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TALENT ACQUISITION TECHNOLOGY

AND THE MODERN RECRUITER

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In talent acquisition, the pace of change has accelerated. Companies are facing new pressures, new priorities, and new challenges when attracting and recruiting talent. With a significant labor shortage and “The Great Resignation”, talent acquisition is more complex than it has ever been. To keep up, companies must rethink their strategies and invest in new technology to support everything from recruitment marketing to onboarding. According to Aptitude Research, 67% of companies have increased their investment in TA tech this year and 73% plan to increase their investment in 2022.

But, as companies rush to transform with new technology, many have lost sight of their recruiters, the people doing the actual work. The most critical role in talent acquisition success is too often overlooked in decision making around the future of work. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of recruiters do not believe that leadership understands their role in the organization. As a result, recruiters are feeling overworked and exploring new opportunities.



58%

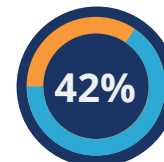
of recruiters do not believe that leadership understands their role in the organization.



recruiters are looking
for new jobs



of recruiters are feeling
more burned out this
year than last year



of recruiters do not have
the resources they need
to be successful

The increased focus and investment in talent acquisition must include the recruiter. As companies plan for 2022 and beyond, they must take a step back and carefully consider strategies and technologies that will directly impact their recruiting teams. This study surveyed over 300 organizations and found a significant disconnect between how leadership, IT, and recruiters view talent acquisition and the value of technology. The goal of this study is to help companies better understand the role of the recruiter and the solutions that can drive success and improve the recruiter experience. It will help answer the following:

The Role of the Recruiter:

What are the different expectations of leadership, recruiters, and IT?

Where do recruiters spend most of their time?

What are the key priorities for each stakeholder?

The TA Tech Landscape:

Which technologies bring the most value to recruiters?

What technologies are recruiters adopting and why?



Aptitude Research conducted the research cited in this report in October to December 2021.

Quantitative Research: 404 Global Responses of Talent Acquisition Leaders across all industries and with 1000 employees and above

Qualitative Research: A series of interviews with companies to understand their strategies for automation



KEY FINDINGS:

1 Recruiters Face a Different Reality:

Companies will not be able to build strong recruiting teams if they do not understand and validate the recruiter experience. Leadership and IT do not have the same visibility into recruitment realities today. Seventy-three percent (73%) of recruiters said it is harder to find candidates this year, compared to 39% of leadership and 10% of IT professionals. For companies to improve the recruiter experience, they must start by understanding and recognizing the challenges that recruiters face.

2 Recruiters Will Leave Their Job for Better Technology:

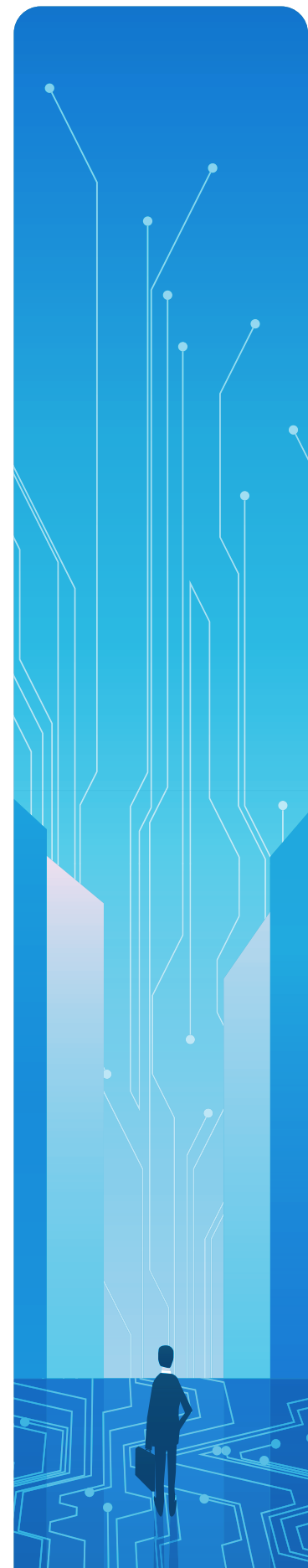
Technology plays a significant role in the recruiter experience and in overall job satisfaction. As companies embrace digital transformation and invest in new solutions, they must consider technologies that will improve how recruiters do their jobs. This study found that one in two recruiters would join another organization if it had better technology.

3 Companies Are Replacing Areas of TA Technology:

Companies are replacing all areas of TA technology from recruitment marketing to ATS to onboarding, yet recruiters do not play a significant role in influencing these technology decisions. One in three companies are looking to replace their TA technology this year, yet only 32% of companies state that recruiters help influence technology decisions.

4 Leadership and Recruiters Disagree on Technology Satisfaction:

This study found that 78% of TA and HR leadership are satisfied with recruitment technology, compared to only 48% of recruiters. These different views on technology will impact how recruiters perform and adopt technology at their organizations. Companies must consider why recruiters are not using certain solutions and what technology will drive value adoption.



5 Recruiters Are Embracing AI:

The majority of recruiters are not fearful that AI will replace their jobs or provide a poor candidate experience. This study found that recruiters are embracing AI to be more efficient and to provide a better candidate experience. Forty-two percent (42%) of recruiters believe that AI will help them become more strategic in their jobs.

6 Integration Is a Challenge:

Integration is not just a point of frustration for IT professionals. Systems that are not seamlessly integrated create more administrative work and delays for recruiting teams that feel under pressure today. Sixty percent (60%) of recruiters surveyed stated that the greatest frustration with technology is poor integration.

