

2012

CANDIDATE BEHAVIOR

TODAY'S CANDIDATES ARE CHANGING
THE RULES OF RECRUITING

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CANDIDATE BEHAVIOR 2012: TODAY'S CANDIDATES ARE CHANGING THE RULES OF RECRUITING

As part of its continuing work to provide the intelligence employers need to make smarter recruitment decisions, CareerBuilder recently partnered with Inavero to conduct the 2012 Candidate Behavior Study.

Results from the comprehensive survey of 1,078 full-time workers from both the U.S. and Canada highlight how today's job candidates approach the job search, what compels them to apply to certain companies over others and what it takes to engage them over the long term.

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Additional resources, including podcasts, infographic and video are presented at www.careerbuilder.com/candidatebehavior.



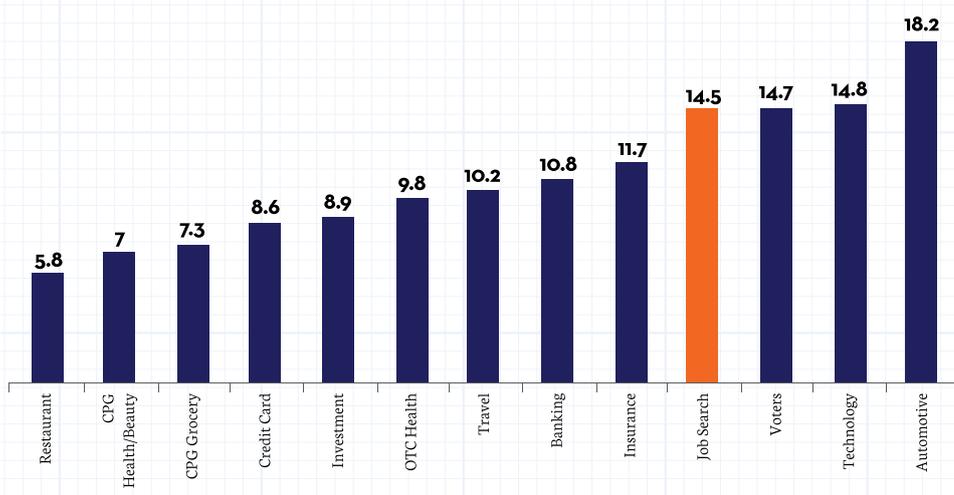
KEY TREND I

TODAY'S CANDIDATE: ALWAYS LOOKING, ALWAYS CONNECTED

“One of the major findings of this study is that candidate behavior is really about digital behavior,” says Kassandra Barnes, Content and Research Manager at CareerBuilder. “Meaning, when you look at how candidates conduct job searches, it’s very similar to how consumers make purchasing decisions - it’s all done digitally.” Results from the survey indicate that candidates engage with your company’s brand way before they set foot through your doors. According to the survey, the job search process is constantly “on” with **74 percent of workers either actively searching for a new job or open to a new opportunity**.

The survey also found that, on average, **job candidates consult nearly 15 resources per job search** - including company career sites, Facebook, online job boards, employer review sites (such as Glassdoor.com), professional and personal networks and staffing and recruiting firms - before they even decide to apply to a job. “For candidates, looking for a job is a lot like making a major purchase - the research happens on a regular basis over a very long period of time before action is taken,” says Barnes. Thus, by the time candidates even get to the application process, they are already engaged and interested in the opportunity with your company.

Q: HOW MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE/RESOURCES DID YOU USE FOR EACH TYPE OF RESOURCE?



The results of the study are reminiscent of Google’s 2011 Zero Moment of Truth study, analyzing the factors that influence today’s consumer decisions. In its most basic definition, the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) refers to the moment a consumer decides to make a purchasing decision - and more often than not, it happens long before the consumer finds said product at the store.

Barnes says that the ZMOT is just as relevant to recruitment as it is to marketing. “It used to be that a consumer would go to the store and find something on the shelf for the first time and make the decision to purchase right then and there,” Barnes explains. “Today, however, thanks to technology that enables us to research and compare products - at any time of day, from anywhere - consumers are doing significant research on products before they even step into a store. Job candidates, we’re finding, are using this same approach to their job search.”

For employers, these findings underscore the need to put as much effort into “marketing” their job opportunities and employment brand as they do their products, services and consumer brand. Candidates are utilizing multiple platforms to interact with employers, search for opportunities and find out what it’s like to work at companies - and they’re doing so increasingly through social media and from their mobile devices. That means employers need to explore and take advantage of the many and various opportunities to connect with candidates these platforms afford.

