

5 Key Considerations for Candidate Engagement in Today's Crisis

Great candidate engagement has always mattered – it can be the difference between getting a great candidate and losing one. The COVID-19 crisis is throwing up a multitude of new challenges. How organizations deal with them will be hugely important to keeping hiring processes moving and maintaining strong talent pipelines for once the crisis has passed.

Keeping Candidates Engaged Will be Harder

What can you do to keep your top candidates engaged in the hiring process?



Your candidates are likely dealing with a lot of change in their own jobs right now – helping coordinate response efforts, reviewing budgets and working through “what if” scenario planning (which will include questions about their own hiring plan). This will have a spillover effect on how they think about your job opportunity. They will naturally wonder how committed your company is to this hiring process.

Be sure to emphasize your commitment to making this hire and over what timeframe. Reiterate how this role connects to the long-term strategy of the firm. If relevant, highlight how the current crisis further clarifies the importance of this role or the skills and experience the candidate has.

The Risk of Moving Jobs Will Feel Higher

What can you do to make candidates feel comfortable joining your organization amidst the uncertainty of the current situation?



The current situation will invariably make people more conservative in their decision making. Make sure you have a solid understanding of how they are approaching their decision and resist the temptation to sell.

Instead, focus on advising them and creating connections that can help them make their decision – connect them with future colleagues who can give them a good view into culture and strategy, and make relevant internal (non-confidential) materials available to them.

“In-person” Requirements Will Delay Decision Making

What is your policy on making offers to candidates that have not been met in person? Does that vary by level?



If your policies are not flexible on this matter, then now is the time to discuss making exceptions if you are already experiencing or anticipate office closures and other measures that may make in-person meetings problematic. It is also worth noting that some candidates may not be able to, or want to travel and meet due to their current employer’s guidance, local government guidance/restrictions or their personal situation and preferences.

We’d suggest implementing two tactics to help facilitate comfort with deploying offers in this scenario:

- Double down on video – make sure all interviews are video based and have interviewers that conducted phone calls previously “re-meet” the candidate over video.
- Do additional referencing checking in order to build confidence amongst the hiring team in their decision.

If either the company or candidate are uncomfortable making a final decision solely based on virtual interaction, consider making an offer with mutually agreed terms that the offer and its acceptance is contingent on a later in-person meeting.

Market Volatility May Derail Your Offer

How can you be sure that market volatility does not derail your ability to construct an appropriate package?



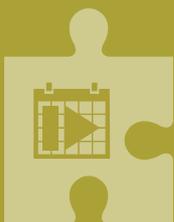
Markets have fallen dramatically, and volatility is high at the moment. The potential of a second half of the year turnaround may create two important challenges when building an offer package.

Your finalist candidate may have a long-term incentive plan that has had significant impact to its value. Communicate early and agree on the methodology for valuing that stock, as you create a buy-out package. Consider using a more realistic share-price proxy like a 30 day average or the mid-point between the high and low over a set period of time.

Also, should the candidate need to relocate, uncertainty in the housing market may be a more significant factor, so be clear on program details and how flexible you can be (e.g., longer timeframe for moving, longer temporary housing coverage, potential home buy-out).

Nailing Down a Start-Date is Going to be Complicated

How will you think about new hire start dates and onboarding given current or future office closures and local travel restrictions?



Deferring start dates may be one logical approach, but this increases the likelihood of the candidate changing their mind or succumbing to a counteroffer. The key here is communication, communication, communication. Be sure to establish a thorough understanding of your new hire's situation:

- What are their personal needs and attitudes at the moment?
- What are the restrictions they face on their movement given local government guidance or edicts?

If you do need to have them start in a work-from home scenario, make sure:

- You can get them the IT equipment they need in advance and appropriately support them on setting it up.
- Get them connected virtually using video with their team and core stakeholders early and often.
- Overemphasize sessions that connect them with others with whom they will be working and ensure they have several buddies they can contact with day-to-day questions.

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