The Stories Tech Candidates *Care About.*

And How to Tell Them at Every Stage of the Job Search

#FIND**YOUR**FORWARD

2022
CANDIDATE
INSIGHT
REPORTS
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Introduction.

The stories employers tell matter a great deal for job seekers. Candidates want to understand who an employer is, how their values align with their own and much more before taking the time to apply. And reputation matters — 84 percent of candidates say it's an important factor in applying. So how do you make sure that you stand out when it may feel like you are on SharkTank trying to make your pitch impactful?

Recruitment teams need to think like marketers and tell stories that connect. This idea is especially important when thinking about where a job seeker is in their candidate journey. A passive job seeker today is interested in different subject matter than someone ready to hit "apply" on a role.

To maximize the efficiency of their content, recruiters should know what types of content job seekers are interested in across the three major stages of the candidate lifecycle. These three stages are the passive job seeker soaking in information about their industry, skills or career development; a potential candidate investigating specific companies of interest; and the active job seeker exploring job listings.

So, how do you determine what topics to promote for candidates throughout the candidate lifecycle? And what content strategies should you use to share the stories that matter most?

We set out to answer these questions. **Our insights will help give your company direction on what topics you should talk about to gain a candidate's attention.** These topics will help you narrow your content strategy and only invest in subjects they will care about based on where they are in their candidate journey. We also offer a number of content ideas businesses can use to grab the attention of candidates.

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Report Methodology.

This report uses a combination of proprietary data from our search traffic and the results of our Built In Tech Worker Survey, conducted in partnership with Brandata, to showcase the top-of-funnel topics passive job seekers care about. The Brandata survey collected data from 1,099 employed tech professionals across the country from March 18 to April 5, 2022. Respondents came from a wide range of backgrounds, including engineering, sales, project management, operations, data and analytics, marketing, HR, and many others.

Additionally, our company profile data covers the middle-of-funnel topics professionals care about, and our job posting heat map data will address the bottom of funnel areas of interest.

This report is part of an annual five-piece series: The 2022 Candidate Insight Reports. These reports — dedicated to benefits, salaries, content topics, industries, and popular tech tools — are meant to give recruiters and people teams deep insight into what candidates are interested in and asking for in today's job market.

Executive Summary.

Here are the most need-to-know insights we pulled from our 2021 search data and subsequent analysis.

Similar Topics Matter Across the Candidate Funnel.

This report showcases what topics candidates care about the most across three major stages of the candidate journey: passive job seeker reading company and industry news and insights; learning about specific companies and their infrastructure (culture, tech, DEI, etc.); and lastly, looking at job postings. **Our research shows there are common themes regardless of where the candidate is in the candidate funnel, including the importance of company culture, leadership, product and technology and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.** You can't go wrong by creating content pieces that highlight these topics and themes for your organization.

DEI Matters.

DEI is on the list as an important topic to candidates, regardless of where they are in the funnel. Approximately 1 in 3 employees and candidates would not apply for an organization with a lack of workforce diversity. Some 37 percent of candidates would not apply for an organization where the employee reviews had disparities in satisfaction ratings among racial or ethnic groups. Developing content highlighting DEI in your organization, from blogs and thought leadership posts to team photos, event images, and more will prove valuable in attracting top talent.

There Are Numerous Content Mediums to Share Your Story.

When it comes to creating content to support your hiring strategy, the options are numerous. **From your website and blog to social media channels and employee reviews to video content, you have the opportunity to reach thousands of potential candidates at any given time.**

You also have the opportunity to target your content based on where the candidates are in the candidate funnel, especially now that you'll be equipped with the knowledge of topics they find to be most important based on where they are in the funnel.

