11 Recruiting Best Practices During COVID-19

Introduction

There's never been a more important time to invest and be thoughtful about your recruiting efforts. Organizations that are continually building their recruiting capabilities, even during a slowdown, are able to quickly rebound and fill their strategic roles quickly when things heat up again. We've put together a list of ways to supercharge your recruiting practices today, so that you're positioned to attract the talent you will need tomorrow.
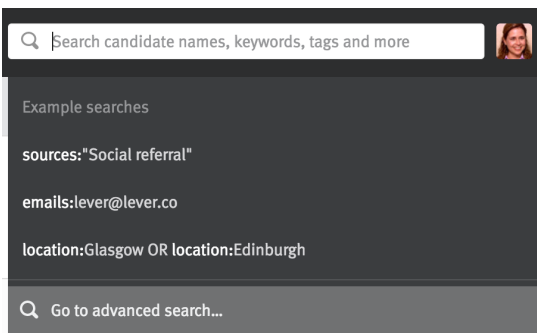
IN THIS EBOOK

01 Optimize Your Hiring Sources

Organizing thousands of candidate records through tags will give you a view into the quality of your database. Likewise, revamping your hiring sources will ensure you are investing the right time and energy in the right places. Tags and sources can easily get messy without centralized ownership leading to inconsistent usage and poor data integrity.

Best Practices

Build and document a consistent set of tags: It's best to go broad with your tagging schema as too much granularity can lead to an abundance of confusion, maintenance and upkeep. For example, you may want to consider tagging by department ("[Pipeline] - Engineering") rather than by role ("[Pipeline] - Python Engineer"). Once hiring picks up, you will then be able to run boolean searches and include that tag, so that you're pulling from the best of the best in your database.

Build and document a consistent [set of hiring sources](#): Merge sources together if needed to create the most consolidated view of your source list.
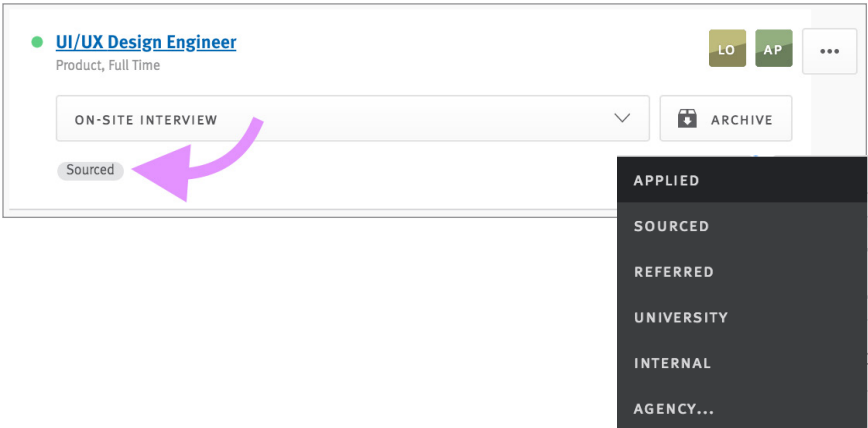
Think about source attribution: For example, why should your career site get all the credit? A candidate may have learned about an opening on LinkedIn, Glassdoor or Indeed long before they actually applied on your career site. [Create a drop down prescreen question](#) asking candidates where they first learned about the opportunity using your set of sources. Place a reminder in your recruiter phone screen feedback form to reconcile the source a candidate gives you with the source tag. This will give you the most accurate view of your sources for candidates that were strong enough to reach a phone interview.

02 Tidy Your Recruiting Pipeline

Organizations have accrued thousands of candidates over the last several years, especially during high growth periods. During these times, pipeline cleanliness can take a back seat to moving on your best candidates quickly. Although this may lead to more positive short-term outcomes, like making a critical hire more quickly, it can have adverse effects on your candidate experience and your data hygiene.

Best Practices

Sort by last interaction and archive stale candidates: You may want to even develop an email outreach regardless of how long they haven't heard from your team. A recent study has shown that 68% of employees believe their experience as a candidate reflects how the company treats its people. Consider how you would treat your own employees during this scenario and act accordingly.

Last interaction ⓘ   ⌃

All time   1 week ago
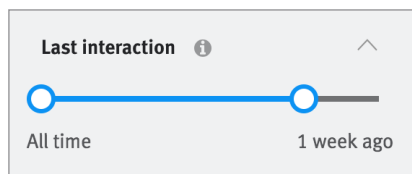
Review candidates who have not yet received a message from your team: If you have yet to review a subset of candidates, take the time to review them and assign the appropriate archive reason and potentially a tag for future pipelining.

