

Rethinking Recruiting

5 paradigm shifts that will change the way
you connect with candidates.



Let's rethink...

- 03 the recruiter experience.
- 11 the concept of top talent.
- 16 candidate breakups.
- 23 the white glove experience.
- 29 employer branding.

Spot-on perspective
from Tim Sackett.



1

Rethinking the recruiter experience.

While talent acquisition teams and recruiters have become "the cool kids" at most organizations, they're still treated like they were decades ago. That doesn't make sense.

It's time to rethink their experience.



Everyone thinks they know how to hire.

In my first week as a recruiter, I was handed a stack of resumes that had to be a foot thick. My boss told me my job was to contact every single one of those candidates and find out what they were looking for, salary, timing, etc. He told me not to return to him until I called all of them.

It took me three weeks to get in touch with every single candidate, and some of those I had called so many times I lost track. But I finished — I was so proud! I walked into his office with a big smile, and I said, “Here you go!” He took the stack and dropped it into a trash can.

He then handed me my first job requisition and said, “Now you’re ready to recruit!”

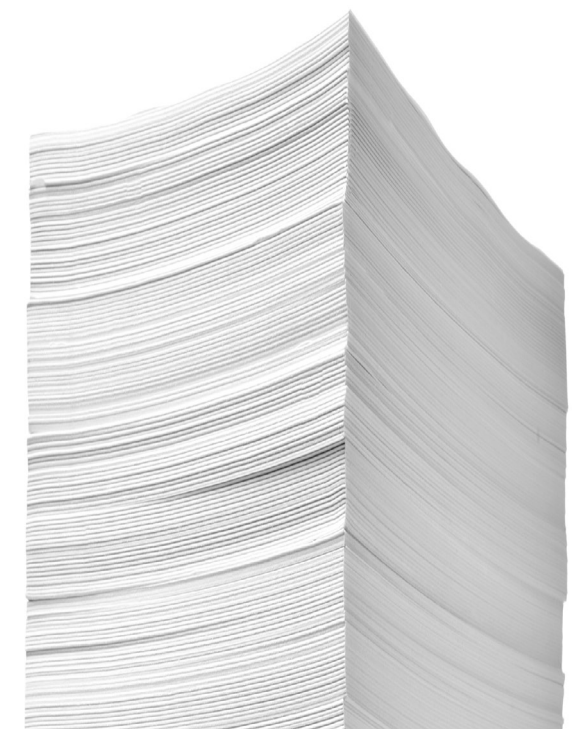
I will never forget the sound all that paper made landing at the bottom of that trash can. All that work, gone! All those conversations! All for nothing!

That was my first thought. But as time went on, I realized that the entire exercise had nothing to do with recruiting those candidates and everything to do with seeing if I was willing and able to simply pick up the phone, again and again and again.

Can you imagine any recruiter putting up with being treated like that today? I’m honestly thankful for the lesson I learned back then, but if that happened now I would have quit before the end of the week. Most recruiters would. It was a terrible experience, and we should be able to do better at improving the recruiting process.

We can do better.

For many years, talent acquisition pros were sort of left on their own little, oft-forgotten island. But in the past decade that has changed



drastically as CEOs figured out talent acquisition is the machine that keeps organizations humming.

But that doesn't mean our experience has changed much over time. Which doesn't seem to make much sense: "We know you are super important, but we're going to treat you the exact same way as we did before!"

The problem is everyone thinks they know how to hire.

Okay, champ, hire me fifty software engineers in ninety days! So one major issue we have is that people

still see "our" job as "easy." No, we aren't designing next-gen software, but that doesn't make what we do any less complex.

Second — and this is huge — we made the same mistake our HR peers made. We became "clients" to our hiring managers versus a peer to our hiring managers. We acted like a vendor versus another valuable function in the company. This allowed the hiring manager to treat us poorly and not give us all the things we needed to be successful, like feedback and time.

Your hiring managers are not your customers! They are peers. They have needs, and as peers, we help them. But we also have needs, and as peers, they should help us. It's a two-way street.

What should the recruiter experience really be?



In a word: simple.

Here are five pillars of a great recruitment experience:

1 Respect.

Just as we respect finance when they ask us for our annual budget projections, recruiters should have the same level of respect from internal and external stakeholders. We will not allow our recruiters to be taken advantage of by hiring managers or candidates.



2 Clear measures of performance and accountability.

Recruiters have success when they are told what is clearly expected from them, given great resources and tools, and then have leadership that follows up with the results in a way that is driven by development and betterment and not a hammer.

3 Rewards and recognition.

Traditional salary and annual bonus programs do not make for a great recruiting experience. If everyone makes the same, and I'm the best recruiter by a mile, shouldn't I be rewarded for that performance? We need to find ways to reward our best and hardest working recruiters.