Topics and Stories Tech Candidates Care About Most

What do tech professionals today care about most in their initial research of potential employers? And how do they differ based on where someone is in the candidate funnel? We answer these questions and offer some contextual insight into the findings.
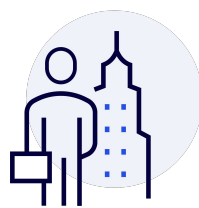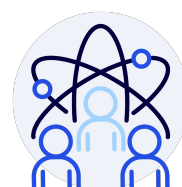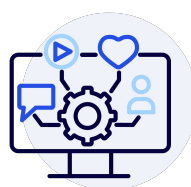
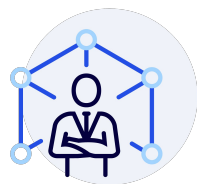# 10 Most Important Topics for Candidates.

Growth

Office Space

Culture

DEI

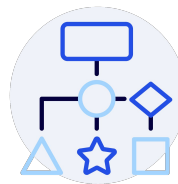Technology

Professional Development

Leadership Insights

Department-Specific Structure and Culture

Perks

Remote Work

[Source: BuiltIn.com Search Data]

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Candidates at this stage of the funnel often aren't candidates at all, at least not active ones. They are employed professionals consuming content that piques their curiosity or helps them explore what they might not be getting from their employer currently.

Growth is a major theme. They are interested in industries that are booming, companies that are growing and other avenues that might be ripe for them to be a part of. If there is a limited growth potential in their current position, the candidate will likely continue exploring the growth they've uncovered in their reading.

There is also an interest in office space set up and whether it's designed for hybrid work and collaboration. Post-covid, employees often seek hybrid or remote work options and tech professionals usually prefer an open office space that supports teams working well and easily together. This ties into the department-specific structure and culture, as well as the culture of the organization as a whole. Innovation and technology are important components of tech culture.

Leadership insights that speak to the other important topics are another aspect of what candidates look for when seeing what other opportunities are out there. If they don't like what leadership has to say, why would they want to work for them?

Finally, 36 percent of technology professionals indicate remote work is a top consideration for assessing new employers, so it's not surprising that it ranks on the top 10 important topics list.

So, what do tech candidates care about most when they're initially researching potential employers?

Top of the Funnel: 7 Most Important Topics During Initial Company Research.

Topic	Percentage
Company Culture	55%
How Managers Run Their Teams	54%
Product and Technology	44%
Industry Trends & Innovation	35%
Vision Statements and Core Values from Leadership	35%
DEI	35%
Hiring Focuses	26%

[Source: Brandata]

SECTION 2

Once technology professionals realize there are better opportunities out there, their interests in topics change slightly. They still aren't actively applying to roles but they are starting to seek out specific company information at a deeper level than just consuming topics of interest.
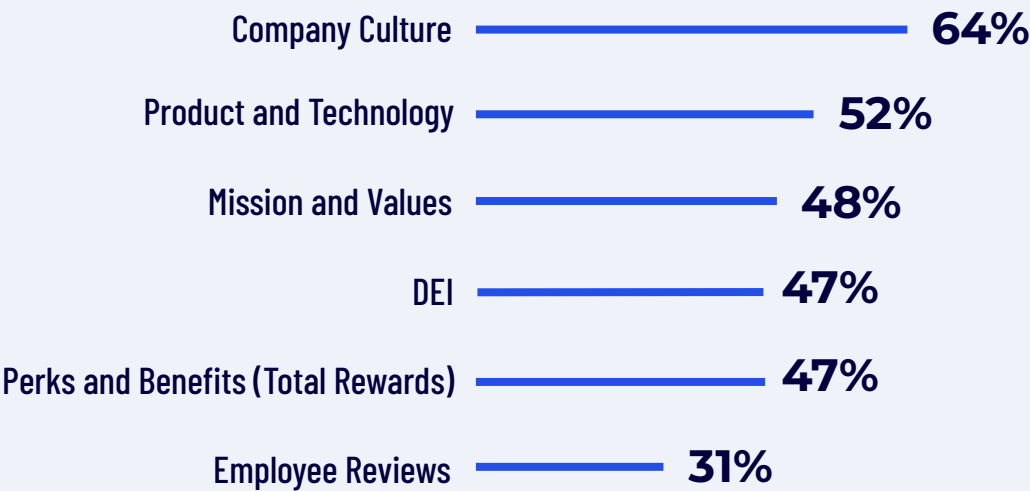
At the onset of their research, candidates focus on company culture and how managers run their teams the most. If they aren't interested in what the company showcases about these items, or they can't find enough information about them, there's a good chance they'll move on to continue their research into other organizations.

