

Can We Talk? Using Technology to Engage with Candidates

While most employers understand the importance of candidate engagement, busy schedules make it difficult for recruiters to personally engage with all candidates in their databases on a consistent basis. And with historically low unemployment rates and a widening skills gap, creating a positive candidate experience has become an increasingly important part of attracting candidates.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways that recruiting teams can use technology to automate candidate touches and keep the candidate informed and engaged. With recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, recruiting automation has quickly moved from experimentation to expectation. It is not replacing the need for recruiters, but is instead reducing the “grunt work” and freeing recruiters to focus on interviewing and closing job offers.

How technology can enhance the candidate experience

Informed candidates are engaged candidates. Here are some ways that technology can be used to improve communication and the overall candidate experience.

Interact with candidates 24/7

The demand for instant results and immediate answers has become our cultural norm. Retailers now offer same-day delivery and apps eliminate the need to wait for a cab or a table at a restaurant. Jobseekers expect the same immediacy.



To allow candidates to communicate with potential employers at their leisure, many companies have begun using chatbots, software that uses AI to understand a person’s message and respond accordingly. They leverage chat platforms, such as SMS text or website chat windows, and use natural language processing (NLP) functionality to provide personal and efficient communication on demand.

In recruitment, chatbots provide responses to common questions asked during the application process, and they let candidates communicate at their convenience. They can also be used to allow candidates to schedule interviews.

Chatbots reduce time to hire, increase the number of completed applications, and improve recruiter efficiency. While they offer many benefits, chatbots also present some challenges. Candidate interactions will depend on how well it can answer their questions and provide additional information about their job application. Because chatbots use machine learning, candidate experiences should improve over time.

TECH TIP: While NLP produces human-like messaging, the straightforward nature of chatbot responses may seem different than interacting with a real person. To avoid making a poor impression, be transparent with users about the use of this technology.

Reach multiple candidates with one personalized message

In today's competitive employment market, speed matters. Automated emails, calls, and texts allow a recruiter to reach tens, hundreds, or thousands of applicants/employees simultaneously. They automate the communication process and also provide metrics to measure delivery and response rates.

While there is still a place for email and phone calls, text messaging has become a preferred method of communication for today's workforce – that is, when a candidate approves of this communication method and opts in. Texting is an efficient way for companies to send personalized messages and receive replies in close to real time. It works particularly well in the screening process, allowing companies to quickly determine whether candidates can work the required hours or complete the tasks required. It's also an efficient way to keep candidates updated during the hiring process.

TECH TIP: While texting can be a more personal and casual way to communicate with candidates, it's important for users to remain professional. Avoid using abbreviations, unnecessary acronyms, emojis, and GIFs that are commonly used in personal text messages. Also refrain from sharing bad news or constructive criticism via text.

TECH TIP: Be prepared for off-topic replies to mass text messages and promptly respond to any messages that require a response.

Automate messaging to candidates

As databases grow, it can be difficult for recruiters to maintain consistent communication throughout the candidate lifecycle. Sure, an email or text message can be sent to a group of candidates, but is there a process in place to trigger follow-up communication as they move through the hiring funnel?

Many companies are now using candidate engagement tools to track and streamline communication with candidates, making it foolproof to deliver personalized messages to applicants and employees at each stage of the application and employment process. These tools integrate with the applicant tracking system (ATS) to communicate with talent on an automated basis. They allow recruiters to increase communication touch points and automate repetitive manual tasks such as confirmations and reminders.

Communication can be prompted manually or by events within the ATS. For example, it can send a message one day after a candidate has submitted an application to set expectations and thank the candidate for their interest.

TECH TIP: In order for automated messaging to work well using events in the ATS, it's important that it's up to date and relevant. Scrub your lists and take the time to customize the message content and delivery methods.

While technology is an incredible way to stay connected with candidates, it is also important to maintain a human element. Recruiting is about connecting people to people. Technology, no matter how advanced, will never replace the need for face-to-face and voice-to-voice communication.

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