



WHAT SETS CANDE AWARD WINNERS APART

2024 Candidate Experience (CandE)
Benchmark Research



CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE
BENCHMARK RESEARCH
& AWARDS PROGRAM SM

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CANDE WINNERS CONSISTENTLY DELIVER

Collectively, the top 10 rated Candidate Experience (CandE) Award Winners in 2024 in North America have earned 56 awards between them over the past 13 years, averaging nearly 6 awards each. One company is a first-time winner, but the rest have won multiple awards. Seven of the employers also won CandE Awards in the other regions we track: EMEA, APAC, and Latin America. These are all employers with above-average ratings in our annual benchmark research.

Why does it matter? It matters because these awards are solely based on the employers' candidate feedback and ratings via our annual benchmark research program. Most of the candidates that are surveyed are rejected candidates – 90% of them. [You can read more about the 2024 CandE Award Winners here.](#)

Pre-pandemic, we were measuring candidate experience in nothing but a global growth market, and for the most part, the sentiment ratings were consistently both positive and negative with little fluctuation. But then all bets were off after 2020, with lots of hiring market volatility since. In fact, the world has experienced significant challenges that have impacted the economy, job growth, candidate experience, and society in general (you can read more about these in The 2024 Business Impact of Candidate Experience brief).

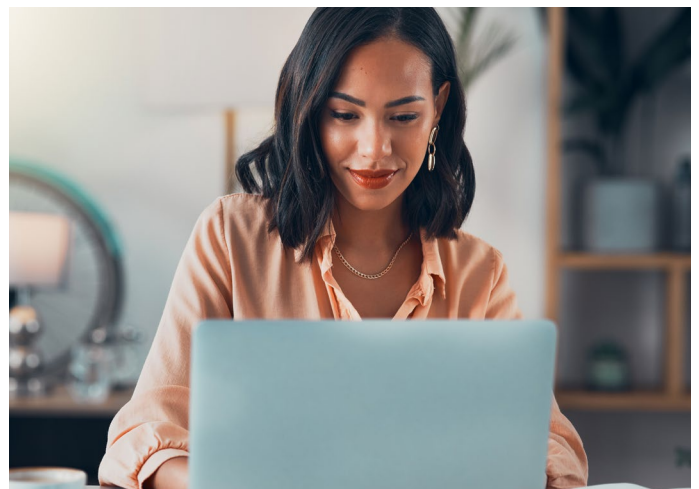
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CandE Winners consistently deliver a positive and fair candidate experience, something that's not easy to sustain over time for the majority of companies that have participated in our research. And with candidate resentment higher than ever – the percentage of candidates who won't engage a business or brand again due to a poor candidate experience – it's been harder than ever to sustain. However, there are those employers doing it every year, some year after year, and that's what this brief will explore further.

The following sections are part of this CandE Winner Executive Brief:

- Perception Gaps
- What's Up With CandE NPS?
- Contentment Is Down And Resentment Is Up
- Global CandE Benchmark Key NPS Ratings
- The CandE Score: Our Best Kept Stack Ranking Secret
- What Sets the Top CandE Award Winners Apart

Collectively, the top 10 rated Candidate Experience (CandE) Award Winners in 2024 in North America have earned 56 awards between them over the past 13 years, averaging nearly 6 awards each.



Perception Gaps

Each year we ask employers to self-assess their own candidate experience across our four key ratings – overall rating, how likely are candidates to apply again, how likely are candidates to refer others, and how likely are candidates to change their relationship status with the employers – and the candidate journey ratings from pre-application to onboarding. We then compare those to the actual candidate responses. We call these differences perception gaps – how employers see their recruiting delivery versus how their candidates say they’re experiencing it.

It’s important to note that we convert all our key ratings to the Net Promoter Score (NPS) scale of +100 to -100, but we changed the overall rating from a 5-point rating to a traditional 11-point rating. What we found is that, since the candidates had a bigger scale to choose from, it led to a much lower overall rating around the world. This still aligned with the usual negative skew we see with over 90% of the candidates not being hired.

What we found pre-pandemic was that the majority of employers rated themselves higher than their candidates in all four regions (North America, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America). But in 2020 and beyond, more employers across regions started rating themselves lower than their candidates on three of four key data points in North America. The same is true for all employers and for CandE Winners.

This trend varied in the other global regions that had smaller data sets of participating employers and responding candidates. This also all continued in 2024, with most North American employers rating themselves lower than their candidates, except for the overall rating, and with lots of variance in the other regions (see Figures 1-4). This includes the CandE Winners as well.

