THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

2025 Candidate Experience (CandE) Benchmark Research

SURVALE | CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE BENCHMARK RESEARCH & AWARDS PROGRAM℠

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The 2025 Business Impact of Candidate Experience

After completing all the 2025 CandE Benchmark data reviews with the participating employers, it's more than clear that the candidate resentment realities for most employers around the world persist. We define candidate resentment as those candidates who felt they had a poor candidate experience with an employer and were no longer willing to engage their business and brand (apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate, or be a customer). Unfortunately, there are many reasons why resentment is higher than ever (again).

Global unemployment for most industrialized countries was still relatively low, but employers cooled hiring across industries in 2025. Many midsize to global enterprise employers also had untenable application volumes across job types, and it took much longer to find full-time employment, especially for salaried professionals and management to senior leadership positions.

Over 1 million people were laid off in 2025. Housing was out of reach for many families in the U.S. and around the world due to housing costs and higher mortgage rates, leaving them feeling stuck. Plus, those who were employed were much less likely to leave their jobs with fewer open positions and more people looking. The new college graduate market was also especially rough this year.

> *After completing all the 2025 CandE Benchmark data reviews with the participating employers, it's more than clear that the candidate resentment realities for most employers around the world persist.*

Global Economic Volatility

Pre-pandemic, we were measuring candidate experience in nothing but a global growth market, and for the most part, the sentiment ratings were consistently both positive and negative with little fluctuation. But since the 2020 pandemic there's been lots of global economic volatility. In 2025, the world continued to experience significant challenges that have impacted the economy, job growth, candidate experience, and society in general:

- **Trade Barriers and Tariffs:** Sanctions & trade tensions (notably U.S. tariffs) have raised costs and dampened confidence among employers. Industries like manufacturing, retail, transportation, and others tightened hiring or even laying off staff due to this climate—and entry-level job seekers felt the squeeze most.
- **Rising Labor Costs & Tax Pressures:** In the UK, elevated payroll taxes and a £25 billion increase in national insurance contributions drove hiring intentions to record lows, with starting salaries registering their weakest growth since 2021.
- **Monetary Policy & Uncertainty:** Even with the U.S. Federal Reserve cutting interest rates, inflation was still too high and affordability was a major consumer issue. This level of uncertainty also negatively influenced hiring strategies and budget planning.

- **Remote Work, Offshoring, and Workforce Nationalization:** Geoeconomic fragmentation—a combination of political tensions and trade shifts—prompted organizations to rethink global operations, leading to both offshoring and reshoring decisions dependent on talent availability and regulatory environments.
- **Regulatory Reforms & Hiring Transparency:** Starting January 1, 2026, "ghosting" candidates will be illegal for many employers in the Canadian province of Ontario under a new law that requires them to inform applicants of their application status within 45 days of their last interview. This law applies to publicly advertised jobs at companies with 25 or more employees and is part of Ontario's updated pay transparency legislation. Employers who don't comply may face penalties. And like pay transparency throughout the U.S. and the EU, these types of laws may spread. This push also shines a spotlight on fairness in AI-driven recruitment.
- **Talent Competition & Demographic Shifts:** The World Economic Forum highlighted inflation, slower economic growth, trade restrictions, and industrial subsidies as major forces that reshaped demand—especially for resilience, creativity, leadership, and cybersecurity skills.

Factors Impacting the Economy, Job Growth & Candidate Experience

Plus, there are always ongoing business impacts that ultimately impact recruiting, hiring, and the candidate experience. Not to mention the impact of artificial intelligence on all of the same.

We again asked candidates in 2025 if they used generative AI to help improve their resumes and cover letters. About 10-16%+ across job types (hourly, professional, management) said they did. That's higher than in 2024, but we're convinced that it's underreported in our research, that more candidates are using gen AI and are wary of admitting it to the employers they had applied to, even though their responses are anonymous each year.

Less than 3% said they're using an AI platform to apply for jobs, like LazyApply.com, and Jobhire.ai, and many others. These platforms have increased the number of unqualified serial applicants that flooded ATS's in 2025.

On the employer side, most of the AI recruiting technology adoption to date had been interview scheduling, chatbots, assessments, and algorithmic matching when sourcing external and internal databases. In 2025, nearly 40% of participating benchmark employers told us they were utilizing AI recruiting tech to match, screen, and/or rank candidates at the point of application. As mentioned above, many with higher application volumes have made this move. However, the majority of employers are still wary due to ongoing regulatory changes and the current lawsuits that include Workday vs. Mobley, SiriusXM, and HireVue.

The bigger takeaway here is the 2025 candidate comment sentiment we gathered in our research revealed more than ever that they believe AI is making all the selection decisions across the candidate journey. That AI is automatically rejecting them. That humans aren't making the calls. We know that's not true and the employers know that's not true, even with an increasing number of employers implementing AI screening. But that's a growing misconception that will continue.

However, this kind of candidate-technology resentment isn't new, especially for candidates deemed unqualified and dispositioned at the application stage; candidates have always railed against any "automation" technology. Today, AI recruiting technologies are here to stay, and recruiting teams, hiring managers, and candidates alike will continue to leverage AI, creating an AI escalation in the next few years. There are also positive sentiment increases in our research when candidates receive consistent and timely communications and engagement via AI recruiting technologies like chatbots and conversational AI.
All of the above is why 2025 was one of the worst

candidate markets since the Great Recession, the economic decline around the world that occurred from late 2007 to mid-2009, primarily due to the mortgage crisis.

However, no matter what the hiring market looks like year after year, there are two sentiment skews in our candidate experience benchmark research and the world at large. There's a positive skew for those who get job offers and accept them, the only "happy" customers, even if the road to employment was bumpy, and that's a much smaller percentage of all who apply. And then there are negative skews for everyone else, even if they felt like their experience was positive and fair, which ultimately is where employers should attempt to land with most candidates per our recommendations each year.

AI recruiting technologies are here to stay, and recruiting teams, hiring managers, and candidates alike will continue to leverage AI, creating an AI escalation in the next few years.

The Relationship Question

Every year, the CandE Benchmark Research Program asks job candidates, "Based on your experience with [COMPANY NAME], how likely are you to change your relationship status (whether or not you'll keep your brand alliance, apply again, refer others and/or make purchases if applicable)?" This is one of the four key ratings we also base our final CandE Score ratings on when we do our final data analyses and determine which employers win our coveted CandE Winners.

