TALENT ACQUISITION AND ONBOARDING

4 STEPS TO A WINNING CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Never have the stakes been higher for organizations when it comes to attracting and recruiting top talent. As social and mobile technologies become more prevalent, organizations are increasingly relying on people to provide a key competitive advantage.

At the same time, an on-demand, consumer-centric economy is raising job seekers' expectations. Last year alone, the economy added over 3.1 million new jobs. Employee confidence is peaking: 52% of employees report optimism in the job market. These highly qualified candidates aren't just looking to work for financially successful businesses. They're demanding unfettered access to great leaders, diverse labor forces and vast brain trusts with culturally stimulating environments.

So how can you build a high-performance culture that treats candidates like your very best customers? This executive brief, the first in a series of three, will explore the steps and solutions you need to create a great employee experience in the earliest—and arguably most important—stages of the employee lifecycle.

We'll walk you through four steps—identifying and recruiting top talent, onboarding new hires, implementing mobile-enabled social tools and setting performance-based goals. We'll explore how mobile and cloud technologies support social recruiting efforts throughout the pre-boarding and onboarding experience. By following these four steps, organizations can create a culture that champions greater transparency, mentoring, diversity, innovation and a consumerized digital experience.

STEP 1—TAPPING INTO THE RIGHT TALENT

The number of channels recruiters are using to identify highly qualified candidates is fast multiplying.

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> President and Founder,
> Staffing Advisors

Mobile-friendly job boards, company career sites, blogs, social media sites and community forums are among the sources organizations are relying on to identify and attract talent.

Exelon Corporation is certainly no exception. Although the competitive energy provider still depends on "established relationships with universities and colleges around the country" to recruit college graduates, Jennifer Boyd, vice president of talent management at Exelon, says, "with all of today's technology capabilities, we have expanded our sourcing online to include social channels like LinkedIn and Glassdoor."

Such multi-channel sourcing widens the pool of candidates for recruiters and supports greater workforce diversity. "A variety of recruiting methods keeps a company from becoming too homogenous," says Bob Corlett, president and founder of HR consultancy and recruitment agency Staffing Advisors. "That's why companies should never rely strictly on job boards, referrals or any single recruiting source."

In addition to social sourcing, inbound and outbound marketing initiatives are an important complement to traditional outbound job posting and recruiting. Organic inbound content, such as

employee videos and blogs highlighting volunteer work and employee rewards, serve as powerful endorsements of a company's accomplishments and unique culture.

Even more powerful than an employee video is an employee's personal endorsement of a company's brand. Strong relationships are critical to finding quality talent as employee and social networking referrals develop into rich and reliable sources. However, nurturing employee and social networking referrals takes commitment from the entire organization, from marketing to product development to sales. Each faction must work to extract the best talent from their individual networks.

Fortunately, savvy organizations are supporting these cross-enterprise efforts with social network–enabled intranet sites. Online capabilities feature job postings, discussions, recommendations and referrals, along with built-in application recruitment guidelines, referral links and organizational best practices.

The advantages of employee referral programs are significant, according to Boyd. "We leverage our employees for sourcing and for getting referrals because our employees not only know what skill

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sets we're looking for but what kind of culture we have. So they can help us pinpoint people who will be a fit here."

Just as social network–enabled intranet sites help employees share potential candidates, social collaboration tools enable recruiters to share best practices and candidate knowledge. By supporting social and mobile collaboration among recruiters, these tools create a 360-degree view of candidates, from your desktop or mobile device, for real-time decision making.

For Exelon, social collaboration tools are particularly important. The company has more than 30,000 employees and seven distinct business units. By relying on Oracle Human Capital Management, Exelon is able to share hiring best practices and processes across the entire organization for quick and consistent recruitment strategies.

The value of social collaboration also extends to the relationship between recruiters and potential hires. Open communication throughout the recruitment process is key to attracting top talent. Candidates appreciate being kept informed of where they are in the application process, whether it's receiving an email notification that an application is processed or a text message that an interview will be arranged in the next three days.

In fact, transparency throughout the interview process is the cornerstone of creating a great candidate experience. By relying on mobile and social technologies that allow candidates to be "part of a conversation," Joyce Westerdahl, executive vice president for human resources at Oracle, says organizations can significantly reduce "the frustration factor" so common in traditional hiring processes.

With innovative recruiting solutions, Westerdahl adds, "managers and recruiters can see where a candidate is in the application process so that there's constant communication with the candidate. That helps prevent any disconnect that can cause unnecessary churn or distractions for hiring managers and candidates."

Amy Best, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at Exelon, agrees. "With our Oracle recruiting module, candidates are able to track where they are in the application process. Until we transitioned to this tool, it was only

the line leader or the hiring manager who knew where a candidate was in the process. The candidate would have to follow up to see where they stood. The system that we've now implemented has a lot more transparency, as well as mobility, so that recruiters and candidates can access information from their phones as they're moving around."

