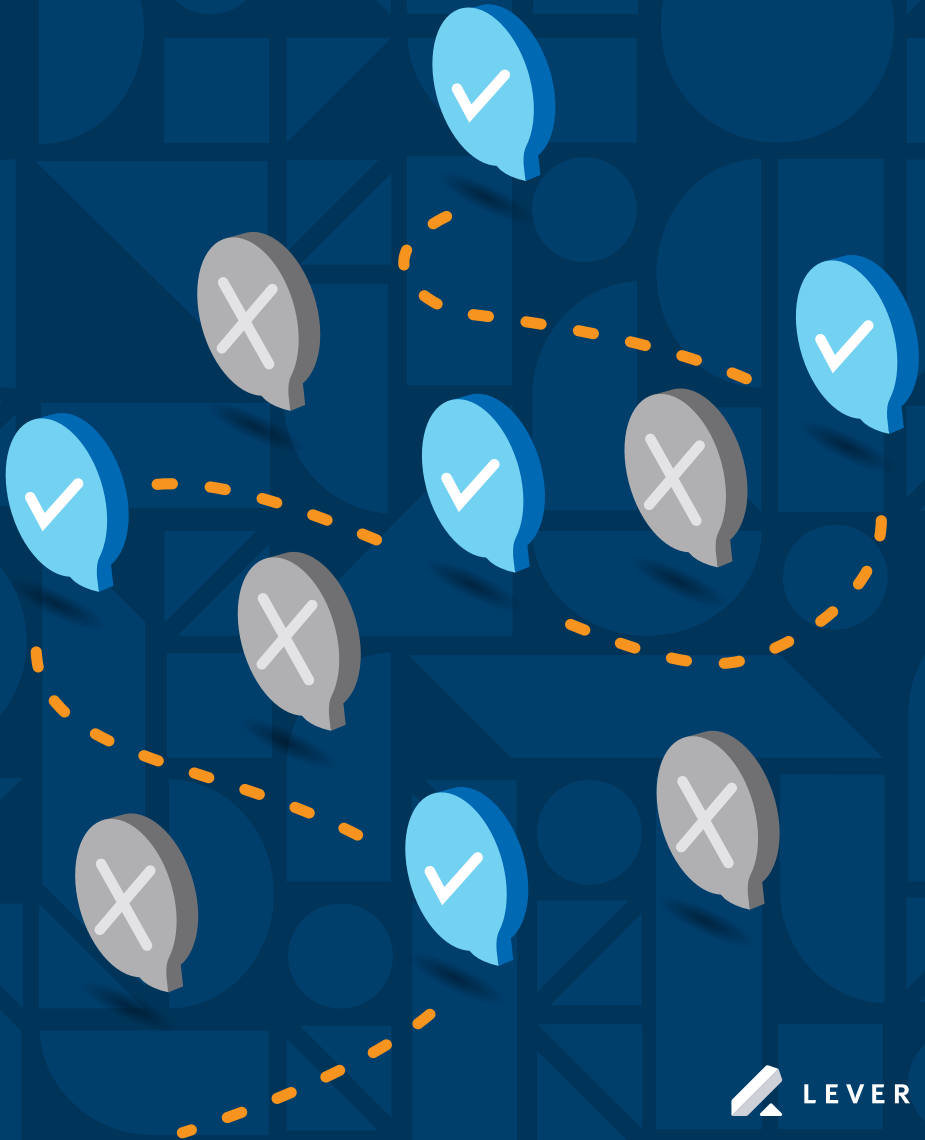# 10 Do's and Don'ts for Communicating with Candidates

LEVER

Communication with candidates is at the heart of the recruiting process.

According to a 2018 Glassdoor survey, the #1 aspect of the job application process that job seekers find most important is **clear and regular communication**, listed by 58% of those surveyed.[1]

The words you use throughout the process—from the job description all the way to the follow up with rejected candidates—has an impact that ripples into your organization and beyond.

With clear, respectful and frequent candidate communication, you can:

- Attract the best candidates to your open roles who are excited to work for your company.

- Show candidates that you'd be a great place to work, increasing the likelihood that gold-medal candidates will accept your offers.

- Keep your recruiting pipeline seeded with silver-medal candidates who may be a fit for a role at your company in the future.

- Collect feedback on the interview process for future improvements.

Here are our top ten do's and don'ts for great candidate communication.