Figure 1. 2024 North American Key Ratings and Perception Gaps

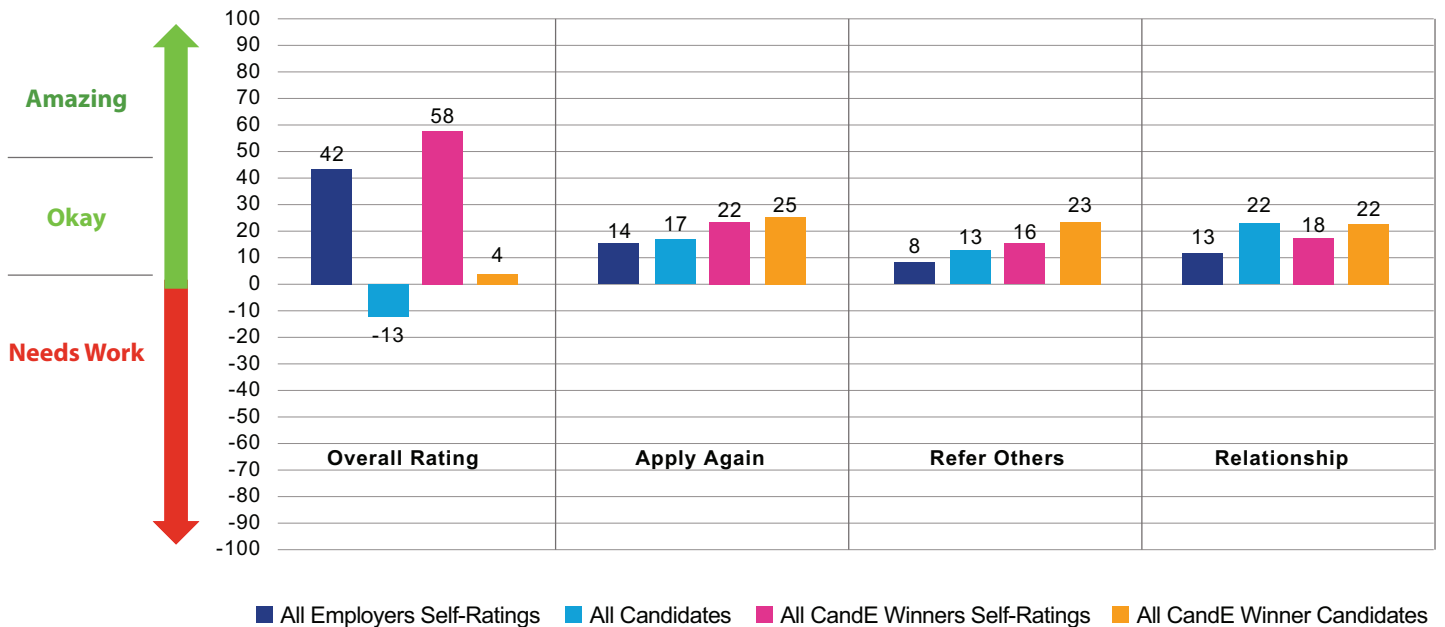


Figure 2. 2024 EMEA Key Ratings and Perception Gaps

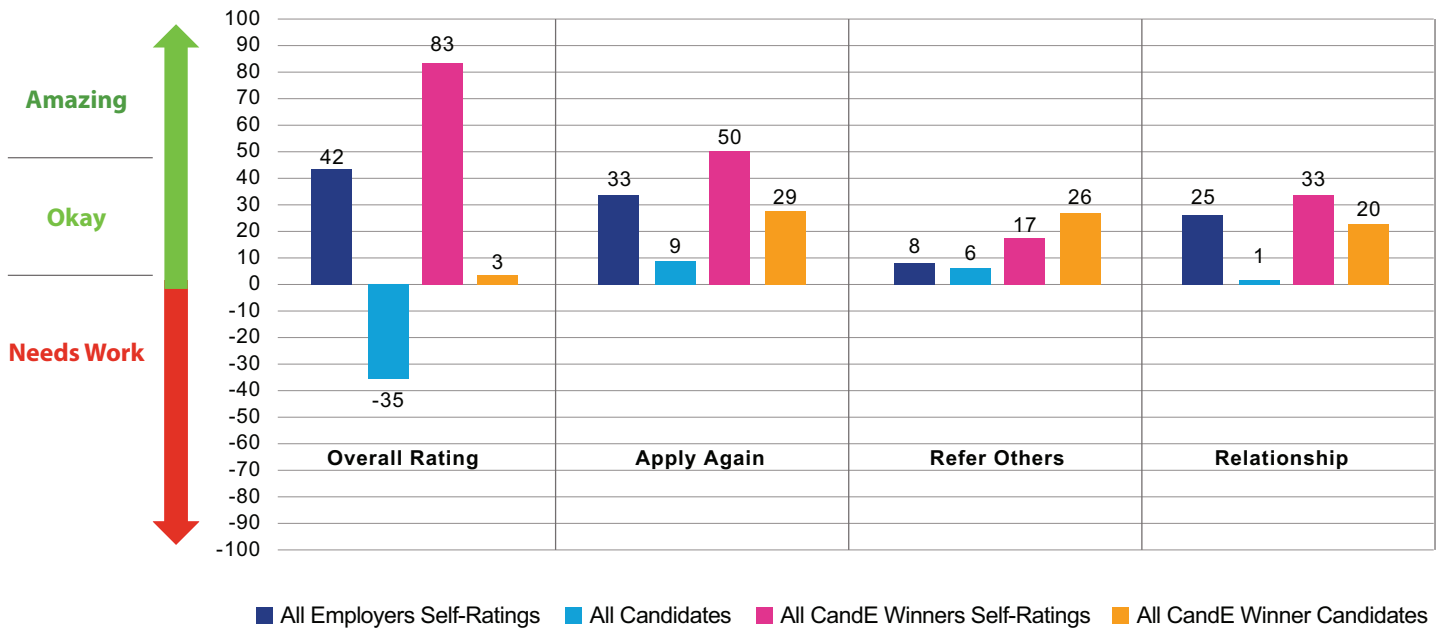


Figure 3. 2024 APAC Key Ratings and Perception Gaps

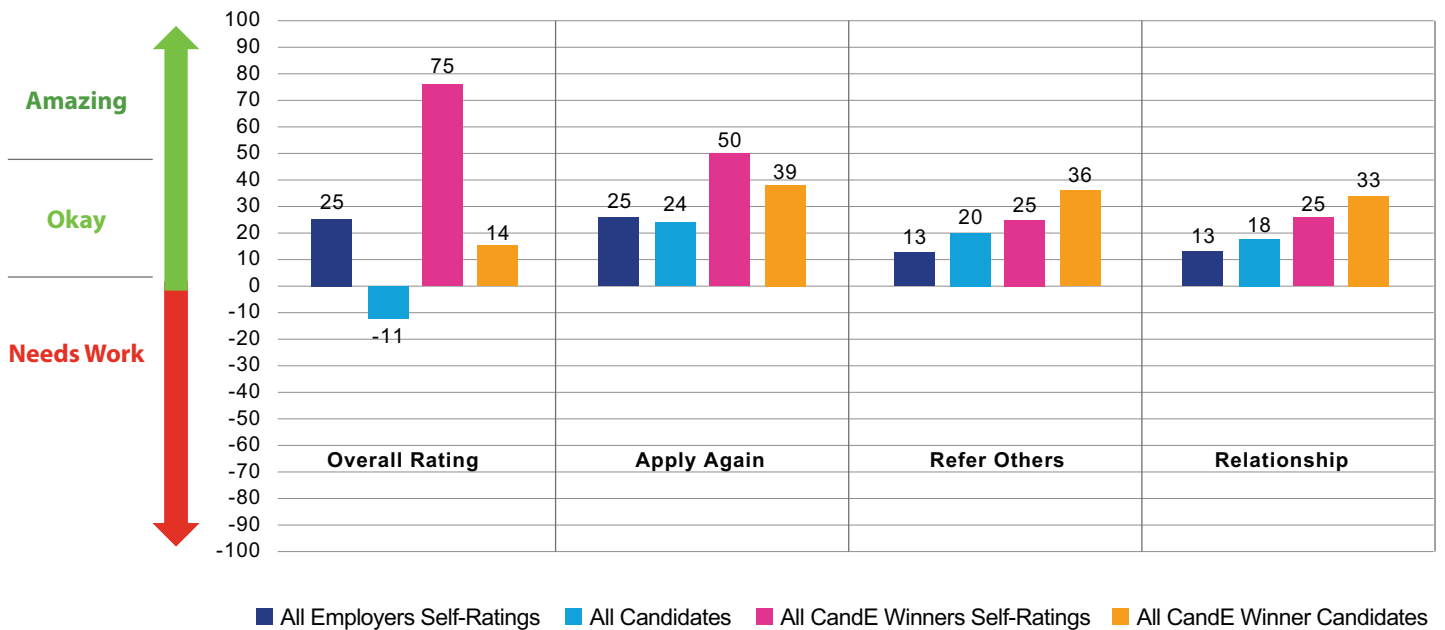
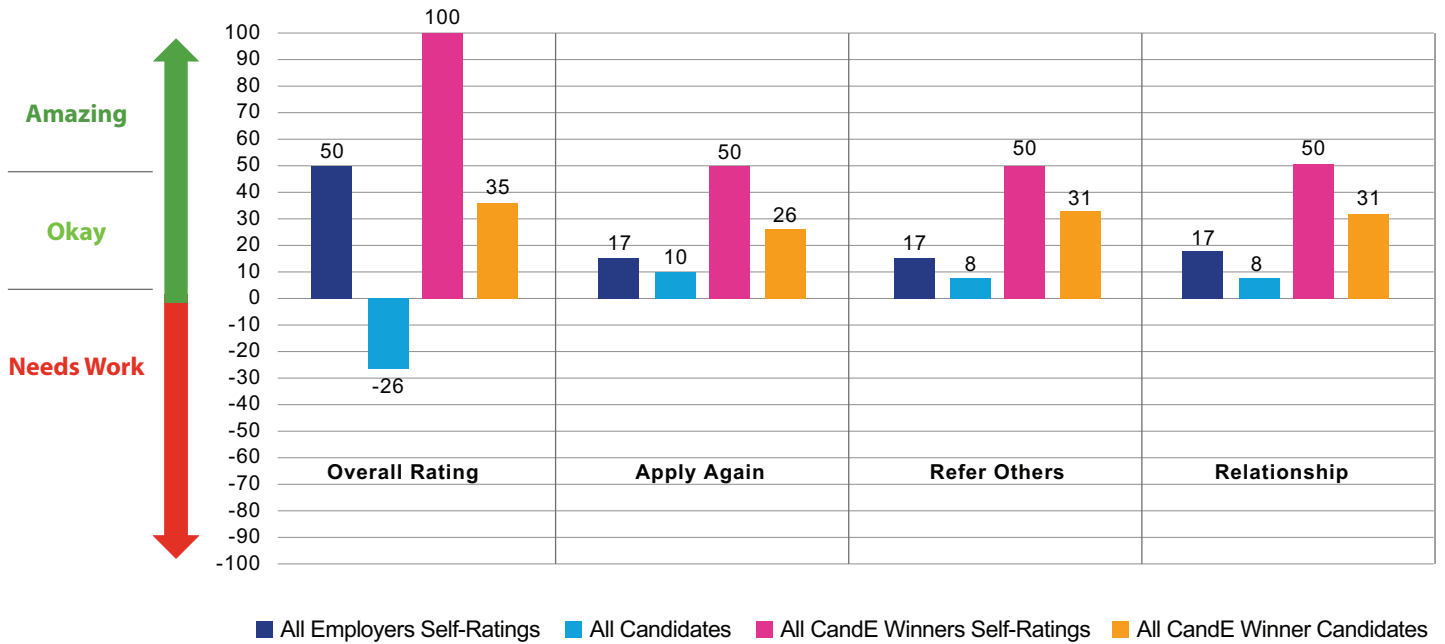


Figure 4. 2024 Latin America Key Ratings and Perception Gaps



With all the volatile economic realities over the past four years, impacting employers and candidates alike, it's not surprising to see the continued trend of employers rating themselves lower than their candidates did. We believe these reset expectations will most likely continue in the years to come.



What's Up With CandE NPS?

CandE NPS is based on the traditional Net Promoter Score (NPS) scale of +100 to -100. When converting the 11-point scale, also traditional NPS, you subtract the 0-6 scores from the 9-10 scores – with 0 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. For example, the 11-point scale looks like this:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

When converting a 4-point scale to NPS, you subtract the 1 score (lowest) from the 4 score (highest). For example, when we ask candidates how likely they are to refer others, the scale looks like this:

Definitely Not	Unlikely	Likely	Extremely Likely
1	2	3	4

The resulting score is the NPS. For a 5-point scale, you subtract the 1 and 2 scores (lowest) from the 4 and 5 scores (highest). For example, when we ask candidates how they would rate the interview process, the scale looks like this:

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Delighted
1	2	3	4	5

In traditional NPS, final scores are grouped as follows, based on their responses:

- **PROMOTERS (score 9-10)** are loyal enthusiasts who will keep buying and referring others, fueling growth.
- **PASSIVES (score 7-8)** are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who are vulnerable to competitive offerings.
- **DETRACTORS (score 0-6)** are unhappy customers who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

Subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters yields the NPS, which can range from a low of -100 (if every customer is a detractor) to a high of 100 (if every customer is a promoter).

Because our benchmark research has a very negative skew due to the fact that most job candidates don't get hired for any given job they're applying to, we look at the converted NPS ratings a little differently. We change how we group our CandE benchmark research NPS results as follows:

- **AMAZING (scores above 50)** are loyal candidates who will most likely keep referring others based on their experience.
- **OKAY (scores between 0-50)** are candidates who are satisfied but may or may not be enthusiastic about referring others based on their experience.
- **NOT SO GOOD (negative scores)** are unhappy candidates who can damage your brand and impede growth through negative word of mouth.