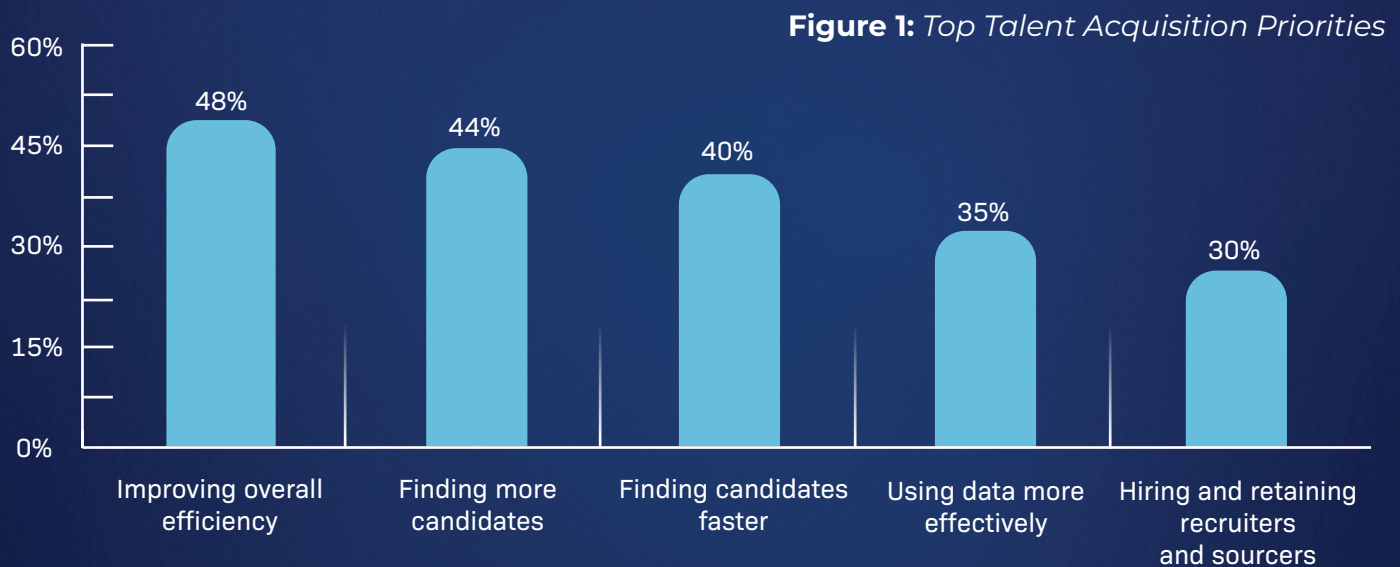
7 The Relationship Between IT and TA is Evolving:

According to this study, the majority of IT professionals do not have a clear understanding of the role of the recruiter or the technology that will improve the recruiter experience. Seventy-three percent (73%) of recruiters stated that it is difficult to find quality talent today compared to only 10% of IT professionals. Without a clear understanding of what recruiters are facing, IT will not be able to advocate for the technology needed to attract, recruit, and hire talent. The one area where both IT and recruiters are aligned is in the value of AI.



PART I: THE ROLE OF THE MODERN RECRUITER

Talent acquisition success is measured by how fast companies adapt and prepare for their hiring needs. Improving overall efficiency continues to be the top priority for organizations looking to attract and recruit talent (see Figure 1). Companies are looking at providers to improve time to fill, increase recruiter productivity, and improve overall decision-making in talent acquisition technology. Improved efficiency benefits the candidate as well as the employer by helping candidates receive communications, stay informed, and move through the process. **Over the past few years, companies moved away from talking about efficiency in favor of experience and quality. The reality is that recruiters and hiring teams need help. The average time to fill a position is 45 days and many companies, especially in high-volume industries, cannot afford to wait that long.**



This pressure to move quickly and find more candidates in a short period of time has placed additional pressure on recruiters and recruiting teams. Thirty percent (30%) of companies stated that hiring and retaining recruiters and sourcing professionals is a top priority today.

Recruiters provide tremendous value to organizations by bringing in the right people to contribute to business performance. In many cases, they are the first point of contact between a candidate and an employer. They also provide tremendous value to candidates by encouraging career growth and empowerment in their journeys. The fundamental work of a recruiter is personal, meaningful, and purposeful. However, the realities of today's labor market have made the job more stressful and administrative in nature, making it hard for recruiters to scale. As the talent acquisition function evolves with more roles and specialists, there is a growing disconnect between the vision of what talent acquisitions should be and the work required to get there.



Figure 2:
Roles in the TA function

To provide a better recruiter experience and improve recruiter retention, companies need a better understanding of this important role. They need to start with the following:

Understanding Today's Reality:

What pressures are recruiters facing and how do they feel about their job and the future of talent acquisition?

Understanding the Role of the Recruiter:

How are recruiters spending their time today and what would they like to focus on?

