



The Survale 2016 Candidate Experience Survey

Executive Summary

It's no surprise that successful organizations pride themselves on building the highest caliber workforce possible. In the face of low unemployment and scarcity of available talent, companies today heavily invest in the process of recruiting, onboarding and subsequently retaining highly valued employees.

With the current high degree of hiring difficulty, organizations are in the midst of a radical transformation from a transaction-based discipline into being relationship-based, where potential candidates are collected and engaged over time as positions become available.

In this environment, candidate experience becomes of supreme importance, with employer brand and long term candidate relationships front and center.

The Survale Candidate Experience survey queried nearly 200 recruiting professionals to get a pulse on the state of candidate relationship management today. The results show candidate experience is more important than ever, but there is little agreement on processes and definitions in this essential, yet relatively new facet of recruiting success.



Importance of Candidate Experience

Firstly, we tested the water to see whether organizations even share the belief that candidate experience is important:

The response was a resounding, YES!



80% thought candidate experience was at least important if not extremely important to the recruiting process and further, almost **70%** recognized that candidate experience starts with the job ad/career site and not the subsequent interview.

What's more, we asked how many were planning to focus more on candidate experience in 2017:

The largest portion, **39%** indicated they would increase their focus on candidate experience in 2017, with **37%** indicating their focus would remain the same.

Candidate experience is of extreme importance to the success of both short term and long term hiring success, and today's organizations understand the value. A full **76%** indicate they will maintain or increase their focus on it in 2017.



Candidate Experience Definition

In order to understand how organizations define candidate experience, we asked them when the candidate experience begins.

There was general agreement, with **68%** indicating that candidate experience begins when candidates view a job ad or online corporate career site. Only **11%** defined candidate experience as beginning at the interview or hiring stage.

Candidate experience begins the moment a candidate considers working for you, whether that's from job ad on a job board or from a visit to your career site. When assessing the quality of your candidate experience, pre-applicant digital interactions are highly important

Candidate Experience Measurement and Improvement

With such importance, most organizations already have tools and processes in place to support this experience prior to interviewing, right? Well actually no - the second set of results seem to stand in stark contrast to the perceived importance of candidate experience:



*Only **1 in 3** employers have formal processes to monitor candidate experience. And when it comes to measuring the quality and effectiveness of their candidate experience, organizations, **11%** said they gather feedback annually and **9%** quarterly.*

One key piece of the candidate experience puzzle is the applicant conversion rate, which measures the number of applicants who complete an application vs those that start an application. This can indicate the effectiveness of job ads, career sites and employment applications. With this in mind we asked for some basic conversion metrics and found a lack of measurement of some basic metrics.

Over half the respondents knew neither their online application completion rate, nor their visitor to applicant rate. Of those who did know these metrics, we found the following:

***66%** of companies experienced application completion rates of less than **50%**
 Nearly **34%** revealed application completion rates of less than **10%***

In their annual candidate experience survey, the Talent board reports that the number one preferred place to research jobs is on the corporate career site, and the number one most valuable content is job ads.

Competitive hiring organizations should be measuring candidate experience from first visit to offer letter, including vital conversion statistics like application completion rate and visitor to applicant conversion rate.

When asked what tools organizations use to measure candidate experience, a large percentage of the free form comments indicated that the tools used were implemented post interview or post-hire. This stands in contrast to the notion that candidate experience starts at the job ad and career site.

These numbers indicate the effectiveness of your per-applicant process, and can surface hidden problems preventing more candidates from becoming applicants.

Conclusion

The general take away seems to be that companies realize the value of candidate experience and generally understand that it begins well before the candidate applies for a job. There is clearly a focus on improving candidate experience, but current efforts appear to be less than consistent and tend to revolve around post applicant measurement. There seems to be a deficit of data with which to understand candidate satisfaction through the full lifecycle from interest to hire and beyond, and no common approach to measurement or process for improvement.



While the desire to improve candidate experience is there, this lack of insight and best practice approach to measuring and managing it can have consequences.

Our survey focused on data associated with the direct benefits of having insight into candidate experience. But what of the indirect benefits too? In addition to the obvious benefit of attracting higher caliber talent, the candidate experience phase is now being recognized as a key influencer on an employer's brand. Get this wrong and not only do you lose the candidates as potential employees, but you can also be sure they won't promote your workplace to colleagues or even worse, won't consider ever being a customer again.