01
Job Descriptions

Don't post generic job descriptions

A bland job description that just includes a list of skills and required experience does nothing to set the role apart. In a competitive job market, it's essential to put your best foot forward. When 72% of hiring managers say they provide clear job descriptions, but only 36% of candidates say they are provided with clear job descriptions[2], it's time to change your approach.

Do bring job descriptions to life

Performance-based job descriptions focus on what the person hired for the role will DO on the job rather than skills and requirements. Start with the big picture (the main purpose of the role), then write out achievements in a series of "you will…" statements. For example, "you will design our landing pages/launch a new product line/etc."

Hiring!

Impact description:

WITHIN 3 MONTHS, YOU'LL

- Evaluate and recommend to CMO a reference tool that will enable a centralized and easily accessible system to view, action and manage customer references.
- Build out five external customer references that can be used in marketing programs, public relations, and analyst activities.

02
Inclusive Language

Don't use language that will weed out diverse candidates

It's been scientifically proven that gendered language discourages women from applying.[3] Words like "rockstar," "ninja," and "dominate," can make women less likely to apply. In addition, women are most likely to apply only if they meet 100% of the job requirements, while men apply when they meet only 60% of the qualifications.[4] Ensure you aren't disqualifying women and that job descriptions are inclusive to all genders and ethnicities.

Do use inclusive language

If you're trying to make your organization more gender-balanced, adjust your job descriptions. Words like "collaborate," "adaptable," and "understand" are more appealing to women. Try out the Gender Decoder for Job Ads or an augmented writing service like Textio Hire. When evaluating applications, watch for any bias around hiring for potential with male vs. female candidates, as well as other biases that might exist.

03
Employee Stories

Don't make statements about diversity and inclusion without backing it up

A blanket EEOC statement tells diverse candidates nothing about how they'll fit into your company. Stock photography of diverse workers posted on your careers website doesn't work either. Diverse candidates want to learn about real people like themselves.

Do tell employee stories

A feeling of belonging happens one employee at a time. By posting the stories of various workers at your company, candidates will get a sense of what it's really like to work there. These can be short videos, blog interviews, or other features spotlighting employees and their stories.

Read on the Lever Blog:

Finding a company and community that celebrates "untraditional backgrounds" in tech

04
Requirements

Don't promote ageism by placing upper limits on experience

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) forbids age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older. Not everyone aims to be a manager by a certain age or even stay in the same field their whole career. A phrase like "5–7 years experience" could eliminate great candidates over 30, not to mention older workers who have changed careers.

Do keep requirements open so the right candidates apply

People seek different opportunities at different times in life. Changing your requirements to something like, "at least 5 years experience" could open up the candidate pool to skilled workers of any age. These subtle cues go a long way toward creating inclusivity.
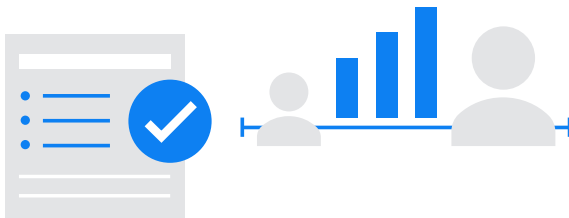
05
Follow Up

Don't put rejected candidates into a black hole

Ghosting candidates hurts employers. 80% of job seekers say they would be discouraged to consider other relevant job openings at a company that failed to notify them of their application status.[5]

Do follow up immediately with engaging content

Send applicants an immediate follow up email with links to content that educates them more about what it's like to work at your company. Also make sure to send personalized rejection emails at each level of screening as soon as you know the candidate is out of the running.

Pro Tip
Within Lever, you can archive or "snooze" candidates who might not be ready for a role today, but will be in the future. Snoozing a candidate hides their profile from your pipeline for a period of time before automatically reminding you to follow up.

06
Culture

Don't leave candidates guessing about your culture

A few pictures of company parties and a list of values isn't necessarily going to give your candidates a feeling about what it's like to work for you. Candidates want a real sense of whether working with you is a good fit for their goals and lifestyle.

Do create a candidate-focused content archive

Build an internal library of content by setting a goal over time to collect employee stories, blog posts, department updates, etc. Use this archive to pick the most relevant information to send to candidates when the time is right.

The Most Memorable Hiring Stories, Part 1

All's fair in love and war and…. Recruiting?

