

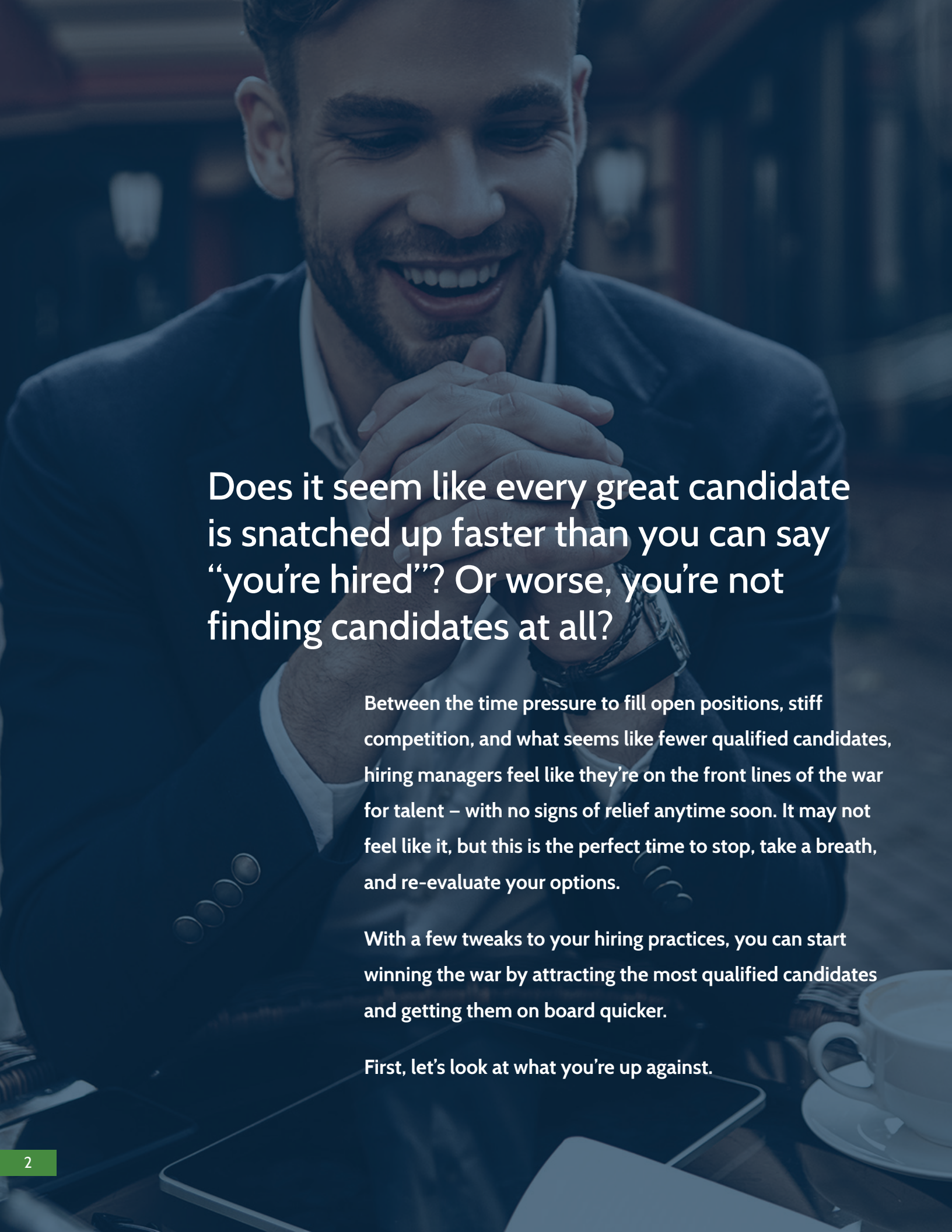


Hospitality Industry Outlook:

Practical Tips to Hiring in a Candidate's Market



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Does it seem like every great candidate is snatched up faster than you can say “you’re hired”? Or worse, you’re not finding candidates at all?

Between the time pressure to fill open positions, stiff competition, and what seems like fewer qualified candidates, hiring managers feel like they’re on the front lines of the war for talent – with no signs of relief anytime soon. It may not feel like it, but this is the perfect time to stop, take a breath, and re-evaluate your options.