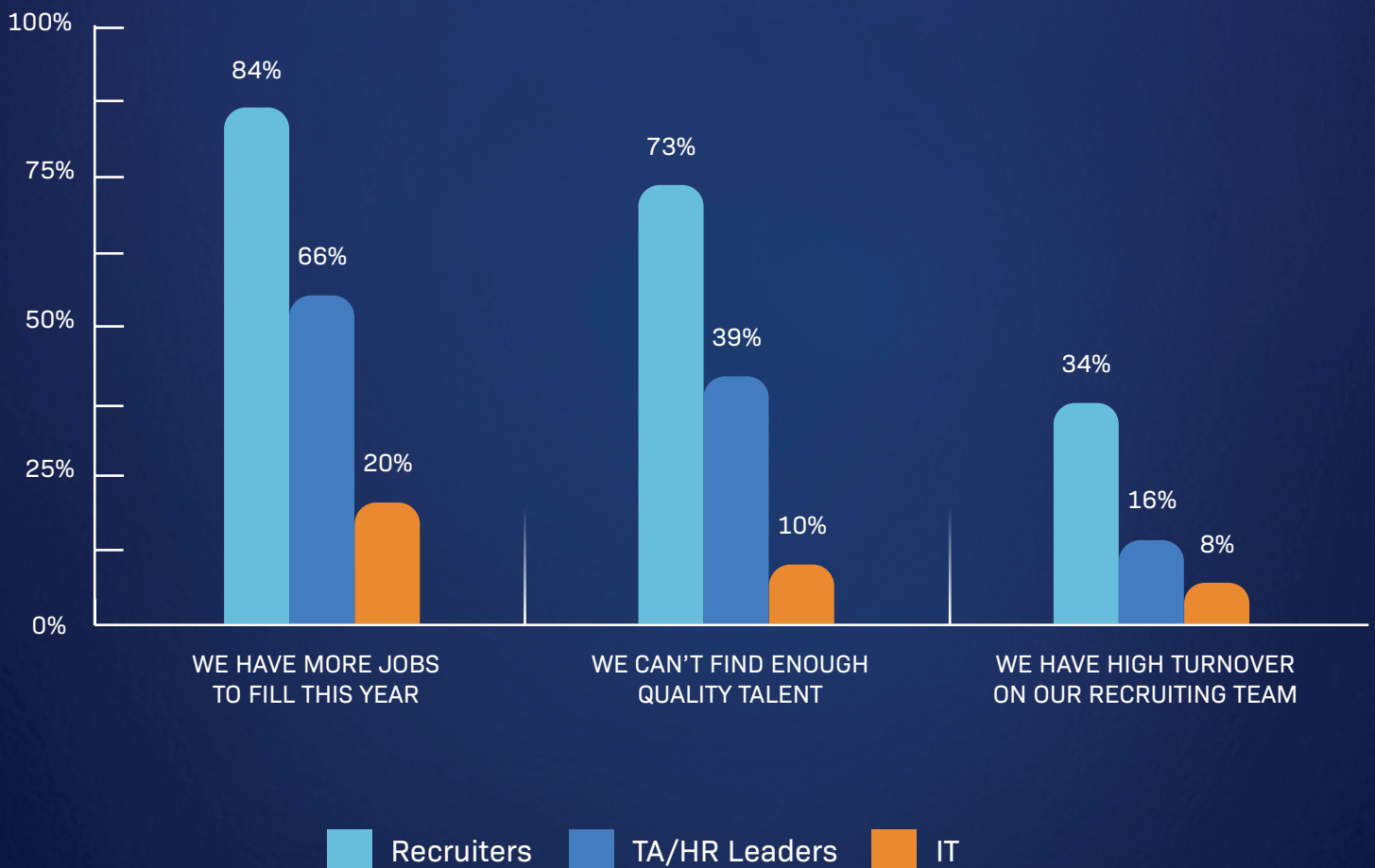
Understanding What Resources Recruiters Need:

What services and solutions will help recruiters in their job?

UNDERSTANDING **THE REALITY:**

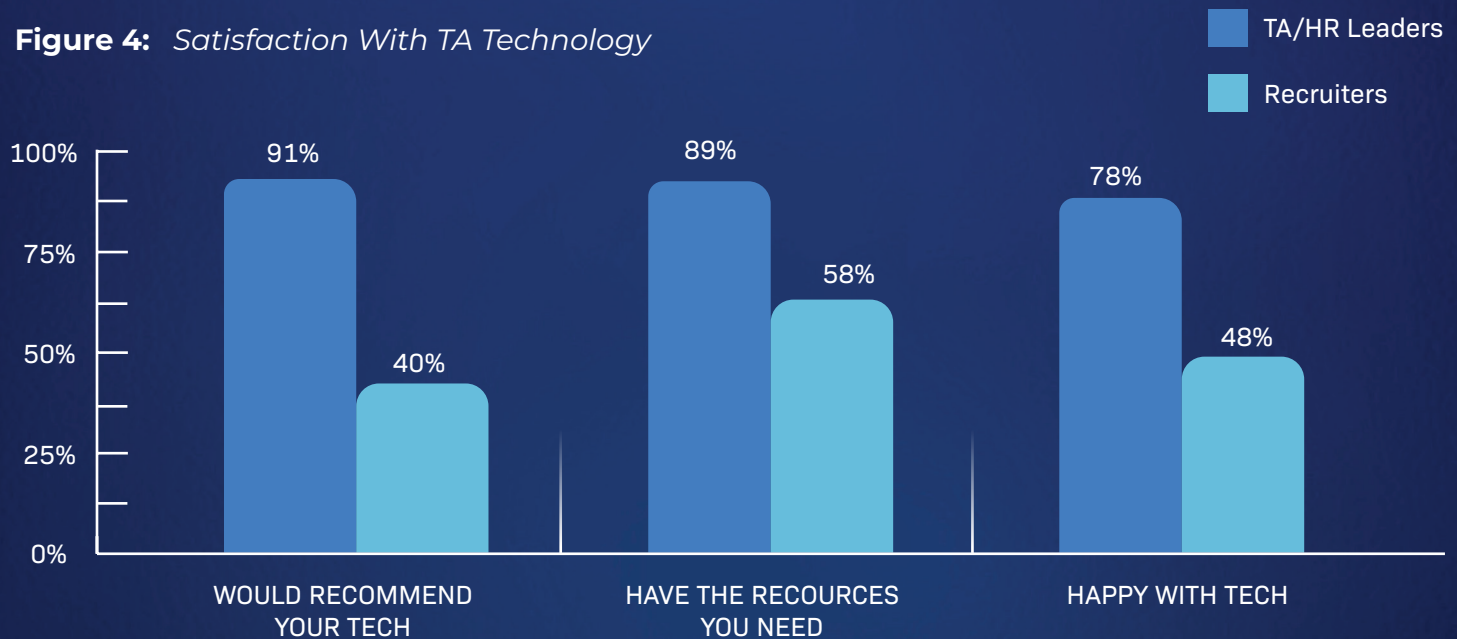
Talent acquisition is challenging. As companies invest in their talent acquisition strategies and technology, they need to understand the challenges that recruiters are facing today. One in two companies state that IT is more involved in TA technology decisions, yet IT professionals are not always aware of the realities of the labor market. Eighty-four percent (84%) of recruiters state that they have more jobs to fill this year, compared to 66% of TA and HR leaders and 20% of IT professionals. Additionally, 73% of recruiters state that they cannot find enough quality talent, compared to only 39% of TA/HR leaders and 10% of IT professionals. Recruiters will not be able to get the support they need if their reality is not validated across the organization.

