The Complete Guide to Candidate Relationship Management and Recruitment CRM

A Recruiter's Guide to Candidate Relationship Management

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Introduction

What is Candidate Relationship Management?

Talent acquisition has always been challenging territory; and that's perhaps never been more true than it is now. For years, the fierce, cross-industry competition for talent was recruiting teams' top challenge; and annual surveys showed that recruiters felt their jobs were becoming more difficult year-over-year. The talent landscape has undergone a disruption; but one thing we're learning is that—regardless of what the market looks like in a given moment—the recruiting strategies that arose to address that candidate-centric market still apply. Talent branding and pipelining should happen regardless of whether a company is hiring. And candidates' expectations of what their hiring experience ought to look remain high.

In recent years, talent acquisition teams have turned to "candidate relationship management"—a set of strategies based on best practices from sales and marketing—to attract, engage, and nurture relationships with top passive talent even before there's an opening for them. It's a strategy that makes sense, since between 70% and 80% of "recruiting" happens prior to application. In Part I of this guide (*The Ultimate Recruitment CRM Buyer's Guide*), we talked about CRM as the technology that supports those relationships, providing recruiters with full, warm pipelines of high-quality talent—not to mention faster time-to-hire and lower cost-per-hire—when a role *does* open. We wrote Part I because we wanted to give you a no-nonsense guide for choosing your recruitment CRM—from what features to look for, to the steps you should take to choose your provider, to the questions you should ask in product demos.

> **Your recruiting tech stack matters deeply. But there's also the human element—the strategy—to keeping talent actively engaged throughout the nurture, interview, and hiring processes; ensuring they feel valued; and cultivating and sustaining confidence in their decision to pursue a career with you.**

On the one hand, CRM is a technology solution that supports relationships with prospects and candidates by streamlining communication, tracking touchpoints, and giving you the insights you need to nurture them in a way that's both personalized and efficient. Your recruiting tech stack matters deeply. But there's also the human element—the strategy—to keeping talent actively engaged throughout the nurture, interview, and hiring processes; ensuring they feel valued; and cultivating and sustaining confidence in their decision to pursue a career with you.

Here's something worth considering: 48% of Fortune 500 companies never send an email to subscribers to their talent network—professionals who have *actively opted in* to learn more about the company. Which means either those companies don't have the tools in place to communicate with talent, or they have no strategy for doing so. Not communicating is a costly promise to break—and it looks particularly bad to talent that's come to expect the same degree of sophistication in their job search as they experience in their consumer lives. The software can't do that part for you. It's up to *you*—the human recruiter—to identify talent, introduce them to an opportunity, demonstrate that you're an ally, and sustain their interest in your organization as a whole. It makes no sense to have a recruiting CRM otherwise.

Combined, candidate relationship management (the technology) and candidate relationship management (the strategies) make remarkable candidate journeys—and therefore, a strong employer brand. That's why forward-thinking TA teams are using their CRMs to transform their function from a one-off, reactive model into a proactive model that nurtures relationships with passive talent for a full and enthusiastic pipeline, ahead of demand. Here are some of their best practices:

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Best Practices for Sourcing Candidates

Get proactive

The best candidates aren't applying for your open roles because they're already employed—but 90% of them are willing to consider their options. You want to find the best of that 90%. Actively sourcing passive talent opens you up to an enormous share of the market that you wouldn't have access to otherwise. Plus, sourced candidates are more than 2x as efficient to hire (they reduce both time to hire and cost per hire), and sourcing improves quality of hire. What's not to like?

Why source passive talent rather than waiting for active applicants?

83%
of TA professionals had trouble recruiting suitable candidates last year. Over 1/3 of them reported a decrease in applicant quality across the board. Attracting talent was the #1 concern of CEOs and C-suite execs in 2019.

42%
of resumes received are from candidates who don't meet the role's requirements.

70%
of the global workforce are passive candidates. When you post a job, you're only tapping into **30%** of the workforce.

86%
of the most qualified candidates for your open roles are already employed and not actively seeking a new job.

90%
of global professionals are open to new opportunities, even if they aren't actively looking for work.

