

3 Steps to Closing the Deal on Technical Talent



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Talk of a talent short market and the difficulty of sourcing great candidates has been stirring up debate in the technology recruitment space for quite some time now. **In one of our previous blogs**, we focused on the secrets to recruiting top candidates in a tight talent market and discussed how, as an industry, we need to stop looking at how the market must change, and start looking at what we could be doing better.

However, sourcing a great candidate isn't the end of the road. The ways in which people are interviewed and engaged with can sometimes prevent an IT company from closing the deal and securing a great hire. The whole recruitment process has a strong impact on candidates' impressions of your business, and thus their likelihood of accepting the offer. These three steps can bring you closer to closing the deal, and retaining that top candidate by creating a great candidate experience.

1. First Impressions

If you were to go to a job interview, what would you expect? Just as your first impression of a candidate plays a part in how you assess their employability, a candidate's first impression of you will play a significant part in whether they want to work for you or not.

As with all first impressions, a lot of hard work goes into making a good one. Having a clear and concise job description on the initial application, which highlights all of the necessary information, is a good place to start. Including some information on your company – with an explanation of what you do and a little insight into the culture – can also be very useful, as the crux of all of this is to make your company stand out and explain to the applicant why they should work for you. Remember that during this process, it's important to communicate clearly with all applicants. Communicating with those

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you have rejected – and those who have rejected you – can also be very valuable in giving you good feedback on your recruitment process, which you can then use to optimise your approach.

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Having a clear application process with strong communication throughout will put you on the front foot by the time you get to an interview. When conducting interviews, try not to wear out the candidate with a one-hundred-step process. With **83% of professionals stating** that a negative interview experience can put them off a role, it's important to carefully consider every aspect of the interview and the purpose it serves. Ensure that the vacancy's important stakeholders are involved in the interview process, as **53% of professionals** mention that the most important interview they can have is an interview with their prospective manager.

It's a good idea to even think about things like where you're holding the interview; how this reflects your company and the impression it might leave. If you're a fun and dynamic IT start up, give them a tour of the office and showcase the work environment. This will also give them a first-hand look at where they'll be fitting into the team, and the style in which the team works.

2. Presenting the Offer

After the interview process is complete and a preferred candidate has been identified, the matter of how an offer is presented comes to the forefront. **Research has shown** that whilst 65% of professionals want to hear bad news by email, 77% of want to hear about good news over the phone – so if you're giving someone good news, make sure to give it with a personal touch. Courier over your job offer along with a gift, or branded collateral such as stationery or a t-shirt. Follow this up with a phone call – or even better, a face to face meeting – and run the candidate through the key elements of the offer. An agency can assist you with this by being a point of contact between you and the candidate throughout the process, and providing that clear communication if you don't have the resources or capacity to do so. Don't rush them into accepting the offer, but do give clear timeframes.

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When making your offer, think beyond just the position in terms of what you can offer the candidate, and look at your culture and the opportunities within your company. Review your interview notes to remind yourself of their key drivers, and ensure that these are addressed in the offer. Also bear in mind that although these intrinsic factors are important, your remuneration package must also satisfy the candidate. It's important to make a credible offer when making your initial approach, so that the candidate doesn't get an unwelcome surprise when the offer comes in. If this isn't possible, then you may need to readjust your expectations and look for different kinds of candidates.

It's always a good idea to make an initial verbal offer at first. This way you can test the waters a little and revise your offer if necessary based on the candidate's reaction. Liaising with a recruitment agency can help you formulate an offer that doesn't risk insulting the candidate in any way, and jeopardising the hard work that was put into making a good impression.

This is another part of the process where you can implement a strong feedback loop. If the candidate accepts your offer, follow up with them and ask them how they felt the offer was presented; what they expected, what you did well and where you can improve. Candidates who didn't accept the offer can also be great sources of feedback. Ask them what about the offer, or its presentation, caused them to not accept it, and look at adapting your strategy to address this. This is another point where an agency can help, following up with the candidates and keeping those lines of communication open.

3. Post-Acceptance

It's easy to fall into the trap of not speaking with the candidate until the day they start work. However,

if you're looking to keep that candidate engaged and further improve your chances of retaining them, it's vital that you continue to communicate even after the offer is made.

One idea to do this is to keep in touch with the candidate beyond their acceptance of the offer by inviting them to company social events or gatherings. This will lessen the lead time when they start and also has the benefit of your team getting to know the new starter. Doing things like getting the candidate to come along for drinks on a Friday afternoon can be a big help in maintaining their enthusiasm to start, and increasing their affinity with the workplace before they even turn up for their first day.

Consider the unique circumstances of your candidate too. For instance, if you've recruited an international candidate, or your candidate has had to relocate in order to take the role, then you might be able to assist them with their move. Even just speaking with them about the area, giving them tips on places to live, nearby facilities and things to do, can make them feel more comfortable in their new environment – which will help when the time comes for them to start.

When that time does come, having a strong on-boarding programme will help your new team member settle in and be more productive. Ensuring that their desk is fully set up and that they receive some kind of company welcome pack, for instance with a company branded t-shirt and notebook, will immediately make them feel welcome and valued. In addition to this, try to leave the drab paperwork until later in the week to put all the focus on getting embedded in the team. Composing an effective plan for the new starter's first 90 days, and ensuring that there is a strong feedback loop in place, will improve productivity immediately and give everyone the best experience possible.

Summary

When it comes to closing the deal, ensuring the candidate has a positive hiring experience is just as important as being able to source top talent. If you want to secure these top candidates, it takes a strong first impression, a well-presented offer and clear communication and follow-through after the offer has been accepted. If these elements aren't present, it becomes difficult to attract this talent, and to retain them even when you do. The way in which you control, manage and develop your recruitment process itself will often be the difference between closing the deal or falling at the last hurdle. Engaging a recruitment agency can solve a lot of these pain-points, especially when communication with candidates is so vital. If you're looking for help with this, please feel free **get in touch** with us today.

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