



Recruiting and Retention —

A Symbiotic Relationship Amidst a Crisis

The way we work has changed significantly since the unwelcome arrival of COVID-19, and so have the concepts of recruitment and retention. High unemployment rates make it seem like it should be easier to find and retain top talent who crave stability in this tumultuous time. However, businesses are presented with new challenges to overcome. If you're finding it difficult to wade through mounds of resumes or you've lost focus on keeping your top performers engaged, you're not alone. Here are a few tips to redirect your talent strategy amidst this crisis.

Competing in a flooded market

Big companies who can afford to have internal recruiters on staff often have an advantage in sourcing for talent quickly. Small and mid-sized companies might need to take the "if we build it, they will come" approach. When done right, that can actually be just as advantageous.

One of the best ways to find top talent is to utilize your connections:

- 1 Ask for referrals from people you trust at organizations or clubs you belong to
- 2 Incentivize your current employees to refer candidates by creating a referral bonus program
- 3 Partner with local schools to recruit interns and recent graduates that they would recommend

You know that relieved feeling when you walk into an event or party and you spot someone you know? When you hire a candidate through your connections, it produces that same feeling — creating a sense of loyalty and comfortability that leads to higher retention of your newfound employee.

Tech can't replace a personal touch

There's no denying we live in the digital age, and technology is a necessary tool to recruit new team members. However, the wide net technology helps us cast can also create a clutter of unqualified candidates. It can make it difficult for you to really get to know a person. The key here is to ensure all things your ideal candidate can see represents your employee value proposition.

Creating that value prop starts with a killer *job narrative*.

Notice, I didn't say job description? A *job narrative*, unlike a description, utilizes the art of storytelling to draw in the right candidate to apply to your job. Rather than listing out bullet-pointed tasks, describe why you are hiring for the position and the attributes of your ideal candidate. Speak directly to the candidate, using words like **YOU** and **YOUR** which indicate ownership. Include a great call to action with instructions on how to apply for the job and what to expect should they get called for an interview.

Taking a new job can be a deeply personal decision for a candidate, so make sure your communication with them is personalized. When you initially reach out to a candidate, tell them what you liked about their resume and minimize the jargon. Talk like a human and you're likely to get a more human response back.

The same can be said for the interview process; your interviews should not be a back and forth volley of Q&A. Have a conversation — ask (appropriate) personalized questions to get to know the candidate. It's extremely important that when an employee accepts your job offer, that all the personalized things you said during the recruitment process are an actual reflection of reality. If that's the case, you're more likely to keep that employee retained.

All the right questions

Asking the right questions during an interview are crucial to determining which candidate is the best fit for your position. This sounds pretty easy on a blog page written by your friendly HR partner, but it can be harder in practice, right? Start by focusing on the *ticket of admission*.

Think of *ticket of admission* as the base tactical skills a candidate would need in order enter the ballpark of that position. To gauge whether or not a candidate's experience and skills match what you need, ask questions that help you **understand work situations they've been involved in:**

- 1 What was their role / responsibility level in that situation?
- 2 What steps did they take to solve the situation?
- 3 What outcomes did their actions produce?

This step should happen in an initial phone screen so that unqualified candidates don't progress further into the interview process.

It goes beyond hiring for fit

One of the questions we're often asked as HR practitioners is:

How do we find the right *fit*?

Fit can be a subjective notion based on the interviewer, so instead focus on a connection to your company values. All people are driven by our own belief systems, so look for demonstrated behaviors to see if there's a connection between their beliefs and your values. For example, if your company values collaboration, listen for **WE** statements in how they answer your questions. If you can sense arrogance or egotism, they might not be a great match for your values. Companies who incorporate values into their recruitment tactics have an impact that lasts far beyond the interview. Remember, people generally don't come to work to blatantly shirk their duties; many terminations we see are a result of poor alignment with a company's values system. Feeling a candidate out for their place in your values system can lead to higher retention and less frustration with costly turnover.



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Top talent is valuable in any economy

Picking and keeping the right employees can seem like a daunting process, especially amidst our current crises. You might be tempted to put aside career development conversations in these uncertain times, but it's important to keep in mind that your top talent can get snatched away, even in an unstable economy. There are all kinds of facts and figures out there about what keeps an employee at a company, but the truth is that each individual's needs are different. So, ask them and then advocate for them. Truly advocating doesn't mean cheering for them on the sidelines, but by really getting to know what makes them tick and making sure that their talents are represented accurately and fairly within your organization.

No matter what crises come our way, you cannot decouple recruitment and retention from one another. Moreover, when you start to look at recruitment and retention as an opportunity to authentically connect with another human being, you'll find them much less challenging!

To learn more about EmPower HR and how they can help you build recruiting and retention strategies that are right for your business, visit their website: www.empowerhr.com, or follow on social!