HiringCenter™: Creating a Constant Flow of High-Quality Candidates

Most small businesses struggle to source high-quality candidates when their business needs require them to hire employees. For hiring, the most successful businesses have the following objective:

Maintain a consistent pool of qualified candidates who know about the business, have a positive affinity towards the business, and would consider working in the business if the opportunity was presented.

Your business should have the same objective if you are going to be successful at attracting and hiring talented people.

Sourcing Candidates

When sourcing candidates, it is important to understand that there are generally two types of people who can become employees at your company:

1. Active Job Candidates

Active job candidates are people who either do not have a job, or are so unhappy in their current job that they are actively looking for a new one.

2. Passive Job Candidates

Passive job candidates are people who either have a job, or are not in critical need of one. These people will consider a new opportunity if it is presented to them, or if they stumble upon it as they live their normal life.

Reactive Sourcing: Active Candidates

A company that finds itself in the short-term need of employees is forced to react to that need. This is sometimes inevitable and cannot be avoided. The pressure of finding someone quickly can put the business at a disadvantage for finding good employees.

Active candidates typically do not have a job, they are about to be fired, or they are so unhappy in their current job that they are looking for a new one. There are always exceptions, but in general these are not the people you want on your team.

The most common ways to source active candidates are:

1. Local Newspapers: Putting a “Help Wanted” ad in the local newspaper is the most common way to source candidates for small businesses. Most candidates are now using the “online” version of newspaper rather than the print version to look at help-wanted ads.
2. Internet: With the growth of the internet over the last decade, more than 40,000 job boards are now available. It is quick, easy, and inexpensive to post a job opening on one or more job boards.

3. Staffing Agencies: Some companies use the “try before you buy” method of hiring. There is merit in this approach, but it can be quite expensive.

Proactive Sourcing: Passive Candidates

Sourcing candidates from a proactive perspective will cost less and produce better results than relying on reactive means alone.

If someone already has a job, they have demonstrated an ability to make a contribution in a company. They tend to be happy enough with their current situation that they are not looking to leave. These people are called passive candidates, and they are the ones who have a significantly higher chance of success in your business.

Consider the following list of proactive candidate sources:

1. Referrals. Everyone has a network of people they know and trust. Enlisting your network of relationships and the networks of your existing employees can produce quite a large source of word-of-mouth candidate referrals.

2. Customers. Your existing customers are a great source for passive candidates. This group of people knows and has an affinity towards your business. Even if they are not able to work in your business, they have friends, relatives, and acquaintances who may be good candidates.

3. Other Local Businesses. Have you walked into a business establishment and been served by an outstanding employee? Most business owners can spot good employees when they see them in action. Learning to engage those around you as potential candidates is an excellent, but often untapped, source of future talent.

Sourcing good candidates involves concentrating on activities that have the highest probability for success. Passive candidates are the best source of high-performing employees. Businesses that have systems in place to produce a consistent flow of passive candidates will improve both the time to hire and the quality of the employee.

Engaging Active and Passive Candidates

To create a constant flow of high quality candidates, your business must develop ways to engage both active and passive candidates. Unless your company has a nationally recognized brand that is known for being a desirable employer (ex. Microsoft, Southwest Airlines, etc.), you will have to compete for the attention of candidates along side other companies who are also trying to hire employees.
In essence, engaging a candidate involves marketing your company similarly to how you would market a product or service. Your messaging should answer basic questions that the candidate will likely have in his mind regarding your line of business, location, nature of the job, etc. But, it can’t stop there if you are going to attract the best candidates. You must also answer the most important question every candidate has:

“Why is it in my best interest to work at your company?”

Self-interest is a powerful motivator. When a candidate is first considering your company as a potential employer, this is where they place their focus.

The internet has equipped companies to engage and communicate with candidates in many new ways. In the past, a candidate would have to wait for an interview to learn about a company and make a determination if the company was a fit for him. This is no longer true. Today, candidates can glean a great deal of information from the internet, and they expect this information to be available at the earliest stages of considering an opportunity.

Many companies have responded to this expectation by building career pages on their corporate web pages. These career pages become a destination for both active and passive candidates for learning about the company and considering employment. Consider the following diagram:

**Engaging Active Candidates.** Active candidates are driven to the career site by advertising. In order to be effective, the advertising must make it easy for the candidate to interface with your company. Clicking on an internet link is the most effective way to get the candidate from the advertiser’s environment to your environment. Once there, the candidate should be able to quickly learn about your company and be given an easy way of presenting their contact information and resume. When active candidates have to send a fax, write an email, sign-in at a job site, or do anything else that restricts the easy flow of information, you are creating
obstacles that will restrict the number of candidates that engage your company. Typically, the best candidates are the ones that “bail-out” of a cumbersome process first because they know they can get a job somewhere else.

