

RECRUITING TOP TALENT IN PACKAGING



INTRODUCTION

“ Keeping our finger on the pulse of the industry is central to our practice

Innovation on steroids.

Chase & Associates has been an executive recruiting firm in the packaging sector for over half a century. Still, there are always things to learn. Keeping our finger on the pulse of the industry is central to our practice. In 2022, while updating this white paper, one observation hit like a ton of bricks. The speed by which our industry is evolving is mind-melting. How to keep up?

In the 2017 version, we identified four spaces critical to your ability to attract and retain top talent. Those four spaces have not changed. We replaced Millennials with Attracting Young Talent, but other than that, the four spaces remain untouched. However, the speed and volume of change in those four spaces continue to increase rapidly. And with those changes will be a new set of rules and pressure points as an industry. The practice of greenwashing, for example, can hurt your brand equity in 2022. In 2032, the practice could cannibalize your bottom line. Packaging brands that master the ever-evolving circular economy will attract the best and brightest to their organizations. Everyone else? Finding top talent will become increasingly difficult. Is your company gearing up for the future?

According to research by Smithers, the global packaging industry will grow at an annual rate of 3% through 2028. Several trends drive continued growth, including emerging markets, evolving consumer behavior, longer life expectancies, and the need for niche packaging solutions. According to McKinsey, packaging innovations in sustainability will be a central market driver through 2030. COVID-19 added additional layers of complexity to the packaging equation by spotlighting supply chain resiliency and online retailing. The bottom line?

Disruption is the new normal!

The circular economy is the business opportunity of our LIFETIME

It's quietly building behind the scenes. A storm of fundamental change is growing in strength. Countries and regions are passing green legislation that will transform the packaging industry over the next two decades. Consumers are growing less patient with plastic waste. Young talent is starting to look closely at a brand's environmental footprint. Sustainability has become an important consideration, and increasingly, it is a crucial driver of business prosperity. Are you building an eco-innovative company?

A Consumer Brands Survey revealed that 93% of Americans seek national-level recycling standards, while 77% believe tackling the plastics problem should be the next tech breakthrough. The 2021 Global Buying Green Report found that 54% of consumers consider sustainable packaging when making a purchase decision. 83% of those surveyed are willing to pay more for eco-friendly products. According to Deloitte, 49% of Gen Zs stated they make employment decisions based on personal ethics. These trends and many others will only strengthen in the coming decades. Brands that are not eco-branded will find it hard to maintain a competitive workforce. Circular economy equity funds have soared from \$0.3 billion to \$2 billion according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Are you building an environmentally sound packaging business that people trust? How do you compare to your competitors specific to sustainability? MUD Jeans, famous for its circular business model, requires 10% less water to make a pair of jeans than its competitors. New Belgium Brewing, the 4th largest craft brewery in the United States, has been eco-friendly since 1991. Green brands that lead the way on environmental issues will be a force to reckon with in the coming years. If you're looking to recruit the best and brightest, go green to sustain your competitive edge.





“The smart packaging market will double in size by 2030

Technology & Market Dominance

Global corporate investment in AI in 2018 totaled 47 billion dollars. In 2021, despite the pandemic, that soared to an astounding 176 billion dollars, according to NetBase Quid AI Index. The fastest supercomputers on the planet could process 2.6 quadrillion complex operations per second in 2010. In 2020, that number soared to 442 quadrillion, according to the TOP500 Supercomputer Database. The smart packaging market will double in size by 2030, according to Imarc. You needn't be tech savvy to hook into the big takeaway. The speed by which technology is advancing is beyond human comprehension.

Thanks to AR (augmented reality) and gamification, the packaging industry is quickly becoming as much about consumer engagement as it is about packaging products. Food preparation videos worthy of cable TV add value to food brands. Online community building around shared interests, such as KETO, brings people together while using your product. Patagonia has been doing this online for years! Manufacturers in the organic space connect end users to their supply chain. The price of admission for the consumer? Swipe a QR code with their phone! ZeLoop, a smartphone application, rewards users for recycling plastics. And the consumer side of advancement is just the tip of the iceberg!

All of the top ten innovation trends SmartUs Insights identified as impactful to the packaging industry are related to technology. A perfect storm is brewing centered around four specific trends where technology drives the solutions: increased consumer preferences/expectations, digitalization (as noted in the previous paragraph), rapid e-commerce expansion, and increasing sustainability demands. These four drivers require packaging organizations to rethink and retool every aspect of their operations to meet the demand and stay competitive.

Technology now drives “how” a candidate engages with your brand.

Pew Research did a study that focused on job seekers and technology. 54% of all job seekers conducted their searches from their phones. 45% applied for jobs from their phones.

