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The optimal recruiting experience

What employers need to say,
do, and offer to attract talent today

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Introduction

A view into the recruiting process

What really matters to today's job candidate? To effectively compete for top talent in an increasingly tight job market with [unemployment rates sitting at less than 4%](#), employers must continually up the ante to attract and retain the right people.

But what are the best practices used by employers to create the optimal recruiting experience? And what motivates individuals to choose one organization over another?

To better understand the key drivers behind a successful recruitment strategy and experience, and the hot-button issues driving candidates to your door, Ceridian recently partnered with Hanover Research to answer these key questions:

- What will motivate a candidate to say “yes” to a new role?
- How important is culture when employees are looking for their next employer?
- What is the ideal recruitment experience?
- What tools and resources do candidates use to research the market?
- What makes candidates turn down an offer?

About the survey

The survey, performed on behalf of Ceridian by Hanover Research, targeted recent hires (those who have started a new job within the last year) and individuals who have turned down a job within the last year. The survey was completed by 1,678 respondents over the summer of 2018. To qualify, respondents also had to be 18 years of age or older, reside in the U.S. or Canada, and be employed either part-time or full-time in a permanent position.

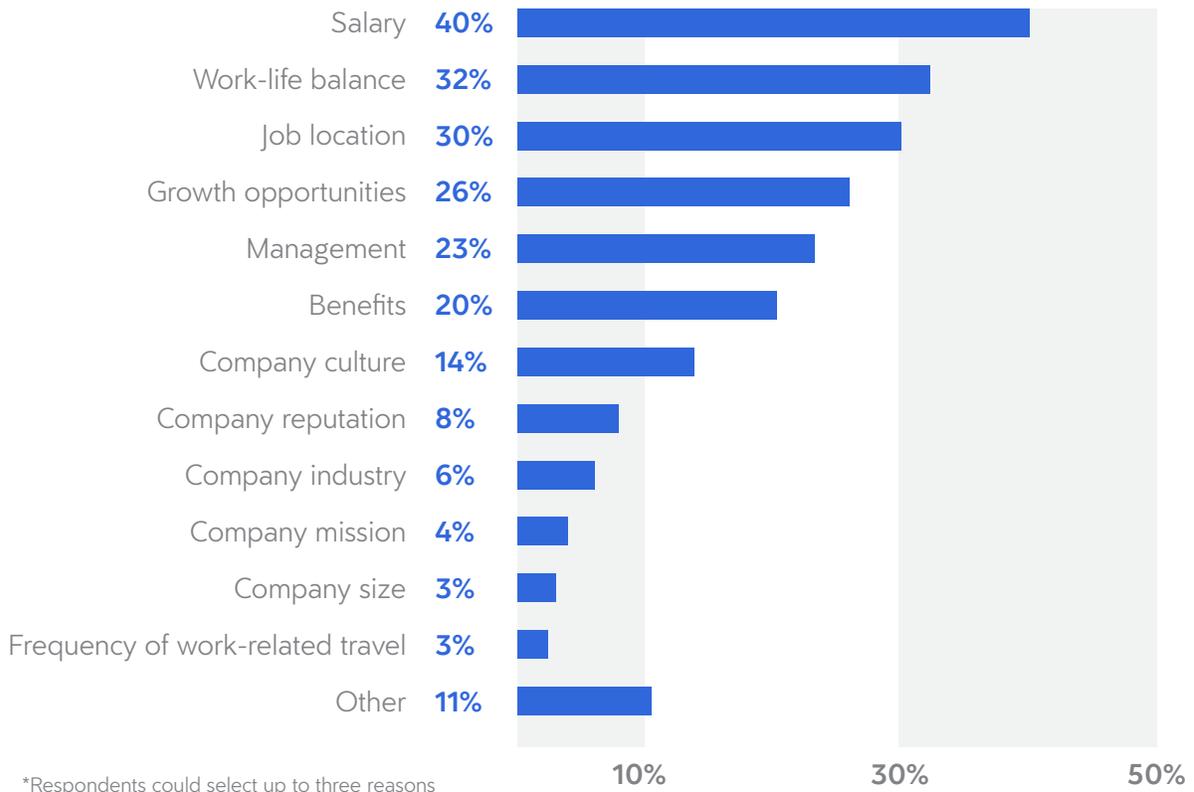
**Why candidates
start looking,
and why they
say ‘yes’**

Salary matters, but so do other factors

Unsurprisingly, respondents cite salary as the most common reason (40%) for pursuing a new opportunity. Salary is one of the top reasons cited by younger job seekers (ages 18 to 35) for accepting a new job, and the one thing most (69%) admit to searching for when surveying the job market.

But we can also safely say that salary information is table stakes for most individuals in the job market. It absolutely factors into one's career decision-making. But is salary the only thing that counts?

