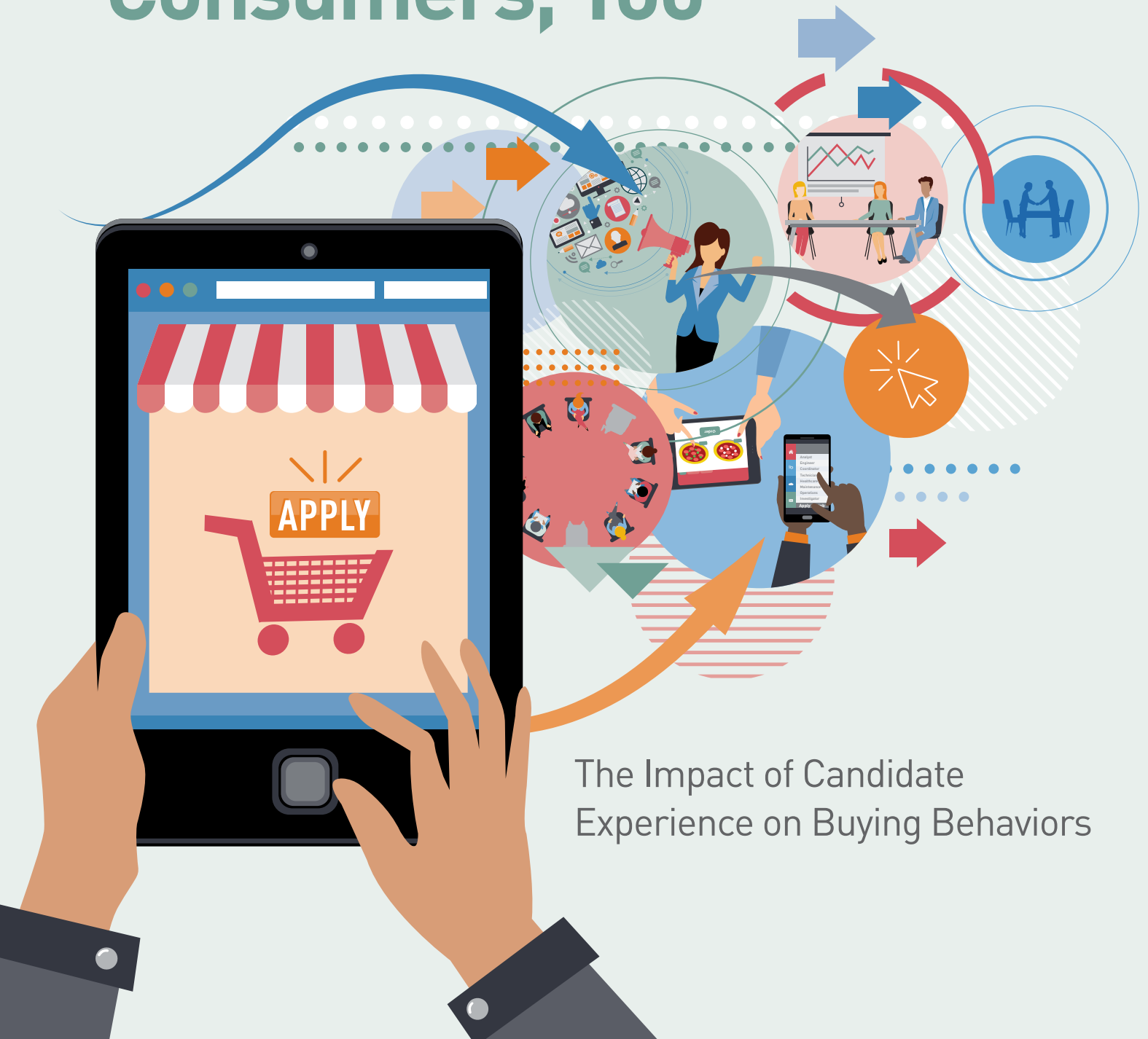




ManpowerGroup®  
Solutions

# Add to Cart: Candidates are Consumers, Too



The Impact of Candidate  
Experience on Buying Behaviors

Insights from the 2018 Global Candidate Preferences Survey

Employer brand and consumer brand are inextricably linked. In today's world of work, people want more than access to jobs. They want value, choice and a personalized approach to help advance their careers and lives. Shifting the recruitment process beyond transactional endeavors to an opportunity to develop relationships with potential customers and advocates will build trust and loyalty, ultimately impacting the bottom line.

As part of ManpowerGroup Solutions' 2018 Candidate Preferences research, this report looked at the following questions:

- What is the **impact** of negative candidate experiences on **purchase intent**?
- What types of **negative experiences** are most **damaging**?



