



# Candidate Experience:

HOW TO HEAT UP RECRUITING IN A FRIGID TALENT MARKET



# 3.8%

BRRRRR – an unemployment rate like that sends shivers down the spine of staffing and recruiting professionals across the country. And with good reason: The last time the unemployment rate remained below 4% for a sustained period was in the 1960s – [over 50 years ago!](#)

## THE RECRUITING CLIMATE HAS CHANGED. DRAMATICALLY.

Candidates are rewriting the rules. Today's job seekers are more savvy, selective, impatient and demanding than ever. Candidates are picking employers – not vice versa. Even hourly workers are doing their homework, looking for ways to increase their pay and perks.

### Don't get iced out!

- If you fail to impress and delight candidates, they'll preemptively reject you – before you even know they're looking.
- [Your reputation will suffer, too.](#) Dissatisfied candidates who take to social media damage your employment brand, making it even tougher to recruit good people.

### The stakes are high.

In a market where unemployment has dipped below 4 percent, treating candidates well is more than just the right thing to do – it's essential to your staffing or recruiting firm's survival.

*On the following pages, we share practical CX tips you can use to give candidates the warm and fuzzies – and turn your agency into a talent magnet.*





# THINK LIKE A CANDIDATE

Do you know what job seekers and field associates want from their experience with your agency?

You should! Empathizing with their needs, wants, expectations and challenges is essential to delivering great service.

**BUT DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.  
TO GET A PULSE ON YOUR CANDIDATES'  
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS:**



# Survey them.

Sites like [SurveyMonkey](#) make it easy to create simple, effective surveys that can help you identify service issues and improve your process:

- Think like a job seeker or field associate when writing your questions, targeting the biggest “pain points” in their job search, as well as the service you deliver.
- Actively solicit both positive and negative feedback. In addition to uncovering service problems, you can build a positive cycle of communication, while also garnering case-study and testimonial content.
- Keep it short – and get to the point quickly. Ask your most important questions first, in case clients don’t take the time to complete the entire questionnaire.
- Read this [Shareworthy Service](#) post for more tips on creating a killer customer experience survey that gets answered – and provides the answers you need.



## Identify hot buttons that set them off.

The best way to handle disgruntled candidates is to head them off at the pass! Here are three [chief complaints](#) many job seekers think (but don’t always say to your face) that you should be prepared to address:

- “That job doesn’t exist.”
- “Recruiters don’t return my phone calls.”
- “I never get feedback.”

This [Shareworthy Service post](#) explains how to effectively handle each of these issues and turn those complainers into cheerleaders.

## REPUTATIONMANAGEMENT

Haley Marketing’s [Reputation Management Service](#) makes it easy to get feedback from your candidates and placed talent...and generate more testimonials and online reviews! Contact us today to learn more.





# GET YOUR TEAM FIRED UP

Delivering great CX requires you to build a service culture – one in which everyone on your team is committed to creating amazing experiences for candidates and associates. Here are a few ideas for [creating a customer-centric company culture](#):

- **LEAD BY EXAMPLE.** When you serve internal employees well, they'll serve candidates and associates well, too.
- **CREATE A SERVICE MANTRA.** Craft a single sentence that describes your customer service mission and goals (it's harder than it sounds!). Spell out what your firm stands for, so you can work together to build the right culture.
- **EMPOWER YOUR EMPLOYEES.** Give recruiters and all candidate-facing personnel the authority, resources and training to deliver amazing experiences.

This [Shareworthy Service](#) post contains more great tips on [building a service culture](#).





# MAP YOUR PROGRESS

Each candidate's "journey" with your firm begins the moment they first hear about you. It continues through the application/registration, interview, testing and placement processes, and it includes all the experiences they have while on assignment as an employee of your company.



