



iCIMS 2023 Talent Experience Report

From finding a job to climbing the ladder, what talent wants (right now) and how top brands are meeting those expectations.



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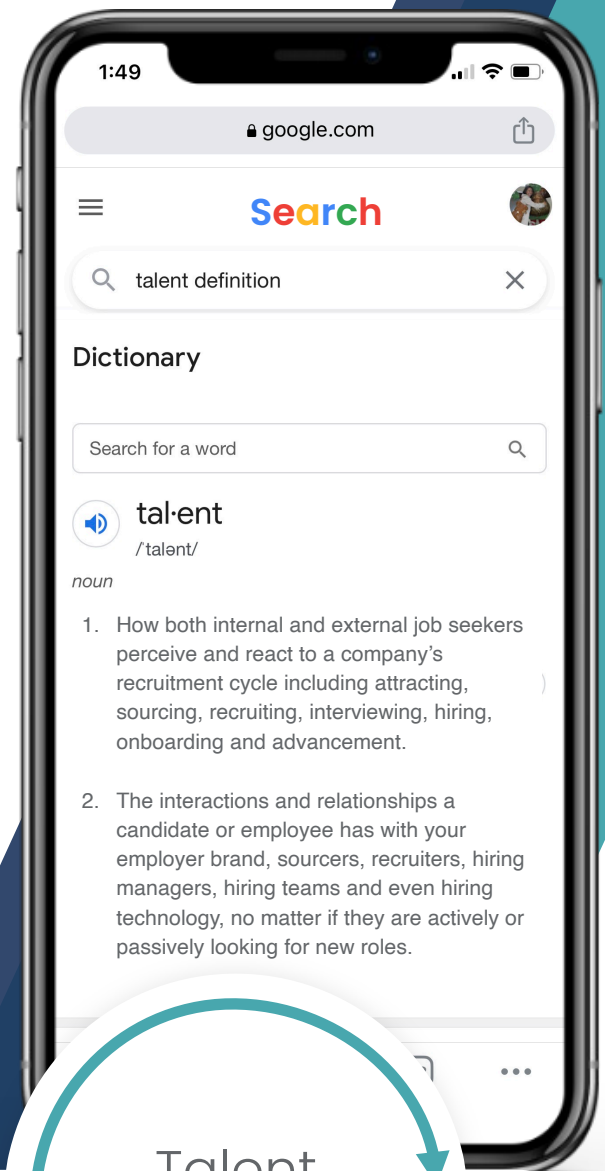
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Great experiences lead to great hires



Think back to any online interaction you've had with a brand lately – like buying cupcakes, reserving a hotel room or applying for a job – and how the experience made you feel. Were you satisfied and kind of delighted by the exchange? Or did it leave you feeling frustrated and ready to throw your laptop or phone out the window?

Great experiences cultivate loyal customers. Similarly, giving job seekers – folks both inside and outside of your organization – a smooth and seamless journey fosters a pool of enthusiastic candidates who think it would be kind of cool to work for you.

So, what better way to find out what great talent experiences look like than to just ask folks what they want? The iCIMS 2023 Talent Experience Report uncovers **what people look for throughout the hiring process** and what they absolutely don't want recruiters to do (hint: Gen Z does NOT want to talk to you on the phone).

And if all this talk about great experiences sounds impossible to pull off, take heart.

We share lots of transformational stories from some of today's leading brands and organizations – including ours. You'll learn how the iCIMS talent team improved their candidate experience by 530%. Sound too good to be true? Read on, and we'll tell you how.

Find out how the iCIMS talent team improved candidate experience by **530%**

The iCIMS 2023 Talent Experience Report highlights what talent expects from employers during the job search, application, hiring and internal mobility processes and how employers have pivoted to meet those expectations.

It brings together perspectives from 1,000 U.S. adults, insights from HR leaders and labor market data from iCIMS' proprietary database, which includes employer and job seeker activity from more than 6,000 customers and hundreds of millions of data points across job openings, job applications and hires.



Top insights at a glance



What do job seekers want right now? Here are some of the stand-out stats from our survey of 1,000 U.S. adults. Why does this matter? Providing subpar experiences can tarnish a brand's image with consumers and impact its bottom line.