Another way we review perception gaps each year is to compare how employers self-rate their candidate journeys – from pre-application (research stage) to onboarding – and how candidates rate their experiences across the candidate journey. These ratings are all 5-point scales that are also easily converted to the NPS rating scale, but for reviewing the perception gaps across the candidate journey, we keep them in the 5-point scale.

Like the perception gaps in the key ratings above, what we found pre-pandemic was that the majority of employers rated themselves higher than their candidates in all four regions (North America, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America). But in 2020 and beyond, more employers across regions started rating themselves lower than their candidates across the candidate journey in North America. The same is true for all employers and for CandE Winners in all regions.

But what we're looking for with the candidate journey ratings is what we call an alignment of awareness. Meaning, even if the employer rated themselves higher than their candidates at any stage, the differences are smaller and it's the alignment that matters the most. That there's an awareness of how candidates respond based on what's being delivered at each stage.

It's important to note that these alignments alone don't guarantee a positive and fair candidate experience – or a CandE Award – but they are part of a comprehensive approach to improve the entire set of recruiting and hiring experiences.

The alignments do vary in the other global regions that had smaller data sets of participating employers and responding candidates, especially in EMEA. But as you can see, the 2024 alignments are mostly aligned between all employers and candidates, and aligned between CandE Winner employers and candidates (see Figures 5-8).

And the tighter the alignment, the more consistent and timely are expectation setting and candidate communications overall across the candidate journey. It's important to note that these alignments alone don't guarantee a positive and fair candidate experience – or a CandE Award – but they are part of a comprehensive approach to improve the entire set of recruiting and hiring experiences.