03 Cultivate Talent Pools

It's important now more than ever to ensure you're communicating with the high volume of talent entering the workforce. It's important to segment and build talent pools that you can communicate with differently, so your process feels personal and human. Lever Nurture helps you to build out campaigns to engage candidates on a personal level at scale, so you can introduce them to their company and team, to lay the foundation for active hiring.

Best Practices

Search through silver medalists: Pay particular attention to those archived. Candidates who were not qualified a year or more ago may have accumulated the skills or experience needed for your current or future opportunities.

Refresh candidate profiles who have already interviewed at your organization: Candidates who demonstrated great cultural and value alignment for your organization in their interview, but lacked skills have surely gained new experience since you last connected with them. Pull in new and relevant experience by searching for them on LinkedIn.

Rediscover candidates who were not responsive to your prior outreach or withdrew from your process: Start a specific campaign to reignite engagement.

Build and run nurture campaigns specific to predefined rules: For example, create unique campaigns based on tags (such as "[Pipeline] - Engineering"), sources (such as "Referrals") and archive reason.

04 Transform Recruiting Playbooks

Align your recruiting team efforts around a centralized set of service offerings and a recruiting playbook. Service offerings require you to identify and describe the collection of services your recruiting team will provide based on role type and prioritization of roles. A recruiting playbook captures the steps your team will follow for the delivery of the services included in the offerings. Service offerings and recruiting playbooks will help you set appropriate expectations with your hiring teams and managers, foster hiring team engagement, drive consistency, and ultimately lead to more predictable hiring.

Best Practices

Ask each recruiter to document their individual processes:
Spotlight similarities and differences from recruiter to recruiter. Distill out your own best practices applicable for all roles and those that have utility for specific role types or priority.

Develop service offerings based on role type and priority:
What are the standard services you will include from role kickoff through hire? For example, hard to fill roles may have a premium offering which includes building of department specific content, candidate landing pages, a higher touch candidate experience, and more time upfront to calibrate sourcing the ideal candidate. For roles where the availability of candidates is less of a concern, you may offer a lower tier package which focuses more heavily on inbound applicants, assessments, and process automation.

Build playbooks for your recruiters to follow for each service included in a service offering: Your playbooks provide the step by step processes for your services, serve as a solid foundation for new recruiter onboarding, and help you drive consistency when recruiters are working across departments and role types.

Create a manager facing version of the service offerings: Present or message to your company to inform existing hiring managers of the new packages and use these documents to onboard new ones.

Toptal released a nearly [100-page playbook](#), giving insight into how they operate as the world's largest fully remote organization, with more than 4,000 individuals actively working every day. In the playbook, they describe how to build and sustain a world-class remote organization, going into great depth as to how Toptal has built a robust organizational structure, integrated its communication tools, and sustained a strong culture in a fully remote environment. Over 70 employees and 10 years of experience are included in the playbook.

05 Revamp Your Process

It's a great time to identify potential bottlenecks and biases in teams or department processes. Couple benchmarks, historical data, and best practices during your service offering roadshow with hiring managers to inform and gain buy in. Now is the time to set interview panel participants, reevaluate and create interview feedback forms, build defaults interview plans, and set up the interview processes for critical roles that will be the first to ramp once the uncertainty lifts.

Best Practices

[Analyze your pipeline conversion rates](#) and time to hire metrics: These metrics will help you identify which interview processes to evaluate. Start with pipelines that have unusual conversion rates in the process or are much slower than average in terms of candidate throughout.

Conversion rates › **by source** ⑦				4/01/20 — TODAY 📅 ⌄
Your report Compare any source.				
SOURCE	HIRED	OFFERS	PERCENT HIRED	ALL MOVED
LinkedIn	3	8	3.7%	81
Added manually	2	16	2.5%	81
Referral	0	0	0%	6
Total	5	24	3%	168

Design interview plans: Assign focus areas to qualified interviewers in order to get the best data points and signal.

Identify evaluation tools to augment your evaluation process: Identify how you could optimize your process with evaluation tools to capture stronger signal and drive efficiencies.

Run interviewer calibration reports: Identify interviewers who are outliers in your process to gain a better understanding of potential biases. Incorporate interview training or make lineup adjustments based on your findings.

Adapting to remote work can be difficult for some industries and companies. Our remote hiring playbook can help you adapt your process for new remote working environments.