80%

said that receiving status updates during the application process would improve their experience and perception of an employer.

56%

of respondents would be less likely to be a consumer of a brand if they had a bad experience applying or interviewing for a job.

43%

said their last job search was frustrating and long.

47%

said that texting is their preferred form of communication.

72%

expect the job application process to take 3 weeks or less.

64%

said their manager does not proactively ask them about their career path and help them build their skillset and advance their careers.

Most frustrating part of the job application process

#1

Lack of communication/updates from an employer

#2

Filling out a lengthy application

#3

Feeling like applications go into a digital black hole



An experience that leaves them hungry for more

Let's state the obvious: Looking for a new job is hard. It requires a lot of time and effort with no guarantees and a high potential for rejection. It can set the stage for anxiety and hurt feelings, so TA teams best tread lightly to avoid leaving a trail of unhappy candidates in their wake. And they might want to move quickly, because **43% of our respondents said their last job search was frustrating and long**. Those bad experiences affect organizations' bottom lines as 56% of respondents would be less likely to be a consumer of a brand if they had a bad experience applying or interviewing for a job.



A decade ago, if we had a lousy experience, we'd complain to friends (although 56% still said they'd share their bad application experience with loved ones). But now, we have much bigger and more public platforms available to air our grievances. 18% of respondents would post a review on Glassdoor if they had a bad experience interviewing for a job. 14% said the same about having a bad experience applying for a job. Why does that matter? 36% of respondents consider employer reviews on Glassdoor, Indeed, etc. as the most accurate source of information on what it is like to work at the organization.

What's the most accurate source of information for what it's like to work for an organization?

- 1) 36% employer reviews on Glassdoor, Indeed, etc.
- 2) 26% career site
- 3) 13% employee testimonial videos
- 4) 10% company news emails

TA hot take: Check out our [playbook](#) for keeping silver medalists engaged and your brand top of mind for future roles.



Created with iCIMS



Helping healthcare workers find just-right jobs

Global Medical Response uses iCIMS Career Sites to **create web pages that show candidates how a job with GMR allows them to serve their own communities**. The pages also point job seekers to the right opportunities: Paramedics, EMTs and nurses encounter an experience tailored to their career paths.

Employee testimonials created through iCIMS Video Studio **give GMR's specialty -specific career pages a personal touch**. When job seekers open posts, they find clips of current employees sharing their experience at the company. As one employee quipped: "The possibilities for work are endless here."

[Read the full story](#)



What talent (actually) wants

Whether they're looking for a new job or trying to find the next step along their career path, internal and external job seekers want — no, expect — a seamless and personalized experience. Here's what they told us (and how some top brands are making that magic happen).

An application process that doesn't leave them in the dark

It turns out that, like most healthy relationships, communication is a key ingredient between talent and employers. **An overwhelming 80% of the 1,000 U.S. adults iCIMS surveyed said that getting status updates during the application process would improve not only their experience, but also their perception of an employer.** Respondents also cited a lack of communication from an employer as one of the most frustrating aspects of the job application process.

"Providing a great experience for your internal and external job candidates is no longer a 'nice to have' — today, it affects the bottom line and is critical for businesses to get right. In fact, more than half of our survey respondents said they'd be less likely to be a consumer of a brand that they had a bad interview or application experience with. The data in this report can help talent acquisition leaders identify their strategic focus areas and continue to build a business case for making investments there."

— **Laura Coccaro**,
Chief People Officer, iCIMS



Giving candidates what they want

Start

3
weeks

A whopping
72%

of Americans **expect the job application process** — from submitting the application to receiving an offer letter— to take 3 weeks or less.

17

 days

iCIMS data shows that the **overall time to hire** from January through July 2023 was about 17 days, or under 3 weeks, for enterprises using iCIMS.



And make it easy-peasy

Data revealed job seekers become frustrated after 3 interviews and want an application to be mobile friendly. iCIMS customers have **reduced application time 14% (about one minute)** since January 2022.



What's it like to apply for a job at your company?



The Cheesecake Factory went undercover to find out.

