



Taking a Future-Focused Approach to Recruiting

Marcia Bray, Vice President, The Jacobson Group

Professionals' attitudes are shifting, the insurance workforce is aging and remote work environments persist. The industry is facing a talent landscape that looks different from even a few years ago. In today's climate, traditional recruiting strategies are becoming less effective and new best practices are taking shape. To build a future-ready workforce, insurers must be proactive in refreshing their approach to attracting and securing top talent.

The insurance industry remains in a tight labor market, with the unemployment rate for insurance carriers and related activities currently at 1.9% – less than half that of the overall U.S. economy (4.3%). Additionally, in The Jacobson Group and Aon's recent Q1 2026 Insurance Labor Market Study, the majority of insurance functions remain challenging to fill; yet 50% of carriers plan to increase their headcount in 2026.

At the same time, professionals are becoming more cautious about making career moves, with 12- and 6-month voluntary turnover slightly lower compared to 2025, according to the study. Today's insurers must find a balance between effectively selling their organization and its open roles, while also ensuring they are building the right skill sets for ongoing success.

Recruiting for Skills

According to a Shin Research Program study, critical thinking and problem solving, team leadership/mentorship, and adaptability and life-long learning top the list of the most important and investible skills across all insurance functions. Identifying these capabilities during the recruiting process is essential for hiring individuals who can easily adapt and evolve alongside shifting business demands.

As the industry accelerates its digital transformation and integration of AI on a larger scale, new roles are emerging. The most successful individuals will be those who embrace innovation and are able to adapt to new ideas, processes and technologies. [Soft skills](#) and the ability to work alongside technology in a way that leverages the attributes of both humans and machines will become even more essential. Organizations should focus on building a deep bench of talent that is equipped to meet both known and unforeseen future challenges.

Traditional professional backgrounds and career experiences are no longer sole indicators of success. In some cases, specific technical skills and competencies can be learned on the job, potentially broadening talent pools. However, having the right mindset and transferable skills enables individuals to excel in a variety of positions.

Providing a Positive Candidate Experience

To be most competitive in today's recruiting environment, insurers must consider the entire candidate life cycle, starting with an individual's first exposure to the company through their onboarding. Ongoing communication, a quick and decisive process, and a focus on candidates' motivators are key for standing out from the competition.

Build your employer brand.

Every organization has an employer brand, whether it's actively managed or not. This is shaped by a variety of factors including current and past employee feedback, social media profiles, corporate websites, news articles and review sites like Glassdoor. Companies that are aware of their employer brand and continually working to ensure it aligns with their corporate values are more likely to present themselves in a positive and authentic light. Too often organizations leave this up to chance. Invest time and capital in sharing your company's story, highlighting its people and providing a glimpse into the benefits of working for your organization.

There's also a significant opportunity to reach entry-level talent and grow them into roles that meet evolving future needs. Partner with high school and college insurance and risk management programs to see how you can expose students to the many career paths within insurance. Offering internships can also build a talent pipeline and further establish your employer brand.

Revisit your job postings.

While the "Great Reshuffle" of talent created an influx of mobility in recent years, this has largely subsided. Professionals now require compelling reasons to make a move. Job postings may be an applicant's first interaction with your company; ensure they convey your company's brand voice and values. Rather than primarily listing daily tasks, highlight the impact the role will have on the company and its customers. List only the requirements

that are essential for success with a focus on transferable skills and attributes. This helps avoid disqualifying candidates who would excel in the role with minimal training. Requirements can be more thoroughly discussed in initial screening interviews to better understand how a candidate's experiences and skills may translate to the open role.

While employers are regaining some leverage in terms of hiring, top candidates will still have high expectations around work-life balance, competitive compensation and meaningful growth opportunities – especially when it comes to technology talent and other roles with broader talent pools. Professionals are also comfortable turning down roles due to in-person requirements, and positions that require relocation are even more restrictive. Currently, [71% of carriers](#) are offering hybrid work and 22% report the majority of their employees are fully remote.

Anticipate these demands, as well as how you will proactively address them. Additionally, don't be afraid to continue to adapt and evolve how you present your open roles – especially if your job descriptions aren't bringing in the right candidates.

Be intentional in your interview process.

The interview process provides the best opportunity to make a human connection with candidates, solidifying their impression of your company and validating your employer brand. Make every interaction count – learn what is important to each candidate and build an interview panel that can authentically address those areas. Motivators and career aspirations differ by individuals and even generations. Encourage those involved in the interview process to bring their own personal experiences to life and share tangible ways your organization lives up to its promises.

Regardless of their level, today's professionals also seek clarity around how they will progress within a company. It's important to note this is not limited to upward mobility, especially within younger generations. Many professionals are pursuing lateral moves, upskilling and exposure to additional areas of the business. Just [6% of Gen Z](#) (born 1997-2012) consider a leadership position their primary career goal.

Understand how your organization can support these aspirations in both the short and long term. Determine how you will upskill individuals to stay relevant in their careers, as well as how you will position them for ongoing success. Articulate these opportunities with candidates, helping them better envision themselves with your company and feel confident and secure about their future.

Move quickly toward an offer.

A streamlined recruiting process is critical. Clearly define what you are looking for in a candidate, ensure the right people are involved and be prepared to make decisions quickly. If organizational needs are unclear or you are not fully committed to filling a role,

interim talent may be a better immediate solution than delaying a permanent hiring decision.

When you've found the right candidate, present your strongest offer upfront and in a timely manner. Hiring managers that continue to explore their options are likely to miss out on top talent completely. Candidates who are actively seeking a new role are typically talking with multiple companies and those who are more passive in their search may lose interest. When possible, match the candidate's desired compensation level; ensure your benefits are competitive; and reiterate key factors around work-life balance, flexibility, culture and other areas they personally value.

It's also important to communicate with the candidates who are not selected to move forward at any stage of the process. Neglecting to close the loop with these individuals leaves a negative impression and makes it unlikely they will reapply for more suitable roles in the future or recommend your company to others. Treat candidates with the same professionalism and responsiveness you would extend to clients.

Invest in onboarding.

Recruiting does not end with the acceptance letter. Effective onboarding begins prior to day one and extends into the individual's first few weeks and months. Help new hires feel welcome by reaching out before their first day, letting them know what to expect throughout the onboarding process, and fostering initial connections with team members.

Prepare your current team members to support the new hire by sharing information about their role, background and intended impact. As part of the first few weeks of onboarding, set up informal one-on-one meetings with peers and key teammates. Especially in remote environments, having these initial conversations can help break the ice and pave the way for stronger working relationships.

Brief them on any unwritten company norms and expectations to help them adapt to the culture. This may include an overview of the current state of the business, how decisions are made within the organization, and expectations around problem-solving and approvals. Continually seek feedback throughout the onboarding process. Set aside time during their first few weeks and months to check in and see how you can even better support them.

A thoughtful, human-centered recruiting process is essential for not only filling open roles, but creating additional brand ambassadors. By aiming to build long-term relationships, prioritizing transferable skills, and taking a future-focused approach that accounts for emerging opportunities and roles, insurers will be well-positioned to win the war for top talent.