# The New Rules of Recruiting Success

Are You Keeping Pace With Change?

The talent landscape has changed dramatically – and so have the rules for recruiting. In this eBook, you will learn how to conquer the challenges, seize the opportunities and build a stronger organization.

Topics include:

- How to manage a tsunami of incoming applications

- Why hiring for diversity matters – and how to do it

- The importance of hiring for soft skills and tips on how to identify them in the hiring process

- Keying into the things top talent wants from an employer

- How to show candidates you value health and safety

- How to keep pace with – and stay ahead of – the changing recruiting landscape
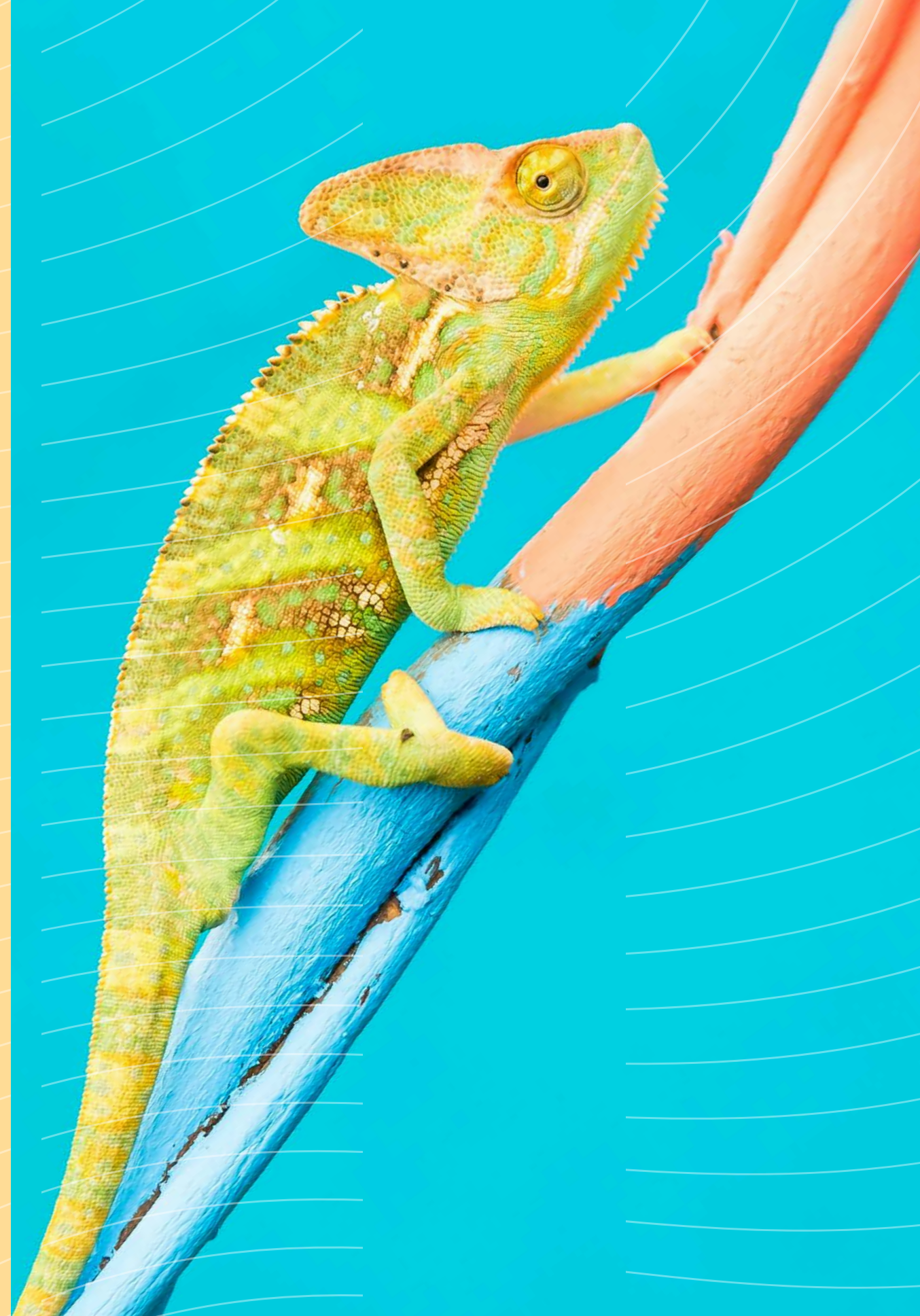
Does Everything Feel Upside Down?