Sourcing from your CRM

99% of employers believe that re-engaging declined candidates helps build their talent community and protect their employer brand. All of these previous candidates—along with all the passive talent you've sourced and the qualified candidates who applied to past open roles—are already in your CRM. Make use of this goldmine of talent.

Calibrate from the very beginning with your hiring manager or client

Step one: absorb every detail about the role and its requirements you can. Building a pipeline *without* this data will only circle you back to square one: You'll bring in candidates that don't match hiring managers' expectations, waste interviewers' time, offer poor candidate experiences, and ultimately force you to return to the drawing board. So get on the same page as the HM *before* launching the search. Clarify seniority level. Ask how they define "seniority." Find out how much education (school, degree) *really* matters. Clarify which requirements are must-haves and which are nice-to-haves that can be learned on the job. Do they prefer go-getters or coachables? Out-of-the box thinkers or process-oriented folks? Who was the best person they ever worked with in that role, and what made them so successful? What keywords would *they* use for the search? Go through a few profiles on LinkedIn together so you can ensure your interpretation of their "ideal candidate" is on point. Doing so will give your HM a sense of what to expect of the search: very few candidates will likely check every box they have; so this might be the time to reassess requirements.

Study how to sell the role

Don't limit your conversation to the hiring manager if there's an entire team you can glean insights from. Ask team members what makes *this* role different from similar roles in other companies. Why did they decide to come work here and what's kept them coming back day after day? What has their career trajectory looked like since arriving (and what does it suggest about the growth potential for your open role)? What are their responsibilities? The most rewarding aspects of their job? The most challenging? How would *they* sell the role to someone who wasn't even looking for a career change? See if you can get a strong quote or two to include in your outreach.

Start each new search with your CRM

You're building a database for a reason—leverage it! Your CRM is a goldmine of prospects who are either: a) already vetted, or b) have already expressed interest in your company. In other words, you've already done the work—whether searching them out and adding them to your database or building your employer brand to get them to apply—so make the most of it. Your CRM contains past applicants, subscribers to your talent network, previous silver-medalists, and sourced (and qualified) prospects who didn't enter process for previous open roles. Starting a search within your CRM reduces time to hire and cost per hire.

As you source, keep an open mind about outdated or text-poor profiles. Passive talent isn't agonizing over the details of their profiles or resumes: there's no motivation to keep them up-to-date with new skills they're acquiring or projects they're completing if they're happy where they are. So use deductive reasoning when you come across these profiles. Even if you can only see their company and title, experience will tell you what those roles entail.

Diversify your sourcing channels

With 630 million members and counting, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network. There's not a single recruiter we speak with that *doesn't* spend the majority of their time on LinkedIn; and because so much information lives there, it'll likely remain the most vital sourcing channel for years to come. But while the strongest sourcing strategies will always *include* LinkedIn, they won't necessarily be limited to it. GitHub, Dribbble, Facebook, Instagram, AngelList, Twitter, Slack, Quora, offline professional conferences and meetups, and your own professional network are all worth tapping into. Different roles and different demographics hang out in different places; and with your CRM's analytics, you'll discover the ROI of different sourcing channels over time. In the meantime, ask teams where the best talent for their open role congregates, whether online or off. Then go there. (Better yet, go *with* them: run sourcing sessions with your team to uncover talent that's already *in* employees' networks—regardless of what social platforms they're connected on.).

Move beyond basic searches

Repeating the same elementary searches in your sourcing sessions will surface the same talent that's surfacing for every *other* recruiter. So go beyond skills-and-job-title search terms ("Java," "VP of Sales") and use search terms that signal responsibility ("design(ed)," "manage(d)," "coordinate(d)," "build/built"). Use Boolean "AND," "NOT," and "OR" operators to broaden or narrow your results. ("OR" in particular makes sure you don't eliminate viable talent.) Think technologies, responsibilities, companies, and so on. Run multiple searches using the details you got from your HM as keywords; and note what other words, phrases, and titles top talent use in their profiles. Add those variations to your next search to cast your net wider. Rinse, modify, and repeat with that new intel to find even more qualified, untapped talent.

