



## CASESTUDY

**How the B2B retailer optimises its key figures, becomes more candidate-oriented, agile and at the same time reduces its costs in talent acquisition**

## Staples: Applicant orientation as a maxim in recruiting

Staples is a B2B retailer of office supplies. The company is constantly looking for commercial and industrial employees. In 2019, the European solution was discontinued due to a localisation strategy and Staples DACH looked around the entire market for its own stand-alone solution as part of a new tender. The recruiting solution used until then had already reached its limits: low performance and high bounce rates determined the picture. In August, Staples introduced softgarden. The results after about half a year: more satisfied applicants, enthusiastic managers, lower costs, better key figures in recruiting.

Staples Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG is part of the Staples Solutions B.V. with headquarters in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Our customers benefit from our expertise as a leading supplier of office supplies and workplace products as well as office solutions and services.

Since 2019, Staples Deutschland GmbH & Co. KG has been fully focused on the business-to-business sector. Due to its integrated offering and solution competencies, Staples Solutions is the ideal partner for companies that want to meet diverse workplace requirements. The company employs around 454 full-time equivalents at various locations in Germany. Staples belongs to the European group Staples Solutions B.V., 85 % of whose shares are held by Cerberus Capital Management.

They are mainly looking for commercial and industrial employees (warehouse staff and logistics staff), but occasionally also for employees with other qualifications, for example in IT, sales and marketing.

# 454

full-time capacities across Germany. 70,000 employees worldwide



Business segment  
B2B seller for space and office solutions



Job profiles sought in particular:  
Commercial and industrial employees



Also:  
warehouse specialists, logistics and sales employees

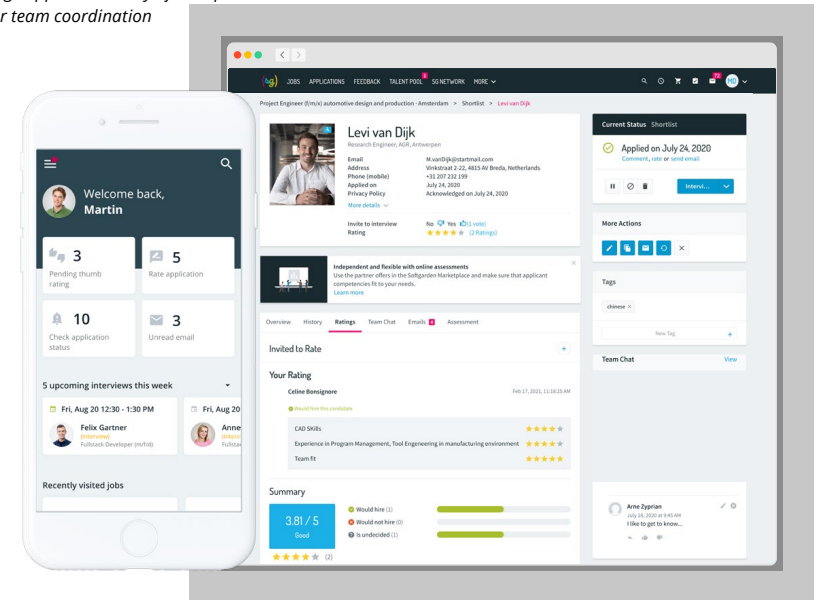


In a final vote, softgarden convinced various internal and external stakeholders from different departments and came out on top."

Thomas Bartelsen  
Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist



softgarden Applicant Management & Recruiting App:  
Manage applicants easily - faster processes and better team coordination



before softgarden

### High bounce rates and low conversion rates

The recruiting solution used until summer 2019 revealed more and more weaknesses over time: In an increasingly candidate-oriented market, the high complexity of the recruiting process in the software became a problem. The performance left a lot to be desired: the picture was defined by high bounce rates rates and low conversion rates.

For Staples, this situation was unacceptable because the company is extremely customer-oriented, sees applicants as customers and wants to put them at the centre of the process. "The old system imposed a huge administrative dragon on applicants, who needed a lot of patience to complete the process," recalls Thomas Bartelsen, Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist at Staples.

