



aptitude
research

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THE STATE OF CAMPUS RECRUITING

This report was in partnership with

yello

INTRODUCTION:

Campus recruiting and early talent programs have reached an inflection point. During the pandemic, companies were forced to quickly rethink their approach to events, DEI, employer branding, and candidate engagement. Additionally, they faced new pressures with virtual events, limited student engagement, disparate systems, and a lack of data and insights. The on-campus presence that once served as the heart and soul of early talent programs shifted to a remote world. And, for many companies, it may never go back. According to this study, 82% of companies will have some mix of virtual and in-person events this year.

As companies prepare for the future of campus recruiting, they must look closely at their programs and consider new strategies and solutions. Technology and automation play a critical role in enabling this transformation. Traditional recruitment solutions are not designed to support the modern campus recruiting function and lack many of the key capabilities needed to effectively identify, attract, and recruit early talent. As a result, 65% of companies are planning to increase their investment in campus recruiting technology this year.

Today's companies have a unique opportunity to examine their early talent strategies and technology with a focus on data, experiences, and DEI. But, as companies plan ahead, determining "what's next" is not an easy task. This report is based on two surveys conducted in 2021 and 2022 and includes data from one collected in partnership with Yello. It looks at the current state of campus recruiting and what actions companies can take to prepare for the future.



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What does this report cover?

-  **Change:**
What areas of campus recruiting were most impacted by the past two years?
-  **Priorities:**
What are the top priorities in early talent today?
-  **Experiences:**
What impact does campus recruiting have on the candidate and the recruiter experiences?
-  **Strategies:**
What strategies should companies consider including DEI, events management, candidate engagement, and employer branding?
-  **Technology:**
What capabilities can help improve campus recruitment?
-  **Recommendations:**
What should companies consider as they plan for the future of their campus recruiting needs?



Methodology

Quantitative Research (2 Surveys):

426 responses of talent acquisition and HR director level and above.

283 responses of talent acquisition and early talent leaders in partnership with Yello

Qualitative Research:

Series of interviews in 2021 and 2022 on the challenges, strategies, and technology influencing decisions around campus recruiting.



Key Findings

1

The Future of Events Is Uncertain:

Most companies are still determining their approach to campus events in 2022. With limited in person options, concerns around the pandemic, and turnover on campus recruiting teams, 82% of companies are looking at a combination of in-person and virtual events. As companies plan, data and analytics play a critical role in determining what events to attend and how to best engage students in a virtual environment. Sixty-two percent (62%) of companies stated that historical data is the most important factor in determining an events strategy.

2

Increased Focus on Niche Events:

Many companies are shifting away from large scale career fairs and info sessions to embrace niche events, clubs, and student-run organizations. Companies are looking for more meaningful relationships with students and engaging with them through more targeted engagements. Fifty-two percent (52%) of companies looking to improve DEI this year are building relationships at the student level, including attending student-run clubs, volunteer opportunities, and activism.

3

DEI Needs to Be a Priority:

DEI starts with early talent programs. According to this study, 95% of companies state that DEI is a top priority for early talent programs. Companies must look at systemic changes to their campus recruiting programs. Nearly half are looking to increase their presence at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) this year and invest in events on these campuses. While attending more schools is a step in the right direction, companies need a more strategic approach that starts with sourcing and engagement. Diversity sourcing requires a commitment to identifying and attracting diverse hires.

4

Recruiter Burnout Is Real:

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of companies are increasing the number of campus hires this year compared to last year, and many lack the resources they need to be successful. As a result, 53% of campus recruiters are burned out this year and one in two recruiters would join an organization with better technology. Campus recruiters need support and resources to create more efficiency and a better experience.

5**Employer Branding Is More Challenging (and More Critical) in a Virtual World:**

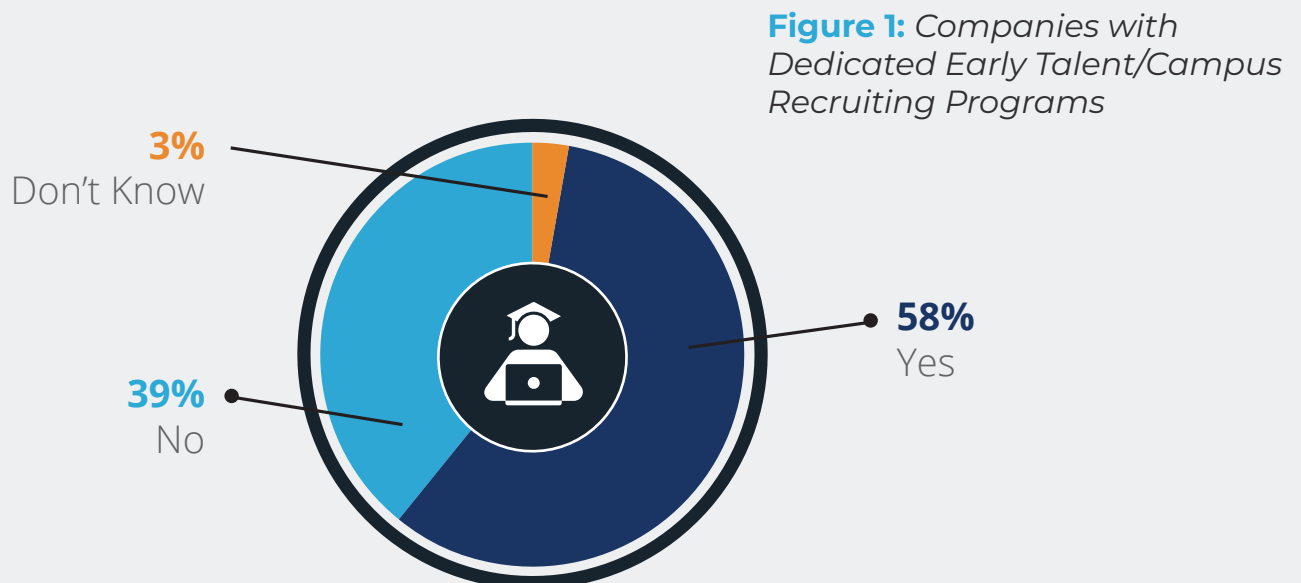
Companies in this study identified employer branding as having the greatest influence on attracting early talent over pay and incentives. Early talent and students want to work for employers that have a strong culture and brand. Employer brand is not only a strategy for large, mainstream organizations. Corporate social responsibility, volunteerism, and community are all factors that early talent consider in an employer.

