THE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE REPORT:

THE HIRING PROCESS UNVEILED

A behind-the-scenes look at what it’s like to be a job seeker in today’s job market
Today’s available jobs are outpacing the number of active job seekers in the market, according to recent unemployment reports, making it a competitive job market for employers. If companies do not put time and care into the candidate experience they are providing they will not only lose out on best-fit talent, but they will also hurt their company’s reputation and ultimately the bottom line.

In this report, we explore the experience people go through as they search, apply and interview for jobs and how the quality of that experience is affecting employers.

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SECTION 1
CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE MATTERS
For a long time now, American employers have had the upper hand in the hiring process with an abundance of job candidates, leaving little incentive to assess their hiring processes. However, with unemployment numbers coming in at the lowest rate since December of 2000, employers are now scrambling to fill positions as they begin to grasp the impact that a candidate’s interviewing and hiring experience can have on other aspects of their business.

More than two-thirds (67%) of employed American adults agree that the application, interview or offer process would make or break their decision on whether to take a job.

Having an engaging career site is only one facet of delivering a candidate experience that can create a favorable brand impression, and ultimately facilitate a smooth transition from candidate to hire.

Recruiting practices are an extension of the corporate brand — and candidates who believe they have had a negative overall experience say they will take their product purchases and relationship somewhere else. In fact, according to a report by Talent Board, 74% of candidates say they will increase their employer relationships based on the very positive job seeker experiences they’ve had, meaning they’ll apply again, refer others and make purchases when applicable.¹

When searching and applying for a job, candidates expect the same ease of use and functionality they see in the apps and websites they already use every day.

If an application process is difficult or frustrating, employers could damage their reputation and even miss out on candidates altogether.

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It’s no longer a one-way street. Job candidates see the interview and hiring process as their chance to size up the employers. Those early impressions count — a lot. An overwhelming majority (95%) agree that the way a potential employer treats them as a candidate is a reflection of how they would treat them as an employee.

¹. Talent Board, North American Candidate Experience Report, 2017
SECTION 2

HOW EMPLOYERS FIND CANDIDATES TODAY
At a time when so many Americans are gainfully employed, employers need to cast their net wider to proactively reach talented candidates who might not necessarily be looking for a new job.

Employers Might be Missing Out on **Passive Job Seekers**

Many employers are leaving a large pool of potential candidates untapped. In fact, **more than a quarter of working Americans weren’t actively looking for a job when they found their current job.**

Despite **more than half (51%) of employees admitting they’d consider taking another job if the right opportunity came along**, 42% of working Americans have not had any contact from a recruiter about a job opportunity in the past year.

Even if Not Actively Looking for a Job, **Workers Can be Convinced to Leave**

Today, only 22% of those surveyed are actively looking for a new job, but **51% said even though they are not actively looking for a different job, they would consider one if the right opportunity came along.**

On average, the workers who report that a recruiter reached out to them about a job opportunity (58%) through LinkedIn or a networking event, were contacted **7X within the past year.**
Finding Candidates on the Front Line

The clear majority of job seekers (69%) use Google as part of their typical process to search for open jobs and research potential employers.

More specifically, 83% of millennials use Google during their job search, and Gen-Xers (68%) are taking advantage of the popular search engine more readily than boomers (53%).

Removing the Middlemen

Even though the majority of job seekers turn to Google to assist with their job search, prior to entering the recruiting space, Google essentially turned all their candidate traffic over to third-party sites like Monster, CareerBuilder, Indeed, LinkedIn, Glassdoor and more. Job boards and aggregators would charge employers to search through their candidate databases and some even sold this information to other companies, with somewhat of a disregard for candidates’ data privacy rights.

With Google for Jobs entering the recruitment advertising space, candidates can now find jobs directly through Google’s AI/machine learning engines, rather than being sifted through a middlemen community of job boards and job aggregators.

This vastly improves the candidate experience and is a game changer from a recruitment advertising cost perspective.
Job Seekers Are Frustrated by Weak Technology

Some job candidates are eliminating potential employers before the hiring process even begins because of a frustrating online application process. This makes it even more imperative for employers to make the hiring process as positive and easy as possible.

According to iCIMS system data, on average, it takes people 11 minutes to complete a job application. However, people who abandoned the online application process tend to spend an average of four minutes filling out the application before deciding to leave the page and not complete the application.

Applicants in these U.S. States Take the Shortest Amount of Time to Complete an Online Job Application
- Washington | 8:48
- Delaware | 8:52
- West Virginia | 9:25
- New Jersey | 9:49
- New York | 10:20

Applicants in these U.S. States Take the Longest Amount of Time to Complete an Online Job Application
- Wyoming | 17:15
- Montana | 15:58
- South Dakota | 14:36
- New Mexico | 13:21
- Alaska | 13:14
Security Breaches Have Candidates Nervous and More Cautious

When it comes to trusting certain online services outside of a company’s recruiting system of record, the applicant tracking system (ATS), applicants are starting to think twice.

Now, virtually all applications must be completed online, and there’s usually an opportunity to populate applications with social media profile data, and even complete the entire process within minutes on your phone. All of these advancements in the candidate experience have made recruiting technology an area of intense innovation, but also lends to growing concern around candidate data rights and security.

Data breaches have become more common in recent years leaving candidates worried about the data they share online, including through social media.

Applicants rely on employers to keep their personal information safe. To keep applicants’ minds at ease, data security, compliance and privacy should be a top priority in choosing a talent acquisition technology provider for employers.

Technology providers with strict data encryption procedures, up-to-date certifications and security policies for supporting General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance will help employers enhance the implied contract that is inherent in their candidate experience.

