

Our post on [2019 small business trends](#) introduced the issue of low [unemployment rate](#) as reported by the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). The impact of this to small businesses is increased competition to attract and retain talent. Regardless of the size of the small business, the loss of an employee can affect the organization in various ways, most notably in the cost and time to backfill the position. While calculations vary by industry, employee size, and position, the [Society for Human Resource Management 2017 Talent Acquisition Benchmarking Report](#) states that the average cost-per-hire was \$4,425 and average time-to-fill a position 26 days. The following are some trends in employee recruitment and retention.

### **Candidate Experience**

Much like you rated the experience of your visit to a restaurant or the rideshare you recently used; candidates and employees alike are rating their experience in applying to and working for organizations on platforms like [Glassdoor](#). A survey from [CareerBuilder](#), reported that about 78% of candidates make a correlation from the candidate experience to the way they perceive a company values its employees. While it may be a challenge to manage the hiring process while focusing on the day-to-day operations of your business, it is a critical component to establish realistic expectations for your candidates. From the job description and application through the job offer or rejection, it is important that the process be timely, seamless, and transparent. For example, outlining the selection process is a small step that can go a long way in creating a positive experience for your candidates. Keep in mind that the current candidate may refer future candidates OR clients to your business based on their experience with your company.

### **Company Culture/Brand**

An article from [Forbes](#) best puts it, as “a brand is a reflection of what an organization stands for.” When I first entered the job market, the best way to find out about an organization was to check with those in my network. The same holds true today for job candidates although with tools like [LinkedIn](#), people can more easily tap into their vast social media networks to get insights on working for an organization and whether they truly live up to the brand. Furthermore, with an abundant access to information, socially conscious individuals in the workforce are more carefully evaluating potential employers on multiple facets including corporate social responsibility. An article in [Talent Economy](#) reports that by 2025, 75% of the workforce will be millennials. The article goes on to cite a 2016 Cone Communications report that identifies 76% of millennials as factoring a company’s social and environmental commitments as a deciding factor in their employer of choice.

### **Total Rewards (i.e. “Benefits”)**

Small business may not always be able to compete with larger organizations when it comes to financial incentives, but have the opportunity to be flexible in terms of non-monetary rewards. An article from [Harvard Business Review](#) identifies flexible hours as the second to highest benefit most valued by job seekers. Benefits like employee recognition programs, formalized volunteer opportunities, or professional development are examples of [non-monetary incentives](#) that may offset a market-competitive salary. Although, no one organization may have the ultimate in benefits packages that appeals to everyone, understanding what employees’ value would put you at an advantage when developing or reviewing your own benefits package.

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