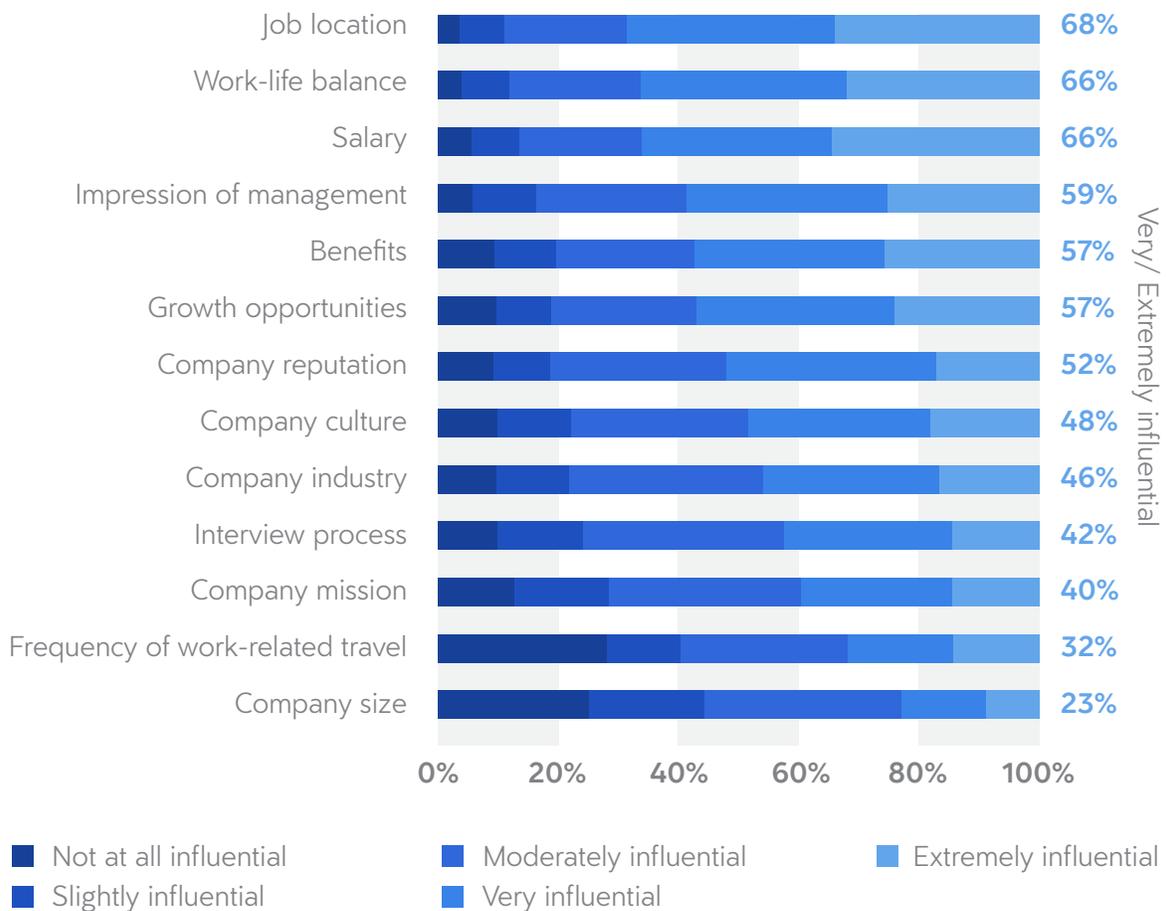
Reasons to pursue a new opportunity*



While people aspire to be in an in-demand, good paying job, [research from Glassdoor](#) reveals that employee satisfaction scores show a slightly different story over time. “Once people start their jobs, pay is not necessarily the leading impact for how satisfied you are,” says Glassdoor spokeswoman Sarah Stoddard.

Ceridian’s research found that company culture, work-life balance, and job location are cited by individuals as key considerations for accepting a new job. Of those surveyed, 68% were influenced by job location. Meanwhile, 66% cited work-life balance as an influencing factor. And 48% cited company culture as a key driver for accepting a new opportunity.

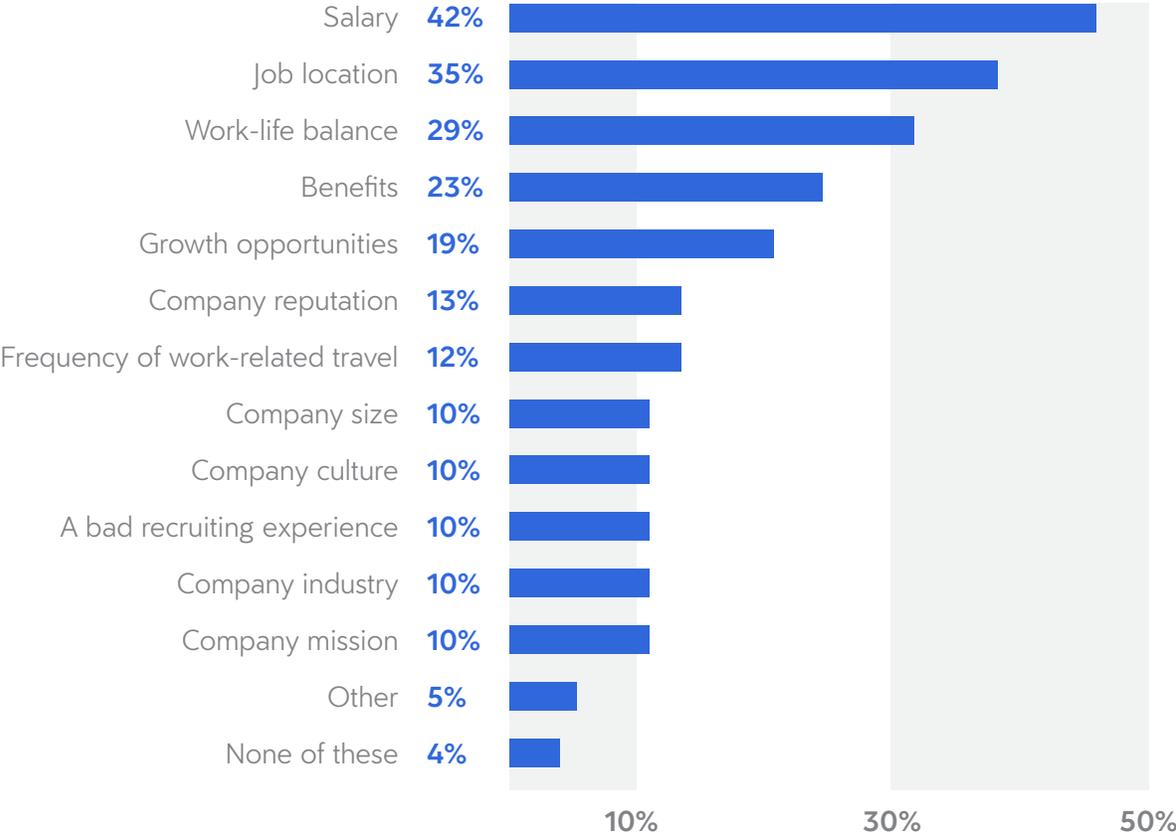
How influential were the following factors when deciding to accept your most recent job offer?