//

The industry really doesn't need another add-on or another bolt on piece of technology. We don't need more clunky, hard to use software that gets passed from legacy teams. We need smooth, simple, lightweight, seamless experiences that are really easy to use.



Josh Secrest
Vice President of Marketing





72%

of recruiters say they're more likely to stay at their current job if their employer invests in conversational AI.

Read the full report [here](#).

4 Properly funded and sourced.

You don't ask sales and marketing to sell your products and then not give them the tools and resources needed to make this happen, but somehow we feel completely fine with telling TA to increase hiring by 30% this year while also cutting budget by 10%.

Investing in the right recruiting tech and tools will actually save you money longterm by making your recruiters more efficient, and also happier.

I find most organizations do very little development of their recruiting teams, and it can make all the difference.

5 An organizational culture of recruiting.

Talent acquisition doesn't own recruiting. Each individual team leader owns talent. They pick each person who will work for them, and manage their performance.

Talent acquisition leads the function that will help each team leader hire more easily. Too often, a bad recruiting experience starts with them being blamed that the organization can't hire better talent or faster.

Great recruiting is less about one function's performance and more about having an organizational understanding that it takes a culture of recruiting to be great.

//

At McDonald's, we often have restaurant managers conducting a lot of the hiring. We needed a process that reduced complexity, given all of the other responsibilities they have, while being able to provide them back more time to spend time with employees or with customers.



Alexa Morse
Director of HR Operations



Wrapping it up.

Those who can figure out how to deliver an amazing recruiter experience will grow, attract, and retain amazing recruiter talent.



2

Rethinking the concept of top talent.

How do you make hiring “top talent” more than just a deck you presented to the executive team to appease them?



Recruiting is a lot like buying a car.

Raise your hand if you have ever worked with an executive that has made a variation of this statement:

"We only hire top talent!"

Just once I would love to hear a CEO be genuinely honest about what they really do:

"We only hire the top talent ... that has actually applied to our open job at the moment we had the job open who was also willing to accept our average salary, average benefits, average culture, and average work location."

That's the reality. That's what 99% of organizations actually do. You, almost certainly, are not hiring the best talent in your market. In fact, you could even be hiring the worst talent in your market. But because it's the best of the worst that you've seen that day, you can fall into the trap of convincing yourself it's the "top talent".

If you're lucky, maybe lightning strikes and you stumble into a great hire: the actual top talent in your market. If you're lucky. I find most executives hate using "luck" as a strategy for any part of their business, though.

The 3 things I typically do as I look to hire the top talent for my company are:

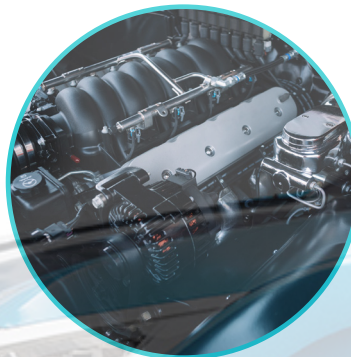
- 1 **Research**
what a "top" candidate looks like.
- 2 **Examine**
performance needed to succeed in the role.
- 3 **Ensure**
the candidate is a good long-term fit.

Recruiting top talent is a lot like buying the best car. You have to find out what factors are the most important for you. Your idea of a “top” car might be completely different from someone else’s top car, or mine. And that has a huge impact on the process.

Honestly, the last thing I’m concerned about is the color or what it looks like. The problem is that so many people will only look at the color and design. They don’t really care if it’s a good fit for their needs or if it will break down in a couple of years and leave them looking for a replacement.

Performance

Does it have the type of engine I need for that vehicle?



