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Candidate Quality vs. Quantity: How Hiring Managers Turn the Dial to Optimize Applicant Flow

A guide for adapting to market shifts, increasing candidate flow, and improving your hiring strategy.

White Paper: Candidate Quality vs. Quantity: How Hiring Managers Turn the Dial to Optimize Applicant Flow

2

INTRODUCTION

Today's hiring climate is all about speed. To fill a high number of open positions quickly, hiring managers need to streamline the sourcing of hourly candidates, make the application process as simple as possible, and use automation and virtual assessment tools to quickly determine which applicants meet their needs.

But as the hiring market and staffing needs continuously change, your organization's hourly hiring may need to pivot to a more discerning approach, requiring custom assessments and revisiting previous applicants to fill positions.

That's why companies that hire hourly workers need a talent management system that allows them to turn the dial from quantity to quality of applicants as needed. It's critical that this "dial" is dynamic: when there are fewer job seekers than there are roles, companies dial up the quantity approach to pull more candidates into the talent pool, and when the talent pool is overflowing with options and becomes difficult to manage, companies should dial into quality to ensure that only the best fits filter through to the interview stage. As these market conditions ebb and flow, companies favor a strategy that allows them to balance their needs with the job climate.

Whether you're looking to fill positions as quickly as possible or have more specific needs for your location, there are different ways to optimize your recruitment strategy.

When managing an hourly workforce, you need the flexibility to prioritize:

Recruiting for quantity

Recruiting for quality

RECRUITING FOR QUANTITY

Start Here →

When you need to hire many employees quickly, you have to take a two-fold approach:

1. Cast a wide net to reach as many applicants as possible

2. Make the application process easy, simple, and speedy for both applicants and hiring managers

So, how do you do that?

1. **Connect with candidates wherever they are, using multiple channels and methods. (Don't put all of your eggs in just one basket!).**

   - **Leverage a Talent Community:** Save time when looking to fill specific or bulk roles by filtering and searching through a pool of applicants on a broad or granular level.

   - **Drive SMS & Email Campaigns:** Engage the passive job seeker or reengage with previous applicants.

   - **Use Programmatic Advertising:** Take job distribution one step further with a targeted approach to maximize applicant flow across top job boards. This drastically decreases the manual time needed to manage job postings while allowing employers to expand their reach, target ideal candidates, and maximize their ROI.

   - **Update Branded Career Pages:** Make your candidate page showcase your unique culture, highlighting how your company connects with your candidates' values. Do you have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion practice in place? Unique programs? This is the place to share the details.

   - **Encourage Text-to-Apply & QR Codes:** Attract candidates with in-store signage, drive-by ads, etc.

   - **Build Social Recruiting:** Leverage the power of social networks and employee connections.

2. **Once you connect with candidates, make it easy for them to apply quickly.**

   Across service industries, applications can take up to an hour to complete. Pair that with the fact that 73% of applicants will abandon a job application if it takes them longer than 15 minutes,[1] and chances are, you're losing potential applicants before you even get the opportunity to interview them.

   Using a conversational AI chatbot, structured conversations automatically complete applications and assess candidates' qualifications within minutes. Applications leveraging this tool are usually completed in two to three minutes.

   For positions with fewer requirements, configure a fast application that asks only the most pertinent screening questions so that candidates can complete the application independently in under two minutes.
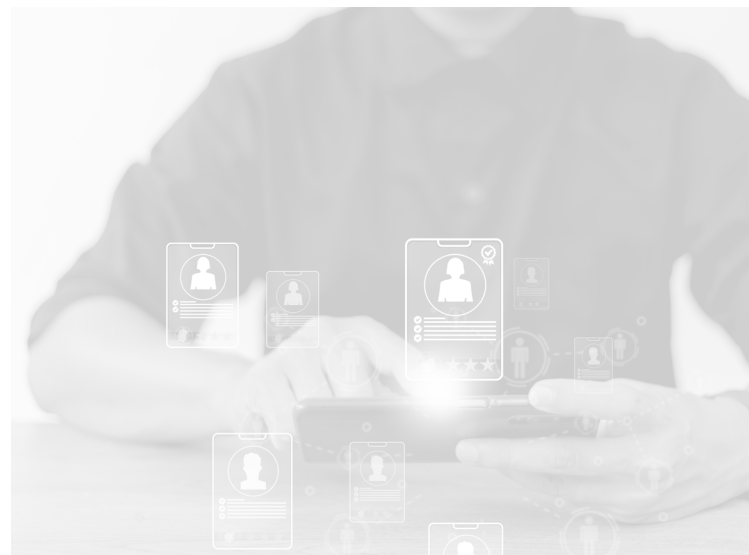
[1] Golden, Ryan. (2 February 2022). "Job applications longer than 15 minutes lose candidate interest, survey finds." https://www.hrdive.com/news/job-applications-longer-than-15-minutes-lose-candidate-interest/618169/

RECRUITING FOR QUANTITY (CONT.)