6**Automation Can Dramatically Improve Campus Recruiting:**

Automation helps companies improve efficiency, but also benefits candidates – providing a fair process, consistent communication, and feedback. Automation can help companies better engage with talent early, schedule interviews and next steps, and communicate with candidates. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of companies are increasing their investment in early talent technology this year.

CURRENT STATE

Early talent is a critical part of strategic talent acquisition with 58% of companies having a dedicated campus recruitment program (see Figure 1). For many companies, these programs have unique goals, challenges, and priorities and may include a separate budget and team dedicated to early talent. Responsibilities may include internships, full-time roles, hosting informational sessions about the company, connecting with students throughout the year, attending industry events/conferences, and participating in student organizations.



Over the past two years, many campus recruiting programs were at a standstill. Companies were navigating the uncertainty of the pandemic and schools were operating in a remote world. In 2021, companies had an opportunity to step back and rethink what would need to change permanently. Now, in 2022, companies are actively ramping up their campus recruiting programs and reinvigorating these initiatives with a stronger focus on DEI, data, and technology.

Companies are preparing for a resurgence of campus recruiting activities this year. According to this study, companies are increasing their investments across all areas of early talent (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Investment in Campus Recruiting



The Great Resignation:

According to Aptitude Research's recent study, *Talent Acquisition Technology and the Modern Recruiter*, 86% of recruiters have more jobs to fill this year than last year and 73% of recruiters state that it is harder to find quality talent. Talent acquisition professionals are facing intense pressure to find talent quickly, but also to retain existing talent. Every industry is experiencing high turnover because of the labor market. As companies struggle to keep employees from leaving the workforce, early talent is looking for opportunities to join. Companies recognize that campus recruiting can bring tremendous value to overall talent acquisition.



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Quality Hires:

With many virtual and in person event options, identifying quality hires is still a point of frustration. Companies invest money in events and building a presence at many schools, yet are not seeing the right candidates applying for jobs or accepting jobs. Quality of hire requires a methodology and access to the right data to inform success.

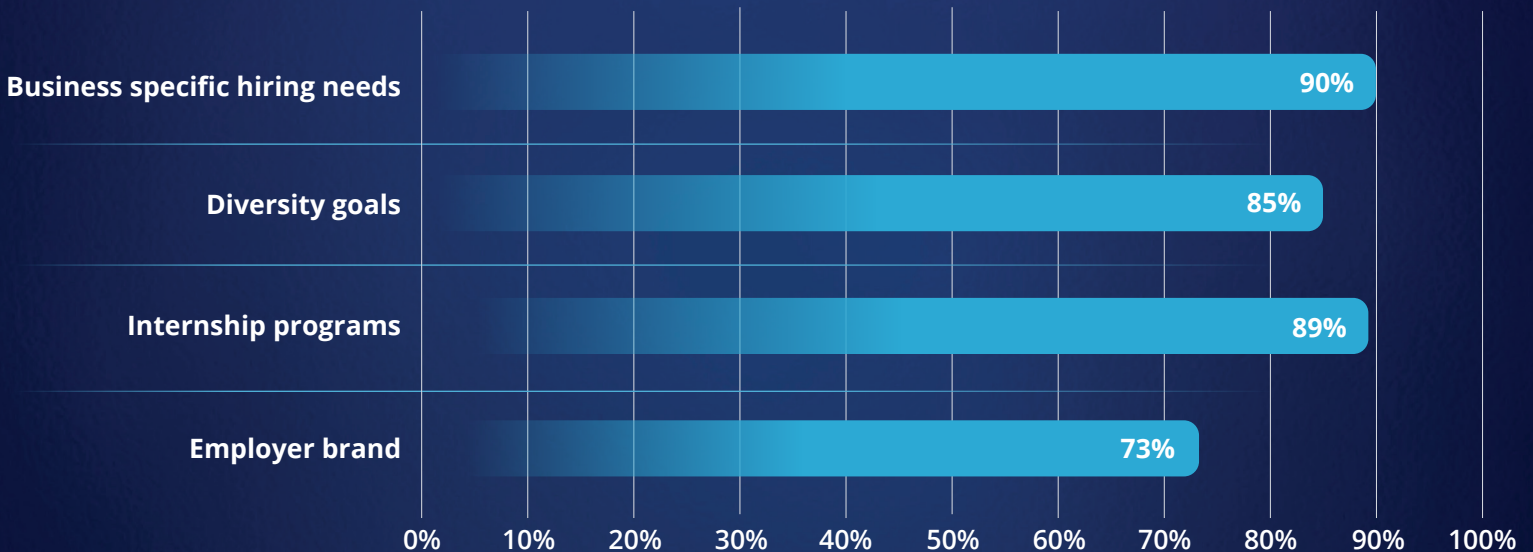
Technology Needs:

To make data-driven decisions around campus talent, companies need to invest in world-class technology. With technology, companies have access to data that can help them prove ROI to company leadership, invest in the right schools, and determine the best way to engage students. Innovative solutions help companies address many of the typical challenges that occur with campus recruitment including communication, data, and available resources.

NEW PRIORITIES

The increased focus on campus recruiting and early talent has resulted in new priorities and goals. Companies are not moving blindly into spring and fall hiring. They are thinking strategically about how to approach campus recruiting and redefining objectives. When asked what priorities are most critical this year, companies identified business-specific hiring goals, diversity goals, internship programs, and employer branding as top priorities. Only 32% of companies cited succession planning as a top priority.

Figure 3: *Top Priorities in Campus Recruiting*



Business Needs:

Business leaders want to align talent acquisition initiatives with company goals. Campus recruiting programs of the past operated in a silo. For example, campus recruiting teams would have a separate strategy and possibly would not report to the head of TA. Today, companies need to be able to provide insights and metrics to business leaders and adjust to changes in the company.

DEI:

Diversity is a priority for companies today and campus recruiting programs are being held accountable for the number of schools that they attend, diverse talent pools, and number of diverse hires. DEI is a critical part of campus recruiting and companies need to be more strategic in how they approach schools and invest in technology.

Internship Programs:

Over 80% of respondents to this study have responsibility for recruiting interns. Many internship programs were interrupted during the pandemic and companies are looking for ways to better attract and recruit interns in a virtual world.