The older the candidate, the more the “other” factors beyond salary come into play when considering a role. While millennials are motivated by salary, job location, and work/life balance, individuals 35 years of age and older look beyond salary when casting about for new career opportunities, influenced by drivers such as career change, bankruptcy, or poor health.

Conversely, salary, job location and work-life balance also represent the top three reasons candidates turn down a job offer or opt to stay in their existing role.

Reasons to turn down an offer*



*Respondents could select up to three reasons

An HR expert's insight: Why are considerations such as job location and work-life balance so important for prospective employees when considering a job change?

Factors such as job location and work-life balance essentially go hand-in-hand, especially in today's workplace, says Lisa Sterling, Ceridian's Chief People and Culture Officer. "The reality is, it is nearly impossible for employees to strike that perfect balance," she says. "Sometimes home life will be one's priority. Other times, work becomes paramount. The trick for employers and employees is in balancing the imbalance."

Sterling urges employers to adopt the philosophy that work is what people do, and not where they go, to think strategically about people's desire for flexibility, and to offer opportunities for their employees to be their best selves at all times.

"People today want the ability to work where it is convenient for them," says Sterling. "They don't want to spend hours commuting on a train or stuck in traffic. And with the tools now available to support remote work, there's no need for it. Progressive organizations who will win the war on talent will allow people to have that flexibility."

Related: [How to implement a flexible time-off program](#)

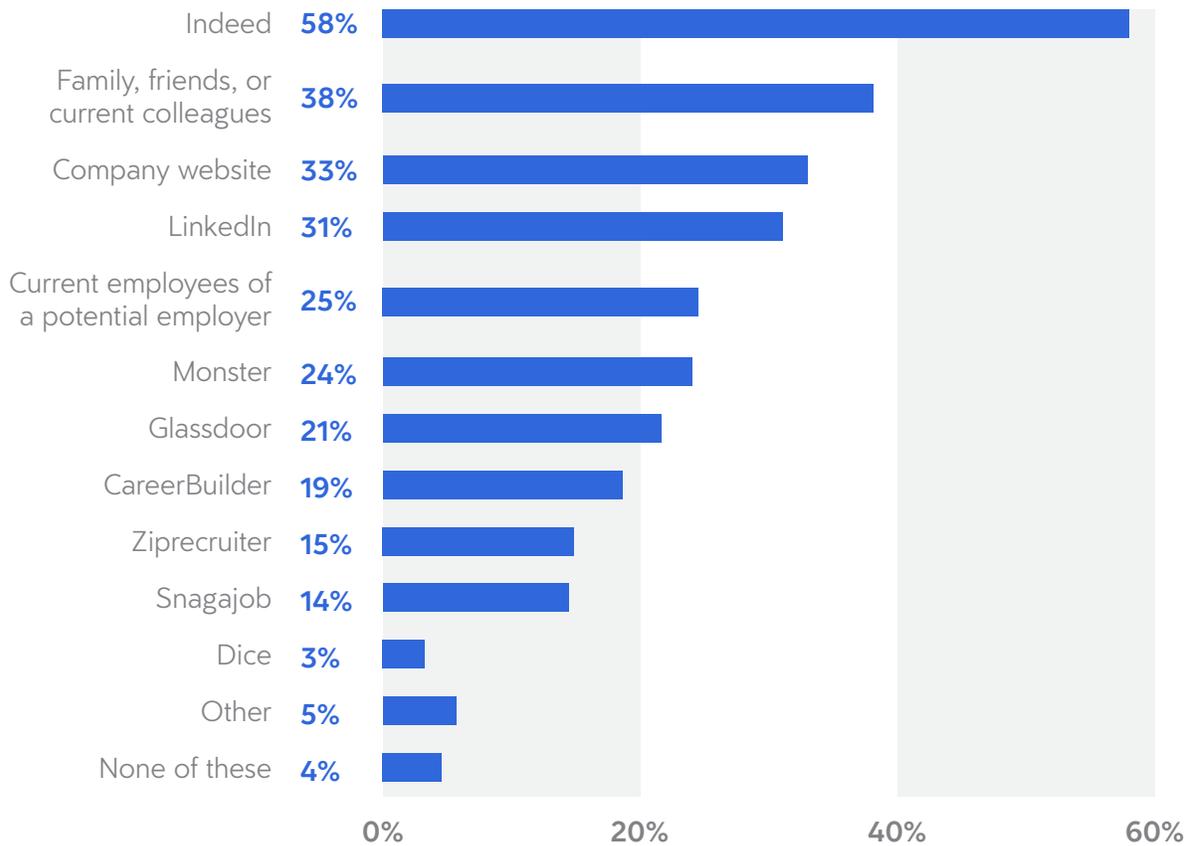
Job research and info sourcing



Where do job seekers go to do their homework?