Product and technology come next, with a likelihood that the candidate will be intrigued by what they find or dismayed if there is a lack of innovation in these areas, which brings us to industry trends and innovation next on the list. Industry trends, in general, are of interest, but also how the company is keeping up with industry trends or leading the way through innovation is of interest to tech candidates.

Next, vision statements and core values of leadership and DEI are equally important, and both speak to company culture. Lastly, it's no surprise that candidates are curious about an organization's hiring focus during the initial research phase. **Open positions, the hiring process, compensation factors and other aspects of the company's talent acquisition phases are often of interest and can generate curiosity for the candidate to inquire further.**

Middle of the Funnel: 6 Most Important Topics for Candidates

Company Culture	**64%**
Product and Technology	**52%**
Mission and Values	**48%**
DEI	**47%**
Perks and Benefits (Total Rewards)	**47%**
Employee Reviews	**31%**

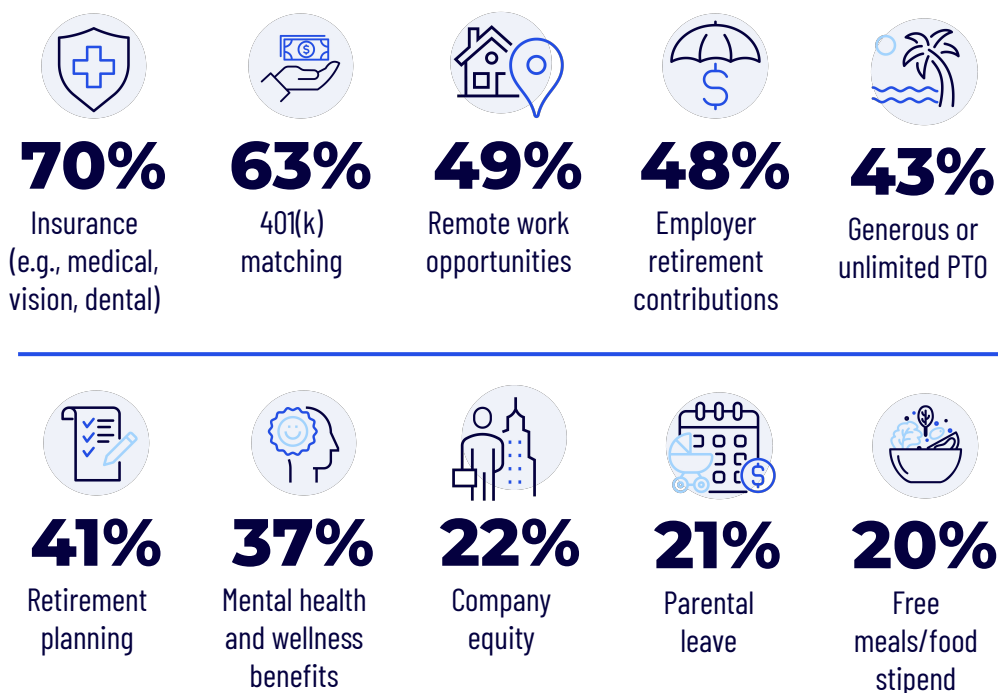[Source: BuiltIn Company Profile Heat Map Data]

SECTION 2

In the middle of the funnel, candidates have found employers they are interested in working for but are on the fence about if they want to apply or not. At this stage, company culture becomes most critical in the decision-making process. From there, product and technology follow. Candidates want to know there is alignment in the technology the company uses and their skill sets, and if the organization is trying new and innovative technologies.