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# Introduction

## GLOBAL CANDIDATE PREFERENCES SURVEY

We asked nearly  
**18,000**  
candidates in  
the workforce

ages **18-65**

across **24** influential  
employment markets  
around the globe

Candidates shared what matters most to  
them in the job-search process



**CANDIDATE:** a job seeker currently in the workforce

The results are clear. A positive candidate experience makes individuals more likely to purchase an organization's products or services and satisfied customers are more likely to work for companies whose products and services they use. The results also show the candidate experience has an impact well beyond Human Resources, directly influencing company brand and profitability. This connection bodes well for HR which, like many other functions, is under increasing pressure to demonstrate financial impact.<sup>1</sup>

There is a substantial ripple effect: Candidates share negative job search experiences directly with other people and through social media. People also increasingly measure their experience as candidates by the same standards that they apply to online shopping.

Companies should devote equal energy and resources toward the candidate experience as they do to the consumer experience. Here is what employers need to know about the dynamics of **candidates as consumers**.



Companies should be concerned about the experience customers have at every touch point. Candidates as potential consumers is one of the most important touch points.

Mohammad-Ali Kashif Al-Ghataa, Senior Marketing Executive, ManpowerGroup, Malaysia

<sup>1</sup> Development Dimensions International, Inc., The Conference Board and EYGM Limited, Global Leadership Forecast 2018, p. 50.  
<https://www.ddiworld.com/glf2018>



# Negative Candidate Experiences Impact Sales

More than half (54 percent) of global candidates say that a negative candidate experience makes them less likely to buy a company's products or services in the future. This extends beyond retail relationships to include a wide variety of potential goods and services.

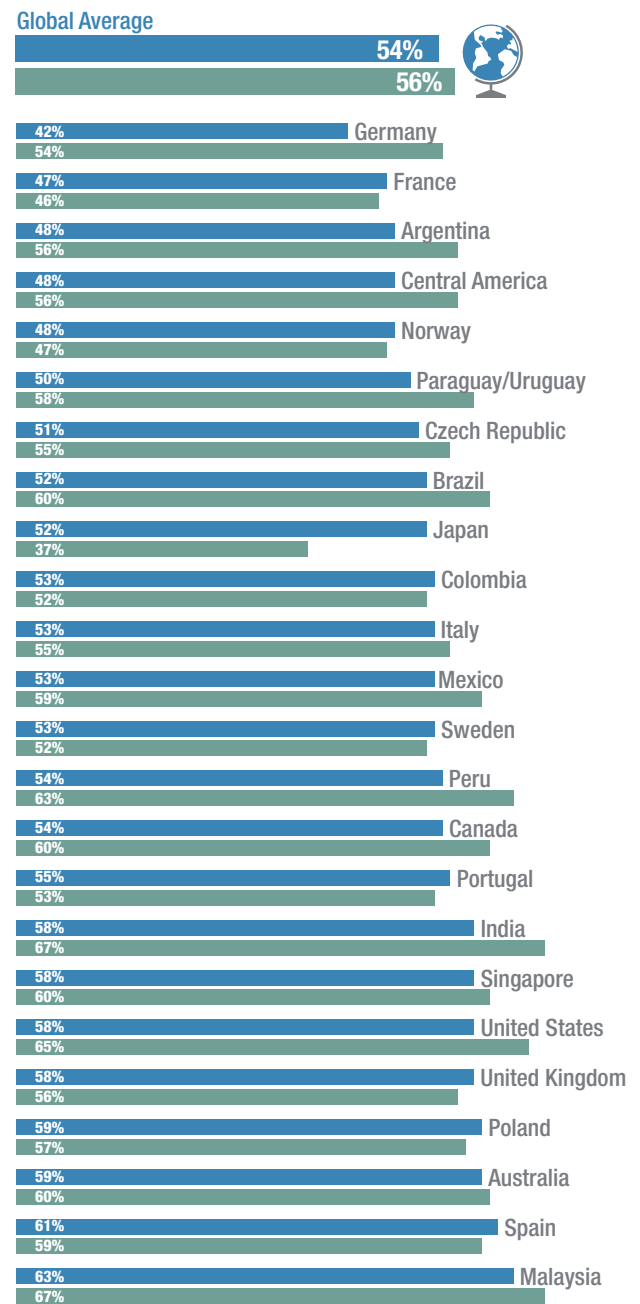
Consumer brands work hard to cultivate relationships with consumers – focusing on customer experience, service, brand reputation and more. Employer brands can be even more personal as candidates themselves are being accepted or rejected by the brand.

More than half of all global candidates (56 percent) also say they are more likely to work for a company whose products they buy or use. Loyal consumers often connect with companies based on a perceived set of common values, so candidates may feel connected to organizational culture through their consumer experiences.

One of the most significant links between customer brand and employer brand is in the United States where nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of candidates say they are more likely to work for a company whose products they buy or use.

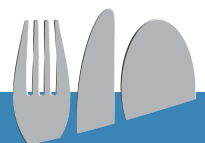
The two-way link between product and employer brand, as defined by high or low overlapping positive correlations on both purchase and employment interest, is strongest in the United States, India, Malaysia and Singapore. It is weakest in Norway and France. In Japan, however, a negative candidate experience impacts purchase decisions, but the use of products has less influence over prospective employment. This is likely due to a long and complicated career decision process that can include factors such as family influence.