06 Design a World-Class Candidate Experience

Candidate experience is a critical component of every organization's ability to attract and ultimately hire the talent they want in their company. Take the time to scrutinize every inch of your candidate journey to differentiate your organization from the pack.

Best Practices

Create a [storyboard](#): Outline the candidate journey so that you have a clear view of the candidate journey from start to finish.

Collect feedback from new hires or candidates who came onsite and ultimately were not hired: Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and have a discussion. Those that withdrew from your process or accepted another offer will give you the best intel.

Rebrand your Recruiter Coordinator function to "Candidate Experience Specialist": Begin to evaluate part of their performance on elements of candidate experience and close rates. This elevates the coordinators' mission and purpose while ultimately giving ownership to the experience of candidates.

Create a new ritual in your interview process: Lever, for example, sends a gif to each and every new hire. These rituals help to catalyze a recruiting culture and connect the company more intimately to each new hire.

07 Build Recruiter Skill-Sets

If your requisition load is light or paused, now is the time to invest in recruiter development.

Best Practices

Have the whole recruiting team become an expert in a discipline: In order to learn and share best practices, divide and conquer subject matter across the team — from sourcing to candidate experience to negotiation and everything in between.

Invest in online courses and classes: There are several recruiting-related resources available including Lou Adler's Performance-Based Hiring and Johnny Campbell's SocialTalent. Don't be afraid to have your recruiters venture into courses outside of their domain as well (Udemy, Pluralsight, Coursera) to build knowledge for the roles in which they recruit for.

Create bungee assignments: These assignments allow recruiters to work in other parts of the business for a temporary period of time. Specifically, moving recruiters into other People functions, such as: Comp, benefits, HRPB roles, and talent ops. This will help them build empathy for other HR functions, and ultimately give them a stronger perspective to make better choices when they bounce back into their recruiter role.

08 Train Interviewers and Hiring Managers

Prepare hiring manager and interview participant training guides so they can bring everyone into the process quickly and ramp hiring quickly to regain lost ground.

Best Practices

Build interview training: Teams can learn best practices in recruiting including anti-bias training, behavioral-based interviewing, and learn from real-life examples. Have each recruiter lead a session with a department they support.

Build an interview certification program: The program should mix theory, role playing, and on the job training in order to ensure everyone who interviews is prepared to make organizational hiring decisions.

Conduct mock interviews internally: Mock interviews provide practice for interviewers and hiring managers. Employees who participate in mock interviews will get valuable practice being interviewed though more importantly they will build empathy for candidates and gain new skills which is an important retention mechanism.

Ensuring you install systems that the whole company can adopt easily is no small feat. Our hiring manager playbook lays the groundwork for you to instill buy-in across the organization.

09 Redesign and Build Recruiting Programs

Recruiting programs round out your accessibility to talent, creates new talent streams, and adds diversity to your pipelines. Zoom out and evaluate the effectiveness of your programs, create new ones, and revamp existing ones.

Best Practices

Create an [internal mobility program](#): These programs increase retention of your existing team and taps into talent that's most readily available — your employees. Candidate experience for internal applicants is paramount. Create SLA's specific to your internal candidates and find white glove moments such as face to face meetings with hiring managers post-interview to deliver feedback.

Customer Service Representative

APPLY FOR THIS JOB

SAN FRANCISCO · CUSTOMER SUCCESS · CUSTOMER SUPPORT   FULL-TIME   INTERNAL ONLY

RECRUITER/OWNER   HIRING MANAGER
Nate Smith   Sally Kim

Lever Test is not a real company. This is a demo account. Lever Test was founded to tackle the most strategic challenge that companies face: how to recruit and hire top talent.

We are looking for a customer-oriented support representative. A customer support representative, or CSR, will act as a liaison, provide product/services information and resolve any emerging problems that our customer accounts might face with accuracy and efficiency.

Create a culture of skill development: Host internal career fairs and create a job shadowing program. At Lever, we give employees a small stipend for professional development such as conferences, classes, and certifications.

Build a referral program that rewards sourcing second and third degree connections to employees: Far too often, referral programs are sticklers for first degree connections when the goal should be to leverage your employee base as an extension of the recruiting team.

Revamp your university program to introduce new, diverse talent streams: Flip the experience and open up the process to more students by conducting virtual events and interviews. Place less weight on university prestige and more weight on motivation, value alignment, and potential.

10 Establish Your Employee and Talent Brand

Great organizations know that their talent brand is constantly evolving and the reasons employees join and stay your organizations evolve over time. Use this opportunity to reaffirm your employee value proposition and infuse it into every step of your process.