If everything feels off-kilter with your company's recruiting, you're not alone. 2020 has been quite a roller coaster, and while the talent market is always evolving, it feels like everything turned upside down in a matter of days.

Not so very long ago you were dealing with talent shortages and retention issues. Now, thanks to massive unemployment, there is a flood of talent in the market, along with a fresh crop of new graduates. On the surface, it may seem like your only problem is managing a tsunami of applications, but there are underlying currents that will impact the way you handle that flood.

The most obvious undercurrent is COVID-19.

The pandemic has led to mass unemployment, lowered spending power, and a need for remote work, social distancing, and extensive safety measures on the job. These will all impact the way you recruit and the way you hire for the foreseeable future.

The second undercurrent is social unrest.

While racial equality events like protests, walkouts and marches have popped up from time to time, the current movement has gained much more traction than other movements in recent years.

People are demanding that companies of all sizes take a stand on social justice issues and not just talk the talk but walk the walk. Diversity and inclusion will remain priorities for candidates and employees, and employers must understand the need to address it in their recruiting and hiring practices now.

Are You Drowning in a Sea of Applications?

With tens of millions of Americans looking for work, hiring teams are experiencing a glut of job applications. Fielding too many applications creates a massive time suck in an already time-consuming process. It can be frustrating, but without time and attention to detail – resources that are in short supply – it can also mean losing out on potentially great candidates.

Rather than hacking away randomly at a massive list of applications, you can take a more targeted approach.

Have an End Date (And Stick to It)

Set a closing date for every job posting and stick to it. On the closing date, pull all your ads and do not evaluate any stragglers that come in during the following days.

Leverage Programmatic Advertising

Programmatic advertising lets you control spending by closing a job posting as soon as you receive a pre-set number of applications. This allows you to evaluate those applications and then move forward, or re-open the job if no one was a match, helping manage stress and workload while controlling costs.

Use Resume Parsing

Resume parsing technology allows you to electronically gather, store and organize the information contained in resumes or applications. Once this information is obtained, it is easily searchable using keywords and phrases to streamline the evaluation process.

Write Better Job Descriptions

Some people may apply to any job they come across, but most are still reading job descriptions and taking a methodical approach. That's why it's essential to write precise job descriptions that clearly state minimum requirements as well as the job requirements and expectations. Be direct – don't leave room for applicants to think they might get the job even if they don't meet the criteria, and firmly state that only candidates with the qualifications listed will be considered.

Now Is the Time to Topgrade

With so many applicants in the job market, now is the perfect time to topgrade.

Topgrading helps eliminate costly mis-hires while securing high performers to fill critical needs. Right now, A-players are looking for opportunities that have not been in the market for years. With a focused plan to target these candidates, you can gain a competitive advantage.

- Start by reviewing your business goals.

- Next, identify the staffing gaps that are preventing you from reaching those goals.

- Then, review of your current employees' skills to see if anyone can be promoted or have responsibilities shifted according to strengths.

- The skills and gaps that remain will help you craft targeted job descriptions and hiring strategies that align with your business goals.

You Can't Afford to Ignore Inclusion

Amid the pandemic, the United States experienced a massive push for social justice, as well. While protests and civil unrest are not new, something in the tone, tenor, and reception of the 2020 protests seems to be pushing real change.

While diversity has been a hot topic for decades, it is now top-of-mind and will remain so for the foreseeable future. People are no longer settling for lip service; they are demanding to see change and results.