Read the full story



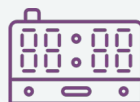
It's no exaggeration to say that The Cheesecake Factory has a healthy appetite for talent, making about 38,000 hires a year to staff its 321 locations across North America. To keep up, the company's talent teams are constantly looking for ways to improve candidate experience. While he applied to other companies all the time to check out what their talent experience was like, The Cheesecake Factory's manager of talent systems had never done that for his own company.

And what he found surprised him: Job descriptions with all different font styles. Too many emails. And questions about tax credits that could scare off applicants, the bulk of which are between 18 and 24.

He took his findings to the talent team and went to work, overhauling fonts on 2,400 job posts, slimming down communication and reworking that intimidating tax question. Through some additional nips and tucks to the application, the company saw big results in just five months:



The application shrank from **9** to **2** pages



Time to complete went from **2.5 minutes** to **1.46 minutes**



Completion rate jumped from **39%** to **71%**

The company made it easy to apply from a phone: candidates can text "cakejobs" to 97211. Today, **60–75% of the company's applications** come from mobile devices.



A communication process that meets them where they are

Almost half (47%) say that texting is the preferred form of communication. 34% would prefer emails, 20% apparently still answer their phones and, perhaps unsurprisingly, a quarter of Baby Boomers wanted employers to get in touch the old-fashioned way, with a phone call or letter. 56% of respondents ranked getting a phone call at the bottom of their communication preferences.

It seems Americans want to stay in the loop with organizations that they are interested in and have taken steps to ensure that happens. One-third have signed up to receive updates from a potential employer, including recent news. 44% would appreciate getting recommendations for open, relevant jobs based on their skills and experience. 43% would provide their resume to a potential employer to get relevant job recommendations based on their skills and experience.

A candidate journey with personalized touchpoints

Much the way it's convenient when retailers serve up a cute sweater to go with the jeans you just put in your cart, 36% of respondents told us that they'd

be more likely to click on an email from an employer that included job roles that matched their skills and experience.

Just including their name would encourage another 22% of people to open an email, and 15% like when the email includes personal information about them (like past employers, skills or certifications). 14% would be more inclined to open an email that contained content — like blogs, videos or career site pages — which were related to content they've viewed in the past.

"It's not about 'consumerizing' the entire experience — it's about humanizing it. We have so much technology to help us do all of this; it's baffling we don't put it to good use. iCIMS shrinks time to apply, talks to people in the channels they prefer, lets organizational culture and employee testimonials shine through and treats job seekers like a brand community (which they are)."

- Jess Von Bank,
Global Leader, Workforce
Technology, Mercer | Leapgen



Created with iCIMS

chewy

Chewy keeps candidates close and reduces time to fill with text messaging

For Chewy, it was important to engage candidates with a high-touch campaign that started within the first 48 hours. "Quality candidates turn quickly, and we want the best," said Chewy's Associate Director, TA.

[iCIMS Text Engagement](#) became a key component for communicating with candidates, who are more likely to respond to casual and friendly messages than phone calls. As they say at Chewy: "iCIMS Text Engagement keeps us close to candidates."

Leveraging text messaging in early outreach campaigns helped Chewy reduce time to fill by 45%.

[Read the full story](#)



A job search that doesn't give clunky 2009 vibes

Talent teams take note: job seekers are spoiled. They know what it's like to buy something with the click of a button and then get served perfectly matched suggestions for what to buy next based on that purchase. But when it comes to looking for a job, many of our respondents have not had any interaction with modern HR tech.

Over half (52%) had not viewed an employee testimonial video to learn more about what it's like to work for a company, and 62% haven't taken advantage of a chatbot for 24/7 support. Furthermore, while 57% of people have not submitted an application or resume via text message, about 20% would have liked that opportunity. Leveraging modern recruitment tech could help organizations provide those seamless and personalized experiences.



3 steps for creating a world-class talent experience program

from Truist, an iCIMS advisor partner

- 1. Confirm and communicate** WHY you are investing in talent experience at your company or in your function.
- 2. Gather insights** about the current state of how your candidates and employees are experiencing your company today and what they want to experience differently in the future.
- 3. Develop a prioritized roadmap** that is built from the intersection of what your talent insights say your people want, what the C-suite is willing to support and what will disproportionately fuel your business strategy.

"Companies who invest in their talent experience with as much discipline and rigor as they do their customer experience will see massive long-term benefits."

