

THE VOICE OF THE CANDIDATE & BIG DATA

by Jean-Paul Isson

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Today's globally-connected, competitive marketplace is propelled by the explosion of internet, digital information and social media. As a result, candidates are more fickle than ever before. They are also more sophisticated, relying on comparative - assessment, online forums and their social network to evaluate and discuss the quality of organizations – and their loyalties reside on a single click.

In fact, it seems that Marshall Fields and Harry Gordon Selfridge's assertion "The customer is always right" is even more relevant now than when it was coined over a hundred years ago. To optimize their workforce planning and retain their top talents today, companies have to listen to what their employees and candidates are saying and efficiently monitor all feedback channels, from traditional satisfaction survey, employee performance reviews, focus groups to the latest social media trends. Leveraging the insights these channels provide is a key competitive differentiator for business success.

1) What is the voice of the candidate?

We define the "voice of the candidate" (VOC) as a collection of knowledge and insights that are captured through feedback channels (such as direct/indirect questioners, social media, candidate touch points, staffing representative surveys, etc.), which showcase candidates' wants, needs, preferences and perceptions. Gathering this type of feedback provides an organization with the opportunity for gap analysis: what a company is offering versus candidate expectations.

Learning how to harness digital feedback is a critical skill for companies who want to remain competitive. Online forums present candidates with the opportunity to freely and anonymously post their reactions, both positive and negative. This provides invaluable content: raw candidate feedback that details what candidates want, how they feel about different companies, how they feel about different brands and marketplace competitors. Analyzing these responses allow companies the opportunity to hear and learn from the "voice of the candidate."

The importance of the candidate's voice

The proliferation of "always being connected," whether through computer, tablet or Smartphone, has given candidates a mouse-and-keyboard super-power. With one simple click on the keyboard or touch on a Smartphone screen, they can easily compare or learn about companies from around the world. This means they are always one click away from leaving you for your competitor.

Therefore, candidate loyalty is essential. The over-saturation, digital feedback, including employee reviews, expert advice, opinion sites, employee testimonials, companies rating (best place to work) data, and shared comments, make it easy for candidates to compare companies, carefully selecting the best fit.

Using the VOC to create an advantage

When properly integrated with business decision-making processes, the VOC can provide huge opportunities for organizations to be proactive, on-target and responsive to their candidates.

This will ultimately improve candidate loyalty, retention and acquisition, as well as bottom-line profitability.

In today's socially-connected arena, an effective VOC helps companies:

- Improve candidate intimacy
- Increase candidate satisfaction
- Increase candidate retention
- Manage the competition
- Acquire top talent

Combined with advanced analytics, the VOC can help companies to evaluate and improve their workforce planning, talent management, continually creating solutions that help them stay ahead of their competition.

2) The effective voice of the candidate

An effective and successful VOC program is designed to capture candidate feedback at each stage of the candidate experience. Start with understanding who your candidates are and what they specifically need. Next, evaluate how your company will fulfill these candidates' needs, and how they will feel about your product or service and your overall value proposition in relation to your competitors and, by extension, how they will feel about your company and brand. Gaining these insights about candidate perception of your value proposition and mission, as compared to your competition, enables you to better understand your candidates' experience. Collecting data and analyzing feedback trends will highlight strengths, weaknesses, and potential growth and improvement opportunities. Addressing these trends will keep your candidates satisfied and create positive feedback that will be shared, no doubt, via online communities.



About Jean-Paul Isson

Jean-Paul Isson recently co-authored an Amazon.com bestseller book in 2012: [Win with Advanced Business Analytics : Creating Business Value from your Data](#). He is an internationally recognized speaker and an expert in advanced business analytics. Mr. Isson is Global Vice President of Business Intelligence and Predictive Analytics at Monster Worldwide, Inc. Where he has built his global business intelligence team from the ground up and successfully conceived and implemented global customer scoring/segmentation, predictive modeling, and Web mining applications building across North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. He is a guest lecturer at MBA programs including Queens, McGill and Concordia Universities.

Mr. Isson frequently keynotes at international executive events including "CIO of the year" and has been speaker for IDC, Forbes, TDWI, Predictive Analytics World, Loyalty World USA and SAS®. He has over 18 years of experience in advanced business analytics focusing on Market and customer behavior modeling and optimization. He has appeared in various media outlets to cover analytics and Employment Market.