

Emerging issue

Why Candidates Ghost Recruiters

The Damage It Causes And The Best Practices To Reduce It



Ghosting is rated as their #1 challenge by nearly 6% of employers (LinkedIn)

95% of recruiters say they have experienced “candidate ghosting” (iHire)

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Ghosting is a burning issue



Ghosting is an emerging and growing issue seeking a solution

- There was a 10% to 20% increase over the past year in candidate and employee ghosting (Source: The Washington Post)
- And a full **40% of candidates now believe it's reasonable to ghost firms** during the interview process (Source: A 2019 iHire survey)
- The **Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago** for the first time cited an uptick in ghosting in its December **Economic Activity Report** and
- **And the word now appears in the Oxford dictionary**



I'LL MOVE *FAST* TODAY...

**BUT PLEASE INTERRUPT AT ANY
TIME WITH QUESTIONS OR
COMMENTS**



**LET'S START WITH
SOME BASIC DEFINITIONS**

Some definitions of ghosting... and estimated levels

Ghosting is a practice borrowed from dating

1. **Ghosting by a candidate** - when a candidate **without explanation ceases all contact... and no longer responds** to communications attempts by the recruiter (up to **20%** of all candidates ghost)
2. **Ghosting by a regrettable candidate** - when a **highly desirable candidate** ceases all contact (up to **33%** of all ghosts are regrettable)
3. **Regrettable candidate ghosting that's preventable** – the percent of regrettable candidates ghosting you... that **could have been easily prevented** (up to **75%** of regrettable ghosts are preventable)
4. **Ghosting by a new-hire** - when a candidate accepts your job offer but without explanation or communications ... **they don't show up on their first day** (up to **20%** of all new college hires)

Some definitions of... types of ghosting

- 5. Ghosting a candidate** - when a **recruiter** ceases all **communications with an applicant** or candidate without letting them know why (95% of recruiters do this)
- 6. Ghosting by an employee** - when a **current employee** without **stating why... stops coming to work** and ceases all communications with the firm (to avoid confrontation)



WHY FOCUS ON GHOSTING?

BECAUSE IT'S EXTREMELY COSTLY

Let's look at the different categories of costs

Negative impacts... on team productivity

- **Settling for #2 means a lower quality of hire** – losing a high quality candidate to ghosting... means you may have to settle for an inferior performing #2 or lower candidate... **and that will lower team productivity**
- **How much does settling for the #2 candidate cost? - they will likely perform 15% lower**, so with an average revenue per employee of \$_____ (Example \$360,000 at Amazon)
You lose an added value of \$54,000

Let's look at the different categories of costs

Reopening the search also means

- **A lost “cost per hire” investment** – assume you’ve lost your sunk hiring cost when you lose a finalist or new-hire to ghosting (\$4,129 SHRM Survey)

For each job where you must reopen the search... costs you approximately \$4,000 in extra recruiting costs

- **Lost team productivity from vacancy days** – extended hiring will mean up to 30 extra position vacancy days... which will lower team productivity

- **Wasted manager time** – the hiring manager will have to spend dozens of hours of extra time on recruiting... **and away from their business activities**

Ghosting is expensive

Ghosting creates negative... business impacts on the firm

- **You may lose applicant / customers** – if the ghosting **is caused by a negative candidate experience**. And if **18%** of your applicants are also customers... **you may lose 15%** of them, costing millions (Virgin Media & BT)
- **Lost revenue** – an extended hiring period will mean **no revenue** will be earned in vacant revenue generation positions
- **You may lose top talent to your competitors** – and, unfortunately, the business results at their firm will improve
- **The overall ROI of recruiting will go down** – because of the extra time and recruiting expense

Ghosting is expensive



Recruiting impacts... when ghost candidates decide to “move on”

- **When a “dream employer” is ghosted** – Robert Half found that ghosting jobseekers are even willing to give up on their “dream employer”
- **70% of candidates will move on to their 2nd choice employer** – they will move on when their preferred employer takes “too long” to get back to them (Source: A 2019 Robert Half)
- **Frustrated applicants may never re-apply** – you will likely permanently lose the top applicants that would’ve re-applied

Ghosting is expensive



Recruiting impacts... it will damage future recruiting

- **It will likely hurt your employer brand** – when a candidate or new-hire ghosts you, they'll spread that negative message on social media
- **Managers will lose respect for recruiters... so they will be less responsive** – most hiring managers blame recruiters for losing candidates... and that means they have less trust in their recruiters
- **Slow hiring may discourage managers from future recruiting** – managers may get frustrated and put a low priority on recruiting
- **Ghosting stops learning... and your chance to find out why they dropped** – once they ghost a recruiter, you lose your opportunity to find out what caused them to drop out and stop communicating



WHY IS GHOSTING BY CANDIDATES INCREASING?

