



# How To Become A Recruiting Powerhouse:

A Practical  
Guide for  
HR and Hiring  
Managers

**Jobvite**

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Recruiting has traditionally been considered a function of Human Resources, but with new tools on the market and new strategies in the air, some are saying it belongs with the marketing team. Others are suggesting Talent Acquisition be pulled out into its own unique department in larger organizations.

Still others prefer different analogies:

*“Recruiting is a contact sport.”*

—John Paul Engel (@JohnPaulEngel), Knowledge Capital Consulting

However you think about it, or wherever it lands in the structure of your organization, recruiting the best talent is a big job, and it should be.

*“There are no shortcuts.  
There are no magic tools.”*

—Jim Durbin (@SMHeadhunter), Social Media Headhunter

There are innovative strategies that address the changing landscape of digital relationships and networks, and powerful new tools that can seem magical when you're trying to find the perfect candidate for the available position. Understanding these strategies and harnessing these tools will prepare you to source, screen, interview and hire the best talent for your growing organization.

# Sourcing: How to Stock Your Job Pool

Whether or not you have an immediate opening you should always be recruiting. Sometimes you'll find a candidate that's worth creating a position for. Sometimes a job will open up that you need filled quickly and you'll be glad you had already started compiling an eligible talent pool.

Before you start looking out, however, take a good look inside your organization and make sure your employment brand - your reputation as an employer - is strong enough to attract the best talent. You can build the most savvy talent acquisition team in your industry, but if no one wants to work for your company, your efforts will be wasted. Here are just a few ways to build up your employment brand so you're ready to start sourcing:

**Advertise your management strengths.**

Do you offer a great benefits package to part-time employees? Do you give your people unlimited sick days? Work with your marketing team to tell the world about it. Your ads can be about more than your product and services, because your company is more than your product and services.

**Tell your employees' stories.**

Employees at well-managed organizations have stories about how their work impacts their communities, their world, or their lives. Help them share those stories, whether it's creating a regular column in the company newsletter or monthly email, or adding it to your social media strategy.

**Build your brand by building your employees' brands.**

Your employees are people with hobbies and interests, and at least some of those are tied to the work they do with you. Matt Cutts, for example, is "the SEO guy"

at Google. His blog, public speaking, etc., build his personal brand and Google's employment brand at the same time.

### **Pay attention to the trends.**

The types of benefits that employers offer is changing, so stay on top of the trends. Unlimited paid time off and work-from-home days, for example, are becoming increasingly popular as employers cite greater productivity and lower costs.

Once you know your organization has a good reputation as an employer, you can start actively networking, building relationships, promoting your workplace, and gathering information on possible talent. Two of the simplest and most efficient of these are a strong employee referral system and a social media recruitment strategy.

## **Employee Referrals: Develop A Recruitment Culture**

Employee referrals have long been recognized as the best source for new hires. The benefits of a well-structured employee referral system are hard to overstate:

- Shorter recruiting process
- Cheaper recruiting process
- Highest applicant-to-hire conversion rate
- Finds passive candidates

Not to mention, employees hired through referrals tend to be better-performing employees who start sooner and stay longer than employees hired through other avenues.

To get a consistent offering of the best employee referrals, however, you want more than just a referral program, you want to develop a culture of recruitment in your organization. You want each one of your team members to know that your organization is always

open to the best talent, and that referrals are always encouraged. When all of your employees double as talent scouts your prospective talent pool is always ripe with the best candidates.

Three considerations will turn your referral program into a recruitment culture:

**Rewards that Matter:** Develop a system to reward or recognize employees for their efforts and progress - e.g. a certain number of their contacts invited, or referrals turned in. This keeps people motivated and creates more conversation about the program.

**Ease of Use:** Simplify the process as much as possible. If employees have to jump through hoops or fill out a lot of paperwork to refer someone, it won't matter how great the potential reward - they won't do it.