Those candidates who said they had a great experience overall, what we're now calling the Candidate Contentment Rate, have been on the decline for the past few years around the world, but increased slightly in North America, EMEA, and Latin America in 2025 (see Figure 1). These are candidates who are more willing to apply again, refer others, make purchases if it's a consumer-based company and be a brand advocate going forward, even if they didn't get hired. It did, however, increase again in 2025 in North America, EMEA, and Latin America.

Figure 1. The Candidate Contentment Rate

Candidate Contentment (Great Experience)

Great candidate experience - I will definitely increase my relationship through brand alliance, product purchases, networking and/or making referrals.

Legend: North America, EMEA, APAC, Latin America

Great Candidate Experience decreased globally in 2023, continued to decline in 2024, but increased in 2025 in all regions except APAC.
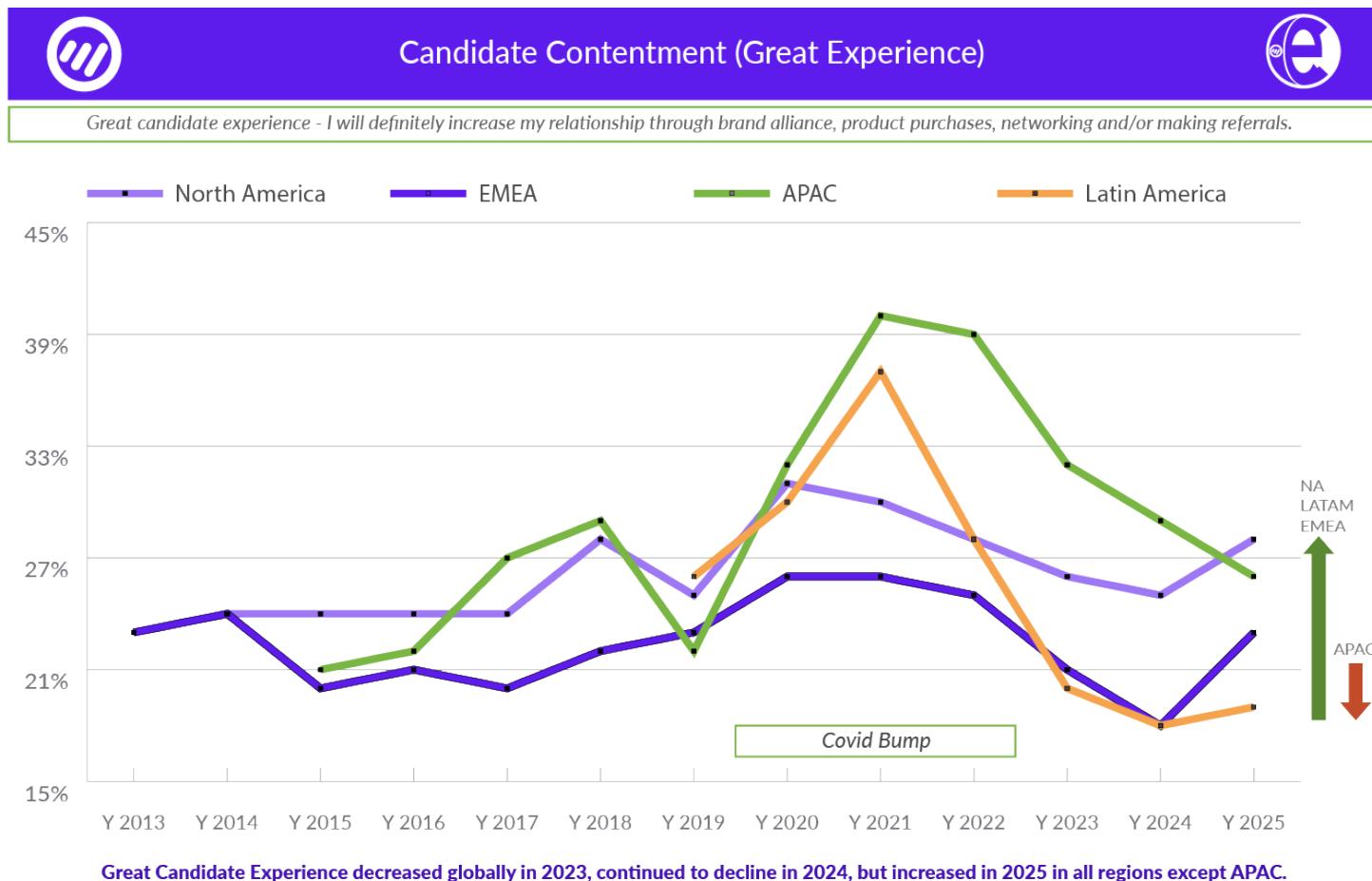
Conversely, the Candidate Resentment Rate has been on the rise globally and the trendlines are all increasing, something we don't like to see in our benchmark research data (see Figure 2).

In 2025, candidate resentment was higher than ever in our benchmark research. Again, resentment meaning candidates who are no longer willing to engage a business and a brand based on a negative candidate experience – no longer willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate, and/or make purchases.

In 2025, candidate resentment was higher than ever in our benchmark research. Again, resentment meaning candidates who are no longer willing to engage a business and a brand based on a negative candidate experience – no longer willing to apply again, refer others, be a brand advocate, and/or make purchases.

Figure 2 . The Candidate Resentment Rate

Candidate Resentment (Poor Experience)

Negative - I will definitely take my alliance, product purchases, relationship and/or referrals somewhere else.

