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How to Do More with Less

Maximize ROI through Strategic Frontline Hiring and Retention

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Introduction

Amid current economic uncertainty, organizations are seeking ways to minimize spend and optimize efficiency. In January 2024, U.S. companies cut 82,307 jobs, twice as many as in December 2023.[1] Meanwhile, reports suggest companies should "eliminate redundant tools across functions" in 2024 and pull back on investments in processes that bring "inefficient and outdated complexity" to their operations.[2]

Human resources departments are bearing the brunt of this strategic shift—recruiting teams are asked to be as cost-effective as possible while also facing skyrocketing turnover. When quit rates are coupled with the costs of sourcing and hiring, HR teams may find themselves in a neverending game of catch-up.

Unfortunately, not all organizations have the resources to acquire the systems they need to achieve hiring greatness. As such, they need to learn how to maximize the strategy piece and work with what they have if they want to see (and show leadership) proven results.

If your organization finds itself in such a predicament, you may be asking questions like:

- How can I ensure new hires have what they need to be successful?
- How can I build a more engaged workforce?
- How can I improve retention rates?

The answers to these questions can be found in one of the earliest interactions you have with your employees: recruitment. These preliminary practices have a not-so-surprising effect on greater business outcomes but often get overlooked for seemingly larger revenue-generating activities.

But the link is clear: Your **candidates'** experiences from the moment they first come into contact with your company directly impact your **customers'** experiences, which, in turn, affects revenue.

IN THIS GUIDE, WE'LL REVIEW:

- **common challenges to achieving workforce management efficiency and maximizing your ROI,**
- **how to assess, consolidate, and optimize your current HR tech stack,**
- **how to successfully implement workforce management solutions to enhance your ability to do more with less, and**
- **how these practices will directly influence your hiring and retention efforts, and how that ties back to your ROI.**

4 Challenges of Existing Hiring and Retention Practices

Frontline employees are the lifeblood of a company's business and, as a result, are the fuel that drives positive business outcomes. But labor shortages in multiple sectors—from manufacturing to healthcare—have limited companies' abilities to meet their missions and have caused them to miss out on the growth they need to be competitive.

What's slowing everything down? Hiring.

And not just hiring, but the full applicant journey—what applicants see, feel, and experience from the moment they click to apply for your job until the day they leave their post.

Here are four challenges and limitations that are holding hiring back:

Labor shortages—As talent pools shrink, so do the means of getting today's candidates' attention. Slow response times and sluggish onboarding cause candidates to lose interest before they even start the job.

Complicated application processes—In addition to slow movement, complex activities required to get hired turn interested applicants into dropouts. Those processes that aren't adapted for mobile, aren't intuitive, and require too much from candidates will stop applicants in their tracks and make them pivot to apply elsewhere.

Multiple-system management—From sourcing to onboarding, the use of different tools for different hiring funnel activities can be a drain on recruiter productivity as well as the hiring budget. When sourced leads come from multiple outlets, are processed through a separate careers page, and then funneled into your applicant tracking system (ATS), managing information exchange across these systems can pile time onto an already lengthy process. Once candidates are hired, the complexity continues when different systems are used for payroll setup, document uploads, communication, and other onboarding activities.

Limited resources—According to research conducted by Fountain and Morning Consult, more than half of HR professionals at the Director level or above say budget availability is the biggest barrier to making changes to their company's hiring and retention processes.[3] HR teams are stretched thin as it is, so they need to find ways to consolidate their tech stacks and accomplish more with what they already have. By combining tools, shortening the length of the hiring funnel, and ensuring only qualified candidates make it to the final stages, recruiting teams can address one of their biggest pain points, time-to-hire, while also investing in their employees' longevity.

From sourcing to hiring to retention, the candidate journey encompasses crucial steps, each of which is as important as the last. But not all recruitment teams can devote the time, concentration, and resources necessary to create a truly flawless hiring funnel. Instead, they need a solution that will stretch across the funnel and deliver quality candidates to the final stages.

In the next section, we'll reveal how to lean into your existing processes to build a talent pool that can help you weather labor shortages, simplify the application experience for both recruiters and candidates, manage more tasks in one system, and stretch your resources for a maximum return on your recruiting investment.

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A Funnel-wide Solution for Strategic Frontline Workforce Management

When faced with slow speed, clunky execution, multi-system mayhem, and not enough resources to remedy the problem, you may think the only way to improve the situation is to beg for more funding from the higher-ups. But this isn't realistic for all hiring teams. If you're in this camp, you'll have to make do with what you use every day.