## Global Comparison



■ Less Likely to Buy From a Company Due to Negative Candidate Experience

■ More Likely to Work for a Company Whose Products/Services They Buy/Use



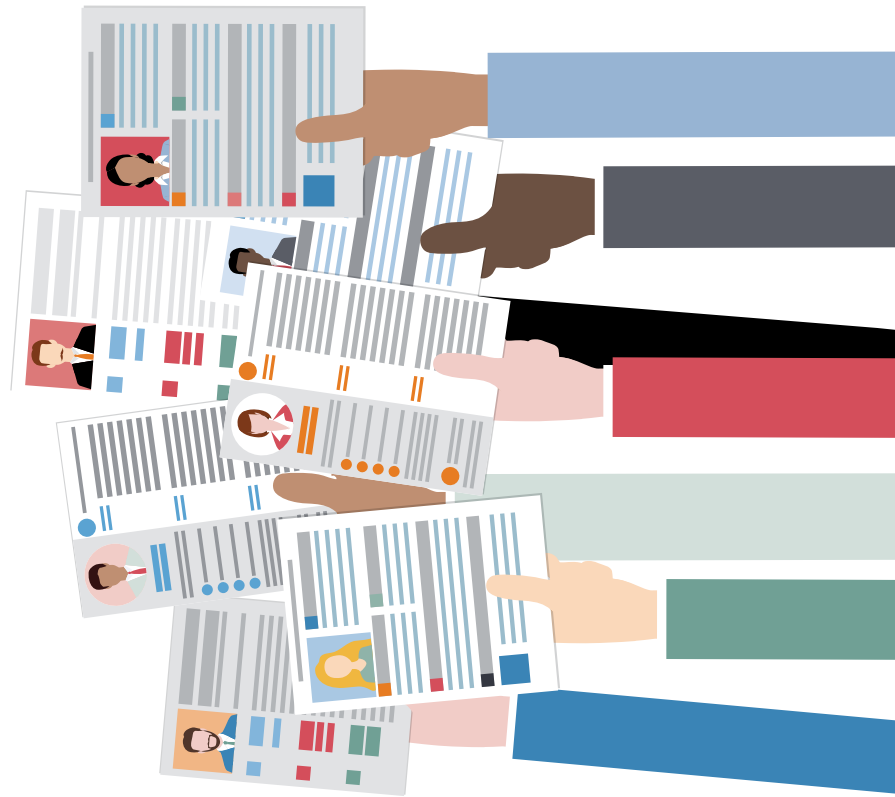
**Bottom Line Impact:** A leading global food and beverage company examined how a negative experience during the recruitment cycle has the potential to affect the revenues for the organization. The company determined that a loyal consumer spends \$15,000 USD over the span of 20 years. If only 20 percent of “consumer candidates” for every 1,000 job openings had a negative experience and those candidates were lost as consumers, the company projected it would lose over \$8.7 million in future revenue.

Candidates that are used to tracking the delivery of their online purchases expect to track their job applications — not have them fall into a black hole. It negatively impacts their purchase behavior and results in lower sales.

Melissa Hassett, Vice President, Client Delivery, ManpowerGroup Solutions, North America

## Worse Than Rejection: The Application Blackhole

While employers may try to dismiss the negative impacts of candidate experience on sales as disgruntled, rejected candidates spreading sour grapes, the research suggests otherwise. Rejection after an interview ranks seventh among a list of experiences with negative impacts on purchase intent. Every opportunity for contact with a candidate positively or negatively reinforces the brand.



**Number one on the list is lack of transparency on salary or job description, with 63 percent of candidates saying it impacts purchase intent.** Not receiving a response to a submitted job application ties with a negative interview experience (59 percent). A slow response to an application ranks fourth (52 percent). In contrast, rejection after an interview ranks among the least damaging of potential negative experiences.

Candidate reactions to these experiences are more common than expected, yet there is some variation by market. In many countries, candidates cite no follow-up after an interview as a top three damaging negative hiring experience. For other countries, a tardy follow-up (six-to-eight weeks) to a submitted application also ranks among the top three candidate experience faux pas. Comparatively, a generic text or email about a job opportunity does significantly less damage.



