



Why You Must Be A Trusted Advisor To Candidates Too



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A recruiter at a company is tasked with getting the best talent from the market at the best price for the company. This was a very common understanding of what recruiting was at its most basic level for a very long time. While the first part still holds, everyone can probably agree that times have changed, drastically.

Recruiters must be a trusted advisor to the business — this continues to be a staple of good consultative recruiting. Now add the notion that “us and them” is now the worst approach you can use if you want to get the best talent to join your team and accept your offer. While you’ll continue to build relationships with hiring managers and internal stakeholders, you can no longer treat the candidate as anything less. In a competitive market, you must also be a trusted advisor to candidates.



You may be wondering how you can advocate for both sides — isn't that usually why everyone gets their own lawyer in a battle? In recruiting, it doesn't have to be that extreme, and you truly can negotiate and bargain in good faith for both parties. If you're not quite convinced yet, here are three really important reasons to consider:

1. In a competitive market, you will lose if you're not seen to be helping the candidate as well.

Many organizations are moving to transparent salary ranges, flexible and customized perks and understanding what candidates want and need on an individual level. Gone are the days you can throw out the lowest offer in the salary range and expect your candidate to be waiting by their phone ready to accept. Instead, you're likely one of several offers they will get, and you'll be the one hopefully to get a call back with positive news. Don't get left behind companies putting out their best offer after asking candidates exactly what they want!

2. How you make people feel matters in a candidate-driven market where there is a labor shortage, you cannot be remembered as the organization who jerked people around, kept them hanging, lowballed them or anything near that experience. Other companies will move faster, remove barriers, skip interviews and archaic outdated testing practices in favor of hiring for attitude, potential and a growth mindset. Some organizations are moving to offer same day and offering positive coaching and feedback through the process. This smooth process, transparency, speed and the lack of hoops to jump through will not only leave a slower company with a mediocre offer in the dust, but if the candidate does take time to compare multiple offers, how they were treated throughout the process will weigh heavily. It's a reflection of how a company treats their people and when you have options, culture can often be the tiebreaker. Don't lose on this front, because you don't care about the candidate experience.

3. Money doesn't win every time.

You help them win. One of the most important jobs a recruiter has is listening and understanding what the hiring manager is looking for, but equally important, what will it take for the candidate to accept your offer. Passive candidates who are top performers will not leave their current company without a compelling offer, and they are likely to receive a counteroffer to stay. If you've been listening to the candidate and building rapport, you might think that they only took your call because they want more flexibility in their schedule. If you offer a lot of cash, but no flexibility, do not be shocked when they turn down your 30% pay bump in favor of a 4-day work week at their current employer. It's critical to learn who candidates are and what motivates them and help get them a package that is coveted.

Candidates will only consider your company if you can offer them something compelling. This is true at all levels of organizations and across all job functions. In the long era ahead with predicted labor shortages, you'll need to compete on a variety of fronts. Treating candidates as if they are one of many and they should be lucky to hear from you when you're ready will no longer fly. Many candidates these days have multiple options, and your top talent who you thought were happy are suddenly resigning before you can blink.

It's difficult to recruit because there are so many relationships to manage, and it can be emotional at times. Use that emotion and that human connection to your advantage — help get your candidates what they really desire. That \$10K that you absolutely didn't think you could negotiate for might actually be much less valuable to them versus time and course fees for a certification they want. The overall cost might be half but showing an interest in what they desire and making it happen matters greatly.

When was the last time you asked a passive candidate who would be perfect for a role at your company what it would take for them to consider making a move? How many times did you actually try to make it happen for them before you got to an offer? Did you think about what they asked for after they ghosted you and wonder why you didn't just push for them? It's not always going to work out perfectly — some candidates surely push the boundaries when they know they are the right fit for the role. If their ask is reasonable, it probably means there is a glimmer of interest in what you can offer them, and you might have a shot at bringing some amazing talent into your team (the best feeling in the world for recruiting professionals — right!?!).

In today's marketplace — you'll lose candidates if you don't advocate for them. Help in any way you can — if that means coaching them on how to ask for more money, time off, paid benefits, development investment, etc. Help them prepare for a potential counteroffer so they feel comfortable saying no to it or showing them financial projections that help build your case. There is so much you can do to show that while you work for a company, you are also on their side. Earning candidate trust and showing you can advocate and advise them too is a competitive edge you will desperately need — consider how you're doing at it today and the potential you have to do better. ✪



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