From there, mission and values, DEI and perks and benefits rank closely together as topics that matter. Mission and values, and DEI both hone in on the company's culture even further. DEI initiatives also support increased productivity and diversity in thinking, making teams perform better, and many candidates know and appreciate this. Minority candidates also want to see that they'll be fairly represented and treated well at the organization.

Perks and benefits also relate to culture and how much an organization cares about its people. They can also be an indication of how well the company is doing financially when an organization isn't making an effort to cut corners when it comes to total rewards packages.

The 10 most important employee benefits across all demographics nationwide that employers should focus on in their content include:

70%
Insurance (e.g., medical, vision, dental)

63%
401(k) matching

49%
Remote work opportunities

48%
Employer retirement contributions

43%
Generous or unlimited PTO

41%
Retirement planning

37%
Mental health and wellness benefits

22%
Company equity

21%
Parental leave

20%
Free meals/food stipend

Download Now.

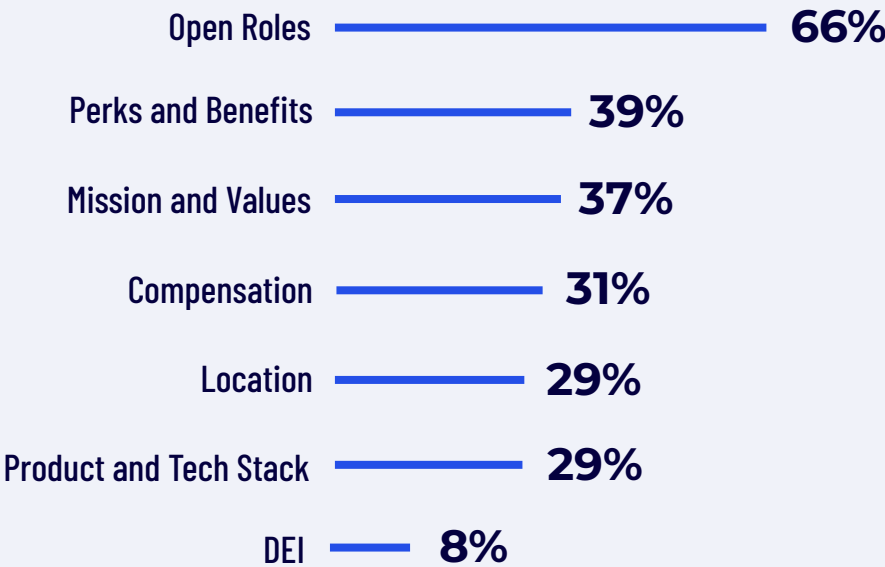### What Candidates Expect From Total Rewards

Lastly, employee reviews matter to candidates, with **86 percent** **of employees and candidates** indicating they refer to employee reviews when deciding whether to apply for a job.

WHAT CANDIDATES EXPECT FROM TOTAL REWARDS

Bottom of the Funnel: 7 Most Important Topics for Candidates.

Open Roles	66%
Perks and Benefits	39%
Mission and Values	37%
Compensation	31%
Location	29%
Product and Tech Stack	29%
DEI	8%

[Source: BuiltIn Company Profile Heat Map Data]

SECTION 2

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Once candidates know they want to work for an employer they start to assess fit within a job post itself as a final step prior to applying. **The items on this list aren't much of a surprise but are important to take note of as far as where they fall on the list, especially when it comes to creating the job post that candidates will refer to when deciding to apply.**

It's definitely no surprise that open roles are the top factor that inspires candidates to apply for a position. Despite liking an employer, if there aren't open positions that fit their skill set it's a safe bet they won't be applying, at least right now.