3. Automate processes and speed up the interviewing process so your hiring manager can be the first to extend an offer letter.

Automated interview scheduling is a game-changer for the hourly hiring industry. When hiring managers sync their calendars with an ATS to instantly extend interview invitations based on their availability, they don't have to do anything except wait for the interview to pop up on their calendars. Applicants select from the list of open time slots to schedule a meeting and can easily reschedule if needed — greatly reducing no-shows.

When paired with a conversational AI chatbot, customers have seen application drop-off rates as low as 12%, time-to-apply decrease by up to 84%, and a decrease in time-to-hire of up to 43%.
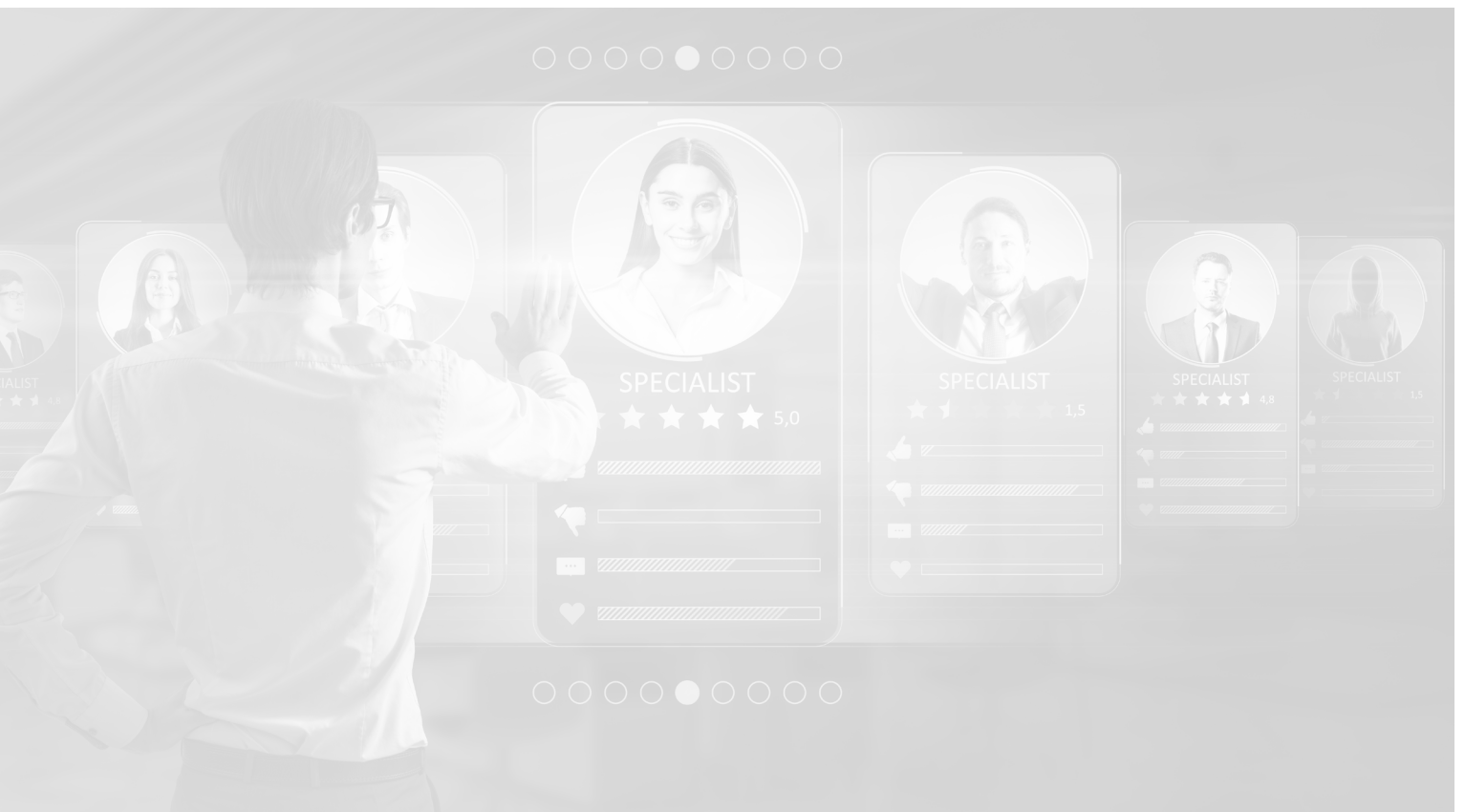
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✓ **12%**

