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BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR A **RECRUITMENT MARKETING PLATFORM**

A recruitment marketing platform is a critical part of the modern talent acquisition technology stack. To compete for talent across industries, companies need a way to engage with individuals before they apply for a job. According to Aptitude Research, seventy-four percent (74%) of companies invest or plan to invest in pre-applicant capabilities this year.

Companies that invest in recruitment marketing platforms see significant benefits to the effectiveness of their overall talent acquisition efforts. They can extend their reach, improve the candidate experience, increase conversion rates, and strengthen their brand. Recruitment marketing sets the stage for how successful companies are at attracting talent, especially during times of uncertainty. According to Aptitude Research, companies that invest in recruitment marketing platforms are three times more likely to improve the candidate experience,

two times more likely to improve conversion rates, and two times as likely to improve overall decision making in talent acquisition.

Despite the many benefits of recruitment marketing, some organizations still have several misperceptions about what these solutions can do and how they should be used. With new providers entering the market selecting the right partner is an overwhelming challenge. Companies need guidance on how to gain internal buy-in and support for a recruitment marketing technology investment.

This report presents the strong business case for a recruitment marketing platform by defining its benefits, highlighting its role in modern talent acquisition, and helping organizations articulate its value to key stakeholders.

This business case will help answer the following questions:

- What are the key trends in recruitment marketing today?
- How can companies calculate ROI for their recruitment marketing platform?
- How do companies define recruitment marketing in terms of people, process, and technology?
- What should companies communicate to key stakeholders?
- What are the key drivers for investing in a recruitment marketing platform?
- What are the questions to ask for selection, implementation, and change management?



RECRUITMENT MARKETING PLATFORMS TODAY: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The recruitment marketing technology landscape has become both crowded and complex over the past few years. As companies look to transform their talent acquisition strategies, finding a trusted partner can be challenging, with new providers entering this market and traditional providers reinventing themselves.

Below are some of the key trends influencing recruitment marketing decision-making today:



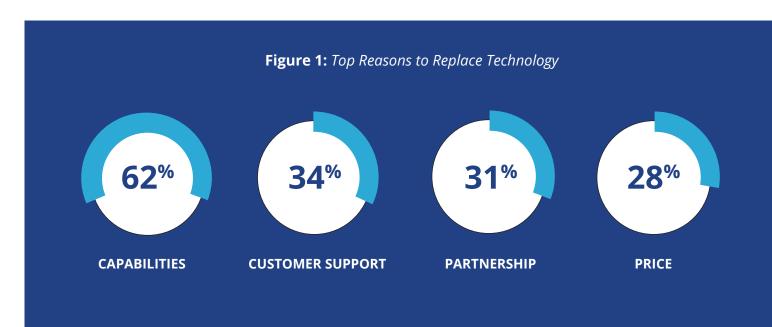
1. Adoption Challenges:

Like any new technology, adoption can be the greatest challenge when investing in a recruitment marketing platform. Companies invest in these platforms and often do not support implementation, training, and change management. New users can struggle with adoption, especially when they do not have predefined use cases. According to Aptitude Research, only fourteen percent (14%) of companies stated that their recruitment teams are adopting recruitment marketing platforms once they invest, and only two percent (2%) of companies said that they are using all the functionality in these platforms.



2. Market Churn:

As companies struggle with adoption, they quickly become dissatisfied with their current providers. Aptitude Research found that recruitment marketing platforms are among the top three areas of replacement in talent acquisition technology today (see Figure 1). Many second and third generation buyers are evaluating new platforms. Many second and third generation buyers are evaluating new providers in terms of capabilities, customer support, and partnership. Changing providers can be costly and erode confidence in talent acquisition technology decisions. Companies should only consider providers that can support their needs for both the short- and long-term.







3. Trusted Partnership:

For organizations to see results from an investment in recruitment marketing, they must work with a technology partner who understands their unique requirements and is transparent about their product roadmap and support. Companies should consider providers with demonstrated expertise and staying power in this market. Recruitment marketing can present new opportunities, but organizations need true partners to achieve results.