Figure 5. 2024 North America Candidate Journey Ratings and Perception Gaps

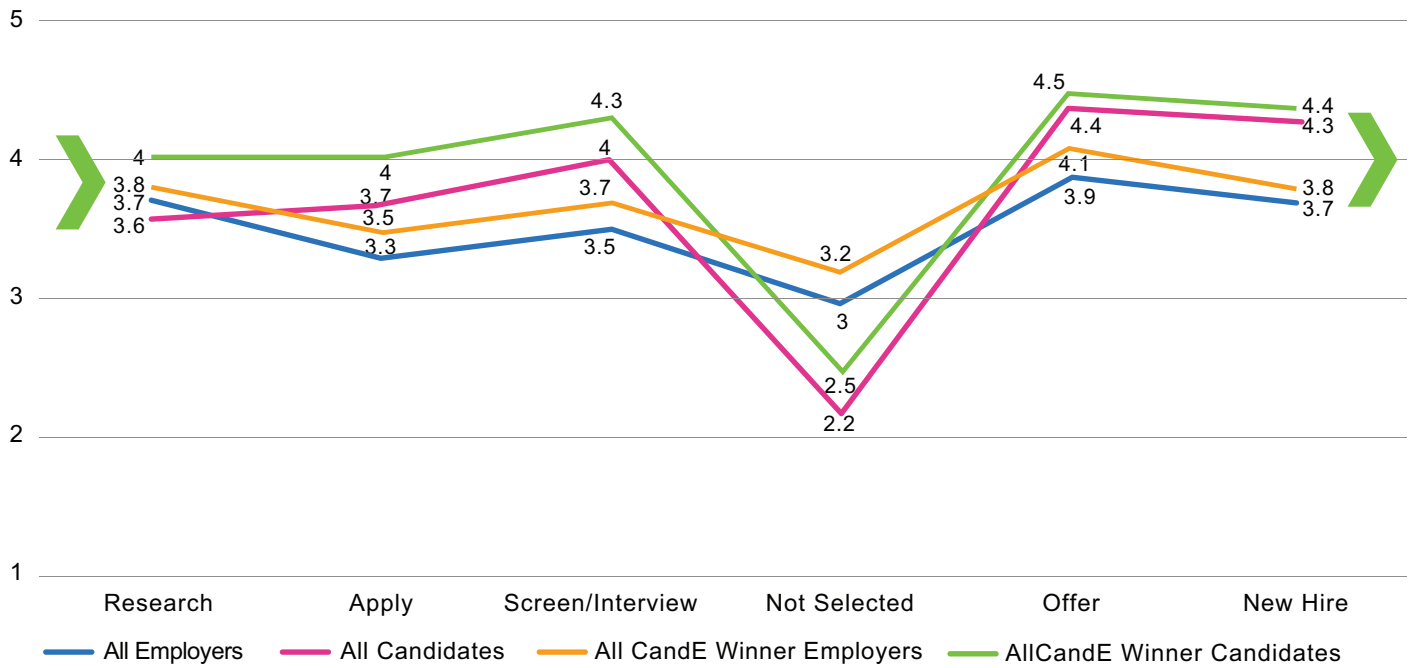


Figure 6. 2024 EMEA Candidate Journey Ratings and Perception Gaps

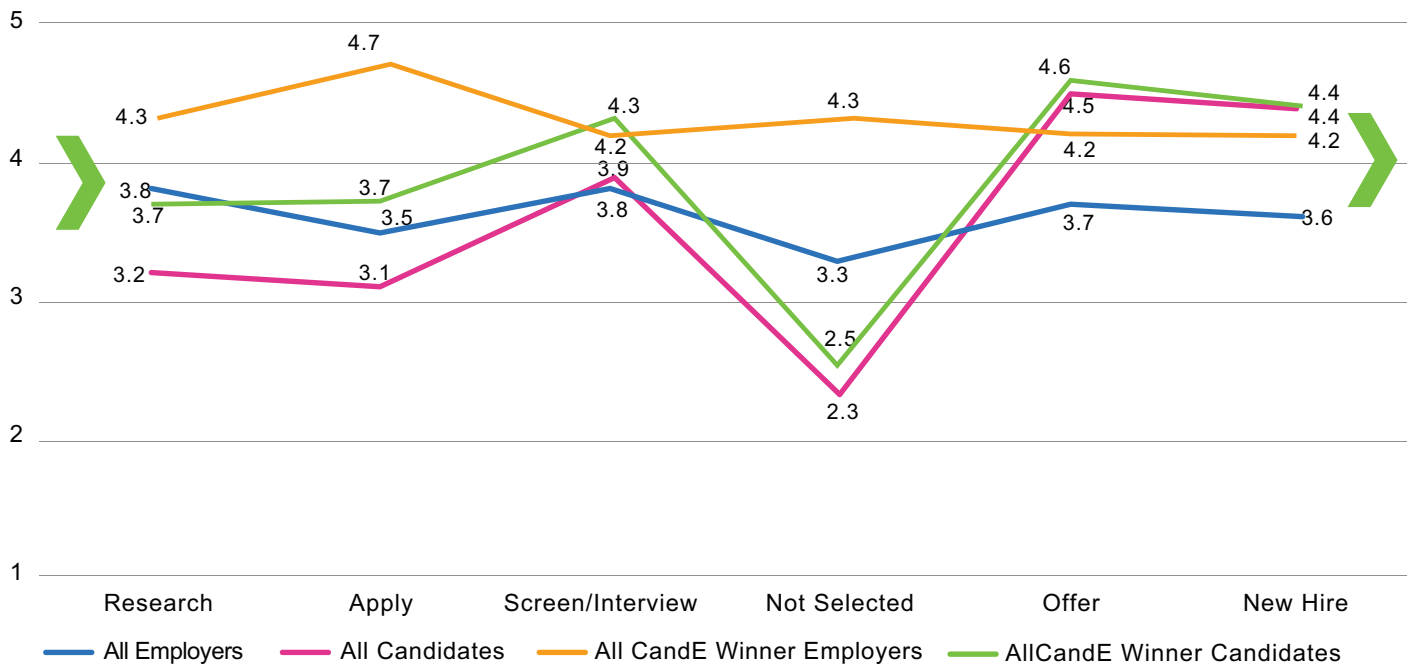


Figure 7. 2024 APAC Candidate Journey Ratings and Perception Gaps

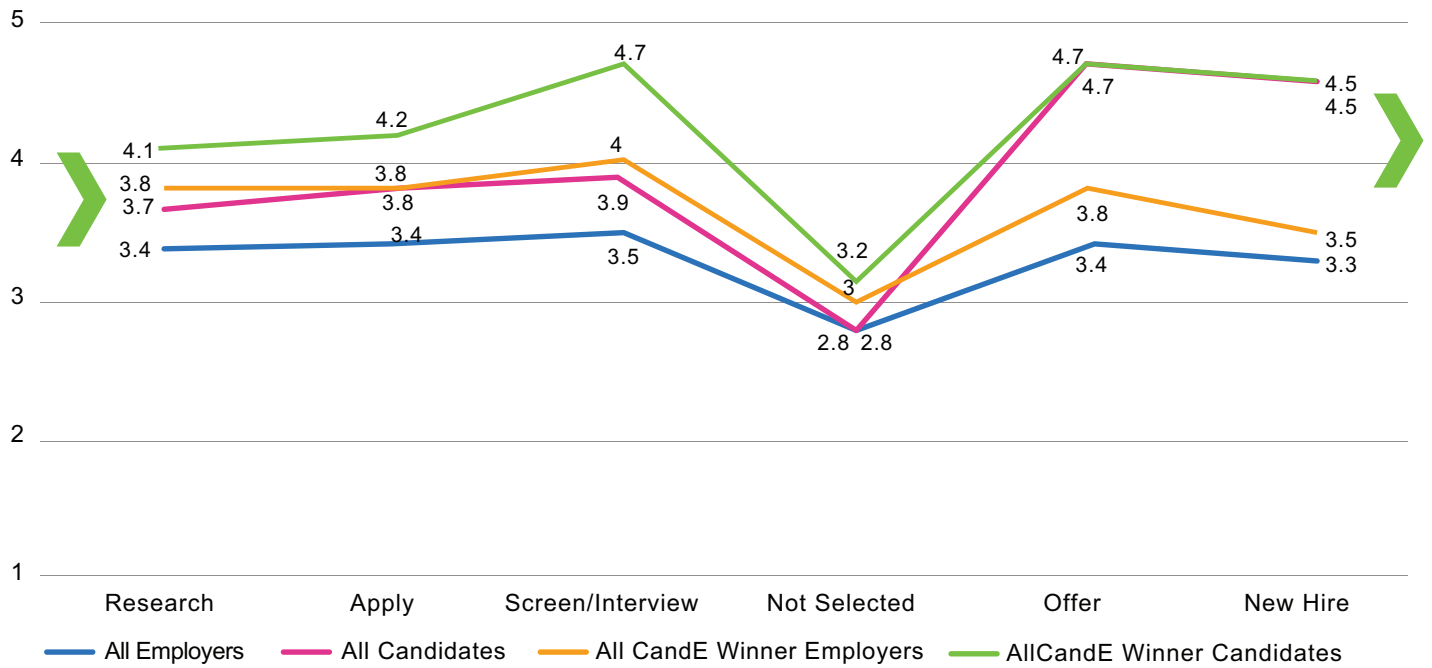
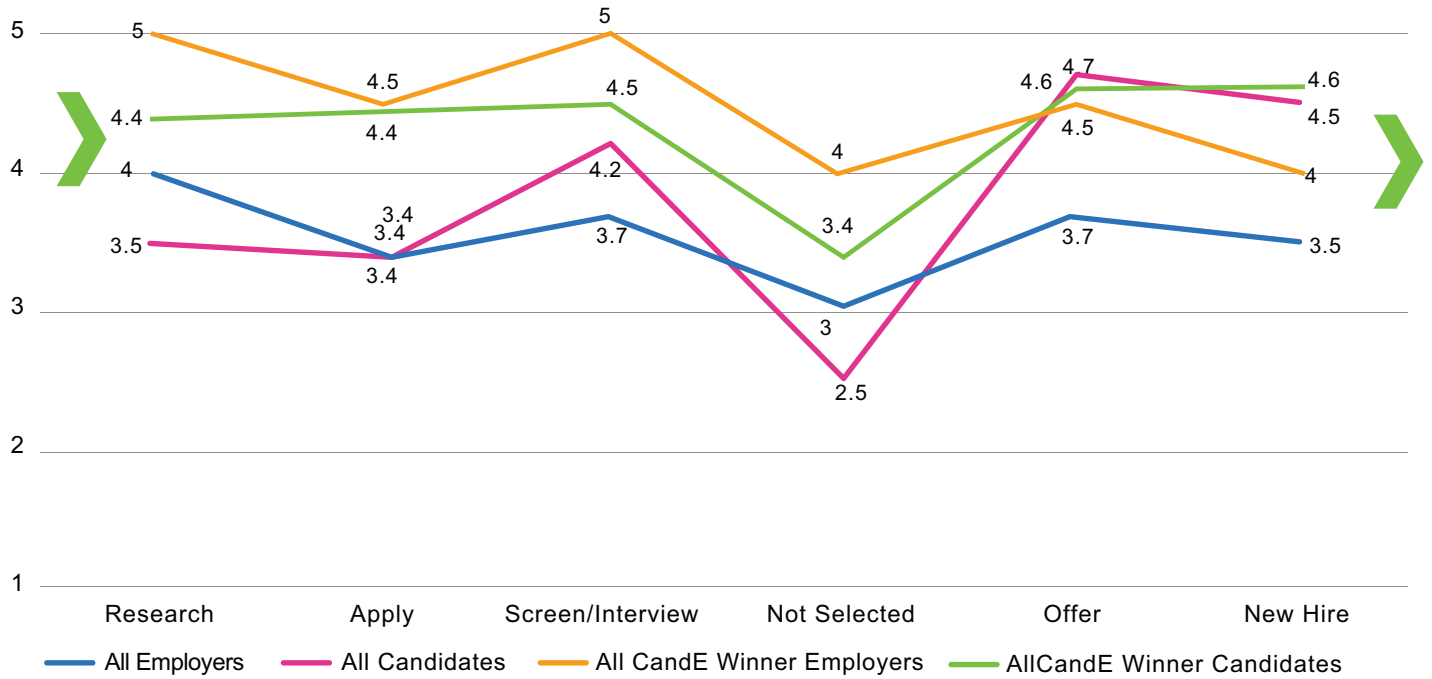


Figure 8. 2024 Latin America Candidate Journey Ratings and Perception Gaps

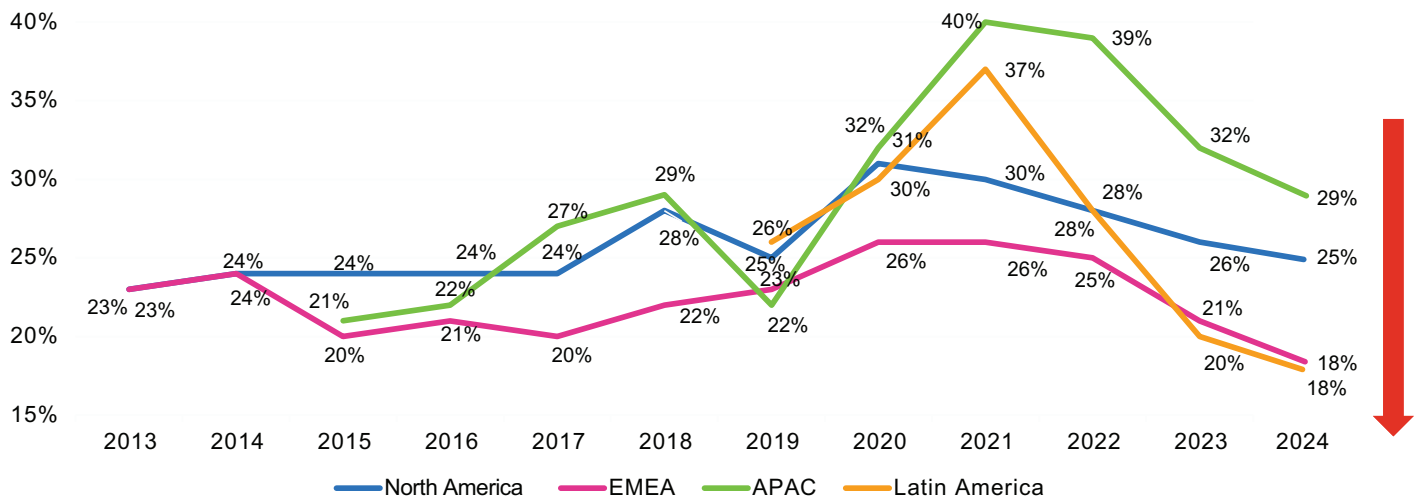


Contentment Is Down And Resentment Is Up

Every year, the CandE Benchmark Research Program asks 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)?" This is one of the four key ratings we also base our final CandE Score ratings on when we do our final data analyses and determine which employers win our coveted CandE Winners.

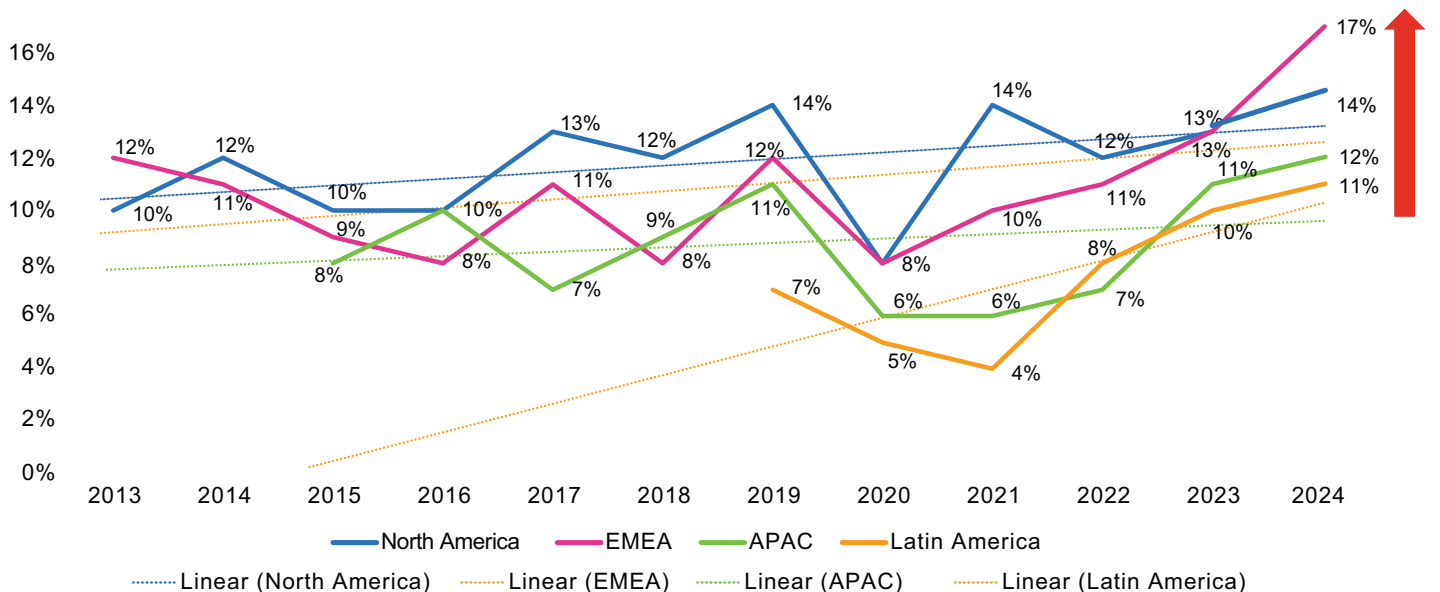
Those candidates who said they had a great experience overall, what we're now calling the **Candidate Contentment Rate**, have been on the decline for the past few years around the world (see Figure 9). These are candidates who are more willing to apply again, refer others, make purchases if it's a consumer-based company and be a brand advocate going forward, even if they didn't get hired.

