

How to Improve Your Candidate Experience

A Step-By-Step-Guide



What Will You Learn In This Guide?

Is your careers site the weak link in your hiring process? If so, it's probably because it provides a poor candidate experience.

If you know your careers site is an issue but don't know where to start with improvements, then this is the guide for you.

Candidate experience is somewhat of a buzzword in the recruitment industry at the moment. But that doesn't mean that it's a fad that you can ignore. By improving candidate experience you open your business up to a wider pool of talented candidates for all of your roles, all while improving your employer brand and reputation.

Competition for candidates is growing, especially in industries that are experiencing skills shortages. As such, a greater emphasis is being put on demonstrating why job seekers should join your business (instead of the competition).

In this step-by-step guide, you will learn how to improve your careers site to create an exceptional candidate experience for every applicant your business attracts.





What Is Candidate Experience?

Candidate experience is the experience that candidates have with your brand, when they apply for roles in your business.

The candidate experience covers every part of the recruitment process, including the very first interaction that a candidate has with your business. These interactions are normally occur through one of your job ads or on your careers site.

The first impression you make on your advert and / or career website will set the tone for the entire candidate experience.

Why Should You Care About Candidate Experience?

You hear candidate experience being talked about – but why do businesses put such a big emphasis on it?

According to Forbes, **72% of candidates** who have a negative experience will tell others about it. By creating a positive candidate experience, you help protect your businesses brand. If a candidate has a bad experience and tells their colleagues, friends, and family, then this makes all of these people less likely to apply for a role at your company – meaning you could be missing out on top talent.

Not only does candidate experience protect your brand and increase the quality of applicants, but it also increases the quality of hire. By giving candidates what they want and need at every stage of the recruitment process, you motivate even the best ones to accept your job offers.

Your Careers Site: Your Secret Weapon

How does your careers website tie into your candidate experience? As we already mentioned, your careers site is probably one of the first interactions that many candidates will have with your brand. This is where the candidate experience starts, so you need to make sure you are setting off on the right foot.

According to **Career Builder, over 70% of candidates** start their job search on Google. Candidates expect to find relevant employers in their search results. A careers site with a great user experience (and good SEO) will help you rank for key search terms that relevant candidates will be searching for.

Job seekers who can quickly find your roles will have a more positive candidate experience. This is why it is important to have a careers site and one that works well to give candidates what they are searching for.

For example, if a candidate is searching “your brand name + careers” you don’t want them to be taken to the home page of your website, which is targeted at customers. You want to provide a convenient candidate experience and immediately take them to your careers page where they can quickly find what roles you have available and discover your application process.

Beyond simply finding your vacant roles, you want to design your candidate journey itself. Your careers site and job adverts are all potential tools you can use to educate candidates about your business, what it’s like to work with you, what kind of recruitment process the candidate can experience, what kind of benefits the candidate - once hired - can expect...



How To Improve Your Candidate Experience

Now you know why you need to improve your candidate experience, let's jump into how you can do it. We will cover five steps that you can implement on your careers site to help you improve your candidate experience.

Step 1: Transparency Builds Trust

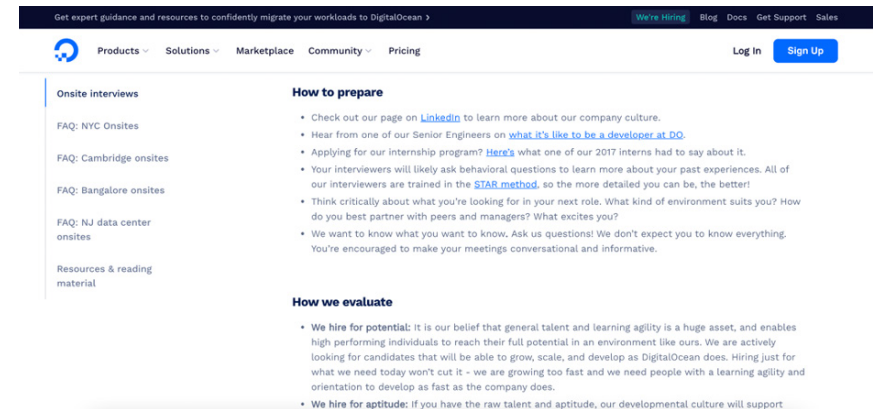
You need to build trust with candidates – especially those that have had little or no interaction with your brand before. For SMEs, this may be the majority of your candidates. Big brands already have established reputations but for smaller companies, you need to reassure candidates through the hiring process that your company is to be trusted and worth working for.