Here, we'll review how to build an all-in-one, full-funnel recruiting process that sets you up for success, aligns with business goals, and helps your org realize its ROI faster.

Simplified Sourcing and Recruiting

It only makes sense to start with sourcing. How, when, and where you source your candidates can make or break your hiring funnel's success, so you need a strategy that will optimize efforts and require as little capital as possible.

Most processes require recruiters to post job openings manually on job boards, which can eat up recruiter time and resources. However, many modern ATSes can absorb this manual task and turn it into one that only requires a few clicks. For example, integrations with external job boards like Indeed allow recruiters to reach a much wider audience and offer the ability to program posts according to recruiters' monthly or quarterly hiring demands and expectations.

The strengths of ATS-embedded integrations extend beyond linking with job boards and expanding the available talent pool. Recruiters also can predict their sourcing spend based on their needs and desired reach, ensuring they secure enough budget for this activity.

With a renewed sourcing strategy that is powered by integrations, the result is a process that is faster, more efficient, and requires less administrative energy. All the while, these strategies are also working to create a talent pool from which recruiters can pull when demand for more workers is high.

Real-world Insight: Laundryheap

Laundryheap's manual sourcing methods inhibited their ability to hire drivers quickly enough to meet the demand for their laundry delivery service customers.

Once they started leaning into the capabilities of their full workforce platform, their sourcing pace picked up. The ability to post to multiple external job boards without having to leave the platform allowed them to decrease their time-to-onboard by 50%.[4]

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Heavyweight Hiring with a Lightweight Lift

Once your candidates have entered the funnel, the focus shifts to moving them through as swiftly as possible. If they're met with a lagging, unintuitive, and labor-intensive path to employment, they're likely to abandon ship for the other hundreds of job openings that are more user-friendly.

But with a few tweaks to your existing hiring levers, you'll find the right combination of efficiency, ease, and candidate autonomy, resulting in only quality workers at the finish line.

The first step to achieving this is to uncover opportunities for customization. Look for areas where you can infuse your employer brand, such as in messages to candidates and on any and all application materials. Build a careers page that not only makes it easy for applicants to find answers to commonly asked questions but also sings with your brand essence, using logos, slogans, and colors to invite candidates to be a part of your world. This helps create a sense of belonging before candidates even join the team.

Next, if you haven't already, embrace the concepts of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) to condense lengthy duties and free up more time. Rather than using these two technologies to undermine and usurp your recruiting team, consider them assistants that can step in where human involvement isn't necessarily needed, tools that allow your recruiters to redirect their attention to more engaging activities.

💡 **DID YOU KNOW?**

According to WorkforceAI,

76%
of HR professionals reported that adopting AI has increased their operational efficiency, and

69%
reported that AI helped accelerate their processes.[5]

Once you dig into what customization and automation can do, it won't take long to realize the benefits and tie these benefits directly to ROI optimization.

For one, a candidate experience that is tailored to your target audience's preferences can attract more engaged and energized candidates, which helps you hire team members who care about the company.

With automation, recruiters can configure a calendar that displays their availability for job interviews. In a few clicks, candidates can reserve a timeslot, triggering confirmation and reminder messages to ensure both parties know when and how to attend their interview.

Real-world Insight: Bojangles

Through automation, Bojangles reduced their job board spending by 86% and decreased time-to-hire from 30 days to 5.8 days. In one year, they sent nearly half a million automated messages to candidates, saving recruiters approximately 230 hours of manual work.[6]

By prioritizing the candidate experience and maintaining the human connection, their applicants stayed engaged in the process and were less likely to drop off or ghost the hiring manager.

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Onboarding the Most Qualified Candidates

According to a report from Morning Consult, only 20% of surveyed hiring teams handle the onboarding process using their applicant tracking system.[3] What the other 80% don't know is that much of this onboarding work can be handed off to technology, freeing up more time to attend to more personal interactions.

The goal of onboarding is to make sure new hires are as prepared as possible for their first day on the job, and beyond. This looks like ensuring their legal documents are uploaded, their background checks have been cleared, and all necessary paperwork has been completed and signed. But it also means they have the tools and training they need to perform their job duties.

To achieve a hiring process that is compliant with legal regulations, hiring teams need to have solid compliance mechanisms in place. This will allow for the collection of workforce data and documents like identification verification (I-9) and tax forms (W-2), all of which should be tracked in one comprehensive dashboard for easy monitoring.

Effective onboarding and compliance practices have a direct effect on employee retention. When new hires are verified and onboarded quickly and without friction, hiring teams are less likely to face no-shows and drop-offs, and are more likely to build a stable workforce.