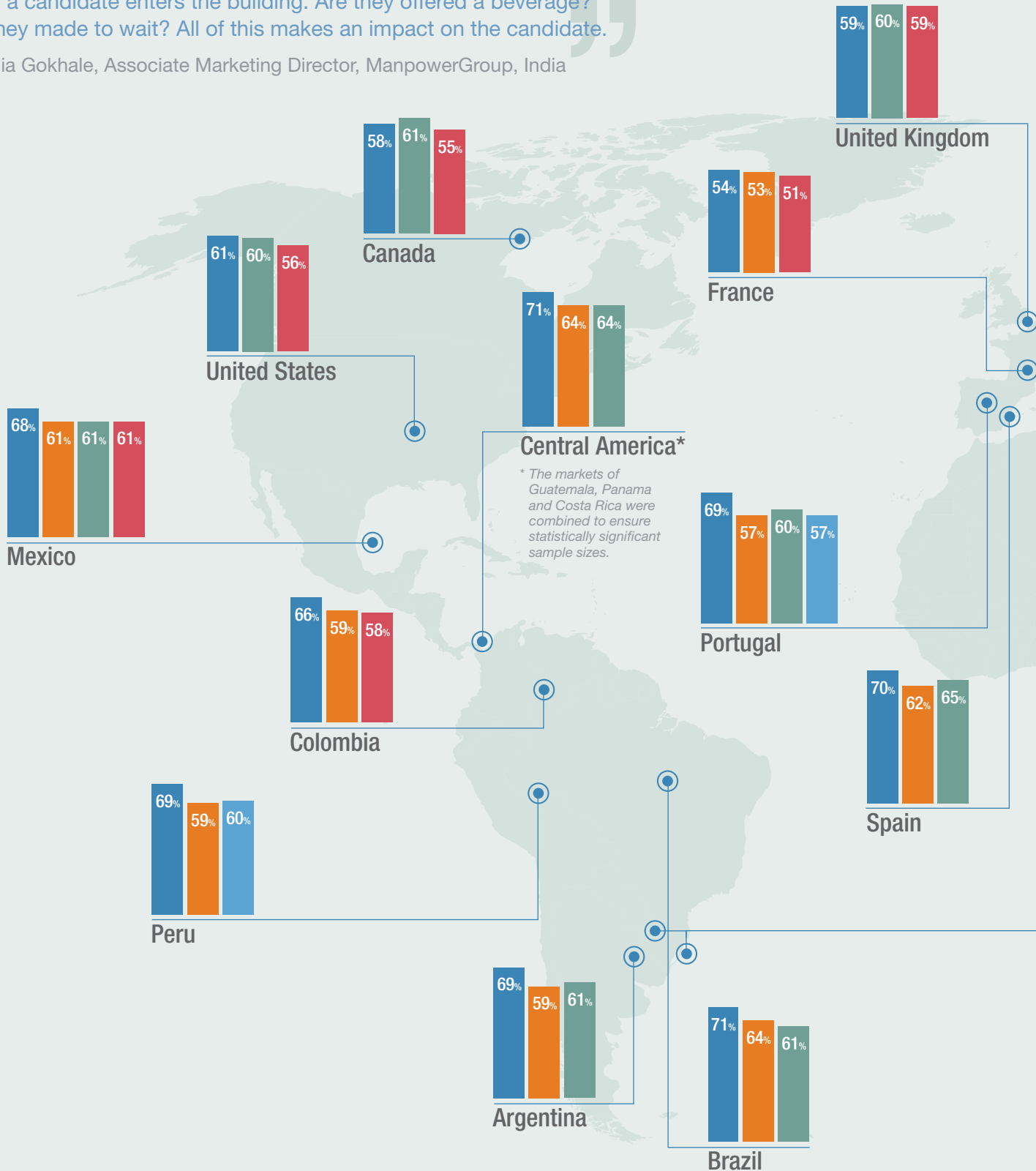
**63%** of candidates say the number one most impactful negative purchase behavior is lack of transparency on salary or job description.

# Top 3 Most Impactful Negative Experiences on Purchase Behavior

There is some variation by market when it comes to negative candidate experiences impacting purchase behavior.

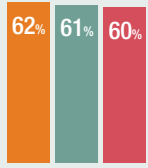
The candidate experience does not start with the interview. It starts when a candidate enters the building. Are they offered a beverage? Are they made to wait? All of this makes an impact on the candidate.

Cynthia Gokhale, Associate Marketing Director, ManpowerGroup, India

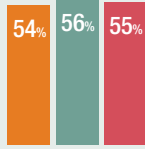


## Candidates' Most Impactful Negative Experiences on Purchase Behavior

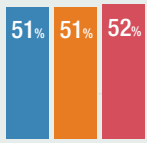
- Lack of transparency on salary or job description
- No response to a submitted job application
- Negative interview experience
- No employer follow-up after initial interview
- Response to a job application 6-8 weeks after submittal
- Failure to address poor feedback on employer review sites



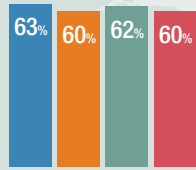
Czech Republic



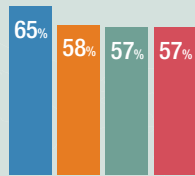
Sweden



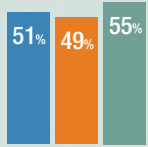
Norway



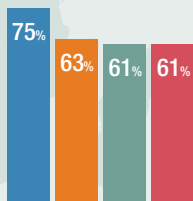
Poland



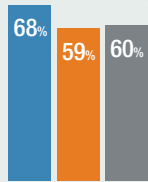
Italy



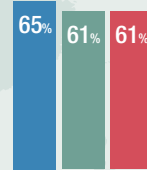
Germany



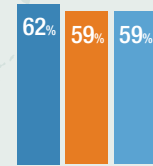
Paraguay/Uruguay



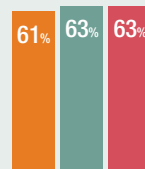
India



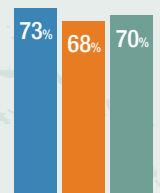
Singapore



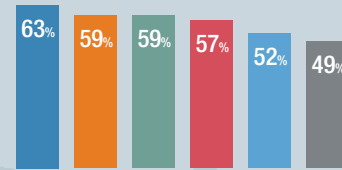
Japan



Australia



Malaysia



Global

In Argentina, candidates interpret the lack of response to a submitted job application as an act of disrespect.