With a few tweaks to your hiring practices, you can start winning the war by attracting the most qualified candidates and getting them on board quicker.

First, let’s look at what you’re up against.

Unemployment Rates

It's no secret that unemployment rates are low: about 4% nationally. This creates a shallow pool of qualified candidates. After all, everyone's working, right? Well, not exactly.

The hospitality industry is trending a bit higher at almost 6%, which makes finding the right candidate more difficult, but not impossible. As the hospitality industry continues to grow, demand for experienced, qualified hires increases. How quickly you react once you have an open position will make the difference between a position that gets filled to support your operations or one that remains vacant far too long.

Keeping Pace with Change

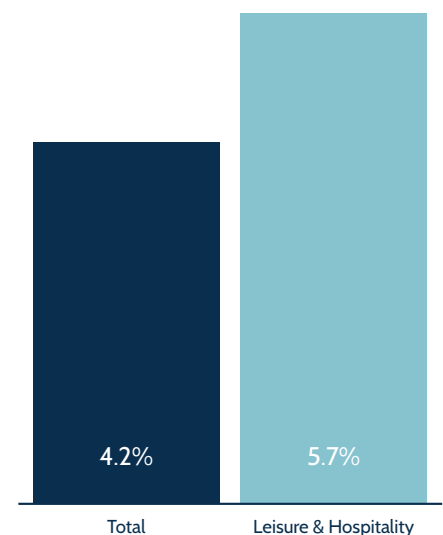
The industry is changing, and with it, guest expectations. As millennials continue to drive trends the hospitality industry,¹ the most successful restaurants and hotels will shift focus to accommodate guest demands.

It's no longer enough to put a great meal on the table or clean sheets on the bed; guests want an "experience" – and that starts with hiring the right people. A recent report said it best: “[**Differentiation**] requires restaurants to execute on all dimensions of the customer experience: value, menu, quality, and the right managers and employees to tie it all together.”² The outlook for hotels is similar: those that fail to innovate will be left behind.³ With the proliferation of apps, review sites, and social media, guests have more choices than ever.

However, it's a mistake for hospitality managers to think millennials only care about technology; to do so is short-sighted and reinforces stereotypes that can be costly in the long run. A recent study found that 72% of millennials value interaction with hotel and restaurant staff.⁴

This puts even greater pressure on hiring managers to make the right choice – which means finding people who not only fit your job description, but your culture. It may require you to examine your hiring practices and redefine “the perfect candidate.”

Unemployment Rate
in the United States by Industry



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of June 2018.

Time to Shake It Up

We know what you're thinking: "Stats and trends are interesting, but the time it takes to find the right people is killing me. I need people now!"

The question to ask yourself is this: "In this candidate's market, how do I get good people in the door and through my hiring process quickly enough before losing them to a competitor?"

It's time to shift your thinking. When it comes to hiring, the "we've always done it this way" line of thinking isn't going to cut it these days. While you want to remain selective, moving fast is critical. Working with a reputable recruiter helps to ensure you're spending time interviewing quality talent and moving them through the process quickly.

Following are a few ideas that may help you think differently about your hiring process.



Think Differently About Your Hiring Process



The “2-jobs-in-5-years” rule is dead.

Passing on resumes strictly based on tenure is not in your best interest – especially in this competitive market. Given that lifelong employment throughout all industries is a thing of the past, it’s hard to believe this “rule” is still around! There are many reasons why someone’s recent work history may be choppy, and you owe it to your business to dig deeper into an interesting candidate. Your recruiter should be able to share the reasons for the movement that will help you make an informed decision.

You may find the best candidate has experience in a few different restaurants or hotels. **Someone who has not made any moves may have more difficulty adapting to both the demands of the new job and changes in culture.** Again, this is where a hospitality industry recruiter can advise you and help source candidates who are a good fit for your profile.

Look beyond “traditional” experience.

Hiring managers often get stuck in the process because they have a preconceived notion of what the “ideal candidate” should be. We’ve already talked about tenure and the limitations of that line of thinking; it’s time to start looking beyond what you think is your “ideal” to candidates who might not exactly be a one-to-one match to your particular business.