- Lisa Colella, Founder & Chief Strategist, Truist



Created with iCIMS



Exceeding hiring goals by 119% with text messaging

To drum up interest for an upcoming job fair, Suncoast Credit Union sent out over 2,000 text messages to prime potential candidates. While other businesses at the job fair signed 2 or 3 employees, Suncoast signed 27 – a win that helped the company surpass its quarterly hiring goal by 119%.



"We were able to hire at levels we never expected," said Suncoast's director of talent acquisition. "Our C-suite and leaders were all simply amazed."

- TA Director,
Suncoast Credit Union

[Watch the full story](#)



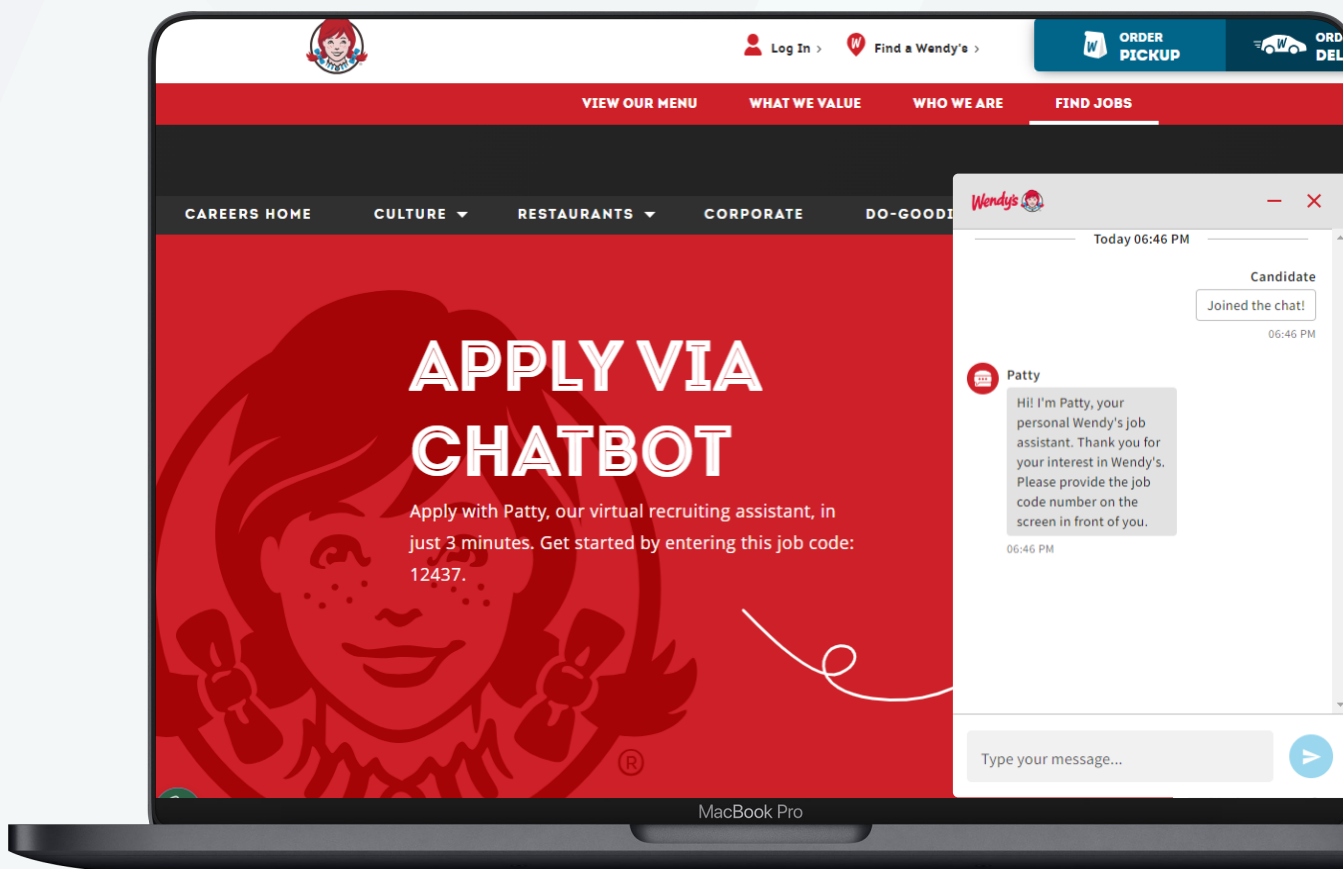
Do you want a Frosty with that job application?