4. Shifting Budgets:

Companies considering recruitment marketing platforms do not necessarily need to find a new budget for their investment. As talent acquisition becomes more complex, companies invest in up to 10 different talent acquisition solutions and three primary sourcing solutions. Companies that go through an exercise of determining what solutions are ineffective can help to free up the budget for a recruitment marketing platform.



5. Global Providers:

The ability to support a global organization is a key differentiator in recruitment marketing. Providers that support global customers need to consider multilingual configuration, GDPR compliance, global career sites, and local regulations. Global companies will need to be diligent as they evaluate providers on their global capabilities.



6. Talent Audiences:

To optimize the effectiveness of a recruitment marketing platform, companies need to consider the audiences they target carefully. Talent audiences and personas are an important part of how companies think about their technology partners. Teams investing in a recruitment marketing platform should consider how these solutions can support their talent audiences and personas with personalized messaging, content, and communication.



7. Key Metrics:

The metrics and data measured by a recruitment marketing system are different than an ATS. In addition to the traditional recruitment metrics such as time-to-fill and cost-per-hire, recruitment marketing platforms have the ability to measure conversion rates, source of influence, source of hire, and candidate engagement.



RECRUITMENT MARKETING

CONSIDERATIONS DURING COVID-19:

According to Aptitude Research, sixty-two percent (62%) of companies are still hiring even if their focus has changed. And, while different regions and sectors face new realities in recruiting talent, this year's uncertainty has created a collective experience. Every organization is going through some type of transformation. Recruitment marketing can help companies thrive during times of uncertainty because it elevates the employer brand and continues talent engagement. Some tips for managing your TA program during this unprecedented time include:



Communicate Frequently

Companies need to be genuine with their messaging and communication. Employers should target key audiences and use social media to be transparent rather than promotional.



Clean-up the CRM

Companies can think about organizing their CRM and re-engaging talent. They can also think about targeted messaging and re-engaging alumni, internal employees, and candidates that did not receive an offer.



Re-think Rejection

Companies can take this opportunity to re-think the rejection process to engage with talent and provide insights to candidates that will not move forward in the process but could continue to engage as potential customers in the future.

Companies building a business case for recruitment marketing need to understand these key trends and their level of maturity. Every company is at a different stage in their journey. The following pages of this report provide insights into recruitment marketing technology and provide guidance on how companies can assess where they are at in the process.

DEFINING RECRUITMENT MARKETING: PEOPLE, PROCESS, AND TECHNOLOGY

Recruitment marketing is more than a technology investment. It is a commitment to strategic talent acquisition that encompasses three key areas: people, process, and technology. Companies that have clarity around these aspects of recruitment marketing are better able to gain internal buy-in and achieve results through technology investment.

People: Who are the talent audiences that companies want to attract and include in their recruitment marketing strategy?

Process: What processes are included in recruitment marketing?

Technology: What are the core capabilities of a recruitment marketing platform, and what are the additional capabilities that make up the ecosystem?



People:

Recruitment marketing is most effective when companies consider the talent audiences or personas that they are targeting. Personas are profiles that represent groups of similar people in a target audience. They help companies determine how to reach specific audiences on a more personal level while delivering the right messages and content at the right time.

Marketers face many of the same challenges recruiters face, including an influx of new technology, the need to distinguish the brand in a competitive market, and a focus on customer engagement (candidate engagement) at various stages in their journey. Marketing departments spend energy and resources, trying to understand their buyer. They identify, nurture, and engage buyers in a way that builds a long-term relationship. Most organizations develop buyer personas to understand their behaviors, motivations, challenges, and preferences. Recruitment marketing uses this same approach to develop a more personalized candidate experience, and give recruiters the insight they need to attract, recruit, and hire top talent. Different audiences require specific communication, engagement, strategies, and capabilities. Here are a few examples of the audiences that companies should consider in their recruitment marketing efforts.

Critical Roles

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Recent Graduates

Contingent Workers

Veterans/Military Hires

Employee Referrals

Alumni

High-Volume Hires

Internal Hires





Process:

Recruitment marketing as a practice includes inbound marketing, outbound marketing, employer branding, and candidate engagement. When combined, these processes help companies connect a brand to the right person at the right time and with targeted communication and messaging.



