

A man with dark hair and a beard is smiling broadly while looking at a tablet computer. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a grey t-shirt. The background is a blurred office setting. The image is framed by a purple graphic with concentric lines.

**How to stand out in a
candidate-driven market.**
Your guide to driving success

indeed flex



UK employers must do more to attract talent

Despite impressive economic recovery, UK businesses find themselves in a challenging spot as we enter 2022. Consumer demand is continually growing, but many companies are struggling to find candidates willing to work for them – with some having to turn away business¹.

This has radically shifted the dynamic of recruitment, with struggling businesses now expected to win over candidates with bigger pay packets and better benefits.

Brexit has dramatically reduced the volume of candidates for low-skilled jobs, with 200,000 foreign workers leaving the UK in 2020². But the pandemic has played an even bigger role, as the so-called ‘Great Resignation’ signalled workers’ unwillingness to take on poor paying, low-status jobs.

The takeaway is simple:

Businesses need to leverage everything in their power to stand out in such an aggressively talent-driven market.

¹ www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jul/08/uk-employers-struggle-with-worst-labour-shortage-since-1997 ² www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-17/u-k-lost-200-000-eu-nationals-as-brexit-and-the-pandemic-struck

The talent market in 2022

In late 2021, UK job vacancies hit an

all-time high³

There are currently

434,500

more vacancies than there were pre-pandemic

1 in 4

employers expect 'hard to fill' roles to increase in 2022⁴

What is a candidate-driven market?

A 'candidate-driven market' is one where there are more jobs that need filling than workers willing to take them. Rather than candidates trying to 'win' roles, the onus is placed on employers to convince candidates they are the best choice.



³ startups.co.uk/news/great-resignation-prompts-record-uk-jobs-vacancies/ ⁴ www.cipd.co.uk/about/media/press/151121hard-fill-vacancies-increase



Five ways employers can stand out

1 Get smart on compensation

The quickest way to differentiate yourself as an employer is simple: offer candidates more money. This has been the most common approach during the staffing shortages of 2021, with sectors like hospitality, logistics and construction all seeing hefty increases to the average advertised wage⁵.

But this approach is not so straightforward. Higher wages for new starters can create resentment amongst existing employees who may feel they are being shortchanged or undervalued. It is also a relatively costly approach, and many businesses simply do not operate on wide enough margins to make large wage increases feasible.

Employers need to take a smarter approach

First, they should make it a policy to advertise wages transparently on all job ads.

While there are potential downsides to this, it promotes a sense of transparency which candidates appreciate. The numbers are clear: job ads that include a salary range receive over 30% more applicants⁶; those that don't advertise it experience a drop-off rate of between 25-35%⁷.

Second, they should focus more on factors such as benefits and bonuses.

Workers increasingly emphasise factors such as flexible working, increasing control over their schedule, and features that will help improve their wellbeing and work-life balance.

EY has found that more than half of employees would quit their job if it didn't offer flexibility⁸, and 93% of workers say that benefits programmes influence their decision when considering a job⁹.

Employers who use this approach will stand out from competitors who only offer financial incentives to employees.

5. www.ft.com/content/865ffa54-5ed1-4a0e-ae33-8e3bbdf1b212 6. www.payscale.com/compensation-today/2015/02/should-you-include-salary-in-job-advertisements 7. www.jobsite.co.uk/ 8. www.ey.com/en_gl/news/2021/05/more-than-half-of-employees-globally-would-quit-their-jobs-if-not-provided-post-pandemic-flexibility-ey-survey-finds 9. www.thehrdirector.com/business-news/workplace/flexible-working-and-employee-well-being-are-key-to-retaining-top-talent-in-2021/



2 Be bold with your employer brand

86% of HR professionals say recruitment is becoming more like marketing¹⁰, and employers need to embrace this. Because as candidates become more selective, factors such as workplace culture and reputation become ever more important.

The biggest obstacle candidates experience when searching for a job is not knowing what it's like to work at an organisation¹¹. In a candidate-driven market, workers are looking for reasons to dismiss a potential employer. Employers that fail to evoke a sense of what it is like to work for them will be quickly overlooked.

Many businesses respond to candidate-driven markets by focusing purely on the candidate. But this misunderstands the dynamic completely. Candidates want to work for confident businesses that they believe in and trust. And employers must therefore never be shy about selling their business's culture, values and vision.

