2021 Recruitment Strategies: Working Smarter, Not Harder

Five paths to fill your funnel

Introduction

Like most good things, hiring doesn't happen overnight. Instead, it requires a long-term commitment to finding candidates who can accelerate your business objectives—and bring your brand to life.

Hours spent sourcing. Constantly checking different recruiting channels. Sifting through a sea of resumes. There's no denying that the current hiring landscape is fragmented, complex, and full of frustrations.

But as your company grows, your recruiting strategies can (and should) evolve with it.

We're here to break down different stages of the recruitment journey—and share several potential paths to hiring success.

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Source
with strategy

Let's start with the first step in the recruiting cycle: sourcing. Before forging ahead, you'll want to look inward—considering critical business factors like skills gaps, increasing workloads, and recruitment budgets. To help hiring teams out, we created this checklist for defining and aligning on core objectives.

CORPORATE NEEDS CHECKLIST

Where are workloads increasing within the business?
Perhaps your engineering department is overloaded with projects and would benefit from new additions to the team. In that case, you may want to target software engineers and product managers during this next hiring round.

Are there any internal skills gaps to address?
Maybe your seed-stage startup is scaling— but lacks a consistent brand voice and vision. Bringing professional marketing talent on board could fill this need and position you for sustained success.

Is our team diverse enough?
Diverse companies are more likely to outperform less diverse peers on profitability— and cultivating diversity starts from the top of the funnel. Ensure diversity is included in your candidate sourcing process by considering factors like race, gender, location, and more.

How many hires will we make?
Does your current growth stage require mass recruitment, or are you seeking only a handful of strategic hires?

Is there a specific hiring timeline?
Look at the calendar and note any upcoming company milestones. For instance, you may be launching a new market in three months and need multiple sales representatives to support the effort. Or, your current Head of Engineering might have just put in their two weeks' notice— leaving you with an important role to fill in a relatively tight timeframe.

What's our recruitment budget?
Of course, every business decision comes down to dollars and cents. Setting a budget will help you determine the most cost-effective recruitment strategies for your hiring team.

After answering these questions, it's time to define your dream candidates. Ready to get started? This checklist covers some of recruiters' most common hiring criteria (level of experience, academic background, critical skills, location requirements, and more).

DREAM CANDIDATE CHECKLIST

What level of experience are we looking for?
Junior? Associate? Senior? Executive? Maybe you want someone with prior experience in the industry. If so, how many years? After considering the unique job responsibilities in question, get specific—and clearly define your dream candidate.

Are we seeking a specific background?
If you're recruiting for a software engineering role, an education in computer science—whether gained through a bachelor's, master's, or hands-on coding boot camp—may be especially compelling. Similarly, an MBA could make someone a strong contender for a marketing or business role. And when it comes to increasing diversity within your company, it can help to look for affiliations with organizations like Women in Data, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), #HIREBLACK, and historically black colleges & universities (HBCUs).

What are the desired skills for this position?
When recruiting for tech roles, fluency in Python and Javascript—two of the hottest programming languages—could indicate prime candidacy for a spot on your engineering team.

Do we have any location requirements?
Here, transparency is key. Be sure to share any geographic preferences up front—whether your company plans on returning to the office post-pandemic or remaining remote indefinitely. (A study from Vettery's hiring marketplace found that, by opening roles to remote candidates, employers were able to increase the number of top applicants by more than 85%.)

Are there any more requirements candidates must meet?
Depending on the specific role, you may need to filter for additional considerations, like security clearance (which is especially important in federal organizations).

At first glance, this list can appear overwhelming. How can one person check all the right boxes—and how long will it take to find them?

It's no secret that sourcing can be a major stressor. But modern technology has made it significantly easier to cut through the clutter, align hiring expectations, and find top talent—in less time, with fewer resources.

At the end of the day, you don't want to compromise in building your dream team. And with the right recruiting solutions, you don't have to. For example, Hired's hiring marketplace allows recruiters to filter by all of the above criteria, helping you pinpoint candidates that check every last box. (More on that later).

Pinpoint your path forward

After clearly defining your dreams candidates, it's time to continue onward in the recruiting journey.

Perhaps you had past success with existing recruitment methods. Or, maybe these efforts entirely missed the mark. Either way, we're here to map out five potential avenues—analyzing each one and sharing actionable tips for perfecting your recruiting process.

Remember: at the end of the day, you don't have to choose just one strategy. Consider what best suits your company at this specific stage—whether that means having a narrow focus or using multiple tools in tandem to amplify your recruiting efforts.

Explore the paths ▼

P1 Posting positions to job boards

As stated by Matthew Jeffrey, Global Head of Sourcing and Employment Brand at SAP, "Recruitment is marketing. If you're a recruiter nowadays and you don't see yourself as a marketer, you're in the wrong profession."

The oldest player in the online recruiting space, job boards can help hiring teams boost their brand and get eyes on open roles. Low-effort and relatively inexpensive, this can be a cost-effective way to promote your company and passively grow your candidate pipeline.

But while job boards excel in providing exposure, they can also fall short in filling your funnel with high-quality applicants. Recruiters who use this method have little control over the candidate pool, so they may wind up sifting through a sea of resumes that sorely miss the mark—and wasting time that could be better spent elsewhere.

