

5 Strategies to Recruit Passive Candidates

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With the US unemployment rate at 3.9%, employers continue to experience difficulty in filling open positions. Because of this, many recruiters are increasing their efforts to identify and engage passive candidates in addition to active job seekers. According to a 2017 ADP Research Institute [survey](#), 42% of currently employed workers who said they were not actively looking for a new job were nonetheless “open to the idea.” Their receptiveness to relevant openings creates a vast opportunity for companies seeking top talent.

However, recruiting passive candidates for a job requires a more strategic approach. Employers must go beyond traditional job boards and other active talent strategies and instead take a proactive candidate sourcing approach. Here are some strategies.

Get out there. Passive candidates are relatively content in their current positions. Unlike active jobseekers who purposefully look for open positions, in order to reach passive candidates, companies need to consider how to get their attention in their everyday activities. Consider where they network, what they read and whom they trust.

Use employee referrals. Your current employees can be your best source of word-of-mouth referrals. Especially if any employees were recruited from a large company, or a declining industry, there could be many more qualified workers receptive to hearing about new opportunities. Make sure current employees know when and what positions you’re recruiting for to leverage this group for sourcing candidates.

Make your pitch outstanding. One of the most important steps in attracting top talent is having a clear pitch, or employee value proposition ([EVP](#)), explaining the benefits of your position to all candidates. Unlike active job seekers who are innately motivated to see your job in the best possible light, employed workers will compare it to their current situation, and you need to make sure your opportunity is best positioned. Consider how you would describe the company culture, what matters to employees, why would someone want to work for the company as well as the benefits that the company offers.

Promote your EVP. Recruiting passive candidates means that you need to create the environment where they'll be more receptive to hearing about an open position or having a conversation with you. Be sure to share the EVP in your job postings, on your website, on your social channels, in your outreach messages and with your current employees — the most important brand ambassadors.

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Be efficient. Avoid lengthy or repetitive steps in your recruitment process to ensure that the process isn't discouraging to potential candidates. Consider how to streamline the application and interview process. For example, try to consolidate multiple interviews if possible, and be flexible with the time of day.

Today's talent-driven job market means that passive candidates are more valuable than ever. Make sure you're spending time to develop a specific sourcing strategy that takes into account the different motivations of this key population and tailors the marketing and messaging to accommodate.