Figure 3: *The Different Perceptions of TA Today*



This divide in how leadership, recruiters, and IT perceive talent acquisition has created very different experiences around technology adoption. TA and HR leadership are happier with the recruitment technology (73%) that they have in place and would be more likely to recommend that technology to other organizations (91%). One reason for higher satisfaction is that TA leaders are two times more likely to directly influence these technology decisions. Recruiters are more frustrated with their technology and the resources available. Many traditional technology solutions are not designed for the modern recruiter and do not integrate with their workflow or help them to attract and hire talent.

Figure 4: *Satisfaction With TA Technology*



UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE RECRUITER:

As talent acquisition becomes more complex so does the role of the recruiter and the recruiting function. Recruiters must juggle multiple hats to be successful. No longer just focused on relationship-building or administrative tasks, the modern recruiting function requires a new set of skills and competencies that often seem contradictory. Talent acquisition professionals must be able to build long-term relationships with candidates, interpret data, sell and market their employer brand, and consider a more flexible workforce – all responsibilities that did not exist a decade ago. While this presents new opportunities for talent acquisition departments to align with business goals, recruiters are often misunderstood by leadership. Figure 5 outlines some of the responsibilities of the modern recruiter.

Figure 5: *Recruiter Responsibilities*



ATTRACT TALENT

Recruitment Marketing

- Strengthen the brand to reflect company values
- Build talent pipelines to engage with talent
- Engage with talent through the process
- Enhance career sites and landing pages to reach the right candidates
- Advertise jobs on the right sites
- Source talent

Source

- Identify talent
- Reach out to passive and active candidates
- Connect candidates with the right roles



RECRUIT TALENT

Screen

- Screen resumes to find the right candidates

Communicate

- Reach out to candidates and hiring managers to align expectations

Interview

- Interview candidates for job opportunities
- Collect feedback from hiring managers
- Provide feedback to candidates
- Schedule follow-ups

Assessments

- Send candidates assessments to determine fit



HIRE TALENT

Offer Management

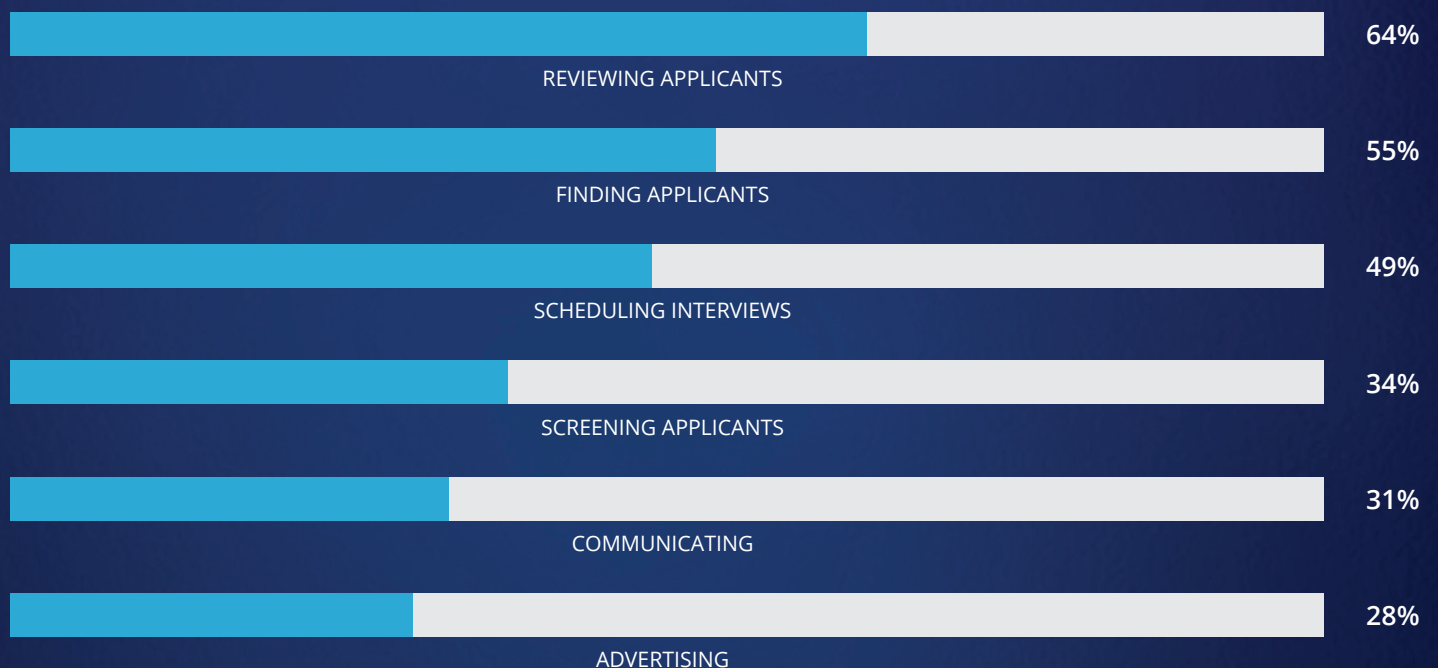
- Extend offers to candidates
- Conduct background screen for candidates
- Start the onboarding process to engage with new hires and stay compliant

Onboard

- Provide new hire forms and paperwork
- Help to engage new hires in the company culture
- Answer new hire questions
- Prepare managers

As the role of the recruiter expands, it also grows in complexity. By adding new roles and responsibilities in a short period of time, talent acquisition at many companies is difficult to manage. Recruiters are forced to spend their time doing administrative work that includes reviewing applicants, finding applicants, and scheduling calls. Additionally, 82% of recruiters spend time scheduling calls daily or weekly and 68% of recruiters spend time looking for candidates in the ATS daily or weekly. This time spent on administrative activities pulls recruiters way from more meaningful work. Less than 50% of recruiters spend time on employer branding or DEI initiatives daily or weekly.

Figure 6: *Activities That Take Up Recruiters' Time*



The amount of work required to manage the tactical side of talent acquisition prevents recruiters from focusing on more strategic work. It also impacts the areas that recruiters believe are most critical to their role. Recruiters identified sourcing, onboarding, and interviewing as the areas that are most critical for 2022, while HR and TA leaders identified recruitment marketing, employer branding, and sourcing. The one area where both leadership and recruiters agree on is onboarding, given the focus this year on retention and internal mobility.