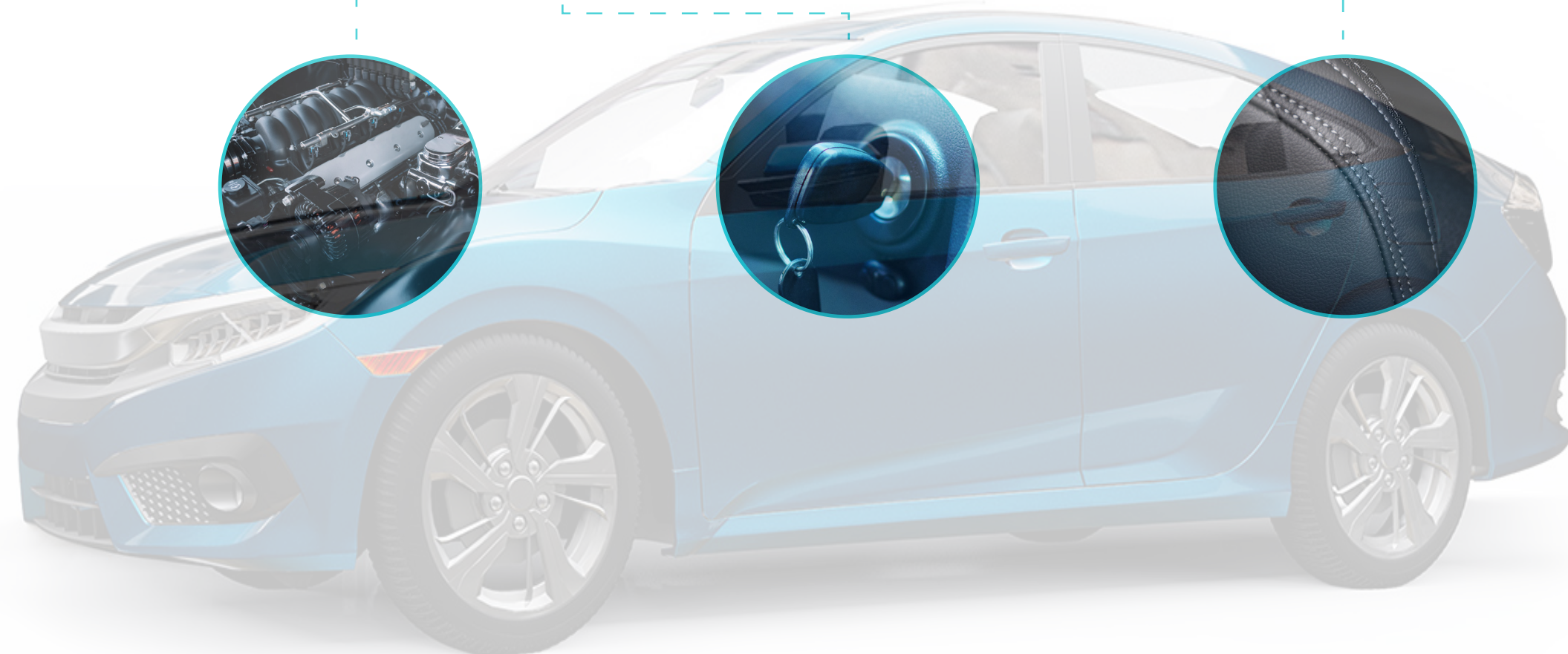
Dependability

When I turn the key, I want that thing to turn on — every time, without fail! I don’t want to be stuck on the side of a highway waiting for a tow truck.



Functionality

Do I need to carry a bunch of stuff or a bunch of people, or just myself? What level of comfort do I need? And finally, interior features like leather seats, a great sound system, etc.



If an organization truly wants to hire the best talent in a market or industry they must first define what “top talent” is to them.

Once you have that, your sourcers and recruiters can go out and actually find that specifically.

Posting a job and praying the best talent will apply to your job is why so many talent acquisition functions fail in the eyes of their executive team. There is a misalignment between what your executives believe they are asking for and what is being delivered.

Once we know what we want, talent acquisition and our recruiting software can build the plan, process, and strategy on how to best go about finding that specific talent.

That isn't easy. It's way easier to just post a job and sell our executives on the concept that those who applied are in fact the best talent. Actually discovering who is the best talent, then finding them, then talking them into working for you is very hard.

It takes a lot of time, resources, and an organizational culture of recruitment. But this is where the magic happens. This is how world class organizations are born.

//

The longer a job sits unfilled, the greater the temptation to lower the bar. Few organizations are willing to hire with the conviction needed to say “no” to great candidates, but they know that's what it takes to hire exceptional candidates.