- **The easiest win in this domain is job ads.**

Most listings are generic and dull; employers don't want to scare candidates off. But in reality, this flattens the market and adds to employee uncertainty. Simply offering something more interesting or unusual will help immediately differentiate your brand, capturing candidates' attention and giving them a sense of your business's personality.

- **Employers should consider employer branding a holistic process.**

But your brand values and employee proposition should be emphasised throughout the entire recruitment process - from job ads and website copy to interviews and onboarding.



What is an employer brand?

Your employer brand is the reputation you hold specifically as an employer. What is your workplace culture like? What is your employee value proposition? It is generally built upon factors such as social media engagement, recruitment collateral, word-of-mouth reputation and awards recognition.

10. www.icims.com/hire-expectations-institute/for-employers/ebook-recruitment-marketing-fad-or-future 11. business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/talent-solutions/global/en_us/c/pdfs/ultimate-list-of-employer-brand-stats.pdf



3 Move fast and be decisive

One of the most common candidate complaints is the length of the recruitment process. The problem has only worsened during the pandemic, with complaints of ‘never-ending’ interview processes and a general lack of transparency about the progression of applications¹².

80%

of candidates will choose one job offer over another based on the relationships they formed as part of the recruitment journey¹³.

Employers should make a conscious effort to combat these factors, streamlining their recruitment process and ensuring that they respond to applications, queries and requests as soon as possible. You should endeavour to provide feedback to candidates and stay in regular contact with any candidate you feel is promising.

According to IBM, 80% of candidates will choose one job offer over another based on the relationships they formed as part of the recruitment journey¹³. However, it is very difficult to build and maintain an authentic relationship with a candidate when your contact is sporadic and spread out over weeks or months.

Employers must therefore endeavour to move fast, and this will require a certain amount of decisiveness.

Part of the reason recruitment is such a long process is that employers take time making decisions. But by delaying the process, they increase the risk of drop-offs or competitors stealing strong candidates.

12. www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210727-the-rise-of-never-ending-job-interviews 13. www.ibm.com/downloads/cas/YMOARJIG

4 Bring a human element to recruitment

Much of the current state of recruitment has been driven by candidates' sense that they are not sufficiently valued. From jumping through interview hoops to waiting weeks to hear back about a role, 'The Great Resignation' has highlighted the systemic power imbalance between employers and employees in the historically employer-driven market.

Businesses must address this fact head on, and introduce a far more personalised and human approach to recruitment. Make notes during interviews, to ensure you remember important personal information and can refer back to it later in the process; communicate in a personable, friendly way.

A key factor here is transparency

Employers should respect candidates' time, and be honest about the likely outcome of the process. It will also help to discuss potential barriers to employment directly; this will help candidates feel they are being treated fairly and ultimately avoid miscommunication.

Employers should also consider personalising roles

Rather than hiring based on a pre-existing criteria, collaborate with your candidates to develop a job description and title that you feel fits their particular skills. This will encourage them to feel invested in your business and respected, as well as differentiating you from competitors who expect candidates to simply tick boxes.





5 Embrace temporary working

The candidate-driven market is always specific to a particular industry. It is not that there aren't enough workers in the UK to fill your roles; it is that there aren't enough workers who want to work in your particular industry.

The solution to this is to reimagine the kinds of talent you search for, and how you bring them into your business. There are huge pools of untapped talent that businesses could appeal to, such as students, retirees and workers who would like a side-gig to supplement their main income.



There are nearly 1.7 million temporary workers in the UK today, and businesses that are able to develop the right infrastructure will be able to plug gaps in their talent supply with ease.

Leaders are already waking up to this: 77% of executives believe freelance and temp workers will substantially replace full-time employees within the next five years¹⁴, and 32% of organisations are replacing full-time employees with temporary workers as a cost-saving measure¹⁵.

Few businesses have fully embraced these possibilities yet though. Just 35% of companies currently include a temporary workforce as part of their strategic planning, meaning this is still an ample opportunity to use this approach to differentiate your brand.

The key will be to develop a comprehensive system of sourcing talent.

The 'blended workforce' offers an ideal model: full-time workers are supplemented with temporary workers from an established and reliable roster. This enables businesses to respond to changing demand rapidly, and save huge amounts of time and money on recruitment and onboarding.

¹⁴. www.cxcglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-2021_CXC_CW_Global_Trends_Report-1.pdf ¹⁵. www.cxcglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-2021_CXC_CW_Global_Trends_Report-1.pdf

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