THE 3 FOUNDATION REASONS WHY

Understanding the causes of ghosting

3 foundation causes

- **The balance of power has shifted** – our low unemployment rates means that **workers feel more empowered...** to “search for jobs on their own terms”
- **It’s a chance for candidates to get even** – some employees and job seekers relish the opportunity to treat employers and recruiters with the same indifference they have experienced in the past
- **Ghosting has few negative consequences for the candidate** – in a tight job market... there are **few negative consequences on their references, reputations and future job chances**



**THERE ARE ALSO TACTICAL
FACTORS THAT CAUSE
CANDIDATES TO GHOST**

**AND IF YOU ADDRESS EACH
INDIVIDUAL CAUSE...**

GHOSTING LITERALLY GOES AWAY!

Slow-moving hiring increases ghosting

The tactical reasons why candidates ghost firms

Offered another job

30%

Realized not a match for the job

19%

Had doubts about company

8%

Experienced technical problems with application

7%

Had a bad interview experience

7%

Understanding the causes of ghosting

Slow hiring is the primary underlying cause for ghosting

- **Slow hiring provides more time to raise concerns** – extending the hiring process provides **more opportunities to hear negative things** about the firm
- **Slow hiring allows time to get another job offer** – so let key candidates know that you want a chance to match counteroffers
- **Slow hiring allows them to stay where they are** - because their boss took some positive action or it took your firm too long to pick

Understanding the causes of ghosting

A lack of data also allows ghosting to grow

- Recruiters haven't taken a data-driven approach to ghosting – most recruiters have gathered little data on what causes ghosting... **so they simply guess at the causes** (Ghost candidate metrics should be tracked for each recruiter)

BTW in the future... **machine learning will scientifically improve messaging** and relationship building between recruiters and candidates



LET'S NOW SHIFT TO...

**BEST PRACTICES FOR MINIMIZING
CANDIDATE GHOSTING**



LET'S FIRST COVER...

BROAD ANTI-GHOSTING ACTIONS

THAT WORK ACROSS ALL HIRING STEPS

6 broad solutions



Prioritization solutions

- **Prioritize top applicants** – because they have more options... they are less tolerant... **so top applicants are the 1st to ghost**, so in order to devote more time to them... they must be **prioritized**
- **Prioritize key jobs** – because not all jobs have an equal business impact... it makes sense to **prioritize the highest impact jobs**

6 broad solutions



Broad actions to take

- **Stop the wondering over whether their application was received** – limit this **#1 applicant frustration factor**... by automating the notification that their application has been received
- **Allow them to track their progress throughout the process** – many ghost recruiters simply because they assume that nothing is happening. Firms like **Johnson and Johnson, Philips, and PWC** allow applicants to track their application's progress
- **Schedule periodic CRM contacts** – use a combination of automation and a **CRM to schedule periodic messaging** to keep candidates interested

6 broad solutions



Broad solutions (continued)

- **Find & use the individual's preferred communications channel – ask up front during the application process for **applicants to rank their communications preferences****

What channels normally have the highest message visibility rate?

- **Text - only 2% of texts are not seen by the recipient**
 - **E-mail - but 80% of emails go unopened**
 - **Phone calls – and 70% of calls go to voicemail**
- **Request a read receipt – many email and communication systems allow you to request a read receipt... **which can allow you to know if your message was actually opened****



NOW SHIFTING TO...

**ANTI-GHOSTING ACTIONS
SPECIFICALLY FOR APPLICANTS**

Limit ghosting among applicants

**FRUSTRATION IS THE #1 CAUSE OF
APPLICANT GHOSTING**

SO IDENTIFY & ELIMINATE THOSE FRUSTRATORS

Reducing ghosting... among applicants

Applicant frustration factors... and how to minimize them

- Slow responses unintentionally make it appear that the firm isn't interested – limit this #2 frustrater by utilizing a 24 hour call back rule... at least for top priority applicants
- Not feeling special – make applicants feel special... by sending personalized communications to your high priority applicants. Show your interest in them by taking the time to personalize their communications

Reducing ghosting... among applicants

Applicant frustration factors (continued)

- **Reduce any feeling of isolation** - by building an applicant community. That allows you to keep your **applicants warm with a periodic e-newsletter**. This pipeline approach also provides more time to build the relationship and to show applicants that they are not alone in wanting to work here
- **Time uncertainty is a major frustrater** – so give them a general idea when their interviews are likely to begin... because that often allows you to string applicants along a little longer

Reducing ghosting... among applicants

3 additional tips for reducing applicant ghosting

- **Use sources where ghosting is less common** – focus your sourcing on... **boomerangs and employee referrals**. Because there is already a pre-existing relationship, **so candidates from these sources are less likely to ghost you**
- **Use the 3 strike rule to limit your waiting on ghosts** – use this rule. When an applicant doesn't respond to three messages they are **out**. Add more tries when priority applicants, finalists or offered candidates are involved
- **Don't spam top prospects or applicants with generic messages** – because those messages that “don't fit them”... *will actually make them angry*