Employer Branding:

This is one of the most important areas of campus recruiting. Companies were able to showcase their employer brand differently in person. Campus recruiting teams found creative ways through storytelling and connections to build excitement for their companies — even for less recognizable brands. Virtual events present new challenges for showcasing the brand and keeping students interested.

The top two actions that companies are taking to deliver on these goals involve technology. Eighty-one percent (81%) of companies stated that they are digitally sourcing candidates and hosting virtual events to achieve these goals.



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TOP CHALLENGES

Despite a shift in priorities and a renewed focus on campus recruiting, companies still face several challenges with their early talent programs including diversity sourcing, finding quality candidates, and finding enough candidates. Many campus recruiting programs are reactive which makes it challenging to find quality talent. Companies do not take a data-driven approach and are not measuring results. In fact, one in three companies do not have any sourcing goals established.



Additional challenges that companies face include:

Too Many Systems: Most companies are leveraging multiple systems to support campus recruiting including sourcing, recruitment marketing, interview management, and events. According to this research study, one in four companies are using over six different solutions to support campus recruiting. However, using multiple systems can result in inconsistency of data and experiences. Companies are unable to understand who they are targeting, quality of sources, or conversion rates when they are collecting data differently. Integrating these systems presents additional challenges. According to this study, 93% of companies using multiple systems to support campus recruiting cited that they are not all fully integrated.

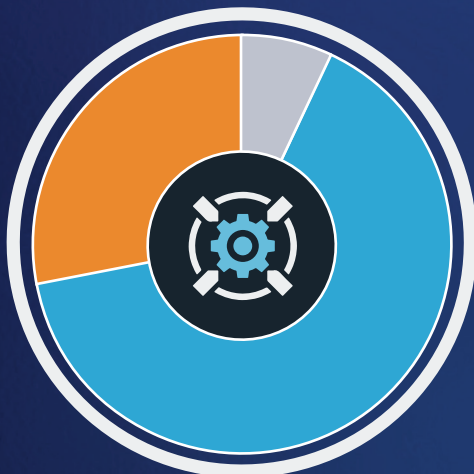
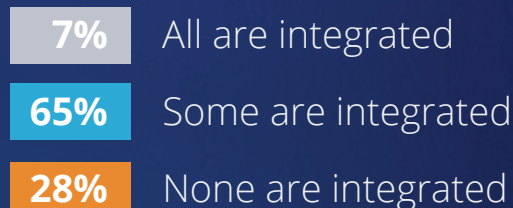


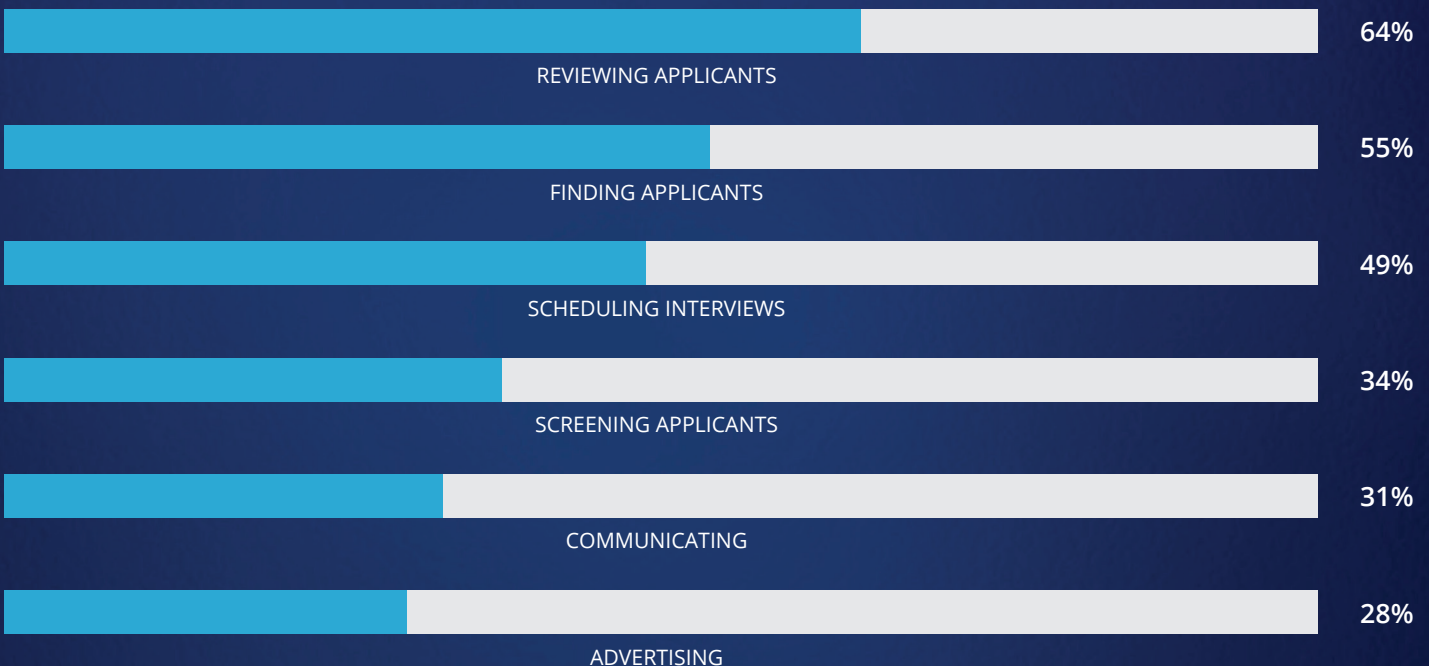
Figure 5: Integration of Systems



Data Quality: Seventy-four percent (74%) of companies that lack integration between systems stated that they must transfer data too often or slightly too often. Creating and maintaining data across multiple systems takes time and is prone to error, especially for fast moving businesses. Companies must manage this data from multiple systems and ensure that they are using quality data to make decisions. As campus recruiting is being held more accountable to business priorities, data management is a necessary part of a strategy.

Recruiter Experience: Fifty-three percent (53%) of recruiters are feeling more burned out this year than last year and 30% of companies state that reducing recruiter turnover is a top priority. Recruiters provide tremendous value to organizations by bringing in the right people to contribute to business performance. They also provide value to candidates by encouraging career growth and empowerment in their journeys. In many cases, they are the first point of contact between a candidate and an employer. 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. Campus recruiters find meaning in connecting with talent, watching students get their first jobs, and being the first relationship within the organization. Yet, when recruiters were asked how they spend their time, most recruiters are doing administrative work.