If they like the job description and, through their research, also like the organization, they're more apt to apply. We already know that perks, benefits, and compensation matter to employees and should be highlighted clearly on the job post to garner inspiration, with a condensed version of the company's mission and values. **And, of course, it's wise to include innovative products and tech stacks the candidate will have access to or work with to boost their interest level.**

Interestingly, DEI is last when it comes to what inspires candidates to apply at the bottom of the funnel, though this is likely in part due to the notion the candidate is already comfortable with the company's DEI initiatives at this stage based on prior research.

Content Strategies to Attract and Hire Top Talent.

When it comes to creating content to support your hiring strategy, the options are numerous. From your website and blog to social media channels and employee reviews to video content, you have the opportunity to reach thousands of potential candidates at any given time.

SECTION 3

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First, let's touch on search engine optimization throughout your online presence. It can be worth it to invest in search engine optimization (SEO) resources to ensure your content throughout your online presence is optimized. Incorporating the right keywords throughout your website, blog and job posts can help candidates who are searching for what you have to offer more easily find you during their online searches.

Next, let's discuss where to post. Regardless of what stage a candidate is at in their company research and job search process, they'll be researching your organization through several mediums, including those listed below. Your talent acquisition strategy should include developing and disseminating content on the following channels based on the topics they find most important, as provided in the previous section.
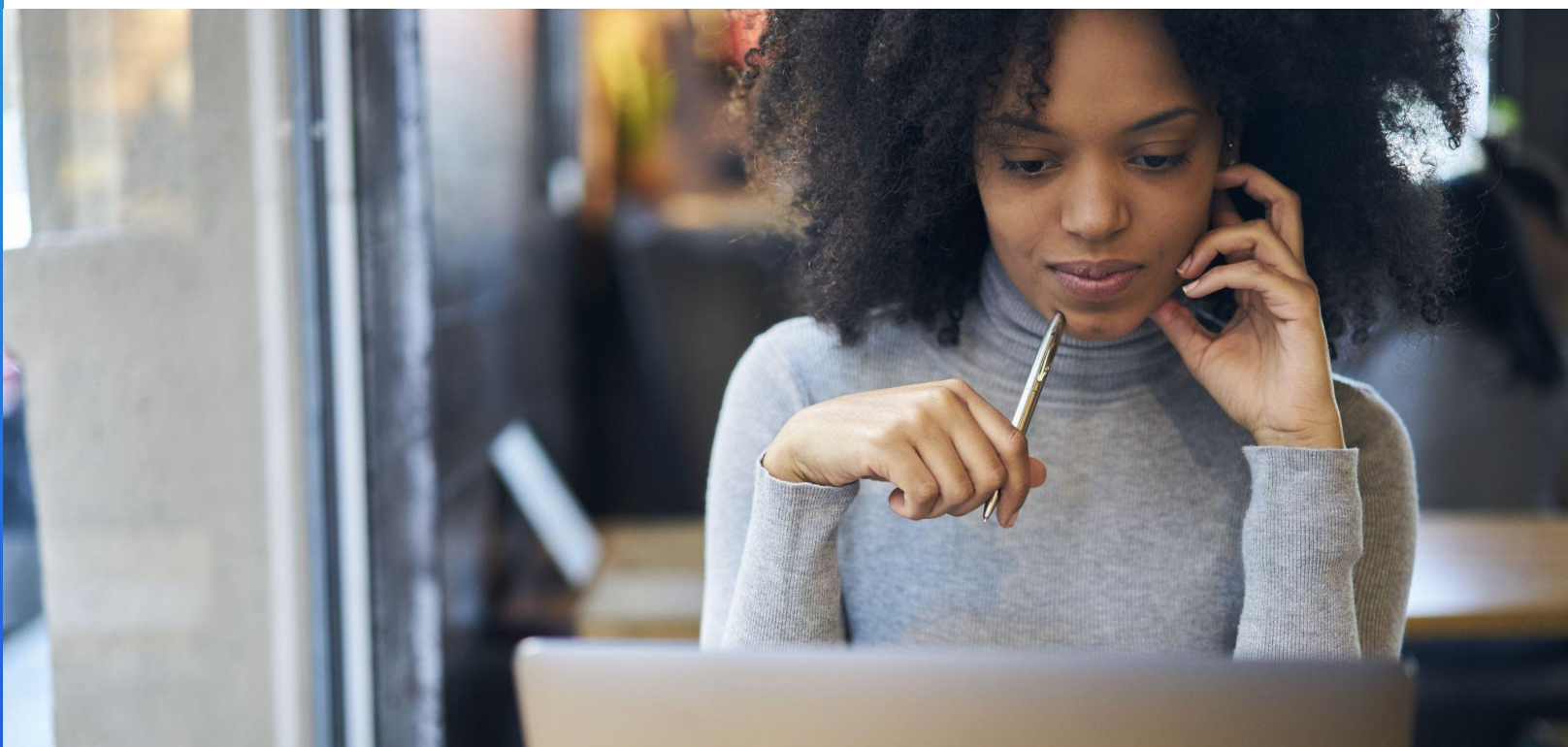
Company Website