Prioritising transparency at every stage of the candidate experience can help you establish trust.

The majority of candidates will have similar questions about your hiring process. They want to know:

- What to expect during the application process
- How long after they apply they will be waiting for a response
- What the interview process is like
- How many rounds of interviews
- Are interviews onsite, etc.

In anticipation of these questions, you can create resources that highlight how your recruitment process works.



A great example of this is the [DigitalOceans careers resources page](#).

On this page, they cover all the most common questions that candidates have. They explain the evaluation process, how candidates can prepare for interviews and even split up their interview process based on geographical location.

This central hub of resources for candidates shows any applicants that DigitalOceans takes their recruitment seriously and values their candidate's time. It also saves their team a lot of back and forth with emails answering questions about the recruitment process.



Step 2: Communication Is Key

Your site probably offers chat support for customers and users, right? According to **99Firms**, by 2022, about 85% of businesses are expected to opt for live chat support. Live Chat is not only a great way to provide support to customers, but it is also a great way to provide support to candidates.

Communication is key in recruitment. Having live chat options – whether run by an automated bot or a human being – is a great way to ensure fast correspondence with candidates and answer any questions they may have during the recruitment process.

A LiveChat option enhances candidate experience greatly because candidates know exactly where they can turn for answers. They don't spend days waiting for email responses. Or start an application and then forget about it because they encountered a problem.

Not only does LiveChat allow you to quickly respond to enquiries, but it also allows you to collect data. The insights you gather from LiveChat responses from candidates can help you further improve your candidate experiences. Perhaps you frequently get asked the same questions in which case you can answer them on your resources page. Or maybe candidates always experience a similar issue uploading their CV and you need to allow for additional formats.

Step 3: Create a Personalised Candidate Experience

Personalisation is crucial to improve your candidate experience.

Look at your careers site through the eyes of your candidate. Start to pick out areas where you can offer personalisation to help you attract top talent.

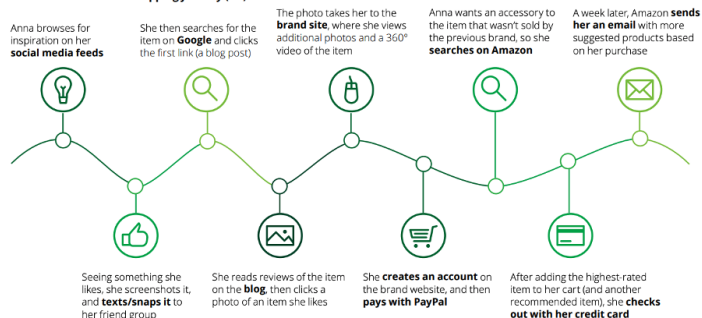
When thinking about personalisation on your website, you can look to consumer goods retailers for inspiration. We know, that's two totally different types of websites, but bear with us. Imagine you want to buy a coffee grinder. As a consumer how do you approach making a purchase? Probably something like this:

1. Research available products
2. Figure out if you want a hand grinder or electric grinder
3. You end up on Amazon
4. You spend 3 hours reading dozens of product details and reviews
5. Finally, you add a coffee grinder to your cart

Why do you often end up on Amazon when you make a consumer purchase? Because it offers such great features such as:

- Filters, sorting, adding to wishlist
- Comparison tables
- Reviews
- Easy to use interface
- Keeps you updated after the purchase with dispatch and further products you may be interested in

Illustrative consumer-shopping journey (US)



Source: Deloitte

What Can Your Careers Site Learn From Amazon?

Let's imagine for a moment we live in an ideal world. What could the personalisation on your careers site look like?

Step 1: A candidate hears about the quality of your product team and is driven to your website to learn more.

Step 2: The candidate subscribes to your talent network. They highlight their area of interest as the product team and your careers site displays the current vacancies that they might be interested in.

Step 3: A few weeks pass. You email the candidate about your latest product releases. The candidate is intrigued and comes back to your website.

Step 4: Your website recognises the candidate. It displays personalised content such as employee testimonials from employees working on the site closest to the candidate's location.

Step 5: They look through some more job descriptions and find one that fits their skills and what they are looking for in a role.

Step 6: They start filling out an application form for the role they are interested in.

Step 7: The kids start screaming from downstairs and the candidate has to step away from their laptop.

Step 8: They pick up where they left off the next day. Their "shopping cart" is still waiting for them. If they don't come back to finish the application, an email reminder is sent out to remind them to do so.