Inbound Marketing:

Inbound marketing attracts customers by creating valuable content, communication, and experiences tailored to them. It forms the connection candidates are seeking and addresses concerns they already have.



Outbound Marketing:

Outbound marketing is a traditional form of marketing that promotes a company through continued advertising, promotions, public relations, and sales.



Employer Branding:

An employer brand can be the reason someone wants to work for an organization. It encompasses the culture and the employee value proposition. A strong, descriptive brand will help companies attract talent and alleviate some of the challenges sourcing can create.



Candidate Engagement:

Candidates should be engaged through consistent communication, recognition, and an understanding of the company values. Too often, organizations ignore their candidates until a job opportunity exists. Companies will have the most success when they communicate in a way that is frequent and meaningful with their talent communities.



Similar to a corporate marketing strategy, recruitment marketing use these processes to:

NFLUENCE



provide the right information through targeted messaging, segmentation, and communication.

TTRAC.



make sure organizations are going after the right audience by understanding the candidate personas, job advertising, and search engine optimization (SEO).

VURTURE



engage with individuals consistently through information and messaging specific to their interests using vehicles such as campaigns and newsletters.

ONVERT



convert individuals into applicants and candidates at the right time.

MEASURE



evaluate these efforts to determine the engagement of candidates, conversion rates, and the effectiveness of the overall strategy.

Identifying the processes of recruitment marketing can help companies optimize the effectiveness of their technology investments.



Technology:

Once companies identify the audiences and processes necessary for their recruitment marketing strategy, they can better understand the role of technology.

Overall, a recruitment marketing platform improves the front-end of the recruiting process and tackles most of what an ATS could never do. It accomplishes this through a single pre-applicant platform instead of multiple, disparate solutions. Currently, forty percent (40%) of companies use ten or more recruitment solutions, and three or more primary sourcing tools.

A recruitment marketing platform can handle all aspects of recruitment marketing, giving organizations the advantage of having greater insights, a more consistent experience, the ability to track conversion rates throughout the process, and improved efficiency. As recruiters look to do more with less, a single platform helps them better manage talent attraction.





One challenge with talent acquisition technology is that some companies are confused by what these platforms include, and what requirements to consider when evaluating providers. As shown in Figure 3, recruitment marketing platforms have **core capabilities** ("must-haves"), and they also have **advanced capabilities** that may or may not be core to the platform ("nice-to-haves"). The most critical capabilities in these systems include career sites, CRM, analytics, apply, job distribution, talent networks, candidate communication, events management, internal mobility, automated scheduling, and employee referrals. Importantly, recruitment marketing platforms also provide efficiency through automation. Al algorithms automate many processes, helping users make recruiting decisions more quickly, reducing recruiting costs and time-to-fill.

Figure 3: *Recruitment Marketing Framework* Core **Events** lob **Career Sites CRM Analytics** Distribution Management Candidate **Employee Talent Networks Internal Mobility Apply** Communication Referral AI / AUTOMATION **Advanced Diversity and Inclusion Content Management** Sourcing Conversational Al **Programmatic Advertising Internal Mobility**



Core Capabilities

Career Sites: Sites and microsites that are targeted to attract talent with content and information.

Event Management: Capabilities to help create, manage, and track different events.

Job Distribution: Capabilities to distribute job posts to multiple sites.

Candidate Relationship Management (CRM): A system to track, manage, and measure candidate communication.

Analytics: Dashboards to provide insight into the effectiveness of recruitment marketing efforts.

Internal Mobility: Capabilities to attract and engage talent internally for jobs and future opportunities.

Candidate Communication: Capabilities to improve candidate reach through various types of communication, including messaging, text, and chatbots.

Talent Networks: Capabilities to group candidates to anticipate future hiring needs.

Apply: Capabilities to support a company's apply process, including mobile apply.

Automated Scheduling: Capabilities to automatically schedule calls and interviews with candidates and hiring managers.

Employee Referral: Capabilities to communicate, manage, and track the employee referral process, making it easier for employees and stakeholders to refer talent to the company.

Advanced Capabilities

Content Management: Tools to support the collection, management, and publication of content to a career site.

