peers in North America or EMEA, something that candidates and employers alike have validated for us over the years.

As mentioned above, candidates who believe they have had a "negative" overall experience tell us every year they will take their alliances, product purchases and business relationships somewhere else. A poor candidate experience means a potential loss of revenue for consumer-based businesses

while hurting referral networks for all companies and impacting which future fit and silver medalist candidates will apply again. Most companies depend on referrals, which can make up 20%-40% of their annual hires. This is the universal business impact that's at stake.

However, the good news is that those who had a "great" overall experience say they'll definitely increase their employer relationships – they'll apply again, refer others, make purchases and/or influence purchases when applicable. These aren't just the job finalists or those hired. The majority are individuals who research and apply for jobs but who aren't hired.

When you compare all the regions' key net promoter score (NPS) ratings (overall, apply again, refer others, relationship) over the past three years, it's again clear that North America and EMEA candidate experiences were more negative, while APAC and Latin America skewed more positive per what we shared above (see Table 1). The exception this year is that the Latin America key ratings looked a lot more like North America and EMEA than we've seen in the past. This again confirms that the global candidate experience continues to deteriorate, because even the APAC ratings are down from the past two years.

Our NPS ratings are always inherently lower due to the majority of candidates not being hired, even in higher positive skews of APAC and historically in Latin America. Usually in our benchmark research, the only time companies will see NPS ratings in the 50s or higher are from candidates who were hired, because again, those are the only happy customers in the recruitment process.

As mentioned in our special report of this year's research, we've been converting our primary 4- and 5-point scale ratings throughout our surveys into NPS scores. What's important to keep in mind is that the sheer number of candidates who employers reject during the recruiting process can quickly impact the business and the brand (whatever the world looks like) in both positive and negative ways.

That's not to say that those hired aren't important to the business. Of course they are – they're the individuals who help grow and sustain the business. **And while all candidates, hired or not, can impact how the business is perceived by other potential candidates, it's simply that those candidates who are not hired need more attention paid to their perceived overall experience.**

Table 1. Overall Global CandE Benchmark Key NPS Ratings

North America	2023	2022	2021
CandE Score	19	20	20
Overall Rating	28	30	22
Apply Again	18	19	19
Refer Others	15	18	17
Relationship	13	16	14
Hired	73	74	73
Resentment	13%	14%	14%

EMEA	2023	2022	2021
CandE Score	26	27	26
Overall Rating	13	25	29
Apply Again	12	20	19
Refer Others	9	18	19
Relationship	8	14	16
Hired	78	77	85
Resentment	13%	11%	10%

APAC	2023	2022	2021
CandE Score	29	31	30
Overall Rating	38	51	53
Apply Again	25	37	39
Refer Others	22	35	37
Relationship	20	32	34
Hired	79	83	84
Resentment	11%	7%	6%

Latin America	2023	2022	2021
CandE Score	25	29	40
Overall Rating	13	31	53
Apply Again	15	23	40
Refer Others	13	25	43
Relationship	10	20	33
Hired	85	87	89
Resentment	10%	8%	4%

NPS Ratings

- **Amazing** – 50-100 (where hires should always be)
- **Okay** – 0-50 (positive NPS for rejected candidates is good)
- **Needs Work** – Below 0 (negative NPS)

How to Get NPS Ratings

- **5-point scale:** Subtract 1 & 2 scores from 4 & 5 scores
- **4-point scale:** Subtract lowest score (1) from highest score (4)

Candidates Who Withdraw From the Recruiting Process

When it comes to candidates withdrawing themselves from the recruiting process, there are many reasons as to why. But when we look at the Talent Board North America data, for those candidates who have an overall poor (1- and 2-star ratings) experience on a 1-5 Likert scale, the three most negative reasons candidates withdraw themselves in North America in 2023 were once again:

1. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
2. Salary didn't meet expectations.
3. The recruiting process took too long.

In EMEA, the three most negative reasons to withdraw were:

1. The recruiting process took too long.
2. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
3. Salary didn't meet expectations.

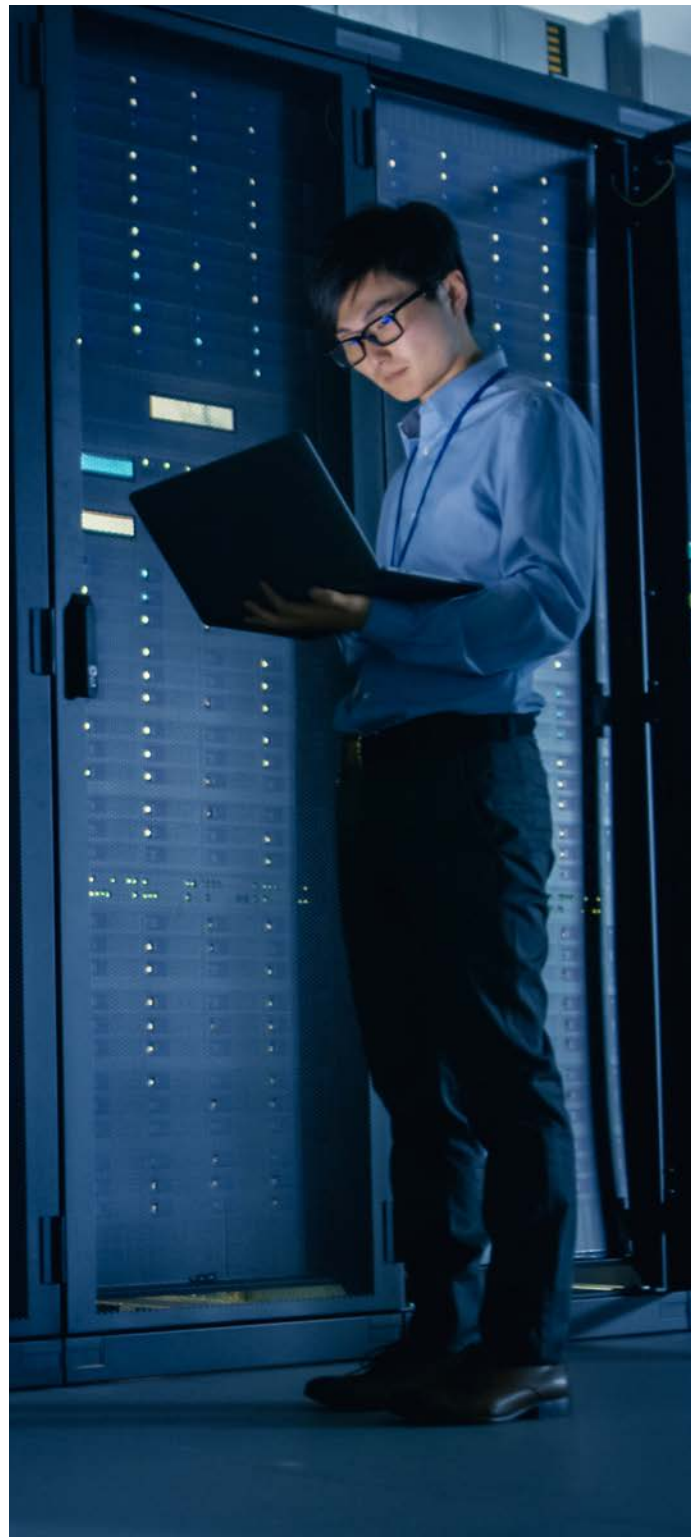
In APAC, the three most negative reasons to withdraw were again:

1. The recruiting process took too long.
2. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
3. There was a difference between the posted job description and how it was presented during the interview.

And in Latin America, the three most negative reasons to withdraw were:

1. The recruiting process took too long.
2. My time was disrespected during the recruiting process.
3. Salary didn't meet expectations.

Although it's not the same pool of candidates year to year, "time being disrespected during the recruiting process" (interviews and appointments especially), usually trends as the number one withdrawal reason only in North America. This year it was the number two reason in all other regions. The recruiting process taking too long always draws a negative reaction around the world, and it's one of the biggest ways to drive candidate resentment higher.



Candidates Share with Their Inner Circles and Publicly Online

The reality year after year is that people talk to one another about their good and bad candidate experiences, especially when we consider their inner circles (e.g., significant others, close friends, colleagues, peers, etc.). When we look at how many candidates share their positive and negative experiences with their inner circle, the trend year after year is clear: most candidates around the world will share their positive experiences and over half will share their negative experiences (see Table 2).



Table 2. Candidates Sharing Positive and Negative Experiences with Their Inner Circles in All Regions

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
North America Positive	70%	77%	75%	77%	76%
North America Negative	61%	56%	57%	52%	72%
EMEA Positive	66%	76%	78%	78%	66%
EMEA Negative	55%	58%	59%	55%	50%
APAC Positive	79%	80%	82%	79%	75%
APAC Negative	40%	41%	45%	47%	51%
Latin America Positive	73%	74%	84%	78%	63%
Latin America Negative	59%	54%	63%	49%	41%

Even with the positive skew in the APAC and Latin America research data, the majority of candidates are still willing to share their negative experiences. What's fascinating about all these global data points is the fact that the mix of companies and candidates are different every year, but their responses have remained fairly consistent over time.

However, the percentages drop when we look at how many candidates share their positive and negative experiences publicly online (e.g., social media posts, Glassdoor reviews, Indeed reviews, etc.), but there are still significant populations willing to share their experiences publicly (see Table 3). The consistency of this data reveals that employers cannot afford to ignore the impact of candidates sharing their experiences online.

Table 3. Candidates Sharing Positive and Negative Experiences Publicly Online in All Regions

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
North America Positive	44%	53%	50%	57%	50%
North America Negative	35%	32%	32%	31%	35%
EMEA Positive	46%	50%	51%	52%	45%
EMEA Negative	30%	31%	31%	30%	29%
APAC Positive	74%	71%	66%	67%	56%
APAC Negative	34%	31%	29%	30%	32%
Latin America Positive	51%	60%	53%	47%	26%
Latin America Negative	37%	37%	28%	25%	26%

It's important to note that when it comes to sharing positive and negative experiences, about a third of the candidates around the world tell us "this information is private and I don't share publicly." That's because most candidates don't want to shout from the rooftops when they don't get the job, only when they get it, no matter how good or bad the experience was. But our research tells us every year that most are willing to share, and that can definitely impact an employer's business and brand.

How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others

When we look at how likely candidates are to refer others based on their experience, the good news is that over 70% of all global candidates said they were likely to refer others based on their experience. For most CandE Award Winners this year, it's even higher (see Table 4).

Although it can be harder to quantify, the business impact of losing or gaining referrals can be just as significant as losing direct revenue. Organizations big and small depend on them, equating to upwards of 20%-40% of hires from referrals.



Table 4. How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
All NA Employers Candidates likely to refer	68%	70%	67%	66%	62%
NA CandE Award Winners Candidates likely to refer	77%	79%	79%	83%	73%
All EMEA Employers Candidates likely to refer	77%	81%	71%	75%	68%
EMEA CandE Award Winners Candidates likely to refer	81%	78%	85%	79%	76%
All APAC Employers Candidates likely to refer	77%	81%	84%	76%	67%
APAC CandE Award Winners Candidates likely to refer	83%	82%	89%	79%	79%
All LA Employers Candidates likely to refer	68%	76%	88%	80%	79%
LA CandE Award Winners Candidates likely to refer	77%	85%	89%	84%	81%

What we also know is nearly every year about 30% of all candidates who respond in our benchmark research say they are still extremely likely to refer, and yet, nearly 90% didn't get hired.

That means that even rejected candidates – those who feel their experience was positive and fair – are still likely to be brand advocates and referral sources. Referrals usually come from employees, alumni and customers, but we haven't heard of many companies that consider rejected candidates as referral pools. It's certainly possible according to our research.

What we also know is nearly every year about 30% of all candidates who respond in our benchmark research say they are still extremely likely to refer, and yet, nearly 90% didn't get hired.

Candidate Resentment Can Add Up

For consumer-based businesses, where candidates are customers and vice versa, the potential revenue impact will always loom large. A commonly referenced [case study conducted by Virgin Media and Ph.Creative](#) a few years ago showed that Virgin Media was losing more than \$6 million annually in sales revenue due to poor candidate experiences, which they were then able to turn into a \$7 million revenue stream.

For companies that are analyzing this level of candidate experience business impact, particularly publicly traded companies, they ultimately aren't willing to share this kind of quantitative data publicly. But in our experience over the years, most companies aren't internally quantifying the cost of a poor candidate experience. They should, because we know candidate resentment can potentially cost millions of dollars per year of direct revenue and revenue impact from referral loss.

Candidate Resentment is a major indicator we track each year and one we recommend employers track as well. Candidate resentment impacts a business and its brand because candidates who report having a very poor recruiting experience are less likely to apply again, refer others, have any brand affinity, and/or make purchases if the employer is a consumer-based company. Ultimately a poor candidate experience can cause employers to lose revenue and referrals, two things vital to a healthy organization. We've updated our [candidate resentment calculator](#) and you can use it to check on what your financial impact might be.

Even with all the potential business impacts highlighted above, whether or not candidates will apply again and/or refer others based on their overall candidate experience is a vitally

important outcome of the candidate experience. And while most companies would argue that they don't want all the candidates applying again, they do want those deemed future fit to apply again. They most certainly want their final interview silver medalists to apply again and to refer others who may also be the right candidates for future roles.

Ultimately, making improvement investments in recruiting, hiring, retention, and candidate experience today can ensure a greater return on employment brand and quality of candidate tomorrow, no matter what the future brings. This is why incremental improvements to recruiting processes and candidate experience can go a long way toward increasing revenue and referral networks.



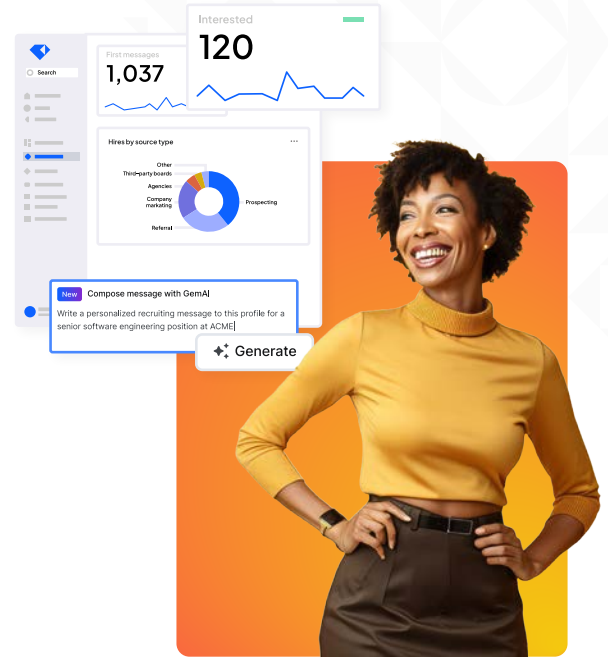
About The CandEs

The Candidate Experience (CandE) Benchmark Research and Awards Program is the first program of its kind focused on the elevation and promotion of a quality candidate experience. Also known as The CandEs, the program was founded by Talent Board in 2011 and is now part of ERE Media. The CandE Benchmark Research Program delivers annual recruiting and hiring industry benchmark research that highlights accountability, fairness and the business impact of candidate experience. More information can be found at <https://www.eremedia.com/candidate-experience>.



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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Candidate Experience by Gender, Generation, Race & Ethnicity

Our 2023 CandE Benchmark Research once again revealed that women, people of color, and younger candidates rated their candidate experiences more positively than older candidates, male candidates, and White/Caucasian candidates did (see Tables 1 and 2). This most likely has to do with a continued focus on inclusive language and examples of diversity that employers are bringing to their careers sites, candidate communication, job ads, and other marketing collateral for their employment brands.

This is true around the world in our data, although in this brief, we'll again focus more on our North American research ratings, which have a much larger sample size. The exceptions are Nonbinary and Native American/Alaskan Native candidates who have lower ratings overall.

In fact, all demographic ratings are less positive this year as well, per our overall aggregate ratings.

The recruitment marketing content rated highest by women, people of color, and younger candidates in our benchmark research this year included:

- Company Values
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Product and Services Information
- Answers to Why People Want to Work There
- Career Events
- Company Culture

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NPS Ratings Tell the Story (Yet Again)

Table 1. Referral NPS Ratings by Demographic

	2023	2022	2021
Male	18	20	21
Female	23	27	26
Nonbinary	3	1	3
Boomer	17	17	16
Gen X	15	17	18
Millennials	19	22	24
Gen Z	26	29	31
White/Caucasian	15	19	19
Black/African American	29	31	31
Hispanic/Latinx	25	28	28
Asian	27	25	31
Native American/ Alaskan Native	15	15	21
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	28	30	43

Table 2. Relationship NPS Ratings by Demographic

	2023	2022	2021
Male	16	26	26
Female	22	25	22
Nonbinary	0	-1	0
Boomer	11	10	9
Gen X	9	12	12
Millennials	15	18	20
Gen Z	29	32	33
White/Caucasian	12	16	15
Black/African American	28	28	27
Hispanic/Latinx	24	26	24
Asian	23	21	25
Native American/ Alaskan Native	15	16	17
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	24	28	36

This is the third year that we've asked candidates to identify their race and ethnicity in addition to gender and generation, which we've been asking for years. The strongest NPS ratings for those willing to refer others (and those willing to continue a relationship with an employer even when they don't get hired) are among women, people of color and younger candidates, as mentioned above.

These NPS ratings are slightly lower overall this year due to an overall deterioration of a positive candidate experience per our special report and all our key CandE ratings. Also, how the candidates this year perceived their recruiting experiences may or may not translate into positive employee experiences. We don't know for certain because we aren't measuring what happens once a new employee starts. But it's clear from the data above that investing in DE&I recruitment marketing continues to pay an employer branding dividend for employers through a better candidate experience for traditionally underrepresented groups.

However, there continues to be a backlash against diversity recruiting and related programs and what ultimately benefits employers when focused on inclusion. That's unfortunate, since demographics have been changing for years, with more communities of non-Whites increasing in even the most conservative of regions. Plus, there continues to be broad public support for LGBTQ+ legal protections. Addressing systemic discrimination while increasing access to opportunity are essential to inclusive recruiting that has most certainly impacted the business bottom line positively.

Individuals who feel their own best interests are being challenged and compromised may react negatively to DE&I initiatives to protect their own sense of value and self-esteem. But for those who felt seen, acknowledged and a sense of "belonging" to the organizations they applied to, their positive sentiment regarding their experiences was higher, as was their perception of fairness.

But for those who felt seen, acknowledged and a sense of "belonging" to the organizations they applied to, their positive sentiment regarding their experiences was higher, as was their perception of fairness.

The Difference Perceived Fairness Makes

When candidates feel like their overall experience is a fair one (i.e., they're truly "in the running" for jobs they're qualified for), they tend to rate their experiences more positively regardless of their gender, ethnicity, race or age – particularly when they're given direct feedback and told definitively when they're no longer being considered for the job. Their perception can tell them their experience is fairer and more positive, whether that's objectively true or not. Their perception and ratings go even higher when candidates receive steady communication and engagement activities from an employer at appropriate times during their experience.

It almost goes without saying that candidates who actually get the jobs they apply to will rate their experiences higher than those who don't. So, looking closely at ratings from candidates who didn't get hired, especially those from historically marginalized groups, can tell you a lot about the perceived fairness during the recruiting process.

Take screening and interviewing for example. What's clear is that women, people of color (mostly) and younger candidates (Gen Z) expressed a higher level of perceived fairness toward assessments they took and the interviews they went through, although the differences are smaller than they had been the past two years (see Table 3).

Table 3. Other CandE Insights by Demographic

	Assessment Fairness NPS	Interview Fairness NPS	When Process Ended, Asked for Feedback %	Feedback Provided %	Encouraged to Apply for Another Job %	Resentment Rate %
Male	41	60	16%	24%	52%	12%
Female	49	63	14%	24%	50%	9%
Nonbinary	30	56	15%	20%	45%	18%
Boomer	23	64	10%	23%	54%	12%
Gen X	22	56	22%	23%	51%	15%
Millennials	37	58	16%	22%	47%	14%
Gen Z	61	69	25%	27%	54%	5%
White/Caucasian	34	61	12%	21%	47%	13%
Black/African American	58	64	19%	32%	59%	7%
Hispanic/Latinx	57	64	18%	26%	50%	9%
Asian	48	74	26%	30%	61%	10%
Native American/Alaskan Native	41	46	25%	25%	48%	13%
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	58	55	33%	33%	57%	11%

It's important to note that expectations and complexity of interviews vary based on experience level (new candidates entering the market versus those who have been in the job market longer) and job type (hourly versus professional), and most likely impact perception differently for all demographics.

It's also important to note that we have to be careful about how much we infer in what we find in our benchmark research data each year. There are too many variables we can't account for that may or may not be affecting the candidate experience, especially for underrepresented and marginalized groups. For example, although the data shows that Asian candidates have a much higher perception of interview fairness, most candidates in our data consistently received similar interview prep ahead of time (interview agenda, etc.) and post-interview (follow-up, etc.). So we cannot infer that interview preparation is having a major impact on perceived fairness – but we cannot rule it out, either.

However, when candidates felt seen and heard, and believed they were able to convey their skills and experiences adequately, their positive sentiment increased, as did their perception of fairness. Historically underrepresented and marginalized groups have experienced bias, discrimination, and microaggressions that impacted their perception and sense of well-being (and they still do today). When more consistent and timely communication and feedback loops, micro-affirmations and other touch points are inserted into the candidate experience, it's possible that the increased positivity is greater than it would be for groups who experienced less bias previously.

No matter what, we do know that the highest-rated companies in our benchmark research (CandE Winners) have a 31% higher perception of assessment fairness rating and a 16% higher perception of interview fairness rating for all candidates. Across the candidate journey, CandE Winners are more consistent and timely with their process structure, communication and feedback loops, optimizing their recruiting technology stack, and so much more. You'll find all those differentiators throughout our annual benchmark research reports.



Some key takeaways here include:

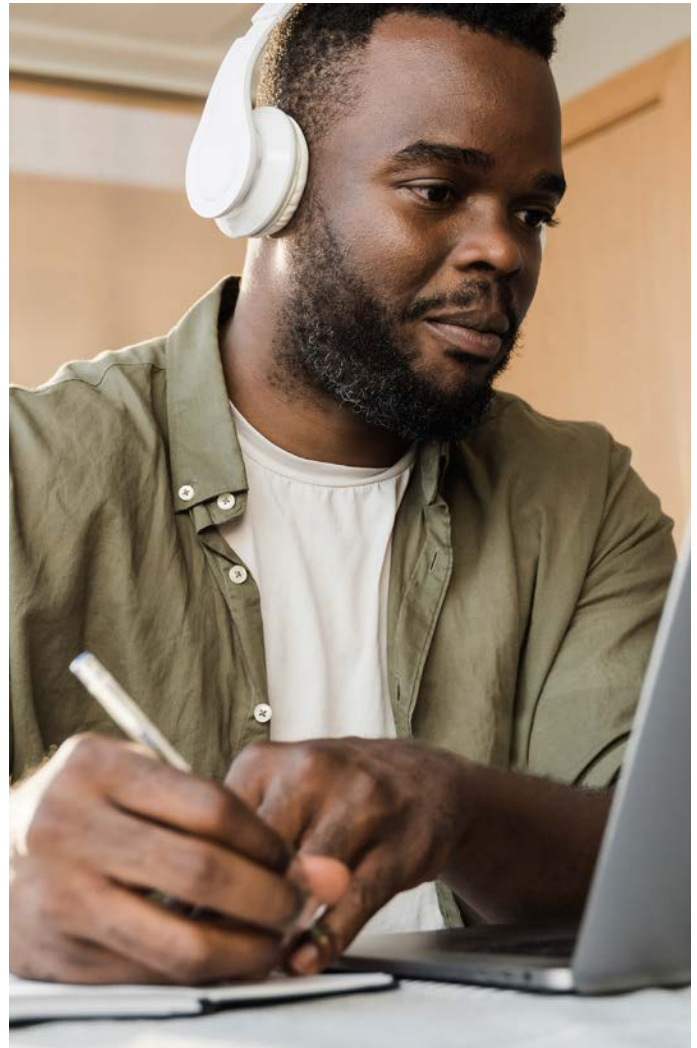
- Reviewing and responding to case studies, games and puzzles, job simulations had the highest level of perceived assessment fairness overall for all candidates.
- Females had a 18% higher perception of assessment fairness than males did this year. Besides the more common general screening questions, experience questionnaires and job-specific questions (i.e., can you do these things, etc.), the most common comprehensive assessments females were given this year in our research were again behavioral and/or personality assessments and job simulations.
- Gen Z had a much higher perception of assessment fairness than all other generations – 49% higher than the next-highest generation (Millennials). The most common comprehensive assessments here were also behavioral and/or personality assessments and job simulations.
- Gen Z also had a 17% higher perception of interview fairness than the next two highest generations (millennials and Gen X). This year, Boomers actually had the second highest perception of interview fairness, with nearly 30% being management positions and 37% being hourly positions.
- Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander candidates had a much higher perception of assessment fairness than White candidates – 52% higher overall. The most common comprehensive assessments here were also behavioral and/or personality assessments and job simulations.
- Asian candidates had a 19% higher perception of interview fairness than White candidates, while Black and Hispanic candidates only had a 5% higher perception of interview fairness than White candidates.
- Female, Gen Z, Black, and Hispanic candidates had significantly lower resentment rates than the other demographic groups. Resentment refers to candidates who said they will never engage the employer again based on having a poor candidate experience.
- This year, Gen X, Gen Z, Asian, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander candidates were asked for feedback more often than all other demographics.
- Gen Z, Black, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander were provided feedback more often than all other demographics.
- Black, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander were encouraged to apply for another job more than all other demographics.