August 2019

softgarden  
is introduced



Introduction of the softgarden solution

### softgarden convinces with customer orientation and speed

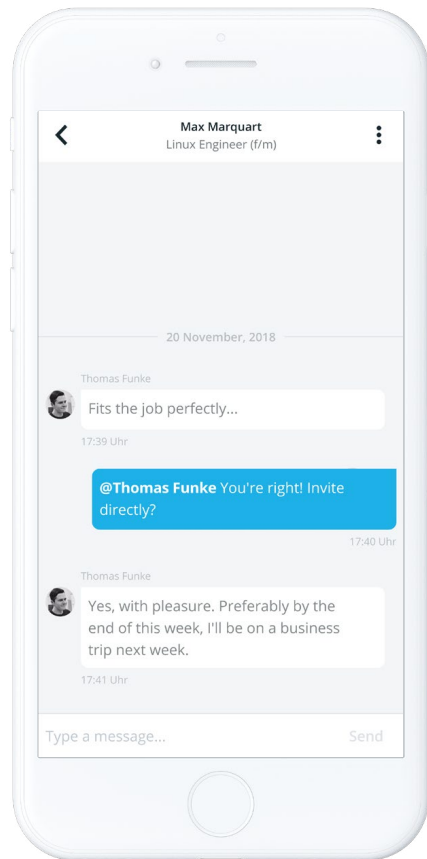
With this in mind, Staples introduced softgarden's applicant management system in August 2019. To select a vendor, Staples used a catalogue with 103 criteria for the pre-selection. This mapped and weighted all the needs of candidates, hiring managers and recruiters. It was also based on the results of relevant studies from the areas of online branding, career sites, recruiting, talent acquisition, talent marketing, customer and candidate journey as well as employer branding. A dozen vendors took part in the tender. softgarden fulfilled **89 out of 103 of the requirements** set out in the tender process.

However, this was only the first hurdle from which four finalists were selected. Staples conducted a multi-stage selection process in which a steering committee selected the favourites through various steps and put them through their paces. This included reviews in the areas of local and central IT, data protection, HR, management and the relevant Staples committees. In terms of the **candidate experience**, softgarden offered a particularly simple, high-performance and applicant-friendly tool compared to the competition.

## Quick success with softgarden tools

### Apply in 60 seconds

“Applicants only need around 60 seconds to apply using the softgarden’s solution,” says Bartelsen: “I tested the tool extensively in the role of an applicant and a recruiter for weeks, which was already top, transparent, fast and simple - I don’t have to fill out 1,000 forms as an applicant and as a recruiter I get the best possible automated tool.”



*softgarden Recruiting App:  
Accelerate your team communication  
and decision-making process measurably  
with the chat and evaluation*

### Data protection with security code

Staples also found the security code provided by softgarden to be particularly candidate-friendly and ideal from a data protection perspective, as it represents a unique and secure authentication for telephone queries from applicants. “The forwarding function, including parsing by e-mail, was also a good workaround for applications that were not received directly via the system,” says Bartelsen.

### Quick answers thanks to the chat function

The quality of service at softgarden was already evident in the test phase, when Staples compared two providers over a longer test period. “We really liked softgarden’s useful chat function here, because we get answers quickly through it,” says Bartelsen. In the test of 15 chat requests, the average response time of the customer support was well under one minute. In real-life operations, softgarden also maintained its speed in the support chat: “We have never had to wait longer than a minute for the service staff, technical problems are solved in record time,” says Bartelsen.

### Effective multi-posting tool

The multi-posting tool allows Staples to post online job ads on over 300 job portals with one click, including six free portals such as Xing and Indeed.

