

# Versique

## TALENT AND TRENDS IN THE CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS INDUSTRY

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### 2019 REPORT

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# **2019 has been an exciting year in the CPG industry.**

Macro-economic factors such as a growing U.S. economy, a strong labor market, and low inflation have contributed to an increase in consumer spending—  
Resulting in an increase in the sales of consumer packaged goods.

The boost in consumer confidence has led to many CPG companies expanding their global reach, implementing innovative business practices, and continuing reshape their sales and marketing strategies.



# TALENT AND TRENDS IN THE CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS INDUSTRY

## How has the strong year in CPG impacted hiring and recruiting in the industry?

Unlike most industries, CPG is not experiencing a talent shortage. As a consequence of downsizing and acquisitions, the industry features a high number of people actively searching for new opportunities. However, the primary hiring challenge for CPG companies is that there is a shortage of experienced talent. With the industry shifting so much in the past ten years, there simply is not enough dynamic CPG talent to fill the growing and changing employment needs of the industry.

## Today's CPG talent requires a different toolbox of skills than the talent of 10-15 years ago.

While consumers are buying more products, their attitudes towards products and brands are changing at an accelerated rate as the marketplace is flooded with more choices than ever before. Both online and offline, consumers are inundated with product offerings. In response to shifting consumer behavior and increased competition, CPG companies are looking for talent that can dramatically shift their sales, marketing, distribution, and communication strategies in accordance with market dynamics.

Today's CPG leaders require a different toolbox of skills and experiences than effective CPG leaders of the past. CPG leaders now need to adopt strategies that can be tweaked and adjusted on-the-fly. Recruiting and hiring this new type of CPG leader requires companies to make changes to their hiring and recruiting processes.

In order to redesign how to approach, recruit, and retain today's best CPG talent, companies first need to understand what factors are driving talent movement.

**Versique's dedicated CPG professionals** exclusively conduct talent searches within the industry. Spending ample time speaking with CPG companies of all sizes and talent from all areas of the industry has taught us a thing or two about recruiting talent in the CPG industry.

To pass our expertise onto you, we created this comprehensive guide to inform you on the trends that are driving talent movement in the CPG industry. Read along, email it to yourself for later (link to pdf of guide), or jump to the section below that interests you most:



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**Why Growing Companies are Appealing to Talent**

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**Why Some CPG Talent is Switching Jobs to Avoid Relocating (Again)**

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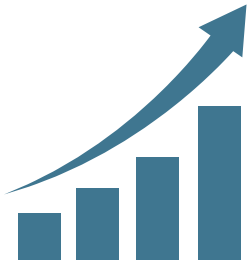
**Why Talent is Switching Companies to Receive Career Development Training**

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**3 Reasons to Use a Specialized CPG Recruiter for Your CPG Talent Search (Repurposed Blog)**

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## **Growth Companies are Appealing to Talent**

In the eyes of CPG talent, smaller companies with potential for rapid growth are far more appealing than the large and established companies.

Below are some of the reasons why today's CPG talent is more attracted to smaller companies

### **Get in on the Ground Level**

Part of the allure of smaller companies is the opportunity for talent to get in on the ground level. Especially for experienced and professional talent who can negotiate stock into their compensation package. Small CPG companies are typically playing the short game. Get to market, disrupt big-time players within that market, attract a committed and loyal base of customers, and then get acquired by a larger company or Private Equity firm.

When smaller companies pull that off, the talent that helps them get there reaps the benefits.

### **Larger Impact**

Joining a smaller company allows CPG talent to make an immediate and profound impact. This element of a small company is particularly appealing to individuals with extensive corporate experience who know all too well how a person can get lost in the corporate vacuum.

### **More Fun**

We hear from CPG talent all the time that they are looking for a smaller company because of the collaborative culture and high-energy environment. Fair or not, smaller companies have a reputation for a positive relaxed work-life balance, a more progressive and relaxed company culture, and a contagious sense of comradery.

### **Ability to Build Processes**

Another appealing element to joining a growing company is the ability to build up and develop business processes. Typically, smaller companies will have less-established processes, enabling talent to influence, revise, or outright rebuild how a company approaches the market.

### **Level Playing Field**

Many of the growing CPG companies are taking advantage of how Ecommerce is creating an equal playing field between the established players and the up-and-comers. While in the past, CPG companies required retail partnerships to get their products into the hands of consumers, in today's environment, companies are able to market and sell directly to their consumers.

The level playing field is appealing to CPG talent, as the prospect of joining a smaller company is not nearly as risky as it was in the past.

CPG companies that have been around for decades and designed products/packages to stand out on the shelf are now having to rethink that strategy and cater to online retailers, who want to pay less for shipping costs but are appealing to the growing number of consumers who shop online.

