

# Voice of the Candidate: What Your Hiring Process— and Candidates—Say about You



Analysis of 400,000+ candidate reviews reveals the interview experiences that lead to declined offers.



# Listen Up or Lose Out

Job seekers have more options, more power, and higher expectations than ever before. Employers must tune in to candidate conversations and build a new game plan to succeed.

Candidates are sharing their interview experiences across many digital platforms, including Glassdoor, Indeed, Blind, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Using our proprietary AI to gather candidates' public reviews and analyze over 400,000 textual responses, we found that candidates are becoming increasingly vocal about their experiences:

## Candidates are sharing their hiring experiences more.



The number of **reviews shared** has doubled since 2020.



The number of **negative experiences** has doubled since 2020.



The number of **job offer declines** has tripled since 2020.





# Poor Interview Practices Limit Hiring Prospects

Interviews are a two-way process for each party to learn about and sell themselves to the other. At this stage, experiences become more personal, and candidates become more (or less) committed.

You could be missing out on strong job candidates due to poor interview experiences.

When candidates share their negative experience and word gets out, the size and quality of your talent pipeline could be restricted, and the number of referrals, time-to-hire, and offer acceptance rates may also decline.

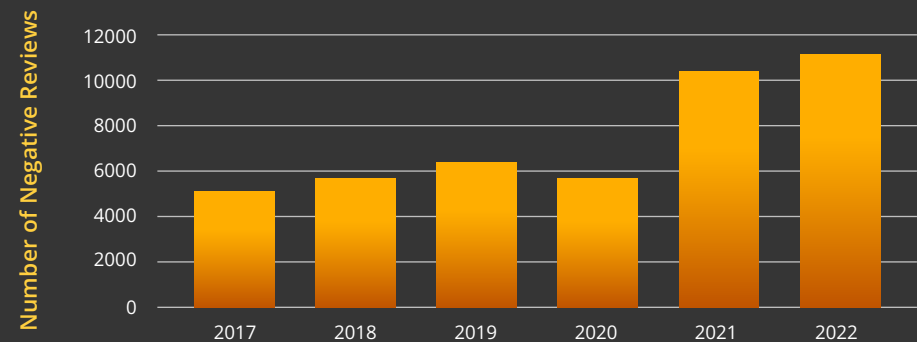
Worryingly, our analysis over time shows that bad interview experiences are on the rise.



## 42%

of candidates **decline job offers** as a direct result of a negative interview experience.

### A Growing Number of Negative Reviews



# The Signals That Cause You to Win or Lose Candidates

Analyzing the data from candidate reviews further, SHL insights reveal the top 10 signals that contribute to positive and negative experiences, as voiced by candidates.

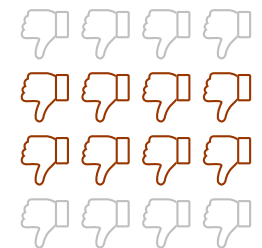
## Signals That Lead to a Positive Experience

- 1 Interviewer asked questions pertinent to the role requirements.
- 2 Interviewer talked about the organization and what it's like to be part of it.
- 3 Interview stage delivered within expected timeline.
- 4 Candidate had the opportunity to ask the interviewer questions.
- 5 Recruiter was clear about stages in the hiring process.
- 6 Interviewer asked questions about academic and professional credentials.
- 7 Candidate received feedback on their performance in the hiring process.
- 8 Recruiter was efficient and was quick to respond.
- 9 Recruiter was knowledgeable about the job description and role requirements.
- 10 Interviewer provided appropriate prompts and follow-up questions to guide the candidate's response.

## Signals That Lead to a Negative Experience

- 1 Recruiter was rude—either dismissive, condescending, or hostile—and unprofessional during interactions.
- 2 Interviewer was rude—either dismissive, condescending, or hostile—and unprofessional during interactions.
- 3 Recruiter ghosted the candidate and stopped communicating.
- 4 Interview was canceled at short notice or with little explanation.
- 5 Interviewer joined the interview late.
- 6 Interviewer had limited knowledge on role requirements.
- 7 Recruiter failed to keep the candidate updated on their progress through the hiring process.
- 8 The job description was misleading or did not accurately represent the role.
- 9 Interviewer was distracted throughout the interview.
- 10 Interviewer's webcam was off.