When it comes to learning about a job or a prospective employer, job candidates naturally turn to the internet for their answers, using online resources such as Indeed, LinkedIn, and Glassdoor to build their knowledge.

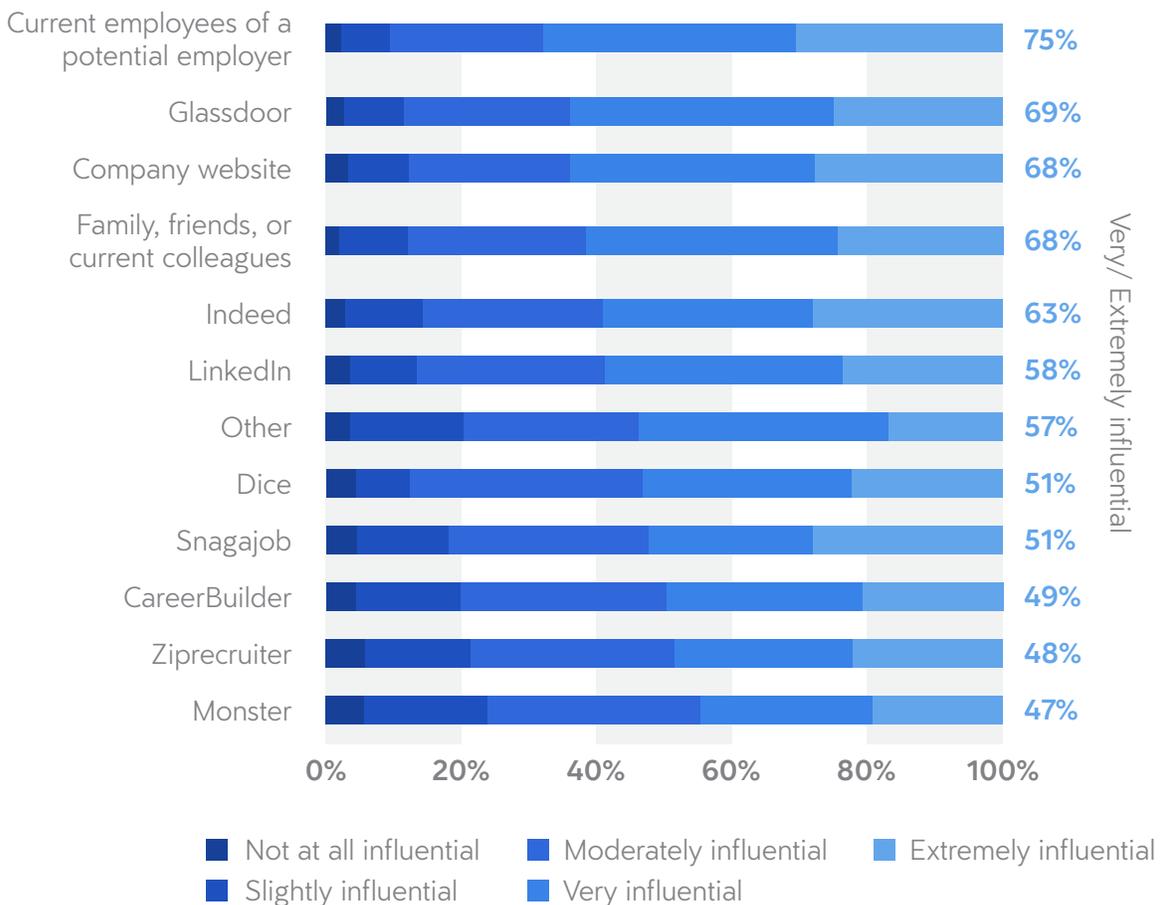
Which of these resources did you use when researching potential jobs and employers?



Word of mouth far outranks online research when it comes to fit

However, word of mouth by far trumps any online resource when it comes to candidates determining whether a company is right for them. According to the survey, while 38% of job candidates turn to friends, family, and colleagues to find new jobs, 68% consider the same sources very important when determining a good fit with a prospective employer. Seventy-five percent also cite current employees of a potential employer as very or extremely important in determining if an employer is a good fit. And 68% of those surveyed will also turn to the company’s website for information on a prospective employer.

How important are these sources for deciding whether an employer is a good fit for you?

