The candidate experience

Recruitment can be a nerve-wracking experience for candidates, and there may be graduates applying for jobs at your organisation who have not applied to graduate-level positions before. There are a few small changes you can make to ensure they have a good experience, even if they are unsuccessful.

Necessity: All recruitment activities should serve the purpose of either filtering out candidates or assessing a competency, otherwise it is simply forcing candidates to jump through unnecessary hoops and may cause them to drop out of the process.

Timeframes: Be open and honest about timeframes and why you are asking candidates to complete specific tasks. Try and make offers within 48 hours, if possible. Delaying too long on your recruitment decision can result in losing good candidates who might be interviewing elsewhere. If you can, it's good practice to inform candidates as to when they should expect to hear from you.

Communication: Candidates will invest a lot of time and effort in your recruitment process. A quick email after each stage acknowledging the submission and informing them when they can expect to hear from you will reduce the number of queries from candidates and helps them feel valued.

Feedback: A positive way to ensure that all candidates – even unsuccessful ones – have gained something from applying for the role is to give them feedback. An efficient way of doing this is to do a grouped feedback email, such as the one below. This is still more than many companies will offer at the first stage of recruitment and will potentially encourage people to apply again in the future.

Universities: If you are working with a university, keep your contact up to date with progress. This will allow them to offer support, add value to the process and encourage them to strongly promote future opportunities with your business. Provide feedback which will help them guide their students and improve their services.

Please see below for an example of how to provide useful feedback to an initial application:

"The applications were scored out of 40 and fell into 4 different groups. A (1 -12), B (13 - 24), C (25 - 29) and D (30 +). Your overall score fell within Band B. Below we have provided some general feedback based on the Band B applications that we received.

Typically, the applications within this bracket:

- *Contained numerous spelling and grammatical errors*
- *Did not tailor the CV to the role*
- *Listed skills but lacked evidence*
- *Provided a poorly structured or generic covering letter*

To help improve the quality of your future applications, we would highly recommend seeking advice from your university careers service."

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