**2x**  
more likely to have a **negative interview experience** if the interviewer does not use their camera.





# What Do the Recruiter, the Interviewer, and the Process Have in Common?

They all get candidates talking online.

When job seekers share their experiences, they reference three key contributing factors: the recruiter, the interviewer, and the process.



The Recruiter



**23%**

Candidates said the **recruiter** contributed to a **negative** interview experience.\*



The Interviewer



**45%**

Candidates said the **interviewer** contributed to a **negative** interview experience.\*



The Process

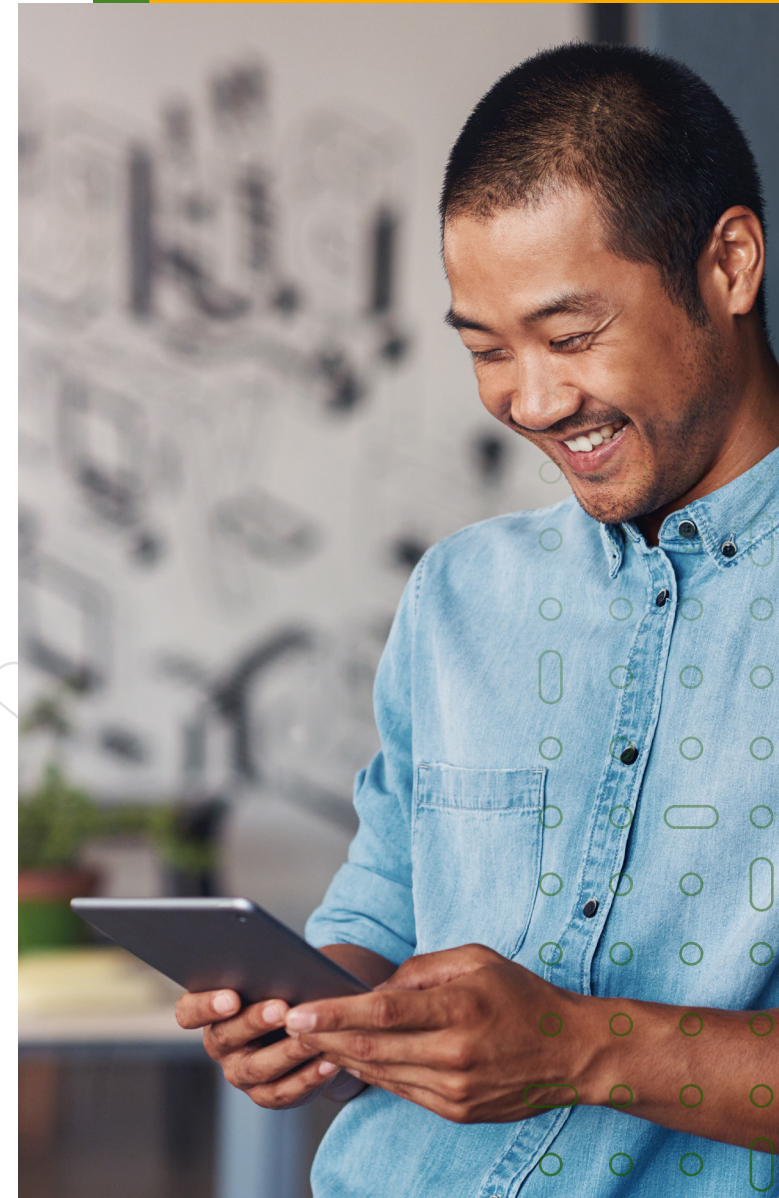


**52%**

Candidates said the **interview process** contributed to a **negative** interview experience.\*



\*Candidates often reference more than one factor in a negative review.





# First Impressions Count: Recruiter Behaviors That Attract and Deter Job Candidates

Recruiters are the first point of contact for candidates across all stages of the hiring process and are responsible for keeping candidates up to date at all times.