Figure 6: *Recruiter Top Activities*



RECRUITING SKILLS

Companies interviewed for this report stated the following skills were important for campus recruiting teams:

- Relationship skills and communication skills on your campus recruiting team to engage with students, and interpersonal skills for both in person and virtual events
- Strong analytical skills to better understand how effective your strategy is and what candidates you should profile and schools you should target

Companies are offering training and development for campus recruiting teams to develop new skills and enhance existing skills. They are also actively collaborating with other parts of the business to build skills.

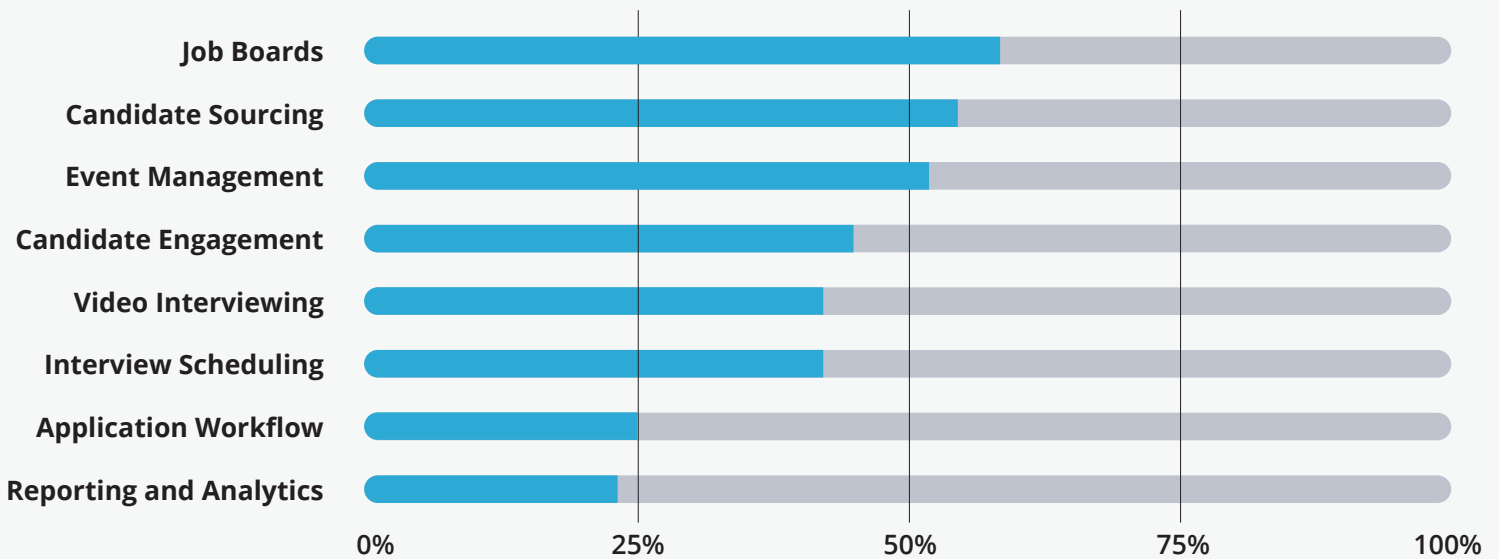


TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays a critical role in campus recruiting. Yet, most companies face challenges with outdated solutions or a lack of integration (discussed above). Traditional technology solutions are not designed to support campus recruiting. They often lack the capabilities needed to effectively attract, recruit, and engage talent.

Early talent technology has improved significantly over the past few years. Sophisticated technology allows companies to source more diverse candidates, manage both in-person and virtual events, strengthen employer branding, and schedule interviews. Unfortunately, companies are not always aware of these options. When asked what technology companies are using to support early talent, most companies are using job boards (see Figure 7). Many companies will post jobs and then use their existing ATS or CRM to support engagement and the candidate workflow. Many of these systems lack effective sourcing and events management capabilities.

Figure 7: Technology to Support Campus Recruiting



The image below outlines how technology and automation can help companies with their entire early talent recruitment process including attracting, engaging, and hiring talent. Automation helps companies improve efficiency for early talent recruiting teams but also benefits the candidates – providing them with a fair process, consistent communication, and feedback on the process. Automation in early talent can help companies better engage with talent early, schedule interviews and next steps, and communicate with candidates.

Figure 8: Automation in Campus Recruiting



FUTURE OF EARLY TALENT

As campus hiring activities pick up, most of the discussions focus on virtual environments and candidate engagement. But the challenges impacting campus recruiting today are more complex. Aptitude Research found several factors that contribute to trends in campus recruiting today, including:



EMPLOYER BRAND: Employer brand efforts and strategies that companies take to attract early talent in both virtual and in-person events.



DEI: The strategies that companies are taking to improve DEI in their early talent programs including targeting schools, engaging with student communities, and measuring results.



EVENTS: The right mix of in-person and virtual events, and the strategies that companies should consider to make the most of these opportunities.



CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE: The experience and engagement of candidates throughout the entire process.

The following pages of this report will look at how companies are taking a more strategic approach to each of these areas including goals, strategies, technology, and metrics.