To identify opportunities for improving candidates' CX – map the journey they take when engaging with your staffing or recruiting firm:

- 1 UNDERSTAND THEIR JOURNEY.** Use what you know about the candidate experience (e.g., information from your ATS, web analytics, candidate reviews) and combine it with what you learn from surveying candidates to identify how, why, when and where they engage with your staffing firm and its brand.
- 2 MAP IT!** Work as a team to rough in the major steps and milestones in a typical candidate's experience, and then expand the map from there. Remember, candidates may take one of many paths with your agency. One job seeker may be perfect for a position and be hired immediately by a client; another job seeker may register and interview with your staffing firm, only to wait days, weeks or longer before being presented with an assignment. To be an effective tool for improving CX, your map must include a variety of "paths" with your firm.
- 3 LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT.** You'll likely find you serve candidates well in many areas – but also have process silos, stalls, communication gaps or other service issues which need to be addressed (more on that in just a bit).

There's no one "right" way to create a [candidate journey map](#), but this [Shareworthy Service post](#) guides you through the [basics](#) to ultimately:

- increase applications;
- recruit higher-quality candidates; and
- improve field associate retention and satisfaction.





BREAK  
THE ICE.  
(THE RIGHT  
WAY!)



First impressions are incredibly important in CX. In today's market, the most talented people have lots of options. They may be meeting with other recruiters, so make sure they want to work for you.

### Consider the first impression you create through technology.

Often the first contact you have with a potential candidate is through your website, Facebook page or job board. If you were a savvy candidate:

- Would the content appeal to you?
- Would you find the application process easy or frustrating (especially using a mobile device)?
- Would your job board postings do enough to entice you to apply or pick up the phone?

### Analyze your waiting area with a critical eye.

Like it or not, candidates make snap decisions about your staffing firm based on what they see when they walk in. The look and feel of your entry area gives people an immediate sense of what it's like to work there, the financial health of your business, and more.

- When's the last time you spruced up your lobby?
- Is it comfortable and clean?
- Does it convey the message: "We welcome and value candidates"?

Take a hard look around. If it's time for an update, freshen up your waiting area to make it more inviting, modern and comfortable.

### Make an initial "deposit."

Think of your relationship with a job seeker as a bank account. Before you can make any kind of "withdrawal" (i.e., asking a job seeker to register/apply/upload a resume), you must first make a deposit. A simple way to do that? Offer something for nothing! It's something we at Haley Marketing do all the time, and it works really well. Here are a few things you could offer for free:

- Resume critique
- Online job search and career management resources
- Software or other training
- Job interview coaching

## WANT MORE WAYS TO MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION ON A POTENTIAL CANDIDATE?

These posts explain [why it's so important to treat candidates well](#) – and how to [roll out the red carpet for them](#).





# IMPROVE YOUR SOCIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE.

Candidates demand it. Your competition is already doing it. And these [stats](#) make the importance of great social CX crystal clear:

- 40% of customers already use social channels for customer service.
- Not answering a complaint from social media decreases customer advocacy by as much as 50%.
- Social customer service programs can increase annual customer satisfaction scores by nearly 20%.



In today's always-on, real-time world, candidates expect immediate response – and it's your job to provide it by:

**Setting clear goals.** Do you want to speed up placements? Create brand ambassadors? Increase high-quality applications?

**Appointing a social media monitoring and response team** and creating a clear set of policies for responding to job seekers and associates online.

**Using social monitoring and management tools** to stay on top of what's being said about your staffing service.

**Being focused.** Do an excellent job over just a few channels, rather than spreading yourself too thin and dropping the ball.

**Triaging new conversations.** By solving their problems through social media, you can generate more favorable commentary about your staffing brand.

## READY TO HEAT UP YOUR SOCIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE?

These posts offer in-depth help for [repairing a "fragmented" candidate experience](#) and [improving CX on social platforms](#).