Ensure that your hiring process enables a strong partnership between hiring manager and recruiter, from the job specification to expectations of each other.

Role requirements can change at pace. Hiring managers have greatest visibility of the specifics of the role and what good looks like, and outdated assumptions from recruiters can easily lead to candidate drop out.



## The Recruiter

### Top Contributors to Positive Experience

- 1 Recruiter was clear about stages in the hiring process.
- 2 Recruiter was efficient and was quick to respond.
- 3 Recruiter was knowledgeable about the job description and role requirements.

### Top Contributors to Negative Experience

- 1 Recruiter was rude—either dismissive, condescending, or hostile—and unprofessional during interactions.
- 2 Recruiter ghosted the candidate and stopped communicating.
- 3 Recruiter failed to keep the candidate updated on their progress through the hiring process.

Similarly, there needs to be alignment on stages within the hiring process and timelines for decisions to be made and communicated to candidates. To tackle poor communication cadence and style, a further investigation into the specifics can be helpful.

Is there confusion about who should make contact with the candidate at each stage? Would a series of templated emails help recruiters ensure timely and informative communications? Do you need a system to ensure that every candidate receives a definitive answer, whatever the outcome?

### Boost Recruiter Productivity with SHL

Ensure recruiters communicate consistently, with [SHL Experiences](#), a one-stop shop for candidates to experience the entire candidate journey in one place, including assessments, feedback, and introductory videos from existing employees.





# Brand Boost or Bust: The Interviewer's Role in the Hiring Experience

Whether they are the hiring manager, functional leader, or team member, interviewers play an important role in the two-way decision-making process. As employees, they must be brand ambassadors, embodying the culture and values of the organization.

Interviewer training ensures that your interviewers will show up confidently and consistently to every interview. While it might seem obvious to ensure interviewers fully understand the role the candidate has applied for, do not overlook some potentially unfamiliar topics. These include understanding job-related competencies (identified in the job analysis) and evaluating behaviors based on responses, as well as soft skills such as body language and active listening.



## The Interviewer

### Top Contributors to Positive Experience

- 1 Candidate's time was treated respectfully.
- 2 Interviewer talked about the organization and what it's like to be part of it.
- 3 Candidate had the opportunity to ask the interviewer questions.

### Top Contributors to Negative Experience

- 1 Interviewer was rude—either dismissive, condescending, or hostile—and unprofessional during interactions.
- 2 Interviewer joined the interview late.
- 3 Interviewer had limited knowledge on role requirements.



“Not enough time was given to answer the interview questions and [the interviewer] would constantly cut you off while you speak.”

Appearing well-prepared to the candidate helps to build rapport during the interview as well as leaving candidates with a positive impression of the role and company overall.

### Develop Your Interviewers with SHL

SHL offers online and face-to-face training, suitable for hiring managers and other interviewers, as well as digital tools for building interview guides and a job-relevant question bank.





# The Interview Process: Do You Delight or Disappoint Job Candidates?

From the outset, the recruiter and hiring manager need to discuss and agree on the hiring process. Some aspects will be mandated by the company, others may be a little more fluid.

However, getting the basics right—providing accurate job descriptions, setting candidate expectations on the timeline, keeping them updated on progress and providing feedback—is essential.



## The Process

### Top Contributors to Positive Experience

- 1 Interview stage delivered within expected timeline.
- 2 Candidate received feedback on their performance.
- 3 Every interview in the process was thorough and detailed.

### Top Contributors to Negative Experience

- 1 Interview was canceled at short notice or with little explanation.
- 2 Recruiter failed to keep the candidate updated on their progress through the hiring process.
- 3 The job description was misleading or did not accurately represent the role.

“It’s been two months and two interviews and still no feedback.”

When was the last time your interview process was reviewed? Do you know the length of a typical candidate journey from application to offer? How consistently do you provide feedback, and is it structured and actionable?

### Upgrade Your Interview Process with SHL

SHL’s [video interview platform](#) creates a process that is consistent and fair for candidates, and efficient and scalable for employers. With the capability to integrate with 80+ ATS vendors and automated, personalized video feedback, you can create a win-win situation for all parties.