EVENTS

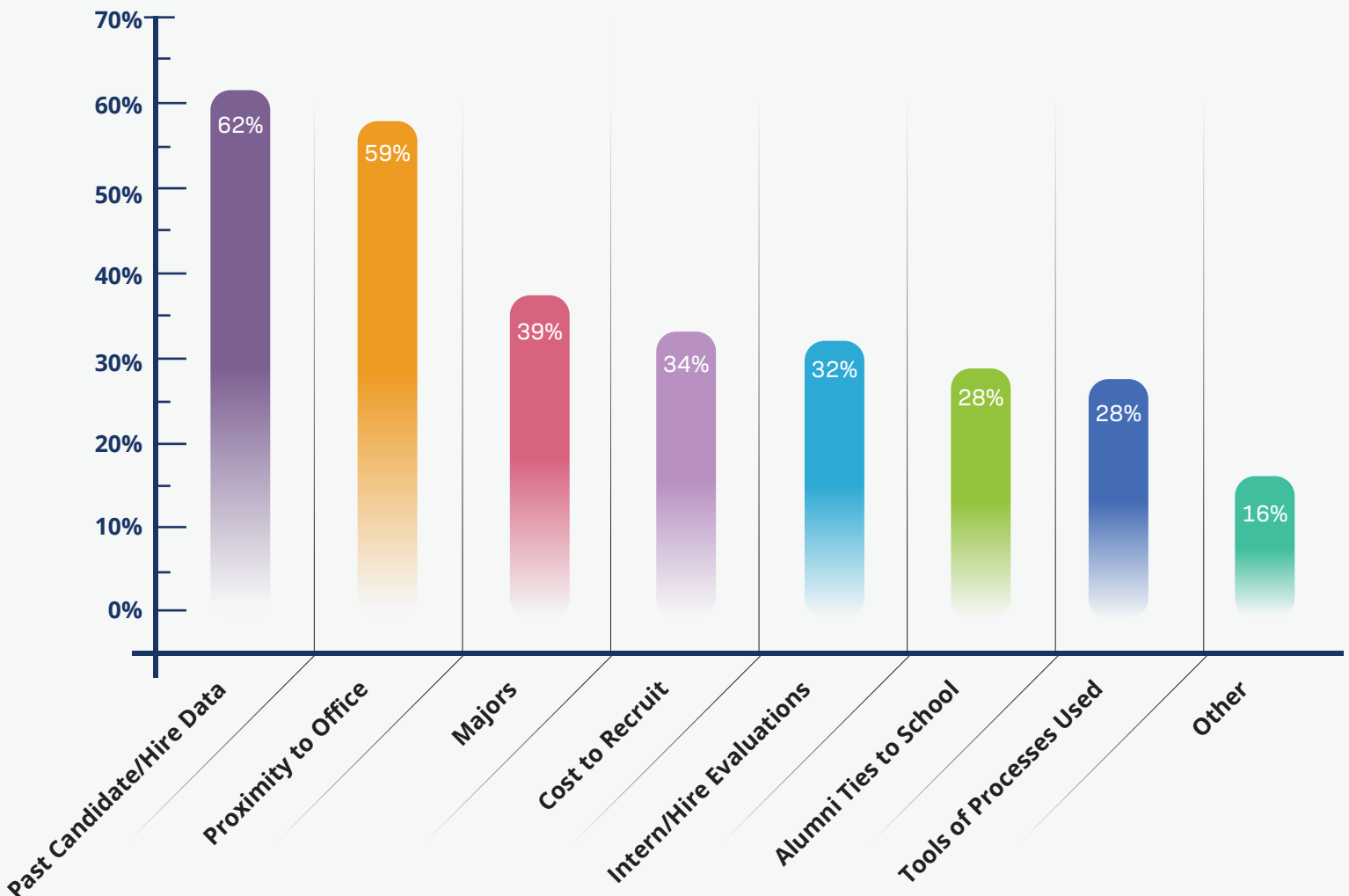


Goals: Most companies are still in the process of determining what mix of virtual and in-person events they will attend in the next year. While virtual platforms have improved significantly over the past year, candidate engagement has declined as many students are feeling “Zoom fatigue.” Some schools are still not offering in-person events. As companies look at improving their programs, finding a flexible approach to events will be critical. Companies want events to be effective and data driven.



Strategies: As companies prepare for 2022 and beyond, 82% are planning a combination of in-person and virtual events. When asked how companies will make decisions around which schools to attend in person, most will take a data-driven approach and consider past performance and proximity to the office as top indicators.

Figure 9: Criteria Used to Determine Events in 2022



Additional strategies may include:

Measuring ROI: Companies should measure the ROI of each event to determine what to continue and what to change.

Communication: Companies should consider pre-event and post-event communication to build relationships with students in a more meaningful way.

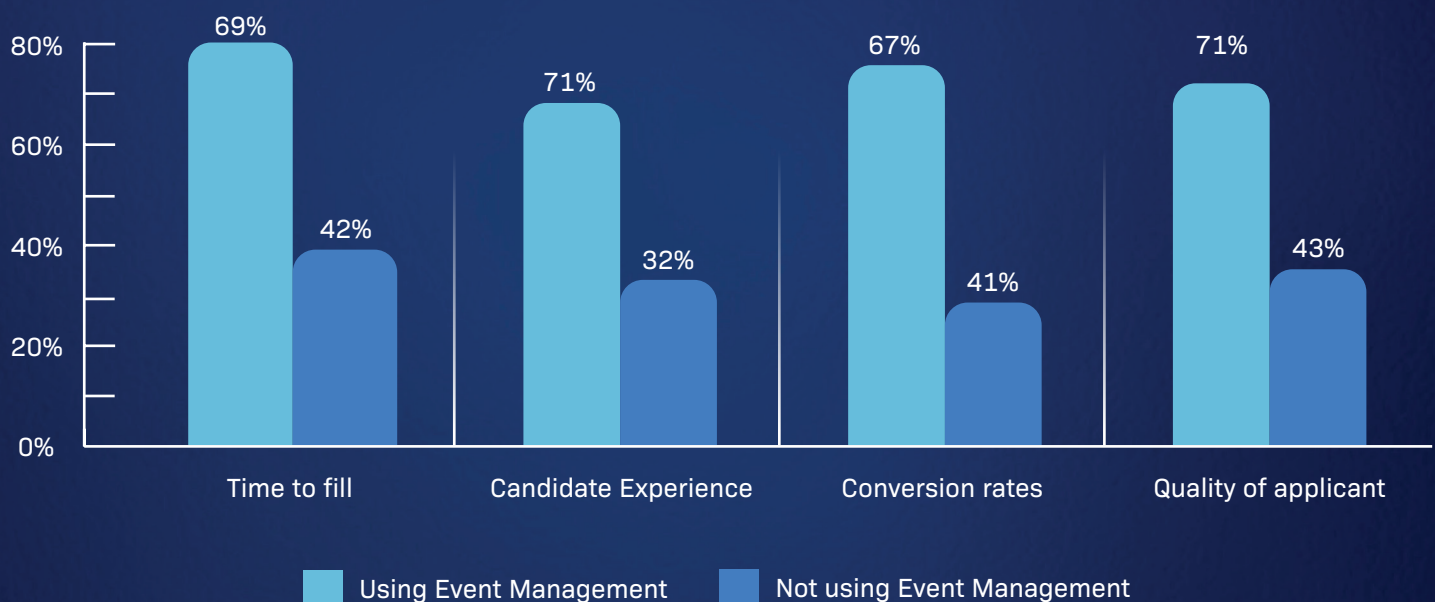
Targeted Events: Companies are moving away from larger career fairs and info sessions and instead investing in student clubs, diversity symposiums, niche events, and out-of-the-box opportunities to connect with students.