**A Metrics-Driven Platform:** You need to be able to monitor and measure your system so you can keep it robust and growing. Some metrics to think about including are: Who is sending you the most referrals? Who is sending the best? Who is trying harder than anyone to send referrals even if he hasn't had any success in it transpiring into a new hire for the company? How much are you spending on referral hires? How does the quality of your referral hires compare to other hires? Which referrals turn into hires? Does one employee have a higher referral to hire ratio than others, etc.?

A well-organized effective employee referral system is part of building a recruitment culture into your organization that will keep the best talent at your fingertips.

## **Social Media:** [Harness The Power Of Networks](#)

Social media has put each of your employees' networks at your fingertips. It is a valid tool to assist you in your recruitment needs.

Your marketing department should be hard at work building a fan base and developing

your brand on several social media channels.

When it's time to hire, post to your social networks first - it's free, and you already know those candidates are inspired by your vision or are in line with your values.

If some respondents aren't your best candidates they'll still be your best recruiters if you let them. Create a "job listing" content piece specific

*“My best advice is to start doing favors for people in the industry you are recruiting. Be as helpful as you can because people are the best search engines for people. As a recruiter you need the best candidates. No profile or resume can tell you what someone will really be like on a job.”*

—John Paul Engel (@JohnPaulEngel), Knowledge Capital Consulting

to each social media channel's strength. Make it shareable and your network will share it with their networks:

**Twitter:** Make sure you're re-tweetable. Count the characters in your user name, add four and subtract the total from 140. The remainder is how many characters your job listing tweet should be so your followers can easily re-tweet your message.

**Instagram:** Instagram is for images. A lot of people won't see or read the text beneath your image, if the image itself isn't appealing. So either put some text on the picture itself, or put together a really eye-catching image that will stop people mid-scroll.

**Pinterest:** Pinterest catalogues images in tall columns, so long, vertical pictures get the

most real estate.

YouTube/Vimeo: Keep it short and catchy.

Facebook: Facebook supports all kind of media, and it moves really fast so post (and re-post) the content you created for your other networks.

**LinkedIn:** This is the “professional” network, so go ahead and be direct. Think someone in your contacts would be great for your company? Ask.

For your text-based channels, like Twitter and LinkedIn, be direct and specific about the role you are filling. For your image-based channels, like Instagram and Pinterest, showcase your current employees and your company culture.

Remember that social media is “social” first, and “media” second. Don’t let a strategy strain relationships in your network. In fact, if your marketing team has been developing a series of best practices for your social media streams, hand over some basic information and let them integrate your social media job postings into their over-arching vision.

## Three Tools To Help Source The Best Talent

You can know the philosophy and make a great plan, but you need the right tools to get the job done. Here are a few great places to start.

- 1. LinkedIn Recruiter:** This tool that allows you to search the entire LinkedIn database, not just your network. You can contact candidates, keep notes for others in your department to see, get new matches to previous searches as they become available and more. The huge downside is that it only works within LinkedIn, but it’s a good place to start.
- 2. Glassdoor:** Glassdoor is the Yelp! of the job market; it’s what traditional job listing sites will need to become. As an employer, you can claim your company listing to

monitor your brand's reputation, look for good candidates, and engage with job seekers at just the right time.

**3. Jobvite Refer and Jobvite Engage:** Jobvite Refer is a social recruiting tool that makes it easy for your employees to invite their networks to your job openings. It uses real-time metrics and integrates with any modern applicant tracking system. Jobvite Engage scours the internet - from social to resume databases - to match passive candidates with your job needs.

The right strategy and software will keep you sourcing the best talent for your brand, so you're always ready with a qualified talent pool.

# Screening: Find the Best of the Best

When you're ready to hire, you don't have time to interview every candidate in your well-stocked, well-qualified talent pool. You need to filter a little more to decide who you're really going to talk to. A formalized screening process will help you screen efficiently, and a process built on your Brand DNA will help you screen most effectively.

## Formalize The Process

Set up a list of base-level requirements for the job position you are filling, and measure your candidates against these prerequisites first. Every hiring manager has biases, and it's easy to be influenced by a well-written cover letter or some other secondary consideration. A list of basic standards will make sure only the right people get through your first filter.