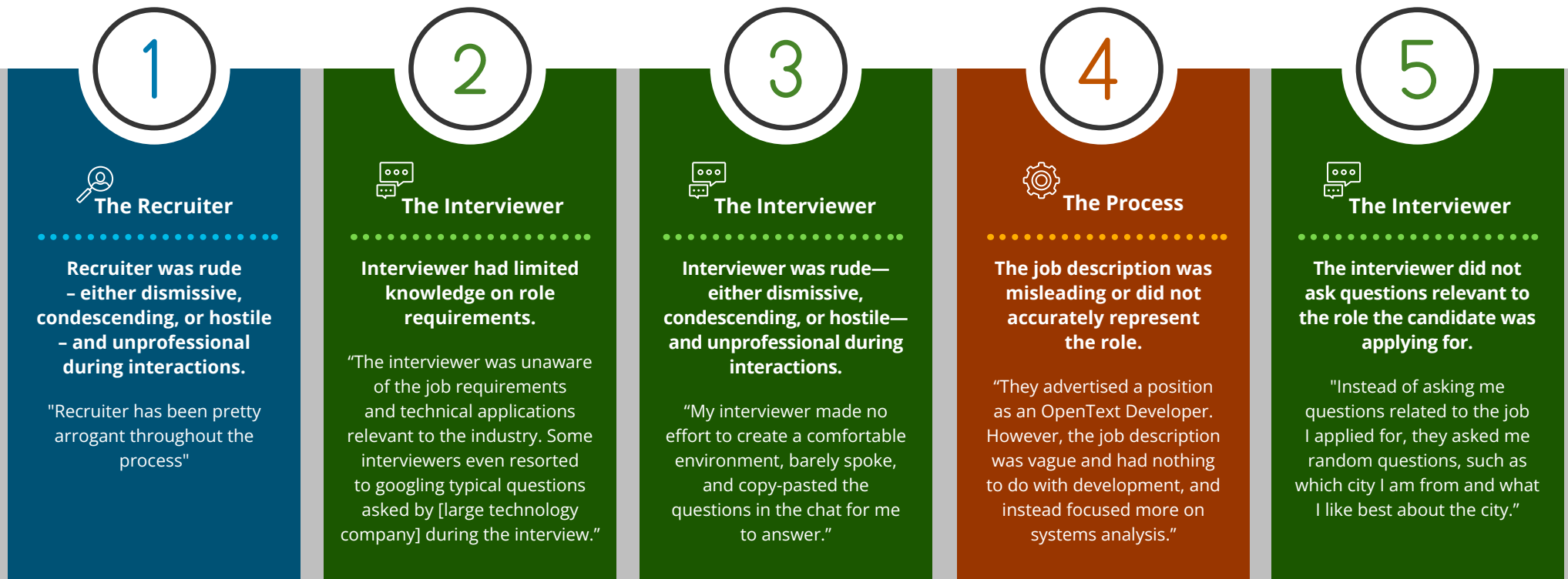




# Falling at The Final Hurdle: Why Jobseekers Decline Offers

Our analysis shows that as many as 2-in-5 job seekers declined a job offer because of a bad interview experience. With so much time and effort invested by the candidate,

recruiter, and interviewer to get to the final stage, these are the contributing factors and top reasons that candidates turn down job opportunities:





# Stop Being an Observer: Time to up Your Game

Listening to the candidate voice is essential. Most companies monitor review sites for negative posts and keep an eye on changes in their overall star rating.

However, with an aggregated view of what people are saying online, you can gain a greater understanding of what candidates experience when interacting with your organization and take action to address recurring issues.

## SHL can help raise your game in the recruiting stakes.

With powerful tools and insights, we can help you:

### Make Hiring Personal

Make a positive impression of your brand by providing first-of-its-kind, personalized feedback to every candidate.

[Learn more](#)

### Deliver Smarter Interviews

Convert top-quality candidates quickly with reliable technology for fast and insightful interviews.