Finally, although job boards can be extremely effective at attracting active job-seekers (think: someone who searched for "software engineer jobs" or "sales roles near me"), they're not as great at engaging passive candidates—who, by definition, aren't looking to make a switch.

PROS:
Build brand awareness, attract active
job-seekers

P2 Requesting employee referrals

According to Wharton marketing professor Jonah Berger, referrals are one of the most successful business strategies out there—with word-of-mouth marketing ranking as ten times more effective than traditional ads.

This trend doesn't only apply to the advertising industry, either. Recruiting is all about putting the right opportunities in front of the right people—and data suggests that organizations can expand their talent pools by ten times through employee referrals.

To incentivize staff members, many companies even offer referral bonuses—encouraging employees to share open roles with their network. For instance, Salesforce offers workers a cash bonus of $2,000 for every successful referral—and a staggering 52% of their new hires came from referrals by current employees.

Of course, the effectiveness of this recruiting method hinges on a number of external factors. For instance:

How big is your organization?
On average, a Fortune 100 company may receive more employee referrals than a seed-stage startup.

Do your employees have contacts in the right geographic region?
If a brand new hire relocated from another country for a job with your organization, they may not have a network of local connections to refer for open roles.

Is the timing right?
A top-performing software engineer may know someone who's perfect for your new tech position, yet isn't looking to make a switch.

PROS:
Improve candidate quality, raise retention rates, reduce hiring costs

P3 Revisiting old resumes

Do you re-engage old job applicants on a regular basis?

For many hiring teams, the answer is "no." And yet, applicant tracking system (ATS) sourcing is a valuable avenue for targeting candidates who already expressed interest during past recruitment cycles.

In sorting through your existing base of applicants, you may be surprised to find exactly what you were looking for (with minimal effort). After all, studies show that most job-seekers abandon online applications—so if someone took the effort to apply in the first place, odds are they may still be interested at a later date.

To make things simple, Lever preserves all points of contact and even recommends past candidates—allowing you to easily start conversations with qualified talent.

Of course, the timing won't always be right. (Maybe a standout applicant recently landed a new job.) But by and large, ATS sourcing can still be a smart recruitment strategy.

PROS:
Don't start from scratch, contact candidates who have already expressed interest

P4 # Trying outbound database tools

A staple of many hiring teams, outbound database tools can help recruiters get in contact with large pools of passive candidates.

The downside of this avenue? Unresponsiveness often comes with the territory.

For example, you might send 100 messages, only to receive one answer: a templated "I'm not interested at this time." (We've all been there before.)

In the end, this strategy truly is a toss-up. Recruiters may strike gold with outbound database tools—or, they may strike out. And that can be exhausting when you're searching for a sure thing.

PROS:
Target candidates who fit your criteria,
reach large pools of passive talent

P5 Hopping into a hiring marketplace

Amazon. Uber. Airbnb. As mavericks of the modern age, these companies have inspired disruption across industries and around the world.

How? Two words: digital marketplaces.

Built on the basics of supply and demand, this business model has taken the tech industry by storm. And as digital marketplaces gained traction during the past decade, savvy entrepreneurs started applying the model to a new area: recruiting.

For years, hiring teams had been bogged down by traditional, time-consuming processes. But with the advent of digital marketplaces, the status quo was ripe for change.

Technology, after all, streamlines so many areas of our daily life—doing everything from hailing cabs to playing wingman (think: Hinge, Bumble, Coffee Meets Bagel). So why not apply it to recruiting and match companies with their dream candidates?

P5 Hopping into a hiring marketplace

Since 2012, Hired has been fundamentally changing the way people hire and get hired. As a data-driven online marketplace, we solve many of the problems associated with old-school recruitment strategies. On our platform, you'll find:

Top talent, tailored to your needs.
Looking for a Boston-based programmer with a bachelor's in computer science, 5+ years of industry experience, plus fluency in React and Python? Simply filter for these specific preferences, then sift through a selection of vetted job-seekers who match your criteria to a tee.

AI that adapts to your hiring preferences.
While you get to know Hired, we get to know you. From the start, our machine learning algorithm uses your activity on the platform to surface candidates that suit your search. Streamlined simplicity means less time sourcing—and more time hiring. Our algorithms find only the right candidates for your job requirements, saving you 45 sourcing hours per hire.

A pool of highly engaged candidates.
Unresponsiveness is one of the biggest banes of outbound sourcing—but this issue seldom occurs on Hired. Since all featured candidates applied for a spot in our hiring marketplace, they're more responsive to recruiting activity (and less likely to ignore your messages). With an 80% response rate, that's higher than any other platform we know of.

Job-seekers delivered straight to your inbox.
Send customized assessments to candidates. Hired allows you to assess candidates' skills remotely with a free suite of customizable technical assessments. Run programming challenges in real-time or asynchronously, always with a complete coding playback.

PROS:
Streamline your search with artificial intelligence, reach responsive job-seekers, consistently fill your funnel with vetted candidates, spend less time sourcing and more time hiring

Curious about adding Hired to your suite of hiring tools? Request a demo here—and together, let's keep your recruiting funnel full.

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