Diverse Teams Deliver Better Outcomes

Diversity isn't just a buzzword. And even if you understand why diversity matters, it's important to recognize that building a diverse team will improve your business. When you cultivate a team of people from different backgrounds and experiences, you develop a more engaged, creative group.

Diverse teams also deliver:

- **Innovation:** Diverse groups are more likely to find innovative solutions to problems because each person has a unique perspective. When everyone thinks and acts the same way, it's virtually impossible to expect new ideas.

- **Better decision-making:** In diverse groups, each person brings to the table a unique set of strengths and weaknesses, priorities, and ideas. When it comes time to make a group decision, those differences foster in-depth discussions that cover all sides of a debate, and individuals are more likely to speak up and share what's on their minds.

- **Flexibility:** Homogenous teams slip into routines quickly. When something happens that disrupts a routine, it is difficult for the group to adapt quickly. Diverse teams are much more flexible and can respond better to challenges.

The data also shows that diverse teams make companies more profitable:

- Companies that scored in the top 25% for gender diversity also posted higher-than-average returns in their industry.

- Companies in the bottom 25% for gender and ethnic diversity were less likely to achieve above-average returns.

Recruiting for Diversity the Right Way

The truth is, hiring for diversity is easier said than done. Quotas aren't the answer because true diversity *is organic*.

You can't expect to hire diverse candidates if you're stuck in the same old recruiting routine. Take a step outside your comfort zone in your recruiting tactics and try new tactics.

- **Partner with universities:** They have been leading the way in diversity for decades and can help you uncover talented new graduates.

- **Host networking events:** In-person events will be curbed for a while, but you can host virtual events to get in front of a diverse group of candidates.

- **Sponsor career-related webinars:** Host webinars that give candidates useful and actionable information about building their careers in your industry. Set up an email address for participants to send their resumes and start networking with those participants.

- **Remove unconscious bias:** Remove all personal identifiers from candidate's applications and add new people to hiring teams who bring fresh perspectives to the process.

- **Build a diverse hiring team:** If you want to hire for diversity, make sure the team making the decisions is also diverse.

- **Have diverse leadership teams:** If candidates don't see people who look like them or share their same experiences, they will likely lose interest in the role. They want to see a clear path for themselves, and they want to know that the company truly values diversity enough to promote people of all backgrounds.

- **Cross-promote jobs and events:** Partner with local women's organizations and diversity-focused business groups to promote your webinars, virtual job fairs, and open positions.

Gen Z May Force Your Hand

While it can take a while to build a diverse team, it's important to note that Generation Z will not tolerate a lack of diversity in the workplace. They have been the driving force behind the protests and demand for change in 2020, and they value and prioritize diversity more than any previous generation.

If these young candidates don't see people of diverse backgrounds at all levels of the company, they will lose interest in the role. They may even take to social media or review sites to express their concern.

Racial, gender, ethnic, and age diversity will matter more than ever before as more Generation Z members enter the workforce.

Soft Skills Matter More Than Ever Before

Even before the pandemic and shifting social structure of 2020, companies realized the importance of soft skills like communication, empathy, and leadership. According to a 2019 LinkedIn study, 91% of talent professionals focused on soft skills in the recruitment process.

However, 2020 has accelerated that focus. Transferable soft skills are more of a priority than ever before.

What Are Soft Skills?

Soft skills can mean different things to different people, but they relate to interpersonal skills that influence the way someone approaches work and interacts with others on the job.

Communication

Communication abilities directly impact productivity and are essential for team collaboration. Remember, communication isn't just about speaking or writing; it is also about listening effectively.

Leadership

Leadership skills aren't just crucial for management roles. Employees at every level need to be able to step up and take the lead from time to time, motivating others to follow.

Accountability

Accountable people do what they say they will do, and if they can't hit the mark, they speak up. They accept responsibility for errors and look for ways to improve, so they do not repeat mistakes.

Time Management

Effective employees must know how to prioritize work, optimize their schedules, and manage their time effectively, especially in environments with a high level of distraction.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking and problem solving go hand in hand. Candidates with a sense of critical thinking can achieve more in less time, and even re-orient their thinking under pressure.