Build a pipeline

Even if you don't have any open roles right now, you should be adding all top talent you come across to your CRM. Sourcing doesn't care if there's a role to fill; it's an endless process. As you begin your outreach, you'll encounter prospective candidates who are interested but unwilling to make a career move just yet; prospective candidates who are terrific but won't respond to you; prospective candidates who need a few more years' experience before they're ready for your role; and so on. Don't set yourself up to have to go looking for them all over again down the road. Add them to your CRM, and devise a strategy to nurture them over time.

2

Best Practices for Outreach

Reach out via email

90% of talent prefers to be contacted by email rather than InMail. This means sourcers who reach out via InMail aren't keeping prospects' preferences (and the overall candidate experience) in mind. What's more, 40% of tech talent has InMail notifications turned off—meaning that they won't see those messages unless they proactively check LinkedIn. No one's *not* checking their email. So use the channel that makes talent happier, and that's much more likely to get the message to the recipient.

Email > InMail

90%
of talent say they prefer to be contacted by email—not InMail

40%
of tech talent has their InMail notifications turned off—so they won't see you've written to them unless they're regularly logging into LinkedIn

Customized Owership

How Gem helps with rules of engagement

Gem's activity overview provides teamwide visibility into *all* historical engagement with a prospect (who viewed their LinkedIn profile, added them to a Gem project, sent them a sequence, etc.), as well as who the current owner of that relationship is. Which means recruiters aren't stepping on each others' toes when reaching out to prospects.

Segment your talent pools

"Talent" is not a single category. They have different skills, backgrounds, experiences, interests, locations, and obligations. Lumping them all into the same category ensures you'll send out blanket outreach that doesn't speak to *any* of them. Instead, use your CRM to divide prospective candidates into pools so that your messaging can be more specific and more relevant.

Codify your rules of engagement

By defining when a recruiter can reach out to a given prospect (e.g. not for 30 days after another teammate has reached out), rules of engagement ensure that recruiters aren't stepping on each other's toes—and that prospects don't feel bombarded by the company.

Tokens

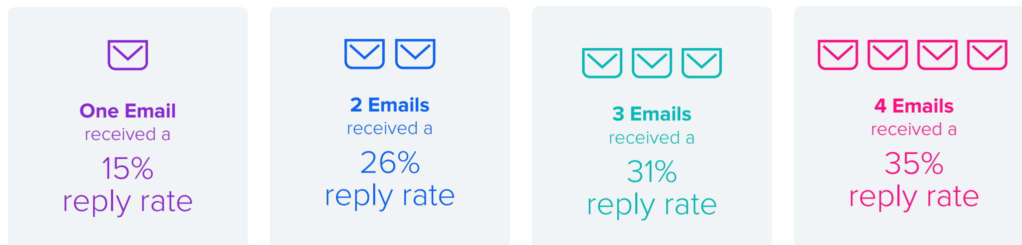
How Gem helps with personalization

Tokens represent values that are either auto-captured from the prospect's LinkedIn profile (i.e. {{company}}) or manually entered by a sourcer (i.e. {{reason}}). These variables can be dropped anywhere in subject lines or message copy when creating an email sequence. The value will automatically populate the email, replacing the token when the outreach is sent. Tokens offer the best of both worlds: personalization and automation.

At Gem, we recommend a short {{extra}} token in the subject line (first name, alma mater, current company, etc.), and a longer {{reason}} token in the body copy (a recent success or set of experiences you're impressed by, a reason they'd make a great add to your team...whatever might inspire them to respond).

Send an email *sequence* rather than a single email

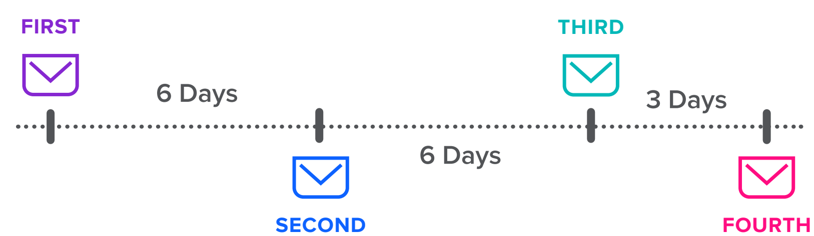
Gem's data, taken from almost 750,000 outreach campaigns, shows that while a single email sees a 15% average reply rate, a 4-email sequence sees a 35% average reply rate: more-than double the response of a one-off email. Anything beyond 4 emails starts to see diminishing returns; but the point is that follow-up messages *work*. A good CRM allows you to set-and-forget a multi-stage sequence. This way you can experiment with different send times, eventually catching prospective candidates when they can process what you're offering.



