





THE 2023 CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE GUIDE

Familiar challenges, new solutions



In 2022, a shocking 90% of talent teams said they struggled to find great candidates. It's no wonder. Four and a half million new jobs were created last year and 50 million people left their current posts — up from 48 million in 2021.

The tight labor market just isn't going anywhere. Employers have added back all of the jobs lost during the pandemic, plus 3 million more. As of March, the rate of unemployment was back to the 50-year low we saw in February 2020.

Despite seeing old employment numbers again, being a talent leader in 2023 is still rife with newness. New challenges, and new tools to use in navigating thoughtful talent strategies.

But first, candidates. What do they say?

WHAT ARE CANDIDATES EXPERIENCING?

In January 2023, HireVue surveyed 1,000+ candidates from a wide range of backgrounds to understand what was shaping their job search habits and preferences. The marks of economic instability were clear — 63% agreed that it had affected their job search in recent months.

The uncertainty felt recently in the face of the Ukraine war, tech layoffs, and bank collapses quickly reordered people's priorities... again. Candidates are now much more likely to value job security than they were just a year earlier. The desire for stability is so strong that 59% of employees said they have no plans whatsoever to leave their current jobs.

Along with lower unemployment has come other gains for employees: higher wages, and despite enormous gaps that still exist, a huge boost in pay equity. Both are, of course, hard to walk away from.



KEY FINDINGS

As we dig a little deeper, this report holds important insight into what candidates in the job market of today are looking for. What do they value in the hiring process?

LACK OF COMMUNICATION

The #1 drawback mentioned by candidates was poor communication from hiring teams.

UPWARD MOBILITY

57% want to stay in the safety net of their own jobs but want the option to transition to different roles within their organizations.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Even with all the uncertainty and changing needs, one thing hasn't changed: diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging still matter.



How can talent teams make progress this year?

WE'VE IDENTIFIED THREE WAYS.

1 GO ALL IN WITH AI TO COMMUNICATE FASTER AND EASIER.

Get communication with candidates dialed in to show them you value their time.

2 ASSESS INTERNAL TALENT PROACTIVELY AND OBJECTIVELY.

Look internally to see who can fill open roles.

3 CONTINUE ENGAGING IN DEI.

Review and strengthen DEI initiatives.

1 COMMUNICATION IS THE DIFFERENCE MAKER

...and AI is the edge



It's time to stop letting the tyranny of the urgent take over, and to start thinking ahead.

With the rapid advancement of new technologies like ChatGPT, we've officially crossed the line between being an early adopter of AI and a late one. We know that 48% of candidates prefer to interview outside of normal business hours, and that speed wins when it comes to connecting with top talent.

So what? Well, if your current talent team works Monday through Friday, 9-5...that's a lot of missed opportunities. Automating some forms of communication to improve effectiveness and increase speed is simply non-negotiable.

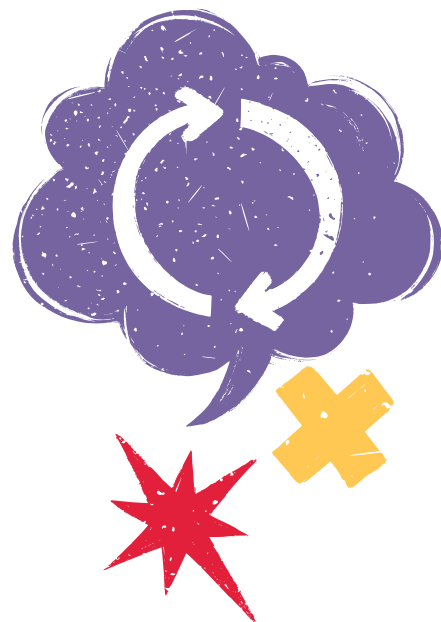
1 COMMUNICATION IS THE DIFFERENCE MAKER

According to our research, 70% of candidates report a preference for interacting with a person. We recognize that preference, yet we also know that AI is the future. Leaning on AI for tedious tasks also happens to be the easiest and fastest way to get the best-fit candidates in front of a real person on your talent team. There's no turning back.

A long-term, sustainable hiring strategy starts with something easy to talk about but difficult to execute: good communication. Being able to nurture a two-way dialogue and quickly answer candidate questions is the key to making them feel valued and heard.

Yet some of us may not be doing as well at keeping in touch as we think. Economic pressure can make us deprioritize a great hiring experience. Even candidates say so — 7 in 10 say they've chosen not to turn down a job even when the hiring process was poor.

What's the takeaway? That your organization has an opportunity to stand out through something as simple as excellent communication. To give your candidates an experience that makes them actually want to work for you — not just feel like they have to.