Wendy's chatbot shrinks time to apply to 2 minutes.

For The Wendy's Company, ensuring restaurants are fully staffed is one of the most important pieces of the customer experience and keeps fans coming back for more. To get candidates behind the counter fast, the company has a chatbot named "Patty" to help restaurant crew and shift candidates fill out the application and schedule an interview in under 2 minutes.

As a result, the median time from apply to hire is 5 days with 80% of candidates and an 8% increase in hires in just 3 months. The technology elevates not only the candidate experience, but it also drives business results by reducing the cost to hire and increasing restaurant manager productivity because they spend less time on recruiting.

"Think what you can do with all that extra time you've saved, like looking through candidates, moving them through the funnel and thinking of new and exciting ways to improve the candidate experience," said VP of Enterprise Technology at The Wendy's Company .





An opportunity to tap into generative AI

Although ChatGPT and its generative AI counterparts have been all over the news in 2023, almost 40% of people are apprehensive about its use in the workplace, while another 40% are open to it. Had their opinions changed in the last 6 months? About 20% of people are more open to using AI in the workplace. Another 20% said their opinion of it had not changed, and they remained apprehensive about using AI tech at work.

63% of people say they have no experience using it to write a resume or cover letter compared with just 17% who have deployed that tech to create content in the job search. About 20% of people say that although they have not used it, they are either interested or plan to use it. Men were twice as likely as women to have used ChatGPT to write a resume or cover letter, and 68% of women said they had no experience using the technology vs. 58% of men.

They want to work at home. And the office. Or maybe a little of both.

Despite a recent survey by the Pew Research Center that found 41% of those with jobs that can be done remotely are working a hybrid schedule, we discovered more workers would rather work remote full time (46%). Hybrid schedules were preferred by 27% of people, while another 27% would rather work full time in person. Looking at preferences across generations, all but Gen Z lean more toward staying home full time, with 40% of our youngest workers preferring to go to the office Monday through Friday.

3 ways to ethically and responsibly leverage AI



Productivity and efficiency aid.

Streamline repetitive, mundane tasks, but beware of sharing personal info.



Candidate touchpoints. Automate how you engage with talent to communicate with them at scale.



Better context for decisions. Keep the "human in the loop" and enrich your information with internet-based data.

*"While there is some fear about AI, there's a lot more curiosity. **Keep in mind that AI should be used as a productivity aid to get better quality starting points, give better context for decisions, improve experiences and reduce time and streamline processes. The concern comes in when the processes and technologies used aren't ethical or responsible. All decisions should begin and end with human decision points.**"*



- **Andrea Wade**
VP of Product Strategy
at iCIMS

Back to office? Not so fast.

Despite calls to return to office and companies implementing hybrid work schedules dominating the headlines, people are still looking for out-of-state work, and employers continue to hire them at a steady rate.



20% of applications were out of state in Q3 23*



13% of hires were out of state in Q3 23*

*iCIMS Insights data



How do you help candidates get to know you?



CommonSpirit Health lets employees play company storytellers.



"I think it's all about storytelling. When we can amplify our employees' voices, it makes much more of an impact on the candidate experience."

- VP Candidate Experience
CommonSpirit Health

[Read the full story](#)

Staffing a hospital is like running a mini city — not only are healthcare professionals needed, but so are cooks, housekeepers, marketing and finance teams, and the list goes on.

For CommonSpirit Health, the country's second largest healthcare chain, the Candidate Experience team analyzes top of the funnel traffic to look for ways to increase quality applications. Rather than getting more applications, they work with their operations team to create buy-in during those early stages by pushing out better job content.

The team had been juggling several microsites, which provided a disjointed experience. Once they consolidated into one career site that supports five brands, they were able to showcase the company culture and amplify employee stories.