It's a given that candidates will go to your site to conduct their research. Therefore, if someone visits your website looking for job information, they should be able to easily identify how to do that and find the information that matters to them in their research.

A career section of your company is a must. It should showcase all of the benefits of working with your organization and should touch on all of the topics that candidates care about most, regardless of where they are in the funnel. Also, highlight areas where you know you stand out.

Does your organization stand out with mature and successful DEI programs? Share that.

Online and Social Content

Your blog is where you can share content to highlight both the company and employees within the company. It's your opportunity to showcase thought leadership, initiatives and what matters most to your organization. Regularly posting on blogs and utilizing a keyword strategy can also support SEO efforts to help you get found online by the tech candidates who are looking for their next opportunity or to draw in the interest of passive job seekers.

Here are some ideas for blog content to get you started:

- **Highlight new hires and up-and-coming talent** through a Q&A about their experiences.

- **Showcase an Executive or Leadership Series related to DEI,** with different leadership members writing a blog regarding their perspective and the company's initiatives in the DEI arena.

- **Create a manager series** with managers discussing leadership and how they run their teams.

- **Post about current and new trends in the industry** that your company is focused on and your organization's perspective on them.

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Video content is another key area you can capitalize on to capture a candidate's attention. It's the number one source of information for 66 percent of people online. Some more fascinating video stats include that over 500 million people watch Facebook videos daily, and 75 percent of Instagram users take action after seeing a video ad. So, whether you get in on the TikTok craze or develop a YouTube channel, video content can be a pivotal part of your content strategy to attract and hire skilled talent. The same ideas for your blog can be repurposed for your videos.

Sharing and posting links to your blogs and videos on your social media channels, including Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, can drive more people to see your content and to your site. Social media platforms are also a great way to showcase your culture, DEI and leadership styles. Posting team photos, celebrating employee wins, sharing photos of company events and more provide insights into what it is like to be an employee at your organization.

Job Postings.

Job postings are especially important for candidates in the middle and bottom of your funnel. For job posts, less is more, with shorter posts getting 8.4 percent more applications per view compared to longer job posts. **Plus, many will spend 14 seconds when deciding if they want to apply or not, so job posts of under 300 words tend to fare better than those between 301 – 600 words, which fare better than those that are 601 words or more**. These stats indicate that you want to ensure you get the most out of your post by focusing on what matters to candidates at the beginning of your post, such as the specifics about the open role, perks and benefits, mission and values, product and technology, and compensation.

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It's also good to know that 70 percent of <u>job applicants</u> use social media channels during their job search, with LinkedIn being the number one used social platform, and 73 percent of millennials found their last job on a social media site. What does this mean? You should be utilizing social media channels as part of your job posting process and making sure your stories align with the topics that matter to candidates.

Company Reviews.