Solution:

TOOLS FOR FASTER, EASIER HIRING

An effective hiring strategy offers an experience that surpasses candidates' expectations — communicating quickly and easily from day one.

Here's what it looks like:

- Providing prompt and clear instructions and overviews of the hiring process
- Updating candidates on their status, and providing feedback, so they always know where they stand
- Being upfront and honest about compensation, work culture, and expectations
- Creating an always-on experience, so they get their questions answered right away
- Responding to frequently asked questions at any hour of the day, so candidates can quickly (and automatically) move onto the next step of the process

AI-empowered hiring tools are the machine (literally) behind these human interactions. Automation, like [text-powered solutions](#) or automatic [interview scheduling](#), can guide candidates seamlessly through initial “hello” to “you’re hired.”

Solution:

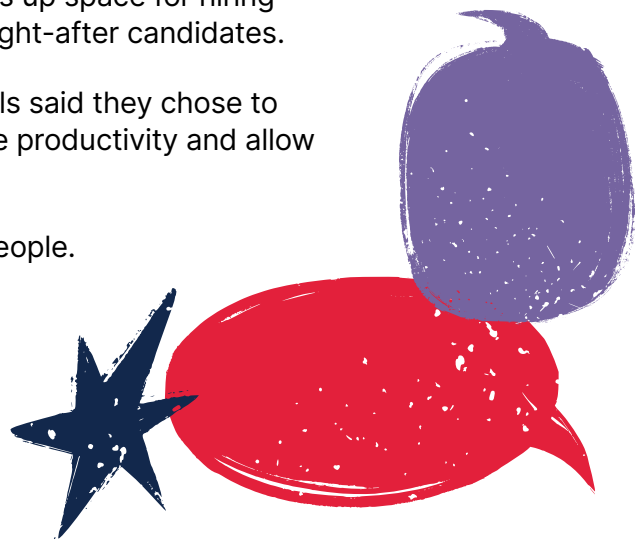
TOOLS FOR FASTER, EASIER HIRING *(cont.)*

But are we in danger of losing human-to-human connection to AI and automation?

When utilized appropriately, AI and automation actually nurture human-to-human connection. Instead of spending hours performing tedious tasks, such as long email conversations or back-and-forth scheduling, automation frees up space for hiring teams to invest in meaningful, personal connections with sought-after candidates.

In our [2023 Global Trends Report](#), 25% of the HR professionals said they chose to increase their technology budgets in 2022 in order to improve productivity and allow recruiters to focus on the human side of hiring.

Hiring technology is truly an investment in productivity and people.



2 CAREER PATHS SHOULD BE OBVIOUS AND OBJECTIVE

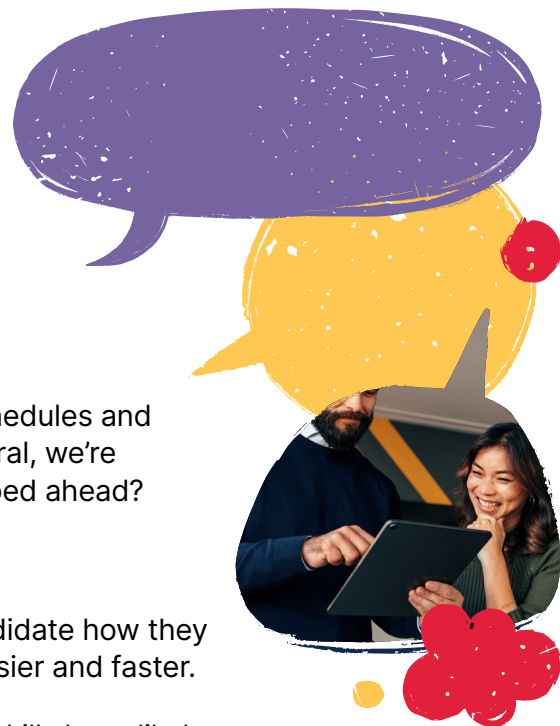
In 2022, we promoted about 20% of our workforce at HireVue.

Why? For several years in a row, candidates named flexible work schedules and work-life balance as top job needs. While those desires are still central, we're starting to see a shift in the rank order of priorities today. What jumped ahead?

Internal mobility. Career growth. More opportunities.

It's a simple concept: Skills are the new talent currency. Show a candidate how they can use their skills in your organization, and right-fit hiring will be easier and faster.

For any given role in your organization, roughly 25% of the required skills have likely changed in the past five years. Constantly sourcing, hiring, and onboarding new employees to fill those skills gaps is simply unsustainable. We have to look inward.