Nearly 2 in 3 (65%) agree that recent security breaches have made them less likely to apply for a job through social media.

That level of concern was uniformly shared among boomers (69%), millennials (67%) and Gen Xers (60%).
SECTION 3

SURPRISING APPLICATION & INTERVIEW EXPERIENCES
**Mid-Week** is When Most Applications Are Completed

Employers should aim to get their new job postings up by Monday. According to iCIMS system data, the most popular day applications are completed is Tuesday followed by Wednesday. The least amount of applications were completed on Friday through Sunday.

![Percentage of Applications in 2017](chart)

**Communication is Key:**

American workers are frustrated with a lack of communication from potential employers. Applicants invest their time polishing their resume, writing a compelling cover letter and completing the job application, but sometimes never hear back from employers. This is also often referred to as the “resume black hole” and leads to a poor experience for potential best-fit talent.

Slipping away quietly instead of breaking unwelcome news may be the easy way out, but for employers that do not communicate with job applicants, they are damaging their candidate experience and the company’s reputation.

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The Way Candidates Want to Communicate with Employers is Changing

When communication is off, candidates start feeling alienated from the hiring process and may become disinterested in a potential employer. Employers can improve the quality of communications with candidates by using text messaging to proactively reach out to candidates about how the hiring process is proceeding and informing them about potential delays.

As 73% of U.S. employed adults surveyed said they were actively looking or open to a new job, texting is the most direct mode of communication to reach working people during a busy day.

86% of people agree that it would be beneficial to receive text messages during the job application process.

The following phases of the job application process would be beneficial for job seekers to receive communications via text message:

- 57% when scheduling interviews
- 57% when scheduling next steps after being hired
- 34% when completing applications, such as to answer questions about the application
- 33% when applying for open positions, such as to jumpstart the application process
Americans are Taking Multiple Days Off to Interview for Each New Job Opportunity

On average, job seekers complete three interviews for a job. This includes all phone or in-person interviews regardless of whether they ultimately got the job.

However, more than a quarter (26%) of Americans who were employed elsewhere while interviewing had to take off three or more days to interview for their current job.

And, more than 1 in 5 of employed Americans have had to complete at least four interviews for a single job.

Considering employers in the U.S. typically give the least amount of paid time off compared to other countries, taking multiple days off to interview for each job opportunity could be difficult for working Americans and deter top talent from advancing in the interview process.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. employees are most likely to have 10-14 days of paid vacation after one year of employment. This compared to workers in Australia and the EU, who have a mandatory minimum of 20 days paid vacation, with some European countries giving their employees up to 25 days a year.

Taking off work for multiple interviews may be even more challenging for the 3 in 10 job candidates who also happen to be parents.

People who were employed while interviewing took an average of two days off from work to interview for a new position.
Questionable Interview

Interviews are expected to be an opportunity for hiring managers to learn more about candidates. An unorthodox question, however, could lead to an awkward moment and leave the job seeker with a negative impression of the employer.

Here are some of the job candidates’ most surprising interview questions they’ve ever been asked:

- Are you planning to have more children?
- Are you married or single?
- Are you pregnant?
- What is God’s plan for you, in your opinion?
- Are you rich?
- Are you currently in a coma?
- Do you have any kind of problems in your life?
- Do you own a gun?
- Do you talk to yourself?
- How do you feel your off-work lifestyle would reflect on our core values?
- How many online chat rooms do you belong to?
- Do you like Star Wars or Star Trek better?
- What color do you think aliens are?
- What do you wear on Tuesdays?
- How many steps did you climb up to reach my office?

State and federal laws make discrimination based on certain protected categories, such as age, marital or family status, religion, disabilities, race and gender, illegal.
SECTION 4

THE COST OF A POOR POST-HIRE EXPERIENCE
More than a Quarter of Employed Americans Have Quit for **Lack of Proper Onboarding and Training**

Even if they manage to successfully execute the screening, interviewing, testing and getting-to-know-you lunches without losing a coveted job candidate, employers aren’t out of the woods once they have a signed offer of employment.

More than a quarter (26%) have quit a job specifically because they didn’t feel they were onboarded or trained properly. Perhaps of greater concern, **44% of job candidates didn’t quit but considered it**, indicating the potential for an even more substantial retention if issues aren’t addressed.

Employee turnover is costly for a business. In fact, the Work Institute estimates the cost of replacing an employee who quits is 33% of a worker’s annual salary.\(^2\) When applied to the median U.S. worker’s salary of $45,000, the estimated average cost of turnover per employee is $15,000.

If employers cannot find and keep their talent, the business’ bottom line will suffer.

Without an audit of its hiring procedures, a business might never learn of these situations. And in business, ignorance is never bliss. Today, it’s more imperative than ever to make the hiring and onboarding processes as positive, easy, and informative as possible.

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\(^2\) Work Institute, 2017 Retention Report, 2017
About iCIMS Hiring Insights

iCIMS Hiring Insights is an online resource for labor market insights and hiring trends. Our team of researchers and writers uses iCIMS’ exclusive data, as well as proprietary and secondary research, to create reports and articles that cover the most recent developments in the workforce. Featuring iCIMS’ Chief Economist, Josh Wright, iCIMS Hiring Insights helps its readers stay well-informed about the latest in recruiting, technology and the labor market. To learn more visit: www.icims.com/hiring-insights.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted among 500 nationally representative U.S. adults employed part-time and full-time, between May 7 and May 14, 2018, using an email invitation and an online survey.

About iCIMS System Data

iCIMS system data is drawn on a database of more than 61 million applications and three million jobs posted per year by 3,500+ customers. iCIMS customers represent a broad swath of the U.S. economy, with expansive geographic, industry and occupational representation.