Figure 7: *Critical Areas for 2022*



UNDERSTANDING THE RESOURCES THAT RECRUITERS WANT:

When recruiters are balancing tactical and strategic elements, the pressures they face can make it difficult to focus enough energy on candidates. Companies must consider ways to alleviate this pressure and provide a better experience.

In 2021, Aptitude surveyed over 400 recruiters to better understand what is impacting the recruiter experience and how companies can improve it. Recruiters are looking for three things:



Technology: Recruiting teams want automation to help them reduce the administrative burden and communicate with candidates.



Time: Recruiters want more time to be able to engage with candidates.

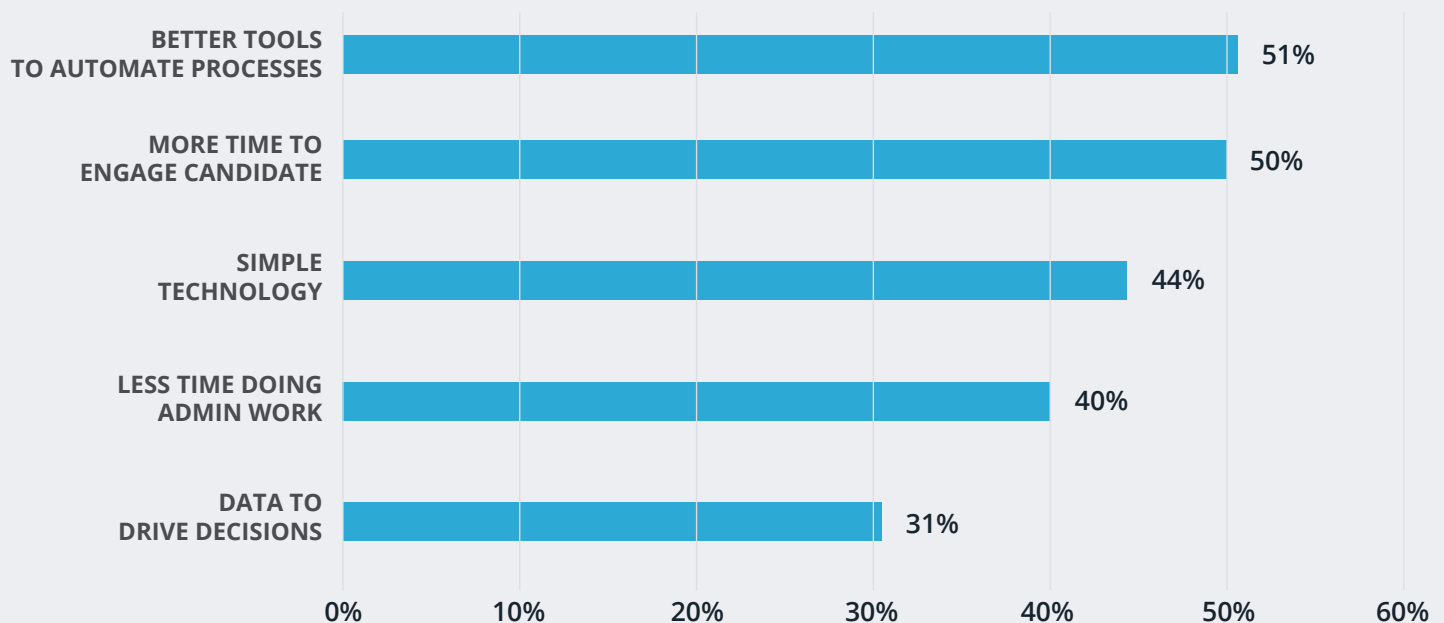


Simplicity: Recruiters need solutions that provide a simple experience and fit into their current workflow. Many traditional TA tech solutions are difficult to use making adoption a challenge.



Additionally,
1-IN-2
recruiters would leave
their current role for
better technology.

Figure 8: Resources that Recruiters Need



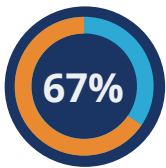
PART II: THE TA TECH LANDSCAPE

Technology plays a pivotal role in the recruiter experience. Not only does it influence where recruiters work but it significantly improves their quality of life by saving time, reducing the administrative burden, and enabling recruiters to build stronger relationships with candidates.

Ten years ago, the talent acquisition technology market was comprised of multiple providers offering stand-alone products in defined categories such as background screening, job boards, ATS, assessments, and onboarding. Today, the market has exploded with thousands of providers and new players entering each month. Additionally, the lines have blurred. Many of these providers offer several solutions in talent acquisition or have created new categories of technology, making the recruiter experience much more complicated.



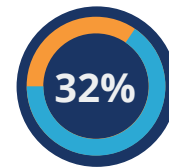
Aptitude Research found that:



of companies are increasing
their investment in talent
acquisition technology
next year



companies have
more solutions this
year than last year



of companies are
using data and analytics
more effectively

But, as companies build more robust TA tech stacks to support their recruitment efforts, they have lost sight of the recruiter. They are looking at technology that will benefit the overall business and improve the candidate experience without always considering the user. This report found a significant difference between the vision that leadership has for TA technology and the solutions that help recruiters achieve success. This section of the report will explore:

What is influencing TA tech decisions today?

What are the greatest frustrations with technology?

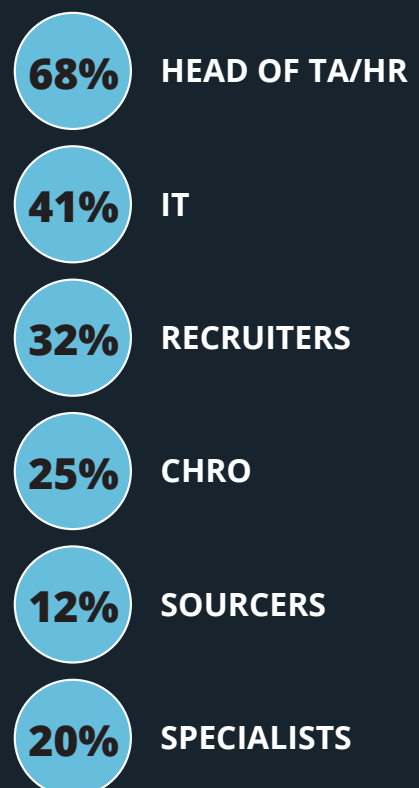
What technology drives value to different stakeholders?