Candidate Resentment increased globally in 2023, continued to increase in 2024, and increased further in 2025.
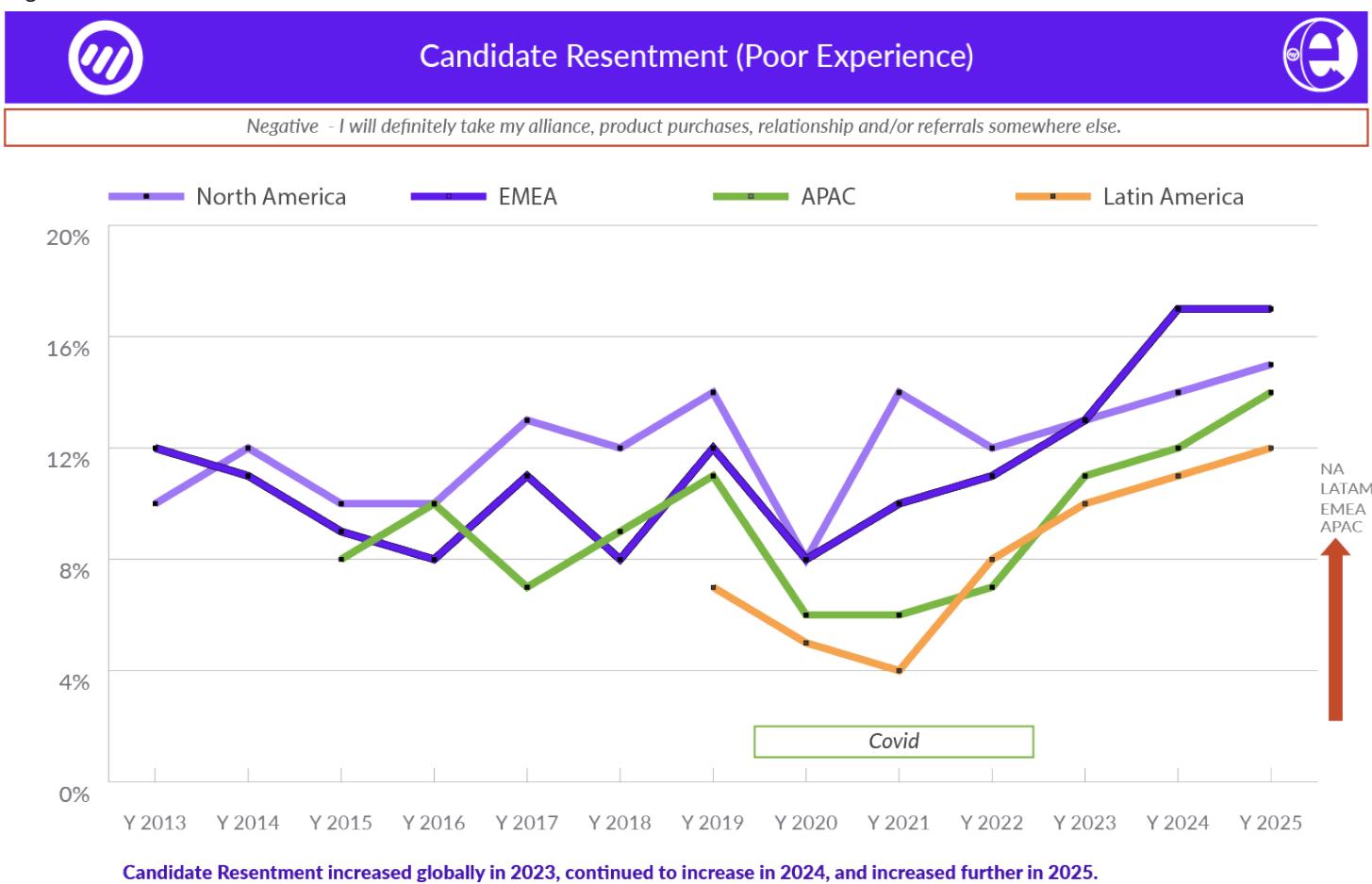
Global CandE Benchmark Key Net Promoter Score (NPS) Ratings and Resentment Rates

Yes, it was a rough candidate market in 2025. And yes, candidate resentment was the highest we've seen in the history of our benchmark research program. However, when you compare the overall 2025 key CandE ratings of all companies (overall, apply again, refer others, relationship) to the 2025 CandE Winners, the differences are dramatic (see Table 1). CandE Winners being the participating benchmark employers that have near-to-above average candidate experience ratings, where candidate resentment is lower overall and the candidates are more likely to engage the business and brand again, even when they're not hired. (For more information about our global benchmark research NPS ratings, see our 2025 What Sets CandE Award Winners Apart brief and 2025 Global CandE Benchmark Research Report.)

For example:

- The CandE Winner candidates' willingness to refer NPS is 52% higher in North America.
- The CandE Winner candidates' willingness to refer NPS is 46% higher in EMEA.
- The CandE Winner candidates' willingness to refer NPS is 25% higher in APAC.
- The CandE Winner candidates' willingness to refer NPS is 38% higher in Latin America.
- The CandE Winner candidates' resentment rate is 31% lower in North America.
- The CandE Winner candidates' resentment rate is 24% lower in EMEA.
- The CandE Winner candidates' resentment rate is 43% lower in APAC.
- The CandE Winner candidates' resentment rate is 67% lower in Latin America.

Table 1. Overall 2025 Global CandE Benchmark Key NPS Ratings and Resentment Rates

	NA All Companies	NA CandE Winners	EMEA All Companies	EMEA CandE Winners	APAC All Companies	APAC CandE Winners	LATAM All Companies	LATAM CandE Winners
Overall Rating	-4	**14**	-14	**1**	8	**34**	-3	**18**
Apply Again	21	**33**	18	**28**	30	**37**	25	**37**
Refer Others	17	**29**	15	**24**	24	**31**	26	**38**
Relationship	13	**23**	10	**20**	22	**29**	20	**29**
Resentment Rate	15%	**11%**	17%	**12%**	14%	**9%**	12%	**6%**

The past two years we've seen more above average candidate resentment across industries. In 2025, the Technology sector had the highest above average resentment rates around the world (see Table 2). This shouldn't be surprising due to the continuous layoffs of tech professionals since the great talent tech hoarding in 2021 and greater investments in AI since.

Table 2. Above Average 2025 Global CandE Benchmark Resentment Rates

Region and Industries	Resentment Rates
North America – Services	18%
North America – Hospitality	18%
North America – Food & Beverages	19%
North America – Consumer Goods	20%
North America – Automotive	21%
North America – Education	21%
North America – Technology	21%
North America – Real Estate	30%
EMEA – Technology	22%
APAC – Technology	15%

Our key NPS ratings are always inherently lower due to the majority of candidates not being hired, even with higher positive skews historically in APAC and Latin America. One of the main reasons for the positive historical skews in APAC and Latin America is because culturally many candidates are less likely to share negative feedback. Not in every country in each region, but in many of them, although the 2025 candidate market forces have driven more negativity and resentment in all regions.

