

## [The Candidate Experience Podcast](#)

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### 'Leave No Candidate Behind' episode with Bruce Mattos



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## Transcript:

Hello, this is Chuck Solomon and welcome to the Candidate Experience Podcast, where we focus on the job candidate journey from apply to onboard and the space in between. Let's get started.

I took something kind of from the military on this one, it was leave no candidate behind. And I felt that that initiative drew our engagement scores with candidates up significantly.

Welcome to the Leave No Candidate Behind episode, where Bruce Mattos, Talent Acquisition Leader at Phoebe Putney Health System, is my special guest. Listen in as Bruce shares his many insights on how to improve the candidate experience. We cover a number of important topics in this episode, including Silver medalist candidates, brand ambassadors, coaching, hiring managers, and more.

Enjoy.

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Hey, Bruce, how are you today? I'm doing great Chuck. How are you today? I am very well. Thanks. Where are you? I, I'm not even sure where you're located. I'm located, I'm located in beautiful Albany, Georgia, which is in the Southwestern part of the state near the Alabama and Florida. Gotcha. So. Please let listeners know a little bit about yourself, where you work and your current role.

Certainly. So my name is Bruce Mattos. I am a Talent Acquisition Leader and I've been recruiting for the better part of 25 plus years and leading diverse recruitment teams. I currently work for the Phoebe Putney Health System, which is a non profit community hospital system. for listening. And I am currently the associate vice president, corporate director of talent acquisition.

Awesome. Can you also, you know, let us know how, how did you get into this talent space? And I'll preface this by saying on your LinkedIn profile. And this is one of the reasons why I wanted to have you on is it said, it says something to the effect of like recruitment innovator. So I'm interested to hear more about that.

Really. How did you get started in this whole talent space? Sure. I, you know, when I was finishing up the United States Army I had a very difficult transition back into the civilian world, as many of our veterans do. A unique opportunity had been presented to me from my former college roommate. He

Was working for a technology firm and they needed a technical recruiter and clearly coming out of the army and coming out of college I had a ton of technical recruitment experience, which I had zero of. But I went ahead and I went through the interview.

I met with the leadership team and interestingly enough. My first recruitment mentor had said this job has nothing to do with technical recruitment everything to do with relationship management. You. And I fell in love with it from that perspective is, is you get to work with people and you know, the other piece that was so rewarding, especially early on is you're connecting people to new opportunities.

So you're helping people find jobs. That's how I kind of climbed or fell into the space and I've really never turned back. Awesome. So I think your background is very similar to mine and in how I got into the recruiting space as well. I had a friend who said, similar to you, who said Hey, you should really be a technical recruiter.

I'm like, well, I don't know anything about that. And so I did the same thing. I went to the interview. And I, and I was forthright and said, you know, I don't know all this technology stuff, hardware, software, et cetera. And they said, don't worry, we'll teach it all to you. And guess what? You don't know, need to know about all these things.

And like you said, this is about relationships. So I would definitely echo what you said. So, and I fell into it too, as well. So. It's a famous last, the famous last words scenario, Chuck. And I think that the people that like you and myself who, who fall into the industry, we actually fall in love with it.

There, there, there's so much good to be gained out of it. And not everybody starts out on the technical side, but I think the benefit of starting as a technical recruiter. Is, is it can segue into so many other industries, higher education, clinical laboratory science. You get the chops because you learn so many technologies.

Yeah. One of the things I really, and I've not done. And you're recruiting for quite some time, but one of the things I really enjoyed about it is just learning new things. And with anything technology, it's always evolving, changing, improving. You know, we weren't, we're talking about AI artificial intelligence today, but we weren't talking about that back unless you were watching science fiction back, back in the day.

So. I love the challenge of learning new things. And I also love when, you know, you had really, really smart people go ahead and explain things. Cause I'd often say, explain this to me like I'm a fifth grader. And so I could understand things and learn things on my own. So great. Shifting gears a little bit.

I wanted you to. You know, if you could describe a challenge that either your current organization or past has experienced with some aspect of the candidate experience and what you all did about it. Yeah. I was thinking about this because in a, in a previous organization, I think the, the worst thing that you can do to people.

Is ghost them and, and I feel that a lot of organizations, small, medium, and large, just drop the ball on the candidate and don't get back to them, don't give them updates don't provide them with any

information, and so you really do apply. You put your name in the hat and it goes into a big black hole.

And, and I, I think for me it was a challenge because then you had people writing in to the president or CEO saying, hey I've applied to numerous jobs and I haven't. So what gets compounded is, is the perception in the public especially if it's a, a large community based company or a company that's been around many years, you know, for many, many years.

You know, there, there is a reputation uphold and if people from the community and other universities, for example, in the area that are putting out new grads and that are doing maybe rotate clinical rotations or they're doing internships with you and then they turn around and apply and then no one ever contacts them.

