

Improving Candidate Experience through Mobile App and Gamification Strategies



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Introduction

In today's world, the war for talent has become fierce. Since the switching costs for good candidates are low, organizations must develop a strong employer brand in order to attract the right talent. Also, since we see an influx of technologically native millennials, it is important to digitize HR. Recruitment process is one of the earliest "active" touch points between the candidates and the organization. Hence, it is important to optimize these touch points in order to create a strong employer brand.

Often, the recruitment process is not just a simple interaction between the recruiter and the candidate, but an integration of communication between various "players" such as recruiters, support staff, interviewers, and candidates. Thus, in this paper we look at the recruitment process from the view of all these players, and identify the difficulties they face in the recruitment process. The objective of this study is to identify and rank the bottlenecks in the recruitment processes of Indian IT sector firms, and to propose a solution in the form of a gamified digital platform to engage all the players in the recruitment process.

Literature review

There is little difference between great candidate experience and strong employer brand. According to Talent Board (2015), 78.6% of the candidates decided to apply for a company based on their own job search, while for only 7.8% of the candidates was their decision influenced by the company. These figures clearly indicate the importance of candidate experience in creating a strong employer brand.

However, according to TMP Worldwide (2014), nearly 34% of the candidates state that their experience during the recruitment process to be poor, and 52% felt that they were not treated as individuals during the recruitment process. A poor candidate experience is likely to discourage the candidate from considering the firm as a prospective employer. This is evident from Kelton Research (2014) which says, 60% of the candidates say that they would not complete a job application, if they face any technical hurdles. Further, according to Pew Research (2015), 40% of job seekers search for the job through their mobiles, and this number is growing. Most of these job seekers have high quality standards of mobile experience, and would not complete the job application if it was not mobile-friendly.

KEYWORDS: RECRUITMENT, IT SECTOR, DIGITAL HR, PROCESS STREAMLINING, BOTTLE-NECK MANAGEMENT, GAMIFICATION.

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Ever since firms have identified a global engagement crisis, they have turned towards Gamification as a resort. Firms like PwC have already gamified their recruitment process, resulting in 190% growth in job candidates, and 78% of the candidates who attended the process were interested to join the firm. Thus, Gamification is a possible tool for improving the recruitment process.

This study proposes a gamified mobile app addressing the obstacles in the recruitment process and engaging all the players, in order to improve the candidate recruitment experience.

Methodology

The study was carried out in two phases. The objective of the first phase (exploratory phase) was to identify and rank the difficulties faced by the different players during the recruitment process, including candidates, recruiters, and support staff. In the exploratory phase, a stratified sample was selected for data collection using R Studio. The respondents included two hundred and fifty-eight candidates, twenty-five recruiters, and twenty-five support staff. The difficulties faced by each group of players was elicited through telephonic interviews, and prioritized using Pareto charts, and the root causes of these difficulties were identified using root cause analysis.

The objective of the second phase (design phase) was to design a gamified mobile platform that addresses the obstacles identified in the exploratory phase and that engages all groups of players.

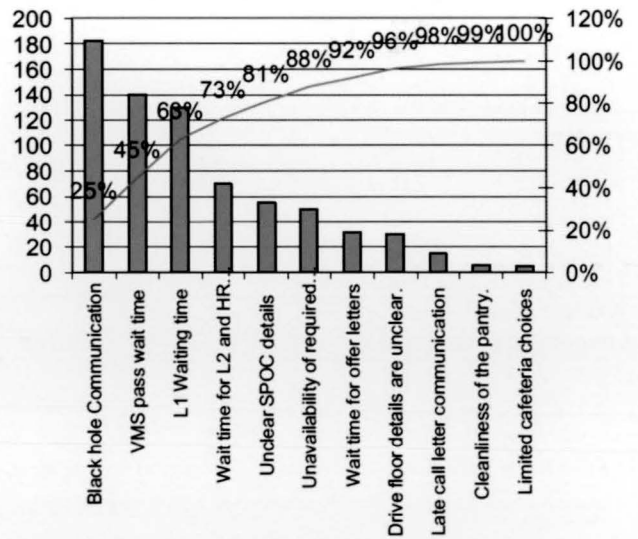
Findings from the Exploratory Phase

The findings from the telephonic interviews with the candidates are summarized in Table 1 presented below. The difficulties expressed by the respondents were prioritized in the Pareto chart in Figure 1 below.

