8 Ways to Convert
More Candidates
Into Applicants

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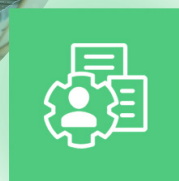
What you'll learn:

Create a Standout Candidate Experience

Recruiting qualified candidates does not come cheap. Based on benchmark data from the [Society for Human Resource Management](), the average cost per hire is around $4,700. But with lost productivity from the open position, resources required to support the hiring process, and time taken away from accomplishing other business objectives, the costs are likely much higher.

Despite the significant investment to find the best sources of talent and channels to attract candidates to career sites, candidate conversion rates are extremely low. Employ data reveals that it is common to see just 10-20% of candidates convert into applicants on a company career site.

The challenge to succeed in talent acquisition includes delivering both a standout candidate experience and increasing applicant volume. This is why it is so important today that companies invest in and optimize their recruiting strategies, technologies, and processes to provide candidates a streamlined experience that converts a higher proportion of job seekers into applicants.

What Is Candidate Conversion?

Candidate conversion is the process of transitioning a career site visitor into a known candidate or applicant by either completing the job apply process or joining a talent network.

Fortunately, there are some basic changes that can be made with minimal effort to vastly improve candidate conversion rates. This guide examines eight elements that you should optimize to impact your candidate conversion rates. See what simple changes you can make across the candidate experience lifecycle that will impact how many job seekers complete an application to help expand your pool of qualified talent.

It's difficult for companies to find the right candidates for the right job. And talent teams must do everything they can to remove barriers to candidate conversion. Organizations that can remove these conversion bottlenecks see a positive effect on their candidate experience and a higher volume of applicants.

#1: Skip the Registration Requirement

When candidates find their way to your career site, you have to make it simple to apply for an open position. Eliminating registration requirements is an easy way convert candidates and give your employer brand a boost.

Industry averages show that only 30% of applicants who start the apply process actually complete it. By placing an unnecessary obstacle in the way of good candidates, you are likely losing some of your best future employees.

Requiring registration on the career site often comes with complex username and password requirements that create a barrier to moving forward. Don't require candidates to register or ask them for information that discourages them from applying.

You may have been told that registration is necessary. But it's not. Remember to make parallels to modern consumer-quality experiences. Most online retailers allow individuals to check out as guests to streamline their digital interactions. So, as recruiting organizations, avoid placing unnecessary obstacles in the way of good candidates.

#2: Enable Quick Apply Options

> Remember, don't require registration at any point during the application process — either as a first step or further downstream.

- **Social Apply**
Social media has become a major channel for sharing open job roles. With 71% of workers likely to share job openings through social media, and 82% likely to click on a job opportunity that someone in their network posts, it's clear that social media channels are effortlessly maintaining their importance within the candidate journey.

  Allowing candidates to leverage their social profiles, like LinkedIn and Facebook, to apply for jobs on your career site is a recruiting best practice. Having the option for applicants to automatically populate relevant information from their social media profile is effective in converting career visitors into applicants. Not to mention, it eliminates repetitive data entry for candidates who we know demand a fast application process.

- **Cloud Apply**

    Allowing candidates to populate fields by leveraging existing files from applications, such as Dropbox or Google Drive, is another application process best practice. Similar to social apply, candidate profiles can be automatically populated with the relevant information from the applicant's cloud-based documents. Employ data reveals that just over half of organizations offer candidates the option to apply with their cloud-based resume, which is a major turn-off to tech-savvy candidates.

- **Mobile Apply**

    If your application process isn't optimized for mobile, you are losing out on candidates. Larger navigation buttons, reformatted content, reduced graphic sizes, and optimized images make the site easier to navigate from the small screen. Remember to also avoid making your candidates type unless absolutely necessary. Although many companies have incorporated this tactic, there are still some career sites that do not render well on mobile devices.

