



## Top 5 Recruiting Secrets of HR Experts

# Recruiting is the Beginning of the Employee Journey and the Crux of Your Organization

Industries are facing increasingly tough hiring environments. With the lowest unemployment since 1969, you need to recruit in creative, appealing ways to get the best — and right — candidates.

As an HR person, you know how important exceptional recruiting is — when it's good, it can make an organization; when it's bad, it can break it. As the recruiting pro at your employer, you know how easy it is for the process to get out of whack.

It sounds easy: a job opens up, you write an ad, post it, evaluate a manageable amount of applicants and presto-change-o you have a spot-on new employee.

**But the reality is a lot more complicated.**

- The open position might need a different skill set than it did before.
- Job ads need to highlight company culture.
- There are so many places to post jobs it's hard to know where your candidates are.
- It's time-consuming to post to multiple channels.
- Too many applications mean entire work weeks dedicated to sorting, reporting and staying compliant with federal guidelines.
- Too few applicants mean an extended search and possibly poor candidates.
- Applicant evaluation is tricky when you're not the direct report.

Recruiting can be simple, efficient and a robust way to build a high-quality workforce. Here are secrets from the trade — five ways to improve your process and get the best team members.

## Secret No. 1

# Use Social Media to Recruit (Not So Much to Vet)

Americans have taken to social media in incredible numbers, and despite making news with reports of privacy invasion and data-marketing, our appetite for the platforms has stayed steady and even increased.

- An average of two hours, 15 minutes is spent per day on social networks.
- 73 percent of Americans use YouTube.
- 68 percent of Americans use Facebook.

When it comes to job recruiting, social media provides tons of opportunities, from attracting applicants to vetting them. But the most important thing to remember is this: Social media is where the audience is. Unless your team members are personally going after ideal candidates (which we highly recommend in Secret No. 3), leveraging social media simply must be part of your recruitment strategy.

## Using Social Media for Job Recruitment

### What It Is

Social recruitment is where the recruitment happens: on social media. Whether your organization is posting jobs, your employees are talking about open positions or recruiters are strategically approaching top-notch candidates, social media is how it's going down.

### Why You Should Use It

Americans spend an average of two hours, 15 minutes a day on social media. Whether they're actively looking for jobs or not — and 51 percent of American employees are (Gallup) — this is the first stop for reaching the masses. If your company has a robust social media presence, posting jobs there is a natural extension. If not, leveraging social media to find your best candidate is still effective.

- 88 percent of job seekers are on Facebook (Sprout Social).
- 79 percent of job seekers use social media in their job search (Inc.).
- 86 percent of job seekers in the first 10 years of their careers use social media to job search (Inc.).

### Passive Candidates

One of the unrealized benefits of using social media is that it doesn't target job seekers. We know — that sounds unhelpful. But in reality, these "passive candidates," who are people who aren't actively looking for new jobs but can be attracted with the right opportunity, are among the highest quality of new hires. Recruiters and HR professionals who play the game at the highest levels make strategic connections, are in industry-specific groups on Facebook and LinkedIn and know who's who in the space. According to SHRM, recruiting passive job candidates is the top reason that organizations continue using social media for recruitment.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE IMPORTANT FACTS FOR HR PROFESSIONALS



- 50 percent of Americans with a college degree use LinkedIn
- Popular among high-income households
- 4 out of 5 members drive business decisions
- Over 75 percent of people who recently changed jobs used LinkedIn to inform their career decision
- **Special spot for posting jobs? YES**



- 2 billion users
- Live video and stories are the future
- **Special spot for posting jobs? YES**



- Used by more Americans than any social network
- Second most popular website online (after Google)
- **Special spot for posting jobs? NO**

## Secret No. 1 (continued)

### Using Social Media for Vetting Candidates

#### Actually, We Really Don't Recommend It

With personal social media channels so easy to access, screening candidates with a quick Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter search seems like a responsible step. However, according to [SHRM](#), research suggests screening social media accounts is more likely to backfire than be helpful. Here are some good reasons to skip social media vetting:

- Profiles have information that cannot be used in the hiring process, such as national origin, disability and other legally protected statuses.
- Conscious or unconscious biases
- Wasting resources on screening that focuses too little on job qualifications
- Legal liability risk increases

#### How to Do It Better

Inevitably, some organizations will want to delve further into a candidate's life. In some cases, candidates themselves encourage this, especially with sites like LinkedIn, where their resume can be expanded. Here are some tips for mitigating social media screening from [SHRM](#):

- Wait until the candidate is nearing the end of the process.
- Focus on the candidate's posts, not the reactions to them.
- If you look at one candidate's social media, look at all candidates'.
- Give the candidate a chance to respond to red flags.
- Print out pages that influence your hiring decisions.

