

The Offer Experience

By Simon Parkin

One of the most important steps in the recruitment process is the offer stage – yet most companies don't invest the appropriate amount of training and resources into this critical recruitment phase. Recruitment is all about the outcome – the hire.

As Recruiters, we need to look at this phase as “closing the candidate” and put the same importance the Sales function puts on “closing the deal”. An organization can have best-in-class sourcing channels but if they are unable to have their top external talent accept their offers and actually start with the company then they have failed.

Obviously the selling of your organization and the role to candidates should be part of every step in your recruitment process but when it comes to the actual offer of employment how equipped are your leaders to be successful in “closing the deal”. Organizations need to understand that top external talent will be recruited by multiple organizations simultaneously and you are competing for this talent.

There is also another threat to this process which is often not considered; if the candidate is truly top talent, how easily is their current organization going to let them walk away. Always anticipate a counter-offer and ensure you have the process and skills in place to successfully compete with a counter-offer.

A counter-offer sounds like a great scenario for most of us but I can tell you from personal experience that a counter-offer is a stressful time for the candidate as they are caught between competing offers and sometimes the security of the known (their current organization) outweighs the unknown (the new organization).

So how can you position your organization to “close the deal” on your top candidates?

The first step is to analyze your current recruitment process, talent, tools and business leaders and understand how effective they are in both selling your organization, the role and your value proposition within each stage of the process. An effective end-to-end recruitment process that sells candidates throughout will help you set the stage for winning new hires – remember, it is a competition and we need to think, talk and market our offerings similar to our colleagues in Sales as they are always striving to win new business.

The next step I would recommend would be to look at all aspects of your new hire offer stage. What role do your recruiters and hiring leaders play? Who extends the verbal offer and how are you positioning the offer based on what you have learnt during the recruitment process on what is most important to your candidate? What does your offer letter and offer package look like? Does it sell and excite your candidates or is it simply full of legal verbiage and policies on what employees can't do? Do you look at an offer as a Win-Win approach for both the candidate and the organization? How are your recruiters and hiring leaders equipped to negotiate the offer? Have you set limits on the

negotiation of salary, vacation, signing bonus, etc.? Will you be turned off on a candidate who negotiates the offer? Are you able to communicate what the new hire can expect on their first day and beyond with an on-boarding plan? When will your candidate be resigning from their current organization and is there a plan to speak to them immediately following their resignation to determine if there is a counter-offer threat.

The final step is to ensure you have an ongoing communication plan with the candidate. Not only up to the offer phase but ensure it continues right up to their start date. The period between offer acceptance and start date is when new hires feel anxious and are most susceptible to competing and counter-offers. You need to hold their hands right up until their first day to ensure you have truly “closed the deal”.

Is your Recruitment function and organization equipped to be a “Closer”?