**Prerequisites:** This is your targeted job description. If you're searching for passive candidates, this will be easy. If you're sorting through resumes submitted in response to a job posting, you may have more work to do.

**Certifications:** If your organization requires a certain level of education, or special certifications are required for the position, check for those next.

**Skills:** Some positions require certain abilities that some people excel at, and some people don't, regardless of experience or education. Sales people, for example, need a certain charisma that can't be taught. There may be indications of those skills on a resume, but you will find them more easily on social networks.

Decide exactly what you are looking for, and compare every candidate against that standard first.

## Use Your Brand Dna

Your organization's mission, vision and values are collectively referred to as your "Brand DNA." These are the statements and strategies that set your organization apart, and make you unique in your industry. They guide your decision-making and define your future.

And too often they are overlooked as a powerful screening tool for job candidates. The most talented applicant who doesn't work well in your company culture or with your existing team is not the new hire you're looking for.

Consider a candidate's personal vision statement, biography and network. Does it look like your organization's vision statement? If your SaaS company is dedicated to providing solutions for small business owners, has your candidate worked with small businesses? Are there small business owners in his network?

Analyze his previous work history, volunteer record, and brand affiliations. Do his involvement and interests reflect similar values to the ones your brand uses to identify itself? If a candidate's personal life indicates shared values, he will more likely fit in with your corporate culture and more readily embrace your Brand DNA.

## Three Red Flags You Never Ignore

Sometimes it's okay to make excuses for a candidate that looks like a great fit for your organization and your job opening, but here are three red flags you never want to overlook or ignore:

- 1. Responsibilities Instead of Accomplishments:** People who get things done will tell you about it.  
If a resume only lists responsibilities and duties at previous jobs, instead of accomplishments is probably telling you that this candidate hasn't accomplished much. Just because he was responsible for something doesn't mean he did it well.

2. Vague Language: If a cover letter, resume, or conversation is full of generalized terms and unspecific descriptions, your candidate is either lazy or hiding something. Neither is good.
3. No Manager References: If your candidate submits a list of references that does not include any former managers or supervisors, it's for a reason. If he isn't confident that previous superiors won't speak well of him or his work, you probably don't want to be the next one omitted from his resume.

There are exceptions to every rule, but any of these issues require serious consideration.

# Interviewing: Preparations and Panels

Interviews can be uncomfortable for both parties. With some practice and preparation, however, you will quickly master the art of conducting an interview that not only gets you all the insight you need, but also put your candidates at ease.

Properly preparing for each interview will smooth the process, and taking advantage of video and/or panel interviews can make it an efficient, enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

## Preparing For An Interview

You expect a good job candidate to do her research about you and your company, so do the same. Make sure you thoroughly understand the position you are trying to fill, and that you are familiar with each candidate's resume, portfolio and/or network. This will save time in the interview, of course, but it also sets a standard for your interviewee and communicates respect.

Then, set up a basic structure for your interview, so you're not bouncing from one random question to another, and so you're never stuck wondering if you're done or not. The specific questions you ask should fall into different categories:

**Fact-Finding:** These are straight-forward questions that should have straight-forward answers to fill in gaps in your understanding or provide clarification.

**Creative Thinking:** These questions test the candidate's ability to look ahead, and demonstrate how well he understands your industry. Ask about current trends in the field you're hiring for, or where he thinks the industry is headed.

**Problem Solving/Situational:** This is where you present a situation - either hypothetical or from past experience - and ask the interviewee how she would deal with the situation. This should be her opportunity to communicate her technical expertise and the value of her experience.

**Behavioral:** These questions should give you an idea about how the candidate behaves in certain situations. Ask about past experiences - How did he turn around a bad situation? How did he react in a particular circumstance?

If you have a good resume in hand, and you've done your homework, you won't need many fact-finding questions. As you're planning creative thinking and situational questions, try to really think outside the box. Many interviewees have heard the same old ones before, and have the "right" answers on the tip of their tongues.

Many hiring experts agree that behavioral interviewing is the most insightful and most important, because past performance tends to indicate future performance. Plan to spend a good portion of your interview on these types of questions, and leave time to ask follow-up questions as you discuss scenarios with your candidate.