A Sense of Belonging Can Make a Recruiting and Hiring Difference

The reality is, most job candidates are looking for the right roles that will compensate them fairly, provide them meaningful work, and give them a sense of belonging. According to our 2023 research, when candidates are presented with company values, diversity and inclusion content, and employee testimonials, their research rating NPS increased 35%. It's even higher for females, people of color, and Gen Z. When it's clear that an employer's values are lived with authenticity and transparency, that they embrace inclusive recruiting and hiring practices and that they value a quality employee experience, it's a win for everyone, not just underrepresented groups.

In a world that's still fractured from the volatile socioeconomic impacts of the past few years, it's obvious that candidates are seeking greater alignment between their own values and those of their employers, and the same goes for current employees reviewing their own values and priorities. We're all coping with greater uncertainty, so finding a workplace where we feel we truly belong because we're seen and heard has been the great existential crisis for the past few years. That's exactly why employers must commit and recommit to these values and DE&I in their recruiting and hiring.

The reality is, most job candidates are looking for the right roles that will compensate them fairly, provide them meaningful work, and give them a sense of belonging.



About The CandEs

The Candidate Experience (CandE) Benchmark Research and Awards Program is the first program of its kind focused on the elevation and promotion of a quality candidate experience. Also known as The CandEs, the program was founded by Talent Board in 2011 and is now part of ERE Media. The CandE Benchmark Research Program delivers annual recruiting and hiring industry benchmark research that highlights accountability, fairness and the business impact of candidate experience. More information can be found at <https://www.eremedia.com/candidate-experience>.



Create Amazing Candidate and Employee Experiences

Largely is a talent experience platform that allows talent and HR teams to create branded and actionable experiences for every step of the employee lifecycle.

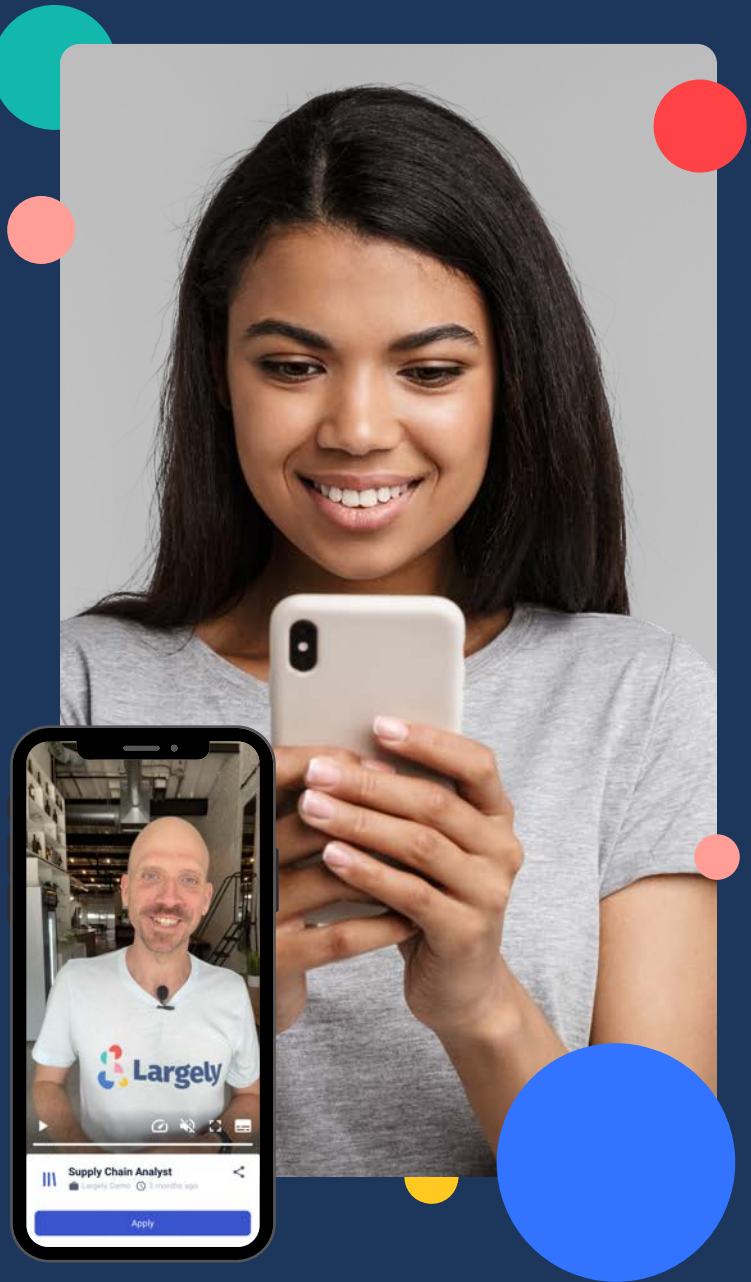
Attraction
Enhanced career sites, job postings, and recruitment marketing landing pages.

Recruit
Easy applications and engaging interview experiences.

Hire
More effective pre-employment and onboarding communication.

Employment
Higher engagement for training and internal communications.

Advocacy
Better retention and stronger employer brand messaging.



COMPANIES USING LARGELY SEE RESULTS

Candidate Conversion

↑ **55%**

Training Registrations

↑ **4x**

Application Rate

↑ **93%**

Employee Referrals

↑ **6x**



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2023 NORTH AMERICA CANDE BENCHMARK RESEARCH REPORT

ATTRACT: North America Employer Branding, Recruitment Marketing, and Sourcing

What It Is

The pre-application stage of identifying and engaging with candidates before they apply for a position.

The candidate experience begins during talent attraction and sourcing, well before a potential candidate applies for a job. In fact, we have always believed that the candidate experience is a 24/7 interactive experience, whether for passive candidates or those actively looking for a job.

Over the past 12 months in our monthly CandE Pulse surveys, employer branding has been in the top five recruiting priorities for TA professionals eight times, but it's always top of mind for employers. The employer brand is a big part of the reason why someone wants to work for an organization and it encompasses the culture and the employee value proposition. A strong, descriptive and transparent brand will help companies attract talent and alleviate some of the challenges that recruiting the right candidates can create.

Over the past 12 months in our monthly CandE Pulse surveys, employer branding has been in the top five recruiting priorities for TA professionals eight times, but it's always top of mind for employers.

Key Takeaways

- Over 101,000 candidates said they researched a job and employer (up 26% from 2022 CandE Research).
- Research stage had a 3.7 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022, down from 2021) and 40 NPS rating (down slightly from 2022).
- CandE Winners had a 4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022, down from 2021) and 57 NPS rating (up slightly from 2022).
- The top three resources found to be the most valuable when researching companies were career sites, Employer Reviews (Glassdoor, Indeed, etc), and site and LinkedIn career pages.



Unfortunately this year, transparency faltered further and affected candidate experience, which in turn affected the business and the brand. A weak brand can deter talent or misrepresent the employee experience, which can lead to new-hire turnover and low performance once onboard.

It's not the candidate market it had been in the past two years, but 55% of the candidates in our North American data had some kind of previous relationships with employers, and 72% conducted their own job research, versus only 2% receiving an unsolicited email or call from a recruiter or third-party agency. Candidates leveraged online groups in LinkedIn and employer review sites like Glassdoor to get a clear picture of an organization before making a connection (29% of candidates in 2023 used online groups on LinkedIn and elsewhere; and 29% of candidates used review sites like Glassdoor, Indeed, Fairygodboss and others, up 32% from 2022).

Candidates continue to do their own research. They want to be prepared and take ownership of their journey, and organizations also need to be prepared. With fewer job openings this year for available candidates compared to last year (as of October 2023 there were 1.3 unfilled positions for every job seeker), companies need to provide clear and consistent information so potentially qualified candidates can self-select based on their interests and needs.

The following section highlights what candidates are looking for in the Attract stage, how employers are responding, and what companies can learn from CandE Award Winners.

What Candidates Want

Candidates always want three things during the pre-application stage: a clear understanding of the company culture, insight into the employee experience, and a sense of connection with the overall brand. Essentially, they want to know that the information and content they receive will reflect the work they will be doing, the company, and the environment in which they will work.

Candidates are looking for more content from existing employees and peers about the company culture. In 2023, 27% of candidates said they wanted career sites in multiple languages, 31% said they wanted even more information about company culture, 26% wanted more information on why employees want to work for an employer, and 28% wanted more information about the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives.

This is why the employee voice is a strong one and should not be ignored during the attraction stage. In our survey, candidates were asked to identify what is most valuable among research channels, marketing information, and content.

Key Takeaways (cont.)

- The top three types of marketing content found to be the most valuable before applying were company values, company culture and diversity & inclusion.
- The top three types of job content found to be the most valuable before applying were job descriptions, details of application, next steps and a list of all jobs currently open.
- 38% of candidates spent one to two hours researching jobs, down 7% from 2022).
- Only 24% of candidates were invited to provide feedback at this stage, same as 2022.
- 76% of candidates completed the job application after researching.

Candidates always want three things during the pre-application stage: a clear understanding of the company culture, insight into the employee experience, and a sense of connection with the overall brand.



Research Channels

Year after year, career sites prove to be the most valuable channel for candidates when researching an employer. They're still the first destination once a candidate has identified an employer and a job, although it's down slightly from 2022, with 39% of candidates citing career sites as the most valuable research channel in 2023.

Online groups such as LinkedIn and Facebook were in second place, with 29% of candidates using them to research jobs, up slightly from 2022. And 29% of candidates cited employer review sites like Glassdoor and Indeed as the third most valuable channel, up 32% from 2022.

Although referrals remained flat as an important research channel for candidates this year, the importance of referrals for companies can never be understated (see Table 1).



Table 1. Candidate Research Channels (Partial List)

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Company Career Site	39%	42%	46%	46%	53%
Online Groups (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)	29%	27%	25%	29%	25%
Employer Reviews (Glassdoor, Indeed, etc.)	29%	22%	22%	24%	27%
LinkedIn Career Page(s)	26%	30%	32%	30%	28%
Job Boards	25%	26%	26%	30%	28%
Mobile Career Site or App	23%	22%	17%	25%	17%
Employee, Candidate, or Customer Referral	22%	22%	25%	21%	25%
Third-party Job Notifications or Agents	19%	16%	15%	21%	18%
Career Fair / Job Fair (Multiple Companies)	14%	16%	13%	16%	13%
Facebook Career Page(s)	10%	11%	10%	14%	8%

Job candidates might also have an existing relationship with the companies they're interested in when they begin their job search. Some of these relationships might affect their final key candidate experience ratings (see Tables 2 and 3). It's clear that candidates who were current employees and those who were brand advocates have the highest key ratings overall, although both ratings are down from 2022. This again aligns with the overall deterioration of candidate experience ratings in 2023, a less competitive candidate market, and the fact that more employees are not leaving their jobs as they did the previous two years.

What's key is that existing relationships and brand affinity definitely affected candidate experience for the better in 2023, even with a decrease in positive ratings.

Table 2. Final Refer NPS Ratings of Candidates

	2023	2022	2021
I am a current employee of the company	37	41	38
I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or innovation	29	30	31
I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company	21	25	25
I was a customer of the company using their products/services	16	22	22
I was a past employee of the company	12	17	15
I have/had no relationship with the company	8	9	7

Table 3. Final Relationship NPS Ratings of Candidates

	2023	2022	2021
I am a current employee of the company	33	36	33
I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or innovation	26	27	27
I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company	17	20	19
I was a customer of the company using their products/services	20	25	24
I was a past employee of the company	7	12	8
I have/had no relationship with the company	4	6	2

What's key is that existing relationships and brand affinity definitely affected candidate experience for the better in 2023, even with a decrease in positive ratings. This, in turn, can impact the quality of referrals that affect all B2C and B2B companies.



Marketing Content

When asked to identify the most valuable marketing content, company values remained number one, albeit down slightly from 2022. It's clear that many people reevaluated what they wanted to do and where they wanted to do it during the pandemic, and continue to post, culminating in the search for aligned values. Products and services information was the second top marketing content, followed by career sites in multiple languages, and diversity and inclusion content (see Table 4).



Table 4. Preferred Marketing Content for Candidates (Partial List)

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Company Values	45%	48%	23%	27%	24%
Products / Services Information	33%	28%	23%	27%	24%
Career Sites in Multiple Languages	30%	31%	35%	32%	28%
Diversity and Inclusion	30%	27%	26%	25%	24%
Answers to “Why” People Want to Work Here	29%	27%	29%	32%	29%
Company Culture	28%	29%	35%	32%	39%
Employee Testimonials	22%	21%	25%	27%	26%
Financial Information	20%	24%	20%	22%	19%
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	20%	18%	19%	22%	20%
Answers to “Why” People Stay Here	19%	23%	25%	27%	26%

What’s clear in 2023 is that candidates wanted a high level of transparency regarding the organizations in which they were interested – especially on how they might “belong” post pandemic and through economic fluctuations and layoffs. This insight also helps when candidates refer others to the same organization.

Candidates also want to understand employers’ diversity and inclusion initiatives, and that has increased in importance by 25% since 2019. The social unrest and ongoing inequities for marginalized groups came to the forefront in 2020, and our data has shown employers investing in more DE&I programs since, even with the backlash and lower demographic ratings we

highlighted in the “EXECUTIVE BRIEF: Candidate Experience by Gender, Generation, Race & Ethnicity.” Younger candidates (Gen Z and millennials), females, and people of color still have all had a much higher positive and fair candidate experience during the past few years in our research.

Interestingly, employee testimonials didn’t change in importance for candidates from last year and the “answers to ‘why’ people stay here” has decreased 27% in importance since 2019. This may have to do with the volatility in the hiring market the past two years and that candidates have retention doubts and doubts about the validity of testimonials controlled by corporate messaging.

Job-Related Content

When conducting research, job descriptions are always the priority piece of job content to be consumed by candidates, although it's down 18% from 2022 (see Table 5). Obviously that's what explains what the work will be. Unsurprisingly, more candidates this year said that knowing more about the details of the application and next steps was valuable (45%). It's also something we find each year that many companies aren't very consistent about, but it is something we do see the highest-rated CandE Winners communicate before candidates apply.

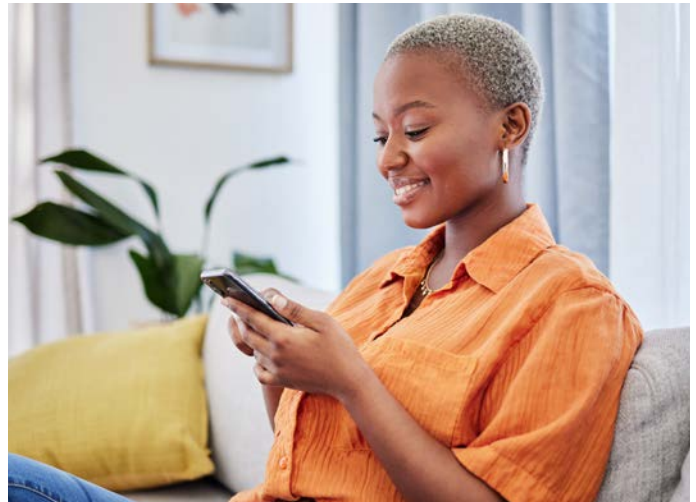


Table 5. Preferred Job Content for Candidates (Partial List)

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Job Descriptions	54%	66%	63%	66%	64%
Details of Application and Next Steps	45%	38%	44%	50%	42%
Jobs Currently Open	39%	39%	46%	42%	NA
Benefit Details	30%	35%	28%	27%	28%
Salary Ranges and Compensation Structure	20%	32%	24%	26%	24%
Career Path Examples	18%	22%	17%	18%	17%
Employee Day in the Life (Job Overview)	17%	15%	16%	16%	15%
Overview of Recruiting Process for This Job	13%	10%	9%	NA	NA
Successful Candidate Profile for the Job	12%	14%	8%	9%	10%

Although salary and benefits are both down in importance, which is counterintuitive to what we'd thought we'd see, it's still important to candidates every year. Candidates and employees this year have demanded to work according to their preferences and want higher pay, flexibility, and other benefits and incentives. But, it could also signal that values, culture (inclusion and flexibility), and what products and/or services an employer sells are just as important (maybe more depending on the candidate and the desired job) in deciding what jobs to apply to.

What Employers Are Doing

The gap between what employers are doing and what candidates want persists, although it was more aligned the past three years (see perception gaps in the Candidate Expectations Versus Employer Realities special report section). Overall, employers must consider how the attitudes, expectations and behaviors of increasingly sophisticated candidates continue to shift, demanding more transparency, communication, and feedback, the latter being where employers struggle the most. The good news is that transparency has been better received by candidates the past few years.

When asked where employers are engaging with candidates in the attraction stages, career sites remained number one for another year (see Table 6). Most companies (finally) consider these sites to be they're interested in applying to. Micro-sites were also utilized more this year by employers to market their brand and their jobs. In addition, LinkedIn recruiter, other job boards, SEO / SEM, talent communities, Facebook pages, mobile text-messaging campaigns, and videos were all up from 2022. And these were only the highest utilized ways employers engaged with candidates before they applied in our data this year.

When asked where employers are engaging with candidates in the attraction stages, career sites remain number one for another year.

Table 6. Critical Online/Interactive Ways Employers Engaged with Candidates Who Have Not Yet Applied (Partial List)

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Career Site (Primary)	98%	77%	70%	76%	68%
LinkedIn Recruiter Outreach	91%	67%	60%	63%	58%
Job Board / Other Site Company Pages (Job/Career Specific)	90%	54%	54%	53%	NA
Micro-sites	66%	38%	30%	32%	29%
SEO/SEM Paid Advertising (Social and Search)	58%	33%	25%	32%	27%
Videos (Across Websites and Social Channels)	70%	29%	37%	31%	26%
Talent Community	60%	25%	30%	30%	31%
Facebook Pages	58%	19%	36%	26%	23%
Mobile Text-Messaging Campaigns	35%	18%	25%	32%	27%

Two important things to note here. First, employers' video usage was up an incredible 141% this year (at least with the companies that participated). Video has always been such a powerful marketing medium, so it's exciting to see it leveraged so much more this year than the last few years.

Second, mobile text-messaging campaigns are also up 94% this year compared to 2022. Text-messaging deliverability continues to be more reliable than email messaging, so it's not surprising we're seeing this increase (finally). And although the mix of companies varies each year, with over two-thirds returning companies and one-third net new, the utilization of text-based recruiting systems has increased 16% since 2021 (see Table 7). Other newer recruiting technologies like conversational AI (artificial intelligence) chatbots also leverage text messaging, a big differentiator for high-volume hiring. Not all hourly candidates even have email addresses, much less check them with regularity.

One thing to note when you're reviewing the technology data is that we had to make adjustments of what utilization was in 2022 and 2021 due to the way we asked the question. The data has been realigned accordingly.

The other core recruiting technologies that saw a small increase in utilization this year were ATS, background screening, interview scheduling, job distribution, CRM, and talent network / community.

While core recruiting technologies experienced a relatively flat market the past year and a half, basic chatbot utilization was up 26% from 2021. This is also the first year that we separated out conversational AI from basic chatbots and 18% of responding employers said they're utilizing it across the recruiting process (see Table 8).

Table 7. Enhancing Recruiting Efforts with Core Technologies

	2023	2022	2021
Applicant Tracking System (ATS)	95%	94%	92%
Background Screening System	94%	88%	89%
Interview Scheduling System	71%	70%	68%
Job Distribution System	71%	70%	76%
Candidate Relationship Management System (CRM)	65%	59%	63%
Talent Network / Community System	64%	62%	68%
Sourcing / Mining System	63%	63%	66%
Video Interviewing System	63%	68%	69%
Onboarding System	63%	74%	65%
Assessment / Testing System	57%	62%	64%
Social Media Distribution System	54%	67%	59%
Text-based Recruiting System	52%	50%	45%



While core recruiting technologies experienced a relatively flat market the past year and a half, basic chatbot utilization was up 26% from 2021. This is also the first year that we separated out conversational AI from basic chatbots and 18% of responding employers said they're utilizing it across the recruiting process.

Table 8. Enhancing Recruiting Efforts with AI Technologies

	2023	2022	2021
Assessing candidates with job simulations for performance prediction	23%	21%	25%
Measuring and predicting employee job changing behavior	8%	13%	14%
Machine learning that ensures the application and screening processes remove bias and identifies the best candidates for roles	7%	10%	9%
Assessing candidates to identify team personality and culture fit	23%	28%	31%
Sentiment analysis of candidate open-ended feedback	18%	22%	14%
Video interviewing with assessments	24%	33%	35%
Virtual career fairs that match candidates and screen/interview	24%	36%	33%
Sourcing existing internal candidate database with a virtual assistant	19%	30%	15%
Conversational AI chatbots (across the recruiting process)	18%	NA	NA
Sourcing candidates from external sources with a virtual assistant	22%	28%	22%
Analyzing job postings for unintentional bias and offering recommendations on how to create job listings with more inclusive language	35%	41%	34%
Basic chatbot recruiting automation (Q&A “customer-service” on career site)	39%	37%	31%

More employers are realizing that it’s a competitive differentiator to communicate earlier with candidates, even before they apply. Basic chatbots are being used more frequently to answer general employment questions, and this frees up recruiting teams to have more hands-on time with potential candidates already in play. Conversational AI is also now being adopted to improve communicating with candidates throughout the recruiting process, ensuring a higher level of automated and more authentic engagement.

Otherwise we didn’t see any increases in AI technology adopted with this year’s employers. In fact, the percentages

are all down from 2022 except for chatbots. This doesn’t mean that adoption decreased, again because the mix of companies changes, but it’s clear that adoption didn’t increase with our participants this year. It’s also true that generative AI has been embedded into more recruiting technology platforms and this will only continue to proliferate and impact recruiting and hiring going forward.

As organizations look to 2024 and beyond to become more aligned with the talent they want to attract, the following section contains recommendations and lessons learned from the 2023 CandE Award Winners.