**“Don't judge people until you've walked a mile in their shoes. Give them a break instead.”**

**– Guy Kawasaki  
Chief Evangelist at Canva**

## Secret No. 2

# Deploy User-Friendly Tech & Artificial Intelligence in a Human Way

The rise of user-friendly tech in HR is here. From cloud-based software and mobile-friendly applications to artificial intelligence in the workplace, the tech industry is moving into HR in all sectors. Thirty-three percent of HR teams in the U.S. are using some form of AI to deliver solutions (Deloitte), and the number is expected to continue growing.

Here's how, where and why user-friendly tech is taking over (but not literally — we don't predict an AI revolution):

### Mobile Accessibility

According to 2018 Pew Research, 77 percent of Americans owned a smartphone in 2018. If your job posts and applications aren't mobile-friendly, you're creating a major hoop to jump through for your candidates.

- 80 percent of time spent on social platforms happens on mobile (Social Pilot).
- Over one-third of organizations have taken steps to leverage mobile recruiting to target smartphone users (SHRM).
- 45 percent of job seekers use their mobile devices to search for jobs at least once every day (Inc.).
- 78 percent of Millennials and 73 percent of Gen Xers looked for the jobs on their phones in 2016 (Indeed).

### Artificial Intelligence That Feels Like Humanity

From analyzing and ranking job applicants to managing employee performance data, AI is saving companies time and setting them up for better candidates, higher retention and more effective career mapping. In recruitment, the sheer amount of data that can come in from job postings can be overwhelming to us, but with AI in place, text-heavy resumes can be digested quicker and with scary-good evaluation. However, while we move toward AI implementation, we're simultaneously seeing a higher demand for high-quality user experience — from potential employees! That means as AI moves in, our humanity cannot take a backseat.

### Automated Communication

Great companies aren't black holes — candidates should always hear back in a respectful way about the application process. Don't be the company job seekers have to call to make sure the application went through. Make it automatic with no-stress company-branded email updates throughout the process.

### Shorter Applications

Fifty-five percent of job seekers say a long application process contributes to a negative candidate experience (Software Advice). Don't make your next great employee jump through time-consuming hoops to get to you — you want their application path to be smooth, so their user experience sets a great tone for your organization.

Not all industries have the same levels of mobile job search demand. Job seekers with lower education levels are much more likely to use their phone to fill out a job application or create a resume or cover letter (Pew). Here are percentages of job seekers using mobile tech to job search, according to Indeed:

- 80 percent: Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance
- 79 percent: Construction and extraction
- 57 percent: Business and financial operations, as well as legal jobs
- 52 percent: Architecture and engineering
- 45 percent: Computer and math

### Track Your Applicants

Using a software that posts jobs and organizes applicants is the tech of yesteryear — software that analyzes the relevant applicant data is where AI comes in. Smart Applicant Tracking Software allows for customizable form fields and automatically sorts your most promising people to the top of the list, a practice called candidate batching that saves you time and paper cuts.

## Secret No. 3

# Culture: If You Build a Good One, They Will Come (and Stay)

Building a phenomenal company culture is no easy task, but when it comes to recruitment, a great culture and reputation will reap major rewards, starting with your current employees' happiness. Kind of like the first domino, creating happy employees sets off a chain of other good omens for your organization: higher engagement, more employee referrals, better bottom lines and increased brand awareness ... Sounds like a great cycle!

## Get Feedback from Your Workforce, and Make Changes

Like in all relationships, listening is the foundation for a great employee-employer relationship. In order to cultivate a phenomenal culture, you need to take the pulse of your workforce. Start with receiving honest and accurate feedback through automated, anonymous surveys that take the temperature of your employee base. Once this feedback is received, build off of the suggestions and follow through with your commitment to make your employees' voices heard.

Need specifics on how to build a great culture? Look no further.

### Need great culture?

Feedback is a sure-fire way to ensure your employees feel heard and valued.

## Spike Those Employee Referrals

Satisfied employees often become natural brand ambassadors for your company and are likely to personally recruit friends and family. This is ideal! Employee referrals average a 46 percent retention rate compared to 33 percent of organizations that only use career sites (Undercover Recruiter). Even better: Your current team knows what it takes to thrive and wants great team members on their side.

## Hire for the Culture You Want

If your company already has a great culture, figure out what it is about your employees that make them happy to be a part of your work ethos. If your company culture needs a kick start, identify which people are succeeding and the traits that allow them to do so — not just in business, but also as a team member — and hire more of that.