Marcela Romero, RPO Manager, Permanent Hiring, ManpowerGroup, Argentina

# Not Just a Millennial Phenomenon



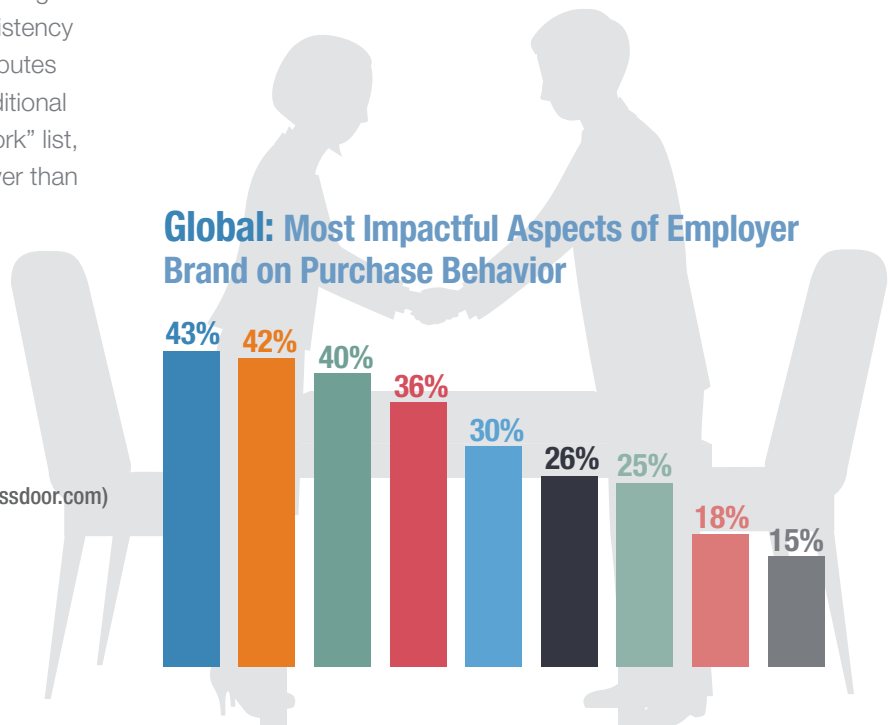
In recent years, much has been written about millennial candidates and the increasing importance they place on employer brand when making career decisions. While it is tempting to believe that the potential impact on sales created by negative candidate experiences is confined to millennials, the data suggests otherwise. What works for millennials works for all. Respondents who reported negative candidate experiences make them less likely to buy a company's products or services reflect the demographics of global candidates generally in terms of age, career level and career motivations. They skew slightly more female (53 percent versus a global average of 50 percent). The same is true for candidates who say they would be more likely to work for a company whose products or services they purchase or use.

## Building a Relationship

For three years the Global Candidate Preferences Survey has pointed to the importance of employer-employee trust among candidates. The 2018 survey results suggest that trust is not merely a “nice to have” but rather a “need to have” element of employer brand. **Forty-two percent of candidates report that lack of employer-employee trust has a negative impact on their purchase behavior.**

In fact, the most impactful aspects of employer brand on sales all relate to the relationship between the potential employee and the organization, including lack of transparency (43 percent) and lack of consistency in words and actions (40 percent). Brand attributes such as clear mission/vision, ill-defined or traditional company culture, making a “great place to work” list, or social responsibility all rank significantly lower than relationship-related aspects.

- Lack of transparency
- Lack of employer-employee trust
- Lack of consistency in words or actions
- Lack of employer-employee communication
- Negative review on employer review site (e.g., Glassdoor.com)
- Lack of social responsibility/giving back
- Lack of clear mission/vision
- Ill-defined or traditional company culture
- Failure to rank on a “great place to work” list







Not responding to candidates is a missed opportunity. Even if the response is that the position has been filled, it is an opportunity to build a relationship and turn the negative into a positive.



Sam Haggag, Director MSP & Sales,  
Asia Pacific & Middle East Country Manager,  
ManpowerGroup, Malaysia & Indonesia

## The Ripple Effect

The detrimental effects of a negative candidate experience extend far beyond the candidate who experienced it. A ripple effect means that others are not only told about the experience, but it also affects their interest in purchasing a company's products or services. **Sixty-one percent of global candidates would tell others about a negative experience. Meanwhile, 50 percent of global candidates say the negative candidate experience of a friend would make them less likely to buy a product or service.**



Candidates share their experiences in person and through technology. Eight out of ten global candidates (83 percent) would share their negative experience in a one-on-one conversation. Approximately one in five candidates (19 percent) would post it to social media, but that number is significantly higher in India (31 percent), Malaysia (26 percent), Argentina (25 percent), the Czech Republic (24 percent), Peru (23 percent), and Poland (23 percent). Ten percent of candidates would post it on an employer review site (e.g., Glassdoor.com), yet Indian candidates are 2.5 times more likely to do this (25 percent).