Personalized Communication: Companies should differentiate and personalize the experiences of virtual and in-person events.



Technology: Events management technology can provide tremendous value to companies. This technology allows companies to manage logistics, relationships, and registration in one place. Companies can keep a master calendar, easily capture candidate information, and track registration and engagement. Aptitude Research found that companies using events management solutions are more likely to improve time to fill, candidate experience, quality of applicant, and conversion rates (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: *Impact of Events Management Technology*



Metrics: Companies looking to improve their events management should consider the following metrics:

- Cost of events
- Number of engagements from each event
- Number of hires from each event
- Candidate engagement at each event
- Candidate feedback on events
- Quality of applicants
- Quality of hire

DEI

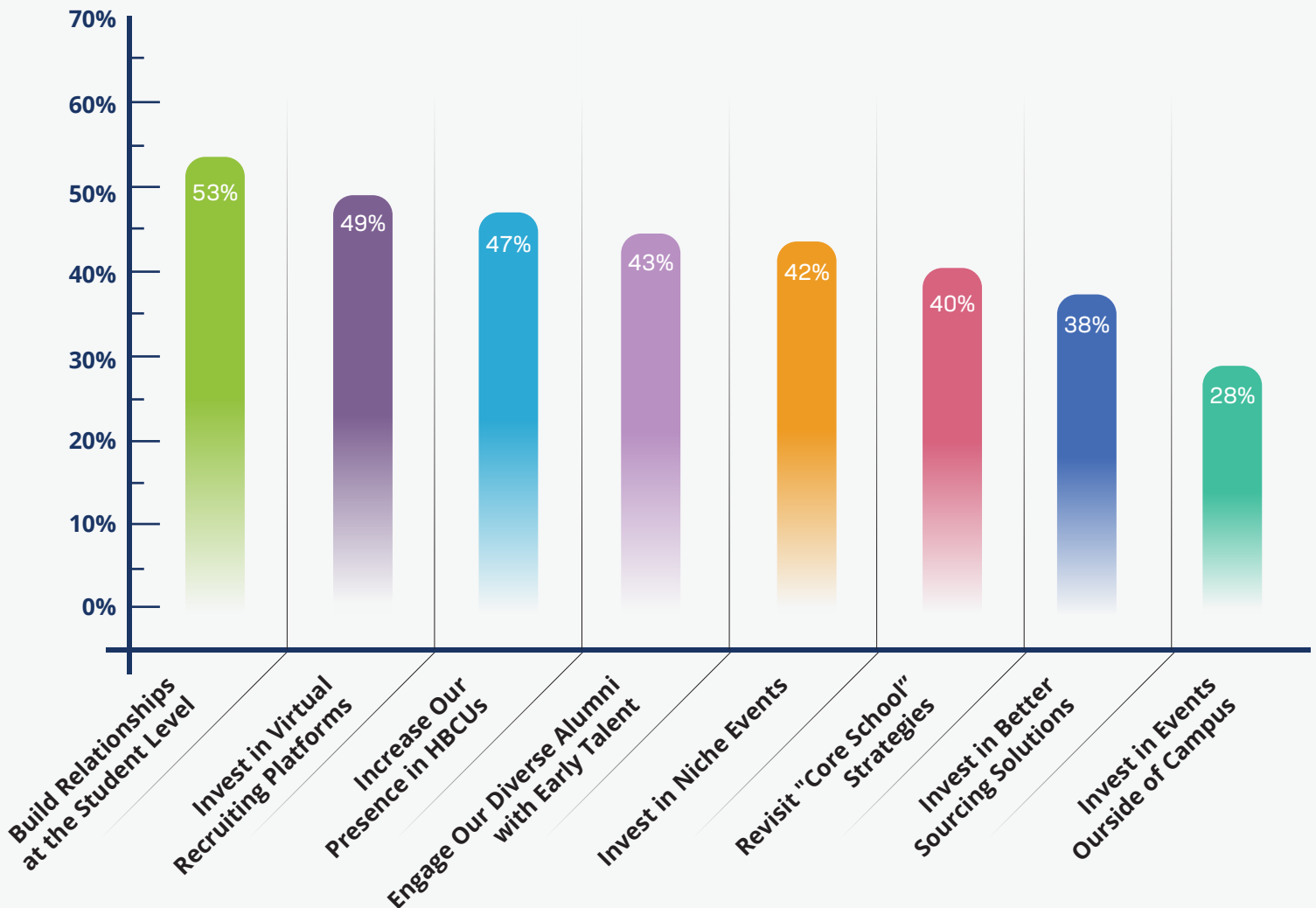


Goals: Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a strategic business initiative for every organization across every industry and it starts with early talent. Companies need to do more than invest in training programs as a check-the-box strategy or a one-time action. They need to understand their objectives and invest in the right expertise, resources, and solutions to drive change. Companies must create a culture where DEI is a strategic priority and measure and track their efforts to recruit diverse candidates and reduce bias at every stage in the hiring process.



Strategies: When asked what companies are doing to improve DEI in campus recruiting, over 50% of companies stated that they are building relationships at the student level (see Figure 11). The tendency for many companies is to increase investment and presence at HBCUs. While this strategy is a step in the right direction, companies need to build more meaningful relationships with students throughout the year. Diverse talent exists at many schools.

Figure 11: DEI Strategies for Early Talent



Additional strategies may include:

Intersectionality: Companies should consider intersectionality where you look at multiple diverse groups.

Employee Involvement and Collaboration: Companies should consider involving employees, ERGs, and Chief Diversity Officers in campus initiatives.

Student Groups: Companies should consider student groups that may include women in tech, STEM groups, student clubs, and diversity symposiums. Companies may also consider investing in diversity associations and conferences outside campuses.



Technology: Sourcing technology focused on diverse candidates can have the greatest impact on DEI efforts at the campus level. It gives companies the option to source beyond traditional places and find a more diverse talent pool. When sourcing is integrated into other recruitment solutions – such as recruitment marketing and interviewing – companies can see the impact of their diverse sourcing efforts throughout the recruitment funnel.