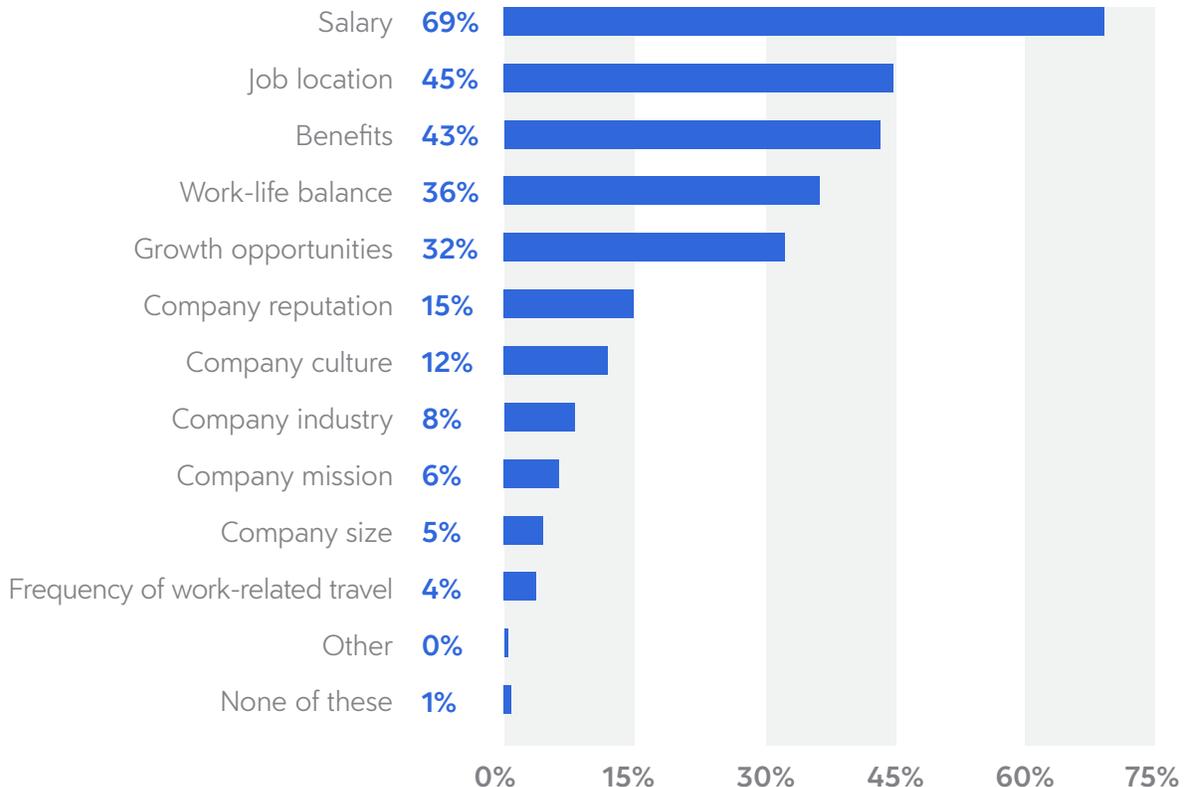


When candidates do search online, what information are they seeking?

While word of mouth is a significant influencer, job candidates do search online for information to complete their picture of a prospective employer. Not surprisingly, salary (69%), job location (45%), and information on work-life balance (36%) rank high, correlating with the top reasons candidates seek new employment or accept offers.

Other information important to job candidates includes benefits-related information (43%), growth opportunities (32%) and company reputation (15%). Taking note of this data, employers should ensure their online presence tells a clear and compelling story of the business, and in particular, provides transparency around salary information.

Which types of information do you look for when researching potential jobs?*



An HR expert's insight: How can employers take full advantage of word of mouth when recruiting new hires?

Encouraging employee advocacy is one of the most valuable things an organization can do to attract talent, says Ceridian's Lisa Sterling. "It's a relatively free method for building your employment brand."

But Sterling cautions that employee advocacy only works if it comes from a place of authenticity. "You'll never get the value of advocacy if they don't truly believe in your organization. It can't be faked or forced. There needs to be a very strong cultural element that everyone rallies around."

She suggests employers get their people involved in the recruiting experience through employee referrals and formalized employee ambassador programs. "But honestly, if you have a great culture – if you walk the walk every day – employee advocacy becomes a natural part of doing business. When people are proud of who you are, what you do, and what you stand for as a business, the advocacy naturally happens."

Both recruiters and hiring managers need to be equipped to tell the company's story to help candidates see the cultural fit.

"Employees need to understand they are joining something that is bigger than themselves. We need to better communicate the larger company mission and culture, its values, behaviors, and what the leadership looks like," says Sterling.

On the flip side, recruiters and hiring managers also need to go beyond prior track record and skills to invest time in really understanding the person in front of them. "As we engage with candidates, it is important we understand how the individual will fit culturally. What do they bring to the table, and how does that play into their longevity with the organization? We need to better communicate the 'what's in it for me?' to candidates – things like inclusiveness, wellness, and workplace flexibility."

Related: [Your employees are your best advocates: four ways to leverage them](#)

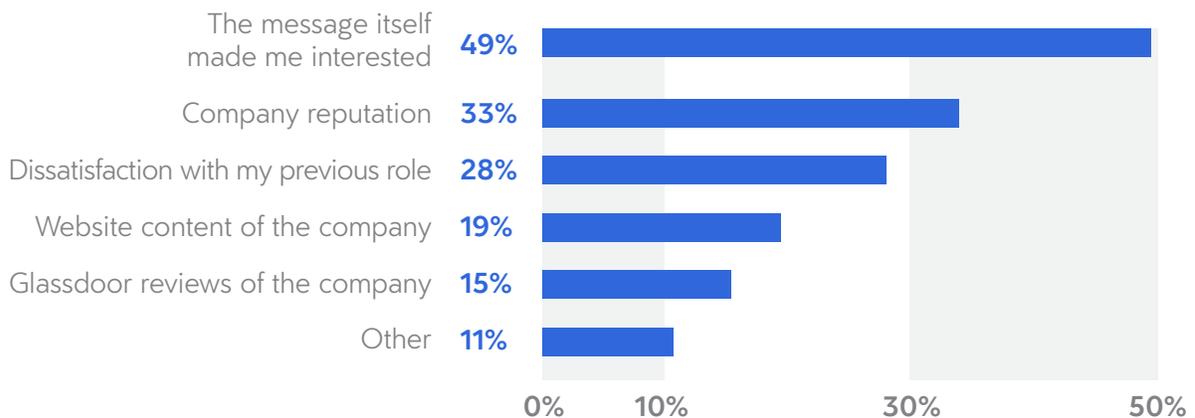


The optimal recruiting process

Why does a candidate respond to a recruiter in the first place? And when they do, what defines a great experience from one that is ho-hum at best?

Among the candidates we surveyed who were contacted by a recruiter, nearly half (47%) were not actively searching at the time. And yet, for 49% of respondents, there was something in the recruiter’s message that caught their attention. The reputation of the prospective employer also played a role, convincing 33% of individuals to engage in a recruitment discussion.