Negative word of mouth works faster than positive word of mouth. If a candidate has a positive experience, they tell a friend. If they have a negative experience, they tell 50 people.



Jiří Halbrštát, Marketing, PR and Candidate Sourcing Director, ManpowerGroup, The Czech Republic

# Shopping ... For a Job

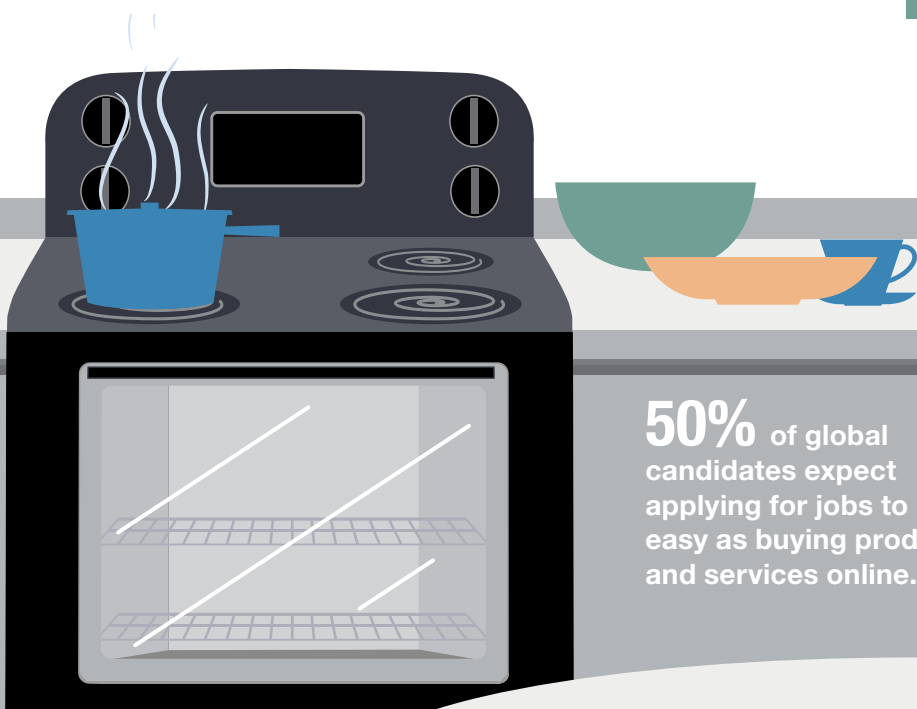
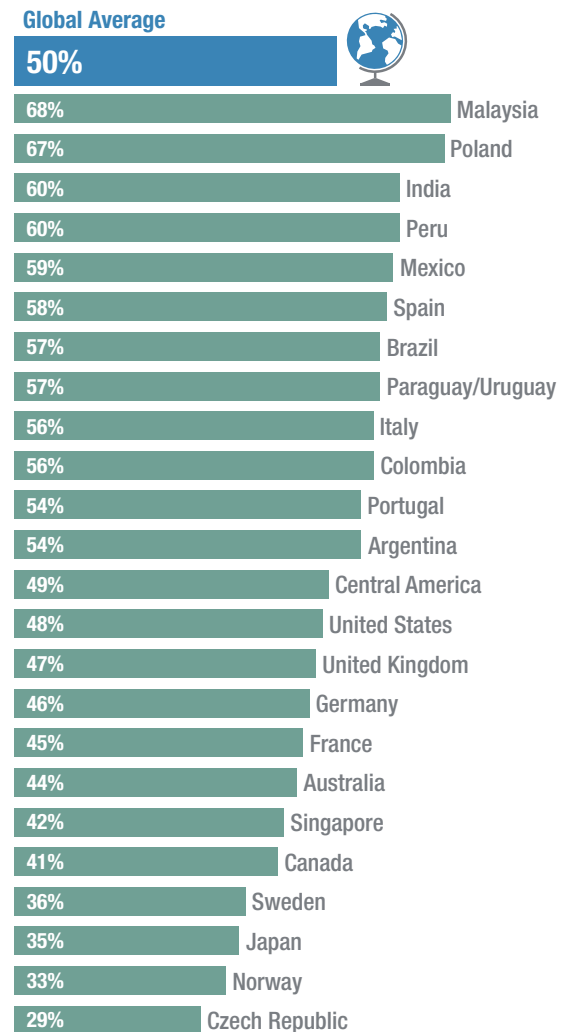
The measuring stick for candidate experience now has less to do with how job seekers traditionally navigated the hiring process and more to do with Amazon Prime®. Candidates' frame of reference for applying for a job is increasingly the online buying experience: personalized, streamlined and steeped in customer service. **Half of all global candidates (50 percent) expect applying for a job to be as easy as buying products and services online.** These perceptions vary significantly by market with two-thirds (68 percent) of candidates in Malaysia and less than one-third of candidates in the Czech Republic (29 percent) agreeing.