Key Recommendations

What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Companies that improve the candidate experience and provide more value to candidates in the attraction stage have a competitive advantage. There are several examples below that help differentiate the 2023 CandE Award Winners and provide guidance to organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the attraction stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

COMPANY VALUES TOPPED CANDIDATE RESEARCH AGAIN

CandE-Winning organizations have a 35% higher NPS rating in the research/attract stage (57 compared to 40 for all companies in North America). This includes providing content around company values – something continues to be the most valuable to candidates in our research. Values were again the number one type of marketing content consumed during research, with 45% of all candidates citing it as most important, down slightly from 2022, but still up 96% from 2021.

That's followed by products / services Information (increased interest in exactly what a company does), career sites in multiple languages (it is a multicultural world today), diversity and inclusion information, answers to why people want to work at the company, and company culture information. When asked where employers are engaging with candidates in the attraction stages, career sites remain number one for another consecutive year, with 98% of companies considering their sites to be critical to recruiting success, especially CandE Winners, up 27% from last year.



CANDIDATE REFERRALS AND BRAND AMBASSADORS

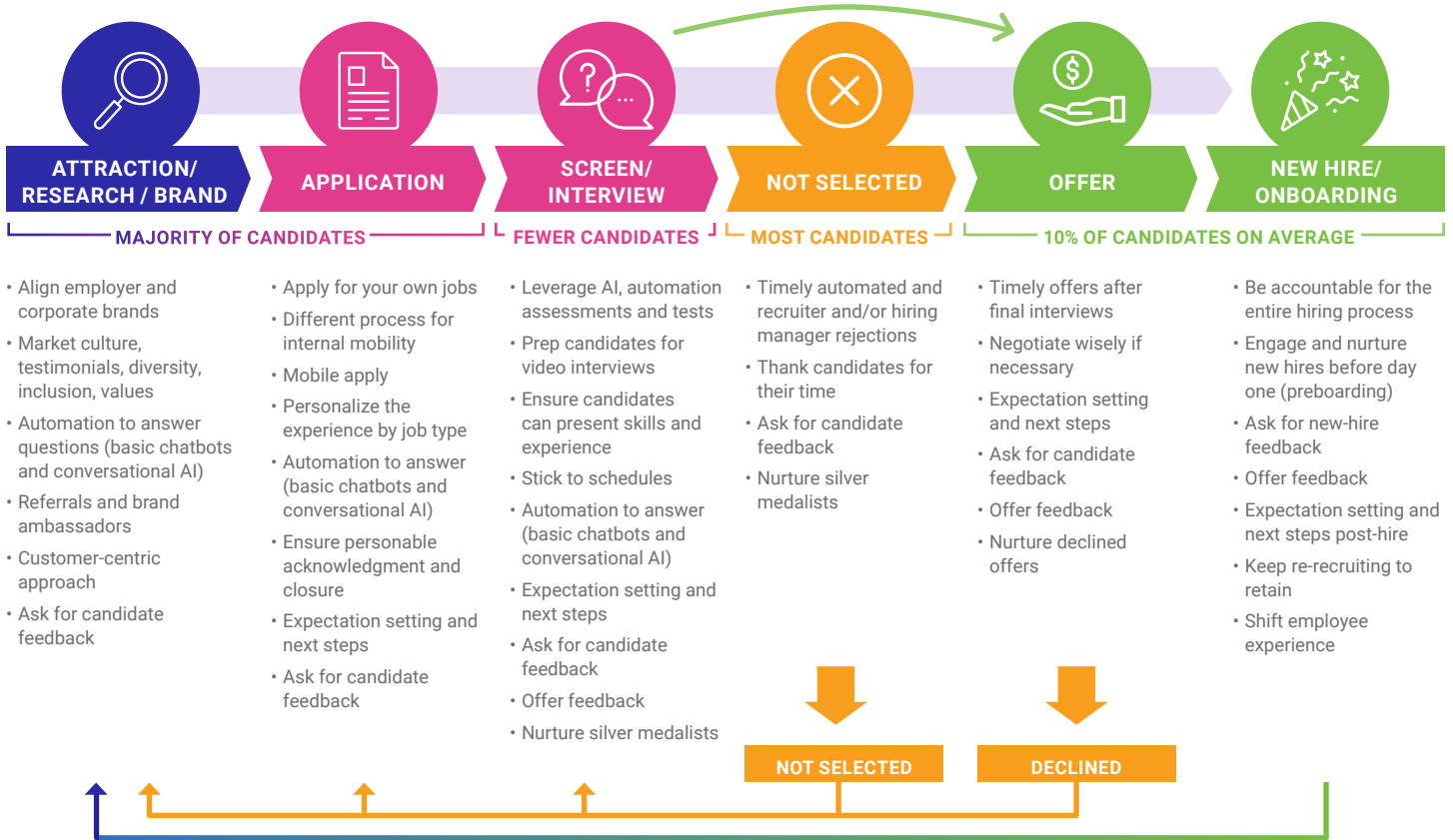
While only 22% of candidates in 2023 cited referrals as a valuable research channel, same as in 2022, referred candidates said they would increase their relationship with potential employers 32% more (apply again, refer others, make purchases if and when applicable), compared with those who conducted their own search or those who received unsolicited outreach from a recruiter.

And the more positive the candidate experience, the more likely candidates are to refer others – this year CandE Winners have a 38% higher willingness to refer others NPS rating (22 compared to 15 for all companies in North America), which is even higher than in 2022. Employers hire 20% to 40% of their workforce from referrals, so referrals are quite the critical competitive differentiator, especially today's still highly competitive candidate market. Current employees are the brand ambassadors whose referral NPS ratings are the highest versus any other current or previous relationship with the company.

TECHNOLOGY IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND HELPED REDUCE BIAS

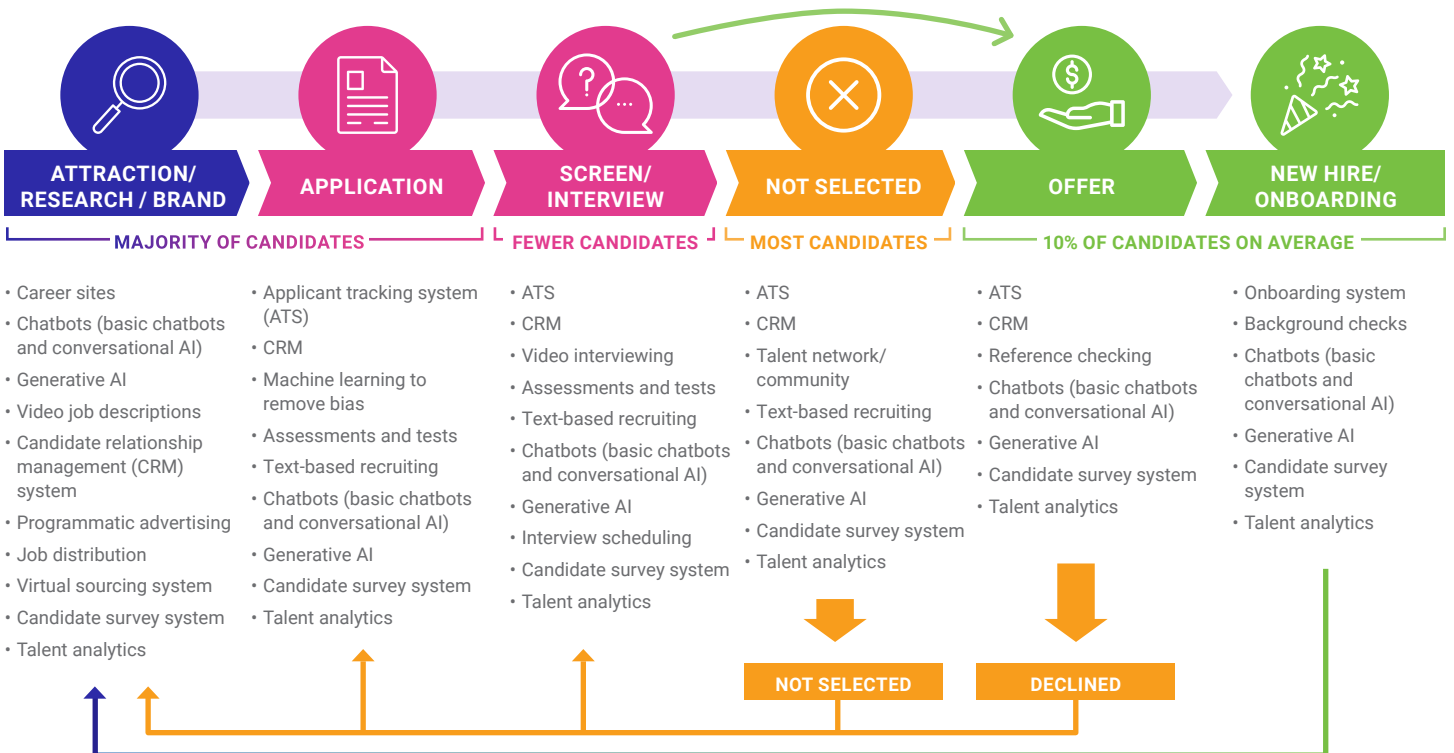
61% of CandE Winners said they used a text-based recruiting system this year, 16% more than all other companies combined in our research, and this has increased steadily since 2020. Job alerts and text-to-apply notifications can increase positive candidate sentiment and perception of fairness due to consistent communication. Text-messaging deliverability is also more reliable than email messaging due to spam filters and hourly candidates not checking their emails regularly.

Also, AI and other smart technologies are helping employers with a greater hiring volume improve their recruiting and candidate communications, and have definitely increased in utilization this year. 18% of employers this year said they're utilizing conversational AI chatbots, and basic chatbot utilization was up 26% from 2021. More employers are realizing that it's a competitive differentiator to communicate earlier with candidates, even before they apply.



The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations

Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:





Top Rated and Customer Approved



+50%

Budget Allocation
Efficiency

+166%

Applicant
Volume

+59%

Time on
Relationship Building

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Application

What It Is

The process candidates go through when filling out and submitting a job application.

The application process is driven primarily by whatever applicant tracking system is being utilized and, thankfully, has improved significantly. In 2020, 34% of candidates said it took less than 10 minutes to apply. In 2023, nearly 40% said it took less than 10 minutes to apply, an 18% increase.

Year after year, recruiters are supposed to be able to handle an increased volume of applications and better manage the administrative side of the application process with their recruiting technologies. This includes automated communications that can be activated at various disposition stages. Screening and assessment tools can be integrated throughout the application process. And applicants can be notified of their status and connected via the ATS, recruitment marketing systems, and CRMs.

The application process is still not without its limitations and shortcomings, however. In 2023, 36% of North America candidates reported that they had not heard back from employers 1-2+ months after they applied, which is the same as in 2022 and similar to 2021 and 2020. That's one-third of all candidates year after year. It's true that disposition timelines will vary across job types, but 1-2+ months later and negative sentiment does increase dramatically.

When we asked candidates about the last step they remember completing in the recruiting process in 2023, 62% of them said they had applied, and only 5% said they had been informed they did not get the job. This means that a good portion of candidates simply don't remember receiving the automated message telling them they weren't going any further. Or, worse, they didn't actually hear back after they first applied. This is also a trend we see year after year.

In 2020, 34% of candidates said it took less than 10 minutes to apply. In 2023, nearly 40% said it took less than 10 minutes to apply, an 18% increase.

Key Takeaways

- Over 72,000 candidates said they applied for a job (52,000 in 2022).
- Application stage had a 3.7 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022) and 40 NPS rating (down from 2022).
- CandE Winners had a 4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022) and 57 NPS rating (down slightly from 2022).
- 51% of candidates applied for hourly jobs (up from 2022).
- 37% of candidates applied on a mobile device, up slightly from 2022.
- 61% of candidates said it took 15 minutes or less to complete the job application, up slightly from 2022.
- Only 35% of candidates were invited to provide feedback at this stage (same as 2022).
- 36% of candidates were still waiting 1-2+ months on next steps after they applied, up again from 2022.

The recruit stage involves activities that help identify the right fit, converting interest into hires as candidates move from application to final interview. What sets successful companies apart from the competition is their ability to create a consistent and transparent candidate experience throughout the following processes:

- **APPLICATION:** The process candidates go through when filling out and submitting a job application.
- **SCREEN AND INTERVIEW:** The evaluation stages that help recruiters and hiring managers determine the best candidates to hire for the organization.

Despite the number of unqualified candidates who apply for jobs every year, without some level of communication being provided, the candidate’s perception of that employer can be negatively impacted. And regardless of the level of automation, providing definitive closure by letting candidates know they won’t be pursued any further can help keep the perception of fairness at least neutral, if not positive.

Of course, not all employers want everyone to apply again, and application volume has increased again across industries in 2023. However, most employers do want those candidates who were deemed as “future fit” to apply for other jobs. This year, 19% of participating employers received over 100 applications per job on average, which is a 27% increase from 2022 and indicative of higher application volumes overall in the past year (see Table 9).

On average, the majority of candidates who apply for all position types are just not qualified enough to be screened further. It’s no surprise that high-volume hiring companies can become overwhelmed with the vast number of unqualified candidates. However, acknowledging applicant interest and ensuring definitive closure always leads to the best possible candidate experience outcomes for employers and a more positive impact on the business and the brand.

What Candidates Want

The majority of candidates in this year’s survey (94%) were again external, and 51% applied for hourly positions. The remaining were mostly entry-level professional, professional, management, and senior leadership candidates. Each year candidates expect a simple and straightforward process with some level of acknowledgment of next steps after they apply. Only 26% said that happened for them this year, down slightly from 2022.

Only 55% of candidates said they received an automated “thank you” message this year, down slightly from 2022. This is interesting since more companies automate the application acknowledgement (as well as the rejection notice for unqualified candidates). We speculate that email deliverability gets more difficult every year, and that’s why we’re seeing mobile text-based notifications increasing each year.

Also, only 28% had a process indicator showing completion, and only 16% of candidates were told how long the application process would take, both down from 2022. All these things can add perceived fairness to the application process.

However, acknowledging applicant interest and ensuring definitive closure always leads to the best possible candidate experience outcomes for employers and a more positive impact on the business and the brand.

Table 9. Average % of Applications Employers Receive Per Job

	2023	2022	2021
1-25	15%	24%	12%
26-50	38%	36%	35%
51-100	28%	25%	29%
101-200	11%	6%	15%
More than 200	8%	9%	10%

Table 10. Types of Screening and Evaluation Candidates Received During the Application Process

	2023	2022	2021
General screening questions	91%	86%	87%
Detailed questionnaire about work history and preferences	86%	78%	79%
Job-specific questions	58%	58%	58%
Behavioral and/or personality assessments	39%	42%	38%
Simulated job tasks	26%	27%	25%
Test (reading, math, etc.)	34%	16%	15%
Review and respond to a case study	8%	15%	13%
Games or puzzles	15%	8%	7%

In previous CandE research years, the highest-rated employers in our research disposition or move people along within three to five days after applying. A clear and definitive yet personable automated rejection email and/or text notification is all that's needed here. Unfortunately this year, less than 50% of the highest rated companies did this. Increased application volumes, leaner recruiting teams, and under-utilized recruiting technologies likely contributed to this change.

Candidates want simplicity when they apply for a job. They want to understand the questions they are being asked and have an opportunity to share their skills and experience. More importantly, they want to be able to do this quickly and easily. As mentioned above, the time it takes to complete an application has been reduced. And while nearly all employers said they again offered mobile apply the past few years, only 37% of candidates said they applied via mobile, slightly higher than in 2022. Mobile apply jumps to 53% for hourly candidates, which makes sense considering that their personal phones are their primary personal computers, too.

Again, perceived fairness continues to be a differentiator in candidate experience, and the application process is a key crossroad for this issue. The application process is as far as the majority of applicants make it today in the recruiting process. The more engagement activities that occur with candidates, the higher the positive ratings go, and the higher the level of perceived fairness.

Over 90% of all candidates received general screening questions during the application process, while 34% completed tests, and only 15% had to solve games or puzzles, both up from 2022 (see Table 10).

Not all positions have the same candidate experiences, and it's clear that some job types have more perceived positive experiences and much greater negative experiences than others. When we look at the job types applied for, nearly all of the refer NPS ratings are down this year. This is true because of the overall decrease in positive sentiment from all candidates we found in 2023. Also, hourly candidates have a 123% higher refer NPS rating than nontechnical professional hires in 2022 (see Table 11). It's a similar picture with the relationship NPS ratings, with most being lower than in 2022 (see Table 12). Obviously, the complexity and time to hire varies across job types, but we would still argue that timely communication and feedback could tighten the perception gaps we see in all the job type data.

Table 11. Final Refer NPS Ratings of Candidates Based on Job Types Applied For

	2023	2022	2021
Paid or Unpaid Internship	23	24	23
Contract	28	27	23
Hourly	21	26	23
Salary, Entry-level	13	16	17
Salary, Technical Position (2+ years)	8	11	14
Salary, Nontechnical Position (2+ years)	5	12	14
Management	5	8	8
Senior Leadership	-1	0	3

Table 12. Final Relationship NPS Ratings of Candidates Based on Job Types Applied For

	2023	2022	2021
Paid or Unpaid Internship	20	19	21
Contract	22	21	18
Hourly	21	25	22
Salary, Entry-level	10	13	13
Salary, Technical Position (2+ years)	3	5	8
Salary, Nontechnical Position (2+ years)	1	7	8
Management	1	4	2
Senior Leadership	-7	-5	-4

Again, perceived fairness continues to be a differentiator in candidate experience, and the application process is a key crossroad for this issue.

What Employers Are Doing

Employers are measured on three areas of the application process that are differentiators in a positive candidate experience: communication before the application process, during the application process, and after. Employers need to think about an application communication strategy that is scalable and keeps candidates informed through a simple process that leverages the right technology. This communication needs to be consistent and frequent.

In fact, overcommunicating and ensuring fairness through engagement activities are where many CandE Winners are investing more of their time throughout the recruiting process. Like the attraction stage, however, a gap exists between how companies view the application process and how candidates experience it.

Still, more companies – including CandE Award Winners – are differentiating themselves through stronger communication about next steps, enhanced screening throughout the application process and timely dispositions. For example, many employers provide application guides with FAQs and contact information, as well as visual indicators of next steps and application status.

Time is always a major factor in the recruiting process, and the application process is no exception. The longer the time between applying and hearing back from the company, the less likely candidates are to apply again or make referrals in the future. The same goes for how long the application process takes.

One of the biggest differentiators at the application stage historically has been the fact that the highest-rated companies in our research were dispositioning or moving forward candidates within three to five days after they apply. However, that's taking longer now due to higher application volume, leaner recruiting teams, and under-utilized recruiting technology. The reality even for CandE Winners is that the process takes one to two weeks or more.

When potential candidates launched the application from a text, their application NPS rating increased 42%. And when candidates had the ability to ask a chatbot questions, their application NPS rating increased 50%.

In fact, overcommunicating and ensuring fairness through engagement activities are where many CandE Winners are investing more of their time throughout the recruiting process.

Every year, we emphasize the fact that employers control the dials of how they respond to interested candidates, when they respond, with what frequency in which they respond and the words they respond with. Also, when employers add screening and evaluation during the application process, that increases the ability for candidates to present skills, knowledge and experience. The more opportunities the candidates have to present their skills – general screening questions, job-specific questions, etc. – the greater their positive sentiment. But, it also increases time, which can deteriorate the experience.

Technology also helps with prompting and engaging candidates at the application stage. When potential candidates launched the application from a text, their application NPS rating increased 42%. And when candidates had the ability to ask a chatbot questions, their application NPS rating increased 50%. While there are strong relationships with these activities, they aren't the only ones that drive higher ratings by themselves. Most likely, it's a series of consistent practices that we outline each year that drive higher ratings, especially for CandE Winners.

Ultimately, the true test of a positive candidate experience in the application stage is whether a candidate would reapply (especially for those that employers want to apply again). In 2023, 28% of candidates said they were extremely likely to apply again, down slightly from 2022. For CandE Winners, it was 32%. For those candidates who gave their application experience a 4- and 5-star rating out of 5, their extreme likelihood to apply again increased by 55%.

Each year, we also recommend that employers go through their own application process from the candidates' perspective, making notes of what to improve upon (time, redundancy, outdated questions, etc.). Then, improve upon them! Of course, employers don't want everyone to apply again – just those candidates deemed future fit, silver medalists, etc., which is why the experience still matters during the application stage.

Key Recommendations

What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Companies that want to improve their candidate communications will provide greater transparency and offer a simple and timely candidate-centric application process. There are several examples below that help differentiate 2023 CandE Award Winners and provide guidance to organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the application stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

TIMELY DISPOSITIONS AND WAITING TO HEAR BACK

One of the biggest differentiators at the application stage is the fact that many of the highest-rated companies in our research (CandE Winners) are dispositioning or moving forward candidates within three to five days after they apply. At most, this process should take one to two weeks. Although the difference is smaller than it's been in the past, CandE Winners were still dispositioning more regularly at three to five days 11% more often than all employers did this year. Employers who hold onto candidates until the job requisitions are filled are risking increased negative sentiment and a lower perception of fairness overall. This is a tough spot for employers because, on average, most of those candidates who apply are not qualified for the job. But it's still better to let them know and focus on those they are going to screen.

Also this year, 36% of North America candidates reported that they had not heard back from employers 1-2+ months after they applied, which is the same as in 2022 and similar to 2021 and 2020. That's one-third of all candidates year after year. It's true that disposition timelines will vary across job

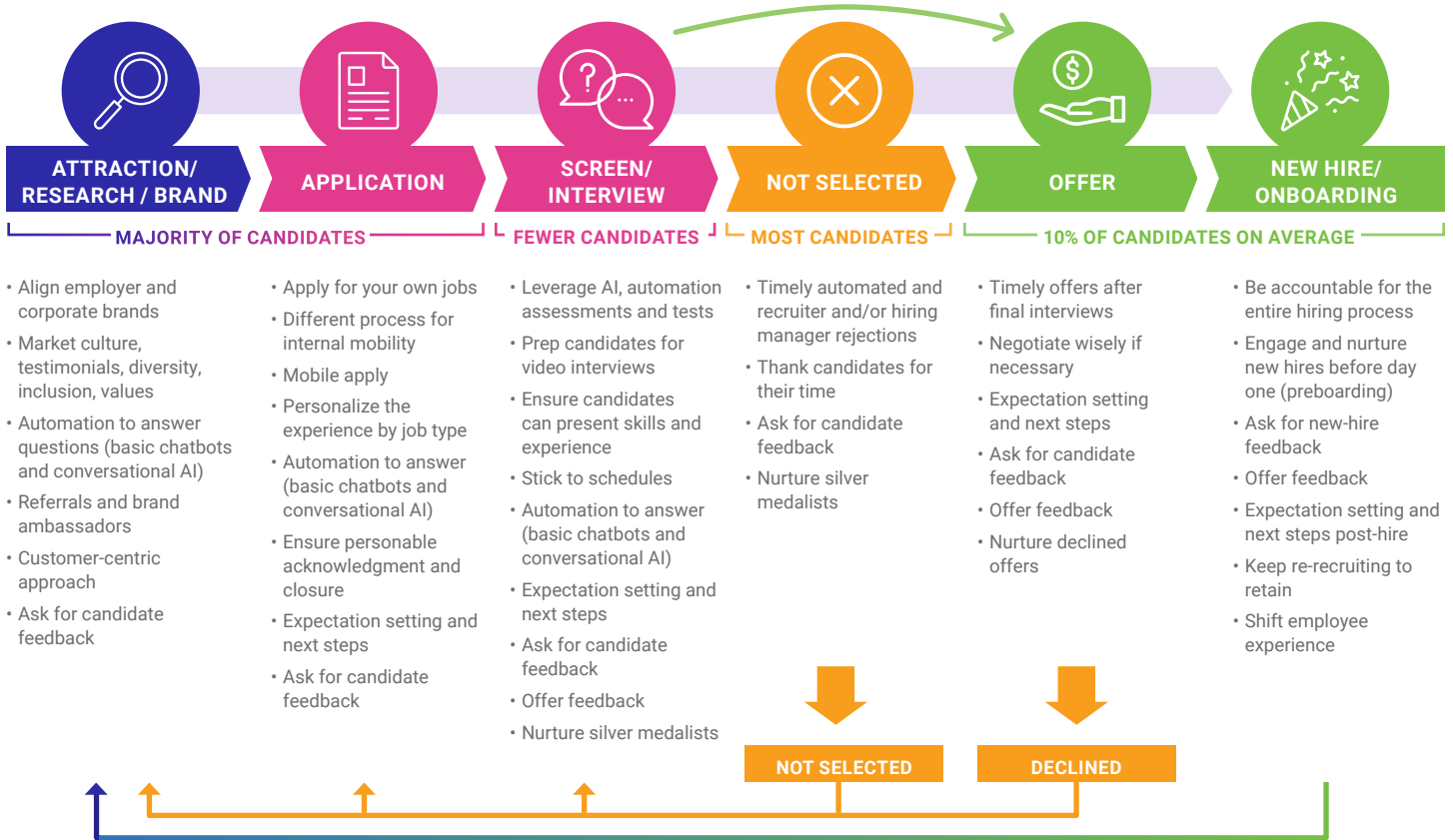
types, but 1-2+ months later and negative sentiment does increase dramatically. CandE Winners, however, have 29% fewer candidates waiting to hear back, which is a significant difference with less of a negative impact on business and brand.