Figure 9. The Candidate Contentment Rate



Conversely, the Candidate Resentment Rate has been on the rise globally and the trendlines are all going up, something we don't like to see in our benchmark research data (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. The Candidate Resentment Rate



In fact, this year candidate resentment is higher than ever in our benchmark research – resentment meaning candidates who are no longer willing to engage a business and a brand based on a negative candidate experience – no longer willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate, and/or make purchases.

Around the world in 2024, the two industries that had the highest resentment rates were Technology and Finance & Insurance (see Table 1), but there were many other industries that also had above-average resentment rates including Education, Manufacturing, Pharma, and Hospitality.

Table 1. 2024 Candidate Experience Resentment Rates

	2024 Average Resentment Rates	2024 Technology	2024 Finance & Insurance
North America	14%	25%	20%
EMEA	17%	19%	20%
APAC	12%	12%	14%
Latin America	11%	13%	9%



Global CandE Benchmark Key NPS Ratings

When you compare all the 2024 regions’ key CandE net promoter score (NPS) ratings (overall, apply again, refer others, relationship) over the past three years, it’s again clear that North America, EMEA, and Latin America candidate experiences were more negative, while APAC skewed more positive (see Table 2). This is also the second year that the Latin America key ratings looked a lot more like North America and EMEA than we’ve seen in the past, and again confirms that the global candidate experience continues to deteriorate, because even the APAC ratings are down from the past two years.

When you compare all the 2024 regions’ key CandE net promoter score (NPS) ratings (overall, apply again, refer others, relationship) over the past three years, it’s again clear that North America, EMEA, and Latin America candidate experiences were more negative, while APAC still skewed more positive

Table 2. Overall Global CandE Benchmark Key NPS Ratings

North America	2024	2023	2022
CandE Score	17	19	20
Overall Rating*	-13/29	28	30
Apply Again	17	18	19
Refer Others	13	15	18
Relationship	11	13	16
Hired	77	73	74
Resentment	14%	13%	14%

EMEA	2024	2023	2022
CandE Score	19	26	27
Overall Rating*	-36/4	13	25
Apply Again	9	12	20
Refer Others	9	9	18
Relationship	8	8	14
Hired	87	78	77
Resentment	17%	13%	11%

APAC	2024	2023	2022
CandE Score	29	29	31
Overall Rating*	-11/32	38	51
Apply Again	23	25	37
Refer Others	20	22	35
Relationship	18	20	32
Hired	85	79	83
Resentment	12%	11%	7%

Latin America	2024	2023	2022
CandE Score	29	25	29
Overall Rating*	-26/18	13	31
Apply Again	10	15	23
Refer Others	8	13	25
Relationship	17	10	20
Hired	88	85	87
Resentment	11%	10%	8%

*Overall Rating is now the traditional 0-10 NPS rating and will be lower than our previous 5-point NPS conversion.

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. One of the main reasons for the positive historical skews in APAC and Latin America is because culturally many candidates are less likely to share negative feedback; they're not comfortable sharing negative feedback. Not in every country in each region, but in many of them.

Positive skews or not, usually the only time companies will see NPS ratings in the 50s or higher in our annual benchmark research are from candidates who were made offers and were hired, because again, those are the only happy customers in the recruitment process.

We've been converting our primary 4- and 5-point scale ratings, and now the revised 11-point scale overall rating, into traditional NPS ratings that fall onto the scale of +100 to -100 (see Figure 11). However, unlike traditional consumer-based NPS that identifies "promoters" and "detractors", we focus on the difference between positive and negative NPS scores, with scores above "0" being "okay", because of the major negative skew of 90%+ candidates not being hired.

What's important to keep in mind here is that the sheer number of candidates who employers reject during the recruiting process can quickly impact the business and the brand in both positive and negative ways (applying again, referring others, brand advocacy, and customer behavior).

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Figure 11. CandE Net Promoter Score (NPS)



CandE NPS Ratings

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

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 very employers screening and hiring them. 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.

The CandE Score: Our Best Kept Stack Ranking Secret

What's a CandE Score? We've been conducting our benchmark research for over 13 years now, and in the early years, we tinkered with our ratings methodology and how we would differentiate above average candidate experience delivery. In 2015 and 2016, our methodology evolved when we created a CandE Score calculation that included the first four key ratings in the candidate survey (see Table 3).

Our CandE Score is a unique rating in our industry, as there is no other comprehensive cumulative NPS-like rating that captures candidate sentiment and perception of fairness like it. Ultimately, the CandE Score is an NPS rating that falls on the +100 to -100 scale.



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Table 3. CandE Score Key Ratings

<p>Rate your OVERALL experience as a candidate with COMPANY NAME where the highest possible rating is 10 and the lowest rating is 0.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-point scale
<p>Based on your recruiting experience with COMPANY NAME, how likely are you to APPLY AGAIN in the future?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitely Not - My experience was very negative. 2. Unlikely 3. Likely 4. Extremely Likely - My experience was very positive.
<p>Based on your experience with COMPANY NAME, on the scale below, how likely are you to REFER someone to work at COMPANY NAME?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definitely Not - My experience was very negative 2. Unlikely 3. Likely 4. Extremely Likely - My experience was very positive
<p>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)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negative - I will definitely take my alliance, product purchases, relationship and/or referrals somewhere else 2. Neutral 3. Pretty good 4. Great candidate experience - I will definitely increase my relationship through brand alliance, product purchases, networking and/or making referrals

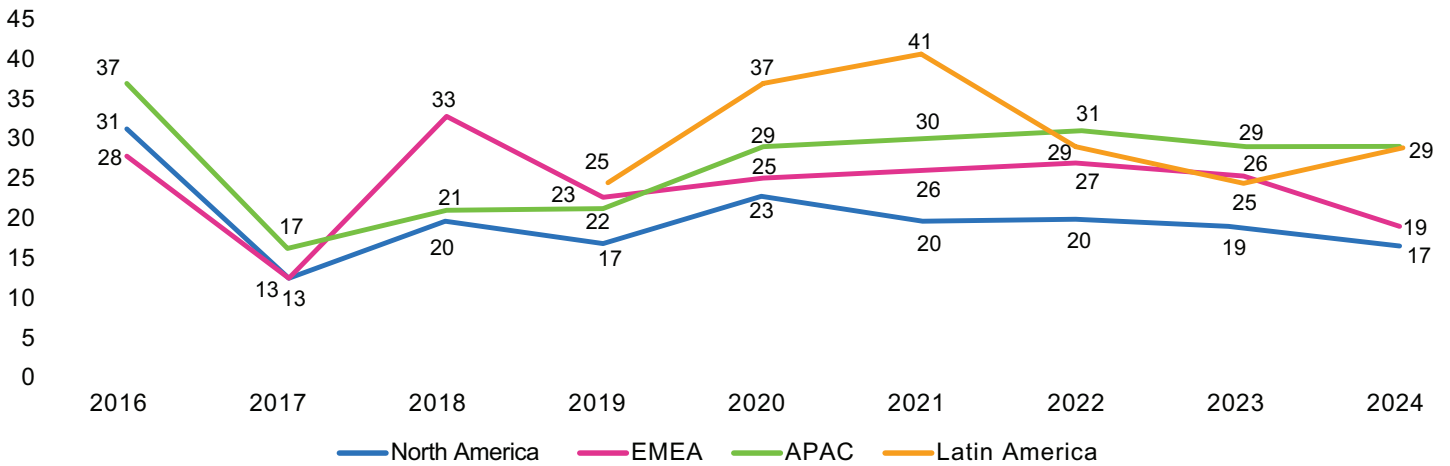
It's important to note that the CandE Score is normalized to a standard ratio of those "Not Hired" versus those "Hired" (80/20) to eliminate any "halo" effects. We recommend that employers only include up to 20% (or fewer) of their hired candidates in the survey process. The "Hired" percentage could be higher than 20%, but it would affect the final CandE score and ranking, primarily because we weigh the calculation more heavily on those who were "Not Hired" – always the bulk of candidates for employers year after year. The simplified CandE Score calculation is as follows:

$$20\% \text{ Hired} * (\text{Apply} + \text{Refer} + \text{Overall} + \text{Relationship NPS}) / 4 + 80\% \text{ DNK} * (\text{Apply} + \text{Refer} + \text{Overall} + \text{Relationship NPS}) / 4 * 100 = \text{CandE Score}$$

After the CandE Scores are calculated for all participating employers, we then stack rank those ratings and select the winners that have CandE Scores that are on or above average in each region (North America, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America). Figure 12 shows the average CandE Scores in each region since 2016.