Career sites accessed via mobile should include reformatted content and graphics that are built to be easily navigated. Mobile optimization also means that you offer candidates the opportunity to take advantage of existing social profiles and cloud-based storage for completing their resume or work history information. This increases the amount of time your candidates will spend on your site and increases the likelihood that they will complete an application.
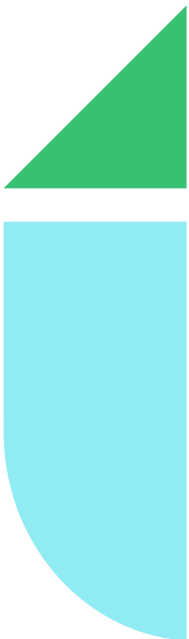
#3: Get the Most Out of Your Events

While digital recruiting strategies are a key channel to reach today's candidates, there is still an opportunity to leverage in-person hiring events, including campus and seasonal events, to find great talent. The benefits of events are that they are a great way to build a personal connection with those candidates and build your competitive advantage for the top talent.

It is essential to enable candidates to easily find information on your career site for upcoming events and then quickly register for them to ensure you see a return on your investment from hiring events. Yet by not integrating event registration into your career site, you're keeping your talent acquisition strategies in silos and overlooking visibility into which of the strategies are producing the best candidates. Worse yet, it becomes a missed opportunity to remarket to those candidates.
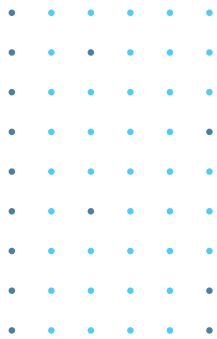
#4: Avoid Talent Network Interruptions

Talent networks give candidates an opportunity to opt-in to an organization's network to receive information about employment opportunities and company news. Candidates opt-in from the career site or apply process, giving permission to recruiters and talent acquisition teams to provide them with relevant updates.

As a recommended best practice, you don't want to force candidates to opt into your talent network before they complete an application. This creates an unnecessary obstacle, distracts your candidate from applying, and most often leaves them frustrated with the need to provide duplicative information in sequential steps. A forced talent network registration can easily reduce the number of completed applications.

#5: Leverage Chatbots and Candidate Texting

Engaging with candidates to create a positive candidate journey is critical for talent acquisition teams. And given the rapidly changing talent market, many organizations are turning to automation to ensure it. What can automating communications do for your recruiting function? The answer is simple: it empowers candidates to access information quickly and on the device that is convenient for them. Plus it allows recruiters to spend less transactional time and more time nurturing candidates.

- **Chatbot**
  Activating chatbots reduces time-consuming interactions between recruiters and candidates. Chatbots can easily answer frequently asked questions, including benefits packages, routing prospects to the correct talent communities, and providing general company information.

  This simple automation allows candidates insight and access to your recruiting process 24 hours a day. And quicker access to your company means you can speed the hiring process and outperform competitors in time-to-hire.

- **Candidate Texting**
  Of the candidates who have experienced texting in the hiring process, Employ data reveals 69% of them preferred texting over email or phone calls. Texting has a 98% read rate, making it a no-brainer for modern talent acquisition teams to use in the approach for connecting with candidates.

While candidate texting may not be a fit for every open position, high-volume roles are often very successful when leveraging this additional avenue for adding applicants to the talent funnel. Examples of roles that succeed by leveraging text-to-apply and automation include retail workers, restaurant employees, and many other entry-level roles.

#6: Enable Easy Opt-in Job Alerts

With the low unemployment rate, there are more passive than active candidates. And your best candidates are likely already employed. But at the same time, a large percentage of the workforce says they would be open to new opportunities if the right one came along.

It's a good idea to make sure you are staying in front of candidates to learn about new opportunities rather than requiring them to regularly come to your career site. That's why you should easily allow candidates to sign up with their email for automated job alerts.

This is a soft and less intimidating way to build your talent pool for the long term, even if the right job isn't there for the right candidate today. Candidates are often willing to share a little information with you in the hopes that someday you may present them with the right opportunity.

