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Employee Engagement Begins at the Talent Acquisition Phase

With Darren Findley and Kim Shepherd



Darren Findley and Kim Shepherd
Engage2Excel
www.engage2excel.com

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on employee engagement—and for good reason. Recent research from PwC shows that organizations with engaged employees have 2.5 times performance and business-related outcomes; 33 percent higher profit; and 27 percent lower absenteeism. It has become critical for an organization to think about how they engage candidates, says Kim Shepherd, Chairwoman of Decision Toolbox and Darren Findley, President, Recruitment Solutions for Engage2Excel. In fact, they protest engagement should begin during the hiring process. Here they share ways to engage with talent and the benefits hiring teams will achieve.

Q: What are some approaches to engage with talent during the hiring process?

A: The onboarding process starts in the recruitment process because it is the first image a candidate will get of a company. When candidates are looking for a new job, they typically interview with three companies and you want to position yourself as number one. There is a great opportunity to be the employer of choice during the pre-boarding process. Court candidates immediately and get them excited about your organization even before the interview takes place.

Show candidates what it's like to be part of the team before day one. What makes your organizational culture stand out? Can you wear jeans every day? Do you have virtual movie nights? Ice cream socials? A wellness program? By engaging candidates during the pre-boarding process, you will drive their desire to be a part of your organization.

Other tips:

- **Communicate clearly.** Be sure to communicate through the entire hiring process—even with candidates that aren't the right fit—and do it in a way that's preferred by the job seeker. For example, research shows that younger workers prefer text messaging.

- **Go mobile.** If your job listing isn't accessible on a smartphone, you are missing 75 percent of the candidate pool.

- **Opportunity descriptions.** If your job descriptions look like they did eight years ago, they are archaic. Use new media and videos, and express why that job has a direct line of impact to the business.

- **Be interactive.** Incorporate tech tools and platforms that interact with candidates during pre-boarding and onboarding.

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Q: How can you introduce company culture to candidates?

A: Your onboarding process should reflect your company culture. Engage with candidates before their first day. Send welcome packets with company gifts or host a meet and greet with an onboarding buddy—before day one. This will show candidates how your organization operates. Plus, you are aligning them to

your passion in a way that is authentic. People work toward excellence if you show them what excellence is.

Q: What is the impact of the candidate experience?

A: The candidate's experience with the recruiter and hiring manager has a big impact on their willingness to work for an organization. Our recent research study found that the recruiter experience drives 24 percent of the desire to move forward, and the hiring manager is at 38 percent. Both the recruiter and hiring manager need to be able to communicate the culture and create an experience through tech, interaction, and authentic communication.

Q: What benefits will organizations experience if they introduce engagement early in the process?

A: Organizations will see reduced turnover. When you think about engaging talent early in the process, you are aligning them to organizational passion and values in a way that is authentic. That authenticity translates into real expectations and a main reason employees leave organizations is unmet expectations. By having a transparent pre-boarding and onboarding experience, you set the right expectations and reduce turnover by as much as 50 percent.