Figure 12. Average CandE Scores By Region



To qualify for a CandE Award, each participating employer has to commit to a specific, statistically significant number of candidate responses and a set standard for the proportion of randomly selected respondents who were not hired. This means each company has to first meet a minimum qualification for responses based on the size of the candidate population plus a minimum percentage of those not hired. These candidate responses include multiple touch points from the pre-application to onboarding.

Again, the CandE Score is the definitive recruiting industry single rating that captures candidate sentiment, perception of fairness, and their willingness to engage your business and your brand.

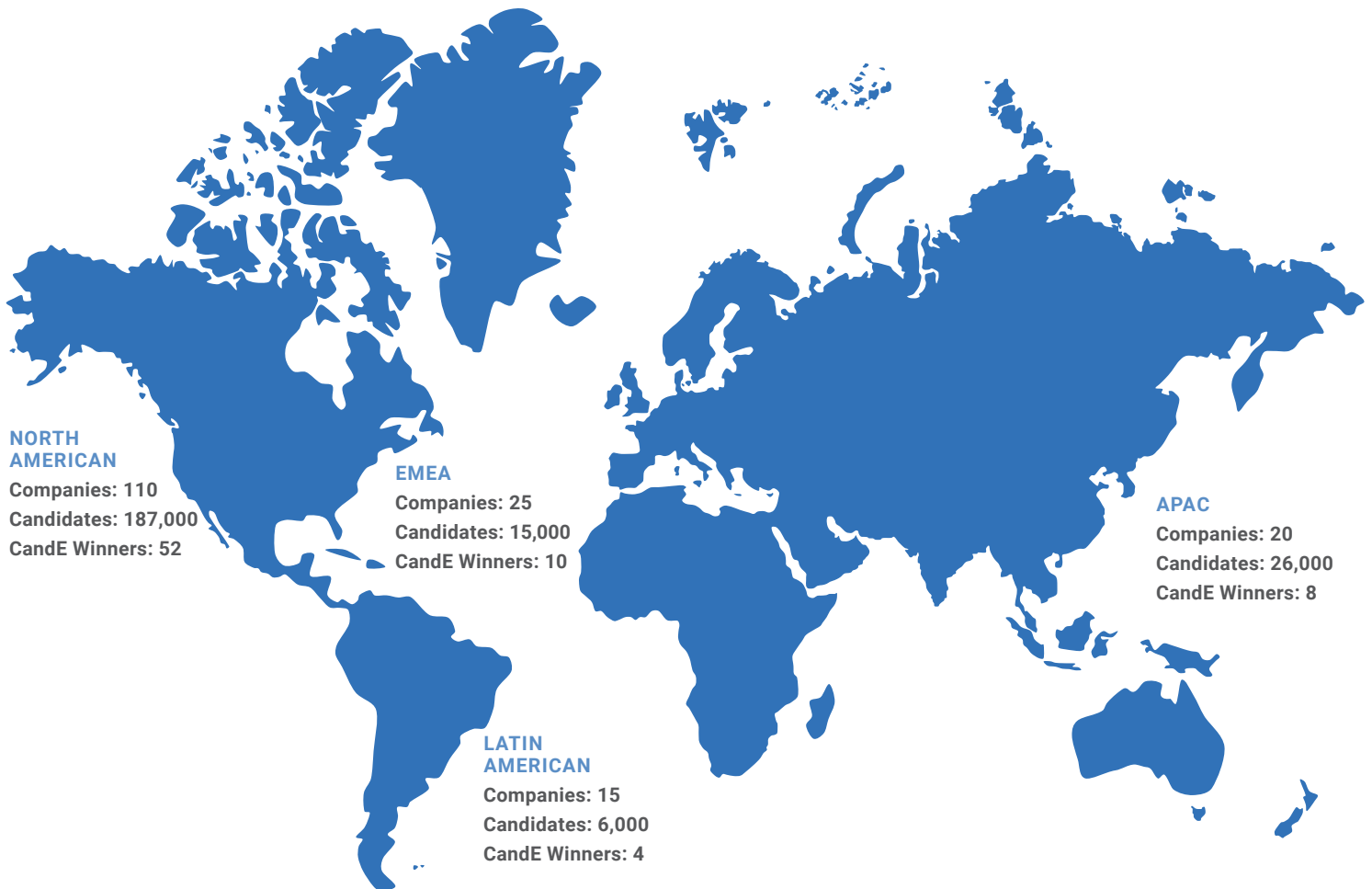
To qualify for a CandE Award, each participating employer has to commit to a specific, statistically significant number of candidate responses and a set standard for the proportion of randomly selected respondents who were not hired.



What Sets the Top CandE Award Winners Apart

Every year there are those employers that have above average CandE Scores, and those are the employers that win our coveted CandE Awards. There were 62 unique employers from around the world that won CandE Awards in 2024 (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. 2024 Global CandE Benchmark Totals



The Most Innovative Candidate Experience Improvement Awards

In addition to our annual CandE Awards, we also gave away new awards in 2024 – the Most Innovative Candidate Experience Improvement Awards. We had nearly 30 award entries from this year’s CandE Winners. While the primary CandE Awards are based on direct candidate experience feedback and ratings, these new awards were reviewed by our team. It was tough to decide, too. But in the end, we selected five employers that had stand-out improvements that were innovative, unique, and validated with data that we will highlight in this brief.

D2L



Pay Transparency:

D2L advertises a narrow base salary range rather than a wide range to provide an accurate representation of what to expect, and this applies to all role-levels such as co-op, entry-level, and senior positions. They’ve seen a reduction in offer declines due to compensation – from February to December 2023, they had 11 compensation-related offer declines, whereas we have only had 6 compensation-related offer declines in the same time period this year (post-implementation), a 45% decrease.

Pre-boarding / Onboarding:

Because companies are having to constantly re-recruit to retain, D2L conducts surveys and live interactive interviews with new hires at the 30-day mark to gain insights into and improve upon their pre-boarding and initial onboarding experiences. Based on the feedback, they are now updating their enablement documentation for managers regarding pre-boarding communications with new hires and preparing new hire onboarding plans and training resources. They also have an 87% offer acceptance rate to-date this fiscal year.

Based on the final CandE Score, we stack rank the companies that have above-average ratings. Each year, the CandE Award Winners exemplify best practices for improving recruiting, hiring, and the candidate experiences.

It’s even more evident in the highest rated companies across regions, employer sizes, and industries. Each year, we look closer at the top 10 Candidate Experience (CandE) Award Winners in North America by overall ranking, and the top 10 by employer size, in addition to the highest-rated companies in the other regions we track.

We segment CandE Winners (and all employers) as follows: Small 501-2,500 employees; Medium 2,501-10,000; and Large 10,001+.

Broken down by industry, the greatest concentration of CandE Winners overall globally included healthcare, finance & insurance, technology, manufacturing, and hospitality.

The top 10 CandE Award Winners in North America across company sizes by industry include healthcare, finance & insurance, manufacturing, energy & utilities, consumer goods, and technology.

The following pages will highlight what sets this elite group apart this year, including:

- Recruiter Accountability
- Recruiting Technologies
- Timely Dispositions
- Waiting on Next Steps
- Structured Interviews and Interview Fairness
- Giving Finalist Feedback

Recruiter Accountability

Recruiting professionals have been through a lot the past few years since the pandemic, and 2024 continued the recruiting disruptions and downsizing. Recruiters are still the primary face of candidate experience, however, and the highest rated employers in our research are more likely to align recruiter performance with candidate experience.

The major exception this year is Latin America, although the total number of CandE Winners is much smaller overall, only four total, and 50% said they align recruiter performance with candidate experience (see Table 4).

Using candidate experience as a signifier of performance demonstrates how important it is and incentivizes recruiters to maintain a good experience throughout the candidate journey.

Recruiters are still the primary face of candidate experience, however, and the highest rated employers in our research are more likely to align recruiter performance with candidate experience.

