



Recruitment

Best Practices for Your Network

KEOLIS

The Heartbeat of Your Network

Today, an organization’s workplace culture plays a significant role before employees are hired and start training. Professionalizing roles within a larger public transit agency requires empowering recruiters and hiring managers alike.

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References

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Austrasian Bus & Coach
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INTRODUCTION

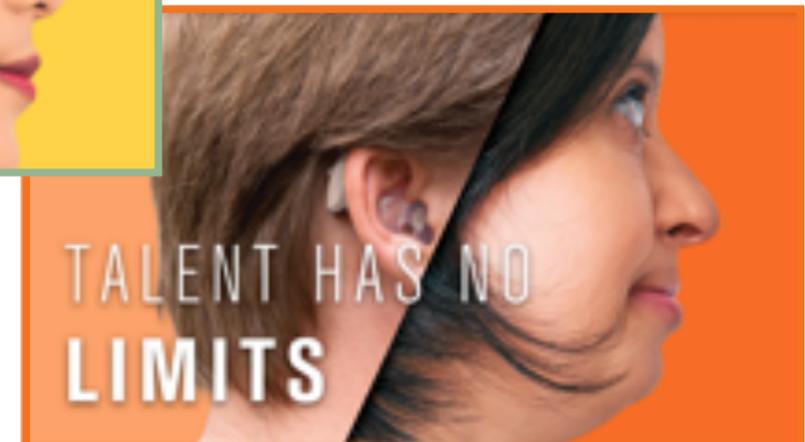
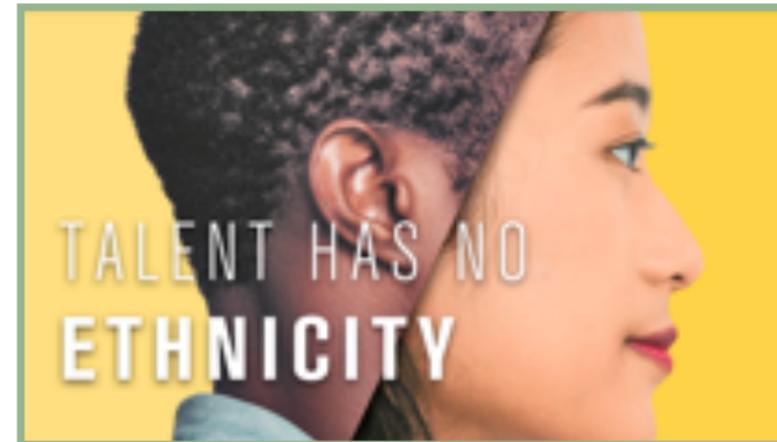
In a nonstop, ever-moving industry like public transportation, little is left to chance. Most leaders could teach a master class on risk management. And, among consumers, predictability and reliability are cornerstone offerings, seamlessly transporting riders from point A to B across the world. Luck aside, there is an element of magic in ensuring the trains run on time: a well-trained, dedicated pool of employees that are committed to providing top-notch service.

Similar to many industries that rely on frontline workers, the transportation industry needs to anticipate, adapt and engage fresh talent to maintain the heartbeat of

the network. With the emergence of new technologies and recent cultural shifts, a new generation has access to more options when considering career paths. To remain competitive, it is essential that transportation agencies recognize that people and planning are key to best practices when recruiting and retaining talent.

To reach (and attract) a new generation of workers, agencies need more than luck or tradition to ensure a robust and growing pipeline of employees. When it comes to recruitment and retention of talent, best practices fall into three essential threads: →

-  Proactively listening and responding to the needs of a new generation of workers
-  Adapting benefits and reshaping career paths that reflect modern workplace culture
-  Doubling down on marketing investment that positions the agency as an employer of choice



Inside

In this paper, we will highlight how Keolis helps its partners attract and retain talent. As a global provider of public transportation services, Keolis can tap into learnings from around the world. Accordingly, we have developed and implemented best practices for recruitment and hiring, achieving success in the face of significant labor market headwinds.