What prompted you to respond to the recruiter’s message? (select all that apply)

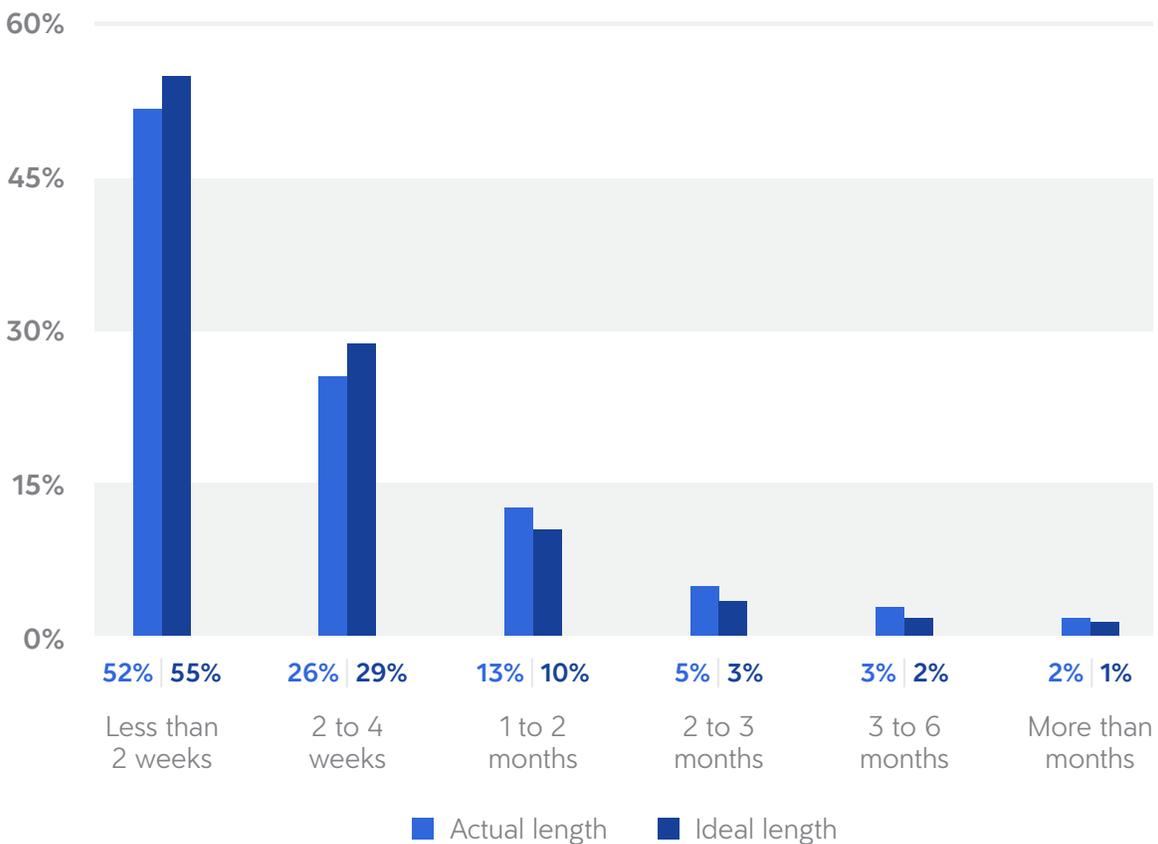


Once engaged in the recruiting process, other factors come into play to shape an individual’s experience, both positive and negative, including average length of the recruiting process, number of interviews, and the use of psychometrics and skills tests by employers.

Related: [Five best practices for writing great job descriptions](#)

Employers get the time to recruit just about right

According to those surveyed, the actual length of time required for the recruiting process was “just about right” when compared to employee expectations. The majority of individuals (55%) expected a two-week recruitment process. Employers for the most part are delivering on that expectation, with 52% of those surveyed reporting that their actual recruiting experience was two weeks or less.



It should be noted that part-time employees are significantly more likely to expect and experience a recruiting process of under two weeks.

About a quarter of job seekers surveyed reported a two- to four-week recruiting process, with a greater share of those candidates pursuing full-time roles.

Related: [10 HR and recruiting stats you won't believe](#)

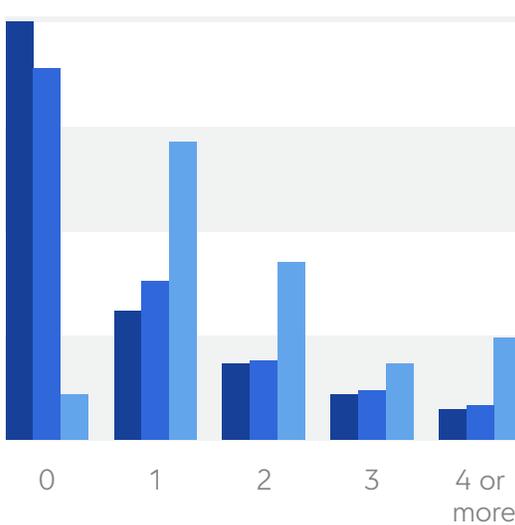
How many interviews are too many?

On average, the majority of those surveyed want to see employers put time and effort into the interviews process. Eighty-seven percent indicated a preference for one to three in-person interviews. Another 64% indicated a preference for one to three remote interviews with a hiring manager, using methods such as video conference (e.g. Skype) or phone. Only a handful (10%) of respondents indicated a preference for four or more interviews.