### Convincing multi-client system

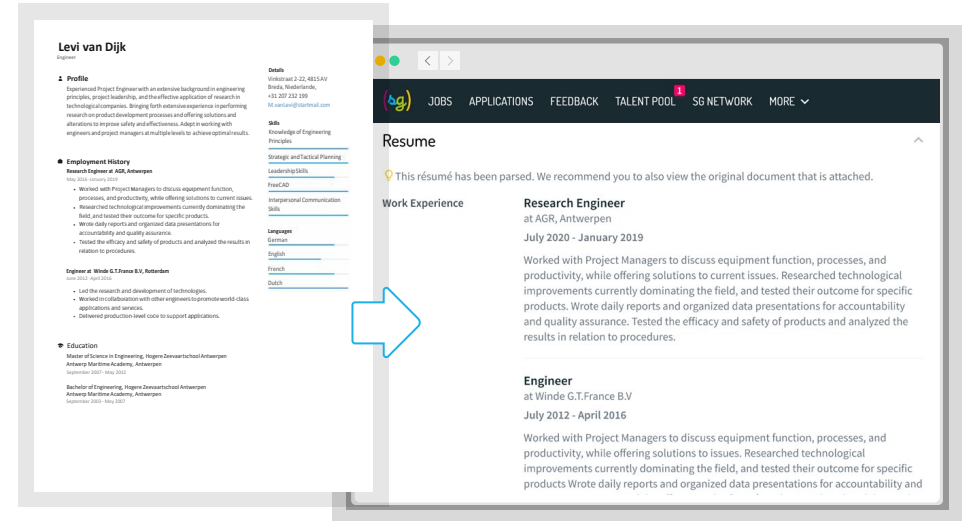
Staples was also particularly convinced by the multi-client system. Thanks to the softgarden solution, the company can work with several clients individually and separately under one roof and regulate the respective insights clearly and delimited through some easy-to-use authorisation concepts.

### The fast SaaS solution

Finally, as a SaaS solution, softgarden was particularly uncomplicated and quick to implement.

“softgarden impressed with constant customer focus, speed and positioned itself as the right partner for attracting talent.”

Thomas Bartelsen  
Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist



### The parsing was convincing compared to other providers

This conversion of applicant CVs is important for applicants and recruiters alike. It involves converting data from PDF CVs or online business networks into a format suitable for further processing in recruiting. Good parsing saves candidates time because they can use their PDF CVs or CV data used in business networks such as Xing or LinkedIn for the application. This way, they do not have to re-enter their data. Recruiters still have structured and comparable candidate data thanks to parsing.

### This is how softgarden could convince

*In the end, softgarden prevailed among four finalists for three reasons.*

- 1 Firstly, they have permanently and exclusively built up a close customer relationship over a months-long process, communicated professionally and had the right solutions or suggestions.
- 2 softgarden distinguished itself through the highest degree of individualisation in a high-performance system environment.
- 3 softgarden was agile at all times in identifying our needs and providing excellent solutions.

“ I have yet to meet a hiring manager who wasn't excited about softgarden.”

Thomas Bartelsen  
Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist



## Balance sheet after softgarden introduction: Key figures significantly improved, efficiency increased, costs saved

### Better recruiter, candidate and manager experience

How has recruiting changed with the introduction of softgarden? First of all, the recruiter, candidate and manager experience has been extremely improved - due to the easy handling of the solution and the fast and excellent support. The system changes the cooperative, simple and result-oriented way of working between recruiters, HR and the specialist department in the long term through simple coordination in the system. All information is easily and clearly visible in one place. Every applicant also benefits from this. “The time it takes to make the first decision has been extremely shortened,” adds Bartelsen.

### Significant improvement in recruiting key figures

#### ✓ Conversion rates improved

The number of conversions improved by around 6 % on average. The best performing job ad achieved an incredible 38 %.

#### ✓ Increased efficiency

The time to interview (i.e. the time that elapses between the receipt of the application and the job interview) has also been reduced. Currently, Staples takes 10 days to invite a candidate for an interview, before the introduction of softgarden it was around 14 days.