This type of careers site journey creates a smooth candidate experience. This type of personalisation is not creepy or stalkerish. But rather, it gives candidates exactly what they need at exactly the right time.

Step 4: Use Employee-Generated Content

In Step 3 we talked about how you could display employee testimonials. This type of employee-generated content is great for your employer brand.

User-generated content (UGC) is used by almost every business you can think of. We were just talking about Amazon. Would you buy a product on Amazon before checking the reviews? Probably not. According to Vendasta, 92% of consumers now check reviews – this is a type of UGC.

The same applies to recruitment. Future employees want to know what working at your organisation will be like, and they won't necessarily take your word for it.

Employees are the trusted insiders. They have the best insights about what it is like to work for your company because they already work there.

Your employees can share insights into your business, what it is like in specific departments, and how your organisation is structured. Potential candidates will trust the words of current employees more than your C-suite, job ad, or marketing campaigns because they appear more authentic.

How Can You Get Employees To Generate Content?

Employees aren't going to create content for you off their own backs, you need to encourage them to do so.

Some examples of how employees can create content for your brand include:

- Encourage employees to write blogs for your website
- Let employees do a takeover of your social media accounts and show behind the scenes and a day in the life content
- Ask employees to write reviews that can be used on your website, Glassdoor and social media

When candidates see your employees' experiences in your workplace they will be more likely to apply. Not only do you get to share more about your company, but you will attract better candidates. Potential candidates will be able to evaluate not only if they have the right skill for the job but also if the workplace culture is the right fit for them.

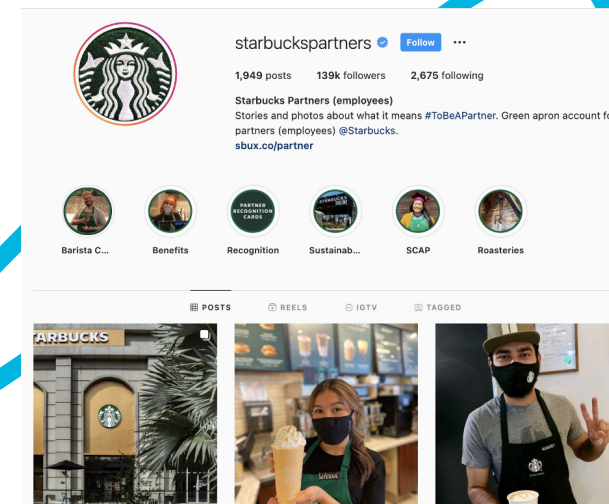
How Can You Get Employees To Generate Content?

Starbucks is a company that excels at employee-generated content.

Starbucks CEO, Howard Schultz, has been quoted saying "[employees] are the true ambassadors of our brand, the real merchants of romance and theatre, and as such the primary catalysts for delighting customers."

Starbucks doesn't call their employees "Employees" but rather "Partners". They give them their own social channels and actively encourage them to create content for social media.

The Starbucks Partners Instagram and Twitter accounts are places where employees are encouraged to share their experience of working at Starbucks.



Step 5: Measuring Candidate Experience

Now that we've covered some great strategies to improve the candidate experience, how do you figure out if those strategies are working? You take a look at the metrics...

Candidate Experience Metrics

Your company needs to continuously monitor metrics on your careers site to understand what strategies are working best and where you can make improvements in your hiring process.

Some metrics you may want to consider are:

- Drop off rate: How many candidates are dropping off before they complete applications? If it is a majority then this indicates a poor candidate experience. You can look for trends in where candidates are dropping off and this can point you to areas of your application process that can be improved.
- Time to accept an offer: Are your candidates taking a long time to mull over your offer? Or worse, are your offers often being rejected? This also indicated a poor candidate experience.
- Conversion rate on job ads: How many clicks are your job ads getting? Is it a lot, but the conversion rate is low? This could indicate a lack of cohesion between your ads and your careers site landing page.

Keeping track of these metrics will help you continuously improve your candidate experience. You will notice patterns and trends that will indicate where your application process is losing candidates and give your insights into where you can make your improvements.



Improve your Candidate Experience

ApplyDirect create app and web-based Career Sites, enabling organisations to attract, build and retain candidates and employees.

We are an ASX listed company working with some of Australia's largest employers, focused on delivering tailored employment and recruitment solutions.

If you're looking to improve your candidate experience through an optimised career site, reach out to our team to chat.

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