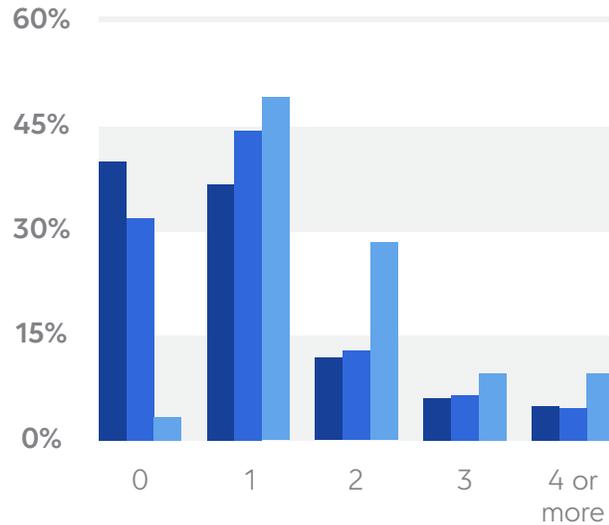
With respect to in-person interviews, employer reality matches up nicely to candidate expectations, with 67% of candidates undergoing the expected one to three interviews.

However, employers seem to be missing out on a big opportunity to more fully leverage remote interviews, performed by either the hiring manager or a recruiter. While the majority (64%) of job seekers expressed interest in interviewing by phone or video conference, only 47% of candidates surveyed actually received a remote interview with a hiring manager.

Actual number of interviews



Ideal number of interviews



- Remote (i.e., phone or Skype), with a recruiter
- Remote (i.e., phone or Skype), with the hiring manager
- In-person

An HR expert's insight: Is recruiting exhaustion a real thing?

The answer to this question is a resounding yes, says Ceridian's Lisa Sterling. "Recruiting exhaustion absolutely exists. Candidates can sit in an initial assessment phase for too long because recruiters are scouring information to shortlist. And the traditional interview process is an archaic experience. Employers continue to throw more people at it. So, we end up having a candidate interview with seven different people, and for what benefit? What have we gained or learned?"

Sterling suggests employers could look to technology advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (emerging technologies that perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence) to automate and streamline the recruiting process and shorten timeframes.

She also strongly suggests employers revisit how job descriptions are traditionally written and move toward day-in-the-life style role descriptions. "Most job descriptions only scratch the surface and do not reflect three-quarters of what an employee does in a day," she says.

Finally, Sterling encourages employers to be more thoughtful and strategic about their interview process. "At every step of the way we should be interviewing to learn more about that individual. What are we learning about their productivity? Their loyalty? Their behaviors? Their capacity for longevity in the role and in the organization?"

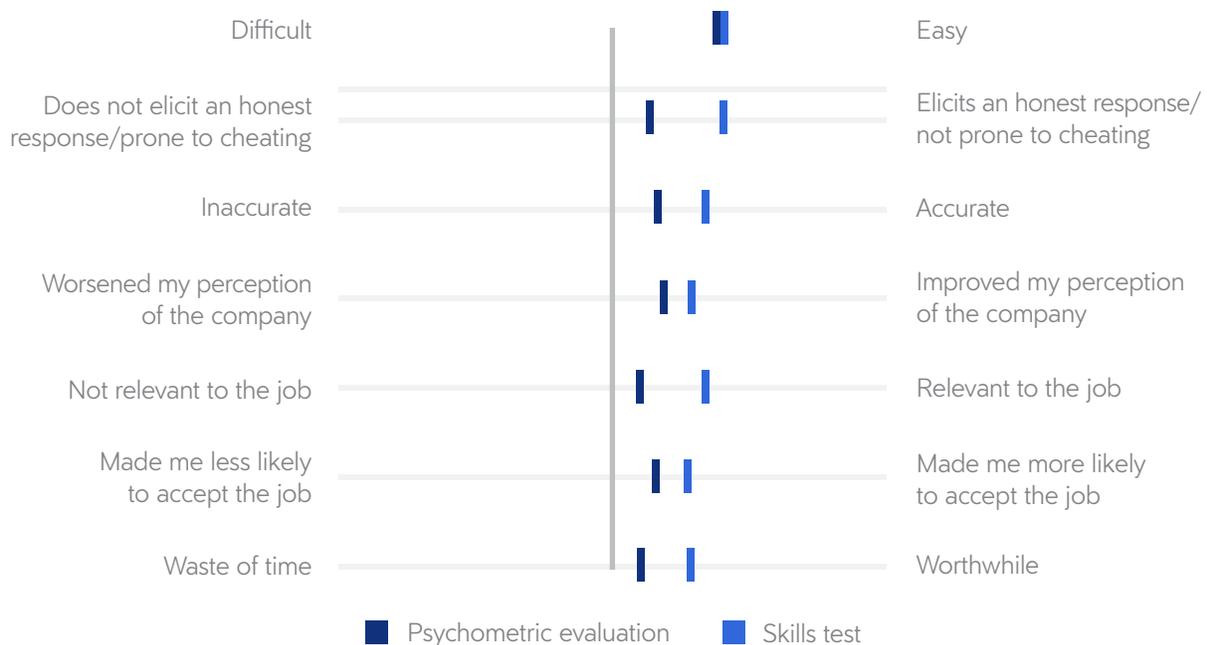
Skills, skills, skills: what's your candidate's comfort level?

According to Deloitte, the half-life for job skills is rapidly falling, putting huge demands on employers and job candidates to ensure individuals are appropriately equipped for the role at hand.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the job candidates surveyed by Ceridian report they have taken a skills test as part of a job interview process. Psychometric testing is less common, with only 44% of individuals reporting exposure to that testing method.