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### GREAT CULTURE CHECKLIST

- Have a worthy values statement
- Hire people who will enact those values
- Get feedback from your employees
- Tweak company stances based on the will of the employees
- Have a plan for employees' learning and development
- Fully commit to the process



## Secret No. 3 (continued)

### Use Glassdoor & Indeed Reviews for Good

Employees who leave reviews of your company on sites like Glassdoor and Indeed can make a huge impact on recruitment efforts. Your digital reputation is on display with a simple search. Monitor your brand on these sites, and if you

54 percent of job hunters read company reviews from employees on their mobiles, while 52 percent research salary information. – Inc.

have soaring reviews, mention them in job descriptions and at recruitment events. If they're bad, thoughtfully respond. **You can't control what's being said about you, but you can take part in the conversation and look for ways to address missed marks.**

### Attract Attention with Spot-On Job Descriptions

A brand-infused, well-written job description can make a difference in number and quality of candidates. Not only does it stand out from other similar positions, it also extends an inviting hand to the applicant. A jargon-free, conversational tone should talk about what the potential employee will gain by joining your company — not just the what you want from employees. Here are some tips for effective job descriptions:

- **Get to the point** — Job posts under 300 words had higher-than-average apply rates per view in a LinkedIn Talent Solutions study.
- **Be casual, conversational and enthusiastic** — The tone of the post impacted viewers' perceptions of an organization's friendliness, trustworthiness and desirability (Nielsen Norman Group).
- **Treat your job posts like a company resume** — You probably need a great employee more than that employee needs you. If you have great stats, show them off — employee retention rates, company perks and the fun your team has building success in the market all show a thriving culture.
- **Be specific** — Fifty-nine percent of job seekers say the No. 1 annoyance in postings is a lack of salary information and specific details about what the job entails (Software Advice).

**“Most organizations seek to hire, ‘people like us.’ The rationale is that someone too good might not take the job, might get frustrated, might be easily lured away.**

**“A few aim for, ‘so good she scares me.’ A few aim for, ‘it’ll raise our game.’ This takes guts.”**

– Seth Godin  
Entrepreneur

## Secret No. 4

# Attract High-Demand Candidates with Nontraditional Benefits

Not every position has a salary budget that will blow candidates' minds. But happily, salary isn't the deciding factor for most job seekers. Sure, it's a perk, but studies show when it comes down to it, pay isn't even in the top three reasons they're looking.

According to a [Work Institute](#) study, the top five reasons employees leave their jobs are:

- **Career Development** — No opportunity to grow in a preferred job and career. (21 percent)
- **Work-Life Balance** — Better work-life balance, which includes more favorable schedules, shorter commute times and scheduling flexibility. (13 percent)
- **Manager Behavior** — Unprofessional or unsupportive managers. (11 percent)
- **Well-Being** — Personal or family health issues. (9 percent)
- **Compensation and Benefits** — Pay was cited more often than benefits. (9 percent)

This indicates significant opportunity for recruitment that has nothing to do with their paychecks. Even if it's not a company-wide policy, some of these tools can be used to negotiate a sweeter package for hot candidates. Here are some nontraditional benefits to offer your recruits.

### Flextime and Work-Life Balance

In an employee-driven market, employees expect employers to allow them flexibility and autonomy. Here are flexible working options you should consider for your workplace:

- Anytime-anywhere work arrangements
- Scheduling transparency
- Easy-to-trade shift scheduling
- Summer hours
- Compressed work weeks

### Personal Development

Great company cultures recognize employees as individuals, and one way to support employees is to support their personal passions. Companies that offer lifestyle opportunities — things like learning new languages, taking on wellness initiatives and participating in volunteer programs — will make a lasting impression. This integration of outside interests into the employer offering is a popular favorite among trendy workplaces.

### Lifestyle Enhancement

Lifestyle Spending Accounts give a new level of the "treat yourself" mentality for employees. These employer-funded programs are comparable to HSAs, but different in that they offer noncash rewards that can be written off as a business expense. Employers decide what employees can spend LSA funds on, and rewards are managed through a vendor system. This emerging trend is growing out of Canada (read more [here](#)), but it will continue to gain popularity in the U.S. because it embodies the employee-focused movement. Examples of LSA spending categories include:

- Wellness expenses like gym memberships, fitness equipment, health tech, spa treatments
- Electronics
- Self-improvement and education courses
- Child/elder/pet care



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## Secret No. 4 (continued)

### Time for Independent Projects

Self-fulfillment and taking on new challenges are important for keeping employees engaged. Great workers like to learn and push boundaries, so as a recruiter, you can negotiate with important hires about how much time they'll be allowed to work on company-focused pet projects. Things like improvement processes and organizational tasks can bring value to the whole team and give individuals an increased sense of empowerment and value.

### Learning Opportunities & Career Mapping

Organizations can set themselves apart by offering easy-to-use learning systems and career development opportunities.