Table 4. Aligning Recruiter Performance With Candidate Experience

Employer Segment	% Aligning Recruiter Performance With Candidate Experience
North America	
Top 10 Overall	90%
All CandE Winners	76%
All Employers	65%
Top 10 Large	80%
All Large	61%
Top 10 Medium	80%
All Medium	73%
Top 10 Small	80%
All Small	67%
EMEA	
All CandE Winners	100%
All Employers	83%
APAC	
All CandE Winners	75%
All Employers	75%
Latin America	
All CandE Winners	50%
All Employers	83%

2024 Top-Rated Global CandE Winners

Top 10 Overall North America CandE Winners

1. Syndax Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
2. Hoag Hospital
3. Virtusa
4. D2L
5. Deluxe
6. Family Care Center
7. Ingevity
8. Atmos Energy
9. Conagra Brands
10. NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital

Top 10 Large North America CandE Winners (10,001+ employees)

1. Conagra Brands
2. NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital
3. Northwell Health
4. Ford Motor Company
5. WM
6. Clean Harbors
7. KeyBank
8. Enterprise Mobility
9. GuideWell
10. Schneider Electric

Top 10 Medium North America CandE Winners (2,501-10,000 employees)

1. Hoag Hospital
2. Deluxe
3. Atmos Energy
4. E. & J. Gallo Winery
5. Holland America Princess
6. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
7. Mettler Toledo
8. Sorenson Communications
9. Smile Brands, Inc
10. Fannie Mae

Recruiting Technologies

The highest rated employers this year tend to leverage recruiting technologies like texting, interview scheduling, and/or artificial intelligence (AI) embedded in their recruiting tech (chat bots, conversational AI, matching and ranking, etc.) to improve recruiting and the candidate experience, more than all other participating companies in our benchmark research. These technologies can help improve communication and feedback loops with candidates and help with identifying qualified candidates.

All of the top 10 overall CandE Winners utilize some form of AI recruiting technologies. 80%+ of the large and medium CandE Winners are also more likely to utilize texting, interview scheduling, and other AI recruiting technologies in North America, with large employers leading the pack this year. Of the top 10 small CandE Winners, only 50%-60% said they utilize texting and interview scheduling, but most do utilize AI recruiting technologies. Also, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America CandE Winners utilize AI recruiting technologies more often than all other participating companies.

It is important to note, however, that it's still a relatively low percentage of companies in our benchmark research utilizing conversational AI for chat bot communications (10% on average), but a higher percentage utilizing generative AI to help with job descriptions and other forms of recruiting content (50% on average). Less than 20% of job candidates on average said that they use generative AI to help them with their resumes and cover letters.

The highest rated employers this year tend to leverage recruiting technologies like texting, interview scheduling, and/or artificial intelligence (AI) embedded in their recruiting tech (chat bots, conversational AI, matching and ranking, etc.) to improve recruiting and the candidate experience, more than all other participating companies in our benchmark research.

Top 10 Small North America CandE Winners (501-2,500 employees)

1. Syndax Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
2. Virtusa
3. D2L
4. Family Care Center
5. Ingevity
6. YKK AP America Inc.
7. Auburn-Washburn USD 437
8. Room & Board
9. Entrada Therapeutics
10. Crum & Forster

EMEA CandE Winners

1. Virtusa
2. Enterprise Mobility
3. UST
4. Delaware North
5. Syneos Health
6. Mettler Toledo
7. Societe Generale
8. Avanade
9. Schneider Electric
10. Flex

APAC CandE Winners

1. TTEC
2. Virtusa
3. Persistent Systems Ltd
4. Intel
5. IDP Education Limited
6. Flex
7. Schneider Electric
8. Avanade

Latin America CandE Winners

1. Messer Colombia & Chile
2. Messer Brazil
3. Schneider Electric
4. Avanade

Avanade and Schneider Electric won in all 4 regions!

The Most Innovative Candidate Experience Improvement Awards



NORTHWELL HEATH

Career Coaching:

Northwell Health's Coffee and Careers is a monthly careers event that provides an opportunity for individuals (offered to current employees and/or external candidates) to meet with a talent acquisition specialist for an in-person or virtual career coaching session, to provide them with career path guidance, resume review, exploration of clinical and non-clinical opportunities and/or more. They completed 736 total coaching sessions from April-August this year.

Community Intervention:

Northwell has increased partnerships with community-based groups, faith-based organizations, and libraries in underserved communities to help inform and prepare individuals for employment, as well as introduce new job training programs. Since October 2023, there have been 321 participants across Harlem, Staten Island, Jamaica, Corona/Elmhurst, Brentwood, Central Islip, and Huntington (the Dolan Center) and 73 offers accepted for Northwell careers.

Timely Dispositions

For the past few years, the highest rated employers have been more consistent and timely with their candidate 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 fluctuated and even decreased. Leaner recruiting teams, increased volume of candidate applications, and inconsistent utilization of recruiting technologies have elongated the timeliness of rejecting unqualified candidates.

For example, less than half of the top 10 North America CandE Winners said their disposition within 3-5 days in 2023, and in 2024, it's only 50%. It's still slightly higher for all CandE Winners compared to all other participating companies – 66% versus 63% – but it's less than half for the top 10 large North American employers. However, for the top 10 medium and small employers, 80%+ said they disposition within 3-5 days. The mix of participating employers does change each year, but again, 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, and while it has stretched beyond 3-5 days, CandE Winners are still more consistently dispositioning unqualified candidates within 1-2 weeks. This is true for CandE Winners in EMEA, APAC, and Latin America as well.

For the past few years, the highest rated employers have been more consistent and timely with their candidate dispositions.

The Most Innovative Candidate Experience Improvement Awards

ROOM & BOARD

Room&Board

Open Req Threshold:

Room & Board created a process for putting newly approved requisitions “on recruiting hold” when their requisition workload is high. They collaborate closely with their leaders to prioritize these roles, ensuring that as capacity becomes available, they focus on the most critical positions first. This approach not only helps them manage their workload effectively but also enhances the overall candidate experience by allowing them to dedicate the necessary time and resources to each search. Their candidate ranking went from 35th place in 2023 to 17th in 2024. Another significant impact has been a recruiter’s capacity to identify applicants to nurture for future hiring needs, decreasing time to fill from a standard 9 weeks, down to 3 weeks on average.

Actionable Insights:

Room & Board also enhanced their ATS dashboard to empower recruiters with actionable insights for prioritizing candidate outreach more effectively. The updated dashboard highlights candidates nearing the 5-day follow-up deadline after applying, as well as those who are “stalled” in the workflow without any recent activity. There has been a significant reduction in the time spent on administrative tasks, which has freed up recruiters to focus on building meaningful relationships with candidates.



Waiting on Next Steps

Even with the fluctuations in dispositioning unqualified job candidates, more CandE Winners are keeping fewer candidates waiting to hear back after they apply, another key differentiator of a positive candidate experience. The longer candidates have to wait, the more negative their experience becomes. Keeping candidates in the loop helps them see where they stand and demonstrates respect for their time and efforts. In fact, all CandE Winners in North America keep 60% fewer candidates waiting on next steps 2+ months after applying (see Table 5).

Even with the fluctuations in dispositioning unqualified job candidates, more CandE Winners are keeping fewer candidates waiting to hear back after they apply, another key differentiator of a positive candidate experience.

Table 5. The % of Candidates Waiting on Next Steps 2+ Months After Applying

Employer Segment	% Waiting 2+ Months
North America	
Top 10 Overall	13%
All CandE Winners	13%
All Employers	24%
Top 10 Large	13%
All Large	31%
Top 10 Medium	21%
All Medium	47%
Top 10 Small	28%
All Small	31%
EMEA	
All CandE Winners	26%
All Employers	53%
APAC	
All CandE Winners	39%
All Employers	42%
Latin America	
All CandE Winners	18%
All Employers	48%

CandE Winners globally keep fewer candidates waiting, although the differences vary across size and region. As mentioned above, the increase of applicants across industries combined with the decreased recruiting team sizes has contributed to the deterioration of timely dispositions and how many candidates are waiting to hear back. The top 10 small North American CandE Winners definitely had more candidates waiting, as did CandE Winners in APAC. However, this surprisingly didn't increase candidate resentment, which remains much lower for CandE Winners than all other participating companies (9% versus 14% in North America, for example). This is mostly likely due to brand affinity and the consistency across the candidate journey CandE Winners are delivering.



The Most Innovative Candidate Experience Improvement Awards



SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

Internal Candidate Experience:

This was one of the most strategic, important, and critical improvements for Schneider Electric in North America. The internal candidate experience has an impact beyond the talent acquisition function, impacting the retention, engagement, and development of our employees.

Technology Improvement: They collaborated with the global talent acquisition team to connect 2 Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), which resulted in a smoother application process for candidates and an enhanced candidate management experience for recruiters and hiring managers.

Change Management and People Coaching: A deep and strong change management initiative was undertaken to drive awareness and ownership for the internal candidate pool. This involved empathetic leadership coaching to emphasize the importance and impact of internal candidates, focusing on retention and career growth.

Candidate-Centric Approach: The strategy emphasized a candidate-centric approach, acknowledging the current market trends that place candidates in the driver's seat. The commitment to respond to no more than 25% of candidates waiting to hear back highlights the organization's respect for candidate time and interest.

The most impressive improvement was the transformation of the internal candidate experience. For the same period, the NPS score went from 41.1 to 66.9 (+ 25.8 points), a 62% increase.



SMILE BRANDS

Recruiting Technology Implementation and Optimization:

Smile Brands implemented a new Applicant Tracking System (iCIMS) including offer center, onboarding module, text engagement, and CRM (iCIMS). Smile Brands also implemented a new chat bot with the name – Pearl E. White (Paradox). Pearl sits on their career site and answers candidate questions. They did all of this in under 12 months.