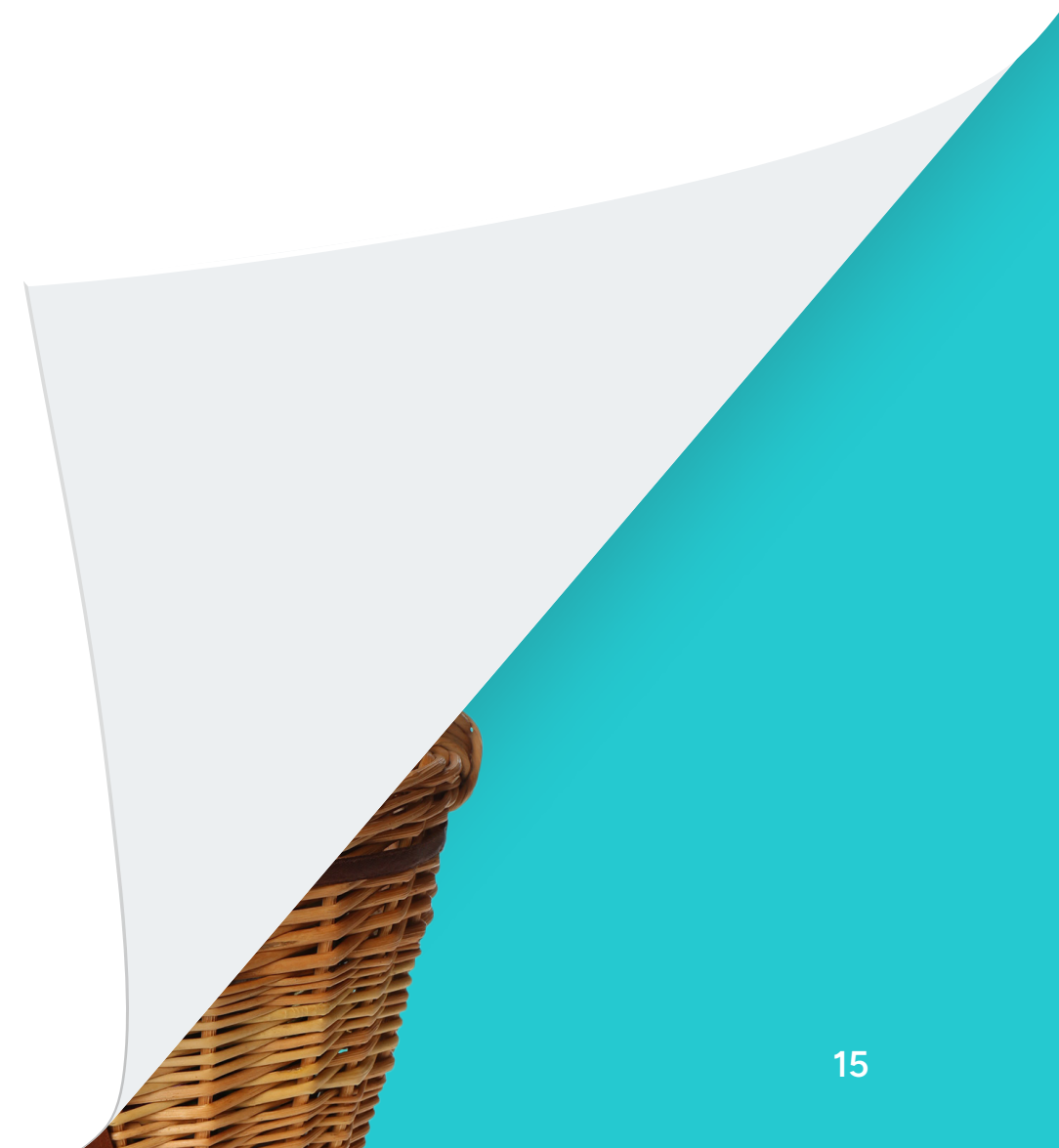


Susannah Sack
Director, Talent Operations



Wrapping it up.

To find top talent, you have to know what top talent means to you — most companies don't.



3

Rethinking candidate breakups.

Of course more candidates end up with a rejection than a job offer. But it doesn't have to make them feel like they're getting dumped. You might want them for a different role in the future. So let's figure out how you can stay friends.



Everyone wants to be wanted.

At one point in my career, I was interviewing for various executive roles in HR. I had three offers to choose from, all of which I really liked for different reasons. It came down to two:

Target and Applebee's.

I eventually chose to go with Applebee's and it was an amazing experience with amazing peers. I actually started my role at Applebee's the week before Thanksgiving. A few weeks later around Christmas this amazing gift basket came to my house.

It felt like instant validation — these people at Applebee's really do things right! Then I opened the basket. It was from the CHRO at Target.

He wanted me to know there were no hard feelings in my selection. He enjoyed our time and was congratulating me on my new role with Applebee's. He didn't have to say it; it was implied "If you change your mind, give us a call."

Applebee's was a great employer and I never regretted my decision.

But what the CHRO at Target did has stuck with me to this day.

Unfortunately, this is usually not the case. Instead, we are awful to candidates we don't hire.

I'm not telling you to start sending gift baskets to the candidates you miss out on (that would be impractical and expensive). But the only alternative isn't sending an automated "thanks, but no thanks!" email to your candidate that will just make them feel crappy. And that's if they actually even receive your crappy message.

We're better than that.

What should the candidate breakup feel like?

Not like you're getting dumped!

And the reality is, the way we're currently approaching hiring does result in that feeling: First, we treat candidates like they are the most desired person we've ever met. And we do it to many (thousands!) of people at the same time.

Then, when we find "the one" we immediately ghost the rest. All those people that became emotionally invested in us are left with broken hearts. Turns out Tinder and TA aren't all that different — and that means we need to drastically alter our approach.

Levels of communication should be segmented based on where a candidate falls in the journey. A candidate who makes it to the final interview deserves more personal feedback than a candidate who blindly clicked one button on Indeed and never bothered showing up for the screening call. Yet, the two candidates are often treated the same. This "levels" approach balances our own resources within the process.