Best Practices

Audit every single candidate facing email and piece of collateral: Make sure the value proposition of your organization is consistent and apparent every step of the way. Find 10 small ways (or more) to make your process more delightful.

Create and develop authentic and compelling content: Showcase your organization's mission, your business goals, and most importantly, your people, so candidates can build affinity with your company. Storytelling through long-form content, as an example, can be linked from job descriptions and targeted advertisements to desirable candidates.

Create an internal employee ambassador program: Ambassador programs allow top performers and tenured employees to participate in recruiting efforts. Your ambassadors should sponsor employee programs, help to articulate and showcase your employment value proposition, and ultimately help to establish a recruiting culture in your business.

10. Establish Your Employee and Talent Brand

Revamp job descriptions: Job descriptions are often the first impression a candidate has with your organization and are often the most influential in their decision to apply, yet many organizations continue to copy and paste their descriptions from yesteryears. At Lever, we spend extra effort creating impact descriptions versus traditional job descriptions.

LEVER

THE TECH STACK

Lever uses our own open source MVC framework called Derby that syncs all data via Operational Transformation (the algorithm behind Google Docs). OT is the way we handle concurrency conflicts for any piece of data that is edited at the same time. In addition to real-time sync, OT allows us to provide a smoother UI since we can render updates on the client instantly without waiting for our backend to respond, while still guaranteeing consistency.

Lever makes extensive use of AWS, Docker, Node, Mongo, ElasticSearch, and Redis within our infrastructure. We use tools like Hubot to streamline deployments and Grafana to see what's going on under the hood. In addition to automating all the things, we love to version them too! Our systems are all created using Terraform and Chef, working together to ensure consistency at all costs.

Read more about The Lever Tech Stack from our Software Engineer, Eric Hwang.

Learn more about Lever's interview process and read about what our engineering has been up to on our engineering team blog.

WITHIN 1 MONTHS, YOU'LL:

- Complete Ramp Camp, Lever's company-wide onboarding program.
- You'll meet other new Leveroos in your cohort, and learn the nuts and bolts of the business, our history, and where we're going.
- You'll also complete your Starter Project, designed to help you build bridges with other Leveroos and positively contribute to your team's processes and knowledgeTackle your first ticket!
- Dive into Lever's technology by pair-programming with your teammates and attending engineering training sessions designed and presented by your peers.

11 Focus on the Data

Organizations are embracing data, researching key metrics, and setting clear targets in order to make hiring predictable.

Best Practices

Build your first or next iteration of your recruiting dashboard:
Identify key metrics that your team and organization should be tracking. Metrics like on-time hiring, time to fill, conversion rates and top source of hire are all critical data points to track in order to benchmark and optimize your process. If you're unable to gather the data you need, evaluate your process to find gaps, and strategize ways to collect important data for reporting.

Leverage benchmarks to compare the performance of your recruiting efforts with those of competitors and best-in-class companies:
Benchmarks can help you quickly isolate those areas with the most opportunity for improvement. Lever provides a recruiting benchmark guide you may find useful in helping assess your recruiting efforts.

Develop a capacity plan for your recruiting team: Look at your service offerings and develop estimates for each of the activities within each service offering, the mix of role types and priorities, and establish a bottom's up view of recruiter capacity. Compare your model with your historic data to find bottlenecks and areas of inefficiency so you are in the best position to regain lost ground when hiring starts up again.

Develop a project plan template to use for each search: At Lever, we place a big emphasis on on-time fills and ask recruiters to work backwards, leveraging conversion rates, to understand what activity is needed on a week over week basis to make their hire on-time. Our recruiting team socializes this project plan at requisition kickoff meetings with hiring managers.

Analyze late-stage withdrawal reasons and offer decline reasons: These metrics are key in your ability to triangulate key qualitative data on your most desirable candidates.

Conclusion

Taking a moment to pause and recalibrate on goals and initiatives can allow teams to inspire changes in areas that might have been underutilized in previous time periods. Talent management teams are being asked now more frequently than ever to advise on the business strategy. These best practices can help your team succeed and grow in the future. Apply an 80/20 lens to your recruiting model and ensure you are investing in areas that can help the business be most productive during this time. We, at Lever, are here to help and support you on this journey.

LEVER

About Lever

Lever's mission is to help the world hire with more predictability. Lever is transforming the way companies hire through an approach that allows talent leaders to attract candidates like a marketing leader, forecast like a sales leader, and have the insights of a finance leader.

For more information, visit lever.co   LeverApp   Lever   @lever