#### ✓ Shortened coordination cycles

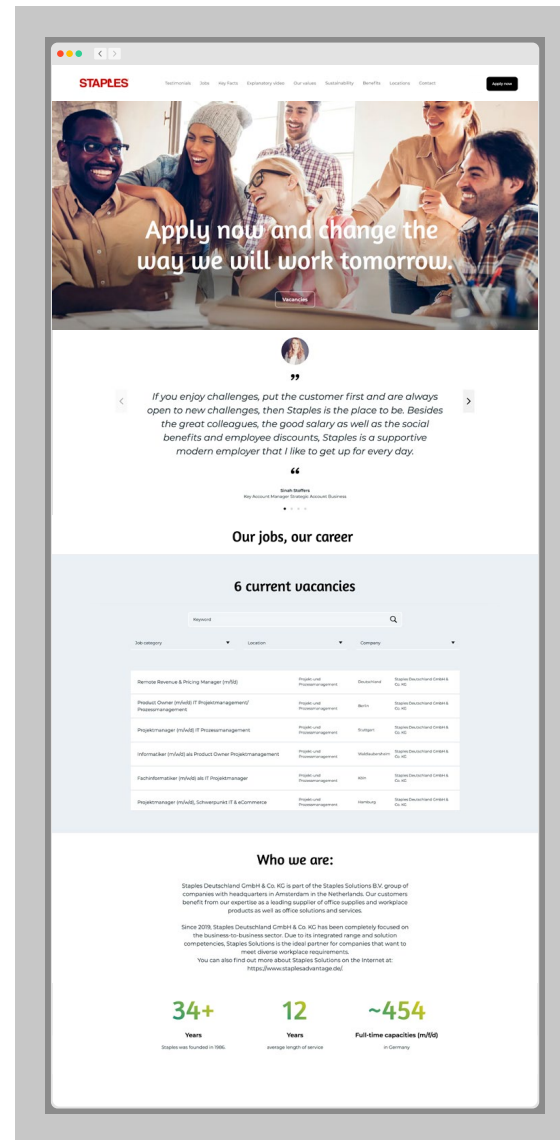
Internal coordination has improved significantly: coordination cycles have become shorter thanks to team chats and other coordination options. “I have not yet experienced a hiring manager who was not enthusiastic about softgarden,” says Bartelsen.

#### ✓ Reduced costs

4.8 out of 10 applicants now find their way into the company without job advertisement costs for Staples thanks to the multi-posting option on free job portals. That is around 20 % more free applications compared to the previous solution – and thus significantly lower costs.

#### ✓ Low dropout rate

The dropout rate of applications has decreased significantly: Compared to the old system, hardly any applications are dropped out today. Previously, a few hundred applications per year were abandoned. In the meantime, this number has dropped significantly. The candidate experience has improved dramatically, and Staples is better able to keep the right applicants in the running thanks to the process.



## Outlook: more reach with the Career Site Pro

How will recruiting continue to develop at Staples? Staples's recent introduction of Career Site Pro by softgarden allows the company itself to publish content on a career site and to maintain it regularly. A recent survey by softgarden shows: Applicants today expect a contemporary career website, otherwise a part of them will jump off again. “With the Career Site Pro, we have a professional and fast solution that also works on mobile and that we can implement ourselves without an agency. The Career Site Pro will help us to become an “Employer of Choice also in terms of talent marketing and to communicate our benefits for the applicant,” says Bartelsen.

Bartelsen is also convinced that recruiting will continue to change through new technical solutions: “For example, the integration of AI-optimised matching including aptitude diagnostics for the pre-selection of candidates would be ideal. They expect answers, preferably in real time. Speed is often the decisive factor in competing offers when it comes to attracting talent. In addition to the formal fit to the job profile, we are looking for people who “fancy a challenging job”. Any technical, data protection-compliant solution that helps us make good evidence-based decisions quickly is welcome