What's important to keep in mind here is that the sheer number of candidates who employers reject during the recruiting process can quickly impact the business and the brand in very negative ways (candidates not applying again, not referring others, not being brand advocates, and not being customers).

That's not to say that those hired aren't important to the business. Of course they are – they're the individuals who help grow and sustain the very employers screening and hiring them. And while all candidates, hired or not, can impact how the business is perceived by other potential candidates, it's simply that those candidates who are not hired need more attention paid to their perceived overall experience.

> *What's important to keep in mind here is that the sheer number of candidates who employers reject during the recruiting process can quickly impact the business and the brand in both positive and negative ways (applying again, referring others, brand advocacy, and customer behavior).*

Candidates Who Withdraw From the Recruiting Process

When it comes to candidates withdrawing themselves from the recruiting process, there are many reasons as to why, both positive and negative. In our global CandE Benchmark Research, candidates who withdraw are a very small percentage of our overall data – usually averaging 1-2% of responding candidates each year.

Although it's not the same pool of candidates each year, "time being disrespected during the recruiting process" (interviews and appointments especially), usually trends as the number one negative withdrawal reason in North America and was also number one for EMEA and APAC in 2025. The recruiting process taking too long always draws a negative reaction around the world, and it's one of the biggest ways to drive candidate resentment higher along with time being disrespected.

> *Although it's not the same pool of candidates each year, "time being disrespected during the recruiting process" (interviews and appointments especially), usually trends as the number one negative withdrawal reason in North America and was also number one for EMEA and APAC in 2025.*

In our 2025 North America data, the three most negative reasons candidates withdrew themselves were:

1. My time was disrespected during the screening, interview, and/or offer stages – 33%
2. Salary didn't meet expectations – 28%
3. The recruiting process took too long – 16%

In EMEA, the three most negative reasons candidates withdrew themselves were:

1. My time was disrespected during the screening, interview, and/or offer stages – 30%
2. The recruiting process took too long – 22%
3. Salary didn't meet expectations – 19%

In APAC, the three most negative reasons candidates withdrew themselves were:

1. My time was disrespected during the screening, interview, and/or offer stages – 33%
2. The work schedule wasn't a fit for my expectations (remote, hours, shifts, etc.) – 25%
3. The recruiting process took too long – 23%

And in Latin America, the three most negative reasons candidates withdrew themselves were:

1. I did not communicate well with the recruiting staff – 26%
2. The recruiting process took too long – 21%
3. My time was disrespected during the screening and interview process – 15%

Candidates Share with Their Inner Circles and Publicly Online

The reality year after year is that people talk to one another about their good and bad candidate experiences, especially when we consider their inner circles (e.g., significant others, close friends, colleagues, peers, etc.). When we look at how many candidates shared their positive and negative experiences with their inner circle, the trend year after year is clear: most candidates around the world will share their positive experiences and over half will share their negative experiences, except for APAC, which was just under 50% sharing negative experiences (see Figure 3-6).

*Figure 3. 2025 North America Candidates Sharing with Inner Circle*
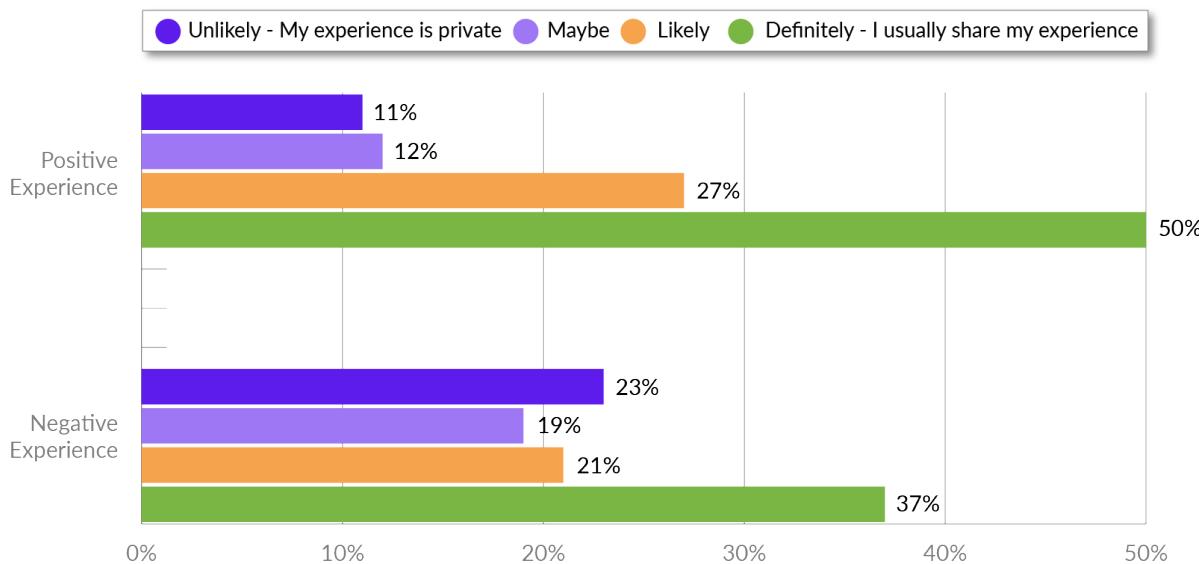
*Figure 4. EMEA Candidates Sharing with Inner Circle*
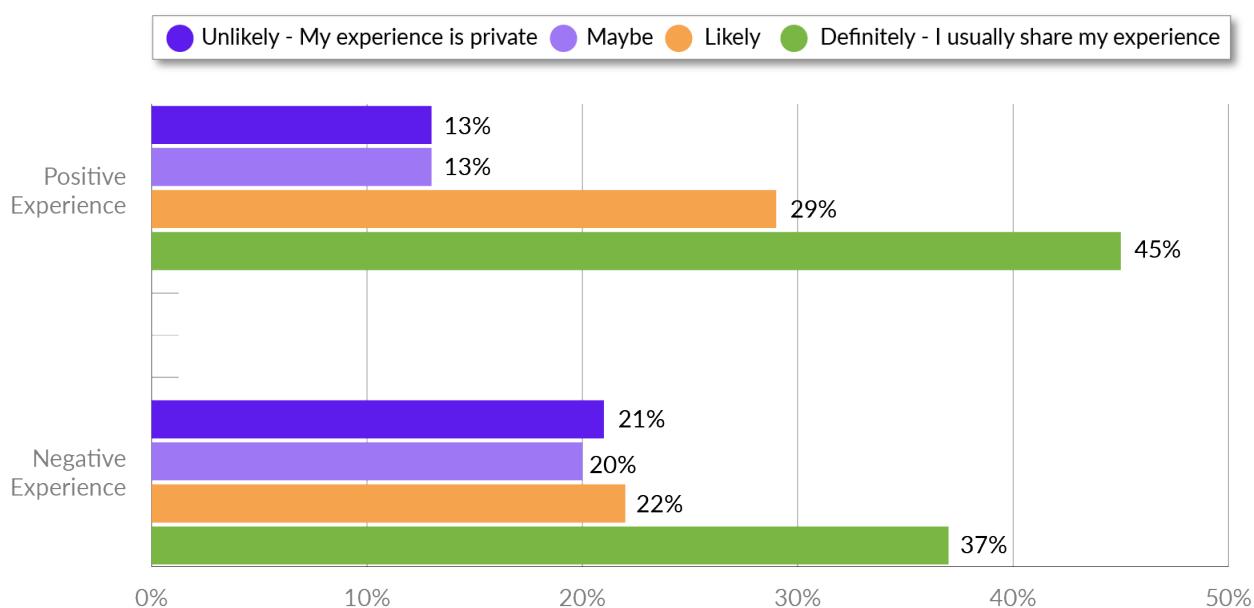
Figure 5. APAC Candidates Sharing with Inner Circle