Providing low barrier to entry for job alerts ensures your company can build its talent database and start attracting talent for future roles. Make sure you have an easy-to-find opt-in job alert button on your career site that is prominently featured for passive candidates to sign up. Proactively attract candidates for today and tomorrow by demonstrating best practices with the option to sign up for automated notifications.

#7: Optimize Job Listing to Google for Jobs

When Google entered the recruiting industry several years ago, it sought to take freeform searches from job seekers and use Google machine learning to better match candidates to relevant jobs. Google for Jobs aggregates job listings across multiple job boards and removes duplicates, featuring listings on the first results page, even before organic results.

Unfortunately, most companies have no direct index to their corporate jobs on their career site. Don't miss an opportunity to ensure a seamless journey for your candidates. Optimize your job listing on your own career site to adhere to the published structure data markup from Google and make simple changes to your sitemap file, in accordance with Google recommendations. With all the time and investment you've put into your career site, make sure you are driving traffic to the right place and not splintering opportunities for conversion.
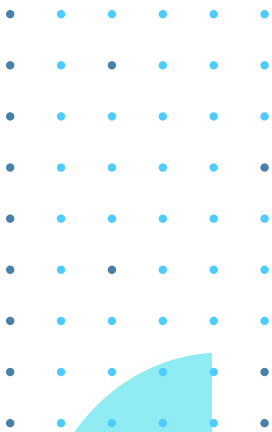
#8: Get the Most Out of Indeed

Few companies get the most out of one of the best conversion opportunities to the biggest source of candidate traffic. Indeed is considered the world's largest job site and offers a game-changing opportunity for companies to convert candidates into applicants by leveraging organic candidate traffic, specifically as a point of application conversion.

As best practice, companies should leverage Indeed directly to offer an on-site streamlined application process. Yet many companies make the process more complex by linking from Indeed to the ATS job description or linking from Indeed to their career site.

By adding layers that make the application process overly complex, companies miss the opportunity to simplify the candidate experience and increase application conversion rates. By integrating technologies that streamline the application process and integrate directly with Indeed Apply, you can enable candidates to feed their profiles directly into your applicant tracking system, all without leaving Indeed.

Where to Start Optimizing Candidate Conversion

As every recruiter and talent acquisition professional knows, eliminating barriers to conversion is essential to increasing candidate conversion rates. Companies that focus their efforts on candidate conversion at multiple stages throughout the candidate lifecycle, and across multiple channels, like career sites, talent networks, chatbots and candidate texting, have seen considerable increases in their conversion rates.

By measuring conversion along the talent lifecycle, and understanding that nurturing and engaging talent is key to converting candidates, you can optimize recruiting performance and create an outstanding experience for candidates.

What are some practical ways to get started? Here are three specific strategies you can apply to begin improving the candidate experience and impacting candidate conversion:

- **Review your current candidate conversion journey:** Audit your own candidate journey through the lens of your candidates. Remember, conversion happens at multiple stages throughout the talent lifecycle — from applications and talent networks to job alerts and event registrations.

- **Analyze your metrics:** Measure what matters to your organization. Understand candidate conversion at all levels. Analyze candidate drop off or opt in metrics at different points in the candidate journey

- **Optimize from the end of the candidate journey to the beginning:** Start with the end in mind. Make sure you do not put up any artificial barriers to application. Take down registration requirements and ensure it's easy and simple for candidates to apply.

It's never too late to start improving recruiting performance. You can make simple changes to your recruitment process to dramatically improve candidate conversion and engage more high quality candidates. Because improving the candidate experience for conversion will have an immediate and lasting effect on your recruiting success.

Learn how LeverTRM, our complete talent acquisition suite, helps organizations navigate the uncertain recruiting landscape and find top talent today so they can be ready for tomorrow.

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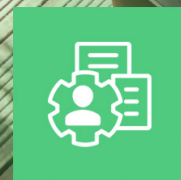
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