[Learn more](#)

### Streamline Hiring Processes

Identify, assess, and interview candidates efficiently so you can reach your hiring goals faster.


[Learn more](#)




# Research Methodology

We mapped unstructured text from candidate reviews posted on social media and employer review sites, to a distinct set of factors that led to a positive or negative experience. An example of the mapping logic is shown on the right of the page.


For this analysis, we used proprietary AI to map unstructured text from:




**400,000+**  
Candidate Reviews



**2,000+**  
Job Roles

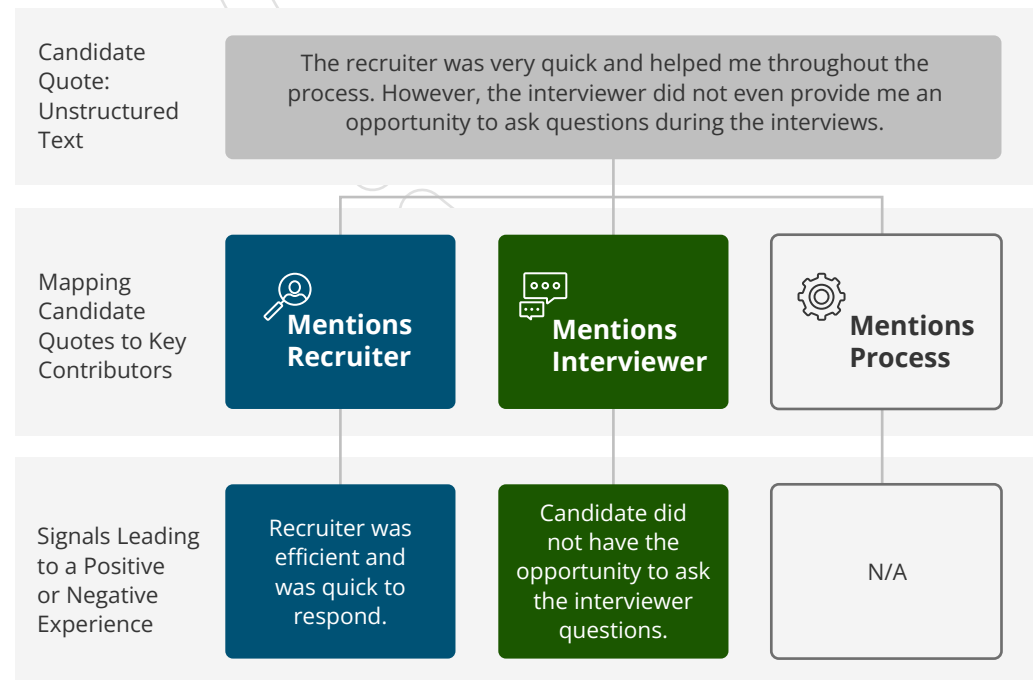


**180+**  
Companies



**130+**  
Countries

## Example of Candidate Review Mapping



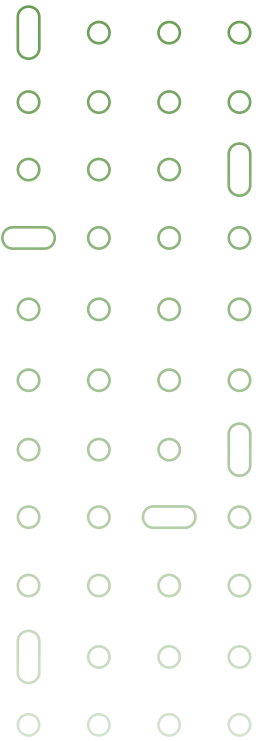


# About SHL Labs

SHL Labs is our high-tech innovation powerhouse with cross-disciplinary collaboration across people scientists, AI researchers, and academics dedicated to advancing innovation in talent acquisition and talent management.



Stay tuned for more insights and innovation from [SHL Labs](#).



SHL brings powerful and transparent AI technology, data science, and objectivity to help companies attract, develop, and grow the workforce they need to succeed in the digital era.

We empower talent strategies to unlock the full potential of your greatest asset—people.



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