Overall, job candidates have a positive opinion surrounding job testing (either skills or psychometric). That said, people are more comfortable with skills testing, expressing that they believe skills testing is more accurate and worthwhile, more relevant to the job, and improves their perception of the company.

Perception of psychometric and skills testing



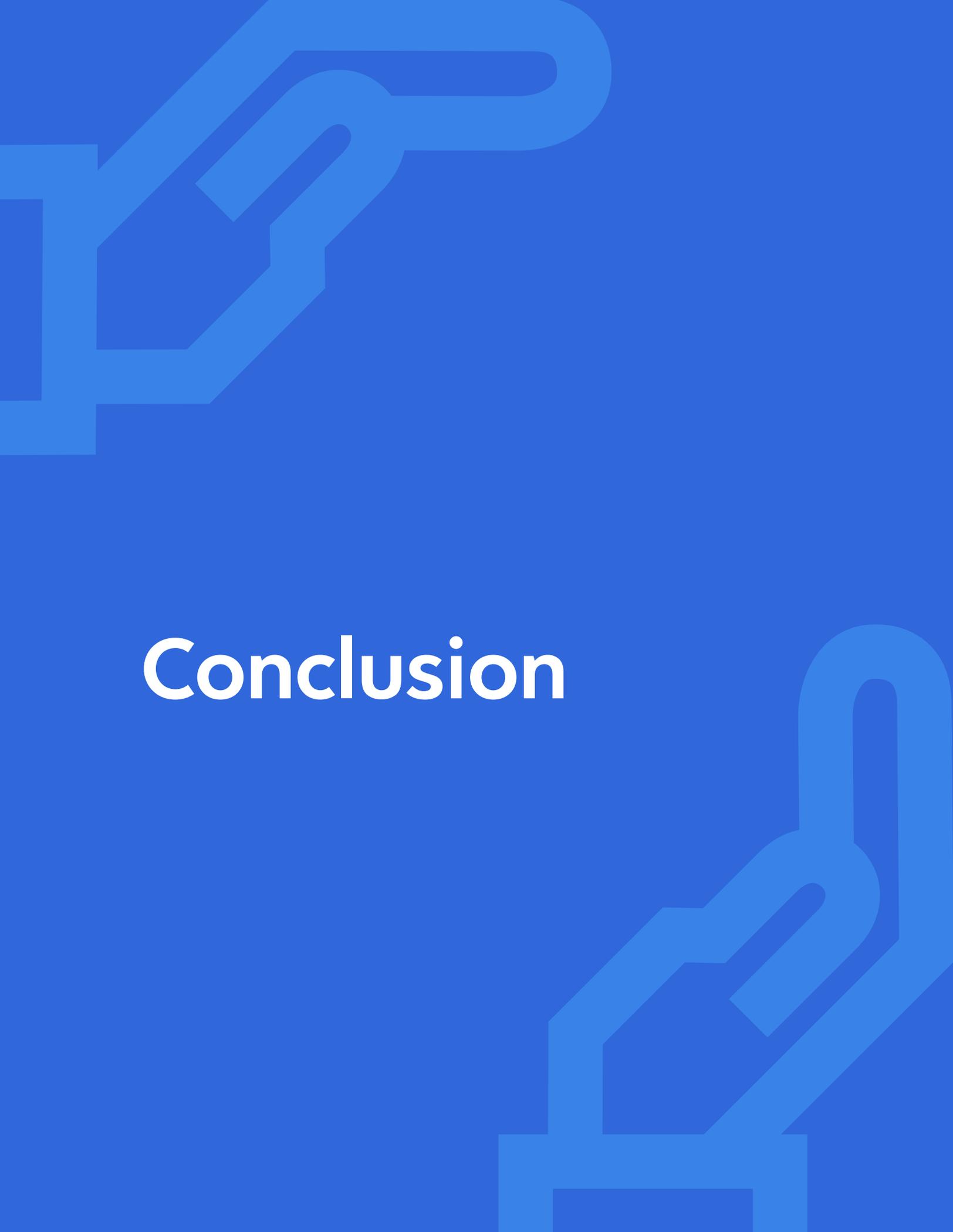
An HR expert's insight: How is job testing changing to keep pace with a more dynamic work/skills climate?

Skills testing is still necessary and important, particularly for highly technical roles, however employers shouldn't view it as a screening mechanism, but rather as a data point to help understand a job candidate's proficiency, says Ceridian's Lisa Sterling.

"Understanding where a candidate sits in terms of their skill level can tell employers a lot about the expected time to productivity," says Sterling. "But I also think the more important measure lies in that person's ability to learn. As a hiring manager, I don't always need to know if a candidate has a skill. What I do need to know is that candidate's ability and desire to be a continuous learner."

Sterling is a proponent of behavioral interviewing to unearth an individual's true talents, and to assess their ability to learn.

Sterling advises employers to adopt a behavioral interviewing methodology and use it to select and promote individuals. "Companies who do it well excel in their industries. When you choose the right person at the right time and put them in the right role, they will soar."



Conclusion

Recruiting best practices are within reach for every employer

All told, best practices for recruiting are highly accessible and well within reach for every employer. Here are the top recommendations, based on this survey:

- Emphasize advantages related to salary, work-life balance, and job location when seeking to attract job candidates.
- Be transparent around salary information – it is what matters most to job candidates and the thing most searched for.
- Avoid prolonged recruitment processes – anything beyond four weeks is too long.
- Invest in interviewing, but consider incorporating more remote interviewing (telephone, video conferencing). Candidates welcome the option.
- And finally, employee brand and culture matter when actively recruiting. Candidates heavily rely on word of mouth to make their decision. So, what are your employees saying about you?

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