Sourcing: Solutions to source both active and passive talent.

Diversity and Inclusion: Capabilities to help users mitigate unintentional bias with data-driven hiring and greater decision making to ensure a more diverse and inclusive talent pool and workforce.

Conversational AI: Solutions that use omni-channel communication to engage with candidates in a more meaningful way through text, messaging platforms, and voice.

Programmatic Advertising: The automated buying and selling of advertising online.

Internal Mobility: Capabilities to engage with internal talent and provide targeted messaging.

Automation

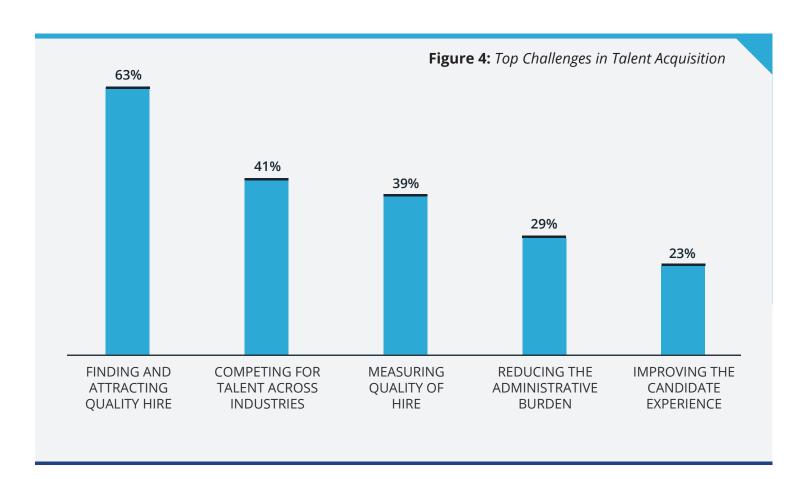
This framework for a recruitment marketing platform includes a layer of automation and AI that improves how companies are making decisions about engaging talent throughout every stage of recruitment marketing. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of companies state that automation is a big reason for investment in recruitment marketing.

Without a recruitment marketing platform, most companies are neglecting how they engage and nurture talent and, instead, rely on a myriad of solutions to help find talent in an ad hoc and reactive approach. A single platform can consolidate all the activities to attract talent and a complete view of data to provide greater insight into the recruitment process.



Key Drivers for Investing in **Recruitment Marketing Platforms**

Although talent acquisition has evolved considerably over the past few years, many companies still have a reactionary, ad hoc approach to attracting talent. In fact, seventy percent (70%) of companies stated that TA is still viewed as a cost-center. Unfortunately, these companies are operating on traditional recruitment models and waiting for candidates to find them without creating a personalized experience. Without a recruitment marketing platform, only thirty-five percent (35%) of companies are engaging with talent before they apply for a job. This inability to connect with candidates in a personal and meaningful way makes talent acquisition more difficult. According to Aptitude Research, when asked about the top challenges facing companies, finding talent, and competing for talent across industries were top of the list for respondents.



Companies need help attracting talent, engaging talent, and competing for talent early in the recruitment process. Without a strategic approach and a technology platform to support these efforts, companies are left with inconsistency in the experience, data, and capabilities. Recruitment marketing platforms help companies become more strategic in the way they identify and attract talent.



Some of the key drivers for investing in these platforms include:

Candidates are Customers:

The candidate experience defines strategic talent acquisition. When the candidate comes first, organizations can deliver higher quality talent, improve recruitment efficiencies, and align more closely with business objectives. One reason that the candidate experience is so powerful is that candidates are also customers. Organizations are investing in customer satisfaction and customer retention, and the same emphasis should be placed on the candidate. Although most organizations are trying to improve the candidate experience, many are still falling short. According to Aptitude Research, 40% of candidates are also customers of the companies where they apply.