Read more…

Lever's Most Memorable Hiring Stories, Part 2

Job searching can be so extremely stressful. Submitting resume after resume for…

Read more…

07
Timing

Don't lose silver-medal candidates who could be a good fit in the future

Sometimes a candidate isn't the right fit for a particular role or team, but could be perfect for a different scenario, or after gaining additional experience. Closing the door on silver-medal candidates loses the investment both of you made in getting to know each other.

Do set up automatic emails to touch base with silver-medal candidates in 3–6 months

Use a tool that allows you to send an automatic follow-up email after a 3-, 6-, or 12-month period. Lever makes it easy to create templated emails that can be personalized and automated for when the time is right.

Pro Tip
Using Lever's internal search functionality, you can create customizable searches, depending upon the reason a candidate wasn't hired; e.g., candidate was qualified but timing wasn't right; or, candidate is someone you might consider in the future.

08
Referrals

Don't ignore employee referrals

Employee referrals can be a top source of hire, and are ten times as efficient as direct applicants.[6] Giving priority to referred applicants can help you hire faster.

Do enlist employee advocates

Employees who provide referrals can help inform how you communicate with these candidates. Ask referrers what they told the referred candidates about the company, and use this information as a springboard for your conversations. In addition, make it easy for employees to share open positions and company activity to their networks.
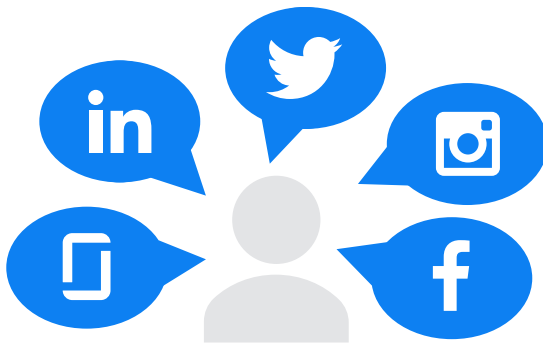
09
Interview Prep

Don't ask the wrong questions or the same questions in an interview

Oftentimes, interviewers can feel they are having the same interview 9-10 times over without the proper preparation in place for each and every role.

Prepare interview prep packets for each and every interviewer

Be sure you have a thoughtful interview process in place. Prepare hiring managers and interviewers with material prior to the interview and ensure all parties know their role and part in the hiring process.

10
Feedback

Don't ignore candidate feedback

Consistent themes in feedback will only perpetuate if not addressed. Interview reviews from disgruntled candidates can hurt your ability to recruit.

Do send out candidate surveys

The only way to learn how to improve is to gather feedback from those you serve and make a plan to change it. Include a link to a survey in follow-up emails. To more deeply understand how to improve, create different surveys for candidate status: rejected, withdrawn, hired, or declined offer.

Lever provides a complete recruiting solution

| Source & attract | Manage & schedule | Interview & evaluate | Offer & hire | Report & analyze | Archive & rediscover |

Communicating for the greater good

The effort you spend on clear, respectful, and informative communication with candidates sets the stage for a positive experience with new hires. Not only that, it will extend your reputation with rejected candidates as well as facilitate future hiring efforts with silver-medal candidates. The activities of optimizing job descriptions, showing your culture and diverse workforce with employee stories, and gathering and acting on feedback all contribute to more effective hiring at scale.

Lever helps improve candidate communication by streamlining candidate workflows, capturing interviewer feedback, and setting up automated emails.

Contact us for a demo today.

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3. Danielle Gaucher and Justin Friesen, Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2011

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5. Workplace Trends, Candidate Experience Study, June 14, 2016

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Lever's mission is to help the world hire with conviction.

Our Talent Acquisition Suite draws the entire team together to efficiently source, nurture, interview, and hire top talent through effortless collaboration. Incorporating best-of-breed automation, intelligence and design, Lever helps employers develop stronger candidate relationships in fewer clicks, by combining powerful ATS and CRM functionality in one modern platform—and measure the results with confidence.

Lever was founded in 2012 and supports the hiring needs of over 1,500 leading companies around the globe, including the teams at Netflix, KPMG NZ, Hot Topic, and Cirque du Soleil. With an overall gender ratio of 50:50, Lever is also fiercely committed to building a team culture that celebrates diversity and inclusion.

For more information, visit lever.co

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