NOW SHIFTING TO INTERVIEWEES

ANTI-GHOSTING ACTIONS

FOR INTERVIEWEES



DARKNESS AND GHOSTS GO TOGETHER



SO PRACTICE EXTREME TRANSPARENCY

Be more transparent about the process

Be transparent about interview steps and timing

- **Highlight each interview step and this goals** (Like J&J)
- **Provide a Q&A site** covering interview issues
- Tell them **how long** the interview process is likely to take
- **Use video interviews** to cut travel costs and time
- **Identify & fix past interview concerns** revealed on Glassdoor.com

Not having job information will cause candidates to ghost

Be transparent and reveal these specific things about your job

- **When will I likely start the job?**
- **What is the pay range?**
- **What will my performance be measured on? KPI's**
- **What is the average time that a new hire stays in this position?**
- **What additional training will be offered to me?**
- **What tools / software will I have available to me?**
- **Do you know what my first assignment will likely be?**
- **Is there anybody notable working on my team?**

Reducing ghosting... among interviewees

Show them you care... by customizing the interview process

- **Specifically ask them for their job acceptance criteria...** and let them know that you can meet them
- **Give them input** into who they talk to
- **Tighten the interview process** to meet the job search timetable of top in-demand candidates
- **During the initial phone interview, use video calls** to strengthen the connection

A negative candidate experience... may cause interviewees to ghost

Stop these bad candidate experiences that frustrate interviewees

- 1. Too many interviews and repeated questions (Google 4)**
- 2. Requiring extensive time off work and unnecessary travel**
- 3. Major time gaps in communications after a completed interview**
- 4. Numerous calls and callbacks to schedule interviews** (rather than online scheduling)
- 5. Postponed or canceled interviews**
- 6. A key interviewer doesn't show**
- 7. Interviewers have not done their research on the candidate**
- 8. Not asking interviewees about their concerns**



**IF YOU DON'T PAY CONTINUOUS
ATTENTION TO THOSE THAT ACCEPT
YOUR OFFER**

OFFERED CANDIDATES MAY BECOME NO-SHOWS



SO THIS FINAL PART COVERS...

THE BEST PRACTICES FOR

PREVENTING OFFERED

CANDIDATES FROM GHOSTING

Ways to minimize ghosting... after the offer

Category 1 - Do classy things to reinforce their acceptance decision

- **Send them a thank you note**
- **Post a “joining the firm announcement”**
- **Assign them a mentor**

Ways to minimize ghosting... after the offer

Classy things to reinforce their acceptance decision (continued)

- **Send them “a startup package” before their start day** – for professional jobs, **send it to their home** with...
 - Their mobile phone and laptop
 - Business cards & swag
 - Message pads with their name
 - Their future email address
- Also include a **packet of company information**, with links to websites, wikis, blogs, podcasts, company social media sites and videos that describe and introduce them to your firm
- Include a **list of frequently asked new-hire questions** / answers
- Give them a **quick response number to call** for any concerns

Ways to minimize ghosting... after the offer

Category 2 – Proactive actions that will end their job search

- **Ask them to stop job-searching**
- **Get them to immediately sign your offer letter**
- **Ask them to tell you when they officially quit**
- **Notify their references that they have accepted**
- **Ask them to change the firm on their social media profiles**
- **Ask them to end the “I’m ready for opportunities” LinkedIn flag**

Ways to minimize ghosting... after the offer

Category 3 – Do things that will draw them to work on their first day

- **Make them aware of their first day scheduled activities**
- **A personalized welcome video** can show that they are expected
- **Provide a “show up bonus”**
- **Influence their families**
- **Encourage them to act as a brand ambassador**
- **Let them know that they will have a personalized learning plan**

Ways to minimize ghosting... after the offer

Category 4 – Actions that can reduce any first-day anxieties

- Reduce any “can’t do the job” fears
- Limit any confusion by providing them with first-day information well in advance

Category 5 – Show them the business impacts caused by no-shows

- Make them aware of the negative team impacts from a no-show
- Make them aware of the manager/recruiter impacts from a no-show

A best practice

Providing training during preboarding

- provide them with a voluntary opportunity to take online training. This may help the firm because the training may develop them faster and it may also increase retention

An example of pre-boarding training

Succeeding@IBM offered new hires **learning opportunities from job acceptance until their new job start time**

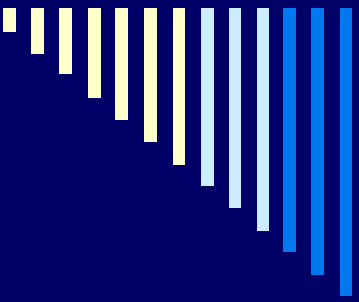
Those who participated had **a much better first year retention...**

A 80% higher retention rate

Ways to minimize ghosting... after the offer

Category 6 - Increased networking builds relationships / commitment

- **Facilitate the building of their internal network** before they start
- **Plan for specifically timed periodic CRM contacts by the recruiter / hiring manager** during their notice period



Did you get a handful of takeaways?

Please also take a minute... and follow me on **LinkedIn**