

SPONSOR'S MESSAGE




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Though the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation is growing in national renown, it recently gained an appreciative global audience.

In late September, the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) hosted the 13th Annual World HR Congress with over 3,500 HR professionals from around the globe. It marked the first time the World Congress was held on Canadian soil and provided a global showcase for the CHRP designation.


Jack Finlayson of the BC Business Council has said that 'excellence in human resource management is becoming an important source of competitive advantage.' I strongly agree.

The CHRP designation provides that advantage - honing and testing the skills of HR professionals with a National Knowledge Exam (NKE) followed by the National Professional Practice Assessment (NPPA). Moreover, it also provides CEOs with the assurance of an HR professional versed in the language of business, wherein all resources speak to the bottom line.

In today's business climate, realizing the economic success of professional people practices has become requisite for growth. HR professionals are being called upon for revenue generating strategic leadership.

As with other industry designations, the CHRP has come to mark the path of professional pursuit in HR. Of the 5,000+ members of the British Columbia Human Resources Management Association, more than 60 per cent have either passed the NKE or achieved their CHRP designation.

Why? Because practicing great people practices speaks to everyone's bottom line.



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RECRUITMENT

DENNIS WOLFF

Applicants' experiences during the hiring process have a substantial impact on the employer's brand in the candidate community

In my role as a recruiter, I spend a lot of time in interview situations. Like most hiring managers, I have my share of anecdotes when it comes to the topic of etiquette.

There are numerous examples of applicants blowing their chances by ignoring the simplest rules of first impressions, such as being late or bringing a cup of coffee to the job interview. However, basic etiquette (or the lack thereof) is not only a pet peeve for employers but also a hot topic in the candidate community.

When asking job seekers about their experience applying for jobs, many are disillusioned and frustrated after having had poor encounters. The recessionary climate has put some hiring managers in a deceptively comfortable spot where opportunities are scarce and applicants are plentiful.

Qualified candidates complain about companies not responding to their applications, about poor interview experiences or a breakdown in communication after having gone through a formal interviewing process with a company.

What many employers forget is that the interviewing and hiring process speaks volumes about the company's brand as an employer. Smart companies know how important it is to treat every applicant respectfully and to offer an interview experience that reflects the company's brand and values.

It's not just about courting the best candidates; job interviews can still be tough, intense situations. In fact, high-potential applicants will expect a tough interview process that enables them to display their accomplishments and abilities, which will make them stand out from the pack.

High-performing, no-nonsense producers will want to feel reassured that the companies they are interviewing with share their sense of professionalism, respect and effectiveness. Here are a few ideas of how your company can improve its brand in the candidate community.

1. Set expectations properly: One of the major frustrations applicants experience is the complete lack of communication after an initial application has been submitted.

If you are not planning on contacting every single applicant, at the very least include a disclaimer in the job posting indicating that only qualified applicants will be contacted.

Ideally, you will also include a specific date by which applicants can expect a response. At least they will know to move on if they haven't heard anything by then.

2. Communicate effectively: Most companies have applicant tracking in place that allows them to properly track applications and to send out personalized emails to large groups of recipients.

Why not set up an automated response thanking applicants for submitting their resumes and advising them of what they can expect moving forward? Even if your company doesn't have a proper system in place, a basic email client has the ability to send automated responses or customized emails.

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3. Consider some advice from the dating world: As with any first date, a first impression is a lasting impression. When conducting the first interview, remember the basics: be polite, be respectful, and be on time. Be an active listener but also be prepared to give an elevator pitch as to what an employee can expect from your firm.

As the labour market improves, top candidates end up with multiple job offers and you want to make sure that your company is at the top of their list.

4. Nothing trumps professionalism: I've heard numerous hiring managers say

that they don't really need to "interview" a candidate. They simply "know" when they see the right fit. While this may be true, the applicant is left with a disappointing experience.

Strong candidates will want more from an interview than just a pleasant conversation. They want to feel that the hiring manager has a keen interest in their work history and previous accomplishments. In the worst case, top candidates may not want to proceed after a weak interview experience as they presume it is a reflection of the company's lack of focus on performance.

5. Be smart when releasing applicants: At the end of the day you can only hire one person per job. It's very tempting to focus entirely on that new hire.

Making an effort to not leave other applicants in the dark is more than just good karma: those applicants who have been interviewed should receive personal feedback. Be constructive and explain your hiring decision. Thank them for their time and interest and encourage them to keep in touch should you feel that they may be of interest for future openings.

Sending out an email to the other applicants who could not be interviewed offers a great opportunity for employer branding. By advising them that a hiring decision has been made and thanking them for

their interest in your company, you are sending a clear message that speaks volumes of your professionalism and thoroughness not only during the recruitment process but also in how your company conducts its business.

As with any experience in an open market, negative news travels exponentially faster than positive. In a time when people can vent publicly about a negative experience, disgruntled job seekers can leverage the powerful world of social media networks by openly commenting on their experience with a particular company and an employer brand can suffer substantial damage.

With every new job your company recruits for, your brand is put to the test over and over again. A lot can be gained from offering a great hiring experience. Much more can be lost by having a particularly bad one. What is the impression you think your organization is leaving in the candidate community? ■

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