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KASSANDRA BARNES

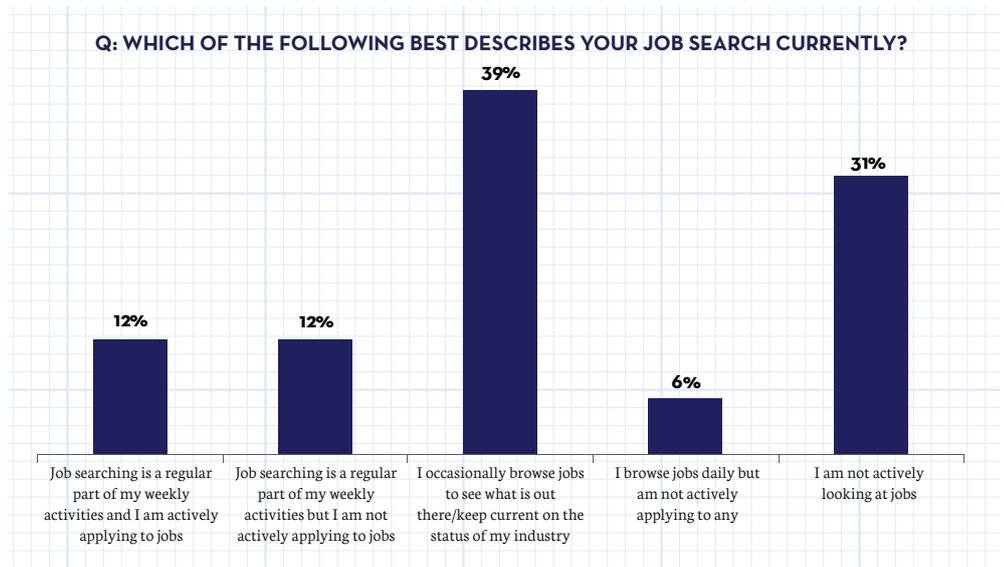
Content and Research Manager
CareerBuilder

KEY TREND 2 THE MYTH OF THE PASSIVE CANDIDATE

69%

of workers said searching for new opportunities is part of their “regular routine.”

Another major finding from the study is the indication that the vast majority of workers are almost always seeking new opportunities. A remarkable 74 percent of survey participants indicated that they were either actively searching for a new job or open to new opportunities, and **35 percent said they begin preparing for their next job within weeks of starting a new one.** When it comes to frequency, 69 percent of workers said that searching for new opportunities is part of their “regular routine,” whether they are employed or not, with 24 percent searching as frequently as once a week.



It’s also worth noting that these findings weren’t unique to any particular demographic segments. Workers of both gender and across all income levels, generations and backgrounds reported similar attitudes and behaviors.

Given these findings, Barnes says, “We need to get rid of the words ‘active’ versus ‘passive’. They just aren’t relevant words in the job search landscape anymore.” Instead of focusing their time, energy and effort on sourcing so-called “passive” candidates, employers need to shift their way of thinking, and understand that most workers – whether currently employed or not – are casually browsing opportunities and companies at any given time.

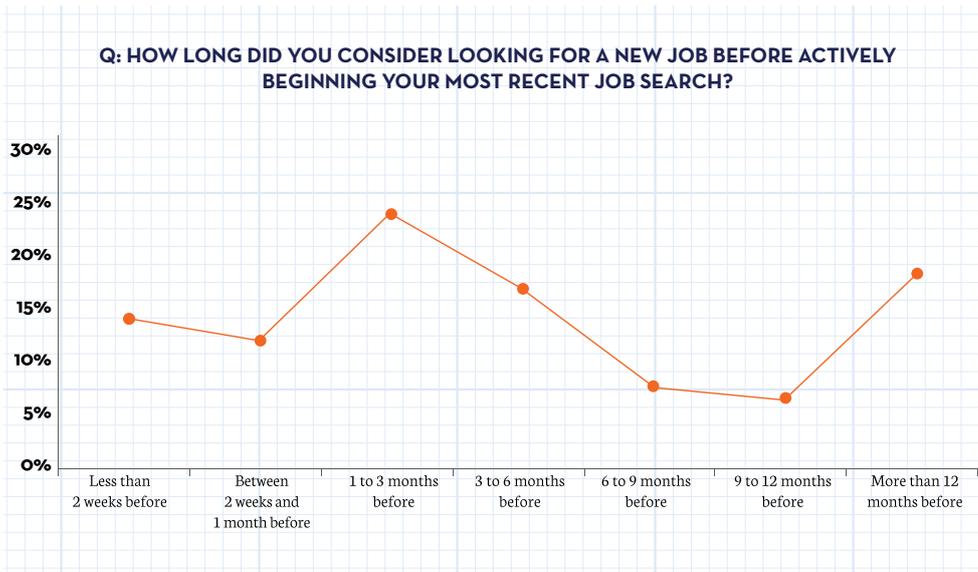
The other danger in using labels like “passive” and “active” to identify candidates is that it can inadvertently derail the candidate search, causing employers to miss out on perfectly qualified candidates. “Employers tend to think of active and passive candidates in terms of ‘bad’ and ‘good,’” Barnes says. “Yet, passive candidates are not necessarily better than active candidates.” If anything, passive candidates might even be less ambitious or willing to leave their current companies, so employers are doing themselves a disservice to ignore the so-called “active” candidates who have shown an interest in their companies.