I'm not telling you to give personal detailed feedback to every applicant, that would be impossible. But each stage of the process should have its own strategy.



50%

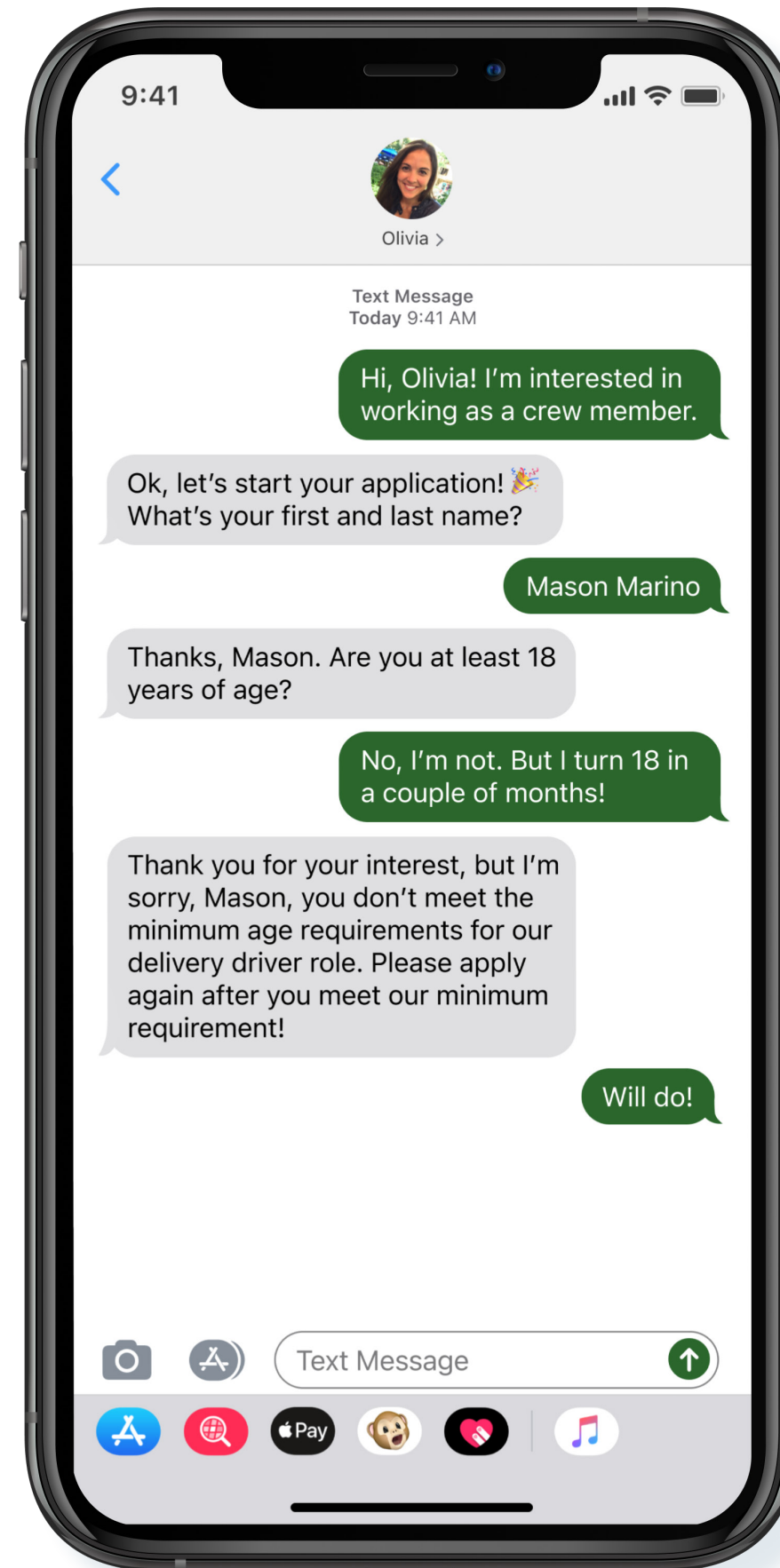
**of candidates are never even
disposed from a job.**

Read the full report [here](#).

Break it down to each level.

1 Applied, but not interested.

Okay fine, send your “thanks, but no thanks” text or email. Or even better, let your AI recruiting assistant handle it for you.



Discover more about how conversational AI can upgrade your screening process [here](#).

2 Applied, screened, passed onto hiring manger, but not chosen to move forward.

The candidate deserves a little personalization around why. They have no idea why they're rejected! Give them something. While the HM didn't want them, you did. So there might be something else in the future that is right for them.