Space your cadence so that emails arrive on different days of the week

At Gem, the cadence we see most often is 6-6-3 (the second email sent six days after the first, the third email sent six days after the second, the fourth email sent three days after the third). But other cadences, such as 5-5-4, will have the same effect. This way, you increase your chances of eventually hearing back from prospects because one of those emails will catch them on a generally "less busy" day.

The Most Common Wait Times Between Emails



Personalize your outreach

Your outreach strategy begins long before you sit down to write that email. It starts with research. That means checking out social profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. It means discovering work samples online—through Dribbble if they're designers, Medium or personal blogs if they're writers, GitHub if they're engineers, and so on. Most prospective candidates leave digital footprints in multiple places. Find them. What's their past and current work experience? What projects have they undertaken, and what roles have they played in those projects? What skills do they possess? What awards have they won? What do they do outside of work (charitable work, hobbies, side projects)? What do their career goals—and life goals—appear to be? With this information in hand, you can explain why you're sending them an email—of all the people you could have reached out to. You'll also know which aspects of your employee value proposition to call out in your emails. (More on EVPs below.)

Take care with your subject lines

These are the proverbial cover of the "book" that's your email—and you'll only see opens if you make them good. Some strategies? Appeal to the recipient's curiosity, appeal to their values, use powerful action verbs (lead, build, define, disrupt), experiment with questions… and of course, personalize.

Test send times

Gem's data shows that more than 50% of prospects open emails within the first 1.5 hours of send time, which underscores the importance of catching passive talent at the right time. In other words, you'll want to send as close as possible to when prospects will be sitting down at their computers next to tackle email. Different roles have different time demands and are accessible at different hours of the day.
At Gem, we've found that:

Engineers & Eng Managers	Sales	Recruiting
Emails sent between Saturday after-noon & Sunday afternoon perform	Emails sent Sunday before 6pm performed	Emails sent Monday & Tuesday at lunchtime perform
10%	20%	20%
better than the average	**better** than the average	**better** than the average

Do your own testing for the roles you're searching for. Your CRM should then let you set-and-forget your outreach, so it goes out at the times that saw the most success in your testing.

Make the outreach about *them*, not *you*

As in marketing, a good rule of thumb is to use "you" more often than "we." There's no need to drone on about your organization. If the prospect is familiar with it, a company description will be superfluous. If they *aren't*, a detailed explanation will only sound like a variation of all the other company descriptions flooding their inbox.

Tell them your company name and, if you're not well-known, what industry you're in. The more important information is in the employee value proposition you offer—the unique set of benefits employees receive in return for the experience, skills, and other contributions they bring to your company. Whether it's a flexible work schedule, gym memberships, tuition benefits, intellectual stimulation, personal development opportunities, working with the best talent in your field, or company culture, you probably offer quite a few things that collectively make up your EVP.

Don't list them all in your outreach. You've done your homework: mention the elements that will be most compelling for your recipient.

What's in an Employee Value Proposition?

Gartner has broken the EVP down into five elements:

Opportunity
(career advancement, challenge, formal training, on-the-job learning, personal development, company growth rate, etc.)

People
(culture, camaraderie, reputation of senior leadership, quality of coworkers, collaboration, team-building activities, etc.)

Organization
(market position, company reputation, quality of product/service, mission/vision/values, social responsibility, etc.)

Work
(job-interest alignment, fulfilling tasks and responsibilities, work-life balance, project quality, intellectual stimulation, etc.)

Rewards
(salary, bonuses, health and retirement benefits, vacation time, paid leave, remote work, gym memberships, tuition benefits, etc.)