# MAKE YOUR JOBS EASIER TO FIND

If your jobs:

- aren't on the results pages of the search engines, job boards or aggregators where job seekers are looking;
- don't appear in the keyword searches potential candidates are conducting; or
- don't capture busy job seekers' attention;

Guess what? **They'll apply to the jobs that do.**

Today's job seekers don't have to do any digital shoveling to find lots of great opportunities; a quick search yields an avalanche of viable assignments and positions.

Make it easy for candidates to find the right jobs (i.e., YOURS) by:

- **SENDING YOUR JOBS TO MORE AGGREGATORS**, including Indeed, Glassdoor and ZipRecruiter.
- **INVESTING IN A JOB BOARD THAT FULLY SUPPORTS INDEXING BY GOOGLE**  
Google Jobs is transforming the way job seekers discover job openings, organically serving up jobs that comply with the [Google Jobs schema requirements](#).



# THEN MAKE POSTINGS MORE ENGAGING...

- LIST THE PAY RATE. Job posts with pay information get 40% more response ([one staffing firm increased applications by 600 percent!](#)). And even if your pay rate stinks, it's better for candidates to self-select out than to waste your recruiters' time. And if the pay rate is lousy, this [Shareworthy Service](#) post provides [tips for encouraging clients to pay up](#).
- INCLUDE THE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION. Jobs that include location are more "discoverable" in job seekers' online searches.
- PROMOTE THE CLIENT'S CULTURE, employment brand and perks.
- DITCH THE BORING LAUNDRY LIST OF JOB DUTIES. Weave those responsibilities into a short narrative featuring a typical day in the position, and its opportunities for growth.



# ...AND SIMPLER TO APPLY TO

According to multiple studies cited in this [Society for Human Resource Management](#) article, candidates aren't willing to jump through hoops to apply to your jobs:

- 60% of job seekers abandon online job applications because of length or complexity.
- Conversion rates increase up to 365% by reducing the application process to five minutes or less.

And these stats from [Indeed](#) make it clear just how dominant mobile tech has become:

- 70% of all adults in the U.S. own a smartphone.
- 92% of 18 to 29 years old own a smartphone.
- 78% of millennials and 73% of Gen Xers search for work on mobile devices – and these numbers are increasing year over year.



# The takeaways?

**Kill the long application** in favor of a short form that takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

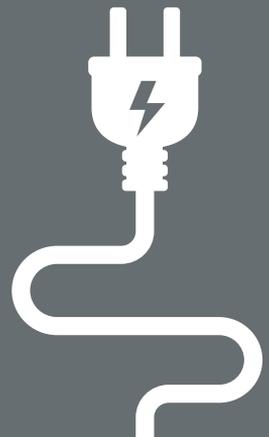
**Think mobile first.** That's where your candidates are applying! Develop a mobile-optimized version of your application that loads in three seconds, has large buttons (that are easy to use on mobile devices) and doesn't require scrolling or zooming to read.

**Consider adding "finish later" functionality** so candidates can save a partially completed application and then pick up where they left off – either on their mobile device or a desktop.

**Integrate an ultrashort form.** Sites like Indeed, Monster and ZipRecruiter allow you to dramatically simplify the application process by integrating an ultra-short form (name, email, upload resume) or using their one-click-apply features. Then, you can ask viable candidates to complete your full application before the interview. It turns a one-step apply process into two steps, but dramatically reduces application abandonment.

## SHAMELESS PLUG:

Haley Marketing Group offers [Responsive Web Design Services](#) and a robust [Job Board](#) to deliver seamless experiences for job seekers – and convert more prospects into placeable candidates! Contact us today to learn more.