Decrease time-to-apply by as much as

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Decrease time-to-hire by as much as

↓ **43%**

RECRUITING FOR QUALITY

Start Here →

When you find yourself needing to screen more thoroughly for a position or have a role with more required qualifications, there are a few strategies you should employ:

1. **Engage Your Talent Community:** When you have a pool of qualified candidates at your fingertips, it's easy to filter through the community and communicate with active and passive candidates to fill broad or specific needs. Marketing jobs to a talent community of subscribers nets applicants you need at the lowest possible cost.

2. **Include Posi-Fit (Position Fitness) Questions:** While still keeping it brief, revise the questions you ask on the application to ensure that you are getting the key details you'd need to determine whether or not they qualify for the role.

3. **Drive Employee Referrals:** Employers often find that their best source of applicants is their employee referral program. Referrals are 4x more likely to be offered a job than an applicant from a website.[2] It makes sense: existing employees are going to want their like-minded friends and family to work with them, which means referrals are more likely to be a good culture fit.
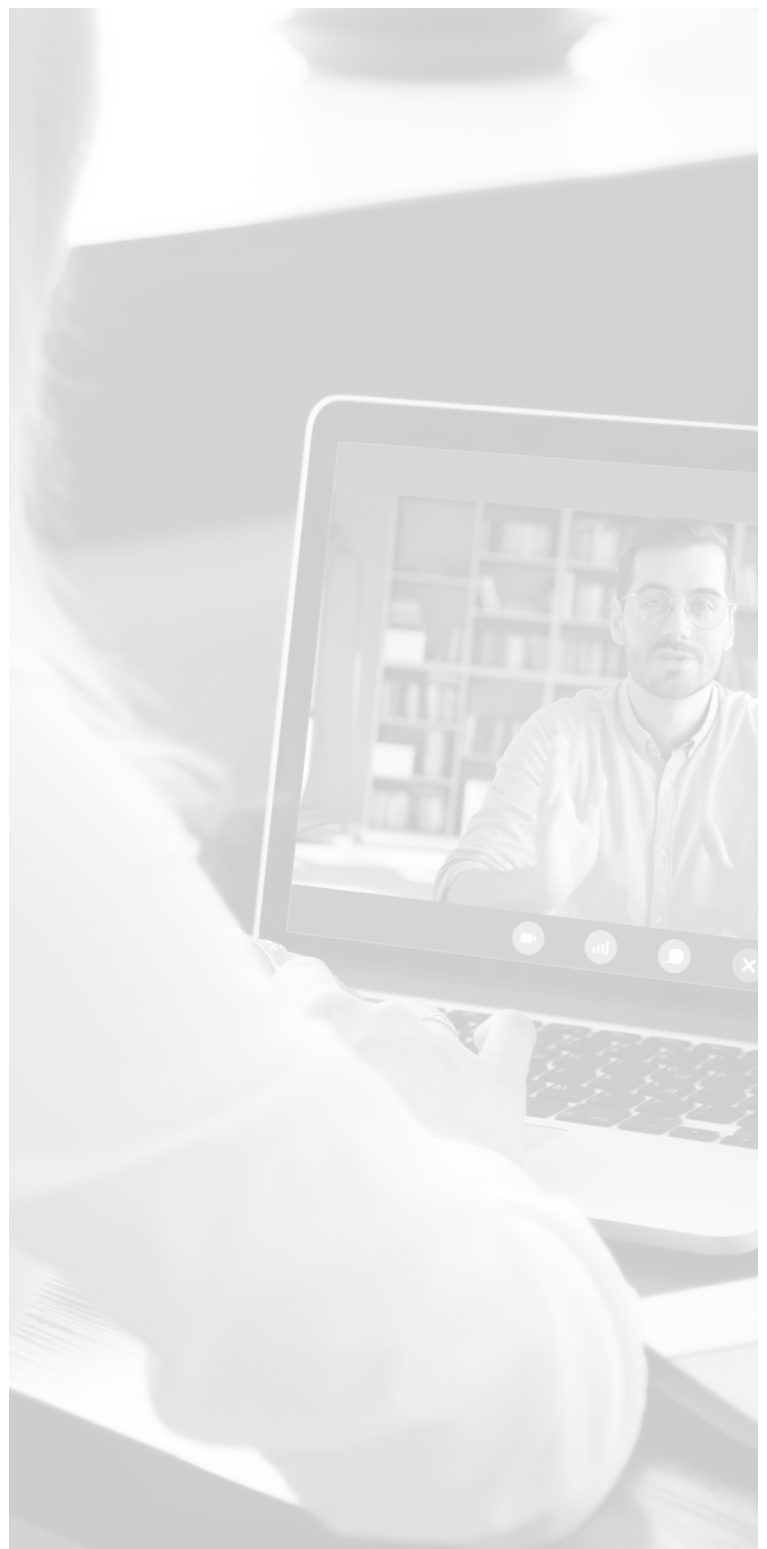
[2] Flynn, Jack. (13 October 2022). "25 Incredible Referral Statistics [2022[: Facts about employee referrals in the US." https://www.zippia.com/advice/employee-referral-statistics/