Table 1: Concerns in the recruitment process expressed by the candidates

Concerns	Freq
Black hole communication	182
Visitor pass wait time	140
Technical round waiting time	130
Wait time for managerial and HR interview rounds	70
Unclear SPOC details	55
Unavailability of required information at reception	50
Wait time for offer letters	32
Drive floor details are unclear	30
Late call letter communication	15
Cleanliness of the pantry	6
Limited cafeteria choices	5

Figure 1: Pareto chart of concerns in the recruitment process expressed by the candidates



The following difficulties were identified as critical, accounting for more than 80% of the concerns expressed by the respondents:

- 1) "Black hole" of communication during the recruitment process - i.e. no response from the recruiter after attending the interview
- 2) Wait time for collecting security pass - i.e. the time the candidate needs to wait in queue in order to collect the security pass
- 3) Wait time for Technical round of interview - i.e. the time the candidate needs to wait after collecting the pass till the first round of interview
- 4) Wait time for Managerial and HR rounds - i.e. the time the candidate needs to wait after the attending the first round of interview till the second and third rounds, if the interview does not take place on the same day
- 5) Unclear Single Point of Contact (SPOC) details for the drive

The root causes of the critical concerns identified above are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Root causes of the critical candidate concerns

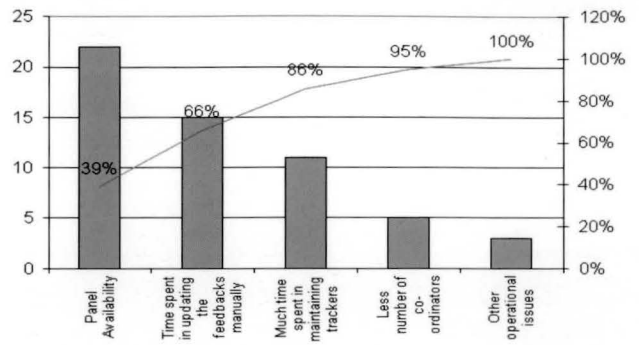
Concern	Root cause
"Black hole" of communication	There are too many candidates, so it is difficult to keep track of all of the candidates
Wait time for collecting security pass.	There are too many candidates and too few pass generating systems
Wait time for technical round of interview	Too many candidates arrive for the recruitment drives, so it is very difficult to organize their resumes
Wait time for managerial and HR rounds, when they don't happen on the day of recruitment drive	Too many candidates attend the interviews in every drive, so it is not possible to manually up date the existing ERP system on the same day
Unclear SPOC details	SPOC is often changed at the last moment, and the same is not updated to the participants

The findings from the in-depth interviews with the recruiters are summarized in Table 3 presented below. The difficulties expressed by the respondents were prioritized in the Pareto chart in Figure 2 below.

Table 3: Concerns in the recruitment process expressed by the recruiters

Concern	Freq
Panel availability	22
Time spent in updating the feedbacks manually	15
Time spent in maintaining trackers	11
Too few coordinators	5
Others	3

Figure 2: Pareto chart of concerns in the recruitment process expressed by the recruiters



The following difficulties were identified as critical, accounting for more than 80% of the concerns expressed by the respondents:

- 1) Panel availability/insufficient panels - sometimes the panels would declare themselves unavailable on the day of interview
- 2) Time spent in updating the feedbacks manually - since the panels are use paper-based grading, these have to be

- 3) Time spent maintaining the trackers - most of the time is spent on tasks like maintaining candidate information on Excel trackers and generating reports

The root causes of the critical concerns identified above are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Root causes of the critical recruiters' concerns

Concern	Root cause
Insufficient panels	No system to track the response of the panels - hence no accountability
Time spent in updating feedbacks manually	Current ERP system, requires a laptop to update the feedbacks and most of the panels do not bring their laptops on the recruitment drive.
Time spent in updating in maintaining the trackers	Large number of candidates come during a recruitment drive, it is difficult to record everything in the tracker as it adds to the coordination work of the recruiter

The finding from the in-depth interviews with the support staff was that there is only one concern: that the drive floor and SPOC

details are not communicated properly to them by the recruiters. The root cause of this concern is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Root cause of the critical support staff concern

Concern	Root cause
Drive floor and SPOC details are not communicated properly.	Drive floor and SPOC details are communicated to support staff but they are changed in the last minute and the same is not informed to the them. So they cannot guide the candidates properly

Based on the observations above, the following are the recommendations:

Table 6: Recommended actions to cope with critical concerns

	Concern	Root cause	Recommended Action
Candidates	Black hole of communication during the recruitment process	Dealing with high numbers, so difficult to keep track of a candidate's message	Deploying a system that can track the communication frequency between the recruiter and the candidate, and remind the recruiter to communicate with the candidate, by generating a communication report.
	Wait time for collecting security pass.	Large number of candidates and less number "Pass generating systems"	Deploy easy -to-use Kiosks that can generate the pass es
	Wait time for Technical round of interview	Large number of candidates come on the recruitment drives, so it is very difficult to number their resumes and line them up.	Deploy a system that tracks the arrival of candidates and lines them up according to their arrival time, which is captured at the kiosk.
	Wait time for Managerial and HR rounds, when they don't happen on the day of recruitment drive	The number of candidates who attend the interviews on every drive is large, so it is not possible to manually update the existing ERP system on the same day.	Deploy a feedback capture application, that automatically captures the interview feedbacks and updates the same in the existing system.
	Unclear SPOC details	SPOC is often changed in the last moment and the same is not updated to the participants of the drive	Deploy an application through which the candidates can receive alerts about the change in the venue or SPOC, once he/she logs into the application
Recruiters	Insufficient panels	No system to track the response of the panels and hence no accountability	Deploy a system that can track the response of the panels regarding their availability, thus improving their accountability.
	Time spent in updating feedbacks manually	Current ERP system, requires a laptop to update the feedbacks and most of the panels do not bring their laptops on the recruitment drive.	Deploy a feedback capture application, that automatically captures the interview feedbacks and updates the same in the existing system.
	Time spent in updating in maintaining the trackers	Large number of candidates come during a recruitment drive, it is difficult to record everything in the tracker as it adds to the coordination work of the recruiter	Deploy an application, that captures the arrival and interview details of the candidates and generate an excel sheet as the report at the end of the day.
Security/Support Staff	Drive floor and SPOC details are not communicated properly.	Drive floor and SPOC details are communicated to security and support staff but they are changed in the last minute and the same is not informed to them. So they cannot guide the candidates properly	Deploy an application through which the candidates can receive alerts about the change in the venue or SPOC, once he/she logs into the application

Design Phase

In the second phase, we need to design the mobile app using a Gamification framework that encapsulates all the recommendations made above. The idea is to automate certain tasks such that recruiters can now concentrate on directly engage the candidate and humanizing the process.

We have used the 6D framework to design the gamified strategy (Werbach and Hunter, 2012):

- 1) Define Business objectives
- 2) Delineate target behaviors
- 3) Describe your players
- 4) Devise activity loops
- 5) Don't forget the fun
- 6) Deploy the appropriate tools

Define Business Objectives

The business objective here is to engage the candidate during the recruitment drive and optimise the candidate experience during the recruitment process, thereby improving the employer brand and overall joiner ratio.

Delineate target behaviors

The target behaviors are as follows:

- Recruiters should maintain the warmth during the recruitment process.
- Panels must become accountable.
- Security and support staff must be equipped with all the information regarding the drive and should be able to direct candidates accurately.

Describe your players

We have four important players. They include:

- Recruiters: These are the key players who will be responsible for scheduling candidates' interview and, most importantly, to be in touch with the candidate, sometimes, single point of contact for the candidate as long as he/she is in the recruitment process. They carry the face of the organization. Age Group: 25-35 years

- Candidates: These are the customers of the recruiters and the brand ambassadors. Their experience during the

recruitment process plays an important role in how well they recommend firm to their friends.

Age Group: 20-40 years

- Panel:** They play a key role in the improving the experience of the recruiter and, in turn, the candidate, during a recruitment drive. If they don't communicate their availability to the recruiter, the recruiter will be under-prepared for the drive. This will, in turn, result in a few candidates not taking the interviews on the day of the recruitment drive or in long wait time for the interview. This will negatively affect the candidates' perception about the firm as an employer.

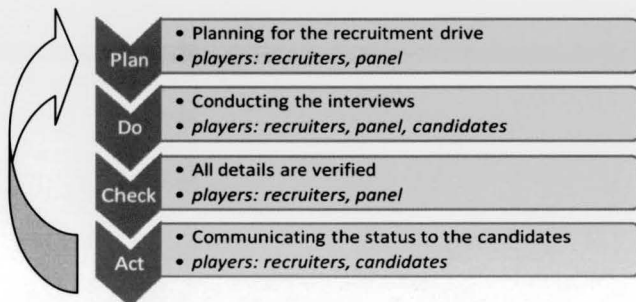
Age Group: 25-45 years

- Support staff:** These are the first point of contact for the candidate, on the day of recruitment drive. If they are not equipped with correct information, they cannot direct the candidates efficiently and will add to the confusion of the drive.

Age Group: 23-36 years

Devise Activity Loops:

The activity flow/loop is specified as follows:



Don't forget the "fun"! & Deploy the appropriate tools:

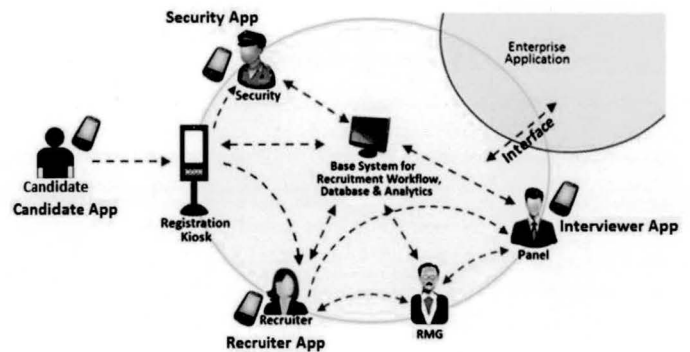
"Fun" is the most important element of the gamified environment. It is important, that the "fun" motivates the players towards the desired behaviors as stated in the second step.