*“Sit in on and take as many interviews as you can get, anywhere you can get them (both in and out of the office). Once you've looked a thousand people in the face, it's hard to be surprised.”*

—Durbin (@SMHeadhunter)

## Video And Panel Interviews

Some organizations chose to start with video interviews. Others prefer to use panel

interviews as a secondary, or follow-up format, and others use them exclusively. There are benefits to both that can serve your company well.

### **Video Interviews Save Time**

Even the best, most efficient interview still takes time. If you have a large selection of candidates to interview you might have to put your To Do list on hold for days. The technology to conduct smooth, effective video interviews, however, is available on a variety of platforms, and can save your whole team a lot of time.

Video interviews are still live interviews, so you need to do the same initial preparation first. Then there are a few additional things to consider:

**Check your system:** Make sure your equipment, software and services are all working. Place a test call to someone you know the day before, and make sure everything runs smoothly.

**Know your platform:** Don't get caught gaping into your webcam while you look for the button to unmute your microphone, start recording, share your screen, etc.

**Unclutter your setting:** What is on the wall behind you? Is your desk visible? Represent your company well.

**Check time zones:** If you and your candidate are not in the same time zone, confirm your interview time - 2 PM in your city, or hers?

With a few extra considerations ironed out beforehand, video interviews can save precious time during the hiring process, especially if you have a lot of candidates that you want to talk to.

*“We currently utilize video interview services because it provides rating features and metrics. Our hiring team*

*can access the rating and notes others have made on the various candidates. We can quickly assess who our top candidates are without wasting time on in-person interviews and team meetings. This enables us to quickly find and retain top talent without wasting the hiring team's time.”*

—Michael Morgenstern, (@TheExpertInst), The Expert Institute

## Panel Interviews Add Perspective

Panel interviews, or group interviews, allow your candidates to interact with your current team, and allow more people to meet and judge each candidate. You can bring in each candidate individually, or bring in a few at one time and see how they respond to their competition sitting next to them.

Panel interviews are a great way to decide which candidate will fit in best with your company culture, and work well with your team. It also improves teamwork and morale, because your current employees know that their opinion about a new team member is valued by you and the company.

Everyone on the panel will need to be prepared with the job description, and candidate expectations, but here are a few additional considerations:

**Arrange the setting informally:** Set up comfortable seating in a circle so it doesn't feel like an interrogation. You will get better insight out of a candidate who is more at ease.

**Select a variety of employees:** If you have a large staff, and you can't have everyone in on each interview, select your panel from all across the organization. This will give you a variety of perspectives on each candidate.

**Define roles:** Someone needs to be leading or facilitating the whole thing, and someone should be taking notes. Then, decide if you want to assign specific questions, or kinds of questions, to specific individuals as well.

Panel interviews give you a wider perspective on each candidate, add a little boost to employee morale, and insure you get a new hire who will fit in well with your team.

*“Once we have narrowed down our applicants, we conduct group interviews where just about every member of the team meets with the candidate and gets to know him/ her. This is a more certain way to ensure that he/she is a good fit.”*

—Michael Morgenstern, (@TheExpertInst), The Expert Institute

## Always Ask These Three Questions in an Interview

You will have some specific information to find out for each candidate and each position, but no matter what the situation, here are a few questions you should always ask, and why:

1. **“Why should we hire you?”** This should force the interviewee to explain how his personal goals line up with your organization's goals, and what he can bring to the table. It should be partly about him, but it should also be a chance for him to demonstrate that he's done the research about you. If it's all about him, beware.

2. **“Tell me about a time ...”** This is a classic behavioral-type question intro. Ask your candidate to tell you about a time she overcame a major obstacle, or a time she completely failed. Listen for how introspective she is, how well she accepts responsibility for her mistakes, how she works under pressure, etc.
3. **“What’s your favorite swear word?”** Throw a curveball or two. You will see how well the applicant thinks on his feet, and you will force a little personality out of him. Does he play along and throw out a swear word? Does he laugh? Fidget awkwardly?