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## Some CPG Talent Will Change Companies to Avoid Relocating

Relocation has always been a part of the career advancement path for CPG professionals. Employees who were performing well and have demonstrated potential would get promoted as quickly as

every 18-24 months. (Not all promotions required employee relocation but in larger CPG companies relocation was common.) For talent with families, or talent who have landed in an area they love, relocation can be taxing.

A big driver of talent movement in the industry is a consequence of CPG talent not wanting to move. We've met with plenty of candidates who are looking to switch companies so that they can remain in the market they're currently working, as opposed to accepting the next promotion for their company—and the relocation that will be required.

We are seeing some companies combat the resistance to relocation with flexible work schedules. For certain candidates, companies will offer the ability to work remotely so that an employee can remain living where they are. Others offer a split-living situation, where talent works Monday-Thursday at the location of the new job, and then flies back home every weekend.



## Talent Wants a Commitment to Training and Development

Another driver of talent movement in the CPG space is the desire to find a company that is committed to training and development. This is a big-time driver for ambitious talent who

want to accelerate their careers. If their dream job requires them to cultivate and master a number of skills they don't presently have, they will look for a company that will help them develop those skills.

CPG talent is attracted to companies that invest in their careers. By providing employees with vital training and education, companies can demonstrate their commitment to helping their employees reach their career goals.

There are a number of advantages for companies who invest in developing their employees, including:

- **Drive Employee Retention:** By providing employees with the training and education they need to advance their careers, companies increase employee retention so their staff won't need to switch jobs in search of the training and development.
- **Increase Recruiting:** Offering training and education to employees will make a company more appealing to work for, especially for talent that is frustrated with their current company's lack of career development.
- **Grow Collective Knowledge:** As a company teaches their staff new skills, their collective knowledge of the company at large increases. The more knowledgeable a company's staff, the better served a company's customers will be.

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## 3 Reasons to Use a Specialized CPG Recruiter

When hiring managers or candidates think about working with recruiters they sometimes cringe, thinking, "Why would I work with someone who has no understanding of the job they're recruiting for?" In the world of recruiting, that's exactly what separates the good recruiters from the bad and gives those good recruiters a leg up in the industry. Having personally worked in the CPG industry for 17+ years experience, our team knows there are three major perks of using a specialized recruiter.

### 1. Representing your Brand

What would you do if you were hiring a National Account Manager and the person you interviewed didn't understand how to create a forecast, why promotional planning is important, how to utilize a marketing team, or even what P&L stands for? How seriously would you take them? I hope you would say they're simply not qualified for the position.

So why would a recruiter who doesn't know the first thing about Consumer Packaged Goods be qualified to recruit for roles in that industry?

The first question many candidates ask is, "How serious is your client about adding someone new to their team?" That question is usually followed quickly by, "Will they move quickly through the process or are they just feeling out the market?"

Imagine the impression your company will make when our team says, "They're serious enough that they have engaged the services of a specialized CPG recruiter from an agency with more experience than any other in the space." It's all about the candidate experience.

### 2. Who Applied vs. Who's Available

Hiring managers often say, "We want to see what traffic we can get out of our own posting before we put it out to recruiters."

Sure, there's always a possibility you get a fantastic candidate to apply to the job, they get hired, and you ride off into the sunset with an amazing new

employee. If everything could go that smoothly, who wouldn't want to avoid a recruiting fee?

Before running off to post all your open positions, think about this: How much control do you have over who applies to your job posting? If you answered anything above 0%, I'll have to congratulate you on your mind control powers!

My guess is that if you asked your CEO, he or she would want you to fill the position with the best talent available, not just the best person that applied to the position.

And if your CEO's opinion doesn't sway you, think about this: If you use a recruiter, you can compare candidates that apply to the position with those that a recruiter brings in. This should reassure you that you're getting the best candidate available, not just the best that came across your posting and applied.

### 3. Saving time

Recruiters can save companies both time and money when it comes to attracting and hiring top talent to fill their open positions. The longer a position is open, the more money it costs the company. Working with a good recruiter will not only help you fill that seat faster, but it will help you fill it with the right person.

Additionally, if you are working with a recruiter who is an industry expert, you increase your exposure to solid candidates in the space. If your recruiter is dialed into the back channels of the market, their knowledge and expertise can mean the difference between landing the perfect candidate and watching them go to a competitor.

Our recruiting team is here to streamline the process. If you want to spend valuable time thumbing through 50+ resumes in the attempt to track down that perfect fit, we are not the team to partner with. We are here to make your life easier by sending over 1-3 extremely specific candidates that match the exact profile you need in the role. If your recruiting experience is anything different, you're not working with the right recruiter agency.

Versique is one of the largest talent acquisition firms in the Midwest and specializes in both consulting and permanent placement. The firm's team has more than 350 years of combined experience and has filled thousands of positions and its network of connections is one of the strongest in the industry.

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