Metrics: Companies looking to improve their DEI should consider the following metrics:

- **Recruitment Marketing:** Are companies targeting diverse hires? What percentage of campaigns are directed to diverse hires?
- **Apply:** What percentage of candidates who applied for a job were diverse? What percentage of candidates that dropped off were diverse?
- **Assessments:** What percentage of candidates that completed an assessment were diverse? Is the assessment offering differential predictions?
- **Interviews:** What percentage of the candidates interviewed were diverse?
- **Offers:** Of all candidates that were given job offers, what percentage were diverse?
- **Hires:** Of all hires, what percentage were diverse?
- **Rejection:** What percentage of rejected candidates were diverse?



EMPLOYER BRANDING

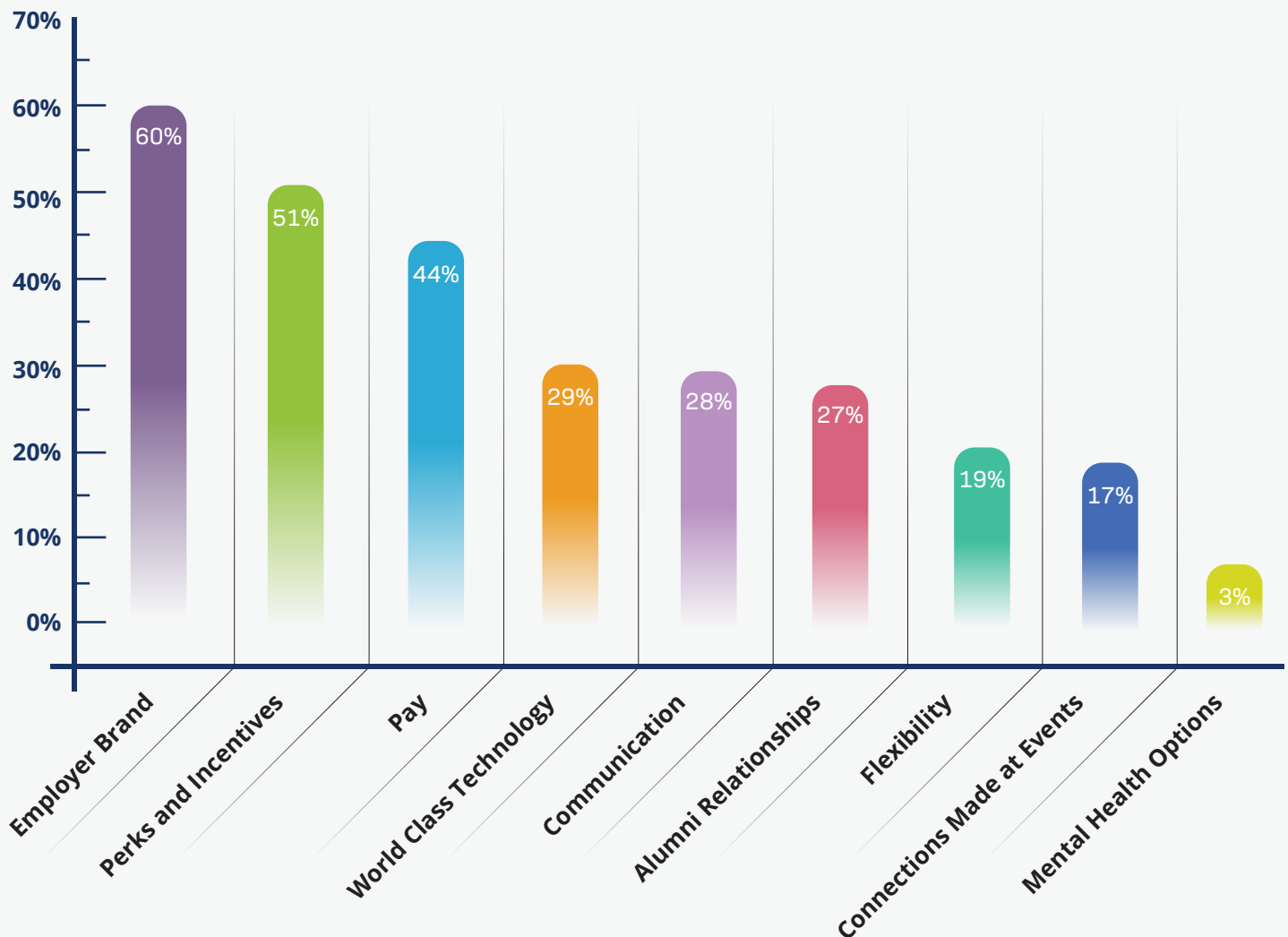


Goals: Employer branding helps companies attract and engage talent. Companies that are successful at building strong brands are more effective in their early talent programs. Many of these companies must consider aligning their early talent brand with their overall corporate and TA branding efforts.



Strategies: Companies in this study identified employer branding as having the greatest influence on attracting early talent over pay and perks and incentives. Early talent and students want to work for employers that have a strong culture and brand. Employer brand is not only a strategy for large, mainstream organizations. Corporate social responsibility, volunteerism, and community are all factors that early talent consider in an employer.

Figure 12: Influence on Attracting Early Talent



Below are a few strategies for companies to consider strengthening branding:

Collaboration: Companies should consider partnering with Corporate Social Responsibility or Employee Resource Groups to help strengthen the brand and showcase how employees are treated.

Incentives: Some companies provide incentives or even student scholarships to strengthen branding.

Champions: Some companies find internal champions in their organization, including alumni, to attend events and build relationships with students.

Storytelling: Share the history of your company and build awareness for the brand through storytelling.



Technology: Recruitment marketing and CRM can help companies strengthen their branding through personalized messages, branded communication, and campaigns. Technology can help showcase the brand using different forms of communication and media including SMS, video communication, and events.



Metrics: Companies looking to improve employer branding should consider the following:

- Candidate engagement
- Online impressions specific to early talent
- Engagement and impressions on landing pages



CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE



Goals: Candidates want to trust the recruitment process. They want to know that their profile, application, resume, or inquiry is going to be given consideration. If automation is in place, candidates want to trust that the data collected will provide them with an equal opportunity. This trust in the talent acquisition process is a key component of today's talent acquisition process. Only one in four candidates trust the data will be used to drive hiring decisions.



Strategies: Companies looking to improve the candidate experience of early talent, may want to consider the following:

Understand What Candidates Want: Companies must consider the unique expectations and experiences of candidates. Collecting feedback and going through the candidate journey can help companies with a candidate-first approach to automation.

Interrupt Bias Early in the Process: By creating a consistent and fair experience for candidates early in the process, companies are more successful at reducing bias and increasing inclusivity.