How is technology integrated into the recruiter workflow?

WHO IS INFLUENCING TA TECHNOLOGY DECISIONS TODAY?





The disconnect between the technology that companies implement and the technology that drives value stems from a flawed decision-making process. Aptitude Research found that only 32% of companies stated that recruiters are involved in TA technology decisions and only 12% of sourcers and 20% of specialists are involved. This indicates that the individuals doing the recruiting are not providing input on the technology that companies use. Decision-making is mostly being done by TA and HR leadership and IT.

Figure 9:
Influencers of TA Tech



Each of these key stakeholders has a different set of priorities and metrics to consider, and the recruiter experience is not always a factor.

Figure 10: *Key Stakeholder Priorities*

	Priorities	Metrics
 HR Leaders	Ensuring that employees are being developed and are meeting their performance expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Hire • Conversion Rates • Employee Productivity • Employee Performance
 CHRO	Ensuring that the employee experience is positive and that employees are engaged throughout the lifecycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Experience • Employee Engagement • Employee Performance • Employee Retention
 Business Leaders	Ensuring that they are recruiting, developing, and engaging the best talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Hire • Employee Engagement • Cost Savings
 IT	Ensuring that solutions are integrated with core HR systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Adoption • Integration

WHAT ARE THE GREATEST FRUSTRATIONS WITH TECHNOLOGY?

Once technology is evaluated and implemented, companies face several frustrations with using different solutions. Aptitude Research found that IT is primarily concerned with too many solutions in place and trying to reduce the number of vendors. HR and TA leadership and recruiters are both concerned with integration and making sure that they have consistency of their experiences and data. This frustration with integration takes precedence over improving the quality of life and adoption.

Figure 11: *Top Frustrations with TA Tech*





Too Many Providers:

The talent acquisition technology landscape is more complex than ever before. Companies are using, on average, ten or more providers to support their recruitment needs, and many of these solutions are not providing value. Companies are quickly embracing new systems, and the result is an unmanageable and disparate TA technology stack.



Integration:

Integrating talent acquisition and HR systems has significant benefits in providing consistent data, enabling a better experience, and eliminating manual processes. Yet, integration has long been a point of frustration for many talent acquisition professionals investing in new technology. Many companies lack the dedicated resources and underestimate the needs and expectations of IT to build integrations. Providers downplay the challenges of working with partners and the willingness to work with their competitors. And IT and HRIT are typically preoccupied with other priorities. In fact, one in three TA professionals surveyed said that IT views talent acquisition integration as a low priority.



Adoption:

According to Aptitude Research, only three percent (3%) of companies leverage all of the functionality in their ATS, and only two percent (2%) in their recruitment marketing platforms. While it may seem easy to blame the provider, many of these challenges with adoption result from the lack of planning and available resources at the company.

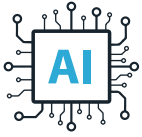
WHAT TECHNOLOGY DRIVES VALUE?

The technology that drives value differs for various stakeholders. IT, HR, and TA leaders are prioritizing CRM solutions this year. According to Aptitude Research, over 70% of enterprise companies are using or planning to use a CRM and 61% of those companies spend more on their CRM than their ATS. The issue is that recruiters have challenges adopting these systems. Recruiters identified sourcing, AI matching, and video as having the most value to their role. IT also identified AI matching as providing value.

Figure 12: *Technology That Drives Value*

Sourcing:

Companies focused heavily on sourcing over the past year – either building out internal expertise, outsourcing sourcing activities, or leveraging world-class technology. One in three enterprise companies have an internal sourcing team responsible for finding candidates and for 60% of those companies, communication skills are the most important competency. Companies need support as remote recruitment, changing labor conditions, and competition for talent has made a challenging process even more complex. Companies are turning to technology to improve the sourcing strategies they have in place.



AI Matching:

With efficiency and DEI driving many of the technology decisions today, companies are looking closely at solutions that can lift the administrative burden on recruiters and help to reduce bias. Companies that leverage AI matching are two times more likely to improve diverse sources, three times more likely to improve time to fill, and three times more likely to improve quality of hire.

Efficiency: AI Matching connects candidates to jobs so that recruiters do not need to go through hundreds or even thousands of resumes for each job. These solutions use experience, skills, and data to match and rank candidates – saving time for both recruiters and managers.

DEI: With ethical AI, companies can reduce human bias in the decision-making process and level the playing field so every candidate has a fair opportunity.

Quality of Hire: AI matching can help companies better identify the right candidates using artificial intelligence that uses pre-established criteria and qualifications.



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Video:

Digital interviewing includes scheduling, video, and communication capabilities for companies looking to better manage, track, and measure the interview process. The pandemic accelerated the investment in digital interview solutions. In February 2020, less than 60% of companies were using or planning to use video interview providers. One year later, 74% of companies were using or planning to use video interview providers. When recruiters and managers have digital interviewing tools, they can improve both the candidate experience and coach managers on best practices. Digital interviewing platforms, whether on demand or live, can help ensure better consistency within an organization when it comes to interviewing and evaluating candidates.

HOW CAN AUTOMATION HELP?

Most companies are still confused by how automation can improve decision making. While automation has transformed many business areas, including marketing, supply chain, and sales, recruitment is still immature in its adoption of these solutions. Only 40% of processes are automated, on average. Automation can lift the administrative burden on recruiting teams and enable them to make data-driven decisions focused on quality. According to Aptitude Research, companies that use data to automate decision-making are twice as likely to improve quality of hire.



