

# Staffing Decisions™

Mansfield, OH  
419.522.2895

Wooster, OH  
330.262.2662



[www.staffingpartnersoh.com](http://www.staffingpartnersoh.com)

Marion, OH  
740.751.4997

## More-Effective Employee Referral Programs

**G**ood employees are hard to find. One option that many companies use to increase the odds of a successful hire is an employee-referral program. The advantage is that an employee you know and trust can vouch for the competence and work habits of the job candidate. It sounds so simple.

Then why do some referral programs get results, while others languish?

### *Stimulating Referrals*

Elissa Tucker, with Houston-based APQC, tracks the percentage of organizations that use specific approaches to support employee referral programs.

Almost half of the responders used one or more of the following methods of stimulating referrals:

- Employees nominate specific candidates for positions;
- Technology enablement;
- Financial incentives;
- Employees share their networks with recruiters;
- Employees broadcast opportunities on their social media networks;
- Candidates refer other candidates.

Financial incentives are not always needed, says Zach Townsend, HR manager with Verified First, a background and drug screening company in Meridian, ID.

"Often, our employees generate referrals without needing any incentive because we have a great culture and they share their experience on their social media," he says. "Our Facebook page is filled with the fun events and programs we have for the staff. Our employees have become evangelists for careers at Verified First just by showing they enjoy working here."

### *Boosting Effectiveness*

There are additional practices that can boost the effectiveness of your program. Muhammad Younas, general manager of Talentera, an applicant tracking software firm, advises:

- Educate hiring managers, not only about how the program works, but also about the results it has been generating.



- Keep it simple, making it easy for employees to submit referrals and you to make sure employees are given credit and earn promised incentives.
- Publicize incentives and highlight employees who participate, even if their referrals aren't hired.
- Partner with the marketing department to further spread the word.
- Keep it fresh: Employee interest may decline if the program isn't regularly updated and communicated.
- Be transparent. Keep employees involved in the hiring process.
- Leverage technology to streamline the process.

### *Unconscious Bias*

One potential unintended consequence of relying on employee referral programs is the potential for unconscious bias. A Payscale report, reported in Forbes by Georgene Huang, found that referral hiring programs tend to benefit Caucasian men more than any other demographic. Women of color were most negatively affected. ▲

### For More Information:

**Entrepreneur: Seven Ways to Make Your Employee Referral Program Successful**  
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/304233>

**SHRM: How to Get More People to Use Your Employee Referral Program**  
<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/employee-referral-programs.aspx>

### **Hot on the Inside**

**New Recruitment Ideas** ..... 2  
Recruiting in low-unemployment times demands new ideas. Innovation in all phases of the recruiting/hiring process are needed.

**Changing the HR Toolkit** ..... 3  
Outdated HR practices may be holding you back. Here are some suggestions for putting more-effective tools at your disposal.

**Building Trust** ..... 3  
Not much is more important in employee relations than building mutual trust. Here are some ideas.

# Thinking Differently About Recruitment

With an unemployment rate hovering below 4%, how should recruiters, HR professionals and hiring managers think differently about recruitment? What are the trends that you need to be aware of?

## Casting the 'Unusual' Net

A tighter labor market has recruiters thinking more creatively about where to find talent. Some are turning to usually spurned groups like ex-offenders and recovering addicts to fill open roles.

That may be too drastic or risky for some employers, but there are other ways to compete in the war for talent.

## A Focus on the 'Soft Stuff'

Why do employees choose to accept a job offer from an organization? Money? Perks? Prestige?

No, says Dana Deibel, who has been an HR executive in several Fortune 500 companies. What really matters to employees, she says, is the relationships with their supervisors or managers, work/life balance, meaningful work, cooperation with coworkers, and trust in the workplace culture.

"The company culture and the feel of the organization can make or break it for a job candidate," she says. "Think about it. We generally spend more time with our colleagues than our loved ones." It's important, she says, for employees to enjoy the environment they work in, feel they are being heard, their opinions asked for and to trust their leaders – and to have fun.

## Start With the Job Description

The job description is a necessary evil for many companies and is generally filled with lists of specific job requirements. Important, yes, but usually not most important to employees you are trying to recruit.

Lynda Spiegel, founder of Rising Star Resumes, says that more-effective HR leaders pique the interest of interesting candidates by mentioning the *traits* required for the job, rather than specific skills that can be readily taught.

Today's job candidates are increasingly looking for work that will feed their souls as well as their pocketbooks. Of course, you still have to make sure that the job description is up to date and provides a realistic job preview.