Driving her point home, Barnes makes an analogy between recruitment and running for political office. “Why would you try to sway a Republican to be a Democrat – or vice versa – when you should really focus on re-energizing your base population?” she asks. For hiring managers, their “base” is active candidates, so it only works against them to ignore or discredit these candidates.

KEY TREND 3

CANDIDATE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: KEY IN COMPETITIVE LABOR MARKET

The study also brings to light exactly how long and intensive the job search process is for today's candidates. According to the survey, the average job candidate started his or her search 38 weeks ago, and **66 percent of respondents said they thought about looking for a new job within six months before actively searching.**



“These results tell us that candidate relationship management [CRM] is critical,” says Barnes. “If you want to keep your pipeline of talent engaged and interested in opportunities with your company, your talent acquisition strategy absolutely must include a CRM strategy.”

The key to an effective CRM strategy, Barnes says, is continuous engagement through multiple touch points. Good to know, then, that today's candidates consult up to 15 resources when searching for jobs, providing recruiters and hiring managers multiple ways to connect with candidates. Of course, having so many options can also be a burden for time- and resource-strapped hiring managers, who can only be in so many places at once.

Fortunately, employers also have options when it comes to tools that help manage these multiple channels. CareerBuilder's Talent Network, for example, is designed to help employers seamlessly integrate all of their CRM efforts - bringing together social media, SEO optimization, mobile recruiting, career site management and job distribution - as they increase their ROI. Regardless of how employers choose to approach candidate relationship management, however, the approach is less important than the fact that they actually do it.

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KEY TREND 4

MILLENNIAL CANDIDATE BEHAVIOR REVEALS INSIGHT FOR RECRUITERS

Millennials remain today's most elusive group of job candidates; yet new findings from the survey provide insight into this generation of workers (also known as Generation "Y") which will help employers understand and engage this group.

Ready for the Next New Thing

According to the survey, 79 percent of Millennials are either actively searching for new jobs or are open to new opportunities, regardless of their current employment status. This "always on" job search mentality highlights the need for employers to engage with Millennials on a continual basis, providing a compelling employee value proposition and defining their employment brands. That way, even those candidates who are just casually browsing opportunities keep you top of mind for consideration.

Millennial participants also reported that their job search process takes 28 weeks, on average, throughout which time they may consult up to 15 resources to search for opportunities and research employers. This finding further speaks to the importance of developing a strong employment brand, so your reputation as an employer of choice precedes you. "Given the considerable amount of time Millennials take looking at them, employers need to begin building relationships with candidates far before they walk in their doors," says Barnes.

Social, Mobile and Ready for a Challenge

Millennials are a very social group, the survey reveals. They are also very vocal about their job search experiences, as 92 percent say they discuss their job search experience with others, both in-person and through social media. This sharing nature can either be good or bad for a company's brand - depending on the type of job search and application experience they provide these candidates. Employers need to make sure they provide positive experiences for candidates (especially since a negative job search experience can adversely affect the bottom line), which is also all the more reason for employers to think about their CRM strategies.

Of all the survey participants, Millennials displayed the most willingness to relocate for the right position. The finding is significant for employers who might be quick to write off non-local applicants, as it suggests that these applicants might be worth a second glance. It also suggests that employers should not limit their recruitment marketing efforts to their local areas, (which will also increase the likelihood of finding qualified candidates for hard-to-fill positions).

Perhaps one of the reasons so many Millennials are open to a new opportunity in a new locale is that, according to the survey, only 23 percent of them "strongly agree" that they are satisfied in their careers. In fact, the average length of time they stay in one job is a mere three years - far less than their older counterparts. Understanding that so few of these workers feel satisfied in their current positions denotes the need for employers to think about how they can attract these candidates as well as re-engage their current Millennial employees.

While this type of "job-hopping" tends to have a negative connotation, employers should get used to it, as "the digital age shift has caused job-hopping to be the rule, rather than the exception," Barnes explains. Rather than worrying about whether your Millennial candidates will stay with you for the long-haul, Barnes suggests employers focus on engaging these candidates by offering the type of meaningful work projects, advancement opportunities, and flexible work environments they crave.

KEY TREND 5

GOOD APPLICANT EXPERIENCES GO A LONG WAY WITH IT & HEALTH CARE TALENT

As the need for quality technology and health care workers increases, it becomes increasingly crucial that employers find ways to engage these highly in-demand workers. For employers hoping to entice these candidates to apply for their opportunities, there is promising news: the vast majority of these candidates want to be recruited.