Negative hiring experiences are an important part of the network of touch points that affect sales and consumer perceptions, causing the line between employer brand and consumer brand to blur. Employers would be wise to invest accordingly.

“The way we look for work is becoming more like the way we look for shoes, yet talent teams are rarely aligned with their marketing and public relations counterparts. By bringing those teams together, we create a partnership that benefits both departments.”

Dana Meyer, Manager  
RPO Talent Engagement Solutions,  
ManpowerGroup Solutions, North America

## Global Comparison: Expect Applying for a Job to Be as Easy as Buying Online



**50%** of global candidates expect applying for jobs to be as easy as buying products and services online.



# 5 Practical Suggestions to Strengthen Your Employer Brand

Here are five practical suggestions along with examples of how ManpowerGroup has helped organizations implement these recommendations:



## 1 Make a Case for Investment

Investing in Human Resources, the candidate experience and employer brand will have a positive return on investment in the form of both human capital and revenue. Look for ways to quantify and track employer brand's impact on sales and vice versa and use it to demonstrate that HR solutions can solve broader business problems, not just talent problems.

### Success Story

## Investing in Brand Awareness Attracts Candidates

**CHALLENGE:** A well-known fashion retailer planned to enter the Uruguayan market. The launch generated high expectations in the new market, as well as in neighboring countries where the brand had yet to establish a presence. The company needed to fill openings, while simultaneously establishing its brand in the region.

**SOLUTION:** Given the low brand awareness in the region, the first step was to develop a marketing plan to introduce the retailer to the Uruguayan public. The Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) team was able to leverage the expertise of ManpowerGroup Solutions colleagues in other Latin American countries who had worked with the client to develop effective and consistent messaging. The marketing mix included advertising and organic messaging on social networks as well as broadcast media, such as radio.

The outreach effort was extremely effective and the ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO team was able to conduct assessments of more than 800 candidates.

**RESULTS:** ManpowerGroup Solutions helped the organization achieve the following results:

- Pre-selection of more than 200 suitable candidates to fill 100 percent of vacancies
- More than 200,000 people were reached through different social networks and job posts were shared more than 135,000 times





## Relieve Overwhelmed Recruiters

Reposition the HR function as a de facto customer service experience. Reducing requisition loads, expanding personnel or providing support through outsourcing will help transform recruiting into the employer brand- and consumer brand-building function that it should be.

### Bolstering HR to Improve the Candidate Experience

**CHALLENGE:** A large financial services and retail banking company was in the middle of an acquisition that created a range of urgent hiring needs. Acquisition-related attrition and rapid growth led to a backlog of hundreds of priority requisitions that needed to be addressed immediately.

**SOLUTION:** The ManpowerGroup Solutions RPO team designed an end-to-end, fully outsourced solution. The recruitment efforts focus on teller, personal banker, branch manager and licensed relationship manager roles.

Because many of these are hard-to-fill and/or specialist roles, significant emphasis is placed on sourcing innovation. The team uses cutting-edge CRM technology and develops relationships with high-potential candidates through social media, events and name generation research.

**RESULTS:** The banking company's investments have paid off with results including:

- The backlog of 100+ priority requisitions was reduced to zero within six months of the program launch
- High-volume, professional branch recruiting averages 50 hires per month
- Volume contact center recruiting averages 20-30 hires per month
- The offer-to-accept ratio for all positions is 93 percent
- Over 730 hires in the first year of the program



Success Story

## Be Transparent

While process efficiencies can improve the candidate experience and reduce negative impact on sales, there is no substitution for cultivating stronger relationships with candidates and employees. Transparency is a key value for candidates in terms of salary, job description, opportunities for advancement and regular interactions with the organization.



Employers can implement low-cost, practical tactics including reviewing (versus recycling) job descriptions, responding with feedback to application submittals and employee surveys that help identify how transparency can be improved.



### Success Story

## Using Transparency to Drive an Effective Recruitment Solution

**CHALLENGE:** A global renewable energy company faced growing pains as it expanded around the globe. The company's recruiting and hiring process across 46 countries varied drastically and there was little consistency in recruitment marketing. The company had divested of employer branding efforts during the financial crisis, so it suffered from a lack of awareness and transparency among potential candidates stemming from inconsistent processes and candidate communications. A requirement for English proficiency (the company's operating language) further reduced the pool of potential candidates.

**SOLUTION:** ManpowerGroup Solutions conducted a thorough region-by-region review of the entire recruiting process. A hub-and-spoke model was designed specifically to address challenges with decentralized recruiting processes. Internal HR experts were transitioned to focus on operational efficiency and employee relations to ensure that the internal employer brand is consistently advanced.

Employer branding initiatives were redesigned and relaunched working with local stakeholders and in local languages, with a focus on social media platforms that are most relevant to the required job roles. Partnerships with third-party agencies and the development of local language microsites help to drive the pipeline needed to support spikes in hiring needs while fostering consistent and transparent communications.