According to LinkedIn, here's what candidates most want to know about your company in your outreach:

Culture 66%
Perks 54%
Mission 50%

Tell prospective candidates what they want to hear about

According to LinkedIn, the top four things candidates say they want to know about your job opportunity are career trajectory, expectations and workload, what a "day in the life" looks like, and employee perspectives. Here's what they most want to know about your company: Culture (66%), Perks (54%), and Mission (50%). So speak to those things… and keep yourself updated on the most recent candidate-preference surveys, so you're always telling them what they most want to know.

Offer social proof

Social proof is the psychological phenomenon in which people look to others to determine "right action" in a given situation. While it's originally a marketing term, the concept is just as relevant to talent outreach. Typically, social proof in sourcing comes in the form of employee confirmation that the company (and its culture) is as dynamic and supportive as the recruiter says it is: if you're sourcing diversity prospects, maybe you link to a blog post written by your female head engineer, for example. The point is to give voice to those people top talent most want to hear from—the folks who are in the very positions you're asking prospects to eventually occupy. Do this by linking to your careers page, your about page, or a page on company culture where employee quotes are featured—or forefront employee sentiment in the email itself.

Ditch the job description

The point of initial outreach is to get prospects on the phone so you can tell them more about the company and the role. What you *don't* want to do is overload them with information—just give them enough to pique their interest and prompt them to respond. That said, including the job description falls into the category of overkill. *You've* found *them* and determined they're qualified; so there's no need to give them a list of qualifications they have to meet if they want to apply for your role. The same goes for lists of responsibilities. Remember, 86% of the most qualified candidates for your open roles are already employed and not actively seeking a new job. Sending them an objectively uninteresting document is not the way to create that spark of interest.

SOBO

How Gem helps with varying your sender

Gem allows you to send-on-behalf-of (SOBO) others, like hiring managers or executives, in two ways. One uses email aliases, which allows the recruiter to maintain full control of the outreach and field any replies from the prospect. The other grants the recruiter access to the hiring manager's own email only to send the sequence; any replies from prospects go directly back to the hiring manager. Both methods result in significantly higher rates of engagement.

Include a call to action in every email

As obvious as it sounds, without a call to action prospects won't know what steps you want them to take next… which means they aren't likely to take *any*. Talent sourcers have a few available options when it comes to calls to action—from Calendly links, to requests that prospects respond with the best times to talk, to commitments to call at a specific date and time unless the prospect has a better time in mind. Tell them you want to have a conversation about what they'd want in their next opportunity rather than pitch them a job. Tell them you want to find out if your position is aligned with their aspirations. Asking if they're open to hearing more about the role is a low-commitment question. Then suggest the conversation—whether over the phone, over coffee, at the office, etc.

Link out in your signature

Include your name and job title, and link to your LinkedIn profile so recipients can verify your humanity. Include your pronouns (she/her, they/them, etc.) as a way of affirming your allyship and showing that your company values diversity. Include the name of your organization and link to your about page or careers page. If you've piqued their interest at all, your signature should make it easy for them to find out more.

Vary your senders

At Gem, we recommend that recruiters send on behalf of their hiring managers or executives to reach highly sought-after talent (leadership, diversity prospects, etc). Our strongest users make this a best practice. Many even see doubled response rates by sending messaging as their hiring managers—particularly when they use different senders for each stage of their sequence.

Include a breakup email in your sequence

Done well, the breakup (aka "Hail Mary") email may be the hook that finally gets prospects' attention. After all, loss aversion—the notion that the fear of loss is more powerful than the pleasure of gains—is real. It can be difficult for prospects to hear you confirm for them that they're not moving forward in the process—so try it, and see if that's what gets a bite. Some of the best breakup emails we've seen propose that the sourcer/prospect relationship take a new form—whether through blog subscriptions, company events, or referral programs ("I have a philosophy that good people know good people!"). Parting gifts are memorable. Humor is memorable. And poems will likely leave their mark for a long time.

Track metrics and adjust accordingly

Your CRM should allow you to experiment with content type and send times to discover what yields the best results. With Gem, you can test email content and see what's working; view link-tracking stats to learn which URLs prospects are clicking into most often and which lead to interested responses; and track overall open, click, response, and interested rates. Take the time to interpret what the data is telling you about each new outreach campaign. This is the only way to improve your response rates over time.