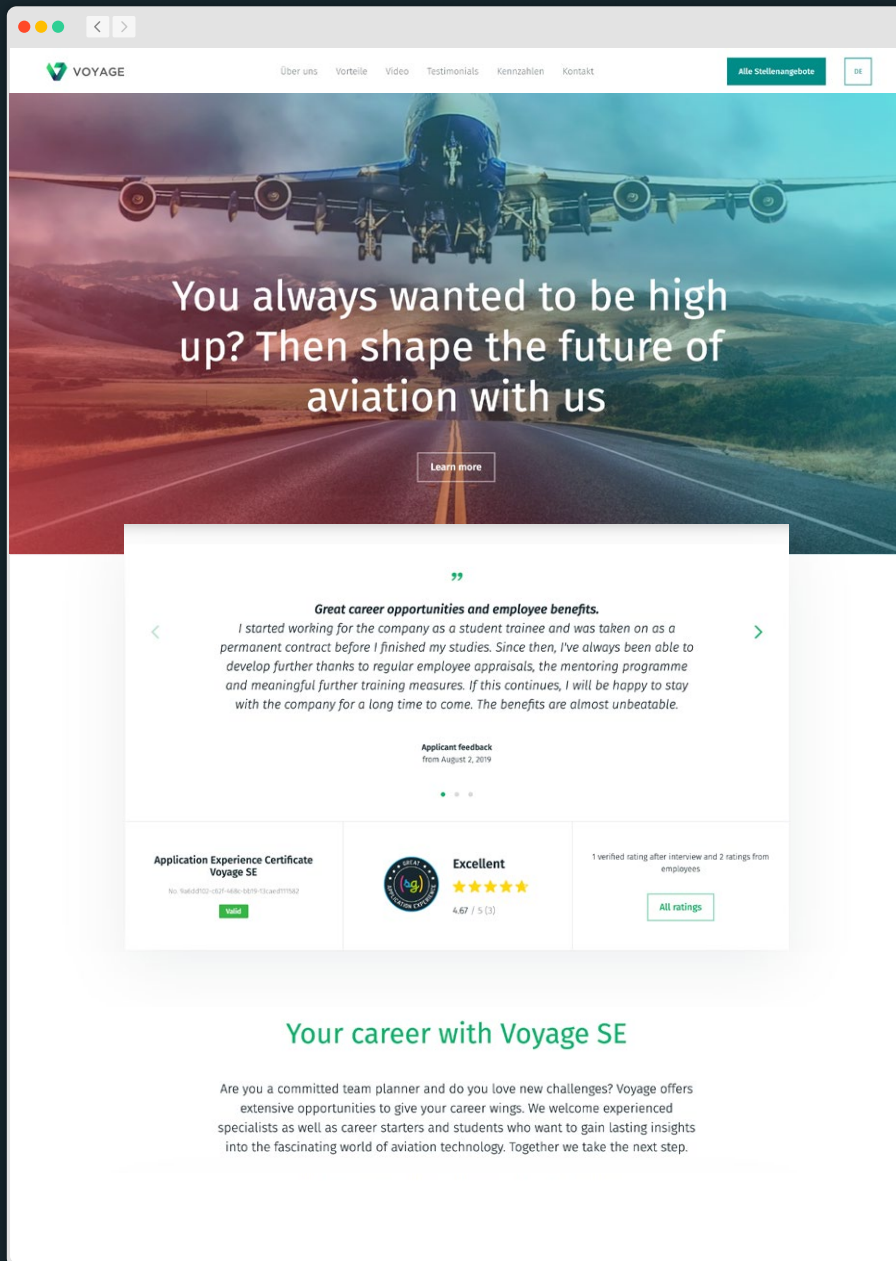
## About softgarden e-recruiting GmbH

softgarden is the contemporary solution to simplify your recruiting. In the applicant management, employers optimise the candidate experience with the help of softgarden, better engage hiring managers thanks to an app and shorten the application process by more than half. In candidate selection, employers reach more candidates on social networks with the integrated Referral Manager by leveraging their employees' existing contacts. They post job offers across channels on over 300 job boards and attract attractive candidates via active sourcing in the softgarden Talent Network. The seamless mobile integration of the career website and job advertisements as well as softgarden's unique Feedback Solution are decisive plus points for employer branding. Employers automatically generate feedback from applicants and new employees, make it visible on their own website and thus improve their online reputation. More than 1,000 international companies of all sectors and sizes already count on the easy-to-implement cloud solution in the competition for the best candidates.

## Career Site Pro

# Professionalize your online employer image

Optimal Conversion • SEO Boost • Mobile-optimized



- ✓ A modular system: editable modules for all requirements
- ✓ A harmonious selection of fonts, colours & shapes - also in your own corporate design
- ✓ Automatic synchronisation of your job advertisements
- ✓ Also available as a stand-alone solution without an applicant management system or with another system
- ✓ Create individual sub-pages for specific occupational groups, career levels or locations
- ✓ Already available in 12 languages

Companies that already use the Career Site Pro



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