CHATBOTS, TEXT TO APPLY, AND MOBILE APPLY

Recruiting technology today definitely helps with prompting and engaging candidates at the application stage. When potential candidates were able to launch the application from a text, their application NPS rating increased 42%. And when candidates had the ability to ask a chatbot questions during the application process, their application NPS rating increased 50%. For CandE Winners, 22% more candidates were engaged by chatbots during the application process, and 26% more candidates launched the application from a text alert. While there are strong relationships with these activities, they aren't the only ones that drive higher ratings by themselves. Most likely, it's a series of consistent practices that we outline each year that drive higher ratings, especially for CandE Winners.

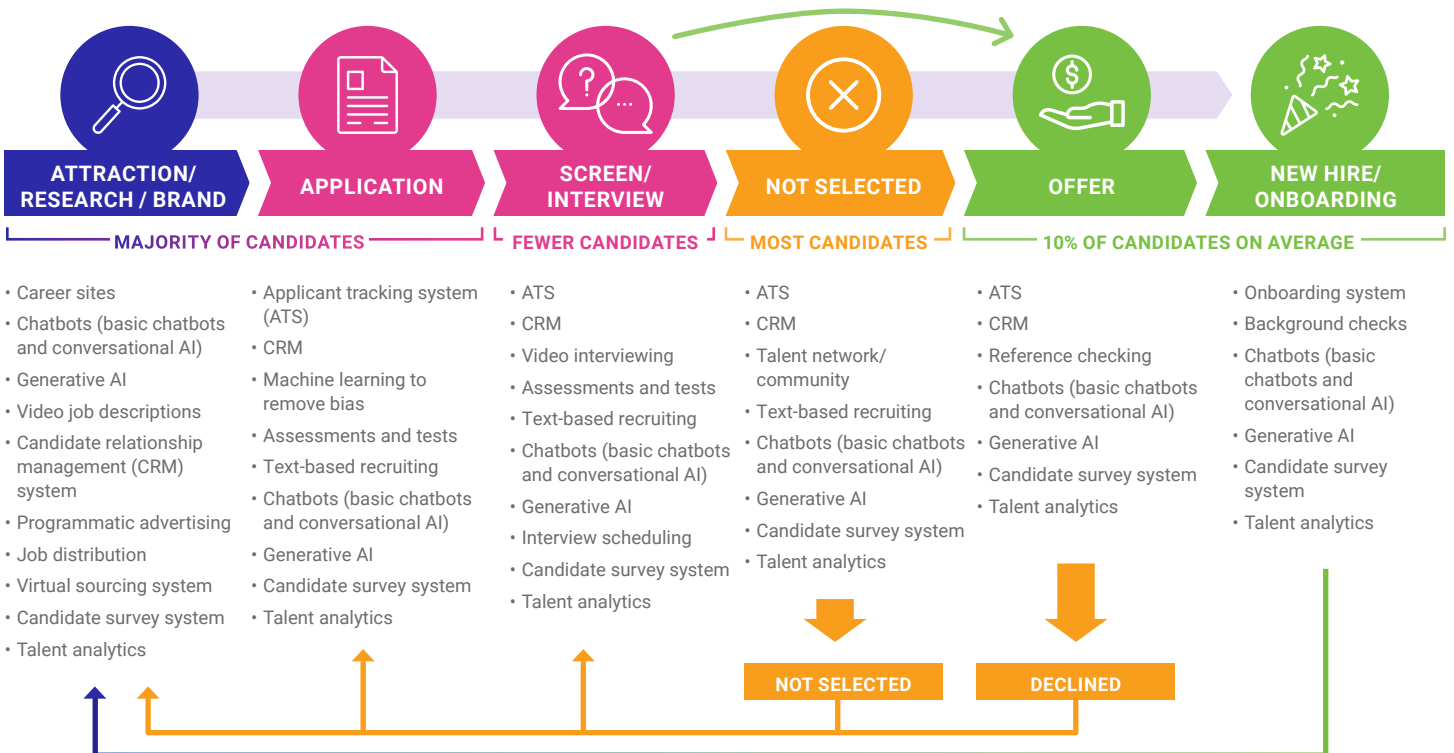
Candidates also want ease-of-use when they apply for a job and on the device of their choice. And while nearly all employers said they again offered mobile apply the past few years, only 37% of candidates said they applied via mobile, slightly higher than in 2022. Mobile apply jumped 28% for CandE Winners, which also had a much higher percentage of hourly candidates. This makes sense considering that these candidates' personal phones are their primary personal computers, too.





The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations

Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:



RECRUIT: North America

Screen and Interview

What It Is

The evaluation stages that helps recruiters and hiring managers determine the best candidates to potentially hire for their organizations.

A strong connection exists between how candidates are treated during the screening and interviewing stage and whether they'll continue to refer and/or associate with the business and the brand. This is where there is more investment from both the candidates and employers. By the time potential candidates make it through screening – and perhaps make it to the interview stage – positive ratings tend to increase, even if it's not the best experience. This is because when there is more communication and opportunities for engagement because candidates are “in the running,” they tend to rate their experience higher. But, we'd argue, the potential visceral negative experiences during screening and interviewing could impact employers more than at the point of application.

Through strategic recruiting, organizations can make sound investments in applicable tools, assessments and tactics, expand their local and global reach, improve the candidate experience and strengthen their overall quality of hires. In 2023, 38% of organizations said they used pre-employment assessment and selection tests prior to the interview, and only 24% did so post-interview.

Screening and interviewing are often the final deciding factors in hiring a candidate. After screening all the applications and early assessments, and conducting early phone screenings and/or video interviews, this is where the final list of candidates is evaluated by the recruiters, hiring managers, potential colleagues and other leaders and individuals in the organization. When recruiters and managers have the right tools and use best practices, interviewing can be a powerful process that determines the best fit for the organization.

However, only 58% of employers in our 2023 North American research had a structured interview process. For CandE Winners, it's 63%. An inconsistent interview process can have a negative impact on both the quality of hires and the candidate experience, especially when recruiters and hiring managers don't prepare ahead of time.

Key Takeaways

- Over 14,000 candidates said they were invited to be screened and interviewed.
- Interview stage had a 4.0 out of 5 Likert scale rating (up from 2021) and 55 NPS rating (up from 2022).
- CandE Winners again had a 4.1 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022) and 66 NPS rating (up from 2022).
- 6% of candidates were scheduled for a screening event after applying (phone screen, video screen, test, assessment), down 25% from 2022.
- 16% of candidates were scheduled for an interview after applying.
- 45% of screened candidates had a phone screen, down 13% from 2022.
- 41% of interviewed candidates had a live virtual interview (down from 2022) versus 39% who had an in-person interview (up again from 2022).
- 20% of candidates were told the salary during interviews without requesting it, up 25% from 2022.
- 74% of candidates had one or two interviews total, up from 2021 and 2022.
- At the end of the interview, 42% of candidates were told what would happen next by recruiters and followed up with as indicated.
- Only 25% of candidates were invited to provide feedback at this stage.

This year, more candidates said they interviewed virtually than in person again, although in-person rates had also increased again since 2020. Some employers fared better than others in doing them either way, because the number one negative reason candidates withdraw themselves from the recruiting process is because their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments.

This is why, whether it's in person or virtual, the candidate experience trends positively when employers help candidates prepare, ask relevant questions and communicate with candidates throughout the interview process – all while adhering to timely schedules overall.

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What Candidates Want

Screening assessments and tests have been around for decades, and recent years have brought new providers bringing their products to market. Assessments and tests are used to qualify candidates – usually before the interview stage, but not always. Each year, we ask candidates and employers what types of assessments and tests they're receiving and delivering. For candidates, that ranges from general screening questions to simulated job tasks (see Table 13).

Table 13. Types of Assessments and Tests Candidates Encounter

	2023	2022	2021
General screening questions	85%	86%	87%
Detailed questionnaire about work history and preferences	78%	78%	79%
Job-specific questions	58%	58%	57%
Behavioral and/or personality assessments	39%	42%	38%
Simulated job tasks	26%	27%	24%
Test (reading, math, etc.)	16%	16%	15%
Review and respond to a case study	15%	15%	13%
Games or puzzles	8%	8%	7%



The majority are general screening questions, detailed questionnaires about work history and preferences, and specific job-related questions. But how do each of these impact the candidates' perception of fairness? The questions that are perceived as the most fair to candidates are those that are the most engaging for them: measuring their possible cultural fit and leadership ability, their specific skill set and their ability, and potential to do the job (see Table 14). Since we've seen an overall decrease in positive candidate experience ratings, it's not surprising to see these perceptions of fairness NPS ratings decrease as well. Perception of fairness is highly subjective, yes, and it also determines whether or not candidates would continue to engage a business and its brand.

Table 14. Perception of Fairness NPS Rating Impact From Assessments and Tests

	2023	2022	2021
Overall Assessment Perception of Fairness	41	48	44
General screening questions (i.e., eligible to work in the U.S.)	49	54	49
Detailed questionnaire about work history and preferences	52	58	54
Specific job-related questions (i.e., able to lift 50 pounds, etc.)	57	62	57
Behavioral and/or personality assessments (i.e., leadership styles, personality traits, etc.)	63	71	67
Simulated job tasks/ activities to respond to	69	77	72
Test (reading, math, mechanical, etc.)	66	72	67
Review and respond to a case study	66	76	74
Games and/or puzzles	73	76	79

Over 12 years of CandE candidate experience research has revealed candidates still have one basic expectation of employers when it comes to screening and interviewing: feedback. They don't get enough of it, and they aren't asked for much of it. Candidates want to understand what is involved in the hiring process, what the results of their screening assessment and/or test was and whether they will be moving forward and why they will.

According to our 2023 survey results, only 22% of candidates received assessment and/or test feedback about their results. 60% of candidates received no feedback after being rejected during the screening and interviewing stage, down slightly from 2022. And yet, the highest-rated companies in our research this year all provide some level of feedback to candidates.

Of those candidates who said they received feedback after being rejected, only 40% indicated the feedback was useful, which was much higher than in 2022. 53% said they were encouraged to apply again for another job, up 8% from 2022.

However, there are more employers giving feedback at the screening and interview stage, and here's why giving feedback can pay off: When specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by 46% this year. Their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 47%.

When we look at whether candidates were invited to provide feedback after the interview, we see the same patterns: Those invited to provide feedback were 113% more likely to refer others.

How candidates are notified that they're being rejected after the interview stage is also critical. In 2023, 33% of candidates received an email from a "do-not-reply" address notifying them that they were no longer considered after the interview stage. Only 34% received a personal email from the recruiter or hiring manager, and only 17% received a phone call. Only 2% said they received a text from recruiters and/or hiring managers at this stage.

When specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by 46% this year. Their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 47%.

Besides feedback, consistent communication and interview prep from employers are just as important. Candidates want to feel confident about the interview process, and without the proper communication and preparation, they are left feeling confused and uncertain. In 2023, 42% of North America candidates received none of the preparation listed below before the interview, up 27% from 2022. The more organizations can do to empower candidates before and during the interview, the more positive their experience will be (see Table 15).

Table 15. Preparation and Communication Over the Course of All Interview Events

	2023	2022	2021
Interviewer names and background info provided prior to the interview event	48%	42%	43%
None of these	42%	33%	32%
Video information, tools and instructions provided prior to the interview	30%	26%	30%
A detailed agenda provided in advance of the interview	25%	22%	25%
Provided job fit and candidacy status feedback at the end of the day	15%	12%	10%
A campus/facility tour provided during the interview event	14%	8%	6%
Escorted between each interview event	8%	6%	5%
Provided process, etc., and follow-up promise afterward	5%	6%	6%
Provided an updated, printed agenda at the interview event	10%	5%	4%
Had to pay for own travel expenses	6%	5%	3%
Travel was fully coordinated	3%	2%	1%
I was reimbursed for my travel expenses	2%	1%	1%

What's interesting is that candidates' willingness to refer others was 118% higher this year when they were provided with information on their job fit and candidacy status at the end of the interview day. However, this is difficult for many recruiting teams to do when awaiting feedback from hiring managers. But for fast-filled positions, it's a win for candidate and company.

Obviously, the pandemic changed forever how companies prepped candidates for and conducted interviews. Since 2019, there has been more video prep and less in-person prep and on-site interview management. This year, live video interviewing happened 42% of the time, down 11% from 2022. In-person interviewing increased 95% in our data this year from 2021 (20% to 39%), but was still well behind the peak of 67% in 2019. While in-person primary screenings were the preferred approach in 2019, they fell behind live virtual and phone screening the past three years (see Table 16).

Table 16. Types of Interviews Experienced

	2023	2022	2021
Phone screen with recruiter	45%	52%	50%
Video interview (live)	42%	47%	55%
In-person interview	39%	34%	20%
Phone interview with hiring manager	27%	31%	38%
Video interview (recorded)	6%	5%	3%

Perceived fairness is very subjective, but when candidates are in the running for a position and are being screened and interviewed, their positive sentiment tends to increase – at least until they're told they're no longer being pursued.

Although it's slowly been on the rise, the overall interview fairness NPS rating is still 24% lower than it was in 2019 (see Table 17). This is most likely due to the pandemic's disruptive impact on the interview process and companies continuing to leverage virtual interviewing to save on time and travel costs.

This year, we dug deeper into the differences in fairness ratings between interview types and found the following (see Table 18):

- Recorded video interviews are perceived as 24% less fair by all candidates compared with live video interviews and 28% less fair compared with in-person interviews. Obviously there's no opportunity to present oneself beyond the final take in a recorded video interview.
- Professional candidates rate their phone screening fairness NPS with recruiters 14% lower than hourly (67 versus 77). This could be due to a greater job complexity and longer wait times.
- Hiring manager phone screening is about the same difference, as professional candidates rate their phone screening fairness NPS 17% lower than hourly (38 versus 45).

Table 17. Candidate Perception of Interview Fairness NPS Ratings

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Interview fairness NPS ratings	58	57	56	55	74

Table 18. Candidate Perception of Interview Fairness NPS Ratings Across Interview Types

	2023
Phone screen with recruiter	54
Video interview (live)	66
In-person interview	69
Phone interview with hiring manager	65
Video interview (recorded)	52

The number one negative reason candidates withdraw themselves from consideration is that their time was disrespected during the recruitment process, particularly during the interview process.

Much has been written about the failings of screening and interviewing via phone, video, and in person. It's clear in our research that job candidates prefer live interview interactions where they can see who's interviewing them and interact with them – in person first, followed by live virtual interviews. But disruption can derail even the best candidates during live interviews, which is why the number one negative reason candidates withdraw themselves from consideration is that their time was disrespected during the recruitment process, particularly during the interview process.

For example:

- Interestingly, this year the highest percentage of all candidates stating their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments was during recorded video interviews and hiring manager phone screens (30% respectively).
- The highest percentage of all hourly candidates stating their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments was during recruiter phone screens (43%) and in-person interviews (35%).
- The highest percentage of all professional candidates stating their time was disrespected during interviews and appointments was during recruiter phone screens (55%) and live virtual interviews (55%).

Also, when analyzing candidate comment sentiment, these three themes were clear in the data:

- Poor communication before and after interviews
- Too much time to complete interviews
- No feedback after the interview

If disruption is at a minimum and candidates feel the interview process was fair, candidates are more willing to engage the business again and refer others. When candidates received any information about next steps and were followed up with by the recruiter/HR professional post-interview (42% said they did in 2023, down from 44% in 2022), candidates' willingness to refer others increased a resounding 112%. At this point, both the employer and candidate have invested a lot in the interview process, so timely follow-ups are a big differentiating factor as to whether the candidates will do anything again with the employer.

What Employers Are Doing

Although there have been fluctuations in the type of screening assessments used by employers over the years, measuring job-specific skills is still number one. Employers have a myriad of screening assessments and tests to choose from to help them select candidates to interview or to proceed to disposition (see Table 19).

Many of the different types were down again this year, but that doesn't mean they were any less important than in previous years – it's just a different mix of employers with varying screening priorities this year. The reality is that employers are in the business of “no,” having to screen out and in, and most candidates do not get the job.

However, the percentage of employers stating they didn't use assessment / selection tests increased 36% since 2021 (see Table 20). While the use of pre-employment assessments or testing has also differed among CandE Winners and all other participating employers in the past, usage in 2023 continued to be aligned and validated. Pre-employment assessments can offer a degree of objectivity and fairness to candidate screening.

That said, only 36% of recruiters were required to make a phone call when rejecting external candidates with limited feedback this year (up from 2022), and 37% were required to do the same for referrals. However, while 28% of recruiters were required to make phone calls for internal candidates, 65% of hiring managers were required to make a phone call with limited feedback to internal candidates, down from 2022. For many companies, it's the hiring managers who have the last word with final candidates.

The business reasons are many as to why employers use pre-employment assessments in hiring, with 52% of North America employers saying the top reason was to help hiring managers make better selections, down slightly from 2022 (see Table 21).

However, with this year's group of employers, all the remaining business reasons have decreased in importance, which seems to be counterintuitive in such a competitive environment with continued turnover and a tight labor market.

Table 19. Percentage of Employers Using Various Assessments Types

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Job-specific Skills	46%	52%	58%	58%
Personality	25%	28%	34%	24%
Ability / Cognitive	22%	26%	37%	42%
Competency	26%	26%	38%	43%
Culture Fit	19%	18%	26%	29%
Job Simulations	17%	17%	26%	34%
Case Studies	14%	16%	18%	24%
Situational Judgment Tests	12%	15%	23%	25%

Table 20. Are You Using Pre-Employment Assessments/Selection Tests?

	2023	2022	2021
No	49%	47%	36%
Yes, but we haven't conducted an in-house validation analysis	23%	28%	34%
Yes, and we have conducted an in-house validation analysis	28%	26%	37%

Table 21. The Business Reasons For Using Pre-Employment Assessments

	2023	2022	2021
Help hiring managers make better selections	52%	54%	52%
Improve new-hire performance	28%	33%	47%
Increase early retention	21%	27%	34%
Risk mitigation	20%	23%	34%
Help candidates understand role	24%	23%	31%
Candidate flow efficiency	21%	20%	31%

Organizations that implement more candidate-friendly and fair interview processes, ones that are structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types, help reduce bias, improve selection, and improve the candidate experience. This year, the highest-rated CandE Winners conducted structured interviews 19% more than all employers combined, and all CandE Winners conducted them 8% more often than all employers combined (see Table 22).

Again, the mix of employers does vary from year to year, and those not conducting structured interviews can potentially negatively impact their candidate experience and hiring decisions.

But the selection process – complicated by the volume of candidates, types of positions, skills and experience, recruiting and hiring manager turnover and the business itself – is never an easy one. Even employers that have developed more effective interview strategies can struggle in getting the most value from their recruiting process and their hiring managers.

And while many states also limited the kinds of salary questions employers can ask candidates (salary history, for example), this year in our benchmark research, 65% of employers asked candidates about salary expectations (same as in 2022), and 13% of employers told us they no longer ask at all (up from 2022).

20% were told what the salary was without requesting it, which was an increase of 25%. For those candidates, their interview perception of fairness increased 27%. Pay transparency will be required legally in more countries in the years to come, and this will pay dividends in a positive candidate experience.

33% of the candidates told us this year that they were asked about expectations (down slightly from 2022), while 6% were asked what their most recent salary was (also slightly down from 2022). 20% were told what the salary was without requesting it, which was an increase of 25%. For those candidates, their interview perception of fairness increased 27%. Pay transparency will be required legally in more countries in the years to come, and this will pay dividends in a positive candidate experience.

Table 22. Interview Process Types: Structured and Unstructured Interviews

	All Employers 2023	CandE Winners 2023	All Employers 2022	CandE Winners 2022
Structured	58%	63%	56%	63%
Unstructured	42%	38%	44%	37%



Key Recommendations

What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Companies that have been able to differentiate themselves by making screening and interviewing more personal and engaging, by providing communication consistently before and after the screening and interview stage, and by providing feedback to final-stage candidates, are usually the ones that have above-average candidate ratings, i.e., the CandE Winners. There are several activities that continue to differentiate the 2023 CandE Award Winners. These can help employers looking to improve the candidate experience during the screening and interview stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

A HIGHER LEVEL OF POSITIVE PERCEIVED FAIRNESS

At this point in the recruiting process, most employers are engaging candidate semi finalists and finalists more consistently and fairly. However, based on all activities from pre-application to the interview stage that CandE Winners engage in more consistently, they have a competitive edge when it comes to candidates' perception of assessment and interview fairness. While "fairness" is subjective, candidates who find any recruiting step and/or stage fair and positive are those willing to apply again, refer, and increase brand affinity.

In 2023, CandE Winners had a 31% higher assessment perception of fairness and a 16% higher interview perception of fairness than all other companies combined. Overall, the candidates' willingness to refer others for all employers and CandE winners increased 118% when they rated their interview fairness with 4- and 5-star ratings. CandE-winning candidates usually rate their overall fairness with more 4- and 5-star ratings, most likely due to the employers investing in more timely and consistent communications, but this year there was little difference, indicating that more employers are consistent in assessment and interview delivery.



STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND NEXT STEPS

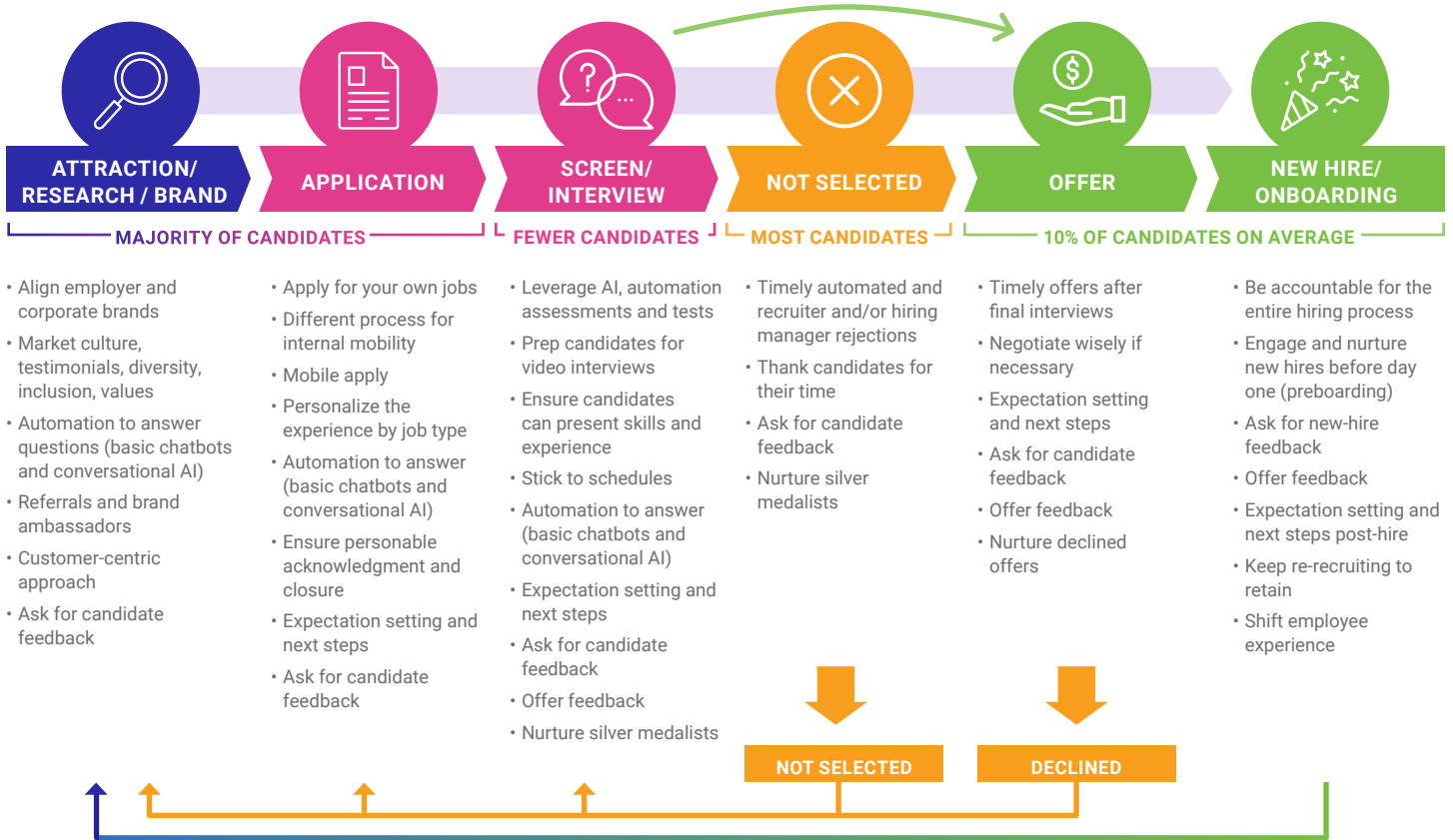
Employers that implement more candidate-friendly and fair interview processes, ones that are structured with a consistent process and set of questions across job types, help reduce bias, improve selection, and improve the candidate experience. This year, the highest-rated CandE Winners conducted structured interviews 19% more than all employers combined, and all CandE Winners conducted them 8% more often than all employers combined.

Structured interviews usually drive higher positive candidate ratings and a higher level of perceived fairness. Also, candidates' willingness to refer others was 119% higher when they were provided with information on their job fit and candidacy status at the end of the interview day. While a much smaller pool of candidates received this immediate feedback (over 50% were hourly candidates), it's still a big differentiator for all companies as well as CandE winners. Recruiters and/or hiring managers at CandE Winner companies also establish follow-up dates with finalists and keep those dates 16% more often than all other companies combined.

FINALIST FEEDBACK INCREASES WILLINGNESS TO REFER

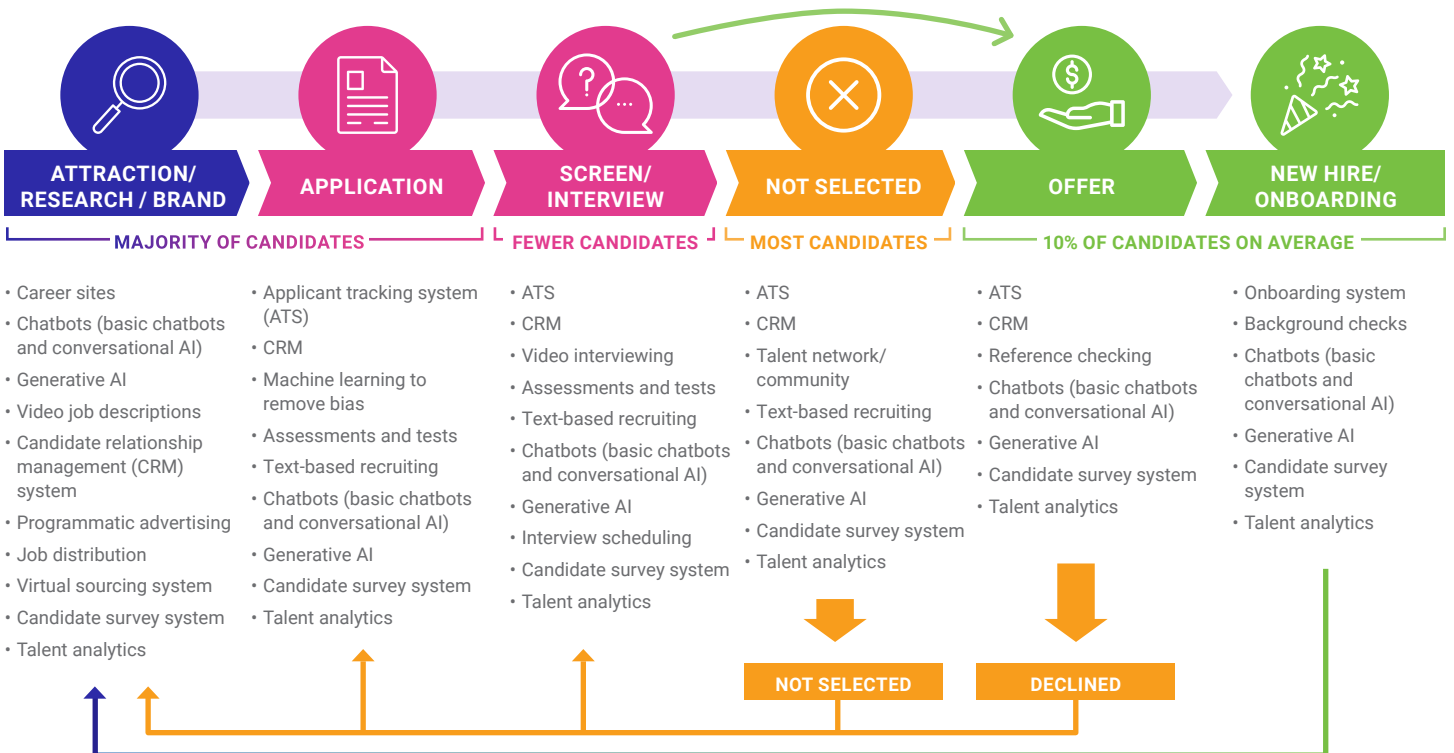
The highest-rated companies in our research this year all provide some level of feedback to finalists, and CandE Winners overall gave 12% more feedback to finalists than all other companies combined in 2023. Here's why giving feedback can pay off: When specific feedback was given to candidates, their willingness to refer others increased by 46% this year, and their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased by 47%.

This year, 25% of all candidates were asked for feedback after being screened and interviewed, and 29% CandE Winner candidates were asked. Those invited to provide feedback at this stage were 114% more likely to refer others. These relationships are always impacted by a combined variety of other positive activities that impact experience. And as always in our research year after year, if disruption is at a minimum, and the candidates feel the interview process was fair, they're more willing to engage the business again and refer others.



The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations

Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:



HIRE: North America

Offer and Onboarding

What It Is

The final hiring stages where recruiters and hiring managers make offers to the best candidates and hire and onboard those who accept the offers.

Once an organization decides to hire a given candidate, it first sends an offer letter and may or may not negotiate. However, this intricate and emotionally charged final step in the process can bring frustration because the organization may not succeed in closing the deal – especially when the process takes too long overall. Time continues to be a big frustration factor with final-stage candidates.

This is why organizations must continue to provide a positive candidate experience and communicate with candidates throughout this process and beyond via preboarding and onboarding. Preboarding is the stage before offer acceptance and day one, and onboarding is the final stage of starting employment. When new hires have positive preboarding and onboarding experiences, they are more productive in their first few weeks and may be more likely to stay with their new employer. The good news at this stage is that most employers are “all in” with those they want to hire, and each year we see little difference in overall ratings during offer and onboarding compared to CandE Winners.

Some companies, however, make a heavy investment in earlier stages of talent acquisition, but then HR and hiring managers ignore candidates (now employees – but candidate experience is perpetual) after they’ve been hired. Preboarding to onboarding have been areas where employers around the world, even CandE Winners, have told us they struggle to provide a quality candidate experience, which ultimately can impact retention even before day one.

When preboarding and onboarding go well, the benefits directly impact organizational success. This section will explore what candidates expect during the offer and onboarding stages, what employers are doing to meet the needs of candidates and new hires and what organizations should be doing to improve the overall candidate experience.

When preboarding and onboarding go well, the benefits directly impact organizational success.

Key Takeaways

- Over 6,000 candidates said they were made offers.
- Over 5,600 candidates said they accepted those offers and were hired.
- Offer stage had a 4.4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022) and 78 NPS rating (up slightly from 2022). CandE Winners also had a 4.4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (same as 2022) and 78 NPS rating (same as 2022).
- Onboarding stage had a 3.4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down 21% from 2022) and 73 NPS rating (down from 2022). CandE Winners had also had a 3.4 out of 5 Likert scale rating (down from 2022) and 70 NPS rating (down from 2022).
- 61% of candidates said they received an offer within one week after their final interview, same as 2022.
- 32% of candidates that withdrew from the recruiting process said they accepted another offer from a different company, down slightly than 2022.
- After accepting the job offer, 66% of candidates received additional onboarding resources.
- 42% of candidates received a call from the hiring manager, and 25% received a text from the hiring manager before their start date, both up slightly from 2022.
- 20% of candidates said the company provided multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members and answer questions prior to the start date.
- Only 24% of candidates were invited to provide feedback before their start date, down from 2022.
- Only 17% said a recruiter followed-up with the new employee within six weeks of start date to confirm expectations reflect reality, down 48% from 2022.

What Candidates Want

It is no surprise that candidates want responsiveness during the hiring process, specifically on whether they will receive an offer based on their interview. 61% of all candidate respondents said that less than one week elapsed between the last interview and their receipt of an offer letter, about the same as 2022 (see Table 23). Collapsing this timeframe can make a big difference in hiring highly sought-after candidates, and we're glad more companies have done so this year.

Similar to 2022, 93% of participating candidates in 2023 accepted the offers presented to them. Yet only 24% of all candidates were invited to provide feedback on their candidate journey before their start date, down from 2022, and 46% of all candidates were not asked for feedback. This continues to be a missed opportunity to glean insight that may help improve retention in the long run (see Table 24).

When employers asked candidates for feedback prior to their start date, these candidates were 137% more willing to increase their relationship out of the gate, compared to 110% higher just because they accepted the job offers. This engagement is also critical to ensuring retention, at least in the short run, and building the bridge from candidate to employee experience.

Job candidates may also have an existing relationship with the companies they're interested in when they said they began their job search. Some of these relationships may impact their overall key candidate experience ratings like willingness to refer, especially when they accept an offer of employment. 29% were current employees, 15% had friends/family who worked for the company, and 4% were those who followed their thought leadership or company innovation. These groups all have the highest key ratings overall, besides those who had no relationship with the company at all.

Table 23. Total Time Elapsed Between Last Interview and Receipt of Offer Letter

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Less than 1 week	61%	62%	57%	57%
2 weeks	23%	23%	25%	24%
3 weeks	7%	7%	9%	8%
4 weeks	3%	3%	3%	4%
More than 4 weeks	5%	7%	6%	7%

Table 24. Percentage of Candidates Asked for Feedback Before Starting Work

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Yes	24%	27%	26%	24%
No	46%	42%	43%	44%
Not sure, I don't remember	29%	31%	31%	32%



Those who had the highest relationship ratings included those who followed their thought leadership or company innovation, had friends/family who worked for the company, and who followed their thought leadership or company innovation, besides those who had no relationship at all (see Table 25).

In fact, those with brand affinity had the highest NPS ratings of those hired, followed by those who were customers – both rating higher than current employees. And no matter how you cut the data, the only time companies ever see candidate NPS ratings of 50 or above is from those candidates who were hired, because they’re the only “happy customers” in the recruiting and hiring process.

Interestingly, candidates who were past employees and were hired again had the lowest NPS ratings for refer and relationship again this year, which seems to indicate that their second time around wasn’t a very good experience.

Those who had the highest relationship ratings included those who followed their thought leadership or company innovation, had friends/family who worked for the company, and who followed their thought leadership or company innovation.

Table 25. Final Refer NPS Ratings of Candidates Based on Their Relationship With the Company After They Were Hired

	2023	2022	2021
I am a current employee of the company	47	55	51
I followed the company as a result of thought leadership or company innovation	65	71	71
I have/had friends/family who work/worked for the company	52	59	58
I was a customer of the company using their products/services	49	57	58
I was a past employee of the company	14	29	21
I have/had no relationship with the company	48	54	49



There are many activities that occur for new hires prior to start date, or internal transfer to new roles applied for current employees (see Table 26). This preboarding stage is a critical time for engaging and nurturing new hires, and yet each year fewer new hires hear from their hiring managers before they start. In 2021, 47% of all candidates said they received a call from their hiring managers, but in 2023, it dropped to 42%, an 11% decrease. Even calls from recruiters and/or HR to new hires prior to day one decreased 20%. One reason for this could be because of leaner hiring teams in 2023.

However, the percentage of candidates who received a text from their hiring manager before day one increased 19% since 2021, from 21% to 25%. And the percentage of candidates who received a text from recruiters and/or HR before day one increased even more – 80% since 2021, from 15% to 27%. This aligns with the increase of text messaging and automated outreach we’ve found in our research.

Another important activity to highlight here is when employers provide multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members, answer questions, prior to my start date. Even though only 20% of companies the past three years have experienced this, these candidates were 137% more willing to increase their relationship out of the gate, compared to 110% higher just because they accepted the job offers. Again, the more nurturing and engagement that occurs prior to their start date, the greater opportunity to improve new hire retention from the beginning.

This preboarding stage is a critical time for engaging and nurturing new hires, and yet each year fewer new hires hear from their hiring managers before they start.

Table 26. Activities That Occurred Prior Start Date or Internal Transfer

	2023	2022	2021
Upon offer acceptance, I received additional services to onboard me into the company	66%	67%	66%
I completed standard new hire/transfer forms via an online system/portal	59%	59%	63%
I received information packages describing benefits	48%	52%	53%
I received call(s) from Hiring Manager	42%	43%	47%
I received call(s) from recruiter and/or Human Resources	35%	39%	44%
I received text(s) from recruiter and/or Human Resources	27%	18%	15%
I received a detailed schedule for the first few weeks on the job	26%	26%	26%
I received text(s) from Hiring Manager	25%	24%	21%
I was scheduled for and received online training	23%	26%	28%
The company provided multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members, answer questions, prior to my start date	20%	21%	20%
I attended online "onboarding" group webinars	13%	17%	21%
I received a welcome basket of products	10%	9%	11%
If relocation was included, I was helped with relocation services	5%	4%	5%

What Employers Are Doing

It's still surprising each year how many companies ask new hires for feedback before they start day one, especially compared with what their candidates tell us. This year, only 48% said they ask for candidate feedback before day one, down 27% from 2022, but only 24% of candidates said they were asked, a clear disparity. It's about the same for CandE-Winning companies and their candidates. It's also true that many candidates may not remember seeing the invitation for feedback via email, which is another argument for texting candidates.

The benefits to asking for feedback are always positive: Candidates who were asked to provide feedback prior to their start date had a 134% increase in willingness to refer others and a 137% increase in their positive relationship with employers. And even though there is a bump in these ratings because these candidates were hired, asking for feedback can strengthen the affinity further.

Besides asking for feedback, engaging candidates prior to their start date can get them excited and further increase their overall positive rating. In 2023, 79% of employers orchestrated specific touch points between the selected candidates and team members, down 5% from 2022 (see Table 27). 37% of employers said they sent specialized marketing and congratulations content and packages to their hired candidates, down 29% from 2022. In fact, most of the preboarding and onboarding activities are on the decline, most likely due to the volatile recruiting market the past year and smaller recruiting teams having to do more with less.

Only 17% of employers said recruiters followed up with the new employee within six weeks of the start date to confirm that their expectations reflected reality. This was down 48% from 2022, quite a significant drop. Because the mix of companies is different year to year, it could be that there were more recruiting teams that handed off onboarding to HR and follow-up wasn't in their purview.

As mentioned earlier, preboarding and onboarding are areas of improvement that employers have told us the past few years. Why? Well, we know from the volatile and competitive recruiting market we've been in for the past few years that retention has been a struggle for employers. Many continue to lose new hires – hourly and salaried professionals – before they even start, although that number is down with more new hires keeping their new jobs and staying put. Even CandE Winners, those companies with above-average key ratings in our benchmark research, struggle with preboarding to onboarding.

Candidates who were asked to provide feedback prior to their start date had a 134% increase in willingness to refer others and a 137% increase in their positive relationship with employers.

Table 27. Employer Onboarding Activities Communicated to New Hires

	2023	2022	2021
Touch points are orchestrated between company team members and the selected candidate	79%	83%	74%
Online application/concierge services are provided to the selected candidate to leverage	63%	69%	69%
Concierge relocation services provided to family (if needed), when relocation is involved	50%	54%	54%
Specialized marketing and congratulations content and packages are mailed to the selected candidate	37%	46%	49%
Candidate experience survey completed prior to start date	37%	42%	33%
Recruiter follow-up with the new employee within six weeks of start date to confirm expectations reflect reality	17%	33%	23%
Candidate experience focus group/debrief within first month of start date	11%	13%	8%

Key Recommendations

What CandE Award Winners Do Better

Most participating employers are all in at this stage of the talent acquisition process, but CandE Award Winners still have a slight edge in terms of more proactive communication and engagement with candidates who received an offer and those hired. Also, there are several action items that differentiate the 2023 CandE Award Winners that can help organizations looking to improve the candidate experience during the interview stage (see "The Candidate Journey CandE Winner Best Practices" and "The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations" graphics below).

INTERVIEW TO OFFER TIME

Time is always a crucial factor in recruiting, especially for the candidates who get the offers. This year 61% of candidate respondents said that less than one week elapsed between the last interview and their receipt of an offer letter, about the same as in 2022. In addition to the bump in ratings when candidates are made offers in general, if employers make the offer within one week of the final interview, the candidates' willingness to refer others increased 119%, and their willingness to increase their relationship with the employer increased 122%. Also, CandE-Winning companies made the offers within one week of the final interviews 6% more often than all companies combined.

PREBOARDING ENGAGEMENT AND NURTURING

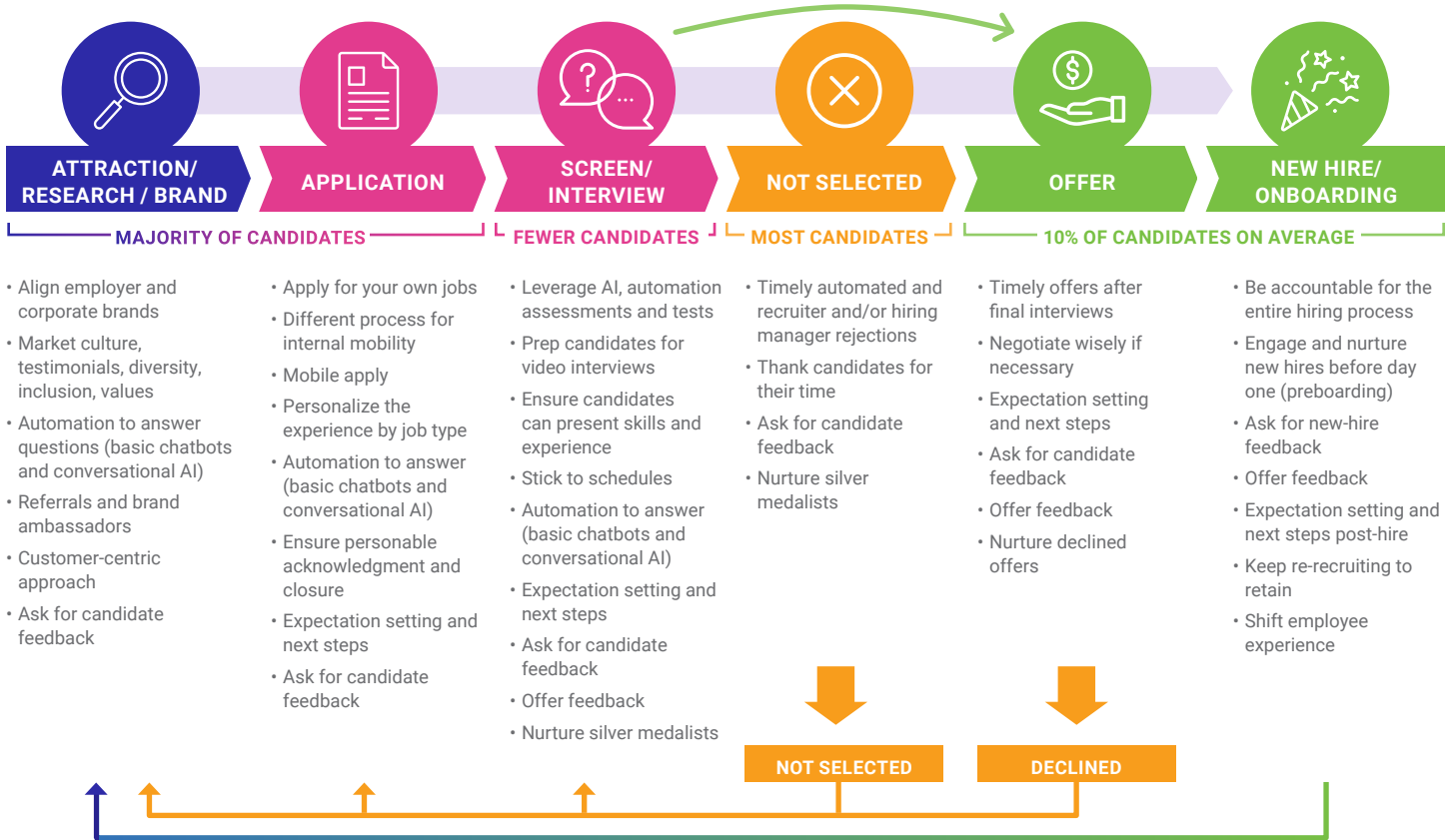
More employers, whether they've won a CandE Award or not, struggle to invest in more communication and engagement preboarding activities with new hires before their start date. However, the percentage of candidates who received a text from their hiring manager before day one increased 19% since 2021, from 21% to 25%. And the percentage of candidates who received a text from recruiters and/or HR before day one increased even more – 80% since 2021, from 15% to 27%. This aligns with the increase of text messaging and automated outreach we've found in our research.

Also, when employers provide multiple options to communicate goals, meet key team members, answer questions, prior to candidates' start dates, these candidates were 137% more willing to increase their relationship out of the gate, compared to 110% higher just because they accepted the job offers. Again, the more nurturing and engagement that occurs prior to their start date, the greater opportunity to improve new hire retention from the beginning.

