

CX Insights

From Candidate to Customer Advocate:
Building Better CX Through Better Hiring



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Customer experience does not begin when a customer reaches out for support. It begins much earlier, with the people an organization chooses to hire.

The employees who answer questions, solve problems and represent a brand shape how customers experience that brand every day. While many companies try to build those capabilities after hire, the foundation for stronger customer relationships can be set during recruiting, interviewing and onboarding.

The connection between talent and customer experience has become even more important as organizations expand their use of AI, automation and digital self-service tools. As technology takes on more transactional activities, the human skills that differentiate experiences, such as empathy, curiosity, adaptability and trust-building, become even more valuable.

Technology can improve efficiency, but people create loyalty.

That makes talent acquisition more than a workforce planning exercise. It is an early opportunity to shape customer outcomes, beginning with an intentionally designed candidate journey.

That starts with designing hiring experiences with the same care used to map customer journeys, identifying the behaviors that signal strong customer advocacy and supporting a seamless transition from candidate to associate. When each stage is intentional, the result is a workforce better prepared to earn trust, strengthen relationships and represent the brand with authenticity.

In the sections that follow, we'll look at three ways organizations can connect hiring strategy to customer experience: designing the candidate journey with intention, hiring for the behaviors that create advocacy and extending that experience through onboarding and associate support.

DESIGN THE CANDIDATE JOURNEY LIKE A CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Companies often carefully map out the customer journey while overlooking one of the earliest brand experiences they create: the candidate journey.

Before candidates become associates, they interact with job boards, career websites, job descriptions, digital applications, recruiters and hiring managers. Each touchpoint shapes what they believe about the organization and whether they can see themselves being successful there.

When those interactions feel confusing, impersonal or disconnected, candidates experience the same type of frustration customers feel when a service journey breaks down. Lengthy applications, unclear expectations, faulty technology, delayed follow-up and poorly coordinated interviews can weaken trust before the employment relationship begins.

52%

OF JOB SEEKERS SAID THEY HAVE DECLINED A JOB OFFER BECAUSE OF A POOR CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

The risk is significant. According to [CareerPlug's 2024 Candidate Experience Report](#),¹ 52% of job seekers said they have declined a job offer because of a poor candidate experience, while 53% reported having at least one negative hiring experience in the past year. When hiring feels confusing or disconnected, strong candidates may walk away before they ever consider joining the organization.

Looking at the experience through the candidate's eyes can reveal where people need clearer guidance, more relevant information, timely communication or a simpler next step. Addressing those needs reduces uncertainty, builds trust and helps candidates determine whether the opportunity is right for them.

Morley Experience

Morley approached the development of its [new careers website](#) much like a customer experience team would approach a customer journey. Rather than beginning with pages and visuals, the team focused on the questions candidates frequently ask, the decisions they face and the friction that can prevent them from moving forward.

The resulting experience recognizes that candidates do not all begin in the same place. Some are learning about Morley for the first time, while others are comparing a specific role, work arrangement or career path. Focused pathways, clearer navigation and more transparent information help candidates understand what matters most to them and assess whether an opportunity feels aligned.



By making the next step easier to identify, the site can support more informed decisions, stronger self-selection and a more trusting relationship from the outset.

Insight: Every hiring touchpoint shapes how candidates perceive your brand and influences the quality of talent you attract.

HIRE FOR CUSTOMER ADVOCACY, NOT JUST JOB QUALIFICATIONS

The quality of a customer interaction often depends on the person behind it: how they listen, respond under pressure, solve problems and make customers feel understood.

Yet hiring has traditionally focused on employment experience, technical competencies and role-specific qualifications. While those factors matter, they may not be the strongest predictors of exceptional customer experiences.

AI and automation are accelerating this shift. According to [McKinsey's Generative AI and the future of work in America report](#),² demand for social, emotional and higher-order cognitive skills is expected to increase as organizations automate more routine tasks.

The [World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025](#)³ similarly identifies analytical thinking, resilience, flexibility, agility and leadership as core skills employers expect to remain critical as work evolves.

Together, these trends point to a clear hiring implication: organizations need people who can build trust, exercise judgment and navigate complex interactions. Technical capabilities can often be developed, but empathy, curiosity, ownership and service orientation are more deeply rooted in behavior and mindset.

Qualifications should still matter, but organizations can strengthen hiring decisions by assessing for customer-oriented behaviors and interpersonal strengths. Behavioral interviewing, situational questions and scenario-based assessments can show how candidates communicate, solve problems and build relationships.