For example, **military personnel with food and beverage backgrounds make excellent additions to high-production kitchens or venues.**

Their experience goes far beyond what they know about the tasks needed to perform a job well. Their tenacity, decisiveness, and initiative⁵ are only three reasons they make great employees and deserve serious consideration. By opening up what you currently see as your ideal candidate, you add many more candidates to your pipeline.



Speed Up the Hiring Process: 7 Days to a Decision

Day 1: Don't sit on those resumes!

Make time to review the resumes you receive. Working with a recruiter is the best way to ensure you're only receiving resumes from qualified candidates versus trying to weed through a pile of unqualified candidate resumes yourself.

Days 2 and 4: Schedule the interview dates.

Conduct the first interview within 48 hours of receiving the resume of a candidate who piques your interest. Follow up quickly with a second interview (if required) two days later.

Day 6: Bring them in for a job shadow.

Don't underestimate the importance of job shadowing. By giving potential hires a "day in the life" glimpse, you'll quickly rule out certain candidates and move others to the top of the list.

Day 7: Make the offer.

"Day in the life" went well? Great! Start the background and drug screening right away, and make the offer contingent upon passing both. This really makes an impact on your overall timeline to hire.

Hire for fit, train for skills.

Why is it mandatory for many companies to hire a restaurant manager, sous chef, or general manager with a minimum of two (or more!) years of management experience? Identify and interview key hourly supervisor, managers, and chefs with less than the required years of management experience, but proven potential and initiative. You may find your next star employee! Many businesses are adapting “hire for fit, train for skills” practices; hospitality can do the same. **While work experience and the ability to do the job at hand is a critical component to hiring, finding a candidate who fits your culture is just as important.**

Multiply your efforts.

Do you fully understand the pain of running understaffed businesses? **Schedule that first face-to-face meeting within two days of receiving a resume and get the ball rolling – and keep it rolling until the position is filled.** For instance, bundle interviews, assessments, and working shifts into one day. Which leads to the next point...

Get moving!

Can you get your hiring process under seven days? **The entire interview process should only have a few key steps.** (*Check out the sidebar on page 6 for a day-by-day example.*) Have candidates fill out background check release forms at the beginning of the interview process and get reference names and numbers right away. Why wait until the interviews are over? This only delays the process and you may find yourself chasing the candidate to get the information.

Close the circle.

Have you ever thought to yourself, “I like this candidate, but I don’t think I’ve interviewed enough candidates to make a decision yet”? While you’re waiting to find the perfect candidate, you may lose a good candidate. Why risk it? Trust your judgement, rely on your knowledge of organizational need, and make the call – or someone else will. **You’re losing money every day you’re understaffed and putting strain on already busy employees to make up the vacancy.** And guess what happens then? They leave, and you’re caught in a vicious circle of continuous interviewing and hiring.

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The solution is simple.

The best solution is often the easiest: find the person you like, who has the experience that fits, and who wants to work for you – and hire them. *Quickly!* Stop looking for perfection and take a good look at the candidate right in front of you.

And finally, recognize you don't need to go it alone. **Did you know candidates often tell a recruiter more information because they are not the hiring authority? Use that to your advantage!** Find a recruiting partner who is agile enough to work on your timeline and serious about finding top talent – and you'll soon reap the benefits of a streamlined hiring process.

¹ CMS, Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP. "Finding the balance: human touch versus high tech. Millennials and the future of the hotel and restaurant sector." https://cms.law/en/INT/Publication/Finding-the-balance-human-touch-versus-high-tech?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIwtnXkqXb3AIVhLXACH3wgwyEEAMYAiAAEgKkD_D_BwE

² Deloitte Center for Industry Insights. Deloitte Development LLP. "2018 Travel and Hospitality Industry Outlook." <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/consumer-business/us-cb-2018-travel-hospitality-industry-outlook.pdf>.

³ Ibid

⁴ CMS et al

⁵ *U.S. Veterans Magazine*. "3 Reasons Military Veterans Make Top-Notch Employees." <https://www.usveteransmagazine.com/2017/02/3-reasons-military-veterans-make-top-notch-employees/>.

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