3 Applied, screened, interviewed by hiring manager, but not selected.

Being in second place isn't the end of the journey. Very few people make it this far. We like you! So let's stay friends. With conversational AI able to automate ongoing communication, this is actually more scalable than you might think.



51%

of job candidates still note a rejected job application experience as positive if they received feedback regarding their rejection.

Read the full report [here](#).

4 Applied, screened, interviewed, offer.

We all think we've got this one nailed, but we don't. Level 4 recruiting comms is not a let-up, but a last-ditch effort to get the candidate to say yes to your marriage proposal! Where are the flowers and the candlelit dinner?! **We should be going all out at this stage, not getting lazy** — hiring managers and their teams should send short videos to candidates at this stage: "OMG! We loved meeting you! Can't wait to work with you! SAY YES!"

Also, a giant gift basket never hurts.



Wrapping it up.

How we treat candidates today will be the best indicator of whether they ever want to deal with us in the future.

4

Rethinking the white glove experience.

When recruiting technology does its job, we are given the opportunity to treat candidates to the proper 'white glove experience.'



Technology is changing recruiting.

Within three years, recruiting technology platforms will do almost all manual tactical work that recruiters are still doing today.

AI-driven technology is quickly taking over the recruiting technology landscape. We have, at this moment, technology that can do almost every single tactical part of recruiting that most of us are still doing manually today.

And that means merely “working harder” with old tech is no longer a competitive differentiator in the talent market.

The key competitive differentiator for talent acquisition functions is no longer “how well you process candidates manually,” but “how well candidates feel about the experience they had going through your process.”

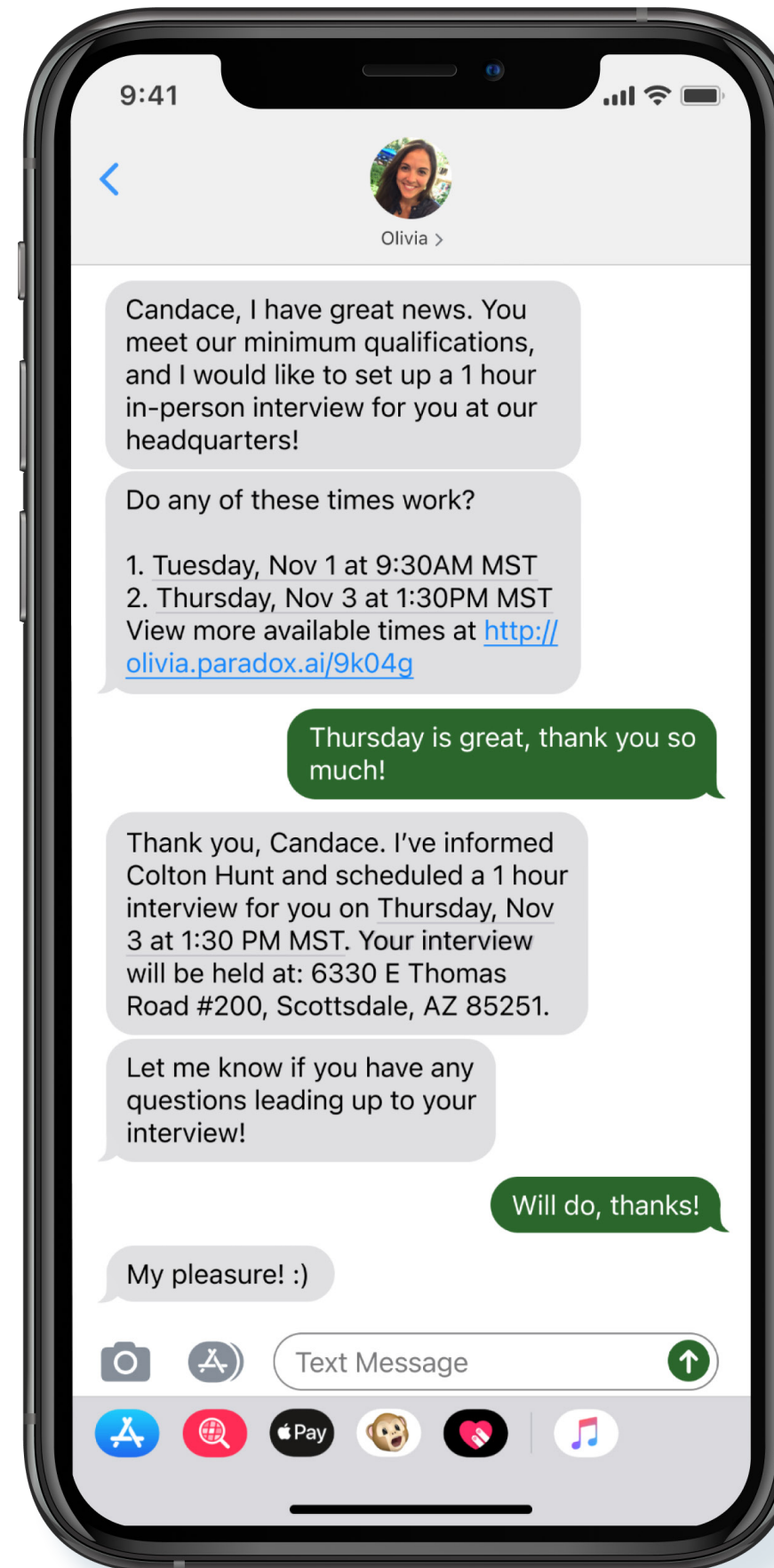
In 2022, with the tech at your disposal, you should no longer be:

- Manually juggling five calendars to set up an interview.
- Screening less than 10% of the candidates that apply.
- Manually typing notes into an ATS.

What should the white glove experience look like in recruiting?

1 Technology that makes the process simple for candidates.

That immediately allows them to feel connected to your brand and your jobs. That means using conversational AI to automate text conversations (and screening and interview scheduling) so the moment they want to engage, you have an avenue for them 24/7/365.



2 Make every candidate feel desired.

It is by far the most powerful emotion you can deliver as a recruiter. To make a candidate feel desired totally sets up the entire hiring process for success. But recruiters can only do it if they have the time (and the unfortunate truth is that right now many don't).

3 Candidates should have the ability to self-service.

That is, be more in control of their own hiring experience by setting up times to continue each step that is convenient for them and syncs with the schedules of the interviewers. The process should work like we would all want it to work.



One of the best things that you can be doing with hiring is making sure you're meeting candidates where they're at.



Rachel O'Connell
Vice President, HR



4 Offer a personality assessment for insight and growth.

But have one that actually makes candidates feel like their time investment was worthwhile; that they learned something from the experience, got a bit better as a professional, and now have a greater understanding of their unique skillset and personality.

5 Follow up with them.

Because our candidate invested their time with us, we should relay personal communication that demonstrates our appreciation for that investment and gives them feedback to help them in the future.



Wrapping it up.

The future of the white glove experience is personalized, human-to-human connections with candidates.



5

Rethinking employer branding.

Contrary to what you might want to believe, nobody has heard of your brand. But I'm here to tell you that's OK. Here's how to elevate your employer brand.



Nobody knows who you are.

Well, I mean, unless you're Google, or Apple, or Amazon — then of course everyone knows who you are. But since most of us don't work for "unicorn" brands, we're all languishing in relative anonymity. Our executives (especially CEOs) don't want to believe this.

CEOs, generally, exist in an alternate reality where everyone knows them and loves them. To be fair, it makes complete sense because every CEO I've met is fully bought into their vision for the company.

When you are that focused and bought-in, you tend to love your company, the brand, the people, your product, and your services — it kind of comes with the job!

So I don't judge them for their belief that their brand is much bigger and more recognizable than it really is.

Another branding issue is when you're the "biggest" brand in town. While you might not be an international unicorn brand, you are the hottest thing in your city — or so you think.

I live in mid-Michigan, and we have some major, enterprise-level employers in town and there is a strong belief by their TA teams that everyone knows them.

The crazy thing is when we survey candidates there is actually a very small percentage that know the local brands and even fewer that know what they actually do.