Adaptability

There is simply no time to hand-hold employees who cannot adjust to rapidly changing conditions during the workday. They must be able to adjust their approach quickly and effectively.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to see a situation from another person's perspective. This is extremely important for inclusion and building a strong company culture.

Hiring for Soft Skills

Soft skills are essential but challenging to identify in the hiring process. They are not like hard skills, which can be verified quite easily.

There is a bit of gut-level feeling involved, but you can identify soft skills through:

- **Studying the resume and cover letter:** How are they written? Do they address critical details listed in the job posting?

- **Interview behaviors:** Does the candidate demonstrate active listening skills? Do they craft well-thought answers? Do they interact comfortably?

- **Strategic interview questions:** Ask candidates to describe situations they have encountered that speak directly to soft skills. For example:

  - Ways they have navigated workplace conflict.

  - Handling co-workers who aren't pulling their own weight.

  - What they do when they know they won't hit a deadline.

  - Times they have had to step up and lead.

  - Times they had to solve a problem with no help from a coworker or manager.

- **Reference checks:** Don't just verify employment. Talk to previous supervisors and colleagues about essential soft skills.

Key Into the Things
Top Talent Wants

Just because there is a glut of talent in the market doesn't mean it will be easy to attract the right people. Top talent can afford to be choosy (even if they are out of work right now), so it is imperative to understand what candidates want from a new employer.

While every candidate will have unique priorities, there are some universal must-haves that most talented people are looking for:

Competitive Salary

Candidates know that times are tight. However, they want fair compensation, and A-players can afford to wait for a firm offer. Learn the averages for your area and make sure your salaries fall in line.

Comprehensive Benefits

Most people want basics like health insurance, a 401(k), and paid time off. It is also wise to offer other benefits that people truly need and utilize in today's market like wellness benefits, childcare credits, paid maternity and family leave, etc.

Work-Life Balance

Thanks to social distancing, people know they can work from anywhere, at any time. Today, candidates want to have the flexibility to work from home or work non-traditional hours that suit their family schedule.

Opportunities to Grow

If you hope to recruit top talent, it is necessary to invest in career development. Provide opportunities to learn, reimburse them for classes, seminars or conferences, and offer in-house training. Map out paths that employees can take to move forward in their careers with your organization.

A Strong Culture

Different people thrive in different environments, but everyone is looking for a healthy company culture that:

- lends itself to productivity

- makes employees feel supported

- offers an environment where they will thrive, rather than feeling stifled

Safety

Safety is more important than ever before. Industrial work environments have always needed to tout safety to attract great people. Still, in the wake of the pandemic, safety has become essential for nearly every industry.

How to Show You Focus on Health and Safety

Employees are understandably anxious about their health and safety, and unless there is a vaccine or cure for COVID-19, that anxiety will continue to bubble under the surface. To attract and retain top talent, it is necessary to address the real concerns your employees and candidates have.

Follow all state recommendations, local rules, and CDC guidelines for social distancing, mask-wearing, other personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizing, and more. Make sure managers are enforcing all COVID-related safety practices.

Some of the actions employees want to see include:

- Extensive, regular cleaning and sanitizing of work areas

- Requiring sick employees to stay home

- Flexible sick leave policies

- Flexible family leave policies

- Company-provided PPE

- Screening all employees before entering the building

- Work-from-home or other alternatives, especially for older and at-risk employees

- Resources for mental health and support

- In your job postings and your company or career site, detail the measures your organization takes to ensure employee safety.