Their brand new career site offers an intuitive and user-friendly experience for job seekers (Careers.smilebrands.com). Their career site includes videos and provides a real preview of what it's like to work at their company and their affiliates. They've included details about our different career areas, culture, Smiles for Everyone Foundation, early career programs, and more. Their application process can be completed in 1.5 minutes and the site includes a new chatbot named "Pearl E. White" (Paradox) that assists candidates in real-time, answering their questions, and guiding them through the application process.

Structured Interviews and Interview Fairness

Our CandE research has always shown that structured interviews, including the prep prior and the follow-up after, always result in more positive candidate experience ratings and a higher perception of fairness.

A structured interview process is a systematic and standardized approach to conducting job interviews, and while that may vary across job types, the goal is still to ensure fairness and consistency in evaluating candidates by asking all applicants the same set of predetermined questions and using a standardized scoring system.

Structured interviews are contrasted with unstructured interviews, where questions may vary between candidates, and the interview may be more conversational. While unstructured interviews may allow for a more personalized interaction, unstructured interviews can be a “hot mess” depending on the hiring managers and can increase bias and subjectivity dramatically.

Overall, over half of the top 10 North America CandE Winners across company sizes, CandE Winners, and even all other participating companies told us this year they conduct structured interviews. Globally that’s the same, except for Latin America, where only 33% of all participating employers said they did. Again, this is a big driver of more positive candidate experience ratings and a higher perception of fairness.

But the competitive edge is clear when we look at how candidates rated interview fairness. Fairness is subjective, but the highest rated employers in our research definitely have higher interview fairness ratings (see Table 6). For example, the top 10 overall North America CandE Winners had a 31% higher interview fairness rating than all other participating employers. The top 10 small North America employers had an even higher interview fairness rating – 40% higher than all other small participating employers.

Table 6. Structured Interviews and Interview Fairness Ratings

Employer Segment	% Conducting Structured Interviews	Interview Fairness NPS
North America		
Top 10 Overall	60%	79%
All CandE Winners	64%	71%
All Employers	66%	58%
Top 10 Large	70%	74%
All Large	73%	62%
Top 10 Medium	90%	53%
All Medium	64%	45%
Top 10 Small	70%	93%
All Small	67%	62%
EMEA		
All CandE Winners	67%	79%
All Employers	58%	56%
APAC		
All CandE Winners	75%	90%
All Employers	50%	77%
Latin America		
All CandE Winners	50%	87%
All Employers	33%	66%

The competitive edge for CandE Winners isn’t just in how they prep candidates for the interview, execute interviews, set expectations, and follow up post-interview; it’s pervasive throughout the candidate journey from pre-application to onboarding.

Our CandE research has always shown that structured interviews, including the prep prior and the follow-up after, always result in more positive candidate experience ratings and a higher perception of fairness.

Giving Finalist Feedback

Another key differentiator for CandE Winners post-interview is in giving finalists feedback. We can't emphasize enough how important this is. Finalists getting feedback are 50%+ more willing to refer others than those who don't get feedback and is especially true for professional (salaried), management, and senior level candidates. It's truly one of the biggest communication differentiators we see every year beyond the nurturing and engagement that should happen during the preboarding stage prior to day one on the job (and that includes hearing from the hiring managers and/or executive leadership depending on the role).

Table 7. % Candidates Getting Feedback

Employer Segment	% Getting Feedback
North America	
Top 10 Overall	48%
All CandE Winners	25%
All Employers	22%
Top 10 Large	28%
All Large	27%
Top 10 Medium	27%
All Medium	19%
Top 10 Small	58%
All Small	27%
EMEA	
All CandE Winners	35%
All Employers	34%
APAC	
All CandE Winners	53%
All Employers	43%
Latin America	
All CandE Winners	47%
All Employers	24%

Another key differentiator for CandE Winners post-interview is in giving finalists feedback.

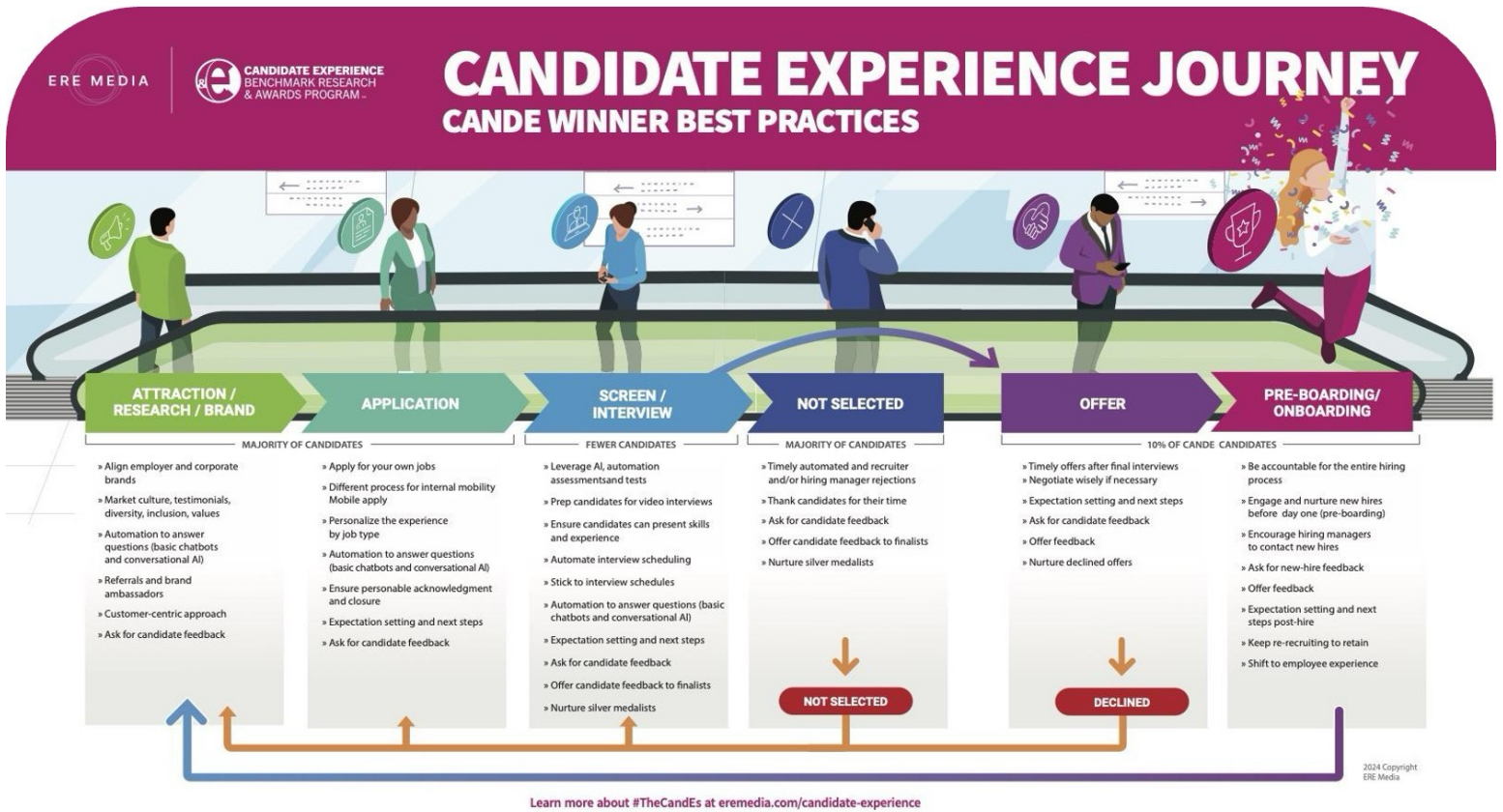
For example, the top 10 CandE Winners in North America give 74% more feedback to candidates than all other participating employers (see Table 7). This is a tricky one for many companies and one of the first questions we are asked about this is: What kind of feedback are you talking about?

We're not talking about culture fit feedback or anything else deemed "personal attributes". Instead, we're talking about job fit and qualification status feedback. The "why" the candidate didn't get the job offer in the end. Usually these responses are brief calls and/or emails that tell a candidate: "There were so many qualified finalists, including you, but in the end we went with another candidate because you didn't have X, Y, or Z. We recommend you go get X, Y, and Z, and in the meantime, you might consider one of these other roles at our company [insert jobs]."

That's oversimplifying the exchange, but we are suggesting these are usually very concise and well received by finalists.

Legal counsel for employers may insist that no feedback be given to job candidates at all unless they're hired. We can't guarantee that there won't be contentious conversations with qualified candidates who still believe they should've gotten the offer, but we do know that the highest rated employers are doing this consistently across job types and reaping referral benefits from it year after year.

These are only a few of the differentiators that set CandE Award Winners apart from most employers year after year. Again, CandE Winners consistently deliver a positive and fair candidate experience, something that's not easy to sustain over time for the majority of companies that have participated in our research over the past 13 years. These employers aren't doing all these things to improve candidate experience 100% of the time year round, but they are delivering a better recruiting experience more consistently over time, regardless of the market volatility around them. The remainder of our 2024 CandE Research briefs and reports will highlight in more detail all the candidate experience improvements we recommend each year. For a summary snapshot of these, see below.



About the ERE CandE Benchmark Research Program

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.ere.com/candidate-experience>.