- **Career-pathing, or succession planning** — Even employees who aren't destined for managerial roles should still have a rewarding career plan. As a recruiter, lay out your company strategy for planning employees' trajectories.
- **Formal mentoring programs** — Only 22 percent of employers currently offer these (SHRM), but a top reason employees leave is a lack of career growth opportunities.
- **Job rotation programs** — A mutually beneficial situation, these programs move employees through a variety of positions in different areas of the company, which lets them broaden their career perspectives and gain new skill sets.

### Voluntary (a.k.a. Supplementary) Benefits

Voluntary benefits are noncritical benefits employers offer that are often paid for by employees. Traditionally, things like supplementary life insurance, vision and dental fall into this category. In the new competitive market, voluntary benefit providers have gotten creative and gone after even more: think critical care insurance, student loan assistance and even discounted merchandise.

## TOP 5 VOLUNTARY BENEFITS

Often free to employers, these voluntary benefits are rising trends.

- **STUDENT LOAN ASSISTANCE**  
Money is deducted from the pay check, and the employer matches some or all of it.
- **CRITICAL ILLNESS INSURANCE**  
A deterrent to financial ruin that covers everyday living expenses during a health crisis.
- **FINANCIAL WELLNESS PLANNING**  
Counseling on a range of topics such as debt management, budgeting and savings.
- **PET INSURANCE**  
Exactly what it sounds like - insurance for pets.
- **EDUCATION & TRAINING**  
Supplemental training, with trends being coding, blockchain & leadership management.

## Secret No. 5

# Put More Focus on the Candidate, Less On Exact Skill Matches

“Hard skills” aren’t the only thing to hire for, and in today’s increasingly tight job market, looking at character traits like attitude, culture fit and leadership skills will get you a wider pool of candidates. Changing up your hiring requirements will also help diversify your workforce, an ongoing trend and necessity.

### Extend the Pipeline

Getting creative with recruitment isn’t just recruiting out of high school, community colleges and universities anymore. Apprenticeships are hot again, and according to the U.S. Department of Labor, effective apprenticeship programs produce a 150 percent ROI for employers.

### Look for Genuine Enthusiasm

A “candidate persona” is a fancy way of describing your ideal candidate for a position or your company — if you do it the right way. Character traits, real-life experience, references and the candidate’s ambition are all great ways to target fantastic future employees. However, “checkbox” qualifiers that are limiting in our hot job market may include things like having a college degree, “x” years of experience and exact skills. With so many industries changing so quickly, candidates with a proven desire to learn and improve may be a better investment than those who fit a traditional career path.

“We look for three things when we hire people. We look for intelligence, we look for initiative or energy, and we look for integrity. And if they don’t have the latter, the first two will kill you, because if you’re going to get someone without integrity, you want them lazy and dumb.” – Warren Buffet

### Neurodiversity as Opportunity

Neurodiversity is the emerging term that describes people with atypical brain functioning — things like dyslexia and autism. According to Harvard Business School’s “Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage,” many people with these diagnoses have higher-than-average abilities, such as special skills in pattern recognition, memory or math. And for companies deploying neurodiversity programs, the benefits of purposefully bringing on neurodiverse employees can bring better productivity, quality improvement, innovative capabilities and higher employee engagement — similar to gains made in more traditionally diverse workforces.

Here are some ways to embrace neurodiversity in your hiring practices:

- Partner with an outside group to identify target candidates, such as community agencies that offer training and placement, school offices with career services or social media sites relevant to this demographic.
- Show grace in the interview process — a neurodiverse candidate may not have traditional social skills, but with accommodation and upfront discussion, his or her skill sets may outweigh this atypical presentation.
- Use an interview process that highlights work portfolios and work simulations.

## Look forward. Make adjustments. Be bold in your recruitment tactics.

Whether you're on the cutting edge of technology with a shiny new cloud-based HR system or you're focused on implementing an employee-centric culture, the future of HR doesn't live in the "soft skills" of the past. BirdDogHR can help your team transition or embrace the wave of data, analytics and employee opinions that saturate our workforces. Our partners use our seamless cloud-based software from the recruitment stage to retirements, for all types of employees.

You've got a team to build. We've got ways to make it easier. [Let's talk.](#)



BirdDogHR offers comprehensive talent management software and managed services — everything you need to guide the entire employee lifecycle. The cloud-based talent management system is straightforward and easy to use, so you can safely focus on implementing strategy — not learning new software or worrying it won't keep up with changing regulations. Managed services operate as an extension of your HR department and deliver the expertise and focus you need. Organizations can see ROI in effective growth management, bottom-line results and compliance peace of mind. BirdDogHR specializes in high-consequence and government contracting industries because they have unique needs. Companies from other industries can use the BirdDogHR talent management solution — and they do — but the solution is built with the most rigorous compliance needs in mind. BirdDogHR is a platform company for leading HCM provider Arcoro.

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**"Work hard AND smart."**

– Mike Rowe