APAC Candidates Sharing with Inner Circle

Legend: Unlikely - My experience is private | Maybe | Likely | Definitely - I usually share my experience

Positive Experience:
- Unlikely - My experience is private: 12%
- Maybe: 13%
- Likely: 34%
- Definitely - I usually share my experience: 41%

Negative Experience:
- Unlikely - My experience is private: 25%
- Maybe: 27%
- Likely: 22%
- Definitely - I usually share my experience: 26%
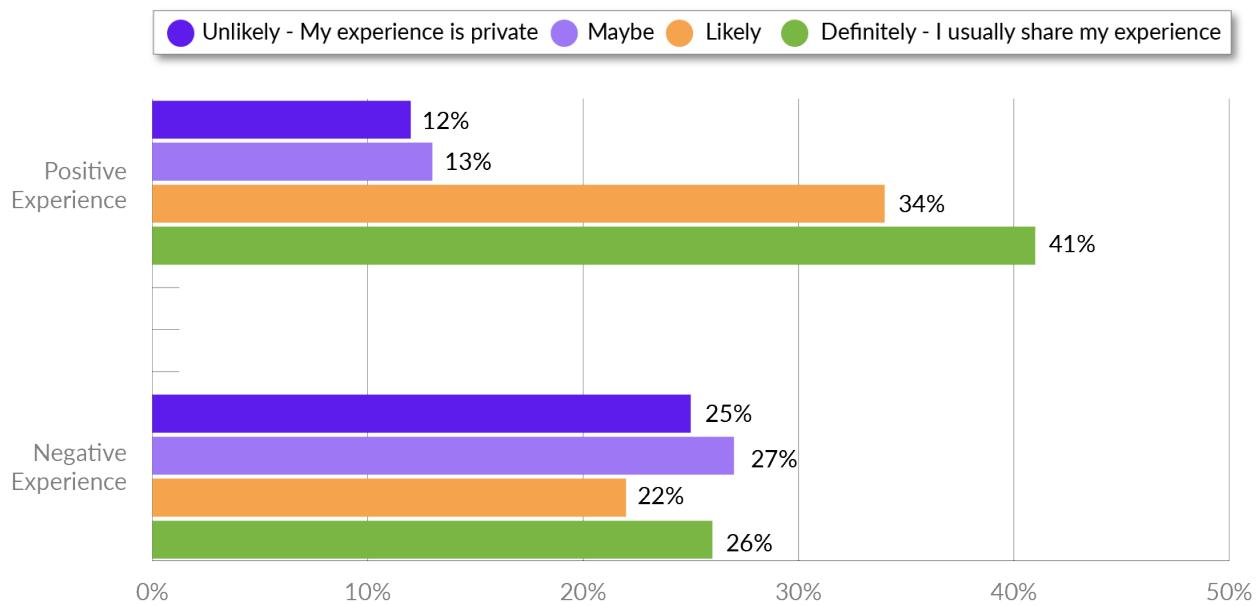
Figure 6. Latin America Candidates Sharing with Inner Circle

Latin America Candidates Sharing with Inner Circle

Legend: Unlikely - My experience is private | Maybe | Likely | Definitely - I usually share my experience

Positive Experience:
- Unlikely - My experience is private: 14%
- Maybe: 14%
- Likely: 30%
- Definitely - I usually share my experience: 42%