According to a Software Advice survey, **83%** of candidates who have bad experiences are more likely to never apply again. **59%** are likely to tell others not to apply, and **42%** are likely to not buy your products. As you can see the cost of bad candidate experiences is high, and it's not limited to those who apply for your jobs.

Likelihood to Take Actions After Negative Candidate Experience



N = 280

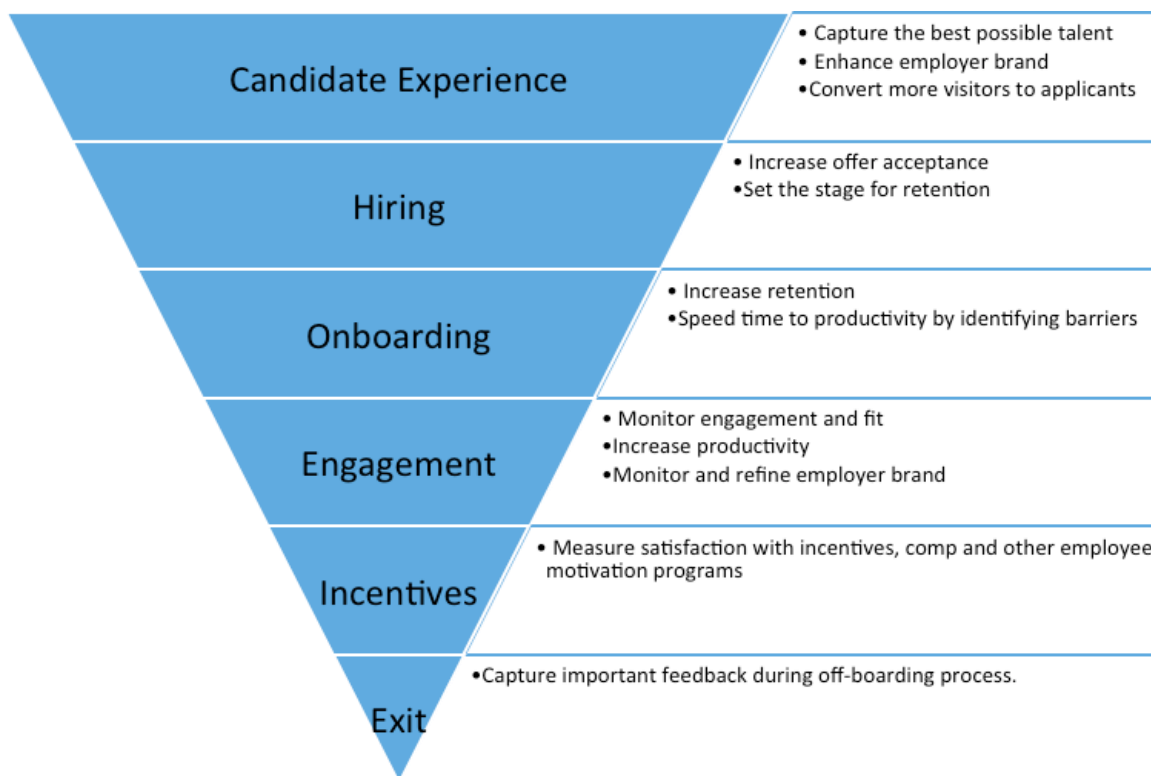
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Survale's recommendation is to monitor and measure the candidate journey from the moment they explore your jobs or company all the way through application, interviews, onboarding, and the full employee lifecycle through exit. Measuring experience, satisfaction and engagement, provides insight into problems areas and a means to manage outcomes with regard to a fundamental aspect of organizational success: Employee engagement.

Full Candidate and Employee Lifecycle Analytics

The figure below shows an example of the multiple touch-points in the employee lifecycle that Survale gives insight into. Once this data is captured through our templated surveys and analytics dashboards, being able to understand the drop off rates between each of the touch-points in the lifecycle immediately helps pinpoint where improvements are needed so as to ensure your organization attracts and nurture the best talent possible.

As organizations mature in their recruiting capabilities, consistent processes for measuring and improving candidate experience are needed. Survale's Employer Satisfaction Platform supports this process by automatically gathering candidate feedback and analytics from the time candidates engage with your jobs online through the application processes, interviews, hiring, onboarding and beyond.



To learn more about candidate experience and how you can build on your total employee lifecycle experience, visit survale.com.