Because such a high percentage of candidates refer to reviews during their initial research phase, you want to pay attention to them. You can encourage employees to leave reviews on popular review sites, like Google and Glassdoor, if they love working for your company. **You can also opt to pull some positive reviews or use a plug-in to post them on your website and blog.**
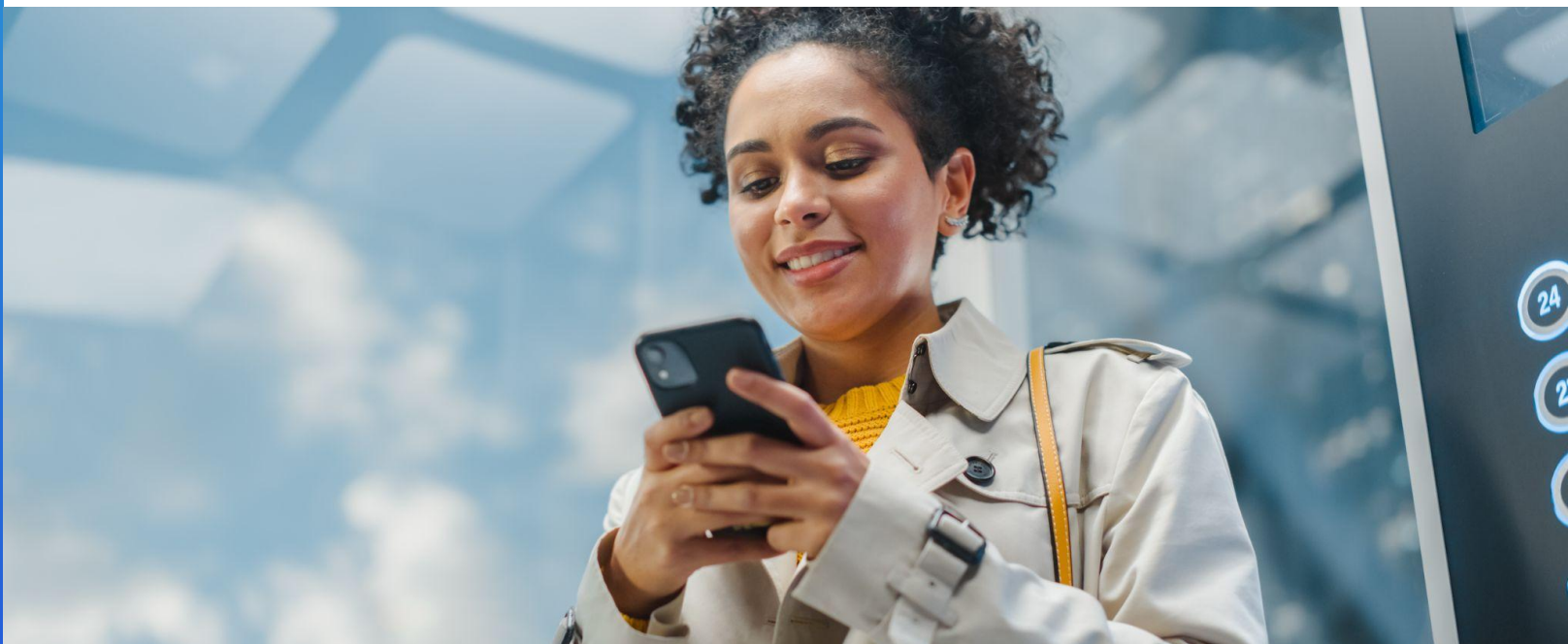
Conclusion.

Job applications were down <u>39 percent</u> for tech roles in 2021. Candidates in this tight labor market need to be enticed to consider working for another organization, especially if they're happy where they're at. **Recruiters need to give them a really good reason to leave and come work for their company.** Sharing great content that matters to potential candidates can help.

Using the insights in this report, recruiters can build great content for their blogs, website, social channels, job descriptions and more to help attract and hire top talent. **Content will help create excitement and connections with sought-after candidates, with the goal of them eventually applying for your organization.** Because, as you continually share the stories that matter to them, why wouldn't they want to apply to work for your company?

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