12 Tips to Build a Stunning Talent Pipeline

Imagine having a warm candidate slate at your fingertips for your next-hard-to-hire role. Those who pipeline talent are living that dream (and probably having more lunch breaks than you!). Pipelining not only saves you and your team from reinventing the wheel for every role, it reduces time to hire and leads to better quality candidates.

We get that it's a "chicken-egg" situation. If you're thinking, "How can I find time to pipeline when I can't even find time to adequately source?", read on. A pipelining strategy will pay off (we promise!).

Here are 12 tips to get you started:

1. Prioritize where you pipeline

Focus on skills your business recruits for repeatedly and roles that are hard to fill. This will increase your chances of filling these roles quickly, reducing cost per hire and time to fill.

2. Pre-screen for top performers

Save time: before placing a candidate in your pipeline, find out from mutual connections whether they are a cultural or performance fit.

3. Get hiring manager commitment

The best pipelines are built in partnership with hiring managers. Get buy-in by explaining the benefits of pipelining in terms they can understand - instead of talking "time to hire" use metrics such as "getting x people to sales productivity y weeks earlier."

5. Stay organized

Create one "source of truth" to keep your team on the same page. Use it to keep track of candidates contacted, responses, and interest levels.

6. Treat your pipeline with respect

Consider your pipeline a community, not a database. Respect the candidate's time by asking him/her, "How often would you like to touch base?" To deliver what you promise, send yourself calendar reminders to continue the conversation.

7. Personalize your message

Have a real reason to message someone – for example, an article that reminded you of a conversation or a work anniversary congratulations. Encourage your recruiters to brand themselves and personalize their messages.

8. Stay visible and accessible

Rather than hounding prospects relentlessly through labor-intensive conversations, stay top-of-mind by using indirect channels like LinkedIn status updates and Twitter. Post articles about your company and industry to keep them interested.

9. Embrace a culture of networking

Encourage your team to get out of the office to attend industry events. Set up a referral system for passive candidates even when jobs aren't available.

10. Set clear targets for your team

Know your ratios of screens to hire to estimate how many people to engage to reach your goals. Create a plan for how many of each skill set they need to find, shortlist and submit each week.

11. Measure progress

Create a pipelining strategy that pulls in talent from multiple channels like Job Applications, Employee Referral Programs and Direct Sourcing. Measure which ones produce the most hires over time.

12. Recognize success

Provide special public recognition for every hire resulting from your pipeline. Acknowledge recruiter-hiring manager duos who successfully collaborate to fill your pipeline with quality candidates.

➕ Bonus Tips for **LinkedIn Recruiter** Users

1. Search and tag

Use tags to make candidates easily searchable for your team. Start with a broad LinkedIn Recruiter search of relevant companies, schools, and organizations. Create a pipeline folder for the broad addressable market (e.g., all computer science students @ University of Washington). Then use specific criteria and folders for individual roles (e.g., cloud computing AND Computer Science @ University of Washington).

2. Accelerate pre-screening with Inside Opinion

On each profile in Recruiter you can now see who at your current company might know the candidate from prior positions. Reach out to your colleagues for a candid read on potential candidates.

3. Use Smart-To-Do lists to keep the conversation going

Use this feature to tag reminders to specific candidates, projects, and team members so you remember to stay connected with candidates.

4. Stay on track with the "Project Overview" feature

Send weekly "Project Overview" screenshots to your team to monitor and communicate the health of your pipelining projects.