NEW HIRE FEEDBACK

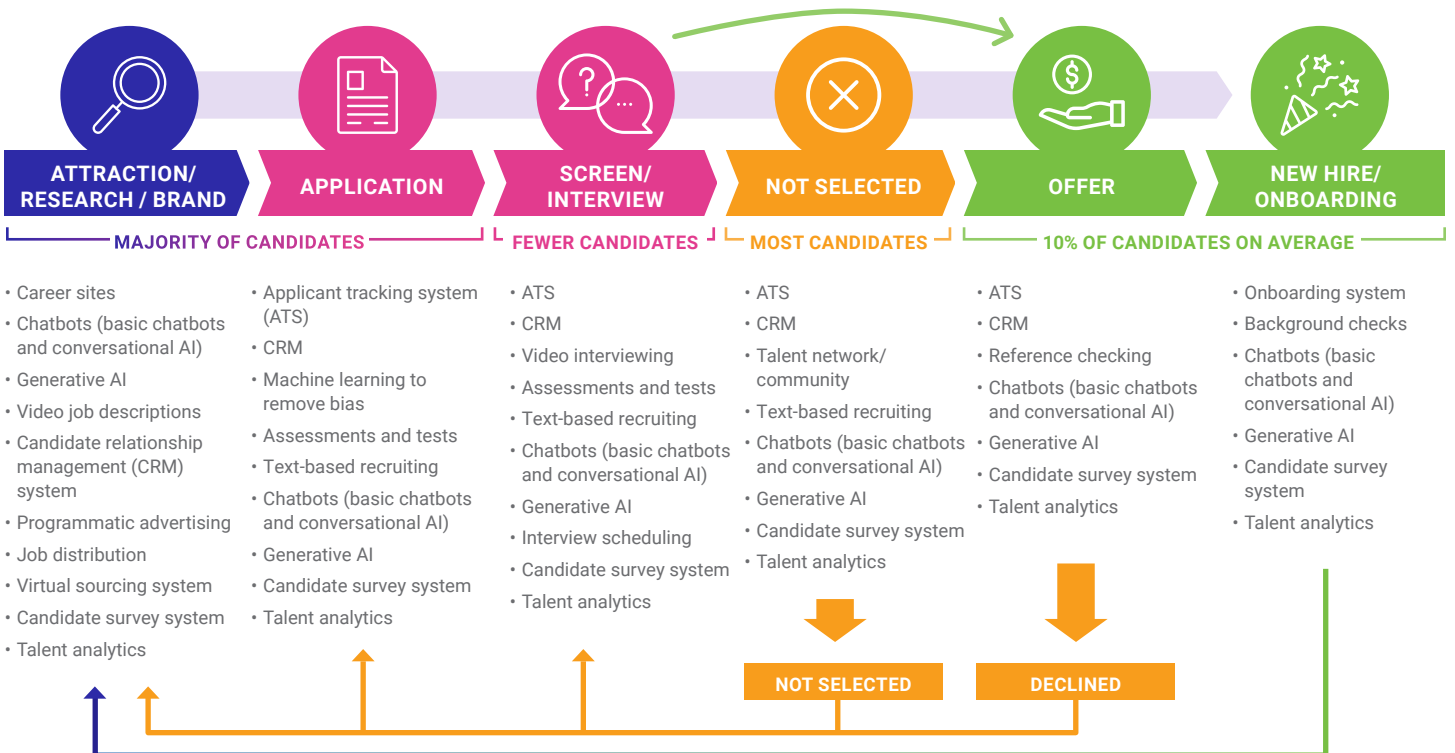
Asking for feedback is key at any time during the recruiting process, but it can definitely help with retention for new hires before day one. This year only 24% of the candidates from CandE Winners and all companies combined said they were asked for feedback about the hiring process. However, when employers asked candidates for feedback prior to their start date, these candidates were 137% more willing to increase their relationship out of the gate, compared to 110% higher just because they accepted the job offers. This engagement is also critical to ensuring retention, at least in the short run, and building the bridge from candidate to employee experience.





The Candidate Journey Technology Considerations

Talent acquisition technology interacts with candidates at every stage. Here are some examples:



APPENDIX

About The CandEs

The Candidate Experience (CandE) Benchmark Research and Awards Program is the first program of its kind focused on the elevation and promotion of a quality candidate experience. Also known as The CandEs, the program was founded by Talent Board in 2011 and is now part of ERE Media. The CandE Benchmark Research Program delivers annual recruiting and hiring industry benchmark research that highlights accountability, fairness and the business impact of candidate experience. More information can be found at <https://www.eremedia.com/candidate-experience>.



DEBBIE MCGRATH

Talent Board chair, and founder and CEO of HR.com, shared, “The CandE Awards have helped demonstrate the business value of positive hiring practices by advocating for the importance of the candidate

experience and the impact on recruiting and the bottom line. Congratulations to this year’s Candidate Experience Benchmark Class for their proven commitment to promoting candidate experience excellence.”



GERRY CRISPIN

“After 12 years, the CandE Awards benchmark research continues to prove that positive candidate experiences lead to positive hiring outcomes, which often have positive business implications, even during

such volatile economic times,” said Gerry Crispin, Talent Board co-founder and principal and chief navigator at CareerXroads. “This year’s CandE Awards winners have again demonstrated their commitment to upholding this practice and we are delighted to recognize their work advancing the recruiting process.”



ED NEWMAN

“Since founding the Candidate Experience Awards 12 years ago, we have amassed an unprecedented amount of data on the recruiting and hiring process and in effect, worked to foster a community interested in

transforming talent acquisition practices,” shared Ed Newman, Talent Board co-founder, and founder & CEO at talentEXP. “The 2023 CandE Awards Benchmark Class understands the value of transparency and a better candidate experience. Congratulations to this year’s CandE Award Winners.”



KEVIN GROSSMAN

Past Talent Board president and now VP of research at ERE Media, Kevin W. Grossman commented, “No matter what the world looks like, especially in 2023, it continues to be a recruiting and hiring world we’ve never seen

before. Even in the face of increased candidate resentment, it’s inspiring to see so many companies continue to improve their candidate experience. Transparency, consistent communication and feedback loops at every stage of the recruitment process are always critical and can equate to positive business outcomes and employment brands.”

Program & Scoring Methodology

The Candidate Experience (CandE) Awards Benchmark Research Program is open each year to employers that hire around the world (North America, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America). The CandE Awards and benchmark research are composed of two rounds of survey: Round 1, the employer survey; and Round 2, the candidate surveys.

Round 1 – the employer survey: Designed to capture and evaluate the participating company’s recruitment processes and practices that affect the candidate experience, and how they would self-rate their own candidate experience.

Round 2 – the candidate survey: Designed to survey a random sampling of the company’s job candidates, ask them several questions about their recruiting experiences and rate their experiences via 4- and 5-point Likert scales that are also easily converted to NPS ratings.

To qualify for a CandE Award, each firm has to commit to a specific, statistically significant candidate response and a set standard for the proportion of randomly selected respondents who were not hired. These candidate responses include multiple touch points from the pre-application process to onboarding (if hired).

These are then scored and normalized to a standard ratio of those “Not Selected” versus those “Hired” (~80/20) to eliminate any “halo” effects. This means we want employers to only target up to 20% of hired candidates in the survey process (the “Hired” percentage could be higher than 20%, but it would affect the final CandE score and ranking).

The survey data is then run through a calculation that generates a final CandE Score NPS rating for each participating employer. CandE Scores are then stack ranked and CandE Winners selected based on having above-average CandE scores.

The four key ratings that determine the CandE Winners are:

- **Overall Rating:** The overall candidate experience rating (5-point Likert scale).
- **Apply Again Rating:** Whether or not the candidates would apply again to an employer (4-point Likert scale).
- **Referral Rating:** Whether or not the candidates would refer others to an employer (4-point Likert scale).
- **Relationship Rating:** How the candidates would change their business relationship status with an employer based on their experience (4-point Likert scale).

Data Collection Overview

- The 2023 CandE Awards and Benchmark Program was open from Jan. 31 to Aug. 31, 2023.
- Over 150 organizations from around the world registered to participate in this year's program.
- Nearly 240,000 candidates completed the candidate surveys.

Connect with #TheCandEs

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How to Participate in the 2024 CandE Benchmark Research Program

BENCHMARK YOUR CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Registration for the global [2024 Candidate Experience \(CandE\) Benchmark Research and Awards Program](#) will open for all regions in January 2024 (North America, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America).

There is no deadline to start, only to complete all surveys, and that deadline is July 31, 2024.

The annual CandE Benchmark Research Program helps you and your organization measure and understand your overall candidate experience ratings from pre-application to onboarding. It also helps you understand the perception gaps between how you perceive your candidate experience delivery compared to your candidate responses, and the impact of your recruiting efforts on your business and your brand.



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Sponsorship Opportunities



The CandEs and ERE Media have a variety of sponsorship opportunities available for HR and recruiting solution and service providers.

For over 12 years, the CandE Benchmark Research Program has been the go-to community for talent acquisition leaders and their teams who seek to elevate and promote a quality candidate experience and understand the impact of their recruiting efforts on their businesses and their brand.

Over 2,000 employers have participated in our benchmark research and we've surveyed over 1.6 million candidates to date. We help employers measure and understand their overall candidate experience ratings from pre-application to onboarding. These employers are part of a larger CandE Community of over 25,000 recruiting leaders and their teams representing companies from big and small industries.

Reach this audience by becoming an annual CandE sponsor and a trusted partner to our community. Our annual sponsorships provide ongoing opportunities to interact with talent leaders, and to inspire positive change that improves recruiting and the candidate experience.

Annual sponsorships generate quality leads throughout the year and include visibility and lead generation activities through email campaigns, webinars, workshops, research projects, and events.



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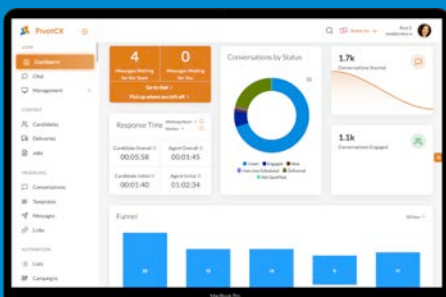
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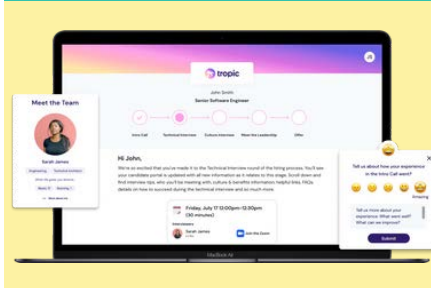
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“
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Paul Kinsey
Executive Director, TA Innovation, Mercy



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Director of Talent Acquisition
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2023 CANDE AWARD WINNER CASE STUDIES



APPFOLIO (NORTH AMERICA)

AppFolio is the technology leader powering the future of the real estate industry. Our innovative platform and trusted partnership enable our customers to connect communities, increase operational efficiency, and grow their business. For more information about AppFolio, visit appfolio.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

A few of the most notable improvements in the AppFolio hiring process this year are refining our hiring process, enhancing our interviewer training, upleveling our scheduling tool, and consolidating resources to create a more streamlined experience for both candidate and hiring manager. Our most commendable accomplishment is the consistency we've gained internally through enhancing the training interviewers receive. We emphasized the importance of decreasing unconscious biases and creating the best possible interview environment. We aligned our hiring teams to specific competencies to facilitate quicker and smarter decision-making, leading to faster feedback for candidates. This consistency has allowed us to focus on hiring our most critical roles with ease and efficiency. Additionally, we are recognizing more engagement with candidates and are experiencing less reschedules from the business and the candidates, elevating the candidate experience.

These changes have positively improved relationships between TA and our hiring teams. Our hiring managers often say there's more clarity, trust, and consistency that directly results in an amazing hire!

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Our decision to make changes in our AppFolio interview process was strongly influenced by feedback from CandE data and Glassdoor reviews. We identified issues with our lengthy and at times inconsistent interview processes, which hindered our hiring team's effectiveness. We also realized that these factors could impact the fairness of our interview process. Candidates also expressed grievances in the time it took to disposition them or the feedback they received when they did not receive an offer.

We understand the importance of candidate experience and how the whole recruiting process plays a role in the candidate choosing AppFolio. Their experience is a reflection on our team and the business, and so it's important that candidates and interviewers feel confident and prepared going into their interviews. We regularly read interview reviews on various platforms and identified two critical opportunities for improvement. We found a chance to streamline the interview process across the company and an opportunity to speed up the hiring process as a whole. Our interview training helped make a difference in these two themes and we are excited to continue to make improvements that directly impact how we are showing up for our candidates.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

This year, our focus was on building a strong team and ensuring alignment with not only our annual team objectives but also our company strategy. We found that showcasing how our objectives mapped into the very same objectives the business had, our message really resonated. We also clearly defined the level of service our talent team would provide for various roles within the company, setting clear expectations for hiring managers from the start. Moreover, we embraced our roles as talent advisors when collaborating with our business partners. This shift has empowered us to have a greater impact on driving change across the organization.

Partnerships with our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and People teams enhanced candidate experience by ensuring our interviewing was more inclusive, and streamlining candidate experience expectations across the business. In addition, working with our Communications team allowed us to weave in our Employee Value Proposition throughout the candidate lifecycle, which gave us groundwork to clearly communicate the value AppFolio provides as an employer throughout the interview process and enhance the candidate connection to our business.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We measure candidate experience through various resources, including reviewing CandE results to understand why candidates choose to move through our interview process, utilizing data from our ATS and sourcing platforms to help understand our candidate experience impact. We share this data with the recruiting team and hiring managers to connect the dots from candidate to hire and provide a story of how our recruiting improvements are making an impact. We also use this data to demonstrate financial impact by understanding how candidate experience impacts time to fill, attrition, and decisions on technology improvements.

Last year, our data showed an opportunity to improve our candidate experience. We are always striving to question our process and how we can improve our process for candidates. We track our CandE responses to understand key themes and share those with our team and areas for improvement. We share this info with specific groups so that recruiters can communicate to their business partners on a personalized scale and they understand the difference between positive and negative candidate experiences. We partnered with multiple cross-functional teams to make improvements through inclusivity and employee values.



BROWN-FORMAN (NORTH AMERICA)

BROWN-FORMAN

For more than 150 years, Brown-Forman Corporation has enriched the experience of life by responsibly building fine quality beverage alcohol brands, including Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, Jack Daniel's Ready-to-Drinks, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Fire, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Apple, Gentleman Jack, Jack Daniel's Single Barrel, Woodford Reserve, Old Forester, Coopers' Craft, The GlenDronach, Benriach, Glenglassaugh, Slane, Herradura, el Jimador, New Mix, Korbel, Sonoma-Cutrer, Chambord, Fords Gin, Gin Mare, and Diplomático Rum. Brown-Forman's brands are supported by approximately 5,600 employees globally and sold in more than 170 countries worldwide. For more information about the company, please visit brown-forman.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

During the pandemic, our interview experience had to happen in a virtual setting. This was incredibly challenging for candidates who were not as familiar with the company since they did not have the opportunity for a site visit.

Recently, we have shifted to a hybrid interview style where some are still being conducted virtually, but many are returning to an in-person experience. We have made concerted efforts to map out a campus tour so candidates can experience what it is like to work at our headquarters. We provide a thorough walk-through of a few buildings and have dedicated interview rooms in a welcoming environment. Our interview rooms are also where many of our employees are located so they can truly see our office space and potential coworkers. Our team has received positive feedback on the campus tour, and candidates appreciate seeing actual workspace instead of generic interview rooms.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

A strong candidate's experience is even more critical in this competitive, volatile climate. A good candidate experience process can set us apart and be the differentiation when a candidate makes an employment selection. To be competitive, it is not only enough to understand what candidates are saying but also to react appropriately and intentionally to the insight. The CandE process allows us to stay on top of any candidate trends and, specifically, to hear firsthand in an aggregated way what candidates are saying about their experience with us so that we can put initiatives in place to combat the trends.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Our team is a fantastic group of professionals in their specific areas of expertise, great collaborators, and drivers. We recently decentralized our global team to better align it with the regional HR business. It allowed us to stay even closer connected to the local markets, changing environments, and the complexities of the candidate marketplace and expectations. As a result of these changes, we have further specialized the functions in our team, including investing more in the employer brand area, especially by hiring a specialist for this function. Candidate experience is part of our DNA; all daily activities have it at their core and heart.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We measure candidate experience by participating in the CandE process annually. In addition, we also have our candidate surveys that are triggered via our ATS Workday Recruitment. We value recognizing repeat candidates who stay in our database and participate in multiple processes, showing they had a good experience. We also receive unsolicited feedback from them where they volunteer their impressions of the process back to us, sometimes in messages, other times verbally. Thus far, we haven't used the data to demonstrate financial impact. Still, we know that we are getting an ROI by having candidates in our database who become active participants in multiple processes year after year.



CITY OF RALEIGH (NORTH AMERICA)

The City of Raleigh is the capital of North Carolina, home to several colleges and universities, with a vibrant performing arts community. Fueled by an impressive mix of education, ingenuity and collaboration, North Carolina's capital city has become an internationally recognized leader in life science and technology innovation. For more information, please visit raleighnc.gov.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

Our TA team has grown this year and we've centralized and increased the communication touchpoints we have with our candidates. Previously, hiring managers in individual departments were responsible for the bulk of communication with a candidate to talk about next steps. This led to some candidates receiving a less than ideal experience because their hiring manager either didn't feel comfortable walking them through the steps or felt they didn't have time.

Now, our TA team contacts candidates at multiple stages of the process to let them know what has been completed and what is still pending – both for the candidate and for us. Even if there is no action required on the candidate's part, we keep them informed about our entire process so that they're never left worrying that they've forgotten to do something or missed a message from us.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

As a public sector employer, we have a somewhat tedious and lengthy hiring process. Because we know our process is longer than what candidates find in the private sector, we wanted to make sure that, for however long they're in our pipeline, they feel valued and well-informed. We're working on our time to hire and hope to create more efficiencies, but we wanted to start with people-focused improvements before process-focused ones. If we improve the way candidates feel during the process, they will hopefully be more understanding of why it's taking longer than they might have hoped. Then, when we make changes to the process to make it faster, we'll already have a people-focused communication strategy that keeps them informed.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

As we got new team members, giving us the opportunity to do more things, we adopted a vision around the word "Elevate". We discussed why things needed to change and the value they would bring while being careful not to make older team members feel as though they'd not been doing things "right" before. We tied all our improvements back to the concept that we were elevating our services. What we did before was fine back then, no one was wrong for having done the best they could, but now that we have more resources, it's time to elevate.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We're still fairly new to measuring candidate experience, so a lot of the feedback we receive is anecdotal, either coming to us from the candidates themselves, or our hiring managers. We typically report on our recruitment process by looking at time to hire by departments and divisions to see which groups need more help. If a division has a lengthier time to hire, we want to make sure they're communicating with candidates about their progress, even if it's slow going. We're also rolling out a survey to hiring managers and will report to management what areas those front-line managers see as the most pressing for us to address.



DELAWARE NORTH (NORTH AMERICA)



Delaware North is a global leader in the hospitality and entertainment industry. The company annually serves more than a half-billion guests across three continents, including at high-profile sports venues, airports, national and state parks, restaurants, resorts, hotels and casinos. Building on more than a century of enduring partnerships and a commitment to local communities and sustainability, Delaware North's vision is to delight guests by creating the world's best experiences today while reimagining tomorrow. Learn more at www.DelawareNorth.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

We've been on a journey to improve our candidate experience over the past few years, including updating our recruiting systems and processes as well as launching our new employer value proposition. On the technology side, we've streamlined our application, not requiring a resume for most roles which has made our application completion rates over 94%. We implemented a candidate survey last year which we're using to measure our performance and set recruiter goals, our average score has grown incrementally. And we launched our texting tool last year, allowing recruiters and candidates to communicate faster and candidates can self-schedule recruiter screenings.

Earlier this year as part of our EVP launch, we updated our careers site to redesign our benefits page, refreshed our job postings, and added team member stories. We created a candidate guide that recruiters can provide to a candidate to better illustrate what it is like to work at Delaware North and prepare them for their interview. We also went pay transparent in January 2023. All of this has resulted in job seekers being better informed and has improved our job view to completed application ratio.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

We've always aspired to have a great candidate experience, but thanks to some technology updates made over the past couple of years, we were now able to better track our performance so we could measure that experience. Some data that indicated we needed to make some improvements included our candidate funnel metrics. We were seeing larger than desired drop off throughout the funnel, so we made efforts to speed up our hiring process and improve our communications.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

To build support within our organization, we've tied our candidate experience to the guest experience which is vital to our business. By explaining that a poor candidate experience can result in the loss of a guest for our businesses, we were able to put a dollar amount on the potential loss of revenue due to poor candidate experience.

We also used our EVP launch as an opportunity to further demonstrate the importance of candidate experience. We launched internally first, with a video and FAQ document tailored per audience to explain what our EVP is, how to use it, and why it is an important part of the candidate experience. Recruiters, hiring managers, and HR managers were provided with EVP FAQ guides, tailored to their hiring roles, to better understand our EVP and how they can use it during their interviews and communications with candidates. These resources helped reinforce the commitment our operations and HR teams have on the candidate experience and their responsibilities to accurately describe what it's like to work for Delaware North – ever so important in hospitality due to the nature of the industry.

A fundamental part of the research and planning phases of our EVP involved working with a committee, who represented a variety of job functions and roles across our large organization. Regular meetings with the committee enabled stakeholders to understand the importance of our EVP in the recruiting process and enhancing the candidate experience. That committee then served as champions throughout the organization.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We measure our candidate experience by using a lot of different metrics, but we start with the results from our candidate survey. The survey scores make up one piece of our recruiter scorecard, along with application to offer ratio, disposition rate, time-to-fill, and average time to action for new applications. This scorecard lives in a PowerBI report that our TA managers have access to and review with their teams daily. We've also created a holistic TA dashboard that provides our recruiting team with key data points, like # of openings, offer funnel, pre-hire turnover, staffing %, time to fill and start.

Our HR Business Partners meet with our division leaders quarterly for QPR's where they review full life cycle data from candidate to exits and identify areas of opportunity. And finally, we provide a weekly global TA update to leaders with updates on recent recruiting activities, % staffing, etc. This gives our leaders insights into where we're seeing success and where we may need their support to help move the needle on providing a better and faster candidate experience.



FORD (NORTH AMERICA)

Ford is a family company, one that spans the globe and has shared ideals. We value service to each other and the world as much as to our customers. Generations have made their memories with us and included us in their hopes and dreams. After 120 years, we're used to adapting to and leading change. That's why we're evolving to focus on services, experiences and software as well as vehicles. Learn more at corporate.ford.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

At Ford, we're committed to providing a world-class candidate experience. We've launched a new ATS, leveraged the CRISP recruitment framework, revamped our professional org strategy, constructed a high-performing team, and re-energized our employer brand with an all-new EVP launch. Throughout the recruiting process, we prioritize personalization, fairness, timeliness and communication – all of which impact the candidate experience and perception of our brand.

We know a candidate's time is valuable – that's why we're most proud of creating an extremely streamlined application process. An application at Ford can be completed in under 5 minutes – and significantly less time when applying to multiple jobs. We do this by leveraging resume parsing, minimizing clicks and scrolling, and automated profile creation. The proof is in the data, as candidates have rated our application process with an NPS score of 53 through Q3 2023.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Ford is a 120-year-old company – 120 years of creating opportunities and building a better world. We know we have strong brand recognition, but we also know the top talent that will propel this company forward is much different than in the past. We wanted our candidate experience to represent the same innovative mindset we bring to our products.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Creating buy-in is key to implementing each of the initiatives listed previously that impact candidate experience. We leverage data, conduct whitepaper research, facilitate Kaizen events, and utilize benchmarks to build a business case. As technology rapidly evolves and influences our products or services, so does the type of talent we recruit. We've committed to bringing in top talent acquisition talent that understands the future of work – helping build credibility amongst leadership. We rely deeply in a partnership with each of our business units to forecast, plan, and execute hiring initiatives. At Ford, talent acquisition is not a transactional organization; we're a partner focused on hiring the right talent to build a better future.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

At Ford, data-driven decision making is essential to ensuring we provide a quality recruitment experience at an appropriate cost. We report on recruitment volumes, requisition status, aged requisitions, internal movements, and much more on a regular cadence. Candidate experience is measured through surveys sent at different stages in the recruitment process. Net Promoter Scores allow us to gauge customer satisfaction and feed recruiter performance metrics. Collecting verbatim feedback from candidates and hiring managers helps rationalize NPS scores and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.