BEYOND RECRUITMENT: BONUS RETENTION STRATEGIES

The challenge of filling open positions is not always a recruiting challenge: sometimes, it is a turnover issue. These can often be met with preventative methods. Turnover rates are very high in hourly jobs, ranging from 123% in C-stores to 85% in hospitality and hitting as high as 150% in the quick-service restaurant industry.[3] This means that your best talent source could be your employees. Your hiring team may prioritize retaining your existing workforce.

A recent study found that what matters most to employees is having opportunities to grow. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do your employees know how they can grow within the company, and understand the criteria by which they are being evaluated?

- Does your company offer training opportunities to help employees move into roles with more responsibilities and pay?

- Do you engage with your current staff when you hire for manager positions?

Provide your current employees with training, goal-setting, and meaningful evaluations. Give them thoughtful performance feedback to help them grow and develop professionally. While many entry-level hourly jobs may be considered temporary (or stepping stones), do what you can to ensure that their next step could be at your company!

Your current employees are also a great source for finding additional qualified candidates, but most companies with an employee referral program don't leverage it. Use it!

Turnover rates in hourly jobs

123%
in C-stores

85%
in hospitality

150%
in the quick-service restaurant industry

[3] (25 March 2021). "New Resource Tackles Employee Turnover." https://www.convenience.org/ Media/Daily/2021/Mar/25/2-New-Resource-Tackles-Employee-Turnover_Research.

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7

A FLEXIBLE APPROACH IS OFTEN THE BEST APPROACH

There is no silver bullet when it comes to recruiting and hiring the hourly workforce. Everything can change in the blink of an eye, and hiring managers need an all-in-one solution that helps them diversify their recruiting strategy, onboard new hires quickly reduce churn, and maintain their existing workforce.

Today's hiring managers need an application that allows them to focus on quantity, quality, and retention simultaneously.

To ensure that managers can hire for quantity and fill bulk roles quickly, the talent management platform must enable them to promote jobs across multiple channels, including social networks, job boards, careers sites, search engines, conversational AI chatbots, email campaigns, mobile devices, and walk-ins – all from a single platform. After casting a wide net, the platform solution should make it simple to nurture a pool of potential applicants, with members automatically updated when jobs relevant to their interests are posted.

To ensure that managers can increase the likelihood that the applicants are the right "fit," the best talent management application must also make it easy to filter out candidates with more granular questions that test for skills as well as personality.