Contact Keolis North America at Media@KeolisNA.com

RETHINKING WORK



Our people are a key pillar of how we do business at Keolis—the others being passengers, the agencies with which we partner and the planet.

David Scorey

Keolis North America

In May 2021, Anthony Klotz, an associate professor of management at Texas A&M University coined the term **Great Resignation** to describe the sudden wave of people quitting their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which led many to re-think where, how and why we work. The record-breaking trend dominated headlines in 2021 and 2022 as turnover continually reached new highs.

While most business leaders responded with increased efforts to retain employees, ongoing coverage of looming recession concerns further lowered confidence among job seekers, acting as an accelerant for the cultural movement. As pandemic restrictions lifted, an emboldened generation of frontline workers emerged and with new expectations for what employers needed to provide.

KLOTZ AND OTHER EXPERTS CITED:



Backlog of resignations during pandemic uncertainty



Incidence of widespread burnout



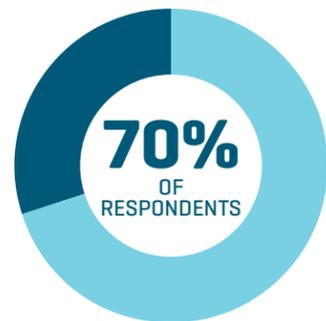
Reluctance to give up remote work



Collective evaluation of prioritizes

In a 2022 survey of
2,100
HOURLY WORKERS

McKinsey & Company found that while



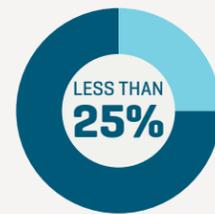
reported applying for advancement within their current company or externally, they struggled with **persistent barriers** for professional growth.

In fact, of those who apply for advancement opportunities, only



achieve the raise or incremental responsibility

and

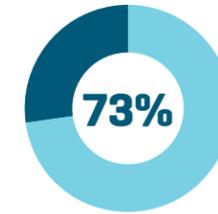


reported a promotion or new role.

Additionally, while compensation remains a top priority for those making \$22.00 or less an hour, the opportunity for job growth or promotion is an even higher priority for frontline employees than pay or benefits alone. At **80 PERCENT**, this figure is significantly more important to frontline employees than surveyed employers reported.

One of the major differences between frontline and office workers is how information is disseminated. While many organizations rely on human resources and web-based boards to communicate about training and open roles, hourly workers cited dependence on a direct supervisor or word of mouth among peers for these opportunities.

Among frontline employees



cited a manager who supports their career progression as key to career advancement.

Empowered with insights and testimonials from people who have advanced, agencies will have further opportunities to **professionalize** the roles that are essential to operations. Keolis offers performance evaluations and

succession planning that factor into overall goals of new talent at all levels working towards retiring as a senior leader. These necessary training programs define what the path looks like within a specific organization. The internal talent pool is frequently analyzed and assessed for ability and opportunity to excel and grow into new roles. Training and coaching is built into each role so an employee can apply to train within a role before meeting all the requirements. For example, within the recruiting department, all talent starting as local recruiters are coached on the skills required to operate on the regional level.

MODERN WORKPLACE CULTURE



Students like to speak to the people who actually do the job.

Kerry Woods

Assistant Superintendent of Transportation and former female locomotive engineer at Keolis

Today, an organization's workplace culture plays a significant role **before** the employee is hired and starts training. Professionalizing roles within a larger public transit agency requires empowering recruiters and hiring managers alike. Before applying, talent want a clear idea of what a career path with the agency would involve.

Best practices that empower teams and underscore the return on ongoing investment fall under three essential pillars:

- 1** Empowered first-contact recruiters
- 2** Accelerate qualification process and shrink time to fill
- 3** Champion "Employer of Choice" initiatives that build awareness

A strong pipeline of qualified talent requires an empowered recruiting resource team. This team is essentially the first touch point in a prospective employee's insight into a workplace culture. Since today's workers want roles that grow with their skills and experience, these team members need to project professionalism and confidence when conducting local job fairs, interacting with media, and when engaging community leaders.

