

# 21 Tips and Tricks to Boost Your Employee Referral Program



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Employee referrals are the #1 source of quality candidates for the most successful global organizations, resulting in faster hires, improved employee retention levels and higher profitability.

It is critical for recruiting leaders to articulate the benefits of enhancing this top producing sourcing channel and make it a top priority for your company.

### Did you know?

Referred employees have **superior performance**, in terms of innovation and produce substantially higher profit. [source](#)

A referred candidate is conservatively **three to four times more likely to be hired** than someone who applies to a position without a referral. [source](#)

Employee referrals are **the most productive source of diversity hires**.  
[source](#)

# Employee Referral Program Do's

If you're looking for an immediate impact on advancing your employee referral program, focus on these 11 approaches immediately.

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## 1. Build a referral program brand.

Put on your employment marketing hat or partner with your marketing team! Consider running two to three campaigns throughout the year, promoting your brand through various media.

## 2. Use collateral to reinforce goals.

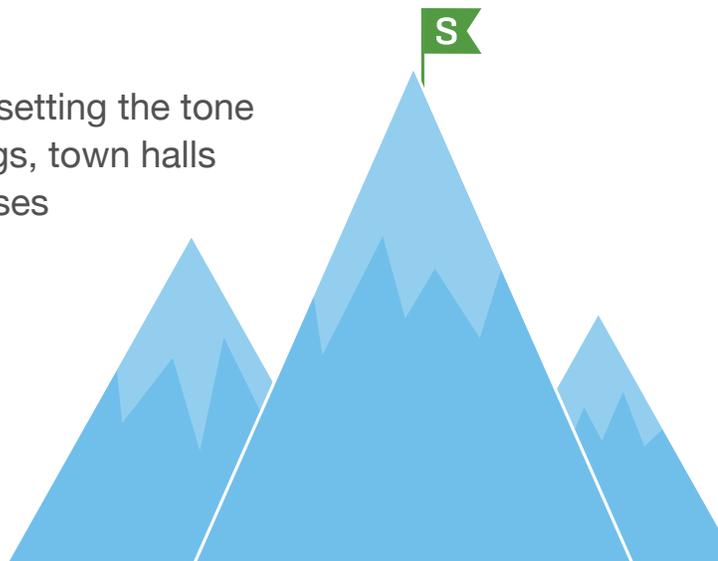
Send postcards to all of your employee's homes, brand a referral page on the intranet, or implement random desk drops. It's about education and reinforcement.

## 3. Make a big splash at new hire orientation.

There's no better time to solicit referrals and set program expectations than with your new employees. Be creative and make it an engaging experience.

## 4. Engage leadership.

Your leaders play an important role in setting the tone for referrals. Attend their team meetings, town halls and gain buy-in from highlight successes of your program.



5. Hold contests with meaningful, timely and fun rewards.

Set goals and publicly acknowledge top referrers. Build excitement when paying referral rewards. Which leader's team is generating the most referral activity? The most hires?

6. Have a clear, simple referral process.

Referring candidates to your company shouldn't be rocket science. When designing your program, create a simple and clear process for your employees and future referrals.

7. Set clear expectations and follow-through.

Employees should know what to expect when they make a referral. Be transparent with regards to candidate communication, follow-up and next steps.



## 8. Reward outside of your organization.

Expand your referral program and reward contributors outside of your organization who make referrals. Many organizations understand the value of a new client and have a client referral program - bring that same mindset.

## 9. It's a match!

Inside the average company, employees are busy doing their day jobs while new jobs are being opened and closed throughout the week. Research a software tool that can automatically match your open jobs with the professional networks of your employees can dramatically increase the success of your referral program.



## 10. Treat employees as recruiters.

For employees to participate in a referral program, they need to be kept in the loop and treated as recruiters. Employees should also have access to the insights and analytics of the program – they are critical to success and should be treated as such.

## 11. Set an always referring mindset.

Always accept referrals, even when a relevant job isn't open. The referral could be the perfect candidate for an open position down the road.

# Pitfalls of Employee Referral Programs to Avoid

Focusing on the best practices and not seeing the results you expect. Why? It's important to steer clear of these common referral program killers.

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## 1. You treat your referrals like every other applicant.

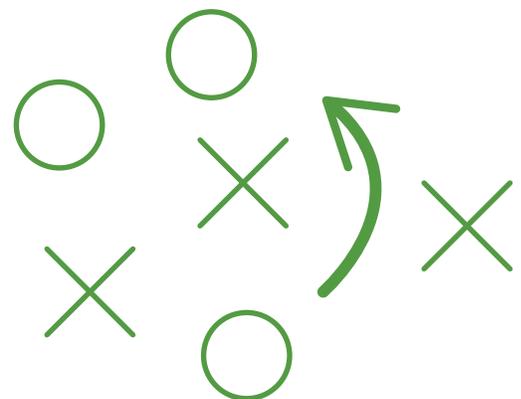
Pay special attention to them! Tag referrals in your **applicant tracking system** to enable a fast track through your hiring process.

## 2. Your HR department is a black hole.

Employee referrals that disappear into the black hole of HR result in lost credibility with your employees AND your referrals. Be sure to keep a close eye on the progress of your referrals as they move through your HR department.

## 3. Lack of engagement strategy.

Perfecting your employee referral program requires application, effort and strategic planning. Relying on periodic e-mails to employees casually inquiring about 'who they know' won't produce results. Take your program across multiple platforms and engage your audiences as if you are running a customer acquisition campaign.



4. Too many rules and regulations.

Don't make it complicated or time consuming. You want to make it easy for employees to participate in your program. Set clear expectations at the outset so all parties know exactly what to expect and when – then stick to it.

5. Your employees have to wait for their referral bonus.

Paying bonuses for successful referrals three months or in some cases six months after a candidate starts work is bad practice. Bonuses should be paid upon the hiring of a referred candidate.

6. You focus too much on \$\$\$.

Identifying rewards as the most important element of your referral program prioritizes quantity of referral over quality. Find a nice balance of incentives to get the highest quality candidates.

7. You only accept referrals when you're in hiring mode.

Keep your employees on a constant alert for talent and always be prepared to accept a referrals regardless of whether you have a vacancy.



8. You don't provide feedback.

Employees won't always get it right without guidance. Provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of referrals.

9. Your leaders aren't driving the message.

Referral programs shouldn't be seen as a human resources initiative. They are a business growth initiative with sponsorship and support from executives and leaders throughout the company. Leverage your executive team to get the right message across.

10. You don't have **social referral capabilities**.

Your employees are busy, they shouldn't be expected to constantly check the intranet to see what jobs are open. Your applicant tracking system should automatically match your open jobs with the professional networks of your employees and inform them who they know.

Referral programs will continue to be a top resource for hiring for years to come. Become a smarter recruiter and adopt the 21 Tips and Tricks to Boost Your Employee Referral Program and create immediate separation between you and your competitors. 

Our simple goal is to help companies achieve hiring success.

To help businesses get the talent they need to succeed.  
And to help people find a job they love.

Everyone is incredibly frustrated by how hard it is to find amazing talent. We share that frustration.

Recruiting is a fragmented, opaque process undermined by outdated technology that turns off candidates and hiring managers.

Now imagine a world where it's easy to find great candidates, it's easy for people to show interest in jobs, it's easy for hiring teams to collaborate, and your recruiting vendors are just a click away.

We imagined it. And then we delivered it.



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