A remarkable 86 percent of IT/engineering workers who participated in the survey said they are actively looking for a job or are open to new opportunities, and 81 percent of health care workers said the same. Of course, this finding doesn't mean they'll say yes to the first opportunity that comes along.

"Since the demand for these fields is so high and the competition is so intense, it's vital for employers to know what their differentiators are when it comes to attracting IT and health care talent," says Barnes. Barnes adds that because IT and health care candidates have so many opportunities, they take more time than the average candidate to evaluate potential employers during their job searches.

One way employers can differentiate themselves in front of these candidates and gain a competitive edge is by providing a positive application experience. When asked about their job search experience, nearly half of health care professionals (45 percent) strongly agreed that their experience during the application process made an impact on their decision to accept a position – for better or for worse. A significant number of IT candidates (29 percent) said the same. These results are just the latest findings that point to the importance of creating a positive candidate experience. A separate CareerBuilder study about how the application experience affects candidate behavior indicates that a company's reputation played a significant role in candidates' decision to apply. This finding underscores the need for employers to build their brand as a best company to work for.

The availability of interesting assignments and advancement opportunities were also among the top reasons candidates decided to apply, indicating the importance of highlighting these types of benefits when communicating your brand message. The survey also found that failing to communicate with candidates once they've applied is a quick way to turn them off, along with making the application process itself too difficult, too tedious or too lengthy.

Beyond the recruitment lessons they hold for employers, the 2012 Candidate Behavior Study findings also speak to the need for employers to put more effort into retaining their current IT and health care talent employees. "Employers need to be aware that just because someone signed an offer to work for them, it doesn't mean the engagement stops there," Barnes says. "What keeps an employee happy may not be the same thing that brought them in the door, so clear retention strategies are vital for these deeply sought-after candidates."

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KASSANDRA BARNES

*Content and Research Manager
CareerBuilder*

KEY TREND 6

YOUR EMPLOYMENT BRAND: A SILENT RECRUITER?

Of the many takeaways from the 2012 Candidate Behavior Survey, perhaps the biggest one is that a company's employment brand has a major impact on its overall recruiting and retention efforts. According to the survey, nearly 35 percent of people begin preparing for their next job within weeks of starting a new one. Why so soon? According to Barnes, the explanation is simple. "The job search process never really 'shuts off.'"

The finding also supports the notion that, because today's job search is similar to consumer purchasing decisions, workers may continue researching other opportunities even after they have made a final decision as a way to ensure they made the right one. "It's like they're trying to make sure they don't have buyer's remorse, so they keep shopping around to make sure they got the best deal," Barnes explains.

This finding further underscores the need for employers to clearly define their employer brands, which enables candidates to understand the culture of the company - and therefore whether or not they'd be the right fit - before they even apply. It also helps candidates set realistic expectations for what would be expected of them once they join the company - rather than finding out that the company wasn't what they expected on their first day on the job.

Furthermore, employers need to understand that engagement doesn't end after a candidate accepts a job offer, and if they want to retain employees - and continue to build their reputation as an employer of choice - they need to put in the effort to keep their employees engaged and deliver on the expectations they set up during the recruitment process.

Thanks to the increasing prevalence of employer ratings sites like Glassdoor.com, which enable employees to openly and honestly discuss their experiences at certain companies, employers can no longer hide their cultures. They also cannot assume that candidates aren't paying attention, either, given that - as previously mentioned - nearly two thirds of workers consult these sites to research potential employers.

"This study shows how much candidates rely on these sources to evaluate potential employers, and it speaks to the importance of creating internal brand ambassadors," Barnes points out. "If a company has an unhealthy culture, candidates will find out about it."

CONCLUSION

Given that today's job candidate thinks like a consumer, you, as an employer, need to think like a marketer. Where a marketer would work to increase brand awareness, you need to work to increase employer brand awareness; and where a marketer's job is to generate customer loyalty, your job is to foster candidate loyalty (through candidate relationship management). Where good marketers are regularly soliciting feedback from their current customers to figure out how they can improve, good recruiters regularly survey their current employee base.

Most importantly, however, great marketers are constantly researching their customer base - how customers think, behave and interact with their brand - and using this information to inform their marketing decisions and enhance their product. Likewise, great recruiters are constantly researching their candidate base. As the competition for top talent grows, it becomes increasingly important for employers to stay current with research and intelligence regarding labor market trends, compensation information and candidate behavior data, such as that found in the 2012 Candidate Behavior Study. This type of intelligence will give you the insight you need to better attract, engage and retain even the most in-demand candidates.



Additional resources, including podcasts, infographic and video are presented at www.careerbuilder.com/candidatebehavior.

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