Is your website optimized for mobile devices? Do your job postings include social share buttons? Does your website offer a memorable brand experience? Like we keep saying, the world is changing. Innovation drives our recruiting practice. We're always looking for new ways to connect with potential candidates. But there is only so much we can do. Clients that have a compelling online presence will attract better candidates. That's the bottom line.

Our advice? Go mobile. Brand sustainable. Look for ways to better engage potential employees. Advancements in technology go well beyond research and manufacturing. The sales legends and operational maestros of tomorrow grew up in tech. It's their language. It permeates their daily lives. So learn to speak their language. Learn how to engage with them in ways that resonate.



Chase & Associates is a family owned, multi-generational recruiting company that has worked in packaging for over half a century.



Alexis Chase Michael Chase

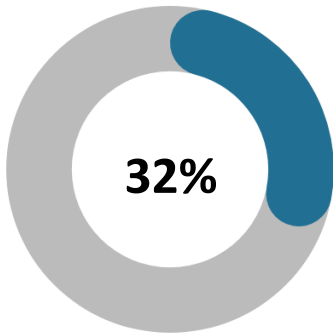


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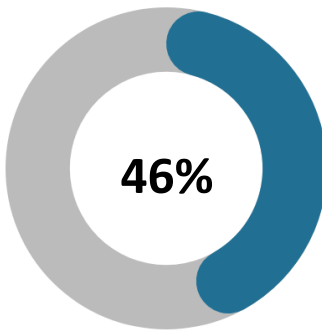
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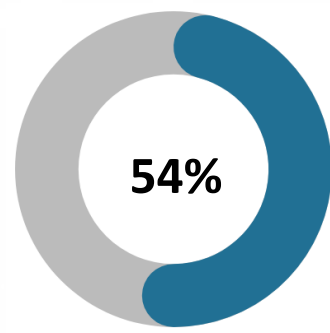
Nine out of ten are making an effort to reduce their impact on the environment.



32%
plan to leave their job within 2 years



46%
rejected senior jobs and/or assignments based on ethics



54%
dissatisfied with their employer's social impact initiatives

Millennials & Gen Z are the exception.



According to the Deloitte Global Survey - 2022



According to Statista, revenue from the video game industry is now greater than movies and all forms of music (recorded, live) - combined! Here's the disconnect. 15-18% of Baby Boomers and Gen X play video games regularly. Conversely, 70-80% of Millennials and Gen Z play video games regularly. The data highlights the chasm between older and younger generations. It is less about gaming than how the younger generations experience life. Technology plays a radically different role for Millennials and Gen Z than their older peers. How to attract and retain young talent?

#1: Support / Like any demographic, the younger generation seeks financial freedom and opportunities for growth. Packaging organizations are often (not always) well positioned in this regard. But the younger talent pool also expects their employers to take their mental health needs seriously, including work/life balance. Anxiety and resilience are very much top-of-mind challenges. If that support is missing, the younger generations move on to a better cultural fit.

#2: Empowerment / One way to attract and retain young talent is to enlist them to lead the way. It's a smart strategy. Who better to bring fresh perspectives than two generations that thrive on disruption? For them, it's a way of life! Business as usual is more of a suggestion for Millennials and Gen Z. Hybrid work deepens the connection to their employers because, when appropriately structured, it allows for more autonomy.

#3: Social Impact / Simply put, social impact business models will become the industry standard as early as 2030. The shared data illustrates that younger generations turn down promotions based on ethical concerns. While social impact models cover much territory, sustainability is chief among those issues in the packaging industry. Organizations prioritizing impact today will undoubtedly attract the best and brightest Millennials and Gen Z candidates.





WE GOT YOUR BACK

CHASE & ASSOCIATES

Employee Retention Starts on Day One

According to a Gallup poll, 51% of the people who left their employer for greener pastures reported that management had not discussed their job satisfaction or future with the firm in the three months before they exited. In The Work Institute's 2020 Retention Report, 40% of resignations occurred within the first year of employment. Have you ever jumped into an ice-cold pool or lake? The initial shock takes a bit to get over! Your onboarding experience, not process, needs to avoid the shock of jumping into ice-cold water.

Your onboarding experience must set the stage for success while keeping new hires hungry for ongoing engagement. How to make this happen? You will undoubtedly hit home runs by focusing on the following three areas.

#1 - Personal Connection / When a new employee feels seen and valued right out of the gate, it builds the trust necessary for a lasting association. One approach gaining traction involves assigning multiple mentors/guides for the first ninety days. A company culture buddy eases the new hire into the culture and people side of the business. A functional buddy facilitates onboarding specific to the new hire's job description and expectations. And a brand buddy hooks your newcomer into the big picture, such as the vision, mission, and brand position. However, you do it, building a strong relationship with a new employee is essential.