GUIDEWELL (NORTH AMERICA)



GuideWell comprises Florida's Blue Cross Blue Shield plan, Florida Blue, which is the leading health insurer in Florida; Triple-S Management, Puerto Rico's Blue Cross Blue Shield plan and a leading health care services company on the island; GuideWell Health, a portfolio of clinical delivery organizations; PopHealthCare and its value-based national medical group Emcara Health; GuideWell Source, which provides administrative services to federal health care programs; and WebTPA, a market leading administrator of self-funded employer health plans. GuideWell serves 38.5 million people across 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, including more than 6 million individuals in Florida. For additional information visit www.GuideWell.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

GuideWell implemented the New Hire Talent Ambassador Program establishing a dedicated Talent Acquisition resource to provide our candidates and new hires with a positive experience. The New Hire Ambassador reaches out to each new hire with an introduction establishing a relationship with them to answer any questions and to help them learn more about our company and to be prepared for their start date. The New Hire Ambassador expresses our excitement to the new hire welcoming them to our company and our employee community, confirms their start date and new hire orientation time, ensures the new hire is prepared for their first day, provides them resources to company resources, benefits and additional information about the company, and answers any questions the new hire may have. The New Hire Ambassador has multiple touchpoints with the new hire during the hiring and onboarding process to ensure a great candidate experience and introduction to our company.

GuideWell reorganized our team members to better support the business with client alignment groups. These specialized teams were created to better support our business areas and candidates by providing more than one Talent Acquisition point of contact for the business and candidate. This has sped up the overall hiring process by eliminating hand-offs and delays, increasing response time and improved engagement allowing for improved consultation for both the candidate and the business area.

GuideWell has provided cross training of roles across the Talent Acquisition team. By having multiple recruiters know the various roles and needs of the business this has reduced delays in the hiring process and has positively impacted our speed of filling roles.

The commitment made by the GuideWell Talent Acquisition team to implement these changes and improve overall candidate experience. The implementation of the New Hire Ambassador Program and creation of the client aligned teams within our business areas.

GuideWell knows that these implementations have made a difference based on hiring manager feedback, business feedback and direct candidate feedback from automated touchpoints, survey results and the annual CandE results. We also measure our critical roles and have experienced a dramatic decrease in time to fill and time to start for high demand and hard to fill roles.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Previous CandE results showed us that we needed to respond to applicants within a shorter period of time. We were seeing delays in not getting to our candidates fast enough and changes in the market impacting candidate behavior. Therefore, we implemented a no more than 7-day rule to respond back and disposition candidates. Talent is our number one priority and part of our company core values. By meeting candidates where they are and being inclusive we have demonstrated success in improving our commitment to our candidates.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

GuideWell built support and commitment within our team and the broader organization by demonstrating compassion through communications, promoting brand reputation through our GuideWell Family of companies, motivating candidate(s) who did not receive an offer to apply again in the future, and encouraging employee engagement through employee referrals. By providing a great candidate experience candidates will likely apply again and recommend our company to other job seekers.

Through consultation within our team, we listened to our team's feedback and experiences and reiterated we succeed as a team together. It is not us vs the candidate or vice versa but a shared commitment to provide top quality talent quickly. We consulted with the business to make modifications to the process when candidates dropped from the process and made recommendations for speeding up time of interviews.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

GuideWell measures our candidate experience through our New Hire Ambassador. Our New Hire Ambassador is getting real time relevant feedback from the candidates as they go through the hiring journey and onboarding process with them.

GuideWell measures candidate experience through increased job offer acceptance rate, reduction in time to fill / time to start, reduction in attrition rate, diverse candidate pools, candidate sources, career site conversion rate and candidate feedback. By analyzing these measures this impacts how we manage our recruiters and hiring manager behaviors. Step in status reports provide us data on how long people are sitting in different steps of the recruiting process. We can address root causes and our consultants work back with business on their specific stats. All of this is used to manage our process and improve consultation with the business and candidates.

We report recruiting progress, KPIs, and demonstrate financial impact to our customers and leadership through our HR scorecard results and frequent touchpoints with hiring managers and client groups.



KEYBANK (NORTH AMERICA)



KeyCorp's roots trace back nearly 200 years to Albany, New York. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, Key is one of the nation's largest bank-based financial services companies, with assets of approximately \$188 billion on September 30, 2023. Learn more at www.key.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

For Key there hasn't been one singular initiative. Instead, there has been a series of smaller moves that have a cumulative impact on candidate experience. We've made our application as simple as possible, revised our communications for clarity and approachability, put the candidate at the center of every ATS configuration decision and implemented Survale surveys at each significant milestone in the candidate experience. We have made candidate experience a consistent conversation within the recruiting team and survey feedback helps recruiters better appreciate the impact they have on job seekers. We celebrate the positives and discuss constructive criticism. Being rewarded by candidates with high satisfaction and NPS scores and high offer acceptance rates provide evidence we are moving in the right direction.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Key is known among employees for having a supportive, people-centric culture. It's important for us to ensure that culture is extended to prospective employees through our recruiting process. Several years ago we only had anecdotal evidence of where we stood in the eyes of job seekers. We began participating in Talent Board's research program to build a benchmark from which we could grow. The Talent Board surveys in combination with our own real-time surveys have helped us better understand where we are thriving and where we have opportunities to make improvements.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Another big focus for Key Recruiting has been developing recruiters to work as talent advisors. If recruiters think of

themselves as being in an administrative support role that limits the recruiting team's impact on the organization. Our recruiters are encouraged to use their talent attraction expertise and work as consultants guiding hiring managers towards more strategic hiring practices, which includes being mindful of how individual actions impact the candidate and their perception of Key as an employer. There is a lot of power in consistently making candidate experience a primary talking point between recruiting and the business lines we serve.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Real-time survey results are our best measure of what candidates really think of Key – particularly when they leave detailed feedback on the whys behind their scores. Our NPS and satisfaction scores are driven by five candidate-facing surveys (post-application, post-screen, post-interview, post-offer decline, post-offer accept) and two hiring manager-facing surveys (post hire and new hire satisfaction after 30 days). Survey data is a game changer in its ability to not only point you towards team members who could use additional training but also gives us a unique way of measuring our impact on attracting talent to the organization. Using candidate experience survey results in recruiter performance conversations is critical to driving home the level of importance we are placing on creating a positive experience.

NPS scores are well recognized by Key executive leaders as a way of measuring success in client attraction. It's important for HR to speak that same language and use survey results as a vehicle for driving organizational understanding of the role positive candidate sentiment plays in our ability to be competitive.



MESSER (NORTH AMERICA)

Messer is the largest privately held industrial gas business in the world, and a leading industrial and medical gas company in North and South America. Messer offers 125 years of expertise in industrial, medical, specialty and electronic gases. The company delivers quality gases, related services and technology via an extensive production and distribution network. Health and safety, sustainability practices and environmental protection are core Messer values that are embedded in the company's daily operations. Messer Americas is part of the Messer SE & Co. KGaA, representing an approximately \$4.4 billion USD enterprise with presence in the Americas, Europe and Asia. For more information, visit: www.messeramericas.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

We fine-tuned our processes for candidate communication and increased the touchpoints for internal applicants. These updates ensure that all internal and external applicants receive initial communication within 48-hours of a completed application. We saw a significant improvement in our overall ranking for the CandE Awards. In addition, we reduced the resentment score by more than 50% while also increasing the apply again score by nearly 50%.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

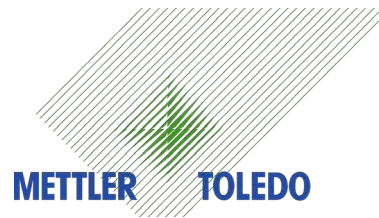
Changes were made to the treatment of internal applicants due to feedback provided by current employees. We also took the initiative to roll out a formal recruitment communication process. Utilization of new hire and applicant survey data also promoted changes.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

A robust Recruitment Communication Training was provided to the Talent Acquisition team and rolled out with support from HR. We also developed and implemented Interview Training for hiring managers that outlined the importance of their timely feedback in helping to ensure a positive candidate experience.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Utilization of internal New Hire Survey and review of CandE data aided in measuring the candidate experience. This data helped to improve communication throughout the recruitment process and ensures a clear job preview is provided early in the process. The increased frequency and effectiveness of the communication lead to more qualified and engaged candidates which in turn has led to less turnover.



METTLER TOLEDO (EMEA)

Mettler Toledo is a leading supplier of analytical precision instruments and services. Roughly half of their employees focus on marketing, sales and service while the other half work in areas such as R&D, engineering, production, supply chain, and business management. Learn more at www.mt.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

We have been working on candidate experience for a couple of years now and what we are most proud of is how we created the awareness of the importance of candidate experience in our leaders' minds. And building on that, we launched Hiring Manager trainings where they are learning how they should approach to candidate interviews with experience mindset and ensure a great experience for their candidates.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

We looked at new hire surveys, Cande data and the feedback we receive from social platforms and this helped us address different topics around our website, our process speed, the digital footprint of our recruitment activities etc.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

It's a focus area in our strategic HR agenda, supported by data and the management team. We are anchoring everything we do on our focus areas which includes also a strong candidate experience.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We survey hired candidates and we participate in a yearly benchmark report to see where we are in the market. We are not at the moment combining the data with financial results but there is already a strong emphasis on candidate experience regardless of the financial relation. We also benefit from the customer experience focus in the company.



MINDPOINT GROUP (NORTH AMERICA)



MindPoint Group strives to simplify cybersecurity to enable your organization's mission. By focusing our experts on your cybersecurity needs, you are able to prioritize your enterprise. We are pure play subject matter experts specializing in one thing: cybersecurity. Since 2009, MPG has been the cybersecurity firm of choice for US federal agencies and commercial enterprises around the globe. We are a full-service ISO 9001-certified cybersecurity organization offering expertise in managed SOC services; governance, risk, and compliance; security operations; FedRAMP 3PAO services; vulnerability, security, and defensive posture; CMMC assessment preparation; vulnerability analysis and penetration testing; system, cloud, and security architecture design, automation, and implementation. Learn more at www.mindpointgroup.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

This year we made candidate touchpoint frequency the cornerstone of our improvements. We set goals to keep candidates aware of application status changes without delay and streamline any other redundancies that might slow down our internal process. Talent acquisition of qualified candidates moves quickly, especially with regard to clearance, so timely communication and efficient response rates are essential. Our team's mindset is that of continuous improvement, so we are always looking for changes that can define and enhance our candidate experience.

We're most proud that we used automations in our ATS to achieve this goal, both for candidate touchpoints as well as project management. Automations remind hiring teams to complete needed feedback to move their candidates along, and the reminders continue until the interviewing team member has also provided their responses. This allows our process to continue quickly and minimizes the risk of losing a candidate due to timing.

From our 88.9% offer acceptance rate and the honor of receiving the CandE award for the second year in a row, this dedication to candidate experience seems to be working!

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Candidate experience is a high priority for MindPoint Group; candidates have a choice in the company they work for, and we want to make sure we are treating our candidates with respect for their time and expertise. We strive to maintain a small-company mentality, providing individual candidate attention

and feedback despite our growth this year, and we want our candidates to feel like they are part of something special. Both talent acquisition and leadership recognize that our ability to continue growing begins with a strong, responsive candidate experience.

Our data is currently limited to individual candidate emails and Glassdoor/LinkedIn reviews. These are important, but can be inconsistent, so we are implementing Survale in January 2024 to poll all candidates for feedback. We look forward to using this quantitative data to make continuous improvements to the candidate experience.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

The keys to building support and commitment within our team include open communication, trust-building, accountability, positive feedback, and good old-fashioned teamwork. Our weekly team meetings are designed to maximize each recruiter's ability and efficiency that week, with necessary adjustments for requisition priority, workload, and individual recruiting goals. We use our ATS to work collaboratively with our peers and regularly communicate with project managers, hiring teams, and supervisors so no candidate or requisition slips through the cracks.

Accountability and positive feedback are central to our success as a team. When we hold each other accountable to their assigned requisitions and allow our team to set and achieve their own production goals, they work collaboratively on similar contracts and positions and meet weekly to clear obstacles with the project manager. We are generous with positive feedback and encourage comments and recognition, whether peer-to-peer within our team or from larger stakeholders within the organization.

Our dedication to candidate experience is reflected in our service level agreements to respond to applicants within 1-3 business days; to achieve that goal, we rely on teamwork, automated reminders, and regular communication with hiring managers. We also strive to give each candidate “white-glove treatment” with regular and open communication, explanation of the interview process both as an overview and step-by-step, and sharing bi-weekly status updates with our candidates even if there has been no change. We like to stay connected to our candidates before and after acceptance, and check in with them 30-90 days after onboarding to ensure they are acclimating to MindPoint Group successfully.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Our most valuable candidate experience measurement so far has been the CandE award surveys annually, which provide us with excellent feedback to supplement our anecdotal data from emails, Indeed, and Glassdoor. We are looking forward to implementing Survale in January 2024 to gather more consistent feedback from each candidate during and after the recruitment process and target changes in our candidate journey to reflect those results.

We report a myriad of data to our leadership teams every quarter, as well as general information shared quarterly with MindPoint Group’s full staff. We make special note of lost revenue per position, year over year increase in hiring, and average days to fill a requisition. Each of these speaks to some degree to our candidate experience, along with our ratio of applicants to accepted offers.

Quote: “We are most proud of the relationships that we are building with our candidates that continue to grow our brand and reputation within the cybersecurity industry. The recognition of back-to-back wins for the CandE awards is an honor and testament to our continued efforts, and we look forward to prioritizing candidate journey for another year!”



ROOM & BOARD (NORTH AMERICA)

Room&Board

Founded in 1980, Room & Board makes modern furnishings that are artisan crafted and designed to last. Room & Board employs more than 900 people across the country, from our Minneapolis, Minnesota, headquarters to stores and delivery centers nationwide. Learn more at www.roomandboard.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

We've made several enhancements to our recruiting process to improve the candidate experience. Some of those changes we are most proud of include:

Implementing a self-scheduling tool: This allows for candidates to schedule their recruiter phone interview more efficiently and conveniently.

Inquiring about accommodations: We added a question to our application process that asks if a candidate requires any accommodations for their interviews.

Sharing a 'personal commitment' statement: Our recruiters support full-cycle recruitment and are the point of contact for every candidate we move through the process. We are committed to providing timely follow up at each step and transparency in every conversation as we set expectations for every step of the way. During every recruiter phone interview, the recruiter clearly states to the candidate that they are committed to a respectful, transparent, and communicative process that will never leave them wondering.

Personalized feedback: We are committed to providing personalized interview feedback for each candidate. Our goal is to leave them in a better position than when we found them. Additionally, we've created over 20 email communication templates that allow for a more personalized response when regretting candidates upon resume review (which represents about 90% of applicants).

More timely responses: We have raised the bar and are committed to replying to candidate applications within 1-5 business days, as opposed to 10 days in the past. We want to ensure timely communication upon application submission and let each candidate know that a 'real human' will be reviewing their application.

Our team continuously receives positive feedback from candidates, even upon extending our regrets. They often share how supported they felt throughout the process and how they appreciate our transparency.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

We recognize that many companies have been treating candidates poorly for a very long time and some continue to do so. Poor candidate behavior (e.g. no-shows, ghosting) can in some situations be attributed to a candidate's lack of confidence in the process due to repeatedly poor treatment from companies. We wanted to differentiate Room & Board from other companies especially in the current state of a candidate-driven market by being true to our values of transparency and authenticity. We are known to be "one of the best places to shop" and "best places to work" and wanted to also be known as one of the "best places to interview."

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

As a Talent Acquisition team, we built support by holding each other accountable, sharing feedback from candidates, and working collaboratively to continually make improvements that have a positive impact on the candidate experience. In terms of building support across the organization, we had shared our commitment to the candidate experience in our broader HR team meetings, partnered closely with our hiring leaders, and shared our intention of participating in the CandE survey with all staff members through articles and updates on our internal employee site. Staff members understand that we uphold the same high-level standards in working with candidates as we do in working with our customers.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We rely on the results of the CandE survey in measuring the candidate experience as well as direct feedback we receive from candidates. As a first-year participant, we are still taking into consideration how we will use the data to demonstrate the financial impact. Additionally, we report time-to-fill, meeting target start dates, new hires per month, new hire retention/turnover. Our data on markets with higher turn-over or longer time-to-fill roles, allows us the opportunity to partner with our hiring leaders in these markets to develop recruitment strategies to drive more qualified candidates.



SASR (NORTH AMERICA)



Founded in 2003, SASR developed technology and a centralized approach to recruiting and staffing that empowered our nationwide team to help clients hire better, faster. SASR delivers workforce solutions that help clients and associates respond, adapt and realize their own potential. Learn more at www.sasrlink.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

One of our most recent process changes has been empowering our recruiters (who also serve as our hiring managers) to send the first assignment offer to the recently hired employee. As a staffing agency our employees are able to search for and apply for any of our open roles. We anticipate having the first specific offer being made by the recruiter allows the new employee to confirm their commitment to work and will reduce the drop off we have seen in the past due to a poor candidate to employee handoff process that relies on other departments within the organization. The goal is from first application to first placement the candidate to employee works with one recruiter to simplify their overall process and build the relationship with the company.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Over the last few years, we realized roughly 50% of our hires were getting through the process but not completing hours with the company. At that time our company relied on an overly automated process with little to no recruiter interactions with the candidates. We looked at time to hire, time to onboard, time to apply, time to first placement and several other factors that showed us there were many opportunities to balance out this lifecycle and bring back the human component to those critical phases where those interactions are critical for an excellent candidate experience. We started interviewing every candidate, and created a one recruiter flow that included a post offer onboarding assistance.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Initially the opportunity to improve our candidate's experience was driven from our executive team through an opportunity mapping project looking at areas of our business that would be critical in order to grow and scale operations. Our candidate experience and technology supporting that experience was one of the key initiatives within the overall project. From the beginning to the day-to-day implementation of the technology and developing new processes, we had agency staff (recruiters) participate in the redesign, discovery and implementation from day one. Their input was instrumental in our successful transition to our current candidate experience. We also used a combination of candidate sources (job boards, partners) evaluations and candidate and recent employee surveys.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We use a comprehensive multichannel approach to measure our candidate's experience. We monitor time to apply, time to interview, time to onboard, time to hire, time to first placement, and time to first working shift, as well as average hours worked, number of jobs worked, and total hours worked. A unique item in the staffing world we measure is employee inactivity, which may be time to inactive (or did the employee become inactive). We also look at termination rates. For those candidates that convert to employees we are able to measure the revenue generated through the shifts they work. We are also able to look at several factors like job remarketing for leads we capture on our career page who may not have applied but signed up for job notices, as well as total touch points before application on the career site.



SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC (NORTH AMERICA)



Schneider Electric is a Fortune Global 500 company, publicly traded on the Euronext Exchange, and is a component of the Euro Stoxx 50 stock market index. Schneider's purpose is to empower all to make the most of our energy and resources, bridging progress and sustainability for all. Learn more at www.se.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

This year at Schneider Electric we have focused our new strategy and talent acquisition transformation to take a candidate centric approach. Our people, processes, technology, and employer branding efforts are all customer (candidate) focused. Our new customer is the candidate: every action we take is focused on ensuring the best candidate experience. We have ingrained the meaning of the candidate experience in our talent acquisition culture and DNA, and continuously communicate the importance of a positive experience.

We are proud of our team's commitment and engagement on this topic, and that we can utilize data and performance tracking to drive improvements all year long. We utilize SURVALE, a continuous listening platform which helps increase our understanding of the candidate experience and gain additional insights into the recruitment experience. This system records our customer voice, which has helped our teams gain insight into every step of the process and how candidates react.

Through the SURVALE system, we also send an external candidate experience survey and an internal candidate experience survey for requisitions managed through our jobs@Schneider (iCIMS) platform. Gathering this candidate feedback helps us refine the recruitment experience based on candidate input and work towards our ambition of "hiring great talent through a great candidate experience."

In addition to gathering feedback from our candidates, we launched hiring manager and talent acquisition surveys in January 2023. We collect recruitment stakeholder feedback through a survey targeting hiring managers at the time of hire and another 90 days post-hire. Additionally, we survey our talent

acquisition team at the time of hire. This allows us to have a full 360 view of feedback from all stakeholders involved in the recruitment process: the candidate, the hiring manager, and talent acquisition.

We look at this data to assess our performance in terms of candidate advancement. We have a roadmap and action plan in place to drive our candidate experience strategy. Our leaders educate themselves and challenge themselves to be disciplined to look at our scores and the comments to drive conversations with our team and/or during one-on-one meetings.

We can see that our changes are making a difference through factual data such as score improvement, but also through team behavior. Because the team is seeing the survey results, they are able to act on changes and improve the candidate's experience. We have seen positive changes in the way the team talks about the candidate's experience, and the care given to each candidate. We have also listened to our candidate testimonies within system feedback or in conversations with our recruiters. Because of these changes and our focus on candidates, Schneider Electric is extremely proud to be selected for CandE award for the first time and be ranked 34 among the 50 companies selected.

Every candidate deserves an answer. We truly respect their interest in our company, and the time they spend applying and going through the recruitment process. It's why we commit to not having more than 25% of our candidates waiting to hear back from us (dispositioning or advancement in the process).

Internally, we are focused on continuously improving communication within the leadership team as well as within the whole organization. Our organization has made changes and improvements to training and coaching our teams. We encourage strong communication among all our talent acquisition employees and know that open communication is critical to our team's success.

Schneider Electric strives to create a strong culture of recognition and appreciation throughout the company. Recognizing our team members' success is a key element to our strategy. As part of this, we monthly recognize a candidate experience champion in our talent acquisition calls. By celebrating these champions, we are cultivating a culture of recognition and highlighting our employees for their efforts.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

As stated previously, this year at Schneider Electric we have focused our new strategy and talent acquisition transformation to take a candidate centric approach. By looking at current market trends, it became clear that the candidate is in the driver's seat. There is a war on talent and a shortage of critical talent. We knew we could not afford to lose even one top skilled candidate due to a poor experience, and had to act to ensure a best-in-class process.

Because of this, we needed to shift and adapt our strategy to stay an attractive company and one of the best places to work. Great people make Schneider Electric a great company, and we wanted to extend that to our candidates. By working cohesively with employer brand and talent acquisition, we focused on our company attractiveness and branding efforts.

Additionally, we updated our HR strategy to include "the care of our employees starts by the care of our candidates." Our ambition is to walk the talk and role model our values: customer first and act like owners. We consider each candidate our customer, so we empower our teams to deliver the best candidate experience, acting like the owner of their own business.

Some of the data and evidence that prompted these changes came from our SURVALE scores as they are the source of customer voice and feedback. With SURVALE we are scoring and allowing comments from users at every step of the recruitment process, which has identified areas we can improve.

We also track candidate advancement in our systems. We have a weekly picture of the number of candidates at every stage of the recruitment process. We use this data to conduct a monthly assessment of candidate advancement in the recruitment funnel from application to offer or disposition.

We utilize an operation performance dashboard as well. This monthly dashboard allows us to track the candidate's advancement in the full recruitment funnel and make sure every voice will be heard at every recruitment stage. Measuring candidate advancement allows us to assess our attractiveness as well as how we are acting to drive the candidate's experience.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

As a company, Schneider Electric focuses on building our internal talent through experience, exposure, and education. Our focus on training and development offers opportunity for all employees to work on their skills and grow within the company. Employees have open conversations with their manager on how to build a personalized progression path that meets their career goals.

To build support and commitment within our team, we have focused on the key areas of communication, training, and coaching. Continuous education is important because the world is always changing. We focus on trending topics, what the team is struggling with, and how leadership can help. Some examples include increasing diversity in our talent pools, how to leverage skills and potential to bring diversity into short lists, understanding our company story, rewards philosophy and structure, and candidate experience impacts. Employees have weekly or bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with their managers, specific coaching sessions are offered, and we recently had a four-hour leadership team workshop to build our strategy and roadmap.

To demonstrate the importance of the candidate experience, the meaning of our candidate experience is communicated at large and part of our talent acquisition culture and DNA. We reinforce the message every time we talk about our ambition, vision, strategy, and talent acquisition culture.