## Use Interviewing Innovations

According to LinkedIn Talent Solution's report, Global Recruiting Trends 2018, the most useful interviewing innovations are:

- Soft skills assessments – 59%
- Job auditions – 54%
- Meeting in casual settings – 53%
- Virtual reality assessments – 28%
- Video interviews – 18%

"As we look ahead to more innovations cropping up, companies will rely on traditional interviews less and less," the report says.

## Show Them the Possibilities

During the recruitment process it's important to show candidates that the organization's culture is aligned with their interests and needs, not only in the jobs they're applying for, but for possible career paths as well.

Are career paths evident at hire? Have others been promoted from within? If yes, point it out, Deibel says. "Find out who has aspirations, and what they need to do to get there. Don't ever let them feel they are in a dead-end job."

## Act Fast

Employers once had the luxury of taking their time when evaluating candidates. No more. You need to source, evaluate and make offers as quickly as

possible. You're likely not the only company the candidate is considering.

If you want to win the prize, act fast. Develop an efficient hiring process that quickly moves candidates from step to step to step until you have the accepted offer in hand. ▲

## Take the Pressure Off Your People . . .

A growing economy has put so much pressure on everyone's day-to-day lives that many cannot focus on what is important anymore.

If you and/or your people are "crazy busy" with an overflowing to do list, and have been in that state for a while now, think about taking some of the pressure off. You could bring in a temp assistant (even a part-time temp) so you all can get home for dinner at a decent hour now and again.

When it comes to bringing in temp help and thinking about how much is it going to cost, I'd like to challenge you to look at it a bit differently: Figure out what your time is worth and what it costs you NOT to get help.

Every business struggles in some way during a growth stage, and most departments are trying to do it all themselves. What is your typical day? Where could you better spend your time?

With another holiday season just around the corner, work up your end-of-year agenda, and then let's talk more about how we can help you stay on track in spite of day-to-day pressures and dilutions. **We're here to help.**

## For More Information:

### Business 2 Community: The Role of Culture in Recruiting and Retaining Talent

<https://www.business2community.com/human-resources/the-role-of-culture-in-recruiting-and-retaining-talent-02086250>

### Fortune: How to Profit From the Ultra-Tight Job Market Right Now

<http://fortune.com/2018/01/18/job-market-interview-hiring-tips/>

### USA Today: More Summer Jobs Turn Permanent as Employers Struggle to Find Good Workers

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/07/30/summer-jobs-turn-permanent-bosses-struggle-find-good-workers/843255002/>

# Two Things to Remove From Your HR Toolkit

It's not your grandparents' parents' or even older siblings' workplace, yet many of the same HR practices that thrived decades ago are being practiced. What outdated tools should come out of your HR toolkits and which new ones should be added?

## #1 Outdated Policies

"Excessive policy-making drains the life out of organizations," says blogger Dan Rockwell in a Leadership Freak blog post. While he acknowledges that policies are necessary and useful, especially in highly regulated industries, he warns that too much of a good thing can:

- Lower engagement
- Hamper creativity
- Impede progress
- Eliminate thinking
- Quench passion
- Create busy work
- Protect and promote the inept

Policies tend to be pervasive and expand over time, with more and more policies piled on to address emerging issues internally and externally, without any being eliminated.

## Zero-Based Policy Development

Just as zero-based budgeting can help managers focus on what is needed today and less on what has been done historically, a zero-based approach to policy development can identify opportunities to clean up HR's toolkits.

Larry Sternberg, coauthor of *Managing to Make a Difference* (Wiley, 2017), recommends getting beyond policies, practices and procedures by asking the following questions:

- What does the Board of Directors value?
- What do our customers value?
- What do our employees value?

Once those answers are known, he says, "HR can pursue strategies and initiatives that support the creation



of value. That's how HR can become relevant."

Most tools that HR departments use have been in existence for decades, so the emphasis can't be on only removing a tool from the box. You've got to reinvent the box. To do this, consider partnering with strategic leaders across the organization to understand the core business challenges and work to invent a new toolkit, piece by piece. This can take time, but in today's market it's essential to staying ahead of the pack.

## #2 The Annual Performance Review

In addition to outdated policies, experts point to annual performance reviews as another practice that may not only be outdated but also ineffective. Melina Gillies, an HR specialist with the Australian business coaching firm, SalesUp!, says, "The problem with yearly reviews, 360-degree feedback or forced ranking is that it is generally only addressed by managers trying to hit a deadline and tick off a box." Great leaders, she says, know that feedback is continuous, and are empathetic and receptive to feedback.