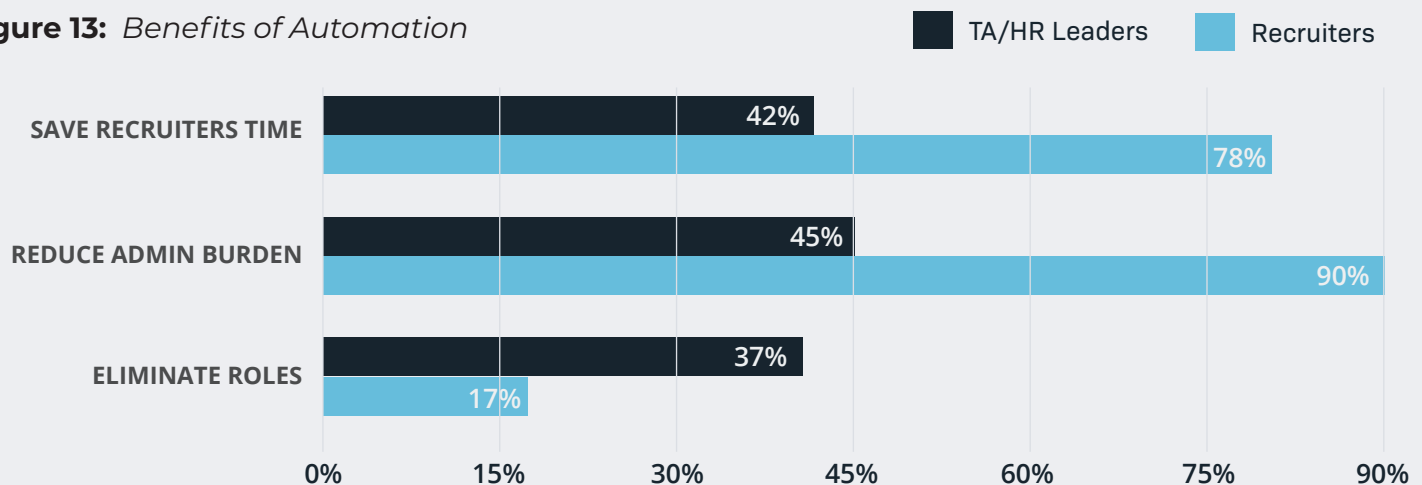
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Automation helps improve the recruiter experience by:

- **Speeding Up Decision Making:** Companies face many delays in the recruitment process that add unnecessary stress on recruiting teams and candidates. Automation creates greater efficiency and automates workflows.
- **Create Cohesion:** The key to recruitment automation is ensuring that the candidate has a consistent experience throughout every stage of the recruitment lifecycle. When companies use the right provider, recruitment automation moves the candidate through the process and saves recruiters' time while upholding the employer brand. Companies should consider what they plan to automate now and in the future.

According to this study, automation can also save recruiters time and reduce the administrative burden placed on recruiting teams. Ninety percent (90%) of recruiters identified this as a benefit, compared to only 45% of HR and TA leadership.

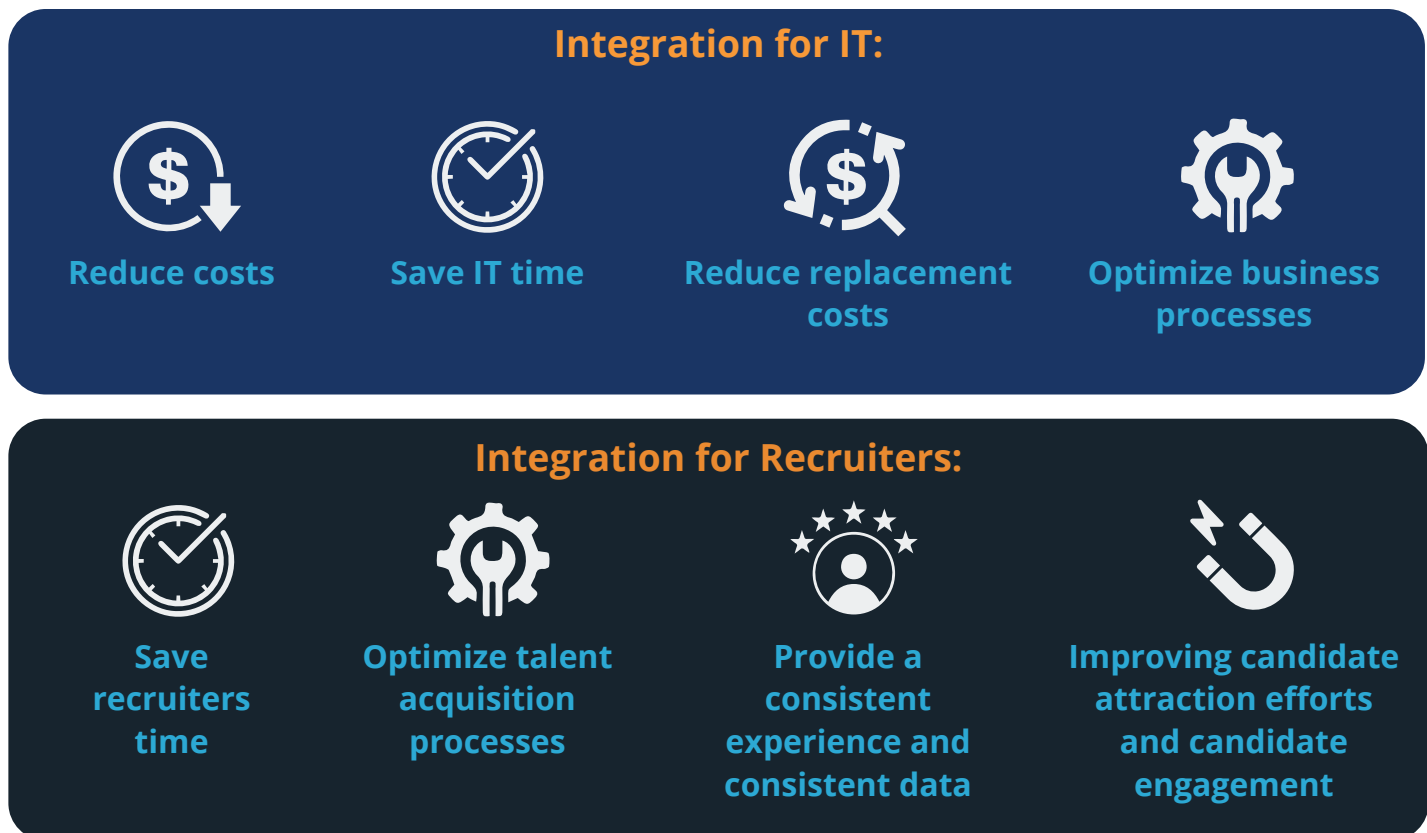
Figure 13: *Benefits of Automation*



The majority of recruiters are not fearful that AI will replace their jobs or provide a poor candidate experience. This study found that recruiters are embracing AI to be more efficient and to provide a better candidate experience. Forty-two percent (42%) of recruiters believe that AI will help them become more strategic in their jobs.

