A historically low unemployment rate and a growing skills shortage aren’t the only things tightening the labor market. The current talent pool is shrinking, and today’s multigenerational candidates expect more from their employers than their predecessors, making it harder for organizations to attract the talent they need.

The solution? Organizations today must be more proactive in how they present, engage, and respond to candidates. Top recruits aren’t content to rest on their laurels; they want to work for organizations that invest in their development.

Here are five ways organizations can attract the best:

**Offer clarity about mission and values.**
Research by LinkedIn found that, on average, candidates spend one to two months researching employers before applying. Top candidates want to know if working for the organization will enable them grow, learn, and achieve career goals. They are also looking to see how an organization treats employees and if the organization’s actions are in alignment with its mission and values.
To attract the best candidates—“best” in both talent and fit—organizations must be proactive in presenting their brand, workplace culture, and employment opportunities. Even the most amazing workplace culture—development-focused, mission-driven, employee-centric—doesn’t provide a recruiting advantage if it’s invisible to candidates.

Consistency matters, too. Is the same message broadcast across social media profiles and blog posts? Do external sources of information like Glassdoor align with the organization’s stated mission and values?

**Double-down on a culture of development.**
Employees of all generations value opportunities for growth and career development: research by LinkedIn discovered that 59% of employees “joined companies for better career paths or more opportunity.” Highlighting the organization’s development opportunities—and learning resources—will help attract motivated talent. Similarly, sharing potential career paths can attract high-performing, motivated, in-demand candidates.

**Offer a simple and streamlined application process.**
Top candidates won’t take the time to fill out convoluted, difficult application processes. Attracting the best talent requires a streamlined, simple, and, ideally, mobile application process—one that respects top candidates’ time and intelligence. Experts recommend creating an application that can be completed online in under 10 minutes to keep top talent interested.

**Respond quickly to every applicant.**
Candidates research potential employers for months yet expect responses to application processes in hours—and a hiring decision in weeks, if not days. Top talent disappears from the market quickly; according to Dr. John Sullivan, HR thought leader and advisor, “the top 10% of candidates are gone from the marketplace in 10 days.”

The ability to respond quickly to candidates depends on a streamlined internal process, one that makes it easier to identify best-fit applicants. Organizations can use recruiting technology to search for, identify, and reach out to great talent in less time. A holistic view of the recruiting process—the ability to manage all active and passive candidates, across all job requisitions—also enables organizations to speed up candidate conversion while still providing a personalized and meaningful experience. This investment pays off: organizations that invest in the candidate experience improve the quality of hires by 70%.

**Commit to an engaging onboarding experience.**
Recruiting shouldn’t end with a signed offer letter, or when a new hire walks through the door on day one. Retention-minded HR leaders should drive an organizational mindset of recruiting not just star recruits, but star employees, too. Transition from an engaging candidate experience to an equally engaging onboarding experience, setting up new hires for short-term and long-term success.

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3 https://www.ere.net/the-top-12-reasons-why-slow-hiring-severely-damages-recruiting-and-business-results/