The Technology Landscape is Complex:

The talent acquisition landscape has evolved beyond just using an ATS and job boards. Today's organizations have endless options for identifying, recruiting, and hiring talent. Although the new landscape presents opportunities, it can also create confusion when evaluating and selecting the right provider. As a result, many companies are making uneducated or impulsive decisions that may prove costly and damaging to their overall talent acquisition operation. This confusion is leading to dissatisfaction as organizations struggle to create a seamless candidate experience using disparate solutions. In fact, one in two companies is not measuring the ROI of that

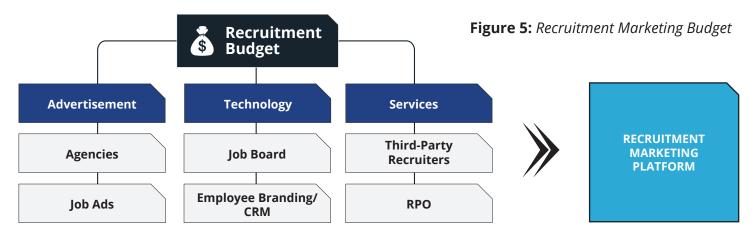
Recruiters Need to Do More with Less:

Nearly 40% of companies laid-off parts of their talent acquisition function from March-July 2020. This current economic climate has placed increased pressure on recruiters to do more with less. In many cases, recruiters must manage both tactical and strategic aspects of their jobs. Recruitment marketing platforms help recruiters increase efficiency, reach a broader talent pool with personalized communication, and automate every aspect of candidate engagement. It creates intelligent workflows to move the right candidates through the process quickly.

ROI Analysis:

The Business Impact of Recruitment Marketing Platforms

Like any technology investment, when building a business case for a recruitment marketing platform investment, organizations struggle to gain buy-in and find a budget. According to Aptitude's research, companies can spend two to three times what they spend on an ATS on their recruitment marketing platform. The reason is that companies are replacing a combination of services, technology, and agency costs. As shown in Figure 5, a single platform eliminates the high costs of agencies and consolidates the experience and data of the attract phase. The result is a more consistent experience and conversion of candidates throughout the process.





According to Aptitude Research, sixty-eight percent (68%) of companies that leverage a recruitment marketing platform measure their investment ROI compared to thirty-six percent (36%) of companies using disparate solutions. When measuring ROI, companies should consider the following:

Measure ROI early:

Companies should work with providers to set expectations for how ROI can be measured and what goals they have for this technology. By clearly identifying the benefits and costs, companies are more likely to see a quicker return on their investment.

ROI includes both short-term and long-term benefits:

Companies can see an immediate increase in the volume of applicants or the conversion of leads to applicants, while the candidate experience and quality of applicants may take longer to achieve. Clearly defining both short-term and long-term goals will help in building the business case.

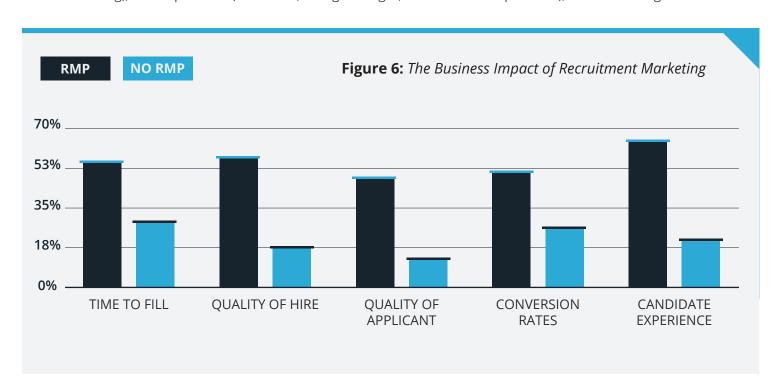
Include Risk Analysis:

Companies should consider the risk of not having a recruitment marketing platform when calculating the ROI.

The ROI analysis looks at the financial value of an investment in a recruitment marketing platform. The ROI is calculated simply as the Net Benefit compared to the Total Cost of the project. This ROI analysis examines the benefits and costs. For most organizations making this investment, they are consolidating spend on multiple tools, technologies, and services into one single platform.

Benefits

Overall, recruitment marketing improves the health and efficiency of a talent acquisition program. It enables recruiters to be more prepared and data-driven in their approach to finding and attracting talent. Benefits fall under three categories: efficiency (time-to-fill/conversion rates), effectiveness (quality-of-hire/quality-of-applicant/overall decision making), and experience (candidate, hiring manager, and recruiter experience), as shown in figure 6.