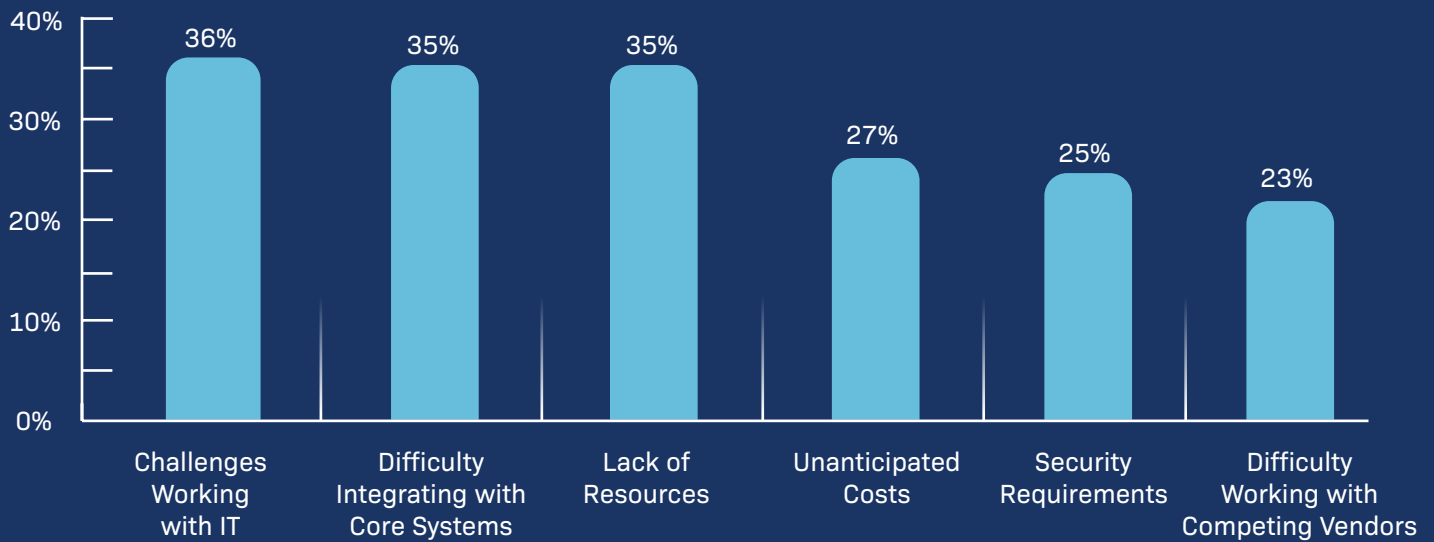
HOW CRITICAL IS INTEGRATION?

Integration plays a role in recruiter satisfaction with technology and their overall job. Integration serves a purpose for both roles.



Many companies lack the dedicated resources and underestimate the needs and expectations of IT to build integrations. Providers downplay the challenges of working with partners and the willingness to work with their competitors. And IT and HRIT are typically preoccupied with other priorities. In fact, one in three talent acquisition professionals surveyed said that IT views talent acquisition integration as a low priority. If a talent acquisition team does not conduct due diligence and collect proper documentation from their providers, it is challenging to get IT to prioritize these projects.

Companies expect “seamless integration” when they invest in a new system, but it often becomes a complicated and time-consuming endeavor. Regardless of how many years of experience, integration is problematic. When asked about the top challenges in integrating talent acquisition technology, companies identified working with IT, difficulty integrating with core systems (HRMS, ATS), lack of resources, and unanticipated costs as the top challenges (see Figure 14). These challenges often stem from the company’s integration process more from the vendor’s ability to support integration.

Figure 14: *Top Challenges with Integration*

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Talent acquisition functions have had to adjust in a short period of time. Companies are rethinking the strategies and solutions they have in place to stay more efficient and improve quality. The talent acquisition leader will be challenged with providing more solutions for less, being able to adjust quickly to unpredictable demand, and providing a better experience. But they cannot ignore the experience of the recruiter in the process.

Below are a few recommendations for companies to consider:

Understand the Recruiter Experience: Many companies take the recruiter experience for granted. The first step to providing a positive recruiter experience is to understand the challenges and frustrations that recruiters face and the opportunity for change.

Consider the Right Solutions: Recruiters have different experiences and expectations for technology. Companies must consider solutions that will improve the recruiter experience and support the recruiter workflow.

Prioritize Integration: Integration is not only a priority for IT professionals. Recruiters want technology that is simple, integrated, and easy to use. Companies must think about integration from the standpoint of recruiters as well as IT.

ABOUT US



Aptitude Research is a leading human capital management (HCM) research and advisory firm. Our in-depth research and vendor assessments help HR leaders develop a deep understanding of the HCM technology landscape, including talent acquisition and engagement, to ultimately make better purchase decisions.

Our flagship research, The Aptitude Index Report: Talent Acquisition Systems (2021), delivers a comprehensive look at talent acquisition trends and technology. This knowledge, combined with our consulting and advisory services, enables companies to save time, money and improve the recruiting, hiring and workforce management experience.

Founded by leading analyst Madeline Laurano and based in the Boston area, Aptitude Research provides a wealth of HCM expertise to companies, vendors and investors. View our recent and upcoming research at AptitudeResearch.com or connect with us on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).



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