

Creative Recruiting and Retention Strategies

Recruiting has become a major challenge for many employers and strategies are changing quickly. Here are some ideas that are working for other organizations, both large and small, to bring in new talent as well as retaining good talent they already have.

External Recruiting Ideas

- Host an in-house career fair. Let people come and learn about your company openings and benefits in a more relaxed environment – after normal work hours.
- Purchase booth space at local festivals and county fairs. While this may produce a little less traffic than the larger events, the rental costs are much lower.
- Attend career fairs at colleges and technical schools. Often alumni or community members will also attend. This provides a higher return on investment than a typical job fair.
- Contact large local churches and community organizations and ask if they have a careers portal or board for postings.
- Read local business papers, trade and professional publications to see what other companies are doing. If you see a company is laying off, contact the HR person at that company and offer to conduct interviews on the spot.
- If you have the budget and a large number of hires, you can promote using radio, TV, theater, newspaper, bus ads, billboards, and point of purchase advertising.

External Recruiting Ideas – Online

- Enhance your current website to include a careers page. Make sure it talks about open positions, culture, and gives an opportunity to apply online. An easy and cost-effective way to do this is with an Applicant Tracking System (ATS).
- Improve your career page with a short 1 to 2-minute video showing the people and the workplace. What makes your company unique or a great place to work? Simply create the video using a smartphone, an external microphone and free editing software.
- Elevate your job postings with a 1 to 2-minute video showing a 'day-in-the-life-of' for the advertised positions. In this day and age, companies willing to embrace technology are more attractive to qualified candidates. With just a smartphone, you can create a video worth more than a thousand words.
- Use LinkedIn to ask other people in your "network" and "groups" who they know – with one email instead requiring multiple calls. The snowball effect may just find you the right person.
- For college recruiting, create a Facebook profile to introduce your company to the under-25 age group. It will allow you to post open positions, but you may have to be more patient.
- Have your job postings written to be marketing focused and sell the candidate on your company. Don't post a job description – make it a posting. If you need help on this, you can always call us for help.
- In addition to paid posting, utilize free job boards and sites such as the workforce development center (some counties have their own, in addition to jobnet), craigslist.com, and university/tech school career service department sites.
- Post on local/regional boards and industry boards such as shrm.org to get a different set of candidates in the market.
- Save money by only posting on one national job board.
- Use university alumni associations – they may offer a website or email service specifically for postings.

College Campus/Tech School Recruiting

- Go beyond college career services offices and contact instructors who teach courses for specifically needed skills. This information can be found easily on most school websites.
- Volunteer to present to universities and technical schools. This will increase your brand awareness on campus and improve the number of resumes you receive. Typically, these discussions are industry focused to a particular course of study – not about your company.
- Host an open house night on campus where you discuss your organization, the types of people you hire, and how to apply. Feed people pizza and keep a captive audience. If you have time, conduct some interviews on the spot.

Ongoing Recruiting and Retention Strategies

- Start an employee referral bonus program. This can be done through a lottery system where you give away a prize at the end of year or quarter (depending on how many you get) instead of small amounts of cash for each hire.
- Make sure your employees are always aware of current job openings. Communicate via email, intranet, or bulletin board – depending on your workforce.
- Re-recruit current employees by doing ongoing career progression and learning about their other internal areas of interest.
- Keep track of how your interviewees and hires found your posting. Not only will this help you know where good postings are, but it will help you reduce expenses by cutting out the sources that don't work.
- Develop and utilize an ongoing internship program for high school, technical school, and university students. This could cut your expenses and also groom a loyal workforce.
- Create flexible work schedules or part-time options – even in key roles – to attract candidates who cannot or choose not to work full-time schedules, such as retirees and moms.
- Utilize new online interviewing technology to interview each applicant and have the interview on hand for future reference.
- Allow for interviews after hours or on Saturdays, if needed.
- Use an ATS to go back and review resumes you already have and share resumes of candidates between departments more easily.
- Review current benefit package for competitiveness. This will help with recruiting and retention efforts.
- Offer competitive salaries for new hires (and increases for current employees) along with advancement to higher levels of vacation for more experienced, hard-to-fill positions, to satisfy new hires that would “lose” days.
- Provide additional benefits to make a career transition easy, such as a relocation bonus (if needed), spousal job assistance (if applicable), time off for kids' events, prorated “education reimbursement costs,” and reimbursement for bonuses lost from the previous employer by taking the new position.
- Consider using contract employees or consultants for more assistance if you are having a problem getting back to a candidate within 48 to 72 hours of application.
- Offer bonuses to employees who remain with the company for a predetermined period of time.
- Provide positive, planned, new employee orientations. Most people will decide within the first week if they will stay with a company long term.
- Offer work-family programs. Give employees education that will help them at home, such as financial management courses or instruction on how to buy a car.
- Give feedback to new employees early in their careers and all employees when going through evaluations.
- Provide earlier vesting for retirement benefits.
- Create a mentoring system to engage and develop employees.
- Initiate an awards program that provides rewards such as vacation trips for reaching goals.