2 CAREER PATHS SHOULD BE OBVIOUS AND OBJECTIVE

Let's take a page out of the campus recruiting playbook, which is becoming much more focused on skills than on GPA like it was in the past. In fact, according to [NACE's Job Outlook 2023 report](#), college students are now being encouraged to “highlight the skills they developed—such as problem-solving and teamwork skills—through their various experiences.”

The roles will change, but the high-level skills will not, at least not as often.

Employers taking a more skills-based approach are saving time and money by focusing not only what the workforce they need today, but the one they'll need a decade from now, too.

Solution:

MAXIMIZE MOBILITY WITH SKILLS ASSESSMENTS

There's no question that internal mobility improves retention and lowers recruitment costs — making it an important option in today's economy.

But how do employers make it easy for employees to find new internal roles (rather than external ones)?

Here's a good starting point:

- Proactively [assess candidates and current employees on their skills](#) and potential to grow within the organization.
- Rethink barriers to entry for internal candidates. Consider those who may lack an advanced degree, but have the appropriate skills and the willingness to learn.
- Promote continuous learning, such as on-the-job training or courses, so employees can quickly grow into the roles they want.
- Make your advancement policies easily accessible.



Solution:

MAXIMIZE MOBILITY WITH SKILLS ASSESSMENTS *(cont.)*

To efficiently evaluate employees' suitability for new roles, employers must modernize their approach. This means bringing in the right tools to conduct fair assessments.

In our [Global Trends Report](#), we found that 1 in 3 employers say their biggest barrier to internal mobility is the lack of technology for internal candidates. If this tells us anything, it's that skills assessments are needed now more than ever.

Using skills assessments allows you to match employees' strengths with the critical competencies of internal positions. From there, employers can easily see if an employee is ready to move into a new role or if they need on-the-job training and education before progressing. Having a solid metric increases fairness and the odds of success for those who advance.



3 DEI IS NOT DONE



The economy's strong rebound since the early days of the pandemic has been especially beneficial to historically marginalized groups. People with [disabilities are more likely to be employed](#) than they were pre-pandemic, and so are people with criminal records. Black Americans hit a record low in unemployment in March, and there have been significant gains in pay equity and wages for the lowest paid employees.

However, these gains are still new and need to be protected if we want them to stick. DEI is not a trend that can be sidelined during economic downturns. It's an initiative that should always be turned on, no matter what other factors affect hiring. Here's why: despite societal benefits, time and time again research has shown that companies that make DEI part of their DNA [boost innovation](#), revenue growth, and employee loyalty.

3 DEI IS NOT DONE

So even as budgets are being cut and hiring speed is slowing, it would be a mistake to not look at DEI as a long game. For companies who want to come out ahead, keeping their foot on their DEI gas pedal is a surefire way to survive economic hardships and reach their goals.

It also signals to both candidates and employees that your DEI practices are authentic — not performative. Almost 50% of candidates say they're more likely to apply for a job when a company displays strong DEI initiatives.

As we dug a little deeper, we uncovered the top DEI characteristics candidates are looking for:

- 55% policy of equal pay
- 39% diverse leadership team
- 34% clear targets for equal hiring
- 28% technology that helps remove bias

Solution:

REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIAS TO CREEP IN

Keeping DEI at the forefront of your company strategy doesn't need to break the bank. There are plenty of budget-friendly DEI opportunities that can help your company make progress:

- Revisiting your compensation strategy to ensure each employee is paid fairly
- Reviewing your employee handbook to filter out exclusive language
- Relying on technology to reduce bias in the hiring process

Let's take a look at that last one for a minute — technology. This is a critical tool for finding quality employees from all walks of life, with different perspectives, experiences, and skills.

Solution:

REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIAS TO CREEP IN *(cont.)*

With 78% of respondents saying they're fully aware that bias is woven into the hiring process, using tools to dismantle long-standing bias is more important now than ever.

Instead of relying on interviewer opinions or resume accomplishments, hiring tools, such as [skill assessments](#) and [structured interviews](#) can quickly evaluate candidates' potential for the role — then invite them to an interview that asks the same questions to every single person.

Whether you're hiring externally or internally, assessment tools and structured interviews weed out implicit bias and establish fair and consistent policies and practices throughout.



CONCLUSION

As talent teams face an uncertain economy and new trends altering the world of work, it's time to shift from a mere "race to hire" to a race to stabilize hiring practices.

Fortunately, we have cutting-edge tools at our disposal to help us do that. All that's required is that we learn how to incorporate them into our existing talent strategies. There will be 97M new jobs created in the next decade. How long will it take to figure out how to hire for those brand new roles?

HireVue's full-service platform is designed to connect talent to opportunity from pre-to post-hire. By automating hiring workflows, improving how talent leaders engage, and assessing candidates for skills objectively. If you're ready to step up your game and finally give candidates what they need in a job, [request a demo](#).