Nuture

Your initial multi-stage outreach sequence has concluded. *Now* what? Just because some (or most) of that talent isn't ready to pursue a career change now doesn't mean they won't be itching for a transition down the line. That's where nurture comes in. Nurture is the process of maintaining and deepening relationships with talent over time through consistent communication with them. In many cases, you won't be pushing open roles for awhile. Instead, you'll be offering company updates, industry news and trends, free tools relevant to their fields, or notes to wish them happy birthday or celebrate an anniversary at their current company.

As with your initial outreach, nurture campaigns should be segmented. Sourced candidates may get different content than prospects who joined your talent community, candidates that didn't make the cut in your last round of hiring, or former employees you hope will boomerang back. You'll determine your frequency based on your knowledge of the industry, the roles you source for, and testing; but we'd suggest a follow-up email 4-6 months after your initial sequence, and another outreach every month or so after that.

With your CRM, of course, nurture campaigns don't need to be high-maintenance: you'll use the same set-it-and-forget-it strategy as your initial sequence, and set calendar reminders to reach out on birthdays and anniversaries. These check-ins will ensure you stay top-of-mind with your best talent, so you're the first person they think of when they're ready to make that move.

Why nurture passive prospects?

It can take between 12 and 20 touchpoints to influence a career decision. By the time your initial outreach sequence ends, you've only had around 4 touchpoints with talent, in a very specific 2-to-4-week window of their lives. Around 65% of them won't have responded to you.

If recruiters don't pick up the thread for that 5th, 6th, and 7th touchpoint to maintain relationships with prospective candidates, they're starting from scratch every time a new role opens. This isn't an effective way of working.

We're creatures of transition; and if your first outreach doesn't catch talent precisely when they're ready to make a move, that doesn't mean they won't be ready 4, 6, or 9 months down the line.

Remember: the vast majority (90%) of passive talent say they could be tempted to move into a new role if the timing was right and the right opportunity came along. Nurture exponentially increases your chances of catching passive talent when the time is right.

Our Nurture Feature

How Gem helps maintain long-term relationships with prospects

Gem's Nurture feature lets recruiters easily set up a re-engagement sequence to go out in the future as soon as their initial outreach sequence ends. Whether recruiters see that 42% of talent opened an email in their initial sequence but never responded, or a candidate responds with a "not now; maybe later," recruiters can create and personalize nurture sequences for those segments and schedule them to go out in the future—at a specific date and time ("July 17th at 7:35 AM"), or with a relative later time period ("in 6 months"). Relative later dates are automatically forwarded to the next working day, and the nurture sequence can be threaded with the initial email sequence to make the conversation, over time, appear seamless.

THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LONG-TERM NURTURE CAMPAIGNS:

- Company successes (funding rounds, "Best Workplace" or "Best Employer" awards, executive hires, etc.)
- Media mentions (CSR-related news, PR from product launches, new features, rebranding, etc.)
- Blog posts written by current employees about what it's like to work for your company
- Updates on your diversity hiring initiatives
- Industry news and trends
- Ebooks or reports your company publishes that are relevant to prospects' fields
- Invitations to subscribe to your blog or sign up for your talent community
- Free tools that are pertinent to the candidate's field (HubSpot's Website Grader for marketers, Glen Cathey's Candidate Funnel and Output Calculator for recruiters, etc.)
- Live streams or webinars of talks given by your CEO or others in the company
- Congratulations on work milestones (anniversaries, IPOs, product launches, etc.)
- Happy birthday wishes

3

Best Practices for Candidates in Process

Keep candidates informed and engaged at every step in the process

The most important thing you can do once candidates have entered your hiring funnel is to keep in constant communication with them. When talent feels lost or forgotten in your process because of communication breakdowns ("ghosting"), they lose confidence in your organization. So what are the next steps? What should they expect, and when should they expect it? How should they prepare for the interview? Where should they park when they come for the onsite? And so on. With a CRM, these messages can be both automated and personalized, keeping candidates aware of the details of *their* particular process.