#2 - Foundation Building / Expectations, rules, and tools are the trifecta for seeding success. When starting, a freshly minted employee must clearly understand the expectations and rules that anchor their place in your organization. However, the magic to retention is in the tools, not the requirements. How do you help your people, new or otherwise, soar? The better your tools, the higher your retention.

#3 - Dreams & Goals / People do their best work when they have a compelling reason to do so. An excellent hiring package alone will fall short if the future potential is unclear. What does your new hire seek to accomplish over the next few years? And how will your firm help the newest member of your team achieve their goals? When a business partners with its employees' ambitions, employee retention is high.

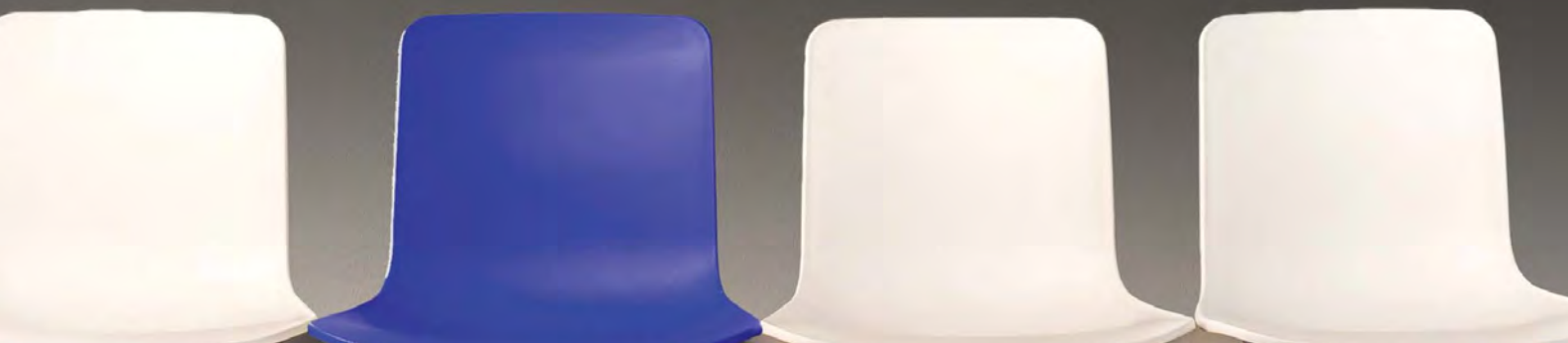
While you've probably seen a Pixar film, you may not be aware of their stellar company culture. The four priorities that guide every step they take include: smart people even over breakthrough ideas, trust people even over the process, build community over free agency, and creative vision even over conformism. Pixar is also loud and proud of the things they punish: mediocrity, egos, and Silicon Valley's culture.

According to Gallup's **State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report**, **65%** of the **U.S.** workforce are indifferent (neither like nor dislike) to their employers. If your firm falls into the other **35%**, like Pixar, you will not have a problem finding top talent.

Retention starts on day one!



65% of the U.S. workforce are indifferent to their employers.



The North American Talent Board Candidate Experience Research Report, showcased some interesting data:

Candidates universally rate potential employers communication skills as poor



state that a negative candidate experience was a permanent deal breaker



state they would refer friends IF the candidate experience was positive



state potential employers did not make a good first impression



state they would share a negative candidate experience online



IN REVIEW

We believe four forces will shape your ability to recruit top talent in the years to come:

- #1 Sustainability
- #2 Technology
- #3 Young Talent
- #4 Company Culture

Understanding and adapting to these forces will play a pivotal role in your success.



OUR FINAL THOUGHTS

The stronger you are as a company, the better you will be at talent acquisition. Packaging companies used to focus solely on producing profit, and executive recruiters only needed to churn out many candidates. That is no longer true. Much has changed.

Packaging companies need to modernize their brands and cultures. Executive recruiting firms need to become thought leaders that go the extra mile. As an industry, we need to get better at passing the torch to the next generation while coping with the rapid pace of technology. There is much to juggle! Whatever challenges lay ahead, Chase & Associates will lend a hand.

As you push your company to meet the moment, we will be doing the same. As you explore new ways to elevate the candidate experience, we'll be here to offer insights. In many ways, our journey is shared.

If you found this white paper helpful, please let us know! We would love to hear from you. And please share it with your peers.

Best wishes for your continued success, Michael Chase & Alexis Chase

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TOP
TALENT
IN
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4 THINGS
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