**RESULTS:** The company now enjoys a stable global recruitment platform that allows them to monitor financials and costs, while measuring success. A few of the key results include:

- Hiring manager satisfaction is trending at 78% and up
- Cost per hire by country, by region and by job family is down
- 6,300 hires in two years – 40% is white collar (management, admin, research and development) and 60% is blue collar (skilled trades, technicians, factory)

# 4 Cultivate the Consumer Talent Pool

Although much has been written about cultivating talent communities, engaging rejected applicants for future employment and building relationships with passive candidates, little attention has been given to the consumer talent pool. Customers are a valuable talent pool – in many cases, they already understand and share many of the core values of an organization through their interactions with the product or service.

Invite customers to become part of your team by integrating HR messages into broader brand communications and sharing resources with marketing and sales departments.



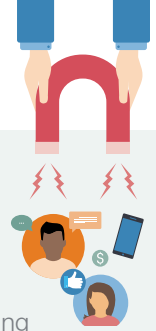
Success Story

## Dual Purpose Marketing: Targeting Sales and Talent

**CHALLENGE:** A telecommunications giant was facing recruitment and retention challenges and needed to find a more sustainable source of talent. Their top performers were also their strongest brand ambassadors so they determined they needed to find a way to amplify this asset in their talent acquisition efforts.

**SOLUTION:** Acknowledging referral networks are effective but somewhat finite, ManpowerGroup Solutions explored opportunities to leverage existing consumer brand equity for purposes of recruiting customers to work for the company.

**RESULTS:** The company's marketing and talent acquisition efforts became integrated; targeting existing consumers with candidate recruitment marketing messages through bill inserts, advertising and consolidated career and consumer online assets (web page and social media). Through these efforts, the company now grows their talent pools of brand advocates while simultaneously growing their potential customer base. They have also exercised their marketing spend for dual purposes of cultivating consumers as well as potential candidates.



# 5 Pose As a Secret Shopper

HR executives should experience first-hand what candidates experience in the hiring process. From application glitches to insensitive robo-replies, much can be learned by walking in the shoes of candidates. Mystery shoppers have been a staple of the retail industry for decades; the same tactic can be easily applied to understand and refine the candidate experience.

## Competing for Talent Requires Competitive Intelligence

**CHALLENGE:** An institute of higher education was experiencing low numbers of job applications despite investments in targeted candidate marketing activities.

**SOLUTION:** To understand what was leading to low candidate flow, ManpowerGroup Solutions began by auditing the organization's application process. The team compared findings to the top competitors in the industry, as well as to other organizations with similar candidate profiles.

**RESULTS:** Through behaving as a job seeker would, the organization was able to correct a number of technical issues (broken links from advertisements to job postings, page timeouts) and process challenges (inability to parse data from uploaded resumes, exhaustive number of application pages) that prevented the attraction strategies from being effective, and ultimately, the institute from competing for talent.

Success Story





**For more insight on how to attract  
the best and brightest candidates,  
visit [manpowergroupsolutions.com](http://manpowergroupsolutions.com).**



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Solutions



Experis®  
ManpowerGroup



Manpower®



Right  
Management®  
ManpowerGroup

## About ManpowerGroup Solutions

ManpowerGroup Solutions provides clients with outsourcing services related to human resources functions, primarily in the areas of large-scale recruiting and workforce-intensive initiatives that are outcome-based, thereby sharing in the risk and reward with our clients. Our solutions offerings include TAPFIN-Managed Solution Provider, Strategic Workforce Consulting, Borderless Talent Solutions, Talent Based Outsourcing and Recruitment Process Outsourcing, where we are one of the largest providers of permanent recruitment and contingent management in the world. ManpowerGroup Solutions is part of the ManpowerGroup family of companies, which also includes Manpower, Experis and Right Management.

## More About the Respondents

Overall, the job seekers surveyed were between 18 and 65 years old and currently in the workforce. In total there were 17,994 global respondents. Market breakdowns were as follows: Argentina (n=747), Australia (n=756), Brazil (n=753), Canada (n=750), Central America (Guatemala, Panama and Costa Rica, n=742), Colombia (n=742), the Czech Republic (n=747), France (n=751), Germany (n=749), India (n=751), Italy (n=761), Japan (N=751), Malaysia (n=756), Mexico (n=755), Norway (N=750), Paraguay/Uruguay (n=752), Peru (n=747), Poland (n=748), Portugal (n=755), Singapore (N=752), Spain (n=740), Sweden (n=755), the United Kingdom (n=740) and the United States (n=745).

They represent a cross-section of age, income, employment status (i.e., full-time, part-time, contract), career level and industry.

Experienced non-managers accounted for the largest group at 28 percent, followed by managers (18 percent), entry-level employees (16 percent), undergraduate/graduate students (20 percent), executives (6 percent) and senior-level executives (4 percent).

Join the conversation on ManpowerGroup Solutions' social media channels:



ManpowerGroup Solutions



@MPGrpSolutions

[manpowergroupsolutions.com/candidatepreferences](http://manpowergroupsolutions.com/candidatepreferences)

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