Efficiency:

- Companies that leverage a recruitment marketing platform are three times more likely to fill positions within 30 days.
- Application time for companies using a recruitment marketing platform is also significantly shorter, with sixty-five percent (65%) of companies stating the application can be completed under 30 minutes.

Effectiveness:

- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of companies are better able to engage with talent before they apply, compared to forty-three percent (43%) of companies without a recruitment marketing platform.
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of companies using a recruitment marketing platform know where their source of hires come from compared to fifty-four percent (54%) of companies not using them.

Experience:

- Companies improve the candidate experience and employee experience through one system that consistently markets a company from awareness to hire.
- Companies strengthen the employer brand by taking a modern approach to building relationships with talent through digital, social, and mobile channels.
- Companies create larger talent pipelines by capturing candidate leads and building relationships earlier in the process.

Costs

To calculate the costs, companies must outline the estimated costs required to implement the new solution, including software, IT labor, and services. Companies must outline the estimated costs required to implement the new solution, including solution provider costs, (products, licensing, services, internal costs implementation labor, management, support, etc.), and other external fees.

Risk Analysis

Without a recruitment marketing platform, organizations have several options available for attracting talent. Some of these alternatives include the use of disparate tools, stand-alone CRM, advertising agencies, or no solution. These options present several risks to the success of talent acquisition and should be weighed as part of this risk analysis. Some questions to ask when assessing the risk of a specific Recruitment Marketing platform include:

Personnel: How do we make sure that we have the resources needed to run this project?

Security: How do we make sure the candidate data we collect is secure?

Technology: How do we make sure employees adopt this new system? What if we run into bugs when implementing?

Integration: How do we make sure we integrate with the right systems? How seamless is this integration?

Performance and Scalability: How do we make sure the solution performs as expected?

Candidate Experience: How do we make sure this solution can improve the candidate experience?

Quality-of-Hire: How do we measure if this solution helps us compete for talent and attract the best fit?

Conversion Rates: How do we track conversion rates consistently throughout the process?



KEY STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS:

GAINING BUY-IN

One important component of building a business case is the key stakeholder analysis. This section includes how companies communicate and engage key stakeholders from the early research phase to internal needs analysis and selection. Each of these key stakeholders may have a different set of priorities and metrics to consider. According to Aptitude Research, companies that leverage recruitment marketing platforms tend to have higher collaboration with other areas of the business, including C-Level Executives (52%) and Marketing leaders (43%). Recruitment Marketing Platforms give companies the tools they need to be strategic in how they attract talent, but it also gives them the data they need to report back to business leaders on areas such as conversion rates, engagement, and brand.

Key Stakeholder	Priorities	Metrics
HR Leaders >>	Ensuring employees are being developed and meeting their performance expectations	Quality-of-Hire Conversion Rates Employee Productivity Employee Performance
Talent Management Leaders	Ensuring the employee experience is positive and that employees are engaged throughout the life cycle	Employee Experience Employee Engagement Employee Performance Employee Retention
Business Leaders	Ensuring they are recruiting, developing, and engaging the best talent	Quality-of-Hire Employee Engagement Cost Savings
IT D	Ensuring the solutions are integrated with core HR systems	Compliance Adoption Integration
Finance	Ensuring the system fits into the overall HR budget	Cost savings Adoption

Several roles in the talent acquisition function measure the success of recruitment marketing initiatives and help to drive these relationships with other parts of the organization. A few of these roles include:

Recruiting Operations Professionals: Forty-two percent (42%) of companies leveraging a recruitment marketing platform have a dedicated operations role, compared to 22% of companies not using one.

Candidate Experience Manager: The Candidate Experience Manager influences decisions around recruitment marketing solutions and candidate communication tools. Aptitude Research found that 24% of companies have this dedicated role.

Digital Specialists: Some companies are adding digital specialists to support their digital transformation. This role can help evaluate and adopt digital solutions to improve efficiencies and the overall experience using mobile solutions, Al, automation, and video. Aptitude Research found that 12% of companies have this dedicated role.