Build Trust Through Data: Both employers and candidates need to trust the data and methodologies for the technology that they are using. Companies looking at automation should consider providers that will partner with them and provide transparency.



Technology: When considering recruitment automation from the candidate's viewpoint, the value extends beyond efficiency to overall experience and brand. The business impact shifts from short-term goals to long-term objectives that are driven by a more human process. Figure 13 reveals how efficiency, effectiveness, and experience are influenced by both an employer-driven and candidate-first approach to automation. The key performance indicators for an employer-driven approach are based on recruitment metrics compared to the KPIs for a candidate-driven approach based on humanity.

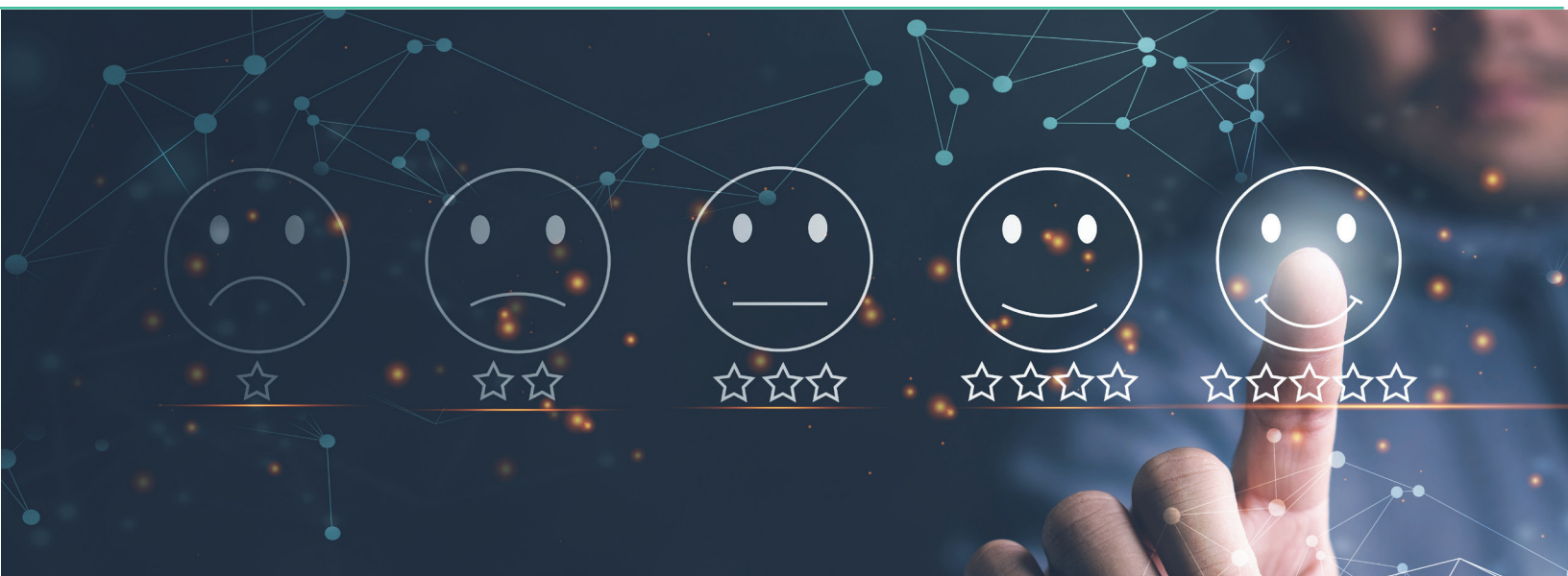


Figure 13: *Employer-Driven and Candidate-First Automation*

	Employer-driven Automation	KPI	Candidate-first Automation	KPI
EFFICIENCY	Recruiters can convert leads to applicants to fill jobs quicker, and they can interview more quantity and quality candidates in a shorter period of time.	Time-to-Fill	Candidates receive more consistent, personalized communication so they can make better decisions around an employer, and with a more positive perception of the brand.	Confidence Personalization
EFFECTIVENESS	Recruiters can make data-driven decisions around talent, and how and where to spend their time.	Quality of Hire	Candidates trust the process and believe that they received a fair opportunity.	Trust Inclusivity
EXPERIENCE	Recruiters can focus on less tactical elements of talent acquisition, such as scheduling and outreach, and focus on the part of the job that brings them joy - building relationships with candidates.	Recruiter Productivity	Every candidate is given a consistent and fair recruitment process.	Confidence Trust Inclusivity Personalization



Metrics: Companies looking to improve employer branding should consider the following:

- ◆ **Candidate engagement**
- ◆ **Online impressions specific to early talent**
- ◆ **Engagement and impressions on landing pages**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

As companies consider the future of campus recruiting, they may want to consider a few recommendations:

- **Virtual vs. In-Person:**

Most companies are still in the process of determining what mix of virtual and in-person events they will attend in the next year. While virtual platforms have improved significantly over the past year, candidate engagement has declined as many students are feeling “Zoom fatigue.” As companies look at maturing their programs, finding a flexible approach to events will be critical.

- **DEI:**

DEI is a critical part of early talent programs. Companies must make an investment that involves closely looking at the schools they attend and their presence at the student level. Showing a commitment will go further than simply making an investment. Companies may also want to consider intersectionality. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals experience discrimination based on multiple and intersecting identities, including race, religion, ethnicity, migrant status, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or socioeconomic status.

- **Automation:**

Automation helps companies improve efficiency for recruiting teams but also benefits the candidates - providing them with a fair process, consistent communication, and feedback on the process. Automation in early talent can help companies better engage with talent early, schedule interviews and next steps, and communicate with candidates.

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](https://www.AptitudeResearch.com) or connect with us on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).



Since 2008 Yello is the leading complete campus recruiting solution worldwide. Now, with WayUp's unparalleled DEI sourcing, Yello provides an industry-leading, comprehensive equitable recruiting solution, streamlining the hiring process and transforming DEI talent recruiting. Yello is used by recruiters and employers at thousands of global companies like CitiGroup and L'Oréal, to source, screen, interview, and hire top, diverse talent. Yello's extensive talent acquisition platform enables recruiters and early-career candidates to collaborate throughout the hiring process. Yello enables recruiters to attract and hire top, diverse talent and seamlessly meet their early-talent hiring goals, all while removing hours of manual work.

For more information about Yello, visit <http://www.yello.co>.