While the hiring process will always be "an administrative process with lots of steps and workflows," Boyd says mobile-enabled recruiting and social collaboration technologies are helping convert a traditionally opaque process into an experience that displays "caring for a candidate." After all, she says, the hiring process "is a candidate's first real experience with Exelon. We want it to be positive."

STEP 2—HERE TO STAY: OPTIMIZING THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

New hires are most likely to quit within the first three to six months of employment, according to the workforce insights arm of credit-reporting agency Equifax. As a result, the onboarding stage is a small window of opportunity for an organization to make a good impression. This holds especially true for millennials, many of whom are just entering the workplace and trying to find the right fit.

To stave off unnecessary churn, many organizations are making onboarding their top priority. According to a Brandon Hall Group study,[1] for the next 12 to 24 months, 52% of organizations are prioritizing optimizing their onboarding process, and 45% are prioritizing their onboarding technology solutions.

While the goal of onboarding is to acclimate talent quickly and reduce the time to productivity, this stage is increasingly being recognized for its power to create a positive candidate experience and retain employees. That's certainly been the case for Exelon, which is currently streamlining its onboarding process to enhance the positive efforts made during the recruitment phase.

"In a company such as ours—a Fortune 95 with seven different businesses—there's a lot of diversity, so we want employees to have clarity around the business: what Exelon means, what Exelon

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> —JENNIFER BOYD
> Vice President of Talent Management,
> Exelon Corporation

offers and what our strategy is," says Boyd. "So we're working really hard to up our game in the onboarding space."

Efforts include hosting local orientation sessions, assigning new college hires a peer or "buddy," and staging formal onboarding presentations on a monthly basis. "It's really important for new hires to feel good when they land here," says Boyd. "It's not just about having an office and a place to sit, but feeling integrated and connected to the people you're working with."

Technology also plays a key role in helping Exelon drive a positive onboarding experience. "We have a lot of information stored electronically that new hires can access either through our website or through the links we send to them," says Best.

For instance, having a fully functioning workspace ready and waiting for a new hire can guarantee instant access to mission-critical HR assets, including:

• Online checklist of every internal site and system needed to learn how to become a high-performing employee.
• Customized checklist for onboarding tasks and

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[1]http://www.brandonhall.com/blogs/whats-trending-in-talent-acquisition-technology/

the ability to review, update or trigger process completion status. In turn, this feature allows HR managers to track training and policy compliance and report on those metrics.

- Work-/organization-/geography-related training documents and videos.
- Work files, documents and information from backend systems to promote new hire productivity from day one.
- Communication channels with key HR, IT and peer re-source contacts complete with built-in social chats, discussion threads and conversations for immediate integration into the company.
- Training content from mobile, web and desktop, online and offline.

Another effective onboarding tool is social collaboration technology. Social networking solutions facilitate real-time collaboration between individuals and teams, providing new hires with instant access to co-workers and mentors. For instance, at Oracle, Westerdahl says hiring managers utilize Oracle Social Network to help new employees "understand how Oracle operates, learn about the company, learn how things get done and to provide resources for any questions they might have. This online, self-service tool instantly connects new employees with other groups for support."

Because of its power to shape the candidate experience, many organizations are now pre-boarding candidates to allow them to experience a company's culture before accepting a position. Arriving onsite to shadow employees, completing homework assignments that mirror workplace tasks and participating in trial programs where candidates do actual work onsite and receive pay are all pre-boarding activities that help map the lay of the land. That's especially important in a market where 61% of employees still say job realities differ from expectations set during the interview process.[2]

"Onboarding starts from the minute a candidate is contacted," says Westerdahl. "We set expectations up front as best we can so that there are no surprises when new hires begin work. A candidate's job responsibilities always match what's outlined during the interview process."

STEP 3—SUPPORTING A FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE WITH SOCIAL AND MOBILE IN A CLOUD ENVIRONMENT

To fuel employee collaboration and engagement, organizations are increasingly turning to social collaboration tools and employee engagement sites. The benefits of these powerful platforms are two-fold, helping both employees and recruiters.

For employees, social collaboration tools help connect remote and on-the-go workers while making it easier for them to do their jobs and do them well. That's because social collaboration tools and HR community sites are excellent at capturing the knowledge of experienced employees and sharing this information across departments and functions. By leveraging social capabilities between teams and across the organization, employees receive the support they need to get work done. At the same time, high-performing employees can earn credit for their unique knowledge and contributions.

For recruiters, harnessing the collective intelligence of employees via social collaboration ensures not only that new hires feel recognized for their efforts, but that the company also benefits from a steady supply of rich ideas through employee collaboration. Instant knowledge sharing also enables real-time feedback for improved performance.

Another key ingredient in building an engaged

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[2]https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/6-in-10-employees-say-job-realities-different-than-expected-glassdoor-survey/

and flexible workforce is mobile enablement. Mobile technologies allow employees to access recommended online training courses, knowledge-base answers and personal data, such as pay and vacation time, anytime, anywhere. These technologies also make opportunities within the organization more visible. By accessing information, such as upcoming job openings, employees can chart their own career paths, whether applying for new positions or requesting job transfers.