Negative Experience:
- Unlikely - My experience is private: 20%
- Maybe: 21%
- Likely: 22%
- Definitely - I usually share my experience: 37%
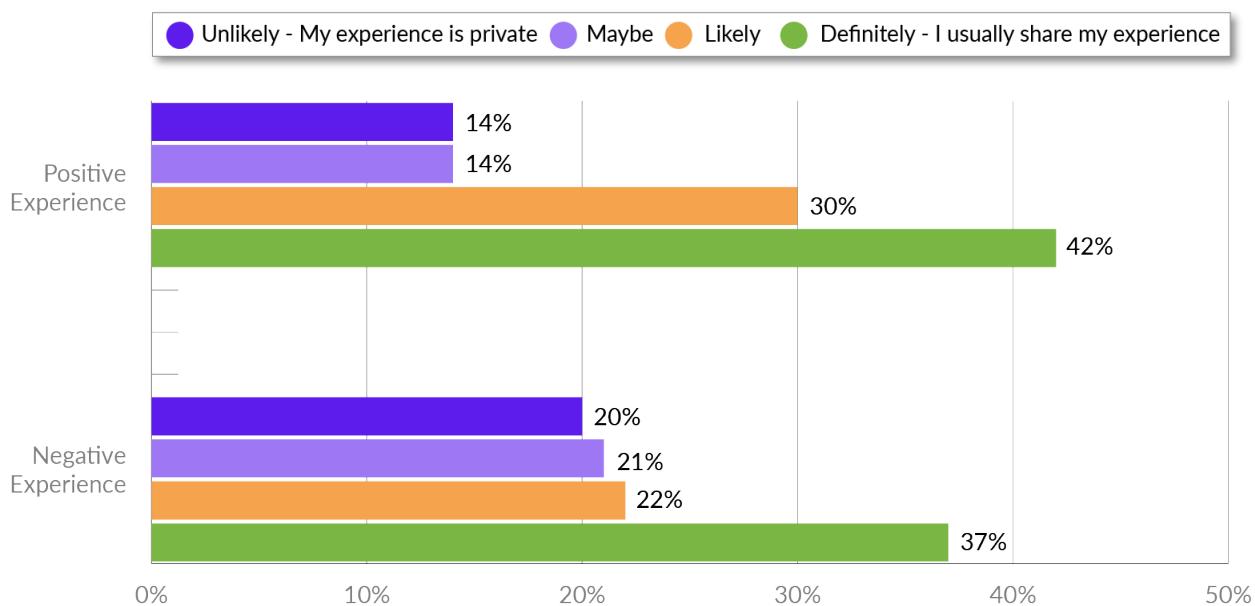
What's fascinating about all these global data points is the fact that the mix of companies and candidates are different every year, but the positive-negative trends have remained fairly consistent over time.

However, the percentages drop when we look at how many candidates shared their positive and negative experiences publicly online (e.g., social media posts, Glassdoor reviews, Indeed reviews, etc.), but there are still significant populations willing to share their experiences publicly (see Figures 7-10). The consistency of this data reveals that employers cannot afford to ignore the impact of candidates sharing their experiences online.

It's important to note that when it comes to sharing positive and negative experiences, about a third of the candidates around the world told us "this information is private and I don't share publicly." That's because most candidates don't want to shout from the rooftops when they don't get the job, only when they get it, no matter how good or bad the experience was. But our research shows us every year that most are willing to share, and that can definitely impact an employer's business and brand.

*Figure 7. North America Candidates Sharing Publicly*

*Figure 8. EMEA Candidates Sharing Publicly*

Figure 9. APAC Candidates Sharing Publicly

Legend: ● Unlikely - My experience is private ● Maybe ● Likely ● Definitely - I usually share my experience

Positive Experience:
- Unlikely: 18%
- Maybe: 16%
- Likely: 31%
- Definitely: 35%

Negative Experience:
- Unlikely: 36%
- Maybe: 26%
- Likely: 20%
- Definitely: 18%
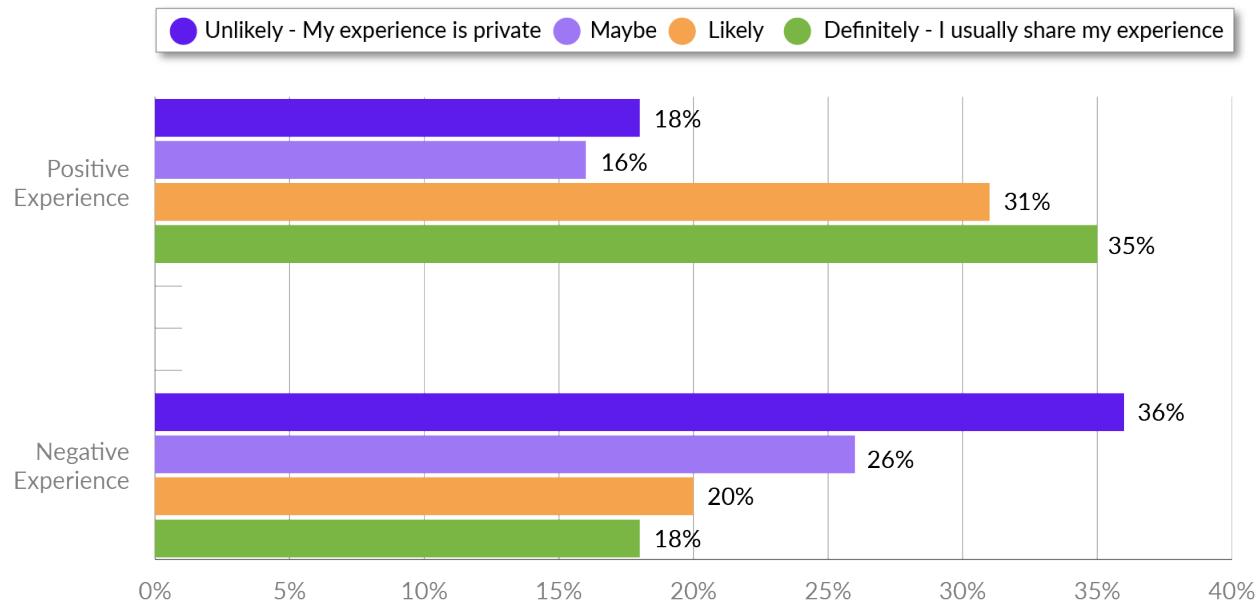
Figure 10. Latin America Candidates Sharing Publicly

Legend: ● Unlikely - My experience is private ● Maybe ● Likely ● Definitely - I usually share my experience

Positive Experience:
- Unlikely: 33%
- Maybe: 23%
- Likely: 25%
- Definitely: 19%