Culture then becomes part of the talent equation. Candidates increasingly want to understand how organizations support employees, develop talent and create growth opportunities. Research from [LinkedIn Talent Solutions](#)⁴ consistently points to purpose, culture and career development as important factors in candidate decisions.

For organizations focused on customer experience, clear communication about purpose, values and service expectations is more than a recruiting message. It helps attract people whose motivations align with the behaviors customers ultimately experience.



Morley Experience

[Morley's Employee Value Proposition](#) (EVP) was designed to communicate more than the benefits of working for the organization. It helps candidates understand the values, culture and service philosophy that shape the associate experience, allowing them to evaluate whether those expectations align with their own goals and motivations.

By clearly articulating what associates can expect from Morley, and what Morley values in return, the EVP supports stronger alignment between candidates and the organization. This mutual understanding helps attract individuals who are motivated by meaningful work, continuous growth, accountability and service to others.

The goal is not simply to generate more applications. It is to help candidates determine whether they are likely to thrive within the culture and contribute positively to the experiences of associates and customers.

Insight: The strongest customer experiences come from employees who demonstrate empathy, curiosity, adaptability and problem-solving skills from day one.

THE ASSOCIATE EXPERIENCE BECOMES THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A positive hiring experience is only the beginning. Lasting customer impact depends on how intentionally organizations carry that experience into onboarding, development and day-to-day support.

Hiring, onboarding, engagement and development are often treated as separate initiatives. In reality, they are connected stages of a single employee journey that shapes long-term engagement, performance and retention.

The expectations established during recruitment should carry through the employee experience. When organizations deliver on their commitments and provide consistent support, employees are more likely to become engaged contributors and advocates.

The relationship between employee experience and customer experience is well documented. According to [Gallup's Q12 Meta-Analysis](#),⁵ organizations with highly engaged employees are more likely to see stronger customer loyalty, productivity, profitability and other business outcomes. When employees feel connected to their work and understand how they contribute to organizational success, customers often experience the difference.

Onboarding plays a particularly important role because it sets the foundation for success. It helps employees understand expectations, access resources, build confidence and form meaningful connections more quickly.



But onboarding should not be viewed as a one-time event. As work and customer expectations evolve, ongoing development helps employees strengthen skills, adapt to new technologies and continue growing with the organization.

Research from [Deloitte's Human Capital Trends](#)⁶ reinforces the need for adaptable, human-centered workplaces where employees have the clarity, trust and support to grow as work evolves.

That support matters because customer experience is shaped in the moments when employees must listen, solve problems and make decisions on behalf of the customer. When people are equipped and empowered, they are better positioned to respond with confidence and care.

Morley Experience

Morley's Inside Track program was created to help new associates feel supported beyond the formal onboarding process. The program connects new hires with the Associate Experience team before and throughout their first weeks with the company, providing a dedicated resource outside their reporting structure where they can ask questions, share feedback and receive support.

The objective is not simply to check in on new hires. It is to understand their experience in real time, identify potential challenges early and help associates feel informed, connected and valued as they transition into their roles. Feedback collected through the program helps surface both positive experiences and opportunities for improvement, ranging from onboarding and training concerns to simple requests that can make new associates more comfortable and successful.

For Morley, this approach reinforces an important principle: listening during the moments that matter builds confidence and connection. Associates who experience those qualities themselves are better positioned to bring them to customer interactions.

Insight: Employees who feel informed, supported and engaged are more likely to create positive customer experiences and become advocates for both customers and the brand.

CONCLUSION

Customer advocacy is built across a connected journey, beginning with the candidate's first impression and continuing through hiring, onboarding and development.

When each stage reflects a consistent service philosophy, employees are better prepared to build the trust and relationships that strengthen customer experience.

Guided by the [Morley Gold Standard](#) (Mission, Vision, Values), our shared values and service principles have helped create a cultural foundation for consistency, shaping how employees are hired, developed, recognized and supported. That foundation is rooted in servant leadership, accountability, continuous improvement and a commitment to helping people succeed.

Customer advocacy does not begin in a single service moment. It is built through the people organizations choose, develop and empower before they ever interact with a customer.

Sources

1. CareerPlug: [2024 Candidate Experience Report](#)
2. McKinsey Global Institute: [Generative AI and the Future of Work in America](#)
3. World Economic Forum: [The Future of Jobs Report 2025](#)
4. LinkedIn Talent Solutions: [Global Talent Trends \(October 2024\)](#)
5. Gallup: [The Relationship Between Engagement at Work and Organizational Outcomes](#)
6. Deloitte: [2026 Global Human Capital Trends](#)