Data Scientists: Industries such as financial services hire data scientists to join their talent acquisition teams and help them leverage analytics. Data scientists can help to evaluate AI and predictive analytics solutions.



THE SELECTION PROCESS:

EVALUATING, IMPLEMENTING, AND ADOPTING

With many providers entering this market, determining the right partner is challenging. Companies have to look at the company, culture, product, and key differentiators. Importantly, they must also look at their level of maturity and unique requirements.

Below are internal questions, external evaluations, implementation questions, and change management suggestions to consider when evaluating providers:

Internal Questions

- Does your company have a lack of visibility into recruiting technology ROI?
- Does your company have enough candidates for high-volume positions?
- Does your company have trouble reaching target audiences?
- Is your company using multiple, disparate solutions for recruitment marketing?
- Does your company have an expensive career site that is not effective?
- What resources do you need and what is available?
- What is your process for evaluating business cases?
- Who will be the change champion for the project?

External Questions

Company Background Evaluation Questions

- What is the heritage of this provider? Is the heritage in talent acquisition or another industry?
- What mergers and acquisitions have this provider had to date? What mergers or acquisitions are planned for the future?
- What is the company culture and leadership style of this provider?
- How much turnover has this provider experienced on its leadership team? Sales team? Research team?
- Is the leadership team diverse?
- What is the average size of this provider's customer?
- What industries does this provider serve?

Product Background Evaluation Questions

- What products does this provider offer (including products outside of talent acquisition)?
- How many major or minor releases are scheduled each year?
- What percentage of the employees at this provider are focused on product development?
- What is the development technology?
- Does this provider offer an open API?
- How many languages are supported?
- Does this provider integrate with an existing tech stack?
- How long does implementation take?
- What services are available, and what do these services cost (training, implementation, customer support)?
- Does this provider offer a dedicated customer support representative?
- How many customers are currently live on this product?
- Does this provider comply with DOE, federal, state, and local regulations?
- Does this provider have the ability to restrict data access by role, IP, or report?
- Is this provider SOC 2 Type II Certified?
- What is the product roadmap for the next quarter? Year?



Key Differentiators

- What are the top product and company differentiators?
- What has changed for this provider over the past year?
- What deals has this provider won over its competitors in the past year, and why did it win those deals?
- What are the opportunities for growth?

Implementation Questions

Most companies are not prepared for implementation – regardless of how many times they may have purchased a solution. Implementation can require additional resources, time, and money. And, too often, companies do not take the time to understand their own requirements before implementing a system. According to Aptitude Research, 48% of companies are using their talent acquisition providers for implementation services.

- What resources do we have internally to support implementation?
- What is the time frame for implementation?
- Do we need an outside consultant for implementation?
- What extra costs can we expect?

Change Management

Change management is an important step to ensure adoption, but it is often ignored. Companies tend to focus their resources on fast implementation and overlook long-term strategies for success. Change management can be challenging for various reasons, including negative experiences with prior implementations, fear of new technology, and resistance from employees. Companies must be open to feedback and address any concerns with the change, even when the idea of new technology is very promising. When organizations are willing to invest the right amount of time and resources into managing change, they improve adoption and reap the benefits of technology much more quickly.

- Who will be the change champion, and does that individual reside in talent acquisition?
- What communication strategy will we use to engage with key stakeholders and employees?
- What are the common change management mistakes we have encountered in the past?
- What metrics should we evaluate to ensure adoption?
- How often will we evaluate our change management strategy?

CONCLUSION:

A recruitment marketing platform can significantly improve the way companies identify, attract, and engage talent. It enhances the candidate experience, improves quality of hire, and reduces recruiter workload. Companies looking to build the business case for a recruitment marketing platform must consider their unique requirements before evaluating partners. Understanding the trends and differentiators of a recruitment marketing platform will help companies communicate the value to key stakeholders.



ABOUT US



Aptitude Research Partners is a research-based analyst and advisory firm focused on HCM technology. We conduct quantitative and qualitative research on all aspects of Human Capital Management to better understand the skills, capabilities, technology, and underlying strategies required to deliver business results in today's complex work environment.

To learn more, visit www.aptituderesearch.com.

JOBVITE

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