Negative Experience:
- Unlikely: 42%
- Maybe: 29%
- Likely: 14%
- Definitely: 15%
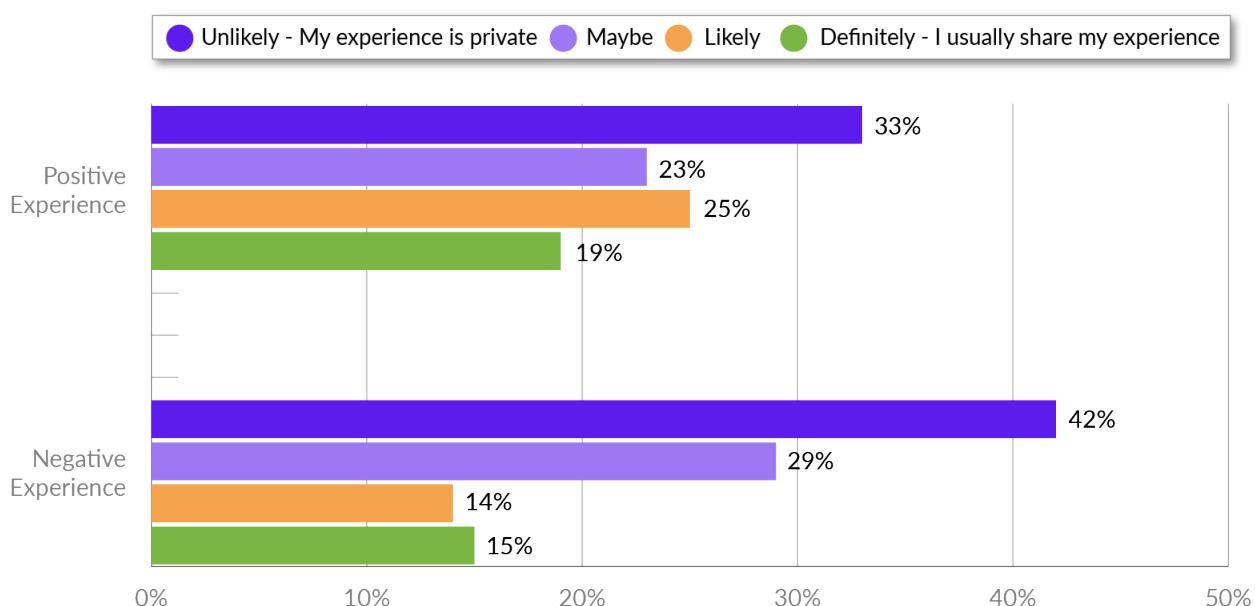
How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others

When we look at how likely candidates are willing to refer others based on their overall experience, about one-quarter to one-third of global candidates said they were extremely likely to refer others based on their experience. For most CandE Award Winners this year, it's even higher (see Table 3). However, there were decreases in the willingness to refer since 2022 in North America, EMEA, APAC, and Latin America, which aligned with the spike in resentment rates referenced above. Latin American CandE Winners were the only ones that increased their willingness-to-referral percentage since 2022.

Although it can be harder to quantify, the business impact of losing or gaining referrals can be just as significant as losing direct revenue. Organizations big and small depend on them, equating to upwards of 20%-40% of hires from referrals.

When we look at how likely candidates are willing to refer others based on their overall experience, about one-quarter to one-third of global candidates said they were extremely likely to refer others based on their experience.

Table 3. How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others (Extremely Likely)

	2025	2024	2023	2022
North America All Employers	30%	26%	26%	32%
North America CandE Winners	34%	31%	30%	40%
EMEA All Employers	24%	21%	23%	33%
EMEA CandE Winners	31%	33%	47%	41%
APAC All Employers	30%	32%	33%	34%
APAC CandE Winners	36%	43%	42%	41%
Latin America All Employers	22%	21%	24%	34%
Latin America CandE Winners	45%	36%	31%	41%

When we look at how likely candidates are willing to refer others based on their overall experience by job type in 2025, about one-quarter to one-third of global hourly and professional candidates said they were extremely likely to refer others based on their experience. However, there were fewer management / senior leadership candidates who were, primarily due to the rough 2025 candidate market for that demographic. More CandE Winner candidates were extremely likely to refer others based on their experience overall, except for hourly in APAC, which was a very small sample size (see Table 4). Also, there were not enough hourly candidate responses in Latin America to analyze this year.

It's always important to note that each year in our benchmark research, 90%+ of the candidates didn't get hired. That means that even rejected candidates – those who feel their experience was positive and fair – are still likely to be brand advocates and referral sources. Referrals usually come from employees, alumni and customers, but they can also come from rejected candidates.

Table 4. How Likely Candidates Are to Refer Others by Job Type (Extremely Likely)

	2025 Hourly	2025 Professional	2025 Mgmt/ Senior Leadership
North America All Employers	33%	29%	23%
North America CandE Winners	37%	32%	28%
EMEA All Employers	31%	26%	16%
EMEA CandE Winners	32%	31%	25%
APAC All Employers	36%	33%	23%
APAC CandE Winners	35%	38%	35%
Latin America All Employers	NA	22%	12%
Latin America CandE Winners	NA	37%	50%

Candidate Resentment Adds Up

For most companies, whether B2C or B2B, candidate resentment can and does impact candidates' willingness to refer others and/or be a brand advocate, which ultimately could impact the business, the brand, and the ensuing revenue. Again, employers depend on referrals and on average 20%-40% of their hires can come from referrals.

However, it's possible to experience a positive or negative direct revenue impact for consumer-based businesses (and indirectly in referral impact for business-to-business companies). For the unfortunate majority of candidates who have negative experiences and who choose to no longer be a customer, we have a candidate resentment calculator on our website that calculates the potential revenue loss for a business.

There are four numbers you need to enter into the calculator:

- Annual hires
- Applicants per hire
- Annual value of a paying customer
- Resentment rate

The following four scenarios below feature how negative candidate experience feedback potentially impacts business revenue using our resentment calculator. Keep in mind that these are simplified examples due the complexity of consumer markets by industry, but the revenue-impact estimates are still quite significant.

You can also generate your own scenarios using the resentment calculator. If you haven't benchmarked with the CandEs and you're not sure what your resentment rate is, then by default it's set at the 2025 average global resentment rate of 14%.

Technology

First, we'll look at the Technology industry. Technology overall had the highest resentment rate globally in our benchmark research – in North America in 2025, it was at 21%. Meaning, 21% of technology candidates – or 1 in 5 candidates – told us that they would never again do business with those employers they had applied to.

So, as an example, when we plug in 10,000 annual hires, 100 applicants per hire, and an estimated $1,000 annual customer value (for this example, think consumer technologies like cell phones, tablets, etc.) with a 21% candidate resentment rate, then the potential total revenue loss is nearly $208 million dollars (see Figure 11).

Yes, $208 million dollars.

Figure 11. Technology Industry Resentment Example

Candidate Resentment Calculator

Calculate the business impact of your organization's candidate experience.

Annual Hires	Applicants Per Hire	Customer Value	Resentment Rate
10,000	100	$1000	21%

Potential Lost Revenue
$207,900,000

Consumer Goods

Next, we'll look at the Consumer Goods industry. This industry also had a very high candidate resentment rate in our benchmark research – in North America in 2025, it was at 20%.