# PREVENT COMMUNICATION VACUUMS AND PROCESS FREEZE UPS.

Give job seekers or associates the cold shoulder during your intake or placement process and they'll simply take their talents elsewhere. Use these tactics to ensure every candidate you engage with receives the proper care – no matter when, where or how the interaction occurs:

#### Adhere to established follow-up processes.

- ADD A **CHATBOT** TO YOUR WEBSITE. Chatbots can improve CX 24/7/365 by: immediately answering candidates' common questions; conducting basic screening to improve recruiting speed and efficiency; and connecting field associates to a human during off-hours, when the situation warrants.
- SEND TIMELY, AUTOMATED RESPONSES TO ALL APPLICANTS, acknowledging application receipt and explaining your candidate intake process.
- KEEP PROSPECTS WHO MAKE IT THROUGH INITIAL SCREENING INFORMED at each subsequent step of the interview process. Explain next steps and timelines. Let them know how and when decisions will be made.
- FOLLOW UP WITH EVERY CANDIDATE YOUR CLIENTS INTERVIEW. If your recruiters fear being stuck in lengthy candidate conversations, encourage them to send respectful, informative emails.
- TAKE GOOD CARE OF SECOND AND THIRD CHOICES. Update them on the job's status and ensure they always know exactly when they will receive communications. If your first choice falls through, you'll have other individuals who are primed to accept your client's offer.
- CONSIDER MARKETING / PROCESS AUTOMATION TOOLS to ensure you get timely feedback from every candidate about their experience with your firm and on the job assignment. You can also use these tools to proactively redeploy candidates coming off assignments.

#### Never give candidates the silent treatment – even if you can't place them.

- Provide direct feedback to unplaceable candidates in a respectful, compassionate way.
- If possible, provide suggestions as to what they can do to improve their prospects – be that through education, skills training or applying to another agency that specializes in their field.

When candidates know where they stand, they're less likely to assume the worst and air their grievances publicly. Even if you can't place them, they will remember the way you treated them and be more likely to apply again or refer other great people to your organization.





GET  
CREATIVE



You may already have a great onboarding process in place, but could you be doing more to enhance their experience? If your staffing or recruiting firm really wants to differentiate on CX, do stuff your competitors aren't:

### Create an alumni network.

Your goal isn't just to place a candidate today, it's to have a career-long relationship with great people who want to work for you...and then want to work with you when they become a client.

### Provide a tech demo as part of your onboarding process.

If you've invested in technology like a job board, cloud-based timekeeping and online educational resources, make sure your candidates know how to take advantage of them! Include a tour of your website and other tech tools as part of your onboarding process.

According to [Staffing Industry Analysts](#), only 40% of temporary workers report being given a website demo – which means your staffing firm has a real opportunity to differentiate based on CX!

### Train clients on how to onboard temporary and contract personnel.

Rolling out the red carpet creates a better experience for the candidate, gets them up to speed more quickly, and improves performance, assignment satisfaction and retention.

These are just a few ways to make your CX stand out from the crowd. **Honestly, when it comes to delivering great service, you're limited only by your imagination.** Get your team together to brainstorm unexpected ways to WOW candidates at every step of their journey with you.



# YOU CAN WARM UP THE RECRUITING CLIMATE!

With unemployment trending downward for years, the job market continuing to expand and baby boomers retiring at an unprecedented rate, today's candidate market is downright frigid.

But while your staffing or recruiting firm has little control over the factors fueling this big freeze, you can still recruit effectively in it – by consistently creating amazing candidate experiences.

## Improving CX takes work. A lot of it.

But it's worth it! When you treat all job seekers and field associates well, it makes them feel valued. Welcomed. More loyal to your firm. And over the long term, delivering great CX positions you to recruit the best people in any employment market.

## Haley Marketing is here to help.

We offer a full complement of **solutions** (websites, social media, content marketing, reputation management and more) – and **inspiring customer service ideas** – to help you raise the bar in candidate CX.

We also offer the following Recruitment Marketing Services:

- Career site development
- Social recruiting campaign design and management
- Programmatic job advertising management
- Employer branding

**FOR HELP WITH RECRUITING, CONTACT US TODAY AT 1.888.696.2900.**

[What can we do for you?](#)





[www.haleymarketing.com/ideaclub](http://www.haleymarketing.com/ideaclub)