Why is candidate experience so important?

83%
of talent said a negative candidate experience would change their mind about a role or company they once liked.

87%
of talent said a positive candidate experience would change their mind about a role or company they once doubted.

9%
of talent said they would tell others not to buy from a company they had a bad experience with during the hiring process.

71%
of talent said they'd be more likely to buy from a company that treated them with respect throughout the hiring process.

72%
of talent that had a poor candidate experience shared that experience on an employer review site, a social networking site, or directly with a colleague or friend.

In your candidate experience surveys, don't overlook the folks you ultimately hire! Nearly 10% of employees say they've left a company because of a poor hiring experience. An accepted job offer doesn't mean new hires enjoyed every step of your process. On the other hand, better candidate experiences typically mean better employee retention once candidates come on board. So learn from everyone how to make them better.

Regularly encourage candidate feedback

Getting feedback directly from candidates is one of the best ways to identify weak spots in your candidate journey. Surveys can help you monitor both candidates' experiences and their overall impression of your talent brand. Send these out after candidates have completed important steps. How was the application process for them? What could you have done to improve the onsite interview experience? What would have enhanced their overall journey? The sooner you can get their impressions after each event, the more clearly candidates will remember the details of their experience and the faster you can pivot, making informed decisions for candidates currently in process.

Calibrate regularly with your hiring manager

Calibration doesn't end at the kickoff meeting. It's important to sync up after interviews to get hiring manager input on the quality of the candidates you're sending their way. (A CRM supports recruiter/hiring manager collaboration by serving as the central hub for this feedback.) The more hiring manager input you can get, the better you can fine-tune your search and screen for the characteristics the more successful candidates have shared.

Give candidates feedback

The data is out there: 94% of candidates say they want feedback after an interview, and talent is 4 times more likely to consider your company for another opportunity in the future if you offer constructive feedback during the hiring process. Don't be afraid to give candidates what they're looking for. You're doing them a favor in terms of their careers—and you're strengthening the mutual trust, and the relationship, between them and your organization.

Track pipeline metrics

If you're encouraging candidate feedback, you're hopefully getting candid responses that are illuminating the aspects of your process that need tending to. But with a good CRM, you've also got access to metrics—such as pipeline analytics—that let you know where candidates are dropping out or stuck in a holding pattern in your hiring funnel. Take the time to interpret what the data is suggesting to you, and use those analyses to manage your performance. This is the only way to improve those numbers—as well as metrics like your time to fill and cost per hire—over time.

Analyze rejection reasons

By “rejection,” we mean both the reasons you rejected candidates and the reasons candidates rejected your offer. Patterns in these reasons will give you more great insights into your process, your culture, and even the red flags to pay attention to in future sourcing sessions. What’s more, taking notes on rejection reasons helps you know whether to reach out to the same candidate again for future roles. If the candidate turned out to be underqualified, they may very well be qualified two years from now. If they rejected your offer because they didn’t want to move to your headquarters, on the other hand, you may not want to write to them again six months down the road to ask if they’d be interested in another position at your headquarters. Your CRM should hold these notes in an activity history so you can easily determine who’s worth pursuing again.

Circle back and nurture silver-medalists and other runners-up

You can only fill an open role with one body, which means you may end up with a solid handful (or two, or more) of talent you can’t hire. These folks might be the perfect fit for a future open role—but they might also have access to a network of talent they could share future job opportunities with. (In that sense, think of them as potential referrers or ambassadors for your company.) This is where former candidate nurture comes in: to stay relevant and top-of-mind. Segment candidates who fell out of process and send one or two “drip” emails per quarter. Ask how they’re doing, offer a brief company update, share your social media handles, and so on. In doing so, you’ll be building trust and staying top-of-mind among talent that’s more likely to take action when that next role opens.

How is Gem CRM Different?

We admit that we struggled with the decision to call our product a CRM. After all, CRM is an acronym that sells short what our solution actually allows talent acquisition teams to do with it. It does more than “manage” candidate relationships, for example; it also supports the hard work of *initiating* them. And it’s as supportive of *internal* relationships—between TA teams, hiring managers, and executives—as it is of relationships between recruitment and talent. So there was the concern that the term would downplay Gem’s capabilities.