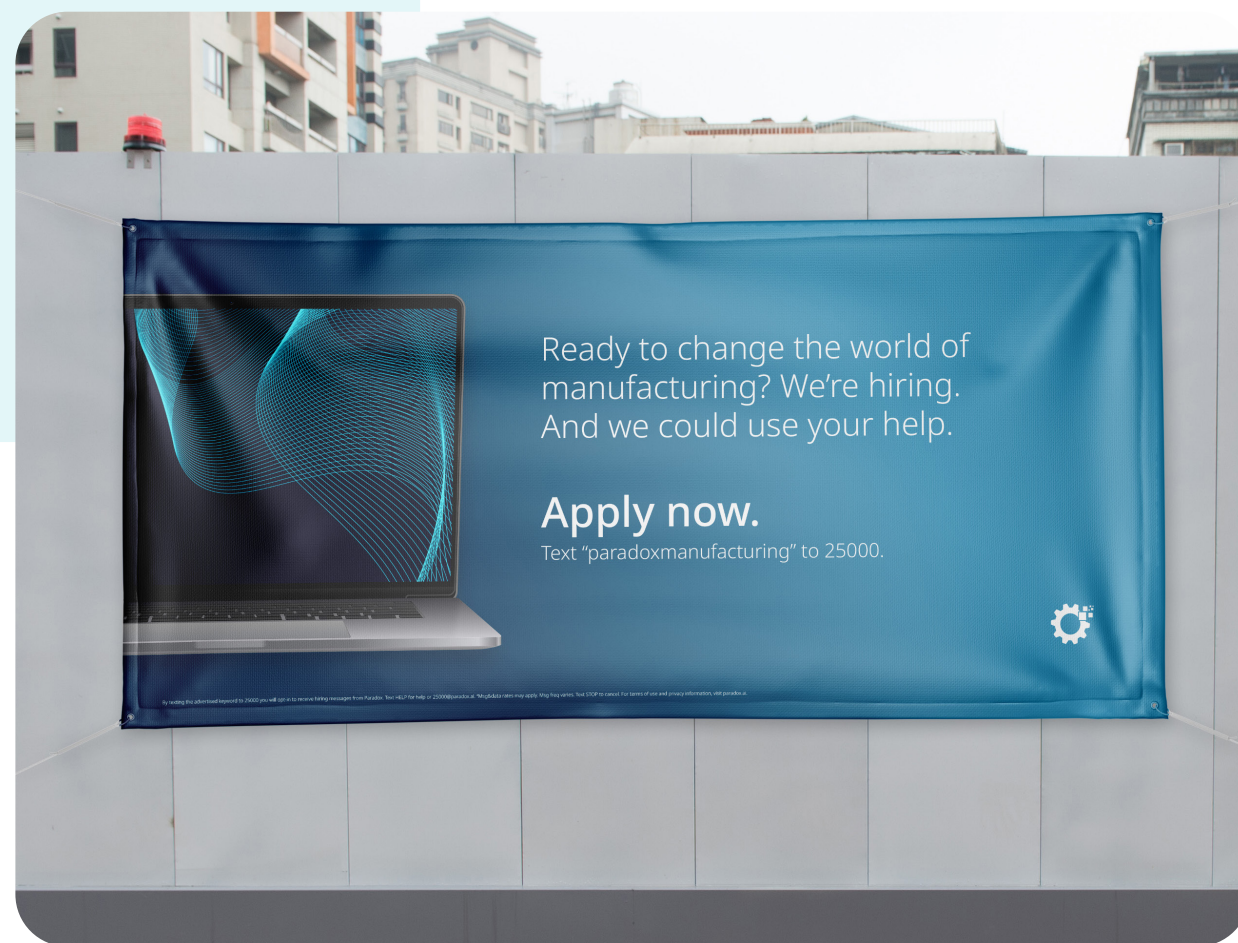
How can you elevate your employer brand to the audience you want to hire?

1 Be realistic.

Almost zero people are looking at your career site in your market daily. Probably less than 10% of your addressable candidate market has ever visited your career site. (But for the ones that do, make sure your career site stands out.)

2 Build an employee advocacy team.

Your employees already know who you are and what you do, so start there. Also, start small. GE started its thousand-person plus employee brand advocacy team from scratch.



3 Become expert recruitment marketers.

Turns out advertising works! Let's make sure people know you want them to come work for you. With conversational AI, it's easier than ever to reach candidates where they are, in the ways that they want; throw a QR code into a digital ad and someone can go from scrolling social media to applying for a job.

4 Use your employee value proposition.

- Use your employee value proposition to get candidates to opt-out, not opt in. Guess what: we all want to believe we are an employer of choice — and in a way we are — but only for those candidates whose crazy matches our own crazy. Be transparent about who you really are.

We tend to spend 90% of our time on developing our employment branding story and our employee value proposition, and only 10% letting candidates know we actually have a job open.

And then we can't figure out why our pipelines are empty. Of course, someone will care about your EVP, but this isn't a chicken or egg scenario — it's both.

Your employment brand isn't what you create, it's what your employees already tell you it is. By the way, it's not the employees that hate you that you want to listen to, it's those that love you.

You can be transparent about who you are and still be aspirational as well. You have employees who love you and that's the story you hope every new employee will also experience.

Your employment brand matters less than you think!

Look, I know that's not what you want to hear. We've been conditioned to believe our brand is everything. But once you get past the unicorn employment brands and the seemingly unlimited budgets at their disposal, almost all of us are about the same.

We try hard to provide a great employee experience, good pay and benefits, and all the other sound bites we put on our career sites. For the most part, there isn't a ton of difference in working a job from one company to the next.

Wrapping it up.

Your “why” won’t get people to work for you — get the little things right.

paradox.ai

© Paradox, Inc. 2022



If you're ready to rethink recruiting, we'd love to talk.

Paradox is building the world's leading conversational recruiting software to drive automation with a human touch. Serving global clients like McDonald's, CVS Health, and General Motors with hiring needs across high-volume hourly and high-skilled professional roles, Paradox's conversational assistant Olivia does the work talent teams don't have time for — streamlining tasks like screening, interview scheduling, and more through fast, easy, mobile-first interactions.

paradox.ai

© Paradox, Inc. 2022