

TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY HIRE IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET

We are currently experiencing one of the tightest labour markets in recent history. Jobseekers have more choice where many organisations are actively seeking to attract their skills. Candidates feel this is the time to capitalise on the skills shortage to gain a promotion, improve work-life balance or find a role with a higher salary.

As we saw in our recent [Hays Salary Guide 22/23](#), 61 per cent of employers intend to increase permanent headcount before June 30, 2023, but 91 per cent say they are experiencing a skills shortage. Add the [salary expectation gap](#) between employers and employees, and we're in the midst of an extremely competitive market.

The skills shortage was a hot topic at the recent Jobs and Skills Summit. Training our local workforce and bolstering it with migrant workers are welcome outcomes. But in the short-term, employers still face several challenges when recruiting in today's market. These include reduced application rates, candidates interviewing for multiple roles, accepting an offer elsewhere or receiving a counter offer from their current employer.

In response, a considered approach is required to successfully secure your preferred candidate.

How to ensure a candidate says “yes” to your job offer

To increase the likelihood of securing your preferred candidate and limit the risk of them accepting another role, we suggest the following seven steps.

1. Speed up the process

Good candidates are not on the market for long, no matter how attractive your opportunity is. Actions – or inactions – that lengthen the time between a candidate submitting their application and attending an interview hinder your chance of securing top talent. This includes a lengthy or complex application form, which should be replaced with a succinct and easier application for hard-to-fill roles. While your standard processes may still work for generalist jobs, for other more specialist roles it is a hurdle candidates aren't willing to jump. Given the volume of current vacancies, good candidates will instead apply for jobs with an easier and faster application process. So, review your processes for opportunities to shorten timelines and reduce screening protocols where possible.

2. Prepare candidates for the interview

Many people find job interviews stressful. Communicating to candidates what to expect beforehand helps to reduce their nerves so they can be their true self during the interview and allows them to effectively prepare. It also improves their perception of your company and gives you better insights into their potential suitability. Information should include who they will interview with and why, the interview length and the topics you'll discuss.

3. Build positive rapport

Your management style has a huge impact on whether a candidate will accept, then remain, in your role. Help candidates understand you and your leadership approach by building rapport and disclosing information about your role, why you work there and your performance management, engagement, team building and reward and recognition methodologies.

Further build rapport by asking questions about their motivations and needs. Why are they looking for a new role? What do they need from you to perform at their best? Where do they see themselves in five years? Once clear, explain how they can realise their ambitions and what tools and resources are available to help them.

Be transparent about timeframes for each step of the process, including when candidates will receive interview feedback. Respond in a timely manner to any message they send and provide regular updates.

4. Sell the job

The idea that an interview should be a two-way conversation is nothing new, but its relevance has increased in today's skills-short market. A candidate must leave your interview feeling that they want to work for you, regardless of whether you think they are the right person for the role.

Once rapport has been established and you've asked about their skills and experience, sell the job. Be transparent and share information about the role, team, ways of working, goals, why you're hiring, potential opportunities for career advancement and the pros and cons of working for your company. Invite the candidate to ask questions.

Don't hesitate to tell the candidate why their skills and experience make them suitable for the role. This helps them feel valued and understood.

5. Provide additional touch points

Some people can make career decisions quickly, while others are more considered. If your preferred candidate falls into the latter category, provide additional touch points to allow them to gather all the information they need to make a calculated decision. For instance, call them between interviews, take them for coffee or lunch, show them around the office, introduce them to team members and, if possible, provide examples of current work.

6. Make the offer yourself

The offer is an important step in the process and another opportunity to build a relationship and sell the job. Book a meeting with your recruiter and the candidate, ideally face-to-face if you can. Have all the job offer details to hand, along with any other relevant information. Ask how they feel about the offer and invite them to ask you any questions. If they appear to be hesitating, ask what may be making them anxious about the role or changing jobs. If relevant, try to overcome their concerns.

7. Keep in touch

Once a candidate accepts your offer and confirms their start date, don't get too comfortable. Counter offers are common in today's market, so continue to build trust to ensure the candidate is committed to your role. For instance, include them in team communications, send them information about tasks they will be responsible for and introduce them to other people they will work with.

If timing permits, take the candidate for lunch to continue building positive rapport during their notice period. Keep them informed and help them feel like they're already part of the team.

Contact us

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