

## Hook, Line & Offer: How to Catch & Keep Your Top Talent

Emily Schelle, Managing Director  
Drew Tye Ruby-Howe, Recruiter



**More than ever, job seekers are in an increasingly advantageous position** to secure the professional opportunity of their dreams. This candidate-driven market is powerfully changing the way organizations must attract, recruit, and retain their top talent.

**To further understand the challenges employers face, let's take a hard look at the data:** At the beginning of 2016, Careers In Nonprofits surveyed job seekers in the DC Metro Area and Greater Chicagoland, inquiring about the professional steps they were most likely to take between now and June 2016. 211 job seekers answered with the following job-driven priorities:

- **86%** of candidates are looking for a new job
- **7%** are looking to make a career shift into the nonprofit sector
- **3%** are seeking a promotion at their current organization
- **2%** plan to ask for a pay increase
- And less than **1%** intend on going back to school

These statistics exemplify that **6 out of 7 job seekers** are open to a new job, while fewer of those individuals are willing to have a conversation with their employer about internal advancement in the form of a promotion and/or a raise. Whether or not you or your organization have lost great talent to other organizations, **the reality is clear:** nonprofits must ramp up their recruitment and retention practices in order to maintain their successful, competitive edge.

So, when it comes to hiring in today's market, what are considered **best practices?**

**“86% of candidates are looking for a new job.”**

Let's Break It Down:

- **Attraction:** As a hiring entity, it is extremely important to communicate your organization's dedication to your mission and enthusiastically describe your workplace culture to desirable candidates. Employees need to know they are entering a healthy, engaging, and driven workplace, and likewise they are heavily tuned in to the ways in which you are driving your mission forward and portray yourself to donors and members.

The most effective ways to attract potential candidates is through your job postings, social media pages, and organization's website. In this digitally-reliant age, your organization's presence on these platforms is a critical factor of captivating the talent you seek.

Here are a few questions to consider: Once job seekers visit your website or LinkedIn page, how easy is it for them to locate your job postings? Regarding those postings, do your position descriptions strategically and effectively appeal to your ideal candidates? Are you abreast of the most popular methods job seekers are using to locate job postings?

These questions need to be more than a consideration, as they will help you create a compelling, concrete action plan around how to recruit your top talent. **If you don't, your competitor will.**

- **Recruitment:** Does it take your organization longer than 30 days to fill a job opening for your entry to mid-level positions? Or longer than 60 days to fill your Director and Executive level roles? **If you answered YES to either of these, chances are that you need to look into your hiring process and reevaluate the steps you've been following.** After 30 days of radio silence from your organization, candidates are likely to lose interest in your opportunity. If these candidates are actively job searching, they will **secure another position with an organization that showed greater commitment to a streamlined hiring process.**

As candidates gain even greater leverage in the market, many organizations experience the shared challenge of losing talent to more competitive salary ranges.

As presented in our CNP Academy: Salary Negotiations Workshop, **employers can present more attractive benefits packages, increased vacation time, and more flexible schedules** to get in their candidates' good graces – all without having to break the bank. As we've so frequently observed, candidates now exhibit an increased desire for different benefits, like telecommuting from home and obtaining professional certifications supplemented by their employer. So, if your budget can't satisfy a \$10,000 salary increase for your dream candidate, make sure your benefits package advertises other attractive features.

Before scheduling interviews with potential candidates, employers must be clear with themselves on what steps they will take in the process, as well as the places they are willing to bend and shake when it comes to salary, benefits, and "perks" offered.

**In short, plan ahead.**



**"... keeping your staff happily engaged can lead to significantly lower turnover rates."**

Here are the major things to consider: How many rounds of interviews will you conduct? What is your target date to fill a position? How much more in salary can you offer to your dream candidate? If that candidate wants additional vacation time, are you in a position to offer them those 4 additional days? **Answer these questions and take action in advance, and you increase your chances of acquiring and keeping your top talent.**

- **Staff Engagement and Retention:**

Whether you already have your dream team or you are looking to hire new employees, **keeping your staff happily engaged can lead to significantly lower turnover rates.** In order to create a foolproof retention strategy, organizations must answer these essential questions: Do you create opportunities for staff to easily access their managers in a time of challenge or frustration? When they do connect with managers, are those managers invested in hearing about a staff member's career and salary goals?

**It is equally important to make time and space for these conversations with your employees as it is in an effort to secure your next major donor.** A disengaged staff can significantly jeopardize your bottom line, donor relations, and the overall health of your organization.

## Success is 80% psychology and 20% mechanics.

While all of this may seem daunting (and sometimes it truly can be), it is times like these that we as employers must remember that ever-present principle that **success is 80% psychology and 20% mechanics**. There ARE measures that nonprofits can (and do) implement to maintain a level-headed, positive work environment for everyone, no matter what change or transition comes your way.

As highlighted in our Resilience Advantage Workshop, organizations that embrace challenge and stay calm and solution-focused are undoubtedly winning in today's "War on Talent".

So, when your staff experiences a bump in the road, no matter how large – don't forget these best practices. By promoting your mission, strategically marketing your opportunities, listening to your staff, and remaining resilient through it all, you will set yourself and your team up for many successful years ahead.

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**What's next?** We will break down the cost-effective ways to keep your staff happy in their roles without breaking your budget.

Stay tuned, stay strong, and keep an eye out for our **quarterly whitepapers**.