So I think that was a unique challenge that one of my former companies had faced. And I think for me, the creativity was there of how to approach it was leveraging the actual technology that you have to make sure one, that everybody got a confirmation that their application was received. As well as that, that confirmation provided a timeline on what to expect next.

The other part of it is, is that utilizing that same technology is, if you know, you're not going to move forward with the candidate, don't keep them out in limbo, don't hold onto their resume for a week, a month, two months. And then disqualify them when you fill the job. If you know, you're not moving forward with somebody because they don't meet the qualifications or it's someone you're not going to rehire or for whatever reason, send them a notice.

Just send them a thank you for applying. Unfortunately, we're moving forward with other candidates or you unfortunately do not meet the minimum qualifications of the job. Send that to people. Most what I think a lot of people don't understand Chuck is most of our recruitment departments in the U S are dramatically understaffed.

So we can't pick up the call, the phone and phone every single applicant. It's just not feasible, but we can leverage the technology of a text. We could leverage the technology of an email. And I think what, what we started to see in, in making sure that we were getting quality messages out to people timely.

Is the call into senior leadership stopped? And we actually put a note in there. If you have any questions, please contact the recruitment team. And we had set up just kind of a call log that who would answer that call and who would take those calls when people did call in and provide them with some basic feedback.

So. I guess I took something kind of from the military on this one, it was leave no candidate behind. And I felt that that initiative drew our engagement scores with candidates up significantly. And I still have, have talked with some of my former recruiters to that organization and they in turn have taken that on with them is kind of taking that approach, just leave no candidate behind.

I love it. I love your your borrowing of the phrase and updating it. Leave no candidate behind. I think that's great. I think what you mentioned there about the, you know, leaving a, was an actual phone

number or an email address that you left or both? It was a phone number. We had a, we had a recruitment hotline.

That was great. Like, you know, in an average week, like how many calls might come in. So in the beginning, I'd say we got maybe 30 to 40 calls a week and it was the recruitment team. We spread out and rotated how we would take the calls. I would even take some calls, especially maybe some of the more, more unpleasant ones are the more challenging calls that came in, but the numbers actually started to drop off.

And, and actually the recruiters liked being on the rotation to take those calls because it got them engaged with people. We actually started to surface some silver medalists or bridesmaid candidates out of it who applied to a job and maybe they didn't put their best foot forward with their application.

They were just calling for guidance. Right. I love that. I think I think that is, I mean, it's such an. Like a novel thing, like, you know, get on the phone with people and talk to them. I think a lot of companies would probably shy away from that. But you know, good for, good for you all for doing that.

I think well, as evidenced by the call volume going down over time that you were doing something right there. So but, and to your point about the, the silver medalist candidates, like I I say this to Folks on my team, you know, oftentimes during the interview process, people aren't great at interviewing because they don't have a lot of experience doing it.

And they might not, you know, seem to put their best foot forward. However, they might actually be a great employee. The converse is also true to some people that interview really well, might not be the best staff person down the road. But yeah, I, I, I think there's. You know, always a little bit of, I don't know, maybe anxiety or stress around the interviewing and people just, you know, they haven't done it.

It's something that's not something like tying their shoes every day. It's not like they can do automatically. So, but. Yeah, I like what you did there. That's Bruce. That sounds like a great, great solution. And also your leaders, not having to get calls from people is probably great on you and your team as well.

I think that comes with the relationship and you've been building trust with your senior leadership team is this. We're going to take this on, you know you know, candidate engagement, whereas it's everybody's responsibility. It starts with recruitment. If with the recruitment team, talent acquisition team, you have to, you have to put your best foot forward there because it really can set a bad example.

As someone goes through the process and you know, many organizations have studied why people quit, quit, quit, quit. That means they're quitting within the first six months. You can, you can draw some heavy percentages towards that. That whole recruitment process, interview process, onboarding process was not a pleasant experience for the candidate.

So, you know, tackle that one on. Yeah, totally agree. We've, you know, we've talked mostly about sort of the recruiter side of things, but, you know, hiring managers or the interviewing managers also have a, you know, big part in the, in the hiring process. I'm wondering, how do you talk with hiring managers about.

The importance of a good, positive candidate experience. This is interesting. You and I, when we, when we recruit or when we go to events, when we participate, we're a brand ambassador. What's interesting is our hiring leaders. Many times our hiring managers do not look at themselves as brand managers.

Well, that's up to you. To bring the candidates and help close them. And I've kind of turned the table on them. I said, you're actually the first point of contact. Your first touch point with the candidate sets the tone for your future with that person as an employee, or it sets up your reputation in the community as a real brand ambassador.

So I think it's more of coaching the hiring manager about the importance of being a brand ambassador, about how to treat candidates. With kindness, like as a candidate, they're going to talk and, you know, nowadays your, your interview questions are put out there on glass door and indeed, and in various chat groups.

