

David Crawford

Making Hiring Easy

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COVER STORY



David Crawford
Founder
The Candidate Guru

With over 20 years of experience in the Talent Acquisition industry, despite a background in Economics and Management Accounting, **David Crawford** discovered his passion for HR when he volunteered to work on HR projects within Finance.

As the **Founder** of "**The Candidate Guru**," David implements his expertise in talent acquisition with his extensive market knowledge from decades of first-hand experience leading talent acquisition at premier institutions.

We caught up with David to learn more about his professional journey and how he makes hiring easy for his clients.

Below are highlights of the interview:

Brief our audience about your journey as a business leader and your current role as "The Candidate Guru." What challenges have you had to overcome to reach where you are today?

I have been in the talent acquisition field for more than two decades. I'm not sure there is a traditional route for doing this work, but mine certainly hasn't been. I earned an undergraduate degree with a concentration in Economics and an MBA in Management Accounting.

Always fascinated with financial markets and Wall Street, I launched my career in Financial Operations, then moved over to the world of Finance and Accounting, supporting Sales and Trading Desks at one of the most prestigious and well-established global financial services firms.

In the early stage of my career, HR wasn't even on my radar. When, on a whim, I volunteered to get involved in HR projects within Finance, I was surprised to discover my preference for HR over Finance, and I have worked within the sector ever since.

What I bring to Talent Acquisition is emphasizing how important it is to understand the business being supported. Being credible and relevant to key stakeholders means knowing what's taking place in the external market and being able to use that insight when building an internal strategy. I find challenges of this sort fascinating—they've allowed me to contribute to the conversation as a "guru."

“*The Candidate Guru started as something fun to do, as a continuation of what I was talking about when invited to speak at conferences.***”**

Tell us something more about The Candidate Guru and your mission and vision.

Just recently, as a side gig, I began sharing advice on social media and talking about hot topics in talent acquisition, especially for hiring managers and candidates.

Writing these *Candidate Guru* posts has created an ongoing rapport and connection with a broader audience, not just with people I've known professionally over the years but also with strangers who seem to appreciate concise, direct, and real-world guidance. I hope my posts will assist candidates seeking employers and employers seeking candidates.

My perspective comes from my extensive work history, managing recruiting at well-known companies and experiencing what has worked and what hasn't. Truthfully, my past mistakes have taught me more than my successes.

Enlighten us on how you have impacted the talent acquisition niche through your expertise in the market.

I tend to be outspoken, which gets people talking. My impact on talent acquisition, especially recently, has grabbed the attention of practitioners not only in the industries where I have worked, but more broadly. That being said, it helps to receive public acknowledgement and affirmation from talent acquisition focused polling and research organizations.

I also firmly believe that in the recruiting world, hearing from candidates who ultimately don't get hired, not just those who receive job offers, provides a more authentic sense of your process and how it works.

Describe in detail the values and the work culture that drive an organization.

Specific values and aspects of work culture are paramount: integrity, client focus, high-quality deliverables, relentless pursuit of meeting the goal, and establishing a trusting relationship are essential, regardless of economic conditions.

It's easy to celebrate and nod your head in agreement in good times, but the actual test is whether the culture persists in embracing those values in more challenging environments.

Undeniably, technology is playing a significant role in almost every sector. How are you leveraging technological advancements to make your solutions resourceful?

Technology has improved talent acquisition in so many ways. It wasn't so long ago when people mailed (with a postage stamp) cover letters and resumes. When seeking employment, job applications were paper-based forms.

Available positions were advertised in newspapers and magazines. Not only do these things now sound archaic, but in minutes, from your smartphone, you can find a job, submit your resume, apply online, and receive confirmation that your information was received.

Even better, now, some tools notify the job seeker about similar jobs that may be of interest. Interviews can get scheduled without even having to talk to



anyone. Video interviews, both live stream and recorded, have significantly reduced the interview-to-hire timeline.

However, with all of these improvements, every component of the candidate and hiring manager's journey is worthy of constant review to ensure they enhance, rather than complicate, the experience. One question I ask routinely about steps in the hiring process is, "Is this a nice to have, or is this essential?" From my experience, what was considered a "nice to have" generally falls by the wayside after time and doesn't get used.

What change would you like to bring to the HR industry if given a chance?

If given a chance, a change that I would like to bring to the HR industry is to encourage people to think more broadly and expansively about talent. It's a shame that blind spots continue to narrow our options. Preconceived notions, history, past failures and successes, generalizations, and comfort levels severely restrict what's possible.

We don't always embrace fresh thinking and novel approaches when it comes to moving talent around. Therefore, asking ourselves tough questions about how we arrived at our conclusions and being open to challenging long-held beliefs, perhaps even suspending them to explore a range of possibilities, would bring new answers and ideas, hopefully leading to better outcomes.

What, according to you, could be the next significant change in the HR sector?

The most significant change noted in HR recently has been referred to, in a catchy way, as "The Great Resignation." However, I see a fundamental relationship taking place in the workplace, to a greater effect, that I refer to as "The Great Reflection." In today's professional environment, people feel empowered to insist on limits on what they will accept and won't tolerate.

This emboldened stance vastly differs from the traditional employer-employee framework, which continues to be challenged by this new push-pull dynamic on both sides. I think we're going to see more savvy employers responding in more meaningful ways to employee engagement.

Engagement should be measured more frequently, as a pulse check, to understand employees' desires. In today's workplace, employees want their voices considered when determining what and how work is done.

Organizations that can listen and respond well will make better decisions overall and will achieve better outcomes, higher customer satisfaction, and better financial results than previously. Leadership doesn't always have to mean the nucleus at the top driving everything. Instead, senior leadership should be anchors of humility, openness, trust, action-oriented behavior, and setting the tone for the organization.

Where do you envision yourself in the long run, and what are your goals for "The Candidate Guru"?

The Candidate Guru started as something fun to do, as a continuation of what I was talking about when invited to speak at conferences. This platform has provided me the opportunity to connect and re-connect with people on

a range of talent acquisition topics that are genuinely exhilarating to my psyche:

- career development
- career mobility
- upskilling and re-skilling
- Coaching people on how to find the right job and
- Assisting employers on how to identify the right people to hire, which ultimately results in forming a diverse and cohesive team.


• **What could be more exciting than that?**

In the long run, who knows where this will go? But one thing for sure is that I'm having a blast on social media sharing two-minute tips for candidates and hiring managers. These segments seem to resonate with people. Topics have included salary negotiation, dealing with resume inflation (embellishment), the most popular day of the week to apply for a job, and how to make the best hiring decision among a short list of finalists.

What's shocking to me is the number of people who stop me in the street to tell me how much they appreciate and look forward to my posts. Having a sense of humor helps—I can't take myself too seriously when doing this.

What would you advise budding entrepreneurs who aspire to venture into the HR sector?

My advice to budding entrepreneurs who aspire to venture into the HR sector is to know what you're talking about. Just having a good idea isn't sufficient to make you successful.

You have to be genuinely credible, which translates into having an abundance of real-life stories to reference from personal experience, data, and research. I think a little gray hair helps, too, though in my case, you've got to look hard to see what's left of it. 



The Candidate Guru

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