So, when we plug in 10,000 annual hires, 100 applicants per hire, and a $400 annual customer value (annual value depends on what the business sells) with a 20% candidate resentment rate, then the potential total revenue loss is over $79 million dollars (see Figure 12).

Yes, over $79 million dollars.

Figure 12. Consumer Goods Industry Resentment Example

Candidate Resentment Calculator

Calculate the business impact of your organization's candidate experience.

Annual Hires	Applicants Per Hire	Customer Value	Resentment Rate
10,000	100	$400	20%

Potential Lost Revenue

$79,200,000

Finance & Insurance

Next, we'll look at the Finance & Insurance industry. This industry had a below average candidate resentment rate overall in our benchmark research – in North America in 2025, it was at 13%.

So, when we plug in 10,000 annual hires, 100 applicants per hire, and a $3,000 annual customer value (annual value depends on what the products and services sold are) with a 13% candidate resentment rate, then the potential total revenue loss is over $386 million dollars (see Figure 13).

Yes, over $386 million dollars.

Figure 13. Finance & Insurance Industry Resentment Example

Candidate Resentment Calculator

Calculate the business impact of your organization's candidate experience.

Annual Hires	Applicants Per Hire	Customer Value	Resentment Rate
10,000	100	$3000	13%

Potential Lost Revenue
$386,100,000

Healthcare

Lastly, we'll look at the Healthcare industry. Healthcare is an interesting one for consumers, because it's a choice / not a choice, depending on whether it's an emergency or an elective procedure. This industry also had a below average candidate resentment rate overall in our benchmark research – in North America in 2025, it was at 13%.

So, when we plug in 10,000 annual hires, 100 applicants per hire, and a $600 annual customer value (think elective procedures) with a 13% candidate resentment rate, then the potential total revenue loss is over $77 million dollars (see Figure 14).

Yes, over $77 million dollars.
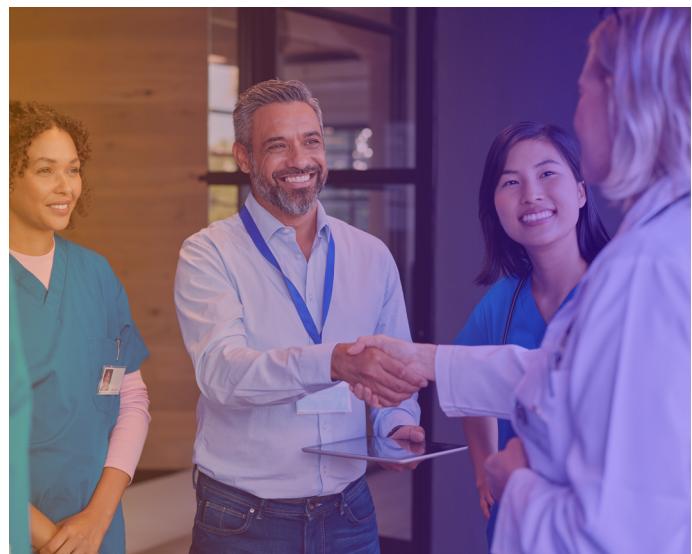
Figure 14. Healthcare Industry Resentment Example

Candidate Resentment Calculator

Calculate the business impact of your organization's candidate experience.

Annual Hires	Applicants Per Hire	Customer Value	Resentment Rate
10,000	100	$600	13%

Potential Lost Revenue
$77,220,000

The Business Impact Is Real

This calculator isn't just for B2C companies either. Many B2B companies have also used it internally to get conversations started and for making the business case for why they need to improve recruiting, hiring, and their candidate experience. For example, the cost of vacancy can cost employers tens of thousands of dollars, and if referrals decrease because of candidate resentment, then those costs can start adding up quickly.

The loss of revenue impact due to fewer referrals is harder to quantify, but our calculator can help get those conversations started. Not everyone puts their money where their mouth is, but a significant number of frustrated candidates will still choose to go elsewhere and not refer others.

Candidate experience is currently in a precarious place; it's been even harder to find full-time work for salaried professionals and management candidates and inconsistent communication and feedback loops abound. Employers are facing an uphill AI-escalation battle as well: too many unqualified candidates leveraging AI to apply and more employers implementing matching, screening, and ranking AI recruiting technologies to counter the untenable volumes.

Again, it's important to note that for the vast majority of job candidates any employer says no to, their candidate experience ratings will always skew negative. However, as we highlighted in the beginning of this brief, CandE Winners have much lower resentment rates around the world when compared to all employers (see Table 1).

Because the majority of our candidate responses skew negative each year, do rejected candidates feel their experience was still positive and fair enough to want to engage a business and a brand again? For CandE Winners, that's most likely the case. That's why CandE Winners are investing more in the following differentiators, for both external and internal candidate experience:

- Consistent and timely communications from pre-application to onboarding
- Consistent and timely expectation setting about the entire recruiting process
- Consistent and timely engagement and follow through throughout the candidate journey
- Asking candidates for timely feedback and providing timely feedback to finalists
- Being transparent and more accountable about your entire recruiting and hiring process

There are no true guarantees in work and life, but after 14 years of candidate experience research, we know these differentiators deliver a higher rate of return for employers than they'd otherwise have with the status quo – from revenue to referrals. While this executive brief focused on the business impact of candidate experience, the other 2025 CandE Benchmark Research briefs and reports include our recommended incremental improvements from pre-application to onboarding, and what differentiates the CandE Winners overall.

> *Candidate experience is currently in a precarious place; it's been even harder to find full-time work for salaried professionals and management candidates and inconsistent communication and feedback loops abound. Employers are facing an uphill AI-escalation battle as well: too many unqualified candidates leveraging AI to apply and more employers implementing matching, screening, and ranking AI recruiting technologies to counter the untenable volumes.*

About the Survale CandE Benchmark Research Program

The Candidate Experience (CandE) Benchmark Research and Awards Program is the first program of its kind focused on the elevation and promotion of a quality candidate experience. Also known as The CandEs, the program was founded by Talent Board in 2011 and is now part of Survale. The CandE Benchmark Research Program delivers annual recruiting and hiring industry benchmark research that highlights accountability, fairness and the business impact of candidate experience. More information can be found here.