To bring those stories to life, CommonSpirit asks employees to record video testimonials on their phones to help job seekers get a feel for what it's like to work for the company and its culture. The company's VP of Candidate Experience says the videos allow employees to be themselves, which lends an authenticity to the unscripted videos. The team leverages them on the career site, social channels and email campaigns.

"Our goal is to get the job seeker on our career site as quickly as possible and to have our employees tell their stories," VP Candidate Experience, CommonSpirit Health.

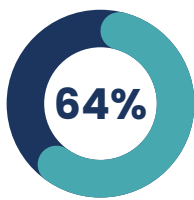


The chance to spread their career wings

When asked what would keep respondents happy with their current employer and prevent them from looking for a new job, 34% said support and guidance to grow in their role at the organization. 31% said opportunities to advance in a new role, and 21% said opportunities to develop new skills.

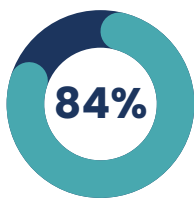
An overwhelming 64% of respondents said their manager did not proactively ask them about their career path and help them build their skillset and advance their careers. 44% of respondents said they would appreciate getting recommendations for open, relevant jobs based on their skills and experience.

43% of respondents would provide their resumes to a potential employer to get relevant job recommendations based on their skills and experience.



of those surveyed

64% expect to discuss their career path with their manager more than once a year.



of those surveyed

84% say that career advancement is important in their next job opportunity.



of those surveyed

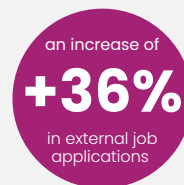
70% say they would be interested in gig or project work at their company to learn new skills.



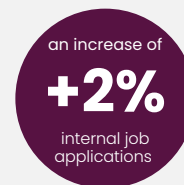
1 in 3

employees expect to discuss a career plan with their manager if they apply for a role internally and don't receive a job offer.

Your employees are looking for jobs with other companies



vs.



iCIMS data shows that internal applicant growth lags significantly behind external job applications.

Amid hiring freezes, reductions and economic uncertainty, giving employees a reason to stick around helps improve retention and makes good business sense.

"When we think about employee satisfaction and retention, we automatically equate that with compensation, benefits or work life balance. The reality is, they just want to know that there is a path for continued development in their current role or organization. We don't have to reinvent the wheel. We just need to enable our leaders to get comfortable having more frequent conversations about skills, career paths and opportunities for growth to remove the taboo on the topic."



- Allison Nadeau, Global VP Talent Management, iCIMS



iCIMS uses iCIMS to hire and advance

How the iCIMS TA team improved candidate experience by 530%

When the iCIMS talent team activated the company's full suite of talent acquisition tools, they supercharged the experience for both internal and external candidates — and have some big numbers to show for it.

Putting all the pieces in place and creating processes to coordinate the flow took a lot of planning — about 2 years from start to finish. As Customer Zero, the iCIMS team made the process seamless for job seekers and recruiters by implementing some of these tactics.

Making a business case for candidate experience.

The team was methodical in their approach to transforming the iCIMS candidate experience. From analyzing market trends to developing objectives and key results to aligning with business priorities, the team left no process stone unturned.

A career site that went from modest to hottest.

Revamping the company's career site to better reflect the brand and its culture was at the top of the transformation list. The new site included a call to action to join the talent community on every page. Employee videos throughout the site give more details about the various teams and the company culture.

TA hot take: To bring a personal touch to building an engaged pipeline, iCIMS deployed marketing automation and leveraged its CRM. Engagement campaigns included monthly newsletters for all talent community members.

Put a bird on it. Bertie, the iCIMS feathered mascot dedicated to candidates, represents HR professionals across the talent lifecycle. They also serve as the site's chatbot and are ready to show you around, answer questions and have a nest full of bird puns.

Take the mystery out of the process. Getting a job shouldn't feel like a Scooby Doo episode, filled with uncertainty until the final moments. The team created a "[How we hire](#)" video to explain the whole process — from searching for open roles to getting set for your first day at iCIMS.

Roll out the red carpet. The iCIMS team keeps the party going with a refreshed onboarding process that creates a sense of belonging and excitement for all new hires.



85%
increase in
career site
traffic



2-week
time to hire
reduction



10x
pipeline
growth



530%
increase in
candidate
satisfaction

*(measured by NPS)



Building a better internal talent marketplace

How iCIMS TA and TM teams joined forces to boost the internal mobility experience.