Empowering first contact recruiters requires that recruiters work closely with hiring managers to establish a clear understanding of needs, priorities and goals. By removing these siloes, recruiters can propel the process further in real time:

- On-the-spot offers
- Qualified to enroll in full benefits on day one
- Paid training [i.e., earning commercial driver's license (CDL)]
- Generous sign-on and referral bonuses
- Competitive retirement packages
- High focus on internal development
- Access to advancement within an Internal Career Portal
- Global transfer opportunities

Additionally, talent expects its employer to maintain a good track record as situations change. In all cases, Keolis aims to do the right thing by its employees. For example, certain railroad employees were allocated 10 COVID-specific sick days during the pandemic, despite previously voting to remove sick time from their contract in favor of other benefits.

When recruitment resources and hiring managers at Keolis partnered to identify candidates, results included cutting lead time by



EMPLOYER OF CHOICE ROI



If you think it's expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur.

Red Adair
American firefighter

Increased commitment to recruiting and career pathing will not only create a strong pipeline of entry level and lateral hires, but return on investment (ROI) is further boosted with ongoing upskilling throughout the organization and improved retention figures. Becoming (and remaining) an employer of choice is multi-pronged effort including: →

- ★ Maintain a leadership role and share of voice (SOV) within the larger industry
- ★ Leverage international expertise to expand the tool kit of best practices
- ★ Raise awareness and spotlight reputation through traditional marketing and grassroots community relations
- ★ Sustain productive relationships with labor leadership/Keolis has a dedicated labor relations team
- ★ Instate rigorous, enduring professional development goals [not just for senior management]
- ★ Increase investment and double down on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives

In Boston, the agency cut the time to fill a position in half, from

311 DAYS to **135** DAYS

BY EMPLOYING THESE BEST PRACTICES ACROSS THE U.S. OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS, KEOLIS HAS:



Made 1,557 job offers



Achieved a 96% acceptance rate



Attracted (and processed) 28,000 applicants

Think about the companies that you most admire. **Employers of choice within an industry do not simply follow the trends and react to criticism. More often than not, they are proactively a leading voice that draws attention to insights and opportunities and engages stakeholders in a plan to make a difference.** Within larger marketing and recruitment plans, this can take many different paths.

As a global provider of public transportation services, Keolis can tap into learnings from around the world.

WHY NOW

Professionalizing an industry that is mostly frontline workers will appeal to a younger generation that has much higher expectations from their employers:

- robust benefits
- good pay
- flexible hours
- ability to move around and grow within a national or even global business

Throughout the **13 COUNTRIES** in which it operations, Keolis encourages **OVER 68,000 EMPLOYEES** to consider the following mindsets:



Cultural alignment concerning safety



Leadership through service



Inclusivity within access to learning

Global learnings like these are implemented throughout the world. Keolis North America maintains memberships with local college job fairs and runs annual internship programs in partnership with local universities.

In France, Keolis Downer deployed a 2022 recruitment campaign designed to take on stereotypical perceptions that people have about transit employees.



Targeting 1,000 potential operators regardless of level of education and experience, the series of apprentice and on-campus events aims to overcome the barriers based on age, gender, sex, social and cultural origin and disability. In the first six months of the campaign, more than 250 new apprentices had signed on to train as drivers and maintainers.

Some small changes can have a large impact. According to research by LinkedIn (2020), fewer qualified women apply to jobs unless their experience perfectly matches everything on the list; whereas most men are more confident and will apply with the assumption of growing into the role. Therefore, Keolis removed all his/her verbiage

in job descriptions and revised to utilize more generic/non-gendered language. Plus, less emphasis is placed on **years of experience** in favor of skill set. Additionally, more emphasis on promoting benefits and succinct job descriptions entice large numbers of applicants.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the key areas outlined here, Keolis is a global business that can help its partners employ these best practices as well as develop their own strategies to attract and retain talent during significant labor market headwinds. Contact Media@KeolisNA.com for Keolis North America to discuss specific needs and solutions.

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