Real-world Insight: GLOBO

GLOBO was dealing with a lack of onboarding structure when hiring remote linguists, a role for which onboarding steps differ from onsite roles. Their candidates also were unsure about their status in the onboarding process, including what tasks they still needed to complete before they started work.

With a full workforce management system, candidates gained visibility into onboarding workflows so they could see where they stood without having to involve recruiters. On the user side, this flexibility enabled GLOBO to make the necessary onboarding tweaks depending on whether they were onboarding onsite or remote employees.

With these changes, GLOBO decreased their time-to-onboard from 22 days to just six days—a difference of 72%—and their annual number of onboarded employees grew from 200 to nearly 2,300.[7]

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Engagement Where It Matters

Achieving all of the above only matters if you're able to hire candidates who are engaged.

These types of workers are more active, energized, and more likely to stay with your company for a long time, allowing you to maximize your investment in the above activities. Engaging workers early on and keeping them engaged throughout their tenure is a light lift for most modern applicant tracking systems. As mentioned, automation can play a major role here by communicating with candidates at various stages of the hiring funnel. On the AI front, chatbots that are embedded into your careers site can answer common questions, the answers to which don't necessitate recruiter expertise.

The next step is to make all of this communication mobile-friendly. By putting your hiring process in the palm of your candidates' hands, you're already a step ahead of web-only platforms. Companies that automate communications with candidates via mobile devices can substantially decrease their time-to-hire.

EXAMPLE:

Employers who rely on auto-messaging for 80% of their communications can see a

time-to-hire of 0-6 days[8]

HI THERE!

Real-world Insight: Athena

Automated text messages helped the Athena team increase recruiter productivity. Ninety-four percent of all their messages sent are now automated, freeing up time for recruiters to focus more on intentionally screening candidates.[9]

They also were able to cut their cost-per-hire by removing the manual storing and sending of important candidate documents.

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Retention Initiatives That Produce Results

Turnover within the first 90 days can be a devastating blow to a company's attempt at growth. The first step to solving the problem of high and frequent turnover is to assess what aspects of your current recruitment process might be contributing to it. These might include minutiae that, when pooled together, create a massive roadblock (e.g., manually messaging candidates one by one), or they might be more glaring issues, like the lack of attention given to new hires because there aren't enough recruiters to manage communication.

Once you've identified and addressed the issues, the next step is to figure out how you want to measure success when it comes to

your retention efforts. This may look like initiating training programs to keep new hires skilled and up to speed with new technology, or it may involve the administration of pulse surveys and the establishment of open communication channels between your recruitment team and workers. Creating an environment of trust and transparency can assure your workers their opinions matter and their well-being is paramount to your success as an organization.