Any architect worth their salt can tell you that a solid foundation is the most critical element of any structure. Without it, you might as well pitch a tent and crawl into your sleeping bag.

When iCIMS HR teams began creating a blueprint for a comprehensive internal mobility program, the first step was to look at the data, develop KPIs and align with business priorities. This ensured that all the improvements to come – the light fixtures and wallpaper – rested on solid footing.

Then, TA and TM teams combined their unique capabilities to build out an internal talent marketplace. Here are the top 5 steps teams took to get there:

1. **Revamping the internal experience.** With a renewed emphasis on retention by leadership, talent teams knew that internal candidates needed the same experience external job seekers had when visiting the updated career site. This included ensuring it reflected iCIMS's branding and employee value proposition, as well as videos highlighting internal mobility success stories.
2. **Laying the groundwork for career pathing.** The team reviewed all positions within the company and identified the skills needed to be successful in those roles. When that full taxonomy is complete, it will enable employees to see where they want to head on their career path and the skills needed to get there.
3. **Providing opportunities to upskill.** Talent teams can't just call attention to open roles. They also need to give employees the means to acquire the skills needed to get there – whether through mentorships, training (either in-house or through a third party) or project work.
4. **Giving insight into who does what at the company.** At a big company with many teams, sometimes, it's hard to envision a career path when you're not sure who does what. iCIMS created an internal landing page where employees can discover how teams function across the organization through testimonials and videos from team members describing their roles.
5. **Taking the mystery out of employee sentiment.** Why wonder about what employees want when you can just ask them instead? The TM team updated the cadence of new-hire surveys (at 30 days and 6 months) to add to the exit interview. Performance management was also rethought, and managers received training to help facilitate conversations about where employees want to head next and encourage more transparent conversations.

How iCIMS gives employees opportunities to develop their skills and advance their careers.



[Watch the full story](#)



Explore more trends and experiences from European candidates

When it comes to attracting top talent, it doesn't matter where in the world you are. Whether in the U.S. or Europe, candidates want the same thing: A simple, satisfying candidate experience with the right tools to guide them through it.

We explore the candidate experience as job seekers search and apply for roles at some of Europe's largest companies. (The report will be available September 19.)

Top findings

9%

Less than 1 in 10 companies in Europe include salary in their job postings.

59%

Over half of European companies failed to send candidates a confirmation or follow-up communication after applying.

8 clicks

On average, it takes ~8 clicks for job seekers to find open jobs on a corporate website.

34 clicks

On average, it takes European candidates ~34 clicks and 4 mins 58 seconds to apply.

3%

Only 3% of career sites in Europe have a digital chatbot.

43%

43% of websites offer European candidates the ability to "apply in 1 click."



Leaders are looking at how we can better attract and engage candidates while driving quality applications. Building a strong TA method, while utilizing technologies of the future, is the only way forward in making the job search less painful for candidates and recruiters.



– Eric Gellé,
SVP, EMEA iCIMS



Methodology

iCIMS commissioned an online survey with Dynata in July 2023 of 1,000 U.S. consumers, who were 18 years and older, to understand their attitudes and preferences in a variety of topics related to the workplace. Dynata utilizes a variety of sample sources such as panel, web intercept sample and specialty lists to deliver data insights that are diverse and representative.



About iCIMS' proprietary platform data

iCIMS Insights provides a deep understanding of the talent market through data drawn from the iCIMS platform. iCIMS' proprietary database of employer and job seeker activity includes hundreds of millions of data points across job openings, job applications and hires. iCIMS customers represent key sectors of the U.S. economy, with expansive geographic, industry and occupational representation. iCIMS' expertise and data intersect to deliver unparalleled insights, helping business and HR leaders better understand workforce trends and drive competitive advantage.



About iCIMS

iCIMS is the talent cloud company that empowers organizations to attract, engage, hire and advance the right talent that builds a diverse, winning workforce. iCIMS accelerates transformation for a community of nearly 6,000 customers, including 40% of the Fortune 100, that collectively employ more than 33 million people around the world.

For more insights and perspectives, visit www.icims.com/insights.