We also recognize that recruiters have experiences with *other* talent CRMs that make the entire solution feel less-than-palatable: in a recent survey we conducted, we discovered that more than half of attempted CRM implementations have been failures. (Recent data from both LinkedIn and Aptitude Research on recruiters’ satisfaction with their CRM solutions supports ourfindings.) At Gem, our first best guess was that these technologies weren’t built to suit the workflows of recruiters. The fallout is bad user experience on both ends—for recruiters and talent.

At Gem, we're doing things differently. For one, our view of CRM is specific to talent acquisition. It was imagined by two engineers who were heavily involved in recruiting at Facebook and Dropbox. Both were in positions to feel the singular pain points that would have to be addressed, and the unique workflows that would have to be acknowledged, in a platform built for recruiters at growing companies. Here are some other ways we're working to repair both the reputation of the talent CRM, and the presumed narrowness of its capabilities:

Rapid but thorough implementations. Gem implementations are typically complete within a few weeks of our initial kickoff call. More complex implementations are typically complete within 90 days. Our commitment to aggressive launch windows is often supported by explicit deadlines and milestones in our contracts. (And we haven't missed a deadline yet.)

Comprehensive onboarding—including ongoing coaching on strategy and best practices. Even the most powerful technology is rendered powerless when there's no strategy behind it; and the last thing we want at Gem is for you to own the platform without the training on how to create, deliver, and scale quality messaging on it. That's why our product launches include regular check-ins with dedicated CSMs, as well as data-backed best practices—pulled from the million-plus emails sent on our platform—to make your outreach as effective as possible.

A solution your team will adopt. We've designed Gem to speed up your team rather than slow it down. A CRM is only valuable if every talent relationship is tracked along with every touchpoint. For recruiters, this often means getting bogged down by manual data entry. With Gem, it takes just one click to create a complete prospect record—and all touchpoints are tracked automatically, so your team can focus on what matters: building relationships.

Analytics and insights. The majority of talent leaders we speak to express frustration with a lack of visibility into their recruiting pipeline. From passthrough rates to forecasting calculators, Gem's analytics provide talent leaders and recruiting operations professionals with the actionable insights they need.

Reliable metrics. Our metrics work precisely because they don't require recruiters to perform manual data entry. Because every touchpoint is automatically logged, Gem becomes your team's trusted source of truth.

With Gem, we made our first hire within two months of signing the contract—and it was around 40% faster than the rest of our hires.

Shannon Zwicker
Manager of Recruiting Operations

Cockroach LABS

The most exciting thing about Gem to me is the night and day change in my Hiring Managers' activity. It has become so easy for them to send customized messages and sequences, and I've never before seen such a willingness to be strategic partners alongside our recruiters.

Thomas Carriero
Chief Product Development Officer

Segment

By automating painful manual processes, Gem has boosted our team's productivity by 12x. We're sourcing faster and more efficiently than we ever thought possible. Our team can now focus on what's most important—providing stellar candidate experiences.

Chinsin Sim
Senior Technical Recruiter

robinhood

Our response rate drastically increased once our sourcers started using Gem. The automated follow-up feature doubled our conversion rate from initial reach out to phone screen.

Mike Moriarty
Director of all Technical Sourcing

Dropbox

> Gem’s metrics help us zero in on stages in the interview process where we’re falling short on equitable gender hiring. For one division, we intuited that we were hiring more women than the average team—and we were! We were prepared to roll off our passive sourcing efforts for that division; however, we found that quarter over quarter we were increasing our male conversions at a higher rate between two key interview stages. If we hadn’t had access to that data, we wouldn’t have been able to strategize on how to allocate our resources properly to fix the trend for that division.

Joel Torres
Lead Talent Sourcer

twilio

Gem

Gem is an all-in-one recruiting platform that integrates with LinkedIn, email, and your Applicant Tracking System (ATS). We enable data-driven, world-class recruiting teams to find, engage, and nurture top talent. With Gem, recruiting teams can manage candidate pipeline with predictability.

To learn more and see a demo, visit

gem.com