



Building Your Future Workforce

by Gina Petrello-Pray, Contributing Editor

Similar to customer relationship management, the goal of candidate relationship management, also referred to as CRM, is to create and sustain long-term relationships with target audiences in order to create significant value for both parties. However, a recent poll conducted by Kevin Wheeler, president of Global Learning Resources, reports that only 65 percent of companies say they have a talent community program in place. This is the lowest response received over the four years of conducting this survey. This same survey also asked how long it generally takes to respond to a resume: 58.6 percent of companies said less than 72 hours (of that, just 26.6 percent respond in less than 24 hours), 15 percent take more than 3 days, and 20 percent simply choose to acknowledge select applicants only.

Response Time

It is surprising that more organizations are not responding within 24 hours to a candidate's application. Effective and timely communication is key in identifying, developing, and sustaining long-term relationships with candidates. A longer-term relationship reduces the guesswork and increases the probability of a better match. Thus, meaningful responses such as telephone calls or personal emails are critical to CRM. However, even a simple template-based "thank you" e-mail or automated response can acknowledge the receipt of a resume especially if the candidate applied on-line. As reported in Perception vs. Reality: Jobseeker Behavior Online, 99 out of 100 jobseekers expect an immediate acknowledgement after applying online.

Responding to a resume is just the beginning of a CRM program. Organizations should mine their candidate database often and be in front of their talent pool once a month or more. Frequent and on-going communication is vital to building and sustaining lasting relationships.

Candidates should be kept apprised of their status during the hiring process as well as receive notification about other positions for which they possess the skills. In addition,

regular interactions are excellent opportunities to position your company as an "employer of choice" by offering company news, invitations to career seminars or even holiday greetings.

Developing a CRM Program

An effective CRM program also requires a shift in how candidates are viewed. Candidates should no longer be seen as applicants but rather as valued customers. Many organizations have found this element of CRM to be the most challenging since it requires a change in the mindset of managers and staff. Treating candidates in a customer service manner means making a point of responding to inquiries rapidly, giving them feedback on how well they interviewed and doing post mortems to identify why they failed to accept the offer. Candidates need to be asked during and after the process, "How well did we treat you?" Remember to think in the broadest sense as a businessperson. We might not be able to hire them today but we certainly can turn many candidates into our future employees or customers if we treat them right.

With powerful candidate relationship management programs, corporations can effectively communicate with candidates and build long-term relationships. They will be able to attract qualified candidates and pass over those with scarce skills. In addition, a robust CRM program positively impacts the company's brand recognition, differentiates it from peers, and plays an important role in positioning the company as an employer of choice. Candidate relationship management soon will join customer relationship management as an essential corporate skill.

Gina Petrello-Pray recently launched her new search firm, Enterprise Asset Search (EAS), of Solon, OH, specializing in the flexible packaging and converting industries in North America. With more than 14 years experience in the search industry, she is known for bringing the human element to every search. She is an active member of IOPP and has gained recognition by building top producing sales teams for respected industry names. Gina frequently serves as a consultative resource for trade publications and has earned many speaking engagements at industry-related events. Gina can be reached at (440) 715-0040 x206 or gina@enterpriseasset.com.