Whether you are recruiting for quality, quantity, or focusing on retaining and promoting internal employees, the right strategy — which should be flexible — ensures that your company meets success. After all, hiring managers know that even if you have to bulk hire for one position with minimal requirements one day, the next, you might have an open opportunity that demands specific skills, or so many applicants that efficiency demands a more finely-grained filter. The tools and platforms that allow you to easily "turn the dial" depending on company needs will ensure that your talent pipeline is healthy and ready for any circumstance.
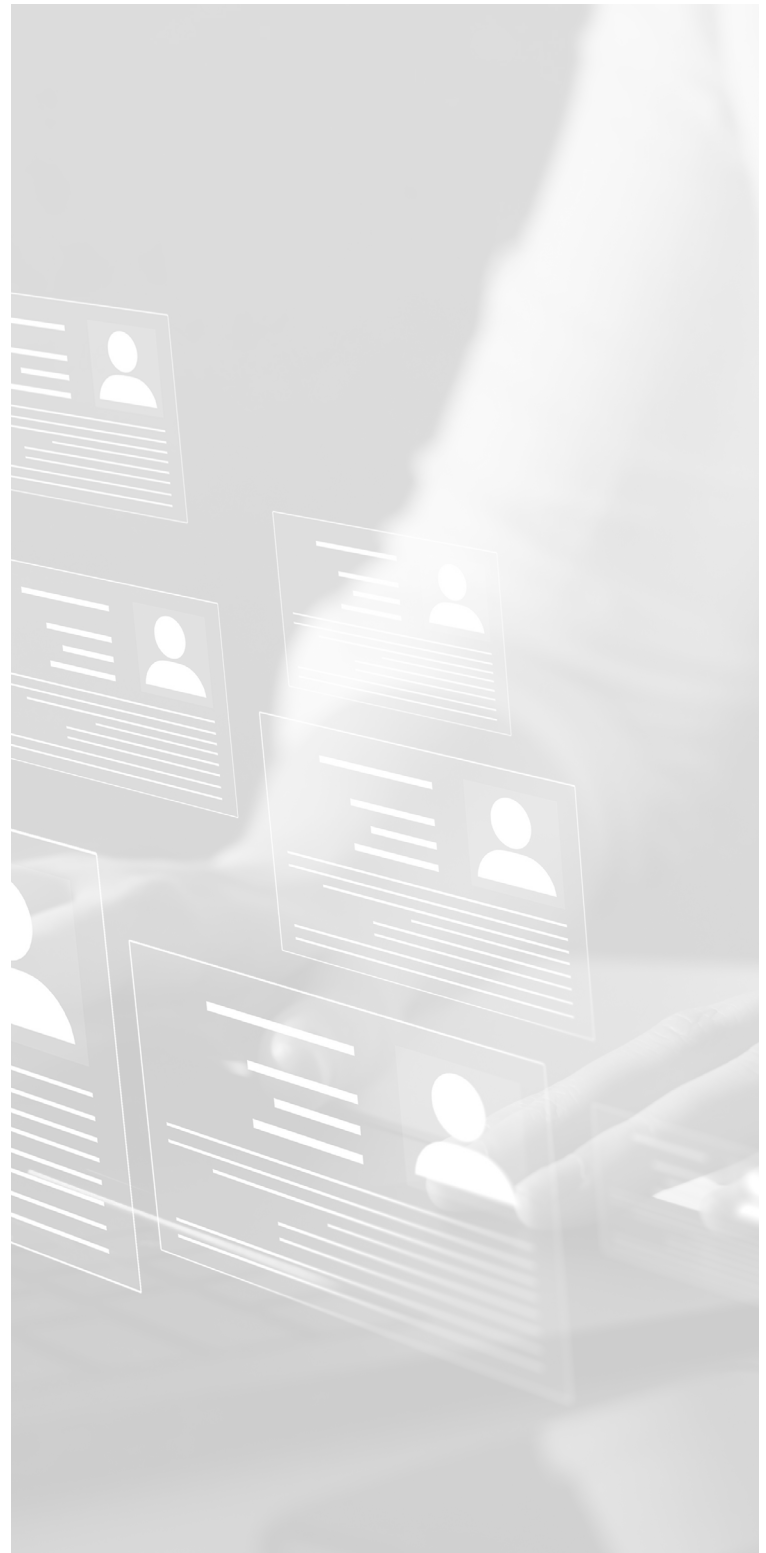
With market uncertainty still looming, companies must have the visibility and flexibility to navigate natural shifts in their talent pools.

American Bread Company leveraged Mitratech's TalentReef to accelerate the review process and optimize hiring practices, leading to faster, more successful assessments, and improved retention rates – and increasing applicant flow by 50%.

Read the American Bread Company Story

ABOUT MITRATECH

Mitratech is a proven global technology partner for corporate legal, risk & compliance, and HR professionals seeking to maximize productivity, control expense, and mitigate risk by deepening operational alignment, increasing visibility, and spurring collaboration across their organization.

With Mitratech's proven portfolio of end-to-end solutions, organizations worldwide are able to implement best practices and standardize processes across all lines of business to manage risk and ensure business continuity.

Mitratech serves over 7,700 organizations worldwide, including 30% of the Fortune 500 and over 500,000 users in 160 countries.

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