The drive team consists of recruiters, panel and support staff. It is this team that directly interacts with the candidates during the recruitment process. So, the gamified strategy should include game design elements, in such a way that their current role should become more interesting.

But before we go into the details of the tools that need to be deployed and how the tools bring "fun", we shall look at the root causes for the problems that we have identified in the first phase of the project. Let us, first identify those parts of workflow of the players, which can be automated or modified, so that the workflow is stream-lined.

A representative design of the mobile app is presented in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Mobile app design



The following are some of the features deployed:

- Recruitment Work-Flow System**
 - Creating recruitment drives with associated details, status updates, and tracking
 - Maintaining and tagging candidate CV's to drive - interface to sourcing database
 - Maintaining interviewer database, tagging panels to drives
 - Candidate registration on kiosk
 - Candidate tracking through complete interview workflow
 - Logging interview details with recruiter follow-ups
 - Drive analytics with recruiter metrics and leader boards
 - Interface to enterprise information system and mobile apps
- Candidate App**
 - Educational & fun
 - Drive alerts
 - Social referencing
 - Status notifications
- Recruiter App**
 - Drive details with status
 - Business connect
 - Candidate tracking & status
 - Performance metrics & leader boards
- Interviewer App Interface**
 - Drive panel requests
 - Candidate lists with interview updater
 - Time management assist with metrics
- Support Staff App Interface**
 - Alerts
 - Check if candidate has got the security pass

Benefits of using the mobile app

- Deploying a kiosk that is integrated with mobile-app will help the recruiters centrally monitor the recruitment drive.
- Once the panel accepts or rejects the request, the same is intimated to the recruiter and is recorded. If the panel does not accept or reject the request, or if the panel accepts and does not come on the day of the drive, they will be held accountable, because the responses of the panels are recorded.
- By automating the activities, including lining-up the candidates in the order of their arrival during the recruitment drive, capturing the feedback electronically and updating the existing ERP system, and generating a tracker for the drive automatically, the recruiters will have more time to interact with and engage the candidates.
- The recruiters can now have a track of the candidates and the status communicated to them, because the mobile app captures the communication frequency and generates reports to remind the recruiters about the candidates who are waiting for an update from them. This solves the main problem – “black hole in communication.”
- Also, any update in the drive floor or SPOC can be notified to the candidate through push notifications. This reduces the confusion as the notifications sent will be specific to the drive that the candidate is attending.
- The support staff will also be notified about the drive details through push notifications. This will help them to direct the candidates correctly.
- Also, the candidates will be aware of where they are in the recruitment process. If they are not intimated about their status further, they can raise a flag. This flag request goes to everyone in the recruitment team, who should close the request of the candidate within forty-eight hours.
- Other features like back-end analytics will help in measuring the drive team's effectiveness.

Since all the root causes of the concerns have been addressed by the app, we have improved experience of all the players of the recruitment process. Now, we need to add some “fun,” to make the process even more enjoyable.

Based on the interviews with the recruiters and the support staff, and the work culture, the points, badges and leaderboards mechanisms have been introduced motivate the employees to actively participate in the game.

So, we can deploy leaderboards based on the following measures-

- 1) Lowest average waiting time of the candidates: The drive team can be assessed based on the waiting time of the candidates and whether they were able to conduct both Technical and Managerial rounds on the same day.
- 2) Managing the crisis i.e. when there are less number of panels: The drive team can be assessed based on, how efficiently they have managed with less number of panels.

3) Communication effectiveness: The drive team can be assessed based on, their communication effectiveness. The same can be measured by looking at the waiting time of the candidate for the status update from the recruiter.

Based on these parameters, we can give badges like “Process Experts,” “The Crisis team,” and “Communication Expert,” respectively, to the best drive teams.

Also, these drive teams can be listed on the country-wide leaderboards and each of them will act as experts and points-of-reference for other drive teams. These drive teams can share their practices that made them successful. So, these leaderboards will not only recognize and appreciate the drive teams, they will also help in knowledge-sharing across the country.

If any employee is handling a crisis, he/she can contact the members of crisis team, for their advice in handling the crisis. This kind of practice will increase the scope for collaborative-creativity and teamspirit.

Since, we are not just measuring the terminal value like number of hires, yield ratio of the recruiters etc, but are also measuring the instrumental values like candidate engagement, we can expect increased candidate engagement by the recruiters.

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