### For More Information:

#### **Forbes: Can HR become agile?**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2018/03/11/can-hr-become-agile/>

#### **Harvard Business Review: Embracing agile**

<https://hbr.org/2016/05/embracing-agile>

Roger Ferguson, author of *Finally! Performance Assessment That Works*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014) which introduces his Big 5 Performance Management system, agrees. He says that the process was born in the 1900s and was originally designed to help engineers maximize manufacturing efficiency.

What are the alternatives? Ferguson cites the example of two Fortune 500 companies that have been using an alternative system for 15 years. Each month, employees submit half-page production reports to their managers describing two things: their five most significant accomplishments from the previous month and their five highest priorities for the current month. This process takes no more than 10 minutes per month but gives employees the chance to tell their story, and claim credit for their contributions. Managers then have the opportunity to respond with affirmation, praise, coaching, or even correction, redirecting the team member's efforts.

Ferguson cites five results of this non-traditional approach:

- Improving both quality and quantity of coaching.
- Enabling employees to feel more ownership of the process.
- Helping managers hold people accountable, always knowing who is working-on what.
- Saving organizations time and money, improving ROI and helping to drive results.
- Focusing everyone on their highest priorities.
- Creating better documentation for legal defensibility. ▲

*Staffing Decisions* is sent to you for your information and enjoyment. Neither *Staffing Decisions* nor the sponsoring institution is providing financial or legal advice. In making judgments related to editorial material in *Staffing Decisions*, always consult your own financial and legal advisers.

Questions regarding editorial material in *Staffing Decisions* may be directed to the sponsoring company whose address appears on the last page, or to Merlin Associates, Inc., PO Box 3910, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

E-mail: [merlin@merlinassociatesny.com](mailto:merlin@merlinassociatesny.com)  
©2018 Merlin Associates, Inc.

**Staffing Partners**  
**355 Park Avenue West**  
**Mansfield, OH 44906**

## *Trust*

# Critical Currency in a Competitive Job Market

**R**esearch by the New York PR firm Edelman tells us that trust in major institutions is at an all-time low. Its 2018 Annual Trust Barometer revealed a nine point drop in trust among the general public and a 23 point drop among the “informed public.”

Says CEO Richard Edelman: “The United States is enduring an unprecedented crisis of trust.”

Distrust trickles its way down into the workplace. What role does, or should, HR play in building and sustaining trust in the workplace?

## **Good Leadership = Trust**

“The culture of trust starts with leadership, period,” says Keri Ohlrich, coauthor of *The Way of the HR Warrior* (LifeTree Media, 2018). “HR can help coach and advise, but cannot change the culture if the leaders are toxic,” she says.

Nonetheless, HR plays a critical role in building and sustaining trust by focusing on fundamental qualities, says Ohlrich, who uses the acronym CHARGE to describe what’s needed: Courage, Humility, Accuracy, Resilience, Goal-oriented and Exemplary. “When an HR professional embodies these qualities, they will

become better business partners, better advocates for the employees and, therefore, more leaders and employees would feel safe telling HR what is really going on.”

Joshua Evans is a corporate culture expert who has worked with such companies as Holiday Inn and Hewlett-Packard to help create climates of trust and engagement. Establishing HR as an “advocacy department,” he says, is a great way to help build trust within the organization.

## ***Be Trustworthy***

To build trust, HR and management leaders must actually be trustworthy.

“Employees lend their trust to a workplace that cares for their professional, personal and emotional needs,” says Ketan Kapoor, CEO of Metti, an HR technology company in India.

In addition, he says, helping employees to feel valued is critical. “Employees tend to lose trust when they feel that their contributions are undervalued or the growth trajectory has become hazy.”

## ***Building Trust***

Trust is built over time, based on



interactions employees have with each other. Having frequent opportunities for employees to come together with other employees and, particularly, HR and company leadership, can help to foster a healthy working environment.

“You should conduct frequent interaction sessions where every employee’s advice is heard and acted upon,” Kapoor recommends.

In addition, Evans suggests, look for opportunities to help employees make connections outside of the workplace. “Another great way HR can build trust is by facilitating team-focused activities,” he says. “Whether it’s charitable giving, entertainment activities or external trainings, HR has the ability to get teams working together outside of a business environment.”

Importantly, building a trusting workplace environment is a journey, not a destination – and it takes time. Through consistency, commitment and communication, HR professionals can help organizational leaders gain and maintain trust among employees. ▲

## **For More Information:**

**Entrepreneur: This is How Good Leaders Build Trust With Their Teams**

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/318011>

**HRDive: Survey: 70% of Tech Employees Don't Trust HR**

<https://www.hrdive.com/news/survey-70-of-tech-employees-dont-trust-hr/530303/>