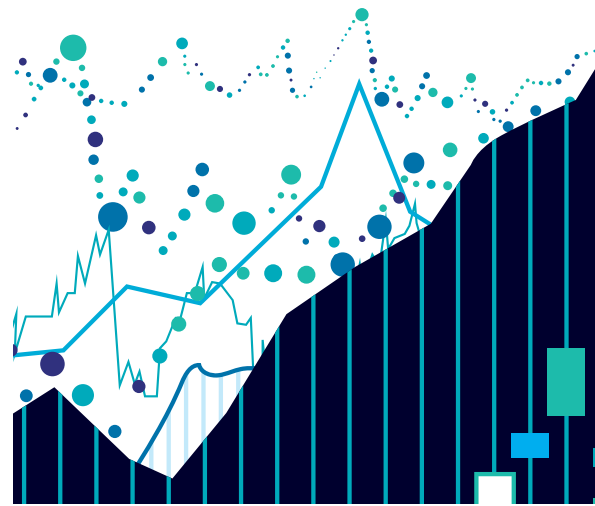


Strategy by Design: A Guide to Marketing for Talent



Finding the right talent isn't a transaction. It isn't about fulfilling a task. If you are focused only on execution, you won't have the opportunity to create a robust value proposition. To be successful and sustainable, you need the right people with the proper perspective. Ask yourself: Who else do we need to achieve our goals?

First, Keep the People You Have

- Who are your best people? What makes them different from the others?
- What is your team thinking and feeling?
- Are they sharing that information with you?
- Are you listening?
- How can you help them continue to be engaged and successful on their own terms?

Then, Remember That One Size Does Not Fit All

Job seekers today are looking for opportunities, not just another job. They have gotten through most of the pandemic, experiencing increased trust and transparency, as well as greater agency over their working hours and workflow. They want to be valued at work, and instead of a career ladder for advancement, they may prefer a jungle gym.⁶ People are deciding what they want to do next, with whom, and where. They are highly networked, and they are doing their homework.

Make a Good Impression

For more than 30 years, Nancy Egan, principal of marketing consultancy, New Voodoo, has asked three questions related to clients. They also apply to recruiting.

- What do you know about you?
- What do you know about them (the talent you are seeking)?
- What should they know about you?

And now there's a fourth:

- Where do they hang out—virtually and IRL?

Build the profile of the person you are seeking. Develop a detailed job description to use for interviews and hiring, like the scope of service in a professional services agreement. And for the job posting, think like a creative agency. Remember that you are creating ad copy, not specifications. What's most important? Will it capture the attention of diverse applicants and make them want to learn more?

Try to think differently—how can you capitalize on the potential of different generations? Does a project manager need 20 years of experience? At the other end of the spectrum, baby boomers have been leaving the workforce, but they don't necessarily want to retire. While they may not be experts in computational design, they have years of experience with client and consultant management while delivering built work, possibly in your own backyard.

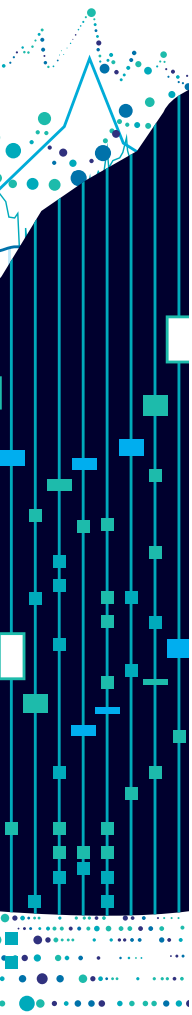
Your recruiting process should capitalize on all of your options to communicate your story and build a pipeline of potential candidates.

Jungle Gym vs. Career Ladder⁶

Sheryl Sandberg

Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

"Ladders are limiting—people can move up or down, on or off. Jungle gyms offer more creative exploration...there are many ways to get to the top of a jungle gym.... The ability to forge a unique path with occasional dips, detours, and even dead-ends presents a better chance for fulfillment. Plus, a jungle gym provides great views for many people, not just those at the top."



Interview potential candidates and then move them into your firm's CRM workflow and stay in touch with them.

- Your website is a storefront for your firm. It's an opportunity for you to share your vision and purpose through well-crafted curation and messaging. And it's the go-to resource hub to learn more about who you are, what you do, and why.
- Content developed by you, your firm, or third-party media resources will reinforce your portfolio, expertise, and point-of-view. It also drives traffic to your website hub.
- LinkedIn is today's digital yellow pages—an encyclopedia of data about you, your firm, and the people in it. In addition to what is essentially an online resume, you have the opportunity to create digital spotlights conveying news and information.
- Social media platforms allow you to showcase your people, culture, process, and work-in-progress to a broad audience, including potential clients, collaborators, and employees.
- Job postings allow you to reach an audience that is exploring career options. They may or may not be prepared to take action, but they are ready to be engaged.
- Targeted networking is a proactive method to reach out—connect with someone who may or may not be ready to engage. It's an opportunity to share your vision through well-crafted curation and messaging.

Your Interview Process

When was the last time you got candid feedback from people who joined (or didn't join) your firm?

One of the biggest complaints we've heard is a lack of response. An applicant submits their résumé for a specific position, and there's no acknowledgment or even

indication of whether your firm is still hiring. Another complaint is the length of time it takes from the date of first contact (e.g., application submittal) to the offer date. Since the applicant is actively seeking a new position, they want information about their timeline—especially if they should broaden their search.

On the employer side, often a firm is waiting for information about a new potential project, and they don't want to move into the interviewing process. However, that's not a great way to build a relationship with a promising future employee.

- Hold an open house (virtual is fine). AIA/San Francisco has a series of monthly (virtual) visits to different offices. This allows firm members (not just principals) to talk about their current positions, projects and aspects of the culture and team that might not be available to an applicant during a regular interview.
- During the open house, if it's not confidential, talk about current hiring plans—internships to senior levels. It doesn't need to be detailed, but you can generate some buzz and interest.
- If someone applies, make sure that they get an acknowledgment, even if it's an auto-reply. If possible, provide information about your review process and its timeframe. Suggest a method for checking in periodically.
- If you cannot meet the timeframe you promised, give them an update. No one likes being on hold.
- If you set up an interview, don't cancel unless it's an emergency. Have a backup interviewer, just in case.
- While you're interviewing, be present—turn off your devices and take a few notes.
- Add your notes to the applicant's file, so others within the firm will be able to access them. ■



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Resources

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- <https://www.substance151.com/brand-purpose-is-new-brand-promise/>
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- ⁸ *The four X factors of exceptional leaders* – Strategy+Business – 09/11/2018
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- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/uncertain-future-well-defined-strategy-can-help-rita-mcgrath/>

⁵ The Golden Circle – Simon Sinek

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