Although social collaboration and mobile enablement strategies serve varying purposes, they share a common engine: the cloud. Consider, for example Exelon. "With our new cloud-based recruiting technology, we're working on mobility and continuing to push the envelope around providing broader accessibility to information," says Boyd. "That's the journey we're on at the moment."

Because the cloud integrates data across multiple systems and sites, HR leaders can gain a holistic, 360-degree look at their candidate pool. Another key advantage: the ability to streamline and accelerate recruiting and onboarding processes.

"From an HCM standpoint, the cloud helps you bring in people faster, especially when you have to hire 30,000 or 40,000 people at once," says Westerdahl, noting that Oracle hired more than 22,000 employees last year, not including acquisitions. As a result, she says, "our mission is cloud. We have turned this big cruise ship, and we are heading to the cloud and transforming all aspects of our business."

In fact, there are over 150 million employees using cloud-based HR solutions globally, according to estimates from HR analyst and principal of Bersin[3] by Deloitte Josh Bersin. For these workers, the cloud empowers them to perform tasks, from importing a resume via LinkedIn or Facebook to tracking an application's status on a smartphone.

"That's one of the reasons we're excited to move to the cloud solution," says Best. "It provides candidates with more transparency as to where they are in the hiring process, from screening to interview to outcome. With the cloud, we'll be able to provide candidates with visibility into the hiring process versus offering a black box."

In addition to supporting social and mobile interactions, the cloud is a key contributor to a positive employee experience. Hiring, onboarding and training can feel "pretty administrative," says Boyd. With a cloud-based HCM solution, organizations can create "a more consumer-grade user experience. Employees would rather feel like they're interacting in a modern fashion that's streamlined and simple so that they can start talking to leaders and engaging with peers."

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STEP 4—SETTING THE STAGE FOR GREATNESS

Innovative tools for managing career goals can help build a positive employee experience by teaching new hires how to fast-track to success.

So when should organizations begin sharing these building blocks for great employee performance? It's never too soon, according to Corlett of Staffing Advisors. "Set performance expectations before new employees even start work," he says. "Defining outcomes is the linchpin of successful performance management."

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[3] http://www.bersin.com/Blog/post/The-Bold-New-World-of-Talent--Predictions-for-2016.aspx

In the case of Exelon, Best says the company's recruiters begin "explaining career paths" to candidates as early as the initial stages of the interview process. "Because we are so diverse and have seven different businesses, employees can have multiple career paths with our company," she says. "So we make sure to have discussions around performance and career advancement early on."

Demonstrating clearly to candidates how they can further their career offers a number of competitive advantages. First, it renders potential hires more likely to lean in and select an organization as its first choice of employer. Greater transparency around goal setting and expectations also gives candidates and new hires something to aspire to: attainable objectives that are rewarded competitively.

There are several strategies for supporting goal management. Regular, informal performance reviews can help employees recognize what they're doing well and how they can achieve higher performance levels. Pulse surveys, conducted monthly, offer a real-time glimpse into how employees feel about their actual performance. And data analytics, along with user-friendly dashboards, are fast emerging as a tool that can be used for improving sourcing, recruiting and onboarding processes.

In addition, social collaboration tools allow employees to share project goals with other team members throughout an organization. Through a social network collaboration platform, employees can spark conversations about project milestones, and solicit ideas and information from colleagues to share their strategies for success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding and hiring quality talent has never been more critical or more challenging. Building a winning candidate experience can provide a key competitive advantage in a market where job seekers are calling the shots.

However, treating candidates like your best customers requires a balanced combination of strategy and technology. These strategies, which are critical to creating a high-performance and candidate-centric culture, include:

• Identifying and recruiting top talent
• Onboarding new hires
• Implementing mobile-enabled social tools
• Setting performance-based goals

These innovative strategies, however, can only be successful if supported by the power of mobile and cloud technologies. From social networking intranet sites to employee referral portals, these tools give candidates greater transparency into hiring processes, providing new hires with instant access to corporate knowledge bases, and enabling recruiters to identify and onboard top talent anytime, anywhere, from any device.

As organizations become more comfortable leveraging social and mobile technology to attract and recruit talent, best practices are emerging. Lessons include:

• Create a multi-channel sourcing strategy that taps a variety of channels, from LinkedIn to employee referral portals, for talent.
• Empower new hires with self-service capabilities in the form of corporate intranet sites and social collaboration portals.
• Kickstart the onboarding experience by providing candidates with information on managing their career goals from the get-go.
• Create social networks that facilitate real-time communication among new hires, peers and mentoring groups.
• Support a flexible workforce with a cloud platform capable of providing 24/7 access to HR information, integrating data silos and delivering a consumer-grade experience.

By following these strategies, supported by social, mobile and cloud technologies, organizations can build a strong foundation for the next stages in talent management: training and career development of high-performing employees.

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