**Engaging Passive Candidates.** Passive candidates do not initially think of your company as a potential employer. They usually have no reason to engage you on this topic. However, due to some external force (a referral from an employee, a good experience as a customer, they happen to be on your website, etc.) they briefly think about your company and employment. At this point, a career site is very helpful tool to engage this person. As with the active candidates, the person should be able to quickly learn about your company. In addition, she should be presented with an easy and non-threatening way of presenting her contact information to let you know she is interested in starting an employment dialog.

**Maintaining a Candidate Pool.** Consistently and regularly engaging both active and passive candidates is the best way to maintain a pool of qualified candidates. Much like a sport team, a company should maintain a “bench” of candidates who are ready to step in and do the job if one of the regular players is no longer part of the team. This requires the company to maintain a “we’re always hiring” footing to the outside world. Companies that wait until they have a vacancy before they start building their candidate pool are at a disadvantage in finding the best candidates.

**HiringCenter™: A Turn-Key Career Page and Applicant Tracking System**

HiringCenter™ is designed to help your company maintain a consistent pool of qualified candidates who know about the business, have a positive affinity towards the business, and would consider working in the business if the opportunity were presented. HiringCenter consists of two elements:

1. **Career Page:** HiringCenter™ gives your company a way to present a professionally developed career page to both active and passive candidates. The career page is customized to your company, displays your company logo, and has verbiage that describes the compelling reasons a candidate would want to work at your company. It also contains details about each job position.

2. **Applicant Tracking System:** HiringCenter™ then gives the candidate a quick and simple way to let your company know they are interested in engaging in an employment discussion. This process takes less than 10 minutes. Once the candidate completes the process, their information is automatically loaded into an email and immediately sent to the hiring manager of your company.
How Does HiringCenter™ Work?

The HiringCenter™ career page is an independent website that is created for your company. Using HiringCenter™ does not require that your company have its own website. The career page is hosted on our servers and customized to have your brand, color schemes, and information. If your company already has a website, the company website can be easily linked to your company’s HiringCenter™ career page so that it appears seamless to the candidate.

Your Career Page

Your career page is the first thing candidates see when they engage your company in an employment dialog. It is important you make a good first impression. The best candidates want to work for what appears to be the best companies. Here are some important things to note concerning the career page:

- **Your company logo** will be highlighted on the career page.
- Here you will get the opportunity to tell the candidate about your company.
- More than one position can be displayed on the site. If a different position is selected, the job position text changes automatically.
- Here you will get the opportunity to tell the candidate about the job position.
- The candidate just clicks the continue button to start the application.
- Your career page will have a unique URL with “your company” in place of /jobprodemo.
Candidates can get to your career page in a number of ways. For active candidates, your company’s unique URL (http://www.hiringcenter.net/yourcompany/) can be placed in a help-wanted ad in the newspaper or on an internet job board. The candidate is then able to click on the link in the advertisement and go directly to your career page.

For passive candidates, there are many ways to point people to your career page. One method that has proven very successful is to offer a business card or a small postcard to someone letting them know that you are always looking for good employees to work in your business. Hiring managers will give these cards to people they meet in their day-to-day work. Your company’s unique URL (http://www.hiringcenter.net/yourcompany/) is listed at the bottom of the card. It is common for a candidate to later reference this card, point her browser to your career page, and learn about an opportunity at your company.

Engaging the Candidate

Once the candidate learns about your company and the opportunities that exist there, the career page presents her an easy way to leave their contact information, cover letter, and resume. HiringCenter™ walks her through a three-step process.

Step 1: Collect basic contact information:
Step 2: Qualify and present screening questions:

It is important to qualify a candidate concerning their expectations and availability. This saves time during phone and in-person interviews. In addition, HiringCenter™ gives you the opportunity to ask up to four screening questions that are customized to your company and customized to the job position.

Step 3: Accept a resume and cover letter:

The final step is giving the candidate an opportunity to paste in a resume and cover letter for the hiring manager to review. This completes the process from the candidate’s perspective. The whole engagement typically takes less than 10 minutes of the candidate’s time.
Candidate Results Are Emailed Directly to the Hiring Manager

After a candidate completes the application on HiringCenter™, the results are instantly emailed to the hiring manager and other designated employees involved in the hiring process. The email contains the candidate’s information as provided above. The candidate’s information is clearly presented and thoughtfully arranged so that the hiring manager can quickly and efficiently review the candidate’s qualifications:

Since the candidate results are delivered in a standard email format, the candidate’s information can be easily forwarded to others in the company who may be involved in the hiring process.

Summary

When sourcing candidates and hiring employees, your business should have the following objective:

Maintain a consistent pool of qualified candidates who know about your business, have a positive affinity towards your business, and would consider working in your business if the opportunity was presented.

To accomplish this objective, your companies must have strategies for reaching out to both active and passive candidates. HiringCenter™ equips your company to professionally engage candidates in a way that will cause many of them to engage you in a meaningful employment dialog.

For more information concerning HiringCenter, Call 1.888.880.8433 or visit www.tidemarkprofiles.com.

View a HiringCenter™ Demo Site at http://www.hiringcenter.net/jobprodemo.