Remember, you don’t just want rehearsed answers, you want to draw insight and information out of people. Prepare well and craft your questions carefully.

# Choose: How to Hire the Best

After screening and interviewing, you've narrowed it down to just a few. What do you do now?

## Check References

Seriously.

When you have a well-qualified talent pool, and you screen them rigorously, and you interview them thoroughly, you can be sure you have a few really great candidates left over at the end. In those cases, calling references will seem like a waste of time.

But sometimes a bad one sneaks through, and what you will save yourself - in time, frustration, and dollars - by not hiring the wrong employee will make all those other boring reference calls well worth it. Don't be afraid to have a conversation with the former managers or ex-coworkers you call, and don't fail to pay attention to the vague answers and long pauses.

## Make an Irresistible Offer

Once you've found the right person, you don't want to let her go. Chances are good your candidate is already working, so you need to prepare a thoughtful offer that she can't refuse. Here are a few ways to do that:

**Move quickly:** A day or two can mean the difference between your perfect new hire, and second-best.

**Offer more money:** Unless you have really solid reasons, don't make an offer for less than what your candidate is currently making. He may still accept, but he will resent every paycheck.

**Put all your cards on the table:** Explain the pay, bonuses, and benefits thoroughly. Call, then write: Always call first, then follow up with a written offer.

**Set a deadline and get a soft commitment:** Many people will ask for time to consider, and that's fine. But agree on a deadline, and then try to get a soft commitment by asking if she has any initial thoughts or concerns about your offer.

The right candidate will be excited about working with your organization, so you don't have to convince him that he wants to work with you. You just have to convince him that it's worth leaving his current position to do so.

## Three Tips for Negotiating a Salary

Sometimes a job candidate will come back to you with an adjustment to your offer. If the prospective employee is worth bargaining for, here are a few tips so you don't lose your shirt in the process:

- 1. Tailor the offer.** If you didn't initially, now is the time to tailor the offer to your particular candidate. Extra vacation time speaks louder to a family man than a recent college graduate.
- 2. Adjust the expectations.** Sometimes it's easier to keep the salary the same, and instead cut hours. Conversely, you could increase the salary, but also increase the expectations.
- 3. Emphasize your concerns.** The candidate will be emphasizing his strengths, skills, and assets,

so emphasize your concerns. Were you looking for a candidate with more experience? More qualified skills? Gently remind him that he's not holding all of the chips.

If the candidate won't budge, take some time to consider and re-evaluate some of your other top prospects for the position. A new hire needs to be really valuable to let her come in with unnegotiated requirements.

# Practice Makes Perfect

From sourcing to screening, interviewing to offering, consistently recruiting the best talent for your organization is an art form that you will refine and master over time.

*“Recruiting is a combination of sales, research, intuition, pitching, and speed. The only way you can succeed is to outwork the other people who want the attention of your candidate.”*

—Durbin (@SMHeadhunter)

You will only get better with every new hire, but there are powerful tools and innovative strategies that can set you up to avoid a lot of mistakes and regrets. As your business grows and you continue to recruit top talent, you will learn what works for you, where you may need some support, and how to bring it all together to set up a dream team for your organization.

# Jobvite

Jobvite is leading the next wave of recruitment innovation with Continuous Candidate Engagement (CCE), a candidate-centric recruiting model that helps companies engage candidates with meaningful experiences at the right time, in the right way, from first look to first day. The Jobvite Platform infuses automation and intelligence into today's expanded recruiting cycle to increase the speed, quality, and cost-effectiveness of talent acquisition. Focused exclusively on recruiting software since 2006 and headquartered in San Mateo, Jobvite has thousands of customers including LinkedIn, Schneider Electric, Premise Health, Zappos.com, and Blizzard Entertainment. To learn more, visit [www.jobvite.com](http://www.jobvite.com). Jobvite was also named a leader in the "Forrester Wave for Talent Acquisition, Q3 2015," and a leader in IDC's MarketScape: Worldwide Modern Talent Acquisition Systems 2017.

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