We have a taskforce of candidate experience champions who help to drive the roadmap. We recognize candidate experience champions monthly, highlighting one person from each of our business unit squads. We utilize survey data to determine which areas of the candidate experience we need to coach our people on.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

To measure candidate experience we look at the progress of our SURVALE scores. We also look at survey feedback from our internal and external candidates, hiring managers, and talent acquisition employees.

To report on our recruiting process, we share a weekly picture of the number of candidates at every stage of the recruitment process. We also do a monthly assessment of the candidate's advancement in the recruitment funnel from application to offer or dispositioning.

We measure performance based on a candidate net promoter score (NPS). This score looks at if the candidate would recommend the process to a friend. The promoter score is calculated by looking at the number of promoters minus the number of detractors divided by the total number of respondents. Currently, our global NPS score is 54%, and we are striving to increase that.

Through SURVALE we also leverage benchmarks of other companies – so we look at how we are doing compared to ourselves as well as external competitors to see how we pace verses the market.

Right now, we do not measure financial impact or return on investment. Hiring manager behavior is coached based on the feedback received through SURVALE to continue to drive continuous improvement in the candidate experience.



SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC (LATIN AMERICA)



Schneider Electric is a Fortune Global 500 company, publicly traded on the Euronext Exchange, and is a component of the Euro Stoxx 50 stock market index. Schneider's purpose is to empower all to make the most of our energy and resources, bridging progress and sustainability for all. Learn more at www.se.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

In our continuous efforts to enhance the candidate experience, we've implemented several significant changes in our recruitment process since iCIMS was implemented. These changes were aimed at creating a more positive and efficient experience for job applicants. Here are the key improvements, done by the tool, we're most proud of:

- **Streamlined Application Process:** We have simplified our application process, reducing the number of steps and eliminating unnecessary questions. This has made it easier and quicker for candidates to apply for positions within our company.
- **Clear and Transparent Communication:** We've placed a strong emphasis on clear and timely communication with candidates. All applicants now receive acknowledgment emails upon submission of their applications, and we've set clear expectations for the timeline of the recruitment process.
- **Personalized Feedback:** close contact with all candidates and - To provide a more personalized experience, we started offering specific feedback to candidates who reach the interview stage but are not selected. This helps candidates understand where they can improve and demonstrates our commitment to their growth.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** We've worked on fostering a more diverse and inclusive hiring process ensuring diverse panels of interviewers for all roles.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

We made the decision to change how candidates were being treated based on a thorough analysis of our recruitment process and feedback from various stakeholders. Several key factors and data points prompted these changes:

- **Drop-off Rates:** Analyzing the drop-off rates at different stages of our recruitment process was crucial. We observed that a significant number of candidates dropped out during lengthy application processes or after experiencing delays in communication. This data indicated that our existing procedures were discouraging potentially qualified candidates from completing the application process.
- **Time-to-Fill Metrics:** We assessed the time it took to fill vacant positions. Prolonged time-to-fill metrics suggested inefficiencies in our process, leading us to reevaluate the stages where delays occurred. Quickening the process became a priority to secure top talent before they were lured by competitors.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Goals:** Achieving our diversity and inclusion goals required a more strategic approach to hiring. We examined our hiring data to identify any biases and disparities in our recruitment process. This analysis revealed areas where we needed to implement blind recruitment techniques and ensure diverse interview panels.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Building support and commitment within your team and the broader organization for improving candidate experience is crucial to successfully implementing changes. Here are some strategies to demonstrate the importance of candidate experience and gain buy-in:

- **Data-Driven Presentations:** Use the data and evidence you've gathered to create compelling presentations that illustrate the impact of candidate experience on the organization. Share statistics on how a positive candidate experience can lead to better employee retention, improved employer branding, and enhanced overall productivity.
- **Customer-Centric Approach:** Emphasize that candidates are also potential customers and partners. A poor candidate experience can deter future business or collaboration opportunities. Connect candidate experience with the broader customer-centric approach your organization may have.
- **Highlight Legal and Ethical Aspects:** Point out the legal and ethical implications of candidate experience. Discriminatory or unfair hiring practices can lead to legal challenges and damage the organization's reputation. Highlighting these risks can motivate support for change.
- **Quantify Costs of Poor Candidate Experience:** Calculate the financial implications of a poor candidate experience, such as increased recruitment costs due to high turnover or missed business opportunities. Show how an investment in improving the experience can lead to cost savings.
- **Training and Awareness:** Conduct training sessions or workshops to educate employees about the importance of candidate experience. Create awareness campaigns that showcase the organization's commitment to this aspect of its culture.
- **Regular Updates:** Keep the team and the organization updated on the progress of candidate experience initiatives. Share success stories and outcomes to maintain enthusiasm and support.

By effectively communicating the importance of candidate experience through a combination of data, real-life examples, and tailored messaging, you can build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization, leading to successful changes and a more positive candidate experience.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Measuring candidate experience and reporting on your recruiting process is essential to demonstrate its financial impact and manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors. Here's how you can do this effectively:

Measuring Candidate Experience:

- **Candidate Feedback Surveys:** Develop candidate feedback surveys that are sent out at various stages of the recruitment process. These surveys should ask candidates to rate their experience, provide comments, and suggest areas for improvement.
- **Time-to-Fill Metrics:** Analyze the time it takes to fill positions, from the initial posting to the final hire. A shorter time-to-fill often indicates a smoother, more efficient process.



SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE (EMEA)



Société Générale, one of Europe's leading financial services groups and a major player in the economy for over 150 years, supports 25 million clients every day with more than 117,000 staff in 66 countries. Our Group draws on our European roots to develop our business internationally. Learn more at www.societegenerale.com/en.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

We implemented a new onboarding tool, which has improved the candidate and hiring manager satisfaction immensely simply due to the simplicity and process. We've also enhanced our processes and reviewed our candidate satisfaction surveys to make those more relevant to the information we wanted to track, easier and quicker to complete.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

We want to continually evolve and grow our delivery to candidates to ensure we remain a top choice employer. We also want to be sure the experience is consistent for internal, external and whether the candidate is successful in being offered a role or not. It's so important for us to build pipelines of candidates who we can keep in touch with and this is much easier to do if they've had a great experience.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

We're lucky to have a very experienced recruitment team and have purposely hired individuals who see candidate experience as paramount. We continually refer to candidate experience through the process with hiring managers and hold them equally accountable to provide a first class experience. We regularly hold interview workshops which include training on interview techniques and questions, diversity and inclusion and interview feedback.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

We send out surveys to all candidates who have reached interview stage and beyond and track those on a monthly / quarterly basis using an NPS score. If we receive a low score, and have the contact details, we'll call the individual to talk through their experience to learn from it.



SOUTHWEST AIRLINES (NORTH AMERICA)

Southwest Airlines Co. operates one of the world's most admired and awarded airlines, offering its one-of-a-kind value and Hospitality at 121 airports across 11 countries. Southwest took flight in 1971 to democratize the sky through friendly, reliable, and low-cost air travel and now carries more air travelers flying nonstop within the United States than any other airline. Based in Dallas and famous for an Employee-first corporate Culture, Southwest maintains an unprecedented record of no involuntary furloughs or layoffs in its history. By empowering its more than 74,000 People to deliver unparalleled Hospitality, the maverick airline cherishes a passionate loyalty among more than 126 million Customers carried in 2022. That formula for success brought industry-leading prosperity and 47 consecutive years of profitability for Southwest Shareholders (NYSE: LUV). Learn more at southwest.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

Our Talent Acquisition Team at Southwest Airlines is dedicated to providing Candidates a best-in-class Candidate experience through a high-tech, high-touch approach. We have a strong relationship and partnership with our Candidate Relationship Management (CRM) vendor to build out robust communication templates/campaigns throughout the hiring process; From the moment a Candidate or Lead lands on our Careers site until their first day, Candidates receive Southwest branded communication and resources that encompass the essence of our Employer Brand, a career with Heart. We built out our EVPs in 2022 and have spent much of 2022 and 2023 building content and processes around our EVPS so that Candidates feel a real difference when interviewing and considering a career at Southwest.

A few of our key improvements and changes we're most proud of:

- The introduction of a one-way video interview tool which allows Candidates to take the time to prepare for an interview, record their responses and submit their interviews on their own time. This provides a very user-friendly and more flexible experience for our Candidates during the screening process.
- Role-specific landing pages and day in the life videos embedded throughout the hiring process. A great example is our Ramp Agent landing page which provides Candidates a very thorough overview of the role, the requirements, the benefits and perks, day in the life video content, FAQs and more. This is included in lead generation awareness/apply now campaigns, in our interview scheduling communication and so much more.

- Pre-Employee Information Sessions for operational roles- during the waiting period between a contingent job offer and a Pre-Hires first day, we are in constant communication with selected Candidates and provide them the opportunity to join optional information sessions that cover a variety of topics from what to expect, benefits overview, training overview, FAQs and more. These info sessions are led by our Pre-Employee Experience Team and typically include members from our Recruiting Team or current Employees in that role.

We know our changes are making a difference because of the feedback we receive from our Candidates and how engaged they are during our hiring process.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

Much like the products and services we offer to our Customers change over time to better serve the Customer, we do the same for our Candidates. Whether that be through enhancements in the technology that we use throughout our hiring process or more personalized touchpoints, Southwest encourages a culture of continuous improvement. We look to our CandE data, in-house Candidate Experience survey data, Recruiter feedback, and ATS data to find areas of opportunity to better serve our Candidates. Additionally, as we're all keenly aware, we're in a hyper-competitive labor market. How a Candidate perceives their experience and their willingness to recommend applying to jobs at our Company makes an impactful difference, now more than ever.

Our President Emeritus, Colleen Barrett who we call our Queen of Hearts once said, "We're in the Customer Service business—we just happen to provide airline transportation." Thanks to CandE data, we can see a direct correlation between our Candidate Experience and how it can impact our business and we make it a top priority to provide the best "customer service" to our Candidates.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Hospitality is a key value that is engrained in our People at Southwest. We're expected to provide legendary Hospitality to our Customers and in TA, our Customers are our Candidates. It is our goal to provide a best-in-class Candidate Experience and be a great place to interview, no matter what the outcome for the Candidate. We are honored and so proud to be recognized by the Talent Board as a CandE Winner for our 7th consecutive year.

Through our involvement with the Talent Board's Candidate Experience Benchmark Research Program, we are able to demonstrate the value that a strong Candidate Experience brings to an organization like Southwest Airlines. For the last several years, we review our year over year data, identify feedback, areas for improvement and recommendations for the following year and present that information to our Talent Acquisition Team, Senior Leadership and other relevant stakeholders at Southwest.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Earlier this year we introduced in-house, point-in-time Candidate Experience surveys by partnering with our Employee Insights Team's survey provider for Employee surveys at the company. This has provided us the opportunity to collect Candidate feedback and analyze it on a more granular level, by job category, department, role, and even requisition. We have not yet had the opportunity for a comprehensive data review but are excited to review this data alongside the CandE data.

We also evaluate our Glassdoor and Indeed ratings, and we review the analytics from our CRM and ATS sites. Using the Talent Board's Candidate Calculator tool, we have been able to tie our customer value to our candidate value and better understand and communicate the financial implications of our candidate experience decisions to other stakeholders at Southwest.



SYNOPSYS (APAC)



Synopsys, Inc. (Nasdaq: SNPS) is the Silicon to Software™ partner for innovative companies developing the electronic products and software applications we rely on every day. As an S&P 500 company, Synopsys has a long history of being a global leader in electronic design automation (EDA) and semiconductor IP and offers the industry's broadest portfolio of application security testing tools and services. Whether you're a system-on-chip (SoC) designer creating advanced semiconductors, or a software developer writing more secure, high-quality code, Synopsys has the solutions needed to deliver innovative products. Learn more at www.synopsys.com.

1. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently? What improvements are you most proud of? How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

We tried reducing recruiting lifecycle wherever possible at all touch points:

- Candidate preference: Every candidate is free to apply to any/more than one position of their interest. If offered more than one they can exercise their own preference to join a team of their interest.
- Swift interviews: Respective business group admins get involved scheduling interviews to accelerate the interview process.
- Flexible Interviews: Flexible interview mode used a) In person and b) Online as per mutual convenience and assessment requirement.
- Faster offer delivery:
 - Optimized offer approval process and reduced from 7 approvers to 3 approvers resulting in faster approvals.
 - Developed inhouse Automated offer document generation with option to generate single/multiple offers with a click resulting in reduction of preparation time.
 - Digitized acceptance: With introduction of DocuSign, all offers are sent digitally with an option with digital signature, thereby ease of acceptance and storage.
- Flexible onboarding: For new hires, a combination of Physical and remote onboarding is used thereby ensuring a positive experience.
- Digitized onboarding forms: Moved from huge paper forms to digitized forms giving ease of filling, autofill in common and repeat fields, thereby reducing the time to fill and ease of submission resulting in paperless onboarding and pleasant candidate experience.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

With increase in hiring and the need to do more in limited resources, we observed that activities which are repetitive in nature, can be automated. Hence, we decide to make these changes based on our own analysis and drive to enhance automation.

Overall objective: Optimize process and Enhance candidate experience. Do more in limited resources.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

As these process enhancements and optimizations were the outcome of the team's own analysis, there was already an inbuilt commitment to achieve the same. Leadership team was also supported with time and resources as it aligned with the overall theme of innovation and automation.

With enhanced candidate experience, we observed clear cases of winning candidates to join us as compared to joining competition due to our agility in completing the hiring process and positive experience.

In Asia-Pacific, all TA work in the same communication platform and share the same value and also be evaluated by the same performance factors.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

- As of now we have not included reporting candidate experience. However, it will in future road map based on following:
 - Comparative Metrics: Such as i) Reduction in interview time compared to prior adopting the process ii) Increase in offer acceptance III) Reduction in offer declines (beyond personal reasons)
 - Candidate feedback survey results.
 - Trending of Key metrics such as: i) Interview to Offer, ii) Offer to Hire, III) Time to Fill/Time to Start, IV) reduced % of offer declines. V) Run-rate of reqs closed by recruiter
- Quarter over Quarter, are some of the metrics which will demonstrate increased productivity by the team and thereby indicate the positive financial impact made by the recruiter.
- There is no systematic way to measure a candidate's experience now, only rely on the feedback if they are willing to share it.
- We have followed all the time to offer, time to fill regularly by system report and also monitor the interview complete time.
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UST (NORTH AMERICA)

For more than 24 years, UST has worked side by side with the world's best companies to make a real impact through transformation. Powered by technology, inspired by people, and led by our purpose, we partner with our clients from design to operation. Through our nimble approach, we identify their core challenges, and craft disruptive solutions that bring their vision to life. With deep domain expertise and a future-proof philosophy, we embed innovation and agility into our clients' organizations—delivering measurable value and lasting change across industries, and around the world. Together, with over 30,000 employees in 30+ countries, we build for boundless impact—touching billions of lives in the process. Visit us at www.UST.com.

1a. What changes have you made to your candidate experience recently?

- A. Streamlined Communication: We've revamped our communication processes to ensure candidates receive timely updates at every stage of the hiring process. This includes acknowledging receipt of applications, setting clear expectations for the interview process, and providing constructive feedback after interviews.
- B. Personalized Touch: We've introduced personalized interactions by assigning each candidate a dedicated point of contact. This individual serves as a guide for candidates, addressing their questions, concerns, and providing them with a more human-centered experience.
- C. Educational Initiatives: We've launched organization-wide training sessions and internal campaigns to emphasize the importance of treating candidates as human beings. This includes empathy-building exercises and understanding the impact of a positive candidate experience on our employer brand.
- D. Data-Driven Feedback Loop: We've implemented a feedback mechanism to gather insights from candidates about their experience. We're actively soliciting feedback through surveys and interviews to understand what's working and what can be improved.

1b. What improvements are you most proud of?

- A. Faster Response Times: We have significantly reduced the time it takes to respond to candidate inquiries and provide feedback after interviews. This has minimized the uncertainty that candidates often face during the hiring process.

- B. Higher Candidate Satisfaction: Through our feedback mechanisms, we've seen a noticeable increase in candidate satisfaction scores. This is a clear indicator that our efforts are paying off.
- C. Enhanced Brand Image: Our emphasis on humanizing the candidate experience has positively impacted our employer brand. We've received unsolicited positive feedback from candidates who have appreciated our approach.
- D. Increased Referrals: Happy candidates are more likely to refer other talented individuals to our organization. This has led to a rise in the number of quality referrals we receive.

1c. How do you know that your changes are making a difference?

- A. Surveys: We regularly conduct post-application and post-interview surveys to gather quantitative data on candidate satisfaction. We track key metrics like Net Promoter Score (NPS) and candidate feedback.
- B. Feedback and Testimonials: We collect qualitative feedback through open-ended questions and encourage candidates to share their experiences in their own words. This provides valuable insights into the emotional aspect of their journey.
- C. Data Analysis: We analyze our time-to-hire metrics, which have improved significantly. We also track our offer acceptance rates, which have shown an upward trend since we implemented these changes.
- D. Referral Rates: The increased number of quality referrals we receive from candidates is another clear sign that our changes have positively impacted their experience and perception of our organization.

2. Why did you decide to make changes to how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence prompted you to make a change?

- A. **Competitive Hiring Environment:** We operate in a highly competitive job market where top talent is in great demand. We recognized that providing an exceptional candidate experience is not just a matter of goodwill but a strategic necessity to attract and retain the best candidates.
- B. **Negative Impact of Poor Experience:** We reviewed our attrition and offer acceptance rates and observed a correlation between a negative candidate experience and these metrics. Candidates who felt disregarded or frustrated during the application and interview process were more likely to decline offers or leave shortly after joining.
- C. **Feedback from Candidates:** We actively sought feedback from candidates who had gone through our hiring process (Thanks CandE!). Many shared their frustrations about long response times, unclear expectations, and a lack of personalized communication. This qualitative feedback highlighted specific pain points that needed addressing.
- D. **Organizational Culture:** Our organization recognized the need to foster a culture that values empathy and human connection in all aspects of our business, including the hiring process which drove the desire to align our candidate experience with our broader values.

3. How did you build support and commitment within your team and the broader organization? How did you demonstrate the importance of candidate experience?

Internal Communication:

- A. **Educational Workshops:** We organized workshops and training sessions for our HR and hiring teams to raise awareness about the importance of candidate experience. These sessions covered the impact of candidate experience on our employer brand and the overall success of the organization.
- B. **Sharing Data:** We shared relevant data and feedback from candidates with our teams. By presenting concrete evidence of how candidate experience affects attrition rates, offer acceptance, and referrals, we made a compelling case for change.
- C. **Leadership Buy-In:** We gained the support of key leaders within our organization by presenting the strategic value of candidate experience improvements. Their backing was essential in driving the necessary changes.

Empathy Building:

- A. **Putting Ourselves in Candidates' Shoes:** We encouraged team members to empathize with candidates by asking them to imagine going through our own hiring process. This exercise helped them better understand the frustrations and concerns candidates might have.
- B. **Storytelling:** Sharing real-life stories and testimonials from candidates who had positive or negative experiences with our organization made the importance of candidate experience more relatable.

Continuous Feedback Loop:

- A. **Regular Updates:** We kept the entire organization informed about the progress of our candidate experience initiatives. We shared success stories and acknowledged improvements made by different teams.
- B. **Acting on Feedback:** We actively sought feedback from employees about the changes we were implementing and incorporated their suggestions where relevant. This made the process more collaborative and encouraged commitment.

Collaboration:

- A. **Cross-Functional Teams:** We encouraged cross-functional collaboration to improve candidate experience. Involving teams from different parts of the organization highlighted that this was a shared responsibility, not limited to HR alone.

4. How do you measure candidate experience? How do you report on your recruiting process? How do you use that data to demonstrate financial impact as well as manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Measuring Candidate Experience:

- A. **Net Promoter Score (NPS):** We regularly send out NPS surveys to candidates after key touchpoints in the hiring process. This simple score indicates the likelihood of candidates recommending us to others, providing a quantitative measure of their satisfaction. (Thanks CandE!)
- B. **Candidate Satisfaction Surveys:** We use candidate satisfaction surveys to collect detailed feedback on their experiences. These surveys include questions about communication, clarity of the process, and overall experience. (Thanks CandE!)
- C. **Interview Feedback:** We encourage candidates to provide feedback on their interviews, both quantitative and qualitative. This helps us understand the quality of our interviews and identify areas for improvement. (Thanks CandE!)

- D. Time-to-Hire Metrics: We track the time it takes to move candidates through the hiring process. Longer times may negatively impact the candidate experience, so we closely monitor and optimize this metric.
- E. Offer Acceptance Rates: We measure the percentage of candidates who accept our job offers. If this rate increases, it can be a positive indicator of a better candidate experience.

Reporting on the Recruiting Process:

- A. Quality of Hire Metrics: We analyze the performance and retention rates of hires from different stages in the hiring process. This allows us to connect hiring outcomes to the quality of the candidate experience.
- B. Candidate Journey Maps: Visual representations of the candidate journey help us pinpoint areas of friction and opportunities for improvement. These maps provide valuable insights for process enhancement.

Demonstrating Financial Impact and Managing Behaviors:

- A. Cost of Vacancy: We calculate the cost of keeping a position vacant and demonstrate how a poor candidate experience can lead to prolonged vacancies. Reduced time-to-fill and higher offer acceptance rates can lead to significant cost savings.
- B. Referral Impact: We measure the increase in quality referrals from candidates who have had a positive experience. This demonstrates the financial value of a good candidate experience.
- C. Offer Declination Costs: We calculate the financial impact of candidates declining offers due to a poor experience, factoring in the cost of extended searches and potentially higher salaries offered to attract top talent.
- D. Employee Turnover: By linking candidate experience to employee satisfaction and retention, we can show the cost savings associated with reducing turnover, which often results from a negative hiring experience.
- E. Behavioral Feedback: We use data and feedback to manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors. If feedback suggests a particular individual or team is consistently providing a subpar candidate experience, we address this issue through coaching, training, or process changes.



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1. What recent changes have you made to your candidate experience, and what improvements are you most proud of? How do you determine the impact of these changes?

We have implemented several recent changes, including enhancements to our career site, Glassdoor and Indeed employer pages. These updates addressed areas that were lacking in information, such as employee engagement activities and company updates. We added details to our benefits and DE&I initiatives. We further enhanced our career site by incorporating quarterly employee spotlights to help candidates learn about our company through the lens of our employees.

To enhance our candidate experience, we undertook the following measures:

- We developed an SLA and trained all hiring managers on the key drivers to a great candidate experience.
- We developed a process to timely respond to employee and candidate reviews.
- We actively request feedback from new hires and candidates monthly through tools provided by Glassdoor and Indeed.

Once we started focusing on how we present ourselves as a company, we witnessed a notable improvement in our Glassdoor rating, which shifted from 3.5 to 4.0. Additionally, our analytics showed increased candidate engagement on these pages.

2. What prompted your decision to change how candidates were being treated? What data or evidence supported this change?

Our decision to revamp our candidate experience stemmed from the data we gathered throughout the journey of the CandE survey. This data revealed areas where we were falling short

as an organization in terms of providing a positive candidate experience. Specific issues included the timely response to candidate applications, maintaining periodic touchpoints with candidates, having more clarity on which codes we use for candidate dispositions also provided us the opportunity to review our data in more detail.

3. How did you garner support and commitment from your team and the wider organization? How did you emphasize the importance of the candidate's experience?

To build support and commitment within our team and organization, we shared the feedback we received from candidates during the surveys. This information allowed our team to identify opportunities for improvement and assess how these changes could positively impact how candidates perceive us as an employer and our overall employer brand.

4. How do you measure candidate experience, report on your recruitment process, and utilize this data to demonstrate fiscal impact and manage recruiter and hiring manager behaviors?

Since we have changed how we capture data on candidates, we are now in a better position to report to the business on the areas that we need to improve on. A deliverable for our team in 2024 will be to create a hiring dashboard.

2023 GLOBAL CANDE AWARD WINNERS