And also it's kind of like the professor ratings that are out there at schools about this professor, that professor. Well believe it or not, you're seeing actual hiring managers. Hey, if you interview with this. This guy or gal, you need to make sure you do this, this, and this. And I think that's people wanting to quote unquote beat the system.

So I coach our hiring leaders truly about the importance of them being that first touch brand ambassador after the handoff from the roof, because if they treat people well, then that person's going to want to come work for them and be a part of the organization. If they really do a good job of explaining what the unit does or what their department does, or what the role does.

That candidate, it lessens the doubt or the angst that you said many people have in an interview. If you, if that hiring leader does a really good introduction at the beginning of the, of the interview or conversation, it will help put a candidate at ease. And also when people are relaxed, they're more likely to show their true authentic self, which is what you want in an interview.

So I like to coach hiring managers about their role as a brand ambassador and setting the tone for your future relationship. If this person becomes your employee. Now hopefully our odds have gotten better over time with interview to hire ratio and candidate to interview ratio, but we're in high volume positions like food services, janitorial administrative, you're probably going to have a lot of people that we're going to turn away, but the manager is going to probably still be talking to.

Maybe three to five candidates in the course of an interview. And the fact that he treats, he or she treats each of those candidates with kindness and dignity and respect, the ones that you don't hire, you treated them well, so they're more likely to want to come for a future job there. And they're more likely to talk positively about your organization.



So that's, that's how I use the phrase. I'm going to coach my leaders on, on being that brand ambassador. Yeah. Great stuff there, Bruce. I think as you said, you know, people can with the internet, social media, et cetera, people can leave reviews all over the place. They're just a couple of mouse clicks and keyboard away from either.

Boosting your organization's brand or diminishing your organization's brand. Recall a recent guest I had me and they, they were consumer brand. So they were very, very much wanted to maintain their, their, not only the employer brand, but also the consumer brand too, because you don't want to. tick people off and, and who may be your customers and your fans but can easily get turned off by a, a, a poor candidate experience.

So great stuff there. Bruce, if you had just one tip for other companies on how they could improve their company's candidate experience, what would that tip be? Yeah, I think there, there's, there's no real silver bullet, but one thing that I think that you could do, and this is at that onboarding point, and I think that organizations that aren't rolling out the welcome wagon, you're adding to the angst, you're adding to a bad first day of school, you're, you're, you're, you're building up something that you could take away just by a little prep work, and that would be, that hiring leader One sends a welcome letter to that new employee telling him, I look forward to you coming into this role.

We've laid out your first week for you. Here's some of the things that you're going to be doing as a part of that welcome letter. Kind of having a, a little a mini orientation schedule. Of the things that they can expect. So I call it a it's, it's like a Guy Fieri's trash can nachos. It's your fully, it's, it's your hiring leader's fully loaded welcome letter.

And I'm not talking, you know, do your, do your benefits selection. You know, here's where the bathroom is. No, this is. A fully loaded welcome letter where hey, I'm I'm excited to have you on my team I know that you're going to impact us in big ways in the following role and then literally laying out what the first two to three weeks are going to look like you know, some people that they're going to meet with and communicating that because that's the welcome, that's the red carpet that a lot of companies miss out on it.

You know, Sherm has done numerous studies on this. And organizations that spend less time on the welcome and you bring people in and the phrase you're drinking water through a fire hose. Well, a lot of those people now, as we transition through new generations, They're going to quickly say, Oh, my onboarding was toxic.

And the word toxic comes into play and toxic workplace. Well, you can do your homework in advance and get rid of that. I think it's also that hiring leader drives culture in their department and ensuring that the staff welcomes those new employees and treats them with kindness. We don't have to eat our young anymore.

We don't have to take people through hazing and having served in the military. You got some unique welcomes and you see the nightmare stories and pro sports about how they welcome the rookies. Well guess what people have options in today's marketplace and some people. They're not worried about options.

They're worried about their own wellbeing. So give them a welcome, bring them in and make them feel good. Even before they hit that organization. And I think that. It would set your expectations with that new employee, and you as a leader are going to be able to better develop and grow that person because you've established trust before they hit the floor.

Great stuff there, Bruce. Bruce, if people wanted to get a hold of you, how could they do so? Absolutely. Thank you. Please look me up on LinkedIn. I, I'm, I'm an open networker. I love to connect and share ideas in the talent space. On the things that we can do better. So add me on LinkedIn. That would probably be the best way.

My wife would kill me if I gave out my phone number.

Understood. Well I thank you. I thank you for your service. And I, and I like really like how you're able to apply some. You know, stuff that you learned in the military into civilian life. I think that was great. And I appreciate your time and your insights today as well. Thank you for the opportunity to share with you.

And I hope that some folks come away with some fresh ideas or fresh perspectives or just something to try that they haven't done so. Thanks, Bruce. Thank you, Chuck. Thanks for listening to the Candidate Experience Podcast. You can reach out to us via our website, Thecx.xyz. That's Thecx.xyz.

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