Get Ahead of the Changing Recruiting Landscape

A strategic staffing partner can help you navigate the ever-evolving recruiting landscape. And while you may be concerned about your budget right now, working with a staffing company can help you control recruiting costs and achieve better results by:

- Taking the initial resume screening burden off your team

- Uncovering hidden talent

- Achieving diversity goals

- Handling first-round remote interviews

- Improving the flexibility of your workforce

- Reducing overhead

- Streamlining the hiring process while improving the quality of new hires

- Helping to develop long-term talent acquisition plans

- Ensuring compliance

If you are ready to not only keep pace with change but get ahead of it, **partner with a staffing expert today.**
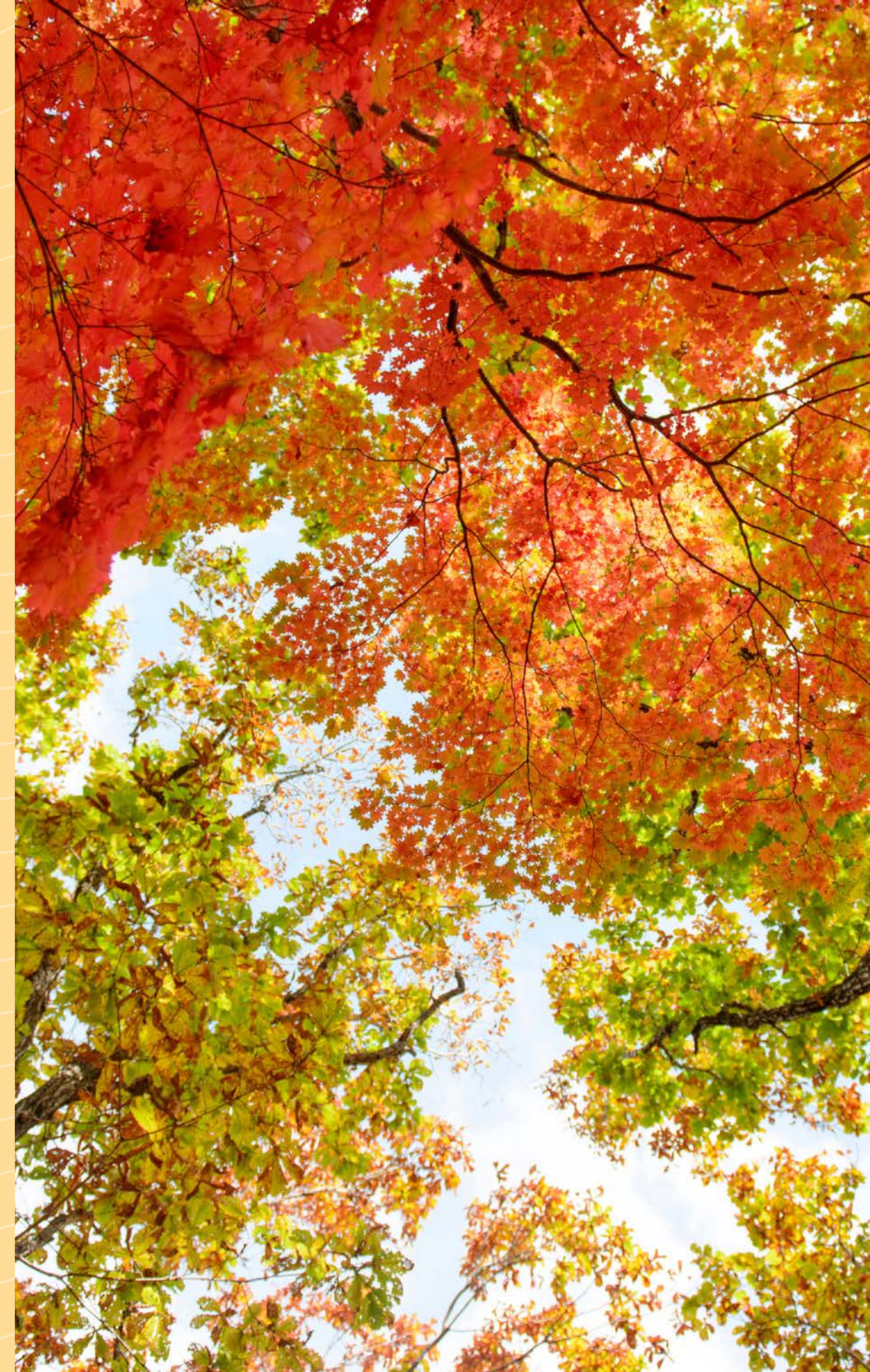
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