Enhancing employee communications and collecting feedback can help you improve retention rates, which have direct implications for your ROI.
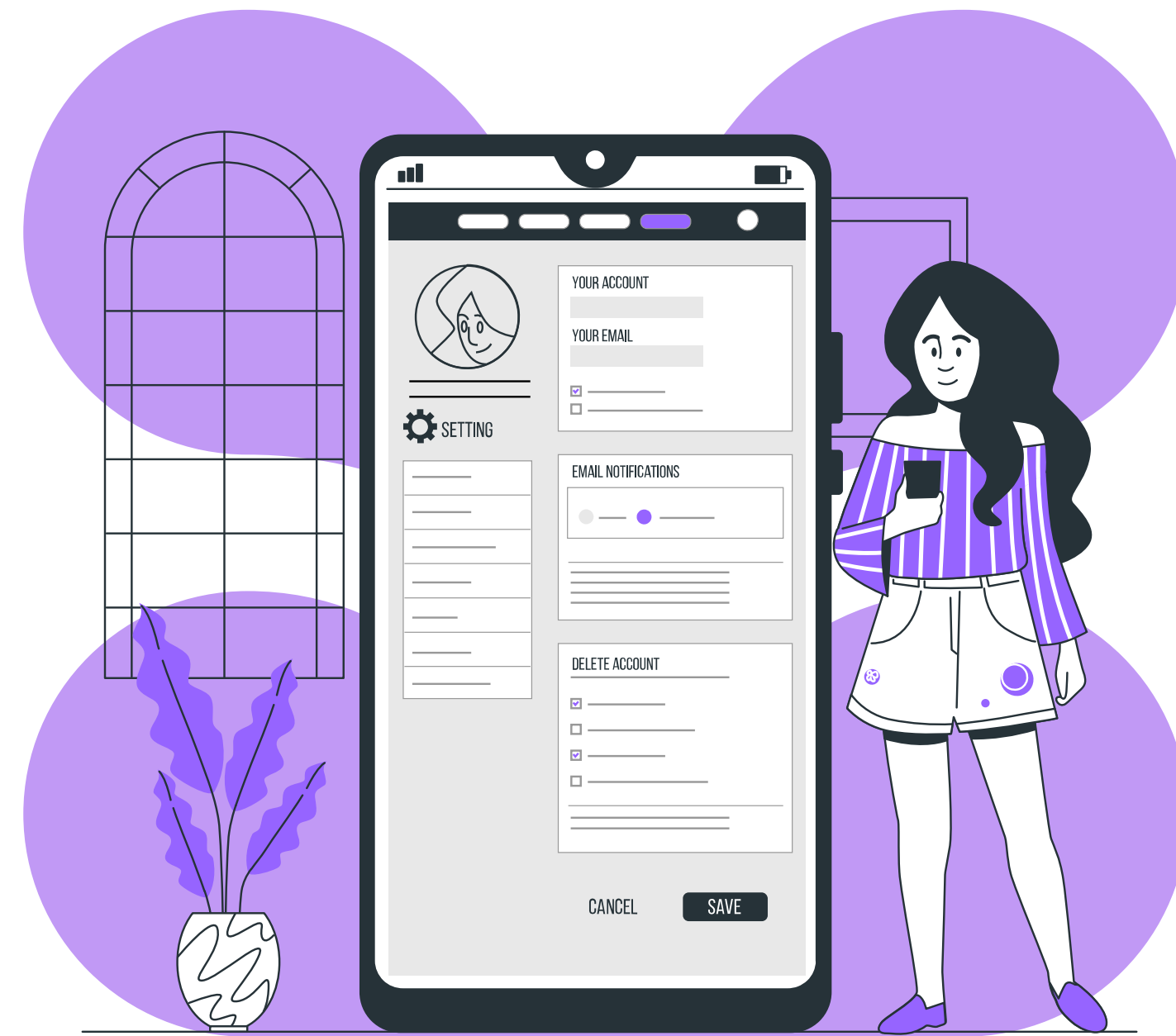
Real-world Insight: Marsden Services

Increasing retention is a major focus for the HR team at Marsden Services. Providing employees with the tools they need to be successful starts with a comprehensive hiring process and getting applicants to their first day of work. Without the proper hiring platform in place,

supervisors become strained and their employees suffer, resulting in higher turnover.

With the right workforce management platform, Marsden Services was able to tailor their applicant experience so they hire the right individuals who are prepared and

ready to work. They also were able to boost the retention of current employees by offering referral bonuses and stipends through the platform. As a result, Marsden Services has seen a 16% increase in day-one retention.[10]

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What This Means for Your ROI

The above strategies are only effective if you're able to implement them in a way that meets your business needs. This endeavor ties back to goal-setting and metrics monitoring, two processes that should align with the goals your specific organization hopes to achieve.

Key metrics to measure hiring and retention efficiency can include retention rates at 30, 60, and 90 days, as well as one year. They also can hinge on employee satisfaction, which can be assessed with the aforementioned pulse surveys and one-to-one meetings with management.

To ensure your hiring and retention efforts stay on track, you'll want to perform regular analyses and learn how to show direct links between these efforts, retention rates, and your return on investment.

With these data, you'll be able to make adjustments and construct your own retention-optimizing workforce management system. Companies that rely on such tactics and learn how to maximize their workforce management process can see hiring times as low as five days.8 The faster you can fill roles and build your ready and available talent pool, the fewer lulls you'll experience in daily operations, customer satisfaction, and revenue fluctuations.

Your Frontline Workforce Management Solution

In today's labor market, the ability to do more with what you already have may be the best option for your company's hiring needs. When you're able to save costly recruiting time, you can invest more in automation and analytics, both of which can result in faster recruiting processes and more informed hiring decisions.

By exploring ways to optimize your frontline hiring and retention processes and tracking results that directly tie back to your ROI, you'll have solid proof to show that your investment in your hiring and retention strategies is beyond worth it.

OPTIMIZE YOUR ROI WITH FOUNTAIN

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About Fountain

Fountain is the only platform built for recruiting, hiring, and retaining frontline workers at scale. Powered by AI and automation, Fountain works with existing technology stacks to create a streamlined hiring process and help organizations find more qualified candidates, faster. Fountain's multi-product solution has enabled customers in 70 countries to process millions of applications in more than 30 languages. By simplifying and shortening the path to employment and delivering an enhanced post-hire experience, Fountain unites qualified frontline workers with the organizations that need them.

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